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EXCLUSIVES

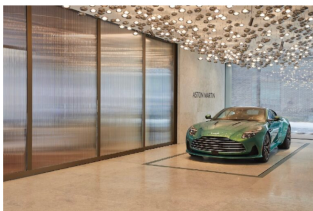
# Where 'the car is the star'

By Georgette Gouveia - August 27, 2023



When Alexander Zilberman was in high school in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, he fell in love with architecture.

"The thing that sold me was a teacher who showed me a photograph of the Kaufmann House by Richard Neutra," Zilberman, architect and principal of Alexander Zilberman Architecture, P.C. (AZA), said of the mid-century modern Palm Springs home built in 1946 for Pittsburgh department store owner Edgar J. Kaufmann Sr. "I looked at it and said, 'I want to do that.'"



The Aston Martin DB12 sits beneath a 2,100-bulb chandelier spanning 131 feet.

"That" would be luxury architecture. Zilberman – who came to suburban Philadelphia from the former Soviet Union when he was 9 – has created flagship and rollout works for luxe brands around the world, from new Theory stores on Madison Avenue, in SoHo and at Palm Beach Gardens in Florida to Helmut Lang in Atlanta, Victoria's Secret in Savannah, Georgia, and Jimmy Choo in Newport Beach, California.

Other recent works include storefront prototypes and a global rollout for Michael Kors; a new executive lounge for Equinox; a mixed-use commercial and residential building in Philadelphia, where Zilberman attended Temple University's Tyler School of Art and Architecture; and new stores in airports and cruise ships globally. Manhattan-based AZA is also noted for hospitality works, including Soho House, as well as workplaces, headquarters offices and select residential works.

But Zilberman's design baby of the moment is the new Q New York, the first flagship of Aston Martin Lagonda, the luxe British car manufacturer beloved by King Charles III and James Bond alike. (Celebrating its 110th anniversary, Aston Martin merged with Lagonda in 1947 when both were purchased by British industrialist David Brown. The company is listed on the London Stock Exchange as Aston Martin Lagonda Global Holdings plc.)



The new Aston Martin flagship – Q New York, a first for the luxe British car manufacturer – is designed to show off the classic sports brand and emphasize the cars as the stars. It

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every day, the experience is enhanced by the inclusion of a prototype of the new DB12 in Iridescent Emerald, a Specification Room that has lounge seating with a fireplace, a limestone dining room spec table, a walnut library sample wall and a massive, state-of-the-art video display as a backdrop.

While Queen Elizabeth II presented her son Charles, the present king, with a DB6 Mk2 Vantage Volante in Seychelles blue on his 21st birthday – sparking his lifelong love affair with the brand – it’s probably best-known for an association with Bond, James Bond that began the moment Sean Connery climbed into a DB5 in the 1964 film “Goldfinger.”

A sleek, silvery successor – the DB5 stunt car from the 2021 James Bond film “No Time to Die” – is ensconced in the 5,000-square-foot showroom at 450 Park Ave. at 57th Street in Manhattan where over coffee with Zilberman and us, General Manager Lisa F. Anastas detailed why Aston Martin is about a lot more than 007. Anastas – who hails from Connecticut, where she sold Aston Martins and other luxury vehicles at Miller Motorcars in Greenwich – described the Aston Martin as both a gentlerson’s sports car and a vehicle for the T-shirt and jeans-clad pure car enthusiast.

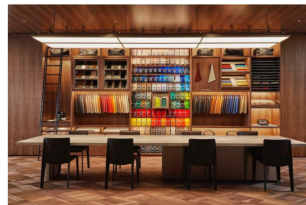
Or at least the gentlerson and pure car enthusiast who has \$200,000 to \$450,000 for a sports car or GT (grand tourer); or \$1 million to \$3 million for special supercars and high performance hypercars, all custom-made with more than three million options. An Aston Martin is purposeful, bespoke and unique, added Anastas, who has 26 years in the luxury car business and lives in New Rochelle.

