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6 key hospitality trends for the year ahead



Where is hospitality headed? FRAME's Tracey Ingram and [Creative Supply](#) founder Youri Sawerschel share the key trends they expect to influence the industry in the coming year from both a spatial and branding perspective.



Louis Vuitton's beach clubs have popped up at the Mandarin Oriental Bodrum in Turkey and on the iconic Huangcuo Beach in Xiamen, China (above).

Newsworthy hospitality

Brands know they need to be relevant – and newsworthiness is a way to achieve (or in many cases, to engineer) that goal. One method is for non-hospitality brands to use hospitality as a news vehicle. Take fashion houses, which typically gain attention from seasonal collections and fashion drops. Ephemeral hospitality activations provide them with a new reason to be in the news, making them relevant at other times of the year and to the right crowd. Think of Louis Vuitton's beach clubs, variations of which have popped up at the Mandarin Oriental Bodrum in Turkey and on the iconic Huangcuo Beach in Xiamen, China. The latter example 'creates big questions for traditional hotel players', says Sawerschel. 'A Louis Vuitton resort popping up next to a normal resort creates strong competition due to the differing revenue model. Louis Vuitton can class it as a marketing expense rather than operational revenue.'

Another method is for established hospitality players to push product creativity, which can be strengthened through the power of partnerships. One example is the collaboration between rising Chinese company Luckin Coffee – the so-called 'Starbucks killer' – and high-end Chinese alcohol brand Moutai. 'Partnerships can ensure integrity,' says Ingram. 'Each brand has its own authenticity and together they can create something new and newsworthy.'



Kōri Ice Cream in Melbourne, designed by Architects Eat, was awarded with FRAME Awards' 2023 Best Use of Colour.

Mono-product brands

In the risky business of F&B, simplicity can be a strong strategy. Hence the rise of mono-product brands: one thing, done well – and branded accordingly. ‘Once you find the one thing that works, you can build up your entire brand communication around that star product,’ says Sawerschel. Little Bao in Hong Kong (sweet or salty bao buns) Buddy Buddy in Paris (nut butter everything) and The Avocado Show (there’s even a burger with an avocado as the ‘bun’) in the Netherlands, UK and Germany are just three examples. The mono-approach can also extend to the interiors: one colour and/or one material. ‘The absence of excess becomes the statement,’ says Ingram, pointing to Kōri Ice Cream in Melbourne by Architects Eat as an example. ‘It can make a brand stand out in today’s oversaturated world, helping consumers to cut through all the visual noise.’ Having a narrow focus can also paint brands as specialists, making them instantly recognizable and memorable. ‘The challenge,’ says Ingram, ‘is to ensure they create monogamy, not monotony.’



Crosby Studios and Repossi merged the metaverse and physical retail with their collaboration Web-3 Café during Paris Fashion Week SS22.

Phygital forms

As if we weren't online enough already, designers are beginning to translate the language of the screen to physical spaces, borrowing its colours, forms, fonts, 3D effects, emojis and pixels. Examples are plenty in the retail world, often mirroring a brand's shift from online only to omnichannel, with Wow in Madrid a good example. 'Hospitality can build a bridge between the digital and physical worlds,' says Ingram. 'You can't (yet) taste anything in the metaverse.' Crosby Studios and Repossi gave a hint of what's possible with the Web-3 Café. The installation-slash-fully functioning café during Paris Fashion Week preceded the launch of a Crosby Studios video game, and was filled with pixelated furniture that could be purchased both in real life and in the game. But as technology advances, how quickly will the look become outdated? 'The trick is to find a balance, because refurbishment cycles won't change – hotels will do a full refurbishment every 10, 15 or even 20 years,' says Sawerschel. 'One strategy for hotels is to limit the look to public, high-visibility areas and tone it down in the bedrooms.' Or to save them for newsworthy hospitality pop-ups.



Tactility, materiality and light play leading roles in making Norm Architects' design for Dentology+ in Belgium's Antwerp feel more like a visit to a spa than a clinic.



Ode Dermatology's Foolsap Studio-designed clinic in Fitzroy, Australia, blurs the lines between its role as a healthcare provider and a wellness space.

