

L I N D +  
A L M O N D

## **Hotel Sanders, Copenhagen – Press Questions**

**Who owns the property and what were their requirements?**

Our client Alexander Kølpin is the owner of the hotel. His initial brief was simple yet challenging... he wanted to create the best hotel in Copenhagen. As we spoke further with him the many layers of ambition unravelled however, and the uniqueness of the project became evident.

One of the key intentions was to bring an entirely new experience to the city. This was to be expressed in the service as much as in the design, with Alexander aiming to introduce service style reminiscent of a members club, a home from home for visitors and locals alike.

**Did these change as the project progressed? Were there any surprises or unexpected design hurdles?**

The concept for the hotel has been at the forefront throughout, at times uncompromisingly. The project is refreshing in that its concept has not been diluted through the build, and will hopefully remain prominent as the first guests arrive.

As with all projects we've faced huge challenges along the way. The age of the building, in fact the three buildings which have been amalgamated into one over the years threw up many a surprise.

One part of the design which caused a number of headaches was in the coordination and installation of the many fixtures and fittings which weren't typical of or compatible with local systems. Thankfully the tradesmen and suppliers we worked with were hugely accommodating and worked tirelessly to realise the design.

**What was the design aesthetic? How did that manifest in the design and materials used?**

It's very difficult to pinpoint the Sanders aesthetic as it encompasses so many things. It is homely yet refined.

Since Alexander was clear in his wish that the hotel wouldn't feel 'typically Danish', we brought in many worldly references from near and far, a freedom a hotel project allows. The hotel is certainly not *Scandi* in style, not minimal or whitewashed. We used rattan and bamboo to create a colonial edge, the golden age of travel and exploration of new places and new cultures. There is a french chicness, a sexyness in the red velvets of the bar. There's also a good dose of English eccentricity and flamboyance in the printed fabrics and furnishings.

Whilst drawing on inspiration from outside of Denmark, we felt a great responsibility in its location. To create such a flagship hotel in the heart of a capital city so renowned for its design influence on the world, we had to ground the hotel in its context. It could not be alien to Copenhagen.

Our approach was to reference Danish mid-modern design in the furnishings of the guest rooms, which are generally calmer and quieter than the public areas. We like to think of the hotel as a Danish home, one belonging to someone who has travelled the world.

**What influenced the colour palette? Which aspects of the spaces best reflect this influence?**

Although there are many colours and tones through the hotel, the intention was that they should remain subtle and understated. The spaces are generally earthy in their colours, even chalky. We have aimed for something timeless, and so have avoided the use of trend driven colours, option to embrace the natural tones of the timbers and stones as much as possible.

In most of the public areas the colour is found in the likes of the rich red velvet curtains (Tata), the dark green leathers (Sanders Kitchen) and the golden velvets of the furnishings (Reception area).

The guest rooms are where we make a little more of a feature of the colour by introducing a painted dado band around the base of the walls. We used three muted tones in the end, a red, a green and a blue. The thinking behind this was to help create a differing experience for guests on each visit. We've applied the colours across the room typologies in such a way that no two rooms are exactly the same.

**Explain the layout of the property. How were materials used to create a sense of continuity between the different spaces and restaurant?**

Sanders is rather untypical as a hotel, and this is particularly evident in its layout. It presents an open, inviting face to the street, with three main entrance points.

The entrance in the centre of the facade will be that most used by residents, taking them to the reception lounge. To the left is a street entrance to Sanders Kitchen, and to the right is a street entrance to Tata bar. Both are internally accessible from the hotel lounge.

The intention was always to create a bit of a melting pot of personalities, to encourage performers from the nearby Royal Theatre to mingle with guests in the cocktail bar, and for local Copenhageners to share a morning coffee as international visitors eat breakfast in Sanders Kitchen. The way the hotel engages the street very much allows for this kind of interaction.

The hotel is also unusual in that there is no formal dining space. Alexander was very keen to create a relaxed, members club-like atmosphere where guests felt comfortable eating almost anywhere. Room service will always be available, but otherwise guests may dine in one of the other five public areas of the hotel...

**Sanders Kitchen** – With a fresh, deli-like feel, Sanders Kitchen will serve coffee and breakfast to residents and locals alike. It's open throughout the day acting as an up-market cafe, and will be the hub for the hotel's special food evening events.

**The Lounge** – The reception area, in the heart of the hotel, has an eclectic mix of comfortable sofas and armchairs. It's the space to really relax in a homely, cosy environment.

