

suite life

Designer Kim Deetjen of Burlington, Vermont-based TruexCullins Architecture and Interior Design has created a niche for herself: suites. Her newest is the remodel of 22 cottages and suites at the Casa Madrona Hotel & Spa in downtown Sausalito, California. "Since 1885 this historic hotel, including a Victorian mansion and the cottages, has been a symbol in the area that has a strong



nautical and artisan community influence," she explains. "We wanted to incorporate the property's history and location, as well as embrace green design concepts." Since the spaces were small, she viewed it like designing an interior of a boat, where every inch was carefully programmed, outfitting them with wood floors, clean lines, and a color palette that complemented and framed the breathtaking views of the San Francisco Bay. "One thing that is mandatory for a suite, unlike a guestroom, it must be multifunctional. In addition to the ultimate bed experience, both in comfort and aesthetic, the suites must have a lounging area that is a comfortable place for the business traveler to work as well as a relaxing space for vacationing families," she says.

IN THE BURG

The up-and-coming neighborhood of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, has seen a slew of development in terms of condos and restaurants in the last year. Now it is about to get its first full-service, luxury boutique hotel: the Hotel Williamsburg & Residences. "I fell in love with the neighborhood—it's not fully gentrified but still has a lot of amenities," explains Ben Graves of Graves World Hospitality, the developer of the hotel.

For the design, Graves turned to New York-based Studio Gaia for the public spaces (including a pool terrace, cocktail lounge, and rooftop bar) and the 64 guestrooms (PleskowRael Architecture handled the sunken restaurant). "It's bold and strong with geometrical lines and shapes," explains Heaohn Lee, Studio Gaia's senior designer. The hotel's orange travertine stones at the entrance lead guests inside, where the lobby is done in a beige, black, and orange color palette paired with materials like glass tiles, charred wood, and stainless steel for "a modern, yet industrial version of Williamsburg"; and the center of the lobby is defined by an underfoot trickling river of water punctuated by a fireplace, which is all reflected in the mirror-finished ceiling. Upstairs, guestrooms bring the nearby park indoors, thanks to a wall photograph of trees, organic leaf-shaped orange chairs, and bamboo floors. "The area needed a modern destination for tourists to stay in and the locals to hang out," Lee says.

"We didn't want it to be too slick. It really has a neighborhood feel with elements of nostalgia," Graves adds, pointing to guestroom keys being housed in boxes behind the check-in desk, and guestrooms featuring vintage record players.



the future is here

YOTEL, the innovative UK brand that made a name for itself with its airline cabin-inspired guestrooms, is set to open its first city center location—stateside. Designed by Rockwell Group in collaboration with UK-based design firm Softroom (most famous for their work with Virgin Atlantic Airways on both the Upper Class Clubhouse at Heathrow Airport and the Upper-Class cabins on board their trans-Atlantic flights), YOTEL New York at Times Square West, brings the efficiency, flexibility, and forward-thinking technology of its London and Amsterdam airport properties into an innovative, urban hotel. "Designing an environment that is transformable from the second you enter a space immediately creates a unique, modern experience for the guest," says David Rockwell. "By focusing our design for the brand's first U.S. flagship on the concept of convertibility of space, we were able to bring a dynamic experience to travelers and New Yorkers alike."

"A key design challenge has been to develop a personality that strikes the right balance between efficiency and warmth," says Softroom director Oliver



Salway, "It's more like product design on a giant scale. Every detail contributes towards the comfort and convenience of the guest, while at the same time being elegant and emotionally appealing."

Highlights in the 669 guest cabins include a bed that transforms into a space-saving lounging position at the touch of a button, a Techno Wall that houses a flatscreen TV and storage components, and a sleek, modern bathroom wrapped in glass; 19 first cabin suites, some with private outdoor terraces and jacuzzis; three VIP two-cabin suites equipped with

rotating beds to maximize the unparalleled views of the Manhattan skyline, three-sided cube-like fireplaces, a billiard table, and wraparound terraces.

The property will also be home to FOUR, a partnership between YOTEL and chef Richard Sandoval that boasts close to 18,000 square feet of transformable public space, including Dohyo, a 110-seat restaurant created in the size and scope of a traditional Japanese Sumo wrestling ring, with a hydraulic-controlled floor that

can be raised and lowered, a lounge and bar with DJ booth, gym, studio space for events and cinema screenings, and a 4,000-square-foot outdoor terrace, the largest of any hotel in New York City.

And even jaded New Yorkers passing by can't help but be intrigued by YOBOT—a theatrically lit robotic baggage drop-off machine whose inner workings are exposed to create a mechanical performance for the guests as it loads and stores their belongings.