

BUILD

For \$18.75 Million, You Can Live Lavishly in the Waldorf Astoria

The building's Art Deco charm has been adapted for the 372 residences and over 50,000 square feet of new amenities.



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By Jane L. Levere

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The Waldorf Astoria New York, which has been closed since 2017, is selling new residences, with some already occupied before the revamped hotel reopens this spring.

The hotel — an Art Deco masterpiece by Schultze and Weaver on Park Avenue in Manhattan — always had a residential component: It was home to everyone from Cole Porter, Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor to Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower. The building's exterior was designated a landmark by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1993 and parts of its interior were designated by the same body in 2017.

The residences in the original building were hotel rooms or suites for which occupants paid long-term room rates.

The building has been renamed Waldorf Astoria New York, with residents of Waldorf Astoria Residences New York having their own entrance at 303 Park Avenue, slightly north of the hotel's main entrance. Floors one to five will be occupied by the hotel's lobby and function spaces, and floors six to 12 will contain hotel guest rooms.



The Park Avenue facade at the Waldorf Astoria New York. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

The 372 residences, ranging in size from 564 square feet to over 6,500 square feet, with 125 layouts, will occupy floors 19 to 52. The amenities for the residences will occupy floors 19 and 25 to 27. Prices start from \$1.875 million for studios to \$18.75 million for four bedrooms. Sales of the residences — managed by Douglas Elliman Development Marketing — began in 2021, and owners began occupying them last December.

Residents of the Waldorf Astoria Residences New York can buy furnished residences, according to Loretta Shanahan, senior director of sales. “For individuals who spend weekdays here and weekends elsewhere, purchasing a furnished residence ensures a seamless, effortless lifestyle,” she said.



Bedrooms in model apartments have warm or cool color palettes. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

B & B Italia is providing warm and cool color palettes for furnishings and accessories in the residences. Kitchen appliances are by Gaggenau. Bang & Olufsen is offering optional audiovisual packages. Bathrooms contain heated floors, rain showers and custom-designed vanities.

The hotel was sold for \$1.95 billion in 2014 by Hilton, its previous owner, to Anbang Insurance Group, a Chinese company that closed the building in 2017 to restore and renew it, aiming to reopen it in four years.



A kitchen and breakfast bar at the Waldorf Astoria Residences New York. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

But the Chinese government seized control of Anbang in 2018, sending its chairman to prison for fraud, and created the Daija Insurance Group in 2019 to assume control over Anbang's assets. Daija now owns the hotel and residences.

The Waldorf Astoria New York's restoration and renewal process has dragged on far longer than originally anticipated, because of its change in ownership, global supply chain issues and increased costs resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, or S.O.M., was hired by Daija to develop and present a plan to the Landmarks Preservation Commission for the Waldorf that blends adaptive reuse, preservation and restoration.

"This is a historic building and, as such, has columns, beams and punched windows, instead of flat slabs and glass curtain walls like a new building might," said Frank Mahan, a principal and adaptive reuse practice leader at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. "We used those features to give the residential units character."



A primary bathroom contains heated floors, rain showers and custom-designed vanities. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

S.O.M., which has collaborated with Building Conservation Associates on the project, discovered in its research that the original Waldorf building contained close to 5,600 windows with steel frames painted warm gray. The firm also discovered that only one of the original windows still existed, and used it as a model for the building's new windows, which have an aluminum frame and energy-efficient double glazing.

The very top of the building contains two copper pinnacles that originally housed the Waldorf Astoria's mechanical systems. The copper has been fully restored, and the two pinnacles have been converted into penthouse duplexes, whose specifics have yet to be released.

Residents will have access to over 50,000 square feet of new amenities, including a private porte-cochere, with 24-hour valet service, on East 50th Street between Park and Lexington Avenues; and a private club on the 19th floor described as "a first-class business facility."

The interior design of the residences is by the designer Jean-Louis Deniot, and Simon de Pury, an art collector and auctioneer, is curating artwork on display in the residences' private lobby and elsewhere.

The interviews below have been lightly edited for length and clarity.

Mr. Mahan on adaptive reuse:



Katherine Marks for The New York Times

To plan a new future for the Waldorf Astoria, we began with deep research into its history. We scrutinized the original architects' design intent, the building's existing construction conditions and the Waldorf's rich cultural history. Only by understanding its history, the changes made over time and contemporary requirements can we chart a new future for a building as significant as this.

By balancing preservation, restoration and adaptive reuse throughout, we leveraged the building's configuration — from column placement to window arrangement — to create character, rather than work against these elements. This has allowed us to create contemporary homes and amenities in which the past is nevertheless present.

Ms. Shanahan on residential offerings:

Our clientele spans nearly every corner of the globe. Many are downsizing or seeking a change in lifestyle. For those residing in buildings that may not provide a full range of amenities, our property offers a new standard of living. Today, both rental and condominium buildings in New York are increasingly focused on delivering enhanced amenities to meet the evolving expectations of their residents.

Mr. Deniot on the interior design:



Katherine Marks for The New York Times

In every aspect, across every function, you can sense the Art Deco influence, but it's an Art Deco like you've never experienced before. I pushed it further into Modernism, beyond the traditional forms we're accustomed to. It's reminiscent, but feels like a fresh take on the Art Deco spirit.