

PRESS RELEASE

30 June, 2026

HBA PARTNER RAHUL SHANKHWALKER EXPANDS ROLE TO DUBAI MENA, STRENGTHENING HBA'S MIDDLE EAST LEADERSHIP TEAM

The appointment reinforces HBA's long-term regional commitment to the hospitality sector along with One HBA's multi-disciplinary approach.



Rahul Shankhwalker Partner, HBA Dubai

Photography credit: Sayher Heffernan

DUBAI, 30 June 2026 – **HBA** (Hirsch Bedner Associates), the world's leading hospitality design firm, has announced that **Rahul Shankhwalker, Partner**, will expand his role to Dubai as part of the firm's continued investment in the Middle East. The move strengthens HBA's senior regional leadership team and reinforces the firm's long-term commitment to the region's rapidly evolving hospitality, residential and lifestyle sectors.

Rahul will work closely with **Andrew Moore, Partner & President, Middle East & KSA**, and **Vincent Tiberghien, Partner and Vice President of Development**, adding senior design leadership and cross-disciplinary expertise as HBA enters its next phase of regional growth.

"Rahul is a valued HBA partner and brings his creativity and design excellence to the studio. With a strong record in design leadership across Asia-Pacific and internationally," said

Andrew Moore, Partner & President, Middle East & KSA. *“His move to Dubai adds further depth to our regional leadership team at an important moment for the Middle East. I look forward to working closely with Rahul and Vincent as we continue to build on HBA’s long-standing relationships, integrated expertise and commitment to the region.”*

With more than 25 years of international experience spanning hospitality, residential and mixed-use design, Rahul joins Dubai from HBA Singapore, where he has led architecture and interior design projects across Asia-Pacific and beyond. His global perspective, multidisciplinary design experience and long-standing partnership with HBA will further strengthen the Dubai studio’s ability to deliver experience-driven projects that evoke emotion, foster human connection and create long-term value for clients.

Central to Rahul’s expanded role will be supporting HBA’s One HBA approach, a collaborative model that brings together the multidisciplinary expertise already established within HBA Dubai, including Hospitality, Architecture, Residential, Lighting, Art, F&B, Digital, Landscape, Graphic Design and Strategy. Guided by the principles of integrated design, collective excellence and exceptional delivery, One HBA enables HBA to draw on specialist talent from around the world to deliver seamless, end-to-end design solutions for clients globally.

Rahul’s move to Dubai also reflects HBA’s strategic focus on the continued growth of Studio HBA across the region, expanding the firm’s ability to deliver thoughtful, commercially intelligent design solutions across a broader spectrum of hospitality, residential and lifestyle projects.

Commenting on his appointment, Rahul Shankhwalker said: *“For me, design is more than creating buildings or beautiful spaces. It is about shaping environments where people connect and feel encouraged to create lasting memories. The places that stay with us are rarely remembered because they had the best design, but because of how they made us feel. As I expand my role into Dubai, I’m excited to work alongside Andrew, Vincent and the wider regional team to bring together architecture, interiors and multidisciplinary thinking in support of HBA’s continued growth across the Middle East. The opportunity is to shape destinations that are culturally relevant, commercially intelligent and deeply embedded in the experiences and memories people create.”*

As hospitality and tourism investment across the GCC continues to remain robust, HBA Dubai is well positioned to support the next generation of destination creation, designing spaces that go beyond aesthetics to shape identity, elevate guest experience and deliver long-term commercial and cultural value. This approach is reflected in a portfolio of landmark projects, including the Residences at Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab, Waldorf Astoria Residences, JW Marriott Hotel and Residences RAK, SHA Wellness Resort along with many, residences & Villas.

Notable current and recent projects from Rahul’s international portfolio include Hilton Maldives Amingiri Resort & Spa, Taj Resort Puri in India, Grand Park City Hall in Singapore, and selected Middle East projects.

Rahul Shankhwalker is available for interviews, expert commentary and thought leadership opportunities on hospitality design, business transformation, multidisciplinary design innovation, and the future of luxury development in the Middle East.

Note to Editor

About Rahul Shankhwalker Partner, HBA Dubai

Rahul believes great hospitality design is felt before it is understood. His approach creates hotels and resorts shaped by memory, culture, landscape and sensory experience, resulting in spaces that are authentic, deeply rooted in place and designed to foster connection and belonging.

Working through a holistic, human-centred lens, he draws on local craftsmanship, indigenous materials and contextual narratives to create meaningful guest experiences. Educated in India and Australia, Rahul has worked across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, bringing a global perspective to architecture and interior design projects worldwide.

Rahul graduated from the University of Goa with a Bachelor's degree in Architecture in 1998, the same year he received a scholarship to pursue a Master's degree at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He graduated in 2000. In 2001, Rahul moved to Singapore to work with Nikken Sekkei, one of the world's largest architecture and design practices. He remained with the firm for five years, contributing to a range of luxury hotel, resort, residential and high-rise developments across Asia-Pacific.

In 2005, Rahul moved back to Australia to establish a boutique practice in Brisbane. Collaborating with leading Australian practices, he helped push the limits of design and develop a distinct style for luxury residences and high-end resorts in Australia and across Asia. Rahul joined HBA Singapore as Design Director in 2007 and was appointed a Partner of HBA in 2012. In 2026, he expanded his role to Dubai as part of HBA's continued investment in the Middle East, supporting the firm's next phase of regional growth and reinforcing its long-term commitment to the region.

Central to his expanded role is supporting HBA's One HBA approach, a collaborative model anchored by integrated design, collective excellence and exceptional delivery. One HBA brings together expertise across different sectors, drawing on specialist talent from around the world to deliver seamless, end-to-end design solutions for clients globally.

With more than 25 years of international experience spanning hospitality, residential and mixed-use design, Rahul has a substantial body of built work, some of which has been recognised with awards and published in prominent international media. His current portfolio includes Conrad Hotel Bangalore, Raffles Resort Bali, Leela Kempinski Delhi, Medi Terre Boutique Hotel Israel, Australia 108 Residences Melbourne, Six Senses Spa at World One Towers Mumbai, and Radisson Hotel Shimla.

About HBA (Hirsch Bedner Associates)

At HBA, we believe in the power of great design to positively impact lives. Design that opens us to new ideas, new innovations, and new connections. Design that gives form to emotion.

Founded in 1965 by Howard Hirsch and Michael Bedner, our legacy of leadership in hospitality interior design now spans an ecosystem of design services and disciplines.

Today, we are a dynamic and multidisciplinary creative collective, bringing decades of experience to bear across design specialisms, markets, and industries. From hotels to homes, art to architecture, landscaping to lighting, HBA delivers design solutions that transcend function, creating environments that inspire and evoke emotion. With over 1,500 professionals in 29 offices across four regions, each year HBA partners with clients in over 80 countries.

Recognised globally for excellence in hospitality design, HBA has earned numerous awards and industry accolades, including the Gold Key Awards, the AHEAD Awards, *Interior Design's* Best of Year Awards, and the DNA Paris Design Awards. In 2026, the firm once again ranked No. 1 on *Interior Design* magazine's annual Hospitality Giants of Design list, and was named on *Forbes'* inaugural list of America's Top Hospitality Architects & Designers.

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