Staying anywhere but still: 2026 hotel trends shaping hospitality

From climate adaptive stays to contactless convenience, we chart the hotel trends currently shaping the hospitality industry in 2026 and beyond.

14/10/2026 • 6 min read

Words: Charlotte Slinger

Hotels have long been more than just a place to stay, with the ubiquitous lobby bar and destination restaurant now familiar fare for both seasoned travellers and the design studios bringing a new concept to life. But as virtually every element of our built environment becomes increasingly porous and multifunctional, and guest expectations reach a new baseline, the hotel industry must continuously find new ways to evolve if it wishes to survive.

From climate adaptive stays and contactless convenience to de-centring the hotel room itself, we explore the six trends currently shaping the landscape of the hospitality industry in 2026 and beyond.

The hotel without rooms

More than mere accommodation, today's hotels are becoming mixed-use ecosystems: destinations not only serving the quotidian requirements of dinner, breakfast and a good night's sleep, but catering to a broader spectrum of our personal lives – including socialising, working and staying healthy. Beyond in-house bars and restaurants, hotels are expected to invest more into spaces for culture, entertainment, retail and wellness, while the rooms themselves arguably take a creative backseat. This fundamental redistribution of space is why we see leading design studios tapped to oversee shared, revenue-generating spaces such as lounges, spas and restaurants, while the brand's in-house team delivers the often more understated guestrooms upstairs.

One ever-growing branch of this ecosystem is, unsurprisingly, coworking; and while sitting in the lobby with a laptop and a coffee is nothing new, these offerings are becoming more sophisticated and are often a core part of a hotel's appeal. Crafted at Powdermills, for instance (a Sussex concept by Birch founder Chris King and Hackney studio House of Dré), is equal parts hotel and members' club, pairing wellness services such as contrast therapy, padel courts and a pottery studio with a private library and coworking space, The Old Kitchen. Membership here also grants access to the shared working hub at sister brand Aethos Shoreditch, which recently replaced the former Nobu Hotel in London's East End.

CRAFTED AT POWDERMILLS

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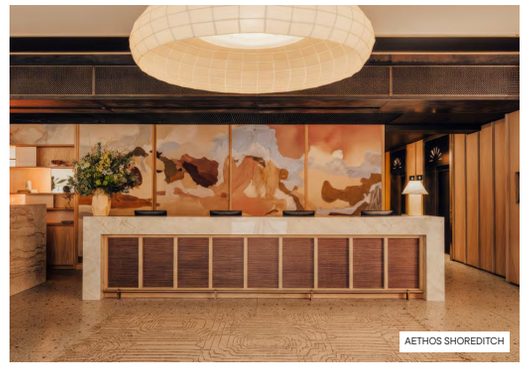
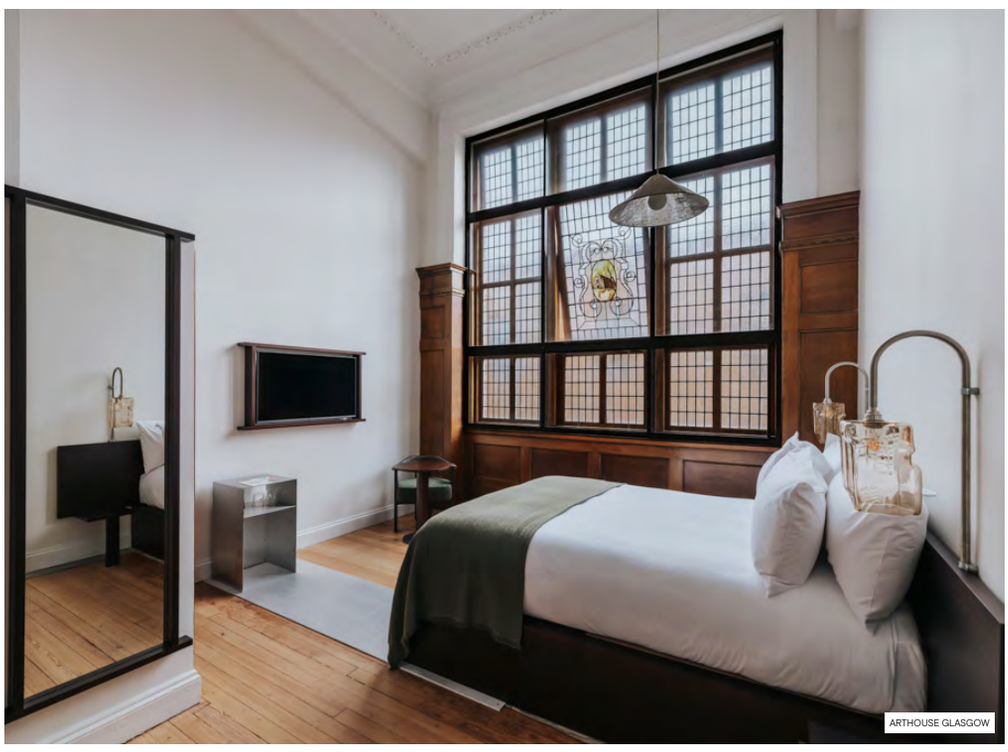


