



# Stay open-minded. Find something unique.

*magdas* HOTEL is a colourful coming together - of globetrotters, visitors, revellers, explorers and discoverers.

Run by twenty former refugees and ten hotel professionals, in cooperation with artists, architects and students, *magdas* HOTEL is something different: a place for meetings and connections, going far beyond regular hotel experience.

A stylish lounge, cafe, library and garden bring together tourists, neighbours, park visitors, the local creative scene, students from the art academy next door. Readings, exhibitions, concerts, film nights, discussions and Social Dinners mean the hotel is always alive with the exchange of ideas.

## **Business-focused, socially run**

*magdas* HOTEL is part of Caritas Vienna's Social Business group. Their aim is to address social matters through a market approach, wherever possible. The concept of a social business is based on Nobel Prize-winner Muhammed Yunus: all income is reinvested, to create more social change. The hotel does not receive any public funding that is not also available to other companies. *magdas* HOTEL must be self-financing, without losing sight of its ultimate goal: improving the lives of otherwise marginalised people.

Migrants with a refugee background face problems in finding work in Austria. Challenges include a lack of German, a reluctance on the part of some employers, and a long wait (of months or sometimes years) before the approval of asylum status, which is a requirement for legal employment.

We are convinced that staff who come from around the world bring real advantages to a hotel business – skills, talents, languages and cultural insights – that give *magdas* HOTEL a significant advantage over its competitors. The experience of the past few months, since the opening of the hotel, proves us right.

### **From modest resources – come great things...**

The project is based in a former Caritas retirement home, and financed via crowdfunding of € 57,306, plus a € 1.5m loan from Caritas Vienna.

To enable the adaptation of the building, on a limited budget, upcycling was a key element from the start. With help from renowned architects AllesWirdGut and artist Daniel Buechel, the nine month turnaround involved taking fitted cupboards from the original nursing home, and turning them into benches, tables and lamps. Old doors became new mirrors – and even luggage racks from Austrian trains now hold suitcases in each room. Enthusiastic volunteers got involved at every stage, from knitting lampshades to growing herbs in the garden. Students and staff from the neighbouring Academy of Visual Arts have produced art to decorate each room, meaning every guest has a unique view. The design of each room was completed by furniture donated by the public, and also Caritas's own used furniture shop, CARLA. This all goes to show that commitment, flexibility and creative ideas can more than make up for limited financial means. To our great delight 2015 *magdas* HOTEL was rewarded with the Austrian State Prize for Design.

### **Facts & Figures**

- Opened in February 2015
- 20 former refugees and 10 experienced hotel staff
- 16 nationalities
- More than 20 languages spoken
- 88 rooms in five categories, 60% with balconies and three with wheelchair access
- Suites and penthouse have TV and satellite
- Salon with lounge and bar, terrace and library
- Rooms from € 62
- Free wifi and tablets for hire
- Bike rental
- Seminar rooms
- Potential for hosting large events