

NOBU HOTEL LONDON PORTMAN SQUARE, UK

Rooted in its deep connection with people and making memories centered around great food, Nobu is a contemporary brand with traditional values, which is one explanation for its worldwide success in the hospitality market. Despite a challenging year for the industry, the brand brought its latest opening to the UK's capital at the beginning of December. Katy Evans managed to check-in between lockdowns to find out more about the design influences that make the new hotel so unique.

Opening a hotel in a year that has seen a third of the world under some form of lockdown may seem unfortunate but Nobu forged ahead with its plan to relocate its iconic restaurant at Berkley Square to Marylebone, now tucked snug inside its brand-new 249-room hotel and for the 10 days it was open – I was there the day it was announced London would enter tier 3, meaning all hotels and restaurants had to shut down – it offered a cool, luxurious respite.

Nobu Portman Square is situated on a corner facing the eponymous square, its large glass-fronted entrance a modern, urban face in a sea of white-stucco and red brick, in contrast, but not out of place with the vast buildings lining the square. Come summer, the large terrace spilling out from the bar situated closest to the square will offer prime real estate for anyone wanting to soak up some sunshine with a view.

On a dark afternoon in December, the bright, warm glass-fronted entrance proved an equally welcoming beacon. That soft, warm light, in fact, is a key element that makes you feel immediately at ease as soon as you are inside, bouncing and reflecting off discrete splashes of gold in the many paintings, artworks, and finishes dotted around the central foyer and adjoining Lounge Bar.





The design, cleverly created by David Collins Studio, clearly puts a strong emphasis on traditional craftsmanship, the foyer a veritable gallery of interesting artworks, and sculptures, its centerpiece a spectacular silver hanging kinetic sculpture by Ivan Black that languidly rotates causing a subtle shift in shape and movement that both draws the eye and instills a rather Zen-like calm.

The first impression is of a light-filled contemporary, cool interior, minimal but the Japanese influence not immediately noticeable until you turn to the hotel's adjoining central hub, the Lounge Bar, a warmly lit, very inviting

space that quite firmly places the Japanese influence front and centre. Jewel-green sofas and chairs the exact shade of the moss so lovingly cultivated at Kyoto's Ginkakuji, or Silver Pavillion, is what first sprung to mind. I was gratified to notice later the bowls of moss in the glass terrarium-inspired cabinets that corner the central bar, alongside miniature trees, bottles of sake, and Japanese whiskey. The mix of dark wood covering the bar, ceiling, and panelled walls paired with creamy neutral shades, particularly the large linen lights, gives an undeniable traditional Japanese-inspired look with a modern feel.



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The dark wood and ambient lighting set the tone for the rest of the hotel's open spaces, the corridors lit softly, textured and tactile surfaces covering every wall. Both the bar and restaurant are low lit, giving a sense of intimacy, though the use of jewel-bright colours and textures also give them a sense of fun. The modern Japanese minimalism is felt throughout the restaurant, the simple seating and open plan room allowing a buzzy atmosphere to ripple out. The open sushi bar also lends an informal ambiance, though due to social distancing, sitting and watching the chefs work was not permitted at the time. In the daytime, the restaurant is surprisingly bright, its floor-to-ceiling windows and popping colour scheme – based on the Japanese dictionary of colour – of citrus green, warm yellow, cool lilac, and indigo giving it a fresh, efficient feel.

The bar is a little gem, repeating the dark timber motif with screened walls but with bold splashes of Japanese indigo and red and bespoke lighting giving everything a moodier, sexy glow. People may come for the restaurant, but they will come back for the bar and lounge, particularly when the terrace is up and running.

In keeping with the minimalist Japanese architecture the rooms and suites, by Make Architects, are not large and are sparsely decorated but the muted neutral colour palette – all cream, stone, and natural wood – is actually a relief for the senses. These little bubbles of calm haven't escaped the meticulous attention to detail the rest of the hotel enjoys though, with touches like the large bespoke abstract 'one stroke' art pieces by Dragica Carlin on the walls, and the warm bronze running through the marble bathrooms that again bounce and reflect that warm glow the hotel seems to just ooze.



