

Primo Piano

Nell'isola belga di Terschelling un monumento storico diventa residenza estiva. Corea: UNstudio e la Galleria Centercity. La casa di Jūmichi Abe, stilista a Tokyo. I Pirwi, design made in Mexico. «Il massimo effetto utilizzando al meglio i materiali», la filosofia di Alfredo Häberli. Gli arredi outdoor vogliono entrare in casa. James Dyson e il ventilatore senza elica. Innovazione, ecologia, progetto: Valcucine. Il punto di vista di Case da Abitare sugli interni e sul business

Molti lo attraversano solo per raggiungere SoHo. Ma il quartiere a nord di Madison Square Park sta cambiando. E se le attrazioni aumentano, lo spirito è immutato

NoMad-ismi



Grand Tour

Metà pomeriggio di un mercoledì di primavera e nella lobby costellata di divani dell'Ace Hotel di New York non c'è un solo posto disponibile. Delle 35 persone sedute tra aria condizionata e luci soffuse, 14 stanno lavorando su Mac, sette su PC e una su iPad. Nessuno supera i 35 anni, a eccezione di tre uomini abbarbicati al bancone del bar, anch'essi illuminati dal bagliore irradiato dagli schermi dei loro computer. Da quando gli ospiti (e la gente del posto) si intrattengono nella lobby di un hotel?

Insieme al vicino Eatly di Mario Batali, autentico tempio del cibo made in Italy inaugurato lo scorso agosto, l'Ace, che ha appena compiuto un anno e mezzo, è uno dei segni più evidenti della recente rinascita di NoMad, il quartiere a nord di Madison Square Park e a est di Chelsea. Nel 1807, Madison Square ospitava caserme, un arsenale e un luogo di sepoltura comune per indigenti, mentre le strade adiacenti erano la quintessenza del glamour. Qui sono nati Edith Wharton, il cocktail Manhattan e il baseball; sempre qui sorgevano il più famoso ristorante di fine Ottocento, il Delmonico's, e le opere più grandiose del celebre architetto Stanford White.

Ora, NoMad è un'area eclettica che unisce ricchi e poveri, produttori e consumatori, vecchia scuola e innovazione. Un collage che mescola negozi di bigiotteria, grossisti di parrucche e grandi nomi della moda d'avanguardia, come Project No. 8a e Opening Ceremony. Un caleidoscopio di profumerie esclusive, con un museo del sesso e una cacofonia di strani hotel, a cui si affiancano ristoranti di fama mondiale come l'Artisanal Fromagerie e il Breslin.

Due tizi si allenano sul ring della Kingsway Gym sulla 28^a Strada (West), non lontano dall'edificio in cui la stilista Isabel Toledo ha vissuto negli ultimi 20 anni con il marito, l'artista Ruben Toledo, in un attico al 10° piano dove scarseggeranno i divani ma non i lucernai e il fascino da atelier picassiano. Due piani più giù, Jay Ruckel e la moglie LaCrasia Duchein tagliano e assemblano a mano con antiche macchine da cucire guanti di pelle per clienti che vanno dalla Metropolitan Opera a Calvin Klein, passando per le madri delle debuttanti di tutto il Sud degli Stati Uniti. «Quindici anni fa all'angolo della strada c'erano bande agguerrite, i Crips e i Blood», ricorda Ruckel, giunto qui diversi anni fa come molti altri inquilini quando il loro



L'Ace Hotel. La sua apertura è uno dei segni più evidenti della rinascita di NoMad (a sinistra, in alto). Madison Square Park, con la statua dell'ammiraglio Farragut, segna il confine sud del quartiere (a sinistra, in basso). Elizabeth e Brian del concept store Project No. 8 (nella pagina accanto). Skyline di NoMad, con l'Empire State Building sullo sfondo (in apertura)





Il John Dory Oyster Bar (JDDB), aperto al 1196 di Broadway dallo chef April Bloomfield con il ristoratore Ken Friedman (nella pagina accanto). Alex Calderwood, co-fondatore dell'Ace Hotel. «Vogliamo essere il salotto del quartiere», dice (a destra, in alto). Chiosco di fiori all'interno dell'albergo (a destra, in basso)



appartamento nel vecchio edificio Breslin è stato rilevato per fare posto all'Ace Hotel. A una recente riunione dell'assemblea di quartiere, ha detto ai costruttori dell'hotel: «Amo la vostra licenza per la vendita di alcolici! Una volta per strada c'erano gangster e sul marciapiede tizi che cercavano di venderti qualcosa a ogni ora del giorno. Adesso è un quartiere piacevole e raffinato, e tutto questo grazie a una licenza per alcolici!».

