



Rodolphe Parente and Marion Mailaender reimagine Paris' iconic Ken Club

Forty years after it first defined Parisian fitness culture, Ken Club returns with a maximalist new look.
Photographed by Ludovic Balay

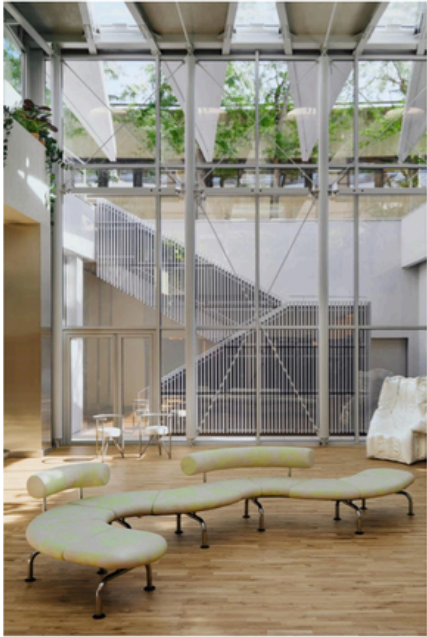
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There's a fine line between leaning into nostalgia and becoming lost in it. Yet, as the newly reopened Ken Club proves, there's also a perfect way to do so. Founded in 1985 by Mireille and Pierre Benzaquen, the fitness club in Paris' 16th arrondissement became an institution, where exercise, music and social life collided in a way not previously seen in the city—or even the world.



Its reputation was shaped by bold colour, energetic classes and the unmistakable cultural imprint of the 1980s; all walkmans, white sneakers and the electric buzz of a space that was part social club, part sports club. Madonna, Sophie Marceau, Michel Denisot and Yannick Noah each passed through the doors at one point, and it wasn't long before Ken Club had earned iconic status.



Now, four decades and a four-year transformation later, under the direction of interior architects [Rodolphe Parente](#) and [Marion Mailaender](#), Ken Club is beginning a stylish new chapter. Parente and Mailaender treated the original Ken Club as a launching point rather than a period piece, taking its appetite for colour, theatricality and movement and translating those qualities into something chic and contemporary. The '80s, but elevated.



Arthur Benzaquen, whose parents founded the club, sees its reimagining as the ultimate way to honour their legacy. "The Ken Club defined us," he says. "It was our parents' creation. Their great achievement. A place that was never copied, because it was so iconoclastic at the time. We grew up here. In reinventing it, I didn't try to recreate the past, but to recapture what was most precious about it: the carefree spirit of the '80s, its freedom, its joyful energy, its love of celebration and movement."



"I was looking for personalities for whom humour, joy and a certain sense of playfulness are simply ways of designing spaces," Benzaquen says. "I still had in mind that laundry room Rodolphe Parente once imagined. A space that would normally be pushed to the margins, suddenly made desirable. With Marion Mailaender, it was something else that fascinated me. Every detail seems to smile. Nothing is showy, yet everything carries a touch of cheekiness."



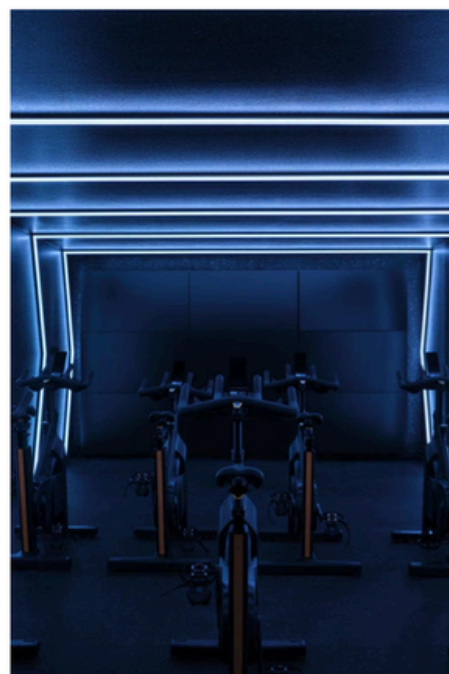
A monumental concrete staircase is wrapped in custom leopard-print carpet, setting the playful tone from the moment of arrival. A reception desk emulating bubble gum in both form and palette. Elsewhere, materials and colour combinations deliberately subvert expectations: cork and melamine in the changing rooms, while a vivid pink cardio space turns a functional environment into an installation.



Architect Denis Valode brings more daylight into the building through glazed openings overhead, incorporating views of the sky into the interiors. Bespoke saunas, hammams and cold-plunge baths create spaces for recovery, while a new restaurant, Dagim is designed by Tomer Lanzman, with food by Michelin-starred chef Assaf Granit.



Conceived as an undulating organic form, the swimming pool is punctuated by circular openings with programmable lighting, framed by steel portholes. In other spaces, an origami-like ceiling covered in gold and silver leaf; a nightclub-esque cycling studio with oversized glitter and LED lighting.



The result is a space that, while deeply rooted in history, is now utterly, unapologetically modern in its design, its offerings and its approach to wellness.