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I travel luxe but smart: I know what's worth shelling out for.

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New York City's Coolest New Downtown Address: Hotel Hugo

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Imagine a young, cosmopolitan, handsome Italian named Hugo. He appreciates luxury without ostentation. He values comfort over coziness. Possessed with an eye for aesthetics, he admires a sleek design that evokes a Deco Italian yacht, a reference to far western Manhattan's maritime history—and present wide-angle views of the Hudson River and New York Harbor.

He wants a neighborhood that's still up-and-coming, quietly filled with creative types, just a short walk from trend centers. He wants an in-house restaurant to serve old-school high-end Italian dishes to a neighborhood clientele, and a glamorous rooftop bar to serve well-mixed cocktails to the city's beautiful people. He wants to be surrounded by contemporary art.

It was this fictional Hugo that the developers had in mind when they ever so softly opened [Hotel Hugo](#) on a quiet street at the western edge of SoHo, near the new media hub of Hudson Square and an easy walk to Tribeca, the West Village and the meatpacking district. And now that they've deemed their

project up to their hero's standards—the staff training nearly complete, the operation falling into rhythms—they're putting out the word that New York's hotel scene has a new contender of cool.

New York's Cool New Hotel Hugo

Behind a dramatic 17-foot-high glass entrance, the building's original 20th-century facade now contains 124 large rooms (a relative steal—by New York standards—this summer and fall, starting at an intro rate of \$449), and public spaces that retain exposed pipes and other traces of the neighborhood's industrial past, as well as *di moda* vertical gardens to soften the edges, and one of the most stylish lobby chandeliers in town. Spread over 20 floors, the rooms all have views over the Hudson River or downtown New York, and provided they have a license, guests have even more scenic access by borrowing one of the hotel's complimentary Vespas, or simply walking a block to the running and bike path that stretches the length of Manhattan.

But the best views are from the top-floor and rooftop bar, which is partially open now for hotel guests and will be fully open next month. The 360-degree vista from the terrace (if you crane your neck a little) includes One World Trade, the Chrysler Building, the Empire State and the Statue of Liberty—as well as the beautiful downtown types the developer expects to inaugurate the space during New York Fashion Week. (Celebs like Jude Law have already hosted movie after parties downstairs.)

They're almost certain to get them, as the team includes a restaurateur behind New York hot spots like the Lion, and the executive chef has done stints at popular watering holes including Sant Ambroeus and Casa Lever. The concept and cooking here are solid.

In just in case their bets don't pan out, a smart concierge app on the in-room iPads doesn't just point out hot nearby restaurants and clubs, but also offers preferred access to reservations. After all, Signore Hugo wouldn't want to miss out on the party.