

# FRAME



Issue 91

The Great Indoors

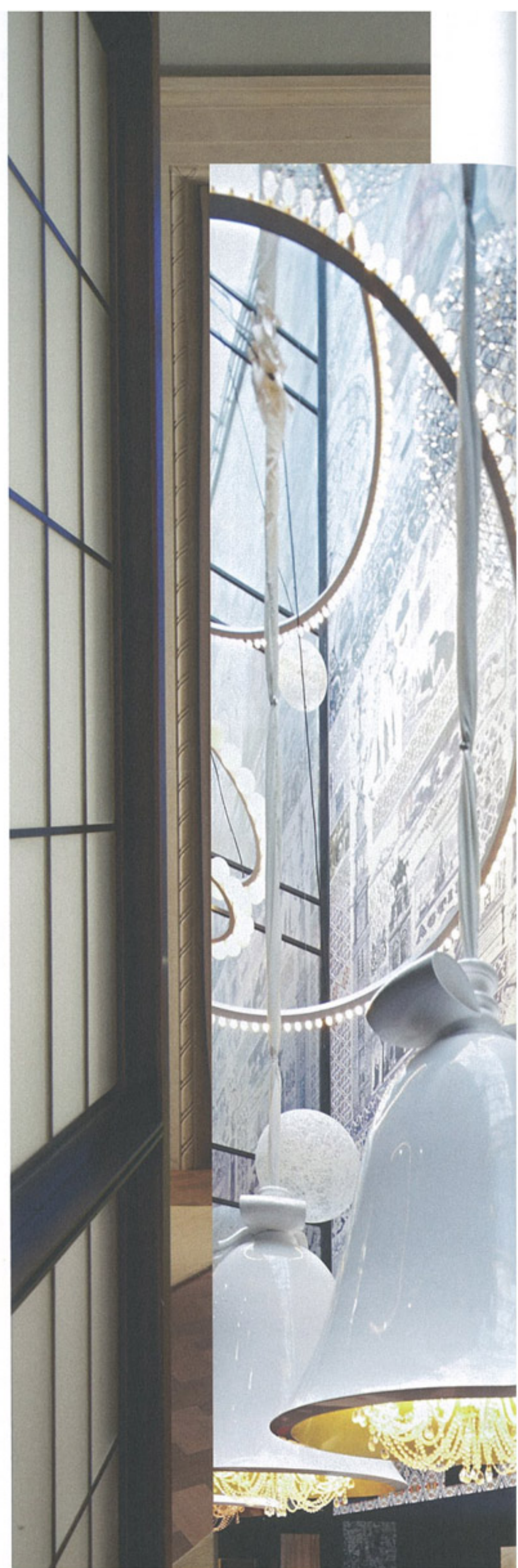
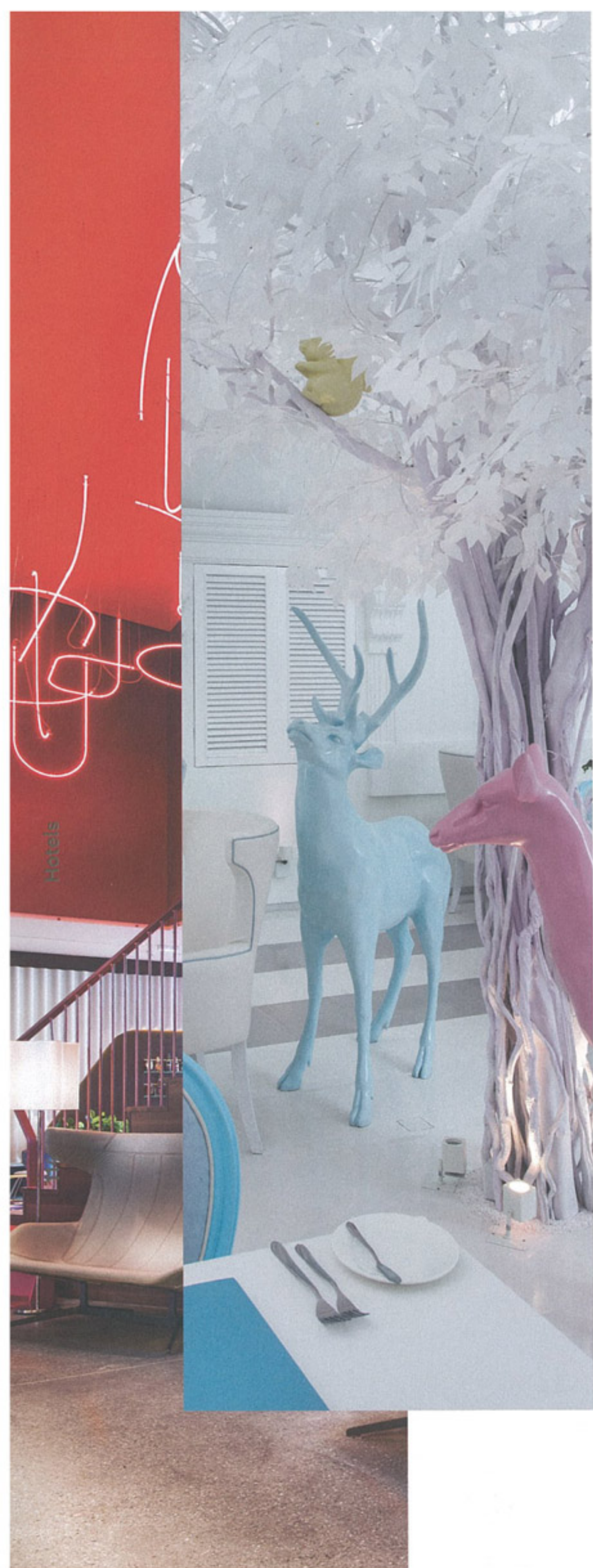
Mar / Apr 2013

