



## Timeless icon meets a dynamic present: Imperial Riding School blends architectural heritage with charming design

**The opening of the Imperial Riding School, Autograph Collection, in May 2024 starts a new chapter in the building's rich history.**

**Vienna, May/June 2024 – Nestled in the vibrant fabric of Landstraße, Vienna's third district, the Imperial Riding School exerts a magnetic pull amidst architectural grandeur. Surrounded by aristocratic charm and creative bohemian flair, the building is a symbol of Austria's rich history, combining an imperial past with a more avant-garde present day.**

The newly opened Imperial Riding School Hotel expertly reflects Vienna's cultural heritage, presenting itself as a timeless icon within historic surroundings – a place where formal etiquette meets rebellious spirit. Home to Austria's imperial military riding school in the 19th century, the building has constantly evolved over the years. Later housing Vienna's largest cinema, the Imperial Riding School was converted into a postbus depot after the Second World War. Today, with a modern extension to the imposing historical façade, the hotel is ready to tell another story.

### **A symphony of sublime elegance and modern style**

*"Respecting the building's illustrious past and heritage while navigating the constraints of a classical property was paramount in our approach. By carefully preserving the architectural integrity and infusing it with contemporary elements, we've honoured the legacy of the Imperial Riding School, ensuring its continued relevance and splendour for generations to come,"* said London-based design duo Martin Goddard and Jo Littlefair, tasked with preserving the architectural heritage of the building while giving the hotel a modern design. Immediately upon entering the Imperial Riding School, the skilful blending of a bygone era with playful and creative design elements catches the eye: the traditional vaulted ceiling gazes sublimely from its lofty perch onto a lobby that authentically captures both past and present. The floor, reminiscent of the original wooden blocks of the stables that once were housed here, evokes its origins from the very first step. Inspired by the

unique elegance of equestrian craftsmanship, the customised lighting leads to a modern art installation that pays tribute to the luminaries of Viennese Modernism.

### **Elstar & The Farrier: a mix of Jugendstil and craftsmanship**

Elstar, the hotel restaurant, is truly a feast for the senses. The exquisitely finished walls, decorated with mirrors and metalwork, call to mind Klimt's Golden Phase. The intimate seating niches are wrapped in suspended metal frames, while the lighting concept accentuates every detail to create an ambience that is both inviting and inspiring. The Farrier bar celebrates elegant design and creative freedom with a level of sophistication that combines contemporary design elements with artistic energy, for example through an imposing metal structure that extends lightly, almost like the flap of a wing, across the entire ceiling.

### **Modern living meets impressionism**

The design story continues in the guest rooms, combining classic equestrian themes with modern sophistication. From woven leather highlights to horsehair panels and impressionistic watercolour details, each element blends harmoniously together to create a place of elegantly creative luxury. Even the corridors pay tribute to the building's equestrian background, with bespoke carpet patterns that evoke the movement of hooves during dressage and wall décor that adds a touch of colour while capturing the feeling of a bygone era.

### **An idyllic oasis in the heart of the busy city**

An idyllic setting meets the big city hustle and bustle: one of Vienna's largest private gardens lies hidden behind the magnificent façade, a tribute to the cherished apple trees of Emperor Franz Joseph I that once stood here. It was the emperor himself who had the trees planted in the gardens at Palais Harrach, which would later become part of the hotel grounds. The outdoor seating areas, laid out in a horseshoe pattern, offer an escape for creative relaxation while inviting guests to indulge in the timeless beauty of the location. Designed by Lindle+Bukor, the garden radiates the pride it takes in its legendary roots as an imperial orchard – a detail for which it is historically renowned.

### **Architectural gems waiting to be discovered inside and out**

A highlight of the Imperial Riding School are the impressive columns in the hotel lobby, which have been preserved from the original building. The façade and its impressive colour, a vibrant red-brown, is also heritage-protected: *"We are proud to be part of this heritage, and it is particularly important to us to preserve the historical details,"* says Jürgen Fleischhacker, General Manager of the Imperial Riding School, Autograph Collection. BWM Designers & Architects played a key role in the project as well. The Viennese architecture firm was responsible for handling all official procedures, including the architectural revision of the historically listed façades in close coordination with the Federal Monuments Office.

