



→ ari s. heckman, jonathan minkoff, and will cooper

Founders and Creative Director
ASH NYC

Growing up surrounded by family members working in real estate, interior design, architecture, and construction, it was only natural the founding partners of Brooklyn, New York-based ASH NYC would enter a related field.

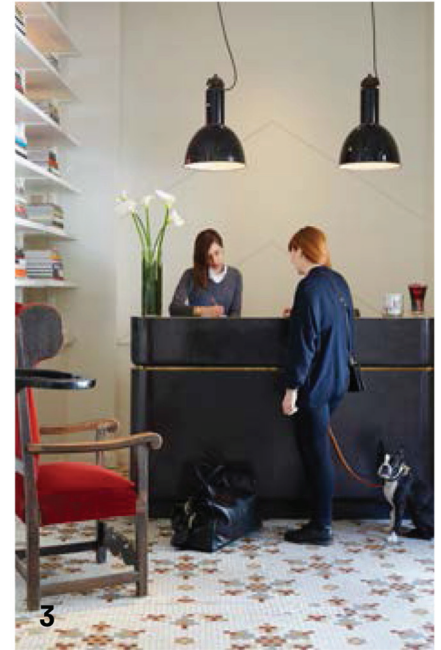
“We interweave four strands,” says co-founder and CEO Ari S. Heckman. “One is real estate development with a focus on adaptive reuse in emerging neighborhoods. The rest are designing, staging, and collecting furniture for these projects and for other developers.”

Heckman, who holds a degree in architecture from Cornell University, first met ASH co-founder and CFO Jonathan

Minkoff when both were working at a real estate equity firm. By late 2008, the two decided to strike out on their own, just as the country’s financial crisis was beginning. They started small, buying a multifamily building in Heckman’s hometown of Providence, Rhode Island, and moved on to acquire a number of other residential, office, and mixed-use properties.

Six years later, they’re unveiling their newest effort, the Dean Hotel, also in Providence. The 52-room property represents ASH’s first foray into hospitality and “exercises all of the muscles,” says Heckman. “Renovating the building, designing the furniture, sourcing other fixtures.”





1. A Jean Prouvé bench in the Dean Hotel's lobby was found in a school in Europe.

2. Flea market finds, including oil paintings, add character to the Dean guestrooms.

3. Reception at the Dean, which is housed in a historic 1912 building, preserved by KITE Architects.

4. Vintage Turkish rugs sourced by ASH NYC convey the personality of the Dean's fictional namesake.

5. A guest bathroom highlights the property's masculine aesthetic.



Moving into the hospitality arena hasn't been without challenges, adds Minkoff. "This project is a business within a business. We already know how to make residential and office buildings awesome," he says. "But in those cases, you're maintaining something on a monthly or annual or five-year basis. With the hotel, on a good weekend, you have 52 new tenants. It's important to us that the operations mimic the same attention to detail as in everything else we do."

When it comes to design, that emphasis on the little things shows up in an aesthetic that skews masculine, explains Will Cooper, who joined ASH as creative director in 2011 after working in brand development

at Ralph Lauren. "We start with a clean palette," he says. "Through sourcing and design, we build layers and convey information." While Providence firm KITE Architects preserved the historic bones of the Dean's 1912 building, ASH NYC crafted a story that references the town's unique academic mix of Ivy League (Brown University), design (Rhode Island School of Design), and cuisine (Johnson & Wales University). The green Jean Prouvé bench in the lobby hails from a school in Europe, while oil paintings found in Paris flea markets and vintage rugs from Turkey flesh out the character of the hotel's fictional namesake. Varied and expertly

curated F&B offerings—a beer hall, karaoke bar, Art Nouveau-ish cocktail lounge, and coffee shop—complete the picture.

The Dean is only the beginning for the ASH NYC team, who see more hotels in their future. "We have a short list of interesting cities where we think we could contribute," says Heckman. "We'll be looking closely at existing but underperforming hotels on which we can put our vision." hd