

PASSION FOR HOSPITALITY

JULY/AUGUST 2020

# HOTELS

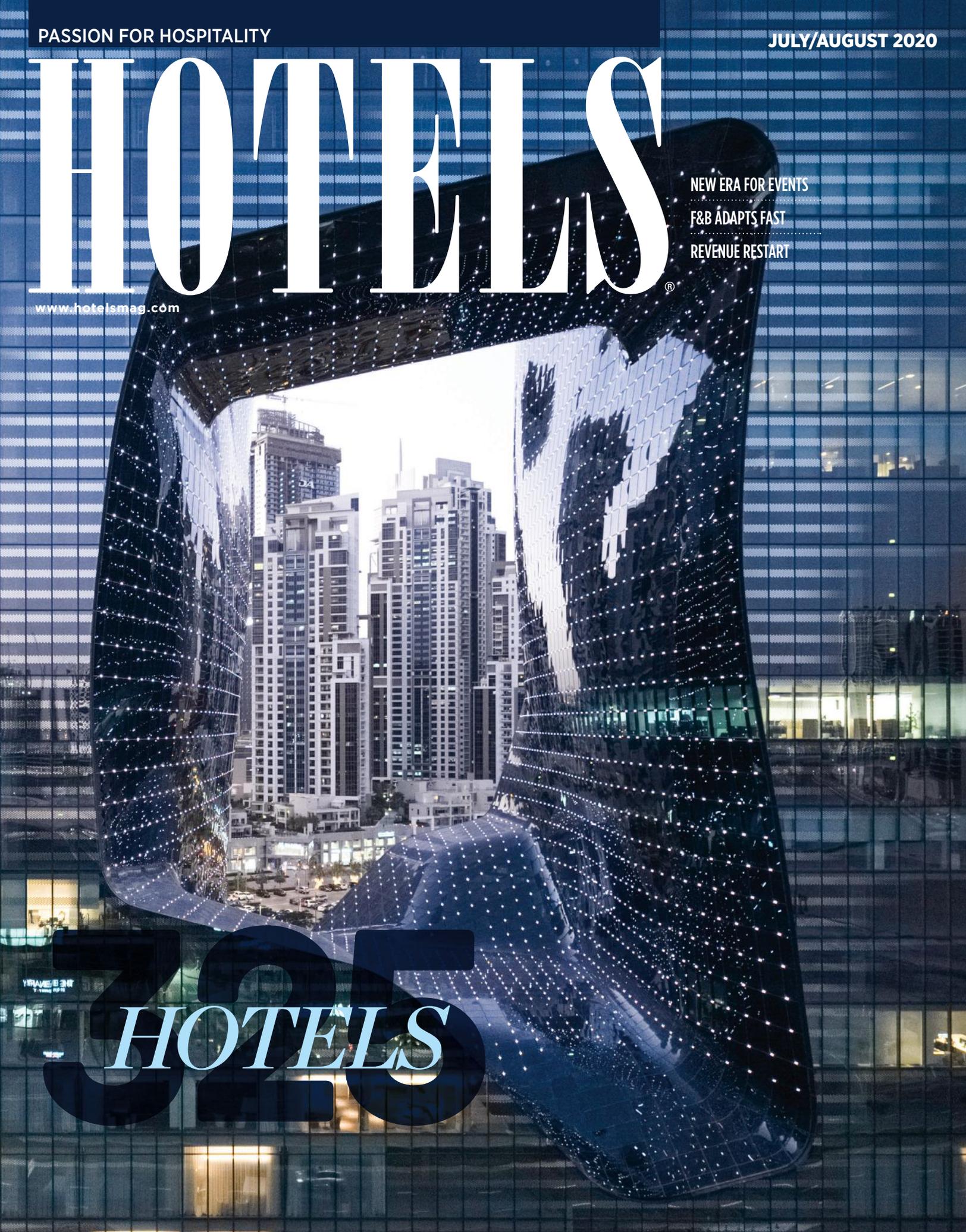
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# 2020 HOTELS



## FEATURES

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SPECIAL REPORT

## HOTELS 325

HOTELS annual ranking of the world's biggest hotel companies, based on 2019 data, shows the industry's giants remaining steady — a fair amount of consistency during a time when “consistent” is just about the last word on everyone's lips.