Hospitable healthcare

More an ongoing trend than a new one, the blurred line between hospitality and healthcare is getting fuzzier than ever. Particularly in the private sector where competition is fierce, hospitality can provide a decisive point of difference. Clinique de Valmont in Glion has a restaurant akin to those in Switzerland's luxury hotels – no science signals whatsoever – while Maex Clinic in Madrid looks like an upscale residential brand. 'We have to go to the doctor's or dentist's, even if we don't want to,' says Sawerschel. 'Branding and spatial design can play a huge role in making those trips more pleasant.' While the design of some medical spaces, like surgeries, is guided by function and hygiene, public-facing areas can benefit from softer palettes and materials – think homely hotel or relaxing spa rather than sterile clinic, as Norm Architects and Foolsap Studio did for Dentology± in Antwerp and Ode Dermatology in Melbourne, respectively. The relationship between health and hospitality is also extending to the wider wellness scene, with Equinox gyms branching out into hotels, the

launch of humanized retirement facilities like Casa Barbara (involving Serge Jérémie Trigano of Club Med and Mama Shelter fame) and the rise of niche retreats such as Dimensions Algonquin Highlands in Ontario, which offers wellbeing-oriented psychedelic-assisted experiences.



Retaining as much of the original fit-out as possible, the Linkedtown Coffee bar in Hangzhou, China, was designed by XianXiang Design ‘in opposition of the polished trendy cafés characteristic of the city’.



Nhoow Architects employed an unfinished and industrial aesthetic to create a community coffee shop reminiscent of a construction site office or a back alley in the old urban area of Chengdu.

Project occupy

Cutting down on resources while promoting reuse, physical hospitality locations are occupying buildings as is – bare bones and all. Good examples of ‘guerrilla branding’ can be found in Asia, from the raw, graffitied look of LinkedTown Coffee in Hangzhou by XianXiangDesign to the construction-site vibe of Judo Espresso Dojo by Nhoow Architects in Chengdu. ‘Hospitality has such a high spatial turnover,’ says Ingram. ‘A new concept often means an entire interior is stripped and replaced, without any guarantee of the new venue’s longevity.’ Instead, some designers and brands are working with what’s there, and repairing furniture once deemed junk to fill in the gaps. Ironically, the approach requires a developed design sensitivity to succeed, something Schemata Architects has proven in various projects. Still, the world will require a recalibration of what’s deemed ‘aesthetically pleasing’ for this approach to sustainability design to take root. And there could be another driver at play: ‘Maybe in a world that’s so controlled and organized, there’s something very fresh about this sense of rebellion – even if it’s artificial, re-created rebellion,’ says Sawerschel. ‘It gives you energy.’



Designed by Kvorning Design, the floating aquaculture visitor and information centre in Hardangerfjord, Norway, Salmon Eye, hosts Iris, a restaurant that ‘brings [guests] to the ingredients’.

Destination dining

In the movie *The Menu*, a handful of guests take a small boat to a private island for a once-in-a-lifetime dining experience from a top chef (played by Ralph Fiennes). Although the 2022 film set out to mock the pomp and pageantry of fine dining, the spectacle looks set to continue – and to literally explore new territories. Guests at [Iris Restaurant](#) in Norway’s Hardangerfjord take to the waters aboard a floating orb that ‘brings them to the ingredients, instead of the other way around’. They reach a remote location to feast on a multi-course dinner conceptualized to convey the ‘challenges and threats to the global food system’ and stir up ‘ideas and suggestions for future innovations’. Swedish company OceanSky Cruises is gearing up to launch five-star expeditions by reviving a more sustainable mode of transport: the airship. Its first destinations are the North Pole and South Africa, and guests can expect scenic views, luxurious cabins and experience-aligned meals from top chefs. In last year’s hospitality trend report, we remarked on the lack of integrated journeys accompanying the rise of immersive experiences. These new developments – as well as the impending relaunch of the Orient Express train – show change is afoot.

In the still-thriving experience economy, it’s clear that hospitality continues to be a strong magnet – particularly for its ability to offer ‘real-life’ experiences in an increasingly digital world. There’s a strong incentive to come up with the next new thing – and many players are racing to the top.

WORDS Tracey Ingram and Youri Sawerschel

Bar Hotel Insights Hospitality Restaurant Entertainment Venue Health Club