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LET THERE BE LIGHT

Posted by Anna Marie-Casas |

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INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER JEAN-PHILIPPE NUEL SPEAKS EXCLUSIVELY ABOUT HIS WORK AT THE SOFITEL ROME VILLA BORGHESE HOTEL IN ROME, WHERE THE LATEST BEDROOM TECHNOLOGY IS AFFORDED AT EVERY TURN.

Anticipating every need is a critical element in creating a remarkable guest experience, says Jean-Philippe Nuel.

Paris-based Nuel is the project designer for the Sofitel Rome Villa Borghese in Rome where guests

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can take advantage of stunning views of the city – and the latest technology at their fingertips to control every ray and angle of light that permeates their exquisite rooms.



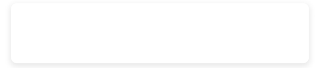
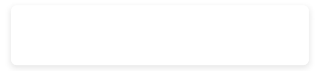
Images courtesy of Studio Jean-Philippe Nuel – Gilles Trillard

While there are many reasons to open the shades – beckoning are the Villa Borghese gardens along with Villa Medici, the Vatican City, and St. Peter’s Basilica to name but a few – guests may want to close them to block some of the brilliant noonday light and heat that comes with it.

Accor, the global hotel group that owns the Sofitel portfolio of five-star boutique hotels, selected the Lutron myRoom solution for every guestroom for its latest offering to give their guests the heightened level of control they imagined they might expect or need.



Few know more about designing for modern-day expectations than Nuel, whose sublime touches are enjoyed by guests in luxury hotels the world over.



Images courtesy of Studio Jean-Philippe Nuel – Gilles Trillard

“When designing a hotel guestroom, I imagine that I am the guest,” reflected the esteemed designer after his latest work was recently unveiled. “I picture different scenarios that may occur throughout the day. There is fantastic light in Rome, so I may want to close the curtains. I may want to change the temperature of the room, cooling it down if it becomes overly warm. I may be on the bed and want to read.”

The post-pandemic hotel

Nuel tells *designerati* exclusively that today, in a post-Covid world, the expectations of guests are

now more about being able to enjoy destinations with the latest technology and procedures to minimise the risk factor than the socialising elements that hotels traditionally offer.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a worldwide movement of withdrawal, with whole countries and cities having closed and imposing limits on social exchanges. In this context, all places of social interaction were impacted.

“The hotel naturally found itself on the front line because, by its nature, it brings people together. Like many establishments, the Sofitel has been faced with the emergence of new guest expectations – where the ability to social distance has overtaken the desire to socialise. The strength of large groups like Accor lies in being able to mobilise multiple skills to develop an approach that reassures guests and guarantees customer safety, without sacrificing on the luxury experience.



Images courtesy of Studio Jean-Philippe Nuel – Gilles Trillard

“Customers have come to expect the implementation of distancing barriers and rules, QR Code menus or contactless payments when possible, not to mention reinforced hygiene rules. Hotels, due to their layout, have certain advantages in adapting to new uses. The rooms are equipped with a multi-use table serving as a desk, but also as a table for breakfast or even dinner. The restaurant, with its terrace and retractable roof, also has unique assets in responding to distancing measures.

“This flexibility, and act of designing with a range of uses and guests in mind, will surely be found in the hotels of the future. The bedroom will need to act as a living and dining space for guests who remain cautious of public spaces, and outdoor

spaces, which have now become synonymous with well-being, will be increasingly sought-after.



Images courtesy of Studio Jean-Philippe Nuel – Gilles Trillard

“In general, the hotel of the future will need to be a place that is open to the city, offering the cultural experiences guests have missed, while offering privacy and control, to compensate for the loss of clientele over the past year.”

Full control

The myRoom system installed in Sofitel Rome Villa Borghese provides guests with an elegantly designed keypad to control light levels, curtain positions, and room temperature in a way that feels both sophisticated and masterful.

A guest can turn all the lights on or off at the touch of a button or move the draperies silently into the open position to enjoy the early morning view of

Rome – without waking up anyone else in the room. They can go for the total privacy option or tailor the room temperature to their personal preference.



Images courtesy of Studio Jean-Philippe Nuel – Gilles Trillard

“Guests need control of the lights, the shades, and the temperature in their room. Managing all of these parameters in a globally-accessible and effortless manner, is, I believe, a distinguishing feature of Lutron,” observes Nuel.

The myRoom system was designed to deliver a luxury experience to guests from all over the world, which meant it was important that there were no language barriers. The buttons feature large icons that are easy to interpret in any language.

The keypads are also beautiful; the design team selected a white glass Palladiom finish, so they could incorporate them into the rich white leather headboards in each guestroom, without compromising the carefully curated look.

“The two elements that mattered the most to me, when selecting a guestroom keypad, were how easily the icons could be interpreted by guests

from around the world and, of course, complementing our high-end aesthetic,” says Nuel.

The myRoom solution elevates the hotel experience by giving staff the tools to impress guests with heightened attention to detail and customer service.

Staff can trigger ‘welcome’ scenes during check-in, so guests enter a gently lit room with the curtains drawn, instead of fumbling for a key card or light switch in the dark.

They can also indicate when they do not want to be disturbed by pressing a button on the keypad, instead of hanging a sign on the door.

Smart home from home

“Lighting control is integral to making superb guest experiences happen, with technology having long played a role in raising a hotel’s profile,” says Miguel Aguado, Marketing and Technology Manager for Lutron Europe. “The smart home market has seen incredible growth, boosted by the unfortunate need to stay at home during the last 18 months. Now, guests will come to expect the same level of convenience when travelling.

“Technology already plays a key role in offering a touchless hotel experience, while enhancing a guest’s stay. Occupants can wake up to sunlight instead of an alarm using automated lighting and shading solutions and turn all the lights off from a single button at the bedside or with touchless control keys.



Images courtesy of Studio Jean-Philippe Nuel – Gilles Trillard

“Going forward, personalisation will be an increasingly important factor in elevating the guest experience. Mobile apps will enable a guest to enjoy bespoke experiences wherever they go – from personalising their wake-up sequence to setting scenes to suit romantic, family or business trips,” predicts Aguado.

“Wellness will continue to be of great importance. By making use of indoor environmental quality parameters, hoteliers can create the optimal guest experience. For example, guests can enjoy the perfect lighting for any activity with tuneable white solutions, and the optimal temperature with remote room controls. As well as this, hoteliers can create a calm, natural style with the right choice of fabrics for smart blinds and curtains.”

Lutron / lutron.com

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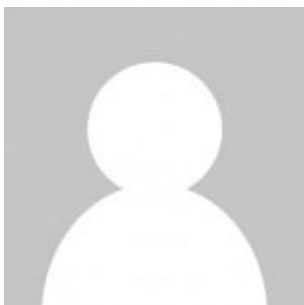
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