

*THE SOFITEL TAMUDA BAY*  
A NEW RESORT  
BY GM ARCHITECTS

M'DIQ MOROCCO



PRESS KIT

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## THE SOFITEL TAMUDA BAY SOFITEL'S LATEST PROJECT BY GM ARCHITECTS

The Sofitel Tamuda Bay is a luxury five star hotel opened in June 2016 in M'diq, a town located on the northern coast of Morocco about 20 miles east of Tangier.



For Sofitel, the Sofitel Tamuda Bay is the luxury hotel brand's latest project and offers 104 bedrooms and suites, eight bungalows and five villas spanning a total floor surface area of 38,128 square meters. Located on one of the most beautiful Moroccan beaches of the Mediterranean, and set against the stunning backdrop of the Rif Mountains, the Sofitel Tamuda Bay stands proudly in one of the most idyllic settings in the entire kingdom.

GM Architects, under the leadership of Galal Mahmoud, were commissioned as architects and interior designers for the resort. The prize for "Best New Hotel" at the 2011 International Hotel Awards and for best 'Luxury Beach Resort' in Northern Morocco and the 'World Luxury Hotel Awards 2016' went to GM Architects for their work on this project. In addition, at the same ceremony in 2016 Sofitel Tamuda Bay won the 'Great prize' of the year.

Today's clientele in the luxury hotel sector searches for aesthetics, quality and excellence. The Sofitel Tamuda Bay, as with most hotels within the Sofitel group, strives to anticipate and exceed such expectations. Tamuda Bay offers a genuine experience in French art de vivre combined with the refinement of an authentic Moroccan style.



Le Sofitel Tamuda Bay - Exterior view © Luc Boegly

## THE SOFITEL TAMUDA BAY A SUBTLE REINTERPRETATION OF MOROCCAN ARCHITECTURE

Galal Mahmoud visits each site in person to get a feel for the place, an approach he calls “contextual immersion”. He makes a preliminary study of the site and the surrounding landscape, including local history, in order to integrate contextual references such as climate, geography and even topography. It ensures a certain respect for the identity and culture of the place.

This approach drove the architect’s work for the Sofitel Tamuda Bay. He took the cultural references of northern Morocco and reinterpreted them in a contemporary language, and then integrated them into the final design. Tangier is punctuated with wonderful contrasting strokes of cobalt blue and white and these have been a vital source of inspiration.

GM Architects designed the Sofitel Tamuda Bay’s architecture and interiors in such a way as to blur the boundaries of indoors and outdoors, with a view to creating a genuine experience of well-being for all guests to enjoy. Sky and sea blend into a beautiful palette of blues to offer a once-in-a-lifetime Mediterranean experience.

The very essence of the project is the fusion of the opposing shores of the Mediterranean: on one side the French Riviera’s world of contemporary art and glamour and on the other, Morocco’s charming traditional crafts and authentic lifestyle.



Le Sofitel Tamuda Bay - Marché des saveurs © Christophe Gay



Le Sofitel Tamuda Bay - Marché des saveurs © Luc Boegly

## THE SOFITEL TAMUDA BAY FRENCH ART DE VIVRE

Resolutely contemporary in his approach, Galal Mahmoud drew inspiration from twentieth century artists whose paintings were highly influenced by their stays in Morocco.

The hotel's internal spaces pay tribute to the influence of these artists in the choice of pigments, the rounded shapes reminiscent of Moroccan crafted objects, and even the blue birds of the Mediterranean Sea. In the hotel's various spaces vivid colours contrast sharply with the bright white used in the marble chosen by GM Architects' team.

The very essence of the project is based on a subtle mix of modern French art de vivre and traditional Moroccan culture. This combination was the overriding principle which guided Gael Mahmoud in the design of each of the Sofitel Tamuda Bay's internal spaces.

Blending local colours in an enchanting setting, this resort offers a unique atmosphere where guests can enjoy a relaxing stay or head out to the nearby chic and festive marinas.



Le Sofitel Tamuda Bay - Luxury room © Luc Boegly



Le Sofitel Tamuda Bay - Duplex villa © Luc Boegly



Le Sofitel Tamuda Bay - Exterior view © Luc Boegly



Le Sofitel Tamuda Bay - So Spa © Christophe Gay

## ABOUT THE SOFITEL TAMUDA BAY INTERVIEW WITH GALAL MAHMOUD

Why have you chosen to work on a hotel project in Morocco?

*I'm interested in all countries that are steeped in culture and history. I am very familiar with Morocco, I've been going there for a number of years. It's a country which attracts me both on a personal and professional level.*

*So it was natural for me to say yes to working, in collaboration with Sofitel, on this project for a five star hotel in the coastal town of M'diq in northern Morocco.*

Did you study the site before starting work? What were your main sources of inspiration for this hotel?

*Visiting the site in person and immersing myself in the location is at the heart of my philosophy. It is a very important concept for me, an approach that I like to call "contextual immersion". For each project I make a thorough study of the site and the surrounding landscape, including local culture and history, in order to integrate contextual references such as climate, geography and even topography. It ensures a certain respect for the identity and culture of the place.*

*When it comes to the Sofitel Tamuda Bay, this approach really did drive my work. I took the cultural references of northern Morocco and reinterpreted them in a contemporary language, and then integrated them into the final design. Tangier is punctuated with wonderful contrasting strokes of cobalt blue and white and these have been a vital source of inspiration for this new project.*

What did your work consist of for the Sofitel Tamuda Bay? What choices did you make for the interior design?

