



## Atlantis, The Palm Design & Architecture



Led by the vision of the late Sol Kerzner, former Chairman of Kerzner International, an esteemed roster of internationally known architects, designers and landscapers joined together to create an entirely original, fully-integrated entertainment destination resort, Atlantis, The Palm. Redefining the Dubai resort experience, the September 2008 debut of this unique project showcases the design talents of Jeffrey Beers of Jeffrey Beers International (JBI), David Rockwell of The Rockwell Group and Adam D. Tihany of Tihany Design. The expertise of established interior resort designers Wilson and Associates, design architects Wimberly, Allison, Tong and Goo (WATG), and the innovative landscape architecture of EDSA were all utilised in the design process. The resort also features artwork by world-renowned artists Dale Chihuly and Albino Gonzalez.

## Topline Facts

- **Operator:** Kerzner International
- **Architectural Designer:** Wimberly, Tong and Goo
- **Interior design:** Wilson and Associates
- **Contractor:** Laing O'Rourke
- **Landscape architecture:** EDSA
- **Lobby sculpture:** Dale Chihuly
- **Lobby murals:** Albino Gonzalez
- **Opened:** September, 2008
- **Size:** 209,563 square metres
- **Materials used:**
  - 10,000 lights
  - 54,000 trees
  - 2,250 tonnes of marble
  - 58,000km steel bars (that's more than nine times the length of the Great Wall of China)
  - Over 120 architects and engineers worked on the project, from 35 different consulting companies in nine countries across three continents and 12 time zones.

## Architecture

*Wimberly, Tong and Goo*

Led by the vision of the late Sol Kerzner, former Chairman of Kerzner International, Kerzner's brief to the designers was to 'come up with something that captured the essence of Atlantis (the legendary island that sank into the ocean as depicted in the works of Plato). The result was sun-kissing spires, Moorish archways, Arabian-inspired lamps and palm-shaped pillars tied together with accents of traditional Middle Eastern vernacular architecture such as hand-wrought iron columns of flowers, leaves and buds.



## Design and construction

*Wimberly, Tong and Goo & Laing O'Rourke*

Atlantis was designed by **Wimberly, Tong and Goo**, an international firm specialising in luxury hotel complexes. The design incorporates classical Arabian architecture in both the interior and exterior of the 23-storey hotel, with semi-precious stones, intricate fossilised shells and 'fish' stones included throughout. The contractor, Laing O'Rourke, developed the hotel envelope using a modular precast glass-fibre/reinforced concrete façade, which was installed by their in-house specialists Emirates Precast. They also developed a pioneering facility to

pre assemble modular bathroom 'pods' in a controlled factory environment. 1,500 pods were delivered direct to the site and installed at a rate of 38 per week. The logistical operation to facilitate the build of the intricate design presented challenges. A highly complex operation was set up involving road deliveries, handling and distribution, temporary utilities, communication systems and traffic management. It was completed two months ahead of schedule.



## The Lobby

*Wimberly, Tong and Goo & Laing O'Rourke*

The 19-metre high Grand Lobby presents a dazzling interplay of water, light and sound with a wall of windows offering stunning vistas of the azure waters of The Palm and beaches along the Arabian Gulf. Moving across the lobby's travertine marble floors, guests enjoy a symphony of sound as a water wall cascades into a babbling pool, a soothing reminder of the surrounding sea.

In the centre of the lobby sits a glass sculpture by one of the most innovative glassmakers of the contemporary age, artist **Dale Chihuly**, who was commissioned to create his first installation in the Middle East. The brief of the crystal sculpture was to create something that symbolised the energy source of Atlantis, and the stunning result, which took almost two years to create, is a 10-metre-high sculpture with more than 3,000 pieces of intensely coloured blown glass ranging from fiery oranges and reds to tranquil blues and greens. The piece is surrounded by a reflection pool and eight "fish columns" constructed within an architecturally developed sea urchins shell. Chihuly came to Atlantis to personally install the sculpture piece by piece over a two-week period,

The lobby's 19-metre-high arched ceilings feature eight hand-painted murals on canvas by **Spanish artist Albino González**, one of the world's foremost interpreters of ancient mythology. Gonzalez painted the murals in his studio near Leon, Spain, with two murals measuring 5 metres by 2.5 metres and six murals measuring 6.5 metres by 2.5 metres. Gonzalez's work captures the major themes of Arabian mythology, a story that has been passed throughout time, from generation to generation and these murals depict the development of the solar calendar, highlighting various constellations and planets and tell the story of the ancient mythological city of Atlantis. The calendars are distributed throughout the eight murals and represent the seasons of the year including the solstices and the equinox (spring, summer, fall and winter) and the four elements (air, earth, fire, water).

**The Atlantis, The Palm art collection** includes works by hundreds of artists, all of which were selected to give guests the experience of what it was like to actually visit the Lost City of Atlantis. San Francisco artists Charley Brown and Mark Evans were commissioned to create tapestries in the main lobby, as well as several large murals for seven grand domes, some of which are as large as 2,000 square feet. Additional featured artists include, Terje Lundaas whose collage of over 52 ornate hand-blown glass shells compliments the tapestries in the grand lobby.



