

Hotel Adlon Kempinski - 100 Years of Grandness
2007 Weltexpress Award - Best Hotel in Berlin

By David Gwodzik

Relaxed luxuriousness amplified in exquisite ambience – calmness stirring the senses into a restful pose, guests take a deep breath while reclining in a posture of tranquil brilliance and colors reverberate a golden hue – the Hotel Adlon Kempinski Berlin is without a doubt the finest hotel in the „Hauptstadt“. Weltexpress' elite-readers were correct in their assessment – the Adlon's history and refined services deserves Berlin's Top Hotel rating. History serves the future and time is traced through the majestic tales that embrace everyone who entered the Adlon. The Adlon's 100 year jubilee proves that commitment to excellence offers the world a continuous journey in splendor.

Leaving the famous Unter den Linden avenue where the Brandenburg Gate guides you to the Adlon steps – it is fair to say, the guest always begins and ends his stay in the lobby of a grand hotel. Weltexpress began its journey in the same fashion. Our readers were correct in saying that their senses were lifted upon seeing the aesthetic marble archways and bronze work in the lobby. A glorious elephant lined fountain stands in the heart of the lobby - the lion heads circling the fountain, spew water gently into a pool, resting body and mind. The hotel's tea- masters offer classical and Asian teas with delicious favorites – scones, cream and jam, Asian fruit tartlets, coconut cream tarts and vegetarian sushi. Served in richly decorated silver and porcelain, the view above houses a glass stained dome made of intricate blue and gold design. The historical grace and aura soars. Stylish pages and waiters befitting the classical past takes each guest on a reflective tour - the Adlon mood was set.

Upon being greeted by Patrick Ritter, Adlon's Hotel Director, the beginning of a wonderful journey where 100 years of a dream was realized. Regal hospitality and kindness was offered by Mr. Ritter, ensuring a most memorable stay at the Adlon. Managing and Regional Director, Stephan Interthal expressed Lorenz Adlon's dream in saying, „he built the Hotel Adlon at the Brandenburg Gate, his motto was „welcome to the Adlon“, a hotel that wants to be so much more to its guests, with its ambience, its service and last but not least its unique location. This motto and hotel name is, still today, more than just a tradition, it is the basis of all our work: Adlon Oblige!“ Mr. Interthal, Mr. Ritter and their team, represent Mr. Adlon's dream - they continue to deliver and earn that special place in the hotel's glamorous history. From the grand lobby to our elegant suite, Weltexpress entered the world where dreams begin. Unfortunately for Weltexpress, the Presidential suite was occupied, but a luxury suite facing the Unter den Linden and a wink away from the Brandenburg Gate was pure joy - the suite was filled with perfect charm and amenities. According to Public Relations Manager, Sabina Held, the Hotel Adlon Kempinski is able to boast not only 304 spacious rooms, but 75 luxury suites and three presidential suites as well. Some of these suites, ranging from 60 to 140 square meters in size, even have their own fitness room with gym equipment, sauna, and Jacuzzi. The big highlight of course is the presidential suite in the new security wing, this being not only the most luxurious, but also the safest suite in the whole of Germany. In rooms covering 240 square meters, elegant furnishings and fabrics blend tastefully with choice antiques, as well as an additional room and a specially appointed drivers lounge for chauffeurs and bodyguards. This ensures that heads of state and other prominent guests with a large entourage and private staff can enjoy an undisturbed stay in a separate wing covering a total of 420 square meters. Two private lifts connects the presidential suite to the basement garage.“ There was no question as to the perfect „room“ – languishing in a kingly state allows for restful and superb company.

Illustrious Guests and Subservient Spirits

On the Bel Etage, an exhibit portrays the historical past leading up to the newly built Adlon. The materials and photographs are highly informative and is a must see while visiting the Adlon.

In 2007, the Adlon Hotel celebrated its 100th Anniversary as well as the 10th Anniversary of its re-opening in the original location. The Adlon is the only hotel in the world to be opened twice by the leader of the state: first in 1907 by German Emperor William II, and again in 1997 by Federal President Roman Herzog. After both its opening and re-opening, it quickly became Germany's famous hotel. Numerous stories have been played out here and the guest list is proof: Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Max Schmeling, Marlene Dietrich, Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, Mikhail Gorbachev, Halle Berry, Pierce Brosnan, Jennifer Lopez, Tom Cruise, Nicholas Cage, Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton, Senta Berger, Claudia Schiffer, Sir Peter Ustinov, Boris Becker, Liza Minelli, Lord Yehudi Meuhin, George Bush, George W. Bush, Luciano Pavarotti, Tom Hanks, Steven Spielberg, Leonardo Di Caprio, Queen Silvia of Sweden, Princess Caroline of Monaco, Queen Beatrice, Queen Elizabeth II, Dalai Lama, Michael Jackson, Dustin Hoffman, Henry Kissinger, Jacques Chirac, Wladimir Putin, Sophia Loren, Catherine Deneuve, Helmut Kohl, Nelson Mandela, etc.

