

A New Milestone Of Innovation

It is said that Singapore is a place where – within a day or two, you can understand the sense and spirit of what it means to be a Singaporean. But that doesn't work for me anymore. Today, visitors can instantly feel the buzz from the city and its inhabitants as mega-buildings reach for the sky and the future while centuries old buildings keep the city tied to its rich and historic past.



This was my second trip to Singapore and on both occasions I have seen modern developments, plus a large number of new and amazing tourist destinations and attractions. This has been made possible, in part, thanks to foreign investment and it is this development that leaves a lasting impression on visitors, including me since my first visit four years ago.

The latest modern splendour is Marina Bay Sands, an integrated hotel and resort that brings another layer of architectural beauty to Singapore. It is also an important milestone for the parent company Las Vegas Sands Corp, the world's top-flight casino resort company, as it helps enhance the travel experience to Singapore. I took time out with my photographer to spend a few days exploring a stunning design that symbolises a new gateway for Singapore to maximise the unmatched luxury leisure experience in entertainment, business and shopping all under one roof.

As I waited to check-in, my mind was awash as I tried hard to find a sentence fitting enough to describe the lobby I was standing in. Words such as gigantic, stunning, incredible, creative, splendid, flowed like water through a showerhead, spraying my head with catchy headlines. The lobby was certainly the busiest part of the hotel and it is here that guests are first introduced to the luxury modernity and upscale service awaiting them. I am sure this welcoming will be a hit with millions of visitors from around the world and further strengthen Singapore's hand as the centre of Southeast Asia.



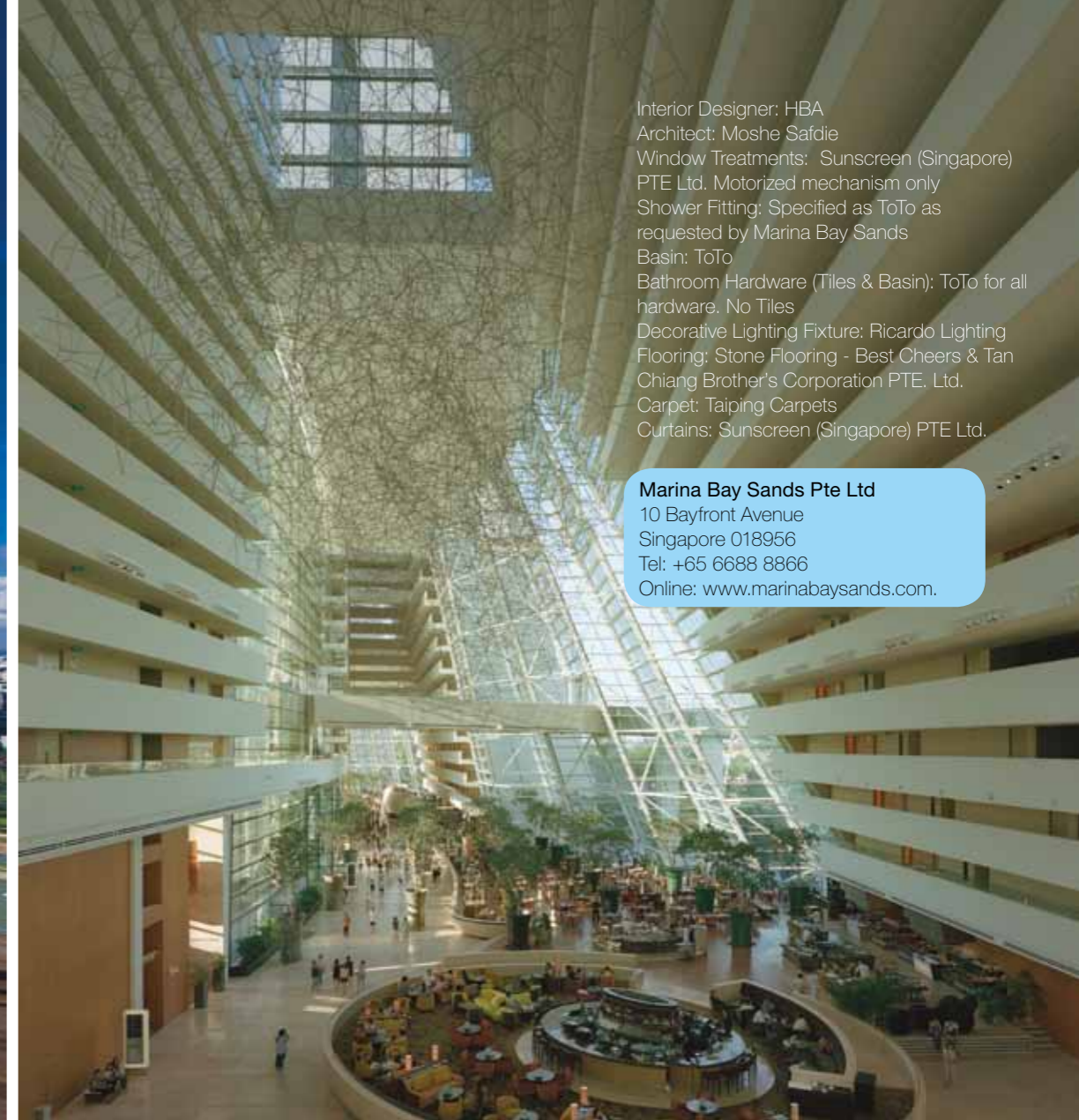
Marina Bay Sands is actually a result of a global endeavor. The design team of Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA), a global leader in hospitality interior design, worked in close collaboration with internationally renowned architect Moshe Safdie to deliver one of the most stunning leisure and convention venues in the world. HBA was tasked with coming up with an interior design for the guest rooms as well as creating an area to host meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) events. The aim is to catapult the reputation of Marina Bay Sands as the gaming and convention destination in Southeast Asia and to fulfill the vision of a truly integrated resort.

