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THE NEW
ICONS
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CURATED BY JASON POMERANC

HD*expo*
hospitality design event



A guestroom at the Nautilus



Sessanta restaurant at the SIXTY SoHo

There was a convergence of a lot of things that made us successful: We created a unique and thoughtful product; SoHo was emerging as a dominant neighborhood for innovative new luxury in New York; and independent boutique hotels went mainstream. There was a generation of tastemakers, celebrities, and fashion and media players who chose to make a few places, including ours, the new establishment.

Those things were coupled with a new hotel economic formula that made more sense. You spent more money on aesthetics and less on archaic hotel services. It was the changing of the guard in many ways. Whether by luck or by design—or a bit of both—we were very much in the middle of it.

In 2011, we merged with Commune Hotels + Resorts (now Two Roads Hospitality). It seemed like a unique opportunity for growth. In 2013, we decided to sell our interest, keeping the three properties in New York and Beverly Hills because our independence was of the utmost critical nature to do what we do successfully. There is such a thing as companies becoming too big. Being able to touch the details, being engaged in the creative process of each project was important, and there was a point where I was getting too far removed. At the end of the day, I am a hotelier and not a board executive—it's what I choose to do. Being an innkeeper is what resonates with my brothers and me.

SIXTY is our next incarnation. We are going project by project with specific and careful thought. Great brands happen one project at a

time, and great projects happen one decision at a time. It worked for us before, and it's the right way for us now.

For our original hotel in SoHo, our goal was to make it part of the downtown fabric—to make our own icon. That's the way we intend it to be for each hotel. There is no formula; it is a series of subjective decisions. I view my job as very cinematic where the guests are the actors, writing their own scripts. The unpredictability of the outcome is part of what makes hotels so exciting.

The second time around, you gain clarity and purpose in a more articulated way. SIXTY SoHo feels much better, more mature, more luxurious in a natural way. We are hoping to build something that will resonate with a youth-minded but sophisticated client base that transcends age and economic status. It's a bit aspirational but takes into account other things besides just the physical. It's experiential.

I have worked with Thomas O' Brien, Steven Sclaroff, Yabu Pushelberg, Tara Bernerd, **Studio Collective**, Martin Brudnizki, Roman and Williams, our in-house team, and many other great designers over the years. For a successful collaboration, a mutual respect is incredibly important. You are working with creative personalities who fundamentally don't work in conventional ways. They make an emotional connection. You can't force great design; it needs



A SIXTY SoHo Loft suite bedroom

to flow. But if you respect the process, you can achieve great design within clearly articulated project goals and still be on speaking terms by the time you are done.

For me and my brothers, our biggest mentor has been my father. Though he is in a different core business, many of the key values are the same. He always said treat people with the affection and respect with which you would like to be treated, regardless of their status. We've never believed our success is someone else's failure or someone else's failure is our success. I am not sure if it is good karma or just a healthy attitude, but it's the biggest lesson we take with us.

Like all aspects of life, the greatest challenge lies ahead. Many have taken the playbook we helped write and expanded the boutique and lifestyle sector into the fastest growing part of the industry. How do we define ourselves going forward? We are answering that question. **hd**

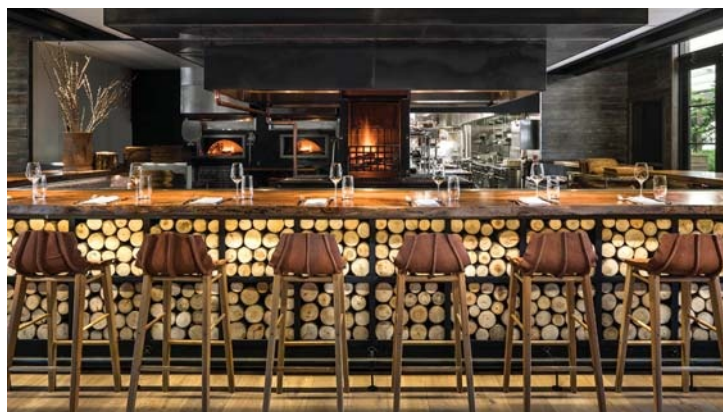


Miami

Quinto La Huella and Sugar

When Swire Hotels first approached Studio Collective, it was to design a rooftop bar for EAST, Miami, the company's first U.S. property. But after Swire's managing director Brian Williams visited the design firm's Santa Monica, California headquarters and saw its recent project Bungalow—a local beach restaurant-bar—he added Quinto La Huella, EAST's in-house restaurant, to the brief.

Quinto is the stateside outpost of Parador La Huella, a boho-chic seaside restaurant in Jose Ignacio, Uruguay, with a huge cult following. Unlike Quinto, Parador was built over time without proper architects or designers, and the structure has been aged by nature's elements—wind, sea air, salt—for the past 15 years. At the new location, the question was “How do you capture that magic, but still recognize you're not on the beach in Uruguay, you're in the middle of downtown Miami?” explains Adam Goldstein, a partner at Studio Collective. “It had to walk a fine line between comfort, honesty of materials, and a level of casualness,” adds partner Christian Schulz, “but still appeal to the average Miami person who's going out to hotspots all the time.” In the end, Quinto, complete with



Photos by MICHAEL WEBER

an outdoor dining area, makes use of many of the same elements—wood, leather, lush landscaping—found in Uruguay, but used in a way that's a bit more refined and appropriate for the city setting.

Sugar, the two-level rooftop bar, shares a similar vibe, though “there's a sense of escapism, like you're in the southeast Asian jungle,” says Schulz. “We wanted it to be as lush and dense as possible.” Meandering through the indoor-outdoor space, one will encounter various, sometimes hidden, seating areas—from the handcarved wooden bar to bamboo-framed couches around firepits—lit by pendants handcrafted from coconut or metal that the designers hung themselves. **hd**

studio-collective.com; quintolahuella.com; east-miami.com

