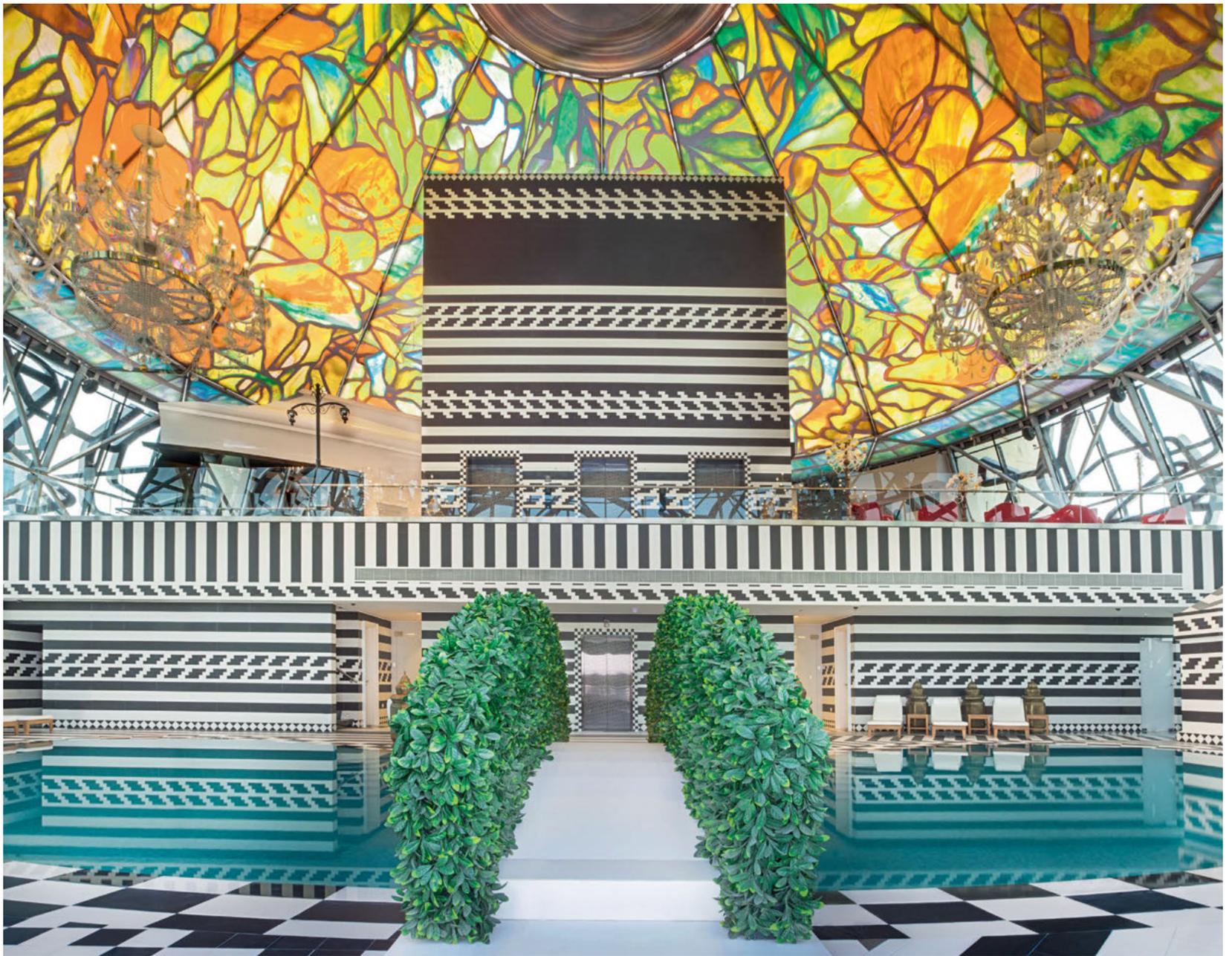


SLEEPER

GLOBAL HOTEL DESIGN

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2017



Mondrian

The typically outlandish designs of Marcel Wanders bring a cacophony of pattern and colour to Doha

Kimpton De Witt

American-born Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants plants its first flag in Europe

Hôtel de Crillon

A delicate balance between conservation and transformation at Rosewood's Parisian palace



Kimpton De Witt

AMSTERDAM

American-born Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants plants its first flag in Europe with an elevated product designed for an international clientele.