AETHOS SHOREDITCH

The death of standardisation

Traditional models of the hotel, with their repeatable room templates, are giving way to individual, adaptable environments as the demand for flexibility is decidedly here to stay. Not just in pursuit of flexibility, though, the appetite for individuality and characterful stays in historic buildings is growing – but standard room typologies aren't always possible in heritage properties, prompting designers to get creative and break free from conventional layouts, furniture packages and identical rooms.

At Oberland's newly opened Arthouse Glasgow, for instance, designers A-nrd resisted standardising its 76 guestrooms, with some compact, others tall, some with original stained glass and others with retained timber panelling; the conventional hotel desk, often present more through expectation than actual use, also loosened here for use as integrated storage and coffee breaks as well as working.



ARTHOUSE GLASGOW

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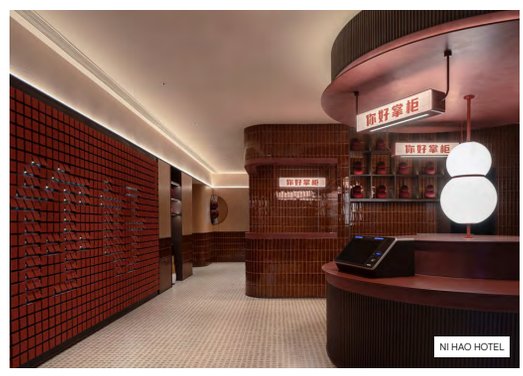


