



Press release

Straubingerplatz, Bad Gastein

BWM Designers & Architects | Autumn 2023

Working with the layers of the past. BWM Designers & Architects developed a sophisticated hotel concept that extends far beyond just the buildings themselves, and were responsible for the overall realisation of the project. The acclaimed Vienna-based architecture firm was commissioned by Hirmer Immobilien to restore Bad Gastein's Straubingerplatz to its former glory – in line with the principle of preserving history while judiciously complementing it with new elements.

The Vienna-based architecture firm BWM had the overall responsibility for rehabilitating the hotel ensemble consisting of Hotel Straubinger, Badeschloss and Alte Post, located near Bad Gastein's picturesque waterfall, as well as for designing new interiors and additional structures. The new 4-star superior / 5-star hotels aim to establish Straubingerplatz as a vibrant hub for visitors and locals alike. With this in mind, BWM Designers & Architects, who pride themselves on having successfully realised countless hospitality projects, developed an open hotel concept that extends beyond the 18.000m² in floor area.

A thoughtful approach to heritage-protected architecture.

Built between 1791 and 1888, Hotel Straubinger, Badeschloss and Alte Post (the old post office building) have long served as an emblem of the popular spa town's historical centre and are now heritage-protected monuments. "Working with the layers of the past" was BWM Designers & Architects' guiding principle for the redesign of Straubingerplatz. "Our planning ideas are always preceded by a precise historical analysis," BWM designer and architect Erich Bernard explains, "in line with the maxim – loosely based on Adolf Loos – that you can change anything, as long as you know what you are changing." The rehabilitation of these heritage-protected buildings called for a thoughtful approach; all measures were coordinated with the Federal Monuments Office and the Bad Gastein municipality. "It is important to us to work with – and not against – the remnants and layers of the past," Bernard continues. "It's precisely those layers that give old buildings their charm and special appeal and make them so unique."

More than just the buildings ...

The open hotel concept developed by BWM Designers & Architects is mindful of each hotel's unique character and its role as part of the ensemble, as well as taking account of Straubingerplatz as a whole. This centrally located square has all the makings of a lively hub – for visitors and locals alike. BWM not only redesigned the existing buildings (13,000m² floor area), but also developed ideas that extend beyond them. The goal was to breathe new life into the entire Straubingerplatz and restore it to its former glory.

Born from the facets of the past.

A high degree of expertise, care and passion went into renovating these hotels, which have reopened under the Travel Charme Hotels & Resorts brand. In collaboration with moodley brand identity, BWM developed a brand philosophy for the ensemble as a whole. The new Hotel Straubinger, named after a prominent local hotelier family, pays homage to the original grand hotel. It was born from the facets of its past, boasting understated elegance and poignant grandeur. The adjacent Badeschloss celebrates its own history, while taking a playful approach to bathing culture. It is a place where the past meets the present, and its atmosphere is vibrant and sociable. The interior design concept was partly inspired by the production entitled "Mystery Sonatas / for Rosa" by the Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker.

Curated art concept.

Together with Schwanenfliess's Andrea von Goetz, initiator and mastermind behind the renowned art festivals *sommer.frische.kunst* and *art.bad.gastein*, BWM Designers & Architects also developed a specially curated art concept for both Hotel Straubinger and Badeschloss: contemporary artists from both Bad Gastein and beyond (for instance, from the US and South Africa) have provided an exclusive selection of works that interact with the town and its tradition and history as well as with the hotels themselves.

Down to the smallest detail ...

The art concept is complemented by a greenery and styling concept specially tailored to both hotels and developed by BWM together with Atelier Peter Weisz. The bamboo palms in the grand hall of Hotel Straubinger, for instance, are more than 2m tall and underline its sumptuous French flair. The Badeschloss, on the other hand, features greenery that reinforces the hotel's retro, bath-inspired look. The décor and styling concept also aligns with the "layers of the past" storytelling. Every single detail – whether a historical found object, a special coffee table book, or a classic or contemporary work of literature – corresponds with the spirit of each individual hotel and has been thoughtfully selected and positioned.

Grand Hotel Straubinger

Honouring the historical fabric.