Dalle finestre della fabbrica LaCrasia è possibile vedere le pietre miliari di quello che un tempo era il distretto dei guantai: l'Empire State Building, la Gilsey House con la sua struttura simile a una torta nuziale, il Flatiron Building, edificio dei primi del Novecento dalla caratteristica forma triangolare, e il Johnston, nato dall'incontro fra stile rinascimentale francese e pietra calcarea dell'Indiana. La prossima primavera riaprirà i battenti come NoMad Hotel.

Come nel caso dell'Ace, primo progetto in quest'area dell'immobiliare Sydell Group, anche il NoMad è stato concepito per fungere da casa-lontano-da-casa, sia per gli ospiti che per la gente del posto. «I clienti in un hotel non cercano più il nightclub ma una bella casa, o un luogo di aggregazione, e questo ha influenzato notevolmente entrambi gli alberghi», dice Andrew Zabler, CEO di Sydell. «Quando arrivano ospiti da fuori città, non vogliono essere circondati da altri forestieri, vogliono mescolarsi ai locali». Il che è molto diverso da ciò che avviene nei quartieri più glamour, come il Meatpacking District, l'ex area del mattatoio quasi per nulla residenziale.

Al contrario, NoMad è una zona in cui vivono e lavorano migliaia di persone, concentrate nel raggio di cinque isolati. «Ci piace questa zona perché è rimasta un quartiere della New York operaia», dice il co-fondatore dell'Ace, Alex Calderwood. «Vogliamo essere il 'salotto' del quartiere». Quando il gruppo Sydell è arrivato qui nel 2005 ha iniziato a costruire un legame, una sorta di alleanza con gli abitanti, potenziando l'illuminazione e la sicurezza nelle strade, piantando alberi e contribuendo alla realizzazione di una pista ciclabile.

La maggior parte dei newyorkesi vede questa zona come un luogo di passaggio da attraversare per raggiungere SoHo. «Se avessi dovuto descrivere il quartiere, l'avrei definito insignificante, privo di



Inaugurato lo scorso agosto, Eataly di Mario Batali è un autentico tempio del cibo made in Italy, con una dozzina circa di ristoranti sempre brulicanti di persone (sopra). Le griffe della moda d'avanguardia sono da Opening Ceremony (a fianco). L'artista Johnne Eschleman, autore di una serie di graffiti all'interno dell'Ace Hotel (a destra)



centri d'interesse, eppure comodo e con magnifici negozi etnici», dice Sébastien Agneessens, designer e musicista arrivato qui nel 2005 insieme alla moglie Vivian Rosenthal, designer multimediale per Tronic. «Non succedeva granché. Sembrava sospeso tra Union Square e Midtown Manhattan, un quartiere residenziale di cui nessuno andava fiero, ma con qualche segreto ben custodito che meritava di essere approfondito. Ora è un po' più confortevole e accogliente, ma non ha perso lo spirito della vecchia New York».

Ed è proprio questo tessuto a rendere NoMad una meta tanto interessante e a caratterizzare entrambi i nuovi alberghi. «Quando soggiorni in un hotel», dice Zobler, «vuoi vivere la cultura locale e incontrare la gente che abita nel quartiere ogni giorno». Zobler vorrebbe vedere trasferiti a NoMad negozi e gallerie d'arte in fuga da Chelsea per via dell'aumento degli affitti seguito alla realizzazione dell'High Line Park. E se, da un lato, portando qui negozi gli immobiliari potrebbero chiedere affitti più alti, per il futuro immaginano anche una cantina esclusiva destinata alla gente del quartiere, non solo ai visitatori.

Sottovalutato e misconosciuto, il corridoio in cui Broadway si stringe fino a diventare un vialetto tra la 20^a e la 29^a Strada presenta già diversi punti di interesse. Tra questi Material Connexion, la libreria del design, e Culture & Commerce, la Creative Artists Agency dedicata al mondo del design, entrambe situate in Madison Avenue; l'agenzia creativa Pentagram, con sede in un edificio neoclassico più a sud; e l'Old Print Shop, un trionfo di stampe, mappe antiche e libri d'arte raccolti in enormi archivi di legno, contenitori di quercia e pigne disordinate, ammassate sulle scrivanie. All'angolo tra la 28^a e Lexington Avenue, dal 1927 vanta tra i propri clienti diversi presidenti americani, da Roosevelt a JFK. Tra i pezzi in vendita anche un disegno di Matisse del 1941 (il 12° di un'edizione da 42 stampe) e un John James Audubon dei primi Ottocento, oltre a litografie, acquerelli e schizzi con prezzi che oscillano tra i 50 e le migliaia di dollari. Capita sempre più spesso di vedere visitatori che acquistano stampe raffiguranti New York come souvenir del loro viaggio invece della solita paccottiglia venduta nelle trappole per turisti poco più a ovest.

