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HOSPITALITY EXPERIENCE & DESIGN



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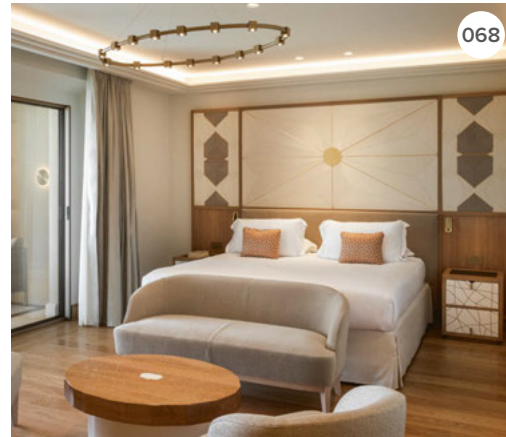
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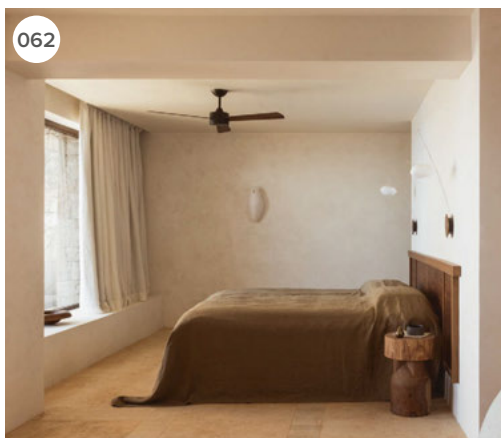
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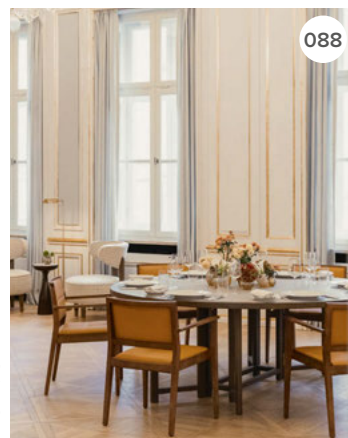
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The Hoxton

VIENNA

Austria's former Chamber of Commerce gets a Mid-Century-inspired revamp courtesy of BWM Designers & Architects and AIME Studios.

Words: Matt Turner
Photography: © Julius Hirtzberger

If you were looking for an early prototype of the creative teams that drive many modern hospitality developments, you could do worse than look at the Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshop) of turn-of-the-century Austria. Founded by architect and designer Josef Hoffmann, painter and graphic artist Koloman Moser, and their entrepreneurial patron Fritz Waerndorfer, its cross-discipline approach paved the way for the Bauhaus and Art Deco movements that followed.

Their work has been a significant influence on The Hoxton Vienna, a striking and successful addition to the portfolio of Ennismore's fast-growing lifestyle brand, which has waltzed its way into the Austrian capital's hospitality landscape with a harmonious symphony of architecture, interiors, branding, art, food and fashion. Along with Ennismore stablemates 25hours and SO/, it's a property that brings a more vibrant edge to the city's somewhat conservative hotel scene.

The Hoxton Vienna is housed in the former

headquarters of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce – a listed Modernist structure originally designed by early 20th-century architect Carl Appel. Ennismore's in-house creative team AIME Studios has worked closely with Austrian practice BWM Designers & Architects to convert it into a hotel, retaining and replicating existing elements of the austere post-war building where possible.

"We are committed to preserving the architecture of the post-war period for future generations, and we took a particularly sustainable approach with this project. We converted the existing structure from an office building into a hotel without having to create a huge amount of additional space," says Markus Kaplan, Partner at BWM. "We were able to create 196 guestrooms while leaving a really low ecological footprint."

Its original stone façade has been recreated in Cipollino marble, with sculptural elements such as the portico and entrance portals restored to their original state, right down to



Food and beverage outlets explore Mid-Century era aesthetics from around the globe

the door handles. Ditto the terrazzo flooring in the expansive, double-height lobby, with its imposing, fluted aluminium-clad columns and black rubber stair-rails. “Our motto has always been to expand the city, meaning to understand the buildings and things that are already there rather than ignore them,” adds Kaplan. “This project has brought the starkness and austerity of post-war architecture to contemporary building culture. We’ve restored the façade to its former glory and given the top floor back its original clarity by removing additions from the 1980s.”

