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For When the Galleries Put You to Sleep: HôtelAmericano Opens in Chelsea, Luxurious and Art-Free



The front desk of HôtelAmericano

By Ann Binlot
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NEW YORK— When Mexican hotelier **Grupo Habita** decided to build a hotel in the heart of Chelsea, the home of approximately 300 galleries, they decided that the walls of the rooms would be bare of any art. An interesting choice, considering the owners are avid collectors and decorating hotels with paintings, sculptures, and photographs is a major current trend. But the premise behind Grupo Habita's decision makes sense: why hang art in the **HôtelAmericano**, when there is art all around it?

Neutral walls didn't hold back the hotel's designer, **Arnaud Montigny**, the man behind uber-hip Paris retail outlet **Colette**, who found inspiration in the look 1950s and '60s America. For the lobby, Montigny selected a black leather sofa, rope and steel side chairs, and a pair of gunmetal pendants. Montigny went to Milan in decorating the rooms, for pieces like the Sacco, a shiny vinyl beanbag chair from the '60s, and an Alessi Optic alarm clock by **Joe Columbo**. He also opted for poufs by **Eric Jourdan**, a French designer.

In the rooms, the beds sit on wooden platforms inspired by Japanese ryokans. **Loden Dager**-designed denim robes hang in the bathrooms. As far as the room service, guests have the option of ordering a bento box from the in-room iPad, which also has a

HôtelAmericano playlist of music and listings of cultural activities. Custom Alpaca throw blankets, 400 count European percale sheets, and fireplaces are some of the other amenities.

HotelAmericano doubles as a gathering place for the surrounding galleries and other creative businesses. The Americano, a restaurant helmed by chef Olivier Reginensi, serves Latin and French fusion. Two bars where you can drink the hotel's own mezcal — BarAmericano and El Privado — are located in the subterranean level. But the gem is La Piscine, a rooftop bar and restaurant with, as the name implies, a swimming pool that will turn into a winter thermal bath in the cooler months.

Even the location is prime; the 10-story glass structure encased in a metal mesh facade by Mexican architect Enrique Norten is nestled right at the High Line. Bowery Lane Bicycles are available for those who to experience Manhattan by bike. Book now for the Armory Show or when Frieze hits next year; the HôtelAmericano's 56 rooms are already filling up fast as it finds itself to be the New York art world's hotel du jour.

HÔTEL AMERICANO
518 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK
212-216-0000