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# hospitality design

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## LEGENDARY LOUNGE

To create the Star Lounge in the space beneath the fabled Chelsea Hotel in New York City, owners Charles Ferri and Vekrum Kaushik strayed from traditional nightclub and lounge designers. "I wanted a design company with fresh ideas and concepts that would set Star Lounge apart from



all other venues, and the only way to truly do that was to go outside the nightlife box when it came to design," says Ferri.

To that end he brought in local architectural firm Richardson Sadeki, who is most widely known for modern, serene spaces like Bathhouse in Las Vegas and Bliss Spa in New York City. For their first lounge, the designers divided the space into three distinct areas subtly suggestive of a 1920s speakeasy, swank cabaret club, and posh gentlemen's lounge.

The VIP room (aptly named Room 100 in reference to the fateful suite where Sex Pistols' Sid Vicious killed Nancy) features soft lighting courtesy of three backlit, silk-screened chandeliers, and curtains that can be closed to ensure complete privacy.

In Room 200, the club, guests are invited to dance on banquettes lining the walls and running down the center of the room, which are lit from below in changing colors to project the dancer's silhouettes onto the walls. Wrought iron barstools front a rich toffee zebra wood bar in Room 300, while in the retro gentleman's bar, cocktails are named after famous Chelsea Hotel residents such as "The Socialite" (Edie Sedgwick) and "The Guitarist" (Jimi Hendrix).

## HISTORY REPEATING

With the title of "the longest continuously operating hotel in North America," the Palmer House in Chicago not only featured the first elevator, but it has been visited by some of the biggest names from Broadway, Hollywood, radio, and television, such as Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, and Sonny and Cher. Now 136 years after it debuted, Dallas- and Washington, D.C.-based firm ForrestPerkins is giving the historic hotel a fresh look.

"It brings great joy to know that you are part of a team that is preserving this grand dame's original and unique grandeur that is reflective of the 'real Chicago,'" says George Scammell, vice president of ForrestPerkins. "By maintaining a historical reference and adding a contemporary flair, we will provide a luxurious experience for today's guests."

Of the 1,639 rooms and suites, ForrestPerkins is responsible for the redesign of the first phase that includes 805 standard guestrooms, 54 suites (with adjoining rooms), the Penthouse Suite, and nine floors of guest corridors and elevator lobbies. (Local firm Loeb Schlossman & Hackl is restoring the hotel's entries and façade.)

As a nod to the hotel's original and notable peacock doors, corridor carpets feature a peacock print. Artwork throughout emphasizes the history of both the city and the hotel: photos of the 1893 World's Fair hang in guestrooms, suite artwork showcases local contemporary artists and other moments in Chicago's past, and corridor walls are decorated with photographs of the famous entertainers who have performed at the hotel's famed Empire Room.

Color prevails in the rooms. In the standard guestrooms, rich shades of green and black (inspired by the original design of the Empire Room) dominate, while suites are outfitted in lavender, chocolate, gold, blush, and powder blue tones reminiscent of the lobby's original terrazzo floor and pastel colored ceiling.

