WAINTERNATIONAL

CLAIRE CRAIG

Originality combines with experience in the work of WA International. Design director Claire Craig speaks to Can Faik about the challenges and triumphs of creating some of the finest hotel interiors in the world...

the hospitality market for over 20 years, WA 25 years International Dubai Interior Design Studio, has nurtured an award-winning reputation Have you noticed any particular trends in hotel design?

approach to each project: resulting in innovative and unique white, white fabrics, white woods, white marble etc. interior designs.

Their talented international interior design team brings a How important are public spaces in hotels? diversity of experience, fresh perspective and originality; I believe public spaces like the reception and lobby lounge to interior detail, the results speak for themselves.

Tell me about your role at WA International?

I am Design Director for WA International. I am involved in all our projects especially during planning and concept design With so many hospitality designers in the industry, how however; I also work very closely with our Project Managers

What five words would you use to describe WA International?

Avant-garde, Stylish, Passionate, Dynamic and Intuitive.

enowned for creating exquisite interiors for How long have you been involved with hotel design?

and established an enviable clientele with At the moment hotel interiors seem to be taking their lead longstanding relationships reflecting its from the latest fashion of mono chromatic colourschemes. superlative performance and commitment Black and white with possibly an accent finish such as gold to unique interiors. Abreast of the latest technology and or silver is very popular right now. We're presently designing trends in interior design, WA International provides a intelligent a hotel where our client has requested everything to be

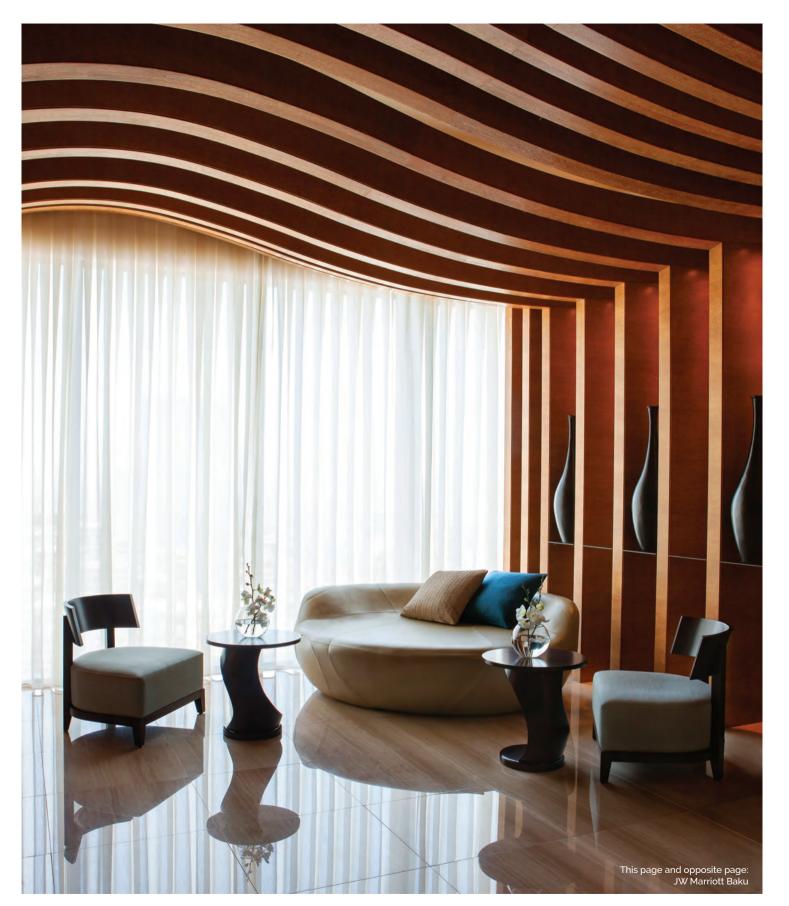
combined with technical expertise and extraordinary attention have become the heart of the hotel. Guests want to engage in all their activities from this space... from meeting with friends to having a quick bite to eat, catching up on emails, to holding an important business meeting.

