

HOSPITALITY

Marcel Wanders designed the **Kameha Grand Zurich**, an Autograph Collection hotel for the Marriott brand, with a wide range of bespoke details and finishes. Having fun with the local context, Wanders whimsically portrayed gold and chocolate in a variety of interior treatments.



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Kameha Grand Zurich

Designer **Marcel Wanders**

Client **Marriott**

Where **Zurich**

What **Hotel with 245 total
guestrooms and suites on
seven floors**

Cost/sf **Withheld
at client's request**

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In the lobby (left), carpets produced by Wanders's company Moooi are inspired by Swiss banknotes. Light shades evoke cow bells, and the columns simulate vases. In the lobby bar lounge (below right), the legendary gold of Zurich appears in the mock coin rugs that define seating areas. The restaurant L'Unico (below left) features padded booths and a ceiling installation that looks like a suspended ceramic dish.

Bankers set the tone in Zurich, a city of sober buildings with a serious dedication to wealth. But it has not always been so proper. A century ago, it was the birthplace of Dada, a subversive art movement that mocked bourgeois values. Today, Dutch designer Marcel Wanders has channeled that spirit of irreverence in the interiors of the Kameha Grand Zurich hotel. Behind the sleek facade of this new hotel is a wonderland of extravagant invention.

"The challenge is to make something that is interestingly different and feels like the place you've flown to," says Wanders, who has designed five one-of-a-kind hotels in locations from Miami Beach to Istanbul. "Authenticity is super-important in design. If it doesn't resonate with the surroundings it feels artificial."

Surprises and beauty, like an opera

Wanders was trained as a product designer and is best known for his quirky furniture. Interiors require a different approach, though. Here, in a nod to the familiar, light fixtures are shaped like cowbells, walls resemble bars of chocolate, and minibars mimic safes. "A hotel should be a destination, full of surprises and beauty," Wanders says. "You have to design it as though you were creating an opera, with musical notes and dramatic scenes, entrances and exits, a beginning and an end. It has to be alive, and work as well on Monday morning as on Friday night. We are selecting not one idea but assembling a puzzle from a hundred varied pieces, chosen from an infinity of possibilities."

Although not appearing like a Marriott, this is the brand's first Autograph Collection hotel



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in Switzerland. It is also Wanders's second collaboration with hotelier Carsten Rath, following the **Kameha Grand** in Bonn. Both Wanders and Rath believe in giving guests a memorable experience that they will talk about—a place that will entertain, inspire, and stimulate.

Like the overture to an opera, the lobby anticipates the extravaganza that follows. Carpet motifs are derived from Swiss bank notes and padded walls are embellished with golden keys. Columns are shaped like vases, complementing the hotel logo of interlaced tulips and branches. Rotating dials, coils, and springs are depicted in a lenticular artwork that appears to be in motion as one walks past it. A staircase leads up to the **Kameha Dome**, an expansive skylit meeting room, in which the black and white geometry of the tiled floor contrasts with the draped red plush curtains and ornate chandeliers.

Other public spaces offer a similar juxtaposition between the exuberant and the refined. In the cheerful, light-filled Italian restaurant, **L'Unico**, padded booths are lit from a suspended ceramic dish that might serve as a giant's pasta bowl, and the varied patterns of the tiled walls are reprised in the table tops. The Japanese restaurant **Yu Nijyo**, by contrast,

Low tables catch gleams of light and a red curtain throws a backlit fretted screen into relief in the **Yu Nijyo** Japanese restaurant (above). The **Shisha Lounge** (opposite, bottom) evokes an Arabian Nights fantasy with Turkish rugs, low sofas, and hookahs. A sanctum for cigar smokers, the **Club Lounge** (opposite, top) features tufted leather chairs and backlit shelves.



