

# HOTELS

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RISING STAR ROUNDTABLE  
COCKTAIL TRENDS  
WORKING WITH ALIPAY

*Nesting with*  
**SCANDIC**



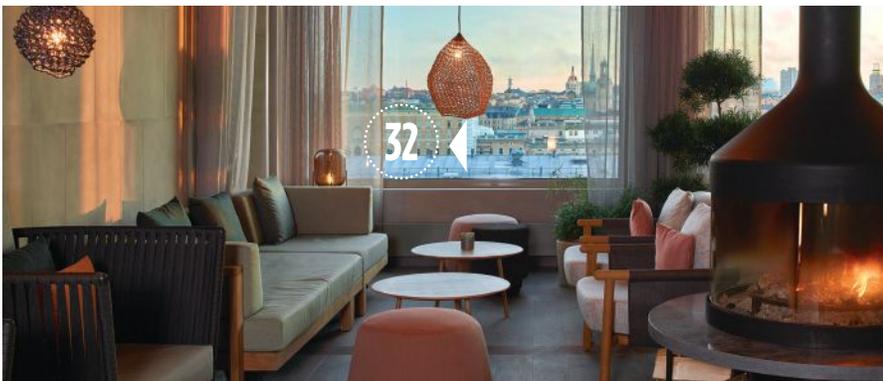
## FEATURES

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SPECIAL REPORT

# 20 next-gen LEADERS

HOTELS interviewed 20 of hospitality's brightest, all 40 and under, to get their perspectives on what the future of leadership looks like and how they plan to disrupt their industries. Freedom, empowerment, risk-taking and a growing awareness of the importance of balanced female leadership: these are just a few of the takeaways from our Wall Street Journal-sponsored roundtable held in Los Angeles just before the Americas Lodging Investment Summit.



### About the cover

Base camp, for campers, evokes a sense of home, of rest after a long day's journey. Scandic Hotels, the largest hotel operator in the Nordics with close to 230 locations, has taken the base camp analogy to heart and reengineered one of its traditional properties in Stockholm into a new hotel: Downtown Camper. "Over time, people's standards have risen and life has become more complicated and cluttered," says Peter Jangbratt, Scandic's managing director Sweden. "Now, we long for a simpler life; we long to go back to nature." See more in the design feature on p32.



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DESIGN

# BASE

In Downtown Camper's lobby, guests can pluck a complimentary kayak to explore Stockholm's archipelago or grab a bike and tour cobbled streets.



# CAMP

*for the city*

SCANDIC'S  
**DOWNTOWN  
CAMPER** BRINGS  
NATURAL REALISM  
TO STOCKHOLM.

*Contributed by* RAINI HAMDI

**B**ase camp. Two words that are sweet music to hikers, a place to rest, recharge, gather resources before the big adventure. Cities are why people want wilderness; how could city hotels be base camps?

But Scandic Hotels, the largest hotel operator in the Nordics with close to 230 locations, has taken the base camp analogy to heart and reengineered one of its traditional properties in Stockholm into a new hotel called — what else? — Downtown Camper. At the property's official opening in early February, among those present were Robin Trygg, the youngest man in Sweden to conquer Mount Everest, and Fredrika Eka, a Swedish woman who dedicated three years of her life to biking around the world.



The Nest serves as a private rooftop wellness space with experience showers, a heated pool and the sauna nest.



Part of Downtown Camper's playful nature: meeting rooms with games.

What's the big idea? "We were inspired by some of the most recent 'super trends,' including the idea of 'back to basics,'" says Peter Jangbratt, Scandic's managing director Sweden. "Over time, people's standards have risen and life has become more complicated and cluttered. Now, we long for a simpler life; we long to go back to nature."

Jangbratt says Downtown Camper encourages an active lifestyle and a curious mindset. "Our guest is an independent traveler who wants to explore the city in new ways, find the hidden gems and get to know the local community," he says. "We want our guests to have a real taste of Stockholm and not just feel like a tourist during their stay."

