



HOUSE / PROPERTY

Inside the \$1 billion restoration of the Waldorf Astoria – the New York hotel being transformed into hyper-luxury residences

Launching in 2022, the new development will allow buyers to own a home in New York’s “unofficial palace” for the first time in its illustrious history

The extensive restoration is converting 1,400 guest rooms into 375 condominium residences and 375 luxury hotel suites, with an impressive array of private amenities

BY ELLEN MILLARD

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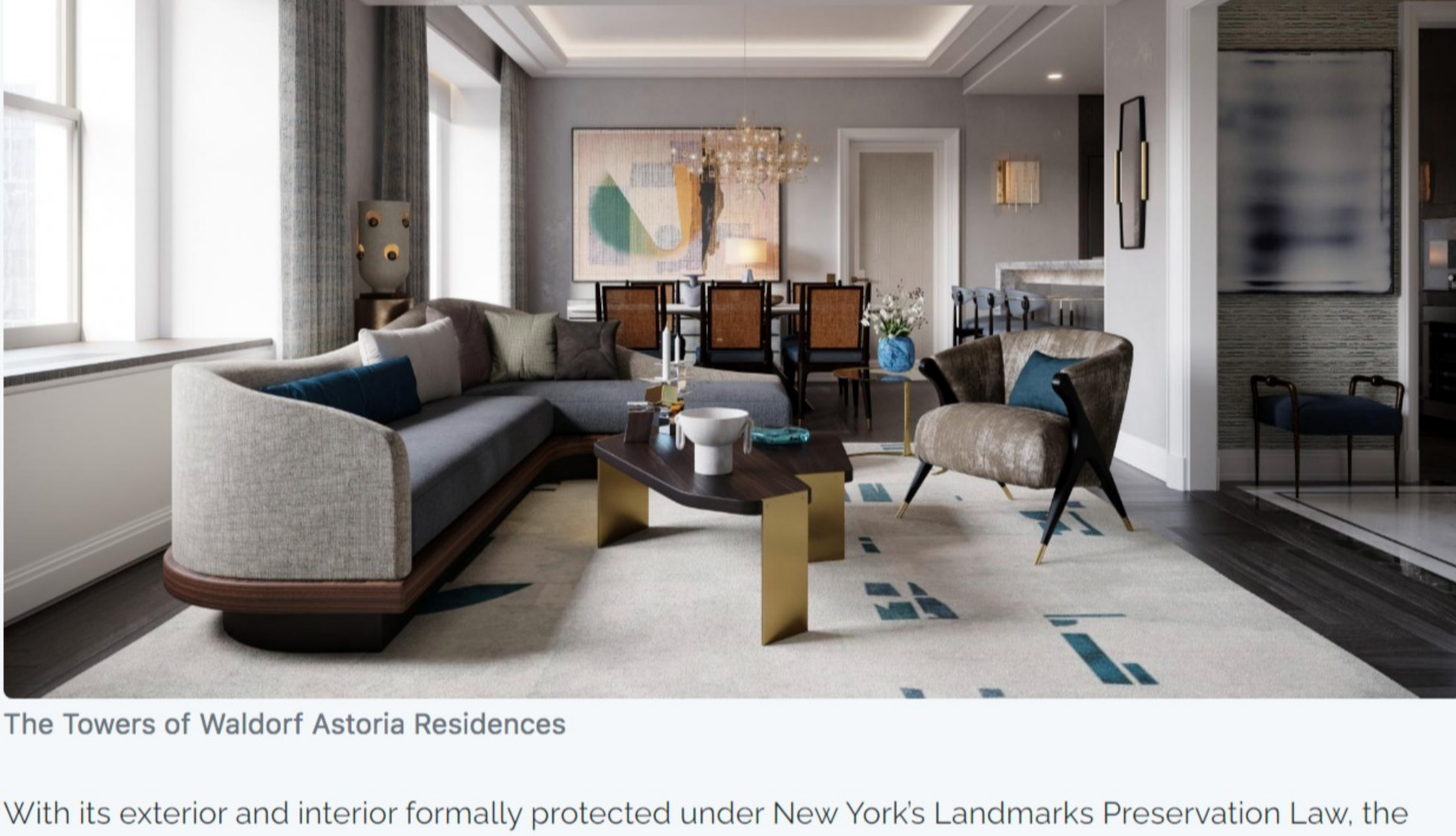
“The greatest of them all” was how esteemed hotelier Conrad Hilton described the Waldorf Astoria, the palatial New York hotel that occupies an entire block on Park Avenue. It was the Waldorf that set the standard for **luxury hotels** as we know them today, with room service, reservation-only restaurants and rooftop happy hours all born within its ‘Waldorf grey’ walls. Red velvet cake was created here too, as was the Waldorf salad, and it was the venue of choice for Grace Kelly and Prince Rainer of Monaco’s engagement party.



