*mag*das HOTEL

Social Business Hotel to Plans by AllesWirdGut Opens February 11

*A new type of social business: Caritas and AllesWirdGut have developed a concept that redefines hospitality.*

*A house for tourists visiting Vienna and for refugees, all under one roof.*

A hotel with an unconventional concept and an inspiring history that is operated to professional standards—this is how the most recent project of AllesWirdGut Architects, initiated by *mag*das, the social business subsidiary of Caritas Austria, can be described, the *mag*das Hotel in Vienna’s Prater district.

78 new and elegant hotel rooms are available to city travelers, tourists in Vienna and overnight trippers, each with a view of the Prater park landscape.

Living side by side with the hotel guests are - and this is what makes the project so special - young people who, however, did not travel of their own free will, but are refugees who were left no choice by hunger, war, persecution, and torture in their home countries.

The hotel accommodates two residential units for living communities. Supported by the Caritas, 25 young persons who came to Austria without their parents as refugees have been living here already since November 2014. For them, the hotel is a temporary place to stay, and for some, it is also a workplace.

This is because most of the staff working at the social value added hotel are refugees.

“*mag*das Hotel is a social business that connects cultures and people, that creates opportunities and a lively place of encounter,” says Caritas Social Business manager Clemens Foschi about the project.

Conversion - the social dimension of vintage style

The core part of what used to be a retirement home dates back to the 1960s.

The existing building was largely preserved and merely refurbished, adapted and brought to modern safety standards. Everybody involved was called upon to come up with creative solutions, not only in financing, but also in design.

AllesWirdGut rely on simplicity and plain elegance, well-matched reduced colors and vintage chic. At the *mag*das, interior design is a response to the existing building, expression of an architectural concept and creative use of scarce resources.

Financing - new ways of building

A budget of 1.5 million Euros was very tight for the conversion in to a high-standard hotel.

The fact that *mag*das Hotel nevertheless became a reality is owed not only to smart planning and a supporting crowdfunding campaign, but also to committed sponsors of materials who saw the project’s exceptional and innovative character and social implication. The participation of committed contractors, suppliers, but also local residents and the refugees themselves in building and providing equipment for the hotel speaks to the social dimension of architecture.

Upcycling - the *mag*das design concept

In the design of the interior spaces - lobby, restaurant and bar, hotel rooms, and apartments - AllesWirdGut used existing pieces, found objects, and an ingenious mix of elements.

The reduced, well-matched and elegant color concept that informs the visible surfaces is accentuated with distinctive individual furnishings, pieces with a past and finds with a history. Caritas’ own *carla* thrift store was a rich source here, as was furniture left behind by former residents or donated to the project by the local population.

What once had been pretty conservative built-in closets was remodeled under the supervision of Daniel Büchel into tables, nightstands, and wall coat racks. Uneven walls were revamped using the proven technique of pattern roller painting.

Work tables with “tags” from students of the St. Pölten New Design University - its new building was designed by AllesWirdGut who are currently also holding a visiting professorship there - were adapted for the hotel lobby and the restaurant.

In the future, the ground floor will serve several purposes, as an entrance area and lobby for hotel guests, a shared living room for the young people staying in the house, and a bar and restaurant for visitors - a contribution to the integration of “foreigners,” whether they may be guests, customers, or refugees.

What can be made possible with a minimal budget thanks to the commitment and effort of everybody involved - from the client to the architects and to companies and volunteers - has stirred much public interest even before the completion of the project.

**Project data:**

Start of construction: August 2014

Completion: February 2015

GFA: 6,460 m²

Team: Johanna Aufner, Andrea Zuñiga Espinoza, Simon Höbel

Landscape Architecture: 3:0 Landschaftsarchitektur

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