The list is only a sample of the illustrious guests whose domicile was the Adlon – the story continues to be played out with great charm and delight. Very few hotels in the world can match the pomp and circumstance that surrounds the Adlon. Sabina Held, PR Manager has spent the last 10 years witnessing high profile guests move through the hotel, „the legendary Hotel Adlon, named after its owner, Lorenz Adlon, was built between 1905 and 1907. Adlon who was born in Mainz, had previously made a big name for himself in Berlin as a restaurateur. The hotel, which cost 20 million gold marks, was to set standards for the future as a top luxury hotel. Sophisticated guests from all over the world praised the hotel effusively when it opened on 24 October 1907; architects and artists, too, joined in the general praise. From then on, the Adlon was the setting for smart, international life and was, neutral terrain on which the representatives of nations exchanged political views and where families celebrated anniversaries and birthdays. Here, any differences between nations, were often put aside. Until now, this was a luxury which had only been reserved for the likes of princes and rulers and now it was accessible to the middle classes. Illustrious, aristocratic families sold their winter palaces in Berlin so they could reside in the wonderful suites of the Hotel Adlon during the ball season. Entire ministries preferred the impressive, grand Kaisersaal hall over their own festive halls. The Adlon's guest list read like a who's who of old Europe. John Davison Rockefeller, Henry Ford, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Aristide Briand, Paul von Hindenburg and Friedrich Ebert were important guests. The classically designed halls hosted society get-togethers, congresses, political dinners and international conferences. A grand hotel at the focus of international relations – something which was, at the time, a complete novelty. The Adlon managed to survive the ravages of the Second World War almost unscathed and, in April 1945, was transformed to a military hospital for a short period. But, on 3 May 1945, a night fire destroyed the magnificent building with the exception of a side wing. During the GDR, there was a hotel in this remaining side wing and the page boys here wore the Adlon's original uniform. The building was renovated again in 1964 but, in the early 70s, faced a temporary collapse as a hotel – an apprentice home was set up in the side wing of this former luxury hotel of the 20s and, in 1984, the final part of the Adlon was also torn down. After the fall of the Wall, the Kempinski Hotelbetriebsgesellschaft (hotel operating company) acquired authorisation for rebuilding the Hotel Adlon. Louis Adlon's widow, Hedda Adlon, had, already early on, transferred the acquisition rights to the land as well the Adlon name to Kempinski in case there were ever the opportunity for rebuilding the hotel.

To finance this, Kempinski sold the project with all rights to the Fundus-Fonds-Verwaltungen GmbH and, in return, received a long-term contract of lease. On 23 August 1997, the legendary Hotel Adlon was finally reopened in its former splendor.“

Culinary Delights – Where God Dances on Your Palate

Arranged by the Hotel Director, Mr. Ritter, Weltexpress was offered a unique opportunity to dine in the Restaurant Quarre. Received by Björn Nöldner, Restaurant Manager, an imaginative first-class composition menu was prepared by Chef Dominik Ambros. Mr. Nöldner and his staff were gracious and presented samples of the Adlon's finest cuisine and wines. 650 traditional wines are available and it makes perfect sense to be guided through culinary delights by highly trained professionals. Thrilling the mind's eye and experiencing the finest in dining, gourmets and lovers of exclusive cuisine can especially look forward to the Adlon jubilee year. The Lorenz Adlon restaurant has been awarded a Michelin star and serves the world's best wines. After dinner, there is the luxury hotel lobby bar - the favorite drink of guests is champagne or one of the many cocktails. Head barman, Franz Höckner has created a cocktail especially for the jubilee which reflects the hotel's glittering past - The Diva Jubilee Cocktail – fresh blackberries, gin, and champagne.

There are other dining rooms adjacent to the Lorenz Adlon restaurant that are ideal for special entertainment – The Library, fitted with a backdrop of books cased in wood paneling, marble columns and gold trimmed chandeliers; the Bundeszimmer and Brandenburgzimmer, matching the traditions of the region are exquisitely designed. Additionally, the meeting and banquet rooms are made to match every desirable function. It was interesting to note that marriage ceremonies are also arranged in the Adlon.

