

# Hotel Business

# DEFINING

## The Business of Boutique

I've stayed at my fair share of boutique hotels, and a few stand out in my mind. At one, there was no closet, just an obviously custom-made wardrobe that could barely fit a coat, not to mention a suitcase. At another, the shower was a makeshift enclosure that made it virtually impossible to shower and not soak the entire bathroom floor. Then there was the hotel that had the bed only about a foot from the wall, and the lighting over the bed was such that it would hit my head on it. I'm not going to name any of them, but I never went back to any of them.

If you think about the origins of the boutique hotel and its subsequent slide into a competitive market, it's hard to see who could outdo whom with the most trendsetting design. It would be easy to question the category's longevity. And through two major recessions, many boutique hotels, boutique brands and boutique companies come and go. But those who have succeeded are the ones who have been able to stay relevant. What's on the surface of a hotel and see the rest of the world. Because today, looking cool is just not enough.

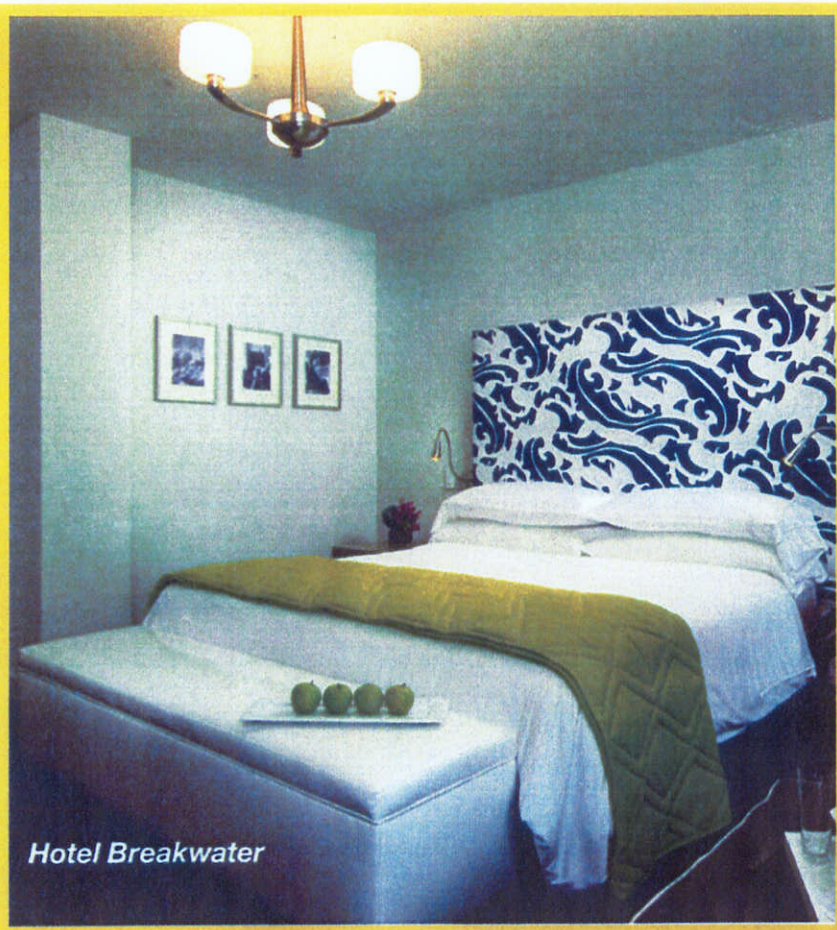
Our cover story this issue focuses on J. Paul Conley Hospitality. Closing in on its 25th anniversary, the company is one of very few purely boutique hotels left in the industry and that is not by accident. Although when the boutique race began more than a decade ago the defining factor was design, Conley figured out early on that if you want a hotel to thrive, it had better be about more than a flash of style. Joie de Vivre's focus on a comprehensive experience—combining unique design, a sense of place and exceptional service—has enabled the company to thrive—despite the necessary ROI for its owners.

Now through its partnership with Geolo Capital, the company has acquired a majority stake in Joie de Vivre International. The company is well-capitalized to achieve the goal of expanding its footprint.

With that sensibility in mind, the boutique segment is continuing to see an influx of new hotels that value both form and function. In this issue we look at a handful of them including the Vanderbilt Grace, a transformation of a former Vanderbilt mansion in Newport, RI. Meanwhile in South Beach, the landmark Hotel Breakwater has been revamped with a blend of old glamour and contemporary sensibility. And across the country in Hollywood, The Redbury makes a bold statement with a style inspired by the eclectic, Bohemian culture of the 1960's. As varied and striking as their respective designs are, all of them also haven't lost sight of the most important factor—the guest.

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Hotel Breakwater



The Redbury



Hotel Breakwater



Hotel Business  
**DESIGN**



## RETRO GLAMOUR

*Hotel Breakwater rejoins  
South Beach hotel landscape*

By DENNIS NESSLER

Standing as one of the iconic resorts built in South Beach during the area's original Art Deco design movement, the Hotel Breakwater has re-emerged from its recent renovation as a modern and chic destination that acknowledges its storied past.

Striking this balance was not easy for the Stephen B. Jacobs Group and Andi Pepper Interior Design, which directed several years of upgrades on the luxury boutique property that was built in 1939 and is located on Ocean Drive. After years in disrepair, the hotel was actually slated to become the Nicky O Hotel a few years ago. However, when the trendy brand didn't get off the ground, new owner 940 Ocean Drive, a partnership including Jordache and Nakas Holdings, took over in 2008 and decided to restore it to its previous luster.

Stephen Jacobs, who also designed the Gansevoort Hotels in Miami and New York, described what he and Andi Pepper, co-designer of the property and his wife, were focused on. "Our inspiration was the Art Deco theme of the historic district, but our approach was interpretive, creating a modern interior with Art Deco references, either

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