





HOTEL



Hard Rock Hotel

LONDON

Owner-operator GLH Hotels partners with Hard Rock International to transform a former musical haunt in London's West End.

Words: Ben Thomas | Photography: © Roberto Lara (unless otherwise stated)

When Isaac Tigrett and Peter Morton opened the first Hard Rock Café on London's Old Park Lane in 1971, the American duo could not have imagined that their rock-and-roll themed restaurant would grow into a globally-recognised brand with more than 180 cafés, 28 hotels and 11 casinos. Now, some 50 years on from its inception, Hard Rock International has returned to the British capital, partnering with owner-operator GLH Hotels to transform the former Cumberland Hotel – an Art Deco building beside London landmark Marble Arch.

With a prime position on the corner of Oxford Street and Park Lane, the iconic property was once the place to stay for music icons, from Jimi Hendrix, Nina Simone and Stevie Wonder to Bob Dylan, Diana Ross and Madonna. It seems fitting then that the music-focused brand should step in, bringing its signature style and unique displays of memorabilia – artfully curated by Giovanni Taliaferro – to the property's public spaces and 900 guestrooms.

Beyond the marquee lights of a new theatre-like entrance are Paul McCartney's left-handed guitar, The Who frontman Roger Daltrey's microphone and a feathered jacket worn by The Killers' Brandon



© Philip Durrant

Above: Beyond a new theatre-like entrance, Hard Rock London fuses music-inspired interiors with memorabilia displays artfully curated by Giovanni Tallaferro

Flowers during a Hard Rock Calling concert at nearby Hyde Park. A passport document belonging to the Sex Pistol's Sid Vicious and a letter from Buddy Holly – written to his parents on Cumberland Hotel stationery – are also framed alongside the personal items of Jimi Hendrix, while the piano from Freddie Mercury's childhood home takes centrestage as the *pièce de résistance*.

Such elements – selected from Hard Rock's vast archive – complement an interior scheme by architecture and design practice Scott Brownrigg, which spent two years devising the concept, using the history of the building and Hard Rock's musical heritage as key touchstones. The firm's Senior Interior Designer, Kate Jarrett, notes that a common goal was clear during early discussions with the client: "The design had to be unique and represent the Hard Rock brand in a new way for the London market," she begins. "We took cues from musical forms such as the record player master disc and the guitar fretboard to inform the interiors, contrasting traditional elements with unique contemporary installations like the memorabilia wall that runs throughout the lobby."

Layered in influences drawn from the worlds of music, fashion, architecture and art, the ground floor is home to two vibrant bars,

retail outlet the Rock Shop and a Hard Rock Café – the first of its kind to be integrated in a hotel. Decked in shades of teal and mustard, with flooring from Altro beneath soft leather banquettes and a statement circular bar, the 340-cover restaurant and cocktail bar serves American dishes with a modern British twist, while a stage for live performances hosts local and international talent every evening.

"The F&B offer was key to the project, as this is the first Hard Rock property to have an integrated café – something that has always been separate," Jarrett continues. "To honour the prestigious location, we also chose materials that offered a luxurious aesthetic and paired them with a traditional British colour palette. Within the café, rich colour schemes of gold and heritage green draw from fashion and music past and present, complementing the panelled interior and large ornate memorabilia framing."

Occupying a central spot on the ground floor, the GMT lobby bar is inspired by the original Art Deco-style ceiling of the Lyons Corner House, which stood on the site in the early 1900s. "The site used to be a social hub where city dwellers would gather for food, shopping and entertainment, so we aimed to re-create that experience too," adds Jarrett. This translates into a 42-seat bar – brought to



Above: The Rock Royalty lounge is decorated with mirrored feature walls and plush velvet seating Left: The lobby features a Rickenbacker 360 guitar used by Eric Clapton, Morrissey and U2's The Edge

life by a series of lighting displays once the sun sets – where hundreds of brass fins span the ceiling, enveloping custom-made pieces by RHA Furniture and bespoke broadloom carpets from Shaw Contract.

“The GMT bar embodies everything we tried to achieve with the ground floor space,” says Jarrett, who worked with surfaces brand Armourcoat and fit-out contractors Beck Interiors across the ground floor, the latter on the design and installation of the delicate fins above the bar. She adds: “The space connects the café, lobby and reception while delivering tailored experiences for varying guest needs.”