Words: Renee Perenchio | Photography: © Laure Joliet

In May 2017, Kimpton De Witt opened its doors as Amsterdam's newest boutique hotel, simultaneously marking a new era for the US operator. Carefully crafted to introduce the brand to the European market, the 274-key sanctuary was formed through an extensive refurbishment of five interconnecting buildings, three of which date back to the Dutch Golden Age.

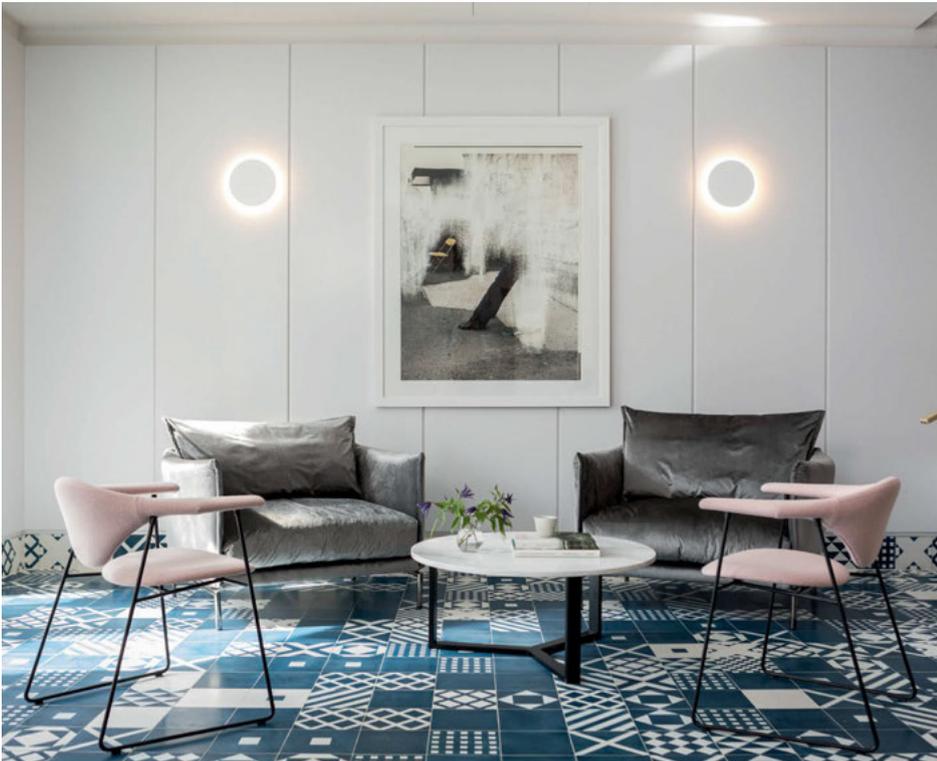
Founded by Bill Kimpton in 1981, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants has become a firm favourite over the years, growing to become a collection of 130 independent hotels and restaurants, each known for its design, personality and undeniable charm.

It wasn't until 2014, when IHG stepped in and acquired the group for US\$430 million, that Kimpton has been able to venture overseas. For its migration across the pond, the brand's core principles remain, but are presented in an evidently elevated manner tailored to new international clientele. "Transitioning into regions where a higher level of luxury is expected, we saw an opportunity to really focus on refining the brand to a state of sophistication that is appropriate for the European market," explains Ave Bradley, Creative Director and Global Senior Vice President of Design at Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants. "This progression into the luxury segment reflects where we've been taking the brand and was a natural fit for this property.

"In the States, we've become known for each property's uniqueness and deep integration within our surrounding neighbourhoods," she







This Page: Standard guestrooms are cosy and personal, with a calming palette of grey and walnut paired with satin brass accents and pops of blue and emerald. In the lobby, blue-and-white encaustic tiles are designed as a modern take on traditional Dutch flooring, while lighting comes courtesy of Astro's Eclipse wall lights



Above: House Bar, a sultry craft cocktail hideaway, offers a contrasting ambiance to the lobby and guestrooms

continues. “In addition to exemplifying a clear sense of approachable luxury, Kimpton De Witt needed to be welcoming and honour Dutch heritage in an authentic and impactful way. We want locals to know we aren’t just outsiders trying to interpret their culture.”

Research by way of senses, Bradley spent days walking, tasting and watching how locals live their lives day-to-day. “There was this clear appreciation for things that are natural and beautiful,” she explains. “I felt an overwhelming ease from the way windows are left wide open and people stop their bike to buy fresh cut flowers. These sweet sentiments helped shape the hotel’s intricate narrative.”

