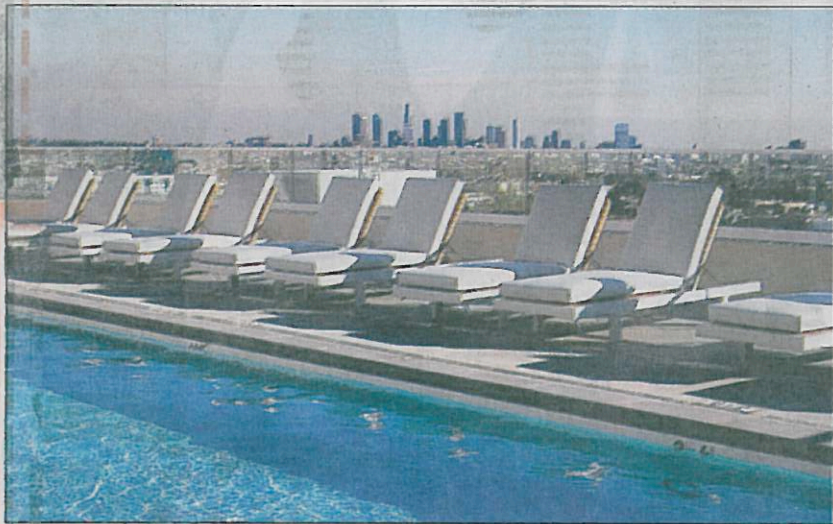


CALENDAR

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2010 :: LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR



LANDSCAPES: Outside, a rooftop pool, above left, boasts spectacular views of downtown. Inside, Christian Moeller's sculpture "Pushing," above right, is among the works commissioned for public areas. Below, the hotel lobby includes a pedestrian bridge and a corkscrew-shaped chandelier.



Photographs by TIM STREET-PORTER (above) and ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times (top)

ARCHITECTURE REVIEW

Urban equation

The new W Hotel complex is one part Hollywood vanity and one part subway plaza. The results are ungainly but an interesting experiment in city planning.

CHRISTOPHER HAWTHORNE ARCHITECTURE CRITIC >>> Think of the new W Hollywood Hotel & Residences complex as equal parts Chateau Marmont, L.A. Live and Pershing Square. ¶ The 15-story, \$600-million development, designed by Dallas-based architecture firm HKS, combines on a single L-shaped site the W's hotel and condominium towers with a 375-unit apartment block called 1600 Vine. The whole ensemble is draped in gigantic billboards, wrapped around a sizable public plaza leading to a Metro Red Line subway stop and squeezed in next to the landmark 1924 Taft Building at Hollywood and Vine. ¶ The rather ungainly result, set to open officially this morning, is not what you'd call an elegant addition to the rapidly expanding Hollywood skyline. And yet few recent projects have had more to say about the state of contemporary urbanism in Southern California than this one. It symbolizes almost perfectly a city that is groping toward a denser, more vertical and more public future while still reluctant to abandon its love affair with the car and the glossier, more exclusive corners of celebrity culture. ¶ As urban real-estate developments begin to combine high-end hotel [See W Hotel, Page D12]

AN APPRECIATION

Salinger: a gift of words and silence

In his greatest work, a clash between self-expression and self-effacement

DAVID L. ULIN

"Don't ever tell anything," J.D. Salinger wrote in the closing line of "Catcher in the Rye." You start missing even now.

For more than two decades now, I've thought of Salinger as ending as a piece of art that Salinger, on Wednesday at age 91, in Cornish, N.H., was announcing in spite of what his most devoted followers — those who have gathered around his driveway for a glimpse of the reclusive author, or parsed his work on a million websites — might believe.

But Salinger was a man who refracted his life into language, producing that was personal and found. Between 1945 and 1951 he produced four unsent books of "Catcher," "Nine Franny and Zooey," "High the Roof Bearers" — before retreating home in Cornish and publishing any more.

As he once wrote in a letter to the poet Ian Hamilton, "I think I've been exploited and I'm sorry I can possibly live a single lifetime."

For the last 45 years was the encoded Salinger's self-imposed silence. Readers debated whether he was still writing or in twilight oblivion of his part, Salinger's interactions with the public were and largely litigious. [See Salinger

Jay Leno on 'Oprah'

"NBC could not have handled it worse," comedian tells C. Winfrey. D2

Two views on Rauschenberg

Charles L. Mee attempts to trace the innovative visual artist Robert Rauschenberg in theatrical form.

