

Rethinking Luxury

INTRODUCTION

What does luxury really mean? We often think of luxury in terms of stereotypes such as sophisticated restaurants, 5 stars hotels and exclusive clubs. However, in my experience this kind of environment has rarely left lasting impressions, a special memory that I might recall. How many of us have ever really taken time to contemplate 'what is luxury?' Yet it's a holy grail, not just for hotels but for all sorts of sectors, from automotive to retail. It's a long-term, increasing and widening trend, aspirational at its heart, and has proven to be recession proof.

The conventional definitions of luxury are rooted in realities that have changed and

evolved; therefore they need to be revisited. To explore this theme further and get a broader view, distinguished international architects and designers have been asked to comment on what luxury in a hospitality context means to them.

These outstanding professionals have three key characteristics in common: they create awesome places and memorable designs, they are lateral thinkers and they are highly responsible practitioners. They come from different parts of the globe: Italy, England, Brazil, North America, Spain, Holland, Argentina and Austria.

Although their responses are individual, there are recurring themes running through some of their views. These revolve around

The Author



Noemi Blager, a brand consultant, is a trained architect who specialises in 3-D branding. Most recently she worked on the brand environment strategy and its execution for 3 (Hutchinson Whampoa Group), and for Arup (Engineers) on the future of hotels. She has also been a guest lecturer at ESADE Business School Barcelona, Kingston College London and the University of Buenos Aires.
noemi@blagercouper.com
www.blagercouper.com

issues of time, silence, sense of place, contact with nature, human encounter, stimulating the senses, memorable experiences and care...

GIULIANA SALMASO AND CLAUDIO SILVESTRIN, ARCHITECTS

www.claudiosilvestrin.com



Silence

Picture by Noemi Blager

Luxury is not a space in which objects and materials overpower the individual.

Luxury is a space with a soul.

Luxury is the emotion of the surprise of not being in a predictable room.

Luxury is the feeling that the guest may have in catching the synergy between the architect and his client that truly desired the enhancement of his well-being.

To be hospitable one ought to be generous with the guest. One ought to focus on the guest's needs and sense of wellness. In hospitable places this is achieved with the right synergy between the service to the guest and the architecture in which this service is taking place from the outdoor space to the smaller detail of the interior.

Luxury is certainly not expensive decorations or ornaments.

It does not suffice to have technological comfort, expensive furniture or materials.

Luxury is the freedom of having silence.

Luxury is generousness of space, from high ceilings to streaked expansive walls.

Luxury is natural light everywhere.

Luxury is a frameless beautiful view.

Luxury is a clear perception of nature and of the sensuousness of natural materials.



G apartment, Milan, design Claudio Silvestrin with Giuliana Salmaso
Picture by James Morris