

A nifty Niseko guide for the piste-poised, a smart cookery school within striking distance of the Big Apple and an architectural tour by way of Paris, Singapore and San Francisco.



Recipe: We ask a favourite Swedish deli for a well-rounded recipe featuring its famed meatballs (with mashed potato, lingonberries and a sprig of dill thrown in for good measure, of course).

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TRAVEL / SWITZERLAND

Steep ascent

How a humble hotel transformed a sleepy Swiss village into the toast of high society – and the price its owner paid.

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THE HEARTH OF THE MATTER

We cosy up in the Danish capital to hear how a professional dancer-turned-hotelier got the renovation of an 19th-century building on the move. Join us as we take a tour, jump up and down on the beds and put forward the case for Sanders hotel. Speaking of cases – can we help you with yours?

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WRITER Thomas Reynolds PHOTOGRAPHER Jan Smedsgaard

TRAVEL / COPENHAGEN

Change of tune

We meet the owner of Sanders hotel, a theatrical new stopover in a 19th-century building within earshot of Copenhagen's Royal Theatre.

WRITER *Thomas Reynolds* PHOTOGRAPHER *Jan Sandergaard*



In København's bustling bike-lane-riven heart, next to the city's Royal Danish Theatre, sits a remarkable new reason to visit the Danish capital: Sanders hotel.

For owner and founder Alexander Kolpin the area and surrounding Amalienborg Castle, Charlottenborg Palace and Nikolaj Kunsthal church are special for more than their good looks. "I was born and raised in the Royal Theatre," says Kolpin, fondly recollecting his past as a principal dancer in the Royal Ballet. "When I was a kid and performing we would come here and hang out after the shows. It's not only a building and a hotel for me – it is something that has a story and history to it, it has definitely defined who I am."

The 19th-century after-show spot (formerly the 92-room Hotel Opera and before that three homes) was acquired two years ago by Kolpin who set about transforming it from a fusty pension into a leading light of the booming city's none-too-shabby hotel scene. The first step for the former dancer was to ditch the single entrance and open up two others. "The whole thing needed to be a lot more homey and less institutional, so once you walk in you felt as if you were in somebody's house." Few domiciles however host a cocktail bar (called Tata), restaurant (Sanders kitchen) or a lobby (the Living Room, overseen by a Carlo Scarpa Murano chandelier).

In a city known for its design and fancy food scene, Kolpin knew his hotel would have to fight on all fronts to win customers. So the food is simple, offering a menu of home-cooked classics rather than a challenge to the airs and graces of the New Nordic crowd.

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Design-wise, however, there's an attempt to push things forward. "It was 92 rooms, now it is 54. Only the façade and staircases are left," says Kolpin proudly. Navigating the low-lit corners is a joy but there are also airy spaces, intricately decorated corridors and rooms with artwork commissioned to both reflect and evoke the ambience of the surrounding neighbourhood.

"This is not strict Scandinavian design – if it was strict I'd get bored," he says, with a grin. The end product comes courtesy of London-based design duo Lind + Almond, who kitted out every cranny with specially made fittings: from rattan panelling and headboards to textured linen cupboards, marble flooring and laser-cut grills covering the old heating systems. The team cut their teeth designing spaces for Soho House & Co and Conran + Partners.

There's even a covered courtyard farm and a wood fire by the rooftop terrace – often patrolled by smart staff in uniforms from Older Paris. "It's like a theatrical production: you have a stage, you have a space, someone is buying a ticket – whether it's for two hours or two days – you are buying a commodity," says Kolpin. For our part, we think that the price of admission is well worth the show. hotelsanders.com



Clockwise from top left: Alexander Kolpin; the hotel now has 54 rooms, instead of 92; a guest makes herself at home; Kolpin wanted to make the hotel feel less institutional; Tata cocktail bar; general manager Niholaj Tamakloe gets comfy



Copenhagen address book:

BREAKFAST:

Café Atelier September

Light and airy, this is a favourite with the brunch crowd; you should sample the café's signature dish, an open sandwich of thinly sliced avocado on rye. cafeatelierseptember.com

LUNCH:

Torvehallerne

A culinary cornucopia: fish, meat, fruit and vegetables; Italian, Spanish, Asian, French and Bornholm's delicacies; takeaways from Gorm's pizza and Coffee Collective; and Italian ice cream. torvehallernekbh.dk

VISIT:

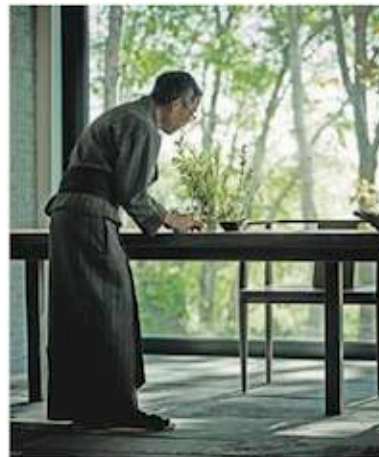
Kunsthal Charlottenborg

This ivy-laden red-brick structure just off the busy canal-side of Nyhavn was built by architects Ferdinand Meldahl and Albert Jensen in 1883 as an extension of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. charlottenborg.dk

SHOP:

Stilleben

One of the first Danish shops to sell graphic prints with its ceramics, the edit has now expanded to textiles and homeware. stilleben.dk



Ski resort: Niseko essentials

The first in a fuss-free, four-part guide to our favourite resorts. *Fiona Wilson*

STAY: Zaborin: Zaborin is a modern take on a traditional ryokan that's set in snowy surroundings and is away from the hubbub. Each of the 15 villas has its own indoor and outdoor baths fed by a mineral-rich hot spring. The food is good too, guided by Hokkaido-born chef Yoshihiro Seno. zaborin.com

BREAKFAST: Green Farm Café: For a full breakfast with good coffee, homemade sausages and vegetables grown in the area, this place in the middle of Hirafu does the job. Come later and you'll get burgers and Hokkaido cod and chips. There's takeaway too. +81 136 23 3354

LUNCH: Sobatei Rakuichi: With just 12 counter seats, it's walk-ins only for lunch at this small wooden soba (buckwheat noodle) restaurant. But it's worth the wait for the best soba in town from Tatsuru Rai. The restaurant is open in the evenings too – but then it becomes reservation only. +81 136 58 3170

DINNER: Robata Naniwatei Niseko: Naniwatei is a Sapporo institution that's been selling traditional Japanese food since 1962. At this 32-seat branch, which opened in 2016, head chef Tetsumasa Fujita cooks quality Hokkaido vegetables and seafood on a charcoal fire. There is sake and Hokkaido wine to pair. No walk-ins, booking only. robata-naniwatei.com

DRINKS: The Barn: Apres-ski has never been Japan's strong suit (karaoke notwithstanding) but this busy bistro in a lofty Hokkaido-style building hums with activity. The upstairs bar has a vast selection of wines and cocktails. nisekobarn.com

SHOP: The North Face Gravity Niseko: There's nothing wrong with wanting to look good on the slopes and this shop carries a great selection of North Face Japan and Ice Breaker undies plus snowboarding clobber. Much of it will look good in the city too. +81 136 55 8086