Archive photos of the Waldorf Astoria on Fifth Avenue

When the Waldorf opened its doors in 1931, it was the largest and tallest hotel in the world and its visitors as high-reaching as the suites they stayed in — HRH The Queen, Sir Winston Churchill and Elizabeth Taylor among them. The proof of the Waldorf Astoria’s prowess lay not just in its star-studded guest list, but in the number of those guests who stayed far longer than their check out time. Cole Porter lived there for nearly 30 years, penning some of his most famous jingles on a Steinway & Son’s piano gifted to him by the hotel. When he died in 1964, his apartment was taken over by none other than Frank Sinatra, who rented the space for a princely sum of \$1m a year. It was also a (not-so) humble abode for the likes of Marilyn Monroe, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and Presidents Herbert Hoover and Dwight Eisenhower.

While you could always stay at the Waldorf Astoria so long as your bank account allowed, it was first and foremost a hotel — and although many took up residence, they were never, truly, residents. This is all about to change thanks to a \$1billion restoration, which will transform the previously 1,400 guest rooms into 375 condominium residences and 375 hotel suites — allowing you the opportunity to officially own a home at one of the most celebrated addresses in the world.



The Towers of Waldorf Astoria Residences

With its exterior and interior formally protected under New York’s Landmarks Preservation Law, the Waldorf Astoria is a difficult building to refurbish. Developer Dajia US and architect Skidmore, Owings & Merrill are behind the project, which will see the nearly 100-year-old property restored and updated for a contemporary audience. This involves, among other things, undoing a number of insensitive alterations from decades past, including replacing more than 5,000 windows with original profiles and colours, colour-matching the original ‘Waldorf grey’ bricks to swap with former, non-matching replacements, and structurally reinforcing a number of terraces to provide access to them for the first time in the building’s history.

