

IN-STORE

Peninsula Hotels focuses on Hong Kong renovations for 2012

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Peninsula Hotels is rolling out a number of updates and renovations at its properties in the upcoming year and is placing a particular emphasis on its Hong Kong location.

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The hotel chain will be refurbishing its guest rooms at its Grande Dame of Hong Kong location as part of a two-phase renovation. Additionally, it has updated particular suites at its Beverly Hills and New York properties.

“Hong Kong is the flagship hotel and I believe they just turned 80, so it’s a big birthday for them,” said Albert Herrera, vice president of hotels, destinations and tours at [Virtuoso](#), New York. “In a market like Hong Kong and China as a whole where there are new developments and new products, the buy keeps getting higher.

“It’s astounding what hotels there have seen and what they are coming up with,” he said. “So, it’s essential that [The Peninsula] maintain themselves as the industry leader and cutting-edge while providing the legendary mystique, service and allure of The Peninsula.”

Mr. Herrera is not affiliated with the Peninsula Hotel, but agreed to comment as a third-party expert.

The Peninsula Hotel was not able to comment before deadline.

China bourne

The Peninsula Hong Kong was last updated in the mid 1990's, according to Mr. Herrera.

The hotel chain will be transforming all of its 297 guestrooms, focusing first on the Peninsula Tower which it will re-open in August.

The guestrooms in the original building will be redesigned next and are planned to open in early 2013.

Peninsula Hotel worked with executive hospitality design agency Getty's for the guestroom layout and design.

The newly-enhanced rooms showcase the finest materials and craftsmanship, boasting a bespoke luxury residential feel with an accent on classic modernity, simplicity and chic elegance, according to The Peninsula.

"With the competition, pace of change and new hotels coming into the market especially in Asia, it's critical to renovate and update the product and services on a regular basis," said Karen Weiner Escalera, president of KWE Partners, Miami.

"It won't be long before having a hotel in Hong Kong, Beijing or Shanghai, will be as important a statement to global luxury brands as locations in New York and London," she said.



Technology appears to be at the center of the redesign. Peninsula Hotels will be unveiling revolutionary technology at its Hong Kong location that is centered around guest personalization, per the hotel.

This may include things such as touch-sensor LED light switches and in-room iPads, according to Mr. Herrera.

Technology in-room is becoming the norm at most luxury hotels, particularly those in China.

For example, Starwood Hotels & Resorts opened its tallest St. Regis property last week in

Shenzhen that offers an in-room iPad 2 which guests can use to manage all of the room's amenities such as temperature or television controls and connect with other parts of the hotel.

"The Peninsula has always been a leader in the technology arena for hotels," Virtuoso's Mr. Herrera said. "But what they are doing now is bringing it to a whole different level – it's not just for the flash but it's also for a really seamless guest experience."

Suite living

Peninsula Hotels will also be making changes to its New York and Beverly Hills locations this year.

The hotel chain recently finished the renovation of all 193 rooms, suites and villas.

The renovation included the debut of its four grandest suites and The Peninsula Villa. Each of the suites and the villa were designed with a unique style and color scheme, according to the hotel.

For its Beverly Hills location, the hotel chain worked with local interior design firm Forchielli Glynn LLC.

The design firm tapped local artisans for a good portion of the furniture and artwork in the hotel.

The idea was to create an updated look that emphasizes the connection between the interiors and surrounding gardens while preserving the hotel's original DNA of luxurious Southern California living.

However, for the Grand Deluxe Suite, Peninsula turned to American designer Nancy Corzine, whose work often appears in luxury lifestyle publications such as House Beautiful, Veranda and Elle Décor.



Peninsula Hotels took a similar approach to its New York Peninsula Suite.

The hotel chain tapped Bill Rooney to design the suite which consists of 5,000 square-feet of living space.

The new suite is being unveiled in May 2012.

“It is important to keep it fresh, obviously, but more importantly to keep the hotel relevant to the needs of today’s travelers,” Mr. Herrera said.

“When I was a hotelier, we had to factor in a few things [while renovating]” he said. “You factor in your existing clientele and what they like from the hotel and you factor in a tomorrow’s travelers.

“It is a delicate balance between being able to move forward and retaining what people come to you for and what they look to you for.”

Final Take

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