

Hotel Josef – Prague’s design sensation

To create a design sensation is not an easy task. And to do it in Prague – a city of exceptional architectural quality and heritage – is even more challenging. Yet this is precisely what Prague-born architect Eva Jiricna has achieved at Hotel Josef, the latest addition to the Czech Republic’s sophisticated capital.

The 109-bedroom Hotel Josef is her largest completed building to date. It has been holistically designed from the outside-in to respond to the exceptional urban location, and from the inside-out to create a comfortable environment for hotel guests. The results reflect the benefits of this integrated approach. From the refined detailing of the façade to the design of fittings and choice of the fabrics and furniture, there is a seamless quality that permeates the entire building, enriching the overall experience of the visitor to Prague’s newest design hotel™.

Unlike most ‘modern’ hotels in historic city centres, Hotel Josef has not been shoehorned into an old building. It is totally purpose-designed to suit the needs of a modern facility. The public areas flow effortlessly around a central courtyard giving visual clarity and orientation. The bar and reception areas are integrated into the natural patterns of movement. The rooms are efficiently designed to optimise the sense of space and light. The design investment has been concentrated on the essential elements of guest comfort, rather than dissipated on unnecessary luxuries that clutter so many contemporary hotel rooms.

The overall effect is one of visual order and coherence. There is a clear inter-relationship between the design of the parts and the whole that is reminiscent of the great classics of Modern Architecture. Immaculate detailing can be enjoyed as you check in at the reception desk, have a drink at the bar or hang your towel in the intimacy of your room. Every single piece of furniture has been carefully selected to fit into the overall aesthetic framework, from the Baleri armchairs and Philippe Starck fittings in the guestrooms to the Thonet chairs and tables in the breakfast room and public areas. In this sense, Hotel Josef is a truly design one-off, reflecting the owner’s aspirations to create a very different environment for the hotel guest in Prague.

Hotel Josef is located in Prague’s medieval quarter, near Charles Bridge and the Old Town Square. Two new buildings, containing eight and six floors of bedrooms, are linked by an open landscaped courtyard and a glazed link that unifies the public areas at ground level. The staggered plan and section ingeniously exploit the idiosyncrasies of the complex site, bringing natural daylight deep into the buildings. Car-parking, business and conference facilities are located at basement level, with access through lifts and a grand spiral staircase on axis with the main entrance.

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