



# WELLNESS DESTINATION BRIDGING HERITAGE & MODERN LUXURY

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Set across the rolling hills of Somerset County, New Jersey, the historic Natirar estate has been reimagined as a refined hospitality destination that bridges heritage and modern luxury. The 40-room Tudor-style Manor House—once a private residence and royal retreat for the King of Morocco—now anchors a new 70,000-square-foot hotel and spa. Perched on a scenic hilltop just an hour outside New York City, Pendry Natirar includes a full-service spa, fitness center, restaurant, and event space.

Approach is part of the narrative. A steep, tree-lined drive winds upward, revealing glimpses of the hilltop where the Manor House and hotel stand in quiet command. The procession builds anticipation, guiding guests toward the Manor House while offering long, framed views of the hotel's reverse façade.

Here, “back” and “front” are equally considered, ensuring the first sight of the building is as refined as the last.

Architecture and landscape work in concert, reinforcing the estate's hierarchy and its presence in the rolling countryside.

The hotel's architecture takes cues from the stucco and sandstone apartment buildings of 1920s California, lending it a crisp, quietly modern character. A custom-colored stucco façade complements the Manor House's limestone accents, creating visual continuity between old and new. Surrounded by the sweeping beauty of Somerset County, the Natirar property offers guests a deeply immersive experience grounded in nature, wellness, and regional heritage. Blending modern design with timeless architecture and a profound connection to the surrounding landscape, the estate invites visitors to engage with its storied past while enjoying the comforts of a contemporary countryside retreat.

# HISTORIC RELEVANCY

The Natirar estate was originally built between 1905 and 1912 as a private country home for Kate Macy Ladd, heiress to a Massachusetts whaling, shipping and oil fortune, and her husband, Walter Graeme Ladd. In keeping with the original conception of the historic Manor House serving as a place to find respite, in 1945, the estate took on a new role as a convalescent facility, serving the community for much of the 20th century. In 1983, the facility was dissolved and its assets distributed among five educational institutions.



With the careful modulation of scale and texture, the project demonstrates how thoughtful design can navigate the steep topography and complex heritage context with grace and restraint.





The estate was subsequently sold to the King of Morocco and used as a private residence. After his passing, ownership transferred to his son, who later sold the property to Somerset County in 2003. The county preserved 411 acres as public parkland and leased 90 acres—including the historic core buildings—to a local resident, with a shared vision for the site's future.

While the Manor House had served many functions over the decades, the new steward's intent was always to return it to its original purpose: a community gathering place rooted in beauty, hospitality, and shared experience. The initial project included the transformation of the historic carriage house into a restaurant with the attached garage converted into a cooking school for public classes. Our involvement began in 2017 with the design and development of the event center, pre-function spaces, and commercial kitchen as well as various on-going projects. Through a partnership with Pendry Hotels & Resorts, the greater hospitality vision came to life in 2024 with the creation of Pendry Natirar hotel and Spa Pendry, a resort that honors the property's legacy while ushering it into a new era of design and guest experience.

The Bridal Suite was tucked into a discreet corner that opens to a private garden, offering an ideal setting for outdoor dining, quiet reflection, or celebratory photo backdrops—shielded from the view of other guests.



# Defining The Experience

Every program element within the hotel was conceived to honor the Manor House's historic presence while immersing guests in the surrounding landscape. From intimate private spaces to shared wellness and gathering areas, the design creates a continuous dialogue between old and new, inside and out.



## Guest Rooms

Across all room types, the guest experience was shaped by thoughtful spatial planning, curated outlooks, and the seamless blending of architecture and landscape. The 66 guestrooms—including 21 thoughtfully designed suites—were planned to prioritize openness, light, and a strong connection to the landscape. Rather than a uniform approach, the design emphasized individuality and intimacy: balconies, terraces, and patios were staggered and varied in type to avoid repetition, ensuring that each guest enjoys a private and distinct relationship with the outdoors including the four specialty suites strategically placed at key corners of the hotel.

