

COMMERCIAL

Interior design

The essential guide for Middle East interior design professionals

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THE ART OF ERGONOMICS

Taking the pain out of long hours in the office

FAUCETS AND ACCESSORIES

Often left until last, faucets and accessories inject much-needed character into a bathroom setting

MAKING THE SWITCH

We take a closer look at Karim Rashid's new restaurant project in Dubai Mall





Built for business

Radisson Suites Gurgaon was created to cater to the city's burgeoning business community – and because of its multi-faceted nature, was a first for both Radisson and Singapore-headquartered design firm DBTA



Initially planned as an extension of the nearby Park Plaza hotel, Radisson Suites Gurgaon eventually evolved into a stand-alone, multi-faceted, one-stop business solution – and the first-ever Radisson-branded serviced residence, private office and convention centre combo.

“The brief was to make Radisson Suites a stand-alone entity, since it was originally only planned as an extension of the nearby Park Plaza Hotel. We also had to design it in such a way that business and pleasure could mix.

“We were able to go beyond just mixing serviced suites and office space; it was designed as a complete one-stop business solution, even for Fortune 500 companies,” explained David Tokiwa, managing director of DBTA, the Singapore-headquartered design firm responsible for the project.

GOOD TIMES

As one of India’s fastest growing satellite cities, Gurgaon has seen its popularity with multi-national companies surge in recent years. The city’s standing has been further boosted with the opening of the Gurgaon-Delhi Expressway, a 28km-long artery connecting Gurgaon to India’s national capital. This has reduced travel time to and from the airport to around 15 minutes – down from two hours.

However, in spite of its growing popularity, improved access and enhanced infrastructure, Gurgaon still lacked dedicated business facilities.

“When we learned that one of the challenges many businessmen face in Gurgaon is the lack of purpose-built business space, we immediately conceived of a mixed-use facility. We wanted to address their concerns for

business space while at the same time adhering to the core identity of the Radisson brand, which is luxury and comfort,” commented Rajneesh Malhotra, operations director of Radisson Suites Gurgaon.

DBTA was essentially tasked with combining the extreme functionality demanded of a business-centric development with the luxury expected of an international, five-star hotel brand.

“DBTA was set with the challenge of coming up with a stand-alone entity for Radisson Suites Gurgaon where functionality met with the distinct Radisson brand of vibrant, contemporary and engaging hospitality,” said Malhotra.

The multi-faceted space is made up of six floors, each serving a distinct purpose. The ground floor is home to eight types of convention centre, capable of accommodating a total of 500 people,

- 1. The new property was designed as a one-stop business solution.
- 2. There are six types of serviced suites.
- 3,4&5. Extensive conference and meeting facilities lie at the heart of the project.



as well as a café bar and restrooms. A gym, bakery, meeting rooms and serviced offices specifically designed for fast and easy business setup can be found in the basement.

On the first floor, there is a 320m² restaurant offering international cuisine, while the second, third and fourth floors feature private offices.

The serviced suites are located on the fifth and sixth floors. They have been designed for business travellers on either short or extended trips. "The serviced suites are the epitome of world-class flexibility, as six types of rooms are available, designed to suit each guest's desires," said Tokiwa.

CLEAN LINES

The basic design language was simple, clean and contemporary – colours, accents, textures and lighting were all selected with this in mind, Tokiwa noted.

The palette favoured browns, creams and whites, while stainless steel, nickel and chrome were used to reiterate a smooth, modern look. Lighting was also highly contemporary in style.

"The fact that this is the first time a Radisson is not a hotel, we had to carefully design it in such a way that the

Radisson brand of contemporary, vibrant and engaging hospitality would be shown as a different entity, this time a mixed-use commercial facility," he said.

However, there was also the desire to weave authentic Indian influences into the design and, in a space that focused so heavily on functionality and modernity, this presented a real challenge.

Furniture, for one, was designed to promote local flavours. In addition, DBTA opted to incorporate stone, a striking feature of traditional Indian architecture, into the design.

"The use of stone and marble is very prominent. This is one aspect of Indian tradition; a good example would be the Taj Mahal. We used stone in order to maintain Indian culture, but in order to balance it and avoid the look of 'heaviness', we complemented it with timber veneer," said Tokiwa.

"Putting functionality within a contemporary design and still maintaining Indian traditions and cultural elements was a challenge. It is a big advantage that DBTA offers such an understanding of the Indian market," said Tokiwa.

The company will celebrate its 15th anniversary this year and has firmly positioned itself as a trendsetter, added

Emily Concepcion, marketing manager of DBTA. "Other than 15 successful years in the industry, I believe we have the passion for creating wonderful designs and for being a trendsetter. We have a sound understanding not only of the Indian market but of the international market as well."

In the Middle East, the company has designed Dubai's two Wagamama restaurants, in Al Fattan Tower and in the Greens, Bistro Madeline at InterContinental Festival City, and Sumibiya at Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Deira Creek.

The company has also worked on projects ranging from Frankie's Italian Bar and Grill in Dubai, which recently won a 'restaurant of the year' award, to Season Hill Residence, the first venture by real estate giant, Capitaland, in Kazakhstan. Radisson Suites Gurgaon represented another first for the company, because of its unique make-up.

"This project reinforces DBTA's flexibility and creativeness in designing spaces. We don't believe in following trends," Concepcion said.

"Our brand promise is 'delivering unique design concepts while combining habitable works of art within cultural diversity'. It's art made real." ☐