

A hand with red nail polish holds a paintbrush over a vibrant, abstract painting. The painting features bold colors like red, blue, and yellow, with a textured, almost fabric-like appearance. The overall scene is dramatic and artistic, serving as the background for the magazine cover.

# SPACE

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL DESIGN

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# AB CONCEPT

ED NG, CO-FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL

Can Faik talks to Ed Ng, one half of AB concept.

**S**ince its launch in 1999, AB Concept has earned a reputation as the design firm of choice for the world's leading hoteliers, luxury developers and premium restaurant operators. Led by co-founders Ed Ng and Terence Ngan, AB Concept is widely regarded as one of the most innovative, integrated and internationally acclaimed design studios in Asia.

#### Tell me about your role at AB Concept?

I am the Co-Founder and Principal behind our company. Terence is also Co-Founder and Principal, in charge of the creation and designing the space, while I am in charge of the whole interior touch-ups and furnishings. That said, there is no clear definition of actual job-role between Terence and I. We always work together as a close team, through every design, detail and creative process.

#### What five words would you use to describe AB Concept?

International, evolving, space, story-tellers and influential.

#### How long have you been involved with hotel design?

Ever since we graduated from university, we've been involved in hospitality and design. It's our passion and we've been doing it for over 25 years already.

#### Have you noticed any particular trends in hotel design?

The idea nowadays in design is not to make it look like a hotel

People are looking to stay somewhere that feels like a home and is effortless in its design.

#### How important are public spaces in hotels?

These have become less important. It used to be that hotels needed to have a grand lobby to impress guests upon arrival, but this has shifted to a more intimate approach. This is especially true for luxury hotels where the trend now is to simplify the checking-in experience, which means the functionality of the lobby has been eliminated.

#### With so many hospitality designers in the industry, how does AB Concept stand out from the rest?

Standing out is not necessarily about a signature style, but about delivering a design that perfectly matches the client's requirements while reflecting the project's brand, the local culture and the unique way in which we, as the designers, portray this through our lens. This is what makes us Ed and Terence of AB Concept.

We're equally known for the specific details in a space, and something as small as a lampshade could be the one thing that we are remembered for in a project.

#### How is the current economic climate affecting the hotel design market? And has AB Concept felt the effects?

The hotel design market is calling for spaces that feel more like a home or a private residence. People want to enjoy different experiences, even within the same brand of hotels. >



and want the space to feel more personal. There has been a shift from hotels to luxury residences, and we are now working to make these two concepts complement each other.

This is why AB Concept is known as a storyteller – when we present a project, the appearance and concept always differ, making each one individual.

**Being based in Hong Kong, which hotels are you currently working on?**

We're working on an exciting project to open a restaurant in the former Hong Kong Central Police Station, but that's all I can share for now!

**Have you seen exceptional growth in any part of the world in hotel design?**

China, and South East Asian countries are very up and coming.

**What is the biggest thing the company has learnt over its 17 years in the industry?**

Not to over-expand and to keep ourselves grounded by continuing to produce beautiful and iconic projects that we love and are passionate about.

**What has been your favourite project to date?**

Our favourite project is always the first in a particular genre: our first spa at Mandarin

Oriental, Singapore or our first restaurant at Four Seasons Shanghai at Pudong.

**What's next for you?**

We have more luxury residential projects and hotels in Europe in the works, and we're also looking into opportunities with super yachts, which would be a completely new challenge for us.

**What would be your dream hotel project?**

A quirky and challenging space with different angles to work around. Playing with lighting is also interesting; how that factors into the design and how the space is seen and used in different light.

**Where currently ranks highest on your travel wish list?**

Somewhere that doesn't have internet – a remote and disconnected island.

**Where do you see hotel design in the future?**

Focusing more on comfort and 'homeliness'.

**How and why did you get into the interior design industry?**

It was a natural progression for me following design school.



CÉ LA VI, Hong Kong



Cote d'Azur



CE LA VI, Hong Kong



Cote d'Azur



Four Seasons Hotel London at Ten Trinity Square

**What are your design dreams/goals?**

To design a window to see the world and the world to see us. I enjoy designing across different cultures and locations, and collaborating with local people. For us it's important to create a meaningful and confident design, but also equally accentuate and complement the experience and story of the space.

**In your opinion, which will be the top trends in interior design for 2017?**

More intimate spaces that connect to the local culture and experiences.

**Where do you take your inspiration from?**

We take inspiration from our previous experiences, the functionality of a space and the user experience. We start each design from the subjective angle of the user, and the aesthetic comes from the local culture, location and surroundings.

**What's your favourite part of a hotel?**

One, the bedroom. Two, the bathroom. Three, the restaurant.

**How would you define your 'hotel style'?**

True to the surroundings and constantly evolving.

**What does design mean to you?**

An opportunity to get creative.

**What do you want in a hotel room?**

An amazing bed with linen from the finest Egyptian cotton.

**What is your favourite project that you created and why?**

It was exciting to complete our first European private residence, La Corniche Villa in the Cote d'Azur. This is one of my favourite places because of the stunning coastline, delicious food and great fashion scene, so it was a pleasure for us to work on this project and to convey this story throughout combining our own design inspirations.

**Let's finish with the issue of personal and work life balance. How do you aim to achieve a good balance and what do those closest to you think of your attempts?**

Design is my personal life, there's no definitive line. Even when travelling, Terence and I bundle our holiday and work time together so it all overlaps. Work is our life and is personal to us.

> [abconcept.net](http://abconcept.net)



W Retreat & Spa Bali, Seminyak