



Supreme king seaview room, left; Solo Sokos Hotel Pier 4, above; Restaurant Harbore, below left; Bar Humu, below

# Solo Sokos Hotel Pier 4

Katajanokanlaituri 4, 00160 Helsinki, Finland

DENISE CULLEN

## Location

Solo Sokos Hotel Pier 4 stretches along the shore of Katajanokka, once a shantytown populated by sailors and fishermen. Though still a maritime hub, “Skatta”, as locals call it, has gentrified, becoming an upscale residential district filled with early 20th century Art Nouveau architecture. Solo Sokos Hotel Pier 4 is located 30 minutes by road from Helsinki Airport and within easy reach of central attractions like the Allas Pool and ferries to surrounding islands such as the sea fortress Suomenlinna.

## First impressions

This waterfront hotel is a looker, with every detail inspired by nature. Stepping in from the street, the sinuous white curves of the exterior yield to a luminous atrium lobby. Here, slender wooden panels arc upwards like fledgling tree trunks, towards a skylight resembling a break in the canopy. Anchoring the space is a sweeping circular bench showcasing different types of Finnish wood. The next thing you notice is the dreamy soundscape, which

blends ocean waves with the distant honking of barnacle geese and other bird calls. The hotel’s signature scent is an enticing woody fragrance.

## Design

Solo Sokos Hotel Pier 4 set out to be Finland’s most sustainable hotel, without compromising on luxury. It was designed by acclaimed Anttinen Oiva Architects to house both the hotel and office premises (which are occupied by forestry company Stora Enso). The building’s frame is made from Nordic timber, which will serve as a carbon sink over its estimated 100-plus years of life.

Outside, a layer of glass, aluminium, and granite protects the exposed wood structures from the harsh weather. Inside, however, most of the wooden frame has been left exposed, delivering visual, tactile, and olfactory appeal. Sturdy Viitasaari granite lies under guests’ feet.

The lobby showcases furniture by renowned Finnish designers, such as the streamlined Ateljee and Triennale lounge chairs by Yrjö Kukkapuro, who died in

February 2025. Objects designed by Kukkapuro are on permanent display at New York’s Museum of Modern Art and London’s Victoria and Albert Museum.

## Accommodation

There are 164 rooms and suites, ranging from 21sq m for entry level double and twin rooms, to the 97 sq m “calm suite” with ample living space. All offer clean, minimalistic good looks, with views either of the sea, a courtyard garden, or the Katajanokka district. The firm but comfortable beds are by sustainability-focused Finnish brand Familon.

We’re staying in a Solo Supreme King with Sea View which is decorated in “tynni” (calm and tranquil) style, with high ceilings, blonde wood floors, a beige carpet, and abstract artwork by local artist Jennifer Lipkin.

A soft wool rug is draped over the chaise longue and plush slippers and robes are tucked away in slimline cupboards. The bathroom contains a combined shower and bathtub, single sink, and toilet, and is amply stocked with Netherlands-based Rituals products.

Although the light-drenched aesthetic is appealing, the room’s blackout curtains aren’t entirely effective. As a deep sleeper, this didn’t bother me, but others may find bright chinks of light around the edges disturbing, especially during the European summer, when the sun sets close to 10pm.

## Dining

We didn’t have the opportunity to eat dinner at the main restaurant Harbore, helmed by Viljami Broas. However, a strong Nordic focus was on display during the daily buffet breakfast, with cloudberry shots, raspberry compote, shrimp skagen (creamy prawn salad), vendace (whitefish) mousse, smoked meats and cheeses, rye cakes, and elk sausages all part of the smorgasbord. Around 85 per cent of ingredients are locally sourced. Cafe Helli, a more casual spot located beside reception, sold coffee and pastries, but operated according to a schedule I couldn’t discern.



## The bar

On a sunny summer’s day, there is no more perfect place than Rooftop Bar Humu. Carefully landscaped, meandering garden paths scattered with wildflowers, rocks, and fallen logs bring to mind a forest. The 360-degree views of the city here are also spectacular. However, as there’s no undercover area, opening hours are dependent on weather. We ordered cocktails during a drizzle, when fellow guests were demonstrating the very Finnish quality of *sisu* (resilience) by sitting on lounge chairs under umbrellas. We tried to do the same but folded quickly.

## Wellness

Communal saunas segregated by gender are heated daily in the evening and on weekend mornings. It was to the adjoining showers we decamped after arriving in Helsinki in the early morning, where I was grateful for the hot water, soothing palette and soft natural light.

Around the corner, a dedicated wellness space is divided into three sections, to suit all inclinations and energy levels. A gym area containing workout equipment such as a treadmill, rowing machine and free weights sits alongside a body care area designed for stretching, yoga, and pilates. A relaxation area with mats and cushions for meditation completes the picture.

## Likes

Our bed is positioned to face the floor-to-ceiling glass overlooking the glittering Baltic Sea. This provides an ever-changing view of the area’s boat and ferry traffic – but none of the noise.

## Dislikes

Inconveniently, the main restaurant, Harbore, only opens for dinner five nights a week and (contrary to advice we received from reception staff) bookings are essential. Alternative eateries are located within walking distance, but as hysterically tired travellers who’d pushed through the day after an overnight flight from Australia, it was disappointing to be turned away.

## Tariff

Rooms at Solo Sokos Hotel Pier 4 start at €150 (\$244); the Solo Supreme King with Seaview starts at €220, including breakfast.

Denise Cullen was a guest of Solo Sokos Hotel Pier 4.

[sokoshotels.fi](http://sokoshotels.fi)

