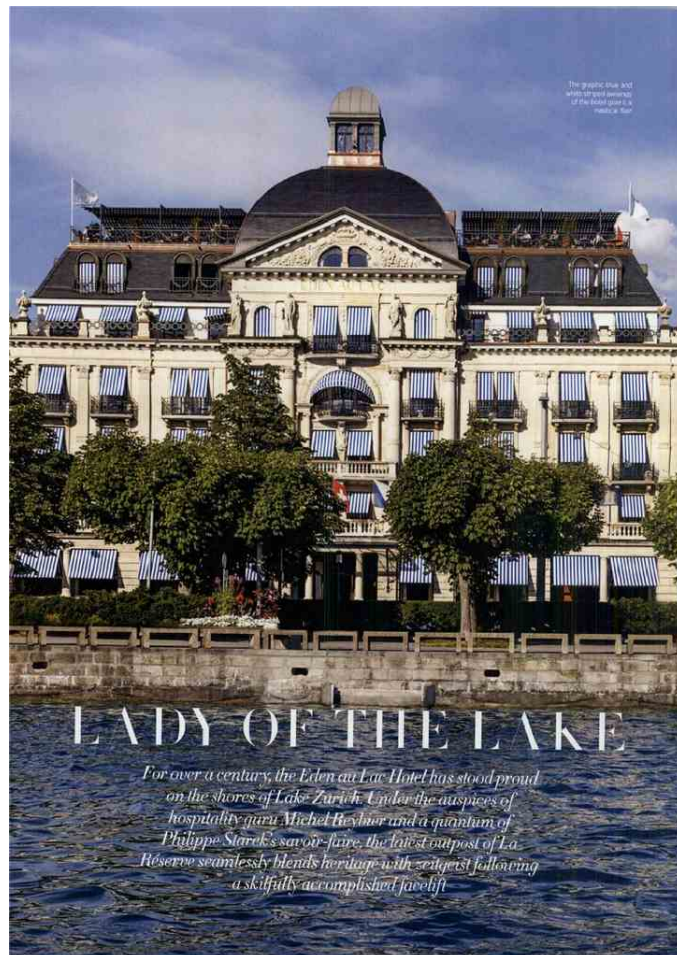


LADY OF THE LAKE

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Starck's facelift of the hotel gives it a sense of both familiarity and freshness.



Yacht club touches can be found throughout the hotel, but come with a breezy light hand.



Peruvian-Japanese fusion cuisine delights the taste buds while a 360-degree view creates a breathtaking backdrop.



WORDS: STEFAN HOTTINGER-BEHNERT

Just a stone's throw away from Zurich's Opera House and opposite one of the city's most iconic waterfront baths, the century-old building has been comprehensively restored and redesigned by Philippe Starck in a timeless and unwaveringly elegant way. The hotel's fabled façade, its blue and white striped awnings protecting elaborate iron-wrought balconies, lion heads and other historical features, have been attentively preserved as reminders of the property's early 20th-century splendour.

Following the theme of an imaginary yacht club, nautical accents flirt with the building's original structure throughout: Exposed brick walls, sleek metal details, and a warm colour palette all come together coherently in an almost non-Starck way, with only a few hints here and there for the trained eye to recognise the designer's signature style. "This hotel has always been exceptional, and now is even more so thanks to Michel Reybier, who is a keen sailor – like me – and well-acquainted with the sea, with water and with sailing boats. There is total osmosis between the building and the setting, the rumours and the stories behind this building," says Starck. With a healthy dose of wit and sprinkles of charm, the designer twists the old into the contemporary with near to archaeological precision. Solid wooden floors, masonry bricks, marble plinths freed from decades-old layers of plaster, soft carpeting, and textured wallpapers all come together to lend a distinctively modern character to the décor. Carefully placed objects from the seafaring world allude to the urban yacht club idea that stands at the centre of Starck's original vision. Ship keels fixed in resin, various photographs of marine motifs, nautical charts and maps, oars that lie around as if left behind following a regatta; Starck skilfully manages to remain minimal without evoking minimalism.

The design ethos flows into the 40 rooms and suites, effortlessly designed in light browns, beiges and the juxtaposition of leather and soft furnishings. The spacious corner suites feature living, dining and entertaining areas with stunning views across the lake and the alps beyond.

Perched on the hotel's sixth floor towering high above the city, Zurich's latest world-weary hangout La Muña serves Peruvian-Japanese fusion cuisine with 360-degree panoramic vistas of Switzerland's postcard city.

Dignified and chic from top to bottom, La Réserve Eden au Lac has quickly become the city's newest haunt for Zurich's demure clientele and a must for any self-respecting style-hunter. ■

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