



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

Unconventional eye-catcher as a mirror of lifestyle

A shimmering metallic veil for Barcelona's latest "in" place to meet

Barcelona, that uniquely dynamic metropolis on the Mediterranean, with its 1.6 million inhabitants is not only the capital of the autonomous province of Catalonia but also Spain's second largest city. Avant-garde architecture, innovative design, unconventional art, fashion and music: Barcelona has a different – and faster – pace to most of Europe's other capitals. The city is a magnet not only for creative minds and connoisseurs of savoir vivre, but also for business people and tourists from all over the world. In 2007 alone, more than 7 million tourists came here to enjoy the delights of Catalanian culture. Over 290 hotels in all categories offer bases from which to explore the creative spirit of this lively metropolis. The city's main artery is the 1.3 kilometer Promenade Las Ramblas, which connects the Plaça Catalunya with the harbour. A colourful mix of street artists, vendors of flowers, animals and newspapers, market halls and cafés draws local inhabitants and visitors alike to this magical, elegant promenade for relaxed strolling. On each side of this central lifeline, flanked as it by roads, lie the old city quarters El Raval and Barri Gòtic, both worthy destinations for lovers of culture and cuisine. And here, too, perfectly placed at the hub of the action, is the new four-star design hotel of the famous Spanish hotel chain Barceló, the Barceló Raval. A 38-meter-high elliptical cylinder, completely clad in a veil of shimmering woven metallic mesh, this 186-room hotel is literally the linchpin of the Rambla del Raval's two axes. A special production of GKD – Gebr. Kufferath AG's spiral mesh type Escalé ensures that guests have an optimal view of this beautiful city



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outwards through the metal façade, while for onlookers outside the mesh mirrors a subtle reflection of the hotel's surroundings.

Elliptical shape

The Barceló Hotel Group was founded in 1931 and today has more than 180 hotels in Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and the USA. The group operates 52 of these – three-, four- and five-star hotels as well as inexpensive city hotels – in Spain alone. The latest addition to the chain's upmarket category is the Barceló Raval, which opened end of September just a short walking distance from the famous contemporary art museums – Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) and Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCB) – and from the Ramblas and the harbour. The quarter itself also offers a variety of diversions with its countless cafés, shops and galleries. With 182 rooms and 4 suites, the Barcelo Raval is compact yet cosmopolitan. The hotel's elliptical form alone makes it stand out from the square street grid in which it is located, but its crowning glory is the panorama terrace on the 12th floor with its 360° view over the pride of Catalonia.

Scope for design with metallic mesh

In 2004, the Spanish architects CMV began with the planning of this exceptional hotel. Their design espoused a consistently avant-garde, formally minimalistic concept that creates an exciting interplay with the structure's surroundings. Faced with the task of cladding the complete surface of the elliptical building with a metallic membrane, the architects chose the company GKD, which has already caused a worldwide sensation with numerous spectacular architectural applications of its metallic meshes. With skillful precision and technological innovation, this world market leader for woven metallic architectural and design fabrics has repeatedly widened



the horizons of what seemed possible and set new standards. The façade of the Planet-m pavilion at the Expo 2000 shot to the top of the architectural milestones charts because this was the first time that a round object had been successfully clad in an apparently seamless mantel. The three-dimensional façade of the Maison Folie de Wazemmes in Lille is another impressive example of the design scope afforded by the spiral mesh type Escale: In this case, the shaping of the metal mesh panels was so extreme that "skin" was the only really appropriate metaphor to describe the optical effect.

Maximum transparency

Convinced by these lighthouse projects and by numerous subsequent applications using Escale 7 x 1, the Barceló Group decided that they also wanted spiral mesh cladding for their new building on the Rambla del Raval, intended as it was to become Barcelona's latest "in" place to meet. The structure of the mesh allows panels in a width of up to max. 8 meters and practically unlimited length to be produced, as any number of spirals can be strung together. The spirals mould themselves to structures curved in two planes, to spheres, to amorphous shapes or – as in this case – to an elliptical building.

What was new in the specifications of the client in Barcelona was that the spirals were to have the greatest possible apertures in order to ensure a transparent cladding with an optimal view outwards from inside the hotel. The normal pitch of the round bars in Escale 7 x 1 is 100 mm; the pitch of the spirals 20 mm. For the Barcelo Raval, GKD developed a special production with a round bar pitch of 150 mm and a spiral pitch of 40 mm. 24 panels of this special version of Escale, the largest measuring 35 x 8 meters, were then installed in front of the glass façade that starts on the first floor with a clearance of 50 to 60 cm to create a corridor for the window



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cleaners. The ground floor of the design hotel has no windows, so the mesh façade begins above the solid basement plinth. The cladding is attached via flat profiles, curved to the radius of the building, which are inserted into the top and bottom spirals, then fastened to the substructure and tensioned by means of fork terminals. Intermediate attachments along the window cleaners' corridor on each floor prevent any uncontrolled movements of the huge mesh panels.

Emotional interplay

The glittering, silvery high-tech grace of the mesh dissolves the minimalistic form of the elliptical cylinder and emotionalises it through reflection of the light and the lifestyle of the throbbing metropolis. After nightfall, the mesh – almost totally transparent – allows a clear view of the ever-changing display of lights shining out from inside the hotel. Through this constant interplay with its surroundings, the shimmering membrane transforms the new hotel into an unconventional eye-catcher in Barcelona's trendy downtown district that unites a feeling of belonging and of identity for local inhabitants and visitors alike.

6.519 characters incl. spaces

GKD – WORLD WIDE WEAVE

As a privately owned technical weaver, GKD - Gebr. Kufferath AG is the world market leader in metal, synthetic and spiral mesh solutions. Four independent business divisions bundle their expertise under one roof: Industrial Mesh (woven metal mesh and filter solutions), Process Belts (belts made of mesh and spirals), Architectural meshes (façades, safety and interior design made of metal fabrics) and Mediamesh® (Transparent media façades). With its headquarter in Germany and five other facilities in the US, South Africa, China, India and Chile – as well as its branches in



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France, Spain, Dubai and worldwide representatives, GKD is close to markets anywhere in the world.

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Photos 1-3: During the day, the metal mesh façade shimmers in the sunshine.



Photo 2



Photo 3

Photos 1-6 © GKD

We will be happy to send you the desired images in printable resolution by e-mail.

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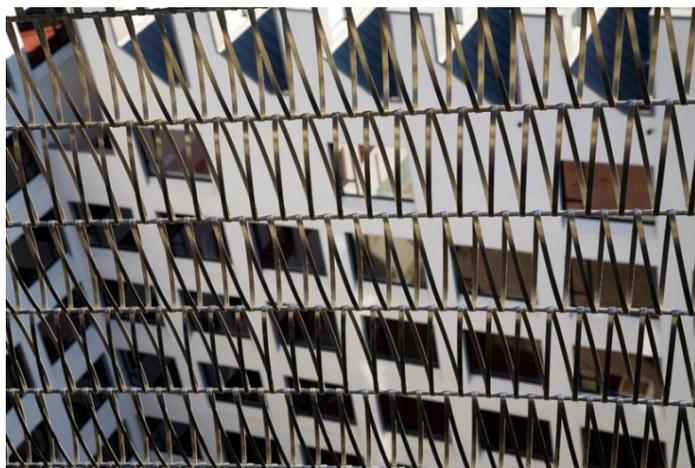


Photo 4: The transparent veil allows an unhindered view outwards from inside the hotel.



Photos 5-6: The glittering, silvery high-tech grace of the mesh underlines the minimalism of the basic elliptical form.



Photos 1-6 © GKD

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