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GLOBAL HOTEL DESIGN

MAY | JUNE 2018



Six Senses Duxton

Anouska Hempel works her magic at the first urban resort for Six Senses

Andrew Zobler

The founder and CEO of Sydell Group talks collaborations, culture and community

Alila Yangshuo

A disused sugar mill in rural China is given a new lease of life by Alila Hotels & Resorts



Viceroy

CHICAGO

Goettsch Partners and TAL Studio celebrate Chicago past and present in the reincarnation of the historic Cedar Hotel for Viceroy's Icon Collection.

Words: Renee Perenchio | Photography: Courtesy of Viceroy Hotel Group (unless otherwise stated)

The melding of old buildings and new is never an easy feat in architectural terms. While some campaign to preserve historic city landmarks, others look to advance the urban landscape with the construction of shiny new skyscrapers. At Viceroy Chicago, it's the best of both, where the design solution creates harmony through contrast. A rich depiction of yesterday and today, the hotel's 18-storey glass curtain tower stands boldly behind the low-rise brick and terracotta façade of the former Cedar Hotel.

Located in the heart of the Gold Coast neighbourhood, the 1920s-era property sat abandoned – temporarily housing a handful

of short-lived restaurants and bars – before Chicago-based Convexity Properties stepped in with the help of Viceroy Hotel Group, architects Goettsch Partners, and hospitality design firm TAL Studio. From demolition to completion, the team spent 22 months bringing the luxury lifestyle brand to Chicago's historic district.

Home to the city's wealthiest residents, the Gold Coast today is a collection of restored mansions and high-rise apartments, where locals are renowned for their community spirit. In this expanding neighbourhood, it would have been easy to demolish the dilapidated Cedar Hotel and start afresh, but for Goettsch Partners, social



Above: In the lobby, bronze desks sit afront a large depiction of a Venetian carnival recital by South American cubist artist Badi

significance triumphed and the architects undertook a 14-month process to deconstruct and reassemble the building's façade. The hotel was not a protected landmark, nor was there any requirement to retain the exterior, yet the team opted to meticulously number, sort, and preserve, and brick-by-brick resurrect the familiar face of the Cedar Hotel. So, why go to the trouble? "The best urban hotels today seamlessly blend with their context and simultaneously create a new identity," says Paul De Santis, Partner and Senior Project Manager at Goettsch Partners. "Although the previous hotel had been abandoned for many years, it maintained a certain nostalgia among local residents and visitors alike. Preserving the vintage façade is a strategy that honours the past while creating a stimulating dialogue with the new architecture."

A stark contrast, the new glass tower features sharp, pleated curtain folds and a geometric pattern inspired by one found in the original hotel. With the new structure set back from the reconstructed exterior, a beautiful, open transitional space was created. Rather than take a traditional atrium approach, luxury hotel and resort designer Todd-Avery Lenahan, founder and Principal of TAL Studio, designed a network of orthogonal windows and three-dimensional light boxes that bring warmth and light to the arrival experience in a new way. "The objective was to create a dynamic connection between two potentially disparate archetypes," explains Lenahan.

"The cleanly delineated reflective boxes and deeply recessed windows acknowledge and give substance to the brittle façade from the inside; a contemporary ghost of the historic brick face on the reverse."

Grounded with a collection of mid-century furnishings inspired by an important period in Chicago's architectural history, the living room's central wall instantly becomes the focal point upon entering the hotel. The monumental 30ft 'tableau wall' towers over guests with colourful graphic bravado inscribed with a collection of quotes from French poet Marcel Proust. A shimmering presentation of thousands of words, the wall challenges guests to look away from their phones and contemplate these words on their own terms.

"For an intelligent social space in an intelligent social city, the Proust tableau elevates the hotel lobby with scale, impact, and provocation that is befitting of the Viceroy brand's entry to the Chicago market," says Lenahan. "Dramatically lit each evening, the tableau wall fills the living room with conversations that emanate from its plane without ever a word spoken."

