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Bespoke lighting by Chelsom

Custom Over-Bar Pendant and Bar-Top Lamps at Mr.C Coconut Grove, Miami. Designer: Martin Brudnizki Design Studio.

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Alex

LAKE ZÜRICH

Campbell Gray Hotels adds to its portfolio with a villa on the lake concept inspired by its surroundings.

Words: Donna Salek
Photography: © James McDonald

Often thought of solely as a financial hub, Zürich has long been mistaken as a destination primarily for travellers on business. Although indisputably a place of great corporate significance, the city has plenty to offer the leisure traveller, with its charming old town, rich arts and culture and growing dining scene. The natural surroundings of the city are something to be marvelled at too; the serene expanse of Lake Zürich is set against the backdrop of the Swiss Alps, and it's here that Gordon Campbell Gray has opened the latest property of his growing hotel collection.

With a prime position right on the water's edge, Alex is conceived as a villa on the lake, where sophisticated interiors complement spectacular views of the surrounding landscape. This could well be the last development of its kind following the introduction of stricter regulations that limit new construction here. The rules state that no building can be within 20 metres of the waterfront, but thanks to the presence of an existing hotel on site – just a

matter of feet from the jetty – locally-based Marazzi + Paul Architekten were granted permission to extend. Working closely with owners Corim AG and consultancy HoCoSo on feasibility, concept development and operator selection, the team has refurbished and expanded the former property to create a new destination that appeals to both those on business and those visiting for leisure.

Marazzi + Paul retained and restored the original 1950s façade, seamlessly adding a contemporary stone and glass structure to house the new facilities. "The idea was to create a hotel that looks like a villa on the lake," explains the studio's co-founder Renato Marazzi. However the proximity to the water brought its own set of challenges, and significant structural reinforcement was required to turn their vision into a reality.

Led by clean architectural lines with plenty of floor-to-ceiling windows, Marazzi + Paul sought to create a visual connection with the locale. "The main inspiration is the lake itself,

Maritime elegance permeates the hotel interiors through the use of navy and white colour palettes together with soft oak timber and brass detailing

the hotel's own marina and the views to the surrounding mountains," notes Marazzi. "Inside, boat-inspired elements such as its lighting, timber floor and cabinetry work are intended to create a connection with the landscape, while warm materials evoke the feeling of a private home."

Campbell Gray Hotels was appointed operator in 2018, and subsequently worked closely with the team on the design scheme. In comparison to the group's other properties such as Le Gray in Beirut, The Machrie on Islay and The Merchant House in Manama – where vibrant artworks and bold installations take centre stage – Alex is somewhat minimal. Creative direction was handed over to London-based studio Brady Williams, who intentionally opted for a pared-back scheme to maximise the lake views. "The brief we gave Brady Williams was for calm," says Gordon Campbell Gray. "Normally I inject a lot of colour and we have always worked on having a vibrant art collection, so in comparison, Alex is very subdued. We wanted to keep it peaceful." As a result, the art on display throughout Alex is minimalist and abstract, created by a host of Western and indigenous contemporary artists from Italy, Portugal, Serbia, USA and from the Zulu people of South Africa.

Upon entry, an open-plan ground floor leads

from the reception area into the lobby lounges and through to The Boathouse bar. Pale wooden flooring and joinery radiate warmth, whilst stone walls, white marble-topped tables and Scandi-style furnishings incorporate plush, high-quality materials into the scheme. "Given the hotel's location, we wanted to bring a nautical feel to the interiors, as though you're living on the water," Campbell Gray continues, adding that the hotel even has its own boat – a stylish XO 270 – to transport guests to and from the city. This maritime elegance permeates the hotel interiors through the use of navy and white colour palettes together with soft oak timber and brass detailing.

