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Jean-Louis Deniot Brings Back Old Glamour in Waldorf Astoria New York

By Fang Block

Impressions: 236,800



Jean-Louis Deniot, interior designer of The Towers of the Waldorf Astoria (inset) and rendering of the Grand Salon Courtesy of Jean-Louis Deniot; Courtesy of Noe & Associates / The Boundary

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The iconic Waldorf-Astoria New York is celebrating its 90th anniversary on Friday. But it has more than its storied history to celebrate.

Last year, it also unveiled private residences, which, converted from hotel rooms, allow buyers to own a piece of Waldorf Astoria history.

The prominent landmark has been under renovation in the past few years, with the interiors reimaged by Paris-based architect and interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot, who has paid great attention to the building's original Art Deco design.

"I had a business in New York for more than 15 years, and had the guts to compete for the job [designing the interiors of Waldorf Astoria] because I am already in love with the idea of working on such a big historic element," Deniot says.

"We got the job because we had experience in restoring historical structures around the world," he says. "In each building we have worked on, ranging from the 15th to 20th century, we have always paid homage to its history."

Taking inspiration from the exterior of the Waldorf Astoria, created in the 1930s in Art Deco style, Deniot handpicked every fixture and finish, and created custom cabinets, vanities, lighting fixtures, and mosaics, done in a modern French Art Deco style, to honor the building's history.

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Rendering of living room Noe & Associates / The Boundary

Deniot, 47, established his Paris-based firm in 2000. His work has since expanded across six continents, encompassing opulent private homes, boutique hotels, yachts, and residential interiors and amenities at prominent new developments.

He was also responsible for designing the 50,000 square feet of private residential amenities, which include a 82-foot swimming pool with a skylight in the space of the original Starlight Roof—which had hosted Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne, and Benny Goodman in the 1930s and '40s.

Other amenities include a Winter Garden bar and lounge, a Grand Salon for entertaining, and the Presidential Library, which gives a nod to the Presidential history of the Waldorf Astoria, where every President from Hoover to Obama has stayed.

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Starlight Pool Noe & Associates / The Boundary

“If you have to be enclosed somewhere, like during the Covid-19 lockdowns, you might want to be in the most beautiful building in the world,” Deniot says. “Here you can preserve your health and wellness, and enjoy the entertainment, amenities and a dream life.”

Branded under the Towers of the Waldorf Astoria, there will be 375 private residences atop the 375-room hotel portion. The building is slated for reopening in 2023.

When the Waldorf Astoria New York opened on Park Avenue on Oct. 1, 1931, as the largest and tallest hotel in the world, it immediately captured public imagination. Over the decades, it has been New York’s “Unofficial Palace,” hosting a slew of presidents, dignitaries, and celebrities, in addition to glamorous galas and events.

In honor of its 90th anniversary on Friday, a website, Waldorf Stories, is being launched to feature an oral history of the hotel, told through people that experienced the hotel at its grandest.

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