

# ARCHITECTURAL RECOR

## The New York Edition

Citadel of style: The New York Edition hotel revitalizes an historic skyscraper with an interior that glamorously fuses past and present.



The bar area features a deep-gold backlit vitrine.

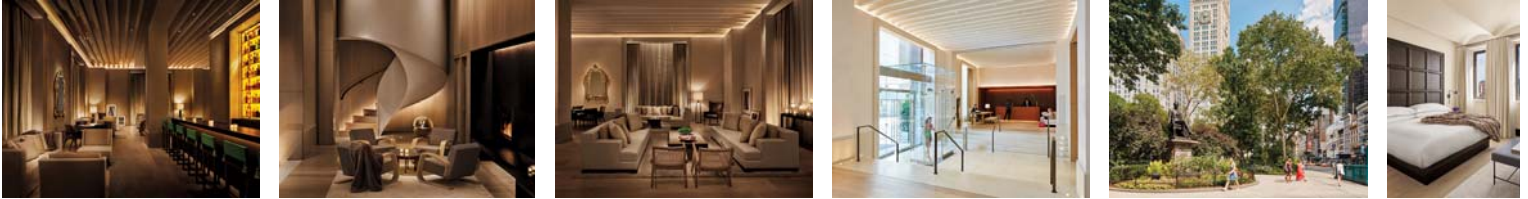
The New York Edition

Rockwell Group and Ian Schrager Company

New York City

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Photo © Nikolas Koenig



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*September 16, 2015*

*Suzanne Stephens*

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## Rockwell Group and Ian Schrager Company

### New York City

#### **Citadel of style: The New York Edition hotel revitalizes an historic skyscraper with an interior that glamorously fuses past and present.**

Since entrepreneur Ian Schrager opened the minimal-modern boutique hotel Morgans, in New York, in 1984, his slightly eccentric caravanseries have proved successful with a cosmopolitan crowd who spurn the conventional accommodations of U.S. hotel chains. So it was quite surprising when in 2007 Schrager began a partnership with the chain of chains Marriott International to create a global cluster of “modern luxury” Edition hotels. The first opened in Waikiki, Hawaii, in 2010, and then came more Editions in Istanbul, London, and Miami Beach before arriving this spring in New York. Aiming for an “understated timeless aesthetic,” Ian Schrager Company enlisted the Rockwell Group to help with the interior design of the first Edition in Manhattan.

The gimlet-eyed among us might remark that Marriott is to “luxury” what David Rockwell is to “understated”: the Rockwell Group is known for colorful, jazzy environments such as New York’s Tao Downtown restaurant, not to mention the steam-punkish stage set for the Broadway musical *Kinky Boots* and the bodacious backdrop for *Hair Spray*. Rockwell affably responds that he has designed a number of muted interiors. Hmm. Yes, there is the natural-wood-and-white Yotel near

Times Square. For his part, Schrager says he likes the architect not only because of his professionalism, but “because he can voice an opinion on the right color.” Even if the colors veer wildly from crème to caramel.

For this particular venture into the high end, Marriott took over one of the lesser-known architectural treasures of New York, the old Metropolitan Life Insurance Company Tower (now known as the Clocktower) on the east side of Madison Square Park, at Madison Avenue and 24th Street. The 700-foot-high skyscraper, completed in 1909 by Napoleon Le Brun & Sons, was the tallest in the city until the 792-foot-high Woolworth Building came along in 1913. It was the grandest addition to the Metropolitan Life complex, which the architects had begun in 1893, filling out a city block for the insurance company. The steel-framed campanile evokes the famous bell tower for St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice, but bearing large clocks on its four sides. Meanwhile, the neighborhood, once dominated by office buildings, banks, and a state court house, is now pulsing with restaurants, new apartment houses, and upgraded hotels for the young-money set.

In order for Schrager and Rockwell to successfully turn the 41-story structure into a hotel, they had to insert the requisite public spaces—lobby, reception, restaurant, and bar, plus health club and spa—into the small base, 75 by 85 feet, with a thick elevator core. As Schrager puts it, “It was like dealing with a Rubik’s Cube but at a greater scale.”

On top of that, it seemed a better fit for the the main entrance to be placed on 24th Street rather than Madison Avenue, even though access at grade is flanked by existing elevated lobby areas. As you enter, you ascend several steps to the reception desk on the east or the lounge on the west, or walk straight ahead (no steps) to the elevator bank. The look of the lobby, lounge, and reception is 1930s–40s art moderne, with the tall silk draperies and smoothly shaped tables and lamps designed by the Parisian designer Christian Liaigre, and with chairs by Alvar Aalto and other pieces inspired by Jean Michel Frank. The serene color scheme varies from silver, bronze, taupe, and charcoal, to vivid gold (for the backlit vitrine behind the bar). The streamlined style is given a Corbusian twist with a spiraling ivory-hued steel-plate stair in one end of the rear lobby. Here you also find a 30-foot-long recessed blackened-steel fireplace wall edging the sitting area.

Since the ground floor had been extensively remodeled in the 1960s, there was little to restore. The Rockwell Group tried to keep a sense of the shell by installing sand-colored cast-concrete floor tile and window moldings within the 14-foot-high spaces where ceilings are articulated by off-white beams of glass-fiber-reinforced concrete. These, along with cream-colored Venetian plaster walls infuse the setting with an assured sense of swank.

The Clocktower restaurant and its three dining rooms, a bar, and a billiard room, with outside access on Madison Avenue, occupy the second floor in the former executive offices. Here landmarked rooms, replete with restored mahogany wainscoting, oak floors, and deeply molded plaster ceilings provide dark, clubby spaces for the soigné clientele.

