

Online application

Hotel Design Award 2026

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SECTION 1: General information

1. Eligible projects and selection process

Up to two hotels may be submitted per year by each company applying. The hotels must be located in Europe and have been constructed and **opened between October 2024 and March 2026** inclusive. The winners will be selected in the following three stages:

1. Application process
2. Jury deliberation, decision and nomination by the 196+ forum Milan jury (in March)
3. The award ceremony (in April)

2. Application process for the Hotel Design Award 2026

Any company involved in the planning, construction and operation of the hotel may take part. However, the applicant must obtain all necessary permissions from the companies involved in the realisation of the hotel project and the operation of the hotel, both past and present. The application needs to be submitted online to 196+ forum Milan by **20 February 2026** at the latest. Each hotel can only take part in the competition once, and no hotel can apply two years in a row.

3. Nomination by the Hotel Design Award jury

The jury will select up to ten nominees and thereof three finalists from among the **completed** applications that have been submitted. The jury will meet in March of the respective competition year. All nominated applicants will then be immediately informed of the jury's decision. Additional documentation may be needed for the presentation of the nominees during the 196+ forum Milan event (e.g. additional photographs, videos, etc.). The organisers will communicate further details to the nominees once the jury has reached its decision.

4. Award ceremony

The award ceremony of the Hotel Design Award 2026 will take place during the 196+ forum Milan event on 20 April 2026. This will be the first time the winning hotel is made known to the public. An official representative of each hotel that has been shortlisted should attend the 196+ forum Milan event in order to accept the award should the hotel be selected. All nominated hotels including the three finalists will receive a framed certificate.

SECTION 2: Conditions for participation

1. Selection criteria

All hotels completed and opened in Europe between October 2024 and March 2026 are eligible to take part in the competition. Each hotel can only take part in the competition once, and no hotel can apply two years in a row. If it should be a conversion of an existing hotel, massive changes and a reorientation must be recognisable. Furthermore, the hotel must have been closed before reopening. Hotels that have been renovated during ongoing operations are excluded from participation.

2. Authorised number of projects

Each company may submit a maximum of two hotels, provided that these conform to the conditions for participation.

3. Application process

Each participating company must submit a fully-completed application form for every hotel that is to take part in order to allow the organisers to decide on admittance to the application process. Should the hotel have been planned and realised by more than one company, the company submitting the application form needs to inform the other companies accordingly and obtain from them any permissions that may be required. The application forms should be officially submitted by **20 February 2026**.

4. Application documents

The jury reserves the right not to admit to the competition any documents that are incomplete or do not comply with the guidelines.

5. The duties of the jury and nomination

All completed application documents submitted within the above timeframe will be admitted for evaluation by the jury. The jury has the task of selecting up to ten nominated hotels and thereof three hotels as finalists. The decision of the jury will be primarily influenced by a number of different, non-exclusive, criteria with regards to the **aesthetic and emotional quality** :

- the originality of the accommodation concept,
- architectural quality (building and façade),
- integration into the project's surroundings,
- interior design, as well as
- innovation (planning and construction, design, operation and technology, as well as related processes, environment/sustainability).

Items marked with * in sections 4–7 must be answered completely. Incomplete application documents may be excluded from the application process. The jury's decision is final and not subject to appeal.

6. Additional material for the final stage of the application

The companies whose hotels have been selected by the jury will be informed of their nomination in writing. They may need to submit additional material, such as a short description of the project in English and/or further photographs, videos of the project. This material may be showcased in the exhibition area and/or at the digital event platform as part of the 196+ forum Milan event. All nominees will agree to be available for any film recordings and allow the 196+ forum Milan film crew access to the hotel and to any other relevant areas of the hotel property.

7. Hotel Design Award ceremony 2026

The results of the competition will be announced during the 196+ forum Milan event on 20 April 2026. At least one official representative of each nominated hotel should take part in the event in order to accept the award for the winner. All nominated hotels will receive a framed certificate. For the representatives of the nominated hotels one (1) free ticket will be provided.