## Rooms

*WA International*

A majestic walkway leads to the Wilson and Associates-designed entrance, welcoming guests to the accommodation of The Royal Towers at Atlantis. Each room and suite boast breathtaking views of the azure Arabian Sea, or the tranquil waters of The Palm.

The resort's 1,544 rooms and suites recently benefitted from an extensive renovation to bring a fantastically fresh look and feel to each and every room. Accommodation ranges from **Ocean and Palm Beach rooms** (45 square metres) to a series of larger suites, sumptuously appointed with walk-in wardrobes, dressing areas and jetted tubs. Interiors are fashioned in an elegantly understated contemporary décor of earth tones, while vibrant splashes of colour bring the ocean indoors. Decadent bathrooms outfitted with marble floors, granite vanities, rain showers and twin vessel sinks provide guests with a luxurious oasis for relaxation.

The resort includes six distinctive signature suites, each with their own distinctive qualities. **The two Underwater Suites** are truly extraordinary with floor-to-ceiling windows in the master bedroom and bathroom looking directly into The Ambassador Lagoon, creating an illusion of being beneath the sea, while looking directly into the heart of Atlantis. With stunning interiors by Wilson and Associates, the aptly named Neptune Underwater Suite and Poseidon Underwater Suite measure 165 square metres each, stretched over three floors. A sweeping staircase leads from the foyer to the large living and dining area that overlooks The Ambassador Lagoon and are supported by a butler's pantry. The master bedroom features a bespoke bed and Frette linens, perfect for taking in the mesmerising views of the marine habitat. The master bathroom features the ultimate in regenerative indulgence, a pedestal jetted tub where guests can relax in bubbles as the aquarium's graceful inhabitants swim by, as well as a rainfall shower with an additional six body jets. A playful entertainment lounge is found adjacent to the master bedroom where guests can enjoy quality content from around the world on their high-definition television.





# Dining

*Jeffrey Beers, The Rockwell Group, Wilson and Associates, Bishop Design*

Internationally renowned for creating stunning dining venues to showcase some of the world's most celebrated cuisines, designers Jeffrey Beers, David Rockwell, Adam D. Tihany and Wilson and Associates have each brought their incomparable style and design to the Arabian culinary scene.

The distinctive style of **Jeffrey Beers** is discovered throughout Atlantis who worked in partnership with Italian Chef Giorgio Locatelli to design Ronda Locatelli as well as Gordon Ramsay to design Bread Street Kitchen & Bar.

To create a rustic yet stimulating environment for **Ronda Locatelli**, Beers blended the charm of the Italian countryside with the modernity of Dubai. A calming water pond juxtaposed with a custom-built fireplace greets guests upon entering, while a central stone clad structure houses four pizza ovens and grounds the open space. Diners relax within specially-designed wood basket seating pods, and various sized circular wood trellis' adorned with custom fiery glass light fixtures suspended over the entire space, lending a sense of intimacy and drama.

At **Gordon Ramsay's Bread Street Kitchen & Bar**, Beers married design cues from old and new worlds to create a warehouse style with a warm and inviting environment. The overall space has a New York loft feel, as well as a stunning mix of vintage and modern elements. Decorated with a mix of eclectic accents, the bar oozes with quirky character and charm.

**The Rockwell Group** collaborated again with world-renowned Master Chef Nobu Matsuhisa to create **Nobu**. Using traditional and modern Japanese elements, the 1,068 square metre space features natural elements of ash, river stones, branches, woven textiles and fishing baskets juxtaposed with light and composition to create a rich and spectacular dining experience.

**Wilson and Associates** brings to life **Seafire Steakhouse & Bar**, a contemporary steakhouse. Guests are welcomed to the restaurant through rustic, bespoke driftwood doors. Comfortable red leather chairs allow guests to enjoy their dining experience in a relaxing setting. Chocolate leather adorns the ceiling providing even more intimacy. A timber tasting room allows guests to dine in private, or to taste fine vintages from the wine wall or the bespoke 6-metre-high wine cooler.

**Bishop Design by Paul Bishop** created a dedicated family entertainment destination that Dubai had never seen before in **Wavehouse**. A collection of spaces which seamlessly morph into each, these offer up endless dining and entertainment scenarios, from a dedicated restaurant, an adult-only bar and external terrace, through to gaming redemption areas, soft play zones, augmented reality experience and a bowling alley. Wavehouse occupies both ground and mezzanine levels, encompassing uninterrupted sight lines throughout which culminate with the incorporation of an active wave machine – accessible from the Atlantis' waterpark, Aquaventure, yet dedicated to the venue itself. Aesthetic aspirations called for a hybrid of industrial meets surf shack; stripped back, refined yet synonymous with an urban style. Catering to all was an integral driving force behind the design integrity, with the venue designed to be a desirable destination for people of all generations.

