LIFESTYLE | ARTS

Inside Solaire Resort North: A peek at its suites, interiors, and more

By Jessica Zapata | Nov 27, 2024



COVER An eight-seater dining area in the Sky Suite at Solaire Resort North

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Interior designer Samantha Drummond shares how

she weaved Filipino style and culture into Solaire Resort North's suites

With most of the prestigious staycations in Metro Manila being in the south, Solaire Resort North sets itself apart as the first five-star integrated resort standing at the heart of one of the most populous municipalities in the metro, Quezon City. The resort offers a lush experience for anyone who wishes to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Behind Solaire Resort's design is Samantha Drummond, founder of the interior design firm, Habitus Design Group. Alongside Enrique "Ricky" Razon Jr, chairman and CEO of Bloomberry Resorts Corporation, they recognised the significant growth potential of Solaire because of its prime location and strong market demand from both locals and, hopefully, tourists. To reflect this vision, they ensured that the interior beautifully showcased Filipino style and design. Over 2,000 art pieces, all created by Filipino artists, can be found in the resort. The team engaged the Manila-based gallery and creative production group Tarzeer Pictures to source and procure all the local art talents.



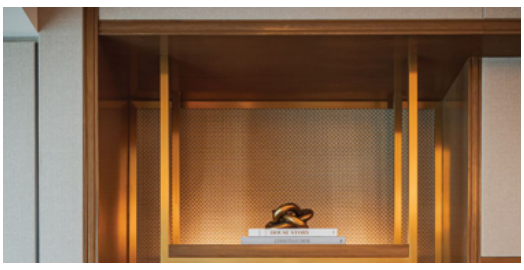
ABOVE Interior designer Samantha Drummond, founder of Habitus Design Group

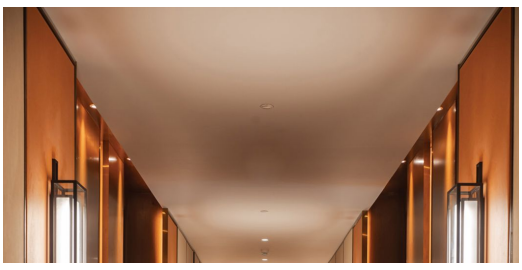
“I want it to be all Filipino art. I wanted to have a Filipino story to it, because you can go into any hotel

anywhere, and sometimes, you wouldn't know where you are. There's no identity. I wanted Solaire to be sophisticated, but still have a sense of place," says Drummond.

One particular art piece that Drummond and Razon are especially proud of is the glass centrepiece that welcomes guests as they enter the resort. *The Mangrove*, by Nikolas Weinstein, is made mostly of glass, woven together by local weavers from the mountains. The idea behind the massive and dominant installation is to invite guests to explore Solaire beyond the ground floor and entice them to go up and experience more of the amenities. "We wanted it to be something that you could immerse yourself in. You can walk under it. You can look up through it. It's a much nicer experience for people. That was the intent—to try to bring a little bit of 'resort' into what urban development is," Drummond adds.

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ABOVE The private pantry



ABOVE The warm-lit and cosy hallways at Solaire

Because of Razon's vision and courage to construct something as formidable as Solaire Resort North, the designer believes that it was through his leap of faith that it became a successful build.

"We made sure it's a luxury offering tied in with Mr Razon's vision, which I carried out properly with my team," she gushes.

The preparation for Solaire Resort North, or for any major infrastructure at that, was not an easy feat though. The Habitus team drew over 12,000 designs of lights and furniture to occupy the spaces at the resort such as the casino and the suites. "I love local craftsmanship and I like to work with local weavers. I like to be a lot more local-focused. I think that's what

I've come out of. It is just being much more authentic. To me, it's natural materials and a sense of place, and something must be curated properly, where you know that there's attention to detail," she recalls.



