

SLEEPER

HOSPITALITY EXPERIENCE & DESIGN





CHECK-IN

Ella Bridgland

Seeking inspiration for her first solo hotel project, the founder of **Studio Ella** takes a fantasy break on a leafy Hong Kong island, where nature dictates the pace of life.

Where are you?

Green Island off the coast of Hong Kong, which, as the name suggests, is lush and home to many species of flora and fauna. The island operates at a pace dictated by nature.

How did you get there?

I arrived via a spiralling titanium slide designed by artist Carsten Höller. Taking full advantage of Hong Kong's mountainous terrain, the slide is both efficient and thrilling – two crucial components of any memorable experience.

Who is there to greet you on arrival?

I am greeted by the earthy, rich scent of the jungle after the rain, as well as the sweet sound of birdsong, and a Skyspace installation by James Turrell. I don't notice who else is there, I'm on my own phenomenological journey.

And who's at the concierge desk?

Kristina Snaith-Lense, General Manager from The Upper House in Hong Kong. She has the ability to put everyone in her presence at ease.

Is there anything you would like waiting for you in your room?

An ice-cold glass of water in an ultra-thin Shotoku Glass. The Japanese do it best.



www.studioella.co

Describe the hotel, your room and the view...

The hotel is made up of a series of horizontal platforms that slice through the terrain to align with the horizon – a paradox to Hong Kong, which is known for its density and verticality. My villa is open-plan and uninterrupted by walls, creating the illusion of a continuous flow between inside and out. The roof, supported by thin steel columns, appears to float and allows the fully glazed façade to open up to our own secret cove. Movement, light and views are framed by characterful internal travertine partitions that glisten in the changing light, while the art and furniture celebrate craftsmanship. The space is anchored by the largest bed I've ever seen; the 100% organic cotton Baea sheets are ultra-soft and instantly send me to heaven.

Who designed it?

It's a collaboration between Geoffrey Bawa – the father of Tropical Modernism – and Japanese artist Kazuo Shiraga, who has an ability to express the relationship between human, spirit and material. Above the bed hangs Shiraga's 1985 painting, Suiju; it is a constant reminder of life, death and action.

What's the restaurant and bar like?

There are several spread across the island. I start the evening with an aperitif at the bar on top of the lighthouse. There is no menu here; the drinks are classic and served over crystal-clear shards of ice with a perilla leaf garnish.

Who are you dining with this evening?

My husband Damian, along with British artist

Rachel Whiteread, whose understanding of form and evocative use of materials inspires me no end; Ethiopian nun and pianist Emahoy Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou, whose music brightens the darkest of days; Tom Dixon, who taught me the fundamentals of design – I practice his lessons daily; writer Julian Barnes, for his telling of *The Only Story*; and Italian architect Carlo Scarpa – the master of craftsmanship and detail.

Who's manning the stoves?

Ukrainian chef Olia Hercules – her cuisine is colourful and comforting.

And what's on the menu?

Three humble ingredients served in multiple, imaginative ways. Ingredients are like materials; I like to experiment and explore their potential.

Would you like something to drink with that?

A glass of Pinot Noir from The Donum Estate in California. The estate has a monumental sculpture collection amongst the vines – I love this combination of art and wine.

What's on your nightstand at bedtime?

A Pattern Language by Christopher Alexander.

What toiletries would you like to freshen up?

La Mer – it has transformative powers.

Early morning alarm call or late check-out?

In a city that moves at lightning speed and a schedule that is planned by the minute, waking up to crashing waves and enjoying a morning at my own pace is the ultimate luxury.