



Press release

## **196+ forum Vienna: Kulturhotellet Højhuset in Herning, Denmark, wins "Hotel Innovation Award 2023"**

**Kulturhotellet promotes culture, art and community**

**Other finalists: magdas Hotel (Vienna, Austria) and Valamar Amicor Green Resort (Hvar, Croatia)**

**This special award goes to the "sustainability pioneer" Scandic Hotels**



Kulturhotellet Højhuset, Copyright: Laura Stamer-Pejsestuen

**Vienna, 28 November 2023 – Kulturhotellet Højhuset** in Herning, Denmark, is this year's winner of the second edition of the "Hotel Innovation Award". The winner of the Hotel Innovation Award was announced yesterday as part of the 196+ forum Vienna in the beautiful hall of the Weltmuseum. The other finalists (in alphabetical order) are the **magdas Hotel** (Vienna, Austria) and the **Valamar Amicor Green Resort** (Hvar, Croatia).



Eighteen participants from 8 European countries applied for the competition and 12 hotels or hotel groups were nominated for the final round. The "Hotel Innovation Award" is aimed at innovative hotels or hotel groups in Europe and focuses on a different aspect of innovation in the hotel sector each year. This year, the focus was on ESG. The 12 nominees\* included four applicants from Germany, three from Austria and one each from Belgium, Denmark, the UK, Croatia, and Sweden. For the twelve-member expert jury\*\*, the following criteria were decisive in selecting the nominees and winners:

- USP, originality, value for money
- Differentiation and pioneering character (game changer)
- Impact on society and the hotel(s)
- Scalability and profitability

**Michael Widmann**, creator of the award and chairman of the jury declared:

"**Kulturhotellet Højhuset** was built in 1961 as a high school and revitalized as a cultural hotel with organic cultivation, event house, restaurant and various social activities. It is an iconic building and a landmark in the city of Herning.

Kulturhotellet promotes culture, art and community while preserving a piece of the local cultural heritage."

Another finalist is the **magdas Hotel** (Vienna, Austria). By converting a former priest's house from the 1960s into a climate-friendly hotel, the hotel has integrated and recycled many parts of the existing building into the current interior design. Many volunteers and artists also contributed to the renovation with their talent and skills. The magdas Hotel is part of the Social Business Group of Caritas Vienna and has trained and integrated over 80 refugees.

The **Valamar Amicor Green Resort** (Hvar, Croatia) - the other finalist - is a family-friendly eco-resort. It has been awarded the Travelife Gold certificate for sustainable accommodations and was built in accordance with the DGNB Green Building Standards. With smart home technology, guests can track their energy and water consumption as well as their carbon footprint, while young guests can learn about recycling, waste separation and plant cultivation in eco-workshops.



In addition, a Special Award was presented yesterday to the "sustainability pioneer" Scandic Hotels, as the topic of ESG is part of Scandic's DNA and a natural part of the daily work in every hotel. Scandic also takes its social responsibility seriously and fully integrates it within its own company. It only uses food and beverages that have a reduced impact on the environment and is also driving the transformation for circular and sustainable hotel room experiences.

Austrian State Secretary for Tourism **Susanne Kraus-Winkler** noted: "In its future development, Austria's tourism strategy will focus on sustainability in all three dimensions – social, ecological and economic. The magdas HOTEL, the Højhuset - Kulturhotel and the Valamar Amicor Green Resort are important best practice examples in tourism and are both pioneers and role models in this area. With a future-oriented sustainability strategy, we are also relying on a strong and targeted 4-pillar model for the entire Austrian tourism sector: the new tourism promotion with a special sustainability bonus, the annual measurement of tourism acceptance among the population, the national certification strategy for eco-labels and last but not least, the ESG Data Hub for tourism, which also addresses the EU topic of green finance."

**Further notes from the jury members:**


**Sarah Habsburg-Lothringen**, Responsible Tourism Consultant: "The Kulturhotellet is a bold example of sustainable hospitality in practice. From the 'farm to table' concept, delivered from its own organic farm to the use of cultural heritage as a conduit for local history, this once neglected building takes the true essence of hospitality to an inspiring level by placing the values-based strategy of human sustainability at the heart of its operation. A well-deserved winner!"

**Xenia zu Hohenlohe**, Sustainable Markets Initiatives: „Scandic Hotels began integrating sustainable practices into its business model over 20 years ago and since then has been THE hotel group to continuously introduce new measures that eventually become the norm in the industry. Without their pioneering role, many of today's sustainability standards would not be as widespread. We hope that Scandic will continue in this direction, as we desperately need beacons like them to continuously improve the industry.“



**\* The 12 nominees in alphabetical order:**

a&o Hostels (Berlin, Germany)  
GymLodge, CFK (Spiesen-Elversberg, Germany)  
Hotel Am Konzerthaus – MGallery Vienna (Vienna, Austria)  
Kulturhotellet Højhuset (Herning, Denmark)  
Le Louise Hotel Brussels MGallery Collection (Brussels, Belgium)  
Liebesbier Urban Art Hotel (Frankfurt am Main, Germany)  
Lindenberg Hospitality (Frankfurt am Main, Germany)  
magdas Hotel (Vienna, Austria)  
room2 (London, UK)  
Scandic Hotels (Stockholm, Sweden)  
Schani Hotels (Vienna, Austria)  
Valamar Amicor Green Resort (Hvar, Croatia)

**You can obtain images here:**  [HIA23 Nominees](#). Please refer to the copyright information for picture credits. If no information is available, the hotel name must be given.

**\*\* Jury members (in alphabetical order of first name):**

Adam MacLennan, PKF hospitality group  
Andreas Martin, 196+ events  
Anne Seubert, Brands & Places  
Astrid Dickinger, MODUL University Vienna  
Burkhard von Freyberg, Munich University of Applied Sciences  
Daniel Schneider, monoplan  
Martin Gräber, hotelbau  
Michael Widmann, PKF hospitality group  
Sarah Habsburg-Lothringen, Responsible Hospitality  
Torsten Kuttig, ECE  
Prof. Dr. Willy Legrand, IU International University of Applied Sciences  
Xenia zu Hohenlohe, Sustainable Markets Initiatives

**196+ forum Vienna:**

From November 26 to 28, a joint event of the PKF hospitality group,



WienTourismus and Museum Booster will take place in Vienna, positioning it as the leading European conference for hospitality, tourism and culture. During the conference, the 196+ forum Vienna will present the industry prize "Hotel Innovation Award". [196+ forum Vienna](#) | [196+ forum](#) | [196+ Events \(196plus.com\)](#)

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