

TASTE OF LIFE



加西版 | Canada West | Jan-Feb 2019

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Oslo's Seafaring History Inspires a Modern Hotel

A new luxury hotel, the Amerkalinjen, is built on an emigrant past in Oslo, Norway.

Text by Susan Kime

留駐一段歷史

——記奧斯陸港畔的Amerkalinjen酒店

一座古老建築的改建工程，不僅意味著一座舒適豪華的酒店即將開門迎客，還將同時揭開一段歷史，以及一個個動人的故事和傳奇。文/昭文

奧斯陸港口是進入大西洋的門戶，也是十九世紀至二十世紀早期「美洲熱」期間，挪威前往北美的移民的起航地。

The Port of Oslo (Oslo Havn), with its access to the Atlantic Ocean, opened a route to America for the many Norwegian emigrants of the 19th and early 20th centuries who had "America fever," as some historians have called it.



挪威首都奧斯陸同時也是一座海港，這座安靜的北歐城市顯然不是尋求熱鬧喧囂旅客的首選。也許來到這裏的人們還是會前往格蘭雕塑公園（Vigeland Park）或是市政廳等標誌性的地點遊玩一番，不過每次令我駐足難忘的是這裏的一座酒店。

我第一次入住Amerikalinjen酒店還是在2016年的時候，它臨近奧斯陸最繁華的Barcode區，這裏是奧斯陸港最富現代氣息的高端地段。我當時感到很好奇，為什麼這樣一座歷史老建築會矗立在這裏，並一直完好地保存下來。

去年夏天，當我再次回到這座酒店，發現這裏正在進行維護翻新。出於好奇或是對這幢歷史老建築的擔憂，我決定前去打探一番，卻意外了解到了一段關於這座酒店背後的歷史和許多有趣的故事。當我再次看到它正門處那氣勢恢宏的灰色雕像時，心中不禁有些感慨，原來這裏對奧斯陸來說，竟有著如此獨特的意義。

Amerikalinjen酒店是一幢修建於1913年的新巴洛克風格建築，令我印象深刻的大門處的灰色雕像，被稱作為「門戶雕

塑」，奧斯陸文化遺產管理辦公室的工作人員Janne Wilberg告訴我，雕像塑造的是大海中的神話人物。一位是Nereid，海之女神，代表著大海美麗祥和的一面。另一位是Triton，他是人魚和海王波塞冬的兒子，也是大海的統治者。

這座建築剛落成時並不是一座酒店，而是挪威至美國航線的起點，在整個二十世紀裏，大約有數十萬挪威人從這裏起航，駛往大西洋彼岸的美國，去追尋新的生活和希望。建築內設有售票處、行李和貨物存儲區，還有乘客們等待船舶起航的大廳。正門處的兩座神像是對這些即將踏上遙遠航程的旅客們的祝福，希望神靈能保佑他們安全抵達終點，並在新大陸上能繼續堅強、幸福的生活。

後來，隨著航空業的發展，海上客運業逐漸蕭條，Amerikalinjen漸漸從喧囂中沉寂下來，失去了往日的輝煌。後來，一位名叫Petter Stordalen的酒店大亨看中了這裏，Petter曾在奧斯陸創建了The Thief等藝術酒店，並在斯德哥爾摩創建了Six Six。當年他談起自己為何想把這裏改建成酒店時，曾說：「最讓我們感興趣的是，當年

上圖：在奧斯陸的Barcode區，海畔的摩天大廈與精美的老建築相映成趣，共同組成一派大都市的景象。對頁：1925年時的挪威至美國航線。



Opposite: In the Barcode district of Oslo, high-rises of different heights and widths stretch up along the waterfront with spaces in between, resembling a barcode. Above: The Norwegian-America Line, 1925.

For years, it was a closed, somewhat anonymous building. I walked by it in 2016, looked up, and wondered what it used to be. I wondered about the imposing, grey, serpentine statues on either side of its locked front entrance. What were they? How were they associated with this building?

It stood near the busy Barcode section of Oslo, a newly-renovated, high-end part of the city on the Port of Oslo (Oslo Havn). I have since learned that this building had a unique role in Oslo's history.

I was fortunate to return this summer to observe its transformation into something new. The concrete, sand, and wood splinters, all remains of the past, were being cleared, but I learned it wasn't a typical renovation or restoration.

It was the creation of a new hotel, interwoven with the original building's past. The hotel's name is Amerikalinjen, and it's built on the foundations of a once-iconic building, the headquarters of the Norwegian-America Line. This shipping line carried hundreds of thousands of Norwegian emigrants to North America in the early 20th century.

The building housed the ticket offices, a luggage and cargo storage area, and was a place where

courageous Norwegian emigrants waited for their ships to sail.

It was built in 1913 in the Neo-Baroque style, and the two large statues I wondered about were called portal sculptures. According to Janne Wilberg of the Oslo Cultural Heritage Management Office, they depict mythological beings of the sea.

One is a nereid, a sea nymph, who represents everything beautiful and peaceful about the sea. The other is Triton, a merman and son of Poseidon, ruler of the sea. The statues symbolized a wish for strength, kindness, and hope to accompany the emigrants as they began their nautical journey to the New World.

While walking through the halls and open spaces of this hotel-in-the-making, I also came to know the three visionaries who are now guiding Amerikalinjen's living legacy.

The first is Petter Stordalen, founder and CEO of Nordic Choice Hotels, a hotelier who has created art hotels such as The Thief, in Oslo, and At Six, in Stockholm. He says, "What interested us most were the untold stories of all the people who left family and friends behind in search of new opportunities across the Atlantic."



