

WORDS BY

JESSICA-CHRISTIN HAMETNER

IMAGES BY

FRANCISCO NOGUEIRA

PROJECT TYPE

LEISURE

Warm welcome

Cosy up in fur-upholstered chairs at Oslo's latest boutique hotel opening Amerikalinjen

With its striking fjords and spectacular landscapes, Norway is the quintessence of natural beauty. Beyond the northern lights, breathtaking scenery and midnight sun, however, this Nordic nation is home to a quality that can't be captured in a photograph or put into words: *kos*, the small joys that make us feel safe and content.

One place to experience Norway's cosiness is at Oslo's Amerikalinjen hotel, which recently flung open its doors and showcased 122 rooms alongside an array of chic in-house eateries open to visitors and locals alike.

Housed within the 20th century headquarters of the former cruise ship company Norwegian America Line, the new boutique opening stands at a prime position on Jernbanetorget Square, where visitors are just a short ride away from the bustling metropolis and Bjørvika, the city's up-and-coming neighbourhood home to the newly opened Munch Museum.

The lively location was a perfect fit for the hotel, but is also reflective of its story, as explained by owner of Nordic Hotels & Resorts Petter Stordalen. "This special build- ☺



→ Fluffy chairs by Eikund provide a place to relax in the Amerikalinjen lobby



Tom Haga

ing is so full of history,” says Stordalen. “What interested us most were the untold stories of all the people – true explorers – that left their families and friends behind when they went to America. We wanted to create a hotel that tells this story of ‘people in motion’.”

Originally designed by prolific Norwegian architects Andreas Bjercke and Georg Eliassen in 1919, Amerikalinjen received its timely makeover exactly a century later. Honouring the building’s heritage, local architecture firm Kritt Arkitekter was tasked with completing the restoration, which strikes a fine and harmonious balance between old and new.

Throughout the hotel, vaulted ceilings and ornamental mouldings lend the interiors – conceived by Helsinki-based studio

Puroplan – a majestic grandeur and timeless simplicity, echoing a maritime past.

Modern and sophisticated, the rooms are finished using gleaming light elements such as smoked-glass mirrored walls that double as modern canvases for the collection of framed maps, photographs and old dining menus from the ships, uncovered during the building process and curated by Oslo-based photographer Magne Risnes.

“Inspiration for a project like

“There is the challenge to balance the exterior with a light, airy and fresh interior”

this comes from multitude of sources,” explains interior architect Katri Laesvuori of Puroplan. “Of course there is this beautiful building with historical features, but there is also the challenge to balance the relatively heavy and imposing exterior of the building with a light, airy and fresh interior.”

To achieve this, Puroplan used obstacles as a source of inspiration. The team punctuated interiors with thoughtfully chosen reproductions of iconic mid-century classics from the 1950s and 60s: Birger Dahl’s modernist Birdy Lamp (now revived by local firm Northern) and thoughtfully crafted furniture pieces such as Veng, an armchair designed by Torbjørn Bekken, as well as the aptly named Fluffy chair, blanketed in long-haired Norwegian ©

↑ Smoked-glass mirrored walls create light and space

↓ The former cruise ship building occupies a lively urban location in central Oslo



→ Eikund supplied Veng armchairs, designed in 1960 by Torbjørn Bekken, to the hotel

→ Fredrik A. Kayser's 1954 Fluffy Chair has been reissued for the modern market



Spælsau, recall an era gone by.

The latter, which was originally conceived by Fredrik A. Kayser in 1954, is characterised by its ultra-soft upholstery in Norwegian sheepskin and has been given a new lease of life to coincide with the opening of the hotel, which showcases the piece in its foyer.

Reproduced by hip Norwegian firm Eikund, which is eager to put the country's forgotten mid-century furniture classics firmly back on the design map, its design approach in many ways mirrors Amerikalinjen's aim to restore, but never destroy. "In a sense, we have both gone through the same process of reviving," says co-founder Morten Hippe. "Instead of demolishing this incredible



building, it's been saved for the future. We follow the same line of thinking."

As past and present merge, Amerikalinjen stands as Oslo's 21st century landmark, honouring local heritage and telling the story of its people.

"For the team behind Amerikalinjen, it's a full circle moment: just like America was called the land of opportunity, today Norway has been given the same title; people are coming here full of the hopes, dreams and aspirations that we had when we left. Amerikalinjen is a hotel not just for guests, but for everyone," comments Stordalen.

With top-notch looks and flop-down homeliness, Amerikalinjen knows that home is where the heart is. ■