

hospitality design

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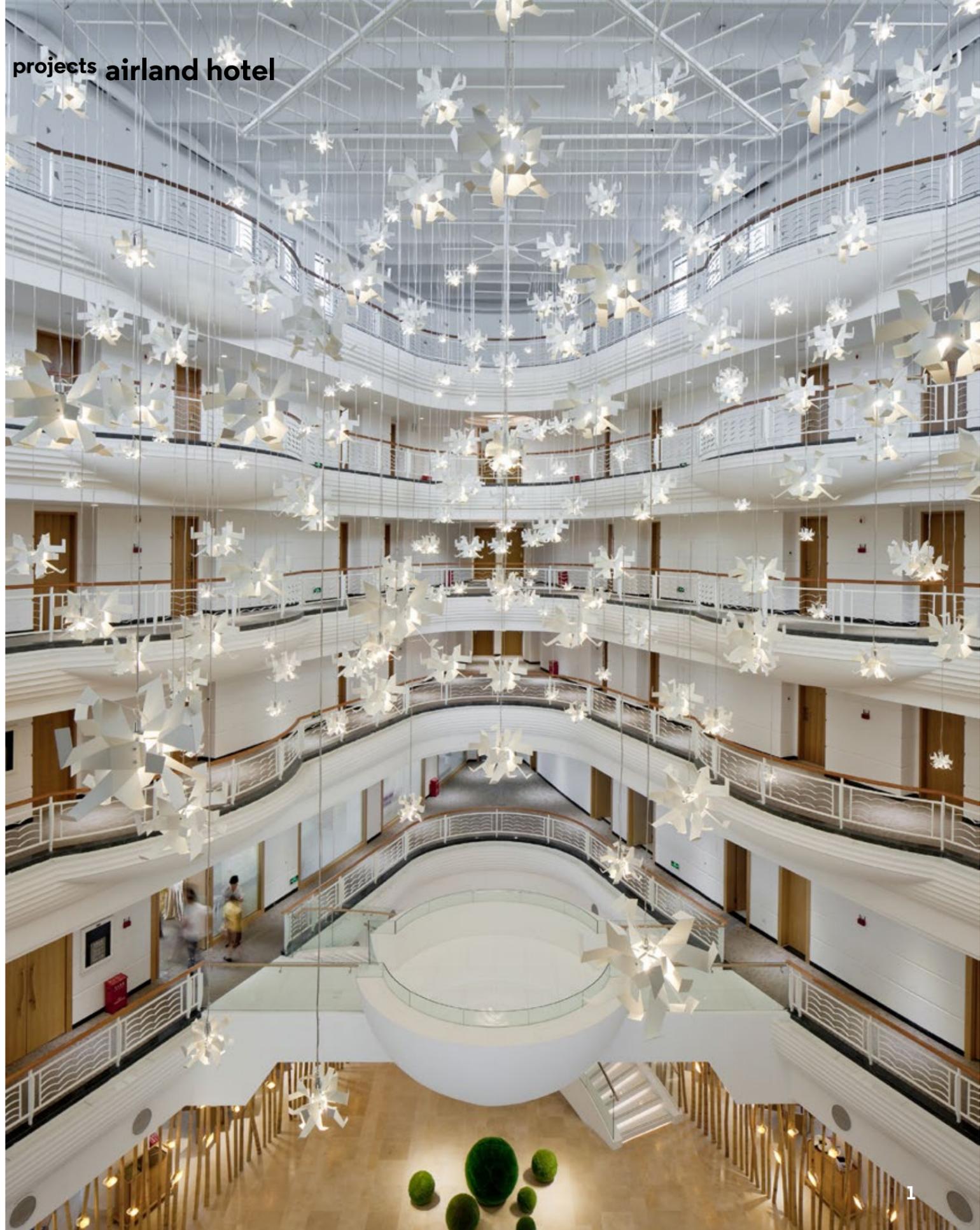
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Presenter of HD Expo, a hospitality design event

HDexpo
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surf and turf →

Coastal living inspires a Shenzhen beach hotel

By REBECCA LO
Photography by PEDRO PEGENAUTE

While Shenzhen is often considered a gateway to China's financial possibilities (with a tech industry that is quickly replacing its manufacturing roots), the special economic zone is also home to one of the country's most vital green regions. The Dameisha coastal area, situated on the northern side of Mirs Bay opposite Hong Kong's scenic Plover Cove Country Park, is where a number of seaside resorts can be found, including the Airland Hotel, which was recently transformed by Beijing-based BLVD into a bright and contemporary destination inspired by the environs. Although it is an atrium hotel, the

1. Airland Hotel's atrium space is dominated by a large pendant chandelier resembling dangling illuminated sea creatures.

