




Gershwin Hotel's gender bender

The century-old hotel is redubbed the Evelyn, after a sexy chorus girl from the early 1900s, to reflect its \$20 million renovation and the evolution of its hip NoMad neighborhood.

BY LISA FICKENSCHER 

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On Dec. 16, the Gershwin Hotel on 7 E. 27th St. will become the Evelyn as the century-old property's \$20 million, year-long renovation nears completion.

The name switch from composer George Gershwin to a sexy chorus girl from the early 1900s—Evelyn Nesbit—is meant to reflect the evolution of the hip neighborhood in which the hotel is located.

"We needed to bring the hotel up to the standards of NoMad," said Ronny Apfel, chief financial officer of Triumph Hotels, a family-owned group of six properties in Manhattan.

It is also part of a larger strategy to upgrade all the historic buildings in the company's portfolio.

Triumph has invested more than \$50 million during the past couple of years renovating its properties, including the Hotel Belleclaire and the Hotel Chandler. It plans to spend another \$30 million or so to update the Iroquois, Washington Jefferson and Cosmopolitan hotels over the next two years. Triumph plans to add some 80 hotel rooms to the Iroquois for a total of 197 rooms, adding the building next door, 47-53 W. 44th St., which the company owns.

The 160-room Evelyn first opened in 1905 as Hotel Broztell. Triumph Hotels, which is operated by the Horn and Barad families, has owned the property since the 1980s. The renovation will be completed next year when a new bar and restaurant are added, providing room service for the first time and making the hotel more appealing to business travelers, Mr. Apfel said.

Next year, the owners hope to charge room rates of about \$400 per night, compared with the \$200 to \$250 it commands now, he added.