

Amerikalinjen opens inside historic HQ of Norwegian America Line



Oslo, Norway, has a new hotel in a historic building. The Amerikalinjen hotel was built inside the headquarters of the former cruise ship company, Norwegian America Line, which was designed by Norwegian architects Andreas Bjercke and Georg Eliassen in 1919.

The grand Neo-Baroque building was spruced up and polished by local firm Kritt Architects, which used the building's decorative maritime trimmings, soaring vaulted ceilings, ornamental moldings and grand staircases.

The property has 122 rooms and suites, and public spaces that include four restaurants and bars and Vista - The Heritage Room, a library and social space.

The rooms of the property are defined by their high ceilings and paned windows, which either look out onto Jernbanetorget Square and the surrounding neighborhood, the fjords, or an internal courtyard. The suites—the Norwegian America Line's former boardrooms—still have the original ornate ceilings. Helsinki-based studio, Puroplan, created a sense of space by separating the bathroom with a decorative white opaque glass panel and adding a smoked-glass mirrored wall behind the bed.

These details also create a modern canvas for the collection of framed maps, photographs and old dining menus from the ships—uncovered during the building process—and for the furnishings, most of which are reproductions of original mid-century classic, like Veng, an armchair designed by Torbjørn Bekken in 1960; Briger Dahl's Birdie table lamp (1952); and pendant lamps by age-old Norwegian glassblowing company, Hadeland, who also provided the ship's original glassware.

There are public spaces at the ground floor and basement. With its own curb-side entrance, Atlas is an all-day brasserie; and at the center of the building, is a plant-filled indoor space named Haven, which was built on a former open-air courtyard. Meanwhile, Pier 42 has velvet furnishings, parquet flooring and concealed lighting; and Gustav is an intimate basement club inspired by New York's jazz scene and the city's speakeasy bars.

Other key elements include: a uniform collection called "In Motion" by Oslo-based fashion brand Holzweiler; lighting fixtures and special-occasion champagne glasses (reproductions of the ships' originals) by glassblowing company Hadeland; revived Norwegian mid-century furniture and lighting classics from companies Eikund and Northern; and bathroom amenities from local cosmetics brand Sprekenhus.

Meanwhile, an art collection, curated by Sune Nordgren, takes its cues from America, with offerings including works by American figurative painter Alex Katz, former street artist Shepard Fairey, and a two-and-a-half-meter tall sculpture, called Towers, by British artist Julian Opie.

Amerikalinjen is located on Jernbanetorget Square, adjacent to the Central Station in downtown Oslo, and near the Bjørnvika neighborhood where the new Munch Museum and the newly renovated flagship Deichman public library are soon to open.