Nobu Portman Square clearly adheres to a modern, minimalist aesthetic, blending Japanese architecture with contemporary design, but the detail is frankly astonishing. Every wall and window is textured, tactile, every light placed to enhance the frequent bespoke artworks. All Nobu hotels reflect and complement their location, and the use of British and European artists reflects London's multi-cultural influence, the emphasis on art and craftsmanship and intimacy particularly resonating with Marylebone's feel of both luxury and independent style.

The hotel may not look like the other buildings in this historic part of London, but it fits comfortably into Marylebone's 'village' vibe. Due to its proximity to Oxford Street and its famous restaurant, it's likely to be a destination visit for many travellers to London, but thanks to its rather sexy bars, it's also likely to be a hit for local Londoners in search of a good drink in a cool surrounding. I think I'm going to be one of them.

INVESTOR: London & Regional
DESIGN: David Collins Studio, Make Architects
ARCHITECTURE: BSBG London
FIT-OUT: StudioExe, WFC Contractors
SUPPLIERS: *Lighting:* Dernier & Hamlyn, Chelsom *Audio tech:* Middlesex Sound and Lighting *Towels and robes:* BC SoftWear
Exterior cladding/façade: Archiclad *Bathroom fittings and fixtures:* Kohler, Geberit, Hansgrohe, Axor *Hygienic wall coverings:* Hycom *Bathroom amenities:* Grown Alchemist
Mattresses and bed linen: Simmons *Gym equipment:* Technogym *Tableware:* Heritage Collection *Glassware:* LSA

www.london-portman.nobuhotels.com

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TOTO

Toto aims to create a new understanding of hygiene. The Japanese sanitary ware producer's toilets and Washlets (shower toilets) in particular are incredibly versatile and well-suited for use in all types of spaces, from hospitality to residential projects. Toto has launched the Washlet RG and with its sleek, streamlined design will enhance the look of any bathroom. It is the shower toilet on the market with the most extensive hygiene features. They are easy to clean and have technologies that ensure long-lasting cleanliness.

www.gb.toto.com

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Kaldewei, is renowned for its green credentials, long term partner of the WWF they manufacture sustainable, 100% recyclable steel enamel products. Steel and glass have been valued for millennia; when these natural materials are joined they blend into an immaculate fusion of steel enamel, elegant yet tough it is at the core of Kaldewei's products.

The Ming is a totally new design; a sophisticated, elegant silhouette ideal for any bathroom. The new washbasin has been photographed as part of Kaldewei's #NaturalUnion campaign supported by photographer and rock star Bryan Adams who took these photographs.

www.kaldewei.co.uk



FIRST IMPRESSIONS: STATEMENT LIGHTING DESIGN

Chelsom creates bespoke lighting design solutions for a post pandemic era of hospitality.

The very essence of Bespoke Design conjures up feelings of luxury, exclusivity and comfort. Designing something to perfectly suit its application rather than buying 'off-the-shelf' will always add a sense of quality and value to a project which is especially true with decorative lighting. For decades the design team at Chelsom has worked hard to ensure there is a consistent DNA flowing through all aspects of their products. Regarded as one of the leading global suppliers of decorative lighting to the global Hospitality sector, Chelsom's standard products are selected by interior designers for brands ranging from Mandarin Oriental to Holiday Inn Express and Virgin Voyages to Carnival Cruise Lines.

Alongside the evolution of their standard lighting collection, Chelsom is also a leading bespoke lighting manufacturer. The team at Chelsom work in a truly collaborative manner with designers and end clients to bring often challenging, one-off design concepts to life. Recent bespoke projects range from the design and build of a one-off 5-metre-high statement chandelier for a hotel atrium as well as the manufacturing of 5000+ table lamps to feature in every cabin on a cruise ship. Unique designs require flexible and adaptable manufacturing, something Chelsom prides itself on offering clients at every stage of a bespoke project.

