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Piet Boon's Huys in New York

Dutch Design in New Amsterdam

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PLUS: WILLEM VAN ROIJEN
ON THE FUTURE OF TEFAF



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DUTCH

TEXT
Jorrit Niels

DESIGN IN

PHOTOGRAPHY
Paul Barbera (interior), Jesaja Hizkia (portrait)

NEW YORK



01

01
The former
office building
contains 58

apartments of
between 55m²
and 325 m².



02

02
The name 'Huys' is
derived from Stadt
Huys and is named
after New York's
first town hall that
was built in 1642.

03
The lamps in
the reception
area and
above dining
tables in the
apartments
are made by
French design-
ers Erwan
and Ronan
Bourollec.

Piet Boon has a studio in the village of Oostzaan in North-Holland, but he spends nearly as much time on location – not in Eindhoven or Rotterdam, but in Tokyo and Paris. And also in New York, where one of his latest prestigious projects is located: Huys, a reflection of Dutch design and craftsmanship. Vernis spoke to the renowned designer on one of his rare visits to the Netherlands.



04
Small office windows are replaced by large floor-to-ceiling frames to enhance the sense of space.



04

D

05 en 06
Oakwood floors designed by Piet Boon and made by Solidfloor.

Dutch innovation, quality and superior craftsmanship: it has existed since the 17th century, but now a second Dutch renaissance is taking place. Modern Dutch Design continues to be popular in New York. Designer Piet Boon believes that "Dutch" does so well in the city because New Yorkers are not that different from the Dutch. "Like us, they are perseverant, have the will to work hard and the ability to think out of the box if they have to. I always



05

tell them that they got this attitude from 'our' forefathers."

Meanwhile the Delft blue scaffolding on 404 Park Avenue has been removed to reveal the full splendour of Huys. Built in 1914, the former office building now accommodates 58 new luxury apartments just a few blocks from the Rockefeller Center and the Museum of Modern Art. Huys is a project by the Dutch Kroonenberg Groep. CEO Lesley Bamberger got Boon on board back in 2010, because "New York



06

'Like us, New Yorkers are perseverant, have the will to work hard and the ability to think out of the box'



07

Every apartment has its own vestibule.



07

“Those apparently small extras give the building something special, which makes Huys more complete than most luxury condos in Manhattan.”

likes its rules and regulations”, as Boon puts it.

“Bamberger rang me and said: ‘I have a great building in New York and I want to apply Dutch Design to it.’ Well, I have some experience in New York and it’s not easy to transform an office building into a luxury apartment block. There are so many rules.” Boon points to the tall door in his office: “In the Netherlands, a door can be fitted to this size, in New York, you ensure that it is wide enough to allow for wheelchair access. In 80% of cases this will be irrelevant, but the rules say that the door has to be adapted for the eventuality. I can give 20 more examples like that. It’s unbelievable, but they are unyielding.”

Boon says restrictions encourage creativity. In the run-up to the project, he visited a number of other high-end projects in New York with Bamberger. That’s when he saw why the Kroonenberg Groep had opted for Dutch Design: “Bamberger is a builder, I’m a builder, we understand each other. We looked at each other and said: ‘We can do this in our sleep.’ The projects had hardly focused on developing a solid concept. You would come in and walk straight into the meter box, or the layout was totally illogical. And impersonal. Often it felt like you were stepping out of the lift into a hotel room. Not what you would expect of a \$10 million apartment.”

In Huys, Boon applied his own distinctive style, blending personal atmosphere with luxurious comfort and equipping each entrance with its own vestibule. “It takes up 1.5m (at 25.000 euros per m²), but it adds so much quality. This was the attitude and level of attention to detail that was to make this project a success.”

It may be because he has 30 years of experience, but Boon was right. Nearly all the apartments have been sold, with a few penthouses left to go. Those apparently small extras give the building something special, which makes Huys more complete than most luxury condos in Manhattan. Boon describes it as “homely”, a style that would suit his own place.

There are also luxury extras such as a bike storage space, a gym and a media lounge. Here too, the Dutch influence is visible. The roof terrace features a garden by Piet Oudolf—with the same plants that he used for The High Line park—and in the lobby

08

“The luxurious functionality is my interpretation of Dutch Design.”

08



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09

It was a conscious move to keep the design simple, with a pallet of neutral tones.



09

It just goes to show that restrictions make it different, but not really worse'

10

The design is dominated by clear lines and symmetry.

residents are welcomed by a hand-painted vase by Roderik Vos and an enormous bronze chandelier by Dutch artist Frederick Molenschot.

Outside, the whole façade has been replaced. The small office windows have made way for large windows with dark steel frames, creating bright interior spaces. Boon took advantage of the fact that Huys is not wedged in between other buildings, as is often the case in New York. "I wanted to let the windows stick out to broaden the view. Unfortunately the city didn't allow everything to 'pop out' but that has given the building its unusual structure. It just goes to show that restrictions make it different, but not really worse."

The interiors are harmonious, with a sober pallet of neutral tones. Fireplaces, deep sofas and comfortable furniture create warmth on the backdrop of the white walls. "The luxurious functionality is my interpretation of Dutch Design, with clear lines and a lot of symmetry. It's like our style: simple but very sophisticated.



10

The building isn't simple but feels very logical. The axes are well positioned with a lot of light and a lot of Dutch products and designs. From the large, high wooden doors to the wooden floors and the natural stone in the lobby. Often a building loses its beauty after a few years. I have tried to prevent that by working with durable materials. That way the building can 'age gracefully'. It has to look good, but to me it is more important that it still looks good in 10 years."

11

Some apartments have a roof terrace or balcony.



11

huys-nyc.com

Huys Sweet Home

404 years after discovering New York, latter-day Dutch pioneers have returned to transform a historic loft building at 404 Park Avenue South into exquisite condominiums – replete with a distinctive Dutch twist.



Huys – 404 Park Avenue South

56 Luxury Condominiums Designed by Piet Boon.

404 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
Huys