When guests enter the new Grand Hotel Straubinger, they are immediately captivated by the history of this venerable building. In the historical reception area, their room cards are handed to them from a velvet-lined drawer as if they were pieces of jewellery. The grand staircase that leads to the upper floors is straight ahead, while the F&B area is located to the right of it. The double doors of the café, which can seat 40 in total, give onto Straubingerplatz, where the outdoor seating directly on the square can accommodate 12 guests. The bar and the salon directly adjacent to the café provide the perfect setting for the end of day; the salon can be closed off with curtains as needed. In line with the principle of “working with the layers of the past”, all areas feature a contrasting mix of old and new, such as the combination of the existing wainscoting with modern, adapted wall panelling. “Depending on the time of day and how the respective areas are used, the furniture and colour scheme get progressively darker,” says BWM project manager Marlene Gesierich. The colour scheme in the café is dominated by the trendy shade “strawberry cream”. In the salon and bar, sage-green paint was discovered beneath the old wall panelling in the course of renovations, inspiring the use of that same colour for the new look. And the Straubinger cake serving trolley is a nostalgic detail ...

With a contemporary spin.

The original restaurant entrance, which features stunning rediscovered mural paintings, was transformed into a private dining room for 10 guests. The new entrance to the grand hall is in the new adjacent building with floor-to-ceiling glazing. In the course of restoring the grand hall, gold accents and the original ceiling in the side wings came to light. Historical elements that could not be preserved were given a thoughtful contemporary treatment. With seating for 86 guests, the grand hall features modern, fresh colours such as green, apricot and amber, while abundant greenery, refurbished Lobmeyr wall panels and a new chandelier reinforce the French-inspired atmosphere. Thoughtfully selected colours and patterns, such as the orange used for the pillars and stucco lustro¹, characterise the 195m² hall. The heritage-protected solid oak parquet flooring was restored to its original state. An eye-catching, round dining table is positioned in the centre of the room atop a specially designed carpet that mirrors the ceiling rosette. Placed on top of the table is a spectacular chandelier, newly created by Lobmeyr but based on the lost original piece. The two balconies afford a view of the church.

The wine cellar is located in the basement, which – by virtue of the building’s location on the hillside – features a balcony with a view of the church. The wine cellar transitions into an oblong room with a coved vault, where the chef’s table has a direct line of sight with the kitchen. The original wood ceiling needed to be replaced, and after removing the thermally treated dowelled timber beams, they were used to make the chef’s table, which can seat up to 14 guests. The wine & dine area features original, wrought-iron lamps (restored by Lobmeyr) and terracotta tiles on the table surfaces.

Swimming out into nature ...

To the left of the entrance, on the west side of the building, is the spa area, which spans the top three floors. Coming from the lobby on the ground floor, guests first enter a courtyard with a chessboard floor (including chess figures), based on the chessboard tile floors in the original treatment rooms. This is a recurring pattern that is also found – albeit in different colours – in the restrooms, corridors and spa reception. On the mezzanine floor are the five new treatment rooms as well as four spa suites, which are spacious rooms featuring free-standing bathtubs, showers installed in converted original basins, and integrated pine saunas. There is a new pool landscape above

the original thermal bath tract, where guests can gaze across Gastein Valley and “swim out into nature” to the sound of the nearby waterfall.

The spa area spans a total area of close to 700m² (350m² indoors, approx. 330m² terrace with pool) and seamlessly merges the old building and the newbuild. Guests coming from the reception and fitness area in the old building can cross into the new building with its outdoor infinity pool and indoor pool. The panorama saunas in the sauna area are located on the top floor; the rest area, furnished with a fireplace, wood storage space and wooden slat acoustic ceiling, is on the second floor. The spa’s colour scheme has a maritime feel, with the ceiling above the pool clad with blue tiles. This is complemented by a mix of thermally modified ash wood, exposed concrete, and chrome and wood details.

Unobstructed view.

The structure adjacent to No. 1 Straubingerplatz could not be preserved and was redesigned as a projecting glass structure with a lamella facade mounted in front of the two upper floors. “The expansive glazing opens the building up to the valley, giving guests an unobstructed view of the natural surroundings,” says Markus Kaplan of BWM Designers & Architects. “The wooden lamellas in front of the glass prevent prying eyes from looking in, thereby ensuring the privacy of these rooms.” Incidentally, in the course of this redesign, the original gap between Hotel Straubinger and the house at No. 1 Straubingerplatz, which was closed up in the early 20th century, was opened up again.