Bespoke design was once considered something for the luxury end of the market. However, the demand for tailored, unique design is something Chelsom works with clients to deliver at all budget levels. The industry has been hit incredibly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and many believe that there will be a need to future-proof the industry by factoring in special qualities to product and interior design. As we all move forward from the pandemic, there will undoubtedly be more of a need to customise products and to specify lighting with added functionality.

Over the last year, the Chelsom design team have been exploring a number of different aspects of lighting design which could serve to reduce the spread of viruses within the hospitality environment. As bespoke features, Chelsom has developed decorative 'touchless-switching' solutions which will reduce the points of contact in a hotel guest room; they also offer fabrics with antimicrobial qualities, as well as metal finishing options which will significantly reduce the spread of germs and bacteria; the Chelsom team are even exploring the use of UV light within a decorative application in a further attempt to wage war on viruses within the hospitality setting. None of these solutions will suit every project but the technologies are there to be experimented with and by having the capabilities available, Chelsom is able to constantly offer smarter solutions and add even more weight to its bespoke services and products for the future.

One recent example saw Chelsom create a huge chandelier for Le Meridien Dania Beach Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Chelsom worked with Dash Design in New York to create a lobby chandelier centre-piece designed to look like a constellation of stars and planets, suspended to create the illusion it was floating on air. A series of 'planets' attached to steel arms of varying lengths contain a small LED at the end to represent stars in the sky. Designed to be compatible with the hotel's existing dimming system, real wow factor is achieved as the chandelier light effect adapts and transitions from a day



through to night sequence. The project was challenging and took two years to complete but Chelsom was able to interpret the original design through months of intense planning and development. A huge level of CAD expertise went into evolving the design and miniature model versions of the chandelier were created along the way so that Chelsom could perfect the overall engineering of the product and master the perfect manufacturing technique. One of the biggest challenges was how to make a huge statement chandelier, the size of a London bus, appear weightless and fit perfectly into the 6-metre domed ceiling of the hotel lobby. The light effect was also key, requiring a huge amount of technical knowledge to create the desired 'twinkle' effect so that the chandelier correctly represented the constellation look that the client was after. The final results speak for themselves and this is one of the most impressive light fittings that Chelsom has ever created. It was a technical and engineering marvel in its creation and an aesthetic achievement to have remained so sympathetic to the original Dash Design brief.

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THE RED SEA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY AWARDS TWO KEY CONTRACTS

Hotel construction is now underway following the award of two major contracts for hotel development at its Southern Dunes site and Ummahat Al Shaykh Island.

The Red Sea Development Company (TRSDC), the developer behind the world's most ambitious regenerative tourism project, has awarded contracts to Saudi company Al Bawani and Swiss firm Blumer Lehmann to support the development plans and structural work of its luxury hotels and resorts.

The two companies will play pivotal roles in the construction of hotels across The Red Sea Project, with Al Bawani responsible for civil and structural works across 40 hotel villas on the Southern Dunes site, and Blumer Lehmann responsible for timber construction planning and fabrication as well as supply works for a hotel situated on Ummahat Al Shaykh Island.

The Red Sea Project has already passed significant milestones and work is on track to welcome the first guests by the end of 2022, when the international airport and the first four hotels will open. The remaining 12 hotels planned for phase one will open in 2023.



WYNDHAM TO OPEN NEW HOTEL IN HISTORIC AREA OF DUBAI

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts has announced the debut of its La Quinta by Wyndham brand in the Middle East with a new 100-room property in Dubai. Expected to open in March 2021, La Quinta by Wyndham Dubai Bur Dubai will be centrally located in the historic Bur Dubai district.

This hotel marks the 75th La Quinta property to open since Wyndham acquired the brand in 2018. La Quinta has now expanded to nine countries: Canada, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Turkey, New Zealand, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. The brand has also announced plans to open eight new La Quinta hotels in the Dominican Republic.

