

DESIGN

Architect and Designer Jeffrey Beers Discusses Gotham Market

Uniting eight distinct restaurants within Brooklyn's The Ashland

by David Graver
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Beneath The Ashland residences in Fort Greene, Brooklyn a new eight restaurant center—Gotham Market—has just opened its doors. Within, one finds floor-to-ceiling windows, exposed brick, reclaimed wood and, of course, numerous food and drink options. Architect and designer Jeffrey Beers was tasked with designing the space. Through a warm, modernist approach, Beers and his company manage to unify the diverse offerings. As a centerpiece, 180 multi-colored handblown glass lightbulbs comprise a chandelier unlike any other. Beers' work has long extended across multiple design realms, including hospitality and residential. Here, he's created a space that's both elegant and playful.



"It was a new building so this was done on paper first," Beers explains to CH. "This building did not exist. The space did not exist. I had to work from plans. I was very excited by the footprint of the space. It was a complete open storefront." Beers invoked the industrial history of the neighborhood but with a contemporary elegance. "It was a very exciting, glamorous space to conceive," he continues, "I had to imagine what this all meant, in

working with Gotham and their desire for a market, but what ultimately turned into a collage or configuration of multiple, different restaurant concepts. They all cohesively exist in a very Brooklyn warehouse environment with 25 to 28 feet high ceilings."



As for the chandelier, the concept began as a unifying factor for the entire 200-foot-long space. "I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to engage the community," he explains, "It's also a device that unifies the entire market." Beers designed the chandelier and he commissioned KEEP for the handblown globes. Remarkably, the lighting duo did this right across the street from Gotham Market, at UrbanGlass (where Beers was a founding board member). The medium has meant a lot to Beers since his days at RISD. "With handblown glass you perceive an artistry that nothing machine made or factory made in the glass world can match artistically," he says. For this chandelier, "Each globe is uniquely different by default. There are certain qualities that Adam, as master blower, can bring into different pieces: some are more intense than others, decorative aspects are drawn out in others. It's all purposeful in a passionate, motivated way." Beers believes this heightens one's reaction to the work, and we'd have to agree.



"It's not a fussy design or trying to be over-embellished or be overly decorative," he continues. "I think it's trying to participate in the orchestra of this market's design," he adds, noting, "It lets all the various instruments in this collage—lets all of those personalities—be present and powerful." It's impossible to deny the importance of lighting upon a space. The chandelier works with the natural light when necessary and steps forward when called upon. As eight unique establishments occupy the same area, as Beers says "weaving in and out, with the kitchens facing the space together," the fixture certainly does tie everything together.



There's an easy sense of spatial understanding when walking in. In the months-long process, Beers actually began visualizing everything—from layout to the chandelier details—using 3D technology. "I had a very good sense of what the result would be," he says. "I design in three dimensions, in a rendering mode, with color and materiality." That said, when the final touches went into the space, there was a different sense of completion. Ultimately, Gotham Market has been designed for the design to hold up as decades pass.

Interior images by Eric Laignel, Jeffrey Beers blowing glass images by Michael George