



Down the tube



DASPARKHOTEL IN LINZ, AUSTRIA.

To the undiscerning eye they are concrete tubes, but Andreas Strauss has conceived dasparkhotel as a 'hospitality tool' that is a world away from five stars.

Text by Emma Firmin. Pictures by Dietmar Tollerian.

Hotel art might normally evoke images of abstract paintings behind reception desks, but dasparkhotel is the urban reality. Concrete cylinders in a park in the middle of Linz, Austria, could sound like the antithesis to comfort, yet that really is not the point (or true.) Every year the city hosts the ARS Electronica Festival, but the event has become more and more a city marketing tool, and Strauss could see the opportunity to develop a concept that would provide easy access sleeping units for friends, students or artists with smaller budgets. Initial funding came by way of KUPF Innovationstopf, an upper Austrian cultural platform, under its 'radical openness' competition, but the persuasive collaboration with manufacturers made the concept concrete. The Austrian company C Bergmann provided three tubes (each weighing 9.5 tonnes) and the transport, and similar generous deals were worked out in the interior details: mattresses, bed frames and wood.

It is basic accommodation - bed, light, power connection - but for Strauss what seems to have been important is that as a crossover project it had no 'look don't touch qualities'. The tubes were chosen because of their almost perfect pre-settings, and with 20cm concrete walls they provide a lot of safety against vandals and others with less

good intentions. The units are surprisingly bright and with great thermal properties - with walls that thick even in the summer it never gets too hot.

PAYBOX

To fulfil the essential requirements of a hotel the precise location was obviously important, so toilets, showers, restaurants and a swimming pool are just a couple of minutes away. Aside from sleeping in a concrete tube, one of the unique qualities of dasparkhotel is the manner in which it operates. Guests book exclusively over the Internet and are emailed a code number, which by the time of their arrival gives them access. There is also a 'pay as you wish' system, which could be open to abuse, but it seems that contributions to the PayBox have allowed it to achieve a status of a 'no cost project', as people's donations have covered both the servicing and any repairs.

Dasparkhotel is currently closed but will reopen in May 2006 in the village of Ottensheim, just outside of Linz and there are currently plans to develop the concept in Maribor, Slovenia.

www.dasparkhotel.net

Concept: Andreas Strauss

Organisation: Gunda Wiesner, Georg Brunader, Olivia Schütz

Web page and booking system: Claudia Kogler and Nicki Diemannsberger