In contrast to the café, the Lounge Bar and Rock Royalty Lounge are defined by contemporary styling, and carefully planned to guarantee optimum acoustics during live music performances – an important element of the overall concept for Jarrett: “We wanted to open up the ground floor space to create a large area for musical performances, giving



Above: Guestrooms and suites are draped in shades of dark red and blue, while Pop-Art-style cushions are inscribed with a graphic of London

every guest a view of the stage. There also needed to be a coherent flow, so the Rock Shop for example acts as its own outlet while opening onto the lobby and café to draw guests in.”

Continuing the rock-and-roll theme, an installation by Nulty Bespoke behind the reception area features 135 hanging fibre optic cables that emanate light from their tips. Designed in the shape of drumsticks, the cables are hung individually at different lengths to create an abstract interpretation of a large sound wave.

Guestrooms and suites are divided into two types, Deluxe and Rock Royalty, the latter offering VIP check-in and access to a private lounge decorated with mirrored feature walls and plush velvet seating from Furniture Fusion – who designed walnut side tables and custom-made sofas for the Rock Royalty rooms, as well as the Paris bar stool, Helta Skelta and Ibiza lounge chairs, and coffee tables in the public areas. Lit by pieces from Astro Lighting, as well as desk lamps, bespoke bedside lighting and statement Ring pendants from Chelsom, rooms are draped in shades of dark red and blue, while guitars embossed on the bed linen and Pop-Art-style cushions

inscribed with a graphic of London are further reminders of the hotel’s history and location. There’s also custom-made casegoods from Curtis Furniture in the form of upholstered headboards, laminated bedside units, wardrobes, tables, credenzas and drawers, as well as original art inspired by the work of British photographer Terry O’Neill, while quirky details include mirrors marked out with the height of artists from Ariana Grande to Snoop Dogg. Once the music stops, beds from Hypnos ensure that guests can rest easy, while finishing touches include Hansgrohe fittings and quartz tops by Roca, the latter applied to the desks, bedside tables and mini-bars. Music-themed perks include Sound of Your Stay, an in-room listening experience with personalised playlists and vinyl, as well as the chance to reserve a Fender guitar for an afternoon jam.

Despite being best-known as the ‘usual address’ on the death certificate of Jimi Hendrix – who took a suite at the Cumberland Hotel two weeks before he died in 1970 – the building’s new persona will no doubt write its own history, becoming the usual address for music-lovers across the city.

EXPRESS CHECK-OUT: 900 guestrooms | 1 restaurant | 2 bars | Meeting and event spaces | www.hrhllondon.com
 Owner / Operator: GLH Hotels, Hard Rock International | Interior Design: Scott Brownrigg | Lighting Design: Nulty Bespoke
 Art Consultant: Giovanni Taliaferro | Main Contractor: Beck Interiors



HI Design Europe

5 - 7 JUNE 2019

As hotel development across Europe continues to gather pace, the region's decision-makers head to Sardinia for three days of sun, sand and scheduled meetings.

Words: Catherine Martin | Photography: © Richard Pereira

Taking place at Forte Village on the picturesque shores of Sardinia, the latest in the series of HI Design forums came as a timely reminder that, in spite of the political and commercial challenges facing the world today, the hotel industry is thriving.

With a packed programme of meetings, seminars and networking, the event attracted 300 delegates from across the continent and beyond, and once again proved an effective platform from which to do business. In total, 89 buyer companies were in attendance, with the line up featuring design directors from hotel groups such as Accor, Four Seasons, Hilton and GLH, along with leaders from interior design practices including Conran + Partners, Universal Design Studio, Wilson Associates and Richmond International. Meanwhile, the suppliers represented a wide range of product categories and services, with Hilding Anders, Skyfold, Bolon and Tuuci, as well as Warisan, Kvadrat, Kettal and Chelsom amongst the brands present.

Opening proceedings, seminar host Guy Dittrich outlined the content of the four sessions set to take place throughout the course of the event, before welcoming Alex Robinson of STR to the stage for a look at recent hotel performance and to address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. "Europe is really fortunate to be experiencing a boom, with 2018 marking the ninth consecutive year of RevPAR growth," he began. "We've had a fantastic period of growth year-in year-out, but what does this mean for the future?"

In presenting performance data for full-year 2018, Robinson revealed a story of referendums, recovery and Russia. "In terms of referendums, London has been resilient in the wake of Brexit with a RevPAR rise of 3%, thanks in part of the devaluation of the pound making inbound travel cheaper," he explained. "However Barcelona has suffered following the results of the Catalan independence referendum, with a RevPAR decline of 4%."