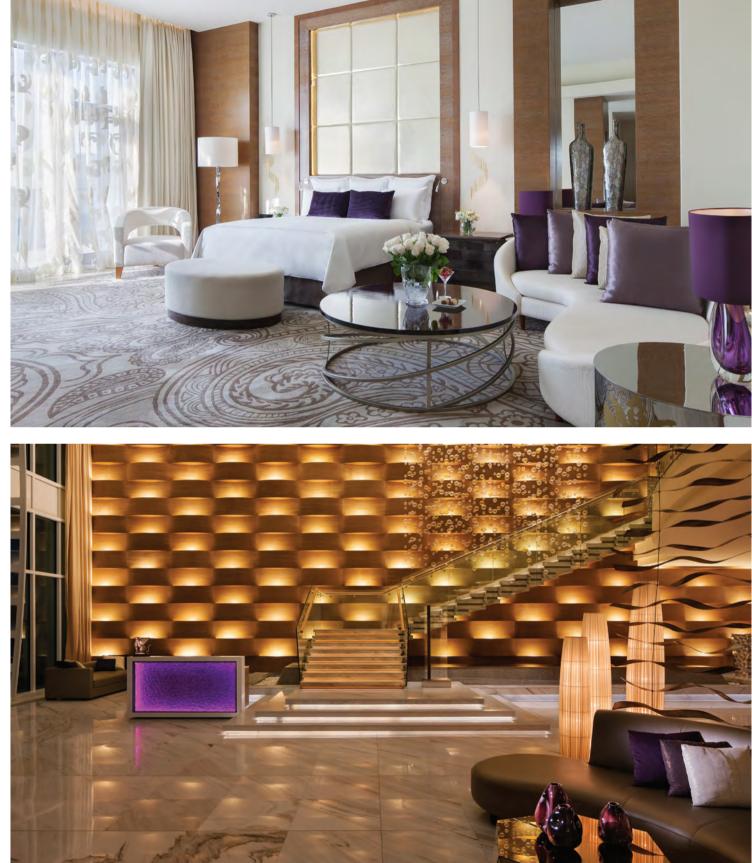
does WA International stand out from the rest?

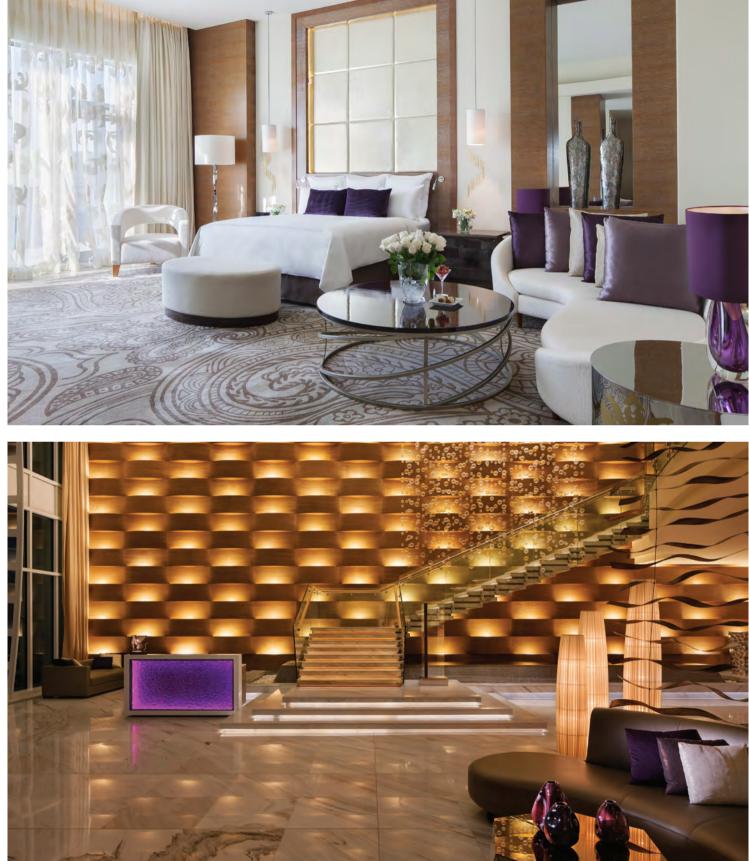
throughout the entire construction on site to final completion. The success of WA International can be attributed to our originality. We begin all our projects with intensive research into the DNA of its location. As a result we produce a strong narrative which is the backbone of our design philosophy for the project.