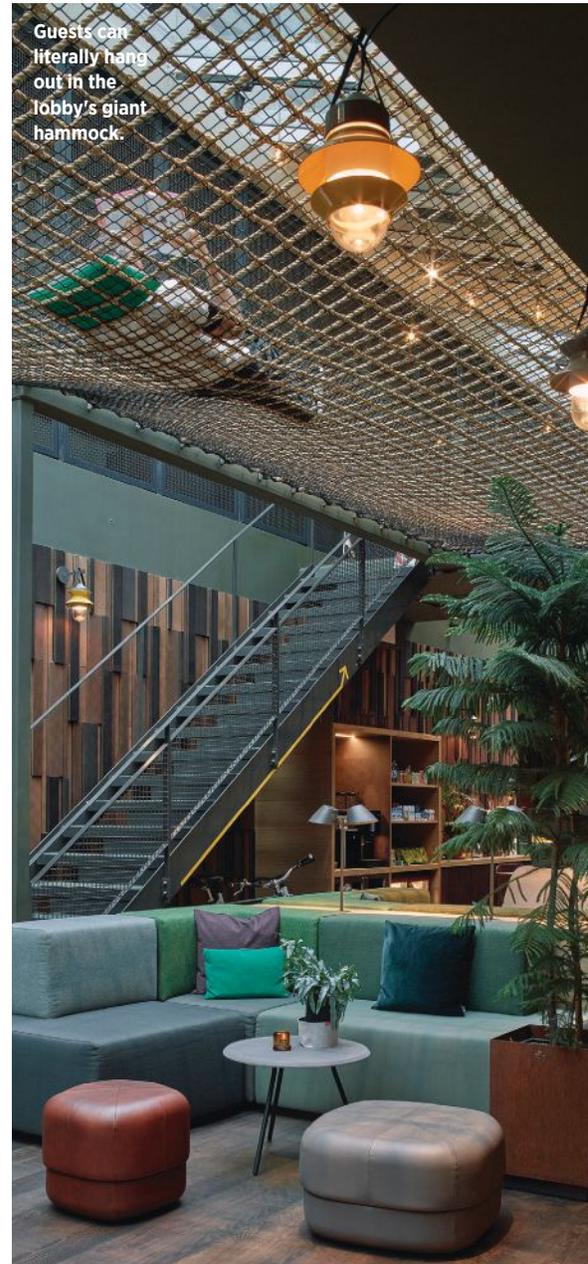
So Downtown Camper brings nature

and base camp sociality into the hotel, and takes guests outside to explore the urban jungle neighborhood. The notion is travelers, like hikers, also want a place to regroup their senses, chart their course for the next adventure and step outside ready for whatever may come their way.

The concept isn't necessarily a novelty when seen as part of the movement among hotels to cater to young-at-heart, independent, curious travelers hankering to be part of, not just in, local streets. But as always, it's the execution that makes the difference.

**DESIGN DIFFERENCE**

Downtown Camper's design bins the "lobby as a social space" idea slayed by first movers in



Guests can literally hang out in the lobby's giant hammock.



The lounge continues the nest theme and offers great views of the city.

the lifestyle hotel segment such as CitizenM. Instead, the lobby design tugs at the hearts of guests to embrace the outdoors — even while they are getting their room keys. Beautiful kayaks are mounted on the ceiling at the front desk; a sleek bicycle hangs on a wall in the lobby. A man reading in a giant hammock net above the lobby is not only for show. Guests can pluck a kayak to explore Stockholm’s archipelago or grab a bike to tour Gamla Stan’s cobblestone streets, free of charge. Reviews on social networks show this is consistently an aspect guests greatly appreciate.

Scandic Hotels worked with Gothenburg-based architects Stylt Trampoli to transform the former Scandic Sergel Plaza into Downtown Camper, its fifth in a collection of Signature hotels launched two years ago that comprises rebrands and new-builds marketed under their own individual names with the extension “by Scandic.”

With Signature, the group has managed to increase rates. A classic double room typically costs SEK 1,550 (US\$189) to SEK 2,000 (US\$244) per night, while rates at the former Scandic Sergel Plaza averaged around SEK 1,100 (US\$133) per night.



Campfire restaurant is outfitted with a central fireplace and camp-inspired furnishings.

“As a Signature hotel, we see potential in primarily the U.K., Germany and U.S. markets,” Jangbratt says. “In contrast, Scandic Sergel Plaza targeted mainly the Scandinavian and north European markets. Downtown Camper is designed with the needs of the modern traveler in mind, where the line between business and leisure is blurred.”

