here's something about an unmarked entrance that draws us to a door. All the better should that privacy be situat-
ed in a central location, hidden in plain sight a few short
blocks from Norway's Royal Palace and the Nobel Institute. 
In which case, Oslo's new Villa Inkognito merits its name
and the inherent promise of discretion.

Hidden beneath the building's 19th-century porte-cochere, Villa Inkognito's wooden doors open into a residence that
evokes the home of an art connoisseur whose 
patronage of the arts is matched by a gen-
erosity of spirit. There's a palpable sense of 
calm upon entrance into the Villa, where 
guests are greeted by the lady of the house, 
whose gracious demeanor exemplifies the 
Villa's intuitive hospitality. Everyone in 
service at the Villa seems to anticipate a 
guest's desires, whether it's an espresso 
croissant upon arrival or the return of a
phone lost in a plush seat cushion. 
Built as a private residence in 1870, the
Italianate building subsequently housed 
the executive offices of Oslo's electric
company, which was located in the ad-
 jacent Sommerro House hotel. After a
meticulous renovation and redesign, Villa Inkognito opened this April as an
11-room urban retreat complete with
conservatory, Champagne bar, library, 
private dining room and music salon with
a Steinway & Sons grand piano.

In addition, Villa guests have access to
Sommerro House and its multiple restaur-
ants and amenities via a private aerial
corridor on the Villa's top floor.

Arriving at the Villa
Designed by the London/New York
 firm GrecoDeco, the spacious rooms and
suites at Villa Inkognito open like a col-
collection of Faberge eggs, bedizened with
passementerie, art nouveau wallpaper,
original paneling and gumdrop lighting.
The carved oak sleigh beds with Swane
mattresses are beautifully dressed in
pressed linens and cotton candy-soft pil-
lows that all but guarantee a blissful sleep.

Guests who arrive at the Villa after a
transatlantic journey might consider a re-
habitation sauna and swim at Oslo's first
roofop pool, situated atop Sommerro
House. Equally indulgent is Vestkantba-
det, Sommerro House's spa and wellness
floor that includes an art deco pool from
1932. Beautifully restored with vintage
wooden changing rooms and a mosaic
by Norwegian artist Per Krohg, the pool
serves as a metaphor for the rebirth of
Sommerro House and the surrounding
neighborhood.

Breakfast at the Villa is served in the
Pipkin Kitchen at a communal table
where a personal chef caters to guests and
their morning whims. Guests who desire
privacy are free to dine in their rooms
—or at Ekspedisjonshallen (Expedition Hall), the historical dining room at Som-
merro House that was once the central
hall of Oslo's electric company.

Situated at the base of Sommerro's
magnificent central staircase, the art
deco-inspired Ekspedisjonshallen retains
Krohg's original fresco of the history of
hydraulic power as well as a sunken bar
and a stage for musical entertainment in
the evenings. High tea is served in the
neighboring To Sostre, where a winter
garden and rattan furnishings evoke Nor-
wegian fairy tales.

At Sommerro House, it's not uncom-
mon to witness the awe of an octogenar-
ian who recalls the building's origins. Ac-
 cording to Dominic Gorham, Sommerro's
guest relations manager, numerous locals
return to the hotel accompanied by rela-
tives who learned to swim in its pool.

Staying at Sommerro House
The surrounding Frogner neighborhood
is home to Frogner Park as well as
the Royal Palace and the National The-
atre; locals have embraced Sommerro
House as a beloved icon reborn.
With water views of Oslo's port and
fjord, Sommerro's Heritage Suites are
an homage to Norway's Art and Crafts
movement, furnished with hand-knotted
wool rugs, moire wallpaper and marquee
bird beds handmade in Java. Chan-
deliers in blown glass provide an ambi-
glow that mirrors the rooms' blood
color scheme complemented by full-
length Jacuard window drapes.

What appears as a spaceship crowning
the roof of Sommerro House is actually
the home of TAK Oslo, where acclaimed
chef Frida Ronge rules the house with
her Nordic-Japanese cuisine. During
the golden hour, the panoramic views of
Oslo fjord are particularly spectacular
from the adjoining restaurant Izakaya
Bar & Terrace, which buzzes with sunset
cocktail vibes.

No trip to Oslo is complete without
a polar plunge into the North Sea, in
which case it's necessary to climb aboard
a floating sauna and cruise into the Oslo
fjord. Apart from the mesmerizing views of
the archipelago and the Oslo skyline,
there are the health benefits of plunging
into extreme cold water.

A member of Legend, Preferred
Hotels & Resorts and Historic Hotels
Worldwide, the Villa Inkognito and
Sommerro House are a short walk from
the Oslo Opera House as well as the As-
 trup Fearnley Museet and the new Na-
tional Museum. Single-room rates at the
Villa Inkognito start from $650, with
full Villa rentals from $10,200 per night.
Rates at the Sommerro start from $250
per double room, including breakfast.