

US BUILDERS REVIEW

THE MAGAZINE FOR LEADING CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES

SPRING 2018

GREEK DEVELOPMENT

Factories in the family biz

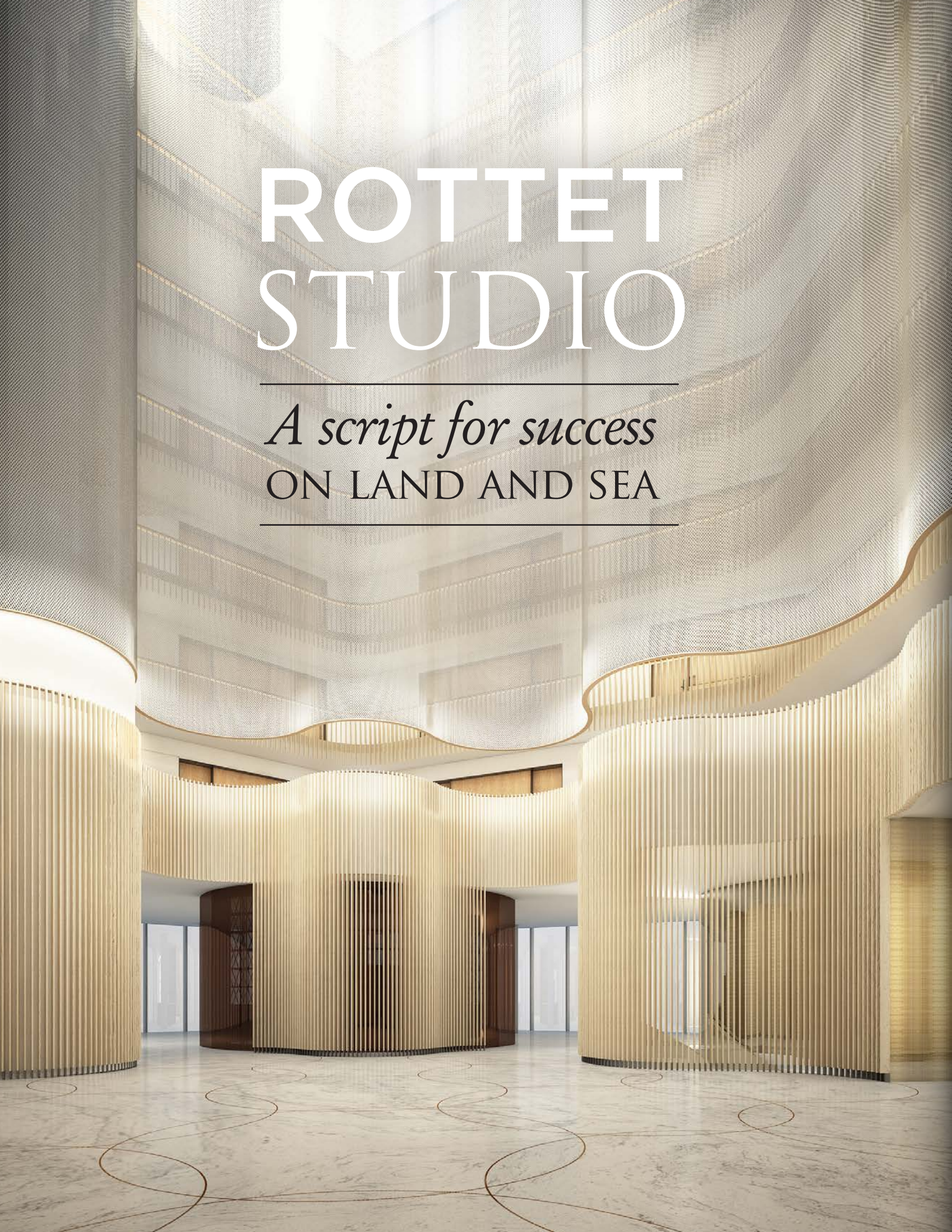


ADAM
HERGENROTHER
COMPANIES

Building a sense
of CO-mmunity

MAG
BUILDERS INC.

From downtrodden teen
to 'geometric' growth

The image shows a vast, multi-level atrium with a curved, perforated ceiling and walls. The walls are made of vertical, golden-brown slats that create a rhythmic pattern. The floor is made of light-colored marble with intricate circular patterns. The lighting is warm and ambient, highlighting the architectural details.

ROTTET STUDIO

A script for success
ON LAND AND SEA



Produced by VICTOR MARTINS and Written by NEIL COTE

That Great Recession of a decade ago may have been a blessing in disguise for some farsighted companies, one of which has proven to be the architectural and design firm of Rottet Studio.

