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project breakdown tuscanypenthouse

By Ashleigh VanHouten

Photography by Christian Garibaldi

DREAM TEAM

Three design firms collaborate on a penthouse revamp

From the beginning, the redesign of the penthouse at the Tuscany, a St Giles boutique hotel in New York, was anything but typical. Originally opened in 1928 and once a W, the hotel's public spaces and 124 residential-style guestrooms were being renovated by designer Jeff Lincoln, but for the 3,000-square-foot 17th-floor penthouse suite, Abigail Tan, head of St Giles Hotels for Europe, UK, and the U.S., wanted to try something different.

In 2011, she called on *Hospitality Design (HD)* magazine to curate the makeover, which was unveiled last summer, by hosting a call for design submissions. The brief: blend modern sophistication with Old World Tuscan charm. From the almost 10 firms who submitted (without a specified budget there were a range of innovative ideas including a cantilevering pool), Tan selected three—AJC Design, dash design, and Gensler—assigning each firm a separate area, from what she thought were the standouts of their proposals.

Not only did the firms donate their time, but *HD* also helped secure manufacturer collaborators—most companies donated the furnishings and fixtures, some were given at a discount—to create a sophisticated retreat that continues the hotel's namesake theme, says Tan. In addition, she selected Make it Right—a nonprofit organization that constructs homes, buildings, and communities for people in need—as the project's charitable partner. Gifts made by participating manufacturers were matched dollar for dollar by St Giles, for a total of \$6,000.

David Ashen, principal and founder of Long Island City, New York-based dash design, says his team was excited at the prospect of collaborating with other designers. "It was interesting and fun to work with other high-caliber firms. All those great creative minds made the end product unique," he says. The diversity of the different teams worked to their advantage, says Alicia Cannon, owner of New York's AJC Design. "We all concentrate on different types of work," she says, "so it's good to see how each team approached the project."

1. Walnut travertine creates a warm feel in the master bathroom.

2. The living room features a vaulted salvaged-wood ceiling (a modern take on a traditional wood trellis), one wall covered in gray glazed Italian subway tile with an irregular edge, the original fireplace clad in Corten steel, and bronzed metal and Edison bulb chandeliers.

3. Wide-plank flooring and Venetian plaster walls define the master bedroom, which can be seen from the elevator lobby through a peekaboo window above the bed.



dash design

Ashen's team focused on the kitchen and powder room. But creating a distinct space that still meshed with the rest of the penthouse was a challenge. "Feeling, color, and texture were coordinated closely among the design teams," he says, noting, for example, that the porcelain tile flooring, meant to evoke the feeling of an old Tuscan villa, carried into other areas. The modern, open-concept kitchen, decked out in gray and white and featuring a raised ceiling to accommodate a custom traditional wood pot rack hanging over a center island, was designed with dinner parties and gatherings in mind. A window was transformed into a patio door, and the powder room—which Ashen describes as "a little jewel box respite"—is dressed in a New York-themed but Old World-feeling custom toile wallcovering, a touch that's "more art than design," he says.

AJC Design

Cannon and her team handled the master bedroom and bathroom, as well as the 1,200-square-foot brick and stone clad wraparound terrace—a stunning outdoor space that is now dotted with comfy seating areas for guests to enjoy unobstructed views of the Chrysler and Empire State Buildings.

"Travertine is used throughout the hotel for a cooler palette," she says. "We wanted to bring a similar, but warmer feel to the bathroom, so we used walnut travertine on the floors and ceilings." More warming touches in the master bedroom include Venetian plaster walls and a wide-plank walnut floor topped with a wool rug, and new large windows allow guests to take in the sweeping views. She turned an unused space into a dream closet made of walnut with leather hardware, and incorporated details such as textural fabrics and rod-iron finishes to complete the luxurious, residential feel.

Gensler

Gensler, led by Jessica Gracey from the firm's Chicago office, was in charge of the penthouse's now walnut veneer-wrapped elevator lobby—complete with custom cowhide wall art and a peekaboo window (featuring switchable glass) into the master bedroom and the views beyond—the living room, and second bedroom and bathroom. Some of the true highlights of the penthouse are seen in the living room, especially the large original fireplace, which she clad in floor-to-ceiling Corten steel, a vaulted wood ceiling crafted from salvaged materials from an upstate New York barn, and white cowhide area rugs layered on top of one another to create a larger covering. Bigger windows, industrial lighting, glazed Italian subway tile, furniture done in weathered leather, bronze metal, mohair, walnut, and linen, and a curated art collection including photographs that showcase a journey through Italy meld Italian influence with a metropolitan streetscape of quintessential New York. "Our goal was to create a place for guests entertaining at the top of New York's skyline," says Gracey. "*Sopra*—the Italian word for above—is the destination we've created for the penthouse suite." h d





4. A closeup of the living room seating area next to the fireplace, where designers employed leather chairs, a walnut wood-topped coffee table, and the same porcelain floor tile found in the kitchen.



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Product Collaborators

Artwork

Kalisher

Tile Flooring

AKDO

BATHROOMS

Robe Hook

Brasstech

Vanity

RH Contract

Mirror

Electric Mirror

Lavatories, Plumbing and Shower Fixtures,

and Accessories

Hansgrohe, Kohler,

Lefroy Brooks, and

Symmons

Vanity Mirror

Séura

Tile

Stone Source and

Walker Zanger

Stool and Lighting

RH Contract

Wallcovering

Kalisher

Toilets, Grab Bars, and Vanity

Toto

Sink

Porcelanosa

GUESTROOMS

Rug

Nourison

Sofa, Ottomans, Headboard,

Side Tables, and Mirror

Bernhardt Hospitality

Leather

Edelman Leather

Lighting

Marset and Vibia

Tables

D'Style

KITCHEN

Stools

RH Contract

Tile

Stone Source

LIVING ROOM

Wood Ceiling

The Hudson Company

Tables, Side Lounge Chair,

Sofa, Ottoman, and Side Chairs

Bernhardt Hospitality

Seating and Hardware

RH Contract

Furniture Upholstery

Maharam, Edelman

Leather, Architex, and

Holly Hunt

Lighting

Vibia, Marset, and RH

Contract

Subway Tile

Stone Source

Drapery Fabric

Carnegie, Donghia,

and Kravet

Drapery Fabricators

County Draperies

TERRACE

Exterior Lighting

Hubbardton Forge

Furniture

RH Contract

ELEVATOR AREA

Wall Art

Kyle Bunting

Wall Wood Veneer

MDC