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HIGH LIFE

Straddling an elevated parkway in Manhattan, André Balazs's new 20-storey hinged hotel is anything but Standard

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTOPH MORLINGHAUS WRITER: DAVID KAUFMAN

There is an unexpected elegance to André Balazs's Standard New York hotel, a massive 337-room property hovering above the hotly anticipated High Line pedestrian parkway at the edge of the Meatpacking District. Located on Manhattan's far West Side, within a gentle stroll of the Hudson River, the hefty, hulking, almost other-worldly hotel – Balazs's largest Standard yet – extends the value-conscious pricing of his three existing outposts (one in Miami and two in Los Angeles) with a far more ambitious aesthetic and amenities. Balazs has likened himself to a Hollywood producer and the Standard New York is a joint venture created by a 'crew' of designers, including Standard-veteran Shawn Hausman, architect Todd Schliemann of Polshek Partnership, and New York-based design firm Roman and Williams (W*97), whose appreciation for unconventional materials is evident throughout.

A stark grey concrete exterior, perched on towering concrete pylons, is paired with a clutch of surprising design details rendered in brick, wood, metal and glass, while Schliemann's wide-to-slim design shifts course at its midpoint to reveal an unanticipated dynamism within its near brutalist façade. The resulting hinge halves the hotel, which provides guest rooms in each section

with distinctive downtown, uptown and High Line views from nearly river to river.

The Standard's interior, meanwhile, is just as eye-catching, reflecting Roman and Williams' desire 'to create a sense of architecture in our interiors'. Though compact, the rooms come in eight different shapes and sizes, all packed with colour, texture and, most strikingly, light. Bathrooms, for instance, are clad in customized, handmade orange, black and cream tiles. Traditional desks are replaced by cosy couches. Tambour wooden headboards flow not just above the bed, but straight on to the ceilings. And walls of un-diffused glass windows provide dramatic, organic illumination.

Beyond the rooms, the Standard also stocks some equally stylish social spaces. At ground level, the indoor-outdoor Living Room with fire pits will serve as a four-season local lure. Black granite walls link the entrance to the lobby, while the low-lit elevator bank is capped by a mirrored light installation, inspired by BMW's historic headquarters. Upstairs, a clutch of bars, lounges, a bijou swimming pool, restaurants and events space will premiere throughout spring – just in time for the High Line itself. ★

The Standard, 848 Washington Street, New York, tel: 1.212 645 4646, www.standardhotels.com. Rates: from \$295



CHECKING IN

LEADING LIGHT

The interior of the Standard New York's lobby, with illuminated strip lights which run from ceiling to floor. Opposite, the hotel is built over the High Line, an old freight railroad which is being transformed into a public park on stilts.

