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Photos by DAVE BURK PHOTOGRAPHY

ritz-carlton, chicago

Design firm: BAMO, San Francisco

The details: For the highly anticipated upgrade of the Ritz-Carlton, Chicago, San Francisco design firm BAMO “connected design elements of the building’s historic exterior and brought the inspiration and energy of Chicago inside,” explains principal Billy Quimby. In fact, the location is part of what makes the building so special: The 292-key hotel is situated on Water Tower Place beside the historic Chicago Water Tower—one of the only buildings to have survived the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. “The goal was to create a modern experience in the middle of the skyline that celebrates the skyscrapers, incredible location, and stunning views,” he adds.

The 12th-floor lobby is anchored by the *Flying Wave*, a wavelike sculpture crafted from four types of handblown glass in blue tones, reminiscent of Lake Michigan, while sleek, solar gray marble columns nod to the building’s Art Deco roots. Guiding the eyes up is the soaring

19-foot-tall American walnut-clad fins that reference the vertical forms of Chicago’s skyscrapers. “The fins delineate the bar and restaurant and frame circulation as well as the views, while the sculpture gently floats in the center below the repurposed skylight and becomes the focal point,” Quimby notes. Art plays a major role throughout the hotel with its permanent collection inspired by the neighboring Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, showcasing various mediums, from sculptures to lithographs.

Other new spaces include Italian concept Torali on the 12th floor, which is dressed in leather, light wood, blue upholstery, and brass and glass globe lights. The marble and copper bar, meanwhile, sits beneath a dramatic canopy of 49 individually suspended modernist fixtures. In fact, every moment was choreographed with precision, notes Quimby, “to celebrate modernism through many eras and Chicago’s rich history with forward-thinking design.”

