



METAMORPHOSIS

STYLT - STORYTELLING VISIONARIES

Stylt was founded in 1991 by Erik Nissen Johansen, a Norwegian artist with a passion for creative concepts and engaging experiences. The company specialises in translating stories into highly distinctive, customer-centric communication concepts.

In adopting this fresh and highly distinctive approach, Stylt draws on insights into human desires and behaviours, over 20 years' experience of the hospitality industry, and trends in contemporary culture.

Today, from offices in Gothenburg in Sweden, the company employs over 50 people, including artists, designers to architects, interior designers, engineers, developers, copywriters and art directors. Their portfolio includes over 400 restaurants, 250 hotels in a wide variety of destinations.



Doorsign graphics



TO PUT IT MILDLY, it's an unusual choice of a theme for a hotel. A book that starts with the two killings before the killer is 'saved' by a middle class girl who has fallen into prostitution. But Crime and Punishment is no ordinary book. It is a cultural icon and a big part of the collective psyche of St. Petersburg, where the Radisson Sonya Hotel is located.

Today, thanks to a visionary concept implemented by Stylt, the hotel embodies the story in memorable fashion. Hints and reflections of Dostoyevsky's masterpiece are everywhere. They give the building a unique character and ensure it holds a unique place in the hearts of the guests who stay and dine there – as well as those of the citizens of St Petersburg.

The special character of the hotel is the result of the vision of Stylt – and Reval Hotels who briefed the company to make the 176-room hotel stand out in the market. At the time, it was their debut in the Russian Market and they wanted to make a splash.

For the project, the Stylt team started by visiting St Petersburg to see what made the city tick. They were told the Crime and Punishment was the best 'tourist guide' to the city. They realized that the book – acknowledged as one of the 50 most influential books ever written – was a global brand which could be leveraged in the design of positioning of the hotel.

As with other Stylt projects, the interior of the Sonya can be immediately enjoyed,

as well appreciated in depth. Initially, the interior impresses with bright contemporary design Russian references the interior strikes. But a quick word with the staff will enable you understand all the design philosophy.

"The hotel translates a literary masterpiece into great commercial success for the Radisson Sonya Hotel"

Entering the lobby, it's like you are in Dostoyevsky's studio. Book shelves stacked with different editions of Crime and Punishment and manuscript papers are one side. The reception desk is supported by Matryoshka dolls, which reference the way that Sonya bore Raskolnikov's burdens. Nearby is a traditional Russian lacquered box, featuring illustrations based on the novel.

The symbolism continues in the Metamorfo Restaurant and Bar, which is named after 'metamorphosis' the word chosen by Stylt to best summarise the story of Crime & Punishment. This idea is born out by images of the Virgin – whose qualities are typified by Sonya – morphing into Dostoyevsky and then Raphael. (Dostoyevsky was fascinated by Raphael's 'Sistine Virgin' painting).

Elsewhere, the guest rooms feature images of the Virgin, quotes from the novel

and paintings of Napoleon. Why Napoleon? Raskolnikov, compares himself to the French Emperor as the archetype of the 'superman'.

These are just a few of the references. The interior, like the book, takes the reader on a journey of discovery. And this has made the Sonya very successful. The mayor of St Petersburg is a fan. Dostoyevsky's grandson, an interior designer by training, is too. Asked how he would have designed the hotel he says, without missing a beat: 'Just like this.' ◊



THE STYLT RECIPE

1. Develop the Road Map®.

An emotional business plan that answers the core question: why should anyone come to my hotel or restaurant?

2. Create the look.

This involves translating the story, in a way that exactly matches the Road Map®, into: furniture, fittings, fabrics, props, artwork, lighting, and communication materials such as menus, labels, logos, tableware and stationery.

3. Make it real.

Blueprints and drawings, originals, digital products, and the interiors are built and decorated as planned. And, if required, publicity photos, launch strategies and event plans.



Hints and reflections of Dostoyevsky's masterpiece Crime and Punishment are everywhere throughout the hotel. The staff even have a crib sheet to brief guests.

