

# Grandstanding in Bonn

By Saxon Henry



Marcel Wanders  
brings his  
whimsical touch  
to the Kameha  
Grand





When a hotel wins a European architectural award like the International Property Award and has an iconic designer like Marcel Wanders behind its hip brand, it's understandable that the property's name would be festooned with the word "grand." Such is the case with Germany's Kameha Grand Bonn, designed by architect Karl-Heinz Schommer and enlivened by the larger-than-life sensibilities of Wanders.

Wanders came to the project after many of the programmatic elements had been decided, as it was originally slated to be an office building. "It was pretty late in the game when the decision was made to change the project to a hotel," he explains, not once flinching that he would have to transform statuesque spaces into human-friendly ones. "We always design spaces to be experiential, and these interiors were no exception."



Statuesque elements, colors with lots of pop combined with classic black-and-white juxtapositions and oversized motifs turned what could have been a cavernous string of spaces into whimsically sophisticated rooms. "My intention is always to create places that people will fly from all over the world to see," Wanders says. "The reason people want to visit a project is because it is inspiring to them."

To enrich the escapades he saw visitors enjoying in this Bonn hotspot, Wanders set out to soften the flinty hardness of the exterior envelope. "The aluminum and glass is beautiful in its own way, but we wanted to create intimacy – it is a hotel after all," he says. "Because it's in Bonn, not Miami Beach where the weather is tropical, the challenge was to create an environment for enjoying the views outside, while feeling warm and cozy inside." Scale was crucial in this respect because each space had to feel comfortable for it to "read" as welcoming.

As for the designer's favorite aspect of what he achieved, he remarks: "Asking that is like asking a mother which of her children is her favorite: she probably knows but she certainly won't tell you!" After a bit of prodding, Wanders does divulge that he is quite fond of the interior garden and the spa, which he deems "quite spectacular." He adds, "I want everyone to know I love every centimeter of the spaces I create, which means I care deeply about every little detail!" And it certainly shows.