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GREATER NEW YORK

New Life in West Chelsea



The rooftop bar at the HôtelAmericano.



The 27th Street facade.

Once a popular stretch for clubs, 27th Street in West Chelsea has more recently become unassuming rue for art galleries. But, with the opening of the two-month-old HôtelAmericano and the buzzy performance arts space the McKittrick Hotel just next door, the neighborhood is quietly growing popular once again—quiet being the operative word, at least according to the Americano’s owner, Carlos Couturier.

“We don’t want to be a trendy hotel,” he said. “We want to be a neighborhood hotel.” Mr. Couturier, who co-owns Grupo Habita, a company that operates luxury hotels throughout Mexico, said he purchased the Americano space, his first in the U.S., four years ago. He was looking for an area that “wasn’t an obvious choice” and “wasn’t gentrified.”

The hotel, which has only 56 rooms, has been at or near capacity on most

nights since its opening, Mr. Couturier said. It’s often filled with people who aren’t staying there, too, spilling over from nearby galleries into one of the space’s many hangouts, including a street-level restaurant with outdoor dining (the Americano), a lobby café, a rooftop bar (La Piscine), and two basement bars (Bar Americano and El Privado).

Even with a litany of drinking spots, Americano has become something of an alternative to the nearby perma-packed locales the Dream Downtown or the Standard. “Mainly it’s a smart crowd here,” said Mr. Courtier. “The art guys have fun, but it’s also about exchanging ideas. It’s a big compliment that they choose to come here.”

He added that the goal is to feel like “old New York. I didn’t want it to be ‘happening.’”

— Mike Vilensky