on location

From California's hospitality boom to Rotterdam's resurgence, here's a snapshot of a dozen places where good design and development go hand in hand

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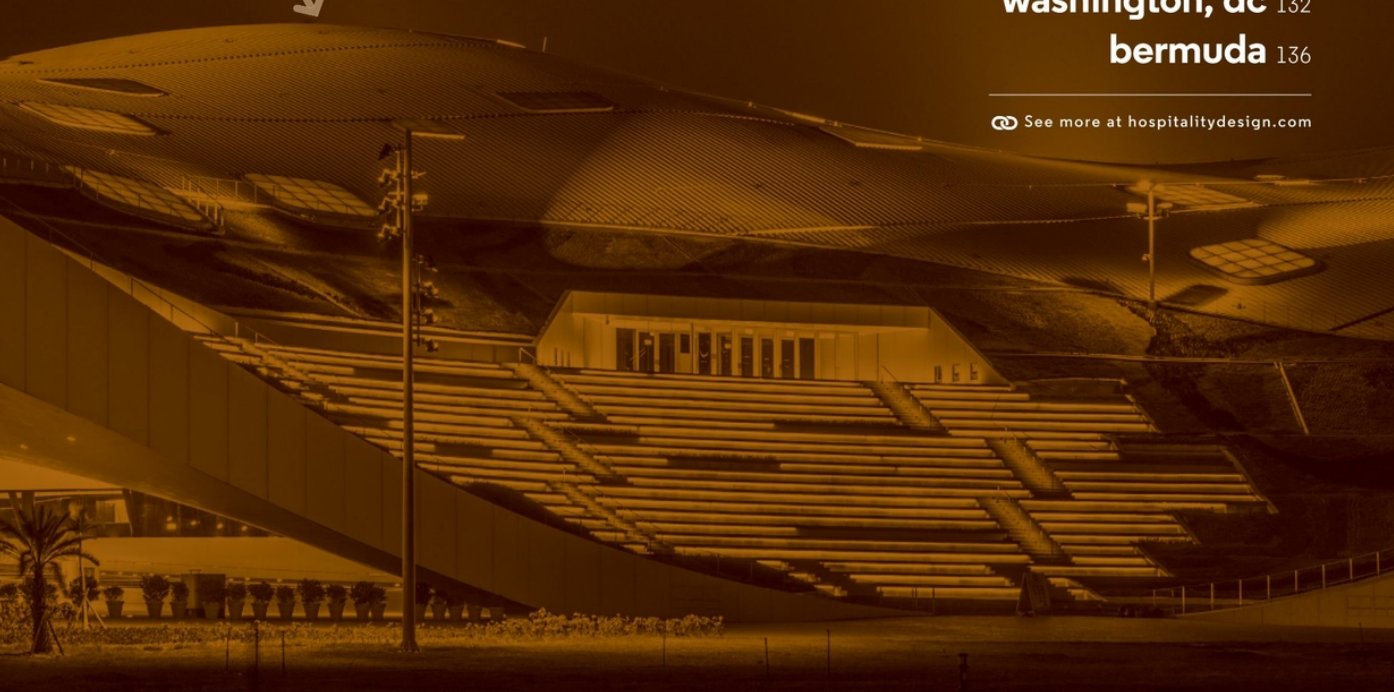


By THE HD STAFF, ALIA AKKAM, JENNIFER FRANKLIN, JOANN GRECO, SHEILA KIM, HARRY MCKINLEY, and OLHA ROMANIUK

An Art Deco-inspired tiled turquoise feature wall enlivens the reception area at the Standard, London

LONDON

While the UK as a whole has been rocked by years of uncertainty and a worldwide questioning of its place in the world, London, perhaps by virtue of its global standing and internationalism, has seemingly weathered the storm. Confidence in the capital's hospitality scene seems undiminished (459 hotels with 47,633 rooms are in construction, final planning, or planning stages, according to global hospitality benchmarking firm STR) and projects like Six Senses London, the group's first foray into the UK market, set to open in 2023, continue apace. Likewise, landmark projects like affordable lifestyle Treehouse Hotel (the younger sibling to Starwood Capital Group's 1 Hotels) have demonstrated there's still scope for pioneering and design-led thinking, even in unsteady times.

