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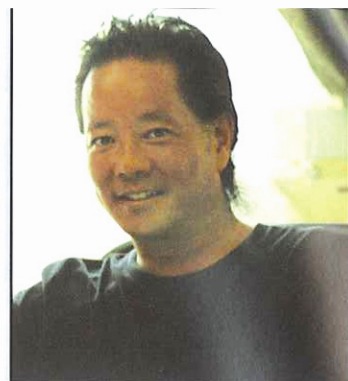
designing for luxury; 'no-frills' hotels; technology and trends; restaurant design; new age bathrooms; lighting trends; furniture and fabrics; colour palettes; wall finishes.

Hotel Design: India and Overseas

David Brian Tokiwa

There have been many designs that lived throughout the ages. From the Roman Times to the Renaissance to today's modern and contemporary. The history of interior design is replete with rich history and constant innovation – a hallmark of true modern living. However, no matter what time period, the pursuit of aesthetics and function remains constant, whether internationally or locally.

That pursuit has led to recent technological developments in hotel design, one of which is the extensive use of 3D model. Not available only



David Brian Tokiwa did Bachelor of Applied Arts Interior Design from Ryerson Polytechnic Institute, Toronto. His job scope, for twenty years now, includes conceptualization, contracts administration and artwork & accessories. Heading DBTA Holding Pte. Ltd. (formerly David B. Tokiwa & Associates Pte Ltd.) in Singapore and subsidiary companies, DBTA International Pte Ltd and DBTA International Ltd (BVI) Mr. Tokiwa aims to provide clients with innovative design concepts and consultancy services in the hospitality and leisure industry, including hotels, restaurants, spas, office buildings and retail complexes.

a few years ago, this technology has now been thrust into the limelight with major design firms using it as an important tool to breathe life into their concepts.

Another key aspect in hotel design is security. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks that happened in the United States a few years ago, as well as the recent incident in the Taj Mahal Hotel, many interior design firms have incorporated sophisticated security plans as part of the overall hotel design.

In terms of room design, the trend overseas point towards elegance and a touch of opulence. Bright colors are in and metallic inflections in light fixtures and bath accessories are common. 'Antique-looking' finish is also quite popular. In contrast, room design in India follows its own unique characteristics.

Generally categorized into three types – business, local and international – most Indian hotel rooms reflect certain customs and traditions in its accessories and fixtures. Bold patterns, printed wallpapers, sandblasted stones and increased use of carpet tiles are but just a few examples. Of course, all these must be done in an eco-friendly way. Using recycled products is one technique most designers use. Not only does it help the environment, it is also good for the bottom-line.

DBTA helped Frankie's Italian Bar & Grill in Al-Fattan win the Outstanding Italian Restaurant of the Year award.



Some key differences can also be noticed in construction norms. In India, labor cost is generally low so building contractors rely heavily on manpower instead of technology. While good in some aspects, this also prevents India from advancing at a level at par with those of its overseas counterparts. In fact, this lack of infrastructure and technological advancement are the most often cited pain points of international designers working in India.

On the positive side, India is an emerging market. That means, almost everybody wants to get a piece of the action. Goodrich Global, a Singapore-headquartered supplier of interior wall coverings, fabrics and other related products has established a strong presence in India. Local companies are doing quite as well. Atmosphere, a supplier of luxury furnishing textiles, partners with major design firms who want to penetrate the lucrative Indian market.

Combining all these factors of technology, products, norms and competitive landscape, it becomes imperative for an interior design firm to strike a balance among the different intersecting interests in a given project. Experience certainly plays a key role in achieving this delicate balance.

In the Middle East, DBTA worked with the likes of Crowne Plaza Dubai to design its lobby using modern concept that adheres to the signature international style of Crowne Plaza. In another project, at Abu Dhabi, DBTA-designed Frankie's in Fairmont Hotel was graced by no less than the Duke of York, Prince Andrew. The difference that we can cite is the technologies that they use in building their infrastructure and the openness for modernizing within Middle-East context. Embracing these two aspects made the region renowned worldwide in building modernization of Middle East.

In India, DBTA worked with Bestech Hospitalities Pvt. Ltd. to design Radisson Hotel Indore, a top to bottom project that married the distinct Radisson brand with a touch of Indian culture and tradition. The project that took one and a half year to accomplish brought immense attention from guests and media for its successful design implementation.

This 'winning formula' was what DBTA used for its similar projects, Radisson Suites Gurgaon, Radisson Hotel Haridwar, Radisson Hotel Nagpur, Country Inn & Suites Meerut to name a few.

Indeed, hotel design in India and overseas has come a long way. Armed with better technology, better design and better practices, the way forward is as exciting as it is rich.