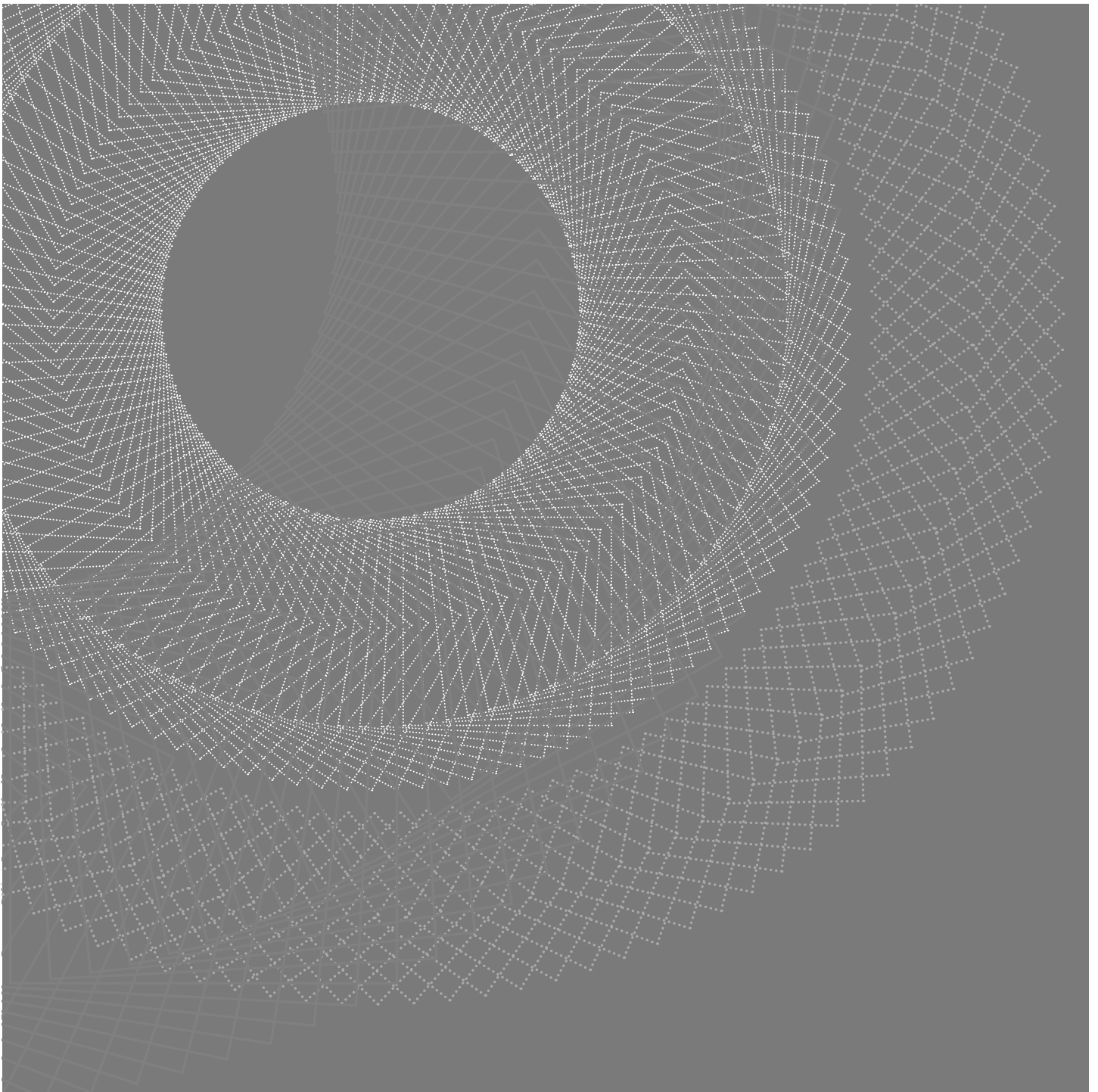


# *Signs of Character*

*Edition 02*





# EDITORIAL

## DEAR READER,



Every building is unique. Every building has its own story. And the second edition of our “Signs of Character” magazine is dedicated to exactly these stories. Whether it is the unique signature of the architect of a new building or the restoration of a historical building, we want you to join us in looking both at and behind the façade and in discovering what is so special about each building. Whether hotels, offices or residential buildings, the bathroom is always part of the building’s living and working environment. We are pleased that products by Villeroy & Boch play such a leading role in each of these stories and have an impact on the living and working environments of people all over the world.

