



nou. The Campanas rose to the challenge, drawing heavily on Athenian culture and injecting it with Brazilian joie de vivre. “We tried to use anthropophagic concepts, and eating the local culture and digesting it with our consciousness, our Brazilian heads,” they say.

“We never had the experience of working on a scale larger than objects, which scared us at first,” explains Humberto. “Dakis gave us total freedom for this project; freedom to dream, a utopia.” Fernando adds: “For me it was a big deal, because I graduated in architecture school about thirty years ago and this is my first project after all that time.”

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The Brazilians brought in architectural students from the University of Thessaly and created a workshop that reinterpreted local materials and culture for the project and remixed it. Students graduated from being industrial designers to “bricoleurs”, as defined by Claude Lévi-Strauss, who strived to produce unexpected combinations through re-evaluating craft and using fragments from culture. “The workshop became like a school inside the hotel,” says Humberto. Most of the hotel’s chairs were designed by the students.

The project brought together the trinity of restoring, recycling and sharing that has been at the heart of the designers’ creative approach. “We had the opportunity to apply all our knowledge and all our concepts which we’ve worked on in the 30 years, and give it a second life by investigating popular local culture, making a portrait of modern Greece and bringing in young people to help us.” The result, from the lighting and fur-

niture to the realisation of space, cleverly creates a contrast between historical Athens and the contemporary hotel. “One of the aspects of our work is about storytelling and each piece of furniture has a different point of view,” they say. Chairs and doors salvaged from the old property were reborn as gorgeous artworks. The Campanas and their students scoured the local antiques markets for furniture that was reborn in the hotel as hybrid tables and chairs.

The design of the public areas plays with perceptions of space. The columns in the lobby are covered in narrow strips of wood, already familiar from the *Favela* chair, while wildly jagged mirrors amplify the space. The mosaic of varying visual and tactile experiences pays tribute to the Campanas multifaceted country of origin. Many parts of the hotel were left untouched to create architectural scars and bandages.

Each of the 79 rooms and suites is a living art installation that guests can immerse themselves in. “We wanted to make a hotel that breathes art and that bears poetry,” says Humberto. The Campanas worked within three clearly identified Greek themes for three different room types. The first pays homage to the hunchbacked fictional shadow puppet Karagiozis from Greek folklore. The next uses charms to ward off the evil eye – “We wanted to amplify a beautiful, ‘useless’ object. ‘Useless’ because it carries a mystic idea,” they say. The final theme features lost postcards that reinterpret old Athens in a contemporary setting.

“The experience was one of the richest experiences in my life,” reveals Humberto of the New Hotel project. “We didn’t want to make a Campana hotel, only with our things and our furniture. We didn’t want an ego-project, without sharing, and sharing was the great beauty of this experience.” ●

# A QUESTION OF PERSONAL TASTE

**VIEWPOINT** Four designers tell Kathryn Tully about their favourite hotels around the world, why they stay there, and assess when a hotel’s approach to art and design succeeds or fails



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**01 PHILIP TREACY**  
MILLINER



**02 JIMMIE KARLSSON**  
FURNITURE DESIGNER



**03 ROD WINTERROWD**  
INTERIOR DESIGNER



**04 ANNE PASTERNAK**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## PHILIP TREACY

“When I was asked if I would like to be design director of The G hotel in Galway, my first thought was absolutely not! I had never worked on a hotel before but, of course, a hat designer can design other things. Design is about taste.

Now the hotel is finished, some of the details are very ‘mine’. The concierge desk is like a miniature amphitheatre. It’s a shape I made, like ones I make hats from, and then enlarged to 15 feet high. It’s a kind of shell. People look at other hotels, come back to the designer and say, ‘But they have it in the Four Seasons’. And my response would be, ‘Well, then I don’t want it’.

I took the same approach to art for the hotel. I bought neon art saying, ‘This Must Be The Place’. I also saw that a 1950s Irving Penn Vogue cover was coming to auction, estimated at £15,000. I went with my friend Isabella Blow and £50,000 later, got it, but I thought a few beautiful things would be better than oceans of junk.”

## JIMMIE KARLSSON

“I’m always a sucker for Philippe Starck hotels. I find him hard to beat from a design perspective. I know he has been around for a long time, but our work is all about breaking boundaries and he excels at that. All of his hotels are so cool. Some people say that they are bored of the boutique hotel look, but hey, I’m an not.

It was great that The Surrey in New York commissioned us, because it is quite a traditional hotel and they had the guts to put furniture of ours in there with graffiti all over it. It shows how in-your-face pieces can still work in a very classic environment and retain that luxury feel about them.

We also do interior design work, which is not necessarily the same as the Jimmie Martin style, but definitely pushes the boundaries more than you would see in an average hotel. I find that most hotels do tend to play it too safe, especially the big brands.”

## ROD WINTERROWD

“Home for me in London is Claridges. While retaining the classically Deco splendor, they have cleverly redone rooms with a more modern spin. Certain rooms and suites have been revitalised with neutral palettes and clean lines, but the beautiful antiques remain. The Bar – The Fumoir – is handsome, deadly chic, hip and young, but still of the period, as is the restaurant. The eclectic mixing of old and new produces a fluid, authentic and tranquil result.

Too often great properties are destroyed by bad design that bears no relationship to what the building was or what it is. There is certainly a place for properties by Ian Schrager and Andre Balazs, the inventive and talented owners of fun, whimsical, minimally designed hotels, but this ubiquitous

approach is now a global prototype for new and renovated hotels.

The limited imaginations that think this concept is ‘de rigueur’ lack an appreciation of what great hotel experiences once were. Not everyone wants to stay in a white ice cube.”

“Not everyone wants to stay in a white ice cube

## ANNE PASTERNAK

“I tend to be very loyal. I stay in The Standard Hotels wherever I go and I did this even before Creative Time partnered with them to curate art programmes for the hotels. They are luxurious, at the right price, yet very hip. The Standard’s Andre Balazs has such a fierce creative vision and arts professionals really respect him. I also love Ritz-Carlton Hotels. I think they were the first in the United States to put emerging artists in their hotels. Now that is much more common, but at the time it was a real breakthrough. Some of the artists they feature are very well known, but some are completely new. You would not have thought that a traditional brand like Ritz-Carlton would take this approach, but I love how they combine the traditional and the contemporary.” ●