**Tata** – The cocktail bar is inspired by the quintessential theatre bar, with rich red velvets, warm timber and rattans. It's open throughout the day but really comes to life on an evening. It's a sexy, moody, sultry space with a stylish buzz.

**The Courtyard** – Open whenever it's not too cold, the covered courtyard is the hotel's romantic outdoor area. It's rustic, Parisian decor offers a place for food and drinks amongst ivy, as well as plenty of blankets and a roaring fire.

The Orangery – The rooftop conservatory is a gem at the very top of the building, a rare space for both residents and the public amongst Copenhagen’s rooftops. This peaceful spot offers calm oasis away from the busy city, and has plenty of colonial-inspired bamboo and exotic plants.

What other materials were used throughout to accomplish your goals? Talk specifics: furnishings, lighting, seating, etc.

The material palette we choose is very much classic in tone, lots of stained timber, honed marbles, velvet and rattan. The hotel has a distinctive *old world* feel, and we have not attempted to reinvent the wheel with the finishes we used.

The aim was to create an institution, something which felt embedded in its city yet worldly, something intriguing yet belonging. Whereas the woodwork is very much of Denmark, the stones and marbles bring little hints of distant lands into the mix. There is exotic marble from Italy, Portugal and Greece, slate from the British Lake District and Croatian limestone.

Lighting is very precious to us as designers, and was specially relevant given Copenhagen’s long, dark winters. Denmark generally does lighting very well, even the average pubs give a beautifully warm, inviting glow. The key as always not to over-illuminate, so as not to kill an atmosphere, and atmosphere is so crucial with Sanders.

We made a conscious effort not to use recognisable feature lighting. The spaces are very layered and detailed, but we focussed on creating balance so they didn’t feel overwhelming. The aim is that one’s eye is not drawn to a particular fixture or material, but rather takes in the whole the atmosphere of each space.

The one piece which breaks the rule is the spectacular 1940’s vintage chandelier which hangs above the reception desk. Designed by iconic architect Carlo Scarpa, it was originally one of 3 housed in a Zurich bank. Over 300 beautiful glass prisms, handmade by Venini, create a wonderfully soft glow to greet guests as they arrive.

**What were the structural challenges in this design, and how did the team overcome them?**

Working with old buildings is a familiar challenge, but in the case of Sanders we needed to work with what was initially three individual buildings. One of our very first tasks was in vastly reducing the number of guestrooms, replacing cramped 3\* spaces with ones more fitting of a luxury boutique hotel.

This meant in some cases amalgamating two rooms into one, whilst spanning between two buildings. We had a big challenge in that the floor levels in the separate buildings frequently misaligned.

Much of this historic part of Copenhagen is built on land reclaimed from the sea. As such there was initially a great deal of structural reinforcement works to the foundations of the building, to prevent it sinking under its own weight.

**What is the architectural or design highlight in your opinion?**

Richy - for me Tata is a real centrepiece, and I'm particularly fond of the concept behind the design. As a take on a theatre bar, Tata references Alexander's past life as a ballet dancer. It aims to attract artists and creatives, both local and foreign, to mingle as they once did decades ago in the same space.

Pernille - I must say the 5th floor Orangery. Maybe it's due to my own 'exotic' background (being half Thai). Iconic architect Arne Jacobsen designed the Charlottenborg chair and Belladonna sofa, both featured in this space, embracing foreign materials in their use of bamboo. This along with tropical printed fabrics, lush plants and the indoor/outdoor connection, takes me back to my childhood home. Further this destination will be very unique to Copenhagen, as no commercial venue similar to this exists at the moment.

**Were there any other highlights or important features you'd like to mention?**

We were offered a unique opportunity to influence almost every element of the design, allowing us to help create a consistent aesthetic, not only in the interiors, but in the branding, the stationary, the uniforms and even the scent of Sanders.

We worked closely with Alexander to help him defining and then create his vision, and we are incredibly grateful to have been allowed so much freedom and trust to create.

**Describe your design aesthetic. Your spaces are smart, elegant and layered – they feel very lived in – how do you create this aesthetic?**

We aim to create spaces which are refined and timeless with an understated, worldly eclecticism. Spaces which are contemporary yet nostalgic. We focus on layered detailing with a carefully curated mix of vintage and bespoke furnishings.

