

EYE / LIFESTYLE

Hotel Chelsea's Elegant Lobby Bar Pays Homage to Hotel Bars Around the World

The new ground floor lounge taps into European opulence.

By **KRISTEN TAUER**  JULY 7, 2022, 1:00AM



Inside the Lobby Bar at Hotel Chelsea. COURTESY OF ANNIE SCHLECHTER

The historic Hotel Chelsea is quietly welcoming visitors back through its doors on West 23rd Street. After opening its Spanish-inspired restaurant El Quijote earlier this year, the revamped New York hotel is introducing another F&B concept for guests to discover.

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Caviar with potato chips and beer cream. ERIC MEDSKER

“The Chelsea’s always felt to me like a grande dame,” says property co-owner Sean MacPherson. “And it felt like the appropriate thing was to create the grande dame of lobby bars. And so we tried to honor the existing architecture and design, and build something that felt old world and classic.”

The hotel’s new Lobby Bar — the building’s first lounge — taps into the grandeur of iconic hotels worldwide and speaks to a European sensibility, while leaning into the building’s history. “It had been a little down and out the last several decades, but it’s a beautiful old building and it feels very much like the type of hotel that’s more likely to be found in Europe over the States,” says MacPherson of the property, which

was built in 1884. “Most of these great old hotels have great lobby bars, there’s never been one for some reason [at Hotel Chelsea].”

The Lobby Bar is located on the hotel’s ground floor, and features plush seating in jewel tones, vintage lamps atop a marble bar and vintage detailing. Lounge seating is spacious yet intimate, catering to both the transient hotel guest and local New Yorker. “There’s elbow room; you actually you can sit down and make yourself comfortable. It’s like a really enormous living room,” adds MacPherson.

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The bar offers an upscale F&B menu crafted by the Sunday Hospitality team to complement the elegant design of the space. Beverage director Brian Evans put together a comprehensive cocktail menu that riffs on classic drinks and also pays homage to iconic cocktails from bars around the world, including the Duke Martini for the Dukes Hotel in London, Arnaud's French 75 for Arnaud's Restaurant in New Orleans, and Tommy's Margarita for Tommy's Bar in San Francisco.

"The house cocktails are a bit more adventurous, and the tributes maybe a little more familiar," says Charles Seich, who's leading F&B operations with Sunday Hospitality. The food menu is the work of chef Jaime Young, who looked to small plates to pair well with drinks — caviar, dirty martini oysters, beef tartare.

The Lobby Bar recently soft opened, and the hotel will continue to introduce new concepts through the fall, including a French-American restaurant and rooftop spa and fitness center. A private events space, the Bard Room, also recently opened.

"We're not trying to make it splashy," says MacPherson of the hotel's reintroduction. "The building's been here since 1884, and we're just trying to maintain its consistent narrative."



Two Dylans cocktail at Hotel Chelsea. ERIC MEDSKER

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Inside the Lobby Bar at Hotel Chelsea. COURTESY OF ANNIE SCHLECHTER



Dirty martini oysters. ERIC MEDSKER



Hundredth Universe cocktail. ERIC MEDSKER



Mercury Pool cocktail. ERIC MEDSKER