

hospitality design

march/april 2014 hospitalitydesign.com

simply luxurious

hd expo preview

HD *expo*
a hospitality design event

hotel sorella kansas city

→ Charged with creating the Kansas City, Missouri sister hotel to the Valencia Hotel Sorella in Houston, Andrea Dawson Sheehan and her team at Seattle-based Dawson Design Associates decided to stray from the city's "stereotype of wood, iron, and cattle," she says. "It doesn't really capture what Kansas City has become—a major hub in the Midwest that serves the business and shopping needs for multiple states. We decided that we could go a bit more formal, dramatic, and elegant than usual in this market."

This is especially true of Hotel Sorella Kansas City's location. Country Club Plaza, designed in 1922 as the first suburban shopping center, now includes more than 100 luxury retail boutiques set in buildings inspired by the romantic history and architecture of the city of Seville. "Our clients wanted us to capture the lifestyle and the sophistication of this affluent guest that lives and visits this part of the city," Sheehan says. "We researched opulent European villas and palazzos that had been renovated for younger members of the family. We wanted to create an environment that represented this new style of aristocracy—spaces tailored to capture the lifestyle of the younger generation while maintaining a classically elegant edge—both



contemporary and minimalist in attitude."

In the public spaces, that translates to a dramatic black and white color palette; a custom marble mosaic entry floor; hand-rubbed Venetian plaster juxtaposed against blackened cold rolled steel panels; handcarved wood panels; elaborate tile work; commissioned oversized Flemish-style portraits; and a blue-purple Venetian chandelier. "It's the feeling of a collector's home that is open to the public," says Sheehan. "This is not Dorothy's Kansas."

Guestrooms boast warm, rich hardwoods, white-on-white bathrooms, charcoal and blue hues, and a dramatic headboard tapestry—a modern interpretation of a classic. But the highlight is top floor restaurant Rosso, which is based on the bell towers of Siena and its horse races: it opens directly onto an infinity rooftop pool lit by colored LED lights and surrounded by cabanas and firepits. "People are really surprised to discover this hotel in Kansas," Sheehan says.