



**LEFT:** The main lobby at the Four Seasons hotel in Dubai's financial district, designed by Adam Tihany. **BELOW, FROM TOP:** Silver glass pendants from the lobby's custom chandelier by Luum; bronze and gold mirrors for the lobby walls; and blue metal mesh for the windows.

## DESERT STAR

In Dubai, a city known for over-the-top glamour and bling, Adam Tihany crafts a more refined version of luxury at the new Four Seasons. **BY PATRICK ROGERS**



Designer  
Adam Tihany.

Adam Tihany is most often associated with the hushed ambiance of restaurants like Per Se and Daniel in New York and the respectfully redone Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles. So what's a nice guy like him doing in Dubai? "You do have a certain expectation that it's a city that puts a premium on wow and bling," says the New York-based designer, whose latest project, the Four Seasons Hotel at Dubai International Financial Centre, opened in April. But the United Arab Emirates city's tastes

are evolving, he adds. "A new breed of developer is starting to move past the need to do the biggest and the best."

At the new Four Seasons, a 106-room business hotel with the feel of a boutique, Tihany has addressed the call for more human-size spaces in today's Dubai. In one sense, he didn't have a choice: "The building was a bit compromised," admits Christopher Norton, the hotel chain's former chief operating officer, who first visited the property when it was a vacant office tower, far from the beach. "Some of the rooms were smaller than what we usually do. Some had views, but others looked into office buildings," he says. "It needed creativity."

The hotel's public spaces are modestly scaled but flow smoothly from one room to the next—"like the progress of a Florentine palazzo," says Tihany. He put the focus on high-quality materials—lacquered wood paneling, zebra-striped Italian onyx, a custom-made brass screen—and domestic touches, such as table lamps and area rugs that define intimate seating areas. The main restaurant is an upscale, glamorous rendition of the all-American diner, with leather banquettes and streamlined lighting. ▽



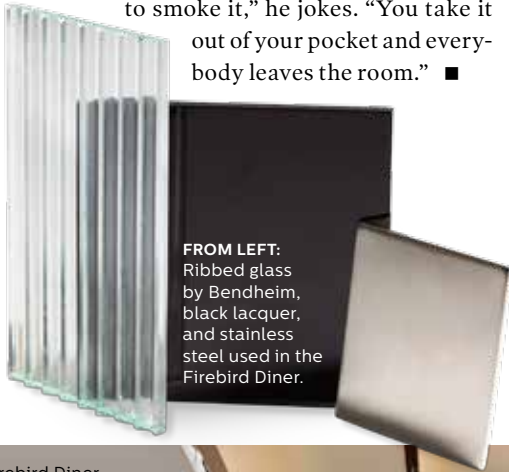
The rooftop pool. **LEFT, FROM TOP:** Fabrics by Janus et Cie, used in the pool cabanas, and Jim Thompson, for the lounge chair pillows; blue glass mosaic tiles by Bisazza line the pool.

PHOTOGRAPHY: WILL HEREFORD/COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS; INTERIOR: ERIC LAIGNEL/COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS; STILLS: PAMELA COOK/STUDIO D. FOR DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



“This area of the city is famous for having the best French restaurant, the best Chinese and Spanish food. We had to do something different,” says Norton.

After years of globe-trotting, Tihany says he has found the ideal guinea pig for creating a high-end business hotel: himself. “I know what it’s like to get off a plane at 2 a.m. and have a meeting the next morning at 8,” says the designer. In the yacht-like guest rooms, hard corners are banished on desks and dressers, and the transition from the textured walls to the taupe ceiling is “fuzzy” to create a cocoon-like effect. But the hotel’s most comfortable retreat, he says, is the Churchill Club. “I smoke a cigar when I want personal time. You don’t even have to smoke it,” he jokes. “You take it out of your pocket and everybody leaves the room.” ■



FROM LEFT: Ribbed glass by Bendheim, black lacquer, and stainless steel used in the Firebird Diner.



The Luna rooftop bar.

FROM LEFT: A wool rug by Loloey for the rooftop bar; fabric by Sahco, for the sofa pillows; and indoor-outdoor fabrics by Jim Thompson, used on the adjacent terrace.



LEFT: A deluxe executive suite. BELOW: Fabrics by Rubelli used in guest suites.



Firebird Diner, the hotel’s main restaurant.



LEFT: A fabric by Pierre Frey for throw pillows in the Churchill Club cigar bar.