"Rauschenberg's 'Gemini' is an eye-opening surprise in his printmaking.

Ask Amy Comics

An ambitious design

[W Hotel, from Page D1]

rooms with residential and retail space, they are presenting fresh challenges for architects, primarily having to do with producing separate lobbies and dedicated elevators for each section of a building. The W, rising on land owned by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and a full decade in the making, adds another layer of complexity to that equation. Along with channeling flows of tourists, hotel guests, commuters, tenants and diners, it has to account for the peculiar whims of Hollywood vanity — accommodating bold-faced names who on some visits will be ready to meet the cameras and on others anxious to slip inside unnoticed.

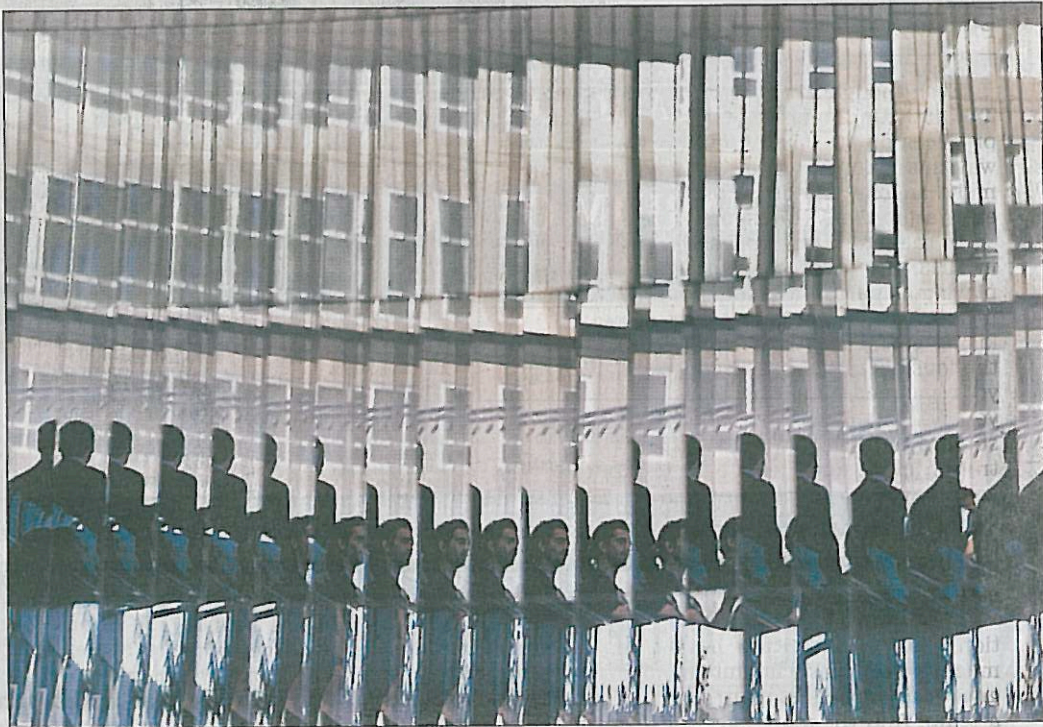
Hotel guests will enter the lobby on a red carpet: one leads in from the Walk of Fame on Hollywood Boulevard, skirting one edge of the Metro plaza, the other from a valet drop-off. Inside, they'll find a grand, high-ceilinged space full of chances to pursue further conspicuousness, including a pedestrian bridge near the ceiling that resembles a suspended catwalk and a curving staircase lined with still more red fabric and wraps around a corkscrew-shaped hanging LED chandelier.

Upstairs, suites grouped together on the second and third floors of the hotel are specifically outfitted for press junkets, aiming to steal some industry revenue from the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills, which has long owned the lion's share of that business. Hotel executives say they conducted focus groups on junkets with a range of people in the film industry and tweaked the design of the 20 suites accordingly, giving them extra-large bathrooms to accommodate hair and makeup crews and heavy-duty electrical panels that help cut down on the need for long cables, among other features.

