



THE FONTENAY  
HAMBURG

## **“HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT SHADE OF TURQUOISE OR PLACE RECTANGULAR FURNITURE AGAINST SEMI-CIRCULAR WALLS”**

### **AN INTERVIEW WITH INTERIOR DESIGNER CHRISTIAN MEINERT, AUKETT + HEESE**

#### **What was especially challenging about The Fontenay’s architecture in terms of the interior design?**

No wall in this building is parallel with the next. The partition walls in the rooms fan out from the inside to the outside and the facade wall is neither concave nor convex. As a result, we couldn’t use the same plans for each room as there are six main centre points to measure all radii from. For example, each natural stone slab in the bathrooms is custom-planned and specially cut.

The exceptional geometric shape opens up the room, showcasing it in its full splendour. Nevertheless, you can’t position rectangular furniture against semi-circular walls. For instance, the television was a problem for a long time because of the shape of the room. We had to come up with a unique construction that would allow guests to watch television from central points in the room and we’re quite proud of the result. Particularly since – in contrast to the rooms of many hotels – the television set isn’t the focal point.

#### **What was your initial response when you were awarded the commission for this hotel project?**

The building already looked incredibly impressive on paper. You can sense the emotive appeal of the architecture, where each part blends in harmoniously with the next without any explanation required. This level of sophisticated versatility – two restaurants, the spa with its swimming pool, the rooftop bar and the spacious patios – isn’t always possible in an urban hotel for a variety of reasons. Me and my team, especially Ilona Braun und Detlef Feußner, hit it off with architect Jan Störmer immediately and it was obvious that the interior design would have to reflect the building’s organic shape. Consequently, circular forms are encountered everywhere and there are superb combinations of various materials – terrazzo, several types of parquet, white and green onyx – all of which engage with the building to lend it a refreshing look.



A MEMBER OF  
THE LEADING HOTELS  
OF THE WORLD



**Much of the furniture throughout the hotel has been made to order exclusively for The Fontenay. What's your personal favourite?**

This unique building requires bespoke furniture. Nothing in this hotel is off the shelf. Except for the chairs in the rooms, which are design classics by Eero Saarinen from Knoll International, virtually all of the furniture has been custom made. For the suites, we further sourced from leading Italian manufacturers like B&B Italia, Flexform or Moroso.

My favourite is the sofa in the guest rooms. It's not an overly soft sofa that you sit down on and almost feel engulfed by as is so often the case these days. Instead it's high and firm, but superbly comfortable.

**The rooms and suites and their trapezoidal-shaped layouts have parquet flooring, but how did you solve the problem with the carpet for the semi-circular corridors?**

Machines can only make rectangular carpets, and we would have had to piece them together like patchwork, which means wasting almost 70 per cent of the material – a colossal amount! So we decided to collaborate with House of Tai Ping in Hong Kong instead. They use hand tufting guns to produce small batches that are custom-made, hand-tufted and based on our floorplans. This is the only way for the carpet to match the given geometric shape. Six carpet sections were supplied for each storey and then rolled out directly in the round parts of the corridors.

**What do you think makes your lobby an exceptional place?**

We place huge emphasis on creating an environment where guests feel welcomed. There's no traditional reception counter at The Fontenay that segregates staff from guests. At The Fontenay, guests and staff sit down at one table so to speak, which is much nicer and more personal than standing opposite one another. The open-plan architecture reflects this aspect. Guests can see our reception staff as soon as they enter the hotel.

**How do you find the right turquoise?**

The rooms' base coat, the wardrobes' bleached wood and the light-coloured parquet flooring need splashes of colour that don't dominate or antagonise. The colours are based on the surroundings, lots of green, light and dark blue. People often perceive turquoise as being more blue or more green. The turquoise in the velvet on the





THE FONTENAY  
HAMBURG

beds' headboards can look different depending on the fabrics nap direction, therefore responding to each person's definition of this colour.

**Similarly to Hitchcock, you've made your own cameo appearances in your projects to date – what did you dream up for The Fontenay?**

I'm a technophile and seize any opportunity to combine technology with interior design. The mirror wall in the events lobby consists of 30 mirror elements – each three metres high – that reflect the light and greenery of the inner courtyard. Each element has a custom-controllable stepper motor that changes its settings according to a specially designed visual script to create new impressions of the interior over and over again.

AUKETT + HEESE is an architectural firm headquartered in Berlin that specialises in planning complex and sophisticated buildings for clients in the retail, office, residential and hotel building sectors. Excellence in implementing a building's design planning in its detailed planning is a key element of the company's approach. AUKETT + HEESE employs about 150 people throughout Germany and is a member of the Aukett Swanke Group. Project manager Christian Meinert has been in the company for 25 years and helped to build Aukett + Heese. Ilona Braun, Detlef Feußner and Christian Meinert were involved in The Fontenay interior design from design phase 3.

For more information visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheFontenayHamburg> and [www.thefontenay.de](http://www.thefontenay.de) website.

For photos and renderings click on this link: <http://www.thefontenay.de/media/download-galerie/>.

Press contact:

Claudia Bellmann

PR Manager

The Fontenay Hamburg

Fontenay 10, D-20354 Hamburg

Tel: +49 40 605 6605 837

[claudia.bellmann@thefontenay.de](mailto:claudia.bellmann@thefontenay.de)



A MEMBER OF  
THE LEADING HOTELS  
OF THE WORLD