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Four Seasons Hong Kong reveals new look

The harbourside property has unveiled sleek new guest rooms as part of a phased hotel revamp. Asia Family Traveller spoke to chief designer, **Peter Remedios**, to find out more



A Deluxe Harbour View room at Four Seasons



The new-look lift lobby



Sleekly presented in-room amenities

Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong is one of the city's most elegant hotels, boasting a tip-top location fronting Victoria Harbour, no fewer than two, three-Michelin star restaurants, a huge spa and one of the best pool decks in town.

The transformation of the harbourside property began last year, with the launch of a slick new bar, ARGO, and lobby café, Gallery. This is the hotel's first major redesign since it opened in 2005.

Partnering with Hong Kong-based design studio Remedios Studio (RS), the hotel has now revealed its new-look guest rooms and lift lobby.

Remedios Studio is led by chief designer and managing director, Peter Remedios, and boasts a hard-hitting resumé with high-profile hotel designs throughout Asia Pacific, Europe,

the US and the Middle East. Collaborations closer to home include Macau's The Morpheus, The Landmark Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong and Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel.

We caught up with Remedios for a walk-through of his latest project.

What was the brief?

Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong wanted to regain their position as one of Hong Kong's top hotels. There's been an increase in competition in the city recently, with several five-star deluxe properties opening over the last few years.

As we would be working on an operating hotel, rather than starting from scratch with a new construction, and would be inheriting existing constraints and having to mitigate noise and disruption, it was decided to carry

out the renovation in three phases.

How did the pandemic impact the project?

We actually started work back in 2017, but as we moved forward supply-chain issues most definitely began to affect the construction industry. In particular, border restrictions created real challenges.

What I found interesting was that the emerging sentiment of a post-Covid world married with our own design ethos. I've always been inspired by nature and the outside world. To be able to capture that in our work - perhaps through biophilic design (connecting occupants to the natural environment) using materials that are natural or feel organic - is important to give the end user a reassuring sense of serenity and security in these uncertain times.

What design challenges did you face?

Eighteen years ago, while I was based in the US, we worked on an interesting project in Hong Kong converting an office tower into what is now the Landmark Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Central. With a lack of views, our design concept had to rely on some pretty avant-garde layouts built around providing natural light. We decided to move the bathroom to the window, for example, an innovative concept that had never been done before.

At the same time, Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong was being built on a spectacular piece of land right on the harbourfront and boasting the most spectacular views of any hotel in Hong Kong. Today we find ourselves on the other side of the fence but competing with other hotels with equally stunning views.

I love challenges, in this case working on a redesign rather than the luxury of a blank canvas to rival the best of what Hong Kong has to offer. In many respects, the competitive challenges we have faced with Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong remind me of our successes more than a decade ago at The Landmark Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong.

Where did you get your inspiration for this project?

We set out to create a sense of approachable luxury and deliver an immersion of what Hong Kong is to the end-user. The 'east meets west' style is an oversimplified pastiche of what Hong Kong is; for me, it's a city of contrasts, of old versus new, of traditional culture versus technologically advanced, of western versus Asian. I was also inspired to create a hotel that embodies the people of Hong Kong. They are modern, tech savvy, stylish, sophisticated and well-travelled. But deep in



Chinese influenced décor in the Grand Harbour View Suites

their hearts, they hold the most traditional Chinese values.

We wanted to create a subtle Chinese aesthetic sensibility within a thoroughly modern design, showcasing a contrast of materials, tones and textures. This captures - in my mind - the design contrasts reflective of the spirit of Hong Kong.

What do you hope guests feel when they enter a guest room at Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong?

We set out to create Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong as a 'homecoming'; when you walk into a room or suite at Four Seasons we want you to feel like you're home. It's a concept we've worked on in the last ten to 15 years, creating spaces where you can work but without it ever feeling like a workspace. As a traveller myself, after a hard day of meetings, the last thing I want to feel is that I'm sleeping at the office! And so there are no desks and no ergonomic desk chairs. In the rooms we design, we want you to be able to relax or work or eat from the sofa, the lounge chair or the table. To enjoy the luxury of multi-tasking and doing everything

FACT FILE

Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong -
 ...opened in 2005
 ...has 399 rooms over 45 floors
 ...received a five-star rating in 2015
 ...was the first hotel in the world to offer a three Michelin-star Chinese restaurant.

you need to do from wherever you want to do them.

Which design elements are you particularly pleased with?

We recognise that everyone will have a different take on a design. For some, the most memorable aspect might be the revolving daybed in the bedroom, from which you can eat breakfast or fire off a few emails as you rotate it towards the spectacular views or watch tv.

For others it might be a functional element like having adequate luggage benches; in most cases the suites can accommodate two suitcases.

Overall, a room should offer a plethora of design elements that will have different appeal to different people. In the deluxe suite we have created an amazing island bar almost three metres long that's unprecedented in a

hotel suite. There's a very Zen piece of modern Chinese art behind this 'mother of all bars' that I particularly like and which is something of a signature element in all the rooms and suites at Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong.

You've worked in Hong Kong for a decade, will you be staying?

Hong Kong is a world city and one of the most cosmopolitan in Asia. Covid has changed how we think of how we live and how we work and has made us ponder what's most important in our lives. Who knows what the future will hold. Being an optimist, I think I would want to be where things are the most alluring, both from an opportunity and personal standpoint.

To read the full interview, head online to asiafamilytraveller.com.