Jazz Age Meets Harvard at the Doubletree Guest Suites Boston

Everyone in town knows The Doubletree Guest Suites Boston for “Sculler's” -- Boston’s top jazz club for nearly two decades. The Harvard University-owned property, “on the Boston side of the Charles,” is also a convenient venue for the University's academic and alumni functions. In addition, it enjoys an unusually high occupancy rate because business travelers and tourists flock to this city property with such easy auto – and airport shuttle – access to Harvard, MIT and Boston University.

Says Christian Coffin, General Manager, “When we created the new interior we sought an environment that is Smart. Relaxed. Welcoming. This is a slight modification of our corporate look of: “Cool. Relaxed. Welcoming.” We just switched “Cool” “Smart” in a nod to our Harvard University owners.

Jeff Ornstein’s J/Brice Design International is a preferred design firm for Doubletree. Says Ornstein, “The Doubletree guest experience is known and respected worldwide. In addition to care, the interior landscape, with its open airy atrium, is part of the guest expectation and brand identity. In this property, several events can be going on simultaneously along with a jazz ensemble playing in “Sculler's”. Sound permeates the atrium but rather than being a negative, it gives the public space a feeling of energy without being intrusive and adds to a positive guest experience.”

Within this breathtaking this open area, Ornstein’s team created a contemporary look for the Terrace Lounge. Its pergola roof in moss green and contemporary patterns in the upholstered seating plus gold leaf detailing create an upscale sidewalk café environment where guests can enjoy a meal or cocktail while overlooking the buzz of the atrium. The bar seats only a few patrons, making it intimate and very social -- encouraging easy conversation among out-of-towners.

Meeting the expectations Sculler's Jazz Club fans was key. Sculler’s – after the racing boats that ply the Charles -- will soon celebrate its 20th year of presenting the biggest names in Latin and Contemporary Jazz, Blues, Soul, R & B, Cabaret and World Music. It’s been voted Boston's #1 Live Music Venue by the Boston Phoenix, Citysearch.com, AOL CityGuide, and the Improper Bostonian -- no doubt for hosting some of the biggest musical artists in the business: Harry Connick Jr., Chris Botti, Jamie Cullum, Michael Bublé, Arturo Sandoval, Tony Bennett, Wynton Marsalis and Dave Koz to name a few. Much of the credit goes to impresario Fred Taylor for making the 200-seat Sculler’s a landmark.

Says Ornstein, “At sunset, Sculler’s offers spectacular views of Cambridge and the Charles from its floor-to-ceiling windows while patrons enjoy world-class dining. In the evening, its personality changes. I wanted to recreate the mood of a 1950s New York or Chicago Jazz club – intimate, but without the hanging layer of cigarette smoke. There are not too many places left that can be called a true 'night club', appealing to the 30 something crowd. This is it. We created a the Jazz era experience, while making the space comfortable and contemporary.”
Boston still hangs on to the threads of its three-button, Brooks Brothers image. That is changing. "To succeed here – or anywhere in the world for that matter – we have to read cultural shifts. Indeed, we have to be cultural spies. As Brooks Brothers cedes to Armani the expectations of Greater Boston’s meeting planners, business travelers and tourists change.

“To meet those expectations, the new Doubletree is more hip, international and youthful than ever before. Admittedly, we did sneak in a hint of Old Boston into our design of the clubby restaurant by making use of mahogany and earth tones. At the same time, we added a contemporary half (frosted) glass wall and chrome to establish intimate guest experiences within the restaurant. We didn’t want it to be kitsch by using brass and maroon.” -- explains Ornstein, who founded J/Brice Design International 20 years ago and has turned it into a global interior design phenomenon with assignments in the

Boston’s changing culture is reflected in the choice of contemporary colors, designs and materials. “The interior is light and upbeat,” says Ornstein adding, “but we did not want to create a sense of place by resorting to add-ons or clichés. This property overlooks the Charles, known by just about every college graduate because of the annual Head of the Charles crew races. We simply took advantage of the river views and, and then we reinforced actual views with artwork depicting Harvard, MIT and other local scenes that exist within the Doubletree’s neighborhood.”

For impact – you never get a second chance to make a first impression – we did the lobby in white marble with crisp clean lines. We capped the front desk area with an elegant coffered ceiling. The white marble is set off with a burnt orange to create a focal point for front desk.

The Doubletree business center reflects real guest requirements. For example, there are no-nonsense carrels equipped with PCs that can accommodate numerous users simultaneously.

The suites are done in royal blue upholstered pieces, celery carpeting and cherry wood case goods, tables and accent walls.

Bedroom fabrics J/Brice selected have modern geometric patterns, crisp lines and light hues of celery, peach and aqua. Guestroom baths include such finishing touches as luxurious Neutrogena products.

**Presidential Aspirations**

In an all-suites hotel, creating a unique Presidential Suite was achieved by J/Brice specifying a magnificent first impression - heavy black and brass double front doors that open to the suite with a backdrop of sweeping view of Cambridge and the Charles River. The foyer is both gathering spot and - with the addition of a taberet and floral centerpiece – becomes a focal point for intimate social gatherings and weddings. The Presidential Suite’s occupancy gets a big boost from Harvard and MIT meeting planners and alumni groups who frequently want to organize events off campus but with proximity to the universities.
Coffin puts it this way, “The Doubletree Culture rests on the principle that “When you CARE, it shows.” This encompasses how we treat our Guests, our Team Members and members of our Community. A big part of that is to create a welcoming and comfortable environment evident from the first moment of contact with every guest. Whatever a guest sees, hears, and smells touches and tastes is part of our Doubletree experience. Thus, it was important that we not only addressed the public ad guest areas, but the entire guest experience. By doing so arriving guests own the welcome.”

J/Brice Design International, Inc., Boston, MA (www.jbricedesign.com) was founded 20 years ago by Jeffrey Brice Ornstein CEO. J/Brice Design is a Certified Interior Design and Architectural Giant, and one of the top ten fastest growing design firms nationwide. Its award-winning, designers have over 200 hotel and restaurant projects to its credit, as well as a diverse portfolio of corporate and residential interiors. Its international experience lends diversity to its design with respect to regional, cultural, operational and budgetary parameters.

J/Brice Design is a preferred design group for Hilton/Doubletree Hotels including its Full-Service, Corporate and Franchise properties, Marriott International/Renaissance Hotels, Intercontinental Hotel Group, and Starwood – including Sheraton, Westin, W, and 4-Points. In addition to contracts with FAEC in Saudi Arabia and Hotel Khalifa, in Doha, Qatar, international credentials include TAJ Hotels headquartered In Mumbai and the Al Khaleej Palace and Admiral Plaza in Dubai, UAE. The bold and inventive style J/Brice is creating is beginning to set the benchmark for future developments it is working on in Qatar, Bahrain, The Saudi Kingdom and the region's newest hot spot, Zanzibar.

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