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MAGAZINE



Issue 75

www.gsmagazine.co.uk

Inspiring Hospitality Design

LAUNCH PAD [new openings + refits]



Mei Ume



It's been a while since I visited a Four Seasons and I'd almost forgotten how exceptional the standards of service are. Even as, across the globe, luxury brands have emerged and developed and continue to raise the bar in terms of guest satisfaction, Four Seasons remains untouchable. Without question, it's the out and out leader. The Four Seasons Hotel Ten Trinity Square is housed within part of a significant London landmark, the Grade II listed former Port of London Authority building, once the most central point of commerce and cultural exchange in the City. This grand Edwardian building, designed in the beaux-art style, was opened by the then Prime Minister, David Lloyd Jones, in 1922. The property has been restored to its former glory with its wonderfully ornate plastered ceilings, marble columns and oak panelled walls. Despite its grandeur, the property does not lend itself particularly well to a luxury hotel. The sheer scale and height of many of its rooms has made it difficult to design intimate spaces within and guests may find it difficult to relax in such a grand and resplendent environment. Mei Ume is the Asian influenced restaurant housed within the hotel, it is located to the rear of the hotel building within a

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large open hall, interrupted by a row of columns that form a spine through the middle. The designers here (Hong Kong based **AB Concept**) have thoughtfully and cleverly provided human scale to the restaurant. Preserving the original mouldings of the columns, AB erected intricate black metal motifs on the exterior of each from which structured frames create alcoves for diners on one side of the columns and suspend halo lights on the other. The bar is covered in a pavilion-like structure and illuminated with custom lanterns framed in black metal with patterned glass. Next to the bar is a semi-private dining space separated by hand painted glass panels with silk embroidery, designed to look subtly modern with distinct black and white brushstrokes in the form of bamboo. The bamboo images add strength and create a poetic dining experience within a bamboo forest. The main dining room is complete with bold red accents, a continuous theme throughout the restaurant that represents happiness and celebration in Chinese culture. At either end of the main dining room are three-layer gilded artworks that depict, at one end, a traditional Chinese banquet scene and on the other a market scene from the Song Dynasty. They are striking and colourful artworks that provide great atmosphere. AB Concept have created a warm and intimate environment and the food served within the restaurant is of the highest order. A corridor separates Mei Ume from another of the hotel's dining rooms, La Dame de Pic, which has just been awarded its first Michelin Star. Congratulations to all concerned. With the standards and quality of food served at Mei Ume, another Star at the hotel surely can't be far away.

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