

COOL HUNTING

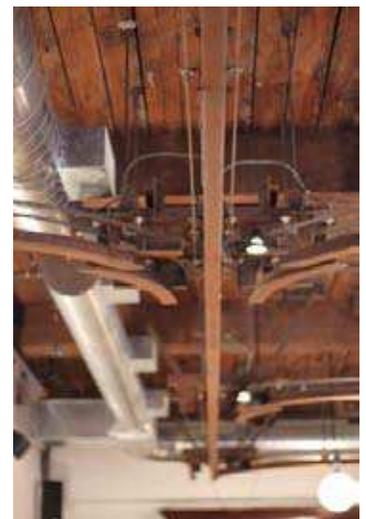
Wythe Hotel

Williamsburg's newest hotel stays true to its Brooklyn roots

by James Thorne in Travel on 21 May 2012



Housed in a renovated factory building on the Williamsburg waterfront, the Wythe Hotel marks the long-due maturation of the booming Brooklyn neighborhood. The place embraces local flavor by blending grungy industrial looks with luxe hospitality, and there's plenty of buzz around the involvement of restaurateur Andrew Tarlow of Marlow & Sons and Diner fame. "It's a grown-up version of what's happening in Brooklyn," says Tarlow of the Wythe. At present, it stands as a beacon for the direction of Williamsburg, a place to stay and feel at home in one of the hippest corners of NYC.





The 100-year-old building represents what's left of an old cooperage that was renovated to suit the wants and needs of hotel guests. "We fell in love with the building on day one and just wanted to show it off as much as possible," explains Peter Lawrence, who along with Tarlow and Jed Walentas make up the trio of partners behind the Wythe Hotel. "We stripped everything down to the bare bones—the cast iron columns and the timbers and the exterior wall," says Lawrence.

Details like rusted ceiling tracks add to the flavor of the historic building, as does a floor-to-ceiling illustration depicting the history of Brooklyn in the lobby. While the skeleton of the original building remained relatively untouched, a three-story add-on by architect Morris Adjmi maximized skyline-facing views and features an L-shaped rooftop terrace and cocktail bar.

If you're looking for Williamsburg in the Wythe hotel, you'll find it in the details. Marlow & Sons provides the mini-bar accoutrements, including a selection of small-batch ice cream. Marlow Goods provides the bathroom towels and the soap is from Goldie's out of Rockaway, NY. Rather than incorporating a complicated tech systems, each room is equipped with a simple red audio jack connected to the room speakers. Each of the four styles of wallpaper for the hotel were custom-made by Flavor Paper, and are available from their online shop.

While the concrete floors may look industrial, heating elements ensure that your toes are cozy when walking around barefoot. Two-way mirrors in the bathrooms allow guests to enjoy the Manhattan skyline while

freshening up. Commenting on the "white linen" approach of most hotels, Tarlow explains. "I don't think hospitality is about a fine cloth. It's more about you and I sitting down, me saying hello and, holding the door for you and all these little interactions."

"Part of the excitement of being in this neighborhood is that it's a creative center—not just in New York these days but internationally," says Lawrence. "The level of talent that's available nearby was too exciting." Much of the furniture was made from wood salvaged during the renovation, with beds and desks repurposed by local craftsman Dave Hollier. Steve Powers, commonly known as "ESPO", decorated the adjacent building with vintage Brooklyn logos to give non-view rooms a piece of art to look out on.

One of the quirks of the hotel is their pair of adjoining "band rooms". Created on the recommendation of the folks behind the Brooklyn Bowl music venue who needed a place to put up traveling music groups for the night, the bunk bed filled rooms hold six and four guests, respectfully.

When it came to food, Tarlow wanted to keep up the "New American" style of his other restaurants, adding a commitment to whole beast butchering and open flame cooking. "We purchase all of our animals in whole form. A cow came in here on Monday and we've been going through it for the entire week—so how we move through it will inform the menu." An on-site butcher and localvore sourcing may not be the most convenient methods for a hotel, but Tarlow wanted "Reynard's" to stand out as a destination restaurant for locals as well as guests. For drinks, the rooftop cocktail bar provides brilliant city views under the building's marquis lights.

A few weeks following its opening, the hotel has already garnered a strong local following. Part of their success comes from the fact that the attraction remains Williamsburg rather than just the Wythe: spa treatments and swimming pools are sacrificed in favor of a sense of place. The hotel promises to become part of the urban fabric, joining the Brooklyn Bowl and the Brooklyn Brewery as an area landmark. Rooms at the Wythe Hotel start at \$179.

Wythe Hotel
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