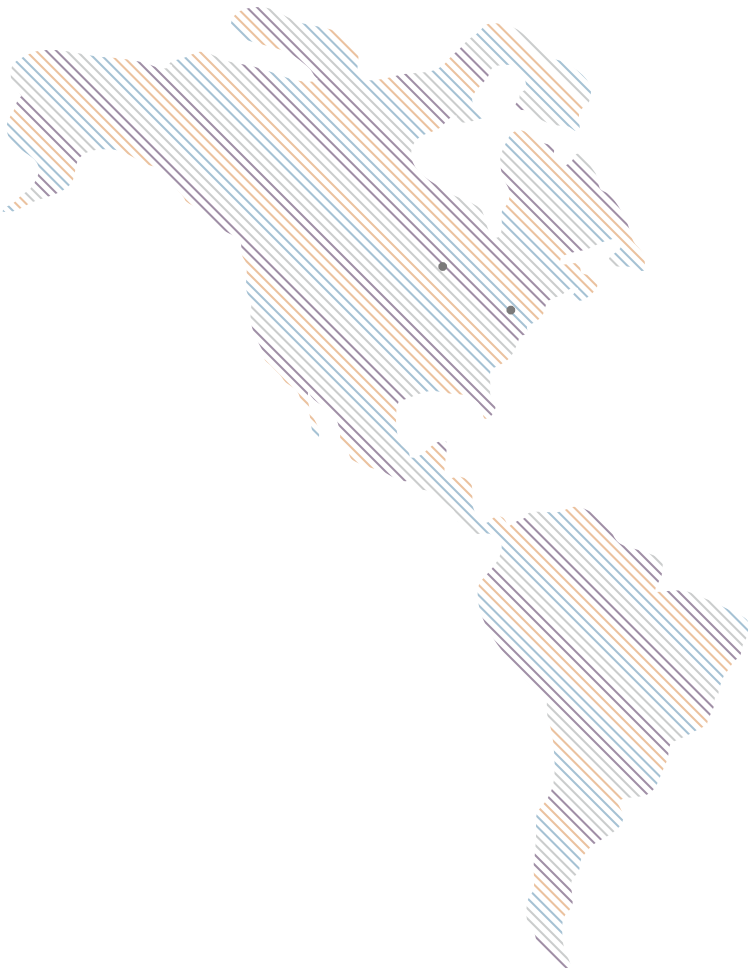
Whatever a building is supposed to say, we are convinced that our range provides the right words to enable it to do so. And, in dialogue with you, we continue to expand our range on a daily basis because we continue to aspire to being part of new ideas and projects.