The hotel has attracted a lot of attention due to the challenging design of its three towers, which form the image of a Chinese character. The eastern towers slope to a maximum of 52 degrees and at 70 metres or the 23rd floor connect to the main towers, which then extends to higher floors or the 55th storey. The curving shape of the towers presented HBA with the opportunity to create more than 100 different room types that are finished in different shapes.

The entire complex is finished to maximise a dramatic transformation between day and night as characterised by the graceful curves and the extensive use of windows and atriums. As a result, night and day at the Marina Bay Sands will create totally different experiences for the guests as well as to maintain harmony within the complex. All guest rooms are similarly designed to evoke a harmony among the various spaces and also to stress the integral part of the architecture.

The three innovative hotel towers house a total of 2,561 guest rooms and the icon of the hotel at the summit is the Sands SkyPark, an outstanding recreational surfboard-shaped terrace connecting the three buildings. The SkyPark is, at 343-metres wide, twice the size of a football field and features the unique





Interior Designer: HBA
 Architect: Moshe Safdie
 Window Treatments: Sunscreen (Singapore) PTE Ltd. Motorized mechanism only
 Shower Fitting: Specified as ToTo as requested by Marina Bay Sands
 Basin: ToTo
 Bathroom Hardware (Tiles & Basin): ToTo for all hardware. No Tiles
 Decorative Lighting Fixture: Ricardo Lighting
 Flooring: Stone Flooring - Best Cheers & Tan Chiang Brother's Corporation PTE. Ltd.
 Carpet: Taiping Carpets
 Curtains: Sunscreen (Singapore) PTE Ltd.

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infinity-edge swimming pool, a garden, public observation deck and restaurants. The total amount of steel used in the construction of Marina Bay Sands was more than 43,000 tons, which is enough to go around the world twice.

Marina Bay Sands is a much-awaited project for the people of Singapore and features a wide array of world-class shopping, dining, gaming and entertainment outlets as well as other cutting-edge attributes at the gigantic SkyPark. However, the guest rooms and suites offer nothing new for the discerning traveller who can find similar comfort in other international hotels.