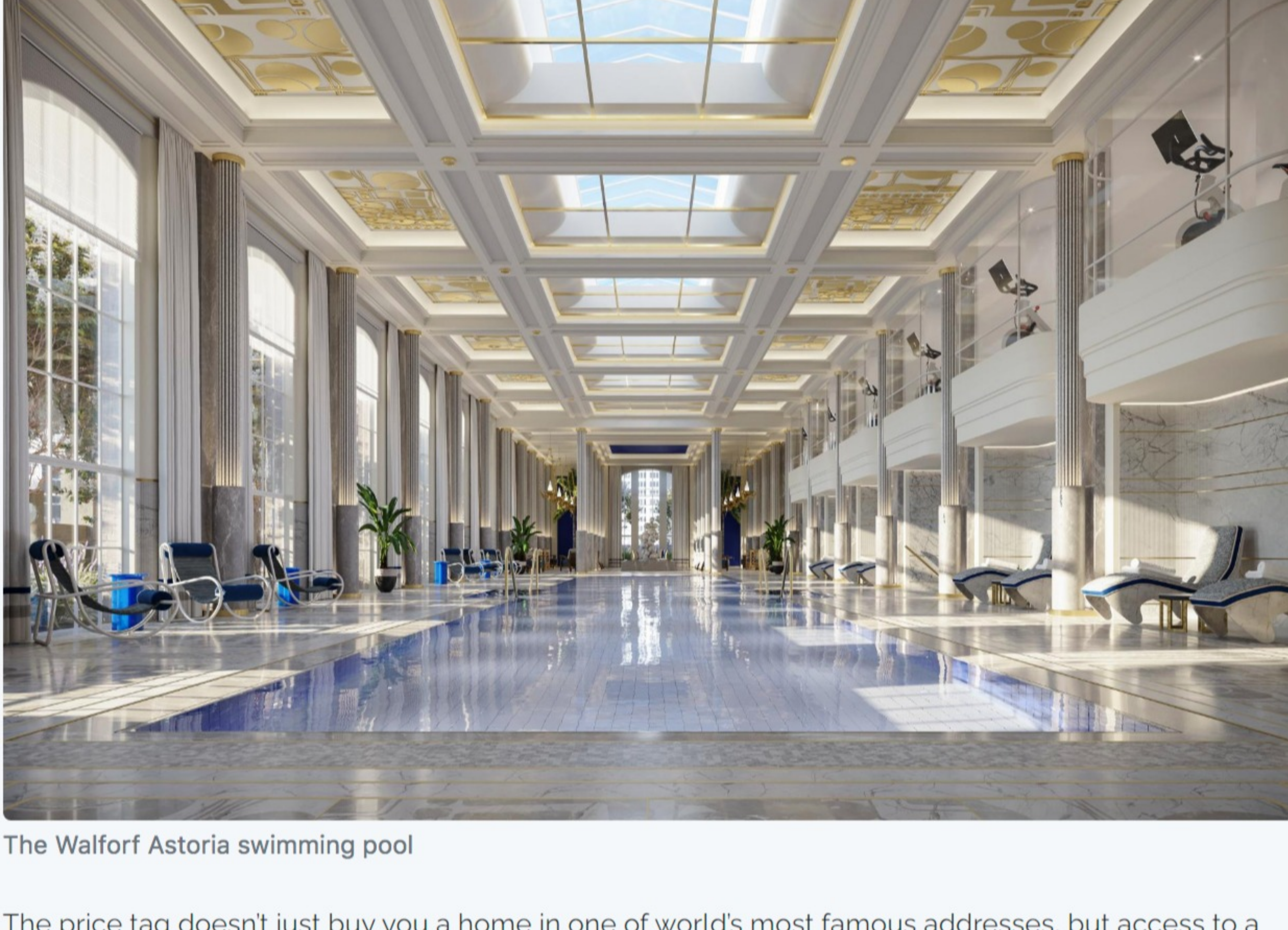
The Towers of Waldorf Astoria Residences will be 375 private homes located above the hotel and designed by interiors mogul Jean-Louis Denoit. Balancing the building’s Art Deco heritage with contemporary living, the designer aimed to capture the grandeur of the Waldorf Astoria in his designs, and that he did. A marble foyer sets the tone for what’s to come, with solid custom-panelled interior doors fitted with bespoke antique hardware, custom cabinets manufactured by Molenti&C, and vanities topped with polished marble. In the bathroom, a Waldorf Astoria-inspired pattern adorns the tile mosaic flooring.



