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**A homecoming in Detroit
for a historical revival**

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➔ **In 2012, the city of Detroit** started exploring ideas on what to do with its old fire department headquarters. Built in 1939, the five-story neoclassical building boasted serious architectural gravitas (the original built in the 1840s, ironically, had burned down) and received a lot of attention. Ultimately, the winning bid went to Aparium Hotel Group with Chicago-based Simeone Deary Design Group and local firm McIntosh Paris Associates to create the Foundation Hotel.

It being Detroit, things weren't always easy: After the initial bid, the city went into bankruptcy, delaying the closing, and as the existing footprint couldn't accommodate the necessary 100 guestrooms, the owners purchased the 19th-century former Pontchartrain Wine Cellars building next door, bringing new challenges to the design.

Like many others involved in the city's revival, this project marked a homecoming of sorts. Simeone Deary principal Gina

1. Grand arches line the historic, circa-1840 firehouse façade of the Foundation Hotel in Detroit.

2. In the Apparatus Room, a leather banquette and original white subway tiles contrast a dramatic smoke-inspired light fixture wrapped in theatrical fabric.





Deary grew up in Detroit. Michael Poris, principal of his namesake architecture firm, came back to the city, his hometown, in the '90s with the intention of making a difference and has been saving buildings from demolition ever since. Michael Kitchen, vice president of acquisitions and development for Aparium and Michigan State alum, says there's a kind of all-hands-on-deck creative community striving to make the city better. "Everyone has their arms linked. You had executive level marketing guys coming back and launching denim shops [in the hotel]. The last thing they wanted was an out-of-towner coming in. [Locals] would see through that, chew it up, and spit it out."

In fact, the overall design concept was inspired by "coming home to Detroit." Explains Kitchen: "There's a forgotten romance in Detroit. It was the Paris of the Midwest. It has some of the best [Beaux-Arts and midcentury] architecture in the country. We had to embrace that." To that end, the decision was made to keep everything they could, and then make everything else extremely modern to butt against it.

The team worked to inventory, reclaim,

and repurpose interior wood trim from the building and other abandoned buildings throughout Detroit—much of it is now prominently displayed as a feature wall in guestrooms. Brick and concrete were left exposed; original white subway tile covers the walls; historic hallways haphazardly run through some of the more than 50 different room types; the lobby features screens made of burned timbers and radiators salvaged from torn down houses and businesses; and on the side of the building, a faded mural by 92-year-old local artist Charles McGee has been preserved. "Detroit is scrappy," says Poris. "The people are scrappy. They're tinkers. And inventors. That's how Motown and Ford happened here. That spirit—a big part of what's happening in the city—is what we wanted to keep."

To contrast the industrial look, every piece of FF&E was custom designed with a contemporary, sculptural sensibility. "The whole building is a celebration of engineering and manufacturing," says Deary. "But instead of being rough, each piece is artistic." Inspired by General Motors' Damsels of Design (the first

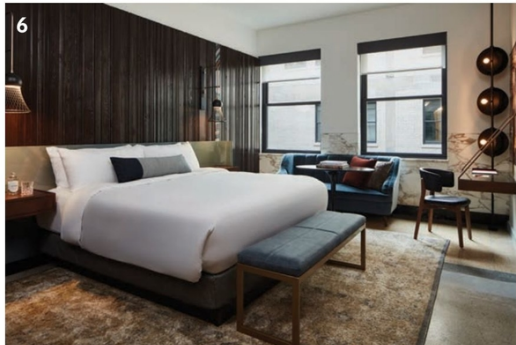
prominent all female car design team in American history), soft feminine curves and luxe velvets in color palettes based on their contributions—beautiful blue and pink hues, and stripes and plaids—abound. It's this juxtaposition against the engineered and masculine furniture styles and details that Deary says gives the property its energy.

It's the craftsman, creators, and makers of Detroit, however, that truly offer the property a rare vibrancy. The hotel boasts 45 collaborations, including a podcast studio with four groups currently in residency, teasers completed with local filmmakers, and the aforementioned Detroit Denim Co. that created the uniforms, to name a few. The restaurant also marks another Michigan homecoming: Michelin-starred chef Thomas Lents returned to head up the aptly named Apparatus Room (its grand space used to house fire engines). A few nights a week, his chef's table serves as an incubator for visiting chefs, culinary school grads, or just a scrappy newcomer who wants to tinker around in the spirit of Detroit. **hd**

 mcmintoshporis.com; simeonedeary.com; aparium.com; detroitfoundationhotel.com



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3. In the lounge, vintage rugs layer on top of new black and walnut wood floors while salvaged radiators and timber screens complement local artist Lisa Spindler's photographs, which give the illusion of people made of smoke.