Here the guest rooms come in two main categories: City Rooms and Garden Rooms. Singapore features so significantly in the design of the rooms, HBA used tactile materials, sleek angles and minimal decoration to create contemporary, tranquil interiors. City Rooms are oriented to magnify the impact of the already magnificent skyline views with beds facing the city. Vibrant colours and smooth, clean lines are accentuated with lustrous dark wood finishes and sophisticated fabrics like mohair to enhance the emotions of the view.

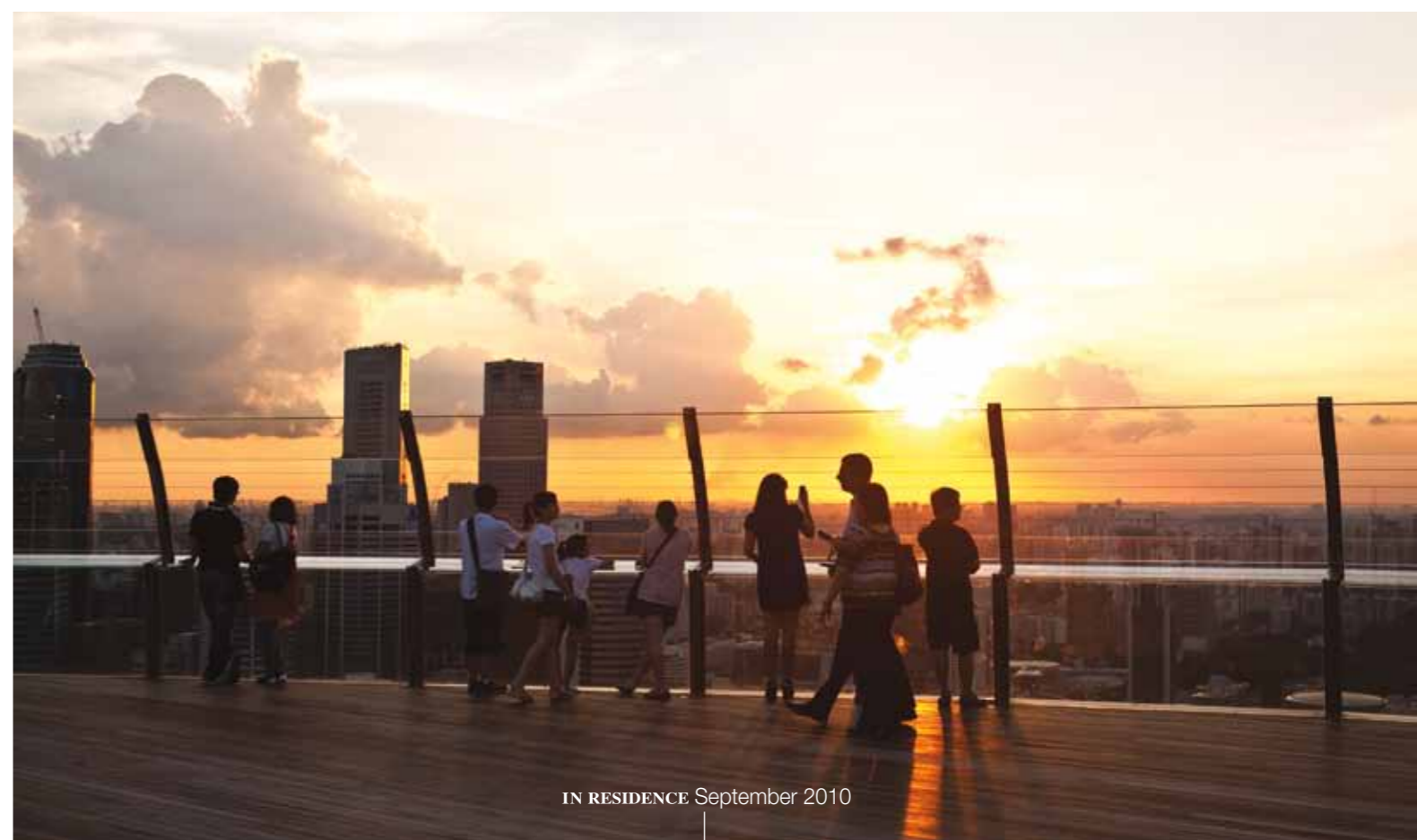
As for Garden Rooms, they feature lush, plant-lined balconies facing a splendid garden below. Inspired by the garden city of Singapore, Garden Rooms seek to merge interior and exterior as if brining the garden into the room to celebrate and integrate with nature. They are finished throughout with soft materials, light woods, textures, natural colours and materials. As in the city facing rooms, lighting is an important design element of the Garden Rooms as well to create a soothing atmosphere for this hotel resort.

