

# BOUTIQUE design

HOSPITALITY REINVENTED

MARCH | 2015

## CLIENT CONFIDENTIAL

MICHAEL MEDZIGIAN  
WATERMARK CAPITAL PARTNERS



## WHETTING YOUR APPETITE FOR MEMORABLE DESIGN

**THOMAS SCHOOS** is highly articulate and very passionate about the attention-grabbing hospitality venues created by his firm. Both those traits come through loud and clear in our Q+A with the L.A.-based designer that starts on page 48. Given that, I'm doubly thrilled that Schoos has agreed to lead a design tour of three restaurants his firm created in recent years in San Diego. That event will take place April 7, the day before our third annual BDwest trade fair and conference begins at the San Diego Convention Center. Here's Schoos' first-person drill-down on the design DNA for each of those eateries:

- **Searsucker** reflects the personality of the building it's in and the history of San Diego, a place where the Wild West meets the sea. To evoke that, I used loops of coarse rope hanging from rustic steel fixtures to create the chandeliers, suggesting either cowboy lassos or ship rigging. These chandeliers have become a trademark of all the restaurants I've done for celebrity chef Brian Malarkey. Everything in this restaurant celebrates American culture in some way, from the neon signs spelling "Eat"—an homage to diner culture—to the light fixtures featuring different kinds of gas lamps as a tribute to San Diego's Gaslamp District.
- **Puesto** takes referencing a building's heritage to a different level. This restaurant is set in an old jail and police headquarters. The other restaurants and venues that went into the same development did everything they could to clean up the space and conceal the building's original purpose. I said, No! What's special about this place is the texture, the ambiance created by history. So we clear-coated the walls and floors and left all the signs of aging and decay intact: chipped paint, broken light switches, glue spots and all. There's even a staircase hanging from the ceiling in one room that goes

nowhere. Into this shell, we put lots of modern design and color, so the contrast creates drama, and that's what draws people in. We were very honored that it recently won a Gold Key Award (see *Boutique Design*, December 2014, page 71).

- The first two restaurants celebrate their sense of place and the history of their neighborhood.

**Bottega Americano** is a little different because it's in a brand new building that houses a law school. So, we had to create a sense of place. The image I had in mind was those outdoor marketplaces that pop up in the plazas of European villages, with foodstuffs on display and dishes being prepared all around, creating energy and excitement. That's what we did inside Bottega Americano, where you're surrounded by food bars that are preparing different dishes and ingredients that become part of the show. We kept the industrial feel of this large space, but then we warmed it up with natural textures, such as the stacks of firewood that surround the support columns and the light fixtures that resemble baskets. So, like the food, the décor combines old world influences with modern techniques and efficiency.

Intrigued by what Schoos and his team have created? I know I am, and can't wait to take the tour with him. Meantime, for more on BDwest and its extensive offerings, please turn to the preview on page 56. Hope to see you in San Diego for both events!



*Matthew Hall*  
EDITOR

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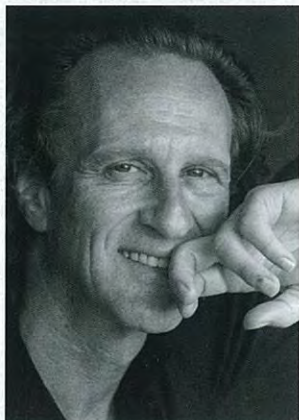
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# ■ IN THIS ISSUE



## MATTEO THUN

FOUNDER | MATTEO THUN & PARTNERS

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**THUN'S MULTIFACETED** career includes stints as a co-founder of Italy's influential Memphis Group in the 1980s, the art director for Swatch in the early 1990s and teaching design at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna for 17 years. He founded his Milan-based architecture/design firm in 2001. Since then, the studio has created a portfolio of cutting-edge projects, including a variety of hotels, restaurants, bars and spas throughout Europe. A recently completed commission is the GOCO Spa Venice, which will debut this month as part of a JW Marriott property (see page 34). Housed on a private island in the Venetian lagoon, the design of the GOCO spa is an example of "luxury through subtraction," Thun says.



## SANDRA CORTNER

PARTNER | HIRSCH BEDNER ASSOCIATES (HBA)

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**CORTNER, A 30-PLUS** year HBA veteran, was recently named a partner at the firm's Atlanta office. Over the years, she has worked on numerous high-profile hotels around the world, including the Jing An Shangri-La, Shanghai; the Mandarin Oriental, New York; and the St. Regis Grand Hotel, Rome. Cortner's penchant for creating noteworthy luxury spaces is on display in the elegant elevator lobby she and her team designed at the Raffles Istanbul at Zorlu Center hotel that's the subject of the Last Detail on page 80.