The guest rooms, 273 in all, with a color scheme based on shades of white, have new oak-paneled foyers and floors and dark walnut headboards. They impart a sense of the old (including existing shallow barrel-vaulted ceilings now painted and plastered), and the new that Schragger and Rockwell meant to—and did—achieve. The ambience that results, to quote Baudelaire in describing a place a traveler hopes to find, appears to be one of *luxe, calme, and volupté*.

Interior designer:

Ian Schragger Company, 818 Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10014

Rockwell Group, 5 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003

Architect of record:

AAI Architects, 14 Wall Street 2nd Floor New York NY 1000

Completion date: May 2015

## People

**Owner:** Marriott International (Client)

*Personnel in architect's firm who should receive special credit:*

**Interior designer:**

Ian Schragger Company, 818 Greenwich Street,  
New York, NY 10014

Rockwell Group, 5 Union Square West, New  
York, NY 10003

**Architect of record:**

AAI Architects

14 Wall Street 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10005

Partner and Vice Chairman, Michael  
Overington

Senior VP Architecture and Design, Paul

## Products

**Ground Floor**

Area Rug (Gallery Area)

Masland Carpet

Saraland, AL

Credenza (Concierge Desk)

Christian Liaigre

New York, NY

Mobile DJ Booth (Lobby Lounge)

Shimna LLC

New York, NY

Leather Upholstered Stool (Lounge/Bar/Gallery)

Cassina Contract/Tiger Leather

Meda, Italy/ Greensboro, NC

Decorative Overdrape w/Sheer (Ground Floor)

Bramson House/Donghia Inc

L. I. NY/ Milford, CT

Haslhofer  
EVP of Project Management, Robert Ashton  
Staff: Kirsten Bailey and Gilles-Fluer Boutry

Rockwell Group (Interior Design)  
5 Union Square West  
New York, NY 10003  
Edition New York Project Team  
President and Founder: David Rockwell  
Partner: Shawn Sullivan  
Project Managers: Ashley Yoon, Jae Chang  
Interior Designer: Saerom Moon  
Staff: Insun Cho, Stephen Croke, Michael  
Horowitz, Erica Klopman,  
Marek Kusio, James O'Meara, Elle Sears

I.S.C. Design Studio  
Brooklyn, NY

**Engineer(s):**

*Structural Engineers*  
DeSimone Consulting Engineers  
New York, NY

*MEP*  
ADS Engineers

**Consultant(s):**

*Lighting Consultant*  
Isometrix Lighting Design  
London, England

*Lighting Consultant (Exterior)*  
Fisher Marantz Stone  
New York, NY

*Lighting Consultant (BOH/EM)*  
WALD Studio LLC  
New York, NY

Overdrape Fabric  
Christian Liaigre  
New York, NY

Sheer Fabric  
Donghia Inc  
Milford, CT

Wood Blinds (Ground Floor)  
Bramson House  
L. I. NY

Table Lamp (Lobby)  
CRW Lighting Inc.  
Deer Park, NY

Floor Lamp (Lobby)  
Christian Liaigre  
New York, NY

Floor Lamp (Lounge/Bar)  
CRW Lighting Inc.  
Deer Park, NY

Concierge Desk (Lobby)  
Christian Liaigre  
New York, NY

Linen Textured Table (Lounge)  
Coast to Coast Designs  
Coconut Grove, FL

Round Bronze Metal Table (Lounge)  
Shimna LLC  
New York, NY

Round Stone Table (Bar)  
Shimna LLC  
New York, NY

*Audio/Visual Consultant*

EL Media Group

New York, NY

*Acoustic Consultant*

Shen Milson Wilke, LLC

New York, NY

*Kitchen Consultant*

Next Step Design

Annapolis, MD

**Photographer(s):**

Nikolas Koenig

917.721.3922

Rectangular Wood Top Table (Gallery)

Artco International Inc.

Ontario, Canada

Round Coffee Table (Fireplace)

Shimna LLC

New York, NY

Lounge Chair (Lounge)

Matzform

Shanghai, China

Lounge Chair Upholstery (Ground Floor)

Holly Hunt

New York, NY

Lounge Chair (Bar Area)

A. Rudin

Los Angeles, CA

Lounge Chair Upholstery (Ground Floor)

Kvadrat

Ebeltoft, Denmark

Sofa (Lounge/Bar)

Quality & Company/Jim Thompson

Concord, Canada/New York, NY

Love Seat (Lounge)

Quality & Company/Christian Liaigre

Concord, Canada/ New York, NY

Sofa (Gallery)

Quality & Company/Jim Thompson

Concord, Canada/ New York, NY

Lounge Chair (Fireplace)

M2L

New York, NY

Lounge Chair Upholstery (Fireplace)

Maharam

New York, NY

**Floor 2**

Leather Host Station

Shimna LLC

New York, NY

Host Stand Upholstery

Holly Hunt

New York, NY

Floor Lamp (Restaurant)

Christian Liaigre

New York, NY

Barstool

Artistic Frame

New York, NY

Barstool Upholstery

Upper South Studio

Winston-Salem, NC

Chandelier (Gold Bar)

Eric Schmitt

Saint-Pierre-lès-Nemours, France

Four-Seat Dining Table (Restaurant)

Saint Damase

Quebec Canada

Two-Seat Dining Table (Restaurant)

Shimna LLC

New York, NY

Chandelier (Dining Halls)

Eric Schmitt

Saint-Pierre-lès-Nemours, France