

# STONEHILL & TAYLOR

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## CONTEMPORARY LUXURY ARRIVES IN MINNEAPOLIS

**New York, June 2014** –The 360-room Radisson Blu Minneapolis is opening in July 2014, as the fourth property for the upscale European lifestyle brand in the U.S. Stonehill & Taylor was responsible for the architecture and interior design of the hotel, collaborating with interior design consultants, Graven Images of Scotland, to create a unique design concept for the property of massive scope: including renovation of the lobby, all guest rooms and suites, two levels of new event spaces, an executive lounge, a fitness center, and the FireLake restaurant and bar.

“The design marries distinct influences from the region – the character and history of Minnesota—with the high-end contemporary look that embodies Carlson Rezidor’s brand DNA (for owner Chartres Lodging Group),” said Michael Suomi, design director, Stonehill & Taylor. “Many Minnesotan families and businesses can trace their origins to early settlers from Scandinavia, where the Radisson brand also has its roots. We honed in on this intersection in creating the hotel’s new look.”

The renovation is highlighted through drastic changes on the outside of the hotel, including a new look to the façade, a new marquee, canopy and signage.

Entering into the hotel, the reception lobby was reconfigured to create a dramatic arrival experience. A large video wall, visible through the glass entrance, becomes the focal point as guests step into the hotel. A giant domed pendant fixture hangs from the 16 story tall atrium. The lobby area, which previously simply facilitated circulation, was rethought as a series of gathering spaces that flow into each other, with large seating elements that comfortably accommodate groups. Scandinavian influences can be seen in the choice of furniture pieces that celebrate the mid-century styles from the region.

The FireLake Restaurant was planned to be a lively, casual and social environment through its open plan. The restaurant can be seamlessly accessed from outside the hotel through a private entrance or through the lobby. The choice of materials in the design of the restaurant makes location-specific references. The restaurant has a welcoming rustic look inspired by Minnesotan landscape and industries, with details in copper, steel and rough finishes. The wood that clads the majority of walls, columns, beams and ceilings in FireLake Restaurant was reclaimed from old barns throughout Minnesota, then cut and dressed into very straight planks. Design allows

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semi private gatherings by closing off sections through a system of curtains made of fabric and chains and sliding doors.

The second floor was previously used as mixed commercial space and integrated into the nearby shopping and business center through walkways. The design team renovated the floor and distinguished the hotel experience with a clear visual entry from the outside supported by lighting, a consistent color scheme and design elements.

In support of business travelers, large parts of the second floor were converted to meeting spaces. The designers uncovered windows, enlarged existing meeting spaces and brought a coffee shop concept to the business areas with more natural light and comfort.

The third floor gained new areas to hold large events. A 16-story-tall atrium was partially closed in the new design to create function and pre-function areas that significantly increased the hotel's offering for events. With a contemporary and sleek modern look, the event spaces are spatially integrated into the new design in the rest of the hotel. A permanent table creates an elegant and versatile solution to use as a bar, a banquet table or a long dinner table depending on needs.

The expansive pre-function areas on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors feature an extensive art program. Unique to a hotel, these spaces are designed as art galleries, offering not only guests, but also locals a reason to visit and socialize. Carefully curated by Stonehill & Taylor, along with hotel owners and the art consultants Soho Myriad and Indie Walls, both floors are lined with a bright collection of contemporary works that celebrate the architecture and history of Minneapolis. Inspired by the character of the city, the majority of pieces are made by local artists, like abstract oil urban scenes by Michael Schmidt and large-scale photographs by Heidi Hermes.

The concept of the guestrooms, created by Graven Images, features an overarching theme of relaxing and neutral tones. Soft grey wood finish of case goods gives them a "built-in" feel. Guest bathrooms have been updated with new colors, showers with glass enclosures and larger vanities. The clean and contemporary new design is juxtaposed by pops of texture, pattern and color. The extensive art program of the public areas is carried into the guest rooms and guest corridors. Suites and a new executive lounge have been completely redesigned by Stonehill & Taylor on the three Club floors of the hotel.

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“This project gave us the opportunity to create a new brand standard for Radisson Blu,” said Barry Nidiffer, EVP, development management, Chartres Lodging Group. “We would like to congratulate the entire renovation and repositioning team on a successful project completion.”

The John Hardy Group led development services for the entire process, including due diligence, budgeting and accounting, and project and construction management.

“We are proud to have represented Chartres Lodging Group in the significant re-imagining of this landmark downtown Minneapolis property,” said John Hardy, CEO, The John Hardy Group.

## **Radisson Blu Minneapolis:**

**Owner:** Chartres Lodging Group

**Operator:** Carlson Rezidor

**Project Manager:** The John Hardy Group

**Interior Design & Architecture:** Stonehill & Taylor

**Interior Design Consultant:** Graven Images

## **Stonehill & Taylor Design Team:**

Principal in charge: Michael Suomi

Lead Interior Designers: Kerry Clerkin, Xyrus Diego

Lead Architect: Steve Chew

## ***About Stonehill & Taylor***

Stonehill & Taylor is an architecture and interior design firm based in New York City. With primary specialization in hospitality, healthcare, research and academic institutions, the firm uses a collaborative approach to produce unique design stories. The firm’s successful projects range from interior design to architecture, new building construction, historic preservation and renovations, including: The Ace Hotel, NoMad Hotel, Crosby Street Hotel, Hilton New York, Novotel Times Square and Refinery Hotel. Stonehill & Taylor is at the forefront of sustainable design, developing projects that are responsible and conscious of their impact on local communities and the world. The firm designed the first LEED Gold hotel in New York, The Crosby Street Hotel, another with The NoMad and was responsible for the most recent renovation of Hyatt Regency Minneapolis using locally-made goods. For more information about the company, visit: [www.stonehilltaylor.com](http://www.stonehilltaylor.com)

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