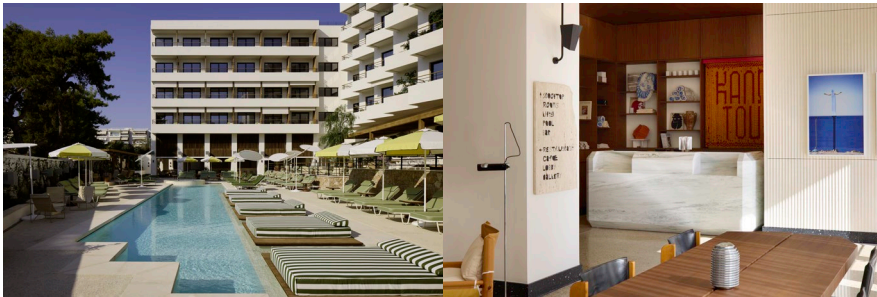


Press release

196+ forum Milan: Ace Hotel & Swim Club Athens wins "Hotel Design Award 2025"

The other finalists: John & Will Silo-Hotel by Guldsmeden (Bremen, Germany) and Palazzo Petrus (Orvieto, Italy)



Ace Hotel & Swim Club Athens. Source: Ace Hotel & Swim Club Athens

Milan, 10 April 2025 – This year's winner of the "Hotel Design Award" is **Ace Hotel & Swim Club Athens, Greece**. The prize was awarded at the 196+ forum Milan this week.

Michael Widmann, Global CEO of PKF hospitality group: "When PKF worked on the relocation of the Athens airport 30 years ago, the existing infrastructure of the old airport (which was closed down) became obsolete. Among these building was an airport hotel (now without airport) - which has, following a Cinderella-like re-awakening, become the Ace Hotel & Swim Club. A seemingly ugly, brutalist building was transformed into a hip location for travellers and locals. The Ace team as well as the architects and designers did an amazing job in bringing this property back to life - in my opinion, it is now one of the best lifestyle hotels in Europe."

Evgeniya Yatsyuk, Zaha Hadid Architects and member of the jury, adds: "The winning project is a refined blend of contemporary and modern elements, harmoniously integrated into a single cohesive design. The interior is characterised by a striking use of bold colours, paired with exquisite textures and materials, which together create a space that exudes both luxury and understated elegance."



The award criteria include the originality of the architectural and design concept, the resulting quality of the building and facade, as well as the interior design. The focus is on the design approach to a compelling hotel concept.

Ace Hotel & Swim Club Athens represents a groundbreaking vision in contemporary hospitality design through its weaving together of architectural heritage, community integration, and artistic innovation. Retaining the Brutalist bones of the former Fenix Hotel, French architecture studio ciguë seamlessly juxtaposed this foundation with Greek modernism's naturalist bent and the laid-back charm of '70s coastal resorts, creating a beacon of adaptive reuse that anchors the transformation of the under-appreciated Athens Riviera. The project dissolves traditional hierarchies between spaces, pioneering a new model of community-integrated hospitality. Its sprawling ground floor offers a leisurely blur of indoor-outdoor space, from lobby through pool to dining areas, while dedicated programming activates these spaces for local use – a first in the area. The hotel's Swim Club program opens pool access to Athenians, while Sebastian restaurant and Good Chemistry cafe serve as neighborhood anchors with street-side accessibility and all-day operations. Most distinctively, the hotel integrates art as architecture rather than decoration through an ambitious program featuring 18 contemporary Greek artists. This sweeping immersion into Athens' present-day art scene makes creative expression integral to the architectural experience. From Claire Manent's monumental facade mural to Theo Michael's kaleidoscopic pool bar mosaic, each artistic intervention is site-specific and deeply considered, communicating the rich creative culture and renaissance currently underway in the Riviera. The result is a landmark of sensitive redevelopment: a renovation project designed in conversation with its natural surroundings, open to public engagement, and truly representative of its cultural context. Custom furnishings blend with vintage pieces, while locally-sourced materials – Dionysos marble, handmade ceramic tile, wood and plaster frescoes – honor regional craft traditions. This thoughtful synthesis creates an environment that transcends typical hospitality design, actively participating in Athens' cultural renaissance while setting new standards for community-integrated adaptive reuse.



The interdisciplinary 11-member jury selected ten nominees from the 26 hotel applications from 13 European countries. Of these nominees, the following three hotels were selected for the final (in alphabetical order):

Ace Hotel & Swim Club Athens (Athens, Greece)

John & Will Silo-Hotel by Guldsmeden (Bremen, Germany)

Palazzo Petrus (Orvieto, Italy)

Widmann: "The three finalists of the 2025 Hotel Design Award share one feature: they are all redevelopments of existing buildings. Greenfield developments have become increasingly difficult due to high interest rates and several other factors. But conversions and refurbishments boom. They often make sense from a financial point of view, but are also in many ways more sustainable than new-built projects. The three finalists are outstanding examples for intelligent refurbishments, intelligently using existing structures and adding a contemporary twist."