Key Design Highlights

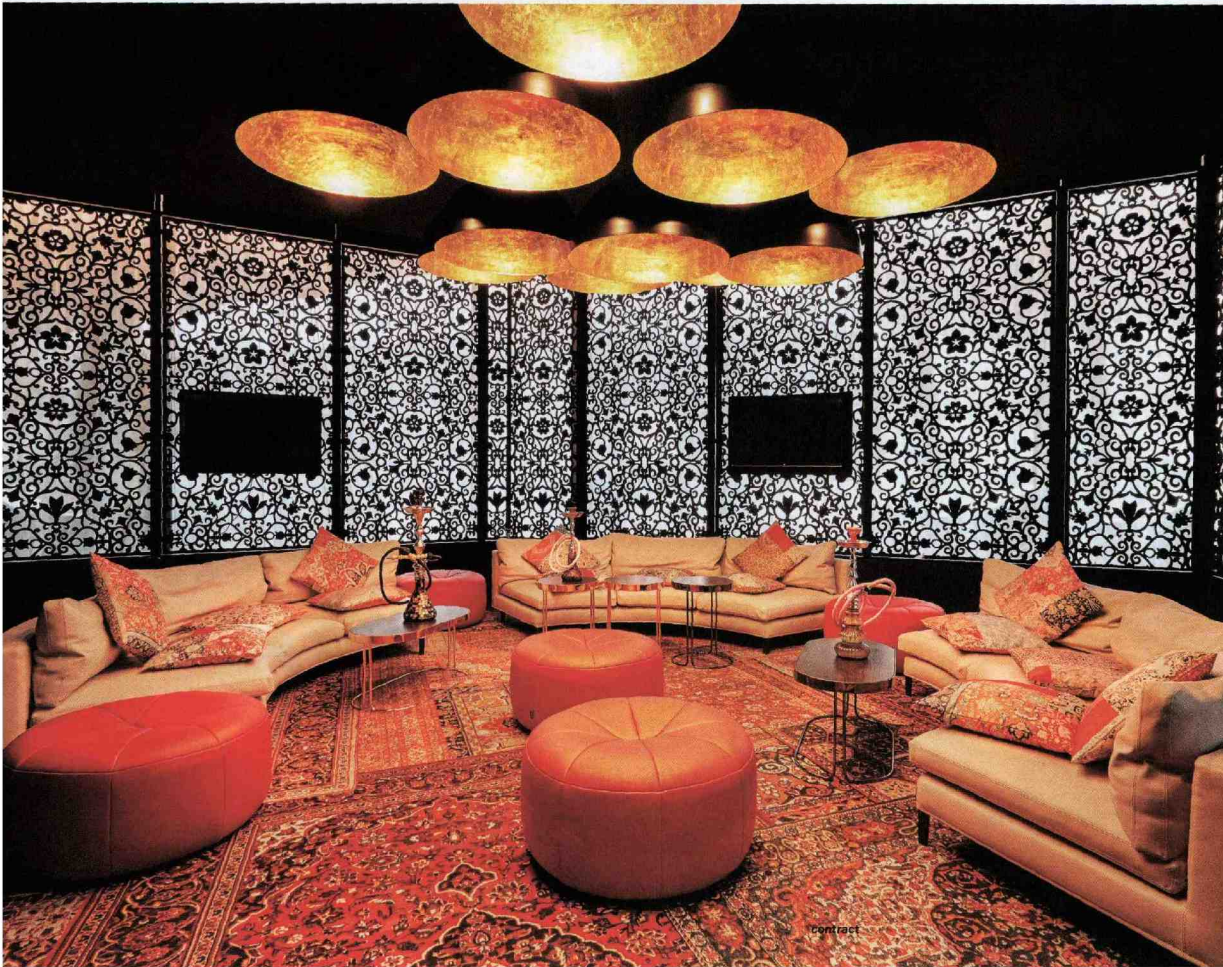
Public spaces contrast the exuberant and the refined.

Quirky furnishings and details designed by Marcel Wanders echo Swiss motifs, including cow-ball-shaped light fixtures, walls that look like bars of chocolate, and minibars that mimic safes.

A range of themed lounges and restaurants is designed to cultivate fantastical and unique atmospheres.

The guestrooms include 11 themed suites that are tailored to the diverse tastes of guests.

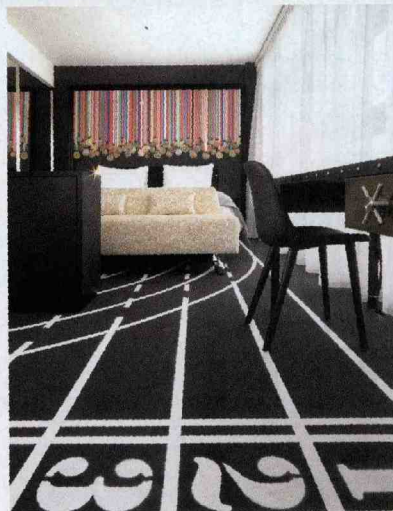
A number of products in the hotel, including carpets, furniture, and lighting, were designed by Wanders and his collaborators and produced by his company Moooi. That includes the pendant light fixture Lolita by Nika Zupanc (pictured on front cover).



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In the De Luxe Suite (above), sliding doors to the bathroom mimic chocolate bars, while the hotel logo of tulips intertwined with branches serves as the centerpiece of a fretted screen behind the bed. Two of the themed suites include the Workout Suite (right), intended for fitness buffs, and the Fairplay Suite (far right), for those that like fun and games. Guests can relax on cushions within wrought iron kiosks on the spa roof deck (opposite, top). Treatment areas in the spa include glass-enclosed couches (opposite, bottom left), and a sitting area (opposite, bottom right) that is distinguished by its cool, monochromatic decor.





is shadowy and mysterious with dark polished wood that gleams in the illumination from gilded birdcages, while the restraint of the furnishings coincides well with a traditional fretted screen set against a red wall. The Shisha Lounge transports guests to an Arabian Nights fantasy of overlaid carpets, sybaritic sofas, and backlit tracery, while the Smoking Lounge tugs them home to a clubroom furnished with studded leather armchairs.

A sense of serenity is the hallmark of the indoor-outdoor spa, with its cool gray tones, soft floral patterns, and filtered light. Even here, Wanders springs a surprise with a row of scarlet shower recesses set into a boldly patterned tiled wall. "I design for people," Wanders says. "It's my way of communicating with an audience."

Themed experiences

The 245 guestrooms pick up on the Swiss motifs of chocolate, bank vaults, and Toblerone-shaped sofas, combining style and comfort. Wanders owns the Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht [Contract, April 2013] that he designed in his home city of Amsterdam, so he understands the importance of working closely with the operating team and generating a good return for investors. "It may look as though we are crazy artists, but we work within strict constraints of time, budget, and functionality," Wanders insists.

To up the ante, Rath invited Wanders to design 11 themed suites. They range from the risqué Burlesque Suite to spaces tailored to the tastes of gamblers, sports fans, and workout enthusiasts, and feature accessories such as a built-in roulette table and a foosball game. "We want every guest to have a favorite place in the hotel," says resident manager Jan Langhammer, "and themed suites encourage them to explore different possibilities." c



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