FROM OPULENT TO SLEEK: CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE AND THE LUXURY TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

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Luxperience 2014 Presentation
Old or ‘opulent’ luxury: Waldorf Astoria, NYC
New or ‘Sleek’ Luxury: Parkroyal on Pickering, Singapore
New arbiters of ‘good taste’ in luxury travel
Evolution of luxury brands: Rolls Royce
Differences between ‘old’ and ‘new’ luxury

- Handcrafted by an artisan versus well-designed and offering precision assembly.
- Precious natural materials (e.g., marble, gold or polished wood) versus high-tech and machine produced materials (e.g., polished concrete, stainless steel and high-grade laminex).
- Things that are timeless and reflect wealth/aristocratic values versus things that are modern, ‘hip’, not overtly ostentatious.
NB: Luxury is still about a high degree of ‘exclusivity’; and has to have the connotation of ‘quality’.
My own research based on 2014 List of Exhibitors...

Contemporary hotels and resorts were coded into these styles:

- Minimalist/Cool
- Eco/Rustic
- Ethnic/Vernacular
- Classical/Elegant
- Heritage/Traditional
- Grand/Opulent

NB: Sample based on individual properties. Coded via website images.

Max Pritchard (2008) Southern Ocean Lodge, Kangaroo Island
A multi-faceted brand that includes art, interesting architecture, bespoke accommodation, scenery, gourmet food and wine/beer, and festivals/performances – all driven by one man’s passion and vision.
**Conclusion:** Luxury accommodation is of necessity exclusive; but good architecture can be enjoyed by everyone that has the time and interest to experience it.

**Question:** In the era of the ‘experience economy’ (Pine and Gilmore) are there multiple ways of having a ‘luxperience’ (e.g., the person staying in the luxury hotel, the person drinking cocktails in its funky bar or the person who enters the foyer in order to simply experience its architecture)?