I found nothing truly outstanding in my room on the 45th floor; just what you would expect to find in any five-star hotel. During my stay, I was given a tour of the exclusive Straits Suite, a magnificently designed suite that offers families contemporary comfort, stylish décor and plenty of space. The suite incorporates a list of unique features like a king-size bed, second bedroom with twin beds, living area equipped with baby grand piano, a dining area, pantry with fridge and microwave, a powder and saloon room, fitness and massage room and a complete set of daily

necessaries. This suite is where the highest standards of comfort are rendered in local materials, elements and details.

Aside from normal guest rooms, HBA also designed the various suites, which are situated on the higher floors and command truly amazing views on both sides of the building. Suites spread across the towers' width, offer both city and garden views. The suites reflect a high degree of luxury and are in contrast to the minimalism found in regular guest rooms. Each suite is opulent in detail, rich in colour and glamorous in material, bringing together international influences such as Italian stone and iconic European furniture.

HBA rose to the challenge of turning 1.2 million square feet of open space in to more than just a remarkable modern icon for Singapore. The design team achieved this through patterning, textures and employing familiar natural and cultural influences from China, India, Southeast Asia and Europe and today the hotel boasts what might be the largest MICE space in the world. 



Unpredictable

Designs In The Making



Singapura Suite's Living Room



Ilija Karlusic

Last month I took time out to visit what's billed as the latest innovation in stunning architecture and noticeable ideas in design, which is quickly making the Marina Bay Sands in Singapore one of the world's newest landmarks. Developed by Las Vegas Sands Corp, the integrated entertainment and casino property is a unique project completed with the cooperation of world renowned architect Moshe Safdie and Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA), a famous interior design company that was responsible for guest rooms and the MICE space.

Actually it was a truly global endeavor with HBA's design team working in close collaboration with internationally renowned architect Moshe Safdie to deliver one of the most stunning leisure and convention venues ever conceived. The integrated teams realised a cohesive contemporary vision that is a

microcosm of Singapore and a monument to the power of design.

"It was an exciting moment when we (HBA) secured the deal with Moshe Safdie. The brief was to deliver an interior architecture for the guest rooms and MICE space that would complement and extend the reputation

of Marina Bay Sands as the gaming and convention destination in Southeast Asia. Knowing the reputation of Safdie and the impact this landmark structure would have, not only on Singapore, but across the work was quite something. It is an architectural feat and one we are proud and honoured to

have been a part of. We were, and still are, very inspired by Moshe's work and feel privileged to work alongside him on one of the most iconic buildings in the world," jointly say Ilija Karlusic, Principal of HBA, Hong Kong and Alicia Loo, Principal of HBA, Los Angeles.

"It was a mutually appreciative and successful relationship. To ensure a strong design, HBA stepped out of its operational norms, establishing an intimate working relationship with Safdie and his team to fulfill the entire vision of a truly integrated resort. The whole process has kept both parties in close contact, harmonising everything from materials and patterns to textures and finishes during the conceptualisation stage, which alone lasted 14 months."

According to HBA, the integrated resort is a microcosm of Singapore itself, blending stylish sophistication and lush natural beauty. Singapore is very much a garden city and the idea of nature and city coming together provided a unique opportunity. The island is simultaneously a sleek and modern city and an oasis of green space and ocean. The overall design reflects an up tempo and yet serene mood. In each room, the highest standards of comfort are rendered in local materials, elements and details. Given the full wall of windows, each room — and the entire resort as well — transforms from day to night.



