



Design

The Gallery HBA London has crafted an interior design concept for the Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah that immerses guests in an ambience woven from the ancient history, tradition and culture of the UAE. Envisioned as an escape from the windswept desert sand dunes to the tranquil waters of the Arabian Sea, the light-filled spaces of the Waldorf Astoria evoke calmness and serenity.

The Lobby

The lobby's design and palette are derived from the centuries-old practice of pearl diving in the islands' sparkling waters. Behind the reception desks, framed wall panels recall the colours of the sea; covered in turquoise silk, they have been meticulously hand-stitched with sequins in a flowing wave pattern. In the centre of the lobby lies the "pearl" of the hotel itself, an iconic clock based upon the ancient astrolabe, which was used to discern the exact prayer times in the Islamic faith. Modelled on a compass, the clock's faces are decorated with turquoise glass accents and the clock has been engraved with a cherished phrase extracted from a traditional Bedouin poem, "From your homeland travel abroad to find glory". As the largest of its kind in the world, the clock will be an attraction for visitors in its own right. Each and every Waldorf Astoria hotel around the globe has a clock as one of its signature attributes.

In addition to displaying three specially commissioned sepia-toned sketches of the Sheikhs, including the ruler of Ras al Khaimah, Sheikh Al Qasimi, the lobby has bespoke artwork conjuring-up the underwater world of divers. British artist Ann Carrington has created four pieces expressly for the hotel, works made entirely from mother-of-pearl buttons that have been sewn in the pattern of fan coral onto taupe silk. Further along the ground level is a calligraphy collection in Kufic, the earliest form of Arabic script that was used to write the first copies of the Qur'an.

Peacock Alley

Flowing from the lobby is Peacock Alley, a signature lounge found in all Waldorf Astoria hotels. Here, the design mixes local touches with contemporary style inspired by the brand's New York City flagship. A ring of banquettes encircle a tiered, marble fountain, a spectacular chandelier with handcrafted glass elements suggest stylised peacock feathers is the centre piece. Intricate geometric paper sculptures formed from barley straw with flax fibres and gold leaf have been especially commissioned from artist Gill Wilson.

Camelia

At Camelia, vibrant shades of amethyst and playful accents paint a fresh and contemporary twist on traditional Middle Eastern tea and shisha lounges. Its delicate, feminine style has been modelled after dainty Arabic pastries and the exquisite patterns found on timber boxes of tea

Lexington Grill

The handsome Lexington Grill is based upon fashionable US steakhouses. Strong textures and dynamic materials help convey the masculine atmosphere of a classic New York steakhouse: deep Carnelian red marble flooring with white veining alludes to the meaty cuisine on offer; table tops have been inset with hammered copper, and banquettes have been upholstered with burgundy and cream leather embossed with a crocodile hide pattern. Contemporary art adds to the moody vibe with sculptures created from copper woven with synthetic horse hair intrigue with glints of light as they interpret age-old materials in a new way. A collection of very detailed, high-contrast black and white images of musical instruments were commissioned from photographer Peter Defty to reinforce the space's association with sophisticated jazz found in New York City.

Qasr al Bahar

Qasr al Bahar offers guests dining in a cool, light-filled setting. The fresh and airy décor borrows from the verdant gardens which surround the restaurant's outdoor terraces, in particular the herb mint. Abstractions of mint leaves can be seen in the overhead lighting detail, while the artwork depicts delicate varieties of seaweed.

Marjan

With private nooks that can be enclosed for more intimate dining experiences, Marjan has an exclusive panache influenced by ancient Islamic patterns and designs. The juxtaposition between the traditional and the contemporary is emphasised by furnishings that blend function with artistry, for example a locally crafted chandelier made from bronze spheres in varying sizes, and the serving tables' bases which appear to be entwined threads of gold. Balcony seating on the upper levels looks onto the idyllic panorama of the coastline. Striking contemporary artwork by artist Sasan Nasernia depicts abstracted Arabic calligraphy.

17Squared

With 360° views of the Ras al Khaimah skyline from the 17th floor, the glamorous evening venue 17Squared is where the city's fabulous come to dance the night away. Fittingly, the décor is draped in "effortless" opulence, with swathes of crystals that swing languidly from the chandeliers, plush leather seating and delicate golden touches inspired by Champagne.

Azure and Al Fayrouz

Outdoors, Azure is a more relaxed affair. Woven wicker chairs and pendant lights, pale timber surfaces and tropical foliage create a casual vibe. The swim-up-bar is sundowner central, with lounge chairs that overlook the shoreline to form the perfect chill-out spot. At the infinity pool, Al Fayrouz takes on an art deco vibe and is finished in striking black and white designs.

Waldorf Astoria Spa

The sumptuous spa has been imagined by The Gallery to capture the essence of floating underwater. This peaceful serenity is felt throughout the spa journey, intended to enliven the senses whilst instilling deep levels of wellbeing. Using rounded shapes and a sinuous spatial flow to immediately relax the body, the reception and retail spaces establish a dramatic sense of arrival. Typical treatment rooms play with light and shadow to create a warm, inviting mood; backlit curved coved ceilings emit a gentle glow, and soft sheers filter the illumination from the private outdoor garden with its bubbling water feature. The couples treatment room is the ultimate in pampering with a luxurious sunken Jacuzzi for couples, individual vanity counters and, next to the massage tables, a large sofa for reclining. Overhead, a backlit, floating cascade of organically shaped "bubbles" creates the sensation of looking upwards from under the tranquil waters.

Rooms and Suites

The hotel's bedrooms continue the concept of being a waterside oasis from the desert. Neutral toned textiles set a soothing tone, punctuated by splashes of turquoise such as the scrolled lines of the wool carpet and the swirled, handmade solid glass spheres which sit atop the timber headboards. Individually carved by woodworkers, these have a circular Islamic pattern custom-designed by The Gallery.

The suites have been designed to provide exclusive guests with the utmost in privacy. Lavish finishes abound; a grand white marble staircase with a dramatic black balustrade evokes the glamour of Chanel; in the bedrooms, bespoke headboards are adorned with mother-of-pearl inlays; and contemporary art mixes with traditional Islamic detailing. Located on the hotel's uppermost levels, each suite enjoys spectacular views from its private balconies.

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