

SPACE

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL DESIGN

1 | 19

PEOPLE

|

PLACES

|

PROJECTS

|

PRODUCTS

RICHMOND INTERNATIONAL

TERRY MCGILLICUDDY

Originality combines with experience in the work of Richmond International. Director Terry McGillicuddy speaks to Can Faik about the challenges and triumphs of creating some of the finest interiors on land and sea in the world...

Since they were established in 1966 Richmond International has designed the interiors of some of the world's most prestigious hotels in locations all across the globe. With clients ranging from multinational brands to independent owners, Richmond refurbishes, restores and creates award-winning spaces. Some notable clients include The Langham Chicago, London West Hollywood, The Beaumont Hotel, London, Four Seasons Gresham Palace and P&O's new cruise ship Britannia. Richmond International has been honored with awards and accolades across the design space, but continues to be driven to hotels that embrace design that is authentic, intelligent and inspiring.

Tell me about your role at Richmond International?

I joined the team at Richmond International in 2002, and have been a Director for the past six years. In my role I am responsible for the company management, liaising with our clients, and the design direction, (alongside Fiona, our Principal).

What five words would you use to describe Richmond International?

Professional, experienced, creative, detailed, and personal.

How long have you been involved with cruise ship design?

Richmond International's journey in cruise design first began in 2009, when we worked on the spa design concept for Royal Princess. This resulted in our appointment as the sole interior designer of P&O Britannia, which was launched in 2015 in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen.

Have you noticed any particular trends in cruise ship design?

We have noted a turn away from the traditional 'formal' look, with cruise lines opting for a more residential-style interior design. The ships are also getting larger in order to be better equipped for the expanding passenger market. Finally, cruise operators are increasingly employing designers who are inexperienced in marine design, which ensures more design diversity on board and creates its own set of challenges.

How important are public spaces on cruise ships?

On board entertainment and passenger services are key to the movement of large numbers of guests. The diversity between these public spaces and the variety in location and programming are crucial to the success of the passengers' experience.

With so many hospitality designers in the industry, how does Richmond International stand out from the rest?

Richmond International has a stable skilled workforce and a huge wealth of knowledge, which has been developed over >





50 years working as leading hospitality designers. Our client understanding and communication skills allow us to successfully achieve the highest standards and fulfill our clients' requirements.

How is the current economic climate affecting the hotel design market? And has Richmond International felt the effects?

Every business seems to be struggling with the lack of investment decisions due to the current uncertainty surrounding Brexit. Without any doubt we are all looking forward to a final decision being agreed so we can all return to business as usual.

Being based in London, which cruise ships, are you currently working on?

Richmond International is currently working with Cunard, P&O, and Princess Cruises on numerous new builds and re-fit cruise ship projects.

What is the biggest thing the company has learnt over its years in the industry?

I believe it is our understanding of the recent changes in guests' expectations, which is the result of more accessible and diversified travel. We constantly develop our own designs and approach in response to the new preferences

and expectations of guests, owners and operators, as well as strive to increase our technical knowledge.

How would you define your 'Hotel Style'?

Richmond International does not have a 'Hotel Style', as we aim to deliver a high quality standard of hospitality design and service that is specifically relevant to the owner's vision, operational brief and the location.

What does design mean to you?

Design is an initial thought or vision, passionately developed into a great experience or product.

Turning to hotel design, have you seen exceptional growth in any part of the world in hotel design?

The Chinese market is developing very quickly due to the huge population increase, as well as the nation's appetite for travel and Western culture.

What has been your favourite project to date?

This is a difficult question to answer, as many of our projects have very special design elements. However, what I consider a great achievement is >

when we successfully create a hotel design that fully reflects the local culture, like Four Seasons Budapest and The Langham in Chicago. I also very much enjoy working on cruise ships projects as the owners are usually hands-on and communicative during the design and build process, which allows the design visions to be successfully developed, realised, and completed very quickly – that is extremely satisfying!

What's next for you?

My career is approaching the twilight years and therefore I am going to be focussing on sharing my wealth of design and management expertise and experiences with more junior members of our design team.

What would be your dream hotel/cruise ship project?

To create a unique experience for a small group of selected guests in a natural location, whether on land or on the ocean. The project would embrace the local culture and respect the environment.

Where currently ranks highest on your travel wish list?

New Zealand is high up on the list, mainly to visit family and friends but also to experience the beautiful and varied landscapes and cultures. I would also love to see the Northern Lights and Fjords with my family.

Where do you see hotel design in the future?

I think hotel design will be taking big steps towards helping reduce the world's environmental issues, at the same time creating exceptional experiences, which educate, and are enjoyed by, the guests and owners alike.

What would you say are the three best places you've ever stayed?

The general view of hotel designers staying in the best hotels around the world is definitely a myth, as we normally develop the top hotel in a particular location, and so often stay in lesser quality establishments. Nevertheless, luckily for us, there are exceptions. I remember The Chedi Muscat, an incredibly peaceful sanctuary, where I found the friendliest and honest locals; Four Seasons Cairo at the First Residence provides a calm oasis within the hustle and bustle of urban living. For a great resort with quality service, excellent cuisine, and relaxation, Fairmont The Palm is ideal on the man-made isthmus in Dubai.

Let's finish with the issue of work-life balance. How do you aim to achieve a good balance and what do those closest to you think of your attempts?

Continuous travel can make everyday life difficult. It is important to make more time for the people we care about; for me, that is my wife, daughter, family and friends. I also have to make time to keep healthy, with a balanced diet and squash, if my schedule allows. I am sure my family and friends probably think I should not be spending so much time at work and travelling, but this is my real passion. I realise I am very lucky to be able to enjoy my job: from the experiences of design, to educating and communicating with my peers, to the sense of achievement we get once a project is complete. I try to have a very positive attitude every day I am at work.

> www.richint.com



The Cosmopolitan
Las Vegas