The Standard, London →

Located only a few steps from the King's Cross Eurostar terminal, the Standard's first global outpost has fittingly ended up at the crossroads of Europe, linking the city to the rest of the continent beyond.

Housed within the former offices of the Camden Council in a 1970s Brutalist building, this notion of pan-Europeanism is echoed inside, with pieces from Italy, Scandinavia, and Germany sitting alongside wares by British makers. "We tried to take over in a friendly way, keeping the essence, but almost as if California rebels had taken over a government building and made it more freespirited," says Shawn Hausman of London- and New York-based Shawn Hausman Design, a longtime Standard collaborator.

The Standard, London's curved windows are echoed in the Library Lounge

Across many of the 266 bedrooms, done in 42 styles, the lines of the iconic curved windows are repeated in molded arches, sofas, and bulbous light fixtures. Its civic past, meanwhile, is more of a conceptual driver. What was once the Camden Council Library room, for instance, is now the Library Lounge, an expansive book-lined space that flows from the main lobby.

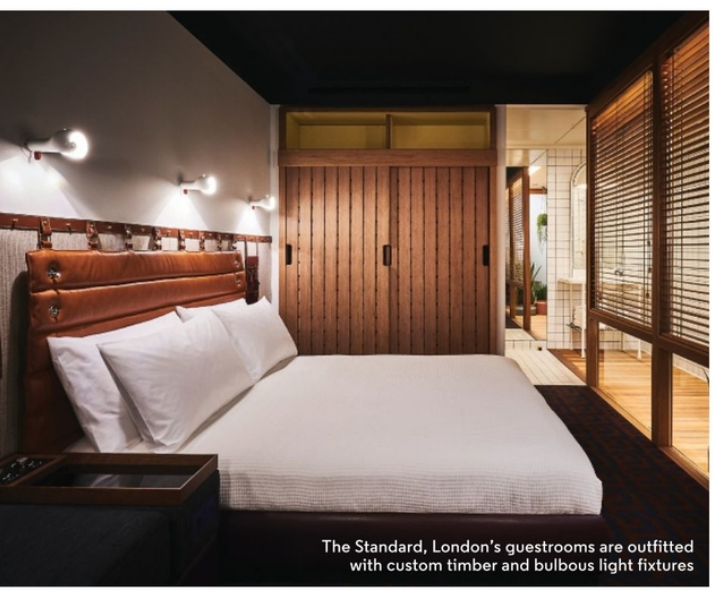
"Through the mix of materials, colors, and craftmanship from all over the world, it is clearly the Standard, and at the same time, perfectly designed for London," adds Verena Haller, the brand's chief design officer.

The Hoxton, Southwark → In many ways, the original Hoxton in London's Shoreditch area rewrote the rule book, becoming a mainstay on the city's social scene. The group has since expanded dramatically, and yet, one of the newest to join the fold, the Hoxton, Southwark, is still a project of firsts: the first to be designed in-house, the first Hoxton property in Europe to feature a public rooftop space (Seabird restaurant), and the first in Europe to include dedicated coworking facilities, spread across an impressive six floors.

The public areas nod to the neighborhood's eclectic history, encompassing the gothic, theatrical, industrial, and deco. For the 193

The colorful, block-lined Library Lounge at the Standard, London flows from the main lobby

The street-facing Double Standard bar at the Standard, London evokes a retro style