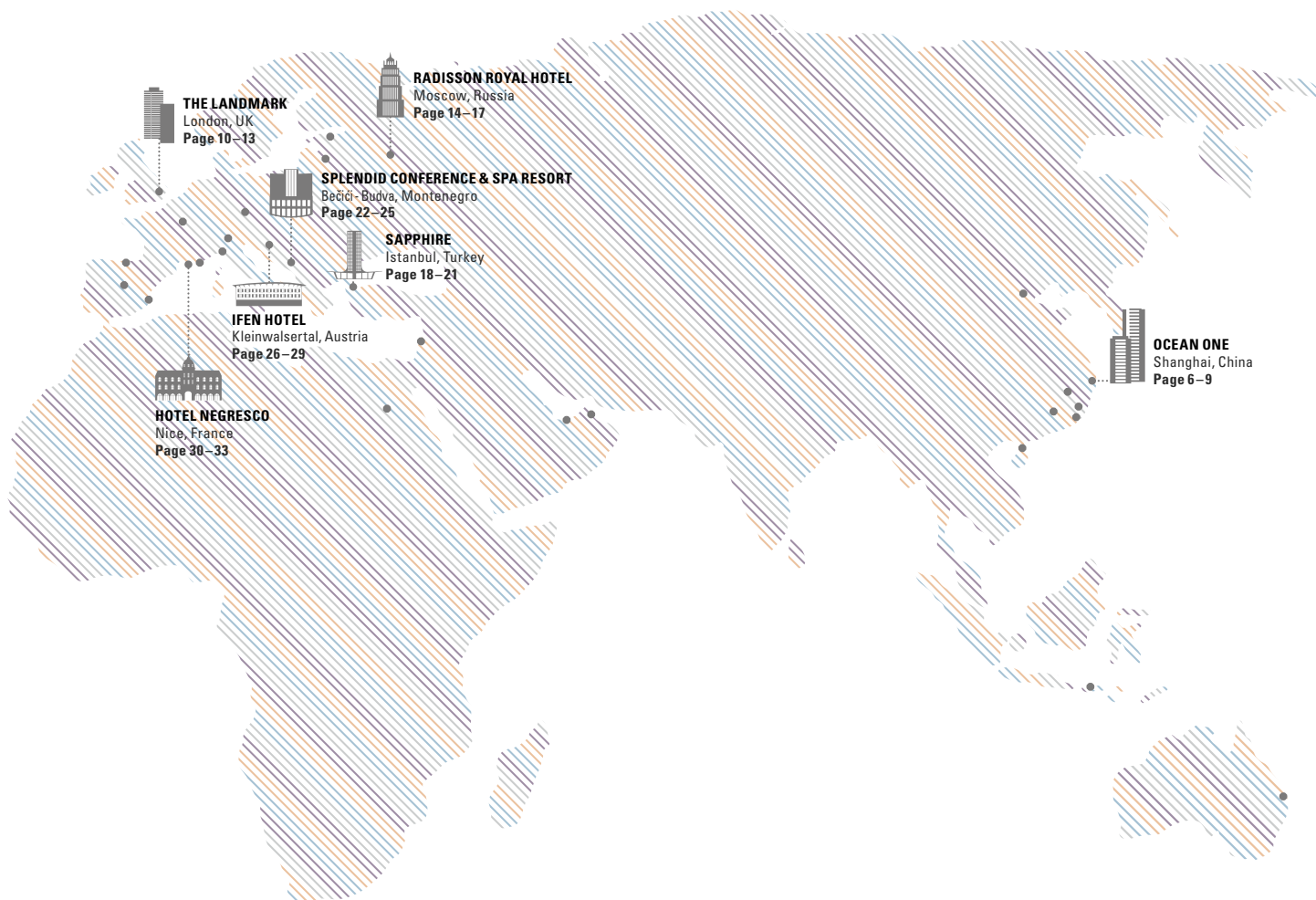
Yours,

Maria von Boch

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## REFERENCES

THE PIERRE New York, USA

LE MERIDIEN CHAMBERS Minneapolis, USA

HILTON HEATHROW TERMINAL 5 London, UK

HILTON CANARY WHARF London, UK

HILTON PARK LANE London, UK

THE GOVERNOR SPA PARK LANE London, UK

ONE HYDE PARK London, UK

LEOPOLIS HOTEL Lviv, Ukraine

MANDARIN ORIENTAL Prague, Czech Republic

HOTEL VIER JAHRESZEITEN KEMPINSKI Munich, Germany

PENINSULA Paris, France

CONCORDE LAFAYETTE Paris, France

CHARLES DE GAULLE Paris, France

HOTEL HERMITAGE Monte-Carlo, Monaco

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM Bilbao, Spain

HOTEL PUERTA AMERICA Madrid, Spain

PALAU DE LES ARTS REINA SOFIA Valencia, Spain

GRAND HOTEL SAVOIA Genua, Italy

ASTRA MONTENEGRO Budva, Montenegro

POINT HOTEL Istanbul, Turkey

SELENIUM TWIN TOWERS Istanbul, Turkey

HYATT REGENCY ISTANBUL Istanbul, Turkey

FAIRMONT HELIOPOLIS HOTEL Cairo, Egypt

MARRIOTT HOTEL Cairo, Egypt

BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Beirut, Lebanon

KEMPINSKI EMERALD Dubai, UAE

THE PALM GOLDEN MILE Dubai, UAE

THE ADDRESS DOWNTOWN Dubai, UAE

MEYDAN HOTEL Dubai, UAE

DURRAT AL BAHRAIN Bahrain, Bahrain

PETRO PALACE HOTEL St. Petersburg, Russia

THE ST. REGIS BALI RESORT Bali, Indonesia

RITZ-CARLTON Beijing, China

DEEP BLUE PLAZA Hangzhou, China

INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL Shenzhen, China

THE PENINSULA HONG KONG Kowloon, Hong Kong

MANDARIN ORIENTAL Hainan, China

FOUR SEASONS Guangzhou, China

ÉLYSÉE RESIDENCES Kirra Beach, Australia

# SHANGHAI

## OCEAN ONE

### OCEAN ONE

Building type	residential
Interior designer	Steve Leung
Building project	new building
Products	Squaro Loop & Friends



**STEVE LEUNG** Interior designer and architect







**SQUARO** bath made of Quarryl®

## THE NEW ROLE OF INTERIOR DESIGN IN ASIA

The importance of interior design in Asia is both visible and palpable on the 25th floor of Ocean One in Shanghai. Steve Leung, Asia's leading light in the field of interior design, created interiors that serve as oases of calm in the hustle and bustle of the metropolis. The Chinese architect who has leaned increasingly towards interior design had already worked on numerous high-profile buildings, such as the Hyatt Hotel in Shatin, the Four Seasons in Guangzhou and Renzo

Piano's Shangri-La in London. His interior design company now employs more than 300 people in Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. He himself says that interior design is his passion. "Practicing architecture is not easy – I find interiors more interesting and promising in terms of job satisfaction."



**LOOP & FRIENDS** undercounter washbasin

## NOT MINIMALIST, BUT CONTEMPORARY.

Steve Leung is both pleased and dismayed to be called a minimalist. He regards himself as contemporary and not tied to any one style. After all, he designs interiors that are predominantly aimed at pleasing his customers. However, contemporary also means taking innovations one step further in terms of both materials and concepts. Villeroy & Boch's Squaro product range is made of the innovative material Quaryl® and is thus entirely in keeping with this

philosophy. As Quaryl® is cast, it enables greater precision in the production of exact and straight edges, an almost invisible fitting of whirlpool jets and the smallest possible dimensional tolerances for installation flush with the tiles. Steve Leung's latest project demonstrates that innovations are part of his overall vision. He wants to open two restaurants in Causeway Bay before the end of 2010.



# SQUARO / LOOP & FRIENDS



**SQUARO** bath  
with optional whirlpool system

Design, aesthetics, quality. Thanks to the use of Quarryl®, when installing a whirlpool system, the jets can be fitted flush and the material also has soundproofing properties.



**SQUARO SUPERFLAT** shower tray

Perfect complement. The extremely flat shower tray merges almost invisibly with the floor. Thanks to the use of Quarryl®, the surface is also non-slip.



**LOOP & FRIENDS** undercounter washbasin

Clear forms and elegant surfaces. The Loop & Friends undercounter washbasins create a pure look and are a key factor in achieving completely flat shelf space.

“ONLY WHEN ROOMS  
OFFER SUFFICIENT SPACE  
IS THE HUMAN SPIRIT ABLE TO  
DEVELOP TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL.”

