

## SUMMARY BEST ACCOMMODATION CONCEPT

### Swissôtel Kursaal Bern

SWISSÔTEL KURSAAL BERN IS A CELEBRATION OF HERITAGE, NATURAL MATERIALS, PROGRESSIVE FUNCTIONALITY AND WARM HOSPITALITY.

The Kursaal is one of the most famous houses in Bern, Switzerland. Positioned on a hill with stunning views across the river and UNESCO old town, the site has been an important cultural meeting place for locals and travellers since 1860. Kursaal Bern became a franchise partner of Swissôtel/Accor in 2019. During this process, the hotel was redesigned by Nina Mair, thus implementing a new design philosophy.

Award-winning Austrian interior and product designer, Nina Mair, was selected to transform the hotel's **lobby and 171 rooms**. Swissôtel Vice President, Lilian Roten, explains: "Our **alpine heritage** has its roots in **craftsmanship, sustainable design and a conscious, active way of life**.

This is exactly what Nina Mair's design brings to the new Swissôtel Kursaal Bern. It's through these approaches that we offer our guests a sense of well-being, energy and joy of life." Mair sought to balance Kursaal Bern's legacy as a community meeting place with the needs of modern business and leisure travellers through a sophisticated yet homely atmosphere. Guests might come for work on a Friday and stay the weekend with family. The design is characterized by timelessness, a connection to nature, intuitive design features and soothing materials. Mair says: "My goal was to create a coherent ambience in which guests feel at home. Above all, **local and renewable materials** are used, combined with **technical refinements** to enhance each guest's stay."

The curvaceous form of the lobby—an important meeting and living space—has been configured into zones of light, custom-made furniture which are easily rearranged for social encounters or privacy. Clusters of greenery act as friendly room dividers and acoustics are carefully managed via wall panels and niches. Mair creates a strong connection to the outdoors by enhancing **natural light** through large glazed walls which open the lobby to the **gardens**, fishpond and incredible city **views**. In the evening, Mair's lobby ceiling design comes alive through sunken light pockets which impart a glamorous glow. The lobby counter, however, is the major centerpiece: taking inspiration from the woodwork motifs of the original building, Mair developed a bespoke stone counter imprinted with a contemporary "fretwork" relief pattern across the surface. To balance the tactility, Mair finishes the countertop in leather that is beautifully soft to touch. More of an art piece than a fixture, the concept marries history with

modernity and craftsmanship with technology—leaving visitors with a lasting impression.

Mair's design uses space intelligently for a **sense of openness whilst being pleasantly cocooned**.

Rooms feature **customized, built-in furniture**: long stone sideboards double as storage or desks, and oak boudoir dressers, headboards with twin side tables, and bench seating deliver comfort and function in compact spaces. Multiuse zones provide cosy living or working corners and custom-tiled bathrooms open or close via sliding smoked-glass doors with curtains for additional privacy.

**Technological comforts** have been implemented with discretion for a personalized sense of wellbeing. Inside the Vitality Suites—an innovative wellness concept—guests can enjoy custom-made fitness walls, yoga areas and personalized training routines. Customized baths with **rainfall showers** are luxurious whilst conserving water. Swissôtel's signature Pürovel bathroom products, which use essential oils, organically produced in Switzerland revitalise the senses. Mair's **restrained material palette** references the site's history whilst creating a calm atmosphere. In her trademark style, the designer chose to simplify rather than overtly add to the space. Inspiration for the two chosen materials—local oak and tiles—came from the building's heritage and are applied in sweeping motions through communal and private spaces in a clear and unified expression. Inside room entries and bathrooms, entire surfaces are laid with handmade Italian ceramic tiles in a fishbone pattern. The washing basins and shower trays were especially designed by the architects and realized by the company Laufen in custom-colours to match the existing surfaces and ceramic tiles. **Two customised colour schemes** are recognizable among the 170 rooms in the new Swissotel, depending on the room typology.

The beautifully minimalistic fixtures supplied by the German company Grohe, perfectly complement the high-quality sanitary objects from the Swiss manufacturer Laufen, creating a wellness ambience that deserves the description „designed and made in Europe“. A soothing spectrum of pale timber, mint green, soft pink and cool greys characterize the contemporary interiors which Mair devised into two schemes: larger Swiss Advantage Rooms are cast in cool green whilst smaller Classic rooms use warm, cozy tones. Natural **leather and wool details** throughout all rooms **satisfy the senses**.

The opening of Swissôtel Kursaal Bern in March 2021 marks the beginning of a new era for this celebrated site—presented through Mair's sophisticated and empathetic design language.