So how do you capture the classy, high-flying duality of the brand? By redoubling its duality with a design that marries public spaces with interior ones, accessibility with intimacy and modernism with traditionalism in a place where, Zilberman has said, “the car is the star.”

In the former gallery of the Phillips auction house, which has moved to 432 Park Ave., the Aston Martin showroom is designed to engage the pedestrians and the thoroughfare first, he said, with a 22-foot-by-11-foot “Champagne Frame,” one of the largest single panes of glass ever installed in a New York City building, allowing passers-by to gaze at a prototype of the new DB12 in Iridescent Emerald and the DBX707 with Q Satin Jet Black exterior. They’re illumined like sculptures by a 2,100-bulb chandelier spanning 131 feet. On the day of our visit, those passers-by included a gaggle of teenage boys and, in a poignant moment, a man who stopped at the door to ask about the cars, though he prefaced his inquiry by saying he knew he could never afford them.

Zilberman noted that the creamy honed Grigio Alpi limestone used in the display flooring – the same material championed by the Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio – appears in the long dining room spec table that sits between the library sample wall and a living room with a fireplace and bookshelves containing photos of Aston Martin devotees James Bond and (then) Prince Charles. The shelving is made of European quarter-sawn walnut. Massive sliding glass doors connect the sitting areas to the display area or seal it off, giving you the sense of being in a cozy British estate, albeit one with a 35-foot by 10-foot LED wall that offers an ultra-high definition, 360-degree view of any Aston Martin in life size. The interactive screen allows clients to create the car of their dreams.

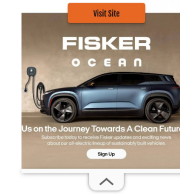
A live video link from Manhattan to Aston Martin’s studio in Gaydon, England, also enables clients to communicate with designers and the Q by Aston Martin team. The Q stands for quartermaster, Anastas said, referring to a commissioned supply officer in the British Army and Royal Marines but also evoking Q, the tech-whiz quartermaster in the James Bond films. There’s also a Formula One simulator that reminds you of Aston Martin’s racing roots embodied today in part by Lance Stroll, son of Lawrence Stroll, who became executive chairman of Aston Martin Lagonda in 2020. It was a move, along with new investment, that led to Aston Martin’s return to the winner’s circle of motorsports with the Aston Martin Aramco Cognizant Formula One Team.



Alexander Zilberman, architect and principal of Alexander Zilberman Architecture, P.C. (AZA) in Manhattan, who designed the new Q New York, Aston Martin’s first flagship, on Park Avenue and 57th Street. Courtesy Alexander Zilberman Architecture, P.C. (AZA)

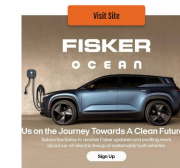
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Along with racing success, there has been significant growth for the Q by Aston Martin division with a record number of Aston Martin units sold with bespoke touches and elements in 2022, representing a 51% year-on-year increase. The Americas is the fastest growing region for Q by Aston Martin, with 92% year-on-year growth in 2022.

Hence, the location of the first flagship in New York City with design by Zilberman, who said he came to the Big Apple, establishing his firm of 11 members there in 2011, because he wanted to strive among the best.

Clearly, Aston Martin thinks it's the place to be, too. As Lawrence Stroll said in a statement: "The opening of our first flagship Q location, in our largest commercial market, is the latest distinct expression of Aston Martin's shift to an ultra-luxury brand. It demonstrates our ambition to drive global growth and create elevated customer experiences to match our owners' passion for Aston Martin.

"We recognize the growing trend of personalization across the luxury goods segment and see huge value in investing in our customer experience to create the best specification experiences available anywhere in the world. With a 92% increase in Q by Aston Martin take-up in the Americas last year, this is the perfect time and the perfect place for us to open our very first global flagship location."

**For more on Q New York [click here](#). And for more on Alexander Zilberman Architecture, P.C., [click here](#).**

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