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Built in 1829, Hotell Continental du Sud sits resplendent in the heart of Ystad.

## Hotel of the Month, Sweden

# A historic jewel in the centre of Ystad

Sweden's oldest hotel sits in one of Skåne's most beautiful cities. Now Hotell Continental du Sud has undergone a careful and loving renovation to restore it to its original splendour and bring its facilities up to the very highest contemporary standards.

By Liz Longden | Photos: Sting reklam

First opened in 1829, Hotell Continental du Sud is an elegant gem of a building, located in the heart of Ystad. Just a stone's throw from the city's historic port, it has been an important meeting point for nearly 200 years, with patrons including cultural icons both real and imagined – the hotel restaurant features in the books of Henning Mankell as a favourite haunt of his flawed hero Kurt Wallander. Little wonder then, that co-owner Jenny Nilsson talks about the building having a unique atmosphere. "The feeling you get when you come in through those doors is

kind of special," she says. "It's hard to put your finger on it, but it's very calming, like a sense of harmony. You can feel the history in the walls."

Nilsson and her partner, Martin Jönsson, bought and took over the hotel in December 2014, with Nilsson taking on the role of hotel manager. Together, the couple has lovingly renovated the grand old building, restoring it to its former glory by putting back original features, while also updating its facilities with technology such as fast Wi-Fi and air conditioning in all rooms.

They have also added a new restaurant, which includes an in-house bakery and pastry kitchen, serving a gourmet menu created from the local region's finest ingredients in the hotel's sumptuous dining room. Indeed, exciting and contemporary cuisine enjoyed in the splendid surroundings of days gone, arguably sums up Nilsson and Jönsson's philosophy in a nutshell. "The hotel is obviously a huge part of the city's heritage, and we're very aware of that. So we very much want to preserve that as best we can, while also offering something that meets the highest expectations of our guests today," says Nilsson.

### Location, location, location

In the early 19th century, Ystad harbour was Sweden's principal port for travel to Europe, and Hôtel du Sud, as it was

originally named, was built to meet the needs of these international travellers. It is thanks to this historic role that the hotel today occupies such a prime location – directly opposite the train station and just a few minutes' walk from the city's sights and shops, with the added convenience of its own car park. It makes the perfect base for anyone wanting to explore Ystad's medieval streets, monastery, museums or theatre. The hotel also offers a treat for golf lovers, with a package deal combining a night's stay and a three-course meal and hearty breakfast with access to southern Skåne's three golf courses at Ystad, Tomelilla and Abbekås.

Even for those keen to venture a little further afield, it is hard to find a better starting point. The buzz and sights of Malmö and Copenhagen, the picturesque island of Bornholm and the renowned beauty of

the Österlen countryside are all within easy reach for day-trippers. "We're a bit spoilt here, especially in the summer," Jönsson agrees.

### Perfect setting for a perfect meeting

Hotell Continental du Sud's central location also makes it an ideal meeting point, whether it be for business, special occasions, or just for pleasure. It goes without saying that, with its original marble, oak floors and elegant chandeliers, the historic building makes a breathtaking setting for weddings and anniversaries, while for conferences, the hotel offers the latest technology, a choice of rooms to suit every mood and occasion, and gourmet cuisine as standard. Nilsson adds that the team prides itself on its personalised service and can arrange for a wide variety of team-building and cultural activities for conference delegates.

"There's nothing we can't sort out," she says. "Whatever our guests want, whether that's hiring a bus and driving around Österlen or something else, we can probably do it." The hotel even has a renowned on-site art gallery, enabling delegates to combine fine dining with the appreciation of fine art.

But a great meeting can also be about simply relaxing with good company in a beautiful setting, and a little sunshine certainly does no harm either, which is why the hotel opens up its restaurant with a laid-back but stylish outdoor area in the summer. Open every day from 12 noon until late, it is the perfect way to continue nearly 200 years of tradition.

Web: [www.hotellcontinental.se](http://www.hotellcontinental.se)



Top left and middle: All the hotel's rooms have been lovingly renovated in classical style, but with contemporary comforts. Bottom left: The hotel prides itself on crafting its gourmet menu from locally sourced food. Right: With its timeless, classical beauty, Hotell Continental du Sud makes a perfect venue for conferences and special occasions.