

Tatler Philippines

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Travel Checking In





Making The Mark

THE CHARACTER OF THIS CLASSIC NEW YORK HOTEL HAS STOOD THE TEST OF CHANGING TIMES; PHILIPPINE TATLER EXPLORES WHAT PUTS THE MARK HOTEL A CUT ABOVE THE REST

AT THE CORNER OF Madison Avenue at 77th Street, just a few steps from Central Park, stands the beautiful 16-storey 1927 building housing The Mark. Under the perfectionist eye of luxury hotel manager Olivier Lordonnois, The Mark's impeccable service, old-world comfort, avant-garde design, and the latest technologies have created one of the finest hotels today's New York City has to offer.

Recently, the five-star hotel had a US\$150 million redesign to help usher the New York landmark into the 21st century, the talent behind the renovation project being none other than Jacques Grange, France's most famous interior designer. Every facet of The Mark bears Grange's stamp – from the hotel's

lobby to its bar and restaurant, to the 118 hotel rooms and 32 new apartments; from mouldings and coffered ceilings to custom fabrics and furnishings. The Mark was the biggest job the French design star took on in his 40 years as a decorator, and it was only his second large-scale residential project. "It was a project that I could not resist," says Grange, whose clientele range from Yves Saint Laurent to Princess Caroline of Monaco.

The Mark's new lobby now boasts a black and white Op Art marble floor, Ron Arad chandeliers, and wildly eclectic furnishings commissioned by Pierre Passebon, owner of the noted Parisian furniture boutique Galerie du Passage. Grange and Passebon collaborated to fill The Mark's halls with striking pieces by designers and artists from the likes of Ron Arad, Mattia Bonetti, Todd Eberle, Rachel Howard, Vladimir Kagan, Karl Lagerfeld, Paul Mathieu, and Eric Schmitt.

As in the hotel's public spaces, The Mark's guest rooms and suites bear Grange's bold vision and eye for detail, but this time in a more quiet and private key. Grange personally designed or selected all the



MODERN CLASSIC
The sitting area at the lobby
INSET
Five-star amenities and service
OPPOSITE
The hotel entrance



The Mark has taken the concept of a luxury hotel and brought it forward

furnishings in the rooms and suites, in pale soothing tones evoking the height of 1930s Parisian luxury. Custom-made beds are dressed in the finest Italian linens from Quagliotti, while state-of-the-art baths are enveloped in black and white marble and nickel fittings for a modern touch.

The Mark has taken the concept of a luxury hotel and brought it forward. However, it is undeniable that people patronise the hotel for its spirit – because of its prime location in the Upper East Side, the hotel itself is part of classic New York. Says The Mark's director of sales, "Both high-profile and regular New Yorkers frequent the hotel. We attract people who are just a little bit interested in new things, what's going on in design and contemporary arts. We do really well with the fashion crowd, and we have a very nice following from the entertainment industry. And it's all done discreetly; it's just about being in a very comfortable environment

where things are elegant and a little bit more contemporary and modern."

The building is divided into residential and hotel units. The largest unit is the building's 10,000 square foot penthouse, a residential space priced at around US\$60 million; the smallest room is 400 square feet – putting The Mark one step ahead of most of New York hotels, which start at 350 to 375 square feet.

The Mark also has a wealth of amenities to choose from. In The Mark Restaurant by Jean-Georges, celebrated chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten concocts mind-blowing dishes such as pizza topped with raw tuna and wasabi, and cod in a sweet garlic-and-lemon broth. Vongerichten says of his menu, "We have things as simple as a burger, as rich as caviar, and everything in between."

Because it is a relatively small hotel, The Mark partners with other luxury brands to give their guests the best New York has to offer. The on-property salon, for example, is Frederic Fekkai. For shoe shining services, the hotel partnered with John Lobb, which provides the overnight shoe shine offered in guest rooms as well as the chair shine offered in the second floor. Recently, the hotel also added on Bergdorf 24/7 personal shoppers, a service exclusive to the hotel where a guest can call at any time of the day and have the head of

MARK IT UP
The lounge area at The Mark Restaurant by Jean-Georges

TRAVEL
Checking In



personal shopping choose the piece for them. Punch Fitness Centre, the hotel's state-of-the-art fitness centre, encompasses all of 1,400 square feet, featuring equipment with the latest technology and personal training by renowned mixed martial arts and kickboxing experts. Former national kickboxing champion Adelino Da Costa founded the centre, which offers exclusively to guests and residents the highest quality one-on-one physical conditioning in the perfect facility to begin a journey of martial arts, achieve fitness goals and strengthen the mind.

Sometimes, however, good service does not simply depend on the kind of amenities guests receive. What differentiates The Mark from other hotels is its attentiveness to its guests. Its 24-hour check in, for example, allows guests to check into their room at any time of the day – this is much appreciated by their international, specifically Brazilian, clientele who usually arrive very early in the morning. After recognising that more guests are now travelling with their children, The Mark partnered with Maclaren Strollers, and now the hotel has custom-made strollers complete with black-and-white stripes and orange details. It is this attention to detail and continuous innovation that makes guests keep coming back to The Mark, and why it continues to be a staple of the authentic New York experience. ■

LAP OF LUXURY
The Seventy Seven King guestroom
INSET
The Mark bar



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