We intentionally avoid specifying furnishings and decor which are overly matching, more so each piece has its own distinctive character which contributes to the overall atmosphere of the space. When designing this way the space never really feels new, rather that it has been assembled over many years.

**What did you want to achieve at Hotel Sanders? What was your brief?**

Our initial brief was simple yet challenging... our client wanted to create the best hotel in Copenhagen, and one of the best boutique hotels in Europe. As we spoke further with him the many layers of ambition unravelled however, and the uniqueness of the project became evident. The aim was to create more than a hotel, it was to create an institution, a way of living.

One of the key intentions was to bring an entirely new experience to the city. This was to be expressed in the service as much as in the design, with an aim to introduce a service style reminiscent of a members club, a home from home for visitors and locals alike.

**What was your remit there – were you involved in spatial planning or was it more the decoration?**

We were initially engaged to undertake the full interior design, but as the project evolved so did our scope. In the end we also undertook the design of all bespoke furnishings (including some manufacturing), the sourcing and procurement of both new and vintage items, the styling and even the branding and website. So very much a holistic approach!

**How did the project come about?**

The project started with a rather unexpected phone call. Unbeknown to Pernille, our client Alexander had spotted her LinkedIn profile and, having noticed both her background in hospitality design and Danish surname, had gone about tracking down an introduction amongst Copenhagen's tightly-knit design scene.

Picking up her phone on an August Monday morning, Pernille was bombarded with Alexander's characteristic energy, charm and enthusiasm, as he explained his grand plans for the hotel he was about to buy.

The conversation turned to how Alexander foresaw Pernille's potential involvement in the project. He was deeply interested in her experience in London's high-end residential and luxury hospitality design market, and although still a little surprised, Pernille was very eager to discuss how she could help. After an exchange of key hotel references and a plethora of images, Alexander and Pernille agreed that their visions aligned, and Alexander provided a more thorough scope of works.

Pernille knew she had a potentially once in a lifetime project offered to her, and with a mixture of excitement and nervousness called former colleague Richy for his thoughts. As Pernille explained the project to Richy, both the scale and the opportunity became increasingly more apparent, and in that same moment she asked Richy if he would join her on what would become an incredible career adventure. With our combined background in architecture, interiors and furniture design we felt well equipped and more confident as a duo to take on the exciting challenge of the project.

**Did you closely collaborate with the owner Alexander Kølpin? How did his background as a ballet dancer inform the design? It has a rather theatrical feel.**

Alexander was very involved throughout the process. This was an incredibly personal project for him, he put his heart, his name and his money on the line to create it! The hotel was to represent an ideology, a way of living and a level of service he has come to demand after many years spent travelling the world as a renowned dancer.

Initially, our challenge was to listen to Alexander's great many inspirations and to curate them into a singular, coherent direction to help define the Sanders brand. The theatrical reference is naturally strong, as is the idea of performance. This hotel is about a holistic experience, about stepping into another world for a short time, a world which is both familiar and enchanting. The spaces are the theatre and the staff are the performers. It is not all that different from a visit to the ballet.

**It doesn't quite fit the pared-back white minimalism that we often associate with Scandinavia – it's a lot more earthy and warm with rich colours. How come?**

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**Where did you source the pieces from? I understand that many of the pieces are bespoke – can you describe the process of commissioning and specifying? Were any pieces especially difficult to create?**

We filled the hotel with a real mix of vintage and bespoke. For the vintage, we sourced mostly from the UK and Denmark, with a few items sourced online. When working from our Shoreditch studio we would regularly wander the local vintage shops on our lunch break, and likewise when in Copenhagen we became very familiar with a handful of excellent sellers of Danish design classics.

For the bespoke items we worked with a handful of trusted manufacturers. It was important that we chose makers who were easily accessible as we knew there'd be many discussions over the finer details and finishes. All of the timber and rattan bedroom furniture pieces, along with much of the joinery in the public areas was made by a Danish manufacturer (Jönsson Inventar), and the upholstered items were done by a London manufacturer (Alter London). Richy also runs a small furniture design and manufacturing studio in the North East (Novocastrian), which came in useful for items in metal and stone, such as the bedroom mirrors, marble side tables and slate tables in the cocktail bar, as well as for some bespoke architectural metalwork.

Many of the pieces we developed required much refinement until we were happy with them, but one of the biggest challenges was the modular brass mirror we made to hang above the fireplace in the bar at Tata (picture attached). We made this in our workshop in the North East and it very much pushed the abilities of our craftsmen and suppliers to the limit!