## Live Large

BIG IDEAS FOR HOMES, HOTELS AND SHOPS  
FROM THE BOUROULLECS, DAVID CHIPPERFIELD, JULIE D'AUBIOUL  
T H O M A S D E M A N D  
FRONT, NOEMIE GOUDAL, ALFREDO HÄBERLI, MOBY, OMA  
MARCEL WANDERS, SUZUKO YAMADA AND  
L O S A N G E L E S

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# Rooms with

**A good hotel successfully bundles a handful of contradictions into a coherent package. It should be grand but welcoming, efficient but unobtrusive, anonymous but intimate, accessible but secure. Within the envelope of a single building, a hotel performs many of the tasks found within the city itself, providing areas where guests can socialize, work, shop, eat, drink and, of course, sleep. There are numerous ways of getting it right, as these four case studies suggest.**

## New Views

Words Grant Gibson

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### The *Frame Panel*



Rodney Fitch founded design consultancy Fitch in 1972. He has been acclaimed for his work in retail design, a subject he currently teaches.



Peter Frankopan heads Curious Hotels together with his wife, Jessica. He is also a Croatian prince.



Claus Sendlinger is CEO and president of Design Hotels, which represents a network of over 170 independently owned hotels in 40 countries around the world.



Set in the city's iconic ring of canals, Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht was designed by local boy Marcel Wanders. The former public library contains 117 guest rooms and five suites – and has a total of 15 room types on offer. Other features include a restaurant and bar, a spa and a 24-hour gym.

# Andaz in Amsterdam

Wanders' design was inspired by the history of the building and the culture of Amsterdam. He tells us, for instance, that a series of small doors in the lobby refers to the doors of canalside houses. Nearby plasterwork echoes examples borrowed from the city's 17th-century homes. 'It welcomes you into a world where things are going to be recognizable but a little bit strange, a bit surreal,' says Wanders. Opposite the lifts is a 'wall of information' with images taken from 1000 books sourced from the city's library. Interestingly, the space isn't dominated by a large reception desk. Instead, using tablets, guests can check in anywhere they wish. 'The check-in follows you rather

than you following it,' he explains, although three tables positioned under bell-shaped chandeliers can act as a central check-in area for the more conventional customer.