Grand Tour



Johan Liden e Rinat Aruh dello studio di design e consulenza Aruliden (a sinistra). Tra i loro clienti ci sono Starbucks, Mini, Volkswagen, Neutrogena. Per i loro uffici hanno scelto la 24ª Strada, proprio all'altezza di NoMad (sotto)



Parte integrante della matrice della zona, queste litografie non appaiono affatto fuori luogo (un po' come le escargot del vicino ristorante francese La Petite Auberge) nel cuore di Curry Hill. Qui i visitatori possono sbizzarrirsi tra il curry take-away di Curry in a Hurry, cucina cinese, indiana, indiana kosher, kosher vegetariana, piatti tipici dell'India meridionale e del Pakistan, e ristoranti indiani aperti 24 ore su 24. Possono ordinare sari e vacanze nel Sud-Est asiatico su misura, oppure scegliere tra una dozzina di diversi tipi di curry da Kalustyan's, il negozio di spezie presente in Lexington Avenue fin dal 1947.

«La diversità è uno dei tratti distintivi di New York; se a questo si aggiunge un mix di grinta ed effetto sorpresa, si ottiene un quartiere unico. Accanto all'albergo a cinque stelle è possibile trovare una bettola e un grossista», dice Colin Hunter, che nel novembre 2009 con il partner Peyton Jenkins ha aperto qui una sartoria su misura. Via di mezzo tra the Hamptons e Savile Row, Alton Lane utilizza body scanner in 3D per prendere 400 diverse misure a ciascun cliente, oltre alle 10 tradizionali misurazioni a mano. Nell'ingresso, degno delle boutique più raffinate, i clienti possono ordinare un cocktail al bar mentre passano in rassegna l'ampia selezione di tessuti. Questo tipo di attenzione e di servizio fa dello showroom una meta privilegiata della clientela, Hunter e Jenkins hanno quindi ritenuto la scelta del quartiere fondamentale. Quando l'anno scorso hanno deciso di trasferirsi, hanno notato che NoMad «si stava sviluppando nella direzione giusta», quindi invece di cambiare quartiere si sono limitati a spostarsi dietro l'angolo rispetto al negozio originale.

«Forse non ci sono molte attrazioni, ma abbiamo ritenuto più importante privilegiare spontaneità, varietà e semplicità, tutti elementi sempre più ricercati», dice Robin Standefer a proposito degli interni dell'Ace, che portano la firma di Roman & Williams. Lo stesso si può dire dell'intero quartiere NoMad. «La sua improvvisa popolarità si deve in parte alla sua autenticità. Abbiamo puntato su un'atmosfera rilassata e aperta, che ha finito per creare la principale attrazione: la possibilità di scegliere il tipo di esperienza che ciascuno desidera fare nel nostro albergo».

Sbonquis Moreno



NoMad in pratica

Da sapere

NoMad è acronimo di North of Madison Square Park. Il quartiere si estende dalla 25ª alla 30ª Strada, tra la Avenue of the Americas (Sixth Avenue) e Lexington Avenue. La stazione della metropolitana più vicina è la 23rd Street station, ma il quartiere si raggiunge anche in cinque minuti a piedi dalla Penn Station. Tutte le imprese e i volti del quartiere sono 'schedati' al sito www.wearenomad.com.

Dormire

Nel centro di NoMad, l'**Ace Hotel** (20 West 29th Street, tel. +1/2126792222, www.acehotel.com/newyork) è pensato come una casa ideale lontano da casa. Inaugurato un anno e mezzo fa, è un segno forte della rinascita del quartiere. Ospita al suo interno ottimi ristoranti e boutique esclusive. Lavori in corso, invece, per il **NoMad Hotel** (1166-1172 Broadway, www.thenomadhotel.com). L'albergo aprirà nella primavera 2012 all'interno del Johnston Building, edificio nato dall'incontro di French Renaissance e pietra calcarea dell'Indiana. Ospiterà 160 stanze e 11 suite e avrà certificazione di sostenibilità LEED. Gli interni porteranno la firma di Jacques Garcia, capofila dello stile 'eclettico-bohemien'.