**You're obviously interested in materials and how they relate to one another – can you say more about this in the context of Hotel Sanders? You've mixed wood, marble, wicker etc?**

Materials are essentially important to us, they are after all what every space is built from. We are interested not just in their appearance but in their texture, their feel, what they say, their resonance.

At Sanders, the aim was to pull in references from all over the world. Designing a hotel is actually quite a freeing process, as taking reference from a seemingly distant culture can make sense in the context of travel. I think that the use of timber very much grounds the hotel in its Danish context. The bamboo rattan acts as a kind of bridge between cultures (as does the concept of a hotel), being used commonly in

Danish mid-modern design, but also in far-Eastern colonial furniture designs, allowing us to drift into a more exotic aesthetic in places without the spaces feeling disjointed.

The luxurious marbles, glass and brass then punctuate all the wood and rattan, creating a sharpness the hint of glamour you might expect from a flagship hotel.

**How important are the tiny details for you?**

We are utterly obsessed with the tiny details, and how they come together to create the whole. They are our building blocks for every project.

**What excites you most – the prospect of an architecturally interesting space or a blank canvas that you can decorate?**

I think we'd always like to start with something.. We are both contextualists so very much seek out inspiration for our projects from its surroundings. It's incredibly important to us that our projects feel that they belong in their location, that they interact with and enhance their context.

Overall it must feel comfortable, by that I don't mean physically comfortable, but the project must be comfortable in itself. It mustn't scream for attention, it must do what it does incredibly well, and be content with that.

A blank site can be terrifying, but with Sanders this was pretty much the case internally. Other than the beautiful facade, there were no real period features internally which we could retain, and so we had to create the character from scratch. That said, it's incredibly exciting to walk into an unloved but magnificent period building with a brief to rejuvenate it into the backdrop of a new project.

**You have worked on projects with big players, such as Soho House, Tom Dixon and Terence Conran, how was this project different or similar? Do you think there is something about your philosophy as a design studio that lends itself to creating hotels?**

The first thing to say is that we are a far, far smaller studio than the likes of those mentioned above. For the vast majority of the Sanders project it was only the two of us. We ate, drank and slept Sanders, 24/7. We did everything. We knew this would be the case from the start and were willing to allow this project to be the main focus of our lives for its duration, such was the opportunity it presented.

I think generally we are very well suited to hotels. Our previous experience in design was heavily hospitality based, but our personal design sensibility plays a big part in why it's a good match for us. We are obsessed with experiential design, the smell of a wood fire, the texture of a fabric on your skin, the sound of the music being played and the transforming light as day moves to night. These things are

what defines a boutique hotel, people visit precisely because they are looking for a heightened sensory experience, they demand it.

Because we are such a small studio, I think we managed to retain the purity of the concept of this hotel, there were fewer voices with which to dilute it. For me this is hugely important in successful boutique hotel design.

**You've said before that the spaces you create are 'contemporary yet nostalgic' – can you explain this? How do you add nostalgia without it becoming old-fashioned?**

I guess it's about creating spaces which feel both familiar and forward-thinking at once. We are not about reinventing the wheel, more about creating a layered, meaningful experience. Although there are many features in our work, none are so eye-catching that they distract at the detriment of the space as a whole. We look to fill every corner, every object, every finish with subtle interest, so that the space reveals itself continually with use. Importantly though, the spaces shouldn't feel cluttered, but natural and comfortable within themselves.

Regarding nostalgia, this is a curious and complex emotion which I think has a big impact on both Pernille and I. It's often described as looking back fondly on past times, but in fact it can be a far more powerful emotion. You can feel utterly transported with so much a whiff of a perfume or the intro to a song. In the context of our work it's about referencing spaces, atmospheres or details of these previous eras which really speak to us, and introducing a contemporary twist.

We have honestly never thought of 'old-fashioned' as a negative term, which is perhaps exactly why we can describe our work as nostalgic. We are lucky enough to have hundreds of years of design inspiration to look back through, and do so regularly. Interiors, just like fashion, are cyclical, and trends come and go. We are less interested in working to a currently popular trend, and more interested in referencing some of the best elements from past ages which in our eyes have a timeless style. We passionately aim to create timeless spaces.

**How have your backgrounds influenced your design aesthetic?**

I think our backgrounds have played huge influence in the development of our aesthetic. Pernille and I are very similar in many ways, but in others we are vastly different. I think this continuous dialogue of challenging and pushing each other is exactly why we work together so well.