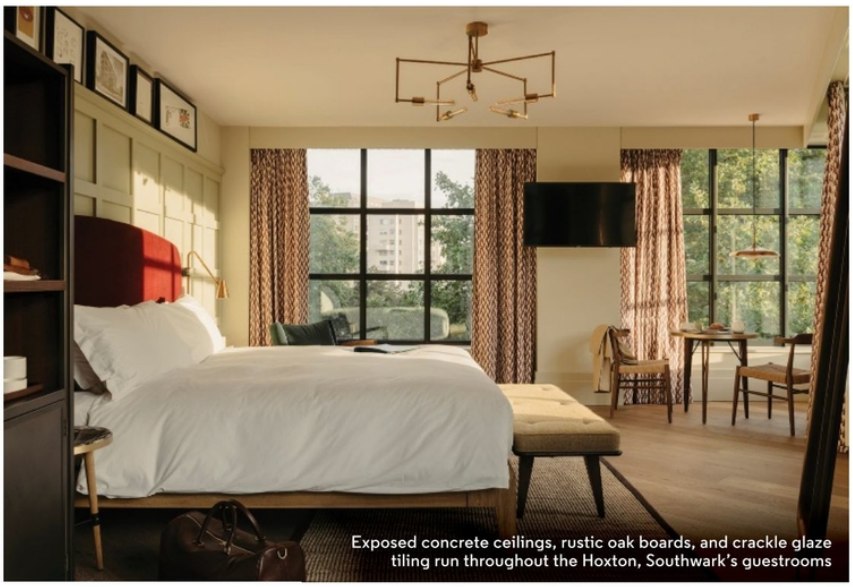


The Standard, London's guestrooms are outfitted with custom timber and bulbous light fixtures

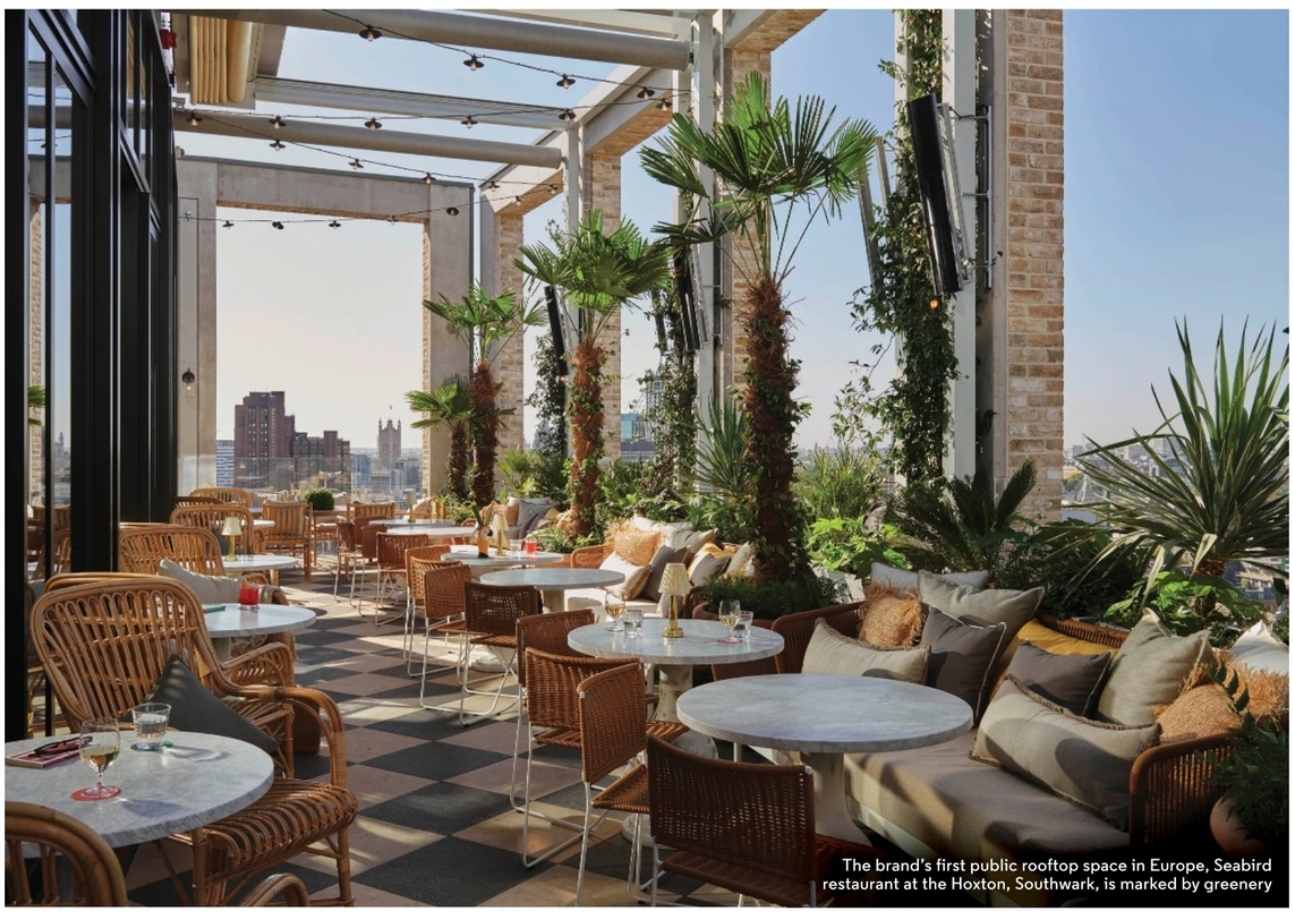
The book-lined Library Lounge at the Standard, London

