

## Back in Blue

Fettle Design, in conjunction with BLVD Hospitality and ESI Ventures, jolts the iconic blue hotel out of the doldrums and into its rightful place as Santa Monica's hot spot

by **ABIGAIL STONE** photography by **DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN**

**WE'RE LONGTIME FANS** of Fettle, founded by the U.K.-born team of Tom Parker and Andy Goodwin. The interior architecture and design studio, which specializes in hospitality, overlays wit, whimsy and an unabashed love of rich color, exuberant pattern and traditional English design over lush, welcoming spaces. Their name, Fettle, is apt; it's an Old-English word meaning hand-shaped or crafted, and the firm's spaces engender a sense of customized cool. That's confirmed by one look at their work on Olivetta and the Draycott, two Los Angeles restaurants whose popularity is due, in part, to their convivial design.

Now they've teamed up with BLVD Hospitality's Jon Blanchard and Nicolo Rusconi, the team behind the Ace Hotel DTLA and Soho Warehouse, in partnership with ESI Ventures, to put the hospitality back into the Georgian. Perched on Ocean Avenue overlooking the Pacific and designed in 1933 by M. Eugene Durfee for hotelier Rosamond Borde, the hotel was renowned for its flamboyant proprietress and its exclusive clientele, a who's who of the rich, famous and notorious, who made the Red Griffin, its restaurant and bar, their regular watering hole. Clark Gable, Charlie Chaplin, Bugsy Siegel, Al Capone and Marilyn Monroe were some of names who disappeared behind the striking turquoise Romanesque revival meets art deco facade.

The exterior has been freshened up and its sunny yellow banding brightened. Interior details—like its arched lobby, ceiling medallions and intricate moldings—have been restored. An array of sunset hues undulates over lush furniture and intricate details.

Its 84 rooms, spread out over eight floors, have been given a refresher course in warmth. Golden-hued arched headboards, crystal fixtures and colorful window valances hint at its art deco past. Touches like Marshall speakers, a built-in mini bar—with push-button concierge service that summons a selection of champagnes, dessert and curated vintage books as well as a custom surprise for each guest—and the hotel's custom-scented candle layer each room with sensual pleasures.

The dining and drinking options are equally glamorous and inviting. On the lobby level, there's the simply named Restaurant at the Georgian, which sprawls over the Sunset Bar, the Dining Room, and the Sunset Terrace, with its jaunty turquoise-and-white striped awning, peach chairs and yellow banquettes overlooking Ocean Avenue. The Red Griffin has been reimagined as the Georgian Room. The subterranean-level space exudes speakeasy vibes and martini charms, with its 1919 ebony polished Steinway built into a custom rose marble bar and its clubby banquettes. The result is a beautiful, enticing destination for Angelenos and out-of-towners alike.



**TOP TO BOTTOM:** A view inside a vibrant guest suite; the Georgian Room brings people in for the cocktails but they stay for the history; the Restaurant at the Georgian opens to the iconic Sunset Terrace, overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