But the ranking can offer some longer-term perspective, as well: Asia-based companies such as New Century Hotels & Resorts, The Ascott Ltd. and Greenland Hotel and Tourism Group show impressive growth, while stalwarts Marriott International, Hilton, IHG, Wyndham and Accor maintain steady but sure growth. And then there's Oyo.



## On the cover

Amid the coronavirus, hotels are deconstructing, reconsidering and recreating every aspect of their operations. Hospitality designers are rethinking their approaches as well, with imaginative solutions that are clever, not clinical, and spatial layouts that help physical distancing avoid feeling anti-social. Their challenge: Deliver the human touch — without, necessarily, the touch of a human. “We'll need to provide greater spaciousness in our future hospitality projects,” says Patrik Schumacher of Zaha Hadid Architects, which designed ME Dubai hotel and the striking building, The Opus, of which it's a part. COVID-19 is keeping the hotel closed for now, but the firm is using digital tools to create scenarios that support social distancing.

# DESIGNING *the* FUTUR

The image shows a luxurious, futuristic lounge. The space is dominated by white, glossy surfaces, including large columns and a prominent, stylized white tree sculpture with rounded, cloud-like canopies. Several large, ornate chandeliers with crystal and gold accents hang from the ceiling. The seating consists of light-colored armchairs and sofas arranged on circular, patterned rugs. The background features large windows with blue-tinted glass and geometric patterns. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and opulent.

**AS TRAVEL — AND TRAVELERS — CHANGE, EXPERTS ARE RETHINKING TRADITIONAL APPROACHES AND RECONSIDERING HOW TO DELIVER HOSPITALITY.**

*Contributed* BY ALICIA SHEBER



The lobby lounge of the Mondrian Doha, Qatar, designed by Marcel Wanders

**As hotels take** their first steps into coexistence with the coronavirus, every aspect of operations is being deconstructed, reconsidered and recreated to not only welcome guests and promote their wellbeing but keep them safe and healthy.

Hospitality designers are rethinking their approaches as well, with imaginative solutions that are clever, not clinical, and spatial layouts that help physical distancing avoid feeling anti-social. Their challenge: Deliver the human touch – without, necessarily, the touch of a human.

HOTELS spoke with experts based all over the world to find out how they are innovating to help their hospitality clients adapt to new realities and priorities wrought by the global pandemic.

“We’ll need to provide greater spaciousness in our future hospitality projects,” says Patrik Schumacher of Zaha Hadid Architects, which designed The Opus (featured on HOTELS cover) and Melia’s ME Dubai hotel within, which should have opened in March but was closed due to COVID. The firm is using digital tool to create scenarios that support social distancing. “We’re building on top of” machine learning, Schumacher says.

**SUSAN HARMSWORTH, MBE, founder of ESPA, has designed more than 500 spas in 65 countries. Now an adviser, one of her current projects is Tri Vananda, a wellness resort opening in 2022 in Thailand, for Montara Group.**

“Hospitality, spa and clinical industries will merge as integrative medicine and prevention become increasingly

important. Trust will be enormous as people grow aware they can’t rely on medical systems and need to take ownership of their health...

“Everything I’m designing addresses the wellbeing of buildings as much as individuals through things like sustainable materials; deflecting electromagnetic fields; considering circadian rhythms with lighting; acoustics; and air quality with open windows instead of air conditioning where possible.

“There may be demand for shorter treatments for the time being. Infrared saunas are proven to build immune systems, hyperbaric training for lungs doesn’t require physical touch, and clothed treatments like Thai or Shiatsu massage can happen face-down. Vibrations are very powerful, so music and sound from gongs and crystal and singing bowls can be added, as well as light therapy. Halotherapy respiration suites with Himalayan salt walls to strength lungs and the immune system will be sought.”

**TARA BERNERD’S interior architecture and design practice, Tara Bernerd & Partners, London, has worked on Four Seasons hotels in Fort Lauderdale, London and New York; one of its current project is the Equinox LA with lead architect Frank Gehry, among other projects.**

“Hospitality spaces that link with the natural environment create a sense of personal connection. In city-centric hotels, we often use materials such as local stones, and if we’re creating a resort, we connect the inside and outdoor spaces.

