sketchbook

best western premier pétion-ville

→ After Haiti's devastating earthquake in 2010, the country is in rebuild mode. Case in point, the country's first U.S.-branded hotel, the Best Western Premier located in Pétion-Ville, a suburb east of Port au Prince, is expected to open later this year. For the project, owners Carabimmo S.A. (Aimbridge Hospitality is managing the hotel) turned to Dallas-based Studio 11 Design.

The design direction came from a trip to the site. "We toured several art galleries, popular restaurants, artisan villages, and even a few of the famous local artists' homes," explains Studio 11 principal Kellie Sirna. "We found that our clients have a love for mid-century modern furniture, color, and art."

With that in mind, for the 106-room hotel, complete with a restaurant, spa, pool, bar/lounge, meeting space, and a terrace overlooking the city, the designers set out to create "a mid-century modern design infused with a transitional feel," says Studio 11 Design principal Stacy Elliston. A neutral color palette serves as the background for splashes of color found in the lighting, rugs, and local artwork—the standout being a column in the lobby covered in photography by students. The artwork can be purchased, and proceeds go to a foundation being formed in honor of one of the owner's wives, who was lost in the earthquake.

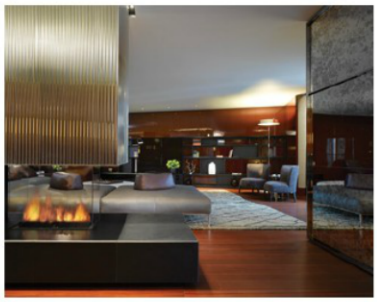
Working in Haiti didn't come without its challenges: since there is no running water, a 25,000-gallon water tank requires daily refilling, and electricity is run on generators. "There is such a need for an upscale property in the country and this area specifically. The level of quality of the existing hotels will be nowhere near the level that we have planned for this Premier property," says Elliston. And others are following suit, says Sirna: "Five other hotels are planned for Haiti in the next two years, including a Marriott and Hilton Garden Inn."

bulgari hotel & residences, london

→ London is blooming with new hotels, one of the latest being the Bulgari Hotel & Residences. Located in exclusive Knightsbridge, the property is particularly unusual as it is housed in a new building among the area's traditional architecture.

"Constructing a new building in this part of London is a rare event because the city tends to be extremely conservative due to its consolidated urban plan," says Antonio Citterio of Milan-based Antonio Citterio Patricia Viel and Partners, the hotel's lead architect and designer.

This is the third Bulgari in the world, following properties in Milan and Bali, and this one has similar design lines to the Milan original. Like the brand's jewelry, the décor is understated and elegant with silver forming the underlying theme of the design. There are two solid silver chandeliers in the ballroom, while in the 85 guestrooms and suites, Bulgari's silver candlesticks inform table lamps. The



rooms' palette also includes stained oak, glossy Sapele mahogany, silk curtains with patterns reminiscent of the company's jewelry designs, modern furniture made in Italy, as well as antique pieces to add character.

A two-story spa—one of the largest in London—is swathed in onyx, teak, and Vicenza stone, and boasts an 82-foot-long pool lined with mosaic tiles, 12 treatment rooms, Turkish baths, saunas, and ice shower facilities. There is also a 47-seat private cinema and a double-height ceiling restaurant, Il Ristorante, with a Brit-influenced Italian menu.