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HOTEL DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT & ARCHITECTURE

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EUROPEAN HOTEL DESIGN AWARDS 2009 CALL FOR ENTRIES – VISIT WWW.THESLEEPEVENT.COM TO ENTER

HI DESIGN EMEA 2009

5-7 MARCH, SHERATON PORTO HOTEL & SPA, OPORTO

Amid the seemingly endless economic doom and gloom, the fourth HI Design was a welcome relief for the 194 delegates including interior designers to architects, accounts managers to chief executives.

HI Design's format of focused one-to-one meetings, educational seminars, a mini exhibition for hands-on sampling of product ranges, and abundant networking opportunities, attracted record numbers of delegates to the event – an increase of 14% on last year. In addition to the 108 suppliers and 86 buyers, were key players from international hotel groups including Michel Gicquel, Vice President of Innovation & Design at Accor, and Gordon Anderson, Director of Projects Procurement at InterContinental Hotels Group. The event attracted those active in the contract market including Brintons, Republic of Fritz Hansen, and Muehldorfer, as well as design practices Blacksheep and Conran & Partners.

Rolf Schmidt, CEO of CHD Expert / Marktplatz Hotel GmbH, opened the first of four seminar sessions addressing the theme of 'emergence'. His detailed update on performance of the 'away-from-home market' and development trends across the EMEA region identified Europe as the biggest destination for global tourism, making it a hotspot for hotel development. Further statistics showed that the total global construction pipeline dropped by 6% between Q2 and Q3 in 2008, and the number of construction starts were less than half what they were at Q4 2007's peak. In response to concerns about the number of projects being cancelled, Schmidt referred to figures from Lodging Econometrics to show that, not surprisingly, cancellations have more than doubled year-on-year from 2007 to 2008. Schmidt said: "For projects already in the pipeline, especially the larger ones, cancellations are accelerating as operating

performance now joins financing and lending as major development concerns."

He also told that new openings will reach a cyclical high in the next two years as projects that were able to secure financing before the global economic downturn come online. It is expected that 2,804 hotels (425,615 guestrooms) will open in 2009 with a further 2,664 hotel projects (447,364 guestrooms) in 2010. Schmidt remained refreshingly optimistic that there are still opportunities out there citing over 10,000 projects in the pipeline as of Q3 2008. Continuing the theme of emergence, Joe Pettipas, Practice Leader for Hospitality and Retail at HOK Canada, identified China and Russia as emerging markets. In a one-to-one interview with Guy Dittrich, Pettipas revealed that HOK is also working in Croatia. "There are still markets that have some buoyancy," he said, adding: "Investors are seeing great potential in the Dalmatian Coast partly due to the expectation that Croatia will join the EU in 2009." South Africa was also highlighted as a region of great opportunity owing to Cape Town's hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Pettipas' warning came to those who were investing in the 'already saturated' European market and 'tough' Middle East: "Dubai has turned into 'don't-buy' with many projects cancelled or going forward at a much slower pace," he said. Abu Dhabi, however, "doesn't seem to have the same financial challenges." Never far from the agenda, sustainability returned to the forum in an interactive discussion with Chris Lefteri, Founder of Chris Lefteri Design. Focusing on the emergence of materials, Lefteri presented a number of ecological surfaces and encouraged designers to use already established materials in new ways. "It's not just specifying something that is green," he explained: "it is about looking at materials in a new way and a sustainable manner."

Emerging trends in European hospitality design was the topic of HI Design's lively panel discussion. Rob Wagemans of Concrete, Tim Mutton of Blacksheep, Erik Nissen Johansen of Stylt Trampoli, and celebrated Portuguese designer Nini Andrade Silva, discussed the increasing importance of technology in the guestroom as well as how their own work ethic affects design. Mutton used the term 'concept guardians' to describe Blacksheep's practice of creating the design concept in-house, and outsourcing services to the best in the business. Panellists urged designers not to follow 'fashions' when designing a hotel. "A hotel needs longevity and should last at least 4-5 years," explained Silva. "If we all use the same colours and the same materials all hotels start looking the same." Silva was applauded for her candid approach before urging designers not to be afraid of being different. Conversation once again turned to the economic crisis with designers embracing the resulting challenges. In previous times of crisis we have seen an increase in creativity and a repeat of this appears to be recurring. "The time has passed where less stars mean less quality," said Wagemans, architect for the award-winning CitizenM concept. "It is time to redefine what luxury is, and luxury is about quality." This year's event was described as the most successful HI Design to date with delegates reporting lucrative meetings with quality suppliers, and the perfect platform from which to do business. Gail Thompson, Managing Director of Purpose Design summed up: "This event gets better every year, not only from a networking perspective but keeping ahead of all the latest news, views and products available. This year it gave me a new sense of focus for what was previously going to be a tough year."

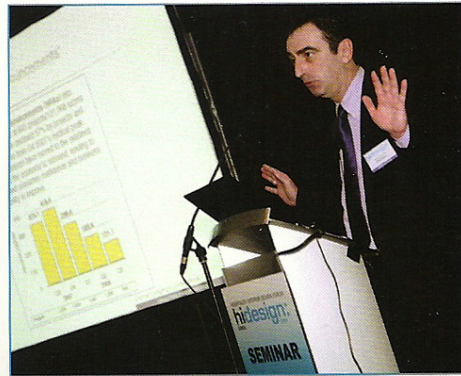
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Alessandra Paliotto presents Trend Group's glass mosaics to Jeremy Blake and Suzi Armstrong of Purcell Miller Tritton



Making the most of HI Design's networking opportunities are Tim Mutton, Founder of Blacksheep, and Daniel Englander, Director of Benjamin West



Rolf Schmidt provided a detailed analysis of development trends across EMEA in the first of four seminar sessions addressing 'emergence'



Maximiliana Pangerl of Muehldorfer presents her products to John Chalker, Creative Director of The Fox Hut at the event's mini-exhibition area



In an interview with Guy Dittich, Joe Pettipas, Practice Leader for Hospitality & Retail at HOK Canada reveals his thoughts on emerging markets



Niccolò Bignardi of Agape and Sonia de Rossi of Corà Group talk to celebrated Portuguese designer Nini Andrade Silva at an evening reception



Nikki Harris and Caroline Wolterink of Kobefab International meet with MGM Mirage's Sascha Lang in a focused one-to-one appointment



Emerging trends in European hospitality design was the topic of HI Design's lively panel discussion with views from four interior designers



Marina Zueco Gil, Export Manager at Jacinto Usan looks over a product portfolio with Javier Hortal from Mandarin Oriental