

Berlin Report

October 2024

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* Project 1: THE KNAST

1. THE KNAST

Project Overview

A women's prison, completed in 1906 in Lichterfelde, south of Berlin, has been transformed into THE KNAST, a dynamic complex of art, culture, gourmet restaurants, and bars, and is now drawing considerable attention. "KNAST" is the German word for "prison." Designed to blend into its residential surroundings without an overtly prison-like appearance, the building resembles a luxurious mansion from the outside. However, once inside, the contrast is striking, with rows of cells lined up side by side, preserving the building's unique history.

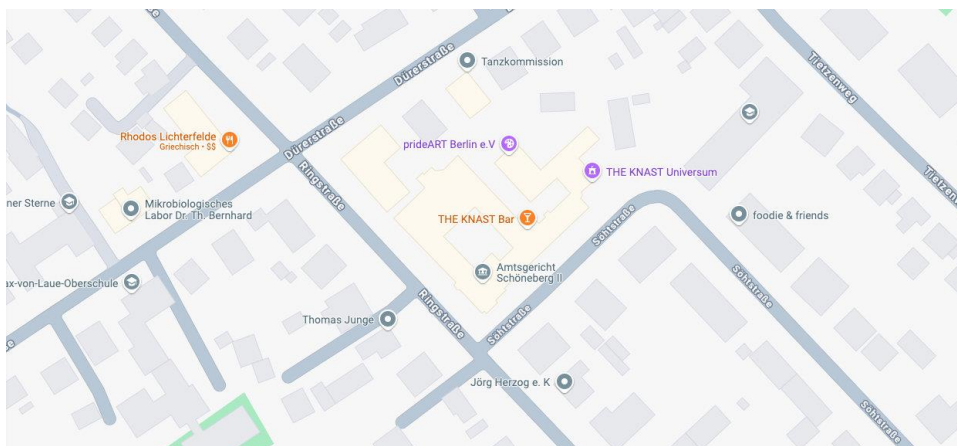
Owners Dr. Joachim Köhrich and Janina Atmadi, who previously ran the Michelin-starred restaurant theNOname in central Berlin, were responsible for designing the restaurant and speakeasy bar within THE KNAST, where photography is strictly prohibited. The duo plans to close theNOname at the end of 2023 to fully focus on THE KNAST project. The design of the new restaurant is inspired by theNOname's sensory-stimulating interior, which featured velvet sofas and solid wood tables placed in a minimalist, white space with subdued lighting.

In contrast, the design at THE KNAST embraces the raw, unfinished feel of the former prison. Original prison-era details, such as drips on the floor and old doors, have been preserved, while smooth leather stools and copper tables add a layer of sophistication. The color scheme draws from the green-gray and brick-red tones found throughout the prison. The former cells have been repurposed as art spaces, now housing exhibitions and ateliers for LGBTQI+A-Community artists, in collaboration with the collective PrideART Berlin. Plans are also in motion to convert some of the cells into a hotel, making this an address to watch closely.

Project Details

1. Client: The Knast
2. Type of Business: Restaurant, Cocktailbar, Studio, Event & Cultural space, Soon to come: Hotel
3. Open Date: Bar 12/2023, Restaurant 17/05/2024
4. Location: Soehntstrasse 7, 12203 Berlin
5. Size: Basement, two upper level, attic with Suites
6. rebuilding: büro west, Uwe Drepper, Interior: Janina Atmadi, Dr. Joachim Köhrich
7. Website: <https://theknast.de/>

