

DESIGN

Traveller terrific

AT HOME II **F3**

Take your favourite hotel home with you

What the hospitality industry doesn't know about economical, functional and durable interiors isn't worth knowing

BY CLAUDIA KWAN

Remember when “hotel luxury” made a splash as a decor trend? In the early 2000s, it was all about every imaginable shade of white on white, with bits of beige creeping in. Thousand-count thread sheets and fluffy towels were also an important part of the design scheme. But reducing the look to paint and linens ignores the true rationale of hotel design. Designing for durability and functionality, while being constrained by small spaces and tight budgets, is something many can relate to.

In rooms at the Adara Hotel in Whistler, the front “closet” is an open, wall-mounted wooden unit, which makes it easier for guests to shrug off their winter jackets and heavy boots. Heated towel bars can be used in a pinch to dry off wet ski or snowboard gloves, and the electric fireplaces warm up the room without the hazard of anyone burning their fingers.

The Adara has taken a quirky approach to “cottage in the woods” decor. Deer antlers are frosted onto mirrors and embroidered into pillows, and resin casts of antlers are also displayed in the lobby.

The lobby also has a boldly patterned rug that doesn't make sense until you see it from the upper level in the lobby: it's a horizontal slice of a log, with concentric age rings (and even a notch cut out of one chunk.) Images of Brent Comber woodcuts are overlaid in transparent sheets on the shower glass, and the vanities have a distinctive wood grain.

“We wanted it to feel like a ski lodge with a twist,” laughs Jay Brooks, principal of Box Interiors. “It's tongue-in-cheek with a fine line — if you make it too kitschy, it ends up very abstract.”

Call it the next step up from watching home design shows and tearing images out of the newspaper; the next time you stay in a hotel room you might just want to look around for inspiration.