

ODE TO OSAKA

THE SYNERGISTIC EFFORTS OF KAJIMA DESIGN AND TARA BERNERD & PARTNERS GIVE THE NEWLY LAUNCHED ZENTIS OSAKA HOTEL AN APPROACHABLE LUXURIOUSNESS THAT'S IN LINE WITH THE CITY'S INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL CHARACTER.

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01, Tara Bernerd & Partners worked closely with Kajima Design to set back the façade of the building in order to create a seamless link between the garden and entrance.

Tokyo architecture firm Kajima Design and London-headquartered interior design practice Tara Bernerd & Partners teamed up to create the Zentis Osaka – a design-led hotel by Palace Hotel Management that opened its doors in July this year.

The 16-floor Zentis building includes 212 guestrooms that are each between 25m² and 57m², 27 one-bedroom apartments for lease, a reception lounge, fitness centre and UPSTAIRZ, the hotel's singular F&B outlet with dining, bar and lounge areas.

02. Locally sourced bricks were used in the reception lounge as an homage to the industrial heritage of Osaka's Dojimahama district where the hotel is located.





03. Stone, subtly inspired by Osaka Castle, was used for the sculptural staircase and concierge desk.

04. Open shelves with decorative objects give the lift foyer a homely appearance.



The architectural brief was for a city hotel with the look, feel and quality of an upscale, urban residence fringed with green spaces.

The total area allocated for the hotel programme was already pre-determined based on city regulations and the brief from the property's developer, Kanden Realty & Development.

Kajima Design was hired to incorporate the desired facility allocations and floor distributions requested by the property's leasee, Palace Hotel Management.

A STRUCTURED, GRID DESIGN

Kouichiro Shiomi, Group Leader at Kajima Design says, "Zentis Osaka's architectural design pays homage to the hotel's immediate location.

"The hotel borders the business district of Dojimahama, so we chose a grid design for the building's exterior as a nod to the very structured nature of business.

"The brick and glass façade on the first two levels complement and accentuate the abundant green space surrounding the building."

Shiomi and his team came up with a cloister-corridor type layout for the guestrooms floors. "This allows the flow of all activities to converge at the centre of each floor and for vertical routes such as lifts and stairs as well as various M&E components to be contained in this centre core.

"This layout also made it possible for all four sides of the building's façade to have an identical look."

05



05. UPSTAIRZ, the hotel's only F&B outlet, includes a dining, bar and lounge area with striking pendant lighting.

The Kajima Design team also took into account feedback and recommendations shared by Tara Bernerd & Partners, particularly suggestions about the architectural elements of the lower portion of the building's exterior because it was imperative for the two teams to work together to establish a seamless, natural flow between the interior and the exterior spaces.

Tara Bernerd, eponymous founder of her firm, says, "We worked closely with Kajima Design to set back the façade of the building, to create a seamless link between the garden and the interior of the hotel.

"Floor-to-ceiling windows on both the ground and first floors help establish this connection, while the outdoor terrace on the first floor provides easy access to the garden from the bar."

Bernerd and her team worked closely with the client and Kajima Design to maximise the benefit of the building's unique garden site, which is a rarity given its downtown location.

"The floor-to-ceiling windows in the public spaces emphasise the interplay with the outdoors, which was a pleasure to work with in our layouts and design," she says.

06



ZENTIS OSAKA

LOCATION
Osaka, Japan

COMPLETION
2020

BUILDING AREA
12,136m²

HOTEL GROSS FLOOR AREA
9,153m²

ARCHITECT
Kajima Design

INTERIOR DESIGN
Tara Bernerd & Partners

DEVELOPER
Kanden Realty & Development

HOTEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY
Palace Hotel Management Co. Ltd.

CONTRACTOR
Kajima Corporation

LANDSCAPE DESIGN
Media For Space

LUXURY WITH AN INDUSTRIAL EDGE

Bernerd – who is known for her hospitality projects that are approachably luxurious with an industrial edge – wove elements of Osaka's identity as a city into the hotel's interior design concept.

"From my very first visit to Osaka, I found the city to be a really intriguing. Osaka has a strong historical heritage but is also modern, vibrant and colourful.

"Craftsmanship and industrial heritage are key to the local culture and we have

sought to encapsulate both with a modern, forward-looking attitude through a mixture of materials from local brick to beautiful timbers and encaustic tiles," she says.

In the reception lounge, stone, which was subtly inspired by Osaka Castle, was used to create the sculptural staircase and concierge desk.

Locally sourced bricks were used to reference the area's industrial heritage, and these harmonise well with the encaustic tile inlaid floor in the centre of the lounge.

When designing UPSTAIRZ, which is

07



06. The semi-outdoor dining area of UPSTAIRZ is fringed with greenery.

07. Encaustic tiles were used for the floors of the public areas, contrasting against the mosaic of the table tops.



08. An outdoor terrace on the first floor provides easy access to the garden from the bar, itself a demonstration of Bernerd's style of approachable luxury with an industrial edge.

09-10. A bento box-style layout optimises functionality in the guestrooms, which were designed as practical and relaxing sanctuaries.



located one floor up from the entrance, Bernerd made the bar the focal point of the double height space by including fluted tiles from a local Japanese company on the front of the bar.

For the private dining room within the restaurant, she and her team used linen-inlaid glass privacy screens as an ode to traditional Japanese *shoji* screens.

In response to the compact size and scale of the guestrooms, Bernerd maximised the functionality and usage of space by developing the guestrooms like traditional Japanese bento boxes with interlocking layouts.

This helped optimise the limited floorplate and create a functional yet inviting sanctuary for guests. Traditional art on *washi* paper made by local artists adorn the guestrooms and public areas.

"It truly was a privilege to work with such an enthusiastic, professional and affable client and architects.

"There were relatively few challenges on this project as we had a great synergy with the client, who was very open to our design ideas and keen to adhere to timelines.

"The whole design process was extremely positive," says Bernerd.