

# Wallpaper\*

JULY 2011

\*DESIGNINTERIORSFASHIONARTLIFESTYLE

UK £4.75  
US \$10.00  
AUS \$10.00  
CAN \$10.00  
DOK 75.00  
FIC 8.50  
D €10.00  
NL €8.50  
I €8.00  
J ¥1740  
SGP \$18.20  
E €8.50  
SEK 75.00  
CHF 18.00  
AED 45.00



## DESIGN DIRECTORY

We create a clean-lined Eden and a stairway to heaven with this year's most uplifting furniture and fittings

**! IT'S GETTING HOT IN HERE**  
The heat is on in our steaming kitchen & bathroom supplement

A boutique bolt-hole in  
**BELGRADE**

Athletic alchemy in  
**TOKYO & NEW ENGLAND**

Alvar Aalto's stacks in  
**VYBORG**

**PATRON SAINT**  
Bless your house with a site-specific design marvel

**DOMESTIC GODDESS**  
Furniture and fashion in holy communion

**DIVINE ORDER**  
Commission your sacred space from our pick of this year's best young architects





# Stari nights

*As Belgrade embraces the Isay Weinfield-designed Square Nine, a world-class boutique hotel filled with vintage Danish furniture, the Serbian capital's design boom goes from strength to strength*

WRITER: VILJA BEAUMANIS PHOTOGRAPHY: MATTHIEU SALVAING

A drab office building given a five-year, \$40m redo by Isay Weinfield, the designer behind São Paulo's smart Hotel Fasano, Belgrade's Square Nine arrives like a Paris supermodel at a cowpoke beauty contest. The first serious design hotel in a city dominated by uninspiring chain brands, it could open its doors in New York or London without a jaded sniff from the blasé habitués of either.

Square Nine's collection of vintage Danish modern took three years to amass, with New York antiques dealer Wyeth Home Furniture trawling international auctions and tracking down the manufacturers of a single 1930s Arne Vodder bar stool, then convincing the company to reproduce 12 more for the bar. Upstairs, 45 cosy, sleek guest rooms are outfitted with built-in Brazilian imbuia wood desks, original Hans Wegner club chairs, Nespresso machines and Hermès toiletries. In the minimalist luxe of the wellness centre, guests have use of a sun-splashed lap pool, a glassed-in, climate-controlled fitness room, a Japanese ofuro tub and a billowing steam room. Massage-only treatment rooms offer ten varieties, cool jazz playing softly

in the background rather than the usual loop of New Age muzak.

The hotel debuted in February this year and was instantly embraced by locals. The rosewood-lined lobby, with snug seating arrangements on a patchwork Persian carpet, bustles with morning coffee dates, lunch meetings, after-work cocktails and fashiony fêtes for neighbourhood designers. Everyone is happily downing imported goodies – Asahi beer, Fiji water or vintage Bollinger – not found elsewhere in Serbia.

In a dynamic, yet still gritty, city (where an entire, Nato-levelled city block across from the US Embassy has been left as, some say, a middle finger), another plus is the location. Stari Grad, a pretty old-town neighbourhood backing onto the Danube, is lined with terrace cafés, restaurants, bars and cool boutiques. Just around the corner, the concept store Supermarket showcases quirky design items and local fashion lines in a loft-like space that contains a spa, a florist and a café favoured by Belgrade's style crowd.

While post-communist cities generally veer toward the nouveau riche glitz, Square Nine – and a slew of chic new

shops (Dragana Ognjenovic), restaurants (Comunale and Public) and bars (Mladost) – underscores Belgrade's yen for sleek modernity over gilded glamour. A catalyst for the current design boom, Belgrade Design Week launched in 2005 and now attracts keynote speakers from Droog to Daniel Libeskind, who is currently revamping the Danube waterfront.

'It was phenomenal. Design in Belgrade took off and became a public subject,' recalls Karim Rashid, who as ambassador for the first Design Week invited many of his industry friends to speak. 'It's booming now. They're having a design renaissance.' Rashid was so taken with the city he soon bought a loft, married a local, and opened a design shop as well as a restaurant.

'Belgrade was always an avant-garde city,' says Square Nine's thirtysomething co-owner (with his older brother Nenad), the nattily dressed Nebojsa Kostic. 'The people love their fashion, they make an event of going out. The city has a long history of creativity and design. Belgrade has always been a cool place. ★ Studentski Trg 9, [www.squarenine.rs](http://www.squarenine.rs). Rates: from \$285



## UP A GRADE

This page, in Stari Grad, Belgrade's old town, Isay Weinfield's design incorporates wood cladding inside and out. Opposite, the lobby bar and the adjoining restaurant, headed by chef Goran Kovacevic, are already popular with locals

Wallpaper\*