

perspectives trends **design**
on a budget

By JoAnn Greco



1. In the Courtyard by Marriott San Diego Downtown guestrooms, custom elements are a nod to the building's original Renaissance-style architecture.

2. SERA opened up the Courtyard's 7,000-square-foot lobby, housed in a historically registered former bank building.

A TALE OF THREE MARRIOTTS

One design firm demonstrates the power of creativity



Three midscale Marriott brands, three locations, three different programs. With one thing in common: a very determined design team that was more than willing to push some boundaries. "In each case, we were able to adhere to the budget requirements and quality standards," says Lisa Zangerle, principal at Portland, Oregon-based SERA, "while adding a little distinction and sense of place."

Courtyard by Marriott San Diego Downtown

A renovation of a 256-room Courtyard by Marriott in San Diego, an adaptive reuse of a 1920s historically registered bank building, was perhaps the most challenging of the three. "Fortunately," says Zangerle, "the ownership group agreed with us that we couldn't stick with typical Courtyard finishes without there





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3. The outdoor terrace at the SpringHill Suites San Diego Oceanside references the hotel's beach location.

5. A wave-like ceiling in the SpringHill Suites lobby sets up a beachy vibe upon entrance.

4. Pillow covers in the SpringHill Suites guestrooms are reminiscent of vintage beach blankets.

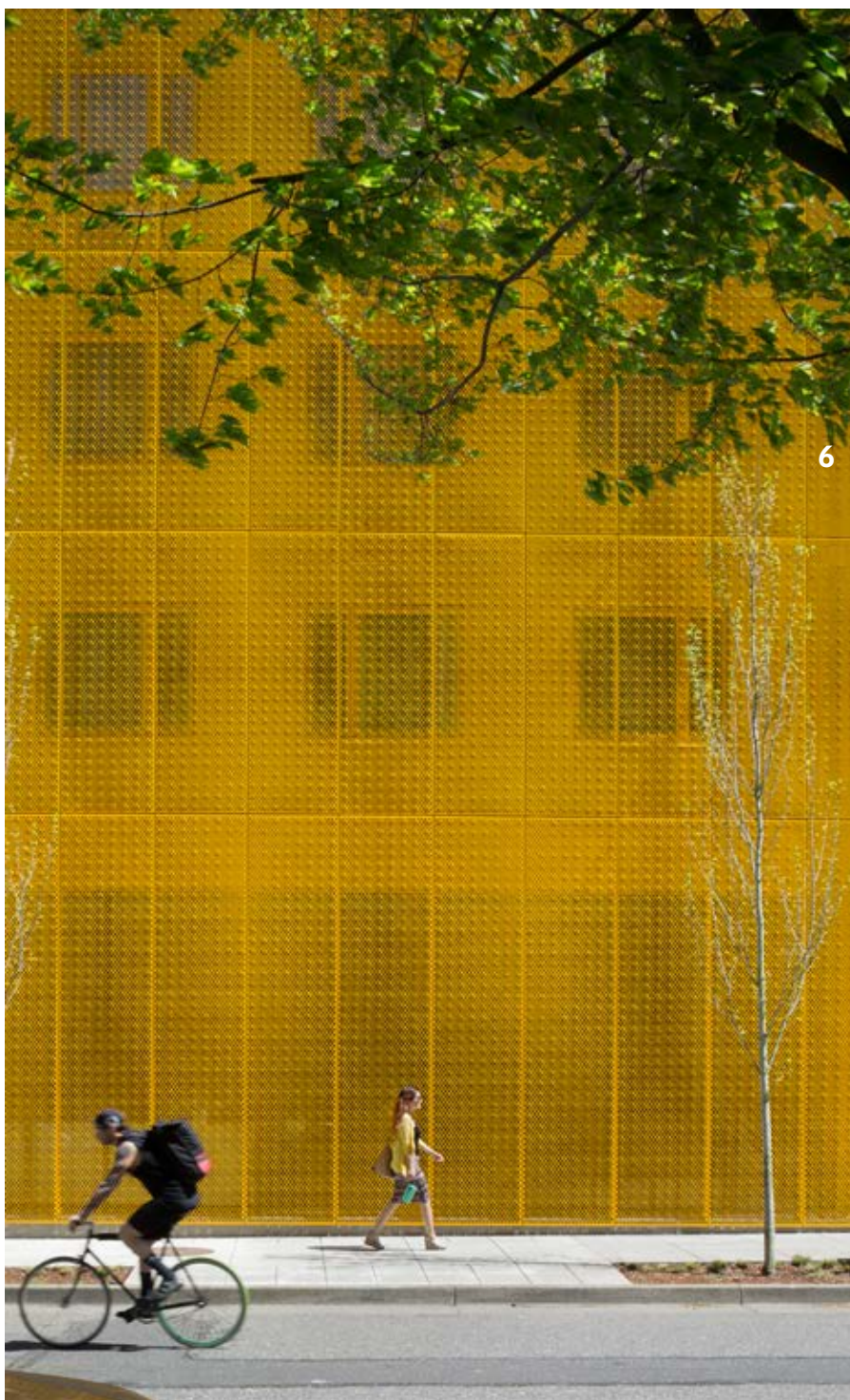
on the small accents like throw pillows with geometric motifs."

