

# *First Class*

CONCIERGE

## **SNOW SHOW**

DOWNHILL IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

## **SUITE DREAMS**

BULGARI HOTEL, MILAN  
RITZ-CARLTON, ISTANBUL  
INTERNACIONAL DESIGN HOTEL, LISBON

## **HOLIDAY ON ICE**

SLEEP OVER IN JUKKASJÄRVI

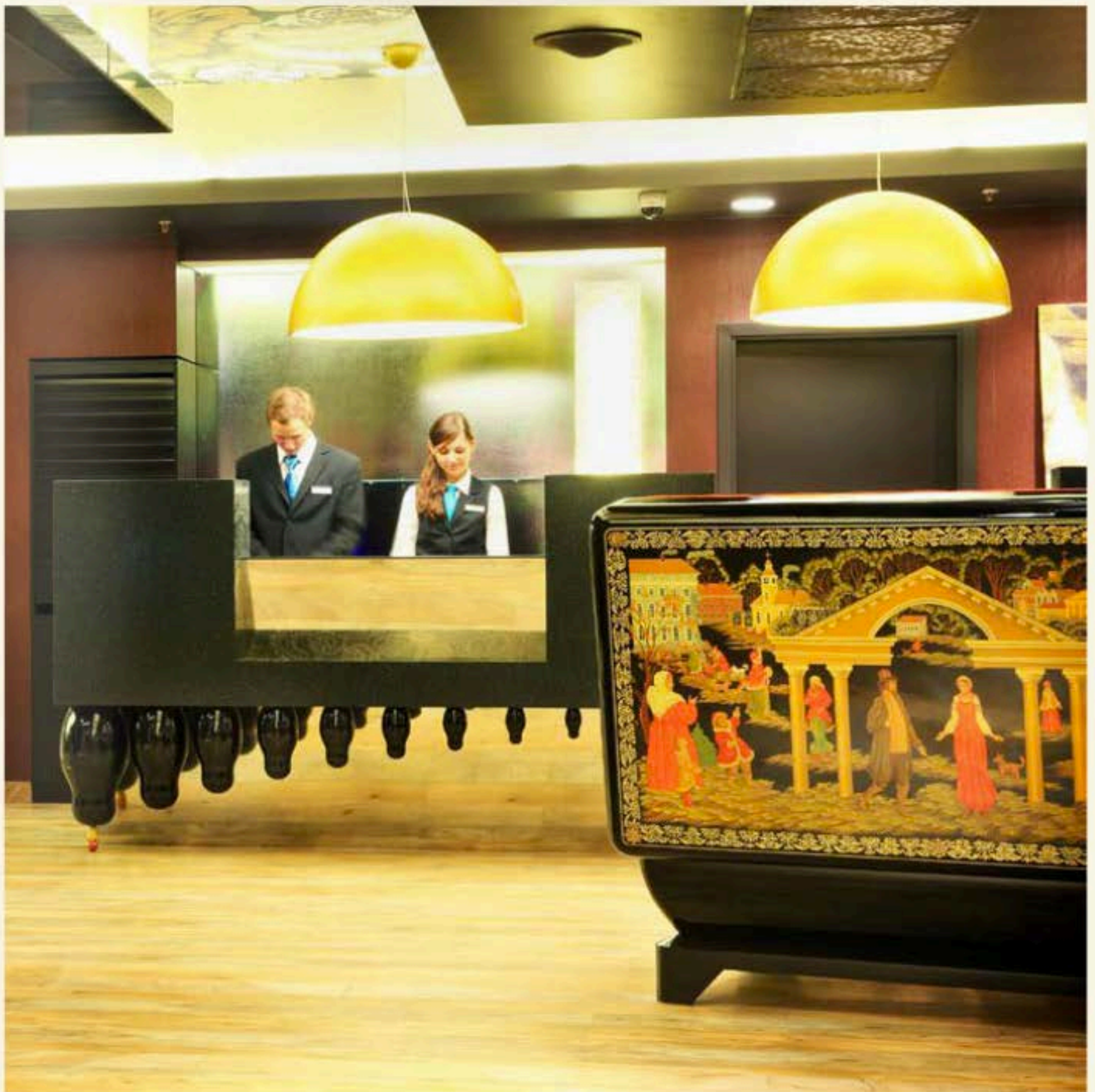
# *Heaven on Earth*

THE MALDIVES & THE SEYCHELLES

# A MASTERPIECE

*In the autumn of 2009, St Petersburg most unusual hotel was opened. At Radisson Hotel Sonya, everything from the interior fittings to the names of the rooms and the menus has been designed based on the bulky novel of "Crime and Punishment" by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. The hotel is a perfect starting point for a couple of intense days in Russia's multi-faceted cultural capital.*

