

MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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BUSINESS

Ace Hotel New York

Musical beds

New York

New York hardly needs more "up-and-coming" neighbourhoods or "hip" hotels. But with Seattle-based Ace Hotel Group's revitalisation of the Breslin Hotel on 29th and Broadway, a forgotten district just north of Madison Square Park (now NOMAD) is about to be relevant again.

Alex Calderwood, West Coast entrepreneur and co-owner of the hotel group, launched the inspired, imaginatively restored and musician/dog-friendly Ace Hotels in Seattle and Portland in 1998 and 2007. He is now directing his talents to the 247-room Ace Hotel New York.

To appreciate the long-forgotten and unloved Breslin hotel, just look up. Above the ugly shops is a beautifully preserved landmark building. In fact, the entire neighbourhood (from 25th to 29th street between Madison and Sixth Avenue) is a landmark district, and the hotel's vision is to build on its independent spirit, musical history (Tin Pan Alley was one block away) and architectural presence.

Creatives have already moved nearby. The studio of fashion designer Isabel Toledo and her artist husband Ruben is visible from the hotel. Gray Advertising has just rented the old toy manufacturer's building four blocks away. And down the street is the Art Directors Club of NY.

Ace Hotel's approach has been one of "resourceful rehab". The hotel will be furnished from salvage shops and reupholstered Brimfield flea market discoveries. The 5.5m-high lobby will have a library and a communal table for hanging out and checking emails.

The deluxe-bohemian rooms will have Ferrari-red Music Hall turntables, a supply of vinyl and Gibson guitars. Textures are retro-chic glossy black window-shutters, Pendleton wool blankets and leather sofa beds to encourage sleepovers.

Each desk holds stark Japanese stationery, pencils and sheet music paper in case you're inspired. Larger rooms will have Smeg refrigerators ("maxi-bars") and the bathrobes are custom-made jersey boxing-styles by Wings + Horns from Canada (see *Fashion Briefing* page 109), which only sell at United Arrows in Japan.



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Street-level shops will include Portland's Stumptown Coffee Roasters (the best in the world according to NPR); Rudy's Barber Shop from Seattle, a new restaurant by Spotted Pig owner Ken Friedman, Brooklyn's Project 8 boutique and a Universal News. Calderwood calls it "a rich, layered experience of culture and ideas with premium retail at every level, in a relaxed, non-stuffy way".

Ace Hotel New York opens in January, virtually simultaneously with Ace Palm Springs, a repurposed Howard Johnson's motel. Calderwood says, "The personality is in the little moments. That kind of stuff doesn't cost more, but makes the experience memorable." That's why Ace New York doesn't need to try to be the next cool place. It just will be. — AMIG
acehotel.com/newyork



05

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARTIN AMELFROG

- 01 Alex Calderwood at Ace Hotel New York
- 02 En-suite bathroom
- 03 Complimentary electric guitar strings
- 04 One of the rooms
- 05 Customised stationery and sheet music paper
- 06 Storage space
- 07 Record player, provided for guests