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## **Interview with Marcel Wanders, Hospitality Design Magazine, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014**

**1) Is it important that Kameha Grand Zurich should feel rooted in its destination and that the design should reflect Swiss culture and way of life?**

MW - Yes, Zurich has always been a central place for art, culture and luxury. The refined and colourful nature of the city makes it the perfect place to bring our bold and festive design style. Our aim is always to incorporate the local elements into our designs as we want to give travellers and residents a clear sense of where they are when they arrive. The design is also characterized by a sense of respect for the past, and we wanted to bring out the emotion and theatricality of the destination in the interiors for the Kameha Grand Zurich. There are all sorts of details referencing the prevalent industries and personalities of Switzerland, such as the chocolate-patterned wall panelling, mini-bars that look like safes, lamps resembling oversized cow-bells, among many others.

**2) The press release refers to your wish to 'reunite designer, craftsperson and user' – how does this project achieve that aim?**

MW - Just as it is important to unite the design of the interior to the heritage of the location, so too should visitors feel a sense of belonging and experience the story we are telling. We want the user to understand the language of our studio and have a tactile sense of the craftsmanship in the textures, materials and designs. Filigree laser-cut wooden panels, the metal work of the wall covered in coin-shaped elements, and customized wallpapers all tell a story about the heritage of Zurich.

**3) Have you custom designed all the furniture, fixtures and fittings for the project?**

MW - Almost everything in the project is custom designed in some way. We pay close attention to every detail, and much of the furniture, upholstery, patterns and other elements are custom designed for the Kameha Grand Zurich, which includes all the examples I mentioned earlier. In addition, we use many signature elements and iconic pieces to complete our design.

**4) Of the individually themed suites, which do you think is the most evocative from a design point of view and why?**

MW - There are 11 themed suites, and it is difficult to pick just one. There is so much richness in every room and they are all so different. But that is the beauty of it! There is a Poker Face suite with an actual roulette table as well as a Fair Play suite with a billiard table, dart board, and board games. Then there is the Serenity suite which has a yoga mat and scented candles, and the Workout suite with a treadmill and bench. You can feel like a movie star in the Diva suite. Or maybe contemplate in the Watchmaker suite, which we designed in cooperation with a Swiss watch maker. Each suite is designed for the specific wishes of the guests, but I would love to stay in all of them.

**5) Usually events and meeting spaces in hotels are boring – how have you avoided this at the Kameha Dome?**

MW - It is easy to have conservative ideas when designing a space that will have multiple uses. Instead we made the Kameha Event Dome more like a grand ballroom than a standard event space. It measures 701 square meters and is lined with classical red velvet curtains with chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, while the floor is made up of black and white tiles in a large version of the Kameha Grand logo: a pattern of flowers and tulips interlaced through branches. It is an extraordinary setting for exhibitions, fashion shows, motor shows and conferences.

**6) Are there any design features, materials or fabrics that harmonise or unify the design throughout the property?**

MW - Yes, besides the unifying signature elements, the locally inspired designs such as the chocolate pattern are seen throughout the hotel. walls, floors and ceilings share colors, lines, motifs and materials. The cast iron bells are also prominently featured in the lobby, the restaurants, and the rooms.

**7) Can you tell us more about the ceiling and walls at Yu Nijyo? What do they represent?**

MW - The Yu Nijyo is a Japanese fine dining restaurant where you can enjoy traditional Japanese specialties with modern variations. The design is meant to match the theme of culinary authenticity and modern sensibility. It is a place to take time out and relax. The ceilings are modelled according to the size of the tatami matt, which is found in all traditional Japanese houses. The walls are laser-cut wooden panels that depict stories of geishas, blossom trees and other symbols. You can also find ceiling lamps that look like bird cages. The oversized Bonshō bells in this restaurant combine Japanese design with the Swiss bell theme present in the rest of the hotel.

**8) Why the departure from Swiss-inspired elements at the Shisha Lounge – where else does the design evoke places beyond Switzerland and why?**

MW - Zurich is historically a centre for global financial traffic. With the location at Glattpark and its emphasis on the needs of business people with its stylish event locations, Kameha Grand Zurich serves as a meeting place for people of multi-cultural backgrounds. We wanted to respect this aspect of the hotel in the overall concept. The Middle Eastern suite and Shisha Lounge have arrows in the ceiling oriented towards Mecca and other elements inspired by Middle Eastern design. Besides the Japanese restaurant, there is also an Italian restaurant with a modern atmosphere, while the Smoker's Lounge is dressed with English-style arm-chairs where you can enjoy cigars from Cuba and the Dominican Republic. We wanted to bring in as much inspiration from the surrounding area and culture into our design, and combined this with international influences to create an excitingly varied and seductive interior design.

Please credit: Kameha Grand Zurich, by Marcel Wanders, [www.marcelwanders.com](http://www.marcelwanders.com)

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