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Richardson Sadeki's Star Lounge

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Stephane Dupoux The Man Behind the Scene



BY KELLY HUSHIN



In celebration of the artistic intellect and history of New York's TriBeCa, The Smyth Hotel, which will be operated by the Thompson Hotel Group, is set to break ground this November/December. Its interior spaces — designed by Richardson-Sadeki — work around building constraints and take advantage of the neighborhood's unique aesthetic.

"We basically wanted to do a hotel that is in competition with the SoHo hotels," said Heidar Sadeki, of Richardson-Sadeki. "We did not do a SoHo hotel; we did a TriBeCa hotel. We differentiated between the two neighborhoods."

And the difference, according to Sadeki, is "while SoHo is much more consumer oriented, TriBeCa is much more intellectually oriented."

"In the 70s, more radical artists and writers migrated to TriBeCa, and to this day, it still has those more radical characteristics," he said.

Partner in charge of the Smyth, Louis Hedgecock, AIA and partner of BBG-BBGM, worked with the design team to enunciate the "TriBeCa-feel." BBG was the architect.

"We tried very hard to work the design into the fabric of the neighborhood," said Hedgecock. "We asked, 'If you were building TriBeCa over again, what would it look like?'"

Hedgecock worked to create design plans that take advantage of the corner-space on the busy Chambers and West Broadway streets. Unlike many neighboring buildings, the Smyth's front corner will not be chamfered, but will rise all the way up its 135 feet; which was the highest the developers were allowed to build. The property is also set to have 15 residential ownership units.

Sadeki said the plan gives guests the opportunity to enjoy the outdoor scenery with the use of large windows — some floor-to-ceiling.

In addition to the windows, the modern furniture pieces which are sparsely-placed and low-to-the-ground, will maximize the guest's perception of space in each room.

"We wanted to bring in the loft-living quality into the hotel," said Sadeki. "Essentially, the difference between a loft and an apartment is the lack of compartmentalization. We're basically taking the approach of dividing the bedroom and bathroom with only glass so there is a visual connectivity between the spaces. The type of furniture we've chosen is very low. We have tried to bring the furniture down to create the feeling of a loft. When you look at the lofts, TriBeCa lofts are more industrial than SoHo lofts. We wanted to

keep this idea — these elements — in mind while we were designing."

"Beyond that, while the design is modern and minimalist, I do believe that we have very carefully and knowingly brought in an element of classicism. The design itself is modern, but it reinterprets classical elements." **BD**

Top Left: Rendering of the outside of Smyth under moonlight; Inset: Heidar Sadeki of Richardson-Sadeki; Left: Living room rendering

The Smyth Hotel

History Meets the 'Modern-Day' in TriBeCa



Star Lounge



Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll

Richardson Sadeki Revamps
the Basement of the Chelsea Hotel

BY ANNMARIE MARANO

AM: "So were you a Sex Pistols fan before this project?"

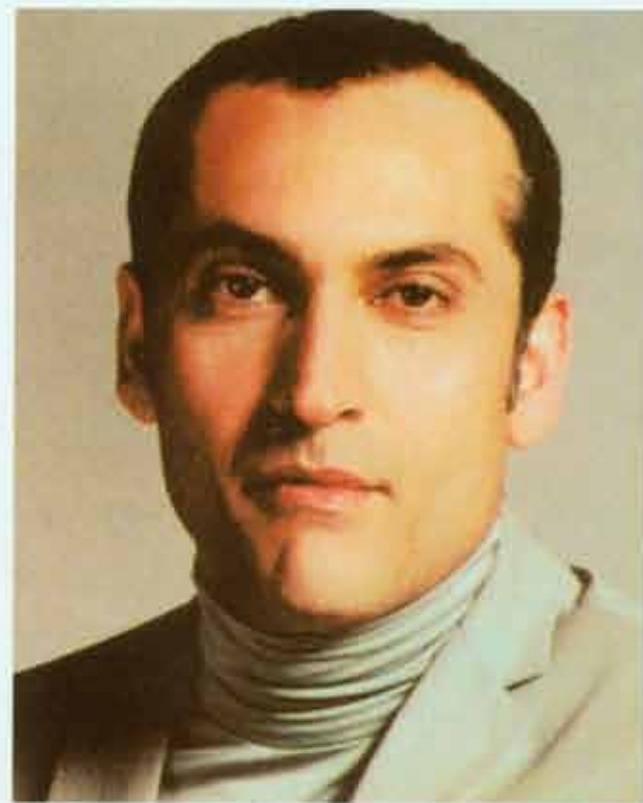
HS: "No, actually I wasn't. I was a Rolling Stones fan. What does Sex Pistols have to do with it?"

