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Marcus does the Midwest

After much success with restaurants Aquavit, Riingo, and his newest, Merkato 55, two-time James Beard winner chef Marcus Samuelsson (and Townhouse Restaurant Group) is taking on the Midwest with C-House. Housed in the Affinia Chicago hotel, the restaurant, which opens this month, is Samuelsson's first take of the American seafood house and will boast a design by Brazilian architect Arthur Casas.

To match Samuelsson's food ("the focus is on the ingredients," he says), the clean and open restaurant is a meeting of sleek, modern lines and rustic, organic materials. "The idea was to design a restaurant that's chic but unpretentious, using natural materials for the upholstery," Casas says.

Highlights include an exposed wine cellar that acts as a divider between the restaurant and the hotel lobby, copper metal work, Tom Dixon pendant light shades, photos by a Brazilian photographer shot while sailing a 35-foot boat through the Atlantic Ocean, a large communal table that connects the lounge and the restaurant, and a sophisticated and secluded rooftop lounge.

www.arthurcasas.com.br

Lights, Camera, Hotel

Robert DeNiro first entered the hospitality world when he worked with Drew Nieporent to open Nobu in New York City. Now the famous actor and director (along with partners Ira Drukier, Richard Born, and Raphael DeNiro) is expanding his hospitality reach with the opening of the **Greenwich Hotel** in Tribeca. "Our goal with the Greenwich was to create a space that would serve guests more as a residence than a hotel; a place for people whose sense of home combines sophistication and authenticity," says DeNiro.

The newly built, eight-floor hotel was a massive collaboration: the public spaces and the façade are by Grayling Design (the Long Island City, New York-based firm also designed favorite Manhattan spots like Schiller's Liquor Bar and Balthazar); local designer Samantha Crasco handled the guestrooms; and Mikio Shinagawa outfitted the Shibui spa (he also supervised a contingent of Japanese craftsmen to implement the lantern-lit swimming pool and lounge under the roof of a 250-year-old reconstructed wood and bamboo farmhouse that has been reconstructed in the hotel by Japanese craftsmen).

For a warm and inviting environment, natural materials and craftsmanship details prevail throughout the hotel. Leaded glass windows and beams of reclaimed oak define the lobby, while the Drawing Room boasts 12-foot ceilings, bookshelves, and a wood-burning fireplace; an antique mirrored glass and French doors leads to a small courtyard where guests can dine beneath latticed vines. Grayling appropriately gave Ago Ristorante an Italian bistro



feel, with exposed brick walls and hand-finished wood paneling, while a section of the ceiling lined with over 90,000 corks nods to the restaurant's extensive wine list. And throughout all of the public spaces, furnishings draw from a wide range of cultural influences—from the hand-loomed Tibetan rugs and the Moroccan tiles, to the handmade Italian terracotta floors.

Meanwhile, no two of the 88 guestrooms are alike. There are 13 suites (some with saunas, others with working fireplaces) and two duplex suites designed as artists studios. And the top-floor 2,500-square-foot penthouse feels more like a private residence than a hotel room with its two bedrooms, full kitchen, skylit dining room, media complex, and large duplex rooftop garden with private hot tub, and yes, views of the city and the Hudson River.

www.thegreenwichhotel.com

or www.graylingdesign.com