Ristoranti e locali

A due passi dal celebre (e bellissimo) Flatiron Building, il torinese **Eataly** (200 5th Avenue, tel. +1/2122292560, www.eatalyny.com) porta a New York il meglio dell'enogastronomia italiana. I ristoranti e i negozi ospitati all'interno del food concept store sono sempre affollati. Per chi ama il gusto esotico, a NoMad c'è il negozio di spezie **Kalustyan's** (123 Lexington Avenue, tel. +1/2126853451, www.kalustyans.com). Dal 1947, il punto di riferimento per gli chef della città. Solo le qualità di curry sono una dozzina. Sapori forti anche da **Curry in a Hurry** (119 Lexington Avenue, tel. +1/2126830900, www.curryhurry.net), ristorante e take-away indiano aperto nel 1976. **Artisanal Fromagerie - Bistrot and Wine Bar** (2 Park Avenue - 32nd Street, tel. +1/2127258585, www.artisanalbistro.com) offre un'ampia scelta di vini e formaggi, conservati in una cantina dove temperatura e umidità sono controllate. Il locale è stato inaugurato nel 2011 dallo chef Terrace Brennan. Il Bistrot è progettato dall'architetto Adam Tihany in stile Art Déco. Atmosfera 'crepuscolare' al **Breslin** (16 West 29th Street, tel. +1/2126791939, thebreslin.com), il ristorante all'interno dell'Ace hotel che ha saputo conquistarsi una stella Michelin. Il menù di



carne è ottimo, con un occhio di riguardo alla provenienza organica dei prodotti.

Shopping

Da non perdere **Project No. 8a** (22 West 29th Street, tel. +1/2127250008, www.projectno8.com). All'interno dell'Ace Hotel, propone abiti e accessori molto cool selezionati da Elizabeth Beer e Brian Janusiak. **Opening Ceremony** (1190-1192 Broadway, tel. +1/6466955680, ace.openingceremony.us), anche questo all'interno dell'albergo, offre una vasta gamma di capi d'abbigliamento delle marche internazionali più all'avanguardia. Per 'gente di settore', **Material Connexion** (60 Madison Avenue, tel. +1/2128422050, www.materialconnexion.com). È una libreria di design e materiali che fornisce consulenze in campo scientifico alle aziende. Consigliata una tappa da **Alton Lane** (11 West 25th Street, tel. +1/6463602947, www.altonlane.com). Un mix di sartoria artigianale e high-tech. Un body scanner in 3D prende 400 diverse misure al cliente, che intanto può sorseggiare un cocktail.

Extra

Per notizie sul **NoMad Film Festival**, di prossima apertura: www.nomadfilmfestival.com.

Vita quotidiana per le strade di NoMad (in alto). Tra i punti di ritrovo del quartiere, il ristorante Breslin, il food concept store italiano Eataly e il nuovo Ace Hotel (a destra, dall'alto in basso)

31 • Crossover

Accessories play a lead role in miniature installations. Exploring history and narrating continents. London-based Darkroom’s mission is to rethink and move on from the concept store. Using one word.

Darkroom: because black is the central theme, the congenial basis, the structural identity, the element of inner and outer rapport, the walls on the street and the interior settings where things come alive. Then there is a deeper reason: if you enter a darkroom it is always with the same intention, to look for something you still do not know, enjoy something that develops over time.

Owners Rhonda Drakeford and Lulu Roper-Caldbeck come from different backgrounds. One founded Mutistore, a graphic design studio; the other worked on developing Paul Smith’s women’s wear line. Their London concept store in 52 Lamb’s Conduit Street (Tel. + 44 (0) 20 7831 7244) reflects the meticulousness of their professional growth and the enterprise’s dash for freedom. Or so it seems.

The focus is on accessories but in the broadest sense: for man, woman and home. Plus books, magazines and prints. Displays that change every six weeks and vary with seasonal themes. African colour, texture and form are now followed by “Aztec Camera”, a celebration of Southern and Central American civilizations. As the owners describe them: “For example, identifying different uses: a necklace can be worn or hung on a wall as an objet d’art. But we also like to work with the concept of scale, like a pouf made from an outsized skein of wool, big enough for knitting with broomsticks instead of knitting needles.”

