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The Churchill



Hot on the heels of the very successful launch of Hotel du Vin in York comes another boutique-style hotel, the re-launched Churchill, a short walk away. We asked designer, **David Richard Mellor**, to provide an insight...

"Situated within short walking distance of the city centre and York Minster the hotel proves popular with tourists and locals alike. As with any successful business though, standing still is not an option in today's competitive market. Our client Lee Robinson therefore took the bold move to grow and re-energize the hotel with the aim of attracting new customers whilst not alienating its existing faithful clientele.

One of the former uses of this magnificent Georgian mansion was as a grace and favor home. Oliver and I wanted to bring back some of this homely grandeur and enhance the buildings architectural details at the same time as injecting a modern contemporary edge.

From the start we knew that there was the opportunity to be quite bold and even slightly quirky with our design, the branding of the hotel >

the churchill hotel



featured a gruff looking image of Winston Churchill's head and Lee himself was quite open to modern contemporary design. It's sometimes a daunting time for any hotelier to embark on such change but change is best done with conviction and Lee's trust in us as designers allowed us to confidently progress our design ideas without being restraint.

In the reception area we wanted guests to be welcomed into a clean simple open space introducing them to the warm neutral tones that flow throughout the hotel. Then into the central atrium is where the full sense of space and grandeur really takes off. From the beginning Oliver had the vision of a bespoke bookcase across the full length and height of one wall to create a library but with the twist of it incorporating internet stations and a coffee bar. Rather than traditional shelving, random

shaped boxes were designed to house antique books, modern oddities and vintage memorabilia. On the opposite wall a traditional grand staircase sweeps up in front of an imposing gallery using some of the unusual portraits and oil paintings that the hotel had collected over the years.

Leading off the atrium through the bookcase is the restaurant. It features a red halo around the ceiling to highlight the moulding detail and we used metallic copper and white wallpaper by Tektura to catch the light that floods in through the elegant triple arch window. Contemporary chrome and American walnut tables from Dovetail give the room a modern edge during the day and can also be white clothed in the evening for a more formal feel.

An archway leads into the adjoining bar where simple banquet seating is contrasted by rich velvet

cushions, cubes and bar stools. On the wall hangs a classic portrait of Winston Churchill that has been divided into squares and mixed up like a huge puzzle. The bar itself sees random shaped boxes used again but this time to house the wine and spirit bottles.

Also off the atrium is a large function room which has been extended by the new wing of the building. The space needed to be multifunctional and cater for different size groups, wedding parties and conferences. We wanted the room to have that wow factor for a bride and groom yet still be neutral enough for them to add their own scheme. A palette of rich chocolate and neutrals was therefore used with wallpaper featuring metallic forest silhouettes and silk wall lights with pearl and glass beads from CTO Lighting. >



Our ideas and brief for the twenty-six new bedrooms was different to that of the public areas. We wanted to create something a little cleaner, more restrained and graphic. I liked the idea of mixing matt black veneer and walnut wood with brushed steel. We therefore designed furniture mixing these elements which were made for us by PTT Designs. A stark white feature wall, curtains in plain linen and a neutral, textured carpet kept everything crisp and modern. To liven things up we introduced a blast of burnt orange to the cushions, throw trim and chose a bold floral Zoffany fabric for the upholstery.

As we were designing we met the Danish design company GUBI who manufacture the Bestlite. The lamp was the first example of

Bauhaus in the UK and gained everlasting fame when Winston Churchill placed one on his desk in Whitehall. It was the perfect compliment to our scheme; the room also features the pendant version hanging either side of the bed.

A key part of the clients brief was also that the bathrooms must include a great shower. We worked closely with Porcelanosa to incorporate generous glass shower enclosures and impressive body jet shower columns. The contemporary basin was a simple white ceramic bowl mounted on a zebano shelf with leather and stitch effect front.

It has been exciting to see the new interior of the Churchill Hotel evolve with the various phases and hear first hand the enthusiastic response from guests. Traditional elements have given this

unique hotel a sense of relaxed familiarity while contemporary design has given it a totally modern feel. •

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Chrome and walnut tables:

Dovetail Enterprises +44 (0)1382 833890

Chairs (restaurant):

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Wallpaper: Tektura +44 (0)207 7536 3300

Fabrics: Zoffany +44 (0)8708 300 350

Lighting: Bestlite (GUBI) +45 33 32 63 68