

interior designer

BRITAIN'S OLDEST MAGAZINE FOR PROFESSIONAL INTERIOR DESIGNERS

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FACTORY DIRECT
FLOORING

Herringbone is back - but not as you know it!

ASK THE DESIGNER

What is your main consideration when creating ambient lighting for a bar or restaurant project?



CELIA CHU

Founder, Celia Chu Design & Associates

Ambient lighting is extremely important when it comes to restaurant & bar lighting design as it dictates the mood for the space and therefore influences the guest experience. As light changes from daytime to night time, transforming the space with different moods has to be thought through and considered and the right lighting installed. With architectural lighting, from floor to ceiling light gives a deep emotion to the space and can guide you to certain elements whether its flooring, design details or the bar itself. Lighting isn't limited to brightness anymore either. We can even use media art to bring a space alive with movement which for us is just like painting light in an artistic way.

www.celiachu.com

Instagram: @celiachudesign



JO LITTLEFAIR

Co-Founder and Director, Goddard Littlefair

Ambient lighting in a restaurant or bar is absolutely key to giving the desired atmosphere and consequently influencing how people spend time in a space. Establishing whether the offer is a quick turn-around breakfast or lunch space, for example, or a long, layered and leisurely experience dictates whether lighting levels should be high or moody and atmospheric. Architectural lighting and decorative lighting both have roles to play in creating the right level, while architectural lights can wash a space and provide overall level of light, decorative light can be more area specific within a restaurant or bar, providing focused light over a bar counter or a dramatic table or creating pools of light to highlight corners of the spaces.

www.goddardlittlefair.com

Instagram: @goddardlittlefair



SARAH JANE NIELSEN

Founder, Nielsen House

Our main consideration is the customer experience, as it is fundamental to the success of any bar or restaurant. From daytime brunches through to late-night drinks, lighting must be versatile. We design 'scenes' with easy transitions, so staff can simply flick a switch to alter the ambience. Harsh glares can be avoided even when designing practical 'task lighting' for tills and hard-working areas. For example, we'll use dropped pendants to create warm inviting glows with soft shadows and hidden architectural, floor or ceiling recessed lamps to guide people within the space, to the bar, kitchen or bathrooms.

www.nielsenhouse.co.uk

Instagram: @nielsenhouse

DESIGNER PROFILE

CELIA CHU



Luxury suite at the Rosewood Hotel in Bangkok

INTERIOR DESIGNER CHATS TO **CELIA CHU** ABOUT HER EARLY MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES IN DESIGN AND WHY SHE VALUES LEADING A SMALL TEAM OF CREATIVES.



Celia is the principal figure and visionary in her design firm, Celia Chu Design. She creates elegantly contemporary hospitality and upscale residential projects with a flair of sophistication and layered richness. Inspired by her passion for art and design, Celia combines practical functionality and her unique expression in design sensibilities to form a holistic approach to all her projects. The finished product is always refined and personalised, with a variety of influences re-imagined to form that signature touch.

Here, Celia discusses her design journey, from her early passion for interiors and finding her own way as a designer, to the challenges of working on her first major project and communicating and collaborating with her talented team.

WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF DESIGN HAVING AN IMPACT ON YOU?

My earliest memory was when I was 10 years old, my mother took us to see show flats that she was looking to purchase. This experience left an impression on me and developed my sense of curiosity towards internal spaces and my love for interior design. From this point onwards I was always found reading interior design magazines, and created my own designs based on what I wanted my own room or even other people's houses to look like. I felt that the possibilities for creativity were endless.

WHERE DID YOU STUDY DESIGN AND WHAT DID YOU SPECIALIZED IN?

Unlike most designers, I started learning interior design directly through work and life experience. After five and a half years of working in this field, I saved enough money to study in New York at Parsons School of design, where my focus was more on residential projects. Only after finishing school, was when I started to be involved within the hospitality field.



The A Cut Steakhouse is the centerpiece of the revitalized Ambassador hotel brand

WHAT KIND OF DESIGNER DID YOU ASPIRE TO BE AND WHO ARE YOUR INSPIRATIONS?