Dimitris Manikis, President EMEA, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, said: "We are on a strong growth trajectory for La Quinta by Wyndham, and this latest addition further highlights our commitment to expand the brand in EMEA and around the world. Dubai is one of the most sought out destinations for travellers from all corners of the globe, making it the ideal location to launch La Quinta in the market."



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THE CARLTON TOWER JUMEIRAH, LONDON

A hugely anticipated unveiling for the UK's capital, it almost feels as though everyone's at bursting point to step into the newly-renovated The Carlton Tower Jumeirah, but we won't have to wait much longer as guests will be welcomed in from this June. Sophie Harper spoke to 1508 London ahead of the hotel's reopening to find out more about the project.

Applying the finishing touches to the glossiest of hotel refurbishments prior to its grand opening this June, the team at The Carlton Tower Jumeirah had hoped to unveil the hotel's new look in December, but like many hotel projects due to open in 2020, the pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns put plans on hold. But perhaps it's more fitting that the hotel opens in 2021, in a celebratory year that sees its 60th anniversary.

Once the tallest hotel in London, The Carlton Tower is the Jumeirah brand's flagship European property and is a modern classic and sophisticated hotspot with a rich history in the heart of Knightsbridge. The all-encompassing £100 million renovation – the most extensive in its history – includes the restructure of the building's layout, with the hotel now offering fewer but much more spacious rooms with a brand-new luxurious and contemporary look. Of the 186 guest rooms and suites, many of the newly created signature and junior suites will boast balconies with spectacular views over London.



Carlton Health Club

With an illustrious past as an 'A lister' haunt, the hotel has been reinvented for a new generation of discerning guests with elegant, timeless decor by esteemed interior and architecture design studio 1508 London. Renowned for creating exceptional private residences and hospitality interiors, 1508 has drawn on the hotel's rich history and glamorous heritage as 'the place to be', to offer a brand-new design informed by modern interpretations of classic British architecture. "With Jumeirah's roster including Burj Al Arab, a global icon of luxury, we've weaved a timeless, beautiful design within a quintessential London setting to create a beacon of sophistication for Jumeirah in London," said Ailsa Connery, Design Director at 1508 London. "The design aspiration for the hotel is set from the moment the guest steps across the threshold of the new Carlton Tower; exquisite materials, fine craftsmanship and considered detailing throughout evokes an enduring sense of refined luxury in relaxed surroundings, welcoming a new era of loyal guests to The Carlton Tower Jumeirah. The interior design reinterprets timeless architectural styles, to create a design for The Carlton Tower Jumeriah tailored to its prime London setting and the heritage of the hotel."

New features include the return of the 'arrivals moment' when you enter the hotel – a redesigned turntable glass entrance and lobby with a bespoke chandelier. "One of the greatest changes to the building is the refurbished Porte

Cochere entrance and lobby," says Ailsa. "The existing dark granite cladding has been replaced with Portland stone. A bespoke fluted chandelier by Lasvit is suspended in the grand hall connected by 504 strings – which incorporates an abstract interpretation of a flower in bloom, inspired by Cadogan Gardens' history as a botanical garden. The setting reinforces a sense of place; of London. Whilst maintaining the building's original tower, the redesigned entrance infuses a new, lighter sense of grandeur to the building, with bright yet soft lighting and natural light-tones welcoming guests to this reimagined landmark hotel."

New bar and dining concepts at The Carlton Tower Jumeirah include a destination restaurant and bar, boasting a theatre kitchen for immersive dining, craft cocktails and a world class wine-list, a private dining room and alfresco seating on Cadogan Place at Al Mare. Additionally, the Chinoiserie is an all-day lobby lounge and bar offering relaxed dining and a 'cake-o'clock' afternoon tea concept, served late into the evening. Both dining concepts can be found on the ground floor and encompass luxury and comfort with a subtle and calming colour palette and gentle lighting.

