

# Be Our Guest!

**The best hotels and restaurants create aspirational spaces whilst feeling like a home-from-home. Juliet Davies talks to the experts to find out how they achieve this.**

**S**atelliet Group ([satelliet.co.uk](http://satelliet.co.uk)) travel the world to keep on top of the latest styles and trends.

"We are seeing a move away from urban industrial unfinished and rough styles back towards the traditional and more luxurious feel, with increased use of natural materials, velvets, cottons, wool, and real leather," explained Satelliet Director Harvey Ockrim. "Colours are pastel shades like light greys, stone, teal, light green and earthy shades.

"Furniture with a mid 20th century vibe is very much in demand but with a 21st century twist. Outdoor space is now used by the hospitality sector as a source of revenue, and for this reason more focus is on the design with large sofas and chairs being incorporated to give a more opulent atmosphere.

"We are also experiencing an increase in the use of steel frames with upholstered seats and backs to add comfort. Clients are also upgrading to advanced stitching detail on seams and quilting stitch on upholstery, either on the inside or outside back."

Harvey has also noted that bentwood is starting to come back into fashion, but this time frames are being lacquered or painted in different colours.

Liam O'Donnell is the director of Valdivian Furniture ([valdivianfurniture.co.uk](http://valdivianfurniture.co.uk)), a British furniture manufacturer that specialises in bespoke, hand crafted contract furniture.

"You can expect to see a range of textures that mirror the earthiness of the outdoors with hospitality furniture making use of natural materials," he said. "Expect fabrics that emulate woody tones and textures in addition to materials like rattan, cane and abaca. This will give spaces a naturalistic feel and help to create a tranquil, at-one-with-nature ambience."

2016 brought us copper tones so expect an update on metal finishes with an array of brass tones, black steel and burnt metal surfaces to make interiors pop with a unique rawness and exploration of controlled rusticity.

"Rustic metals will complement the use of natural materials and textures and will give an edgy, urban feel to a space," Liam added. "Metals can also be mixed to create a contrasting atmosphere of silvers, rose golds, bronze and more rustic finishes.

"The hospitality industry is getting creative with upholstery and bringing back geometric patterns, unique materials and pops of colour. This can be great to create exciting centrepiece furniture to make that bar or ▼





Catering Design Group recommend  
creating pockets of space





Scandi-style by GO IN

▲ hotel lobby truly stand out, particularly when upholstery fabrics are designed specifically for an establishment."

According to Tim Armitt, Managing Director of Lyndon by Boss Design, (lyndon.co.uk), during the last decade, hospitality establishments have reinvented their communal spaces and lobbies to accommodate a range of activities centred not only around relaxation and play, but work too.

"And as more and more hotels extend their facilities to offer conferences and events, choosing the right furniture and seating has become more important than ever," he told us. "As well as maximising space and accommodating large volumes of people, it's essential that pieces offer ▼



Armchairs from Lyndon's Vernon collection



Satelliet are seeing a move from urban industrial towards traditional and more luxurious

▲ comfort, flexibility and practicality too. Modular seating complete with integral data and power outlets to meet the needs of corporate guests is now widely specified in this sector."

As hotels continue to market themselves as destination settings, furniture has become more aspirational and is now a key element of the design plan.

"Natural wood continues to be a popular

choice; bringing both texture and colour to seating and furniture," Tim added. "No longer confined to just the frame, it helps create a softer and more intimate environment. With beech, oak and walnut leading the way, wood blends seamlessly with both contemporary and traditional styles. Handcrafted touches - such as comb joints and bevelled edge detailing - give an exquisite finish and provide a timeless appeal for years to come."

Eating and drinking away from home is embedded in today's lifestyles, not to mention a millennial way of life, and Michael Sinclair, Design Director, Catering Design Group ([cateringdesign.co.uk](http://cateringdesign.co.uk)) thinks it's a social occasion that happens, more than often, two to three times a week.

"Creating pockets of space which offer customers a sense of exclusivity is the perfect way to create a sense of seclusion and escapism," he said. "To achieve the ▼



▲ look, use screens, plus soft and indulgent booth style seating with natural finishes and textures.”

Interior design within a hospitality setting is becoming more in-tune with the way people live, demonstrating their aspirations and values. “Sustainable designs featuring natural, earthy tones and raw materials such as leather, brickwork, untreated wood and concrete give an ‘inspired by nature’ concept and a sense of wellbeing,” continued Michael. “These materials, including natural, organic finishes and indeed plants and foliage, are being incorporated more and more into the décor.”

And it’s not just about the food and drink.

“Technology is currently the buzz word in interior design,” Michael explained. “In today’s connected society, it is important for hospitality operators to remember that customers use a growing number of electrical devices on a daily basis. Therefore, consider charging outlets, which can be conveniently and unobtrusively incorporated into table tops, booths and posetur shelves.

“Additionally, make your customers feel right at home, with the use of ‘table tablets,’ to check their newsfeed and emails or play the latest games. However, it is also important that hospitality operators include ‘technology free’ areas for customers who want to concentrate on social gatherings with friends or family.”

Jan Dammis, Head of International Sales at GO IN, (go-in.co.uk) considers that the current trend in hospitality furniture design is all about new combinations of novel and traditional materials in order to create innovative and individual styles.



JOI-Design predict a trend for living room lobbies with individualisation (image © Simone Ahlers for JOI-Design)

“The choice of materials used in furniture design has never been greater; elegant woods, trendy weaves and futuristic stainless steel are all available in an unrivalled variety of forms and colours,” he said. “These define not only the form of the important pieces of bar furniture such as tables, chairs and stools, but are also important in characterising the ‘feel’ of the pieces too; the robustness, the build quality and the luxuriousness.

“When you’re choosing furniture, customers are significantly influenced by the quality of finish because they are in intimate contact with it throughout their visit. It’s all about look and feel, and getting it right will help create a positive impression of your overall offering. Your target audience must always be at the centre of your planning and you’ll also need to consider the character of the interior space, the style of the building and the surrounding environment. In all





Valdivian Furniture forecast  
the use of natural materials

▲ cases the furniture you choose will have a huge impact on the ambience. Different materials, colours, and fabrics can be used to create your desired effect and, if required, separate areas can be formed using these in different ways."

Peter Joehnk and Corinna Kretschmar-Joehnk are co-managing directors of JOI-Design (joi-design.com), and whilst they think the trend for cosy living rooms in hotel lobbies is still here, Peter strongly believes the lingering obsession with 'vintage style' is growing less

important (and has already saturated the mass market).

"In the future, we'll be seeing a new category of living room lobbies that follow another big trend, individualisation," he said. "So lobbies will remain young-spirited, creative, and highly social, but each one will be personalised to attract different kinds of clientele."

Corinna added, "In one of our latest projects, Capri by Fraser Berlin, we used a specific

concept, 'layers of history,' which was inspired by the archaeological excavation visible below the glass lobby floor. Our goal was to find a new expression of modern times, versus looking backwards. We created a vibrant, playful living room with iconic modern furniture, which guests have noticeably enjoyed!"

So the next time you're chilling out in a bar or hotel lounge and feeling so relaxed, you're enjoying someone else's hard work!