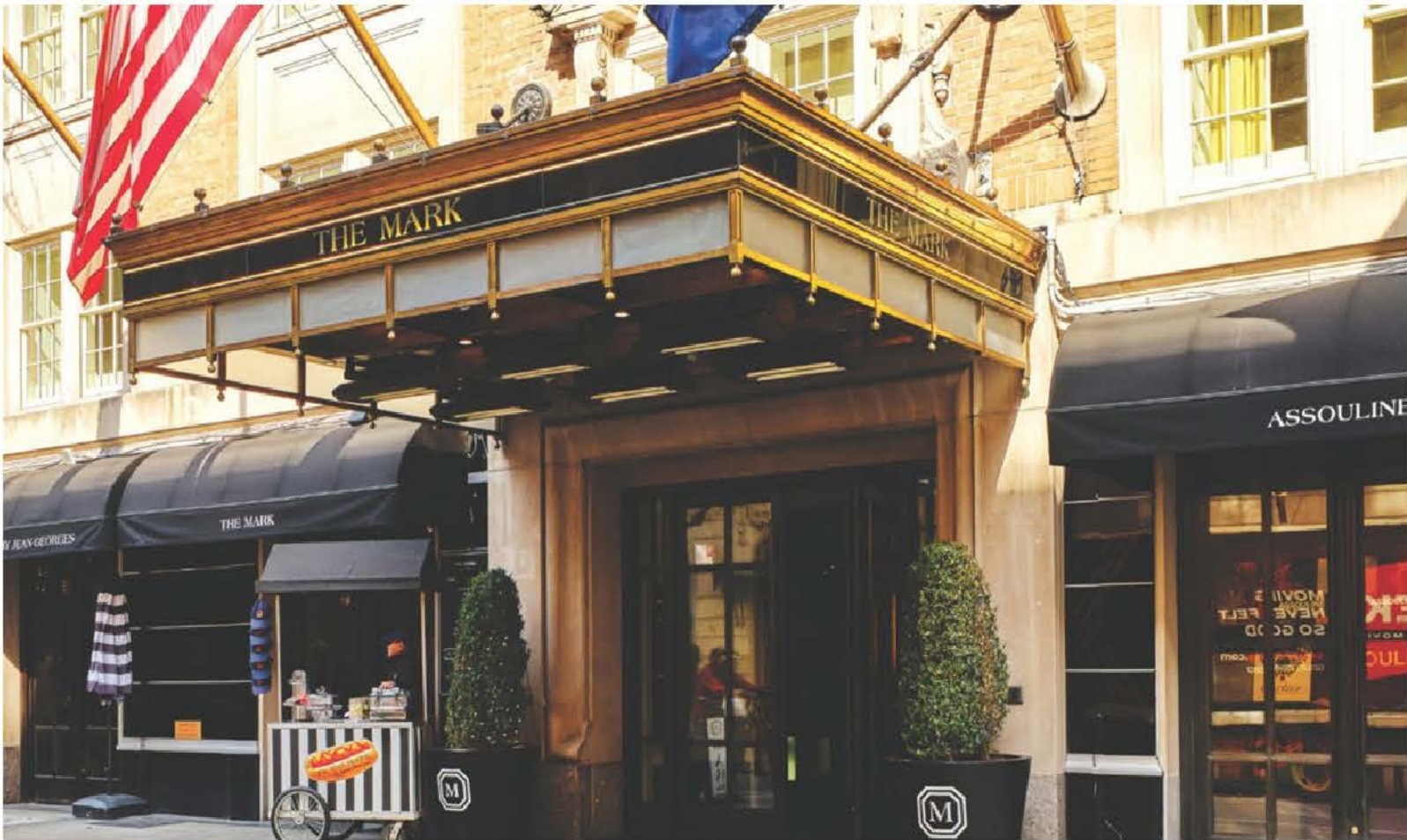


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NOTEWORTHY
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THE MARK HOTEL IN NEW YORK CITY CONTINUES TO SET THE BAR ON REFINED HOSPITALITY.

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In this increasingly boorish age, true civility—the kind that permits intelligent discourse—often hinges on a properly mixed drink. It’s at The Mark Bar, within The Mark Hotel, that such a desideratum is unequivocally met. Here, you procure a respectable potable and, more remarkably, engage in conversation without shouting. This speaks volumes about its unique appeal. I confess, I’m frequently deposited into establishments that loudly proclaim their “luxury.” Often, these prove little more than gilded cages, monuments to tastelessness and unexamined indulgence. Yet, there are rare exceptions. With a certain admiration, I must concede that The Mark Hotel, amidst the highborn rectitude of Manhattan’s Upper East Side, transcends customary banality. It is, dare I say, rather phenomenal.

Before contemplating its comforts, I must recount a recent, quite decadent, excursion. I found myself at Caviar Kaspia, located within this very hotel. What an excursion it was—a plunge into epicurean excess. The evening commenced with a glistening assortment of pearls, each burst of briny richness an exquisite testament to the sea’s bounty. The accompanying vodka, chilled to frostbite perfection, cut through the richness with bracing clarity. It was a repast that transcended mere dining. One might assume, after such indulgence, that the senses would be dulled; quite the contrary. Upon entering The Mark, you’re immediately struck by the common spaces, which are not a riot of clashing styles or an exercise in forced abundance. Jacques Grange’s touch extends throughout, orchestrating a harmony of understated sophistication with a subtle pop of color. You observe an interplay of textures and carefully chosen pieces that speak of refinement rather than mere expense. It’s a space designed for lingering, ensuring that even the briefest passage through these areas is a genuine pleasure.

From these meticulously crafted public areas, one might then ascend to the private domains, where The Mark Penthouse awaits. To call it a “suite” would be semantic cowardice; it is, in fact, a private principality suspended above the urban sprawl. The main salon, graced by a grand piano, speaks to a commitment to civilized arts. Beyond the aerial splendor, quotidian accommodations impress equally. The standard rooms eschew the usual penchant for neutrality, offering instead a tasteful blend of comfort and understated design. The bathrooms, in particular, are of a scale and finish that suggest a genuine understanding of the restorative powers of a well-appointed ablution. The particular shade of green employed within them has made its way onto my vision board.

Culinary arrangements, overseen by Jean-Georges Vongerichten, adhere to the sensible principle that good ingredients yield good results. It’s not revolutionary, nor should it be; it’s simply competent, and in this modern age, that’s a virtue. For those who, like myself, sometimes require assistance in maintaining a certain outward semblance of order, there’s also the Fekkai Salon. The sheer convenience of descending from one’s temporary kingdom to have one’s appearance rendered presentable is a stroke of regal genius.

The location, too, is beyond reproach. Situated on East 77th Street, it offers immediate proximity to Central Park and the cultural riches of Museum Mile. It is, in short, strategically positioned for both retreat and engagement. It’s the distillation of the ideal New York experience, a place where you can truly inhabit the myth of the city that never sleeps, yet do so in unparalleled comfort and style. The Mark Hotel, for all its undeniable expense, manages to justify its existence. It’s not a place for the faint of wallet or the uninitiated, but for those who appreciate discretion, genuine comfort, and a certain unassailable standard of quality. One might, on occasion, even be tempted by the competing gravitational pull of The Carlyle’s fabled Bemelmans Bar, a venerable institution offering its own brand of impeccably mixed libations. And while such diversions might appear to challenge The Mark’s hegemony, the truth is that this amiable, if indeed potent, rivalry only serves to underscore the formidable allure of the Upper East Side itself, elevating the very concept of refined urban living.

