





ELIZABETH DILLER **SURFACE**



inspiration

It was an uphill battle to create the impressive lodge that sits on the 70-acre site today. "We always had in mind, during the design process, how difficult the construction process was going to be," recalls local architect Humberto Plaza. "Except for local lava stones, all the construction materials needed to be imported from mainland Ecuador. And due to special laws that restrict the entry of labor onto the islands, finding qualified Galapagosian labor was also a big problem."

The next challenge was conceptualizing a luxurious 5-Star resort that was minimally invasive to its environment and minimally wasteful. "We knew that the hotel needed to be analyzed from cradle to coffin," Plaza explains. "The construction process, its operation, and its eventual dismantling needed to be as clean as possible." He designed the project so that its footprint required little land movement, "respecting the original topography as much as possible," he says.

"Using insulating materials such as polystyrene sandwich panels, natural ventilation, shade provided by the overhanging roofs, LED lights, and super-efficient air conditioners guarantees little heat gain and very low energy consumption," he adds. "Power is provided by photovoltaic panels. Solar wind generators, and bio diesel, with very little electric energy being purchased from the local electricity company."

A complex system of water cisterns collects rain from the property's pitched roofs and feeds a state-of-the-art water treatment plant that provides filtered water for cooking, juices, drinking water, and ice, and dual-flush toilets and water-saving →



installation

Mansueto, which is set in a bed of local lava stone. Mansueto's work also appears in several focal points in the restaurant, whose design theme and name is Evolution. A DNA double-helix sculpture, also set in aluminum, sits at the center of the space, and doubles as a lava stone fireplace, while another sculpture depicts the evolution of man, and a third pays homage to the heads of the Galapagos finch—an important catalyst to Darwin's theory.

Other arts and artifacts such as photorealistic paintings of the Ecuadorian Amazon by artist Sergio Zapata and artisan-made rugs and alpaca wool pillows are all locally sourced, minimizing the need for carbon-emitting transport from distant shores. Throughout the property, fossils serve as ideal artwork and conversation—both sustainable and relevant to the overarching theme of evolution.

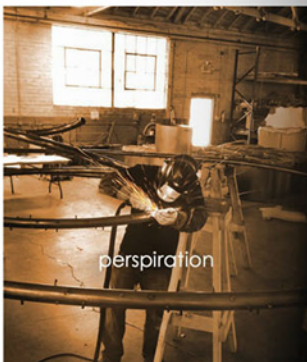
But these important elements and many key construction materials almost didn't make it—the cargo ships carrying them sank in the Pacific, adding yet another challenge to the project, delaying its completion by several months and testing the patience of its project team. "Luckily, we had very capable people working on the project that worked hard to overcome the difficulties," Frei Shephard says. It was the steadfast determination of a father-daughter team, however, bound by their common interest, which truly made Pikaia Lodge a reality.

Reluctant to take full credit, Frei Shephard says of her father and the lodge: "We were together for the whole process, and we are very close—we have a lot in common. Our special connection really helped us on this project. I think the chemistry that we have was a must for something this important to him." ■

perspectives sustainable studio pikaia lodge galápagos

to have arrived on the shores of one Austroliana's boots took root and spread like wildfire. Perilous bushes of blackberries threatened the revered native population, but their extermination also poses a threat to other endemic plant life. This is how delicate the balance of nature is on the islands, so it's not difficult to believe that building on them would not be taken lightly. Strict regulations, right inspections of all shipments to the islands, detailed building plans (down to eventual demolition), and a promise to hire local workers are some of the hurdles that developers must tackle.

Despite their stringent restrictions, Herbert Frei's dream of opening a 100 percent sustainable ecotourism resort never wavered—and though it would take more than five years of permitting with the strictest of building departments, it would be well worth it. Frei, an experienced Galapagos tour guide and environmentalist—combined the islands for years before he procured the perfect piece of land, perched nearly 1,200 feet above sea level at the center of an extinct volcano in the highlands of the central island of Santa Cruz. In fact, with only 3 percent of land free for use, Frei was lucky to find this former private cattle ranch for his lodge. 97 percent of the island is National Park land and protected from development. And here, it's almost always sunny, relatively cool, and surprisingly mosquito-free.



perspiration

showers and taps are employed on property to help save water. Plaza's development team also went one step further in contributing to the ecological well-being of their site, replacing a cattle farm, ravaged by elephant grass overgrowth and deforestation, with 12,000 endemic trees, wild tortoises, and birds.

The resulting hotel, christened Pikaia Lodge (named for the first known vertebrate, pikaia gracilis, from which all modern vertebrates are thought to have evolved) is nothing if not impressive. "We can proudly state that Pikaia Lodge is definitely one of the most advanced ecologies in the world," says Frei's daughter, Maria Elena Frei Shephard, who was responsible for its interior design.

Her design directive was just as environmentally conscientious as the lodge's construction—sheir all due was right by her father's side in his quest for eco-perfection. Fourteen suites ranging in size from 403 to 550 square feet come with their own pool feature tank and bamboo harvested from sustainable Ecuadorian plantations and furniture imported from nearby Peru. Their location and orientation allow for them to be naturally cooled with little or no need for air conditioning. And Plaza designed a structure for the rooms, located on the side of a hill, which will be added to the property in the future. These will just skin the ground so that rainwater can flow underneath, ensuring efficient absorption into the groundwater.