Like a painting ...

With regard to Hotel Straubinger’s 46 guest rooms, the objective was to preserve the historical fabric, while judiciously complementing it with new elements. Both the old and new elements are informed by the motto of “new luxury”. It is the specific charm and authenticity of the historical fabric that makes this place unique. The patina on the walls, the surviving doors and other original artefacts are priceless vestiges of the old hotel. These have been thoughtfully complemented with new elements in order to meet modern standards and requirements. The overall composition of colour and light is inspired by the chiaroscuro of historical oil paintings, resulting in an expressive use of light and dark shades. As much as possible of the historical building was preserved. It gives the appearance of having been dipped in dark oil paint; beyond that “paint line”, it remains untouched.

Hotel Badeschloss

New space.

The 102 guest rooms of the Badeschloss are spread out across the original building and the 13-floor newbuild behind it. “The facade was designed as a double-skin, coloured-concrete construction,” Markus Kaplan of BWM Designers & Architects explains. “The fact that the skins have different thicknesses gives the facade a lively appearance and a relief-like character that blends into the Alpine surroundings,” adds BWM project manager Martina Lehner. This principle extends to the different designs of the windows: Ornamental brass balustrades add sparkle to the otherwise rock-like structure. The upper storeys feature bay windows that project beyond the facade and serve as decorative elements and “display cabinets” for bathtubs. In this way, the bathing culture theme is communicated to the outside world. The proverbial – and literal – crowning glory is the infinity pool on the roof; the glass crystal steps into the pool take centre stage and are a reference to the glass domes on the roof of the Bad Gastein conference centre, planned by architect Gerhard Garstenaue.

The name says it all.

The entrance area of the new Hotel Badeschloss is located directly on Straubingerplatz. Guests are greeted at a small concierge desk; then they go down a tunnel to reach the lift to the first floor. The individual zones in the lobby transition smoothly into one another, underlining an easy-going lifestyle and an inspiring sense of community. This area is geared to an openminded audience consisting of both guests and locals of all ages.

The name – Badeschloss – means “bathing palace”, which perfectly describes what the hotel is all about. The community table is clad with white tiles, the yellow table in the lobby is reminiscent of a diving board, the guidance system is inspired by swimming pools, as is the open kitchen. A long wall of lockers – which recalls the changing rooms in public baths – serves as a cloakroom for locals who want to join the party.

New accents.

The core of the original building houses all the F&B areas – the restaurant, bar, sitting room, fireplace room and lounge, private booth, parlour and dining room. Each of these spaces boasts a highly unique design. The two-level terrace with seating for 64 guests can be used year-round and has long benches along the glass facade. Guests can directly access the restaurant and the fireplace lounge from here. In keeping with the overall motto of “working with the layers of the past”, the “new layer” in the restaurant is the light-blue tile wall, as well as three original Lobmeyr chandeliers reconditioned to meet modern technical standards. The solid wood floor was restored in consultation with the Federal Monuments Office, and another “new layer” added in the form of touches of neon colours on the benches and tables. In the fireplace lounge, with a real fireplace, the original stucco ceiling and the partly reconstructed original Ardnet marble floor were combined with modern lighting and furniture elements. In terms of colour, muted shades were used for the common areas, while pastel colours offset by bright accents dominate the guest rooms.

Alpine Swim Club.

The rooftop spa in the newbuild spans three floors, and the spacious 64m² terrace on the 13th floor boasts a rooftop pool with stunning glass crystal steps. The modern signature wall with lettering spelling out “Alpine Swim Club” sets the tone, complemented by wavy metal lines, wooden slats, flashes of cobalt blue, and a terrazzo look. The sauna area on the 12th floor has a seraglio bath, a Finnish sauna and a herbal pine sauna with panorama windows, an outdoor area and rest area, showers and an ice fountain. Wood pallet furniture can be found throughout the hotel – in the outdoor area of the spa, in the lobby, and (in a modified form) in the suites.

Celebrating bathing culture.

“A bath you can spend the night in” – that is the concept for the exclusive rooms in the original building of the cosmopolitan-style Badeschloss. This idea infuses the entire atmosphere and is reflected in a variety of scenarios revolving around bathtubs or showers. Each visit promises to be a new experience, especially as each room in the original building is one of a kind. By taking advantage of additional spa and wellness offers, guests can turn their hotel room into their own private spa.

