



haute living

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PERSONAL TOUCH. A DESIGNER LABEL HOTEL OPENS DOORS TO A MEMORABLE UNIQUE EXPERIENCE. **JULIE EAGLETON** EXPERIENCES THIS NEW FACE OF HOSPITALITY

fashion designers never cease to inspire us with their latest collections, but now their well-tuned aesthetic is no longer restricted to the catwalk. Hotels all over the world are realising that bland design, no matter how luxurious, will simply not cut it anymore. People who frequent top hotels want more than comfort; they expect design that is alluring, sexy, interesting and functional – just like the treasured perfect little black dress or impeccable sharp suit. In fact the overused term, designer hotel, has now been given a whole new meaning.

palazzo versace, gold coast

As one could expect from such a designer, every meticulous detail of architecture and decor, down to the delicate china settings envelops guests in an ambience that is pure Versace. Situated in Southern Queensland on the Gold Coast, only 100 metres from the surf beach, the five-star Palazzo Versace Gold Coast stands as a beacon of glamour in Australia's favourite holiday destination.

Sophisticated luxury greets you at every turn. Staff dressed in head-to-toe Versace, escort you through gold-gilded doors. A magnificent chandelier, originally purchased by Gianni Versace to place in one of his villas, hangs above the lobby's marble floor inlaid with the iconic Versace Medusa head. Deep-purple, navy, cream and gold manage to dazzle and yet, soothe at the same time. The inspiration is a mixture of European and Renaissance. Versace-designed furniture, linen and fragrances await in the luxuriously appointed rooms, gleaming with classical elegance. Have a drink at your private in-room bar or stand on a Juliet-balcony overlooking the hotel's very own beach bar and toast a



Palazzo Versace



Hotel du Petit Moulin Cafe



Reception at the Hotel du Petit Moulin



Hotel Missoni

special occasion with Versace crystal. Guests can also unwind at the Salus per Aquum day spa or swim in the lagoon-style swimming pool.

Since its opening in 2000, the world's first completely fashion-branded hotel has had an international reputation as a holiday haunt for celebrities, film stars, rock stars and members of royalty visiting the country; all keen to completely live the Versace lifestyle.

Rooms at Palazzo Versace Gold Coast are available from AU \$420, including breakfast.

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hotel du petit moulin, paris

Christian Lacroix may have experienced dire straits with his bankruptcy at the end of 2009, but this king of couture has certainly left his mark on the Hotel du Petit Moulin in the Marais district of Paris. Housed in a former bakery – the oldest one in the city – where according to local legend, Victor Hugo would come and purchase his bread. Its 1900 frontage and shop signboard has been preserved.

The suave interior decoration of the bakery has been restored, creating a Venetian-style setting for the reception area with almond-green and wine-coloured ruffled taffeta drapes. The wonderful 17th-century wooden staircase has been left unadorned. As the hotel only has 17 rooms, Christian Lacroix set out to decorate them individually, taking into consideration their unique shape, height and exact location within the hotel. Lawn-green corridors link rooms, which

contain a mixture of wallpapers, bright fabrics, leather, brocade, velvet, fur, wooden floors and ceramics. Period furniture is covered in vivid graphics, creating a nice juxtaposition. There is no concern about a possible clash of styles; a combination of slate and cement is warmed with Venetian mirrors, antique gold mixes happily with fluorescent-green and in the hotel cafe, Edwardian style furniture sits alongside '60's seating in shades of yellow and pink. Christian Lacroix sums it up: "It's like couture, where the harmony is created from a puzzle of inspirations, where the feeling of the moment is nourished with elements from the past, where modernity lives in the tradition of the present."

Rooms at Hotel du Petit Moulin are available from €190.

Inquiries, (0033) 142 741010

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hotel missoni, edinburgh

The Rezidor Hotel Group opened its first Hotel Missoni property in Edinburgh in June 2009, developed in collaboration with the renowned Italian luxury fashion dynasty, Missoni. Hotel Missoni Edinburgh captures the timeless style, colour and glamour of the fashion house, using the signature bold use of colour and the famous striking patterns that the label is renowned for. These colours bring a cool contemporary vibe that flows through the lobby, restaurant and beyond to the private areas of bedrooms and bathrooms. All rooms come complete with AV/iPod hooks



Continentale Hotel

up, stylish Missoni bathrobes and Nespress coffee machines.

The hotel has been personally designed by the brand's creative director, Rosita Missoni. Simple, stylish tones of black and white are punctuated with brilliant flashes of colour whilst large mosaic urns are decorated with the Missoni trademark zig-zags and geometric patterns.

The hotel overlooks Edinburgh's old town in the heart of the historic centre. Bar Missoni is a trendy place to meet in the lobby of the hotel and Cucina is the hotel's Italian restaurant which offers fresh, seasonal and authentic Italian dishes.

