

SPACE

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL DESIGN

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Roger Hill, Chairman/CEO

THE GETTYS GROUP

ROGER HILL, CHAIRMAN/CEO AND
ANDREW FAY, PRESIDENT/COO

The Gettys Group is an award-winning global design firm with an expert understanding of the hospitality industry. With offices worldwide, the firm combines a strong local sensibility with a global perspective. SPACE's Can Faik meets CEO Roger Hill and President Andrew Fay...

The Gettys Group operates at the unique intersection of strategy, design and implementation, and is extraordinary in its capacity to execute brilliantly in Interior Design, Consulting, Branding and Procurement. This organisational strategy has produced a fluid interchange of expertise, which enables The Gettys Group to drive innovative, and authentic solutions to every project.

Tell me about your role at The Gettys Group?

Roger Hill, Chairman/CEO and Andrew Fay, President/COO

Through our global leadership at The Gettys Group, we've looked to transform the standard business model for hospitality design, taking branding, procurement and consulting in-house. We oversee development efforts, including the acquisition and repositioning of assets throughout the United States, Asia-Pacific and the Middle East.

What words would you use to describe The Gettys Group?

RH & AF Thought leaders, innovators, disruptors, forward thinkers, cutting-edge, visionaries, story tellers, global, influencers, trusted.

How long have you been involved with hotel design?

RH The Gettys Group has been designing hotels for nearly 30 years. Andrew Fay and I, along with some college friends, created The Gettys Group shortly after graduating from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

Founded and headquartered in Chicago, The Gettys Group has grown to multiple locations including Miami, Hong Kong, Dubai, Jeddah and Manila. Each office is dedicated to create and facilitate work throughout the region it is located.

What makes The Gettys Group different to other design companies?

RH We work at a unique nexus of interior design, procurement, consulting and branding and understand that designers must speak a universal language of business and strategy as well as design. We also have a highly collaborative, creative culture at The Gettys Group, which provides a variety of service offerings, and we are inspired by how these groups work in tandem to create memorable guest experiences. We work across the globe and the environments we create are people-centric, engaging, innovative, thoughtful and ultimately enhance the experience of the end-user.

We develop brand promises and then bring them to life in the built environment. We thread a story through everything we do.

Have you noticed any particular trends in hotel design?

RH & AF Millennials are influencing a lot of design trends in the hospitality sphere – especially where connectivity is concerned. We took this into consideration with a recent project: Hotel RL Baltimore – part of a new hotel chain set to target the top 80 U.S. urban markets that is designed for consumers with a Millennial mindset. The lobby was specifically designed with two distinct areas to promote connectivity:

- **The Steps:** A new gathering and stadium-seating concept in the open pavilion-style lobby where guests can plug in and utilise complimentary Wi-Fi
- **The Living Stage:** an events platform to host and broadcast entertainment and TED-style talks that will eventually be broadcast across all RL locations

How important are public spaces in hotels?

RH & AF Extremely important. The Gettys Group's mission is to fully understand and shape the traveler's experience. Our design approach considers the moment the guest steps through the lobby doors all the way to their guestroom >



Andrew Fay, President/COO

and looks to create a destination, often by celebrating the building's authentic architecture and enhancing the design in a newly discovered way to tell a story. Our public spaces aim to honor the local, provide a calming oasis and also offer new ways to connect. Hotel lobbies are becoming a default place for mobile workers, placing additional demands on the designer's ability to deliver versatility in hotel layout and design. Hotel public spaces are increasingly becoming more important social hubs in major urban markets.

We recently transformed the Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel with a lobby designed to create "Instagramable" interactive moments with select pockets that welcome exploration and discovery, including the VIP Club Lounge, Artist Studio, Staytion, Coffee Bar and Library. The hashtags #RenHotels and #RenChiRefresh are splashed across the entrance wall, encouraging guests to join the conversation.

How is the current economic climate affecting the hotel design market? And has The Gettys Group felt the effects?

