

ESPLANADE

MARCH | APRIL, 2010

So, You're Thinking of Living At...

The Clarendon

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Interior Photos Boston Virtual Imaging

ARCHITECT ROBERT A.M. STERN AND HIS TEAM are no strangers to Boston's urban fabric. In 1991, Stern worked diligently to mesh 222 Berkeley with a just finished 500 Boylston by Philip Johnson. This was 20 years ago when, no matter what you were building in Boston, if your project drawings didn't clearly specify red brick, you were immediately seen as suspect. Much has changed in two decades and while context is often still king in Boston, let's just say the dress code for new construction has thankfully been expanded. Indeed, on Stern's newest addition to our skyline, The Clarendon, the first five floors are sheathed in limestone, perhaps a nod to the creamy stone used at the old John Hancock building across the street. The upper floors have bands of floor-to-ceiling glass on various floors, and at night, the crown of the tower glows, like its neighbor, in a manner recalling the great Streamline Moderne buildings of the 30s. Stern is known for always keeping one eye trained on contextualism, assuring none of his residential buildings feel out of place, but at the same time, his work, whether commercial or residential, is always deliciously finished. 222 Berkeley – an ode to its time – is a sea of polished marble, and his exacting de-

sign for an addition to Harvard Business School's Baker Library has no equal, looking very much at home next to the esteemed McKim, Mead, and White original.

The Clarendon, developed by The Related Companies, continues Stern's love affair with traditional glamour, but all of that is eclipsed by the building's vast amenities. With 24-hour concierge there to take care of something as simple as collecting your dry cleaning or as complex as planning a wedding reception for 100, the full-service aspect is apparent from the moment you walk in the door. The beautifully finished lobby here represents the best of the new Boston. Impeccably dressed and seemingly ready for a night on the town, this space features honey-toned, satin-finished oak paneling, handsome seating areas, a working fireplace and Stern's modified Ionic pilasters with ebony capitals gleaming like so many black ties.

Open to this space is the Assouline Culture Lounge, a library chock full of books from the famous art and design publisher. Both this space

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Stern's design for The Clarendon seems to be aware of past, present and future all at once. Made for today's fast-paced world, it is nonetheless, luxurious in its finishes and coddles with its services.

Photo: Bruce T. Martin



and the lobby have a hard to define, sumptuous quality. The effect is like being on an Ocean liner from the Art Deco era. Take one of the elevators up to the amenities level and on one floor are The Clarendon's expansive, 'residents only' gym finished by Equinox, a private clubroom with full kitchen and generous terrace complete with landscaping and seating. At six stories up, it's far quieter than one might imagine – perfect spot to read the Sunday Times in June.

The units themselves range from studios of about 600 square feet to sprawling, 3,500+ square foot penthouses. And while the wow factor often comes from the initial shock of the stupendous upper story views, the surprise for us was the high quality of the baths and kitchens. Too often these days it seems large residential projects, including some in this city, are sold as "decorator ready", meaning you are responsible for flooring, carpets, etcetera. But then decorator ready started creeping into

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kitchens and baths, which became, shall we say, less than desirable. This is clearly not the case at The Clarendon. Kitchens we saw were perfectly arranged and finished in materials like neutral colored natural stone that promises not to fall out of style in three years. Plenty of storage, big, easy to grip stainless handles and integrated appliances

made these kitchens read as custom and tailored. Powder rooms were tailored and clean, with warm, dark marble just edging its way around the room, bordering a cream colored marble center. The master bath had a double vanity with rectangular undermount sinks topped by slabs of polished, translucent onyx.

Beyond this, if you prefer to live car-free, (and, at two blocks to the T, why wouldn't you) you'll find a convenient ZipCar in The Clarendon's parking garage, which is attended with valet 24 hours a day. And one of the best amenities of all: Post 390, the two-story restaurant fast becoming known for its comfort food and great, relaxed atmosphere, is just an elevator ride away. As a resident of The Clarendon, you can have a house account, and yes, they deliver. ■



The Assouline Culture Lounge off the main lobby is packed with new books for residents to read. Gas fireplace keeps visitors warm in winter.

Residences at The Clarendon feature oversized windows with truly breathtaking views from the upper floors.