The guest rooms in this tract are characterised by their simplicity and the stunning view. Community is the main idea here, and the treatments offered are in line with it. This tract also has one or two surprises in store for guests, such as a bathtub with a panorama view.

Facts & Figures

Task

Design-build services for the revitalisation of three existing listed hotel buildings (gross floor area approx. 13.000 m²) and construction of a new building (GFA approx. 6,000 m²), as well as development of the corporate design for the hotel ensemble consisting of Grand Hotel Straubinger (46 rooms) and Badeschloss (102 rooms)

Client

Straubingerplatz Immobilien GmbH

Project data

Completion: autumn 2023

Address: Straubingerplatz 2–4, 5640 Bad Gastein, Austria

GFA: approx. 19,000 m²

BWM team

Erich Bernard, Markus Kaplan, Peter Foschi, Marlene Gesierich, Martina Lehner, Claus Hasslinger, Elisabeth Albenberger, Ismail Berkel, Maximilian Fasslabend, Lena Hainzinger, Tanja Hainzl, Clemens Hörl, Marlies Klauser, Ales Kosak, Sonja Leitgeb, Massimiliano Marian, Elisabeth Morillo-Napetschnig, Fridolin Öhlinger, Tjasa Rus

Project partners

Design-build / interior design: BWM Designers & Architects

Brand strategy and branding: moodley brand identity

Execution planning: zwei Architekten

Construction supervision: edelmueller.architektur.management

Structural design: Gschwandtl & Lindlbauer ZT GmbH

Building services engineering: Ingenieurbüro Lothar Mayer GmbH

Construction physics: TAS Bauphysik GmbH

Fire protection: Norbert Rabl Ziviltechniker GmbH

Construction coordination: Lackinger BauKO GmbH

Historical architectural expert opinion: EIDOS Architektur ZT GmbH

Surveyor: Gernot Fleischmann

Landscape planning: Simma Zimmermann Landschaftsarchitektinnen OG

F&B consulting: Baysics, Georges Desrues

Lighting design: Pokorny Lichtarchitektur

Carpet design / guidance system contributor: Gabriele Bruner

Interior styling concept: Atelier Peter Weisz together with BWM Designers & Architects

Art concept: BWM in cooperation with Andrea von Goetz of Schwanenfluss

Straubingerplatz, Bad Gastein

Preview press photos



BWM_Bad Gastein_Grand Hotel Straubinger_Suite View
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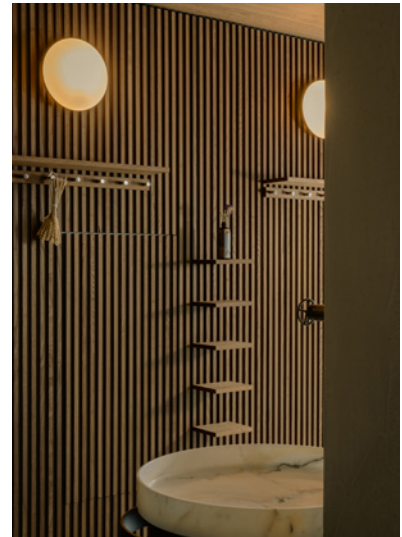
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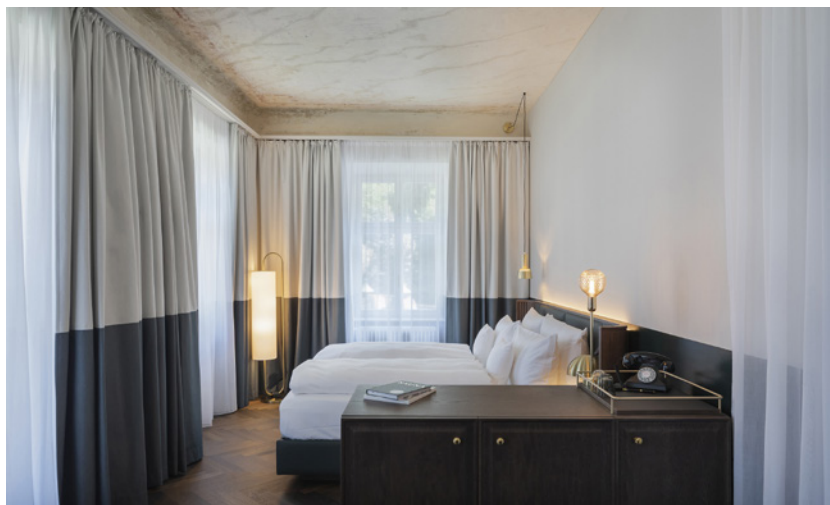


