

Modern Hospitality

Vienna's oldest standing curtain-wall building welcomes a different kind of crowd.

In Vienna, imperial grandeur doesn't mingle easily with modern art, dense traffic, or simple urban seediness. Yet such a misalliance exists. Schloss Belvedere, a baroque palace, borders one of the city's busiest streets. It faces a contemporary art museum on one side and a hole in the ground on the other—which will one day be Vienna's main train station. Next to the palace is Austria's oldest still-standing curtain-wall building, which was recently turned into the city's newest hospitality destination, Hotel Daniel.

Designed by the renowned Austrian architect Georg Lippert and completed in 1962, the building was once the subsidiary of a Swiss health-care company. Lippert was a dedicated modernist,



Hotel Daniel's ground-floor shop sells everything that an intrepid young traveler might need.

What Weitzer means by "urban stay" becomes clear as soon as one enters the building: there's no liveried doorman, no reception desk, no lobby.



The Hammock rooms provide an extra spot for guests to relax.

which is evident in Hotel Daniel's shiny green-glass-and-aluminum facade. Sadly, grand old Vienna turns its nose up at midcentury modernism; after briefly housing Motorola's local branch, the building silently dilapidated.

In the mid-2000s, the structure was about to be restored as an office building. "But then," says Christian Heiss, the project's architect, "came the economic crisis, luckily." The hotelier Florian Weitzer bought the building and changed its designation, but kept Heiss. Together, they turned the landmarked structure into a hotel that Weitzer likes to describe as an "urban stay." What he means becomes clear as soon as one enters the Hotel Daniel: there's no liveried doorman, no reception desk, no lobby. Instead, there's a long counter, baristas with piercings, a motley selection of vintage and designer furniture, and Viennese hipsters helping themselves to freshly ground cereal.

Weitzer wants to attract such young urbanites, people who travel light and

have little need for spacious hotel suites. "It was difficult to achieve a maximum of rentable rooms, while allowing for a minimum of individual space," says Heiss, "especially within the limitations of the aluminum window profiles." He solved the problem by intertwining the tiny spaces like a zipper. A glass shower cubicle in each room offers a spectacular view of either the Belvedere or the future train station and the adjacent Schweizer Garden. The concrete ceiling is marked by old electrical installations, random nails, and other signs of construction, reminding guests that this building has a past. "We just removed the old ceiling linings," Heiss says.

This month, the artist Erwin Wurm will create an installation on top of the hotel that will be visible from the street. Around the same time, a beekeeper will install three hives on the roof. The honey will be served six floors below. It is safe to assume that the breakfasting hipster crowd will queue up for it. **M**