



The newly refurbished lobby of the Loews Regency Hotel in Manhattan.



A Kravet viscose blend for the lobby sofas.



A silk blend used for the lobby pillows.



The main entrance.



A Deco-inspired sconce.



A pouf by Azadeh Shladovsky for the lobby.

OVERNIGHT SENSATION

One of Manhattan's grand hotels undergoes a yearlong refurbishment that enhances its classic glamour even as it reaches out to a new generation. **BY INGRID ABRAMOVITCH**



New lobby chandeliers.

In 1963, brothers Preston Robert (“Bob”) and Laurence (“Larry”) Tisch hired a design dream team of the era—architect Emery Roth and decorator Ellen L. McCluskey, who had worked on the Waldorf and the Plaza—to create a new hotel on New York’s Park Avenue. The Loews Regency quickly became a glittering jewel in the crown of the Tisch empire, a New York classic with an ideal Upper East Side location, a marbled lobby, and a restaurant (home of the original “power breakfast”) that became a virtual clubhouse for the city’s political and financial movers and shakers.

That tradition started in the mid-1970s, when Bob Tisch and moguls Lew Rudin and Felix Rohatyn began meeting for breakfast strategy sessions in an effort to save New York City, which was then

on the brink of bankruptcy. Eventually, the Regency became the day-break destination of Gotham’s A-list set: Larry King, Katie Couric, the

Reverend Al Sharpton, mayors from David Dinkins to Michael

Bloomberg, and many others loved to congregate there over eggs and waffles.

All along, there was also a wide-eyed teenager in residence: Jonathan M. Tisch, whose parents, Bob and Joan Tisch, kept an apartment in the hotel that his mother maintains to this day. “I am the male Eloise,” says Jonathan, who grew up to become chairman of Loews Hotels and Resorts, cochairman of the family’s \$20 billion Loews Corporation, and co-owner of the New York Giants. “The Regency was a wonderful home for me. Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton would stay there, as well as Princess Grace and Prince Rainier. Presidents would come through.”

As the hotel’s golden anniversary approached, he realized that the Regency was due for an update. What began as a plan to redecorate just the guest rooms and suites evolved into a top-to-bottom, \$100 million renovation. The hotel was shut down for a full year—a decision that wasn’t taken lightly, particularly when Tisch had to ask his own mother to temporarily ▷



The breakfast room in 2005.



Hand-cast lobby counters.



A linen blend used for the lobby pillows.

move out. “There were a lot of difficult decisions,” he says. “Every inch of the hotel has been thought about and touched.”

His goal, he says, was to freshen up a classic with a new design and a reconceived layout that would feel both elegant and relevant to the modern traveler. At boutique New York hotels like the Ace, he had observed how lobbies were becoming lively spaces that lured both hotel guests and locals. “Granted, that’s a different demographic,” he says, “but you walk in there and everybody is plugged in on their laptops or phones, and the atmosphere feels current. We wanted a similar feeling, so we knocked down walls at the Regency and built a bar that is open to the lobby and visible from the street.”



A guest room chair.



Kravet faux ostrich for guest room ottomans and, above, metallic vinyl for chairs.

Tisch, a design and architecture aficionado, admits that he agonized for a long time about the direction for the hotel’s updated decor. After one false start, he selected Rottet Studio, a firm based in Houston, Los Angeles, and New York, to oversee the renovation of the lobby and



A rendering of the hotel restaurant.

375 guest rooms. “We wanted it to feel like a theater set, glamorous and very New York,” says the firm’s president, Lauren Rottet.

Meyer Davis Studio was enlisted to overhaul the restaurant with a clubby design that features wood-paneled walls, graphic carpeting, and a mix of settees and banquettes. “It’s deliberately dark, edgy, and cozy,” says architect Will Meyer. “And we made the room quiet and soft, so you can have a conversation and actually hear yourself.”

Just for fun, Tisch invited his friend Nate Berkus—as well as the design team Haynes-Roberts, with whom he has worked on personal projects—to create one-of-a-kind guest suites for the hotel (Rottet Studio and Meyer Davis are also designing unique suites). Meanwhile, in a loftlike space designed by Meyer Davis, French hairstylist Julien Farel is poised to open a 10,000-square-foot salon and spa.

For Tisch, the renovation was a labor of love. He was intimately involved in every



Fabrics for the restaurant upholstery.



The bar area’s lounge chair upholstery.

design decision, personally signing off on everything from fabric selections to art and furniture choices. In the end, the only thing he didn’t change was his mother’s apartment. She was attached to the design, which was created by the decorator Maurice Bernstein, a friend of hers. “But we did move everything out and put it in storage, so it wouldn’t get dusty,” her son says. “That was probably the smartest thing we did.” ■



The restaurant’s Philippe Starck table lamps.



A guest suite bath.



Bath hardware.



Guest suite materials, from left: faux shagreen, polished steel, and satin-etched mirror.