



TIFFANY & CO. WALL STREET

Steel and Glass Jewel Box

Above The S-shaped stair with its Starphire glass railings was tirelessly soldered and finished to achieve a seamless look.
Right The existing facade.

© Michael Weber

Looking at the well-preserved escutcheons and stone garlands of 37 Wall Street, it seems logical to assume that its interior has been equally cared for throughout its 101 years. But not so for Tiffany & Co., which opened its Wall Street branch in this location in October 2007. When the company first saw the former hall of the Trust Company of America in mid 2006, the 11,000-square-foot space was very visibly neglected. Tiffany retained the design studio Yabu Pushelberg to transform the grand room into more intimate shopping experiences on the main floor connecting to a narrow mezzanine via a new staircase, with a customer-service area in the basement level. To do so, the Toronto-based architects relied on a series of steel-and-glass installations that are as provocative to the modern consumer as they are sensitive to the historic setting.

Tiffany and Yabu Pushelberg were obliged to follow New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) guidelines in its repair and renovation. Philip Bottega, the company's vice president of real estate services worldwide, lists the restrictions: No installing lights in the ceiling, restore the marble, attach the staircase to the most historically accurate portion of the mezzanine, do not block the perimeter walls, preserve the views and cavernous feel of the 35-foot-tall space. Importantly, he adds, SHPO did not want to see the space made into a "bad copy of Beaux Arts." So while the existing bronze grillwork would be brought back to its former glory, any new intervention could not parrot the past but, rather, had to genuinely express the present.

Among the many solutions Yabu Pushelberg created for the multifaceted space are three salons—a row of Grade 304 stainless steel-clad frames that create a set of freestanding rooms—as the main response to preservation requisites. Besides meeting those criteria, the salons intimate the privacy and individual attention one would expect from a big-ticket purchase. They also include interior electrification conduits, so that each salon's merchandise can be illuminated properly; power also runs to the salons' tops, where a crown of uplights and security equipment brighten the ceiling and monitor activity.

Material choices prevent the salons from feeling like cubbies. Twelve-foot-high museum-grade Starphire glass partitions form the walls of these rooms, ensuring sight lines from back to front. Smaller wedges of optical glass, nicknamed "chiclets", occupy the space between the two larger layers; these additional visual layers make the vista seem longer than reality, in a hall-of-mirrors effect; indeed, a closer look will reveal that the chiclets are mirrored on one side, and acid-etched with platinum on the other. The glass panes and salon vitrines are framed in half-inch tubular steel and then sleeved in Grade 304 stainless steel with an orbital finish done by hand. While Tiffany uses stainless steel in all of its stores, this was the first time they employed an orbital finish. "Stainless is pretty much part of our DNA," says Bottega. "It is something that we use in all of our showcases around the world. [Here] it was just used in a very different way."

Different indeed. James Galvin, director





of operations of ACC Construction, explains that the salons represent an ostensible first in fabrication: Each glass partition is, in fact, a freestanding, six-sided volume delicately integrated with the tubular-and-stainless-steel structure, meaning that the glass enclosure could have been ruined by condensation. Because the Wall Street location had no large-scale staging area, the glass assembly was completed in the shop in Canada and pumped and filtered to zero humidity before being welded and glued to its steel cladding. Even the crating process was uniquely engineered, with tilt meters monitoring the wellbeing of each piece during shipping and unloading.

Two other project elements also highlight the unexpected, yet painstakingly executed combinations of Tiffany's signature orbital-finish stainless steel with another material. An installation designed by Ingo Maurer and comprising 20,000 Swarovski crystals dangling from tubular- and mesh-steel frames is suspended above the entry sequence, guiding shoppers' eyes to the L-shaped

mezzanine that hugs the rear of the store. Additionally, to travel to that mezzanine, shoppers ascend a dramatic staircase in which thin slabs of Vermont stone treads and reinforced glass sandwich a one-inch-thick steel frame. The treads are sided by S-shaped stringers, each of which include three pieces of roll-formed steel that, Galvin explains, are tirelessly soldered and finished into seamlessness. The stringers are also topped with Starphire glass railings. Galvin notes, too, that due to the short timeframe, the stair treads were made directly from templates. In fact, the team had to skip prototyping for all components of the Tiffany Wall Street store.

Reflecting an ensemble of LED, halogen, and fluorescent lights, the salons, crystal-bedecked pendants, and sinuous staircase make for an almost dizzying, glittering experience. It's not unlike swimming in an oversize jewel box filled with Tiffany baubles, an effect that never would have been possible without the right materials and craftsmanship. ■

Above: © Michael Weber; below: © Yabu Pushelberg



Above and above facing
The modern steel and glass elements of the store respectfully defer to the building's landmarked Beaux Arts detailing.
Below and below facing
Ironworkers had to take extra care during installation not to damage the existing interior.



Above: © Tiffany & Co.; below: © Yabu Pushelberg

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Owner: **Tiffany & Co.**, New York, NY
 Architect: **Yabu Pushelberg**, Toronto, Canada
 Structural Engineer: **EBM**, New York, NY
 Mechanical Engineer: **Chetrit Consulting Engineers**, New York, NY
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