Founded in 2008 by Lauren Rottet, whose professional designations include induction as an Inaugural Member of the Women in Design Hall of Fame, the firm initially didn't have much to garner from the then-sagging construction front. However, Rottet knew that during such lulls the hospitality industry typically made use of high vacancy rates to undertake renovations. That was precisely what The Surrey was planning in New York City's Upper East Side.

"Savvy hotel operators reserve capital to invest in property improvements and renovations during slower economic times, while people are traveling less and occupancy rates are lower," explains Kyle Rottet, marketing director and son of the founder. "We noticed a trend and took full advantage of the opportunity as we had always wanted to design hotels."

Other firms might still be kicking themselves for not recognizing the same opportunity. The Surrey renovation was Rottet Studio's first hotel project, and in the process of full immersion, the new firm designed for itself a reputation that 10 years later continues to grow and bring in more business from hospitality heavyweights, international law firms, mixed-use developments, the medical industry, Fortune 500 companies and even cruise lines.

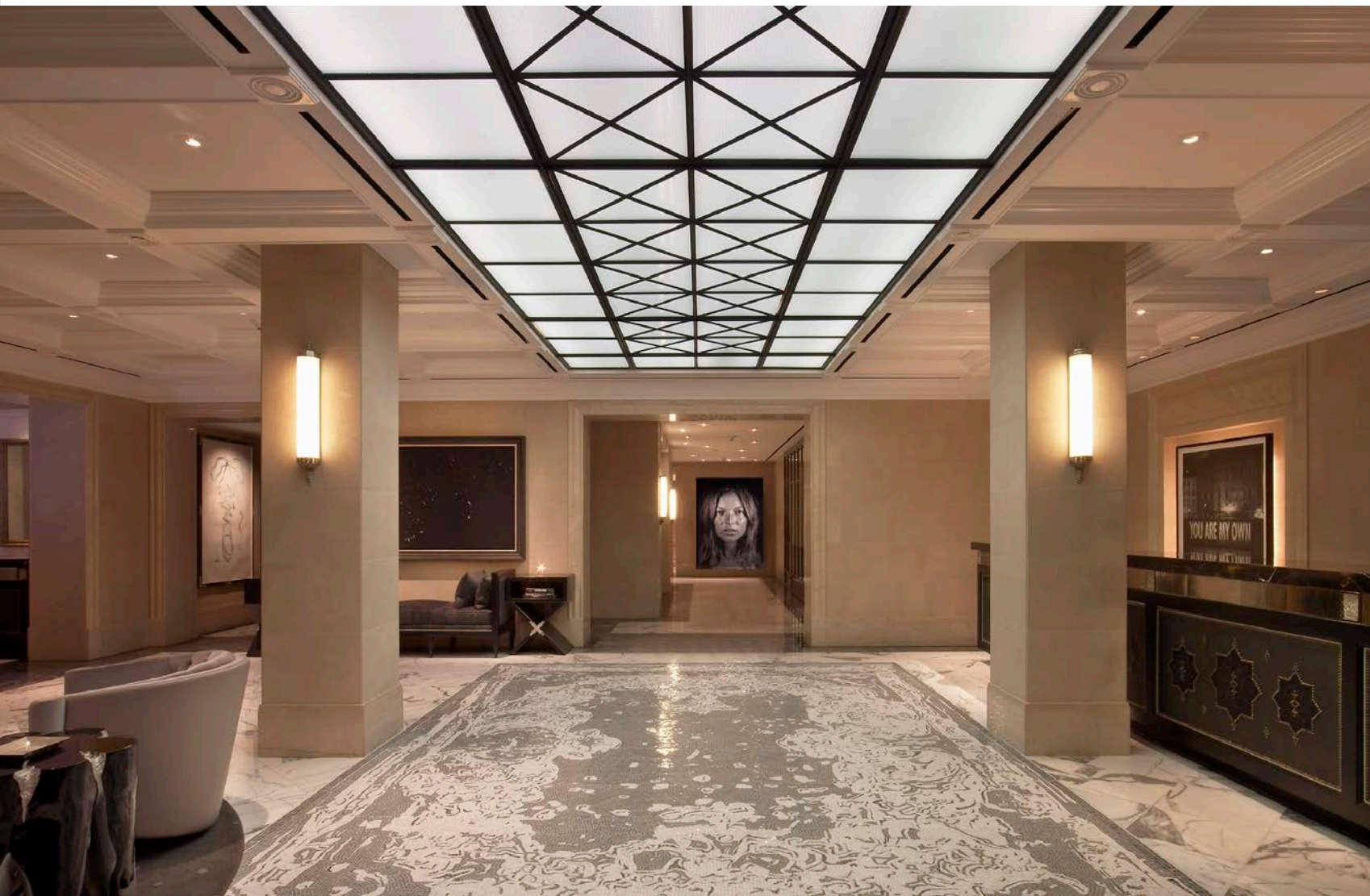
With offices in Houston, Los Angeles, New York and Shanghai, Rottet Studio keeps busy around the globe and, as Kyle explains, "there is a unique story to every project."

