



Design Icon

Adam D. Tihany

Story by Lisa Brown
Portrait by Gideon Lewin

Within the Art Garden designed by Japanese-American sculptor Isamu Noguchi at Jerusalem's Israel Museum, sits *Space That Sees*, a permanent installation from American artist James Turrell comprised of gray and white concrete with limestone framing a rectilinear skylight.

For interior designer and architect Adam D. Tihany, owner of Tihany Design and recipient of the inaugural *Las Vegas Home & Design* magazine *Design Icon* award, this is the perfect space.

"You are completely transformed," he explains. "It works so beautifully that you realize we don't need all this stuff — wood paneling and golden things. All you need is a piece of sky. You can just be totally taken by the simplest things in nature."

For his own works, which range from Beijing and Hong Kong, to Capetown, Dubai, Geneva and beyond, on the international stage and locally right here on The Strip, Tihany draws on the creative talents with whom he works and the places to which he's traveled as his muse. Yet perhaps as great an influence is his own uniquely global frame of reference. Born in Transylvania, and raised in Israel, Tihany studied in Italy, and eventually migrated to New York City, where he established his design studio in 1978.

Le Cirque, Mark Balllogg; Agua, Andrea Martiradonna; Hangar One, Paul Warchol; Aleph, Janos Grapov; Jean-Georges, Peter Paige.

Aureole, Mark Balllogg; Cravings & Bouchon, Andrea Martiradonna; Teatro, Eric Laignel; MO Bar, Michael Weber; Spago, Peter Paige.

Since then, Tihany has developed the interiors of approximately 300 high-end restaurants and boutique hotels, including the restaurant and bar at London's Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, the 2003 European Hotel Design award-winning Aleph hotel in Rome, and Aureole at the Mandalay Bay. His skill in the realm of retail can be seen at Madison Avenue jeweler Fred Leighton, while Hangar One in Scottsdale, Ariz., showcases his architectural prowess.

In Las Vegas, Tihany has worked as a design consultant to local architects of record. His most recent project: the Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas at MGM MIRAGE's CityCenter, where he acts as design consultant to AAI Architects, Inc. In addition, his firm is designing two major restaurants and a central public area.

While his restaurant designs typically take on a life of their own, forming a portrait of a celebrity chef or

restaurateur out of the nuance of finishes and furnishings rather than a paintbrush, Tihany's vision of hospitality design begins with luxury shelter in mind.

"The art of hospitality is really in the room," he says. "As such, we start imagining the hotel from the room down."

Inducted into the Interior Design Hall of Fame in 1991, it's no small wonder that the Milan Furniture Fair employed his keen eye to design and curate two major exhibits. For young designers earning their chops, Tihany offers a very simple piece of advice: "If you truly want to understand something, try to change it," he says. "The experiences that move us are things that transcend ordinary thinking. The only advice truly that I can give anybody that wants to be in this business — if they want to be good and make a difference — is to take the ordinary and make it extraordinary."

That may be easier said than done, Tihany explains. "But it's advice," he adds. "It's supposed to be difficult, no?"

Above: Lauded-designer Adam D. Tihany has been envisioning the way the world eats, shops and travels for over 30 years. Tihany's experience also includes unique collaborations with such manufacturers as McGuire and Christoffle to conjure up products with a fashion-forward design.