

Sumptuous Textures and a Rich Material Palette Define Portland's New Woodlark Hotel

R&A Architecture + Design transformed two historic buildings to create the new 150-room boutique hotel in downtown Portland, Oregon.

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The Woodlark, a new boutique hotel that opened in December in downtown Portland features two historic, early 20th-century buildings restored by Culver City, California and Portland-based R&A Architecture + Design, collaborating on interiors with Staicoff Design Company and Smith Hanes.

The first structure was the original Woodlark Building while the adjacent building housed the former Cornelius Hotel. Both buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, so the R&A Architecture + Design team had to adhere to stringent federal, state, and local guidelines during the restoration. Combining the two edifices was a challenge: the designers had to ensure code compliance, complete a seismic retrofit, and align the floors of the two buildings. The solution was to connect the twin structures via a common hallway, with new stairs on each floor.

The interiors were as thoughtfully considered as the exteriors. “We look at interior design like architects. Each room is treated as a smaller, individual project,” explains Christian Robert, R&A Architecture + Design co-founder and principal. The result is a dialogue between all of the spaces: each with a unique look, yet still collectively complementing one another.

In the lobby, for example, potted plants and lush greenery abound, bringing a touch of nature indoors. Guests can even buy their own bouquets to take home from the outpost of Colibri, which offers custom arrangements in signature metal casings. The brass in those containers echoes the same alloy found in cabinets nearby.

The foliage theme is carried over to the wallpaper in the rooms; the designs are custom and based on native flora. The color palettes are rich, with lush blue, green, and gray tones, used singularly and in masterful layered tonal combinations. The Woodlark side is decorated in brighter tints, while the Cornelius side features deeper hues similar to its darker facade.

“We wanted to maintain the distinct character of each of the exteriors, but tie some elements together throughout the spaces,” explains Robert.



Supple leather, sleek lacquer, and plush velvet are combined to create a unique sensory experience for guests. “Everything you touch in the guestrooms has been considered. It’s about the unexpected textures,” says Brooks Atwood, design director at R&A Architecture + Design.

Local inspiration and materiality are what truly bring the spirit of the Pacific Northwest to this hospitality destination, which is drawing travelers and locals alike. At its heart is the “focus on the craftsmanship and authenticity found in Portland,” Robert says.



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