

## SOFITEL STEPHANSDOM

LOCATION: Vienna, Austria  
 DESIGN: Jean Nouvel



One doesn't usually hire Jean Nouvel to design a basic tower, but that's what Accor Hotels initially told the architect they wanted for their first Sofitel property in Austria. "Nouvel wanted something in the context of the surrounding buildings," says project manager Ingrid Menon. "He tried to make a building that wasn't a tower building, but wasn't a small building either. It's a mixture of both." The resulting 18-story project (with a five-story volume that juts out from the main structure, housing the lobby and entrance) lies on the island district of Leopoldstadt. Each side is a different color—grey to the south, black glass to the west, a mirrored east-facing facade, and a glass one to the north. The only shots of color are from three installations by Swiss video artist Pipilotti Rist. One, on the rooftop restaurant's ceiling, achieves what Menon says was Nouvel's goal of making a "modern interpretation" of the nearby St. Stephen's Cathedral. —RIMA SUQI



## EL MOLINO

LOCATION: Barcelona, Spain  
 DESIGN: BOPBAA / Fernando Salas

El Molino, a theater near Barcelona's Parallel Avenue, opened in 1899 and quickly become renowned for its intimate burlesque performances. Actors and the audience were—quite literally—at arm's length. In 1997, however, the company running the place went bankrupt and shut it down. Afterwards, a botched renovation job gutted much of its interior. This led to a new buyer, who hired local architecture firm BOPBAA and interior designer Fernando Salas to spearhead an 11-year restoration of the space, keeping intact the close audience-performer proximity while bringing its design and technology into the 21st century, from Swarovski-embossed leather seating to LEDs animating the interior railings.

Central to this re-imagined 14,000-square-foot, 230-person-capacity venue is its curvy 88-foot high red wall situated above the stage, which BOPBAA partner and architect Josep Bohigas calls "the tongue"—a reference, says Bohigas, to the fact that it looks "like a tongue coming out from a mouth," but also to the romanticism of the place, as well as to the "clear and correct" speech of the actors. Enveloping this empty, exaggerated vertical space, for a closed-in yet comfortable feel, are other new additions, including a basement kitchen, mezzanine-level indoor-outdoor cocktail bar, backstage rehearsal rooms, and a glazed facade. —S.B.