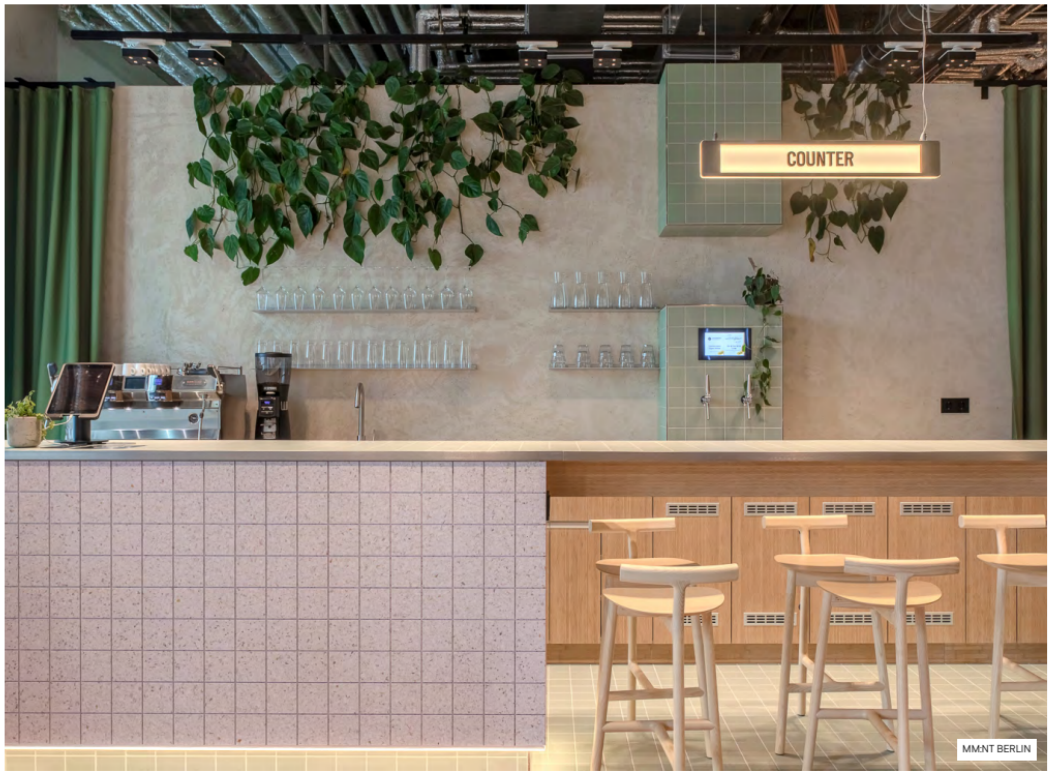
NI HAO HOTEL

The invisible hotel

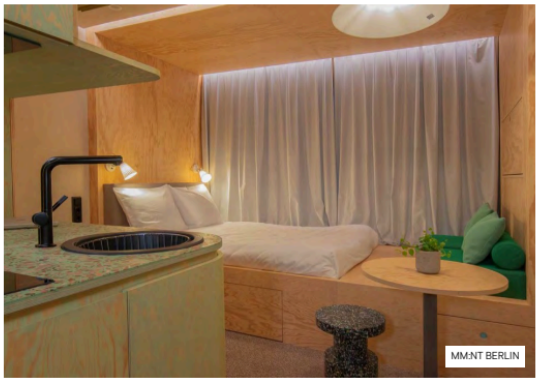
Just as workplaces are embedded with technology to monitor employee metrics, hotels have been receiving similar treatment, with smart tech giving guests control over mod-cons with the touch of a button. The latest shift is how this is physically integrated, introducing tech that all but dissolves into the building to create high-tech rooms that look seamless and natural. Physical tokens of the traditional hotel experience are therefore disappearing, with key cards, switches and even reception desks replaced with contactless check-in, touch-sensitive surfaces and motion sensors

In Berlin's Mitte district, experimental concept MM:NT was developed in response to this shift, with design studios ACME and BWM enlisting experiential design expert Philippa Wagner of PeoplePlacesSpaces. The aparthotel continues to operate in 'ongoing beta mode', acting as a testbed for the self-service, digital-led approach favoured by many Gen Z and Millennials: an app facilitating check-in, access to smart storage lockers and shared amenities, and communication with staff. "The early phase of the project was characterised by a real sense of freedom to rethink the travel and stay experience," says ACME's Emma Buckley. "We discussed every part of a guest journey with a radical sense of ignorance, to not replicate rooms as they always have been, but to rethink every part and question what adds real value."

The NI HAO Hotel in Chengdu was conceived under a similar ethos (described as 'punk wellness'), with designers Vermilion Zhou introducing wellbeing-led amenities, meeting areas and workspaces while also keeping costs low with 24-hour automation and low staff interaction.



MM:NT BERLIN


MM:NT BERLIN

MASON & FIFTH WESTBOURNE PARK

The permanent temporary

Boundaries between hotels and the home are becoming ever blurred as they evolve into places to live, not just to stay. Long-term stays are growing in popularity thanks to flexible lifestyles, global mobility and the rise in digital nomads, and with it, operators are blending serviced apartments and branded residences with the traditional hotel typology – a shift that must be reflected in personal kitchens, storage, communal spaces and a broader consideration of privacy for the guest-turned-tenant.

Aparthotel brand Mason & Fifth has centred its model around this collapse of traditional hotel boundaries, with three locations now open in London – Westbourne Park, Primrose Hill and Belsize Park – including fully serviced apartments, bookable rooms, workspaces and wellbeing facilities to offer guests "everything they need and nothing they don't". Locke has similarly carved out a reputation as one of the industry's leading design-led aparthotel brands, with 28 locations across 14 major European cities including London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Berlin and Lisbon.