Elsewhere, RevPAR increases in Paris (12%), Brussels (13%) and Istanbul (74%) spoke of a strong recovery following terror attacks the previous year, while Russia has benefitted from hosting the 2018 World Cup, recording RevPAR gains of 45% in Moscow and 18% in St. Petersburg.

Moving on to year-to-date figures for 2019, the picture was less positive, with new supply beginning to impact performance. RevPAR declines were recorded in Copenhagen (-3%), Athens (-7%) and Tbilisi (-11%) following a significant number of new openings, while the UK cities of Edinburgh and Manchester also showed signs of a slowdown having experienced double-digit supply growth in 2018.

STR data for London over the past 18 months revealed rises and falls in both occupancy and ADR, with the highs thought to be down to large-scale concerts and a run of good weather. However it was the long-term picture that was most impressive, as Robinson pointed out: "If you look at occupancy before the global financial crisis, we're now actually 10% above that peak. This growth in occupancy has occurred despite new development, the advent of the sharing economy and unfortunate terrorist attacks... so I think we're in a good place."

As a result, there's no let-up in the appetite for owning and operating hotels in London, with supply set to grow by 4% in 2019, equating to a total of 5,810 new rooms across 52 hotels.

While performance across the UK and Europe is expected to slow in 2019, Robinson remained optimistic, concluding: "Overall, even with some of those headwinds and competitive trends, the opportunity for growth remains."

For the afternoon's keynote, architect and designer Nigel Coates took to the stage to talk about his pioneering work, spanning the fields of hospitality, residential, retail and office. Having trained at London's



Architectural Association, Coates first captured the attention of the design world for his exuberant drawing style and inventive narratives, which have been translated into buildings and interiors across Europe and Asia. He went on to head up the Department of Architecture at Royal College of Art and is a founding member of the London School of Architecture, all the while continuing to create spaces and objects, from retail stores for Katharine Hamnett and Jigsaw, to lighting for Slamp and furniture collections for Gebrüder Thonet Vienna.

Addressing the audience, Coates revealed that his mission is to bring equal parts of art and intelligence to architecture and design, as demonstrated in projects such as Hotel Feral, a pop-up suite at The Sleep Event 2014 in which guests were encouraged to discover their own way of living through thoughtful, intuitive and authentic solutions. Coates also discussed the first Hoxton hotel, opened in Shoreditch in 2007, where his concept hinges on fast access and convenience for people on the move, before offering a preview of a forthcoming hotel project in Kyoto.

“What makes a hotel successful?” he questioned, looking to moments of ‘everyday magic’ for inspiration. “For me, it’s generosity; as a guest you need to feel that you’re being given more than you actually need,” he continued, pointing to hotels with spacious living quarters, luxurious sofas and deep bathtubs as examples of generous design. “My message today is for you to think about people’s experiences,” he concluded. “As a designer, you are the person who has to channel those experiences.”

Following an evening of networking amongst the pine groves, day two kicked off with some meditation and breathing exercises, setting the scene for a look at mindful design. Taking extracts from his forthcoming book, author Aidan Walker looked at various definitions of mindfulness, including the belief that mindfulness is a way of life rather than a brief intervention for relieving symptoms. He went on to speak about the principles and practices behind creating mindful spaces, stating: “There are two sides of mindful design: design for mindfulness – the creation of spaces, experiences and products that encourage, enhance or invoke an atmosphere of calm and inner awareness; and design from mindfulness, in which the practice becomes a tool for designers themselves.”

Applying the principles to the hospitality industry, Walker referenced a number of hotels devoted to the practice – including Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai, The LifeCo in Bodrum and The Boulders Resort & Spa in Scottsdale – but added that mindfulness is

more than just physical wellbeing. “Mindfulness is a both a method – a way of working with your mind – and a state of being,” he explained. “With mindfulness you’re more creative, more insightful and more compassionate; you have more authentic experiences.”

In closing, Walker shared his seven principles of mindful design – curiosity, compassion, creativity and craftsmanship, as well as communication, collaboration and critical intelligence – and showcased the work of those at forefront of the movement, including Clodagh, Oliver Heath and Ilse Crawford.

Rounding out the seminar programme, interior designer Charles Leon delved into the human brain and asked ‘what’s the point of design?’ “Design give us reason, purpose, identity and meaning; for better or worse, designing is fundamental to our existence,” he explained. “If you know that if you plant seeds in spring you will have crops in the late summer, then you can plan for that, every year. If you can plan for a better future, then you can improve your situation. Design is simply a plan for a future outcome.”