ABOVE The expansive waiting area by the elevator is decorated with local art



ABOVE The art pieces displayed in each suite are different so that each room would have its own unique feel and style

Apart from the growing popularity of its restaurants, the interiors in Solaire's suites also deserve attention. Drummond shared how her design philosophy is not standardised but depends on the client's requests and the guests' needs—for the suites in Solaire, the interior designer incorporated elements like natural materials, books and leather to evoke a tactile and emotional experience.

"I'm trying to steer a little bit away from marble, even though I can't because I'm in the casino world. I'm trying to be a lot more sustainable and use tile. I think

we all should be much more sustainable in our approach to things. If you're in a five-star experience, you've got to have some nice books. You have to have certain textures of things like adding a leather folder would be nice," says Drummond.

She stressed the importance of how the guests would feel as they enter the room, either they feel good or they don't. With this sentiment in mind, Drummond made sure that the suites would welcome each guest with a picturesque view of the city, along with enough sunlight that highlight every furniture it touches.

See more: Artistic Pursuits: How Tarzeer Pictures beautifully integrated art to Solaire Resort North

ABOVE The Mangrove installation by Nikolas Weinstein

"The arrival must be all about the view. Once you arrive, you would want to open up the door and go, 'Wow.' Then you start taking notice of the other things, like the furniture, the books and the artefacts. Afterward, you might notice the lighting and the light levels. It has to be comfortable. It can't be bright," she says.

The colour scheme of the suites does not go unnoticed. Drummond kept the rooms fairly neutral to make the overall look and aura timeless. If the walls and ceilings are coloured beige, taupe, grey, cream or white, the vibrant hues would come from the furniture and other decor such as carpets, cushions, artwork, stones, flowers and even lamps.

“If you can keep a neutral resort palette, which I find is just clean and doesn’t date, you won’t have to renovate and spend more money, and you can get a good eight years out of it. But if you go with bold colours or something too trendy, it doesn’t last, and people get bored with it. Art also provides the colour. I rely heavily on colourful art,” she says. “I try to keep things fairly neutral to add colour and movement with objects, as opposed to a fixed finish.”

To ensure that warmth dominates the suites, the interior designer firmly said that using timber for flooring is best for neutral tones. If not, the room will appear cold and unwelcoming. “I love having timber floors. It gives a feeling of cosiness, and it feels residential. I think in hotel rooms, it should feel quite residential. You don’t want to go and not feel comfortable,” says Drummond.

ABOVE One out of the two bedrooms in the Sky Suite

Another important factor that kept her busy during the process was the space planning of the suites. Not all guests are the same, some come as a family, some as a couple. When it came down to maximising the space of the suite rooms, privacy, but still with interaction, was integrated.

“When you have families in hotel suites, they sometimes tend to not have enough privacy, especially if there are kids. I think it’s all about creating a nice separate zone. When you have the luxury of a suite, you’re able to create different zones and different areas, so there’s privacy but there’s still interaction. If you can achieve both in a suite, then you’ve achieved the most important thing,” she says.

ABOVE The spacious walk-in closet

ABOVE The living room space is extensive enough for big groups

Even configuring the bathroom was not easy. The interior designer insisted that the bathrooms fit at least two people, explaining that there is usually one who's brushing their teeth, while the other takes a bath. Aside from the two-person space, she added that having double vanities and a tub is just as important to encapsulate the luxurious and relaxing stay that the resort is known for.

Throughout her sit down with *Tatler*, Drummond's passion for interior design and admiration for her talented team were evident. "It's a team effort. I'm fortunate I've got a good team. They inspire me, they are the ones that inspire me to get up and do better things."

Drummond admitted that designing the resort's suites was challenging, but sticking to her and Razon's vision of making it a haven for people coming from different walks of life made it all possible. "You want to feel cosy like you're in your own home. Especially when you're from the outside world, you want to go and escape. It's

all about escapism—forgetting everything and relaxing," she says.

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