

# Sleight of hand and Victorian mémoires

A modern interpretation of Victorian design, **The Prestige Hotel** makes optical illusion a key element of its entire project, creating delightful spaces and memorable experiences for guests. A new addition to the prestigious Design Hotels™ portfolio, created by Ministry of Design

Where lush vegetation abounds, driven by the tropical climate, amidst splendid English buildings from the 19th century in the center of George Town, The Prestige Hotel welcomes you into an almost colonial universe, contemporary and magical, created with 'sleight of hand' by Ministry of Design. With a name taken from a psychological thriller on the world of magicians, alternating drama and science fiction in late 19th-century London, the project uses a scheme based on 'optical illusions,' drawing in an original way on the Victorian aesthetic with the transposition of heritage in a fantastic spatial narrative that combines the pastel tones of furnishings with an allusive vegetation, together with botanical prints and furnishings in wicker and rattan, in a tropical context. The visual stimuli are subtle but omnipresent in the hotel, responding to the unusual specificity of the site – a long, narrow lot – which could have made the guest experience rather monotonous.









Mechanical lighting elements positioned at regular intervals project the shadows of intricate motifs, generating optical illusions on the monochrome walls of the corridors – already dynamic in their own right thanks to the oblique decorations that make the traditional wall facing more abstract – and on the white tiles of the floors, with inserts of black mosaic that seem to vanish and reappear. The studio has organized the ground floor in such a way that the reception, the Glasshouse restaurant and other retail facilities exist as autonomous spaces, in keeping with the model of the historic English shopping passage. In the circular reception area, the check-in counter with mirrors magically balances on chromium-plated spheres. To reach it, one has to walk on a white marble floor on which a black labyrinth has been traced, with a brass sphere at the center bearing the logo of the hotel. The curved back wall is adorned by



imaginative paneling in the form of a cloud. Other unusual features include the engraving on the metal wall inside the elevators, which thanks to reflecting surfaces produces a Droste effect on all sides, with the contours of the iconic buildings of Penang and local botanical elements depicted in a style reminiscent of Victorian wallpaper.

The fulcrum of the portico is the very luminous Glasshouse Restaurant, conceived as a delightful indoor garden for breakfasts, lunches and dinners. The tropical motif of the cushions and the forest green leather placed along the perimeter work in harmony with the white wicker chairs and the reticular structure decorating the windows and walls. Here again, there are plenty of visual tricks: from the mirrors that convey an impression of doubled spaces, to the axonometric deceptions of Escher-like cubes on the floor. Placed on different levels, the 162 rooms are subdivided into four deluxe types, accessed by means of sequences of darkness and light in the corridors painted with two-tone boxes in black and white.





The guestrooms share a precise approach to luxury, though not without surprising individual effects, gauged through an eclectic selection of materials. Surfaces in marble, polished brass with built-in lighting for the vanity mirrors, inspired by elaborate Victorian designs but modernized with an angular form, generating optical illusions. Chrome and brass enhance the bathroom furnishings, as well as the posts of the doors and furnishings, alongside white wood for contemporary paneling with trapezoidal relief patterns. The references to the world of magic become even clearer in the mattresses that seem to float, thanks to particular lighting below the structure of the beds, and in the shower cabin-wardrobes made in glass and bronze-colored metal, which bring to mind the traps set for himself by Houdini.

Developer: Tommy Koay,  
 Public Packages Holdings Berhad  
 Hotel operator: Design Hotels™  
 Architecture: KL Wong architect  
 Interior design: Ministry of Design  
 Furnishings: Kian Interiors, Qbrid Dsignhaus;  
 Custom furniture: Pena Builders, Samson Hospitality  
 Flooring: Boon Seng Timber Flooring,  
 China EC Stone Art, Equipe Ceramics,  
 GNG Distributors, Goodwood Builders, Greenscape,  
 Lam Ah Marble, Kingres Marketing,  
 Niro Ceramic Group, Royal Thai Carpets  
 Lighting: Light Craft, Pena Builders  
 Bathrooms: Kohler  
 Fabrics: Acacia, Duralee, Hunter Douglas, Innovasia,  
 Sunbrella, Tatum Malaysia  
 Upholstered panels: Hufcor Maroshumi  
 Custom printed wallcovering: PPAasia  
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