

THE Constant ISSUE

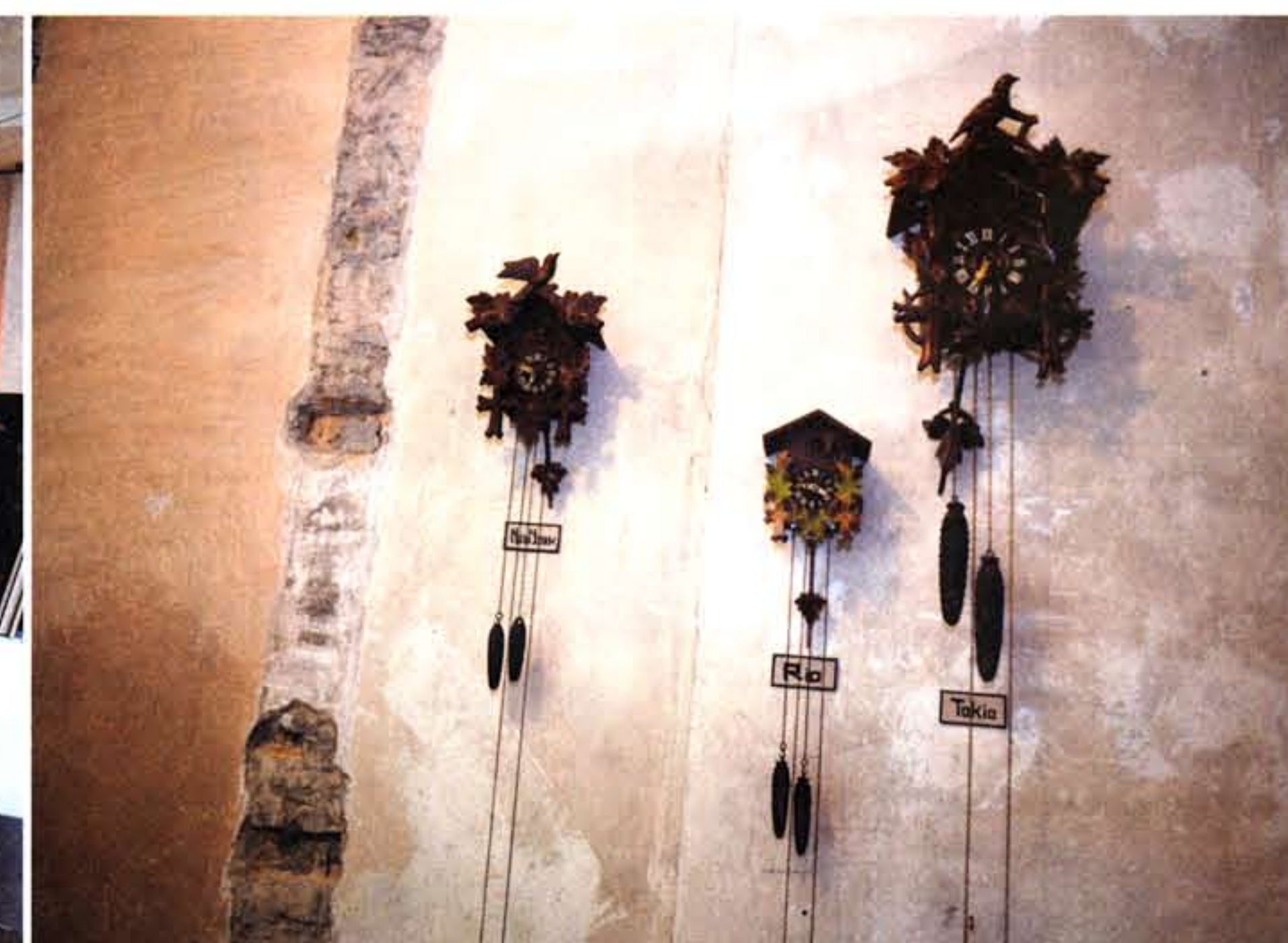


A Harlequin Bug collected near a nuclear power plant in Three Mile Island called Governor's Stable. The shield is bent and the yellow form is asymmetrical.

5518.00 / £12.00



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NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Text by *Chauntelle Trinh*
Photographs courtesy of *Michelberger Hotel*

Michelberger Hotel was designed to provide a warm and genuine stay, without compromising on the quality of hospitality. Our Berlin Associate finds out why there is really no other place quite like it.

Band Of Hoerses - *On My Way Back Home*
INFINITE ARMS (2010)

50 NO PLACE LIKE HOME



It was intended that guests at the Michelberger Hotel should feel like they were putting up at a friend's place. Tell us about some of the most interesting homes you have visited?

Just last week we travelled through northern Italy resting in a small mountain village for lunch. We joined a couple of old South Tirol peasants at their table. Old and single. Without a wife all their lives. They lived on a mountain with people still almost cut off from the outer world.

