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For Immediate Release

MdeAS Architects Announces Completion of Santi at 520 Madison Avenue

*Design Firm Led Renovation of Ground-Floor Space at Tishman Speyer Asset to
Deliver a New Upscale Italian Dining Experience by Chef Michael White*

(New York, N.Y., May 05, 2025) – [MdeAS Architects](#) (em-dee-ay-es), a New York-based architecture firm celebrated for modern design and redefining districts, public spaces, buildings, and interiors, has completed the design of [Santi](#), an Italian restaurant by Chef Michael White on the ground floor of Tishman Speyer's 520 Madison Avenue. The entrance to the 8,500-square-foot space is at 11 E. 53rd Street.

MdeAS worked with owner, Tishman Speyer, to carry out a full renovation of the space, which was previously occupied by the restaurant Valbella. As the architect, the team oversaw the design, documentation and construction processes. MdeAS coordinated with property management and ownership, the restaurant operator [BBianco Hospitality](#), and numerous consultants to ensure the project delivered high-end functionality and an unforgettable dining experience.



[Michaelis Boyd](#) was the project's interior designer, with L'Observatoire International as lighting designer. Jessica Schupack was the F&B development consultant with Next Step Design as the foodservice design consultant. ADG was the structural engineer with AMA as the MEP engineers. [Vanguard Construction](#) served as general contractor to deliver the high-end product.

"Santi delivers an inviting and memorable dining experience that represents BBianco Hospitality's expertise and history in Italian fine dining," said Mike Zaborski, principal at MdeAS Architects.

The restaurant is nestled into the back façade of a newly upgraded pocket park that engages passersby from 53rd Street and Madison Avenue in New York's Plaza District. Visible through a new double height dark statuary bronze storefront is the warm glow of the onyx bar and richly detailed wood interiors. This welcoming space acts as a front room, greeting guests and serving as the social

center of the restaurant. The bespoke 16-seat horseshoe bar features a green onyx backsplash, white honed Cristallo quartzite and custom metal framing.

Beyond lies a sequence of uniquely interconnected areas for dining across the ground floor and mezzanine levels, including a den with walnut and leather banquettes in green onyx, and a double-height enclosed courtyard dining room with hand-painted cloud mural walls and a custom handblown glass light pendant. The open mezzanine dining room, which overlooks the other spaces, creates energetic spatial connections and view corridors throughout the restaurant.

Artwork tells the story of Chef Michael White's culinary journey and is central to the design. Many works are featured throughout the various dining rooms, including a portrait gallery within the double-height staircase area. The curved staircase with ambient tread lighting brings diners up to the mezzanine area for an exceptionally crafted private dining room experience with a 14-seat custom marble table and geometric wood inlay flooring.

"The sequence and unveiling of uniquely designed spaces, paired with crafted material detailing and layered lighting, creates a fabulous space for artwork and culinary storytelling to thrive," added Mike Zaborski, Principal at MdeAS Architects.

Accents of leather and eucalyptus wood veneer paneling were used throughout the restaurant to create warmth. For acoustic considerations, the team opted for micro-perforated wood panel ceiling tiles with integrated slots in the den to conceal speakers and MEP equipment. Dark, smoke-toned wood floor planks wind throughout the restaurant, with custom mosaic tiling at special inset moments in the courtyard and mezzanine rooms.

"The combination of beautiful detailing and use of materials, while seamlessly incorporating the high-end functionality demands of the culinary program, combine to make a special restaurant experience," said Paola Martinez, associate and project lead at MdeAS.

MdeAS and Tishman Speyer have a respected working relationship that spans more than three decades. The architecture firm has designed several projects for the prominent owner, developer, operator and investment manager of first-class real estate around the world, from lobby restructurings and streetscape enhancements to façade design and upgrades, for projects such as [The JACX](#) in Long Island City; [900 19th Street NW](#) in Washington, D.C.; [525 W. Monroe Street](#) in Chicago; and [650 California Street](#) in San Francisco.

About MdeAS

MdeAS Architects (pronounced [em-dee-ay-es]) is a New York-based architecture firm known for modern design focusing on the quality of natural materials, intelligent programming, and the redefining of districts, public spaces, buildings, and interiors. Founded in 1991, the award-winning studio, led by principals Dan Shannon and Mike Zaborski, is a team of progressive global creators with a passion for designing architecture that makes an impact. MdeAS has reimaged interior and exterior spaces for clients such as SL Green Realty Corp., Macklowe Properties, RFR Realty, Vornado Realty Trust, Tishman Speyer, RXR, and Rockrose. For more information, visit www.mdeas.com or follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

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