

KHIRSTIE GUNN MYLES, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, YOTEL



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With the recent appointment of Khirstie Gunn Myles as YOTEL's Senior Vice President of Design and Construction. Can Faik caught up with her to discuss her new challenge with YOTEL...

Inspired by the luxury of first-class travel and uncompromisingly designed around guests, YOTEL takes the essential elements of luxury hotels into smaller, smart spaces and delivers a sense of community with areas for co-working, social gatherings and exercise.

Tell me about your role at YOTEL?

I recently joined YOTEL as Senior Vice President of Design and Construction Global. This is a new role in the group. I am leading all matters design and construction, as well as project management and technical services. It is a fabulous role which I am lucky enough to have taken up during a period of exceptionally rapid growth for the ever-evolving brand.

How long have you been involved with hotel design?

I have worked in hotel design for over 20 years now!

How and why did you get into the interior design industry?

I am an Architect and I was very lucky to have the opportunity to have studied at the Charles Rennie Mackintosh School of Architecture in Glasgow. Those early days instilled a strong passion for experience-led design; a passion which has only grown stronger as I have worked around the world with great hotel groups, inspired by owners and investors and many talented design and engineering professionals.

Have you noticed any particular trends in hotel design?

The best luxury resorts curate and deliver seamless guest experience through well-considered design and service delivery – this approach is invaluable for other hotels and hotel groups to learn from.

How important are public spaces in hotels?

Irrespective of hotel size, star rating and/or location, the public space in hotels sets the tone and culture of the guest experience. The way in which the public areas are designed inform the guest experience and the ease of operation.

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

This is an interesting question. I was recently based in Asia and I was endlessly in awe of the development of amazing home-grown design groups. I was equally amazed by inspired investors who push the boundaries of perceived 'norms' in the hospitality design business on every level. For example, industries in Bangkok and Osaka (Japan) have been ahead of the curve with certain

aspects of 'lifestyle' retail-outlet design. This has informed hospitality design, especially in the design of public areas.

How much time do you dedicate to sourcing products and suppliers for the projects you work on?

Appropriate time invested up front is time well spent. Essentially, the delivery of good design and exceptional guest experience is reliant on sourcing appropriate products and building good relationships with suppliers.

Do you find it easy to source new suppliers or do you work with existing companies on a long-term basis?

We constantly seek to innovate and understand new product development as well as alternative products which we may never have encountered before. This ensures continuous evolution; therefore, we work closely with current suppliers as well as scouting out new suppliers to work with us.

What has been your favourite project to date?

That is tough to answer – it is like asking a parent who is your favourite child – you love them all equally!

What's your favourite part of a hotel?

From a design perspective, I have no favourite areas. However, from a guest perspective you can't beat great public areas to hang out in, do your own thing and people watch.

How would you define your 'hotel style'?

I strive for a rigour in design process and delivery. Projects must be appropriate to respective location, guest profile, and brand (if branded). Therefore, my style is entirely subjective depending on the project.

What does design mean to you?

Good design is my passion. It permeates our surroundings; from coffee machines and cups to public spaces, hotels and transport. Everything intertwines to inform how we experience our world on a daily basis.

Where currently ranks highest on your travel wish list?

I have been exceptionally fortunate to have travelled the world with my line of work. Previously, the highest-ranking place on my list was Bhutan. However, I recently visited the country with my partner – words cannot express how exceptional the Kingdom of Bhutan and its people are. Now I am back in Europe, I am drawn to another 'heaven on earth' – The Moray Firth area in North East Scotland.

What do you love about being a designer? Where do you draw your inspiration?

I love creating successful and memorable user experiences through design. As designers, we are all the sum of our experiences and vocabulary. I am an explorer and enjoy travel, meeting and working with people across cultures – therefore, every day you see and learn something new, which I incorporate into my work.

Is there anything exciting that you are working on at the moment that you can tell us about?

At YOTEL, we have an exciting pipeline of new projects around the globe. Further to opening more YOTELs in many new locations, we have welcomed a new addition to our portfolio – YOTELPAD. YOTELPAD is a new way of living that enables our guests to live and work smarter within cleverly designed spaces. Unlike our YOTELAIR and YOTEL city properties, which are cleverly designed for shorter stays, YOTELPAD is uniquely built for longer stays and to accommodate the unique needs of travellers lodging for longer than just a few nights at a time. We anticipate most guests will stay comfortably for at least a week, potentially up to six months or a year at a time. Each serviced PAD is designed to feel like home and is serviced with everything you need for a convenient, flexible stay. PADs come with a full- sized bed, ample storage space, a kitchenette, bathroom and a flexible work and dining area.