The Towers of Waldorf Astoria Residences

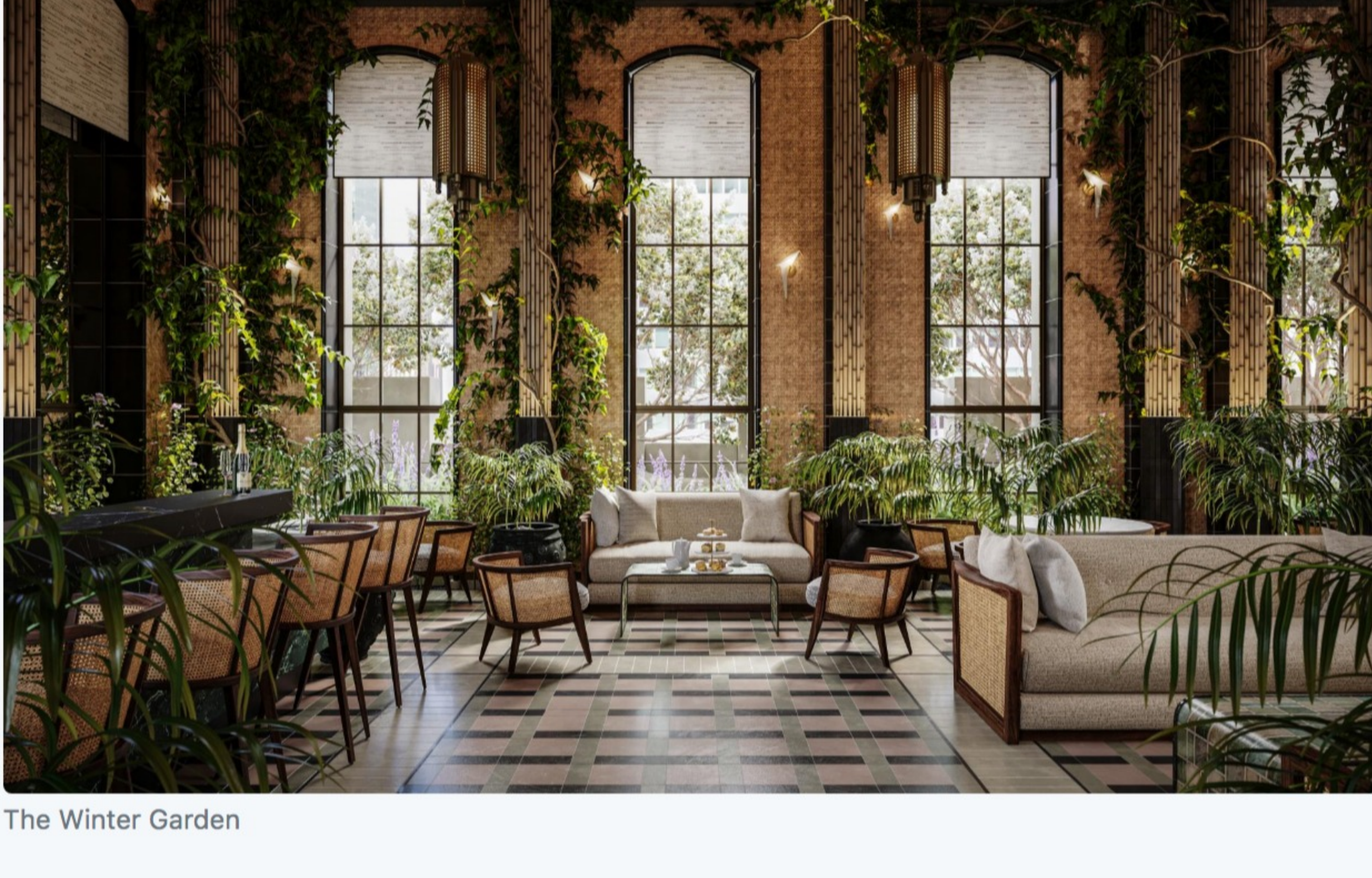
Each apartment is designed to be turnkey, and residents can want for nothing — there is even the option of a fob front door key, which can be programmed to work at specific times of the day for heightened security. The only downside is perhaps the lack of customisability, while there are bespoke elements throughout the property, the general design is fixed — you will be given a quartzite countertop kitchen whether you want one or not.

Where you do have the freedom to choose is in the floorplan; there are more than 126 possible layouts to select from, ranging from studio apartments to two spectacular penthouse suites located at the top of the hotel’s towers. The majority of properties will be one- and two-bedrooms — a decision based on market demand — with prices starting from \$1.7m for a studio and going up to \$18.5m and beyond.



The Walforf Astoria swimming pool

The price tag doesn’t just buy you a home in one of world’s most famous addresses, but access to a host of private amenities too, of which there are many. Along with the hotel’s own restaurants, bars and 20,000 sq ft spa, residents can enjoy 55,000 sq ft of exclusive services, with each space once again designed by Denoit. There will be men and women’s wellness lounges, each with its own sauna, steam rooms and private treatment rooms; a private fitness centre, which will overlook a 25m swimming pool and an outdoor terrace; two bars (The Presidential Bar and the Monaco Bar); a billiards room; a games room; a theatre; a children’s playroom and a library. These, along with two outdoor spaces, can all be privately booked for events, with staff, food and drinks arranged via the residential concierge.



The Winter Garden

“The Waldorf Astoria was long called New York’s unofficial palace, and that is partly because these were grand civic spaces accessible to any resident or visitor to the city; they became the places that New Yorkers and people from around the world would come to celebrate the major moments of their lives,” Andrew Miller, CEO of developer Dajia US, said. “We have taken enormous care in restoring these places and bringing them back to an aesthetic that in many cases haven’t been seen for more than 50 years, because of all of the alterations that happened over time.

“There is a very strong desire and commitment on the whole team’s part to ensure that the Waldorf Astoria will reopen as the finest hotel in New York City,” Miller added, “and we aim to keep that title for many decades.”

The Towers of Waldorf Astoria Residences start from \$1.7m, with occupancy expected in 2022. waldorftowers.nyc

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