Orchid Suite



Pool Table at Chairman Suite



Presidential Suite

"Generally speaking I usually take Feng Shui into consideration such as the flow of energies and spatial forces when it comes to designing interiors. Whether this is directly related to Feng Shui I wouldn't be able to answer that for sure but I do know there is a relation to a certain extent. I personally very much consider these spatial forces, human energies and the movement and interactions of volumes and how humans interact with these energies when designing interiors," says Karlusic.

Each room is oriented to magnify the impact of the already magnificent skyline views. Vibrant colours and smooth, clean lines are accentuated with lustrous dark wood finishes and sophisticated fabrics. The effect is to give one type of room a playful, urban resort feel that helps create a captivating ambience, enduring interest and personality of guests.

"HBA's international presence, depth of experience and detailed industry knowledge enabled us to identify interior design trends at their source, make definitive predictions about new directions and innovations and influence design standards at a global level. From continent to continent, each Hirsch Bedner interior is the result of a unique and sensitive response to location, architecture and client vision," stresses Karlusic and Alicia Loo.

"We always keep in mind that our design is governed by sophisticated travellers. To accomplish and complement the exclusivity and characteristic of a property, the designer team would conduct a series of research and brainstorming sessions in order to create the best a property has to offer.

"We provide a comprehensive package of interior design services that follows a project from planning through to implementation. We are philosophically open to new influences in technology and sustainability, pushing the aesthetic envelope to give our projects the strong, inspired identities that originally shattered all preconceived notions of standardisation and revolutionised the practice of hotel design," says Alicia Loo.

As for the design of the Presidential and Chairman Suites, Kathleen Dauber, Principal of HBA, Los Angeles, added that the main focus is to cater to six-star luxury. The most significance element of the design is the views. These suites are located on the upper floors of the buildings and present occupants with unparalleled views of Singapore. Every room focuses on the view and many of the baths are located on an exterior wall to give unobstructed views of Singapore by day and by night. The theme of the two most opulent suites is contemporary luxury warmed with natural woods and rich textures. A sense of extreme comfort is conveyed through the spaciousness and unique amenities found in these VIP suites. The colour palettes vary from suite to suite to create a different ambience in each. They range from sky blue and brown to cool gold and red.

In addition, unique textured handmade carpets are used throughout the suites and are custom designed by HBA. There is a continuing thread of inspiration from



Kathleen Dauber

nature throughout and this can be seen in the loose and flowing carpet patterns. The fabrics and woods used are richly textured and stained while upholstered walls are used in the media rooms and at the headboard walls in the bedrooms to create a cocoon-like feel and add sound absorption so extraneous sounds are absorbed and cannot be heard.

"Although every designer has his / her own style, it is vital to understand the brief and be able to create and accomplish the design to complement the overall presentation of the property. It is fundamental to understand the background information of a property from different aspects from a big picture such as geography of location, weather, nature and cultures to people, colours, taste; the smallest aspect one could imagine. All these elements play important role to plan and conceptualise a design," says Kathleen.

"We have been guided by the HBA philosophy of creating a sense of place: a well-designed and integrated package of fantasy, drama and creature comfort delivered on time and within budget. We are enthused to create inspired, brand-strengthening design experience that evokes a distinct sense of place, while delighting the world's most discriminating travellers. Our ultimate objective is to add value, raise standards and enhance the brand of a project's owner and operator," she adds.

"The suites have been designed to have a grand sense of space. There is a formal entry opening on to the first of two living rooms. The floor to ceiling height of the suites is grand and windows wrap the space with views back toward Singapore and also out to the bay. The ceiling design is also quite unique. It is a multi-height ceiling with individual ceiling planes which are floated off the ceiling creating a multi-faceted ceiling plane accent with antique silver leaf at random locations. The goal was to create a seamless concept with no design elements having a louder voice than any others," says Kathleen.

Special thanks to:
Ilija Karlusic, Principal of HBA, Hong Kong
Alicia Loo, Principal of HBA, Los Angeles
Kathleen Dauber, Principal of HBA, Los Angeles



Chairman Suite's Main Bathroom