STEVE LEUNG interior designer and architect

# LONDON

## THE LANDMARK

THE LANDMARK	
Building type	residential
Architect	Squire and Partners, London
Building type	2 towers
Height	45 and 31 floors
Building project	new building
Building contractor	Chalegrove Properties Ltd
Completion	2010
Products	Memento Omnia Architectura Fire & Ice





**MEMENTO** washbasin **OMNIA ARCHITECTURA** wall-mounted WC

## PLAYING WITH CLARITY

The two towers on the Isle of Dogs communicate clarity as a concept, from both the inside and the outside. The alignment of the buildings, which is oriented along the main lines of sight, and the façade design that, with its glazed exterior, mirrors the world outside, together create a clear and vibrant architecture.

Clear, because both the design and the materials dispense with organic forms and colours. And vibrant, because the reflective surface, opaque panels and layers of sintered glass of the building react to the natural incidence of light, thus offering privacy and thermal insulation for the interiors.



**MEMENTO** washbasin

## THE CUBE AS A FORMAL DESIGN ELEMENT

The Memento product range also continues the cubist design concept in the interior and takes the effect of the outer façade into the rooms inside. Clear lines and simple colours dominate the design of the individual bathrooms. Whether set against a dark or light-coloured wall, the products adhere to a strict formal principle that dispenses with ornamental and decorative elements and is thus both contemporary and timeless at the same time.

The architects: Founded in 1976, the London architectural practice Squire and Partners operates on both a national and international level. The architecture designed by the practice boasts an elegant and clear style that, in terms of design, construction and implementation, meets the requirements of the environment and of later use. In response to increased building materials requirements, Squire and Partners invests a great deal of energy in researching and developing materials.

# MEMENTO/OMNIA ARCHITECTURA/ FIRE & ICE



**MEMENTO** washbasin

Minimalist, straight-lined design. Available in black or white, also with the delicate tone-in-tone New Glory décor, or even in the impressive, costly platinum décor.



**OMNIA ARCHITECTURA** wall-mounted WC

Clear, sleek and minimalist. A modern design language that is spoken all over the world. Omnia Architectura is the most extensive collection in the Villeroy & Boch range.



**FIRE & ICE** tile

Aesthetics as an expression of personality. Thanks to the partial metallic sheen, Fire & Ice creates a variety of different effects. This range of porcelain stoneware showcases minimalist design in a unique way.

**FIRE & ICE** tiles **OMNIA ARCHITECTURA** wall-mounted WC



**MEMENTO** washbasin



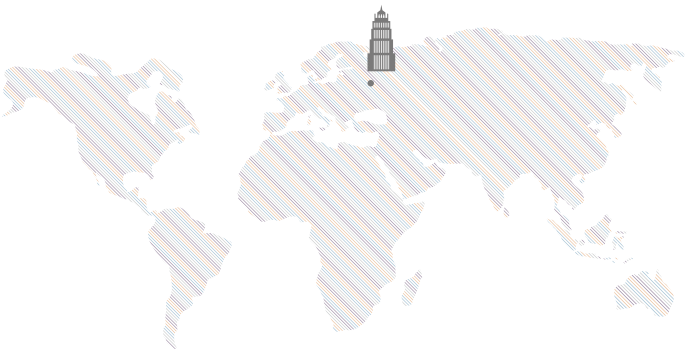


# MOSCOW

## RADISSON ROYAL HOTEL

**RADISSON ROYAL HOTEL**

Building type	hospitality
Architect	Arkadi Mordvinov und Wjatscheslaw Oltarschewski (1953 – 1957), 2000 architects & interior designers (2007 – 2010)
Building type	hotel
Height	206 m
Building project	renovation
Building owner	Rezidor Hotel Group
Completion	2010
Category	5 Star
Products	Amadea Evana Hommage Pavia







**HOMMAGE** wall-mounted WC + Bidet **EVANA** undercounter washbasin

## A HOMAGE TO RUSSIA'S CLASSICISM

One of the legendary “Seven Sisters”, the former “Ukraina Hotel”, one of Europe’s largest historical architectural works of art, was reopened in spring 2010 after extensive renovation work. The “Seven Sisters”, built in the Stalinist style, is a group of Moscow skyscrapers that also includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the central campus of the Lomonosov University.

The renovation work took more than three years to complete and involved some 2000 architects, designers and interior designers. This is hardly surprising as both the architecture and the interior design have to be in keeping with both the history of the building and the future use of the 5-star hotel. A total of 505 rooms (25 – 370 m<sup>2</sup>) and 38 apartments (70 – 120 m<sup>2</sup>) were furnished.



PAVIA bath made of Quarryl®

## PREMIUM ASPIRATIONS DOWN TO THE VERY LAST DETAIL

The interior design offers the entire repertoire of eclectic design that, above all, reflects the high requirements of a luxury hotel in Moscow. Every detail of the interior design elements, both textiles and furniture, meets the premium expectations of guests of a five-star hotel in Moscow. This is also demonstrated in the bathroom furnishings, which feature products from the Amadea and Hommage ranges.