Another nuance of the combination theme is the not uncommon pairing of quite rough materials like leather, cord and chain with silk, cashmere or cotton. “All found in a strictly geometrical arrangement, something that at first sight isn’t associated with female sensitivity. As to layout, we’re not really interested in affinity by genre: we prefer to work on chromatic relationships, on textures.

We’re looking at something that resembles an installation, a scene where dialogues and tensions arise amongst objects.”

Nor is it ever a high-flying design name to govern choices: “About 20% of products are designed in house. The other 80% involve avant-garde or as yet unknown designers.”

A similar situation for the customers: “Our target is aged 21-75 years, men and women of different income brackets. There are students who buy the magazine and middle-aged women who buy £500 leather handbags.

What we aim to offer is offbeat cross design, accessible to everyone.”

45 • NoMad-ism

Many people merely cross it to reach SoHo. But the district north of Madison Square Park is changing. Its attractions are changing, yet its spirit remains the same

Mid-afternoon on a springtime Wednesday and there isn’t a single seat available in the dim, sofa-lined lobby of New York’s Ace Hotel. Of the 35 people seated, 14 are working on Mac laptops, seven on PCs and one on an iPad. No one is over 35 except for three men bellied up to the bar and they too are bathed in the glow from their computer screens. So, since when do guests—and locals—hang out in a hotel lobby?

Along with Mario Battali’s nearby Eatly which opened last August, a teeming emporium of Italian comestibles dotted with no less than a dozen restaurants, the year-and-half-old Ace is one of the conspicuous signs of the recent re-animation of NoMad, the Manhattan neighborhood north of Madison Square Park and east of Chelsea. In 1807, Madison Square was a barracks and a pauper’s burial ground; within less than 50 years, the streets flanking it had become the essence of glamour. This was the birthplace of Edith Wharton, the Manhattan cocktail and American baseball; the home to New York’s most famous late 19th-century restaurant Delmonico’s; and the site of some of architect Stanford White’s most regal constructions.

By 1900, it would become a commercial district where vestiges of both the aristocratic and the working class would continue to co-exist to this day. Now, NoMad is a kaleidoscopic area that unites highbrow and low, manufacturing and consumption, old school and new. It’s a collage of costume jewelers and wig wholesalers mixed with avant-garde fashion headliners like Project no. 8a and Opening Ceremony. There are knockoff perfumeries, a museum of sex and a cacophony of awkward-looking hotels paired with world-class dining at places like Terrance Brennan’s Artisanal fromagerie and April Bloomfield’s crepuscular, pubby, Michelin-starred Breslin. Two guys are sparring in the boxing ring at the Kingsway Gym on West 28th Street not far from the building in which fashion designer Isabel Toledo and husband, artist Ruben Toledo, have lived for over 20 years in a skylit 10th floor penthouse that is short on couches and long on Picasso painting studio charm.

Two floors below them, Jay Ruckel and wife Lacrasia Duchein hand-cut leather gloves and sew them on antique machines for clients like the Metropolitan Opera, Calvin Klein and the mothers of debutantes across the southern United States. “Fifteen years ago, there were Crips and Bloods on the corner,” recalls Ruckel who moved in a few years ago when tenants like him and his wife were bought out of the old Breslin building in preparation for its resurrection as the Ace. At a recent community board meeting, he told the hotel’s developers: “I love your liquor

license!” There used to be gangsters on the street and guys on the sidewalk trying to sell you something all day long and now it’s turned into a delightful, civilized neighborhood—because of a liquor license!”

It’s clear from the Lacrasia factory windows, which look in four directions that it isn’t a comprehensive change, but that there are spots that are beginning to bridge the old city and the new. The windows look onto landmarks of halcyon days: the Empire State building, the white wedding cake of the Gilsey House, the triangular, turn-of-the-20th-century Flatiron Building and the Johnston, a French Renaissance, Indiana limestone affair, which will open as the 160-room, 11-suite, LEED-certified NoMad Hotel next spring with most of its historical architectural details intact.

Around the rehabilitated architecture, Jacques Garcia, who did Paris’ Hotel Costes, will design NoMad’s “eclectic, bohemian” interiors. Like the Ace, developer The Sydell Group’s first project in the area, NoMad should serve as a home-away-from-home for both guests and locals alike. “We see a real movement away from the hotel as nightclub toward the hotel as great house, or hotel as a gathering place, and in both hotels that’s a strong influence,” says Sydell CEO Andrew Zobler.

