

# BOUTIQUE design

HOSPITALITY REINVENTED

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BOUTIQUE 18 · CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS · EXHIBITOR PREVIEW

FALL 2022



## GREAT ADVENTURES

A NEW OUTDOOR-FOCUSED BRAND  
LEANS INTO ACTIVE VACATIONING

*Keir Weimer, Founder, Weekender*

# WHO AND WHAT TO KNOW NOW

A ROUNDUP OF BOUTIQUE AND LIFESTYLE NEWS

By Katie Kervin



A RENDERING OF THE RADICAL'S LOBBY

## SUOMI DESIGN WORKS FOUNDER MICHAEL SUOMI DETAILS UPCOMING RADICAL HOTEL IN ASHEVILLE

*How did you get involved in the Radical project?* We were invited to compete by the ownership group right after the pandemic started. The developer, Hatteras Sky, has a financial background, and the brief was unique. I was intrigued because it was clearly not written by a project manager but one of the owners, who had very specific passions and ideas. My team and I put together an initial content presentation.

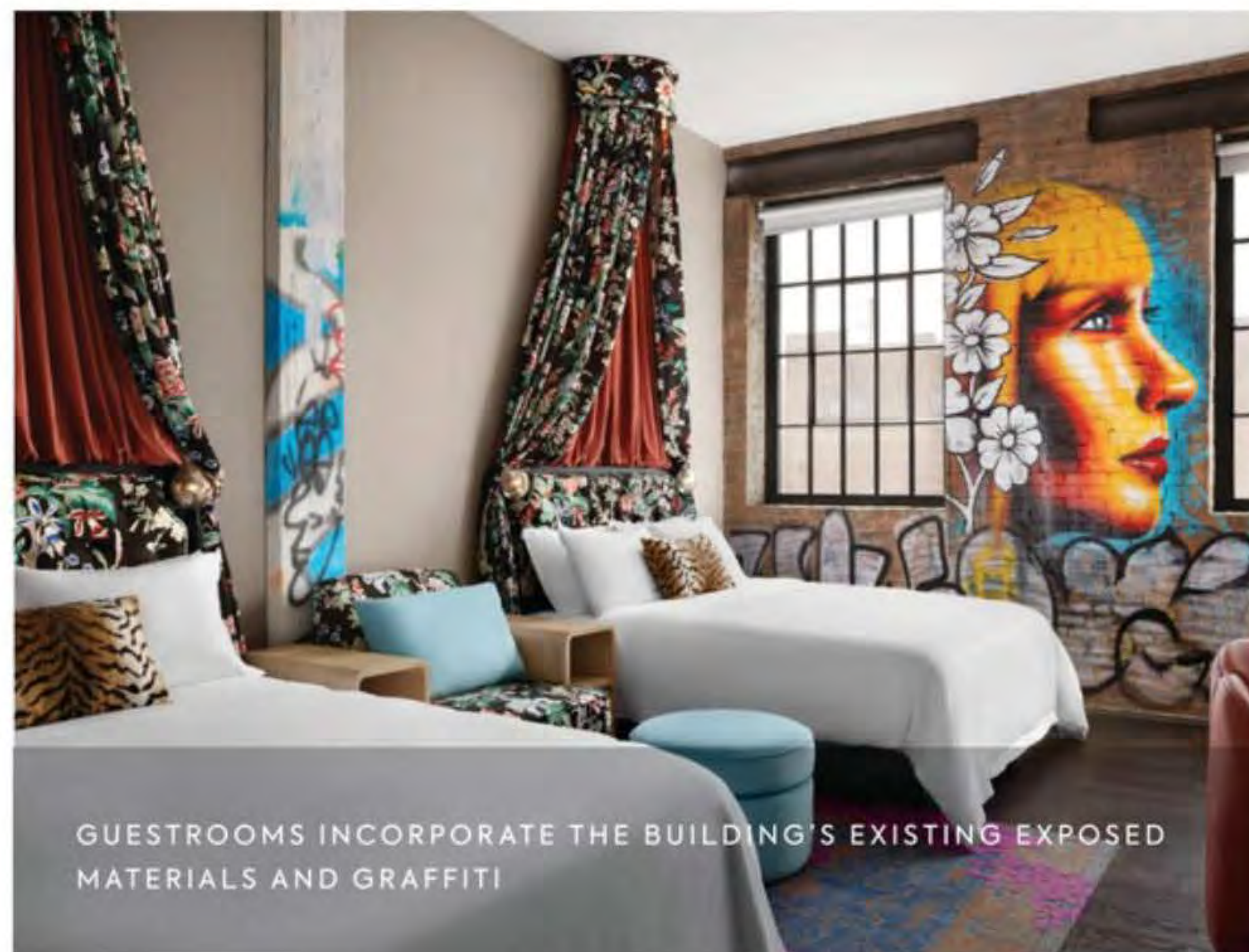
*What is the Radical bringing to Asheville?* [Hatteras Sky] had been working on this Radical project, as well as a couple of other deals, before they officially launched their company. They're focused in Asheville, and their intent is to build six hotels there, along with other projects in the U.S. There's been a lot of hotel construction in the last several years, but it's been predominantly hard brands and mostly select service. There's very few independent boutique hotels.



A RENDERING OF THE RADICAL'S LOBBY SHOWCASES ITS ECLECTIC VIBE

**What is the concept behind the hotel?** It was an abandoned industrial site, not used for years. A prior use was as the city's bomb shelter, and it was all covered in graffiti. [The owners] submitted the structure to the historic parks department for consideration for the National Register of Historic Buildings, as well as to the State Historic Preservation Office, and asked for permission to maintain the street art inside and out as part of the language of the building. [One of the owners] had spent time in Berlin and loved the East Berlin punk and independent music scene that came out of the Soviet era there, plus the idea of being rooted in the South, as their company is. We also found out that it was previously called the Kent building. Fred Kent bought it to turn it into his headquarters for his breakfast cereal business. [We created three storylines for the project] and our client loved all three, so we pulled aspects from each into our design.

**How are some of these elements translated into the design?** We wanted to have that feeling of being an art installation, and also tie it back to Southern gentry in the early 1900s, and feel like we're respecting the street art that's in the rooms and the building. There are very muscular materials like the exposed brick and steel everywhere. We also looked at pictures of what it meant if you were wealthy in the South in the early 1900s. The fabrics



GUESTROOMS INCORPORATE THE BUILDING'S EXISTING EXPOSED MATERIALS AND GRAFFITI

are very ornate and picturesque, with birds and flowers and palm leaves on them.

[In the public areas] we're pulling on different narratives as well. The reception desk was designed to look like an old bank teller window from say, 1917, but reoutfitted with a glowing Lite Brite that will say 'Yo!' We wanted to pull in elements from the '80s [because the] 1980s was prominent in the brief as the era [the owner] loved in East Berlin. Then

we're surrounding it with stage curtains—part of making the ground floor feel like an art installation is to create a backdrop to soften the brick and concrete. The curtains that will surround you are going to be very traditional—like theater stage curtains—burgundy fabric and fringe and tassels. On the other side of the curtain, when you first arrive, [the material is] a futuristic mirrored silver fabric. The project is an enormous amount of fun.



MICHAEL SUOMI