



THE BENJAMIN  
AN EXECUTIVE SUITE HOTEL

**Contact:**

Maria Andriano/Caroline Klein  
Redpoint Marketing PR, Inc.  
212.229.0119  
[andriano@redpointpr.com](mailto:andriano@redpointpr.com)  
[klein@redpointpr.com](mailto:klein@redpointpr.com)

**THE BENJAMIN: A MODERN MASTERPIECE  
WITH ECHOES OF AN EARLIER ERA**

***Design of DHG's Luxury Brand  
Owes Much To Emery Roth's Influence***

NEW YORK – When one considers New York in the 1920s, the mind conjures images of a thriving city, one that was coming into its own as the center of the world. Babe Ruth was rewriting sports history books, leading The Yankees to unprecedented championships; flappers were setting the fashion trends of the era; jazz was all the rage in nightclubs throughout the city; and architects like Emery Roth were creating the towers that are still considered masterpieces of modern building design.

Eight decades later, New York is still a thriving city, and elements that made it distinctive then are once again evident today. The Yankees are always champion contenders; some of the hottest jazz around can be heard in clubs or on the streets after dark; and, while the flappers may be (some would say thankfully) nowhere to be found, Roth's creations remain an integral part of the city's skyline.

Perhaps no other architect of this century has made such an indelible mark on that skyline as Roth, with such grand creations as *The Eldorado*, *The San Remo* and *The Normandy*. In 1898, when he opened his practice, the rapidly growing New York City economy provided seemingly endless opportunities to shape the cityscape and change the way buildings were designed.

In November 1997, **the Denihan Hospitality Group**, operator of the Affinia and Benjamin brands, purchased one of Roth's great works from 1927, the **Hotel Beverly**. Considered by many to be one of Roth's most successful creations, The Beverly was highly regarded for the vitality and

warmth in its design, inspiring even the legendary artist Georgia O’Keefe to paint it from her apartment across the street.

DHG, a privately-owned company, and a New York institution in itself, renamed the hotel **The Benjamin**, in honor of its patriarch and company founder, Benjamin J. Denihan Sr. The company then announced plans for a \$30 million renovation of the property, which opened in April 1999.

DHG sought a design team to restore the 30-story building to the classic elegance and European style embodied by the 20s era, yet update it to accommodate the high-tech needs and user-friendly requirements of today’s business traveler.

#### **- Award-Winning Design Team -**

DHG selected an award-winning team to handle the challenging project, including the interior design firm **Di Leonardo International** of Warwick, R.I., and the architectural firm of **Ronald Schmidt & Associates** of Englewood, N.J.

Maintaining and improving upon the distinctive exterior was the responsibility of Ronald Schmidt & Associates. The company has worked on several historical preservation projects for theaters, churches, cultural centers and colleges. The firm’s work on The Benjamin’s exterior honors the traditional aspects of the original façade while preserving the integrity of the famed neighborhood’s ambiance and charm.

The restoration of the hotel was a vital part of the project, as Roth’s building was known for its Romanesque arcades, crenelated parapets, Gothic-style rose windows and terra-cotta birds looking out from their hideaways. “We haven’t lost any of the building’s aesthetics. If anything, we’ve added to the splendor to give The Benjamin a more sophisticated look,” said Ronald Schmidt, president. A special focus was placed on integrating the hotel’s signage, security cameras, and fixtures into the building’s original design, as well.

#### **- Public Spaces Set the Tone -**

With more than 25 years of experience, including hotel projects for Ritz-Carlton, Westin, and Forte, Di Leonardo was charged with the task of providing a new look for the property, while enhancing the elements that made Roth’s design so distinctive.

“I set out by first considering what qualities most appeal to the international traveler. The conclusion was that cosmopolitan European influence, sophistication, style and comfort were all necessary elements to be incorporated,” said Robert Di Leonardo, president.

Inspired by [Mansions in the Sky](#), a book on Emery Roth’s architecture, Di Leonardo has altered the interior to incorporate architectural elements such as arches in the lobby and provide a stunning backdrop for the intimacy of the public space.