About the building owner: the Rezidor Hotel Group is one of the world's leading hotel groups and currently boasts more than 400 hotels, either in operation or in development, and more than 86,300 rooms in over 60 countries. Rezidor operates the Radisson Blu Hotels & Resorts, Regent Hotels & Resorts, Park Inn and Country Inns & Suites in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

# EVANA/HOMMAGE/PAVIA



**EVANA** undercounter washbasin

Popular collection of undercounter washbasins. Modern minimalism. The pure, clear washbasins are available in circular and oval form.



**HOMMAGE** floor-standing bidet

A homage to the 20th century. A reinterpretation of classical forms. Also available as a wall-mounted bidet.



**PAVIA** bath

Precise design. The method of casting Quarryl® gives rise to endless design possibilities – whether gently rounded forms or precise straight lines.

**PAVIA** bath made of Quarryl®



**EVANA** undercounter washbasin

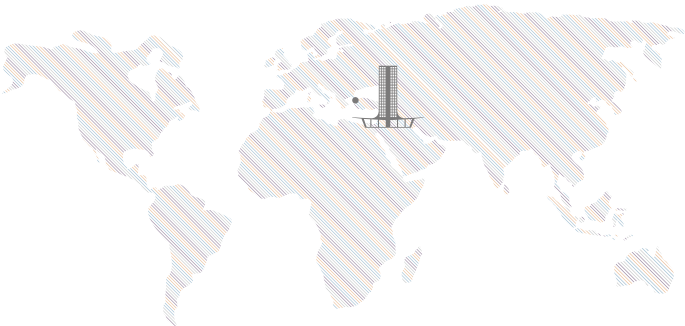




# ISTANBUL

## SAPPHIRE

<b>SAPPHIRE</b>	
Building type	residential
Architect	Tabanlıoğlu Architecture
Building project	new building
Completion	2010
Number of floors	54
Products	Memento Subway Loop & Friends





**LOOP & FRIENDS** surface-mounted washbasin

## A VERTICAL GREEN BUILDING

Turkey's second tallest building is situated in the Levent district of Istanbul. Its special claim to fame is that the Sapphire is the first "ecological skyscraper" in Turkey. With a double-façade construction, sustainable building materials and energy-saving systems for operation of the building, it sets new standards in sustainable building in Turkey. The building also incorporates

experience gained over recent years and is able to withstand earthquakes measuring 9 on the Richter scale. Standing tall at a height of 261 metres and with a formal design language that highlights the verticality of the building, the architects of the Istanbul-based Tabanlıoğlu practice have reconciled the apparently contradictory concepts of well-being and urbanity.



## REDEFINING URBAN WELL-BEING

Green building also means the very best quality of life for users of the building. The third floor boasts a “vertical garden” that makes well-being a central aspect of the architecture of residential buildings and an integral part of everyday life. The interior design remains flexible and offers the user several possibilities: based on

the concept of a volcano, the materials and surfaces used are organised around four different themes: summit, lava, earth, magma. The Loop & Friends and Subway products have such a minimalist design that they can adapt to any furnishing concept and are thus suitable for any urban interior design.



# SUBWAY / LOOP & FRIENDS / MEMENTO



**SUBWAY** wall-mounted WC

.....  
The international bestseller. Straight-lined design. The collection also includes bath and shower trays and can be combined with the Central Line furniture programme.  
.....



**LOOP & FRIENDS** surface-mounted washbasin

.....  
An entirely successful collection. Available in many forms ranging from round to rectangular and also as built-in and undercounter variants.  
.....



**MEMENTO** wall-mounted WC

.....  
Straight-lined variety. In addition to a wealth of washbasin sizes and a handwashbasin, Memento also offers the matching WC and bidet.  
.....

**SUBWAY** wall-mounted WC



**LOOP & FRIENDS** surface-mounted washbasin

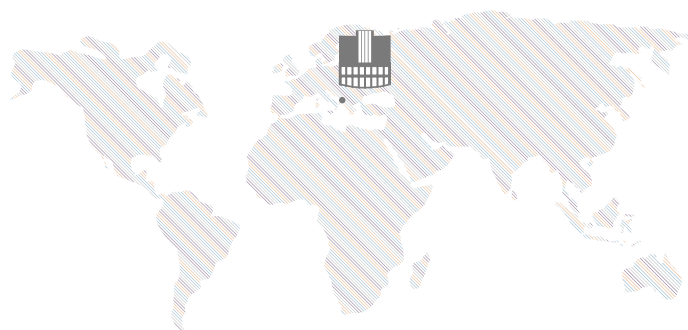


# BEČIĆI-BUDVA

## SPLENDID CONFERENCE & SPA RESORT

### SPLENDID CONFERENCE & SPA RESORT

Building type	hospitality
Architect	Zoren Djordjevic (architect), Aleksandra Matic (interior designer)
Building project	new building
Completion	2006
Products	Subway Loop & Friends Cetus





**LOOP & FRIENDS** undercounter washbasin **SUBWAY** wall-mounted WC

## TAKING A CURE BY THE ADRIATIC

The town of Budva is one of the oldest settlements on the Adriatic sea coast. According to mythology, the town that now boasts over 11,000 inhabitants was founded more than 2,500 years ago by Cadmus, the son of the Greek-Phoenician King Agenor. Surrounded by a medieval city wall, the famous old town is now a listed historical monument. Thanks to its mild climate and numerous sandy

beaches in both the town and surrounding area, Budva is now one of the most popular bathing resorts on the Montenegrin Adriatic coast. The Hotel Splendid opened its doors here in 2006; as a four-star hotel, it offers those in search of relaxation everything they could possibly want in terms of spa and wellness services.