4. The chandelier dangling over the bar is inspired by Gina Deary's childhood memory of driving through the dark, deserted building-lined streets of Detroit "during its more depressed days, where a random lit street lamp was incredibly haunting yet beautiful at the same time," she says.

5. Blue velvet curtains—a color informed by GM's Damsels of Design—frame the private dining room.

6. Reclaimed wood trim from the firehouse and other torn down buildings in the area create a feature wall in the guestrooms.

The Foundation Hotel Detroit

Owner and Management Company
Aparium Hotel Group Architecture
Firm **McIntosh Poris Associates**,
Birmingham, Michigan Architecture
Project Team **Michael Poris** and
John Skok Interior Design Firm
Simeone Deary Design Group,
Chicago Interior Design Project
Team **Gina Deary**, **Lisa Simeone**,
Sara Talleux, **Alicia Gwinn**,
Christine Babini, **Katie Liberman**,
and **Lauren Winter** Contractor
Sachse Construction Purchasing
Firm **Slate Procurement** Lighting
illuminart Engineering **MA**
Engineering **Kitchen Next Step**
Design Graphics **Simeone Deary**
Design Group Art Consultant
Uncommon Editions

THE APPARATUS ROOM

Millwork **Mod Interiors** Ceiling Tile
and Display Kitchen **Architectural**
Salvage Warehouse of Detroit Host
Stand and Server Station
Urban Ashes Bar Light Sculpture
and Smoke Pendant **Incite Design**
Mercury Glass Globes and Linear
Ceiling Pendants; **HB Architectural**
Lighting Smoke Study Artwork **Lisa**
Spindler Upholstered Banquettes
Ariston Hospitality; leather by
Moore & Giles Barstools **Custom**
Contract Furnishings; leather by
Moore & Giles Settee **Custom**
Contract Furnishings; fabric by
HBF Textiles Dining Chairs **Sandler**
Seating Dining Tables **Wood Goods**
Industries and **Beachwood Custom**
Communal Tables **Architectural**
Salvage Warehouse of Detroit and
Urban Ashes Table Lamp **Visual**
Comfort Custom Bar Chandelier
Alex Probe

PRIVATE DINING

Chandeliers **Incite Design** Drapery
Miceli Drapery Company; fabric by
JF Fabrics; tassels by **Houles Paris**
Dining Tables **Restoration Hardware**
Dining Chairs **Custom Contract**
Furnishings; fabric by **Fabric**
Innovations; leather by **Moore &**
Giles

LOUNGE

Fireplace **Fire Orb** Loveseat
Custom Contract Furnishings;
leather by **Moore & Giles** Lounge
Chairs **France & Son**, **Custom**
Contract Furnishings, **Restoration**
Hardware, and **1st Dibs** Lounge
Chair Fabrics **Optima Leathers** and
CF Stinson Coffee Tables; **Etsy/**
Scott Pallan Area Rugs **Old New**
House and **Borokhim** Side Table
Herman Miller Ottoman **Roger &**
Chris; leather by **Moore & Giles**
Throw Blankets **Fairbault Woolen**
Mill Company Throw Pillows
Restoration Hardware, **TRNK NYC**,
and **Lulu & Georgia** Wine Display
Shelving **Foxwood Wine Cellars**
Glass Bulb Sculpture at Hose Shaft
Kim Hartly and **College for Creative**
Studies

GUESTROOMS

Wood Headboard Wall
Architectural Salvage Warehouse
of Detroit Headboard, Nightstands,
Open Closet/Dresser/Minibar,
Desk **Cheng Meng Furniture**
Mattress and Bed Base **Serta**
and **Leggett & Platt**; fabric by
Samelson Chatelaine Wallcovering
Indie Walls and **Simeone Deary**
Art + Branding; fabric by **Detroit**
Wallcovering **Claret Mirror**
MunnWorks Headboard Accent
Art **DAC Art Consulting** Throw
Pillow Fabric **Samelson Chatelaine**
and **Swavelle Hospitality Fur** Throw
Pillow Fabric **Sankon Interiors**
Limited Denim Bed Pillow **Cone**
Denim Oval Dining Table **Skypad**
Area Rug **Lapama Rugs** Luggage
Bench **Anton Maka Designs**; vinyl
by **Architex** Headboard Sconce
Challenger Lighting Floor Lamp
Lusive Custom Lighting Desk Chair
Sandler Seating; vinyl by **Swavelle**
Sectional/Sofa **Marquis Seating**;
fabric by **Valley Forge**