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Waldorf Astoria

A legend's encrypted messages

Building on the myth of the legendary Waldorf Astoria on New York's Park Avenue, the Waldorf Astoria Berlin at Breitscheidplatz square combines traditional luxury with a good shot of Berlin's own cosmopolitan wackiness. Anyone staying at this hotel needs to do a double take – since it is full of surprises and hidden messages.

The Presidential Suite on the 31st floor is not only 280 square metres, but at 115 metres up, it is also the highest hotel suite in the city. The floor-to-ceiling windows offer stunning 360° panoramic vistas across Berlin – but the most spectacular may actually be from the spa-like bath with its view of elephants and giraffes in the Berlin Zoo. The Library Lounge on the 15th floor not only has the best view of the landmark Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church – but it's also worth looking down for a moment at the carpet. Initially, you may only see individual lines, yet once put into perspective they create the pattern of a large fingerprint.

At second glance, the first floor between the Lang Bar and the breakfast restaurant recalls the railing of a luxury liner. The allusion here is to John Jacob Astor IV, founder of the first Waldorf Astoria in New York, who died when the Titanic sank in 1912. From the railing, guests can look down on Peacock Alley on the ground floor. The grand corridor once connecting the original New York Waldorf Hotel to its sister, the Astoria, was nicknamed 'Peacock Alley' after the elegant ladies in their bright gowns. Today, each Waldorf Astoria has its own interpretation of that famous feature.

The Art Deco spiral staircase from the Roca Restaurant to the Lang Bar also has an encoded message – if you imagine the staircase as a straight line, you can read the notes of Beethoven's 5th Symphony. The Lang Bar itself, though, has no cryptic message – quite the contrary. One look at the bar menu of over 100 drinks is enough to know it could be a very long evening!

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