AM: "Well that's where Sid Vicious, of the Sex Pistols, allegedly killed his girlfriend — in Room 100 of the Chelsea Hotel."

HS: "I actually had completely blacked out that the alleged murder had taken place in Room 100. And I didn't know that the VIP was called Room 100."

AM: "Well that's what it says on the website."

HS: "That's nice, I like that."



Although Mick Jagger did not frequent the halls of the Chelsea Hotel (who knows, maybe he did), it was often visited by other greats, including Stanley Kubrick, Arthur Miller and Andy Warhol.

And when Richardson Sadeki took on the task of renovating the club in the basement of it (known as "Serena" for eight years prior) their goal was certainly to celebrate its history.

"Well that is kind of the idea," Heidar Sadeki said of how Room 100 re-calls a tragic event at the hotel. "The idea was to in fact maintain some of the nostalgia of the historical Chelsea Hotel, but kind of have a couple of other rooms that were ghost-free."

So in other words — be sure to give reverence to the sorrow of the space, while not putting a damper on the party.

"So essentially, the room that is called Room 100, or the VIP, is the room that references the history of the Chelsea Hotel. That in fact it celebrates the melancholy of it. That it is meant to be, both in terms of environmental expression and

the music — it is more quiet."

And it was through one simple element that they achieved that: a canvas photograph of a back-lit, black chandelier.

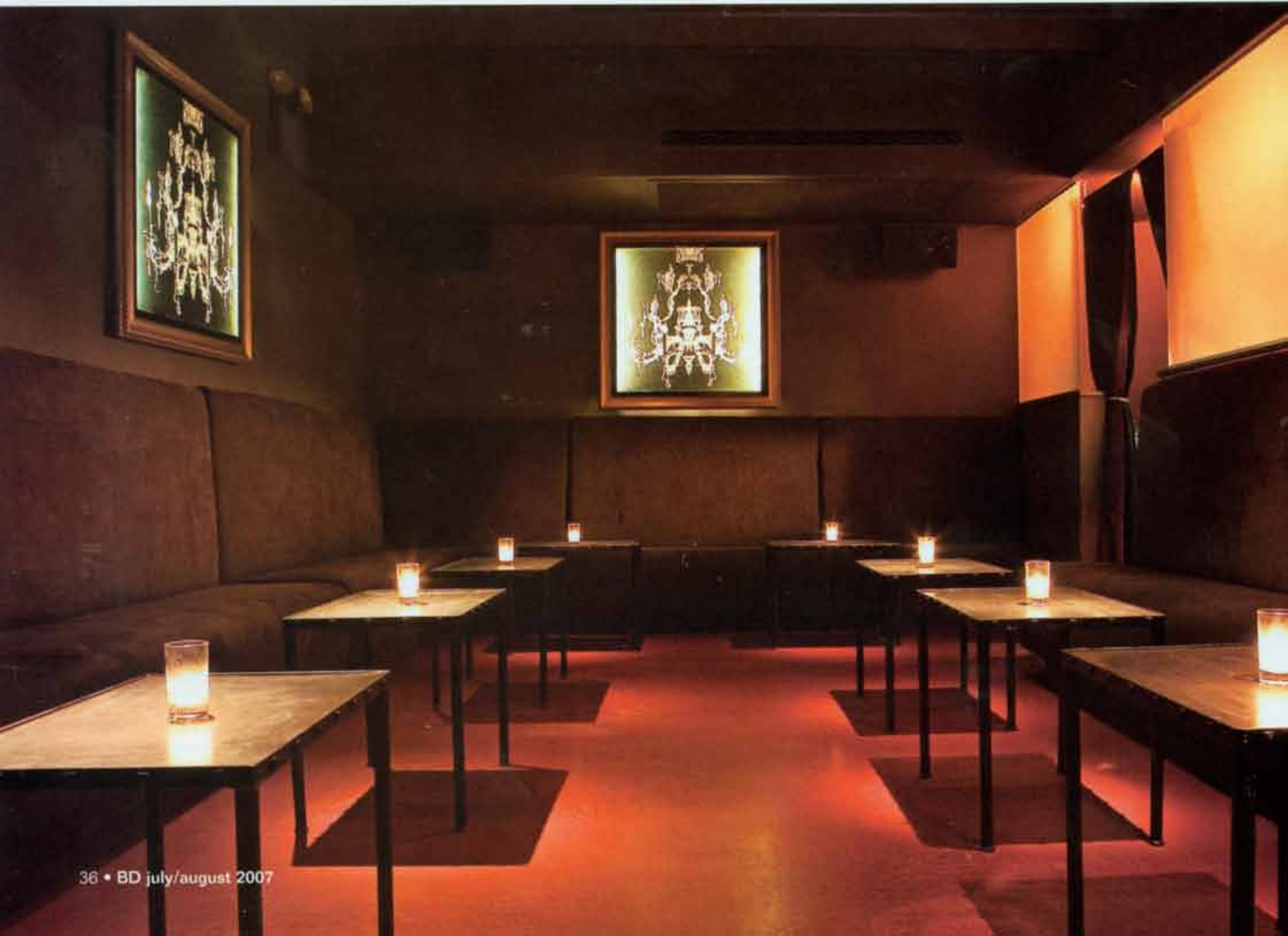
The photographs of the chandelier hang throughout the three rooms of the club, along with some stragglers left behind from the previous bunch of black-and-whites that used to hang in Serena.