Pernille is half Danish and half Thai, so the ability to curate that juxtaposition of stripped-back mid-modernism and exuberant exoticism runs in her blood. She spent part of her childhood in her mother's antique shop in Thailand surrounded by inspiration, and another part in her mid-modern Danish family home, filled with a mix of design classics and curiosities collected by her incredibly well-travelled parents. Her eye for curation is incredibly rare.

I myself am from the north east of England, son of a long line of shipbuilders in the region's industrial heartland. I grew up in and around our family metalworks business, so the sight, smell and sound of grinding steel and welding sparks is very natural to me. I'm very interested in industrial design, the simple functionality of it, the geometry and rhythm, and its surprising elegance at times. I'm interested in how it can be redefined to become 'luxurious', and in revealing the inherent beauty of modest materials.

### **Why retail these designs?**

From the beginning the intention with Sanders was to create more than a hotel, it was to create an institution, a lifestyle for guests. Our client was always keen to allow people to access the Sanders ideology in more ways than visiting, and so making such things as the furnishings available was an obvious step. Our brief was to create spaces which felt both extraordinary and homely at once, so we were always confident that people would connect with the interiors, and to, hopefully, wish to buy into a part of the Sanders experience.

### **Are the hotel involved in the retail in any way?**

Yes the client was very keen to sell the pieces too and to market the hotel through the retail of the pieces. Sanders has become a brand in itself so these pieces act as a very strong part of creating its identity.

### **Can you tell me about the aesthetic, each piece almost looks vintage and unique in itself - why do customers want mismatched furniture these days?**

Our design concept and overall interior direction had to reflect both the context of it being in Copenhagen, and also reflect that the people staying would most likely be world travellers. The direction for many pieces is taken from Scandinavian mid-modern classics and materials, but there are strong veins of Colonial exoticism, English eccentricity and Parisian sophistication, creating a very worldly tone. We worked closely with the makers to refining each and every detail.

The furniture for the guest rooms were designed as a collection, working well together but also as stand alone pieces. Mismatching furniture in a home is now becoming very normal, and it's not uncommon for instance to see a home with two or three differing types of dining chair clustered around a table. Mismatched furniture tends to give the impression that each piece is special, that it has a story attached to it. It may have been found at a flea market or vintage shop, and has meaning to its owner. It creates layers of personality within the space. The uniform look is often a little predictable, and somewhat inflexible when it comes to freshening up or evolving a space.

We feel there is a movement certainly in the UK towards investing in key individual pieces which then are assembled and curated to create an interior. These pieces, generally high in either financial or personal

value, can be reused and reincarnated over many years, often then being handed to the next generation. This is a philosophy which is the norm in Denmark, which is perhaps why the interiors at Sanders feel so personal.

### **Why do you think so many customers want to buy hotel's interiors?**

We're not sure this applies to hotels generally, but rather quite specifically to boutique hotels. To the guest, the interior is only one factor in their overall experience, although of course an important one. To stay at a boutique, rather than a budget hotel is a conscious investment in a gratifying experience, and so naturally guests leave with a buzz of endorphins, and often a longing to recreate the experience.

Although it's unlikely they can recreate the level of service in their own homes, what they can do is take inspiration from the interiors, grasping some of the special experience of staying in a boutique hotel in their day to day life.

### **How influential do you think hotels and interiors are in terms of influencing design in the home? And why do you think customers are so inspired by it?**

Certain hotel types play a huge part in influencing home design, again the boutique hotel is the prime example. People appreciate stepping into another world for a few days, experiencing a taste of an alternative life in another part of the world. The interiors therefore can be a huge source of inspiration.

So often do people see images of boutique hotel rooms and declare that they love the space, yet could not see their own homes styled that way. When visiting however, people tend to be in state of openness to new experiences and cultures. The hotel presents them with a different style of interior, a different ideology, and they often discover that they are intact completely comfortable with it.

Each night around 100 guests stay at Sanders, and if they leave taking a little inspiration to apply to their own home, we know we've done our job.

### **Furnishings**

The Sanders Bed, Wardrobe, Sideboard, Side Table and Bedroom Mirrors are all available to purchase from [www.lindalmond.co](http://www.lindalmond.co)

Please contact [info@lindalmond.co](mailto:info@lindalmond.co) for enquiries.