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Cast Iron House, Avant Garde Distinction in New York

By Verónica Boix

In the heart of Tribeca, a historic building in Manhattan is poised to become a new contemporary style and luxury icon: Cast Iron House, a neoclassical landmark.



The credit for reinventing the building's interior goes to Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, winner of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize earlier this year. Known for the human dignity that exalts his creations and the impeccable aesthetics of his constructions, Ban is one of today's undisputed design leaders. Among his most representative works are the housing project he created for victims of disaster and the Pompidou-Metz Centre in France. Today, with Cast Iron House, he leaves an indelible mark on the Manhattan cityscape. Read more here about design, architecture, and homes.

In the process of adapting the structure to modernity, the visionary architect faced a major

challenge: remaking a milestone with his unique label while preserving the essence of one of the most magnificent examples of New York's cast iron 19th century architecture.



With dazzling harmony, the 133-year-old building's new neoclassical façade is the result of over three years of work. It took extreme attention to detail, to remove 4,000 pieces of ornamental iron from the exterior, which were taken to Alabama and recast to recover their original splendor. Once perfection was attained, they were reinstated at number 67 Franklin Street, the site of the construction. Valperga Galleani Palace another example of restoration.

Two penthouses with glass walls look as if they were suspended on the top of the building. Designed to float, there are surrounded by 1,399-square-foot terraces that blur the boundary between interior and exterior and give the feeling of living in the sky. However, the secret that makes it such an exceptional project is hidden in the glass walls of the penthouse: just press a button and they will open as sliding doors, letting in light, open views of the city and the cooling breeze from the nearby river.



Built in a cathedral style, eight pairs of extraordinary duplexes with double height ceilings comprise the original building. Open and breezy, the fluid interiors characterize the work of Shigeru Ban. The high ceilings, large windows and huge white spaces uninterrupted by walls describe the concept of "universal floor" at the Cast Iron House. Created by Ban himself, the white matte lacquer cabinets with rounded lines are part of the design of kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms, marking a contrast with the simple oak floors. These details make the space a real work of art.

This work heralds a great success: the reinterpretation of history through innovative aesthetics. Cast Iron House is an impressive work. Perhaps its greatest charm resides in its joyful elegance. ■