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辦公室設計專題特輯MA YANSONG
馬岩松

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中國建築要多點不切實際的想法

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IN THE BLINK
OF AN EYE

Text: Melinda Earsdon Photography: Courtesy of Blink

For Clint Nagata, 2012 was a good year, reaping awards aplenty and reinforcing his design firm's connections with leading luxury hotel brands across Asia



Jumeirah Dhevanafushi won a silver for Blink at the Asia-Pacific Interior Design Awards

Last year was good to Clint Nagata, founder and creative director of Bangkok-based design group Blink. Not only did he pick up *Hospitality Design* magazine's award for World's Best Luxury Hotel for the Conrad Sanya last May, his team also recently took home a silver award in Hotel Space at the Asia-Pacific Interior Design Awards 2012 for their work on the Jumeirah Dhevanafushi.

Despite this, Nagata remains humble. "I have always liked drawing and being creative. I would draw and sketch as a way to clear my mind in high school, but when it came to deciding whether to become a graphic designer or an architect, the decision was simple. Graphic artists don't make as much money," he says with a laugh.

Nagata chose wisely, and since then has gone from strength to strength. Having attended university in Hawaii, he kickstarted his career with an internship at Walt Disney Imagineering, where he worked with the

division responsible for designing theme parks. One day he stumbled across an ad in the paper looking for creative individuals, which turned out to be a design role with Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo, one of the world's leading design consultants for the hospitality, leisure and entertainment industries.

However, the extraordinarily creative Nagata struggled somewhat within the firm. "I was a business partner, which to a certain degree equated to an arranged marriage. You don't get to decide whom you partner with," he explains. "I wanted to be more in control of the work I did. Starting my own firm in 2006 gave me the flexibility to do this."

Blink went on to merge with workspace design experts Space Matrix at the end of 2011, and today the company has four offices around Asia. The Bangkok office — initially started out of Bill Bensley's garage — remains the regional headquarters, with offices now also in Singapore, Delhi and Shanghai.



Clint Nagata

WORLD-CLASS DESIGN

Since branching out on his own, Nagata has become famed throughout Asia for cutting-edge designs that push the boundaries of architectural and interior standards, delivering clean, stylish yet culturally relevant projects. “I like to design spaces that are refined and orderly,” he explains. “It might have something to do with my upbringing as a Japanese-American, but I like to create an environment that is well thought-out and logical, almost simple and pure. My designs are the opposite of fuss and chaos.”

This style is inherent in Nagata’s work, who today is one of the most sought-after designers when it comes to hotels and resorts in Asia. In the last couple of years, he has developed a particularly close working



Above The new Regent Bali in Sanur was designed to reflect local craftsmanship and the Balinese ability to see beauty in everything Below The interiors at Regent Phuket Cape Panwa reflect local Thai heritage with a Chinese twist



relationship with the Regent Hotels and Resorts group, helping them inject new life into their brand. “The Regent has an illustrious past; however, it has faded over the years. We are working with the group to bring a sense of renewal and freshness to their designs, reinforcing the Asian essence of their history into the brand through design.”

Blink recently completed the Regent Phuket Cape Panwa, which opened last December, revealing a vision of a tropical ocean retreat and reflecting local Thai heritage with a Chinese twist. The rooms feature Nagata’s typically crisp, minimalist designs and clean lines, interspersed with rich materials from around Asia, such as warm wood floorings, petrified wood furniture and intricately detailed bamboo chairs that demonstrate more than a passing resemblance to the Ming dynasty. The effect is glorious. The team also worked on the architecture of the hotel, changing the drab exterior to provide a more historical Thai look that is at once luxurious yet simple.

Blink also recently completed work on the Regent Bali in Sanur, which launched just last month. The hotel was designed to reflect the exquisite local craftsmanship and typical Balinese ability to see beauty in everything, and as a result offers unrivalled luxury and elegant interiors. “The bathrooms are one of my favourite features,” Nagata says. “We completely closed them off from the room, creating a sanctuary that doesn’t rely on views, and we installed an oversized handmade shell mirror and custom vessel sinks cast in Bali to give the space a sophisticated yet local touch.

“Almost everything was created locally and was inspired by Balinese culture, from the vessel sinks to the batik-inspired patterns on the mirror. I especially like the hand-raised tiles on the floor, which were actually made for swimming pools, but we used them because they possess a great sheen and artistic unevenness that works really well.”

With two successful projects drawing to a close, what can we expect from Nagata and the Blink team next? “We’ve just started work on the design renovation of the Regent Taipei, and we’re also working with a spa company in China who want to transform themselves into a hotel brand, which is interesting,” he says. “But after that, who knows?”