"We basically wanted to remove and we have removed most of those photographs. I do think that the remaining black and white photographs and the painting of the chandelier does refer back to the nostalgia that was present in the club before we changed it."

Change it they did. "Pragmatically it was a disaster," Sadeki said. "Nothing really would work in terms of basic logistics."

Due to structure walls that come down from the building, the space was always divided into three segments.

"At the point that we took on the project, there was a bar





"On the right you have a vibrant space that you can feel invited to and to your left you have the Room 100 that's much more quiet and subdued."

at the front room, a massive bar in the middle room and no bar at the end room. The toilets were at the end room, still are. It kind of created no logical sense of circulation as to, you know, a sense of arrival and a sense of destination within the space itself."

Sadeki removed the bars in the first and middle room and made the only bar the one in the back room (the third segment). "So essentially what happens is as you come in, you walk into a waiting area, to your left is Room 100 and to your right you can see the lounge and the third space is actually a standing bar. On the right you have a vibrant space that you can feel invited to and to your left you have the Room 100 that's much more quiet and subdued. The room in the middle is kind of the more youthful lounge. It is still a sitting room and we designed a couple of dancing platforms in the room."

The result was a clear distinction

between the three spaces, which Sadeki says works better for a nightclub than having one large, continued space—"because the demographics of nightclubs right now is far more diverse than any other time before."

Nightclubs are frequented by kids in their early 20s to people in their 50s, who obviously enjoy different environments, he said.

The lighting also differentiates the spaces. Room 100 is very subdued. "The middle room is a dancing lounge. So while the ambient light is very quiet in the room, the most important lights are the ones between the banquettes and the wall. They kind of graze the wall upwards. These lights are very sophisticated LEDs that can be pre-programmed to change both

color and intensity."

In the third room that houses the bar, the entire back of the bar is a self-illuminating surface.

Sadeki also used Ultrasuede, plexiglass and natural wood liberally.

More than anything



else, he says

the firm strives to create an experience, rather than an interior. "In a sense, we think of it as a set for a movie. We don't spend as much time on proportion as we do on what kind of impressions are generated in juxtaposing one space against another." BD

Left top: The back of the bar in the last room (Room 300) is a self-illuminating surface, and the room also utilizes some photographs from the previous space that help tell the story of the Chelsea Hotel; left bottom: The VIP lounge, Room 100, is named after the room where Sex Pistols bassist Sid Vicious allegedly killed his girlfriend Nancy Spungen; This page top: The LEDs in the middle room (Room 200) can be pre-programmed to change color and intensity