

## Taking the Plunge

For celebrated Mexican hotelier Carlos Couturier, it's time to sink or swim in New York City.

| By James Heidenry |

Having spent his childhood splitting his time between a farmhouse surrounded by citrus groves and a beach house where he watched the sun come up, Carlos Couturier seemed destined for a slow walk though life, enjoying its simple pleasures along the way. And indeed that is how it started once he graduated from college. "I went to Florence and lived there for a full year doing nothing," he says. "It was the best year of my life." But Couturier eventually returned to Mexico and joined the family business. Selling citrus to supermarket chains around the world required extensive travel, which in turn forced him to focus on his jet-setting needs. "I came to know precisely what I wanted in a hotel experience," he says. "Then one day, while studying for my M.B.A. in college in Mexico City, I met my future business partner, Moises Micha." They built their first design-minded hotel there in 2000, and the HôtelAmericano—their first in the U.S.—opening in Chelsea this June will be No. 11. The hotel has all the basics (deluxe rooms, a rooftop pool, engaging architecture) and all the details (staff uniforms designed by Loden Dager, Bowery Lane bicycles for guest use, hand towels imported from Japan) that New Yorkers have come to expect of their boutique hotels. It's the overall aesthetic, though, that Couturier says will set Americano apart. "The goal is to express our Latin culture," he explains. "But we don't want to be obvious about it, and we want to exude a young spirit." No doubt a thankful nod to a gloriously misspent youth. **M**

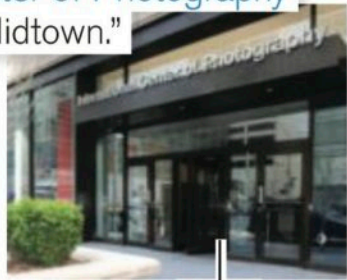
**JOB SITE** Carlos Couturier in the pool of his HôtelAmericano in Chelsea, opening in June.





## Couturier's City Essentials

"As far as NYC cultural institutions go, I really like the **International Center of Photography** in Midtown."

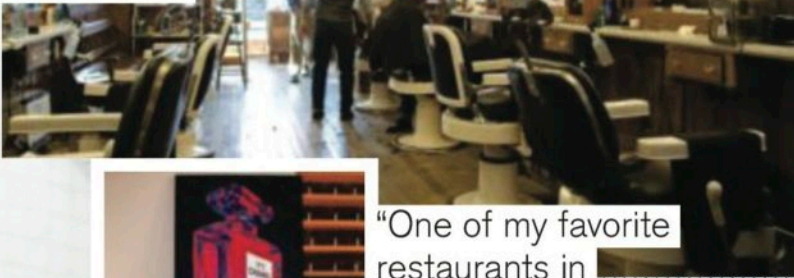


"This summer I can't wait to walk along the **new addition of the High Line**."



"Marilyn Monroe, New York City, 1956," by Elliott Erwitt, currently on display at ICP.

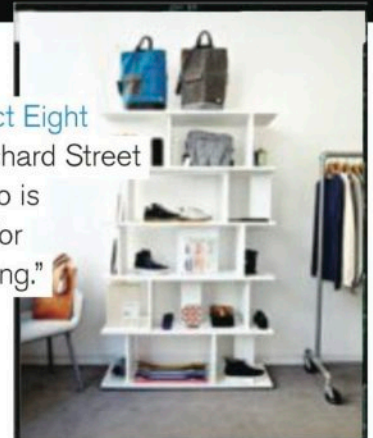
"I really appreciate the little pleasures I only seem to enjoy here, like a haircut from **Sammy** at **F.S.C. Barber** downtown or a sweat at the **Russian & Turkish Baths** in the East Village."



"For drinks with friends I like the bar at **Raoul's** in Soho."



"**Project Eight** on Orchard Street in Soho is great for shopping."



"One of my favorite restaurants in Manhattan is **La Petite Maison**—it's fun and very Euro."