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

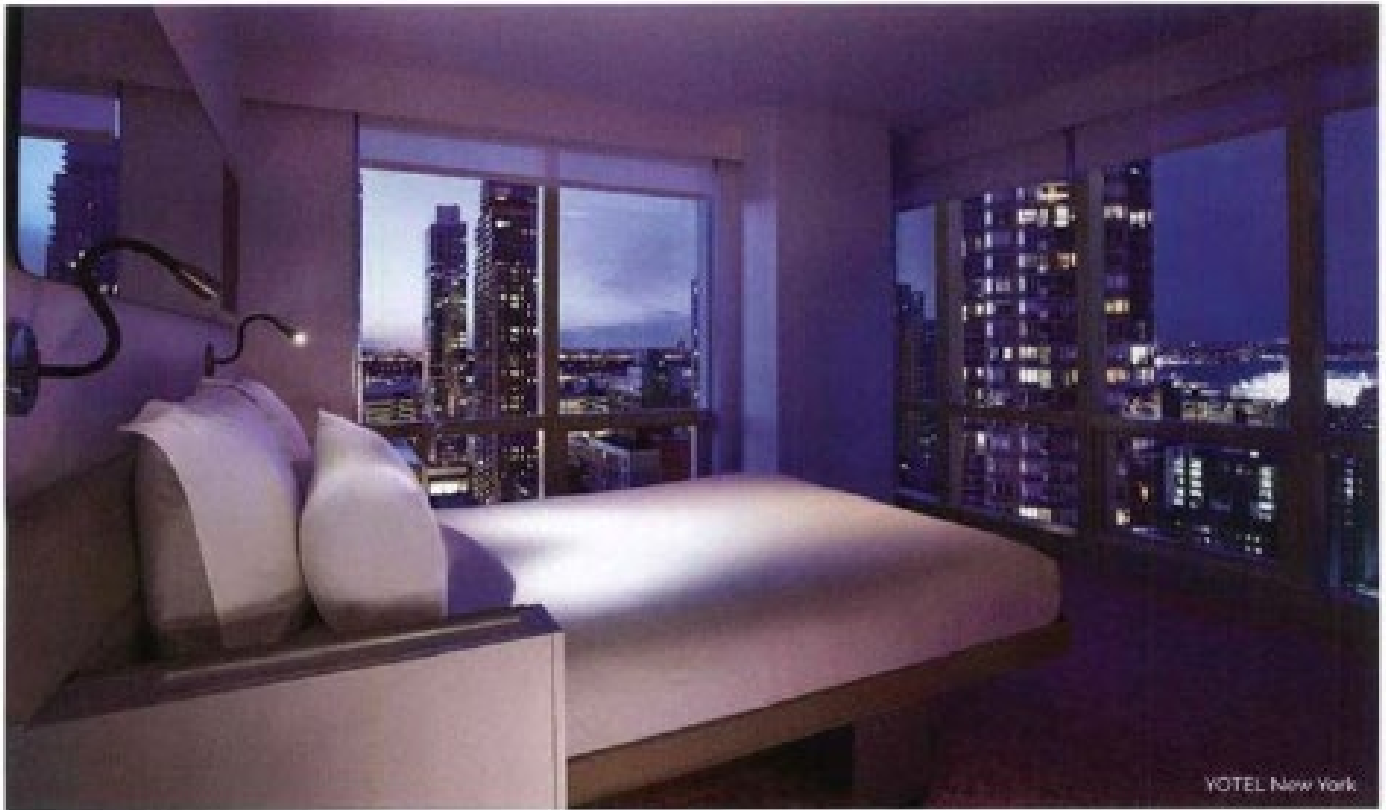
There is no correct answer for this, that's probably why it is such a frequently discussed topic!

Everyone is different, I can be a workaholic as I really enjoy what I do. That said, I ensure I make time for my family and friends and I always fit in time to ski, sail and explore.

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Grains and Hops restaurant YOTEL Singapore



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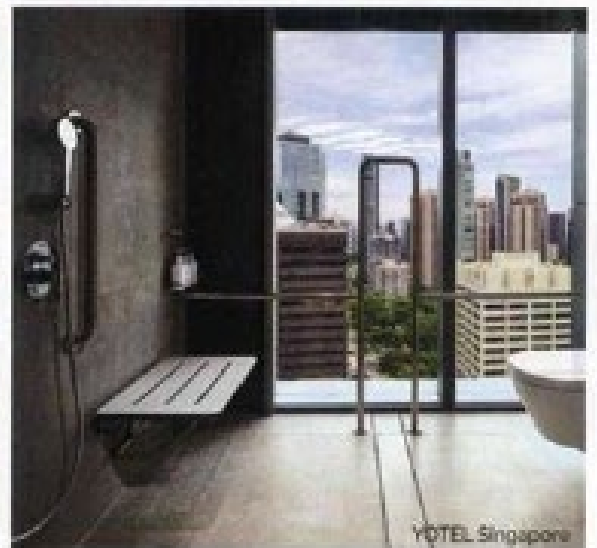
YOTELPAD dining area



YOTEL New York



YOTELPAD in Park City



YOTEL Singapore

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