**LOOP & FRIENDS** undercounter washbasin

## SPAS – HAVENS OF PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY

For a hotel with a spa and wellness area dedicated to the relaxation of its guests, the furnishing of the bathrooms is of central importance. In addition to design, key factors include user-friendliness, the sound-proofing effect of whirlpools, attractive materials, non-slip and robust surfaces and easy-clean properties. Hotel

Splendid features products from Villeroy & Boch's Evana and Cetus ranges, which meet the highest requirements of the luxury hotel allowing the hotel to offer premium relaxation and recuperation.

# SUBWAY / LOOP & FRIENDS / CETUS



## **SUBWAY** washbasin

Another hit. The washbasin is available in various sizes, variants and forms and is the perfect complement to the Subway WC. Timeless design, high-quality materials and diverse possibilities add the finishing touch to the collection.



## **LOOP & FRIENDS** surface-mounted washbasin

More variety for more possibilities. The successful surface-mounted washbasins are also available as semi-built-in variants and can be combined to optimum effect with the Shape furniture programme.



## **CETUS** oval bath

Perfect form, impressive variety. The sweeping lines of the bath ensure maximum lying comfort. Also available as rectangular and hexagonal variants.

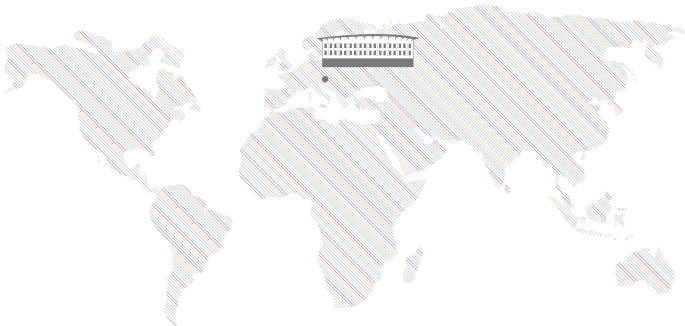
## **CETUS** oval bath made of Quaryl®



# KLEINWALSERTAL

## IFEN HOTEL

IFEN HOTEL	
Building type	hospitality
Architect	Hans Kirchhoff (1936), Prof. Hermann Kaufmann (architect), Lorenzo Bellini (interior designer)
Operator	Travel Charme Kleinwalsertal GmbH
Building project	new building
Completion	2010
Products	Subway La Belle Loop & Friends







**LOOP & FRIENDS** rectangular undercounter washbasin

## REINTERPRETING ALPINE ARCHITECTURE

The re-opened Travel Charme Ifen Hotel is situated at an altitude of 1,111 metres between Austria and Bavaria at the foot of the Hoher Ifen mountain in Hirschegg in the Kleinwalsertal. The choice of location was no coincidence: as early as 1936, the Hanover-based architect Hans Kirchhoff commissioned the construction of the “Ifen Hotel” on a rocky ledge and the hotel soon became a refuge for prominent people of the day. The overhanging round façade is characteristic of

the building’s special architecture and offers the guest an impressive view of the mountain landscape and the Kleinwalsertal. The Austrian architect Prof. Hermann Kaufmann, winner of the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture 2007, created the round building, which was inspired by the unadorned style of the 1930s, also adding a modern section.



## AUSTRIAN ARCHITECTURE MEETS ITALIAN DESIGN

Some 38 million euros were invested in redesigning the Travel Charme Ifen Hotel, inspired by the design of its predecessor. A reduced and clear design language stands in apparent contrast to the grandeur of the natural landscape, which also acts as the perfect backdrop for the hotel. The Roman designer Lorenzo Bellini ensured a perfect interaction of architecture and interior design. He designed

furniture, lamps and accessories especially for the hotel. Featuring natural materials, such as wood and granite, as well as a warm colour palette comprising tones of red, brown, beige and grey, the interior design creates a feeling of comfort that opens through the large panoramic windows onto the snow and ice outside, which further enhances the feeling of warmth inside.

# LA BELLE



**LA BELLE** free-standing bath

Modern interpretation of the Romantic. The La Belle bath features delicate and playful lines. Available either as a free-standing or built-in variant.



**LA BELLE** washbasin

The perfect unity of all parts. Thanks to the consistency of its design. La Belle meets all the requirements of a designer bathroom. Both the washbasin and the WC take up the curved line of the bath.