The John & Will Silo-Hotel by Guldsmeden is a unique blend of architecture, charm, design and sustainability, making it a standout contender for the Hotel Design Award 2025. Here's why: 1. Architecture: They carved 3.500 m³ of concrete from old grain silos so the guests can stay in round or semi-round hotel rooms – an architectural and structural masterpiece by Delugan Meissl Associated Architects and all involved construction companies. 2. Sustainability: The motto is: Travel! But make it as sustainable as possible. Just like our partners, Guldsmeden Hotels, the hotel runs with a steadfast commitment to sustainability. From organic materials and energy-efficient systems to some bold decisions – every aspect is designed with the environment in mind. 3. Interior: The design combines art, Nordic minimalism, Balinese warmth, industrial clarity and local references. This unique combination creates a serene and inviting atmosphere that guests and employees love. 4. History: John & Will is a place with history. The hotel looks back on oil mills on a church pasture, a vibrant working-class district, decades of cornflakes production, and, finally, an empty grain silo. Now the hotel is shaping the future of this special place. 5. Community: Located in the emerging Überseeinsel district, it is more than just a hotel. Together with the Barception, gastronomies, and local events, the hotel fosters a sense of community among the guests and residents. Explore our neighbourhood, full of new beginnings! 6. Personality: The staff makes every guest feel special. From the moment of arriving, experience the warmth and



hospitality at the Barception: check in, borrow a bright red John & Will bike for a ride around Bremen, or just drop in for a chat. Catch up with old friends or make new ones.

Nestled in Orvieto, **Palazzo Petrus** is a shining example of architectural elegance, cultural heritage, and modern luxury. Its thoughtful design seamlessly integrates history and innovation, redefining Italian hospitality. A meticulous restoration of a centuries-old building, Palazzo Petrus balances heritage and contemporary innovation. Its preserved frescoes and modern furnishings honor Orvieto's history while setting new standards for luxury design. Sustainability is central to Palazzo Petrus' mission. Through energy-efficient systems, locally sourced materials, and waste reduction efforts, the property delivers eco-conscious luxury, setting an example for responsible hospitality. Each room reflects Orvieto's spirit, blending bespoke Italian craftsmanship with modern aesthetics. Custom furniture and locally inspired art immerse guests in an authentic yet sophisticated experience. Palazzo Petrus partners with local artisans, showcasing their work throughout the property. This collaboration fosters a deep connection between guests and Orvieto's cultural essence, enriching every stay. The hotel prioritizes comfort and well-being through intuitive layouts, refined amenities, and serene spaces. Guests enjoy a harmonious blend of grandeur and intimacy, crafted for ultimate relaxation. A dedicated team drives Palazzo Petrus' innovative vision, establishing it as a benchmark for excellence in hospitality. Their unwavering commitment ensures the property remains a leader in luxury design. Palazzo Petrus avoids fleeting trends, embracing enduring beauty, functionality, and harmony. Its timeless design guarantees lasting relevance as a symbol of hospitality excellence. Conclusion Palazzo Petrus is more than a hotel; it's a celebration of history, sustainability, and innovation.

Olga Yatsyuk, Zaha Hadid Architects and member of the jury: "The finalists showcased an exceptional standard of hospitality design, making the selection of a winner a challenging task. Each project presented a unique, well-crafted narrative, outstanding design vision, impeccable execution, and seamless integration with its surroundings. Together, these three remarkable hotels set a benchmark for excellence, representing the finest in hotel design and innovation for 2025."



The ten nominated hotels in alphabetical order:

- 25hours Hotel Paper Island (Copenhagen, Denmark)
- Ace Hotel & Swim Club Athens (Athens, Greece)
- Château Neercanne (Maastricht, Netherlands)
- John & Will Silo-Hotel by Guldsmeden (Bremen, Germany)
- Lasserhaus Arthotel (Brixen-Bressanone Bolzano, Italy)
- Palazzo Petrus (Orvieto, Italy)
- The Home Hotel Zürich (Zurich, Switzerland)
- The Social Hub Florence Belfiore (Florence, Italy)
- The Usual Rotterdam (Rotterdam, Netherlands)
- W Prague (Prague, Czechia)

Images are available at the following link: [☐ HDA 2025 Nominees](#). Please refer to the copyright information for photo credits. If no information is available, please state the hotel name.

More information about the 196+ forum Milan:

The 196+ forum Milan is an annual event hosted by the PKF hospitality group and serves as the opening event of Milan Design Week each year. It has established itself as Italy's benchmark event for hospitality investment and design, bringing together professionals from across Europe and around the world. The event provides an international networking platform where industry participants can exchange ideas and attend a full-day conference featuring expert talks, interactive formats, current case studies, and networking opportunities. This year's event took place from April 6 to 7. A highlight of the forum was the presentation of the "Hotel Design Award 2025." <https://award.196plus.com/hotel-design-award-2025>

Contact for 196+ forum Milan:

Elisabetta Valenzano
M +39 351 7204137
elisabetta.valenzano@pkfhospitality.com
www.196plus.com/196-forum/196-forum-milan/

Press contact:

Martina Rozok
M +49 170 2355988
martina.rozok@196plus.com
www.196plus.com