The New York Edition


The bar area features a deep-gold backlit vitrine.
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Suzanne Stephens

Rockwell Group and Ian Schrager Company

New York City


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 Napolean 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 Schrager 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 Schrager 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 Schrager 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)
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