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MOSS: The Genuine Article?

A stylish newcomer is staking a claim as Moscow's first 'real' boutique hotel

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MOSS

"Moscow—as you've never seen it before"—these are the first words to greet visitors on the website of MOSS, a new hotel on Krivokolenny Pereulok. The promise holds true: MOSS takes the local hotel scene into uncharted waters, boldly blurring the lines between traditional luxury establishment, art gallery, and friendly guesthouse.

"MOSS might be the first real boutique hotel in Moscow," explains Anna Endrikhovskaya, the head of MOSS' concierge service.

"Every small hotel in the city that has four to five-star level service wants to call itself a boutique hotel. But a real boutique hotel is defined by its location, auteur design based on a clear concept, owners that take an active part in the hotel's life, as well as attentive

service,” adds Endrikhovskaya.

Opened in April by the Adwill company, MOSS is run by a team of like-minded people, including developer duo Mikhail Andreyev and Rustam Topchiev, known for a range of highprofile projects around the country.

Easy to miss, MOSS occupies a former maintenance building behind a dilapidated 17th-century house that once belonged to the Golitsyns, one of Russia’s most prominent aristocratic families. MOSS. Why MOSS? “It’s soft to the touch, like everything here, and the word sounds a bit like Moscow,” says Endrikhovskaya.

The Trud workshop, which is MOSS’ exclusive partner, produced most of the decorations, furniture and various objets d’art, which make MOSS’ interior look like nothing else you’ve seen. Much of it makes use of the original wood and nails from the Golitsyn building.

The lobby and adjacent areas were designed by Natalya Belonogova, known for the cosy interiors of restaurants Ugolek, Pinch and Uilliam’s—hence the fireplace, lit every night.

The walls of the lobby, staircases and corridors would look more in place at an art gallery than a hotel. Both Russian and foreign artists are currently on view, including multidisciplinary practitioner Protey Temen and traveling illustrator Stephanie Ledoux. MOSS plans to hold full-scale exhibitions in the near future.

The lobby’s other attractions are blinking, chameleon-like lamps made from car air filters by the designer Sasha Fuchs, and a corner with clothing by Milan normcore brand Dondup.

The central staircase seems to float on air, each step protruding from the wall seemingly without any support. The walls of the elevator shaft are covered in moss—you can admire it while riding in the transparent cabin.

Sadly, MOSS’ choice of restaurant partner does not match its boldness in design. The lobby hosts yet another outpost of the ubiquitous Coffeemania chain.

The hotel has 30 rooms, starting from 16,000 rubles ($280) per night. The three categories are called “moss soft,” “moss sweet” and “moss high”—and each is a work of art. From the baroque lamps to the Australian aboriginal art on the walls and the wardrobe handles made out of Black Sea pebbles, every detail speaks of a meticulous approach to design.

The hotel prides itself on its concierge service. Endrikhovskaya and her team will arrange “anything within legal bounds,” from tickets to the Bolshoi to a reservation at a secret bar.

MOSS, then, has all the makings of a great boutique hotel—an alternative to the city’s grand hotels that has a style all of its own and attracts locals as well as visitors.

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