**LA BELLE** built-in bath made of Quaryl®



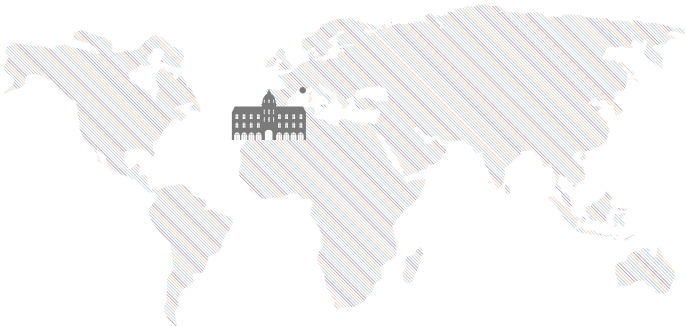
**SUBWAY** wall-mounted bidet



# NICE

## HOTEL NEGRESO

HOTEL NEGRESO	
Building type	hospitality
Architect	sté A.B.R./Atelier le Transo
Building owner	Jeanne Augier
Building project	renovation
Rooms	117 rooms and 23 suites predominantly with a seaview
Products	Subway Evana Libra Squaro







**EVANA** undercounter washbasin

## AN ICONIC GRAND HOTEL

Whoever thinks that the age of the grand hotel is over should first visit Hotel Negresco in Nice. The spirit of the belle epoch is still very much alive here. The grand hotel, designed by Edouard Niermans (1859 – 1928), first opened its doors in 1913. Today, it is owned by Jeanne Augier who, in cooperation with high-profile interior designers,

was herself responsible for the interior design of each individual room. The bathroom renovation was entrusted to the company A. B. R., who managed the project very successfully. The entire history of French art can be found in the rooms. As each floor is dedicated to a specific period, the listed hotel enables visitors to travel back in time.



**SQUARO** corner bath made of Quaryl®

## A LIVING MONUMENT ON THE CÔTE D'AZUR

The building with its unmistakable pink dome also features a unique architectural feature on the inside: the Salon Royal is home to the huge glass dome designed by Gustave Eiffel and allegedly inspired by the breast of his lover. A chandelier made from Baccarat crystal hangs from the glass dome and casts its splendid light onto

the 375 m<sup>2</sup> carpet. In the midst of all this luxury, it's even more surprising to learn that, at the request of Henry Negresco himself, the hotel was used as a hospital during the First World War. This details greatly adds to the character of the building, as does Carmen, the ginger hotel cat that stalks the hallways of the grand hotel.



# LIBRA/SQUARO



**LIBRA** bath

Comfortable use of space. Thanks to its reduced form, the compact bath unites high-quality luxury and practicality without compromising on comfort.



**SQUARO** corner bath

The art of clear lines. The unique shape that, with its clear lines, creates a stylish design for timelessly modern bathrooms.



# LEARNING FROM NATURE. THAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME.

OLIVER CONRAD, DESIGNER

The designer Oliver Conrad is an architect and trained carpenter. He founded his studio OC Gestaltung in 1990 and launched his first furniture collection in the same year. He has been working with Villeroy & Boch for many years, initially developing Tableware projects. Signs of Character visited the designer at his creative studio in the renovated “Obermüllerhaus” in Düsseldorf’s “Medienhafen” and talked to him about his new designs for Bathrooms & Wellness, the future of the bathroom and the new My Nature product line.

**OLIVER CONRAD** designer and founder of OC Möbel + Objekte & OC Gestaltung





**Mr. Conrad, how do you see the development of the bathroom?** We are following two parallel trends. On the one hand, we have the merger of the kitchen and living room as a public area and, on the other hand, the merger of the bathroom and bedroom as a private area. However, the problem is that, although the bedroom and the bathroom are moving closer together, it's actually the architecture that is holding things back. Our bathrooms are actually too small. If a bathroom is just eight or ten square metres in size, I can't transform it into a wellness oasis. The problem is often the size of the bathrooms.

**How large does a bathroom have to be in order to serve as a living area?**

Some architects used to say that we don't need more than six square metres. Today, it's quite the opposite. If you today plan 15 square metres, things start to be fun. If we are to meet today's requirements, we actually need a 20-square-metre bathroom. But reality is somewhat different.

**What do you think of the idea of technology in the bathroom?** I think it's going to catch on big time. But, to some extent, we have too many possibilities. As a brand and as a designer, we have to be selective. For example, LED lighting: If I give you a remote control that allows you to set 4 million lighting atmospheres in your bathroom, you'll throw it aside after ten minutes. What do we actually need? A functional light that we can switch on and off. Forget the atmospheric lighting. It is up to us to offer the user the right products. Sound is also a key area and will become increasingly important.

**You mean sound in the sense of acoustics?** Yes, acoustics. The bathroom used to be a reverberative room and we are now starting to ask ourselves what sound it can absorb and muffle; I need loose materials, textile objects or furniture that can absorb the sound. And we have to make sure that it all fits together afterwards. And we're not planning a space to put the scented candle. The bathroom used to be a purely practical room for washing and taking a bath or shower. That was it. Today, we are spending much more time in the bathroom and also pamper ourselves there. It's all about wellness today – a bar of soap that doesn't do wellness isn't sold any more.

**Your previous designs are very abstract, reduced and cubic. Your Pure Stone line that Villeroy & Boch is currently showcasing is almost narrative or metaphorical. Are you remaining true to yourself?** Not at all. And that's what's interesting. I have an innate grid in my head. And it's taken me a long time to break away from it. I've always made very straight-lined things and then, out of nowhere, I suddenly designed a sphere and I can't even say why I did it. I just had to design something round – and so that's what I did. This shift can be seen in our sketches for My Nature, too. Ceramic material gives you the geometric lines and the delicate aspect on the one hand and the rounded, sweeping quality on the other, because this is also what you find in nature. The natural doesn't always have to be curved. Have you heard of pyrite? Pyrite is a naturally-occurring mineral. It has a completely cubic structure. You might not believe that it's natural but pyrite really is like this. Nature is both. And you can find this dualism in the ceramics and furniture of My Nature. Learning from nature is a huge area. And I believe it's an important one.

