

THIRTY FOUR



110 *
double pleasure

152
#146

other voices
keep the bones,
change the dress with
VitrA

{ 156
seven rituals

159

32 velvet mansion
Hotel Les Ottomans



SUMAHAN ON THE WATER, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

By **Erasmus**
WILSON

On the Asian side of the Bosphorus the independent hotel Sumahan on the Water in Istanbul offers a complete respite from the constant barrage of noise and pollution that the crowds and traffic spew into the confused city full of wailing minarets, rapidly multiplying monstrous high-rises and thousands of crowded roads winding up steep, worn down hills. Open since 2005, the luxuriously restored 19th century Ottoman spirit distillery has been transformed by the husband and wife team of architects/owners Mark and Neelofa Butler, along with their daughter, interior designer Yaela Butler, into a 15-room boutique hotel that pays homage to the classic and modern face of the ancient and still thriving city, where the green streets just steps away from the watery artery that feeds rich oxygen into the pulsating heart of the bustling megacropolis. The street once called by Odysseus "lands of life, pleasure and happiness, Istanbul draws its strength from the Bosphorus," writes Othman Pasha in Istanbul, Memories of a City. Few places are as good as the Sumahan on the Water to experience these euphoric words in action.



The industrial heritage of the old factory remains present through the exposed brick walls and black steel rafters. Discerning eyes will recognise in the lobby library Mario Bellini's La Bambole sofa and Voi au Vent chair and Antonio Citterio's 9750 Aperta chair and ottoman combined with elements of a local traditional kilim rug design, whose pattern can be immediately researched in large volume out of print reference books on the shelves. The balance created between old and new, local and global, measure and exuberance strikes an immediate serene chord. This is not a neutered international design hotel look, but a place of distinguishing character, with love poured into the finest detail, holding you captivated.

Don't forget to bring your lover, because entering Surmahan is starting a romance best enjoyed together. Its bathrooms alone, covered floor to ceiling with the white/grey local marble from the Marmara Island, are private little hammams with plenty of place to play and will bring steam back to the most staid of relationships. From the raised bedroom platform the post-cotilla slumber is heavenly while observing through each other's toes and tall windows the waves outside slosh up against the shore endlessly, while distant

ship horns and seagulls signal their arrival or departure... indeed, like a scene from your favourite movie. Later, standing on the garden quay accessed from the hotel room - pulling a satisfied cigarette - the sunset over the Bosphorus Bridge burns a postcard moment straight into the memory chip of the inner eye. A stroll through Surmahan's meandering hallways leads to its sister fish restaurant Kordon, serving up an exquisite platter of maritime appetisers and the freshest seafood dishes, seated in summertime on a terrace next to the water while supertankers slip silently by in the night. A stay at Surmahan on the Water becomes a transcending experience, where a beautiful location, thoughtful design and attentive service conspire to give the guest a mental spa treatment from the rejuvenating current that is the Bosphorus.

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