



THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

OCTOBER 26, 2009

Feels Like 2007 in Here

Boutique hoteliers Jason Pomeranc and Morris Monian stand nattily athwart recession

BY DANA RUBINSTEIN

"I think every hotel has a psyche."

That was Jason Pomeranc, who, as co-founder of Thompson Hotels, has fashioned himself New York's innkeeper to the image-conscious. Friday afternoon, he arrived promptly to his newish hotel in New York, the 100-room Smyth Tribeca at 85 West Broadway, looking the part: rumpled and rough shaven, dark hair gelled back, revealing a face whose close-set brown eyes recalled Patrick Swayze, and whose full cheeks recalled Tim Russert.

"As you can see, the hotel has a kind of eclectic, masculine point of view," Mr. Pomeranc said as two striking women in black V-necks sauntered by and assumed their positions behind the check-in desk, which, with its backdrop of glass shelves occupied by vaguely menacing cohorts of antique toys, looked more like a bar in a financier's Tribeca loft.

"That doesn't mean it's not extremely welcoming to the female psyche as well."

He rolled through the hotel lobby, followed by a coterie of female attachés, pointing out the mid-century Brazilian furniture, the pencil drawings by Santiago Rubino. The décor, he said, was evocative of *The Thomas Crown Affair*. A bar filled out the end of the room. Its back wall was covered with pink crocodile leather.

"Downtown," proclaimed Mr. Pomeranc of his target market, "is effectively melding into one neighborhood."

How sad.

"Yes and no. It's not so much that the neighborhoods are diluting, it's that the psychology of the guests is opening up.

"I think the real separation now is between uptown and downtown."

Let there be any doubt, Mr. Pomeranc, 38, and a Soho resident, is

of the downtown ilk. He grew up in Queens and then on Fifth Avenue on the Upper East Side, ultimately transitioning downtown via an N.Y.U. education and well-publicized relationships with Shannen Doherty and Ali Wise, the former *Dolce* publicist now in the tabloids for allegedly hacking into the phones of her ex-boyfriends' girlfriends.

Does he worry that he opened his hotel in bad economic times?

"Look, I think you always do," he said, leaning, ankles crossed, against the brown leather walls of the elevator, which was carrying him to a ninth-floor "signature suite." "I hope at least or I believe, the worst

The signature suite felt more like a perfect apartment. Tom Dixon-designed cone lights. A full kitchen. A full kitchen table. Extraordinary views. On the wall a piece by John Sparagana, who deconstructs fashion photographs.

We descended to the ground floor, where famed French restaurateur Frederick Lesort will reopen *Jour et Nuit* this spring.

Back in the lobby, Mr. Pomeranc posed for a photograph. A wispy Lake Bell dropped by. She was shooting a new HBO show upstairs called *How to Make It in America*. Mr. Pomeranc kissed her hello.

"You're doing a photo shoot?!" she giggled.

Lake Bell dropped by. She was shooting a new HBO show upstairs called *How to Make It in America*. Mr. Pomeranc kissed her hello.

"You're doing a photo shoot?" she giggled.

Lake Bell dropped by. She was shooting a new HBO show upstairs called *How to Make It in America*. Mr. Pomeranc kissed her hello.

"You're doing a photo shoot?!" she giggled.



Jason Pomeranc in the Smyth Tribeca.