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The Bronx is up, the Battery's down, and innovative interiors are everywhere in between

INTERIOR DESIGN

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ERIC LAMONTE



No Reservations

The Glen & Company interiors at midtown's Rafael Viñoly–designed Flatotel are an unqualified success

WHEN IT COMES to luxury hotels, comfort is usually paramount. Architect Glen Coben of Glen & Company chose a slightly different approach for the Flatotel, a 460-room midtown high-rise built by Rafael Viñoly in the 1980s. "I designed the furniture to look a little uncomfortable," Coben admits while touring the moodily lit lobby, where oversize chaise longues jostle with austere walnut cocktail tables. "Guests will recognize a bit of rigor here—that someone really thought this space out." For the ordered geometry and razor-sharp lines, he cites a sartorial inspiration: "It's not the Armani suit but the person *in* the Armani suit that stands out."

Rest assured, though, that perching on a wide-tufted, cowhide-upholstered lounge or tossing back a martini on a high-backed banquette is an entirely cushy experience. Flatotel's lobby and 80-seat restaurant are seamlessly stitched together by a shared Carlo Scarpa aesthetic, not to mention the communal dining table and 100-foot-long light trough piercing the glass-and-walnut partition between the two spaces. A honed granite floor in a basket-weave pattern and rough-hewn concrete-hued plaster walls further unite the two spaces. Throughout, Coben finessed every detail. In the restaurant, Moda, dining tables' inset strips of laminated tempered glass line up exactly with the light trough above, like an illusory reflection. Other tables were designed with slots into which tablecloths—tailored to the tables' precise dimensions—are threaded. The seating? Stately in appearance but eminently comfortable.

To enhance the continuity of the Flatotel experience, guest accommodations reiterate the play of geometry and the palettes →



Top: The hotel's walnut entry hints at the geometry within.

Above: A walnut-and-glass partition separates the lobby from the restaurant, Moda.



established downstairs. However, Coben continues, “I wasn’t going for a look that was too design-y. Just carefully thought out with the guest in mind.” Since this was his first hotel project, he tapped into his own experience as a traveler to ponder just what it is that guests want: lots of light, a luxurious bathroom, and a great bed. Accordingly, he made the bed the primary feature of the guest rooms and suites. In larger ones, a freestanding bed unit in the middle of the space takes advantage of prime views and handles a variety of functions. The wide footboard, for instance, has built-in drawers as well as an upholstered top that functions as a bench; a desk is built into the back of the walnut headboard panels. And—in a final nod to fine tailoring—Coben sourced drapery and upholstery fabrics from a supplier to many a fashion house. —*Jen Renzi*

PROJECT TEAM: JOY CARDILLO; RON DESCHAMPS; CHRISTINE SCHOLTZ; KEENA SUH; LUIS BLANC; SVEN JOHNSON; PAUL MAGUIRE; SUZANNE GELHART.

PENDANTS (LOBBY): FLOS USA. CHAIRS, BANQUETTES: MURROD INTERIORS UPHOLSTERY (FABRICATION); ELMO LEATHER (LEATHER). CHAISE COWHIDE: SPINNEYBECK. WALL PLASTERING: WALLPOWER. PEN SHELL PANELS: JANUS ETCIE. MOSAIC TILE (LOBBY, BATHROOM): TILES—A REFINED SELECTION. GRANITE, LIMESTONE FLOORING (LOBBY, BATHROOM): AKMER INTERNATIONAL. WALL GLASS (LOBBY), MIRROR (BATHROOM): DYNAMIC GLASS & MIRROR. CUSTOM TABLES (LOBBY), CUSTOM FURNITURE (GUEST ROOM): ARTCO CONTRACT FURNISHINGS. CHAIRS (RESTAURANT): CHAIRMASTERS. BANQUETTE UPHOLSTERY: MAHARAM. DRAPERY FABRICATION, INSTALLATION (GUEST ROOM): MASON CONTRACT PRODUCTS. DRAPERY, UPHOLSTERY FABRICS: EDPA USA. CARPET: MOHAWK GROUP THROUGH ARCHITECTURAL FLOORING RESOURCES. FLOOR LAMPS: ANDREW GARY THROUGH ROBIN REIGI ART & OBJECTS. DESK CHAIRS: HERMAN MILLER. MILLWORK: PREMIER WOODCRAFT. MEP: MGJ ASSOCIATES. STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: CANTOR SEINUK GROUP. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: NORTH BROADWAY CONSTRUCTION CORP.



Left: A bathroom features a pedestal sink and a floor of Bulgarian limestone with iridescent glass-mosaic tile. The walnut storage niche is set into the mirror.

Right, from top: A desk is built into the back of the walnut headboard in a deluxe guest suite. The footboard also serves as a dresser.