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## Q&A: Alan Tanksley Designs a Model Apartment for the Venerable Woolworth Building

Thanks to Tanksley, this iconic skyscraper gets a posh custom makeover.

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**W**hen an iconic New York property becomes available, everyone wants to see pictures. If your agent is good enough, you land an appointment. So imagine the low-pressure task of creating a model unit in the Woolworth Building. A defining element of the New York skyline for over a century, the 1913 neo-Gothic architectural wonder also happens to be one of the most sought-after real estate scores of the moment.

Alchemy Properties has restored and renovated 30 floors in the building, enlisting noted architect Thierry W. Despont for the project. The resulting collection of 33 condominiums, known as Woolworth Tower Residences, features the kind of top-shelf amenities one would expect. Interior designer Alan Tanksley created the model unit on the 38<sup>th</sup> floor, which serves as posh calling card for Sotheby's International Realty, and a high-level look at a stylish future for the lucky owners.

How does it feel to design a chic space meant to entice and excite high-level buyers within a historically important building? Tanksley didn't seem to suffer stage fright, turning out a sophisticated space with superlative furnishings. We asked him what it's like to design in the clouds.

How did this project come about?

Stan Ponte, a senior vice president at Sotheby's International Realty is a friend as well as both a business and personal client. We have teamed up on minor work before so once they landed this plum project Stan brought me into the project to create an environment that would truly represent the potential buyer's lifestyles.

The Woolworth Building is a New York icon. Did you have any particular impressions or experiences prior to this project?

Absolutely, yes. Having grown up outside the city, the Woolworth Building was always on the many visits we made of the island. Additionally, I've always been enthusiastic about architecture and history. The Woolworth Building lies at the center of a very important point in New York City's history.

Who did you design this space for?

I had in mind a couple with young adult children living elsewhere but visiting frequently. My couple would have a sophisticated eye and years of experience to understand the subtle elegance of an environment that graciously accommodates both comfortable family time and entertaining on a large scale from time to time.

Creating a model unit is different than designing a residential project where you know

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and interact with the client. What were some of the challenges?

In this case the challenges were few. I've been fortunate and have been designing similar projects for clients who may well be buyers in this very building.

Any favorite rooms?

For the living room, I worked with the owners of Martin Patrick Evan to custom color and scale their "Digital Monet" pattern as a way to define the space and provide an organic backdrop to balance the urban views outside. I also worked with, the owner of Dune, to create the pair of custom curved sofas that provide movement and intimacy within the large, open room.

Fromental created the ethereal wall covering that runs throughout the Master Suite. Their hand printed "Lava" paper was made in England specifically to the measurements of the room. The custom walnut cabinetry running throughout the dressing rooms was fabricated by Clive Christian in England for the apartment. It is luxury defined.

What are some of the standout pieces in your opinion?

The most easily recognized pieces are the pair of semi-circular sofas with cantilevered shelves behind eliminating the need for any form of sofa back furniture, built by Dune Furniture. Another significant piece is a bronze console table designed and fabricated by Aurelien Gallet.

Did you commission anything custom for this space?

Yes, most of the upholstered items throughout the apartment were custom made for the project. As was the custom millwork for the master bedroom dressing room and the living room wet bar was designed and fabricated by Clive Christian in London then shipped over and installed here. Another great custom element is a gorgeous wallcovering we also had made in London for the master bedroom.

If you were the realtor or broker showing the space, what would you say are its best and most covetable features?

Handsome and generously scaled rooms with great traffic flow among them. The enormous light that pours in with the city stretching out behind. The fixtures and finishes are exceptionally chosen. And finally, it's a wonderful apartment to entertain in.

How are the views?

Legendary.

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