Leon went on to talk about storytelling and its influence on the sector, stating: “Stories are how we learn, pass on information, transform and change, emotionally, culturally and behaviourally. Design satisfies our insatiable need and desire for novelty and change; it takes control of our environment and tells a new story.”

He also outlined a belief that innovation and creative thinking is part of everyone’s biological make-up and crucial in all walks of life. “We have an unquenchable desire for purpose and meaning in our lives,” he concluded. “We set ourselves goals and aims because we are naturally restless and optimistically believe that we can improve our situation and our wellbeing, and thereby give it meaning. So, the answer to my question, why design? is very simple. We do it because that’s how we’re made. Design is creating a different future by planning a change with ideas.”

The session closed with a lively Q&A, leaving delegates with plenty of food for thought into the final meetings. In total, operators, designers and suppliers participated in an impressive 1,700 meetings across the three days, a strong indicator that growth and innovation across Europe’s hotel sector is set to continue.

The next HI Design Europe will take place at Riu Plaza España in Madrid, from 10-12 June 2020, while the inaugural HI Design Americas lands in Florida on 9-11 September 2019.

www.hidesigneurope.com



Sleep & Eat

NEW FOR 2019

Returning to London Olympia with a new theme, Europe's eagerly anticipated hotel design event refines its offer for 2019.

Sleep & Eat, Europe's leading hotel design event, has announced a theme of Social FlexAbility for its 2019 edition, as well as the architecture and design firms set to interpret this concept across a series of special features.

Comprising an exhibition of over 160 established and rising suppliers, a conference offering keynotes from prominent hospitality figures alongside panel discussions between those shaping the sector, immersive room sets and a variety of networking platforms, the show will take place from 19-20 November at London Olympia.

In reference to the theme informing this year's curation process, Mark Gordon, Brand Director of Sleep & Eat, explains: "With the rise of electronic and social media, people are starting to disconnect from each other both by accident and choice. In the future, designers will be in the vanguard of combating this social interactional shift by providing hospitality guests the opportunity to reconnect with others in-person and, indeed, to re-connect with themselves. The challenge for hospitality designers will be to provide flexible spaces where users can activate the social experience of their choice. This year, we will be asking our design collaborators to share their vision on how this might become reality in a hospitality setting."

These ideas will feed into all areas of the event, most prominently across the ever-popular Sleep & Eat Sets, which will see six international firms create a series of conceptual playgrounds demonstrating how design might achieve diverse social functionality while maintaining a modern, comfortable and luxury aesthetic. Set to participate this year are Twenty2Degrees, Miaja Design Group, Hat Design and Barreca Tibblin, who will each realise a guestroom, whilst Name Architecture and SpaceInvader will create a concept restaurant and bar respectively.

Nathalie Rozencwajg of Name Architecture comments: "We are looking forward to contributing to the leading event in the hospitality sector and sharing our vision for the future of the industry. Sleep &

Eat is a driving force that bridges today's solutions with visions for tomorrow and designing a set is a unique opportunity to contribute to the debate and explore the power of design to personalise a social experience through a spatial one."

The theme will also form the inspiration for this year's Sleeper Bar, a pop-up networking spot created afresh each edition, with London and New York-based Michaelis Boyd overseeing its design for 2019. Elsewhere, new for this year in recognition of the continuing convergence between hotels, restaurants and bars, the event's previously separate conference streams are being merged into one comprehensive Sleep & Eat Conference, curated by Supper Consulting Editor Heleri Rande.

"Bringing the Sleep and Eat theatres together will capitalise on the synergies between them," Rande explains. "They should be complementary and together assist in generating greater revenue. The entire hospitality scene is on the move and we have an exciting opportunity to bring this to life on stage."

The event has also revealed some of the 160 brands set to showcase new launches and products on the exhibition floor, including fabric specialist Arley House; Italian porcelain and stoneware brand Ceramiche Caesar; ILIV Contract Textiles; and UK-based shower manufacturer Aqualisa.

Sleep & Eat veterans including popular brands such as Vitra, Chelsom, Bang & Olufsen, Dornbracht, Style Library Contract, Morgan Furniture, Hansgrohe and Camira Fabrics are also confirmed to exhibit, as are Hong Kong's Absolute Lifestyle, Italy's Zonca International and Grespania from Spain. A full list of exhibitors will be available soon.

Sleep + Eat will take place from 19-20 November at London Olympia's National Hall.

www.sleepandeatevent.com



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