Location Map



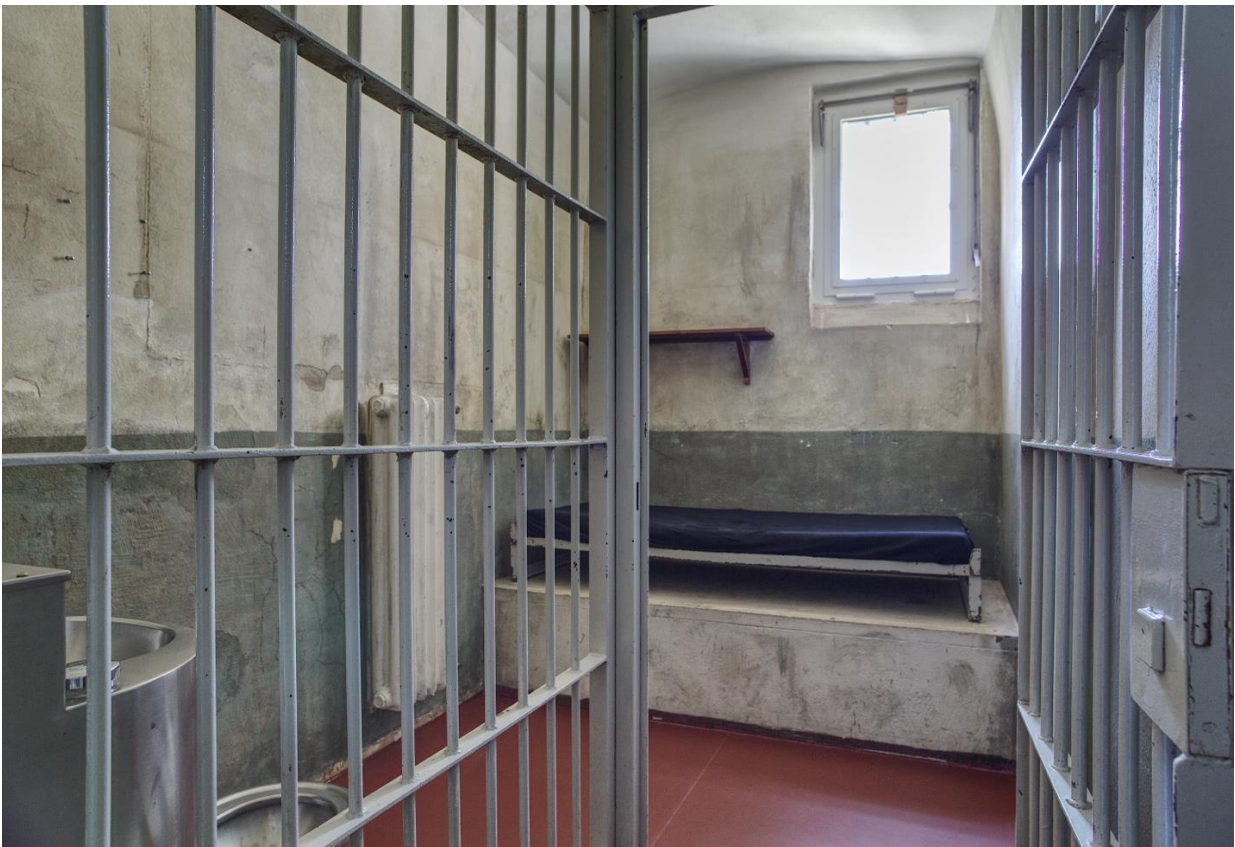


Above: The restaurant space with a remodeled entrance. Folded ceilings and indirect lighting create a sense of spaciousness in what would otherwise be a confined and oppressive area. Below: A space lined with cells, now repurposed as ateliers.





Above: The walls of the restaurant are lined with doors reminiscent of cell doors. Below: The rough-hewn walls of the former cells, which have been left in their original state. There are plans to convert this space into an accommodation facility in the future





Above: The water area is unified with calm, dark tones, and the luxurious materials give the bathrooms a hotel-like atmosphere. A thick monolithic slab was used for the counter, while the walls are adorned with numerous industrial lighting fixtures once used in prisons. Warm, natural materials are abundant, such as the dull, polished copper plate and the sink, which retains the raw texture of stone.



Above: The key colors of the prison space are green-gray and red, which also serve as the primary colors in the restaurant's interior design. The architecture is minimalist and functional, evoking the style of the early 20th century and Bauhaus.



Above: The prison courtyard, where the original ping-pong table remains. A spiral staircase, added during the renovation, mirrors the design of the tower at the back.



Above: The wooden counter and copper-plated ceiling create a warm, cozy atmosphere. Bottom right: In contrast, the cell space feels dull and cold. Each cell measures approximately 3.5 x 2.5 meters. Bottom left: The impressive building features a luxurious facade that blends seamlessly with the surrounding mansions. A courthouse stands in front of the prison.

