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Hotels

Behind the scenes at HôtelAmericano

By Emma Lundin

NEW YORK CITY

Sexy, global, Latin-spirited - New York City is the inspiration behind the new HôtelAmericano

You might think that New York's hotel scene has seen it all, but you'd be wrong. After a decade honing their concept and design in Mexico with hotels like Basico, Distrito Capital and Boca Chica, hoteliers Carlos Couturier and Moises Micha of

Grupo Habita have just made their first foray abroad, with the sleek, stylish, 56-room HôtelAmericano in New York.

Best described as a boutique Mexico-Manhattan fusion hotel, theAmericano takes inspiration from its West Chelsea

district, and aims to help guests live like locals by letting them in on all the neighbourhood secrets. Like all hotels by Mexican hotel group Grupo Habita, theAmericano has a special focus on contemporary art (Couturier and Micha both sit on the boards of several fine-art institutes in Mexico City, and their hotels often host exhibitions and openings) - a theme that fuses well with the minimalist exterior, created by Enrique Norten of Ten Arquitectos, and the interiors by MCH's Arnaud Montigny.

'The challenge was to make the space feel casual, sophisticated, sexy and gritty at the same time,' Carlos Couturier says. 'Manhattan is a very Latin-infused city - things are less rigid here than in other major capitals, and NYC feels casual on daily basis. It's sexy and very global, and we wanted HôtelAmericano to capture this city spirit.'

When searching for a location for their hotel, Couturier and Micha found exactly what they were looking for in West Chelsea.

'It has an understated sophistication, an original grittiness that is rare to find in NYC these days - and a connection to the future of the city through the High Line Park,' Couturier says. 'West Chelsea is full of small secrets; it's a real neighbourhood.'

His own favourite addresses include Japanese restaurant Izakya Ten at 207 10th Avenue, intimate tapas bar El Quinto Pino at 401 West 24th Street, and 'an amazing bookshop at 195 10th Avenue by 22nd Street called Printed Matter - worth a detour even if you are staying on the Upper East Side'.

The active focus on the hotel's location and events is what sets theAmericano apart on New York City's crowded hotel scene. Guests will find iPads filled with insider tips to local restaurants, bars, galleries and shops in their rooms, as well as Manhattan-made Bowery Bikes in the lobby to use when exploring the neighbourhood. But its focus on the location doesn't mean this design hotel has neglected its own amenities - the rooftop pool that turns into a hot tub in winter, the TVs and WiFi, the 24-hour room service in bento boxes; plus three bars, a café and a restaurant.

This is the sort of holistic hotel service we approve of.

HôtelAmericano, 518 West 27th Street, Chelsea, New York (www.hotel-americano.com).
Doubles from \$375.