The experience arms race

Striving to create something memorable for an audience that grows harder to impress, hotels are now also competing on an experiential level. This presents a careful balance to be struck, however, with brands walking the line between crafting a truly unique, authentic stay (through theatrical interiors, a stacked programme of activities, opulent restaurants and extreme locations) and chasing the next 'Instagrammable' location that becomes a short-lived gimmick.

Done right, the hotel can succeed in becoming the attraction itself, as the architecture becomes an integral part of the product. At the andBeyond Suyian Lodge, Michaelis Boyd deftly fuses the immersive safari experience of Northern Kenya with luxury touchpoints, pairing domed private villas clad in local earth with an editing suite for guests to review their photographs of trips into the savannah. Similarly rich in character, London-based studio Fettle has revived The Inn at Sundance Mountain Resort, the boutique cluster of ski cabins founded by Robert Redford in the 1960s – preserving original modernist design cues while incorporating references to Native heritage, the Utah landscape and a ski valet service.

SUYIAN LODGE

THE INN AT SUNDANCE MOUNTAIN RESORT

CHATEAU LA BANQUIÈRE

The climate-adaptive hotel

No mere buzzword, sustainability is seen as a marker of a hotel's ethos and a connection to the local landscape. However, this is already shifting from 'nice-to-have' eco credentials like recycled materials and reclaimed furniture to more pressing concerns of the climate emergency, such as extreme heat or flooding. Projects incorporating seasonal spaces, passive cooling and regenerative practices therefore stand out for guests who strive for more ethical consumption and a reduced environmental footprint.

This adoption of seasonal design can range from transitional features such as the fully retractable roof of The Emory in Belgravia, to shaping the whole ethos of projects like The Hall at Denton Reserve, where BOX 9 carefully restored a Grade I-listed property with storm-felled oak furniture, paint textured by olive stones and chandeliers woven from moor-harvested heather. "Every single piece and material had to leave a legacy of positive change – whether through sustainability, supporting a maker, empowering an emerging studio, or championing innovation," says BOX 9 co-founder, Lou Davies. "If it didn't have the potential to restore landscapes, lives or our relationship with craft, it didn't come through the doors."

Following the design of Château La Banquière, French-Californian designer Marianne Tiegen in fact views luxury hospitality and sustainability not as mutually exclusive, but as a saving grace for the industry: "Luxury today faces an identity crisis. Its renewal lies in craftsmanship, authenticity and rarity. Sustainability can be a form of true luxury – rooted in nature, in history, in care. In twenty or thirty years, the fabrics, colours and textures will tell their own story: one of place, of patience, of beauty lived in."

Discover more of the latest hotel openings with Tatjana von Stein's The Dean Munich, the reimagined Sheraton Stockholm and Faber's bar and restaurant for Salthouse Harbour Hotel.

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Art Nouveau and 1980s excess at The Dean, Munich

Tatjana von Stein bottles the layered history of 20th century Munich at the hotel group's latest five-star opening.

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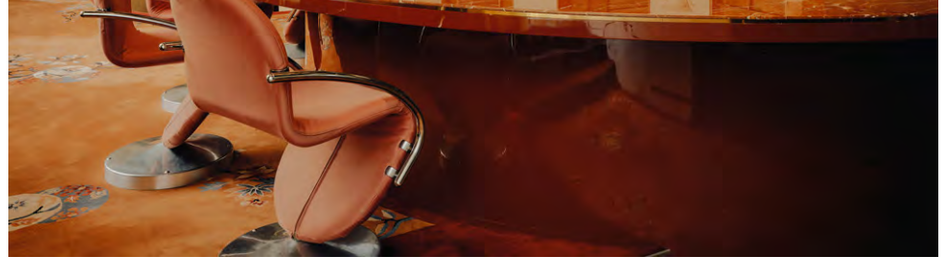

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Words: Charlotte Slinger
Photography: Dean Hearne

