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JEFFREY BEERS INTERNATIONAL

JEFFREY BEERS, FOUNDER & PRESIDENT AND VINCE STROOP, PARTNER & EXECUTIVE DESIGN DIRECTOR

The management team behind Jeffrey Beers International talks in depth to SPACE Editor Can Falk about the amazing projects the studio has completed.

Jeffrey Beers International (JBI) brings experience, vision, and architectural precision to the creation of vibrant social spaces. Internationally recognised as a leader in architecture and design, JBI is a full-service studio founded by Jeffrey Beers in 1986.

Tell me about your role at Jeffrey Beers International

Jeffrey Beers: I am the Founder and President of Jeffrey Beers International. My background as an architect and as a glass blower has formed the essence of the firm's commitment to layout, functionality, artistry and colour.

Vince Stroop: I have recently re-joined the studio as Jeffrey's first Partner and will act as the Executive Design Director. It is a tremendous honour to be working with Jeff and the talented team here. I will focus on developing new creative business opportunities and will be instrumental in the international evolution of the 50-person studio.

What five words would you use to describe Jeffrey Beers International?

JB: Bold, dedicated, inviting, warm and artistic.

VS: Innovative, imaginative, makers, approachable, clever.

How long have you been involved with hotel design?

JB: I began working on hotels, such as the Raffles City Hotel

in Singapore, when I worked for I M Pei from the mid '70s to the mid '80s.

VS: 25+ years.

Have you noticed any particular trends in hotel design?

JB: We are seeing bolder choices such as grander custom designed chandeliers and sculptural circular staircases.

VS: I am definitely intrigued by the increased interest in developing the 'immersive experience' environment. By this I mean the trend towards unique and remote eco-resorts, lodge camps, overnight train travel and the resurgence of the roadside Motel. I have also noticed that the 'co-working' virus, which has spread like wildfire, and blurs the work-play continuum, has definitely created an opportunity in the hospitality market to service this trend.

How important are public spaces in hotels?

JB: The public spaces are extremely important and they should feel inviting and warm. You want guests to gather in them and socialise with one another.

VS: Much in the same way that over time, the kitchen became that space where everyone always hangs out in the home, the public space of a hotel has assumed that similar place in a city or town where not only the guests 'hang out' but so do the locals. They hold an important place as the new town square or city plaza. This certainly isn't a new trend; it's been



Vince Stroop (L) Jeffrey Beers (R)



The Ocean Club, A Four Seasons Resort - Pool

evolving over a few decades now, but these spaces are critical not only to the success of the hotel but also as part of the constantly changing urban fabric and can be part of the community.

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

VS: There are plenty of creative studios out there and it's easy to pick from a lot of current trendy designers who offer initial eye candy. But can they go the distance and do they have the endurance that hospitality projects demand? Fortunately JBI is one of those firms with over 30+ years of experience that stands the test of time, and given our wide variety of project types is able to pragmatically adapt seamlessly to the often chaotic nature of the business.

What hotel projects are you currently working on?

JB: We have a number of exciting urban hotel projects in New York, Boston, Dallas, and other major cities across North America. For example, the Hilton Columbus downtown in Ohio just revealed the renderings of our design for the hotel's renovation. Internationally, we continue to focus on resort work in the Caribbean and we've just started a new and exciting project in Seoul.

VS: We are fortunate to be an international studio and have many projects underway that range from an Golf Resort in Texas, an Eco Resort in Costa Rica to several bars and restaurants throughout the U.S. and Caribbean. We also recently landed an intimate adaptive reuse project in Belgium.

How would you define your 'hotel style'?

JB: Our 'hotel style' is influenced by the late Morris Lapidus. Lapidus was

talented, prolific and flamboyant, but he also created hotels that were about the guest. He created an environment where the guest could be the star – not the hotel or its design. We try to emulate his style throughout all our projects including urban, boutique and resort.

What does design mean to you?

JB: The essence of design is the relationship between precision and sensuality, discipline and spontaneity. I would personally describe our aesthetic as 'emotional modernism' be it a Daniel Boulud restaurant, the lobby of the Atlantis Sanya hotel, or a private residence on Fifth Avenue. Design should be the harmony of technical knowledge with a skilful use of elegant materials. The resulting spaces are theatrical and glamorous while also remaining comfortable and inviting.

Have you seen exceptional growth in any part of the world in hotel design?

JB: Boston is having a moment in both hotel design and luxury residential towers. My two sons went to college there and it is very exciting to be a part of the city's newfound creative energy.

VS: It seems as though Mexico is on the Hot sheet at the moment with plenty of chic urban projects in Mexico City to the hip resorts of Tulum. We are currently working on a project in Cabo.

Where currently ranks highest on your travel wish list?

JB: My sons and I love to travel for golf and we would love to revisit the Dominican Republic or Scotland. My wife and I have always dreamed of a two-week road trip across the English countryside. Hope both trips will happen sooner rather than later.



El San Juan - Gold Bar



Renaissance New York Midtown - Lounge

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VS: I am fortunate to get around quite a bit, and I'm always game to see 'everything' but my overall travel goal has always been to make sure that I have visited each of the seven continents before I check out. I have one more to go, so New Zealand and Australia make the wish list by default.

Where do you see hotel design in the future?

JB: I personally miss the days of when a hotel was a destination rather than a secluded boutique property. I hope hotel design will return to being transportive and theatrical.

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

JB: I am biased towards One&Only resorts and have fortunately stayed at quite a few including The Ocean Club in The Bahamas (now a Four Seasons), Palmilla in Los Cabos, Mexico, and the Royal Mirage in Dubai. I fondly remember that the Mirage would attentively place thoughtful quotes on your pillow at turndown. I quite liked that.

VS: The Rosewood London England, The Retreat Hotel, Blue Lagoon Iceland, and Al Moudira Hotel, Luxor Egypt.

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?

JB: As the Founder and President, I am pulled in all directions to be the leader, the face of the company, and the driver of new business. You can only imagine how excited I am to have Vince on board to help share these responsibilities and to ensure I have more personal time. When I do get away from the office, I head to my home in the Hamptons. I like to take my boat far out into the Atlantic Ocean and go deep-sea fishing.

VS: Friends of mine tell me that I have a 'lifestyle' job! I guess that must mean I subscribe to the cliché: 'if you do what you love you never work a day in your life'. I suppose that does ring true at some level. I really do enjoy my work, but like anything you need to step away from it every now and again to be able to remain objective; for that I have a sturdy pair of running shoes and a great playlist!

www.jeffreybeers.com

