

INTERIOR DESIGN

APRIL
2009



high fashion



"You're not walking into another Gap store," Heidar Sadeki says. Definitely not. Unless one exists with three types of marble, copious white oak, 30 treatment rooms, a pool, a gym, and a Warren-Tricomi hair salon, the Richardson Sadeki–designed Lapis at the Fontainebleau Miami Beach hotel is unlike any Gap or generic spa we know.

Morris Lapidus's most famous building, the Fontainebleau reopened in a tough hospitality environment. Back in the good old days, just a year ago, there was enough fat in the Lapis budget for Sadeki and Clarissa Richardson to consider hiring Philip Glass to write the de rigueur waft-y music for the treatment rooms and lounges. In the end, Sadeki admits, "Money was tight." So there was neither Glass music nor a glass structure the architects had planned. (More on that later.) But what survived the shrinking budget is luxe, all the way.

A visitor to the main hotel needs only a moment to spot the sharp Lapis signage and start following it through a maze of halls and ramps to the elevators, which descend to a lower separate building, all new construction by HKS. From the elevators on, Richardson Sadeki handled everything down to the graphics, the uniforms of the attendants, and the color of the towels—let's call it Burnt Cookie.

Beyond the elevators, a shopping corridor is lined with square columns clad in Carrara marble. The columns support glass shelves loaded with soap

the Lap of Lapidus

firm: richardson sadeki site: miami beach



From left: At the Fontainebleau Miami Beach hotel's Lapis spa, a neon-lit desk of frosted resin glows in contrast to reception's Carrara marble and white oak. Custom chaise longues lining the 75-foot pool are Turkish marble heated to body temperature.







and lotion, solid perfume, beaded headbands, and workout clothes. Temptation might be almost irresistible if it weren't for the glowing reception desk, beckoning like a light at the end of the tunnel. With that frosted-resin desk and the reflecting pool opposite, reception is an oasis of repose.

The 40,000-square-foot spa is on two levels. On the lower one, guests are free to wander between a pulsing shower, a rain tunnel that soaks them in warm and cool torrents, and the central pool, where the water, supplied by hot and cold jets, is treated with minerals and seaweed extract from France. The couple's treatment rooms on the upper level—there are two that can be joined for larger groups—have expansive views of the ocean in addition to extra-large mineral tubs and a private lounge with marble benches where couples can, according to a brochure, "create a new sense of intimacy."

Overall, the spa offers the transcendent experience that comes along with good design and years of experience. Richardson and Sadeki, who met at the Princeton University School of Architecture, have designed two Bliss spas in New York and the celebrated Bath House spa at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas and are now working on four fitness and

hospitality



PAUL WAREHOL

Opposite, clockwise from top: The shopping corridor's shelves display Warren-Tricomi hair-care and Tracie Martyn beauty products. Tubs in the men's spa have surrounds clad in marble mosaic tile. Warm and cool torrents stream alternately onto the rain tunnel's marble floor.

From top: Facing the Atlantic, the two couple's treatment rooms offer mineral soaking tubs and private lounges. Towels in the men's locker room were dyed to match the walnut accents.



hospitality

The pool water's 3-percent mineral solution is fortified by red-seaweed extract.

hospitality projects in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. However, not every creature comfort was quite ready for the opening of Lapis. Take the fabulous hammam loungers of stripy gray Turkish marble. They're supposed to be set at body temperature, but the technology wasn't cooperating at first.

Then there was the case of the double stairway connecting the men's treatment and locker rooms on one side and the women's on the other. Once a customer had been rubbed, wrapped, oiled, scrubbed, and kneaded into a state somewhere between bliss and rubber, both men and women tended to cross and end up in the wrong place. "The design was intended as two separate frameless glass boxes hanging from the opposing walls, forming two landings coming to arm's length from each other. The construct would have imposed a ceremonial approach and withdrawal between men and women," Richardson says. Signs now steer guests in the right direction, relieving the staff wrangler who'd been standing at the bottom of the steps to prevent unexpected encounters. —*Linda Lee*

FROM FRONT TY, TY & TY: CUSTOM TOWELS (POOL AREA, LOCKER ROOM), CUSTOM THROWS, PILLOWS (TREATMENT ROOMS). **THROUGH ARTISTIC TILE:** TUB SURROUND TILE (MEN'S SPA). **TOUCH AMERICA:** STOOLS, BEDS (TREATMENT ROOMS). **MTI WHIRLPOOLS:** TUB, FITTINGS. **THROUGHOUT STONE SOURCE:** STONE SUPPLIER. **BEN JAMIN MOORE & CO.:** PAINT. **HKS:** ARCHITECT OF RECORD. **NATURAL RESOURCES SPA CONSULTING:** SPA CONSULTANT. **ZEROLUX:** LIGHTING CONSULTANT. **STO DESIGN GROUP:** HYDRAULIC CONSULTANT. **WALTER P. MOORE:** STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. **TLC ENGINEERING FOR ARCHITECTURE:** MEP. **CAYLEX ARCHITECTURAL FABRICATION:** WOODWORK. **TURNBERRY CONSTRUCTION:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