After a couple of glasses of red wine, we offered to take him back to his home, which was a couple of kilometres away. Arriving there was a highly emotional experience. He told us his sad but at the same time happy life story as we drank his self-made Schnaps. His home was a small ancient chalet was given to him as a twenty-two year old by his grandfather, who rejected his daughter and him for a long time, since he was an out-of-marriage baby. The old man was a brutal man, but after his mother died giving birth to him, the grandfather felt guilt and gave him this shed.

That was fifty-five years ago. And everything from the pictures at the wall to the bed has the same age. He doesn't understand why he never found a woman that liked him. He lived his life, had three quality cows

that made his living, and only allowed nice people to visit him. Before we left he told us, that there is only one thing in his life that he regrets, or a wish, "I wish I would have at least one illegitimate child."

Homes have a story. And the story makes the quality.

Apart from being a comfortable and homely place, what other factors contribute to the 'new typology of a hotel'? What experiences put forward your unique brand of hospitality?

Typology is not a word I would use. Everything that is built by characters with a passion, not driven by money, but by creating something original that comes out of themselves. Something that cannot be copied. The hotel is an extension of us, like our own flats. It is a tribute to Berlin. And the way we manage it is a tribute to how we think good business should be done. If you want to nail it down, it is a family hotel with people not bound together by blood but by the same motivation. We built room types tailored to what we believe are modern travel constellations: small families, a group of friends, single business people, or artists on the road. Our hotel has elements of friends' hangout, of a concert stage, of design-loving, of luxury, of life on a budget, of a place that wishes to be a gate to the city. Not a replaceable island within.



How do you feel about the gradual change that is happening in Berlin and the sudden influx of creative immigrants over the years?

I love it. Like every big city, Berlin has something that no other place has. The longer you are here the more you understand it.

Places like our hotel express this spirit. And I really wish that more investors trust what they find, see and experience here and build on it. Instead of copy and pasting things you find in any other major city. This is why those immigrants feel inspired to come and stay here. The comparisons with New York are ambitious, but on a smaller scale, Berlin has the chance to constantly move into new areas, while increasingly building a stronger economic base. Without immigrants there is no change. And Berlin plays and incorporates change in every aspect.

Because it is not about owning buildings or apartments here in Berlin, it's about putting life into spaces. It's not about holding on, it's about accepting change and moving on with it. Berlin is the capital of Anti-Establishment. It's about the content, not about the frame. That's the charm.

With its unpredictable culture, there is hardly an uninteresting day in Berlin. What itinerary would you plan for a visiting friend?

- To Prinzenbad on a hot summer day. That's where all Kreuzberg meets, in two ugly big swimming pools. All you see is Kreuzberg people. It's colourful: a few small town gangsters, big families on holiday from the city.

- To Restaurant Gino's in Wrangelstrasse. Best *spätzle* in town. An Austrian/German kitchen. Affordable, comfortable with good people.

- To sit in front of the twenty-four hour Turkish Baker or the Bürgermeister at Schlesisches Tor. People watching in the middle of one of Berlin's most happening areas.

The Michelberger hotel building was a former factory. You retained some of the original interior elements and mixed them with precious collectables found. What are some of the more interesting features?

Anja Knauer and Sibylle Oellerich, our interior stylist searched flea markets and house sales for things that carry a story. The little pictures on the wall from old family albums, the grandma-knitted kitchen napkins



used books in our book walls, the painter's studio chairs. The walls where we left the different layers open show the different layers of paint that the building collected over the past hundred years.

What were the main inspirations or influences?

Whatever we saw in our lives influenced our creative decisions. We approached everything very raw and virgin-like. We thought about things like it was for the first time. Doing things for the first time has magic to it. I would recommend to anyone planning to build a hotel, to not look at what or how others do it, but to concentrate on what's within them.

Have there been regular guests or interesting personalities you have met?

That is probably the most precious thing about being a part of a hotel. Every day you have new people coming your way. Sitting in the bar at night, meeting the regulars and talking to new ones. Talking about ideas or just having a beer.

The hotel is also known for its 'Baustelle parties' that have helped to build its local network. What are some of the great parties we have missed?

You didn't miss out on anything. As long as you stop by here someday, at least once.

The Michelberger collective is all about a way of doing things. What is your next intention?

We are working on many different ideas. At some point, one will be ready to go. So far, they all don't have anything to do with another hotel. Another hotel would be too boring, probably because now we know how to do it.

Finally, could you please share with us your perception of 'Constant'?

It's something reliable. A private reference. An inner beat, my trust for my friends and in myself. It's a base that helps us handle all this change around us. The stronger it is, the more you are able to do and give.

But in another way, life itself is the only constant in life.