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When It Comes To Lobby Design, First Impressions Matter

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86.9M Unique Monthly Visitors



Lobby of The Wales, Carnegie Hill, New York City. VMI STUDIOS

It's not just job interviews and first dates that call for making a good first impression. High-end residential buildings must exert the same favorable impact from the very first moment well-heeled prospective buyers stride into their grand lobbies.

In many New York City buildings, architects and designers stop at nothing to generate gasp-worthy first looks by means of top-shelf design and, increasingly, extraordinary works of art. The following examples clearly demonstrate just how much effort and skill often go into the creation of heart-stirring, drop-dead gorgeous lobbies.

The Wales, Carnegie Hill, New York City

Stepping into this hotel-to-condo conversion at 1295 Madison Avenue is like walking agog into a display gallery of a fine art museum.

Coffered ceilings, custom moldings and floors blending Zimbabwe Black granite and Bianco Estremoz and Gricio Nicol marble grace the lobby. The warm glow of a custom brass chandelier brightens the antique wall mirrors, and a striking wood-burning fireplace and seating offer an enduring focal point. Some have observed the fireplace and long corridor of marble evoke a pre-war feel.

“The lobby of the Wales has been designed as if it was the entry hall of a private residence,” says Pietro Scaglione, art director of Paris-based design firm PINTO, known for decorating the world’s most opulent hostelrys and office buildings, along with private jets and yachts. “[It features] noble materials such as marble and aged mirrors, special attention to details and finishes, [and] art works and sculptures creating an original look inspired by the neoclassical architecture of the building with a modern European twist.”

One Boerum Place, Downtown Brooklyn, New York City



Lobby at One Boerum Place. AVERY HALL

This luxury rental was designed to exude a spa-like atmosphere, The Bespoke lobby showcases custom oak woodwork, stone flooring with oak trim and a 10-foot-tall glass entrance above a massive oak door. A Gachot-designed Verde Green Italian marble desk and bench stands out among the lobby’s custom furnishings.

Rotating artworks curated by Picture Room co-founder Sandeep Salter are joined by a custom objet d’art sculpted by Dustin Yellin, an acclaimed local artist.

Jolie, Financial District, New York City



Lobby of Jolie. FIELD CONDITION

A rich and welcoming ambience beckons to visitors entering the double-height lobby of Jolie on Greenwich. Anchored by a granite and blackened steel concierge desk, the Deborah Berke Partners lobby radiates skilled workmanship and emphasizes biophilic elements. The lobby is further elevated by two art pieces by James Perkins and Petr Weigl, each commissioned by developer Trinity Place Holdings.

“A serene escape from the bustle of Lower Manhattan, the lobby of the Jolie is quiet and grounded with natural materials like the jet mist granite floors that support the rift sawn oak undulating walls and baffled ceiling,” said Stephen Brockman, partner at Deborah Berke Partners, a New York City-based architecture practice whose institutional, residential and commercial projects have been described as “true-to-place and life-enriching.” “We selected these materials to connect to the history of the place – the forested island of Manhattan, with outcropping of stone that support the land of Manhattan,” he continued. “The indirect lighting is meant to mimic sunlight making its way to the forest floor.”

The Westly, Upper West Side, New York City

Another head-spinning, double-height lobby can be found at 251 West 91st Street on Manhattan’s Upper West Side. There, this 20-story boutique condominium is graced by a lobby offering a helix-shaped grand staircase that opens to the building’s second-floor amenity

spaces. Among those spaces is a fitness center and yoga studio, lounge, children's playroom, youth room for gaming and music room.

Regardless of which lobby they find most appealing, buyers are apt to agree each is respectful of the old adage, "You don't get a second chance to make a good first impression."

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