Between the end of the 19th century and the outbreak of the First World War, Western Europe enjoyed a peaceful, prosperous era known retrospectively as the Belle Époque. Momentarily free from the political upheaval of wartime, this was a period defined by flourishing movements in arts and culture, including Art Nouveau, which rejected the rigidity of academics and history in favour of organic lines, elegant craftsmanship and stylised natural motifs. And while the movement was adopted in idiosyncratic ways by different countries across Europe, German creatives in particular interpreted Art Nouveau through their

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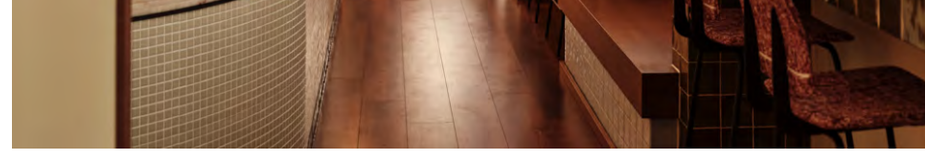
The reimagined Sheraton Stockholm is a love letter to Sweden

Layering references to both 1970s architecture and Swedish design contemporaries like Acne Studios, ADC & Tuneu deftly revives a hospitality landmark.

21/09/2026 • 2 min read



Photography: Ben Anders

Overlooking Stockholm's Old Town, Lake Mälaren and the creative island district of Södermalm, Sheraton Stockholm has been a fixture of the Swedish capital since 1971 – the first Sheraton location in Europe, it has cultivated a presence as a local landmark in its own right over the last five decades. Ushering the hotel into its next chapter, Barcelona-based studio ADC & Tuneu (founded by design duo Aaron David Clarke and Marta Tuneu) has led the revival of its public spaces, unveiling a warm, expressive concept that pens a love letter to Sweden. Careful to honour the building's history and its original 1970s aesthetic, the studio researched the work of major architects such as Gunnar Asplund, referencing this heritage while also weaving in contemporary Swedish design culture. The recurring use of Falu red, for instance (a traditional pigment used to paint the country's iconic timber houses), is balanced by nods to the refined palettes of fashion house Acne Studios and the signature floral motifs of household furniture and décor brand, Svenskt Tenn.

Pivoting the hotel to a lifestyle-led concept, the studio's architectural interventions see a transformed lobby bar, restaurant, coworking and meeting spaces, and gym (complete with its own juice bar) – welcoming guests first with a vast atrium in the lobby. This double-height space now features a mural by Barcelona-based artists Claudia Capdevila, which wraps around the mezzanine level above the central focal point of the ground floor, Sally's Bar. Here, custom built-in sofas were crafted by ADC & Tuneu and mid-century furniture upholstered in geometric Nordic wool meets a mix of lacquered finishes and timber, reaffirming the 1970s-inspired feel alongside a curated pick of low slung, chrome-framed modular pieces.

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Venturing further inside, in-house restaurant Mr. Bronck is open to both guests and the public with its blend of Scandi and New York influences – receiving its name from Swede settler Jonas Bronck, linked to the naming of the Bronx. The restaurant, a moody, enveloping eatery with dark-stained joinery, mosaic marble flooring and ribbed cylindrical pendants, is home to two bars: one facing the theatrical open kitchen and the other a dedicated cocktail spot. Floral motifs evocative of Svenskt Tenn also feature throughout the hotel's two grand ballrooms (the Red Ballroom and the Orange Ballroom), which are carefully contrasted with more modernist elements such as a bespoke geometric carpet created by the studio and navy storage units by USM.

"This project was about reconnecting the hotel to the life of the city," explains Clarke. "Every detail, from the lighting to the furniture to the art, was considered to create a cohesive experience that feels contemporary yet timeless."

"We wanted to honour the building's 1970s heritage while confidently moving it into a new era," adds Tuneu. "Our vision was to create spaces that feel warm, vibrant, and rooted in Scandinavian identity, but with the expressive geometry and playful boldness that define our studio."

Discover more hospitality haunts with the velvet clad Kitty's Cosmopolitan Club, the Japanese restaurant and rooftop bar that's 'a bit dangerous' and step inside Astet Studio's Aethos Milan.

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