“Designing lifestyle destinations during



A rendering of the Pan Pacific Orchard, Singapore, by WOHA

Digital Mirage

lockdown has been interesting... In order to develop a pitch for a resort somewhere warm and beautiful with lots of outdoor space, we asked our teams to take virtual holidays – look at hotels and beaches, order cocktails and really plan a trip. By being a bit creative in our approach, we ensured we didn't lose that personal touch."

**RICHARD HASSELL and Wong Mun Summ, founders of WOHA, Singapore, apply architectural solutions to climate change and urbanization. Projects include the Platinum Green Mark-rated Parkroyal on Pickering Hotel; due in 2021 is the zero-waste Pan Pacific Orchard. Both are in Singapore.**

"We're currently developing a boutique hospitality project with 8M in Singapore, an adaptive reuse of a heritage building featuring apartment-style rooms with small kitchens. This minimizes daily interactions with strangers, with an infection risk similar to staying in your personal apartment... Shared-economy concepts are conducive to

businesses forced to give up their brick-and-mortar retail or office spaces. And once people resume traveling, apartment sharing/rental platforms might prove even more popular for privacy reasons.

"Hotel design should address the climate emergency. Buildings use over 60% of energy worldwide, so they are key to decarbonizing. This has been a driving force as we push to develop even better strategies for environmental and social sustainability."

**CRISTINA LAURIJSSSEN leads Rosewood Hotel Group's design of luxury hotel projects in the EMEA, including The Crillon in Paris. She is guiding the design of hotels in Vienna, due to open in 2022, as well as properties in London, Munich and Venice.**

"The shared economy might evolve with more careful pairings of people who trust how each other runs their business or maintains cleanliness. People have missed community and connections, so they won't want to hide in their rooms. Public area

designs still need to be animated to keep a nice vibe and allow people to connect without guests being on top of each other. Different zones within one big area will cater to different privacy preferences and give guests options besides their rooms.

"People doing at-home workouts may prefer to use their guest room as their gym, adding to the yoga mats and weights we already provide with virtual mirrors that help exercise routines. Concerns about carbon emissions and taking fewer flights have sped up as we see benefits of reduced pollution. Innovative materials, cleaners and UV lights will quickly evolve and become widely available because they're the norm, not the exception."

**WILL MEYER AND GRAY DAVIS, founders of Meyer Davis, New York City, have designed hotels including the Four Seasons in Papagayo, Costa Rica; 1 Hotel Miami; and Rosewood Little Dix Bay, which opened in January.**

Our clients are asking us to consider if



A rendering of the Manorah Mindfulness Hall at Tri Vananda, a wellness resort in Thailand in which Susan Harmsworth is an adviser

things can be slightly different without looking unusual, for example, making glass privacy panels between banquettes, which we would have designed anyway, higher. But while we're trying to be predictive, we also don't want to overreact and design something that looks entirely different and feels uncomfortable. People dining or working out in glass bubbles won't become commonplace. Clever designers will figure out smart and witty solutions that just feel right."

**PATRIK SCHUMACHER** has led Zaha Hadid Architects since Zaha Hadid's 2016 passing. Along with other projects, the company designed the ME Dubai hotel slated to open in September in The Opus, a building also by ZHA.

"We'll need to provide greater spaciousness in our future hospitality projects, but we haven't needed to do so yet. The ME Dubai in The Opus, both of which we designed, should have opened in March but was closed due to COVID. Once it's occupied, we might need to ease crowding by redirecting guest flow so they don't rub shoulders in the public areas.

"Our team scripted a digital tool with algorithms that redistribute floor plates, seats and tables to estimate the maximum people a space can have with social distancing, plus it suggests one-way systems



An interior at the Four Seasons Hotel London at Park Lane, designed by Tara Bernard & Partners

for passages and elevators. A simulation capacity tool we're creating functions like a video game where clients can move through the space and encounter people mimicking real-life behaviors in office and public spaces. We're also developing a geometric tool that, using a building's fixed dimensions, generates potential layouts to help us find the optimal solution, since measure complex designs is not always easy. We're not relying on machine

intelligence; we're building on top of it.

