

Rising Sun

This new-build symbolically represents a new day for the Chinese economy

By **MATTHEW MARIN**

Located at the foot of the Yan Mountains, the design of the Sunrise Kempinski Hotel, Beijing is influenced by the principles of Feng Shui, a Chinese geomantic practice in which a structure is configured to harmonize with spiritual forces.

Kempinski Hotels, a European luxury hotel group, charged Shanghai Huadu Architect Design Company with conceiving a boutique hotel on Yanqi Island that would combine modern architectural characteristics and traditional Chinese culture to appeal to international travelers.

“We think that contemporary architecture should have a universal language, through the use of modern forms and modern materials, to allow people with different cultural backgrounds to read and understand,” said Zhang Hai Ao, chief designer of Shanghai Huadu Architect Design Company. “And, the contemporary architecture must have the characteristics of local culture and thoughts, expressing the characteristics of regionalism by using traditional symbols.”

The round shape of the front view of the hotel, Beijing represents the rising sun, symbolic of the growing economy in China. “The image of sunrise in the Chinese culture represents vitality, hope and strength,” said Hai Ao.

Covered by a glazed curtain wall, the 21-story, 318-ft.-high hotel features a rooftop that resembles the color of the sky, while the middle of the building emulates the Yanshan Mountain and the bottom imitates the lake, according to the designer. The exterior glass surface, which is covered by more than 10,000 glass panels, spans 194,558 sq. ft. The roof of the third floor, above the Kempinski Grand Ballroom, is a free-form shape, like a cloud. The whole picture then embraces the theme of “the cloud lifting the sun,” according to the architect.

Chinese cultural elements are used throughout the building’s design. The entrance is shaped like the mouth of a fish, symbolizing prosperity. From a side-angle view, the building is shaped like a scallop, which represents fortune in Chinese culture. The side of the building is made up of traditional Chinese panes.

The new-build hotel, which opened in February, is situated near Yanqi Lake. Yanqi Island, which opened in November 2014, spans 5.4 sq. mi. and is comprised of Sunrise Kempinski, Yanqi Hotel and 12 other boutique hotels—all managed by Kempinski.

Sunrise Kempinski offers several food and beverage outlets, landscaped gardens, a private marina, an electric boat, the Yanqi Pagoda, Kempinski The Spa, recreational and fitness facilities, and a Kid’s Club. The

hotel shares a total of 151,437 sq. ft. of meeting space with Yanqi Island, including the 89,093-sq.-ft. Beijing Yanqi Lake International Conference Centre.

Sunrise Kempinski Hotel, Beijing was constructed with reinforced concrete and all-glass exterior to blend the building with the natural environment. Additionally, the structure has been engineered to withstand up to a level-eight earthquake.

Consisting of 307 guestrooms and suites, Sunrise Kempinski Hotel, Beijing presents a minimal, contemporary interior design by DiLeonardo, a Providence, RI-based design firm. Hints of soft blues in the guestroom conjure a peaceful ambiance with wallpapered panels softening the overall space, while printed fabric selections for accent pillows suggest the hotel’s resort location, according to the firm. Honey golden wood in the flooring brightens the room while providing a sense of warmth.

“As an homage to the landscape and architecture, the interior is largely inspired by the idea of framing the view—whether it is capturing the view of the exterior landscape, framing areas within by enclosing a space, or setting a vignette of the interior decor,” said Giana DiLeonardo, partner, DiLeonardo. “The guestroom design is minimal and contemporary, yet relaxed.”

The guestrooms’ contemporary furniture pieces in dark and golden brown zebrano are accented with metal and mirrored details. A desk chair repurposed as a modern interpretation of an antique Chinese wood-carved chair accompanies the work desk along the wall beside the inset TV.

“We created elements of intrigue within the overall hotel design by experimenting with the juxtaposition of solids and voids, and infusing reoccurring geometric forms into unexpected spaces, design elements or features,” said DiLeonardo.

Smoked glass encases the split bathroom facilities, with the bathtub looking out into the guestroom, integrating the bathroom with the living space and allowing for natural light to spill into the room. “The rooms are also bigger than average to create more space and comfort for movement,” observed Hai Ao.

Bringing the outdoors indoors was the inspiration of the layout of the guestrooms.

“Each room gives guests an immersive, natural feeling through maximizing the viewing effect, especially at the top of the glass dome space,” said Hai Ao. “There is a 360-degree view to the beautiful scenery.”

The centerpiece of the lobby is a custom-designed art installation, set around the staircase, composed of thousands of round, glass spectrums hanging from the ceiling to the ground on stainless-steel cables. The design abstractly reflects the exterior outline of the mountainous landscape beyond Yanqi Lake.