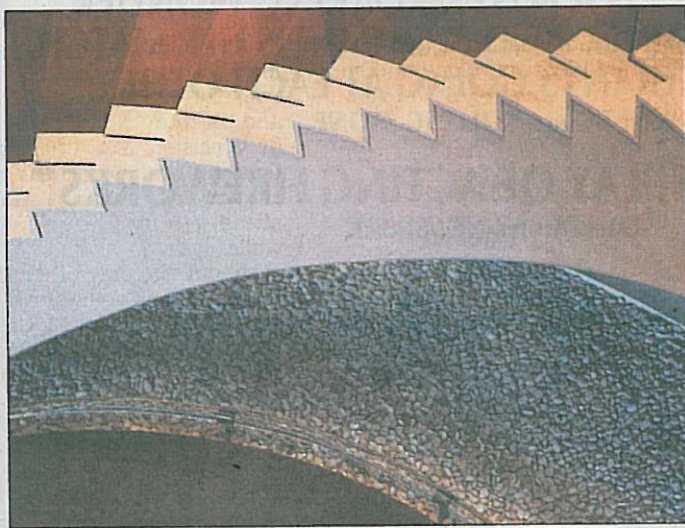
Those suites and the rest of the hotel rooms, designed by the Portland, Ore., firms Designstudio Ltd. and Architropolis, offer what their chief designer, Sharilyn Olson Rigdon, calls a mixture of "Barbarella"-style Hollywood and 1960s L.A. Modern. Like the condominiums, they are most notable for the remarkable views they offer of the Hollywood Hills and of landmarks, including the nearby Capitol Records Tower and Griffith Observatory.

On the top floor of the hotel tower is a bachelor suite featuring a small raised area that includes a stripper pole — or rather did include a stripper pole until city building inspectors, according to Olson Rigdon, asked the W to remove it because the area wasn't wheelchair accessible. (Any elevated space inside a hotel room with a dedicated use has to accommodate wheelchairs; removing the pole, apparently, was enough to remove the use.)

The highlight of the hotel's rooftop pool area is a curving cabana wrapped in aluminum scales; it was designed by Daly Genik Architects, which also was responsible for the condominium interiors and the strik-



REFLECTIONS OF YOU: Two staff members are reflected dozens of times as they ascend a mirror-lined spiral staircase in the hotel's lobby. Call it unintentional art. Or is it?



HOLLYWOOD TREATMENT: Red carpet lines a staircase ascending over a bed of rocks in the hotel's lobby.

ing Douglas fir-lined lobby for the condo tower. Kevin Daly, a founder of the firm, said the W asked him to design the cabana as "a Venus' flytrap for supermodels."

The complex will also cater, however, to a high-end client base that will be less interested in bottle service or keen to avoid cellphone cameras and the junket scene altogether. Condo owners using a dedicated car turnaround can bypass the hotel lobby completely. Inside the hotel, a sequestered series of suites offers direct and private access to a fourth-floor outpost of Bliss Spa, where detox services will be on the menu alongside the anti-aging mushroom enzyme peel. And hidden discreetly a few steps from the pool deck is a separate series of cabanas — also designed by Daly Genik — available for purchase by condo owners, giving them dedicated private space on the rooftop level.

Even as it aims for well-heeled and expense-account business, the project, developed by Legacy Partners of Foster City, Calif., and Gatehouse Capital Corp. of Dallas, is among the largest transit-oriented developments, or TODs, yet completed in Los

Angeles. It has provided the Red Line's Hollywood and Vine station with an attractive new yellow-glass canopy, designed by Rios Clementi Hale Studios, which also oversaw the W's skillful landscape design. On the other side of the complex, the apartment block includes 78 units set aside for low-income tenants.

The residential component of the development seems likely to speed the maturation of the surrounding neighborhood, which particularly in the blocks to the south and west is shaking off a seedy reputation to emerge as the one of the more vital, walkable parts of Los Angeles. Along with a number of cafes, restaurants and new residential buildings, the district contains Amoeba Music, the ArcLight and Pantages theaters, the Hotel Cafe and the popular Space 15 Twenty retail complex.

Under the direction of art consultant Tiffiny Lendrum, the W has also put its 1%-for-art budget to unusually ambitious projects for the public areas by Jennifer Steinkamp, Pae White, Christian Moeller and Erwin Redl.