**So are you an advocate of the right angle and the cube?** We used to talk furniture, and furniture is always made up of joined surfaces. Since we've been making ceramics, we have had to rethink because we don't have any problems with edges anymore, rather we work with a single piece. As a product designer working with ceramics, you are, in theory, shaping a piece of clay. And that's very interesting. I simply have a piece of clay, throw it on the table and start shaping it. I knead it and don't have any problems with edges because the material is the same throughout. So I simply create the design in my head. Not on the computer, as everyone thinks. No, I sit down in the mornings and think about what I can make. I start by kneading a piece of clay in my head and then I sketch it. That's how I created Pure Stone. We couldn't build the washbasin on the computer. It had to look like a stone that has been hollowed out during the course of 4,000 million years. However, with My Nature, we wanted this delicate, thin feel.

**Can you tell us something about My Nature?** We've been working on it for more than one year. First we developed these delicate, curved forms. And to realise them we wanted a material that isn't oak or walnut again. We looked for native woods renewable resources from our own land, asked what has a good sound and thought of chestnut. Everybody loves chestnut trees, even children know them because of their fruits. Light wood is becoming popular again. As designers, we also have to be one step ahead of the market. It takes at least another year before the product reaches the wholesaler.

**Does My Nature force an opening between the bathroom and the sleeping area?** It can also be used in the classical bathroom. The "Smartbench" opens it up more, that's the way it was designed. However, the boundaries are becoming increasingly fluid, what is the living bathroom? The typical picture we have in our heads is looking from the bathroom through the dressing room into the bathroom. There still has to be something inbetween, people are ok with that. However, they haven't got the basic idea yet. The bed is a bit further away, because of the moisture. How close does the carpet get to the tiles? They think it can't all work, but it does work. And the products we're producing today have to be able to do everything, whether in the 10m<sup>2</sup> bathroom or in the living bathroom.

**Is the delicate aspect possible? My Nature doesn't have a rim.** Yes, we wanted a very strict edge radius but feared we might have a problem with firing. We collaborate very closely with Villeroy & Boch. I simply love working with them in production and technology. That's where you appreciate just how difficult this profession is. Getting a product to look the way you want it to and also being able to is a tremendous achievement.

**The ceramic also shrinks a lot.** Yes, the shrinkage is 30 percent. That's a huge amount. Added to this, the material is also de-

formed. It's really alarming.

**And that can't be simulated on the computer?** No. Villeroy & Boch only does it out of experience. In theory, if we wanted a straight form, the washbasin would have to be curved when it is fired. That reinforces the corners. They know exactly what the mould has to be like in order to get straight edges.

**So back to your brainstorming. What do you do to get a flash of inspiration?** You have to work on it. Nothing works without a meaningful concept. The finished product needs to tell a story. I tend to walk around with it for days and weeks asking myself what this product is all about. It gets to a point where I can almost feel it and feel what's right. Then I put it down on paper. You carry it around with you for a while and then you start to develop it. And then we build models in our workshop.

**It's unusual to work with models. Don't many people just work with renderings?** Renderings lie. And yet, unfortunately, we still have to do them. If you were to say to me now that you need a washbasin, I'd have an idea and would draw it on the serviette. And you also input your imagination. However, if I say here's the rendering of the washbasin, there's nothing there, it has no weight or life. However great renderings are, they now look like photos and yet you still realise that something is wrong with them. A dimension is missing. That's why we build 1:1 models.

**So you have a more holistic, artistic approach to an idea?**

First, there's an idea, an inspiration. And something of this initial inspiration has to remain. If I take the idea apart and find out what's important about it, in the end, this original idea, which led us to the actual form, is still there.







Does the fact that such a way of working is encouraged make a difference to the quality of the collaboration with Villeroy & Boch? Yes. What makes Villeroy & Boch special is the tradition; the fact that Villeroy & Boch has existed for so long and the fact that they know what they are doing. There are many ceramic manufacturers on the market but only a few brands. Villeroy & Boch is a brand. They stand for something. They have existed for 260 years. And only because they have continued to develop. The exciting thing is that they manufacture in-house, that they have the knowledge in-house and that they also have confidence in designers such as us. We believe it's important that someone can approach development with freedom and without being restrained by the question of what can actually be manufactured. This is why we also collaborate very closely with Villeroy & Boch. We then develop ideas that are not universal. The challenge is not "make a washbasin!" but "make a washbasin for Villeroy & Boch!" That's a completely different task. It's more difficult, but it also gives us a certain framework.

They have their own way of doing things. When I started working for Villeroy & Boch, the question was always, "is that a Villeroy product?" Unlike in other companies that say "that's a product that the market wants". This is why they only work with designers that also understand this Villeroy approach and the company.

**Mr. Conrad, thank you for the interesting discussion.**

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9300 2C G0 Shades and dimensions subject to the usual tolerances.

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