## The Spa

Spa Pendry, a 19,000-square-foot wellness retreat, is thoughtfully sunken into the natural slope of the site, allowing it to remain visually subordinate to the historic Manor House, while offering expansive views across the hillside and estate grounds. This embedded approach reinforces the property's restorative connection with nature and preserves the architectural hierarchy of the site. The spa features 12 treatment rooms, many with private covered terraces, along with a Himalayan salt room, eucalyptus steam room, and a tranquil plunge pool, all designed to immerse guests in a serene, sensory-rich experience rooted in place.

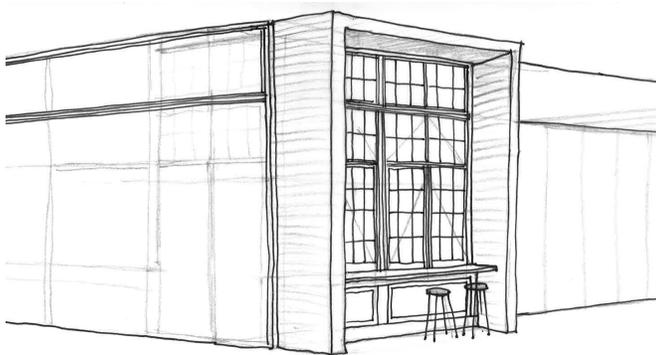
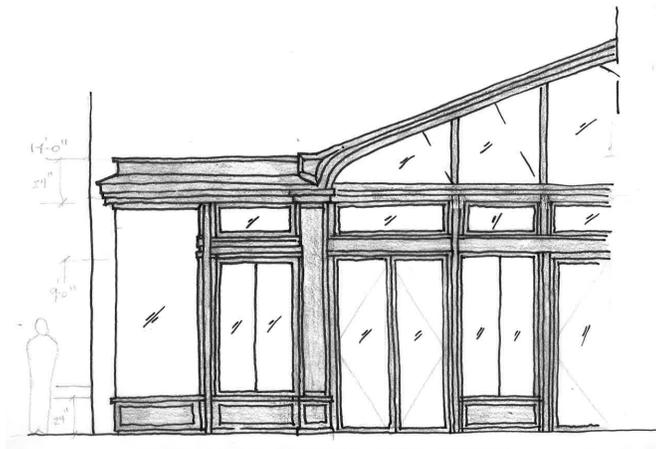
## Feature Stair

At the heart of the spa, a sculptural white staircase spirals gracefully downward, its flowing form inspired by the curves of the Raritan River that has shaped the surrounding landscape for centuries. While the concept evokes a guest's personal journey through renewal, its execution demanded equal measures of artistry and technical precision. The design team collaborated closely with the structural engineer to create the floor opening and engineer a steel stair that allowed the underside to follow the stair's elegant curve.

# SOLVING THE CHALLENGES

Designing a luxury hotel within the context of a treasured historic estate posed a complex challenge: how to introduce a significant new building while preserving—and even elevating—the primacy of the original Manor House.

The design team approached the site with deep sensitivity, carefully siting the hotel to work with the land's existing features and architectural character. The new structure was conceived as a quiet complement to the historic house—never competing with it, but rather supporting it. The entry procession reinforced this hierarchy, guiding guests along a tree-lined drive that gradually ascends to the hilltop, offering glimpses of the hotel before culminating at the Manor House—the focal point of the experience and the symbolic front door to the estate. Spa guests enter through the estate's original brick garden wall and iron gate, a gesture that honors the site's history and architectural legacy. By setting the new spa entry behind the Manor House, the design gave greater visual weight to the foreground, allowing the historic structure to retain its prominence and architectural integrity.





Site topography played a critical role in shaping the design. The spa, partially sunken into the hillside and tucked discreetly into the landscape, not only minimized its perceived mass but also provided walk-out terraces and maximized views across the estate. Circulation paths were meticulously planned to promote exploration and accommodate varied experiences, including hotel guests, spa visitors, event attendees, and staff, each with intuitive and unobtrusive access routes that protect the serenity of the setting.