In its ambition and design IQ, the W is a clear step up from



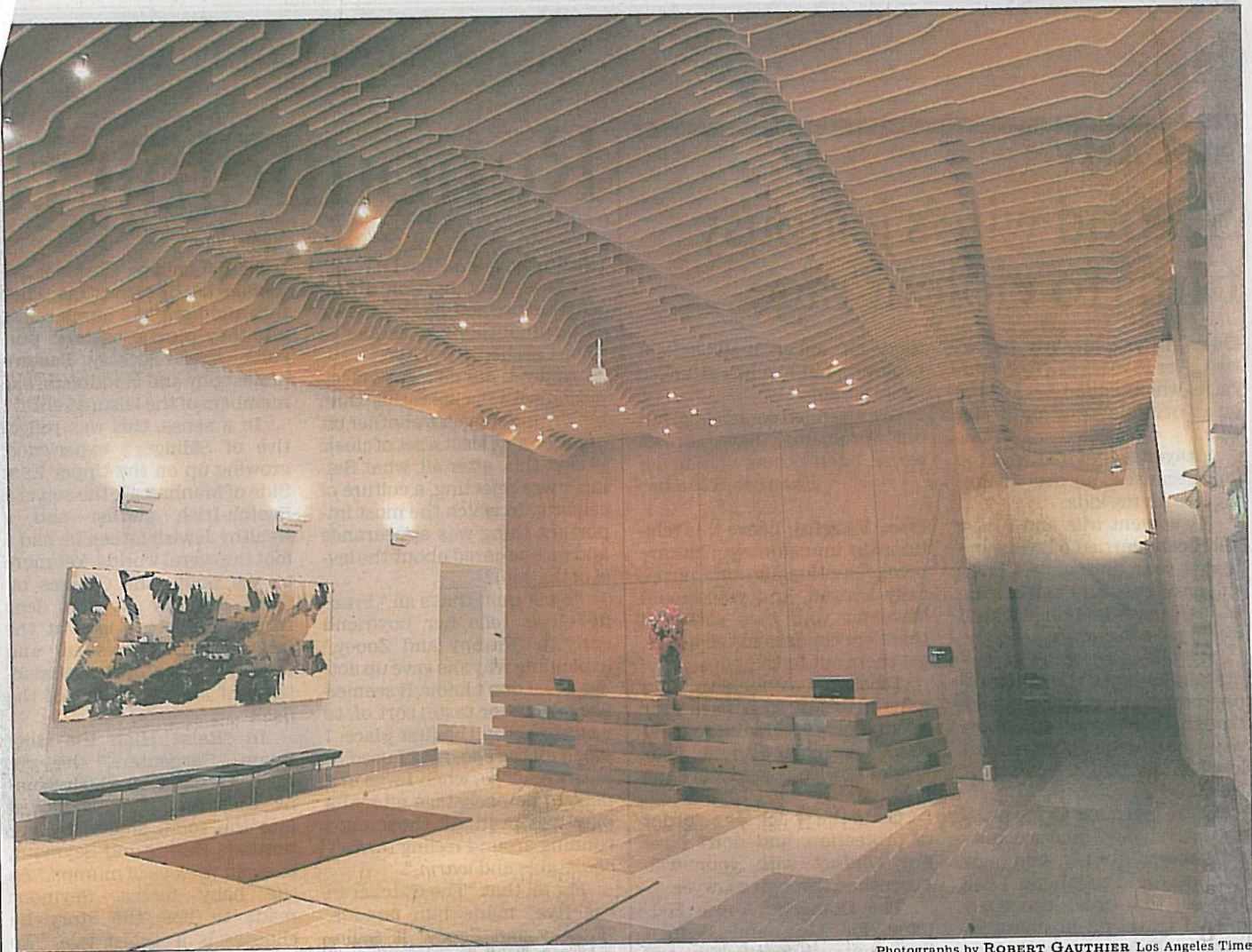
Los Angeles Times

the 2001 Hollywood & Highland complex, which pioneered the large-scale TOD concept in this part of Los Angeles. Still, it's a pity that the spirit animating the handful of really ambitious design touches on display couldn't have been extended to cover the whole project. On the exterior, in particular, the HKS architects were visibly hamstrung by the demands of this very tricky site, creating an awkwardly proportioned series of sky bridges, curtain walls, terraces and billboard scaffolding that never coheres as a whole.

What it will mean for the civic fabric of a quickly gentrifying, densifying Hollywood remains to be seen. The W brings together several parts of L.A. culture that typically spin in separate orbits, raising the question of how much these groups will actually interact under the complex's aggressive neon glow. Will junketeering reporters from London newspapers and Chilean TV rub shoulders with commuters, publicists or hotel guests in the lobby bar? Will the condo owners and the apartment tenants find any common ground?

From that point of view, the W Hollywood isn't just an urban-planning experiment for Los Angeles. It's something of a sociological one too.

christopher.hawthorne
@latimes.com



Photographs by ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

A SEA OF TRANQUILITY: Undulating sculptured wood lines the ceiling of the residential lobby at the W Hollywood Hotel and Residences. The complex is in an area emerging as one of the more vital, walkable parts of Los Angeles.