“We describe our style as ‘modern elegance.’ We tried to put ourselves in the mindset as if Emery Roth were designing this hotel today. The Benjamin reflects a new Emery Roth design for the millennium,” said Di Leonardo.

Di Leonardo’s “modern elegance” style springs from the need to have an environment composed of many different looks, all constructed around a strong, unusual, striking, cosmopolitan feel. The lobby and reception areas communicate the sophisticated image of the entire hotel, establishing the mood and anticipation as to what lies ahead. The exceptional levels of detail apparent in both the reception desk and a sweeping grand staircase balance a soft neutral background of warm marble and elegant upholstered walls covered with carved silk damask velvet.

The palette is rich, sophisticated and upbeat with silvers and taupes decorating the raised metal leaf reception desk. Texture plays a very important role in creating interest, identifying details, and establishing comfort and luxury with a lasting elegance. Sweeping Venetian mirrors serve as a focal point of the lobby and bring a monumental feeling to the space.

Atop the grand staircase, the guest lounge reflects an urban sophistication. Boardrooms and meeting rooms on this level are equipped with the most up-to-date technology, yet the arched windows were retained to keep the integrity of the exterior architectural influences. This design marries the Old World charm that was evident in Roth’s work with today’s modern essentials.

#### **– Rooms that are the Ultimate Destination–**

The project expanded the property from 188 to 209 rooms, including 97 one-bedroom suites and a deluxe two-bedroom suite. The distinctive nature of the building allows each room to offer something different. Aside from technological enhancements, guest rooms are equipped with amenities which may include small galleys, chaise lounges, oversized club chairs and sleep sofas. The galleys feature state-of-the-art appliances, glass door cabinets and granite countertops. Guests also enjoy special touches, such as custom shower caddies, top-of-the-line Bose® stereo systems, and other amenities that ensure a comfortable stay.

#### **– The Executive Suite Concept –**

With its intimate, boutique-style setting, The Benjamin is the luxury brand in the DHG portfolio. As An Executive Suite Hotel, The Benjamin is designed to allow executives to work and relax in a more private setting without compromising the comforts, intimacy and amenities found in New York’s larger four-star properties. The property is equipped with the ultimate in technology and business amenities including, the Executive Nap Kit for jet-lagged guests needing to refresh before a business meeting, generously scaled executive desks, ergonomic

desk chairs, two-line phones with voicemail, dataports, and a separate line for a combination fax/printer/copier. For guests who want a guaranteed good night's sleep, the on-staff Sleep Concierge can recommend the perfect pillow from the hotel's 12-choice pillow menu and arrange other sleep amenities, including a relaxing massage at the hotel's Wellness Spa, a bedtime snack of milk and cookies, and a bedside white noise machine to drown out stray background noise.

The Benjamin reflects the company's tradition of offering a unique luxury in the New York market, combined with consistent and genuine personal service. It also reflects a design and atmosphere that evoke an era that will not be forgotten – not while Roth's legacy still dots the city's landscape and not while the spirit that made the city the center of the world lingers.

The Benjamin, located at in the heart of midtown Manhattan at the corner of Lexington Avenue and 50th Street, provides an experience of true luxury and supreme comfort in an intimate, boutique-style setting. Classically elegant accommodations, world-class amenities, premier technology and seamless, superlative service are the hallmarks of The Benjamin. Known for its comprehensive sleep program, The Benjamin features the industry's first and only Sleep Concierge, a 12-choice pillow menu and custom Benjamin Bed. The Benjamin brand is operated by DHG (Denihan Hospitality Group), a privately-owned company with more than 40 years of hospitality management expertise. The Benjamin is a proud member of a worldwide alliance of hotels including Joie De Vivre in the United States, Thistle Hotels in the United Kingdom, Rotana Hotels in the Middle East and First Hotels in Scandinavia. For more information, visit [www.thebenjamin.com](http://www.thebenjamin.com) or call 1-888-4-BENJAMIN.

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