Hospitality Suites were located on the most prominent corner of the building, one on the first floor and one on the second. These suites create "see and be seen" moments and offer sweeping views of the estate. The first-floor suite features generous indoor-outdoor flexibility, with a large terrace that steps down to the lawn—ideal for small events or social gatherings. Its location also provides convenient access to the Manor House, making it easy for guests to move between the two.





Technically, the design team navigated a series of complex integrations between historic and new structures. The new connection, known as the Orangerie, for example, was designed to intersect with an existing single-story brick wing affectionately called the ‘Ice Cream Parlor.’ Creating this connection required exacting precision, involving in-depth on-site measurement, consideration of existing historic features, and extensive coordination to ensure material transitions, dimensions, and elevations aligned perfectly—blending indoor and outdoor character while preserving the estate’s authenticity. Code-required fire separation was seamlessly incorporated into the design from the start. Internal property lines were strategically located between the old and the new buildings, while the Orangerie was utilized as a pedestrian walkway, allowing the historic Manor House openings to remain as existing. Modern life-safety systems were discretely embedded with smoke separation strategies using concealed shutters and deluge sprinklers on glass.



Presidential Suite, positioned above on the top floor, boasts the most expansive views in the hotel, enhanced by a glass-lined balcony and dual indoor-outdoor fireplaces that amplify the immersive experience.

# Timeless Connections

Each design move balances reverence for the estate's storied past with the clarity of contemporary expression, allowing historic and new elements to coexist in a seamless architectural conversation. From a light-filled architectural link to the façade materials and patterns, altogether this project sets a new benchmark for heritage properties.



## The Orangerie

Serving as an architectural bridge between the historic Manor House and the new hotel, the Orangerie was designed as a one-story enclosed walkway and lounge that gracefully linked past and present. Designed with a garden house aesthetic, it provided a light-filled counterpoint to the Manor House's darker, millwork-clad interiors, guiding guests through a carefully choreographed procession. The roofline echoed that of the adjacent Ice Cream Parlor to maintain architectural continuity, while exterior detail elements were preserved and integrated to showcase original features.

## Stucco Facade

The design of the new hotel and spa building incorporated a bespoke cementitious stucco finish inspired by the art deco style of 1920's California to complement the historic limestone of the Manor House. To meet both the aesthetic and sustainability goals, the team undertook an intensive materials research and testing process. This led to the use of mineral wool insulation, a more sustainable material, in place of standard rigid insulation behind the stucco system—yielding improved energy efficiency, thermal performance, and fire resistance. The assembly reduced thermal bridging by using stickpins in lieu of full aluminum framing to support the insulation and metal lath.

## Brick Facade

The spa's architecture is grounded by a custom brick façade that anchors the building to the site. Rather than mimic the red brick of the historic Manor House, the design team selected a long, slender brick in a monochromatic tone aligned with the owner's vision for a crisp, modern aesthetic. Its rich texture and subtle variation add depth and quiet visual interest, reinforcing the building's connection to the natural landscape without overpowering or competing with the Manor House. The detailing celebrates this relationship: the short ends of the bricks reveal the red clay body and are intentionally exposed at corners to frame the glass entry.



Every decision was made to honor the past while crafting a place that feels timeless, as if the hotel had always belonged to the estate. Material selections and detailing were also critical to echo historic patterns and rhythms. Details, such as limestone watertables, brick profiles, metal railings, awnings, and trellises added shadows and depth to the building with an understated elegance.



## A TRANSFORMATIVE INVESTMENT

The Pendry Natirar Hotel Spa and Resort simultaneously preserves cultural heritage, advances sustainable development, and stimulates long-term economic growth. Guests are drawn not only to its luxury accommodations and expansive spa, but also to its immersive agricultural and recreational offerings. From farm-to-table dining and hands-on culinary classes to outdoor adventure programming, Natirar has become a year-round destination where connections seamlessly intertwine.

Architecture:  
CosciaMoos Architecture

Interior Design:  
Design Agency

Owner:  
Natirar