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"CRIME AND PUNISHMENT" has been called St Petersburg's number one novel and is the perfect guide to this fascinating city. It has inspired many authors, artists and directors over the years and it has developed into something of a Russian gem. Since last year, there has even been a hotel which has been completely dedicated to the novel which is both loved and discussed by many generations all over the world. "Crime and Punishment" has strong links with St Petersburg and is regarded by many as the ultimate guide to the city even if, at times, it can give a rather slightly unpleasant insight to the city and to the darker sides of its inhabitants.

Radisson Hotel Sonya acts as a surprising and inspiring cosmopolitan meeting point if you are seeking an extraordinary hotel experience. If you have tired of room categories which are arranged as to standard, size or floor plan then you'll be pleasantly surprised when you discover that the categories have been given names like conscience, grace, rebirth and ego. The ego suite is for you if you want to provide yourself with accommodation offering some space for pleasure. Even the restaurant is inspired by the Russian author. The menu is created like a book, with its foreward, chapter and epilogue presenting dishes as if they were fascinating stories. Here, they've really developed the idea of storytelling and taken it to its extreme.

#### Visit the magnificent Hermitage

St Petersburg has been bestowed with the nickname of "Venice of the North". It's a magnificent city and they didn't hold back on the expense when it was built. They called upon the services of the best architects, who created a European metropolis on Russian soil. The city has been known by many names over the years with the most well-known being perhaps Leningrad, but it's a town with many faces and has also been known as Petrograd and Peter-burg. St Petersburg is often called Russia's cultural capital and the cultural greats such as Dostoyevsky, Pushkin and Tchaikovsky have all made their homes there. The river Neva flows through the city through its many various tributaries. When you walk around St Petersburg, you get the feeling of being in a great European city. The city has, in many respects, European characteristics, and for those interested in architecture, walks can be both long and many as the city boasts many architectural splendours. At the doorstep to Radisson Hotel Sonya lie the city's collective cultural offerings, as it is situated just ten minutes walk away from the Hermitage and the Russian Museum, two of the world's leading art galleries with extensive and impressive collections of international and Russian art.

In spite of the fact that St Petersburg has been exposed to many wars and revolutions over the years, many build-

ings are surprisingly well-preserved, among them the magnificent Winter Palace, the extremely lavish home of the tsar, Peter the Great. St Petersburg is characterised by wide streets and avenues. The most famous of these is Nevsky Prospect, which is several kilometers long. A good starting point for those who visit the city for the first time is to walk along a stretch of Nevsky Prospect where there is much to see. The most popular excursions in St Petersburg obviously go to the Hermitage. Second are those trips which take you on a round tour through the city where you get to see the Winter Palace, the Prince Vladimir Cathedral, the cruiser Aurora and the Church of our Saviour on Spilled Blood.

#### Accommodation surrounded by classic Russian culture

The writing desks in the hotel rooms have been inspired by Dostoyevsky's own writing desk, and the classic masterpiece, as well as the traditional Russian style, make its presence felt even in the most unexpected places in the hotel. In the lobby there is a gigantic book case, filled with "Crime and Punishment" translated into several different languag-

es. Those who feel compelled to brush up on this classic story can settle into the sofa which mostly reminds you of a gigantic Russian wooden box with motifs reflecting the story. Materials, colours, patterns and the whole decor have been carefully selected to convey a classic Russian feel.

When we were given the task of designing the interior to the Reval Radisson Hotel Sonya, we began by creating a storyline which our architects and designers could use. Everyone loves a really good story, the hotel personnel become more involved and it makes it easier to create the hotel's personality.

Travellers seek new experiences, even with regard to their accommodation, when they are out on their travels. More and more try to find hotels which really do convey a feeling of the culture, history and identity of the destination, says Erik Nissen Johansen, creative director at the Gothenburg based architectural office of Stylt, who are responsible for the unique style and design of the hotel. ■

By ANNIKA WILDBERG