Bradley partnered with London-based Michaelis Boyd Associates to help bring this vision to life. “We too felt it was important to create an aesthetic for Kimpton De Witt that truly captures the character of Amsterdam; a design that is playful yet timeless and celebrates the layered history of the hotel’s intertwined buildings,” states Tim Boyd, founding partner of Michaelis Boyd Associates.

Challenges and surprises were a given with an architectural structure as eclectic as the city that surrounds. Three of the hotel’s interconnected buildings date back to the 1640s, fused together with two from the late 20th century. The sprawling ground floor was gutted and reconfigured into a series of engaging spaces that includes a retail outlet, a sultry craft cocktail hideaway, Wyers Bar & Restaurant and Miss Louisa’s Beignet & Coffee window. Public spaces also

extend outside, where an internal courtyard draws visitors in with its hanging chairs, festoon lighting and abundant plantlife.

In the lobby, a polished reception desk, crisp white marble and minimalist Vibia Pin lights are countered by quilted Moroso sofas and bold, blue-and-white encaustic tiles designed as a modern take on traditional Dutch flooring. A collection of intimate enclaves with stylish furnishings surround a sleek, central communal table displaying books on art, travel, and local culture that add the thoughtful, locally engrained details Kimpton guests have come to expect. Antiques and accessories – sourced from local outlets such as de Weldaad, Mendo and Prinsheerlijk Antiek – also feed into the history and personality that Bradley so desired.

“One of the most meaningful incorporations of Dutch culture is one that is likely unbeknownst to even locals themselves,” she remarks. “To ensure De Witt did not feel new and pristine, we layered in a collection of eclectic, orphaned artwork from a nearby gallery. We really enjoy the deeper sentiment that these artists’ works are modestly displayed at the hotel as a mysterious contribution, with no need for recognition. It feels very aligned with genuine Dutch demeanor.” The orphaned pieces are joined by custom works curated by art consultant Soho Myriad.

Charm and attention-to-detail carry up into the hotel’s guestroom floors. Corridors gleam with an assortment of brass doorknockers,



Above: Designed by Studio Modijefsky, Wyers Bar & Restaurant features plastered walls and industrial tracks of metal piping

each shaped like a different insect as a hint to the sweet touches waiting on the other side. Standard guestrooms are cosy and personal, with a calming palette of grey and walnut paired with satin brass accents and pops of blue and emerald. Playful touches include the geometric bird-shaped reading lamps and floral print Gubi chairs, while a local flavour can be seen in the Dutch porcelain tea sets, Leff Amsterdam brass Bluetooth speakers, and bathrooms clad in Delft-inspired tiles.

The building's 17th century character comes to life in the nine suites, which nestle beneath original pitch beamed ceilings. While the penthouse boasts a fireplace, spiral staircase and private terrace with expansive city views, it is the 'Little House' that is most in-demand. Described as a house within a hotel, the three-storey suite is the childhood home of Dutch playwright P.C. Hooft.

Back on the ground floor, Wyers Bar & Restaurant, offers a contrasting ambiance, luring guests in with intrigue and edge. Kimpton commissioned local interior design firm Studio Modijefsky to tear open the space, exposing the raw mechanical ceiling and

creating an integrative dining experience inspired by its former life as the Dutch textile factory of Firma Wyers. Reminiscent of a luminous thread, custom lighting weaves through the interior above the olive green banquettes, dark finishes, and plastered walls, while industrial tracks of metal piping designed to mimic weaving machines flow up the mirrored back bar, forming the display shelving and wrapping around the ceiling.

Helmed by American Chef Sammy D, the menu filters in a few classic Dutch dishes with clever takes on modern American comfort food. As the brand continues to expand, Europeans will soon come to recognise Kimpton's consistent delivery of dining destinations that both stand alone and serve as an integral part of the experience.

Looking ahead, IHG and Kimpton have their sights set firmly on expansion. The brand will open in the Opéra district of Paris in 2020, while three management contracts have been signed to introduce Kimpton to Asia. According to the group, the first properties in the region will be located in prime markets in Southeast Asia and Greater China, further solidifying its appeal to a global audience.

EXPRESS CHECK-OUT: 274 guestrooms | 1 restaurant | 2 bars | 600m² event spaces | Fitness centre | www.kimptonhotels.com

Operator: Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants and IHG | **Architecture:** Kentie en Partners | **Interior Design:** Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants in-house; Michaelis Boyd; Studio Modijefsky (F&B) | **Lighting Design:** Deerns