

TOP OF THE LAKE

Yacht-club vibes in a Swiss hotel with designer cachet

LAUREN HILL

Design guru Philippe Starck had always dreamed of creating a yacht club. When he was brought on board to put his stamp on heritage property La Reserve Eden au Lac hotel in Zurich, that dream became a reality.

Under Starck's touch, the hotel, which made its debut in early 2020, has taken on a nautical vibe inspired by its waterfront setting, the passion he and the founder of La Reserve Group, Michel Reybier, have for sailing, and by the feeling Starck had when he first stepped into the historic building.

"When I arrived at La Reserve Eden au Lac, I already felt like I was in a yacht club. Then I heard some rumours ... that Eden au Lac used to be a yacht club a long time ago. We found a lot of traces from the past – pictures of sailboats, mahogany panels used for yachts, oars and hulls of boats – and so my dream came true."

Now listed as a cultural monument, this 1909 building has stories to tell, from the success of its early years as a hotel to the turmoil of World War I and the revelry of the roaring '20s. Swiss businessman Arthur Louis Thurnheer steered the property through World War II and it changed hands in subsequent years until entering its most recent phase in 2017, undergoing a complete renovation before reopening in January 2020 as the latest edition to the La Reserve collection. It joins La Reserve properties in Geneva and Paris, a hotel in Ramatuelle and a beach club in Pampelonne, both on the French Riviera, and Reybier's wine-producing chateau, Cos d'Estournel, in Bordeaux.

As well as being the only five-star hotel in Zurich on the lake shore, Eden au Lac is the only accommodation here to combine its historic grandeur with the vision of one of the world's leading designers. Starck has injected his playful spirit into the neo-baroque landmark.

"I discovered in the ruins of the yacht club, in the steeple, a small hidden bar without windows, overlooking the terraces," says Starck. "Inside this dome, we created a charming place with quaint flower sofas, hanging mugs bearing the names of the sailors of the lake and, above all, an extraordinary collection of skiffs and kayaks fixed vertically into the structure to create a spectacular sculpture. This place opens up the imagination."

The rooftop venue, which has the feel of a harbour master's office, now houses the hotel's showstopper restaurant and bar, La Muna. It spans much of the sixth floor, with two terraces leading off the cosy wooden-beamed room. Peruvian-Japanese dishes by chef Tomoko Gunji Hangartner draw in Zurich's after-work and weekend crowd.

Elsewhere, Eden Kitchen & Bar offers international and Swiss dishes on one side and a sophisticated cocktail bar uncorking bottles of Michel Reybier Champagne on the other.

From the grand staircase to the tiled



Lake-view suite at La Reserve Eden au Lac Zurich, main; La Muna restaurant, below; balcony panoramas, inset

MORE TO THE STORY

Zurich has long had a place on the global art map but the past few years have seen the city's design credentials grow. In May 2019 the newly renovated Pavillon Le Corbusier, the last building constructed by the Swiss-French designer, was unveiled. In October last year, the David Chipperfield-designed extension to the celebrated

Kunsthaus art museum opened. It's a capacious geometric structure designed to give the institution landmark status. To see more art, visit the galleries and antiques shops running down the hill from Kunsthhaus to Grossmünster church, and across Münsterbrücke Bridge to the stained-glass windows of Augusto Giacometti and Marc Chagall in Fraumünster church. Guests of La Reserve Eden au Lac receive city passes granting complimentary access to public transport and museums.

pavillon-le-corbusier.ch
kunsthhaus.ch
zuerich.com

lobby, Starck has fused contemporary design elements with the original structure to preserve its most historic architectural features. Ara Starck – Starck's daughter, who is a successful artist in her own right – crafted the stained-glass windows that cast coloured light on to the stairs.

Each of the 40 rooms and suites affords uninterrupted lake and mountain views, with a light colour scheme pairing touches of Jatoba wood with textured marble, tan leather and sculptural silver accents. Starck designed every furnishing to fit the yacht-club theme, and appealing details such as Panama hats provide the finishing touch.

In Europe's winter months, the lake provides a picturesque setting for wrapped-up walks as the mist descends over the water.

The summer brings an entirely different experience when leisure revolves around being in, on or by the lake. Whatever the season, this retreat has once again become one of Zurich's most coveted places to stay.

Lauren Hill was a guest of La Reserve Eden au Lac Zurich.



IN THE KNOW

La Reserve Eden au Lac Zurich is about 20 minutes by road from Zurich airport. City view rooms from 700 Swiss francs (\$1085) a night. It's a minute's walk to Zurich Opera House and a little further to reach the Old Town and famous shopping boulevard Bahnhofstrasse.

lareserve-zurich.com



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