

# Downtown L.A. Proper Hotel by Kelly Wearstler

By Abigail Stone  
Photos by The Ingalls

**INTERIOR DESIGNER** Kelly Wearstler's name on a project pretty much guarantees its status as award-winning. Her latest work for the Proper Hospitality hotel group is no exception.

Downtown L.A. Proper hotel, which opened in October, channels the cultural diversity of the city and the industrial vibe of the building's downtown setting through a lens that manages to expertly blend vintage, industrial and folkloric elements. The result is a 148-room escape that is undeniably nostalgic, distinctly modern and unquestionably welcoming.

Set in the city's South Park district, the Italian Romanesque Revival-style building was designed by architects Curlett & Beelman in 1926 to house a brokerage and an exclusive private club frequented by luminaries. It later morphed into a YWCA. Wearstler has woven this history through a wide-reaching narrative whose inspiration extends across the neighborhood's backstory. "The design of the hotel was greatly inspired by the community—early California, Spanish missions and the Los Angeles *Herald Examiner* building across the street," Wearstler shares. "The building is a historic cultural monument, so we maintained some of the original integrity and fabric, like the window casings and brickwork, while elevating it with contemporary jewel tones, patterns and plasterwork." The result—from the Mexican folk art animals painted by Abel Macias that cavort across the arched ceiling of the front lobby—which also showcases a front desk installation by ceramicist Morgan Peck—to the imposing stained glass front and back doorways, created by Judson Studios, that lead to Caldo Verde, one of the hotel's three restaurants from James Beard Award-winning restaurateurs Suzanne Goin and Caroline Styne, to the intriguing ivory ceramic mural by Ben Medansky that lines the private 35-by-12-foot pool in one of the hotel's singular suites, is a dazzling tribute to the many moods of Los Angeles and its increasingly global presence on the world stage.



**CLOCKWISE:** A Noguchi pendant and sconces by MQuan for Allied Maker illuminate the interior of Caldo Verde, the hotel's signature all-day restaurant from the James Beard Foundation award-winning team of chef Suzanne Goin and restaurateur Caroline Styne; in the living room of one of the hotel's premier suites, vintage Adrian Pearsall hexagonal Spanish chairs sit atop a vintage rug. Portola's roman clay plaster in Nitty Gritty, washes the walls and puts the focus on the hotel's historic windows; in this two bedroom corner suite, a custom chest sports custom ceramic tiles by local artist Morgan Peck; a new floor, laid in a timeless parquet that appears worn and well-trodden, fits with Wearstler's intention to blur the lines between old and new throughout the building.