Lenahan fused this inspiration with that of the Flâneur, an 18th-century French literary type characterised by an eye for exploration and a free spirit. "The overall interior design plans were one-of-a-kind, created with detail, precision and the highest quality, resulting in an authentic, inspired and dynamic experience for guests with many design dimensions and nuances," confirms Lenahan.



Above: Guestrooms feature a distinct headboard wall displaying a digitally reproduced work by Tim Modus, laden with bronze geometric patterns

The tableau is the first of many moments of discovery and surprise layered throughout the hotel. As the exploration continues, a series of bold artwork and contrasting low-capped ceilings draw guests into the lobby. Lenahan's classicist approach and use of spatial disciplines creates tension and a provoking transfer into the more intimate reception zone. Statuesque bronze desks reminiscent of modern sculptures found throughout Chicago sit afront a large depiction of a Venetian carnival recital by South American cubist artist Badi. The painting introduces a colour scheme that materialises throughout the hotel, serving as a prelude to discoveries that are yet to come.

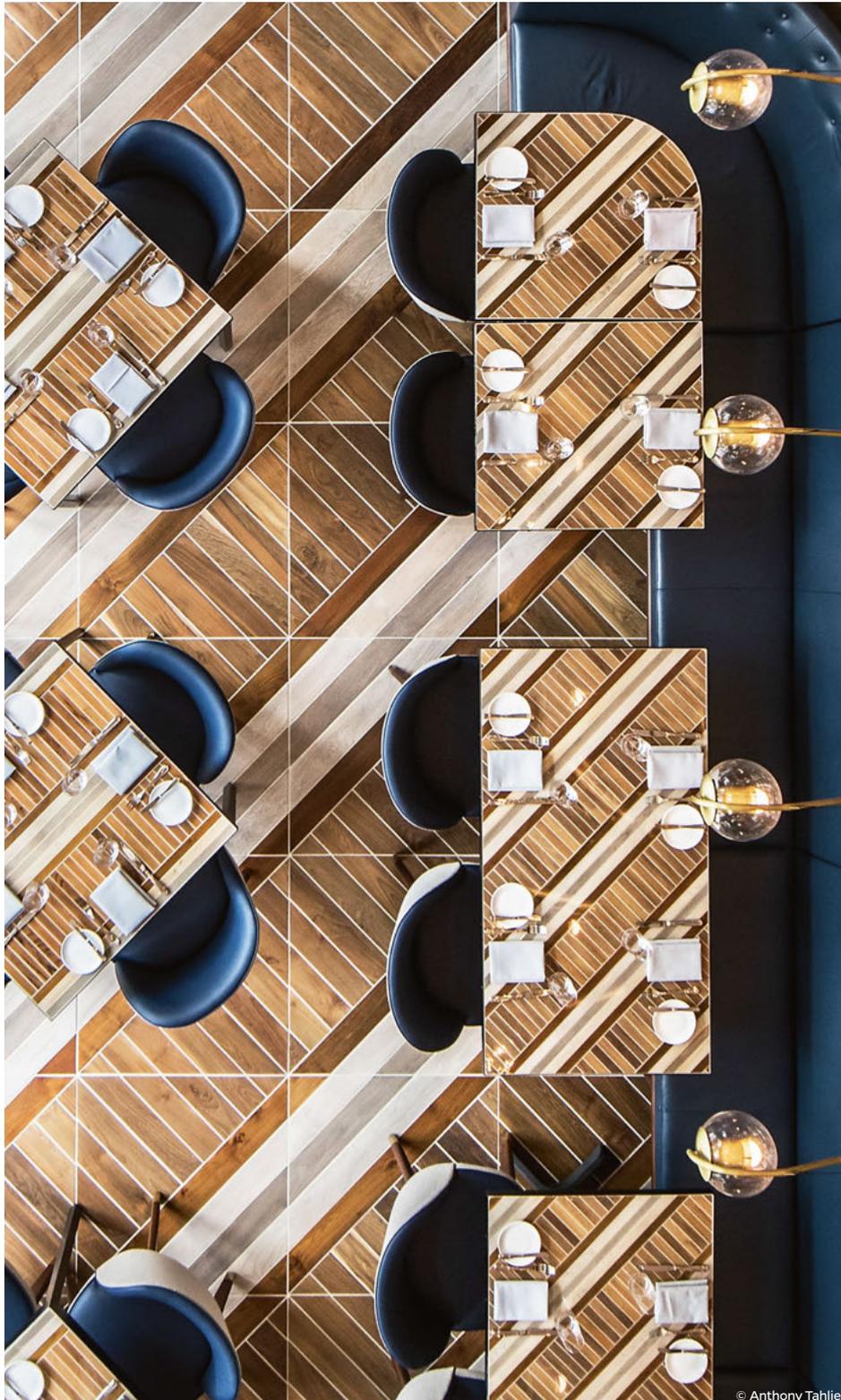
Guest corridors are laced with bright teal, citrus and red, continuing the colour story and giving integrity to Badi's introductory palette. Behind the playful doors, guestrooms take on pops of the same and feature reproductions of cubist figural artist Miette Brave's works. Mid-century-inspired gold light fixtures accompany custom walnut casegoods and a network of drapery tracks that expertly interface with the angular, floor-to-ceiling windows. A distinct headboard wall displays a digitally reproduced work by London-based artist Tim Modus, reimagined into a wallcovering and laden with bronze geometric patterns nodding to the same era.

