

✦ A DECADE OF HELSINKI DESIGN WEEK, P.60

DESIGN BUREAU



HEAVY-METAL SOFTWARE: ZAHNER'S GAME-CHANGER

The fabrication giant's latest technology
puts designers in control, P. 54

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Finishing the Job

To create many of the furnishings used throughout the Affinia 50 hotel, Dawson Design Associates teamed up with manufacturing company Saniharto, a specialist of customized furniture for the luxury-hotel and -apartment markets. Though the companies have worked on more than 20 projects together, including notable hotels around the country, the work for the Affinia 50 stands out for its contrast of high-gloss and matte finishes and a desk-dresser piece that combines laminate, metal, and walnut-burl veneer.

"Every product is custom made to achieve the highest level of design, construction, and finish," says Saniharto international sales and operation manager May ysa Enggahardjo, "and delivered, as always, to the rigorous deadlines demanded by both commercial markets and the hotel industry across the globe."

Home Away from Home

A boutique hotel revamp focuses on residential feel with an artistic flair

BY EMMA JANZEN

Every hotel boasts the comforts of home, but few actually deliver on the promise—instead offering generic designs with matching furniture and soulless social spaces. When launching a full renovation in 2012, the Affinia 50 hotel in Manhattan hired Seattle-based interior-design studio Dawson Design Associates to create a fresh new identity that would avoid this cliché.

To achieve this goal, art director and principal Andrea Dawson Sheehan approached the project as if it were a high-end residential property instead of temporary lodging. "We wanted it to be like you could live in this hotel for months and have it feel like you're staying in a friend's living room—a sophisticated friend living in New York," she says.

With the help of architect Nobutaka Ashihara, Dawson Sheehan and her team designed 41 new guest rooms during the renovation, for a total of 251 chambers. Every aspect of the rooms and the social spaces—from the open floor plans to the comfortable materials and furniture—speaks to

the idea of honoring the Midtown neighborhood and creating a "home away from home," as Dawson Sheehan puts it.

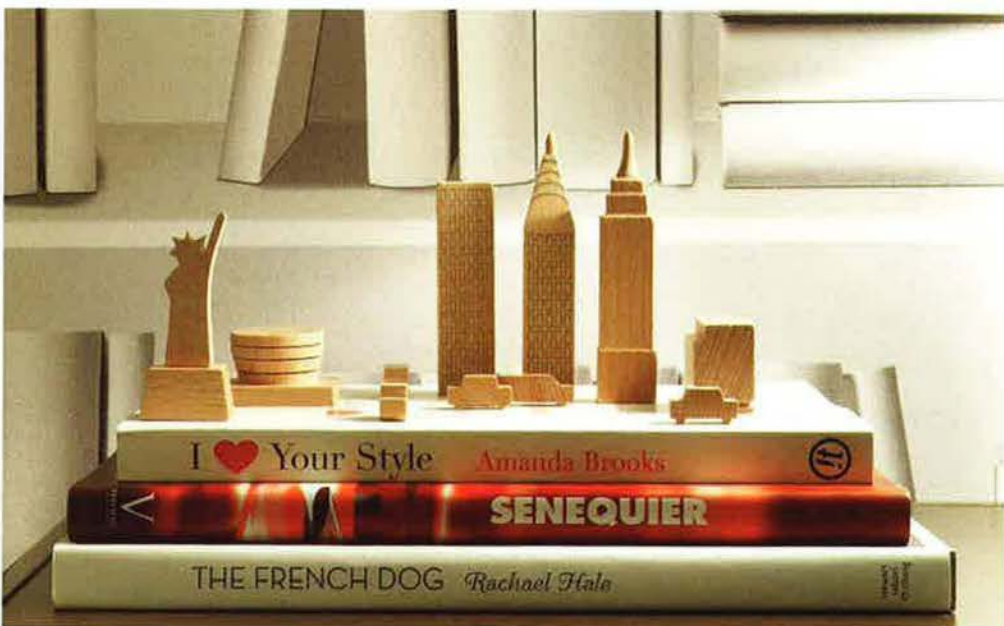
The overarching color palette takes inspiration from the history of the surrounding area, which once played home to many famous artists in the school of abstract expressionism. Bold, saturated hues like one might find in a Rothko or Pollock painting weave through a cool grey and white foundation. The artwork also reflects the designers' overall intention; each piece was sourced from local artists and arranged in a way that feels natural and homey. "We didn't want it to feel like a gallery." **CONTINUED →**



In redesigning the Affinia 50, DDA art director and principal Andrew Dawson Sheehan approached the project as if it were a high-end residential property—to feel like you’re staying with “a sophisticated friend living in New York.”



(CONTINUED) Dawson Sheehan says, “We wanted it to be three-dimensional and have an impact on how the space felt. So it’s interactive; you can really put your hands on it. It’s not just hanging on the wall.”



Though the \$18–20 million construction process was not easy—the hotel remained open to customers during the entire renovation process—Dawson Sheehan says that the team captured the intended spirit of sophisticated New York City while maintaining a strong residential appeal. “Yes, it’s stylish, and yes, it’s contemporary, but it’s also human,” she says. “We captured that New York energy from the guys who lived there.”



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Design by MGM Resorts International Design.



© Fair Pacific Hotel Seattle, Washington, USA.
Design by Dawson Design Associates, Inc.



© Affinia 50 Hotel, New York, USA. Design by Dawson Design Associates, Inc.

Saniharto is one of the world's leading manufacturing companies, specializing in custom state-of-the-art residential and contract furniture for the luxury hotel and apartment market.

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