"For quite a while we've focused on nature, green zones, outdoor spaces, and open windows. Wellness is crucial to a healthy, beneficial, and productive environment. I'm very sensitive to air quality, exchange levels and temperature... The first task of architects, engineers and developers should be creating a valuable and beneficial product from the outset, and secondly making it as energy efficient as possible."

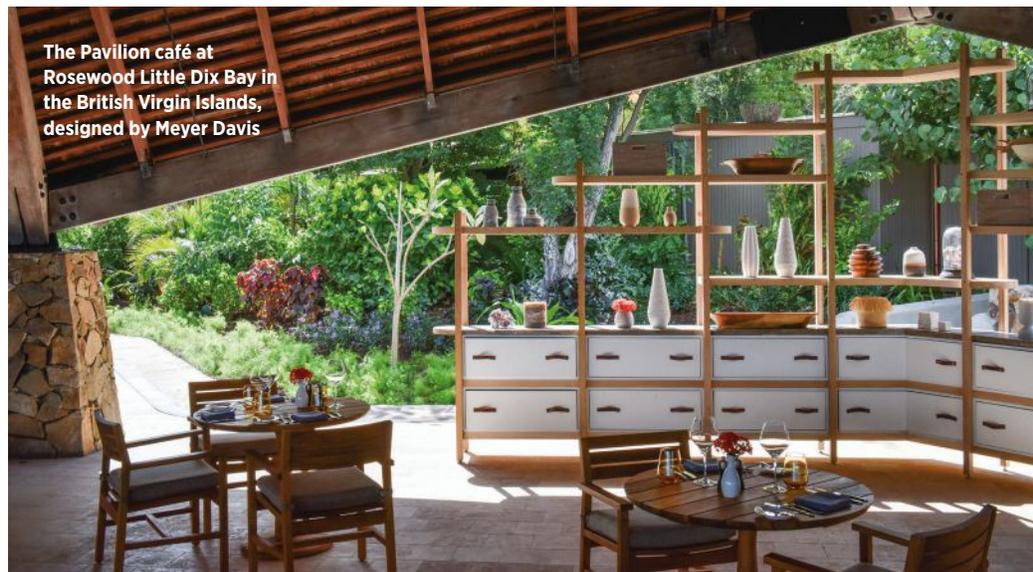


The lobby of The Opus, the Dubai skyscraper housing the ME Dubai hotel; both were designed by Zaha Hadid Architects

**GABRIELE CHIAVE** is creative director of Marcel Wanders' Amsterdam-based studio, focusing on holistic solutions, with a portfolio including the Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht and Mondrian Doha.

"Since some people will begin to travel, we're working with clients to reimagine their reception areas and create private, intimate spaces with reconfigured seating areas. While we want guests to feel free to roam, we also want to respect everyone's right to their personal space. By showing them new ways to think about welcoming people into their hotel, we're making sure every guest can still experience a personal and meaningful connection with our design that stays with them after they leave.

"We will stay on our path towards the use of more sustainable materials and find more and more ways to bring nature indoors, which we already do. We're approaching spaces a little differently in response to the pandemic, concentrating more on what contact is necessary and what can be eliminated, which in some ways actually enhances the guest experience. The flow of traffic in and out of public and private spaces is also being considered as we find ways to give people more room."



The Pavilion café at Rosewood Little Dix Bay in the British Virgin Islands, designed by Meyer Davis

**JEAN-MICHEL GATHY**, founder of architecture practice Denniston, Kuala Lumpur, has designed multiple Aman Resorts, including the Aman New York opening this winter, and destinations such as Marina Bay Sands, Singapore.

"I'm not worried about open lobbies. It's the airports and planes required to reach them. Hotels with shared spaces won't change fundamentally, but the rules will adjust as new products are created. The buffet will either disappear,

have a sneeze guard, or be served by waiters inside the station. Receptionists will be behind glass. Lifts will hold four people instead of 15, but they'll be faster. Door handles, taps and drinking glasses will be made from materials the virus can't attach to. There will be new water filtration methods, and one AC system per floor instead of per building. To accommodate reduced capacity, hotels will have three smaller restaurants instead of a larger one."