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Case studies
- MEDIA ONE HOTEL
- EL CHIRINGUITO
- ANSTON ARCHITECTURAL

Special report
RETAIL DESIGN

A look back
DESIGNMENA QUIZ

ROGUE'S GALLERY

DUBAI-BASED DESIGNER PAUL BISHOP SHARES HIS LATEST F&B PROJECTS



Keeping in with the media crowd

MEDIA ONE HOTEL REDEFINES ITSELF WITH EDGY INTERIOR MAKEOVER DESIGNED BY DUBAI-BASED LW



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Media One Hotel in Dubai Media City has recently undergone an extensive refurbishment of its entire ground floor, including lobby, bar, café and office lobby. LW's design team, led by Pooja Shah-Mulani, senior interior designer, was briefed to make the space more exciting and give visitors something to think about.

The central theme that was selected was 'media' – relating to the location of the property within Media City, as well as the key business interests of many of its guests.

This was translated into some of the playful pieces that adorn the lobby, café and bar.

"We were given a lot of freedom to really push the boundaries for design and choose fun elements to bring the space to life," Mulani tells *Commercial Interior Design*.

Overall, there were no major changes made to the structure or the flooring, keeping disruption to the operation of the hotel to a minimum.

The designers relocated the reception desk to the back of the lobby space. Not a traditionally obvious place for this function, but as Mulani explains, the new layout now adds to the aspect of social interaction.

"One of the things that we wanted to initiate as a design company was moving away from a traditional reception desk at the entrance," she says. "With a lifestyle brand, the lobby is one of the most difficult spaces to activate because people use it as a grazing space. We wanted this area to become a social hub where people meet and greet and socialise. We wanted to create a space where you want to go rather than a place where you have to go just to check-in."

White marble runs throughout the ground floor so the design team de-

1 The design team placed 78 monkey lights throughout the public areas.

2 Lobby area at the Media One Hotel in Dubai Media City.









cided to introduce timber panels and cladding to add some warmth.

The fabrics chosen are contemporary and eclectic, adding texture and interest to seating areas, often punctuated by pops of blue. Most of the furniture in the lobby area was custom-made. Wooden flooring has been introduced into the outlets, complementing the use of marble, wood and metal on furnishing.

In the lobby area, visitors will notice abundant white monkeys holding lights (by Seletti World) – a nod to the 'see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil' premise. There are 78 monkey lights in total throughout the space and Mulani says this feature wall is one of the most Instagrammable features.

"Being a media hub, one of the main inspirations was how to incorporate the evolution of media throughout the years and generations," adds Mulani.

There are also sheep, by Jean Luc Cornec, made out of coiled cable of old telephones: a reminder of how far communication devices have come.

"We've taken traditional approaches and turned them into art forms. We found an artist in Germany who transformed old vintage telephones into sheep," she says.

An eclectic mix of furniture and fixtures has been configured into social yet intimate meeting spaces through the clever use of sliding barn doors.

The bar, named QWERTY after the first six letters on a keyboard, boasts bold statements and art on the walls that reflects pop culture and a gastro pub vibe. By simple changes to cushions, artwork and lighting, the space is transformed from daytime to night.

Mulani continues: "QWERTY is an all-day dining restaurant but also a hotel bar. It works very well transitioning from day to night. I think that a lot of hotel brands are finding that their

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QWERTY is an all-day dining restaurant but also a hotel bar.
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The outdoor area offers different seating options.



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Suspended metal fixtures at CaféM provide storage and display space above the serving counter.
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Pooja Shah-Mulani.

all-day dining space is very dead at night and nobody wants to go there. It is used heavily for breakfast and lunch but we wanted to make sure it was used throughout the day. Since it is in a lobby area, it is also a lobby bar at night, offering a different experience when guests come in the evening."

The outdoor area is also completely transformed, offering different options in seating arrangements. A built-in long bench is adorned with white outdoor pillows with quirky prints alongside plants in oversized white planters.

"The outdoor bar worked well throughout the year, so the operator wanted this area to be bigger and they managed to get in large cooling units. We've added more lounge and dining seats as well as a proper bar," explains Mulani.

CaféM is located on the ground floor and is a relaxed, fun meeting place serving food all day long. Here, sus-



8

pended metal fixtures provide storage and display space above the serving counter. Bold statements adorn the wall, giving visitors a talking point. One of the main features is a custom-made bench at the entrance.

Bespoke cabinetry creates a welcoming home for plants and books related to the media theme while the different types of seating, including a smaller lounge area, makes the café a place for informal meetings and casual meals.

"All the shelving and timber panelling were locally made. The operator used a lot of design to work for them in terms of using the space. They've put the cutlery and plates on the shelves, so it looks like a lived-in space," Mulani says.

As Mulani concludes, Media One Hotel can now claim to be a benchmark in urban living. Its choice of customised industrial lights, contemporary furniture and street art combines to create a youthful, edgy experience that has been well received by its guests and visitors.

8
Catchy signage and bold graphics complete the interiors.

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