Other aspects of the design relate more generally to the city. Each guest room has a traditional Dutch hand-painted number on its door, and wallpaper motifs such as a fish head blending into the ornate handle of a spoon are intended, says Wanders, to 'connect the unconnectable' – a reference to the open-minded, multicultural nature of Amsterdam.

We also find examples of the designer's interest in making mass-produced objects 'less sterile, more unique, more personal, and more humane'. In the bathrooms, each basin has a unique Delft Blue pattern painted by Wanders himself. 'What I like to do,' he says, 'is to make a space that feels authentic, even though it's new.' This interior may have been 'made for the place . . . but it feels like it could have been there a long time'. \_

[marcelwanders.com](http://marcelwanders.com)

## by Marcel Wanders

The lavishly carved woodwork was produced in Austria. In the background, a show kitchen animates the hotel restaurant.

Andaz

Hotels







## Does it work?

**Rodney Fitch:** Do you know the Library hotel on Madison in NY? There, taking its cue from the NY Library across the road, books are everywhere, and every room is its own small library. Design at the Andaz – which I understand is housed in the old Amsterdam library building – appears to pay only lip service to this rich architectural and literary heritage. The interior is okay. The restaurant looks interesting, complete with show kitchen. Rooms are on the small size – rather obvious Dutch references: fish, Delft Blue and a few books, of course. But little is striking enough to set this hotel apart from any number of other competitors and the lost books are a lost opportunity.

**Peter Frankopan:** We love Marcel Wanders and love having some of his work at our hotel, the Canal House in Amsterdam. The big hanging lights look great – such a good way to break up a space. I'm not so sure about the white bedrooms, which I expect will not be too popular with the housekeepers. There are some very nice touches, though, and I especially like the carved medallions in the restaurant. It will be interesting to see how the clientele react to the design and the feel of the space, as it is primarily a corporate hotel. But terrific for Amsterdam that there is another design-led hotel in the city.

**Claus Sendlinger:** Being in his hometown, Wanders went all out with the Andaz. I really like the unique details, the references to the sea and the old merchants of the area, the bell-shaped chandeliers. He really is the 'Lady Gaga of Design'.

References to the sea are found throughout the hotel, alluding to Amsterdam's maritime past.

Monumental hanging lamps make the most of the lofty space.





A playfully graphic lighting installation adds interest to the hotel bar.



25hours Hotel

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Photos Ben Rahn / A-Frame

Located in a former industrial area of Zürich, the 25hours Hotel boasts interiors designed by Alfredo Häberli. The envelope of the building might be broadly modernist, but inside it's bursting with colour and playful graphic devices based on drawings in Häberli's sketchbook. The designer describes it as 'a three-dimensional city guide to Zürich'.

# 25hours Hotel in Zürich

The hotel has 126 guest rooms in three categories: Silver, Gold and Platinum (a sly reference to the city's famous banking sector). Silver and Gold are further divided into double rooms or those with bunk beds; guests sit on Vitra chairs, sleep in Alias beds and put their toothbrushes into litala cups. Silver rooms feature carpeting with abstract motifs, such as a fish and a city fox, that continue on the walls. Gold rooms are larger and have a subtler colour scheme. Highlighting the hotel's eight Platinum rooms are

hardwood floors and balconies. Intriguingly, all beds rest on noticeably long legs. Häberli believes that 'beds you can't see under make a room feel really closed off'.

References to Zürich appear in the lobby. A mirror installation in the central bar, for instance, pays tribute to the city's abundance of water, and models of its famous churches adorn the sideboards. The lighting scheme echoes the hotel's logo. The first-floor conference area holds up to 20 people, but a more unusual facility is the space designed for cookery classes, with, at its centre, a kitchen block equipped with Bulthaup and Miele appliances. From the sauna at the top of the building, guests have impressive views over the city.

Häberli has furnished the hotel with more than 60 exclusive products, from FSB door handles to the elegant Jill chair manufactured by Vitra. Perhaps the most remarkable, though, is Blok, a small wooden toy found in each room and in the lounge area, giving these urban lodgings a homely touch. \_

[alfredo-haerberli.com](http://alfredo-haerberli.com)

## by Alfredo Häberli

Like other Häberli creations, 25hours is bursting with colour and pattern.







