



Welcome to the future

BY: BARBARA E. EULER for KTCHNrebel ⌚ READING TIME: 2 MINUTES

Who knows what hotels will look like in the year 2050? Answer: we do! Hotels of the future already exist today. A study by Villeroy & Boch (which we reported on earlier) has us drooling over the coolest future-hotels in the world.

Example: Hamburg The spectacular Westin Hamburg, located directly on the harbor, is making headlines. Its gigantic glass facade blurs the boundaries between fixed and fluid, between inside and out. The more than 1000 window elements have different curvatures, creating fascinating mirror effects. Despite its size – 110 meters at its highest point – the structure, which also houses the world-famous Elbphilharmonie, has a light, airy feel to it. On the concave roof, sequins shimmer in the light like cresting waves. The hotel is on the east side of the building, extending from the 6th to the 20th and uppermost floor. Inside the rooms, floor-to-ceiling window fronts make guests feel like they're floating directly over the harbor – a luxurious and pleasantly weird concept that feels like it's straight out of the future.

For breathtaking architecture of a very different variety, look no further than the award-winning Crane Hotel Faralda in Amsterdam. As the name implies, the hotel is housed in an elaborately restored historical crane, in the middle of the trendy district around the old NDSM shipyard. The 50 meter-tall construction features three high-end designer suites and a spa at the very top. Famous models, artists, and free spirits often stay at the Crane, and even royals have been spotted there. The hotel is particularly appealing to anyone who wants to travel incognito – the entire building is only accessible to guests, and bookings even include discreet pick-ups and drop-offs. Crane Hotel Faralda has made a name for itself as the place to be when it comes to parties and events of all types... and if that's not enough excitement for you, you can even bungee jump from the top!

Our neighbors to the south have jumped into the futuristic hotel scene with both feet as well. The best example: Hotel Schani in Vienna. Despite its authentic Viennese charm, the facility is packed with innovations: you can check in via app, and there's a Bitcoin ATM on site. Oh, and let's not forget the robot working in the lobby. SchaniBot, which the hotel developed in conjunction with the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering and Organization (IAO), is currently a work in progress. The hotel began sending it around last fall, testing its ability to communicate with guests and gathering feedback on the experience. Now the robot is back at the lab, where scientists are working on boosting its customer service capabilities, hoping to impress guests even more than it already has. Incidentally, Schani's ahead of its time when it comes to environmental protection, too: the hotel has had electric car chargers in its garage since back in early 2017, and it has received Austrian and European environmental certification.

Of course, any discussion of futuristic hotels wouldn't be complete without Henn na, a chain of robot hotels with locations throughout Japan. The check-in desks are "manned" by an assortment of lively robots. At some locations, they look like regular people; at others, they're colorful dinosaurs. Henn na Maihama Tokyo Bay has the latter variety, and guests of all ages seem to enjoy the lovingly designed dino-bots. The technology fun at Henn na also extends to the rooms, where communication robots offer hours of futuristic entertainment. Some locations have features like individually adjustable lighting schemes, temperature-adjusted beds to help guests sleep, facial recognition locks on the doors, and special coatings on surfaces designed to foster a relaxed atmosphere. In short: the future is here. And it's a lot of fun!