



Asian cowboy

By Janet Collins
Photos by Ian Grant

Edmonton's Metterra Hotel mirrors the changes taking place in the city's Old Strathcona district where down home is becoming upscale.

Edmonton's Old Strathcona district is gradually evolving from Cattle Country to Big Apple, with new restaurants, a few nightclub/lounges and interesting boutiques drawing crowds. In the midst is the Metterra Hotel (aka The Met), on Whyte Street, previously a nondescript office tower, reworked inside and out to create a contemporary hotel.

"The rooms are unusual shapes, each a different size and with different amenities," says Pat Roth, leader of the team from Dingham Roth Interior Design, which handled the transformation. She explains that the pre-existing service core and placement of support columns dictated the layout of the hotel rooms. The office tower configuration also allowed for extra high ceilings throughout.

What is now a double-height lobby was once two complete floors. The second-floor hospitality room (where evening cocktails are served as is the

complimentary breakfast buffet) once functioned as part of the office building's parkade. Now, it opens onto the lobby space with a glass railing allowing for plenty of natural light. The area beneath the hospitality room serves as a lounge/library area for guests.

Jane Russell, co-owner of the building, says the silky copper drapes used in many of the rooms were the catalyst for the whole colour palette. "Everything is detailed and handcrafted," says Russell. "The rich, warm colours add a touch of sophisticated elegance."

The range of artwork found throughout the property – from sculptures to textiles to photographs – may be Far Eastern in theme, but the resulting mood is more global than Asian. The décor may be elegant, but it is by no means highbrow. The Met maintains ties with its western roots: during Stampede week, the hospitality room hosts readings by cowboy poets. □



Opposite_ A waterfall in the entrance lobby adds an interesting feng shui touch to a space that is punctuated by cowhide seats and polished tree-trunk tables
 Above_ Just off the main lobby, the lounge/library provides a cozy place for guests waiting for a taxi or simply wanting a place to relax
 Below_ Guest rooms offer many of the comforts of home including gas fireplaces and stylishly appointed kitchenettes.