

CREATIVE HOSPITALITY

Text by *Yishan Lam*

Photography by *Jonas Mosesson*

An understanding of the ideals behind Creators Inn, a complimentary accommodation that allows creative travellers to meet new like-minded friends.

If creative culture is going global, it may not be that access to creative cities follows suit, especially if you are pretty tight on budget, not an internationally celebrated creative genius(yet), or do not have a cool cousin whose couch you can crash on.

But should you be a creative individual in Gothenburg or Stockholm on a bout of collaboration or some other kind of creative visit, there is a place you can apply to that promises to match any rate you can find below zero.

Reviving traditions of hospitality for their current context, Swedish clothing brand *Elvine* have set up Creators Inn to offer free short-term accommodation for visiting creators, with a twofold aim: to support traveling creators and add interest to the urban landscape.

Besides spinning a new yarn on the idea of “Corporate Social Responsibility”, by offering creatives a base from which to engage with the city, the idea creates a ripple effect of

encounters and exchanges elsewhere that add to the vitality of the place – a little bit of cultural diplomacy on the side.

Surely that gives some incentive to cobble together a reason to go to Sweden.

In a way, Creators Inn functions like a micro artist residency: in comparison to institutional residencies, it’s more accessible, has a quicker turnover, and offers an unscripted context for cross-pollination for the people and personalities who come, whether blogging trend-spotter, product designer or musician.

Like other interest group-oriented hotels such as Ace Hotel and The Standard in USA, and Claska in Japan, it shows a wider thirst for a convergence of carefully-curated style and comfort, and opportunities for like-minded individuals to meet. Is this the way forward for hospitality?

To discover how hospitality relates with creativity, we interview Jesper Larson of Next Century Modern on the thought process behind the project.





How did you guys come up with the concept of Creators Inn?

I had a lot of creative friends visiting me in Gothenburg and I wanted to increase their hospitality level. At the same time, Elvine has a history in the local graffiti scene, and have a saying that *Elvine is your friend*. Since as a friend you offer your visiting friends a place to stay, we started Creators Inn by Elvine together and the rest is history.

Can you describe the thought process behind each of the design details?

The logo basically pays homage to the old Holiday Inn logotype. The first edition of Creators Inn was all about making an apartment with one room feel like a hotel chain. So we borrowed a lot of hotel attributes, such as the logo, made small bottles of shampoo, soap, etc. and worked with the interior, putting the bed in the center of the room, adding drapes to cover a

blank wall and things like that. I was actually pretty amazed how much difference it made to room.

The second edition of Creators Inn was a capsule version located at the creative collective LAT in Gothenburg. That is still up and running, and it's basically an ongoing experience of comfort regarding living/work space requirements. At the capsule version of Creators Inn you only get a small sleeping capsule, but it's soundproof and has a direct intake of fresh air, so people sleep like little babies there. At the same time you have larger shared spaces such as kitchen, dining area and workspaces.

The third edition of Creators Inn is currently running in Stockholm. Located at Hotel Scandic Malmen in the vibrant area of Södermalm, it's our first hotel-in-a-hotel version. For this edition it was all about turning a hotel room into an apartment. We used second-hand

furniture, plants, put in a stereo with vinyl records, books, magazines and so on to create that *home sweet home* feeling. Guests can also borrow a bike and get free creative concierge services, among many other things. It's all about creating that special luxury that comes from thoughtful ideas and service.

It's also an open and democratic system where everyone is welcome to give a valid reason to stay, and unlike other residencies, creators aren't obliged to create anything in return for Creators Inn. What is the secret formula to sustaining such goodness?

Creators Inn was actually created as a complement to other artist in residence programs where you have to write long applications, usually a year a head of time. I don't believe the modern creatives work like that.

But people have a hard time believing it is free. I think it's a bit

troubling that people can't grasp something as simple as hospitality. Somehow this noble phenomena got lost with capitalism.

There is no secret formula. It's more like Kant's categorical imperative or the golden rule: "do to others as you would like they to do to you".

What impact has Creators Inn had, on the city, on creators, on yourselves, on the world? What have you personally derived from the experience?

The response has been amazing. People from all over the world seem to love the idea. I think it's because we were first with the concept. It's a simple idea, but it has so many winners. We call it "Creative Social Responsibility". It's actually a win-win-win-win-win-situation:

1. The creators get free accommodation with a high standard and service level

2. Local independent event organizers don't have to pay for their guest artists or creators

3. The city becomes more attractive for creators, and the visiting creators make the city more interesting for the inhabitants

4. This creates natural meetings between local and visiting creators

5. Elvine gets goodwill and great PR

Beyond, we hope to open a Creators Inn by Elvine outside of Scandinavia and continue to evolve the project.