

# INTERIOR DESIGN<sup>®</sup>

OCTOBER  
2020



Morris Adjmi Architects and Curious Yellow  
Design's Rockaway Hotel captures the laid-back  
essence of the Queens shoreline

**back to the beach**

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**In 1977**, when Queens natives the Ramones released “Rockaway Beach,” the punk band’s classic paean to the borough’s oceanside neighborhood, it was against a backdrop of high crime and low budgets. Fast forward to 2012 and, like much of the city, the working-class riviera—the largest urban beach and boardwalk in the nation—had gone from worn-out to welcoming. Then came the epic devastation of Hurricane Sandy. Eight years later, rebuilding efforts are nearing completion. And now comes a crowning jewel, the Rockaway Hotel, which embodies the coastal getaway’s restored charm and relaxed aspirations.

A spit of land a few blocks wide, the Rockaway peninsula sits between Jamaica Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, with the skyscrapers of Manhattan glimmering like the Emerald City in the distance. Its ready accessibility by bridge, subway, and ferry (a pleasing polyglot of hipsters and Hasidim) made it an attractive site for the new hotel, the brainchild of sustainability-minded developer 7G Realty, which took a hands-off approach in its brief to Morris Adjmi Architects and Curious Yellow Design. “All we did was make sure there was a balance of urban and beach,” recalls 7G partner and chief social impact officer Michi Jigarjian, who was determined that the building not disrupt its context of row bungalows and low-rise apartment blocks.

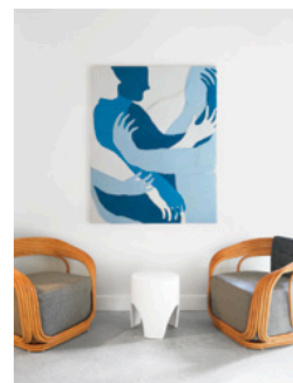
**Previous spread:** The lobby of the Rockaway Hotel in Queens by Morris Adjmi Architects and Curious Yellow Design is defined by white-oak shelving, plastered walls, and custom furniture by Curious Yellow.

**Top:** Nearby, the custom teak table stands on semipolished-concrete flooring across from a Guillaume et Chambron reproduction armchair.

**Bottom:** Vintage Giovanni Travasa chairs compose another lobby seating vignette.

**Opposite top:** Blackened-steel balustrades wrap around a Kennedy Yanko sculpture.

**Opposite bottom:** A custom rattan pendant fixture hangs from the lobby’s white-oak ceiling.



Morris Adjmi was a perfect fit for the project, having won a load of street cred years earlier with his seminal Wythe Hotel in Williamsburg, Brooklyn—another high-profile property that helped transform a neglected city neighborhood. Although Adjmi's 84,000-square-foot Rockaway Hotel encompasses a restaurant, rooftop bar, street-side coffee shop, large-scale event space, and outdoor pool area, it delicately nods to the existing architectural topography, complementing the historic bungalows, some of which date to the 1920's. They determined the hotel's modest six-story height as well as the use of zinc exterior paneling, which echoes the row houses' colors and style. "We tried to create something with a relaxed vibe that really fits in the neighborhood and becomes an instant go-to place," Adjmi says. "It feels like it belongs here."

Curious Yellow was also influenced by the hotel's setting as well as '60's beach culture. Partners Anna Cappelen and Chloe Pollack-Robbins—veterans of a previous oceanside success, the Hero Beach Club in Long Island's Montauk—created an eclectic yet calming atmosphere embellished with items that a contemporary surfer might have collected on the road. "It's a place where the city's grit and luxury and the beach all come crashing into each other," Cappelen says. ➤

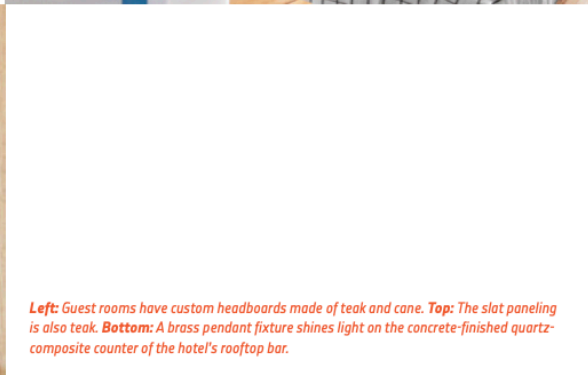
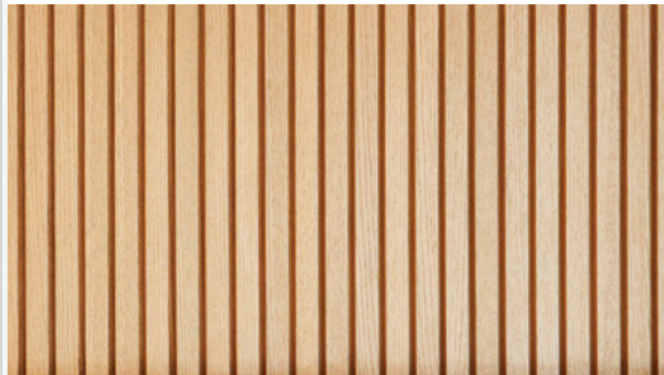


The hotel comprises 53 guest rooms and eight extended-stay suites. All enjoy an ocean or bay view—some backdropped by the far-off Manhattan skyline—and many offer terraces. Custom beds with floating nightstands are made from teak and cane and dressed in crisp white linens. They back up to walls fronted by teak slats, which provide even more natural warmth and texture.

