

HOTEL INTEL

AMERIKALINJEN IS A HAUTE-HIP GETAWAY IN OSLO



ROCHELLE LASH

A visit to the Amerikalinjen is an encounter with both the glorious past and dynamic present of Oslo, Norway.

The hotel has reimagined a 1919 heritage landmark. The hotel was originally the headquarters of the Norwegian American Line, a shipping company that travelled between Norway and New York back in the day.

Today, this architectural treasure has been transformed into a haute-hip boutique hotel with sizzling scenes at Atlas Brasserie & Café and the innovative bar Pier 42, as well as Gustav, an insiders jazz club.

Amerikalinjen is in the heart of Oslo, across the street from Oslo Central Station and therefore has easy access from Oslo Gardermoen Airport on the smooth Flytoget train.

Lounging in the lobby facing Jernbanetorget Square, I felt instantly in sync with the city, watching the strollers, trams and scooters criss-crossing the open space.

“Amerikalinjen is a highly charged destination and a stylish home base for modern-day explorers to our buzzy capital city,” said Petter A. Stordalen, head of Strawberry Hospitality Group. “The hotel integrates old and new and celebrates both American diversity and Norway’s spirit of adventure.”

The neighbourhood: The Oslo Visitor Centre across the street is the place to buy an Oslo Pass, a ticket to all major sites, such as the Nobel Peace Centre and the new-in-2022 National Museum.

A few blocks away is the Oslo Fjord, which is alive with cruise



The Amerikalinjen in Oslo, a stylish boutique hotel in the historic former headquarters of the Norwegian American Line, recalls glamorous 20th-century ocean crossings and has 112 rooms and suites. AMERIKALINJEN

ships, floating saunas and such electric sightseeing boats as the Legacy of the Fjords and the MS Brisen of the Brim Explorer Line.

The revitalized port district, Bjørvika, is known for its striking contemporary architecture, including the Oslo Opera House, the Deichman Bjørvika library, new Munch Museum and the Barcode Project, a collection of tall, narrow futuristic buildings.

For an all-around tour, the HMK Oslo Panorama Tour stops at the city’s high points, including the Vigeland Sculpture Park, Olympic Holmenkollen Hill and Ski Jump, Oslo Cathedral and Akershus Castle (sightseeingoslo.com, via bus or boat).

Norway’s legendary winter sports beckon, even in summer. It’s a 30-minute ride on a local train to the year-round indoor SNØ arena, where you can cross-country ski, ice-climb, downhill ski and snowboard

(snooslo.no). No worries about what to wear: Helly Hansen’s flagship store is across the street from the hotel.

Today’s vibe: Above all, Amerikalinjen is cool. The front-deskers wear unconventional mix-and-match striped and checked suits by Norwegian designer house Holzweiler, an eco-conscious company. The hotel’s art collection is edgy, too. Norwegian guru Sune Nordgren has curated a multi-generation collection that showcases pop-art posters of Patti Smith and Barack Obama, as well as vintage maritime memorabilia like sepia-toned photographs and nautical maps, plus futuristic multimedia installations such as Spencer Finch’s colourful Fluorescent Lights.

Amerikalinjen has 112 rooms and suites with high ceilings, spiffy bathrooms and up-to-date electronic controls for music, lighting and TV. Breakfast — and

it’s spectacular — is included, as is the mini-spa facility, with a gym, sauna, rain showers and heated ceramic relaxation beds.

The retro-inspired design plays on the shipping line’s upper-deck glamour with black and white art deco tiling, frosted glass and sensual velvet furniture. Fine architectural fittings such as pendant lamps, antique wood and ornamental cornices have been repurposed.

Dining/drinking: Amerikalinjen’s service throughout is outstanding, from barista coffees to cocktails, and Atlas Brasserie and Café is a local hit, so reservations are recommended.

Breakfast, included in every stay, is a tour de force, with à la carte eggs Benedict and a buffet of muesli parfaits, bowls of berries, Norwegian smoked salmon, skagen (shrimp salad), cod caviar, pastries from the hotel’s Little Bakery, plus extensive vegan and

IF YOU GO

Oslo Tourism: visitoslo.com; Norway: visitnorway.com.
Amerikalinjen: 47-21-40-59-00, amerikalinjen.com; Jernbanetorget 2, Oslo, Norway. Member of Preferred Hotels & Resorts / Historic Hotels Worldwide. Accessible.
Price: Best rate guarantee. Rates fluctuate and are approximate. May-September, rooms from about C\$405; Fortuna suite, from about \$780. October-April, rooms from about \$380; Fortuna suite, from about \$750. All include breakfast buffet, wellness features. Packages with champagne/dinner, jazz evenings.

lactose- and gluten-free choices.

Lunch highlights include creamy tarragon fish soup, cod (one of Norway’s seafood staples), steak, a vegetarian burger and a topnotch Caesar salad. Saturday’s jazz brunch — with live music — might be a steak sandwich, croque monsieur, avocado toast, a beet and goat cheese salad or a nod to New York, pastrami on a bagel (lunch, Monday to Friday)

On offer for dinner are king prawns, beef tartare, langoustines with saffron orzo, roast Norwegian lamb, steak and grilled cod velouté (cod is one of Norway’s staples). Delectable sharing platters include Norwegian porterhouse and T-bone or a whole roasted turbot (dinner, Tuesday-Saturday).

The streetside bar, Pier 42, is named after a shipping berth on New York’s East River. It has been dubbed the best cocktail bar in Norway by two national bartenders organizations. It plays on its Norway-New York link with awesome creations like Manhattan-henge and the Spanish Harlem. (Monday to Saturday).

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