8. Competition and the jury's decision

No claims may be asserted concerning the application system, the jury's choice of nominees, finalists and the winner, or any other aspects concerning the competition. The companies accept the present conditions of participation by registering for the competition and the Hotel Design Award 2026.

9. Use of photographs and project-related information

The organisers are entitled to publish the photographs and videos provided and the following hotel-related information (namely: name of owner, operator, developer, architect, interior designer, landscape architect, lighting designer, hotel category, construction time, number of rooms, image video) as part of the presentation of the applicants, on the 196plus website, the digital event platform, in press releases, in social media, in trade journals, conference documents (print/digital) or in an event app, as well as during the 196+ forum Milan conference on 20 April 2026. The submitting company must clarify the use of the copyrights prior to the application, as well as the concomitant labelling. Participation is deemed to constitute confirmation that the proper picture copyrights have been obtained. 196+ forum Milan reserves the right to transfer any compensation claims resulting from inadequate labelling of image or video material from the application documents to the participating company. When submitting the image material, please make sure that all images are uploaded as JPG files in print quality (300 dpi) with the **image rights properly marked**.

10. Submitting complete information

All fields marked with * are mandatory and must be completed. The hotel will be automatically disqualified from the competition if the requested information is not submitted in full. **N.B.:** These data are only made available to 196+ forum Milan and the Hotel Design Award jury for evaluating the submitted application. Neither 196+ forum Milan nor the Hotel Design Award jury members will publish them or use them for any other purposes.

11. Participation fee

We charge a nominal fee of 129 € (net, plus VAT) for participating in the competition for the Hotel Design Award. The amount is due with the final submission of the application. The amount will be invoiced separately.

SECTION 3: Information about the company submitting the hotel application*

- Name of the company
- Street / No.
- Zip code
- City
- Country
- Contact person for the application
- E-mail
- Phone
- Function within the context of the hotel project (architect, project developer, etc.)

SECTION 4: Hotel*

- Category
 - If the hotel is a revitalisation of an existing hotel the prerequisite for participation is the prior closure of the hotel
 - New construction or
 - Conversion (original use as an office, industrial building, etc.?) or
 - Conversion (original use as office, industrial building, etc.?) + new construction or
 - Revitalisation/Renovation of an existing hotel following closure (original categorisation?) or
 - Revitalisation/Renovation of an existing hotel following closure (original categorisation?) + new construction
- Hotel name (Please make sure the spelling is correct! The hotel name is used for all marketing activities.)
- Date of completion (between 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2026)
- Street / No.
- Zip code
- City
- Country
- Website

SECTION 5: Suitability to receive the award*

Concise description of why the hotel should win the award (USP) | 2,000 characters incl. spaces

SECTION 6: Profile of the hotel

1. Segment*

- City hotel, resort hotel, leisure hotel, family hotel, longstay, hostel, serviced apartment
- Other

2. Operating concept*

- Full-service, limited service, conference hotel, resort, seasonal operation (opening dates)
- Other

3. Classification*

- Official classification (1 star, 2 stars, 3 stars, 4 stars, 5 stars, other categories)
- Other

4. Description of location* (part of town or city, neighbourhood, stand-alone, lake, island, etc.)

600 characters incl. spaces

5. Gross floor area (GFA) of the hotel (sqm)*

- Property
- Above ground
- Underground

6. Number of floors*

- Above ground
- Underground

7. Rooms*

When assigning rooms, please decide on one room category, multiple entries are not possible.

- Number of rooms (total)
 - Single rooms
 - Double rooms
 - Family rooms
 - Suites
 - of which are Barrier-free rooms

Room per category (in sqm, from/to) | 1,000 characters incl. spaces

8. Construction/renovation period (months)*

9. Total investment costs (not mandatory)

Only for the evaluation by Hotel Design Award jury members. None of this data will be published or used in any way by 196+ forum Milan.