在一瞬間

撰文：Melinda Earsdon 攝影：由Blink提供

對Clint Nagata來說，2012是豐盛的一年：屢獲殊榮之餘其設計事務所在亞洲亦與多個奢華酒店品牌加強合作

對曼谷設計事務所Blink的創辦人兼創意總監 Clint Nagata來說，去年是個好年。他先在5月憑三亞海棠灣港麗酒店贏得《Hospitality Design》雜誌大獎的全球最佳奢華酒店獎，然後最近又在亞太區室內設計大獎2012中憑Jumeirah Dhevanafushi獲頒酒店空間組銀獎。

話雖如此，Clint卻謙厚依然，笑道：「我向來都喜歡畫畫和發揮創意。高中時我會亂畫和塗鴉來清清腦筋，但決定究竟要當平面設計師還是建築師時，卻很快就下定決心。平面藝術家賺錢不夠建築師多。」

Clint的選擇很明智，自此以後一帆風順，越走越強。他在夏威夷讀大學，第一份工作是在華特迪士尼幻想工程裡實習，於專責設計主題樂園的部門工作。有天他偶爾在報紙看到有公司聘請創意人員，後來才發現招聘設計師的是Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo — 環球酒店及休閒娛樂界裡數一數二的设计顧問公司。



但是，極富創意的Clint在這間公司裡卻有點掙扎。他解釋：「我們是商場上的合作夥伴，即是說某程度上一切都是安排好的，而你不能決定與誰合作。我希望對我做的作品有更大的控制權，2006年自立門戶就讓我有彈性這樣做。」

Blink後來在2011年與辦公室設計專家Space Matrix合併，公司今天在亞洲共有四個辦事處。在Bill Bensley的車房誕生的曼谷辦事處一直都是區域總部，分公司則設於新加坡、德里和上海。

世界級設計

Clint在自立門戶出來打拼後，便憑著前衛設計走紅亞洲。他的設計挑戰建築與室內設計標準的界線，項目簡約時尚得來卻又表現出文化的精髓。他解釋：「我喜歡設計精確細膩又井井有條的空間，或許是跟我身為日裔美國人的成長背景有關，但我喜歡創造的環境既要考慮周全又合乎邏輯，幾乎是簡單且純正。我的設計與過火和混亂正好相反。」

Clint所有的作品都蘊含著這種風格。今天若說到亞洲的酒店與度假村都會知道他是其中一位最吃香的設計師，過去數年尤其是與麗晶國際酒店集團合作無間，幫助他們為品牌注入新生命。他說：「麗晶有著輝煌的歷史，但鋒芒卻年年減退。我們與麗晶合作為設計帶出新生與新鮮感，透過設計加強品牌歷史中的亞洲根源。」

Blink最近設計的布吉攀瓦角麗晶酒店於去年12月開幕，展露熱帶海邊度假村的嶄新風貌，以玩味的中式元素呼應當地的泰國文化。客房是Clint一貫的清新簡約設計和俐落線條，並以亞洲各地的豐富物料點綴，例如洋溢暖意的木地板、木化石傢具，以及不止是模仿明朝傢具而設計細膩的竹椅，效果瑰麗迷人。設計團隊亦著手處理酒店的建築設計，為單調的外牆披上新裝，帶出更具歷史感的泰式面貌，既奢華又簡約。

Blink另一近作峇里島沙努爾的麗晶酒店於上月開幕，酒店設計反映當地的精湛工藝和「一切都美」的巴里傳統特質，創造出無可比擬的優雅奢華室內裝潢。Clint說：「浴室是我喜歡的設計之一，完全從房間隔離出來，是自成一角的密室，造出無需依賴景觀的私人避難所。我們裝上手製的貝殼框大鏡子，盆型洗手盆是在巴里澆鑄特製的，為浴室添上別緻卻又富當地色彩的氣息。」

他續說：「從盆型洗手盆到鏡上的蠟染色布圖案，幾乎所有東西都是在當地製作，靈感都取自巴里文化。我尤其喜歡地板的手工凸紋磚，本來是泳池專用的，但我們就用浴室裡，因為它們帶有很美的光澤和凹凸不平的藝術感，與設計配合得恰到好处。」

Clint和Blink的團隊接下來還有兩個很成功的項目將近完成，未來還有甚麼值得我們期待的呢？Clint說：「我們剛開始著手設計台北晶華酒店的翻新，亦正與內地一間想要轉營為酒店品牌的水療公司合作，有趣得很。不過在這之後，又有誰知道？」 ●



This Page Blink won ‘World’s Best Luxury Hotel’ for its work on the Conrad Sanya