



## Stadshotell

### STOCKHOLM

A restored heritage building in Sweden's capital is transformed into a gastronomic haven, where Nordic elegance meets Franco-Mediterranean flair.

Words: Kasia Dietz • Photography: © Erik Olsson

There's a palpable pulse when strolling the streets of Stockholm's effortlessly chic Södermalm neighbourhood, and the latest venue drawing a well-heeled, global crowd to the area is the newly reimagined Stadshotell. A perfectly symmetrical imperial stone façade featuring regal columns and a gold-faced clock tower invites guests into a 19<sup>th</sup> century building commissioned by Queen Josefina as a tribute to her late husband, King Oscar I. Once inside, the formality fades and diners spill into the ground floor dining rooms and bar, where black-and-white imagery by Swedish photographer Gunnar Smoliansky turns the walls into conversation points. Everyone is graciously welcomed, some by Head Chef, Olle T Cellton. The celebrated chef and author, who also helms Stockholm's beloved restaurant, Babette, is part of the reason why this latest opening has been positioned as 'a house where you can eat and sleep'.

It was precisely a place like this that was lacking in Stockholm, according to Johan Agrell, one of the hotel's five founders: "We knew right

away that the city was missing a gastronomy-led hotel, so we've used that philosophy to shape everything, from the design decisions to the creative direction."

Seasoned in the creation of hospitality projects, the team – also comprising Fredrik Carlström, Jon Lacotte, Dan Källström and Ian Nicholson – tapped a group of architects, designers and craftspeople, including Ateljé Nord, Saga Arkitektur & Design, Studio Escapist and Anker & Co to bring their vision to life.

Those waking up within this national heritage site with a decidedly artistic focus are served breakfast and dinner in the Bistro. Overlooked by a vaulted ceiling, the stucco white walls are contrasted by grey and red limestone. "This matches the original limestone floor in the foyer, which was laid out as a compass rose," says Carlström. In the lounge, a large sofa is the central focus, cushioned by green velvet, while leather-covered T13 chairs designed by Mats Theselius for Gemla surround the tables. The pièce de résistance is a wooden



At the top of a winding staircase, fine-dining venue, Matsalen, is defined by Ionic columns and pale green marbled walls



cabinet stocked with vintages curated by Wine Director, Alexandra Karosis. The adjacent room that defines the restaurant's name is reminiscent of a classic Parisian bistro with a stylish Scandinavian twist. The reddish wooden Småland chairs, designed by Yngve Ekström for Stolab in 1956, complement the white and brick-tiled floor and have been reintroduced for the hotel. The playful, minimalist décor reflects both the simplicity and craftsmanship of Swedish design.

In the adjacent bar, dressed in chestnut wood and leather sofas, a grey limestone floor leads up to the footrest of the bar counter. While sipping on a signature libation, glancing up at the ceiling reveals a pyramid shape edged in red limestone. What mood was the team trying to capture? "We wanted to create a classic American-style hotel bar," Agrell says. "And ours is specifically a nod to the classic American Bar in Vienna, designed by Austrian architect Adolf Loos in 1908."

A Franco-Mediterranean theme illustrates Cellton's innovative Bistro menu, where the freshest ingredients are used in the creation of hearty dishes. A heap of Swedish butter, ready to melt on a warm slab of bread, is served on a ceramic platter branded with the hotel's logo. Carefully concocted bites to share include



bruschetta with fresh tomato and anchovies, and beef tartare with pickles and Ossau-Iraty cheese. Flavourful mains might resemble grilled duck breast with Tokyo turnips, saffron chickpeas and pomegranate with a touch of fragrant rose harissa. King Oscar's cake, Cellton's take on the classic Oscar II cake, has become the signature sweet. He prefers a concise menu, with daily specials highlighting the seasons. "For us, it's not only about the food or the chef," he affirms. "It's about the whole experience."

Ascend the winding staircase at the rear of the lounge into what was once a chapel for a gastronomic jaunt into the chef's most masterful menu. Matsalen, the hotel's fine-dining venue, is defined by original Ionic columns and pale green, faux-marbled walls decorated with golden angels and medallions gracing crosses. Undulating banquettes surround the nine tables, where Dorthé Atelier's woven chairs offer stylish seating. A central island beneath the elevated ceiling replaces an altar, on which two wine racks glow like upturned chandeliers.

The dance between servers and sous chefs is a pleasure to observe as canapés mark the commencement of the dinner ritual. Succulent snacks, as the waiter playfully calls them, include peas and caviar, and coppa with figs. Wines flow smoothly, served in carefully selected glassware chosen by Karosis.

Freshly caught langoustines from Sweden's west coast are served with artichoke and topped with aioli. The savoury procession continues with a plate of white asparagus; risotto with morels; a perfectly prepared pigeon complemented with carrot and fava beans; and delicate duck bouillon with a touch of tarragon.

Desserts, overseen by Pastry Chef Klara Johansson, are sweetly surprising, especially the pistachio pie served with rhubarb and cardamom ice cream.

The experience is summed up nicely by Restaurant Manager, Christofer Von Seth: "The entire hotel is in a dialogue between modern and traditional, urban and provincial," he confirms. Design 'perfektion', as the Swedes would say.



#### IN A BITE

**Owners:** Johan Agrell, Fredrik Carlström, Jon Lacotte, Dan Källström, Ian Nicholson  
**Architecture and Interior Design:** Ateljé Nord, Johan Krikström, Saga Arkitektur & Design, Studio Escapist  
**Lighting Design:** Anker & Co  
**Graphic Design:** Sebastian Wadsted  
**Executive Chef:** Olle T Cellton  
**F&B Manager:** Christofer Von Seth  
**Head Bartender:** Andres Basile Leon  
**Head Sommelier:** Alexandra Karosis  
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