“When out-of-town-guests come to stay, they don’t want to be surrounded by out-of-towners; they want to mix with the locals.” This is distinct from swank neighborhoods like the Meatpacking District, which is hardly residential at all. By contrast, NoMad is an area where, within a five-block radius, thousands of people live and work. “We like the area because it’s still a real New York working class district. It was, and it still is,” says Ace co-founder Alex Calderwood. “We want to be the neighborhood’s ‘living room.’”

When Sydell came into the neighborhood in 2005, they began by allying themselves with the locals, installing additional street lighting, planting trees, ramping up security and helping the city to lay down a bike lane. Most New Yorkers think of the area as an in-between space through which they pass to reach midtown or Soho. “I would have described the neighborhood as somewhat dusty, devoid of epicenters, yet convenient and with great ethnic stops,” says designer and musician Sébastien Agneessens who also moved into the area in 2005 with his wife, multimedia designer Vivian Rosenthal of Tronic. “There wasn’t much happening. It seemed to be stuck between Union Square and midtown, a residential neighborhood that nobody was proud of, but there were a few under-the-radar exceptions that made it special and worthy of exploration. Now, it’s less rock ‘n roll, a little more cozy and comfortable, but the spirit of an older New York remains.”

It is precisely this texture that makes NoMad attractive and which will become the virtue of both new hotels. “When you come and stay at a hotel,” Zobler says, “you want to stay in a place where you get to experience the culture and meet the people who live in the neighborhood every day.” Zobler would

like to bring in more restaurants and see some of Chelsea’s art galleries, which have been squeezed by ever-rising rents with the development of the High Line Park, relocate into NoMad. And even though the developer could pull in higher rents by installing fashion retailers, he also envisions inviting in a high-and-bodega, an amenity for people who live in the neighborhood, not just those who visit.

The undersung corridor where Broadway narrows to a trickle in the West 20’s already has unique amenities. These include, among others, design resource library Material Connexion and its sister, the Creative Artists Agency of the product design world, Culture & Commerce, which are located on Madison Avenue. “We have the best of New York City in a 10-block radius,” says company president Michele Caniato, “and more and more design showrooms are making their homes here too—from DDC to Duravit. There was a time you wouldn’t step foot in the park, now, spring will come and you’ll be hard pressed to find a seat on the bench during lunch.”

Creative agency Pentagram is located in a neo-classical building to the west of the park. To the east, the Old Print Shop, a candy store of fine prints, antique maps and art books ranged in huge wooden flat files, oak storage bins and messy desktop stacks, has occupied a building at 28th and Lexington Avenue since 1927, doing business with the likes of US presidents from FDR to JFK. They have a 1942 drawing by Matisse (12th in an edition of 42) and an early 19th -century John James Audubon, along with lithographs, watercolors and sketches ranging from fifty to hundreds of thousands of dollars. In recent years, tourists have been stopping in to buy prints of New York scenes as mementos of their visit instead of the tinny souvenirs sold en masse not far to the west.

Part of the area’s profound and dispersed catholicism, these lithographs, like the escargots at nearby French restaurant La Petite Auberge, don’t feel out of place at the heart of Curry Hill. Here visitors can get Chinese Indian, kosher Indian, vegetarian kosher Indian, 24-hour Indian, southern Indian, and Curry in a Hurry. They can order made-to-measure saris and made-to-measure Southeast Asian holidays, or shop for a dozen types of curry powder at Kalustyan’s spice store, which has made the same Lexington Avenue location fragrant since 1947.

“Diversity is one of the things that makes New York beautiful and there is an element of grit and surprise—you can have a five-star hotel next to a dive bar and a wholesaler—that makes this neighborhood exciting and unique,” says Colin Hunter, who opened a bespoke tailor shop on 25th Street with partner Peyton Jenkins in November 2009. The-Hamptons-meets-Savile Row, Alton Lane uses a 3D body scanner to take 400 digital measurements of each client’s body, supplementing these with 10 traditional hand measurements. In a salon-like room, clients may order cocktails from the bar while browsing fabrics. This kind of service makes the showroom a “destination” for their

clientele, so Hunter and Jenkins felt it was important to be in an appealing neighborhood. When they decided to move last year, they saw NoMad “growing in all the right ways,” and relocated just around the corner from the original shop.

