

2010: Volume 3 Issue 4

# hospitality

architecture + design

redefining retreats  
futurist tendencies  
ultimate ablutions

USD 10  
HKD 78  
SGD 15  
AED 38  
RMB 75  
EUR 9



- Urban** ▪ Vivanta Bangalore ▶ Quincy Singapore ▶ Hilton South Wharf Melbourne  
Thomson Toronto ▶ Mövenpick Saigon ▶ Rayne Hong Kong ▶ Fairmont Nile City
- Resort** ▪ Saffire Freycinet Tasmania ▶ W Retreat Koh Samui ▶ Alila Luang Prabang Bali
- Essay** ▪ The Future Hotel ▶ Sustainability **Products** ▪ Bathroom Design

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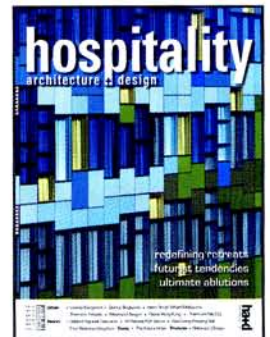
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Front cover image:  
The Vivanta by Taj Bangalore  
Photograph courtesy:  
Taj Hotels, Palaces and Resorts





# utilitarianism

By Stephen L. Galbreath

*From Makkah to Macau: The quest for sustainable design.*

Steve Galbreath is a vice president in the Dallas office of RTKL and is a leader within the firm's hospitality practice. With RTKL since 1993, Steve's diverse project experience includes hospitality and gaming components for large-scale, mixed-use developments and resorts throughout the Middle East, Caribbean, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States.

Steve has worked nationally and internationally with hospitality clients such as Hilton, Shangri-La Hotels, Hyatt, Marriott, numerous Starwood brands, and the Las Vegas Sands Corp.

A frequent speaker at industry conferences such as ISHC, HD Expo, CHIC, Hotel Developer's Conference and BITAC, Steve currently serves on the Board of Directors of the ISHC (International Society of Hospitality Consultants), a prestigious, invitation only group of hospitality experts.

IT'S NO SECRET that the last few years have presented some formidable challenges for the hospitality design industry as new development has shifted from the United States to other markets including Asia, the Middle East and South America. As a result, design firms practicing in hospitality have followed suit and now focus a great deal of time servicing clients and delivering projects in these regions.

Prior to this global market shift, green hotel development dominated industry discussion. Now that work has moved overseas to markets where sustainability is less mainstream, some in our industry might assume that we should shelve our green ambitions for another day. To the contrary: sustainable hotel design is gaining ground in some of the most unexpected locations around the world.

Whether for economic reasons, or to establish market differentiation, an active movement toward smart site planning and sustainable building is creating opportunities for designers to experiment with fresh ideas in these new markets. While sustainability might not be the first thing that comes to mind when we think of large developments in hot, harsh and humid climates, there are solutions that can be implemented within these conditions. In reality, we might not be able to do everything sustainably, but we can introduce incremental measures.

One of the most significant areas to make an impact, regardless of the size or location of the property, is water consumption. In hotel properties, the bathroom is a key benchmark of quality. A robust shower, luxurious towels, and a soaking tub are basic requirements at a certain tier. Water usage is clearly associated with these amenities: it is also one of the easiest areas to manage while maintaining the expected quality experience. So while a guest will almost certainly notice the amount of water pressure in the shower, they will most likely not notice how much water a toilet uses or the flow rate of the sink faucet.

*This page:*

Steve Galbreath.

*Opposite page, clockwise from top left:*

Cotai Central project [rendering];

Makkah hotel mall interior [rendering];

Makkah mall detail [rendering].





RTKL is currently working on a project in Makkah, Saudi Arabia that illustrates this issue. Makkah has been a hotbed of hotel development over the past few years, and we are involved in the design of a 120,000 square metre project comprised of 16,000 hotel rooms spread across 32 towers. While much of the construction is conventional, the services on such massive projects are important. Just the act of changing to low-flow showers, lavatories and toilets across 16,000 rooms has the potential to reduce the amount of daily water use by an astonishing amount.

Changes in lighting, as well as control and monitoring systems can also produce significant sustainable outcomes. Energy used to condition or light unoccupied guest rooms adds up. Something as basic as installing key card slots to activate guestroom power has been shown to significantly reduce electrical consumption. More elaborate monitoring systems can be employed as well, enabling the front desk to oversee everything from the lights and HVAC to room systems depending on whether the guest is present.

Another RTKL project, on the Cotai Strip in Macau, employs some of this technology. Totalling more than 1.3 million square metres of casinos, retail and convention space, the Cotai Central, the epicenter of the Cotai Strip, is arguably one of the largest commercial developments in the world. The project includes a 500-key Shangri-La hotel, a 1,200-key Traders hotel, a 600-key St. Regis hotel, and a 4,000-key Sheraton hotel. By installing lighting and control technology the team is able to reduce the air conditioning load in every one of the nearly 7,000 rooms – and cut overall energy usage of the property.

Beyond these elements, designers also deal with a vast array of materials that make up the majority of the overall green equation including fabrics and floor and wall coverings. Choosing locally sourced products wherever possible is one more simple way to simultaneously reduce

the resources required for transportation and shipping, reference local design elements, and support the local economy.

Given its large footprint on the environment, hospitality design will continue to present some of the biggest challenges to achieving greater green design. However, as architects and designers we have the opportunity to influence sustainable solutions through a wide-range of decisions – from materials and systems, to colours and carpeting – each representing a touch point for green design. Through collaboration amongst architects, designers, developers, operators and manufacturers, the industry can make great strides in sustainability.

Using this knowledge to inform those we do business with allows us to push the limits of what's possible across all regions. ♻️