## ILAN WAISBROD

FOUNDER, PRESIDENT AND PRINCIPAL DESIGNER | STUDIO GAIA

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**A MEMBER** of the inaugural Boutique 18 class a decade ago, Waisbrod and the team at his New York-based design studio have a reputation for creating bold designs that buck trends. That approach is reflected in the firm's work on such projects as the King David Hotel in Jerusalem and the Dream Midtown hotel in New York. The firm's portfolio also includes work on three completed hotels for Starwood Hotels & Resorts' luxury W brand, with another in the works. The most recent of those Ws to open, in Bogotá, Colombia, is profiled on page 26.



# ESCAPE VELOCITIES

A menu of design innovation is transforming spas from pampering enclaves to experiential destinations where guests can rest, rejuvenate and reinvent themselves.

BY MATTHEW HALL

**IN ITS** “Top 10 Global Spa and Wellness Trends Forecast” for 2015, industry consultant Spafinder Wellness Inc. says “experiential novelty is the Holy Grail for many luxury travelers.” Providing such experiences is one of the core missions of three noteworthy spas, two of which will soon open (the GOCO Spa Venice in Italy and the Santuario LeDomaine Wellness & Spa in Spain) and the other, a recently completed renovation/expansion of an existing, high-profile destination (the Golden Door in Southern California). Designers worked hard to incorporate features that help all three of these

properties meet patrons’ growing demands for a one-of-a-kind experience.

## GOCO SPA VENICE

This spa—the first by Bangkok-based GOCO Hospitality in Europe—is part of the JW Marriott Venice Resort & Spa, which is slated to open this month on a man-made island in the Venetian lagoon. The hotel is housed in a 1930s-era building that once served as a hospital, while the spa’s treatment rooms are located in a nearby former stable.



SPA EXTERIOR, GOCO SPA VENICE

The refurbishment of both those buildings was overseen by Milan-based Matteo Thun & Partners, which worked on the development's master plan, architecture and interiors. "The project's focus is on the lagoonscape—water, slowness and silence—which is linked to consistent choices of locally available materials (brick and tiles, glass, mirrors and Venetian textiles) in a contemporary way, without any sense of nostalgia or historicism," says firm co-founder Matteo Thun. "It's a unique place that will cater to the upmarket tourist who wants an outstanding location offering 'luxury through subtraction.' It's away from the noise and bustle. And above all, without creating useless waste."

In keeping with the goal of creating a venue that serves as an eco-friendly escape, designers took such steps as carefully preserving the red brick façade, wooden pitched roof and uniquely shaped windows of the stable housing the spa. The eight treatment rooms within the building, meantime, feature smooth surfaces in neutral colors, accented with antique brass details.

In addition to those treatment spaces, the GOCO complex includes an indoor/outdoor aquatonic pool that offers air- and water-jet features such as hydro-backed benches and neck-massage nozzles; a traditional hamam with a scrub room; outdoor "express" treatment pavilions; and a tea lounge. The result, says GOCO Hospitality ceo and founder Ingo Schweder, is

a one-of-a-kind facility "that provides a comprehensive well-being menu that imparts a sense of harmony."

#### SANTUARIO LeDOMAINE WELLNESS & SPA

Like the GOCO Spa Venice, this retreat is housed in a former stable. The converted space in this instance is part of a 12th century abbey that's now home to a hotel, the Abadia Retruerta LeDomaine. That 22-key property is slated to reopen this month after being closed since late last year to accommodate construction of its new, on-site spa, which will debut in July.

The hotel and spa are surrounded by vineyards in Spain's wine-making Duero region. Drawing inspiration from that setting, the destination's owners decided to create a spa that will feature a "vino-therapy" concept run by what the hotelier describes as the world's first spa sommeliers. Those specialists will ask arriving guests to taste a selection of wines and smell a variety of oils, and then create custom treatments based on their responses.

In addition to being commissioned to create the spaces that would house that unique experience, the project's designers—Italian architect Marco Serra and Swiss interior architect Michele Rondelli—were asked not to construct anything that would block views of the surrounding countryside from the hotel. Their solution: dig down.