Comforting and familiar touches instil an air of ease, yet don't take away from the grandeur and excitement that any guest staying in a prime London location for a few days would want. The new ornate open balustrade of the main stairs is reminiscent of a more stately affair, guiding the guest past



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hand-finished decorative plaster relief panelling with full-height antique mirrors reflecting a cascade chandelier – it is these elegant details that make the hotel stand-out and add to the guest experience.

Guest rooms and suites again carry a residential feel whilst being something altogether a bit 'special'. From deluxe and superior rooms that have been designed in light, elegant tones yet feel rich in texture and depth, to balcony rooms that are timeless in their classic styling where floor-to-ceiling windows allow natural light to flood in and private balconies provide al fresco living with wonderful views over London. Then of course there are the garden suites that offer generous and tranquil living spaces, the executive suites that include a walk-in wardrobe and a generous salon offering guests a separate dining and living area for entertaining. City view suites offer a spacious living area, guest powder room and separate bedroom as well as a dedicated entrance into the bedroom, which allows for more privacy. Luxury suites come with an expansive living area including a dining table that seats four and private balcony with exceptional views of

Cadogan Gardens and Knightsbridge, and then the pièce de resistance, the royal suite being the grandest guest accommodation and the pinnacle of luxury with two luxurious entertaining areas, spacious and tranquil bedrooms, and an exquisite, oversized marble bathroom which features a walk-in rainforest shower and Jacuzzi. Every detail has been given an elegant sprinkling of class and sophistication down to the Focus SB Morpheus switches and sockets in a beautiful polished nickel finish.

"The focus of each bedroom is the view and natural light," says Ailsa. "Inspired by the play of light through the landscape and the rich variety of colour and texture, the material palettes reinforce the timeless refined design aesthetic. Combining a contemporary classic aesthetic with modernist style influences, rooms feature elegant wall panelling and detailing, with furnishings in softer forms. The warm colour palette is influenced by British heritage hues of deep blues, greens and maroons. Throughout the property all joinery has been manufactured and installed by specialist British joiners."



THE CARLTON TOWER JUMEIRAH, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON

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The hotel's famous world-class health club The Peak Fitness Club & Spa, which is set across three floors has also been revitalised during the renovation. The Peak boasts a new delicately lit ethereal space in the form of its Talise Spa on the hotel's second floor, featuring London's largest 20-metre swimming pool with natural daylight and views through its huge, curved glass ceiling, lined with poolside cabanas for relaxation. In addition to the spa and pool facilities, the fitness club offers panoramic views of the capital with a full Technogym suite and even a private garden exclusively for guests to find their inner calm in with a morning yoga session or feel energised with a game of tennis on one of the two courts.

"This unique hotel attracts some of the world's most influential clientele, quite often staying for extended periods in what becomes their London home. We wanted to create an atmosphere that is timeless and elegant, while referencing the glamorous heritage of the hotel and architectural vernacular of the location. Drawing upon our residential work, we sought to create a palatial sense of grandeur with all the comforts and luxuries of home," summarises Hamish Brown, Partner at 1508 London.

Designing with escapism in mind, 1508 London took a holistic approach to the interiors and has created an oasis in the middle of Knightsbridge. From the point of arrival, The Carlton Tower Jumeirah guarantees ultimate relaxation, transporting you from the bustling streets to utter serenity.

DESIGN: 1508 London
FIT-OUT: Beck Interiors
SUPPLIERS: *Lighting:* Chelsom *Bespoke feature lighting:* Lasvit *Switch plates and sockets:* Focus SB *Bathroom amenities:* Grown Alchemist *Lift installation:* Apex Lifts *Sliding windows and doors:* Hazlemere Commercial Glass *furniture:* Gallotti & Radice *Carpets:* Wilton Carpets *Gym Equipment:* Technogym *Staff uniforms:* No Uniform London *Glassware:* LSA

www.jumeirah.com

