

[NEWS](#)[PROJECTS](#)[PRODUCTS](#)[PEOPLE](#)[GALLERIES](#)[AWARDS + EVENTS](#)[Projects](#) → **Hotels/Resorts/Wellness**

Pullman Kaifeng Jianye

Rebecca Lo • Photography by Edmon Leong • May 17, 2017



Photos: Pullman Kaifeng Jianye

The eastern Henan city of Kaifeng, the former capital of the Northern Song Dynasty, is celebrated as one of China's eight ancient capitals. With a history that dates back to the third century B.C., the fortified town is still graced with resplendent temples, pagodas, and gardens. Situated on the outskirts of the city, in a wetland area beside the Song Dynasty castle wall, Pullman Kaifeng Jianye has arrived as one of the first 5-Star international hotels to open in Kaifeng. The 186-key, low-rise property is the

work of Shanghai's **H2 Architecture Design Group** with interiors courtesy of Singapore-based studio **LTW Designworks**.

"The wetland is characteristically very organic, and the architecture of the building suits the configuration of the land that it sits on," notes H.L. Lim, founder and principal partner with LTW. "The building is not constructed in a straight manner, but follows the flow of the landscape. It is a contemporary, two-story building, but the shape of the roof is based on Song Dynasty architecture with its undulating and curved ends."

References to the city's culture can be seen immediately upon entry, as the reception features a trio of monolithic green slabs that resemble naturally occurring stone. "The Song Dynasty is famous for ceramics in distinctive colors of white and celadon," explains Lim. "We decided to create drama and incorporate art into the reception."

Korean ceramic artist Lee Hun Chung designed the three counters with varied bodies to express the beauty in imperfections. Installed behind the counters, a large, 465-square-foot artwork by Korean artist Ran Hwang depicts a traditional Song Dynasty building and is made with buttons, beads, and pins upon a wood panel.

The chrysanthemum, the city's signature flower, is seen in the ballroom's ceiling-mounted lamps as well as in guestroom carpet patterns. An abstracted version of the flower also appears as a vertical ceramic strip along guestroom walls. Ceramic tiles were chosen to adorn the walls to reflect the style en vogue during the Song Dynasty. "There is a cultural reference as ceramic tiles are traditionally handmade and fired in a dragon kiln," Lim explains.

Behind the bed, landscape murals dominate the entire wall, further underscoring the Chinese painting effect, while table and floor lamps are reminiscent of traditional lanterns. The curvature of the façade is echoed in the interiors, particularly in the presidential suite, where the curves of the ceiling correspond to the roof overhead. Standard accommodations also feature a strand of marble that references Chinese ink paintings.

For Xi Bar, Lim went for the look of a scholar's pad. He included traditional patterns on wooden lattice screens as well as a combination of bamboo barstools, lounge chairs, and antique sideboards to achieve the aesthetic. "We wanted to project a cultured ambiance because the Song Dynasty was a period when there was an increase in art appreciation, such as paintings and poems," Lim explains.

The onsite Chinese restaurant Lu Hua, meanwhile, blends Chinese elements in a more contemporary manner. "While the ceiling patterns appear to be European, the design is actually that of traditional patterns found in the ceiling of the Forbidden City," he says. "To give it a modern twist, the patterns are in solid white." Adds Lim: "The hotel's design fits its location and gives it that distinctive sense of place."



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