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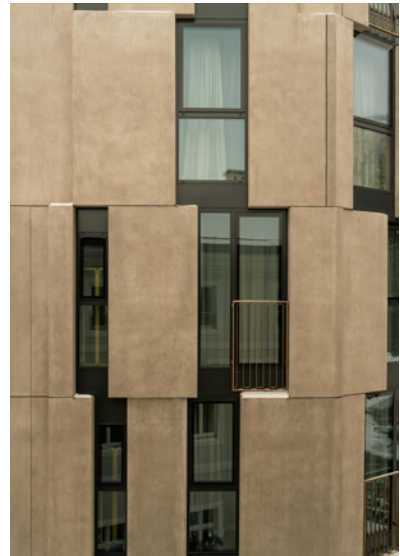


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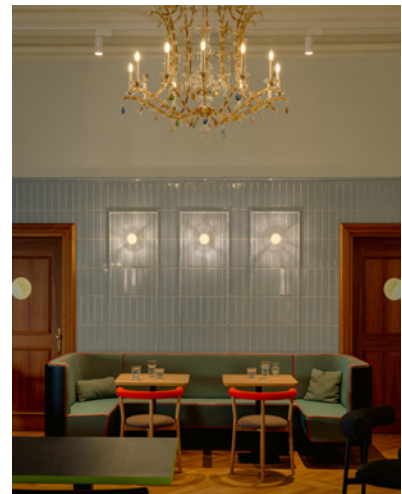
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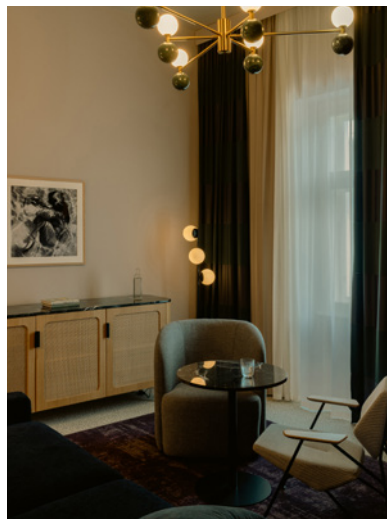
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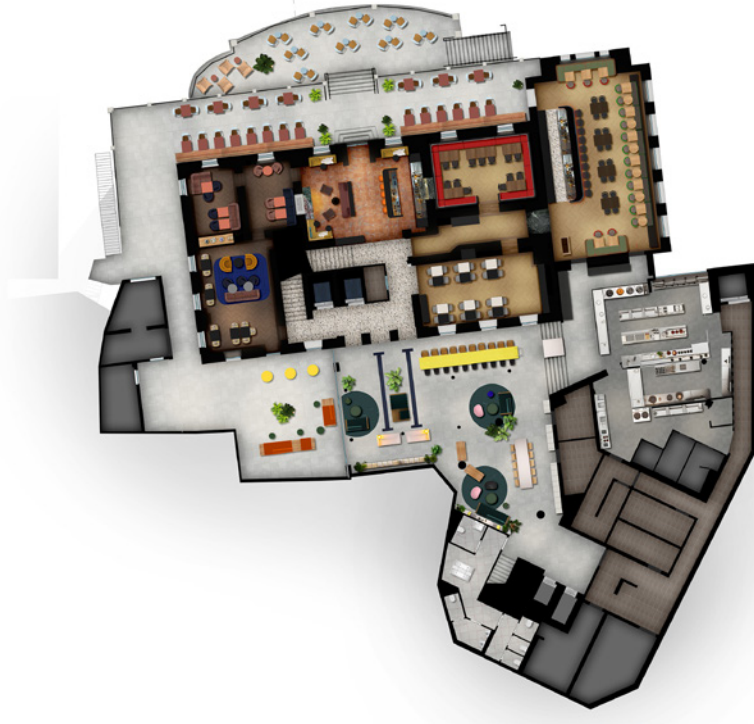
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