

A fetish for denim

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The world's first Levi's hotel unzips its door in Germany



In European cities it's not unusual to find the main train station located right next to the red-light district - Amsterdam and Munich are examples. It's also true for Frankfurt, the financial and aviation hub of the whole continent. And of all the places in the entire city, the world's first Levi's-inspired hotel has chosen this "exotic" district for its location. Bruno Marti, marketing manager for 25hours Hotel, says he sees nothing but positives. "There's always life on the street, so guests don't have problems walking back here at nights." He points out the convenience too - just a couple of minutes' walk from the main station. Besides, it's located right next to Levi Strauss' headquarters in Germany.

Tailored by Levi's - the name above the door says it all! Walking into the hotel, the warm atmosphere can't be down to just the smiles from the young and pretty receptionists. The reason for the familiarity quickly hits you - the indigo blue of jeans! Against this colour scheme, Levi's red labels, copper-colour buttons and cowboy boots are used as decor themes throughout. So far, so unusual.

But don't get me wrong, this is not a shrine for Levi's worshippers or a museum for jeans. "We want to create the atmosphere of the Levi's lifestyle through the denim's texture, colour, patterns, buttons and so on," says Marti. The hotel's 78 rooms on six floors are all dominated by different shades of denim blue, with red doorframes signifying the 501 red label.

The theme for the rooms is the history of Levi's, with each floor showing how the jeans maker has shaped our lifestyles, from the 1930s to the '80s. Rooms on the sixth floor reflect Levi's in the '80s, when the style was for bright neons and coloured jeans. Drop down a level and things go disco in the '70s-themed rooms, with carpets and furniture in clashing colours and crazy patterns. The radical '60s is picked out in clear lines, round shapes and sharp black-and-white contrasts. As we get to the deeper layers of Levi's history, the colours become dimmer. The glamour of the '50s is faithfully reproduced in pastel shades while the first-floor '40s reflect the tightening of belts during and after World War II with muted colours. Visit the birth of Levi's in the '30s, and the style becomes crisp and practical.

Guests can choose between a bright and lively room or a moodier decor, and rooms come in M, L or XL size. While you might find the "M" a tight fit compared to its Thai equivalent, it's roomy by Frankfurt standards. L is snug and the XL studio gives you space to breathe easy. And even though it's a journey into the past, each room is well equipped with modern technology including a flat-screen TV, iPod sound system and free WiFi. The coolest feature for this visitor though was the pair of jeans from the room's era - now that's stylish!

There are numerous details hidden away, too, but Marti warns that it will take you weeks to find them all. Staircases are painted to mimic the displays of jeans and clothes you find in boutiques. And just when you think it can't get any funkier, you find the Gibson Music Jam Room in the cellar, where guests can live out their rock-star fantasies on the piano, guitars and drums.

When your stomach needs filling, head down to Nykke&Kokki next to the lobby. It offers a variety of healthy dishes and freshly baked bread to mop them up with. The restaurant-cum-bar has an easy-going atmosphere, encouraging you to sit back, relax and enjoy the moment, rather than rush to pay once your dishes are cleared.

If your next destination is Frankfurt, it's worthwhile dropping by to check this hotel out. And if you're a die-hard fan of Levi's, this date with denim is unmissable!

AT A GLANCE

High point: Convenient location only a few minutes' walk from the main train station

Low points: Next to the red-light district, which might be too lively for some.

Find it: Niddastrasse 58, 60329 Frankfurt, Germany

Pay for it: Weekdays from 120 (Bt5,800)/night, weekends from 100/night; breakfast from 8. Guests under 25 get a 25-per-cent discount.

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