Rooms at Hotel Missoni are available from £140, including bed and breakfast per night.

Inquiries, (0044) 131 2206666

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A view of Florence

continentale hotel, florence

Where else could you enjoy a panoramic view of Florence while relaxing in a king-size tub? The Continetale designed by Salvatore Ferragamo is situated in a magical picture-perfect location of Florence next to the Ponte Vecchio with rooms overlooking the River Arno. Decorated in light sherbet tones of lemon and pistachio-green, the Continetale also plays homage to the happy-go-lucky feel of the '50's and '60's with bubblegum-pink accents. Guest rooms have window seats and desks disguised as trunks allowing you to write, relax or simply think. Adorning the rooms are black and white photographs by fashion designers such as Emilio Pucci and Alberto Fabiani.

The second floor is home to the relaxation room – complete with chaise lounges and a cocktail lounge with a bar that glows in pink, orange and white. The guest rooms have a very light feel with sheer-draped beds, light wood furniture and flowing curtains that catch the Tuscan light.

The Sky Lounge De'Consorti is the crowning glory of the Continetale with a 360-degree view across the Florentine skyline.

Rooms at Continetale Hotel are available from €180, excluding breakfast.

Inquiries, (0039) 055 27264000

www.designhotels.com

armani hotels, milan and dubai

Located in Italy's fashion capital and Giorgio Armani's home city, the sophisticated Armani Hotel Milano is set for completion in 2010. Reflecting the designer's sense of beauty, elegance and grace, the hotel's emphasis is on superior service, immaculate design and incomparable luxury. The hotel will contain the largest guest rooms in the city, a gourmet restaurant, a luxurious Armani/Spa and all rooms will have magnificent views over Milan.

The Armani Hotel Dubai is located in the iconic Burj Dubai, the world's tallest tower. Due to open its doors this month, this palatial hotel contains five restaurants, an exclusive private members' club, five restaurants and a nightclub.

Giorgio Armani has personally overseen all aspects of content, design and style which incorporate the various Armani fashion, furnishings and beauty collections. "This marks the beginning of a new chapter in the Armani story. I cannot think of a more energising prospect than bringing my philosophy of style and design to a collection of hotels and resorts."

www.armanihotels.com



G Hotel Galway



Bulgari Hotel

bulgari hotel, milan and bali

Situated in Milan's most stylish district, via Montenapoleone and close to La Scala Theatre, one of the creators of the world's finest jewellery has converted a beautiful 18th-century building into a classic contemporary hotel complete with a 4,000 sq mt private garden which surrounds guests in an oasis of green. Bulgari's bold and contemporary style is evident throughout using precious materials such as Vicenza stone, solid teak and black Zimbabwe marble to create stunning, lavish and unexpected harmonies.

Rooms at Bulgari Hotel, Milan are available from €530, excluding breakfast.

Inquiries, (0039) 028 05805222

www.bulgarihotels.com

For those seeking a warmer climate, Bulgari also has a resort in Bali located near the village of Pecatu and the stunning clifftop site of the Puru Luhur Uluwatu Temple. The resort is a fusion of traditional Balinese style and contemporary Italian

design. Positioned at 150 metres above the sea, the resort offers amazing views across the Indian Ocean. Hand-cut volcanic stones and exotic woods were used to build the hotel and lava and palimanan stone have been used for the interior walls and garden. Balinese antiques and eclectic art are in abundance creating an air of sensual refinement.

Inquiries, (0062) 361 8471000

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g hotel galway, ireland

Renowned Irish milliner Philip Treacy has brought a touch of old-fashioned Hollywood glamour to the west coast of Ireland. Galway has always been a city bursting with energy and vitality, but now the G Hotel, a five-star haven of luxury, is the crowning glory. In the public areas, the design is dramatic and kaleidoscopic for sure, but in contrast, Treacy has also taken inspiration from the landscape and sea shores of Galway. For instance, in the bedrooms, he's used cushions shaped like shells and also ensures that rooms are flooded with natural light.

Purple-velvet banquets and jewel-coloured Andrew Martin chairs in the Matz restaurant looks simply good to eat. Three individually styled lounges linked by a raspberry coloured carpet dazzles and yet soothes the senses. The grand salon is bathed in calming colours of gentle brown and gold. The ladies lounge radiates in hot-pink and '60's swirls of black and white carpet, whilst the gentleman's lounge is a hub of sophistication even with its electric-blue walls. Lastly, a carpet of a thousand red Swarovski crystals adorns the cocktail bar.

The emphasis is on unrestrained luxury and the bestowal of red carpet glamour on everyone who enters the G. Unlike some hotels where the ascetics can distract from the underwhelming service, the G's superior personalised service along with the abundance of Irish charm makes for a thrilling and relaxing stay. □

Rooms are available from €115, excluding breakfast.

Inquiries, (00353) (0) 918 65200

www.theghotel.ie