

KUWAIT
Hotel Missoni
 Kuwait City
 965/2577-0000
 hotelmissoni.com
 From \$414



HOTEL COUTURE

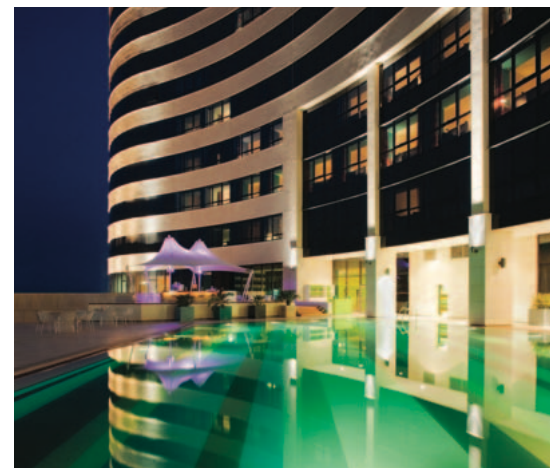
BY DAVID FARLEY

“BUONGIORNO, SIGNOR FARLEY,” said Umberto, the head waiter at Hotel Missoni’s Cucina restaurant. By the beginning of my third day, the staff knew my name. And what I drank with breakfast. An espresso *doppio* was delivered to my table a minute later. “Prego,” the server said.

You’d think I was in Italy. In fact, I was 2,500 miles southeast of the country’s heel, in the capital of diminutive, oil-rich Kuwait. Opened in spring 2011, Hotel Missoni,

owned by the eponymous fashion and home furnishings house, is one of many designer-conceived hotels that have popped up around the globe.

I have to confess: I have a complicated relationship with fashion. Maybe it’s related to my childhood. (Isn’t everything?) In the seventh grade, I wore a T-shirt to school that said, MY SON IS IN THE NAVY. My trend-conscious peers, who clearly had no sense of irony, laughed at me until the final bell rang.



COURTESY OF HOTEL MISSONI

OTHER FASHION DESIGNER HOTELS AROUND THE WORLD



1. FRANCE
Hotel Le Bellechasse, Paris
 A fairy tale-like property near the Musée d'Orsay is one of three Paris hotels designed by Christian Lacroix. Dragonflies, astrological symbols, and fantastical creatures flew from Lacroix's imagination onto the walls.
 From \$364. 33/(o) 14-550-2231, lebelleshasse.com

2. ENGLAND
Bulgari Hotel, London
 The third hotel in a growing Bulgari empire shimmers in shades of silver—a nod to the fashion house's silversmith origins. The 85 rooms and suites are elegant to the nth degree; dark-hued

textiles and leather armchairs create an understated, cozy atmosphere.
 From \$778. 44/(o) 20-7151-1010, bulgarihotels.com

3. AUSTRALIA
Palazzo Versace, Queensland
 Luxury and opulence define Donatella Versace's fashion sense. This Roman-style palace with Brazilian marble, Italian mosaics, and gold columns, is no departure from her aesthetic. Details from the custom bath products to gold-and-fuchsia-patterned upholstery were imagined by the designer.
 From \$492. 61/(o) 7-5509-8000, palazzo.versace.com.au

4. GERMANY
Casa Camper, Berlin
 The Spanish shoe company's second hotel (the first is in Barcelona) features 51 minimalist rooms and three suites with hardwood floors, fluffy rugs, and furniture plucked from the 1970s and '80s. Albert Raurich, formerly of Catalonia's elBulli restaurant, created the menu at the eatery, Dos Palillos. The hotel also rents out bikes, perfect for exploring nearby Hackescher Markt.
 From \$314. 49/(o) 30-2000-3410, casa.camper.com/berlin

5. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Tortuga Bay, Punta Cana
 A resort within a resort, Tortuga Bay has 30 suites and 13 villas designed by D.R. native Oscar de la Renta. Villas face the Caribbean and feature wicker canopy beds and coralline stone bathrooms. Take your private golf cart to the open-air restaurant, La Yola, in time for a sunset pineapple cocktail.
 From \$710. (809) 959-7325, puntacana.com

When I wore bowling shoes to high school, I was similarly mocked. How would I do in a hotel designed by a couturier?

I was picked up at the airport in Kuwait City in a Maserati (a complimentary perk for all Missoni guests). Not a bad start.

The property (and its sister hotel in Edinburgh, which opened in June 2009) is the brainchild of the Missoni family matriarch, Rosita. The hotel's 169 rooms were designed to feel like her home. Compact Hans Wegner wishbone chairs and tulip-like Eero Saarinen-designed tables rest on hardwood floors, and everything—espresso cups, towels, even the swimming pool—display the colorful stripe patterns Missoni is known for. Generous helpings of turquoise, gold, and beige are splashed throughout the hotel to evoke the bayfront landscape outside, and every room looks out on the ever-expanding Kuwait City skyline. Like many things Italian, the hotel is simple and comfortable.

The Missoni team, which is fine-tuning its approach before opening hotels in larger markets, learns fast. There are no design hotel clichés here: no faucets with the function designed out of them, no overly formal staff. “Are those Camper shoes?” a waiter asked me one day at breakfast. I nodded. “Like bowling shoes,” he said. “Very cool.” Here, it seemed, fashion and I got along great. **A**

