Mesmerising Mondrian

The Mondrian Doha in Qatar is a five-star destination designed by Marcel Wanders and operated by global hospitality company sbe. The interior draws on local knowledge and exhibits innovative materials and techniques, while using bespoke designs and Wanders’ signature style to create a truly holistic, sensual and memorable experience.

The Mondrian Doha is the first of three hotels set to open in the Middle East from lifestyle hospitality company sbe. Introducing the Mondrian brand to the region for the first time, the lavish 270-room hotel has been designed in collaboration with world-renowned Dutch designer Marcel Wanders, along with South West Architecture, which was responsible for the design of the building.

Guests can choose from five distinctive room categories including a penthouse suite, studio suites, one and two bedroom suites and a range of standard guest rooms, all of which share the universal design details of Swarovski crystal chandeliers and sumptuous bespoke furniture hues to mirror the desert.

The hotel incorporates bespoke Marcel Wanders design features with influences from the beauty of local patterns, ornate Arabic writing and historic souks. Standout elements include giant columns with golden eggs, a ‘tree of life’ comprised of flowers, falcon video art, giant shisha patterned carpets, ornate stained glass and intricate mosaic tiling.

Speaking with darc about his involvement in the project, Wanders says: “I was approached by sbe and Sam Nazarian and they were very involved in the process and clear in what they wanted from the start. When working so closely with a client you have to position yourself in a unique way. It has to be totally collaborative, with as little hierarchy as possible. In the case of this project, it was particularly challenging because we were bringing so many elements of the culture and we had to agree on what would be the best representation of the region and the best ways to feature it. “The opportunity set before us was to create an incredible destination for international and local travellers alike. They wanted a luxurious destination hotel where all of the guests’ desires would be catered to, as well as a fantastic destination for the locals to experience the culinary venues. With eight restaurants and bars - some of which are entirely new to Qatar, Middle Eastern cuisine is at the heart of Mondrian Doha’s food and beverage offering, along with internationally renowned chefs. “The client worked alongside us to help design within this thriving artistic region, brimming with innovation and possibilities. The challenge was to get people to be on the same page... I allowed everything in the local culture to influence and affect me in a personal way - from customs to clothing styles to architecture and even language. The region is so rich with heritage that it brought a heightened sense of reverence and responsibility to this project. Design is all about passion and there is no creation without emotion... The end result is a
destination where guests never have to leave because all of their desires are met.”

The essence of One Thousand and One Nights, a collection of Middle Eastern folk tales and stories, has influenced the design of the space, which is detail-orientated and complex, with a number of facets, levels and layers. Structurally the building is shaped like a falcon, with many references to the national bird of Qatar also found inside.

“The client helped us define how the city has grown immeasurably over the past few years, transforming itself from a modest fishing village into a global visionary capital. With the concept of One Thousand and One Nights storytelling as our guide, we created a hotel that is sensitively rooted in local Arabic culture and the embodiment of Arabia as experienced through a lens that mirrors the modern reality of Doha.”

Within the hotel, guests discover two types of decorative lighting, Wanders and his team included bespoke lighting elements such as the oversized bell lamp in the lobby and the oversized Pillar lamp, alongside this, most of the crystal chandeliers are custom made especially for the project. “As an interpretation of the local culture and art, the design includes a custom made local lantern with a modern touch,” continues Wanders. “The project would not be complete without the touch of luxury spark sprinkled throughout the hotel. Aside from providing mood lighting, they are also part of the main feature of the interior space.”

Four main decorative lighting suppliers were partnered with in the design of the Mondrian Doha; Preciosa created most of the customised crystal chandeliers, Moroccan Bazzar furnished all of the local decorative lanterns and lighting; general decorative lighting throughout was created
by Moooi; and Sia & Moore Architecture were responsible for the Pillar lamp base and shade.

“Regardless of the space in which we are designing, every piece of lighting extends the overall concept,” says Wanders. “This particular project called for a signature feel with international and modern twists. We brought a local feel to a layered experience of beauty, poetry, transparency, complexity and surprise.

“As a whole, the lighting in any interior space we design is meant to guide the guests’ experience. The lighting brings mood and direction - a visitor’s feelings are informed by the colours, brightness and shadows created. This helps to make guests feel connected to a space and the concept. Lighting can draw your eye, letting you know what to focus on and what to take away from a room or area experience.

“We crafted the Mondrian Doha to be a contemporary classic, with interior settings that feature everything from locally-inspired fabrics and materials to bespoke items that connect to local culture. Conceptually, we have married local culture with a modern design aesthetic. It is a great feeling when...
the work is finally completed and you have
carried a concept from beginning to end.
“This project was about guests creating their
own collection of a thousand stories during
their stay. To help them do that, in the lobby
they discover an oversized gold leaf bell
with a crystal chandelier that celebrates
their arrival.
“In the lounge, we’ve placed a surreal white
forest highlighted by giant white ‘Trees of
Life’; then in the multipurpose hall, three
colours adapt intriguing atmospheres. We
placed a striking, custom-designed four-level
high spiral staircase in the atrium that leads
guests up to a viewing platform. In other
places, there are giant columns with golden
eggs, falcon video art, ornate stained glass
and intricate mosaic tiling placed to inspire
feelings of nostalgia.
“I’m so proud of the entirety of the project
and what it means to the people of this
region. In staying true to our design and the
Mondrian ethos, this hotel has been created
to be a fantasy-like environment and a
multi-layered sensory experience that at
times feels abstract. Each day in this luxury
hotel destination will offer a new discovery
and the creation of a new memory.”

www.marcelwanders.com

**lighting specified**

- **Bespoke Pillar Lamp / Big Bell & Small Bell**
  / One Minute Table Lamp Shade by Marcel
  Wanders
- Various Bespoke Chandeliers by Preciosa
  Saint Tropez Boutique Traditional Arabic
  Hanging Lamps
- **Flos Skygarden, Can Can Hang Lamp &
  Wallflower** - by Marcel Wanders
- **Flos Tab T** - by Barber Osgrey
- **Flos Miss X Table Lamp** - by Philippe Stark
  Lee Broom Decanter Light Range
- **Modul Standing & Table Lamp & Paper
  Chandelier XL** by Studio Job
- **Modul Valentine Table Lamp**
- **Modul Lolita Floor Lamp** by Nika Zupanc
  Modul Faro by Marcel Wanders
  Wall-Mounted Diesel Foscarini Ceiling Lamp
  Tom Dixon Lustre Pendant