Story starts with Surrey

Buildings have character, maybe even soul, and Kyle likes to imagine what the walls would say if they could actually talk. Such an approach makes every project different.

Built in 1926 as a residence hotel, The Surrey was a frequent hangout of such luminaries as John F. Kennedy, Bette Davis, Claudette Colbert and other famous faces. However, when Rottet Studio was entrusted to renovate the interior, another dynamic personality came to mind: Gabrielle Bonheur “Coco” Chanel, the French fashion designer and namesake behind Chanel No. 5.





She was one stylish, forward-thinking woman; the only fashion designer on Time's list of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century. Her life would make for an engaging 2009 movie, "Coco Before Chanel," but long before that premiere, the Rottet team was envisioning its own fantasy film of her.

As Kyle explains, the design team paced the area's blocks, absorbing every aspect the "microclimate" had to offer including the sights, smells and local attractions of arguably the most affluent part of Manhattan. With Ms. Chanel's lifestyle in mind, the lobby and bar area were redesigned to include French Limestone walls, Tiger Beige portals, marble floors and leaded glass ceilings; all reminders that not everyone had to scrimp during the Great Depression.

That lobby made for a most pleasant walk to the lounge, also redesigned with the 1930s deco look, elegant as well as warm and engaging, with seating areas inside the black box made of sharkskin, surrounded by tufted walls with crystal chandeliers above. Just the right mix of high-society decadence and class that, in some afterlife, may have drawn raves from the lady they called Coco.

"The design team had this image of her coming in on a winter's night, throwing her coat over a chair, ordering a drink and attracting the attention of every eye in the room," says Kyle. "The hotel is a high-end, sexy atmosphere and still ranked the number one hotel in New York City by the readers of Conde Nast Traveler, even nine years after the renovation. That is pretty amazing, especially in a city like New York."

Encore performances

Rottet Studio didn't have to go overboard promoting itself once The Surrey renovation was complete. Not too long after, Rottet Studio was commissioned to develop the new Presidential Bungalows at the iconic Beverly Hills Hotel. Rottet Studio was also responsible for the interior design of Extell Development's new supertall 1,550-foot Central Park Tower, which will be the world's tallest residential building upon completion in 2020.

For those who may want to experience interior and exterior luxury far from the big city and its bright lights, there's the St. Regis Aspen Resort, where Rottet was in charge of \$40 million worth of rustic yet elegant renovation. The purplish gray interior complements any season, and the magnificent Rockies, of which there's a panoramic view from most every part of the hotel. A roaring fireplace makes for an inviting place to congregate, especially after a day on the slopes.

While other designers retrenched during the Great Recession, a new firm saw opportunity, and it's been seeing an array of new business ever since.





Ship ahoy

Rottet's projects extend far beyond the U.S., the firm's international work including office and residential towers in Hong Kong with Wheelock Properties and the completion of two new Four Seasons hotels in Bogota, Colombia.

Rottet Studio also has earned its sea legs, its Los Angeles office having designed all of Viking Cruises' ocean ships and most of its river vessels since 2012.

"Viking did not want a generic ship," Kyle explains. "They were looking for an interior designer to set them apart in the industry."

Working with a naval architect and the shipyard where the vessels are built, the firm implemented a Norwegian flavor that emphasizes that Scandinavian country's seafaring heritage. While it's another unconventional accomplishment for Rottet, it seems in keeping with the founder's ever-acute vision.

For it could be that Lauren Rottet has something in common with Coco Chanel. A high honors architectural grad from the University of Texas at Austin, Lauren, too, is a trailblazer of sorts.





An architect since 1980, Lauren is the only woman to be elevated to the College of Fellows of both the American Institute of Architects and the International Interior Design Association. Her walls boast evidence of all kinds of professional accomplishments. Her furniture and product designs have earned her four gold medals for Best of NeoCon and a Chicago Athenaeum Award.

Just the kind of dynamic personality to keep in mind when envisioning a high-end interior. She may be even worth her own movie. •