For the interiors, AIME Studios has taken its cue from 1950s architecture, with a multi-layered approach that mixes Mid-Century Austrian design with rich textures, geometric shapes and bold tiling. In the lobby, original travertine-clad walls and lush greenery provide an appropriate backdrop to ruby red sofas, vintage 1950s-inspired armchairs, rugs and Mid-Century lighting.

Consultants Sterling Art have curated artwork throughout the public spaces and guestrooms. A bespoke abstract botanical piece by Austrian artist, Rini Spiel, hangs proudly over the lobby. An oil painting of

the iconic Konzerthaus façade by local artist, Rudolf Fitz, is another noteworthy piece.

F&B outlets and events spaces explore various aesthetics from different geographical locations in the Mid-Century era. Bouvier, tucked off to the right of the lobby, is an all-day modern bistro brought to life by Ennismore’s Carte Blanche. Its menu offers a Manhattanite take on European classics, created in partnership with Jeremiah Stone and Fabián von Hauske Valtierra, the duo behind New York’s Wildair. Design features include a chequerboard terrazzo floor, deep-red wall panelling, 1950s-inspired custom seating and retro advertising posters harking back to Mad Men-era Madison Avenue. A 70-cover terrace with fringed parasols, tiled tabletops and greenery will come into its own in spring and summer.

Subterranean speakeasy Salon Paradise is an underground cocktail bar influenced by the Beat Generation counterculture of the 1950s, and their jazz club hangouts. A vintage 1920s Hoffmann Konzertklavier piano takes centre stage alongside a burl-timber bar, around which are aged leather banquettes, textured fabrics and handwritten postcards





dating to the Prohibition era. Carte Blanche worked with Rory Shepherd of Paris' Little Red Door for a drinks list, with libations named after characters in Jack Kerouac's seminal beatnik novel *On The Road*: Sal Paradise (tangerine sorbet, tartaric acid and Sekt sparkling wine), the dessert-like Big Slim (peanut butter cognac, banana and cream) or the Old Bull take on an Old-Fashioned (white rye, white vermouth, vanilla and pine).

Up at rooftop bar Cayo Coco, it is Cuba not Kerouac that has driven the concept, with tropical interiors of rattan furniture, bright blue ceramic tiled columns and bold artworks that hark back to the golden age of travel in Havana. Bar snacks such as crispy coconut shrimp and chicharrones offer an alternative to the schnitzel and strudel that dominate most Viennese menus. The rooftop has seen the building restored to its initial state as envisioned by Carl Appel. An extension from the 1980s has been removed and the original roofline from the time of construction reinstated to create

a new rooftop bar, outdoor terrace and pool, which offer an almost 360-degree panoramic view over the city.

The Hoxton Vienna's event spaces also mark a new direction for the brand. The Auditorium is the first theatre-style venue in the portfolio. Fashioned from an existing civic space, it has tiered cinema-style balcony seating, striped walls, electric blue drapes, a large and flexible floor space, plus its own dedicated street entrance and two fully-stocked bars. Hovering above the roof of the auditorium is a new, lightweight single-storey structure, with an additional six rooms housing Hoxton's signature Apartment concept, set around an open pantry with a kitchen that can switch to a bar in the evening. The design references the traditional Viennese Gasthaus, with its geometric tiling, clashing patterns, warm timber panelling and mohair upholstered chairs – subtle odes to the location's traditions within a property that pushes boundaries amidst the city's usual hospitality offer.



EXPRESS CHECK-OUT

Owner: KNSA Hospitality

Operator: Ennismore

Architecture:

BWM Designers & Architects

Interior Design: AIME Studios,

Carte Blanche

Art Consultant: Sterling Art

Landscaping: Weidlflein

Main Contractor: JP Immobilien

Project Manager:

Turner & Townsend

www.thehoxton.com



View the full gallery on

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