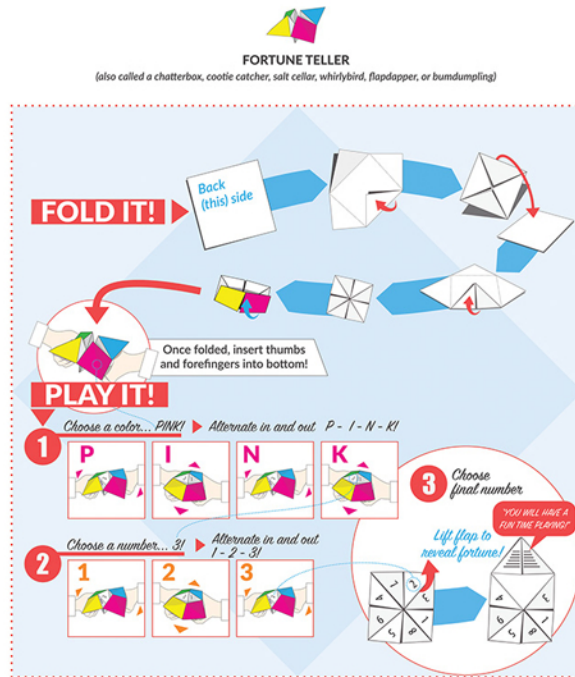
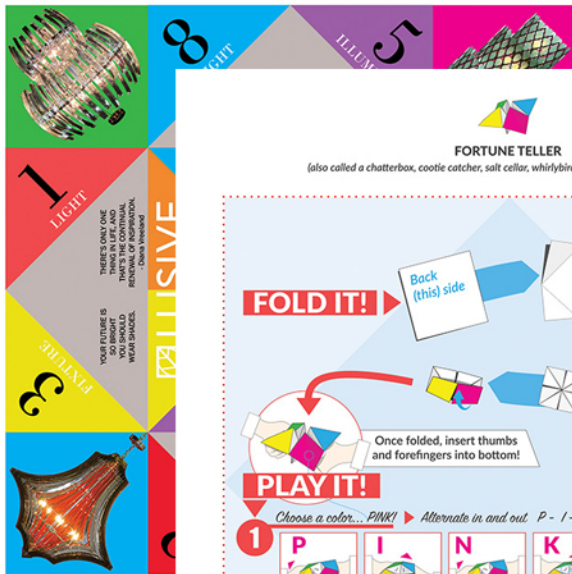
The lobby features a stunning aluminum tree of life sculpture (completely recyclable in itself) by Ecuadorian artist Larissa



hospitality design



growth spurts
nine destinations to watch



Your fortune is waiting.



products outdoor furniture

7

Designed by Roger Thomas for **Walters**, the Omega curved sofa, part of the Delta collection, is made from powdercoated aluminum and features a screen seat with a synthetic rubber back.



8

This stool collection from **Ethimo** by French designer Patrick Borgeat features an elegant armchair with a backrest and a synthetic screen seat ideal for outdoor use.



products outdoor furniture

5

The South Beach bar table by **Sease** Outdoor offers a clean, elongated look in a tall, contemporary table made of powdercoated aluminum in a grey finish.



6

Crafted from concrete-style fibercast, the Quattro round dining table from **West Elm Contract** is modern with a minimalist silhouette. The outdoor pieces are water resistant and come in grey.



illumination





The Moben Collection by Thomas Cooper Studio

JOHN PAWSON

SURFACE



PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]



First impressions last.



inspiration

products **spa**



5



6

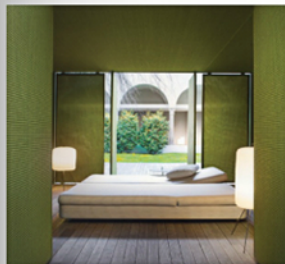
5 The Oak Hill suite of luxury bathroom fixtures from **DKV by American Standard** includes a canvas white high back freestanding tub (pictured), a high back lavatory with metal console or wood vanity, a high-efficiency toilet, a towel closet for sink or wall mount, and a wood framed mirror in white oak or weathered oak finishes. DKV.COM

6 Toto debuts the Reconnect suite with its simple freestanding tub and vessel lavatory. The vessel's curves create a refined design statement using SanGloss glass for easy cleaning, while the tub's thickly flamed marble rim rests above tapering sides, creating a curved backdrop with polished chrome armrests and a pillow headrest. TOTOUSA.COM

products **spa**



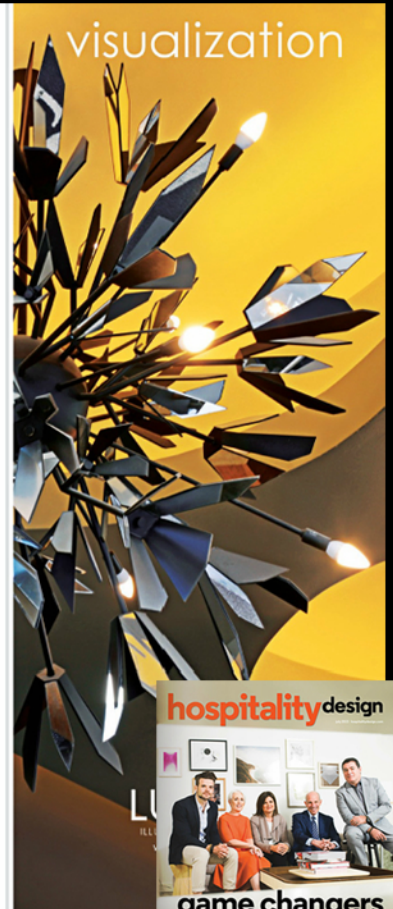
7



8

7 Luxury ivory freestanding baths from **Lapidea** are sleek and generously carved from Italian ivory travertine, a natural choice. LAPIEDA.COM

8 Designed by Francesco Rota for **Paola Lenti**, the Cove is a modern adjustable backrest and internal container. It is made of aluminum with elastic belts and plastic spacers. The removable upholstery seat cushion is water repellent. PAOLALENTI.IT



visualization



Proving what happens in Vegas doesn't always stay in Vegas.



First
impressions
last.



