





Generator, Venice

A leader in the increasingly popular and competitive design hostel market, Generator has locations across Europe, with plans to expand globally. Generator's overall design language has been crafted by DesignAgency, led by partner and Generator's creative director, Anwar Mekhayech. Each location has its own distinctive style that reflects the local spirit and culture of its host city, with an emphasis on vibrant social spaces.

The newest destination in the group's portfolio, Generator Venice offers stylish and affordable accommodation located on the waterfront of the quiet, residential island of Giudecca – a one-stop vaporetto ride from San Marco's Square. The hostel occupies an 1855 Palazzo, originally built as a granary warehouse before being converted into Venice's only hostel in the 1950s.

"Venice represents a key tourist destination in Italy, but it's also known for being a rather expensive one," explains Carl Michel, executive chairman at Generator. "Generator Venice is uniquely placed on Giudecca, with commanding views of St Mark's, and is the ideal base from which to explore the fascinating art and history of this great city."

"Generator is unique in having the only larger hostel in the city – on the archipelago – giving it a real edge over those on the mainland given Venice's maritime heritage. But however well located and design led, our accommodation is still highly affordable and opens Venice to a wider audience of savvy, younger and budget-conscious travellers."

Josh Wyatt, partner of hospitality and leisure at Patron Capital – Generator's parent company – claims that the new hostel also caters to those travelling to the city for business. "Our guests are still mainly young travellers," he says, "but there is definitely an increase in the number of visitors who are travelling for work but prefer the more relaxed atmosphere of a private room at Generator. They are looking for lively public spaces and wide range of events, rather than a more corporate hotel environment."

DesignAgency's interior confidently mixes the history and charm of the historic building with local craft and culture, and brings forth contemporary design elements and a playfulness that is synonymous with the Generator brand.

A team of structural specialists, archaeologists and restorers brought the building's stone columns, timber beams, roof trusses and grand twin staircases back to their original glory. Under the strict eye of Venice's Fine Arts Committee, services have been carefully upgraded, with an elevator, new rooms and bathrooms added to provide 21st century comfort without marring the integrity of the historic building.

The small main floor space has been divided into intimate and exposed enclaves – some at different levels, and some shielded by a tufted leather bar. The furnishings used provide examples of Venetian style, manufacturing and culture. Rubelli curtains, for example, provide an element of texture next to the Fantini mosaic floor, while a Murano glass clown chandelier hangs from the ceiling. The space also features a stone fireplace, handcrafted in Verona, which replicates a piece designed by Palladio in the 16th century.

These traditional elements have been woven with bold threads of contemporary design. Tom Dixon's Offcut Flouro stool – now a Generator signature – is featured alongside bronze orb lights by the same designer. The cushioned bar front is complemented by the first installation of Marcel Wanders' New Antique stool by Moooi.

Further pieces have been sourced by Anwar Mekhayech, who drove around Italy in a Fiat van in the run-up to the hostel's launch, visiting antique markets such as the famous Fiera di Parma, and the monthly outdoor market, Piazzola sul Brenta. At these events, Anwar purchased mismatched furniture such as an old apothecary cabinet – which becomes the backdrop to the DJ booth – a four-poster bed, carpets, art, mirrors, and amusing and memorable curiosities, such as a neon sign situated in the fireplace that reads fuoco – the Italian for fire.

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