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What Will The Perfect Hotel Room Look Like In 2019?



Michael Alpiner Contributor

Travel

I write with a journalist's mind and a poet's heart



Elegant simplicity at the Hyatt Regency Paris Etoile HYATT REGENCY PARIS ETOILE

Hotels flip design of necessity every few years, and like the Pantone "Color of the Year," the palates change, the design direction changes and even the traveler's experience within the hotel changes.



Hudson Yard Boutique Hotel HUDSON YARD BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Last year's boutique hotels are next year's "experiential" pod palaces.

George Wong of [GEORGEWONGDESIGN](#) has worked with some of the best and biggest hotel clients in the industry. He sat down to answer some questions at the turn of the new year on what trends travelers will see in hotel design in 2019.

What trends do you see coming forward this year in hospitality design?

“Guest experience” is a trending phrase in hospitality design. In the coming year, guest experience should be the number one prime consideration for every design. Brand-consistency does not necessarily mean brand-monotony. Guest prefer fresh and different "experiences" with different hotels even when they are under the same brand. I see that designers will need to play a bigger role in the creation of guest experiences in the sense that we should be the driver in the pushing of the envelope with every given opportunity. Guests will appreciate the efforts of an interior environment that is elevating and/ or transformative. In return, the guest will feel even more appreciated when the hotel delivers the brand promise through services on a personal level.



Minimalism without cluttered signs of technology at the Edition Shenzhen China EDITION SHENZHEN CHINA

Will technology in hotel design be even more important to travelers this year? What aspects of design and technology do you see coming into play this year and moving forward?

Technology in hotel design will play a much larger, yet paradoxically less visible role. Technology has always been used for hotels to gather data to improve their services and streamline their operations. However, at a guest level, technology is still at a budding phase. Imagine so many households are already using smart-home systems...there is no reason for hotel rooms not to become smarter rooms. Marriott has been testing the use of Alexa in hotel rooms and the results have yet to come out. While it is a good move, the benefit of technology is not for

technology to be in plain sight as another piece of accessory in the already overcrowded real estate of the bedside table. Rather, it should disappear in to the background.

Guests should have the option to program as they wish all the room amenities such as TV, lighting, coffee machine, music etc. If someone wants to wake up to a gradual brightening up of the room lights, with sounds of birds chirping, and the aroma of morning coffee, they can do that through their *phone*. Or if they wanted the chorus portion of Beethoven's 9th symphony to be played at 6:00 AM, they can program that too. The idea is that having a hotel phone is like having another control panel (still remember those?). I see a day when technology will obliterate all "standard-amenities" such as alarm clock, music speaker, phone, and what have you, that are taking residence on the nightstand.



Warmth and wood at the Park Hyatt Chennai PARK HYATT CHENNAI

As per the Pantone Color of the year, are there color palates that travelers will see more and more of this year?

It is always tricky to predict a certain Pantone number. Bidding adieu to years of blue couch fever, I think pale greens in less saturated tones will be quite soothing against natural materials such as wood and stones.

Does the rise of the "experiential" and "live like a local" trends have traction in hotel design this year?

Experiential is the key. In my opinion, "Live like a local" is more of a state of mind rather than a matter of design. One really has to question oneself as to the extent of how authentically one desires to live like a local, and if one is prepared to go into the daily chores of living like a local when one could better spend the day in leisure. There are other options out there for those who really, really, wanted to live like a local. But they risk not knowing the actual accommodation until they get there physically, and most of the times, without any recourse. Hotel

guests, however, will have the best of both worlds. Hotels aim to create an experience that connects guests to the essence of local and regional cultures, and then some, in the comfort and safety of their known and trusted brands.

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What aspects of hotel design will never go out of style and are always on trend?

Intuitive designs will never go out of style. As I've said to the press in the past, the successfully designed hotel will allow the guest to navigate and flow with comfort and ease with minimal signage. In terms of settings, comfort, warm, authentic are the key to timelessness. Like bespoke suits, styles such as colors, furniture and lighting etc., changes with the times. That's why hotels refresh the decorations every 5-7 years to stay relevant. As the bespoke suit, slight adjustments in the lapel, the pockets and buttons, for example, will result with an enhanced and upgraded look, while the comfort and warmth of the suit remain unchanged.

Michael Alpiner is co-editor of extremeluxurygetaways.com. He is a college writing professor, and a published poet and article writer. He lives in Queens, NY.



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