



| New Brands Design for a New Kind of Hotel Experience



TODAY'S HOTELIER FEATURES

by Alicia Hoisington

Today's travelers are changing, and hotel design is adapting to meet their needs. As new brands are launched, leaders are thoughtfully introducing new design concepts in response to new guest demands and demographics.

From open-concept public spaces to a seamless check-in experience, use of color and designing with local flavor, brands are providing new experiences for guests and new options for owners. Here's a look at how some of the industry's newer brands are approaching design to create a new era of hotel experiences.

Carlson Rezidor's Radisson RED

The Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group introduced the color RED to the world last year with its first hotels opening in Minneapolis and Brussels. While the brand plans for 60 hotels in 60 cities by 2020, the two hotels open now illustrate to owners and guests the unique proposition for RED.

The demographic: Age doesn't play a factor so much as does the mindset of the target guest, says Rose Anderson, vice president of global branding and innovation for Carlson Rezidor. The Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group introduced the color RED to the world last year with its first hotels opening in Minneapolis and Brussels. While the brand plans for 60 hotels in 60 cities by 2020, the two hotels open now illustrate to owners and guests the unique proposition for RED.

"The millennial mindset is what's behind the whole philosophy of the brand experience and essence," she says. "It's very much the behavior of the millennial, and it's driving the lifestyle approach."

Public spaces: Anderson says the traditional hotel lobby is a sterile environment that allows for little interaction with front-desk associates stuck behind a desk. Radisson RED fixes that problem, doing away with the front desk and instead offering a free-standing pod area. Guests do not step into a traditional lobby, but rather a “social space,” she says.

“They are stepping into an environment with a certain vibe to it with gaming going on. The bar area is immediately visible, and it has a certain atmosphere where something is happening,” Anderson says.



Radisson RED bar in Minneapolis

Check-in: Guests can choose to check in electronically and receive a mobile key that allows them to go straight to their rooms. In the Minneapolis location, a team member can check in guests via an iPad. However, Anderson says identification requirements differ by countries, so in some global locations guests will still need to check in with a team member’s assistance at the pod area, which allows for a casual interaction.

“The pod is a replacement for the physical desk, which formalized the process. The pod makes it free-flowing, and staff can interact better. They can walk around and interact with the guests,” Anderson says.

Color: For a brand named after a color, it would be remiss if that color weren’t prominent in the design. As such, the color red plays a huge factor in the brand’s design, Anderson says.



Radisson RED Lobby in Brussels

Local flare: “Customers today don’t want cookie cutter and the same thing wherever they go,” Anderson says. “They want to discover the places they visit; even if they are on a business trip they want to know the local environment.”

That philosophy inspires the design, especially when it comes to art. For example, comic strips were born in Brussels, so the RED hotel there centers its art on them.

“The art direction informs the design of the whole hotel. There’s local flare, creating something fun and a casual environment that is unique and different,” Anderson says.