“I guess there aren’t a ton of amenities, but it’s more about the spontaneity and the haphazardness and the simplicity that people have really been desperate for,” says Robin Standefer about Roman & Williams’ design of the Ace interiors. It is something that could also be said of the entire NoMad neighborhood. “Part of the reason it is the next new thing is because there’s something so authentic about it. We were relaxed and inclusive and that created the greatest amenity of all: letting people choose their own experience.”

57 • Easy-to-wear

Junichi Abe organized a contest and commissioned the design of his home from the winner. After working with Rei Kawakubo and now designing for his own label, Kolor, this pragmatic stylist lives in a Tokyo home echoing his apparel range.

Photo: Junichi Abe

The origins date back to 2004. After Junichi Abe’s lengthy partnership with Rei Kawakubo, the founder of Comme des Garçons, he established his own brand - Kolors. “I’m delighted to be putting my own stamp on super-wearable, comfortable clothes,” he says. “Seasonal collections without a theme but embracing three key aspects: material textures, unique cut, skilled assembly of the pieces,” he adds. Well, we think, these golden rules can also be applied to his home in the residential area of Meguro, Tokyo. A quiet, verdant area where houses are not cramped close together. A few years ago, Junichi decided he needed a new home now he had a wife and a small child. He found some land he liked and in his typically pragmatic way he invited three architects to enter a competition: whoever presented the most innovative project would be the winner. When all was said and done, the contract went to a young Yokohama couple: Yashima and Associates. It goes without saying that the stylist, a graduate of the Tokyo Fashion College, fully intended to work with them, steering the young architects known (in any case) for their crisp, linear design inspired by the purest of Japanese tradition. “We brainstormed,” he says “I told them what I wanted and they invested their experience.”

Together they made nine models, they appraised, removed, balanced, organized and reorganized the interior spaces and eventually achieved a result. The house was to have three floors, with geometric lines and plenty of light, in 330 understated square metres. The only foible is an exposed stone wall on the rear facade, a quirk e might not expect (maybe) and which contrasts perfectly with the curved wood ceiling

slats inside. The style-fiend owner chose strong, frank materials like rough stone, wood and glass. Right from the entrance the mood is overriding minimalism: grey gloss resin floor, umbrella stand, stairs leading up to the next level with a handrail set (precariously) against the side of the wall. The rungs of light wood lead to the living room where, surprisingly, the design is almost completely “Made in Italy.” From the couch to the glass and resin coffee table, and a pair of red tables, everything is from Zanotta. The only exception is the Nordic touch of the (iconic) Poulsen artichoke lamp. More stairs, this time behind a white wall, lead to the balcony that looks out over an immense park, owned by the tycoon who lives next door. Then there is the garage, because Junichi is a big fan of luxury cars and owns a Jaguar and a limited-edition Audi sports car of which he is particularly proud. When the designer is not at home, he is in his boutique-atelier (seen here) in Tokyo’s Minamioyama district.

The tireless stylist personally designed the space, which exploits the extensive basement space. Again the philosophy is “less is more”. Cobalt blue carpet on the floors, exposed cement walls, glass chambers as fitting rooms. And the Kolors collections. Nothing else.

When we spoke to him on the telephone, it seemed appropriate to ask how things were going, telling him we understand the tragedy that has hit his country. But he is a man of few words and with the same style he applies to everything, he replied that Japan will make it.

62 • Meet you at the mall

Not just a shopping centre. Korean Centercity Gallery is an activator of experiences. With an even-changing façade and interiors to discover, one floor after the other. Designed by UNStudio

Dutchman Ben Van Berkel of UNStudio writes: «fMuseums are becoming supermarkets, then why can’t a department store be transformed into a museum?». No sooner said than done. Centercity Gallery, built in Cheonan, Korea, is a sensational shopping mall which recalls – in the giddy whiteness of its ten floors above ground – Frank Lloyd Wright’s Guggenheim Museum. There are also six floors below ground. The building was designed after attentive observation of the habits of those who frequent shopping centres. Particularly in South-East Asia, where department stores also perform a social function: places where people arrange to meet for lunch or a drink, and often indulge in window shopping rather than actually buying. So this was not merely a matter of designing a shopping centre, but also an ‘activator’ of experiences.

The interiors are devised to evoke the desire for discovery, and reveal themselves gradually, as one moves

here and there, from one floor to the next. In addition to the shops, the Gallery houses a series of public spaces, including a centre for art and culture, and a VIP hall. The food court and supermarket, on the first level below ground, also adhere to the overall design scheme. On the outside, the appearance of the edifice changes continuously through the use of special lights, animations and moiré effects, which switch on and off in the course of 24 hours. In daytime it has a monochrome appearance, while at night it comes alive with soft tones that wash its surface with rolling waves of light. The inner layer of the facade, of steel and aluminium, is pierced by a series of openings, illuminating the interior: 66 thousand square metres in all.