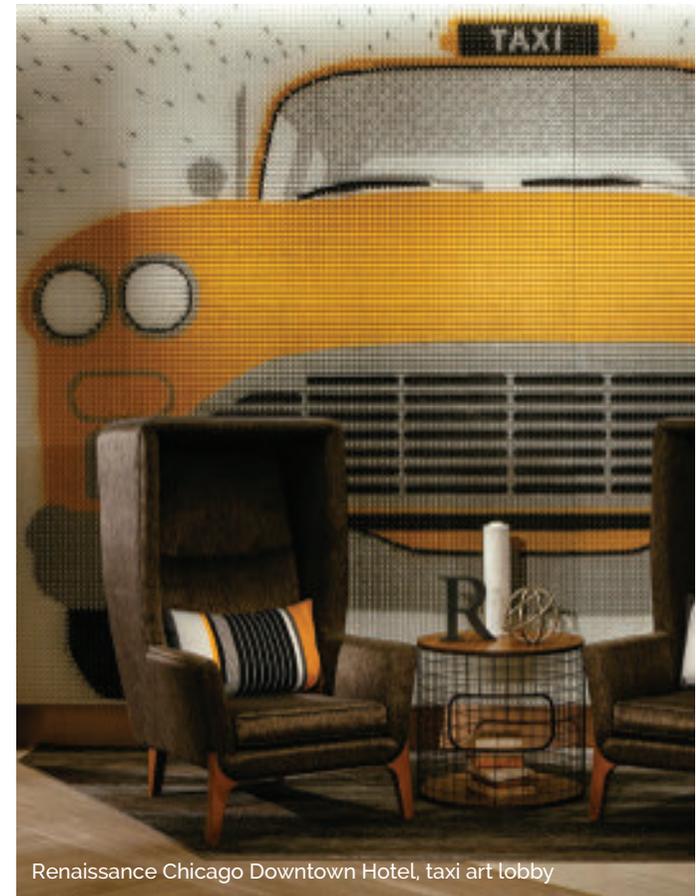
RH & AF The U.S. economic environment has proven to be very beneficial to the operation of our business, while the significant reductions in oil prices are creating ongoing challenges in certain markets, particularly outside the U.S., North America continues to be the largest and fastest-growing market for hotels globally.

Have you seen exceptional growth in any part of the world in hotel design?

RH & AF We continue to see wonderful advancements in the design of select-service hotels around the world. Boutique and lifestyle hotels are also enjoying unparalleled growth rates in key markets as owners and operators access various electronic channels to build their individual brand identities.

What is the biggest thing the company has learnt over its years in the industry?

AF Given the nature of the business, attracting and retaining the brightest, most innovative and creative team members in the industry is always our number one goal... and our



Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel, taxi art lobby



Front desk



Bleachers, lobby



Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel, library



number one challenge. We understand that as a service provider, our team members are the firm's most important assets:

What's next for you?

RH & AF We have quite a few projects in the pipeline. We're planning the grand opening for the rooftop reveal of the Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel this spring. We're also looking to expand the Hotel RL brand with the next opening in Washington D.C. in 2016. Globally, we're also working on a new project in Portugal that we're really excited about... more details to come.

How would you define your 'Hotel Style'?

RH Based on our breadth of services and the fact that we work in the U.S., Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, we operate and design with a global perspective, but we always tailor our solutions to the local environment and that has proven to be a unique ingredient to our success.

What does design mean to you?

RH & AF The Gettys Group is at the cutting edge of what's new in hotel, resort, restaurant, spa, casino and entertainment venue design. As designers, innovation and creativity is our primary currency. We are constantly striving to be cultural anthropologists by understanding the world around the project and carrying that through in an authentic, culturally-sensitive design.

Great design is great business...the true measure of which is its ability to forge strong emotional connections with the end-users. Great design also improves people's well being in new and meaningful ways.

What would be your dream hotel project?

AF An aspirational program on a compelling site, that includes room to breathe spatially, opportunities for compelling solutions for wellness, the culinary arts, the visual arts, and guest experience.. a fair budget (does not need to be overly extravagant), a brisk schedule for effective decision making, and the opportunity to enhance a brand's identity or help to create one that makes a difference.

I would not be offended if this dream project was in the Madives.

Where currently ranks highest on your travel wish list?

RH & AF Visiting Bhutan is definitely on our bucket list. It's supposedly the happiest country in the world

Where do you see hotel design in the future?

RH & AF The success of a project is directly linked to the creation of a unique brand experience. Design firms with in-house branding teams that can translate the brand design concepts into tangible elements in the built environment are the wave of the future.

Where are the three best places you've ever stayed?

RH & AF Projects that captivate our senses and engage us on an emotional level are always at the top of the list.

Let's finish with the issue of personal and work life balance. How do you aim to achieve a good balance and what do those closest to you think of your attempts?

RH & AF It's a constant struggle...particularly working across several time zones on multiple continents. Enhanced connectivity also blurs the boundaries between work-life and personal time. Keeping a watchful eye on those boundaries and being as flexible as possible are ways we try to manage the balance!

> gettys.com



Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel, lobby bathroom