Häberli's graphic language adorns the walls and even the carpets (below).



25hours Hotel

Hotels

Blok, a small wooden toy found in every room, gives the bedrooms a homely touch.

## Does it work?

**Rodney Fitch:** I'm told that Swiss people regard Zürich West as that city's creative centre, equivalent to Hoxton/Spitalfields in London or the Village in NY. Thus, 25hours tries hard to be trendy and cool. In my view it fails, because it lacks spontaneous coherence – a must for any would-be hip environment. Plenty of interesting design moments, but overall everything seems rather contrived – even the 'subtle' witticisms are often in your face to the point of becoming banal. It's a cuckoo clock trying to be digital, but underneath it remains a cuckoo clock.

**Peter Frankopan:** I had to pinch myself – is this really in the heart of the financial centre of Switzerland? The hotel is a riot of colour and of bold statements. Alfredo Häberli has done brilliantly to convey both a sense of celebration and of humour – again, rather un-Swiss characteristics. It is a rather large hotel, and I wonder what the guests will be like and why they will choose this particular accommodation: the location, the room rates or the design? I'd love to stay at 25hours when I am next in the city – to see how it works.

**Claus Sendlinger:** Alfredo Häberli's colour concept is brave, and his artistic concept surprises guests with ambiguous humour. If they look closely, they will notice that he subtly questions human values in a way that raises a smile. If they turn their heads, change their perspectives, peek behind curtains and pay attention to their surroundings, they will be surprised.



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A muted and neutral palette complements the natural stone.

Café Royal



Hotels

## Does it work?

**Rodney Fitch:** I'm ancient enough to have spent many a happy hour in the old and decrepit Café Royal. I ate there, danced there, and watched boxing there amongst the faded Edwardian splendours and Oscar W shadows. The claim is that this refurbishment 'echoes the glories of the Café Royal's past'. It does nothing of the sort. That it is a smart and probably comfortable addition to the London hotel estate, I don't doubt. But this interior has nothing of the exuberance, *joie de vivre* or character of its predecessor, and I doubt very much that its guests will get any unique London West End vibes from staying there.

**Peter Frankopan:** This has been much talked about and long awaited. The hotel is in a great location, right in the centre of London, and in a building full of character. It is aimed mostly at business travellers, and the colours are muted and safe. The stonework looks quite heavy and makes the hotel seem very grown-up and serious. Travelling can also be about having fun! I think it will appeal to the target customer, and – certainly with David Chipperfield involved – the finishes will be immaculate.

**Claus Sendlinger:** What a catch! The master of minimalism meets the former lavish palace of decadence. Despite the hotel's simple design, Chipperfield managed to create a warm, spacious atmosphere using natural colours. The walls echo the building's stone façade, and the materials he used give the space a hint of elegance. Can't wait to see it.

Carrara marble is one of Chipperfield's preferred materials for the hotel. Pictured here is the sauna.



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Sometimes it's the site that intrigues. The prospect of David Chipperfield working on the new Café Royal in London's Regent Street is genuinely lip-smacking. Chipperfield is, after all, an architect known for his sensitive, quietly austere buildings, such as The Hepworth Wakefield, while Regent Street's designer, John Nash –

# Café Royal in London

historically, one of the capital's more important architects: the man responsible for formulating plans for Trafalgar Square and reconstructing Buckingham Palace – had a taste for the theatrical.

The result is a fascinating blend of styles, old and new. Chipperfield's challenge lay in three existing buildings owned by the Crown Estate: County Mark House, the former Oddenino Hotel and the old Café Royal itself. Arranged over ten floors (two of which are underground) are the refurbished hotel's 159 guest rooms. Although the hotel still has an entrance off Regent Street, Chipperfield has created a new way into the complex, with a vehicle drop-off on the adjacent Air Street. This leads straight

into the Ten Room, an Art-Deco space that had been inaccessible to the public for many years (and which proffers the first glimpse of one of the architect's preferred materials for this project, Carrara marble). Tucked around the corner is the reception area, housed in a timber-lined space designed to lend privacy to guests checking in. The centrepiece of the ground floor, though, is the wildly ornate Grill Room, meticulously restored by Donald Insall Associates, a firm that specializes in historic buildings. Originally opened in 1865, the Grill Room now serves as a champagne and caviar lounge.

