

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Mandarin Oriental profiles renowned interiors duo in 'Design Story'

January 12, 2023



The city of Istanbul itself—including the hotel's namesake, the Bosphorus Strait—serve as the greatest inspiration behind the hotel's interior design. Image credit: Mandarin Oriental

By MARYBETH CONNAUGHTON

Hospitality brand Mandarin Oriental has released a new video featuring renowned designer Adam D. Tihany who, along with his partner Alessia Genova, brought the interior of its Bosphorus property to life.

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Each choice the two made, they explain, was inspired and informed by their love for Istanbul, which straddles the Bosphorus Strait that lends the hotel its name. The city's rich history and culture are woven nearly literally into every facet of the hotel's inner character.

"The love of Istanbul is something very personal for me," said Mr. Tihany as part of the video.

"Yet, it's also universal. People all over the world admire and love the city, because of [its] diversity, because of the richness of culture and richness of art and architecture. This incredible world of wonders, past and future, East and West. It's just a complete [ly] magical place that is an endless source of inspiration for all of us," Mr. Tihany said.

"There is no better word [for it] than a mixed salad' of beauty and inspiration."

Tradition woven throughout

This approach to design leading with a love for a property's surrounding location lends itself naturally to the "glocalization" movement gaining momentum in the hospitality industry.

Increasingly, travelers want their accommodations to provide memorable experiences that both draw from and contribute to the culture unique to their destination. Hotels and resorts are responding in kind.

In terms of interior design, Tihany Design has maintained both the "global" and the "local" aspects of the portmanteau. In its work with several other locations within the Mandarin Oriental portfolio, the team has incorporated site specific elements into projects while commemorating the hotel group's Asian roots.

Employed as design consultants for the group's Las Vegas property, **the firm** took a minimal approach to the design of the lobby and accented it with Asian-inspired art. Up on the 23rd floor, in the hotel's Sky Lobby, they conceived of a

wall made of gold bullions, an elegant nod to the city's slightly seedy history of fast, flashy money.

References to Turkish culture are apparent at the Bosphorus almost as soon as one sets foot through the door. In this design story, Ms. Genova calls attention to a metal screen on a ground floor wall.

The screen bears a pattern which is symbolic of Turkey's culture of carpet weaving, a pattern which the duo designed exclusively for the hotel. It recurs throughout the property in the form of custom fabric, and on paneled screens that separate bedrooms from bathrooms.

A mass wooden screen that stretches across the second level puts that woven effect into 3-D. It also creates a layered appearance that recalls Mr. Tihany's references to the layers of history that rest just beneath the city.

Ms. Genova and Mr. Tihany give the viewer a highlight tour of the hotel.

Often referred to as "the seat of empires," and a bridge between the East and the West, Istanbul is the only city in the world that exists on two continents. Bisecting the city into an Asian side and a European side is the Bosphorus Strait, and the hotel sets right on the water's edge.

The lobby's centerpiece is a boat that the pair designed and filled with handblown glass, another famous traditional Turkish export. Istanbul is the **Mandarin Oriental's** second location in Turkey, the first being in Bodrum.

Farther afield

As much as travelers may want an experience authentic to their hotel's destination, they also want accommodations that remind them of home.

In November of last year, Hospitality group Marriott International debuted Apartments by Marriott Bonvoy, which traded traditional hotel amenities and services in favor of household appliances ([see story](#)).

As the hospitality industry will no doubt have to get creative to continue to meet its guests ever-evolving needs, they might take Mr. Tihany's advice.

"[People ask] Where does your inspiration come from?' he said.

"All I have to say is, Look around."