The bar is Art Deco in style, combining a soft pistachio-coloured backdrop and matching leather bar stools with a veined marble countertop, more metal hardware and globe-shaped light fixtures supplied by Chelsom – who also provided bespoke fittings throughout the hotel. At the heart of its F&B programme, The Boathouse restaurant serves a menu of locally sourced seasonal produce in a space surrounded by floor-to-ceiling windows offering panoramic lake views. Oak flooring continues throughout, whilst wooden and Aegean blue leather chairs alongside booths upholstered in grey knitted fabric are set at marble-topped tables. When





asked what he wanted to achieve with the dining offer, Campbell Gray reveals that attracting locals was just as important as appealing to guests. “We wanted to make sure that the public areas would be busy,” he explains. “With every hotel we open, we create spaces where locals like to go.” And they do. Stepping outside, it is not unusual to find the hotel terrace buzzing with those from the surrounding neighbourhood, enjoying al fresco drinking and dining – complete with firepit and blankets through the winter season. The design outside aligns with that inside, and the addition of patio armchairs with shells woven from brown rope give another subtle nod to the seafaring motif.

The hotel’s 44 guestrooms follow a soothing ambiance, with Brady Williams opting for quality finishes in calming colourways. Comfortable furniture and natural materials such as stone and timber once again connect guests to their surroundings, simultaneously creating a warm, residential feel. Dark blue kitchenettes in each room cater to long-stay

visitors, and bathrooms with cobalt and dove grey tiling are accessorised with hints of brass to add further nautical touches. Ranging in size from studio to penthouse, every suite is spacious and comprises floor-to-ceiling French windows that maximise natural daylight and open onto balconies overlooking the lake.

A luxury contemporary hotel like Alex is not a common find on Lake Zürich, and given the restraints on construction in the region, it seems there may not be anything similar to emerge in the foreseeable future. “This hotel is quite unique,” concludes Campbell Gray. “Switzerland is a traditional country and so to do anything like this here is different. We didn’t want the hotel to be too old-fashioned or too modern. We just wanted to keep it clean-cut, elegant and sophisticated.”



EXPRESS CHECK-OUT

Owner: Corim AG

Operator: Campbell Gray Hotels

Architecture: Marazzi + Paul Architekten

Interior Design: Brady Williams

Landscaping: Atelier Verde

www.campbellgrayhotels.com

COLLABORATION

The Hakwood Collection by Kelly Hoppen Hakwood

Having applied her signature style to hotels, cruise ships, spas and restaurants across the globe, British designer Kelly Hoppen MBE has now teamed up with Hakwood to take on the tile market. Launched in celebration of the brand's 40th anniversary, The Hakwood Collection by Kelly Hoppen is built around simplicity, colour and shape, comprising six interchangeable designs: Line, which features linear metal dashes set upon neutral, colour washed wood; Cube, which subtly combines natural and industrial tones with four metal corner cubes set against a backdrop of the finest wood; and Signature, an Art Deco-inspired style that plays with illusion, structure and shadow. Adding to that are the Grid tile, which features a canvas of vertical strips in varying dimensions; Square, a contemporary optical illusion that explores the aesthetic and architecture of squares through classic colours; and V, which nods to the traditional herringbone pattern by blending diagonal slats into a unique jigsaw to create a striking V shape. Each design is available in a range of colours including Fossil, Silver, Mineral, Basalt, Bronze, Flint and Chalk.

www.hakwood.com



CASE STUDY

Mr. C Coconut Grove Chelsom

Chelsom has collaborated with Martin Brudnizki Design Studio to create a bespoke lighting scheme for the guestrooms and public areas of Mr.C Coconut Grove in Miami. In the reception, lobby and Bellini's – the main restaurant and bar area – a selection of Art Deco-inspired fittings include delicate glass wall lights with brass detailing and decorative table lamps featuring domed glass shades, with brass metalwork adorning banquet seating and coupled with classic brass picture lights to frame various artworks. Toadstool shaped lights with perforated brass shades adorn the bar area and complement a statement pendant above, while an oversized shade-style pendant in cream with brass trim detail is suspended from a canopy. In the guestrooms meanwhile, bespoke ceiling pendants encompass six opal glass globes branching out from a central stem, with larger double-tiered versions (seen here) installed in the suites. Elsewhere, elegant floor lamps in brushed brass are paired with tapered cylindrical shades in cream linen.

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