The lobby features curvy furniture and vintage Indonesian textiles mixed with a hint of Scandinavia (Cappelen is Norwegian). Materials include off-white linen, flax-textured weaves, black metal, teak, pink terrazzo, cast concrete, and stone. A grand entry table showcases an ever-changing tableaux such as a giant bouquet of cherry blossom branches, an antique marble bust, vintage candy, and black-licorice sculptures. Shelves are lined with books and curios, walls are hung with sconces and art. Jigarjian, who is a professor in Bard College's MFA program and heads the Camera Club of New York, has curated the hotel's painting and photography collections, which center on works by local artists.

Outside the lobby, the pool is surrounded by teak and woven-rope chaise longues interspersed with lush concrete planters and large ceramic floor vases. Along one side of the pool, a massive cedar frame shelters semiprivate ➤





*Left: Guest rooms have custom headboards made of teak and cane. Top: The slat paneling is also teak. Bottom: A brass pendant fixture shines light on the concrete-finished quartz-composite counter of the hotel's rooftop bar.*





cabanas outfitted with teak sofas and tables in which guests can relax under parasol-like rattan pendants. "Every single person you know would feel comfortable here," Pollack-Robbins notes. "It's unpretentious but also transporting. You feel like you can lounge around all day with a glass of red wine." More wine can be enjoyed at the rooftop bar, situated beneath an enormous skylight. Wooden tables topped with hand-painted tile and a quartz bar join brass pendants and hanging plants for an urban yet unaffected feel.

Without a doubt, the hotel is the hippest element in Rockaway's post-Sandy renaissance since the Queen's Economic Development Corporation used the Ramones anthem in an ad campaign to lure visitors back to the shore. Just like that song, the appealingly laid-back property is saying:

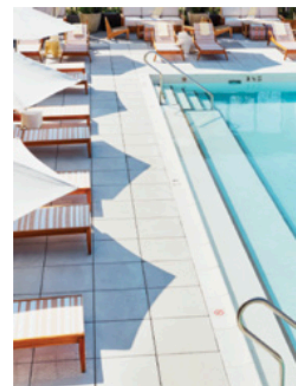
*It's not hard, not far to reach  
We can hitch a ride  
To Rockaway Beach. 🌊*

#### PROJECT TEAM

**JESSE LEVIN; KALEB QUIRIN; LUKE ERICKSON; CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR; LAUREN CAUGHLEY; COURTNEY HATHAWAY; MORRIS ADJMI ARCHITECTS. LAUREN BAKER: CURIOUS YELLOW DESIGN. REBECCA COLE GROWS: LANDSCAPING CONSULTANT. LIGHTING WORKSHOP: LIGHTING CONSULTANT. CERAMI: ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT. CARLIN-SIMPSON & ASSOCIATES: GEO-TECHNICAL CONSULTANT. A DEGREE OF FREEDOM: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. SULLIVAN GROUP DESIGN: CIVIL ENGINEER. MGE: MEP. JDP DESIGN CONSTRUCTION: WOODWORK. COMALLA CONSTRUCTION: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.**

#### PRODUCT SOURCES

**FROM FRONT: LULU AND GEORGIA: RUG (LOBBY). ALLIED MAKER: SCONCES. KIM SOO: BLANKETS, VASES. STITCH ROOM: CUSTOM THROW PILLOWS. CIRCA LIGHTING: SCONCE (STAIR). CEDAR AND MOSS: PENDANT FIXTURES, SCONCES (GUEST ROOMS). SAM STEWART: TABLE LAMPS. VALLEY FORGE FABRICS: CURTAINS. IN COMMON WITH: SCONCES (BAR). TECH LIGHTING: PENDANT FIXTURE. KASWELL FLOORING: BAR FACE. FIRECLAY TILE: WALL TILE. BESTART & MIRROR: CUSTOM MIRROR (BATHROOM). MEROLA TILE: FLOOR TILE. ZUCCHETTI: SINK FITTINGS. SUNBRELLA: SOFA UPHOLSTERY (CABANAS). THROUGHOUT BENJAMIN MOORE & CO.; PORTOLA PAINTS & GLAZES: PAINT. CAESARSTONE: SOLID SURFACING.**



**Top:** Among the 53 guest rooms is a deluxe king featuring a custom bamboo side chair and oak floor planks. **Bottom:** Concrete pavers and custom chaise longues surround the pool.

**Opposite top:** An Um Project stool joins a quartz-composite vanity in a guest bathroom. **Opposite bottom:** Cedar frames the pool area's semiprivate cabanas.

