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The Yas Hotel: anything but formulaic in the world of Formula 1

Launched in October 2009 as the first hotel to span a Formula 1 racetrack, the Yas Hotel has since stood as a landmark icon in Middle Eastern architectural design. An incredible lattice structure, comprising 219 metres of sweeping steel and 5,096 diamond shaped LED panels, provides a ‘veil’ that drapes over the hotel’s two towers, which are linked by a bridge that crosses the Grand Prix circuit. The optical effect is mesmerising: thousands of different shades and colours and shapes, including animations, shine from the hotel and illuminate the surrounding desert, sea and sky. The largest colour LED display in the world, this vast and vibrant shroud of lights mirrors the dynamic, ground-breaking qualities of the Grand Prix itself.

Within the streamlined edifice, the space-age aesthetics continue. Designers Jestico + Whiles and Richardson Sadeki have worked closely with New York architects Asymptote Architecture, to create an interior in which spaces flow together, bespoke items of furniture give each room originality and the filtered lights from the Gridshell provide subtle illumination. The Deluxe and Executive Suites allow the Middle Eastern sunshine to pour in through floor to ceiling glass panels which change from scarlet to indigo to create definition between the entrance and the bedroom. The bathrooms sit encased in frameless glass boxes, mounted with fine silk sheer panels, whilst exclusive furnishings decorate the lofted, double height spaces of the Presidential suites.

A taste for the contemporary extends to the hotel’s excellent range of restaurants, whose designs also still incorporate discreet references to the culture from which their cuisines originate. Angar, the Tandoori restaurant takes the colours of traditional saris and incorporates the panels of fabric into the table tops, whilst Amici, the Italian restaurant is focussed around a heavy, family sized olive wood refectory table. Noodle Box, the noodle restaurant uses volcanic basalt tiles and Nautilus, the speciality seafood restaurant, benefits from a marine setting at water level, amplified by subtle aqua colours.

As the racers flash past, spectators can enjoy their cocktails at Rush bar, located in the bridge that stretches over the racetrack. Operated by George V Restauration, who also run the international Buddha Bars, the design includes a back-lit resin bar with a chrome orb back bar and a DJ booth. For sun-seekers, Skylite, a poolside bar on the roof of the hotel, offers a great relaxation space during the day, as well as becoming a vibrant shisha and cabana lounge bar in the evening, providing some of the best views across Abu Dhabi.

When designing Espa, the hotel's luxurious spa, Richardson Sadeki drew inspiration from the traditional hamam, reinterpreting the restorative spaces of Islamic architecture. The warmth of the hamam is complemented by a cooler space at the northern tip of the spa houses, where stone furnishings, refrigerated floors and an illuminated nightscape ceiling serve to create the perfect respite from the Abu Dhabi heat.

For those in search of a dynamic setting for an event, the ballroom of the Yas Hotel provides an impressive and adaptable venue. With 509m² of event space, the ballroom upholds the advanced contemporary style of the hotel. Crystal LED lights of changeable colour trace the path of the speed line design which runs through the flooring, whilst the luminescent walls, clad in floor-to-ceiling white panelling, can be left as a neutral backdrop or lit up dramatically by the matrix of glowing ceiling lights – creating an effect of one seamless chandelier.

Settled in the 3rd millennium BC as a nomadic herding and fishing village, Abu Dhabi now defines innovation and modernity. The Yas Hotel, through its breathtaking architectural design, raises this creative bar and reinvents originality.





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