



*(Top left) Each suite acts as a gallery backdrop for a major work of art, taking both its palette and design concept from the paintings displayed there.*

### Something Completely Different

Rather than updating the “unpretentious yet stylish environment” the hotel had relied upon since its 1986 opening, Nicholson saw an opportunity to create a unique identity for the hotel. He envisioned a cutting edge, art-driven aesthetic, especially in the newly created executive floors. That concept became the essence of the design brief and the hotel’s “art and elegance” tagline. “It is not often in hotel work that the designer has the opportunity to use paintings and sculptures of the caliber intended for the Listel. With the artwork in mind, the mandate was to create a dynamic, contemporary space that is bold yet acts as a backdrop for an ever-changing art collection,” says HRD principal Judy Henderson.

Henderson eliminated what she terms “the regimented interior planning of the lobby” and maximized the potential of the architectural volumes. “Even though the lobby was only 20 ft. (3 m.) off the street, it lacked sufficient impact to attract pedestrian traffic. It consisted of a large reception desk, an enclosed access ramp, and a sea of pink wallcovering,” she adds.

Visually raising the lobby ceiling pumped up the volume of space, enabling it to hold bold monolithic forms comprised of granite slabs and mahogany panels. Eliminating the traditional front desk not only solved an aesthetic problem but also an operational one. Front desk functions were broken down into three individual “check-in” pods that offered a more personalized sense of welcome and improved traffic flow.

Along the edge of the lobby a fireplace surrounded by plush velvet theater curtains anchors an inviting lobby seating area. Steel panels behind the reception desk contrast with the richness of mahogany panels and curved glass panels used in other →216