

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

## You Can Live in This \$30 Million Woolworth Building Mansion in the Sky

*Pavilion A, which was designed by AD100 Hall of Famer Thierry Despont, is the latest apartment on the market at the once world's tallest skyscraper*

By Elizabeth Fazarre  
Impressions: 2,800,000



*In 2015, floors 29 to 58 of the Woolworth Building in New York City were converted into luxury apartments and have gone up for sale in batches. Today, AD reveals the \$29.85M Pavilion A—a 6,711-square-foot, five-bedroom, four-bath, and two-half bath apartment built within (and on top of, as the apartment is one of four in the building that has a terrace) the first setback in the iconic structure. Designers Clive Christian and Joey Leicht collaborated on the staging. Photo: Travis Mark*

**//** In many ways, Cass Gilbert's Woolworth Building was the epitome of the New York romantic skyscraper from which the 20-century city derives so much of its visual identity," declared the 1983 Landmarks Preservation Commission report

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that designated the 1913 skyscraper as an official New York City landmark. In its “romantic” way, the Gothic-style, terra-cotta-clad Woolworth Building is also one of the best examples of a pre-zoning commercial tower that isn’t historically considered a skyline behemoth. Though it once held the title of tallest building in the world, the 60-story edifice has not one, but two voluntary setbacks atop its formidable base and rises to become a thinner, elegant tower with a copper pyramid roof. (Its later neighbor, the 1915 Equitable Building, by Ernest R. Graham, grew 38 stories high from its exact lot lines and set city officials in a tizzy that prompted the creation of the 1916 Building Zone Resolution, enforcing a stepped façade requirement for all future buildings above a certain height.)



*The Woolworth Building residences are crowned by a five-story penthouse called the Pinnacle in the crown of the tower. It takes advantage of the second setback to create a wraparound terrace with 360-degree views at 727 feet over Manhattan and is on the market for \$110M. Photo: Chris Coe for Optimist Consulting*

Though the Woolworth was formerly solely an office tower, architecture geeks and luxury buyers alike have recently made their homes in this landmarked icon. In 2015, developer Alchemy Properties converted the upper half of the building into one-of-a-kind apartments, with the design genius of AD100 Hall of Famer Thierry Despont. And now, there is an opportunity to live in one of those famous setbacks—for \$29.85 million.

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*Pavilion A, the latest apartment for sale at the Woolworth Building, features a 2,770-square-foot duplex terrace that allows residents to get up close and personal with the terra-cotta-clad tower. Furniture by Janus et Cie. Photo: Travis Mark*

The five-bedroom, four-bath, and two-powder room Pavilion A, as the 29th-floor apartment is called, totals 6,111 square feet of interior space with a 2,770-square-foot duplex terrace that allows residents to sidle up to the terra-cotta tower. Formerly housing mechanical equipment that was updated and reduced, this setback level now provides intimate views of surrounding buildings and distance views toward the north. Inside, Despont retained the prewar layout but updated the space with contemporary features including smart lighting, entertainment, and window treatments. Skylights are prominent throughout the apartment, bringing natural light to unexpected spaces like hallways and the interior-facing kitchen that otherwise would be artificially lit. “I thought it was important to design the apartments in the tradition of the great New York apartment,” said the architect to AD PRO about the project in 2018. “We pushed the details and we retained, as a design inspiration, many of the original elements.”

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*Despont renovated Frank W. Woolworth's former private pool into a resident amenity.  
Photo: Travis Mark*

Designers Clive Christian and Joey Leicht collaborated on staging the home with the high-end furnishings: Baccarat chandeliers and lighting in the master bedroom, the dining room, and the entry; a Vista Alegre tabletop in the dining room; and Farrow & Ball paint or wall coverings on every wall. "Our goal was to take this incredibly beautiful residence and finish it the only way it should be, with top brands," says Christian. To "bring forth the most luxurious result possible," in the master bedroom, for example, a massive chandelier by Stephanie Coutas for Baccarat hangs over the Dorya bed with Frette linens. In a living room, a ribbonlike mirror by Christopher Guy brings intrigue to a wall of eastern-facing windows. And in the dining room, another Bacarrat chandelier—accompanied by a grand piano—emphasizes the room's double height, which is best surveyed from its loft accessed via a spiral stair.



*In the master bedroom, a Baccarat chandelier hangs over the Dorya bed with Frette linens. Photo:  
Travis Mark*

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The Despont-designed kitchens and baths are classic with contemporary luxury twists. Marble door surrounds mark the separated shower and toilet entries. And the kitchens are all-white with seamless cabinetry and marble surfaces. The staging design team, too, focused on a neutral palette, save for the laundry room, where a Christian LaCroix for Osborne & Little butterfly-print wallpaper brings a pop of color to the space.



*A living room offers eastern views. Photo: Travis Mark*

Resident amenities in the building include wine storage, a fitness center, and a 50-foot lap pool that once was the private swimming hole of Frank W. Woolworth himself. The space had lain abandoned since 1998 and was renovated by Despont, who added a sauna and hot tub and enveloped the space in Romanesque mosaics. A connection to the former building owner is also shown in the residential lobby, where the decorative ceiling coffers from Woolworth's former office on the 40th floor were restored and relocated in front of the reception desk.



*The lobby's ceiling coffers have been restored and relocated from Frank W. Woolworth's former private office on the 40th floor. Photo: Travis Mark*

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On the other half of this floor, the three-bedroom Pavilion B is also up for sale. And on the top five floors, the 9,710-square-foot penthouse Pinnacle is up for \$110M. Along with a wraparound terrace on the apartment's setback, its interior has also been outfitted with over 100 new windows to maximize light and views under its ceilings, some as tall as 24 feet. As these are the only four apartments in the building with outdoor spaces, luxury buyers can live within (and on top of) a true piece of New York architectural history.

<https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/for-nearly-dollar30m-you-can-live-on-top-of-the-setback-at-nycs-woolworth-building>