being a disconnect." For example, receiving a green light to make full use of an approximately 7,000-square-foot lobby offered SERA a way to stretch but also adhere to Marriott standards. "We removed all of the brass and glass that was sealing off most of the space from the public and opened it up to create the social zones required by the brand—the media pods, the communal tables—that there hadn't been room for before," Zangerle says.

Custom elements reference the building's historic Renaissance-style architecture, from carpeting that picks up on the purple and orange of the coffered ceiling to new chandeliers that echo the space's original wagon wheel light fixtures. Those shapes and colors appear again in the guestrooms. "Since we didn't have a lot to spend, we had to prioritize," says Zangerle. "The carpeting costs were the same as the standard would have been, plus we decided to add oomph

SpringHill Suites San Diego Oceanside/ Downtown

A new-build 149-key SpringHill Suites (with architecture by Denver-based JG Johnson Architects) in nearby Oceanside, California, gave SERA a chance to play up a different setting. "Here, too, we wanted to give the property a local flavor," observes Zangerle. "But in this case that meant emphasizing a connection to the outdoors and using a very beachy palette." The surf's up vibe is evident from the moment a guest walks in and notices the wave-like quality



6. Yellow metal screens surround the Residence Inn Portland Downtown/Pearl District, a hue repeated throughout the property.



7. The use of wood in the Residence Inn's lobby floor and behind the reception desk alludes to the region's logging history.

of the lobby ceiling, to laying on a bed adorned with indigo pillow covers that resemble vintage beach blankets. "I'm especially proud of those guestrooms," Zangerle says. "When the people from Marriott went through the model rooms, one individual just turned around and said,

'You're making me smile.' As a designer, that just meant so much to me."

Residence Inn Portland Downtown/ Pearl District

SERA returned to an urban environment—this time, downtown Portland—and took over both the architecture and interiors of the Residence Inn. The resulting 223-room U-shaped hotel is punctuated with bright yellow metal screens. The sunny hue acts as a beacon, says Zangerle, and it's a color that weaves its way throughout the interior of the hotel, appearing on guestroom walls, the reception desks, and the chairs and ottomans found in lounges and meeting spaces. "Because this is an extended-stay hotel, there were a few more elements that we had to incorporate," she says, "but since we were charged with the entire project, we were able to be pretty holistic."

Custom accents include an extensive use of wood—a nod to the region's logging heritage—such as a collage formed from log ends that backs the reception area. Guestrooms, too, feature furniture and artwork from local sources and artists.

When considering SERA's innovative work with Marriott's brands, Zangerle stresses that a good relationship with vendors and open-minded partners goes a long way. "Ultimately, Marriott can say 'yay' or 'nay' to anything," she points out. "But if we present a concept that's unique to that property while meeting brand standards that call for porcelain tile or 32-ounce carpet, for example, and if we adhere to the price points and overall design aesthetic, I've found that almost 10 times out of 10, we'll gain their approval." **hd**