#### **Further information:**

[www.imperialridingschool.com](http://www.imperialridingschool.com)

## Picture gallery:



The Imperial Riding School Hotel opens its doors in May, marking the debut of the Autograph Collection brand in Austria.  
[Download](#) / © Cathrine Stukhard



The stylish lobby welcomes guests with a warm atmosphere, inviting them to discover the hotel's rich history from the moment they enter.  
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The Farrier encourages visitors to enjoy an aperitif as they leave their everyday routine behind for a while.  
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A place in which to slow down, unwind and relax with a refreshing drink: The Farrier.  
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The 140-seat Elstar officially opened at the end of May.  
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The 342 rooms with a new design concept invite international travellers and Austrian guests to enjoy a unique and enjoyable hotel experience.  
Pictured: A Deluxe Room at the Imperial Riding School Hotel  
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The Junior Suite has plenty of space for hotel guests to enjoy their stay to the fullest.

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The spacious Junior Suite with its warm wooden interior at the Imperial Riding School Hotel

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All rooms feature a fully equipped bathroom with modern design elements and products from Saint Charles Apothecary.

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The historic building is full of stories that manifest themselves in every corner of the former military riding school. But there is plenty to discover in the nearby surroundings as well. Pictured: Several rooms offer a view of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of St Nicholas.

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### Imperial Riding School, Autograph Collection

In the new Imperial Riding School Hotel, the historical elegance of the former imperial and royal Military Riding School is just as obvious as the courage to be creative. Steeped in history, the hotel allows the past to live on with great charm in a modern design concept and uses inspiring flair to create a new lightness. Private and business guests are offered premium comfort, top facilities and first-class service in the heart of Vienna's third district. 342 rooms and a varied gastronomic offering with regional and international specialities, as well as a pool, wellness area and hotel garden, make your stay a unique experience. The Imperial Riding School is the first [Autograph Collection](#) hotel in Austria and is therefore part of the [Marriott International](#) brand. The main owners are [Northwood Investors](#) and the hotel is operated by co-owner [Event Hotels. Imperial Riding School](#)

### About Autograph Collection® Hotels

Autograph Collection Hotels advocates for the original, championing the individuality of each of its over 290 independent hotels located in the most desirable destinations across 50 countries and territories. Each hotel is a product of passion, inspired by a clear vision, soul, and story that makes it individual and special: *Exactly Like Nothing Else*. Hand-selected for their inherent craft and distinct perspectives on design and hospitality, Autograph Collection properties offer rich immersive moments that leave a lasting imprint. For more information, please visit [www.autographhotels.com](http://www.autographhotels.com), and explore on social via [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#) to be inspired by immersive moments that are #ExactlyLikeNothingElse. Autograph Collection is proud to participate in Marriott Bonvoy®, the global travel program from Marriott International. The program offers members an extraordinary portfolio of global brands, exclusive experiences on [Marriott Bonvoy Moments](#) and unparalleled benefits including free nights and Elite status recognition. To enroll for free or for more information about the program, visit [marriottbonvoy.com](http://marriottbonvoy.com).

### About Event Hotels

Event Hotels, headquartered in Cologne, operates 60 business and city hotels at over 40 locations in Europe under the names of well-known international hotel brands. The motto: Hospitality at heart. Event hotels are the leading white label hotel operator in Europe, and as such not only manage the operational business of its hotels, but also take an investment stake in real estate and operation together with partners, work out potential for sustainable growth and thus shape the landscape of hotels and hospitality. [www.eventhotels.com](http://www.eventhotels.com)



### About Northwood

Northwood Investors LLC (“Northwood”) is a vertically integrated real estate investment advisor that was founded in 2006 by John Z. Kukral, former President and CEO of Blackstone Real Estate. Northwood is headquartered in Denver, Colorado and has 14 offices across the U.S. and Europe. Northwood seeks to acquire well-located real estate through tactical sourcing and subsequently maximize its value through hands-on value creation at the asset level. Northwood’s team of more than 260 dedicated real estate professionals possess expertise in acquisitions and asset management, providing the firm a competitive advantage to source investments and create high-quality real estate projects. Northwood’s experience is evidenced by the team’s \$20 billion of real estate acquisitions since inception. Link to website: [Northwood Investors](#)

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