*The Sofitel Tamuda Bay's architecture and interior design were entirely conceived by us at GM Architects in order to allow for a smooth and seamless transition between indoors and outdoors which will help guests experience a genuine sense of well-being.*

*This approach is in perfect harmony with the holistic work carried out by GM Architects whereby architecture and interior design are closely linked within a scenography that blurs the lines between indoors and outdoors. We strive to deliver a unique Mediterranean experience to our guests, a refreshing stay not to be found anywhere else on Earth.*

*Having made the choice of a resolutely contemporary approach, I decided to draw inspiration from twentieth century artists whose paintings were highly influenced by their stays in Morocco, in particular the rounded shapes, pigments, colours and, of course, local objects.*

*This subtle combination of contemporary French art de vivre and Moroccan culture was the backbone upon which to build each of the interior spaces. We worked in close collaboration with Sofitel in order to capture and recreate the deep connection that exists between France and Morocco. Our aim is for each guest to embark on a voyage of colour, history and culture.*

Were you inspired by traditional Moroccan craftsmanship for this hotel?

*Moroccan culture and craftsmanship are rich in colour and texture and, as far as I'm concerned, are highly characteristic of this Mediterranean civilization which has evolved over many centuries. They are, for me, an endless and permanent source of inspiration for each of my projects.*

*The use of innovative materials and methods allowed me to reinterpret this traditional lifestyle into a contemporary language. A telling example is the use of Plexiglas to create the moucharaby screens of the Sofitel Tamuda Bay.*

## ‘LIVING OUT THE GOOD LIFE’ BY GM ARCHITECT’S A CONTEMPORARY AND MULTICULTURAL APPROACH



Galal Mahmoud © Christophe Gay

Born to Egyptian parents and having an English grandmother and Lebanese citizenship, architect Galal Mahmoud lived in France for several years, after fleeing the civil war in Lebanon with his family in 1976. He graduated from the Ecole d’Architecture de Versailles in 1986, opening his first architects’ practice in Paris the following year. In 1996 he founded GM Architects in Beirut, specializing in the luxury hotel and upscale seaside resort markets.

During his many trips to Asia, Galal Mahmoud experienced true well-being and witnessed at first-hand Asian societies’ approach to living in the shape of lifestyles that are equally comfortable in an outside environment as inside a house. Galal Mahmoud takes this approach and fuses it seamlessly with the architecture ‘for living out the good life’ that is so characteristic of the Mediterranean region.

These experiences are at the root of Galal Mahmoud’s philosophy and approach to architecture, where the concepts of ‘well-being’ and multiculturalism are key.

### CONTEXTUAL IMMERSION

Galal Mahmoud’s culturally diverse background has naturally led him to adopt a multicultural approach to all his projects. His ability to apprehend the essence of a place, to be alive to the diverse influences that shape it, imbues all his projects with a unity of vision, one that is genuinely informed by its immediate context.

‘Contextual immersion’ therefore lies at the heart of GM Architects’ way of thinking. Galal Mahmoud steepes himself in the geographical, historical and cultural environment of each project. He makes these contextual components his own, reworking them in a way that is relevant to and easily comprehensible by contemporary society, but also respectful of the identity and culture of the location in question.

### AN INTERNATIONALLY-RENOWNED ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN FIRM

GM Architects architecture and design firm specializes in the field of high-end tourism, notably in the creation of luxury hotels and resorts. It is one of the largest such firms in Lebanon. The company employs 40 professionals including architects and interior designers and is managed by Galal Mahmoud in partnership with Randa Chahine, Anwar Hajj and Elie Waked. The firm has bases in Beirut and Abu Dhabi and is active worldwide. Its completed projects may be seen in France, Africa, the Middle East and throughout the Mediterranean region.

GM Architects initially specialized in interiors for the luxury and residential markets. It has since branched out and its expertise now encompasses interior design, landscape architecture and site evaluation and analysis in seafront locations.

GM Architects is the only architecture and design company in the Middle East to work regularly with Accor, Rotana, Starwood, Jumeirah and Rezidor. This is due to the high standards of service it delivers, the painstaking care it takes both in the development of a wider vision for each individual project and in the execution of its finer details and its ability to deliver projects that meet the standards of the international hospitality sector and the requirements of the major hotel chains. The firm’s creative approach to projects embodies the distinctive philosophy of French-Lebanese architect Galal Mahmoud.

The ‘Museum of Civilizations’ project designed by GM Architects and presented at the 2014 Venice Biennale was selected for the ‘Future project of the year’ category at the World Architecture Festival, Singapore in 2014. In March 2015, it scooped the ‘Cultural Regeneration’ category at the 26th MIPIM Architectural Review Future Projects awards, before winning an ‘International Architecture Award’ in 2015. The prize for “Best New Hotel” at the 2011 International Hotel Awards and for best ‘Luxury Beach Resort’ in Northern Morocco and the ‘World Luxury Hotel Awards 2016’ went to GM Architects for their work on Sofitel Tamuda Bay. In addition, at the same ceremony in 2016 Sofitel Tamuda Bay won the ‘Great prize’ of the year.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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