

Press release

19 January 2005

**The Silken Groups Hotel Puerta America launches in Madrid**

The Silken Groups Hotel Puerta America in Central Madrid was conceived as an architectural showcase, with individual floors fitted-out by different world-renowned architects, including Foster and Partners, Zaha Hadid, John Pawson, and Ushida Findlay. The Foster vision for the second floor was inspired by the work of the late Basque sculptor, Eduardo Chillida, who was a personal friend of both the client and Lord Foster. Chillidas work explored natural materials, organic forms, and an architectural sense of space - concerns which are reworked in the Foster scheme.

Chillidas treatment of space as a material to mould, and the interplay between positive and negative space, has been echoed in the sculptural quality of the hotel rooms and corridors. A sequence of top-lit, circular glass drums lines the corridor and punctuates it with a chain of illuminated ellipses. These drums become the central elements that link the corridor with the interior of the rooms. Continuing into the bedrooms, the glass elegantly curves around the integrated shower area, creating a subtle partition. The washbasins sit on a glowing onyx shelf that sweeps out to the full length of the room, forming an elegant connection between the two areas. The shelf embodies the flexibility of this multi-use living area: it is a desk, a television counter, a wash stand, and a dressing table.

The design appeals to the senses and uses Chillidas natural material palette, with warm cream and brown colours. The leather wall panelling is sumptuous to the sense of touch and further adds to the visual impression of quality and luxury. Conceived as an urban sanctuary, the Foster and Partners designed suites will offer a luxurious respite from Madrids frenetic bustle.

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