



## **Architectural Teams For Redesigned Grand Ballroom**

### **At The Pierre NY Recognized With**

### **Prestigious 2023 McKim, Mead & White Award**

*New York, NY. October 2, 2023* The Pierre NY, a Taj Hotel is pleased to announce that architects Sawyer|Berson in collaboration with Michael Smith, Inc, have been honored with a 2023 McKim, Mead & White award under the category of Commercial, Civic & Institutional Architecture for their outstanding work on the redesign of the Grand Ballroom. The award is hosted by the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art and is one of the highest achievements within the realm of classical and traditional architecture design.

“We congratulate the Sawyer|Berson and Michael Smith, Inc. teams on this well-deserved recognition for their outstanding and diligent attention to the history and architectural details that are inherent in The Pierre’s heritage while bringing the Grand Ballroom to state-of-the-art status,” says Francois-Olivier Luiggi, General Manager of The Pierre.

The newly reimagined Grand Ballroom has been designed to offer guests the best that modern-day technology and design can offer in an ambiance that retains the understated elegance and attention to historical detail that The Pierre has built its reputation on during the last 90 years. “We looked at all aspects of what makes a ballroom grand including ambiance, design, catering, service and functionality,” says Francois-Olivier Luiggi. It is the total effect of all these qualities working together that has put The Pierre in a class by itself.

“Our firm was asked to redesign The Pierre Hotel’s Grand Ballroom, stripping away the accumulated results of prior renovations and refashioning the room as a dramatic and architecturally unified space, returning it to its original, smaller volume. While this created a functional challenge, there was an opportunity to create a beautifully

detailed and proportioned room on the footprint of the original,” says lead architectural designer Brian Sawyer, of Sawyer|Berson.

“We pursued an 18<sup>th</sup>-century French neoclassical design, referring to the powerful architectural ideas and features of the hotel’s French neoclassical 1930s exterior by Schultze & Weaver and honoring the great New York beaux-arts buildings of the period,” he continued.

The reimagined Grand Ballroom represents the best of everything. From elevated culinary capabilities to built-in audio-visual technology to state-of-the-art lighting and acoustics and reduced set-up times, the Ballroom has been reimagined to meet the needs of the most sophisticated guests.

Notable architectural details include fluted Ionic piers, entablatures and cornices in cast plaster; matching perimeter walls’ paneled dados, chair rails, pilasters, and elongated upper panels. The Versailles’s Petit Trianon inspired the monumental French doors and transoms and two marble Louis XVI-style fireplaces, overmantels and trumeau mirrors add to the elegance of the room. The eight Murano chandeliers were restored by the original Italian family and custom decorative sconces were also added to the piers and pilasters.

Improvements in the AV infrastructure will allow a faster set-up and break-down for even the most complicated events. The system will be able to easily handle dual events with both in-person and virtual participation. The faster set-up and break-down capabilities will also allow The Pierre to book 2 events per day – improving the availability of event space in New York City.

The Grand Ballroom reopened in Spring, 2022 after a three-year, \$19 million transformation. In addition to the Sawyer|Berson and Michael Smith Inc. teams, 14 discipline-specific teams collaborated with The Pierre to both restore and redesign the ballroom with particular attention to blending historical details with state-of-the-art modern technology.

The Pierre’s Grand Ballroom has long been recognized as an iconic location for celebrations that are lavish, memorable and outstanding, as well as au courant since its inception in the 1930’s. The ballroom has been redesigned three times under previous managements. This has been the most extensive reimagining, a mark of Taj Hotels which took over management of The Pierre in 2005 and embarked on a \$100 million renovation of the hotel – most notably the Rotunda and Two E Lounge.

“Bottom line, the Ballroom has been designed with our guests in mind. The goal was to design a ballroom that becomes a perfect backdrop for NYC events, and which makes the guests shine vs the ballroom,” says Francois-Olivier Luiggi.

### **About The Pierre NY, A Taj Hotel**

A New York icon, The Pierre, A Taj Hotel continues to set the standard for timeless elegance and unrivaled hospitality in New York City for more than 90 years. Situated on Central Park, The Pierre has remained a landmark treasured by visitors and New Yorkers alike since opening in 1930. It is the only AAA Five Diamond and Forbes Five-Star rated property on Manhattan’s Upper East Side. The hotel’s 189 rooms, 49 of which are suites, offer classic design with couture touches, abundant natural light, and high ceilings. First-rate amenities include white-gloved elevator attendants, and a Les Clefs d’Or Concierge team. Exquisite entertaining is synonymous with The Pierre, and its opulent newly reimagined Grand Ballroom, Cotillion Room, and Rotunda continue to host New York’s most unforgettable events, while chic, multi-functional meeting rooms welcome private gatherings, from intimate closing dinners to annual shareholder meetings. The Pierre’s robust food and beverage program boasts 24-hour gourmet room service, and a bespoke cocktail program in the Lounge, seasonal fare with outdoor seating at signature restaurant Perrine and indulgent cuisine in the whimsical Rotunda. Follow The Pierre on Instagram, Facebook, & Twitter: @thepierreny. [www.thepierreny.com](http://www.thepierreny.com)

### **About Sawyer|Berson**

Sawyer|Berson is an interdisciplinary firm practicing architecture, landscape architecture and interior design based in New York City. The firm’s work includes private houses and gardens, apartments, townhouses, and urban roof terraces as well as commercial and institutional projects throughout the United States. Sawyer|Berson was founded in 1999 by Brian Sawyer and John Berson. The firm works in a variety of styles and seeks to achieve unique designs in traditional and modern vocabularies. All projects are supported by rigorous historical, contextual, and technical research and are developed in close consultation with the client. The firm’s work has received several awards and been featured in major publications and books.