bedrooms, inspiration was found in the brands that occupied, or still occupy, the surrounding warehouses and factories, as well as a legacy of tanning, glassblowing, and metal forging. "We wanted the design to feel rooted in the community," says Emma Montier, interior design associate with the in-house team at Ennismore, the Hoxton's owner and developer. "We worked closely with local designers and makers, and many of the design elements, from the furniture and lighting to the joinery, are either bespoke or vintage."

Sofitel London St James → Though the majestic, Grade II-listed Sofitel St James has been a central London fixture and brand flagship since its opening in 2002, in late 2019, the hotel underwent a much publicized renovation. Doyen of hotel design Pierre-Yves



Exposed concrete ceilings, rustic oak boards, and crackle glaze tiling run throughout the Hoxton, Southwark's guestrooms



The brand's first public rooftop space in Europe, Seabird restaurant at the Hoxton, Southwark, is marked by greenery

Photos by ROBERT RIEGER and courtesy of THE STANDARD

Designer Jim Hamilton conceived the refined Wild Honey at the Sofitel London St James

An airy, modern living room at STAY Camden

Rochon spearheaded the guestrooms' facelift, blending classic French elegance with British dynamism. "The renovation captures the creative, youthful energy of the 1950s and '60s in London, a period that was driven by innovation in art, fashion, and music," he says. Across the 183 rooms, Rochon's cultural references are as diverse as they are unexpected. Gone is any semblance of staid luxury and, in its stead, are tartan carpets, pop art, and color-blocked schemes in Bordeaux red, green, and violet.

The Guardsman → Slated to open this summer—at a prime spot close to St James's Park and Buckingham Palace—the Guardsman is something of a departure for owner and operator Shiva Hotels. The purpose-built hotel, home to 53 rooms and six longer-stay residences, is the brand's first step into the luxury market and draws more from a members' club than a typical boutique hotel.

Shiva Hotels appointed London firms Dexter Moren Associates (DMA) on architecture and Tonik Associates on interiors, with both working closely together to deliver a meticulous, layered design that befits the grandeur of its location. "The façade reflects the luxurious interiors," says DMA associate Kate Sandle, "where we included handmade gray bricks and bespoke gold finish decorative screens."

The Londoner → The Londoner is earmarked to open this summer and will feature more space below ground than above—a quirk that has it branded as the world's first iceberg hotel. Featuring 350 rooms (including 35 suites), across 14 floors, the project is vast for a central Leicester Square development and has come with a nearly $400 million price tag for Edwardian Hotels. Additionally, a green loan of $229 million will see the property rank as one of the most environmentally friendly in London.

"Our chairman gave a clear brief: give the rooms and suites a great sense of tranquility to

Bespoke furniture and parquet flooring define the ground floor of the Guardsman

A rendering of the Londoner's residentially inspired reception area

Photos and renderings by PAVLOS ETHIMIOU, ANDREW TORT, and courtesy of THE GUARDSMAN and THE LONDONER

contrast the lively buzz of the area, as well as the bars and restaurants of the hotel," says Rob Steul, design architect at Edwardian Hotels and lead designer on the project, alongside New York and Toronto firm Yabu Pushelberg. To create a luxurious yet relaxed look, an open residentially inspired concept was cultivated. It will give "guests a true sense of a home away from home in the epicenter of the West End," Steul adds.

STAY at the LABS Collective, Camden → Formed from 169 serviced apartments and an ecosystem of social spaces, STAY Camden is the first of a new lifestyle branch from LABS Collective, a brand that forged its name in the coworking sector. Interiors are sharp, restful, and understated enough to allow guests to imprint their characteristics on the apartments over time. "STAY is more than a place to sleep," says Yaara Gooner, head of design at LABS, "it's a space to live, connect, and belong." Residing within Hawley Wharf, one of London's most exciting new developments, "it was important that the [hotel] reflected this cultural destination and provided a novel way of living," she adds.