



Isay Weinfeld Brings Lush Simplicity to Chelsea for His Debut Project in New York

The two-tower complex at Jardim pairs an industrial palette with an abundance of gardens

By Elizabeth Fazzare

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For Jardim, Isay Weinfeld's first building in New York, the architect and his team also staged the model units. Here, in the open-plan living room of a three-bedroom apartment, a sofa by RH joins a cocktail table and pair of lounge chairs by BassamFellows (right) and two Ib Kofod-Larsen chairs (left).

Photo: Evan Joseph

Brazilian [architect](#) Isay Weinfeld has been biding his time to make his New York debut. "I needed to be sure that I would have a good relationship with the client and everybody would be happy in the end," says the [Brazilian](#) architect, who opened his [São Paulo-based](#) firm in 1978 and has since completed projects in nearly every typology. "I felt that with these clients, I met a good match," he says. Those clients are developers Centaur Properties and Greyscale Development Group, on whose site in West [Chelsea](#) Weinfeld has now designed two towers of apartments, coupled by an ethereally lit porte cochere tunnel that runs north to south between West 27th and West 28th Streets and acts as a private entry for their shared lobby.

With just three materials cladding the exteriors—concrete, weathered steel, and a dark brick—the 11-story buildings are a careful exercise in simplicity. Between them, two gardens by Future Green Studio spring up, connected vertically via a concrete spiral stair open to the sky above. And inside, Weinfeld extends his natural poeticism with limestone bathrooms, slatted wood kitchens, and sky-high ceilings met by pocket windows with garden views. On a recent tour, AD PRO gathered the architect's thoughts on the project.

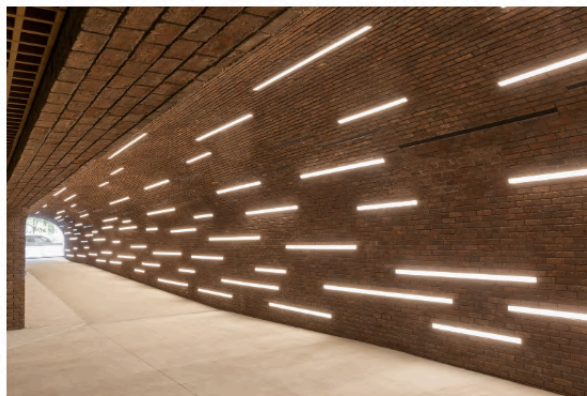
Project Details

Name: Jardim

Design Team: Isay Weinfeld; Future Green Studio (landscaping)

Location: West Chelsea, New York City

Size: approximately 150,000 square feet



A porte cochere tunnel, which connects West 27th and West 28th Streets, acts as a private entrance for the building.

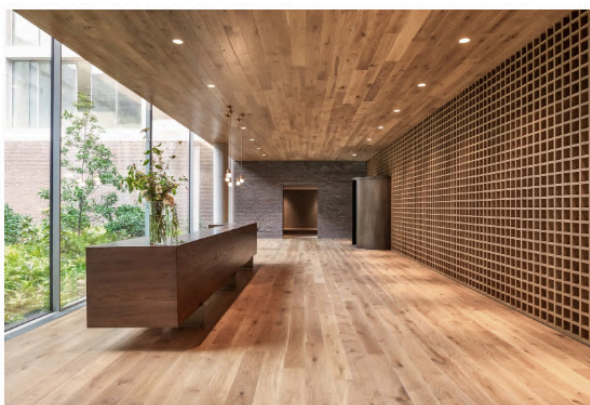
Photo: Evan Joseph

AD PRO: Did the idea to put two gardens in the courtyard between the buildings come first, or did the site decide it?

Isay Weinfeld: It's the result of the position of the two buildings. Instead of having one entrance for one building here and one on the other street, we decided to have just one entrance with one reception and a big garden in the back. We needed a link between one street and the other. Not wanting to design just a boring tunnel, we did this kind of passageway that gives you the sensation of surprise: You enter a space not knowing where it will lead and then, little by little, you discover the garden behind the trellis, in front of the reception desk.

AD PRO: It's exciting to come into an enclosed space and to see sunlight, as well.

IW: Yes, it's meant to direct the views of people and their sensations, in a way. This space could have been anything. But, gardens are very important in our work—the relationship between inside and outside.



The lobby is hidden behind a wall of custom wood lattice. An open-air garden is accessible in a courtyard behind the reception desk.

Photo: Evan Joseph

AD PRO: You designed the entire project, from the architecture to the interior. What is it about designing the whole project that you think enhances the work?

IW: I cannot see designing a building but not designing the kitchens or bathrooms; it's part of the work of an architect. The project is stronger if you design everything, in my opinion. We don't do any building without doing the interior design in the lobby area and the amenities. We also choose the landscape designer, because it has a lot to do with our work. We choose the name of the building. In a [restaurant](#), we choose the graphic designer for the menu. We never take any project without being the art director of everything, and we need to have clients that think this way as well.



Custom light-oak cabinetry by Molteni, stainless steel countertops, Gaggenau appliances, and terrazzo flooring all define the model unit's cozy kitchen.

Photo: Evan Joseph

AD PRO: What drove your design choices for the model unit?

IW: It's always linked to two things. The first one is comfort. You will never see a piece of furniture in our work that is beautiful, but you cannot sit on it. Comfort comes first. Then, design.

AD PRO: The same philosophy must apply to the kitchens, where you have wood detailing and metal countertops in lieu of the marble often seen in luxury residential projects.

IW: We don't want to make a showroom of materials to show that this is chic or expensive. We believe in speaking quietly, not shouting. For me, the metal countertops are very practical. I love to cook, and maybe that shows in my material choices.



A powder room features limestone walls and a vanity with a built-in sink.

Photo: Evan Joseph