

# A PLACE IN THE SUN

Opulence and comfort at the  
new Intercontinental Kigali.

**Text by Gina Sayers. Photos by Mike Pawley**



**A**s part of its expansion drive into Africa, Southern Sun Hotels has opened the new Intercontinental Kigali hotel in Rwanda, with all the frills and fancies expected of the group.

The hotel boasts 97 lavishly-designed rooms, six suites and a 300m<sup>2</sup> presidential suite. It has two exclusive restaurants, two bars, a business centre, fitness centre, meeting room, boardroom, pool and a diverse selection of retail outlets. Adjacent to the Intercontinental Kigali is a convention centre that offers state-of-the-art conference and banqueting facilities, made up of a multi-level conference facility with break-away rooms, a translation centre, media rooms and hi-tech audio-visual equipment.

The interior design was a collaboration between Blacksmith African Interior Design Consultants, which was responsible for the public areas; Peo Architectural Interiors, which decorated the presidential suite and conference centre; and Atrium Design Consultants, which created the luxurious bedrooms.

The overall brief was to create a contemporary, classic and chic hotel that offers a hint of Africa, while exuding the strong European lines and comfort of international hotels.

"Today's contemporary hotel trends include crisp, clean lines offset by warm

**LEFT: The reception area sets the tone for the hotel with its African chic interior.**



**ABOVE: The presidential suite is ornately designed in natural hues and golden tints.**

finishes, juxtaposed with synthetic, slick finishes and natural elements," says Ryan Illgner of Blacksmith African Interior Design Consultants. Taking this into consideration, the company meticulously incorporated stainless steel and sandblasted glass in the balustrades and screens, and introduced smooth lines in elements such as ceilings and shop-fittings.

Natural elements in the patterned, veneered annagray panels and granites add warmth and sophistication to the public areas. A combination of textures can be found in textured stuccos, smooth stuccos, polished glass, porcelain tiles and wool carpets.

The bedrooms are designed in calming tones, giving the areas a relaxing appeal. "Our design philosophy is to provide a home from home for the travelling business-person. We try to keep a very relaxed atmosphere within the rooms and not over-

play details, colours and designs in fabrics," says Bev Whittaker of Atrium Design Consultants. "We originally proposed using light timbers for the casegoods, but we have found that in Africa, generally, there is a definite preference for the darker woods, as they are perceived to be more opulent," Whittaker adds.

Plums, aubergines, creams, warm greys and beiges were the ideal contrasting and complementary colours for the rich stained mahogany furniture.

"As we do not feel that matching co-ordinates for bedspreads and curtains are either modern or lend themselves to the home-from-home atmosphere, we rather worked with a single, strong key design for the throwover, with scatters and trims tying up with the colour of the suedes used on the dummy curtains," Whittaker notes. The predominant colours of the

#### **INTERIOR DESIGN**

Blacksmith African Interior Design Consultants

Atrium Design Consultants



**RIGHT:** African tones and ethnic patterns abound in the conference room.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Plums, aubergines, creams, warm greys and beiges were the ideal contrasting and complementary colours for the rich stained mahogany furniture in the bedrooms.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Saturated in dark wood and organic tones, the restaurant is timeless and elegant.

individual suite schemes were gold, blue and chocolate.

Finished in sheer fabrics and natural tones, with splashes of cool blue accents, the presidential suite is more luxurious and ornate than the standard suites. Its private lounge and dining areas express a subtle baroque ambience, and are lavishly decorated with wood finishes and a hint of gold.

The conference centre is a simple, timeless design of classic lines and bold African motifs. In black, cream and beige, the conference room is a calming backdrop for the yellow polka-dot black chairs and wooden tables.

Despite the challenges of frequent rain, logistical impediments and a tight deadline, the hotel was completed in record time. More than just a new tourist attraction, the Intercontinental Kigali is testament to how collaborative efforts can overcome obstacles and achieve spectacular results. ■

