

# HELSINKI PROVIDES RARE PRISON EXPERIENCE



Flocks of tourists visit the infamous Alcatraz of the coast of San Francisco every year. They are fascinated by the prison atmosphere. However, only a small percentage of them would ever wish to stay there, let alone pay for the privilege. Nevertheless, Hotel Katayanokka in Helsinki offers precisely this experience. Of course, guests are not treated like prisoners used to be. The slop which was dished out to Finnish inmates is now in the form of lobster and seafood specialties. Similarly, whereas the inmates used to have to endure years of endless mental torture, today's guests are able to wire up to two internet connections and enjoy their abode in the comfort of air conditioning.

This is not to say that Katayanokka has not kept the prison theme. All drinks are served in tin cups to make the experience more authentic. Whereas, the earlier Finnish prisoners were lucky to receive anything resembling fresh water, today's guests are able to choose from a wide range of cocktails and practically every known beverage under the sun.

In keeping with the prison theme, guests are often labeled with 'guilty' stickers and even given iron balls with chains to give them a small taste of what it was like to be an inmate. All 106 rooms in the hotel can be described in the same way: that they incorporate the feelings of modern comforts and luxury whilst reminding people of what used to be there. Although the guests tend not to feel any degree of discomfort whatsoever, they are still aware of what the building used to serve as.

The basement 'jailbird' restaurant is a perfect place to relax away from the hustle and bustle of the city centre, in very unique surroundings. Almost all dishes have unique names connected with the prison theme.

Planning to visit a prison hotel? Add your comments.

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