

# A LOCAL TWIST



Hotels bring a taste of the town through hyperlocalism.

→ BY GERALD OLESKER



As I sit down to write this column, I'm enjoying my 91-point Costeo Kirkland Signature Malbec wine on hand. Yet ironically, it highlights an interesting paradox and trend being seen within the hospitality space.

Hyperlocalism is elevating communities, especially in Southern California, where the weather is a constant and fires tear up our terrain. Yet, we still plot away daily, sip wine from the local wineries, shop at the farmer's markets and visit the booming boutique hotels.

Through the years in working with the world's most exclusive clients, it is my unique privilege to eat at their tables, be treated to their wines and sit in their restaurants.

No, I am not a food critic. I am an architectural industrial designer who designs and fabricates beautiful lighting that graces their tables, homes and hotels. The personal brands that my clients have created are some of the best and well-known, as are their hotels and restaurants.

What that does for me is provide a unique opportunity to glance into their lives, learn their operations, and provide a design and product for those moments we interact.

## HYPERLOCAL ENTHUSIASM

Why is hyperlocalism becoming more popular among our finest hotels? Are people seeking out a more authentic experience? Or do they just want to feel at home while they're traveling?

A good example of the hyperlocalism trend taking shape is occurring at a new boutique hotel opening in San Luis Obispo, Calif., located in the state's Central Coast region and about 190 miles north of Los Angeles.

Local is key in this mixed-use property. From the materials used to the artisans working on it, this is a must-see destination.

Then there are the local farmers, ranchers and artisanal chefs, as well as the award-winning vineyards and wineries that all contribute to the amazing culinary experience to be had.

The hotel's rooftop bar boasts a corten steel

tower that flanks the olive grove and fireplace, along with steel-raised planter boxes of mixed herbs and vegetables that will be used in the dishes served in their restaurant.

No, this is not about the fourth-story rooftop bar that emulates the fun and distinct elements of downtown Los Angeles or Newport Beach's rooftop views.

It's the admiration that the hoteliers know their stuff and are bringing this twist to locals in San Luis Obispo. It is also for the travelers who will be meeting their college kids or the couple on a road trip driving from the Bay Area to meet their family in San Diego and want a romantic stopping point.

I am impressed by the entrepreneurial risk taken by the hoteliers, and commend their hyperlocal enthusiasm, for choosing a risky destination in the middle of a local and quietly revolving downtown inhabited by college students. It's certainly a testament to the emerging trend of hyperlocalism being sought after within the hospitality space.

It also highlights the growing trend of personalization and how hotels are seeking more opportunities to tell their stories through creative means. It becomes all about creating an experience for the traveler, as opposed to just providing a place for them to stay.

Whether it's through the design of the property or its culinary offerings, the experience becomes an opportunity for that traveler to enjoy the town or community in such a personalized way that this actually becomes a selling point for the hotel brand. This personalized and local experience ultimately becomes the brand's competitive advantage in the market.

Hyperlocalism is also a win-win for the local community. By hotels partnering with local businesses, it also helps them connect more personally with their local residents.

And, after all, in this internet-connected world where it seems like our smartphones get most of our attention, wouldn't it be nice to connect with those right in our own backyard? ■

Hyperlocalism is elevating communities, connecting local businesses and offering one-of-a-kind experiences.



**GERALD OLESKER** is an architectural industrial designer, creative entrepreneur, and founder behind ADS Lighting. He has designed and manufactured lighting and furnishings for over \$3 billion in real estate. His work appears in luxury and celebrity homes and commercial developments in and around Los Angeles and around the globe.