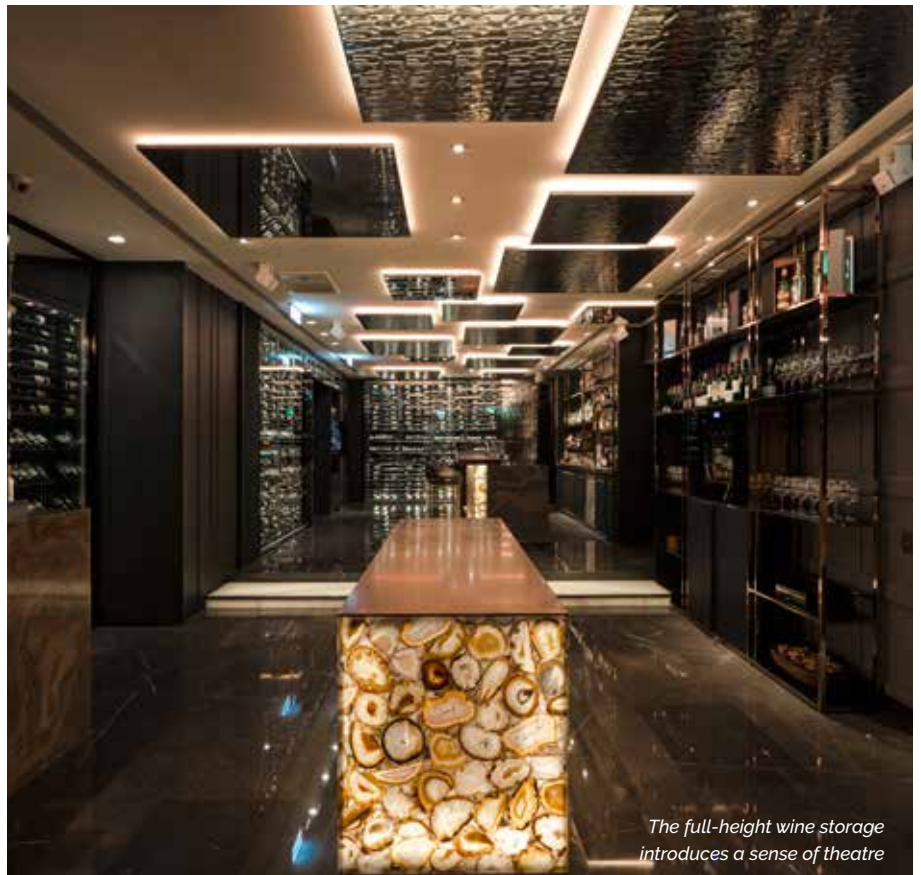
There wasn't a particular designer that I desired to be, as I simply wanted to push the limits of artistic and functional design. It's less about who I wanted to be as a designer and more about what I wanted to create through my passion that I had already acquired from a young age.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST PROFESSIONAL DESIGN COMMISSION?

After starting my own practice, the first professional design commission was Hyatt Regency in Guam. It was a wonderful experience working with the owners who were Japanese. This being my first project created some challenges that I hadn't faced before, such as working with and managing the client's expectations as well as budgeting issues rather than just focusing solely on the design aspect. On top of these challenges was the fact that everything was imported down to the smallest elements. However, I think this being my first project allowed me invaluable experience which propelled me further into my career.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST DESIGN COMMISSION TO DATE?

My biggest commission would be the Rosewood Bangkok completed in 2019. It's a project that I am extremely proud to have been a part of and I was able to put forward and successfully implement a lot of my own design ideas.



The full-height wine storage introduces a sense of theatre

Designer Profile

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STUDIO AS A WORKSPACE AND A COMMUNITY OF DESIGNERS?

My studio is a place where we truly value the creative process. We are always careful and will take care with each step of the design process. As a collective, we also look to innovate and expand on original ideas to formulate something completely unique and bespoke, in order to fulfill clients wants, needs and desires.

WHAT ARE THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS YOU LOOK FOR WHEN BRINGING NEW TALENT INTO YOUR STUDIO?

I look for individuals who can bring something unique to the table. A person with passion and drive as well as new ideas that we can implement. I value each member of my team implicitly and I take everyone's ideas into consideration, which is why I have such a small team. I think the skill to communicate is also an invaluable tool that I need a person to be able to implement, whether through imagery or presentations and speeches. I require my team to be able to communicate with me as well as clients effectively.

WHERE IS THE MAJORITY OF YOUR WORK BASED? AND HOW HAS TRAVEL HELPED TO SHAPE AND INFLUENCE YOUR IDEAS ON DESIGN?

The majority of my work is based in Asia including China, Thailand, Japan, Vietnam and my hometown Taiwan. Other work extends to other

continent such as Europe and Africa. Having projects all over the world has allowed me to accumulate a wealth of knowledge of different cultures and ideas. It's crucial to understand the culture for which you're designing, as when you implement elements drawn from the culture itself, you can truly create something unique not only to the country itself but to the whole world.

WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE A KEY FOCUS FOR DESIGNERS MOVING FORWARD INTO 2021?

2020 has made it abundantly clear that we as designers need to focus on social distancing design in order to facilitate the issues that have been created by COVID-19 as well as other potential pandemics. There are also key indicators that not enough is being done around the world in terms of renewable design, so we as designers have to take up the mantle and shoulder some of the responsibility for designing in an environmentally protective way.

IF YOU HADN'T BECOME AN INTERIOR DESIGNER WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

It's hard to picture myself being anything other than an interior designer as it's been my life for so long and my main passion. I suppose if I were anything else, it would be something related to art due to art being so influential throughout my life experiences.

www.celiachu.com

Photography by Panormaic Studio, Bangkok

Intimate lighting add a touch of drama to the convivial atmosphere





Celia's stunning bathroom design at the Rosewood Hotel in Bangkok