那些離開家人和朋友橫跨大西洋去尋找新機遇的人們，他們背後無數的傳奇故事。」

如今，當我來到這幢建築的二樓，發現這裏的一部份空間即將被改造成一個輕鬆舒適的圖書館，這裏將被稱作「故事殿堂」，無疑是想將Petter的理念付諸于實踐。圖書館的設計師Aat Vos告訴我們，建成後的圖書館中，將會存放大量關於當年移民的書籍、資料和文件，人們可以在這裏查閱和追憶當年那些真實動人的故事。Aat說：「來到這裏的酒店的旅客們，也可以把自己的故事留下來，他們的照片和推特，或是交換一些書籍。」

按照計劃Amerikalinen將於今年3月重新開業。現任首席設計師Jaakko Puro是赫爾辛基PuroPlan建築設計公司的老闆，為了充份實現Petter的構想，他花費了許多心思，努力將建築古

典的外觀與內部裝飾融合在一起，其中照明的設計是很大一個挑戰。「建築的外觀有許多新巴洛克裝飾元素，那些精美的浮雕、雕塑和巨大的門窗都被隱藏在了黑暗中。我們準備在建築外部安裝一些照明設施，讓這座城市中的標誌性建築重新點亮起來，存在於光明之中。」

Jaakko說這種對歷史的尊重和緬懷會體現在整個建築裝飾項目的方方面面，例如：酒店前臺處將會有一面「深藍如大海」般的軟包裝飾牆，結合地面上的黑白大理石和大廳中的其它黃銅裝飾，會令人聯想起二十世紀初的室內裝飾風格，從而有了穿越回大西洋蒸汽船時代的感受。「我們所有的設計都圍繞Amerikalinen酒店曾經的航海史，當人們走進這裏，會感覺自己也像是一位對未來充滿期待的新移民，並告別過往留下的晦暗陰影。」



對頁：原來的挪威至美國航運大廈，如今被改建成了一座豪華酒店Amerikalinen。酒店最新的改建工程將進一步追溯當年移民的故事，其標誌性的大門處的海神雕塑也將修復保留，作為當年歷史的見證。右圖：大門處的海之女神和海之子雕塑，為當年即將踏上前往大洋彼岸航程的旅客送上平安的祝福。

Opposite: The historic Norwegian-America Line building is entering a new life as a luxury hotel, the Amerikalinen. The hotel revives the stories of the emigrants who once walked its hallways. Its façade (the right-hand side of the building as pictured here), will be revamped, but its iconic features will remain, including sculptures on either side of the entrance. Above: Portal sculptures of a sea nymph and a merman symbolized a wish for emigrants to have a good journey by sea to the New World.



The Emigrant Story

“Norwegians did not emigrate primarily because they were oppressed, or persecuted, or poverty-stricken,” writes the late Einar Haugen, a Harvard professor who was born in Iowa to Norwegian immigrant parents. With the industrial revolution, increasing education, and a number of other changes in society, “They emigrated because they had learned to be dissatisfied, and because a changing world had provided them with a hope of escape from their dissatisfaction.”

Though many Europeans emigrated during this time, Norway had one of the

highest rates of emigration, surpassed only by Ireland.

Haugen writes that many Norwegians brought “into American life an overwhelming sturdiness and intensity of purpose. This was an indispensable asset to immigrants who were at once assigned the heaviest labour and the hardest tasks. ... They took hold of the wind-swept prairie of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Dakota with little more than their bare hands.”

It was hard, but rewarding. Haugen writes, “There is a pride of accomplishment



which sustains the immigrant through all difficulties.”

Temple of Stories

As I walked to the second floor of the building, I learned of the unique plans for this space: a portion of it will be transformed from the drab construction space it is now to a light, cheerful library space called the Temple of Stories.

The Temple’s designer, Aat Vos, said the room will be filled with books and documents that tell stories of emigrants who came and went from this building.

But also, he says, “For those hotel visitors who come to our Temple of Stories, they can leave behind stories of their own, in photo-tablets, in Twitter feeds, or just by exchanging books.”

Amerikalinjen, is set to open March 2019. Jaakko Puro, owner of Puroplan in Helsinki, is the principal designer, following Stordalen’s guiding vision. Puro explains how the exteriors and the interiors are coming together, with

lighting being a major focus.

“When we look at the façade of the Amerikalinjen building, there are many Neo-Baroque elements, decorative reliefs and sculptures, large windows and doors, many of which have been lost in darkness,” he says. “But by using exterior up-lighting, we will raise this iconic building, lost in darkness, to one that lives in light again.”

Behind the reception will be an upholstered wall, the colour of “the deep blue sea,” Puro says. The black-and-white marble floor and brass details will recall early 20th-century décor and “retrieve memories of the steam ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean in the beginning of the 1900s.”

“All our design elements reflect a seafaring history of Amerikalinjen and will hopefully remind visitors of its past,” he says.

As we walked through the still, dimly lit halls and open areas, infused with emigrant dreams, it was easy to feel like an emigrant myself, saying goodbye to the fading shadows behind me. ☺

Amerikalinjen酒店改建工程的設計師Jaakko Puro說，酒店新的裝飾風格，將喚起人們對一個世紀前那個時代的回憶。

Designer Jaakko Puro says the Amerikalinjen décor will recall the steam ships crossing the Atlantic a century ago.

