

inspiration



Clockwise from far left
Stained glass in restaurant
La Maison de Manfred;
outdoor dining on the
rooftop; one of the 104
Starck-designed rooms; the
hotel's unexpected exterior

Maison Heler Metz

Always expect the unusual when it comes to Philippe Starck – his latest French hotel is a surrealist fantasy, topped with an architectural flourish

It's not every day you see a metal-clad mansion in the style of the 19th century atop a nine-storey skyscraper, but that's exactly what Philippe Starck has done with the hotel Maison Heler Metz, blending the futuristic with the traditional in a way that only the French polymath can. 'There is a certain gravity to Metz,' Starck says. 'Not darkness exactly, but a kind of pale, persistent melancholy. I find a strange kind of poetry in it. This context was fertile ground for the project.' It can be seen in his use of raw, natural materials, from veined marble to exposed concrete and untreated leather, which crops up throughout the 104 rooms, two restaurants and two bars.

Despite the enchantingly eerie undertones, there's an air of Wes Anderson about it – most obvious in the 'whimsical objects' hidden like Easter eggs planted in films. Among them are ancient coins and quotations, and a secret alphabet to decipher. On the top floor, theatrical stained-glass windows by Ara Starck (Philippe's daughter) offer altered panoramic views. It all stems from Starck's refusal to be seen as merely an interior architect. 'For my projects, I act like a film director: each imagined place tells its own story,' he says. This is an auteur's take on luxury. *From approx £125 per night, hilton.com; starck.com* **ED**