The New Adlon Day Spa

Granted, your room or suite is a wellness experience in itself, but your journey in a private elevator that delivers you to the Adlon Spa is an essential part of your stay. Combinations of a Guerlain Beauty Day or stimulating massages and bodywork will revitalize your spirit – bringing new balance and harmony into your lifestyle. The full wellness treatment takes you around the world. Close your eyes and receive a lumi-lumi-nui-massage and transport yourself to Hawaii, think Asian and receive a Yin-Yang massage – what more can be said when the body and mind are being healed effortlessly. If that is not enough, the New Adlon Day Spa will be opening in 2007, complementing the existing spa facilities. Karin Rogge, Adlon Spa Manager said,“ the new state-of-the-art wellness oasis spread over two floors and designed in the form of elegant private suites with Jacuzzi, showers, saunas and lounges will be an exclusive experience not to missed.“

Weltexpress Rating - Best Hotel in Berlin – The Hotel Adlon

Each rating category – service, reception, lobby, rooms, restaurants and spa receives ten points per category. The Hotel Adlon Kempinski did not miss a point in any category. Not mentioned in the above rating was the attentiveness and caring relationship the Adlon staff showed children. Being child friendly is a measure of success our readers found very important. „Children are indeed a part of the Adlon experience and the overall magic offered children by one of the world's best luxury hotels was met with outstanding results,“ said Venera Chakirova.

Weltexpress was correct in rating the Hotel Adlon Kempinski as Berlin's Best Hotel. „Ever since it opened in 1997, the Hotel Adlon in Berlin has systematically earned itself an exceptional global reputation. Its discerning and loyal clientele appreciates the combination of exclusive style and comfort, perfect service and excellent cuisine, state-of-the-art technical know how and fascinating history, luxurious flair as well as its spectacular location beside the Bradenburg Gate.

The positive response from the public to the Adlon quality is amply demonstrated by the innumerable prizes the hotel has won for its exceptional performance. Competent juries of experts and high-ranking media in Germany and abroad have honored the grand hotel with both coveted and highly respected awards over these past few years. In March 2005, for the 7th time in a row the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences gave the Adlon its „Five Star Diamond Award“, as a grand hotel that ranks up amongst the world’s very best. In 2004, the Adlon received its first French prize: ‚Villegiature Award‘, nominated the elegant five-star plus hotel ‚Best Hotel in Europe‘. Furthermore, the exclusive German wellness guide ‚Senses‘ honored the Adlon Spa as: ‚Personal Favorite as overall winner‘ in the international hotel industry. The Adlon had been selected out of 203 candidates. In the November 2003 Conde Nast Traveler issue featuring 2003 Reader’s Choice Awards Hotel Adlon has been elected No. 15 at the ‚Top 100 Best of the Best Worldwide‘, boasting of 94.8 points of perfection. Furthermore, it achieved in the same award the sixth rank of the ‚Top 75 European Hotels‘. Hotel Adlon Kempinski ranks No. 55, with 84.7 points among ‚The Top 75 Hotels‘ worldwide in Institutional Investor’s annual ‚World’s Best Hotels Survey‘, which is featured in their November 2003 issue. The same points earn this legendary hotel 17th position in Europe. And also in 2004 the Adlon was among the 100 World’s Best Hotels. The Hotel Adlon was accorded one of the highest international awards by TIME Magazine, when in 1999/2000 the respected American publication voted it ‚Hotel of the Century‘. Just one year before, and again in 2002 Conde Nast Traveler voted the hotel a member of the ‚Top Readers’ Choice Gold List‘ in the USA and Asia. In the January 2003 US edition of Conde Nast Traveler magazine’s annual ‚Gold List – the World’s Best Places to Stay‘ Hotel Adlon obtained the second place. While, in the UK, The Tatler Travel Guide listed the Adlon as one of the best hotels in the world in the 21st century and the Daily Telegraph included the Adlon in its ‚Top Ten Luxury Escapes‘ in 1999. At the turn of 2000/2001, the US American journal Institutional Investor rated the Adlon as the ‚Best Luxury Hotel in Berlin‘, including it in its list of the 90 best hotels in the world, a rating that is always eagerly awaited by the international world of business.“

Weltexpress congratulates the Hotel Adlon Kempinski for its enormous success and winning our readers hearts and minds.

„2007 Weltexpress Award - Best Hotel in Berlin - Hotel Adlon Kempinski“

Nelson Mandela, upon leaving the Adlon in 9.9.1999 was heard saying, ‚visiting this famous hotel has been an unforgettable experience‘. Weltexpress couldn’t agree more!