Up on the 18th floor, a seasonal outdoor pool and terrace overlook Lake Michigan and connect to rooftop cocktail lounge, Devereaux. Poolside bar by day, cocktail destination by night, Lenahan has

crafted a transformative space that lends itself to both atmospheres. Orange creamsicle marble flooring and neutral leather barstools blend effortlessly with the light of day and glamour of night, while gold detailing, soft lighting, and expansive windows create a "picture frame to the sparkle of the Chicago skyline that surrounds". Classic cocktails and elevated bar snacks are served up daily through a partnership with Boka Restaurant Group, one of the premier chef-driven F&B operators in the country.

The Chicago-based group's collaboration extends down to onsite restaurant Somerset. Helmed by Michelin-star chef Lee Wolen and sitting adjacent to the lobby, Somerset flows off a large garden terrace that absorbs the energy of the surrounding Gold Coast avenues. Within, design firm Avroko has adopted a contemporary approach to American country club culture appropriate for the neighbourhood's high society of the past and present. The dynamic trio of dining experiences begins in the main restaurant and bar, where inspirations pull from nearby Lake Michigan marinas and glass back-bar screening hints at canvas sails. The mezzanine level perched above offers a view down onto the 'marina' and a more intimate clubhouse vibe. The grandeur of a central perforated brass and timber chandelier by Goodshop anchors the triple-height space and is complemented by details such as sporting medals and custom-built speedboat models that dress the adjacent private dining room.





This Page & Opposite: In Somerset, operated by Boka Restaurant Group, Avroko has adopted a contemporary approach to American country club culture appropriate for the neighbourhood's high society of the past and present

Environmentally-friendly reclaimed teak tiles by IndoTeak Design line the floor, feeding into the country club aesthetic, topped with dining chairs from Stellar Works. Also of note is the marine blue curved banquette at the heart of the dining room, again designed bespoke by Avroko together with Stellar Works.

Further preserving the hotel's original character, Cedar Hotel's neon sign has been repurposed as a decorative feature, mounted on the wall for all to admire.

Upon opening, Viceroy Chicago became the sixth addition to the Icon Collection, the group's brand tier characterised by ultra-lavish experiences for guests with a sense of adventure. The Midwest outpost will soon be followed by openings in Portugal's Algarve, Serbia, Danang in Vietnam and Bocas del Toro in Panama.

EXPRESS CHECK-OUT: 180 guestrooms | 1 restaurant | 1 bar | 5,000ft² events spaces | Swimming pool, gym | www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com
Owner: Convexity Properties | **Operator:** Viceroy Hotel Group | **Architecture:** Goettsch Partners | **Interior Design:** TAL Studio; Avroko (restaurant)