67 • Modern on the island

Bought on the spot, this ideal summer holiday location is a classic 1800s farm, nestling in the province of Friesland. Architect Bart Vos opened it up to light, space and functionality.

Photo: Bart Vos

Terschelling is a Friesian. In that it is one of the islands that hug the northern coast of the Netherlands, in the Waddensea.

The perfect place to relax: beaches, rolling dunes, woods and picturesque villages. Also perfect for buying a house. Which a family of five (father, mother and three children) did after a 19th-century farm caught their eye. Two storeys nestling under a long red-tile roof, a big garden and a barn too. A “historical monument” ready to become a summer home.

The commission went to Bart Vos of Vos Interieur in Groningen, who had already worked on a first house, at Uitwellingerga, also in the province of Friesland. The professional rapport is perfect. The requirements are identical.

“We had to adapt the interior to modern needs, conceiving it above all as a functional space,” says Vos. The commission went to Bart Vos of Vos Interieur in Groningen, who had already worked on a first house, at Uitwellingerga, also in the province of Friesland. The professional rapport is perfect. The requirements are identical. “We had to adapt the interior to modern needs, conceiving it above all as a functional space,” says Vos. Easier said than done, since the farm was originally a series of many small boxes lacking spatial rationality. The solutions developed include transparent glass features that open up to allow the passage of light and create harmony, especially on the ground floor. On the first floor, the principle is similar, but in reverse order: the starting point is a huge void and here each function is given its space: bedroom, guestroom and bathroom. Whatever is left remains unencumbered. An open-plan staircase, plated like an origami (exclusive Bart Vos design), cuts seamlessly through to each level.

Another aspect was the historical memory of the place, to be recovered and enhanced. “The original ground floor doors were restored and painted white,” adds Vos. “The effect is not dominant but fits perfectly into the milieu. Other original features were also painted white, like the old wooden beams.”

White was a choice that linked and provided continuity for the entire premises. White is neutral, a coherent scenario for furnishings. A measured mix of period and contemporary. The result is perfect, without being affected. The antique elements come into the modern era and the new elements attune to the period look. Simple. The owners are enthusiastic art collectors so “for them every item is an opus and they select with taste.” Bart Vos is an industrial and interior designer; Vos Interieur is a store working with his studio. “So it’s easy enough to get special pieces,” assures the architect. It is also easy to commission them. Like the kitchen designed by Piet Hein Eek. Dutch tradition did the rest, here and there brought into the Noughties.

For example, a Hella Jongerius Polder sofa paired with a Tolomeo lamp by Artemide. Or Koninklijke Tichelaar Makkum tiles that share the children’s bathroom with Edra’s Paesaggi Italiani. Ingo Maurer’s masterpiece Birds Birds lamp hangs in the entrance, in front of a window. Almost about to take flight.

73 • ¡Que viva México!

They’re aware it’s a drop in the ocean, but they’re trying just the same: “It’s possible to make money and do things the right way.” Tables, chairs, sofas, armchairs, partitions. Top quality, sustainable self-production and good design, all based on wood. Like their chosen name: Pirwi. ¡Que viva México!

“A tree is never just a tree.” In the case of Pirwi, it is a source of inspiration. Emiliano Godoy and Alejandro Castro are Mexican designer-entrepreneurs who base their design and business philosophy on wood.

The name itself, Pirwi, means Peruvian Pepper and says it perfectly: a tribute to an evergreen species native to South America. Their strict approach is one of top quality, sustainable production and good design, which translates into 40 employees, 16 freelance designers and more than 120 catalogue items. Tables, chairs, armchairs, sofas, bookshelves, benches, partitions. Some can be disassembled and recycled, more will be available in two years. “Because we like to do things properly,” they say. We met them in Milan but the photo shoot refers to the Mexico City showroom. Starting from there:

What does it mean to be a designer in Mexico?

It means that few companies offer design and virtually no designers work for them. Designers produce their own work and distribute on a limited basis. We founded Pirwi because we wanted a green business to work on a wide scale. *The keyword?* Responsibility. In Mexico we launched a new concept of responsible production that revolves around the product. When we use a material we know exactly where it comes from and what