The first floor accommodates members facilities, including a lounge, a dining room, a private screening or meeting room, and a business centre. The Pompadour Suite, an extraordinary private banquet and event space, is on the floor above. On my visit (after the soft opening of the not-yet-completed hotel), the presentation suite, which I found by traversing timber-lined corridors, was large and luxurious yet unfussy – and most notable for its huge bath carved out of Carrara marble. \_

[davidchipperfield.co.uk](http://davidchipperfield.co.uk)

## by David Chipperfield

Café Royal



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The end result is a fascinating blend of styles, old and new.





The beautifully restored hotel building recalls an era of colonial grandeur.

Words Tracey Ingram  
Photos Edward Hendricks, courtesy of MOD

'When we first visited the site, the client wasn't even looking to start a hotel,' says Colin Seah of Ministry of Design. Together, they were scouting for new accommodation for Bagan Bar, a well-known Penang nightspot and one of several food and beverage outlets owned by the businessman.

# Macalister Mansion in Penang

The Singapore-based designers wound up creating not just one but *five* separate F&B venues for Macalister Mansion, a hotel-cum-lifestyle complex in the Malaysian city. The building was simply too large for only one bar and a tad too small for a typical hotel. This led to the idea of developing a more domestic experience. Spending the night here is supposed to be like dropping in on an old (and rather wealthy) friend. You can eat in his dining room, relax in his living room and grab a drink at his bar. To weave some historical context into the project, the designers

envisioned Norman Macalister – the first governor of Penang under British rule – as the 'old friend'.

Many older hotels in Penang are within the city's UNESCO World Heritage zone, which is about 3 km from Macalister Mansion. Hotels in that area tend to become time warps, but Seah's client insisted that the team refrain from replication and build on history in a contemporary way.

The building is a collage of architectural styles and features. The reception is the heart of the complex; from here you can access almost every part of the hotel. The formal dining room was once a void between the main building and an outbuilding. By glazing the entry and covering this space with a canopy, MOD made the original exterior walls part of the interior. The eight rooms of the hotel are all slightly different and have their own virtues: one has a balcony, another reinterprets the four-poster bed, and so on. At night people can enjoy whisky and cigars in the Den or have a drink at Bagan Bar. According to Seah, though, 'You have to be in the right mood to drink in a bar that's so visually arresting.'

[modonline.com](http://modonline.com)

## by Ministry of Design



Every room in the hotel differs radically from all the others. A draped canopy sets the dining room apart.



Manchester Mansion

Hotels

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Bedrooms adopt a slightly more restful style than the public areas.

Macalister Mansion

## Does it work?

**Rodney Fitch:** This is a hotel you'll remember not only for its striking design, but also for the number of times you strike your shins on sharp edges in your bedroom. It's a lovely building (if somewhat overlit), and congratulations to the owner and designer for such a splendid restoration. But the interior is the proverbial kitchen sink with everything thrown in. In the few images I have, I counted no fewer than 24 different chairs. Sorry, but this eclectic approach, needs considerable restraint and creative discipline to assure a lasting appeal.