A criterion of a Signature hotel is an original building with a bold lifestyle character that lends itself to innovative social

concepts. The Downtown Camper architecture is Brutalist, from the ‘60s, and the area was a popular hangout for skateboarders during the ‘70s, according to Jangbratt.

It has been the cultural and commercial center of downtown Stockholm for many decades, just two minutes walk from the central station, the Royal Opera House, Kulturhuset and Stadsteatern. “It’s the combination of the building, the location, and the originality that makes Downtown Camper unique,” Jangbratt says.

The renovation took a little over two years with the exterior preserved, a top floor added featuring The Nest (a rooftop pool, wellness area, lounge and gym), the interior redesigned and connecting doors added to many rooms for a Camper Co-Living directed at extended family or big groups of friends or colleagues traveling together.



Co-living rooms can host up to 12 guests.

**A HUGE CAMP**

Stockholm has its fair share of funky hotels, but Eric Nissen Johansen, Stylt Trampoli's founder and creative director, is cool about the challenge of making a large hotel, which has 494 rooms, feel camp-like. The firm focused on creating the feeling of togetherness and tried to translate that feeling into a hotel experience, according to Johansen.

"Downtown Camper was created for the type of people who feel more comfortable in their leisure clothes than their work suits, and for everyone that prefers a fun, unique hotel stay over a run-of-the-mill experience," Johansen says. "It's an outdoor attitude located in the middle of the city; untamed and authentic; down to earth. It's a relaxed and laid-back oasis in the bustling city, a modern base camp for the urban explorer."

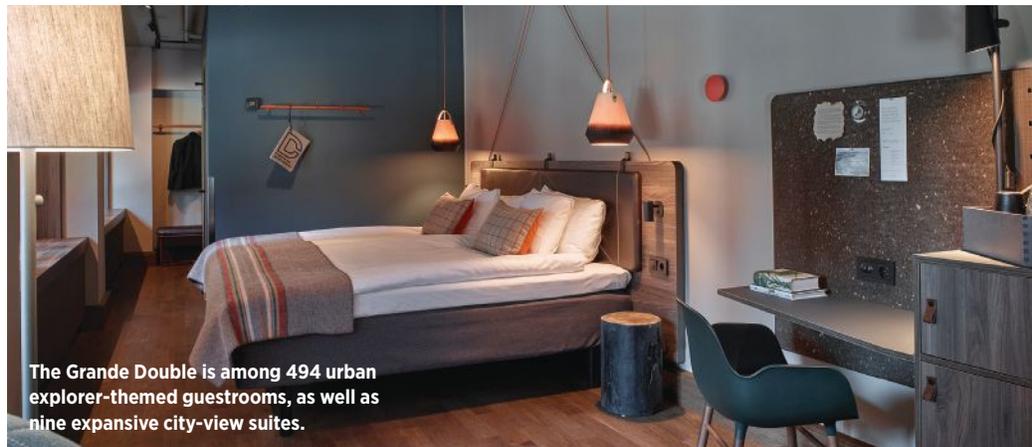
The outdoor attitude manifests itself in other details. Look at the elevators' moss ceilings, greenery growing out of pillars and flashlight-inspired lamps throughout the corridors. And, of course, the bird's nest shape of The Nest, whose sauna contains around 1,000 branches sourced locally.

Campfire, its restaurant, is outfitted with a central fireplace and firewood, and camp-inspired furniture and pillows, and hosts Campfire Sessions (acoustic sets with local artists). The Camper Lounge contains a massive log table as a centerpiece.

"I believe that a sense of informality is the most important ingredient in a successful F&B or social space," Johansen adds. "At Campfire, everything from the service,



Co-living bath



The Grande Double is among 494 urban explorer-themed guestrooms, as well as nine expansive city-view suites.

the menus (campfire-inspired dinners, the comforting stew), the music and the varied seating arrangements further enhance the welcoming, casual atmosphere."

His own favorite space is the primary conference room that also serves as a game room. "Guests are always hanging out, playing games and testing out the swings. Such a fun space," Johansen says.

Downtown Camper also has a lifestyle concierge whose job is "to make strangers

into friends and to make sure all guests have a unique and exciting stay," Jangbratt says. It also banks on Scandic's experience in working with innovative partners within the local community and in bringing locals and travelers together.

"We invite both locals and our hotel guests to join the daily activities, and that's something we would like to preserve. We have to thank our amazing staff for much of our success," Jangbratt says.