

# Rosewood

## VIENNA

Heritage meets contemporary in the Austrian capital, where a new hotel captures the essence of the city.

Words: Lauren Jade Hill

Photography: Courtesy of Rosewood Hotels & Resorts

Like so many hotels that step into the bones of a heritage building, the vision for Rosewood Vienna began with the architecture. Taking over a collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings – formerly serving as the headquarters for Erste Group Bank – the hotel’s location on Petersplatz in the Austrian capital’s Old Town sees it flanked by landmarks such as the green-domed St Peter’s Church and gothic spires of St Stephen’s Cathedral. “Following our Sense of Place philosophy, we started by taking the heritage of the building as the leading inspiration, before looking at Vienna and Austria from a design perspective,” confirms Trish Luyckx, Group Vice President of Design & Project Services at Rosewood Hotel Group. “We researched the country’s design traditions and handicrafts and then paired that heritage with the Rosewood philosophy and style.”

The revival of the building – originally constructed in 1838 under the watchful eye of Austrian architect Alois Pichl – was brought to fruition by native practices A2K and BEHF Architects, along with London-based interior designer Alexander Waterworth and Conrad Kroencke of Austrian studio Kroanland – the latter envisioning the F&B areas.

The design quartet also worked alongside Parisian consultant Atelier 27 to curate the contemporary artwork collection that dresses the residential-style guestrooms and public areas. Botanical murals by Marie Hartig – handpainted over 40 days – hang in all-day lounge Salon Aurelie, and part





Designed to evoke the atmosphere of a Viennese coffee house, Salon Aurelie features botanical murals by Austrian artist Marie Hartig that were handpainted over 40 days

of the structure's façade features a colourful mural depicting modern Viennese life by Austrian graffiti artist Knarf. Other artworks see the reinterpretation of vintage Viennese postcards and the representation of legendary composer Mozart – not just for his status as an Austrian icon, but also owing to him having once lived in an apartment on this very site.

Upholstery and drapery come from Austrian textile manufacturer Backhausen and lighting is by Kalmar – who supplied various pieces to the public areas, including its Hase BL and Dornstab floor lamps – while shelves are dressed with books that offer insight into Vienna's cultural heritage as well as the work of artists such as Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt, both of whom left their mark on the city. "Everything has a link to either the building, Vienna or Austria," Luyckx explains, adding that the concept wasn't only about looking back. "The intent was that, while we have an incredibly historic property, we also wanted incorporate contemporary aspects that capture Viennese life today."

Such was the case for Waterworth, who instilled a somewhat residential feel in the hotel's 71 guestrooms and 28 suites, along with crafting warm and inviting public areas like the Asaya Spa and palatial Pavilion events space.

"My approach was to create a home-from-home experience that showcases an interpretation of Viennese culture and history through a more contemporary, timeless lens," says Waterworth of his first scheme in the city. "The overall vision was to design a space that embraced a sense of belonging."

Throughout the hotel's interiors, tall windows and soaring relief-decorated ceilings are set against a neutral palette enhanced with touches of warm orange, yellow and soft blue. The material palette sees parquet flooring and swathes of marble paired with sumptuous fabrics, patterned rugs and elegant accessories.

The Presidential Suite, known here as Hoffman House, spans 1,916ft<sup>2</sup> and comprises a master bedroom, living room, entertainment area, dining room and kitchen. Named after



Josef Hoffmann – the Austrian architect and founder of the Vienna Secession movement – the suite impresses with its J.L. Lobmeyr chandelier, Backhausen fabrics and eccentric bathroom accessories based on the designs of Hoffmann’s avant-garde arts and crafts enterprise, Wiener Werkstätte. “Authenticity is an essential part of integrating a design within its sense of place,” notes Waterworth. “Optimising local manufacturers and brands not only brings regional recognition, but also an innate connection.”

Continuing the theme, the Asaya Spa extends over the fifth and sixth floors with four treatment rooms, a social suite, relaxation area with city views, sauna, steam room and experience shower. Here, a palette of light blue, grey, ecru and greige adds warmth, while a turquoise ceiling with contemporary gold light fittings mimics the turquoise-green, gold-topped copper roofs of Vienna’s landmarks.

The city’s culinary roots meanwhile are honoured across a variety of dining venues

designed by Kroanland. On the sixth floor are panoramic brasserie Neue Hoheit and private dining space the Garden Room, which leads to the outdoor Secret Garden set among the rooftops and overlooking an inner atrium.

The light-filled brasserie features a show kitchen, wine gallery, bar and terrace, and speaks to the wider theme with its floor-to-ceiling windows, black-and-white floor tiles and glass sphere lighting by Bakalowits. A level above, Neue Hoheit is a speakeasy-style rooftop bar that echoes Vienna’s Art Nouveau style.

Completing the F&B line-up, Salon Aurelie evokes the atmosphere of a traditional Viennese coffee house, taking cues from the capital’s Palmenhaus restaurant. According to the operator, the venue is already a popular spot for city-dwellers intrigued by the renovation. “The building has so much history that locals are keen to see what has been done inside,” Luyckx concludes. “We want the hotel to become a point of reference in Vienna. Not just for overnight guests, but also for the community.”



**EXPRESS CHECK-OUT**  
**Owner:** Erste Group Bank  
**Operator:** Rosewood Hotels & Resorts  
**Architecture:** A2K, BEHF Architects  
**Interior Design:** Alexander Waterworth Interiors, Kroanland (F&B)  
**Art Consultant:** Atelier 27  
**Main Contractor:** Ay-Ka Bau  
[www.rosewoodhotels.com](http://www.rosewoodhotels.com)