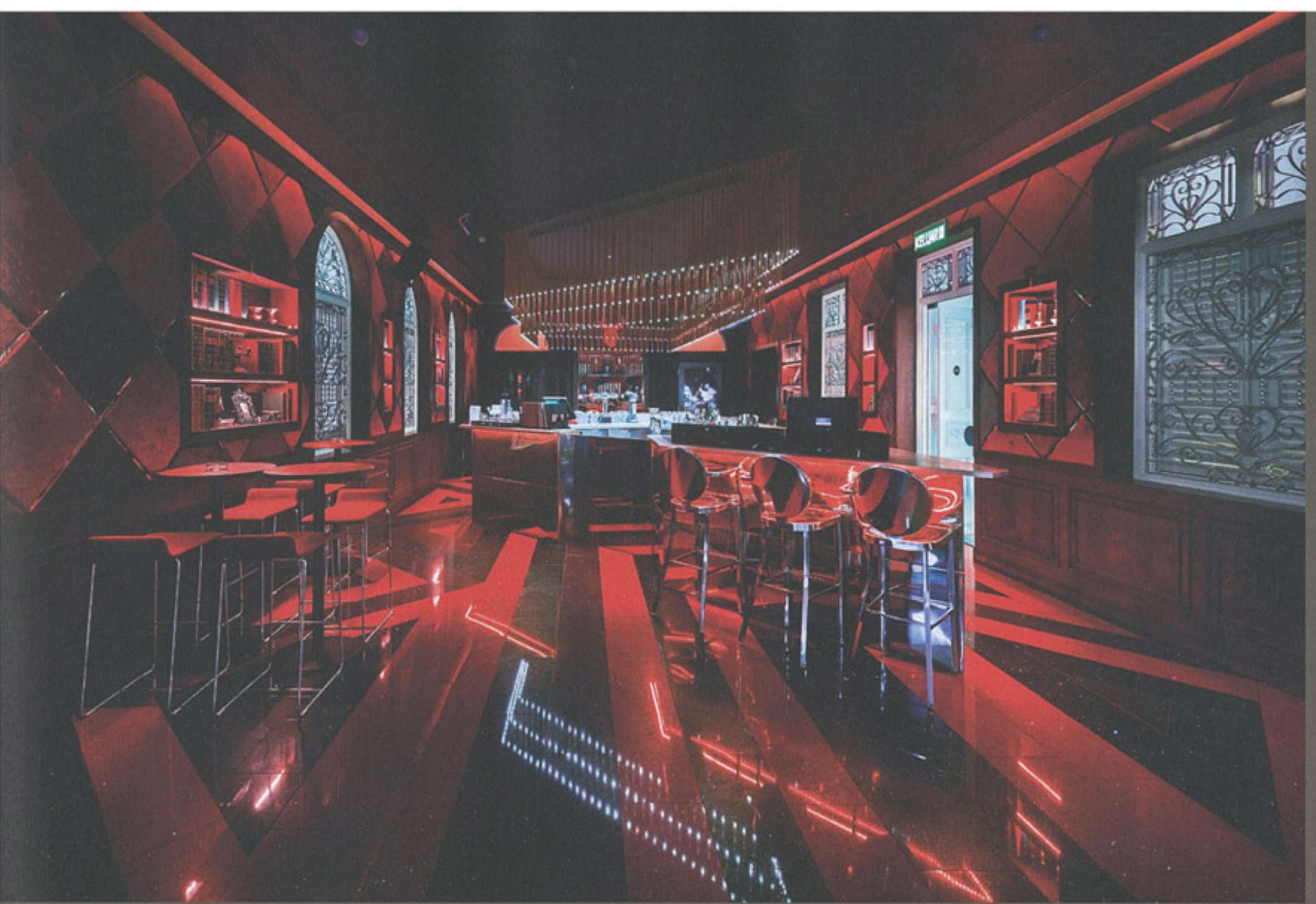
**Peter Frankopan:** We know Southeast Asia well, and what we love about the hotels there is how they use local influences and say something about the location. I'm not entirely sure about this quality at the Macalister. No matter how stylish a hotel may be inside, I like to have some idea of where I am. How Malaysian are the deer in the dining room, for example? And someone has certainly had fun with the tiles in the bathrooms. It may be that the hotel is aimed at local and regional travellers, but I don't think it will be top of our list when we next go to Penang.

**Claus Sendlinger:** Penang just got a whole lot hipper with the opening of this little house of treasures: Macalister Mansion really raises the bar for boutique hotels with its holistic concept. From curated art to specially designed uniforms, and from personalized stationery to handcrafted paperclips... Great job in striking the balance between the nostalgia of the past and a vision of relevance for the future.

Fun with tiles: the bathrooms abound in baroque decoration.







Shades of red enhance the warm, vibrant Bagan Bar.

Another palette and another approach for bar The Den.

