

THE LOBBY AT THE
HARD ROCK HOTEL NEW YORK

A Musical Motif

by
GEORGE
SELI

THE HARD ROCK HOTELS BRAND is known for visually impactful designs, and the new Hard Rock Hotel New York is no exception. Opened this spring in Midtown Manhattan, the 446-key property is intimately tied to music: John Legend and DJ Cassidy were among the A-list performers at the May 13 grand opening celebration, taking the stage at The Venue on Music Row. The hotel's entertainment venue features a jazz bar/speakeasy theme, one that also creates a memorable first impression on guests as they enter the lobby at 159 West 48th Street. The space is the work of award-winning design firm Jeffrey Beers International (JBI). "We wanted a 'wow' moment when guests arrived to immediately transport them into the world of Hard Rock," says Tim Rooney, principal of JBI. "The lobby is a rich collection of special moments, features, and finishes that

all contribute to this feeling of being within a music instrument and immerses you in the glamorous, vibrant New York music scene." The hotel's signature tones and materials are on display, including dark brown woods, marble, brass finishes, brushed gold and bronze, leather, and blue velvet. The stone floor features a pattern of a circular sound wave radiating outward, while the grand glass stairway appears to be held together by guitar strings—an innovative idea from Rooney and his team. "We created a large circular opening in the ceiling with a dramatic curved grand stair and double-height braided metal 'guitar strings' to lead you up to the second floor lobby and lounge space," he explains. Overall, the lobby's subtle musical symbolism complements the memorabilia characteristic of the Hard Rock Hotels brand.

1

GUITAR THEME

While iconic guitars have always been part of the Hard Rock Hotels experience, the lobby design actually evokes the feeling of being within the instrument. "The entry, lobby, and lounge are designed as if carved from the inside of a guitar or string instrument," says Rooney. "The warm woods, shimmering metal, and tensioned metallic strings are all derived from the design of these string instruments. Faceted wood wall panels surrounding the second floor lobby lounge, framing more amazing memorabilia, evokes the feeling of acoustical panels in a luxurious music hall."

2

EVOLVING CENTERPIECE

The sculpture at the center of the lobby, though remarkable, is not meant to be a permanent fixture. "This centerpiece sculpture is meant to grab your attention as your primary focus when you enter through the main doors," says Rooney. "The content of the centerpiece will evolve over time to showcase different musical artists, but the moment of glamour that is created—as if the artist was being photographed on the red carpet in that moment—will always greet you and invite you into the Hard Rock Hotel New York."

3

THEATRICAL LIGHTING

The lighting design alludes to the ambiance of a performance space similar to the Midtown venues from a bygone era. "We wanted to use dramatic lighting reflected in faceted mirrors surrounding the curved entry space to create visual excitement and evoke a time of glamour and excitement when the studios and shops of 48th Street 'Music Row' filled the city with sound," Rooney explains.