- New construction
 - Construction- and additional costs (above ground/underground, incl. fees, etc.) (€)
 - FF&E (€)
- Existing building
 - Construction- and additional costs (above ground/underground, incl. fees, etc.) (€)
 - FF&E (€)
- Existing building + new construction
 - Construction- and additional costs (above ground/underground, incl. fees, etc.) (€)
 - FF&E (€)

10. Operator*
11. Owner*
12. Project developer*
13. Architect*
14. Interior designer*
15. Landscape architect
16. Lighting designer

SECTION 7: Hotel details*

1. **Target guest group**
1,000 characters incl. spaces
2. **Keywords regarding unique characteristics**
200 characters incl. spaces
3. **Short description of the building's architecture**
1,000 characters incl. Spaces
4. **Short description behind the story of the interior design concept**
1,000 characters incl. spaces
5. **Please show us how you have implemented the story in the hotel and how it reflects your target group**
1,000 characters incl. spaces
6. **Please describe the integration of your hotel concept into the location / surroundings**
1,000 characters incl. spaces
7. **Special aspects relating to sustainability and certificates (BREAM, DGNB, LEED, additional certificates, etc.)**
1,000 characters incl. spaces

8. Description of F&B concept

- No. of restaurants and concept
- No. of bars
- Other (snack machine, guest kitchen, honesty bar, etc.)
- Style, type of food and seating capacity per outlet (1,000 characters incl. spaces)

9. Short description of meeting / conference / working area

- Choice yes/no
 - Total area (sqm)
 - No. of meeting rooms
 - space available | 500 characters incl. spaces
 - Other / special features | 500 characters incl. spaces

10. Short description of wellness & spa area

- Choice yes/no
 - Total area (sqm)
 - Wellness, spa and fitness offer | 1,000 characters incl. spaces

11. Preview images

Please upload here the three most representative images of the hotel (facade / room picture / public space) as JPG files in print quality (300 dpi) with identification of the image rights in the file name. These images will be primarily used in order to present your hotel (trade journals, 196plus website, conference brochure, etc.)

- Exterior view/façade
- Room
- Public space

SECTION 8: Upload files

Here you have the possibility to upload further pictures, plans, press releases, presentations, advertising videos and video clips in a collective folder.

For an overview that is as complete as possible, we recommend submitting the following material in addition.

When uploading the respective file, please pay attention to the exact indication (e.g. view standard room, view restaurant "name", view lobby). Please note that all images should be submitted as JPG files in print quality (300 dpi) indicating clearly the intellectual property rights of the photographs and videos submitted.

- Map indicating the hotel location (radius 2 km and radius 10 km / 2 pictures)
- Aerial view of the hotel (if available / 2 pictures)
- **Exterior view/façade* (1 additional picture, different from the already uploaded pictures)**
- The hotel in its surroundings (2 pictures)
- Interior views (2 pictures)
- Reception area (2 pictures)
- Restaurant (2 pictures)
- Lobby (2 pictures)

- **Public space*** (1 additional picture, different from the already uploaded pictures)
- **Rooms*** (1 additional picture, different from the already uploaded pictures)
- Barrier-free rooms (2 pictures of the barrier-free hotel rooms with sanitary rooms, which illustrate the structural realization of the barrier-free concept)
- Bathroom (2 pictures)
- Spa area (if applicable / 2 pictures)
- Conference area (if applicable / 2 pictures)
- Special design features of the hotel (e.g. design details / 2 pictures)
- Architectural plans (e.g. preliminary drawings, a selection of non-dimensioned plans is sufficient / 3 files)
- Storyboard / Brand concept
- Selected press articles (up to 5 articles)
- Videos, presentations (up to 2 files)
- Virtual hotel tour (lobby, reception, F&B outlets, conference, spa, standard room category, others) recorded e.g. via mobile phone with or without explanations possible (no professional video recording necessary)
- **Upload links*** (website, social media, etc.)