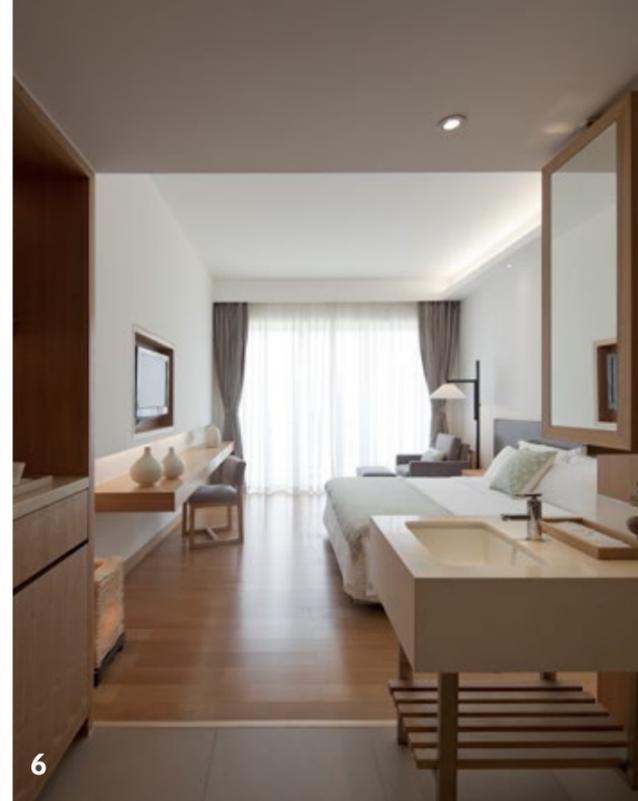
2. Most of the former classic European stairs have been transformed into bowl-like bird's nest forms integrated into the hotel's architecture.

3. The all-day dining restaurant features a palette of gray and light wood that's found throughout the hotel.

4. Vertical wood screens lead guests to reception.

5+6. Open layout guestrooms are minimal in style with white and gray walls and light oak cabinets and flooring.

7. The beachy, natural palette continues in a lounge space partially enclosed by bamboo screens.



reception and lobby lounge of the original space, built in 2000, were rather dark. “The biggest challenge was how to integrate our design with the existing architectural structure,” says Honglei Liu, BLVD’s partner and creative director. Because of a tight budget, a new skylight was out of the question, so Liu replaced the exterior walls along the perimeter of the ground floor with transparent glazing “to introduce natural light into the space,” she says. In addition, “a series of windows were installed on the exterior wall on the top floor.” Meanwhile, she explains, most of the original classic European stairs were transformed into white, bowl-like bird’s nest forms and integrated into the hotel’s curvilinear architecture.

The building’s triangular plan features rounded corners that are reiterated in the atrium’s triangle-shaped opening. BLVD kept seating groups for the lobby lounge and all-day dining restaurant to either side of a sweeping white staircase, allowing the central void to be dominated by a large chandelier that resembles illuminated sea creatures. All of the guestroom corridors face the atrium and feature scallop-shaped balconies, their horizontal lines reinforced by wood railings on balustrades for a cruise ship-like feel.



The restaurant is partially shielded from the busy lobby by screens and vertical slats that allude to a forest. “We selected materials that were easily maintained yet generate a feeling of the beach,” explains Liu, pointing to local granite and natural materials such as oak and sandstone that complement the neutral color palette. Lighting comes in the

form of cone-shaped pendants above the buffet counter and oversized white shades suspended over banquettes lining the windows, while light gray upholstered chairs with wooden legs add to the laidback vibe.

The same feel continues in the guestrooms, which are clean and minimal with an emphasis on function, evidenced in



the long wood shelves beneath the TV that double as work surfaces. BLVD developed three types of rooms—with the smallest at roughly 200 square feet—taking down the original bathroom wall and placing the sink outside for an open layout. White walls, with sandstone in the wet areas, contrast the light oak of the cabinets and flooring.

Because Dameisha boasts one of the best beaches in Shenzhen, Liu says, “people come here to escape the hustle and bustle of city life. Our design intent was to create a hotel for coastal living that was very different from urban life.” **hd**

blvd.com.cn; airlandhotel.com

Airland Hotel Shenzhen, China

Owner and Management Company

Airland Group

Interior Design Firm

BLVD, Shenzhen, China

Interior Design Project Team

Honglei Liu and Yuxin Yang

Contractor

Zhongzhuang Design & Decoration Engineering

Lighting

Summer Lighting Co.

Engineering

Zhongzhuang Design & Decoration Engineering

Kitchen

TOTO

GUESTROOM

Bed and Bedding

Airland Group

Carpet and Rugs

Shenzhen Huajun Decoration Material

**Designers did not provide sourcing for other furnishings shown.*