



St. Regis Tianjin

Words: Catherine Martin

Photography: Courtesy of KCA International

A new landmark on the skyline of Tianjin is home to a 247-key St. Regis hotel, featuring interiors by KCA International.

With its rich history as an international port city, Tianjin has for centuries been considered the 'Jin Men', or gateway, to Northern China. A prestigious new address in the Heping district, along the south bank of the Hai River, honours and contemporises that tradition with a cutting-edge iconic design that is the new landmark on the city's skyline.

The site is home to the recently opened St. Regis, which dubs itself "Northern China's most prestigious gateway for business leaders, society tastemakers and discerning travellers". The 274-room hotel boasts a premium level of bespoke service, luxury and amenities: it is the first property in Tianjin to introduce the signature St. Regis Butler Service; it has the largest Presidential Suite in Tianjin; and offers a world of gastronomic experiences said to be unmatched in the city.

Given its proximity to the new 76-storey Tianjin World Financial Center Tower, Northern China's tallest building and the hub of the city's burgeoning business community, it is likely that St. Regis will attract the corporate client. As such, owners Financial Street Holdings Co. Ltd have incorporated facilities that will cater to this market. Over 2,700m² of event spaces includes the St. Regis Ballroom, an 800m² pillar-free space dripping in crystal chandeliers, a variety of meeting rooms, and the Jin Men VIP Room, which serves as a pre-meeting space or a hospitality suite. With two sofas facing each other, the Jin



Men room is configured for government-style meetings in the Chinese tradition. A second ballroom, The Diamond Ballroom, is located on the top floor and offers stunning views over Tianjin through floor-to-ceiling windows. Polished wood floors, white marble accents, and gold-coloured glass pillars, as well as a graceful leaf motif on the ceiling, are to dazzling effect. A rooftop courtyard completes the offering.

Designed by East China Architectural Design & Research Institute (ECADI), the 18-floor building is constructed from steel and glass in the shape of a hollowed cube that further complements the concept of 'Jin Men.'

Interiors are the work of London-based KCA International led by Design Principal and founder Khuan Chew, herself of Chinese descent. The design brief revolved around the historical stature of the St. Regis brand and its heritage of tradition, elegance, and

luxury dating back more than 100 years to the grand opening of St. Regis New York by the Astor family. "Our task was to ensure that we guaranteed this atmosphere in the experience for the guests," explains Chew. "We referenced design ideas from the Art Deco and Art Nouveau eras of the 20th century, and were inspired by Grande American high society. We imagined what it would be like to have tea in our tea lounge, dinner at the French restaurant, staying at the Presidential Suite and recreating the lifestyle of Mr and Mrs Astor," she adds.

Local elements have been incorporated into the design, however Chew points out that Tianjin is one of the most Western looking cities in China with diverse architecture thanks to European Concessions. "The spirit of the hotel was more a Western approach with touches of Chinoiserie in the decoration," she explains. The majority of furniture was selected

and made locally, and while the client is happy with the outcome, Chew expressed frustration with some finishes being substituted without prior knowledge.

Guestrooms continue the contemporary Western aesthetic with ancient Chinese influences, and are completed in a warm beige and burgundy palette. Ranging in size from 42 to 427m², the 238 rooms and 36 suites are among the largest in Tianjin. Each room offers modern conveniences including a 40-inch flatscreen LCD TV, Bang & Olufsen sound system, and iPod docking station, while Chinoiserie can be seen in the detailing. A black marble bathroom with dual vanities, a bathtub, and separate glass-enclosed rainforest shower, includes Remède amenities and an LCD TV embedded in the mirror. Guests can also enjoy the services of a personal St. Regis butler trained in the English tradition of impeccable service – a first for a Tianjin hotel. ▶



THIS PAGE: The deeply masculine St. Regis Bar offers a timeless feel with its rich leather seating and wood paneling

PREVIOUS PAGE: The Cantonese restaurant, Yan Ting, is finished in a more contemporary style with dramatic lighting, embossed, carved and etched glass room dividers, and polished floors

► The 450m² Presidential Suite is designed with classic Chinese elements of carp swimming by lotus in a stream, amid clean, contemporary lines. Polished wood floors and soft wool rugs can be found in the seating areas, furnished with sofas and lounge chairs, while the entertainment room houses a Wii, karaoke, and long-tail piano.

The hotel offers a range of culinary experiences, including the riverside Promenade all-day-dining restaurant, and Riviera, a Parisian bistro serving French fare. The Cantonese restaurant, Yan Ting, is finished in a more contemporary style with dramatic lighting, embossed, carved and etched glass room dividers, and polished floors. Conversely, the deeply masculine St. Regis Bar offers a timeless feel with its rich leather seating and wood paneling. Here,

the speciality is 'Jin Mary', the hotel's take on a Bloody Mary made with a blend of unique Chinese flavours and seasonings.

St. Regis Tianjin also features the signature Iridium Spa, managed by Touch Spa. The 1,200m² facility offers five private treatment rooms and two couples suites, in addition to a pair of VIP rooms furnished with double Jacuzzis and spa massage beds.

Since the opening of St. Regis Tianjin, Starwood has now opened its 125th hotel in Greater China. Driven by phenomenal demand, Starwood will open nearly 60% of its new hotels in Asia Pacific in 2012. While this is fuelled by the strength of its Sheraton and Westin brands, St. Regis is gaining momentum with plans to open in Changsha, Chengdu, Kuala Lumpur, Lijiang, Sanya Yalong Bay, Shenzhen, Tianjin and Zhuhai. ■

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

St. Regis Tianjin

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www.stregis.com/tianjin

- 274 guestrooms and suites
- Yan Ting, Riviera, Promenade
- St. Regis Bar, Decanter
- Iridium Spa, exercise room, pool
- The Study, 15 events venues including two ballrooms, meeting rooms, and courtyard

Owner: Financial Street Holdings Co. Ltd

Operator: Starwood Hotels & Resorts

Architect: ECADI

Interior Designer: KCA International