VISIONARIES | HEAD SPACE

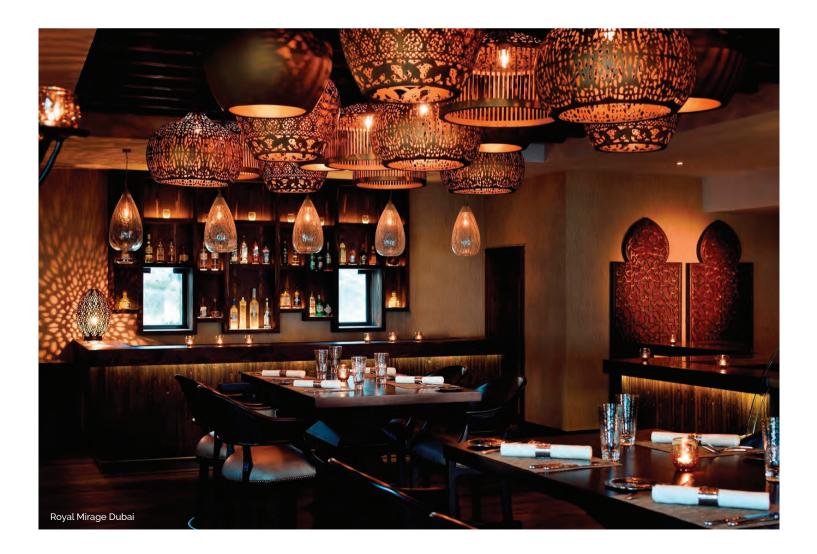
How is the current economic climate affecting the hotel design market? And has WA International felt the effects?

The present economic climate has had a somewhat negative effect on the hotel design market, however we are fortunate in Dubai and the region to have some lovely projects that are keeping us busy.

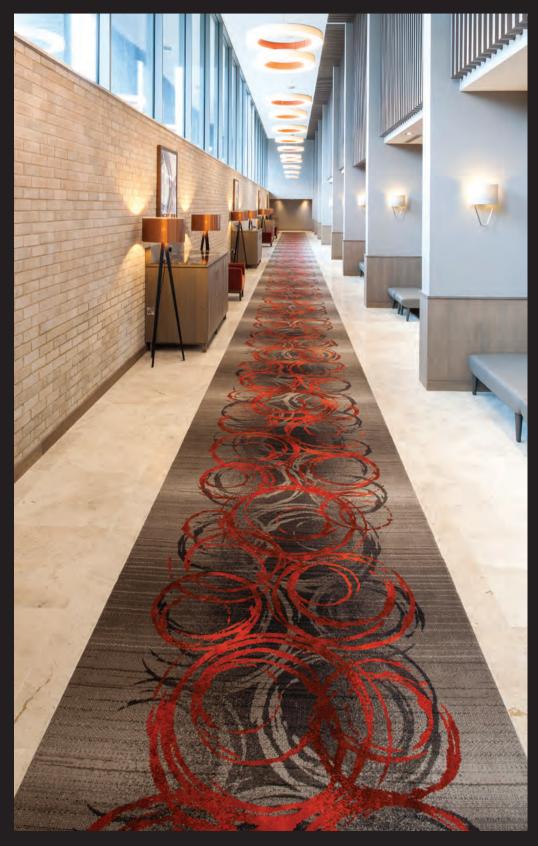
Being based in Dubai which hotels are you currently working on?

We are currently working on the Westin in Business Bay, an impressive property with 1,700 guestrooms, a Renaissance Hotel also in Business Bay, the interiors of the Dubai Opera House, a Hyatt Regency in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, serviced apartments in London as well as further refurbishment work on the One & Only Royal Mirage Dubai.

What is the biggest thing the company has learnt over its years in the industry? It is imperative that our team is kept up to date with the latest trends in all aspects of design, technology and renewability.



PSYLO[™] WEAVING TECHNOLOGY









Clayton Hotel Chiswick | Cunningham McLean | Parrott Photography



What has been your favourite project to date?

I know this will sound clichéd but I really can't pick out one single project as a favourite. There are "too many favourites" in our portfolio.

What's next for you?

We've been shortlisted for a couple of new projects in countries we haven't worked in before which is always very exciting.

What would be your dream hotel project?

I love working on destination properties in exotic places. The Park Hyatt Zanzibar which we opened last year definitely fits into a dream hotel project. Let's finish with the issue of personal and work life balance. How do you

Where currently ranks highest on your travel wish list?

We did a project in Argentina a couple of years ago, the Four Seasons in I am extremely fortunate to have a job I love and a fantastic team around me. Buenos Aires and I fell in love with the country. It would be great to see more of South America.

Where do you see hotel design in the future?

It is interesting today how hotel operators are redefining their brands. Guests are now able to choose a brand which fits into their desired lifestyle. It is our job to keep abreast of the latest industry trends and at the same time create interiors which continue to inspire.

What would you say are the three best places you've ever stayed? Four Seasons Safari Lodge, Serengeti Tanzania, Rimrock Resort Hotel, Banff Canada and of course one of ours One & Only the Palm, Dubai.

aim to achieve a good balance and what do those closest to you think of your attempts?

My personal and work life completely overlap as my work is so enjoyable.



wa-international.com





Since 1901 www.johnson-tiles.com