

Samantha Drummond Talks Purpose and Innovation in Hospitality Design



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SBID is excited to introduce a new weekly blog series – the Judges’ Interviews – in which, leading up to the 2022 SBID Awards ceremony, you will get to meet and find out more about the people who will be evaluating the contestants’ projects this year!

In this week’s interview with [SBID Awards](#) Product Design judge; design advisor & founder of Habitus Design Group, Samantha Drummond discusses her views on the hospitality sector, what innovations are needed in those spaces and how hospitality design can shape the guest experience.



Villa Lounge, Solaire Hotel & Resort

How would you define the power of design?

Design is a means to problem solving. In a hospitality setting, this begins with understanding the customers', as well as the client's, needs and aspirations and from this developing a framework for concept development, innovation and creativity. Such an approach is as much linked to strategy as it is to aesthetics. Yes of course the look and feel are important but what matters even more is how the design makes guests feel. Are they at ease? Is their curiosity aroused while their sense of belonging is stimulated? Will the memories they take away with them convert family and friends into your next guests? Design has the power to evoke emotions, to change the way people experience a space and to encourage them to stay longer.



Solaire North Quezon City - Japanese Restaurant

How would you compare the challenges?

In fact, the creation of large resorts and small hospitality destinations face many similar challenges. All projects, regardless of size, require the same fundamental disciplines.

However, one thing that is different is that the larger the project, the larger the team and therefore more people management is required, sometimes internationally across different time zones. Also, it's often the case that larger projects have more aggressive deadlines in order to achieve completion on multiple spaces simultaneously.



Villa bathroom, Solaire Hotel & Resort

How do you use design to shape the guest experience?

Hospitality design is a wonderful opportunity to create a stage for guests to live a charmed life during their stay. We aim to craft experiences that make guests feel glamorous, special and cherished. There are many elements that go into the design mix but I do think lighting is very important in shaping the experience as are unexpected surprises – a beautiful repurposed item for example or curated collections of books and, of course, bespoke artwork. Such things help guests connect emotionally, add layers of meaning and create memories.



Marina Bay Sands, Retail Mall

What inspires you both professionally and personally?

So much inspires me – I think that's the nature of being a designer... food, art, music, craftsmanship, the natural world. In my work, I love to take on an empty building, a vacant plot of land or even nothing more than a vision in the client's mind. That's when I really have to use my imagination to come up with something genuine which hasn't been done before while also engaging my Advisory head and making a sound business case for my proposal.

There is also the 'who' inspires me and here I have been so lucky. From my extraordinary clients who have taught me so much about business over the years to the many world-acclaimed architects, designers, artists and chefs I have been privileged to collaborate with. They have all been an inspiration.



Marina Bay Sands, exterior

Do you think there are any hospitality sectors that would particularly benefit from product innovation?

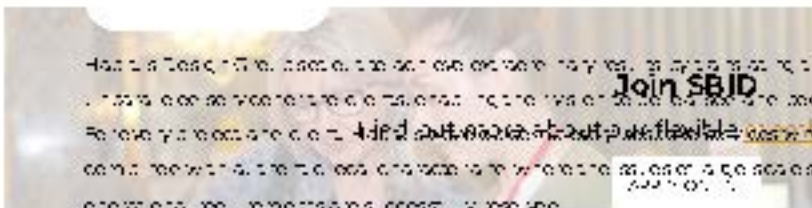
Wellness is a sector that is constantly evolving in terms of treatments, new experiences and now the wide offering from pampering to medical interventions, mind and body wellbeing. I am sure there is opportunity for product innovation here. I also think that in the aftermath of the pandemic, “working from alternative locations” has become a way of life and the hotel bedroom desk could be ripe for a renaissance. However, this will not be as before. An innovative approach to resolving the room’s working space is definitely called for.

Cover image: Private Residence, Denmark

Questions answered by **Samantha Drummond**, Design Advisor & Founder, **Habitus Design Group**.

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