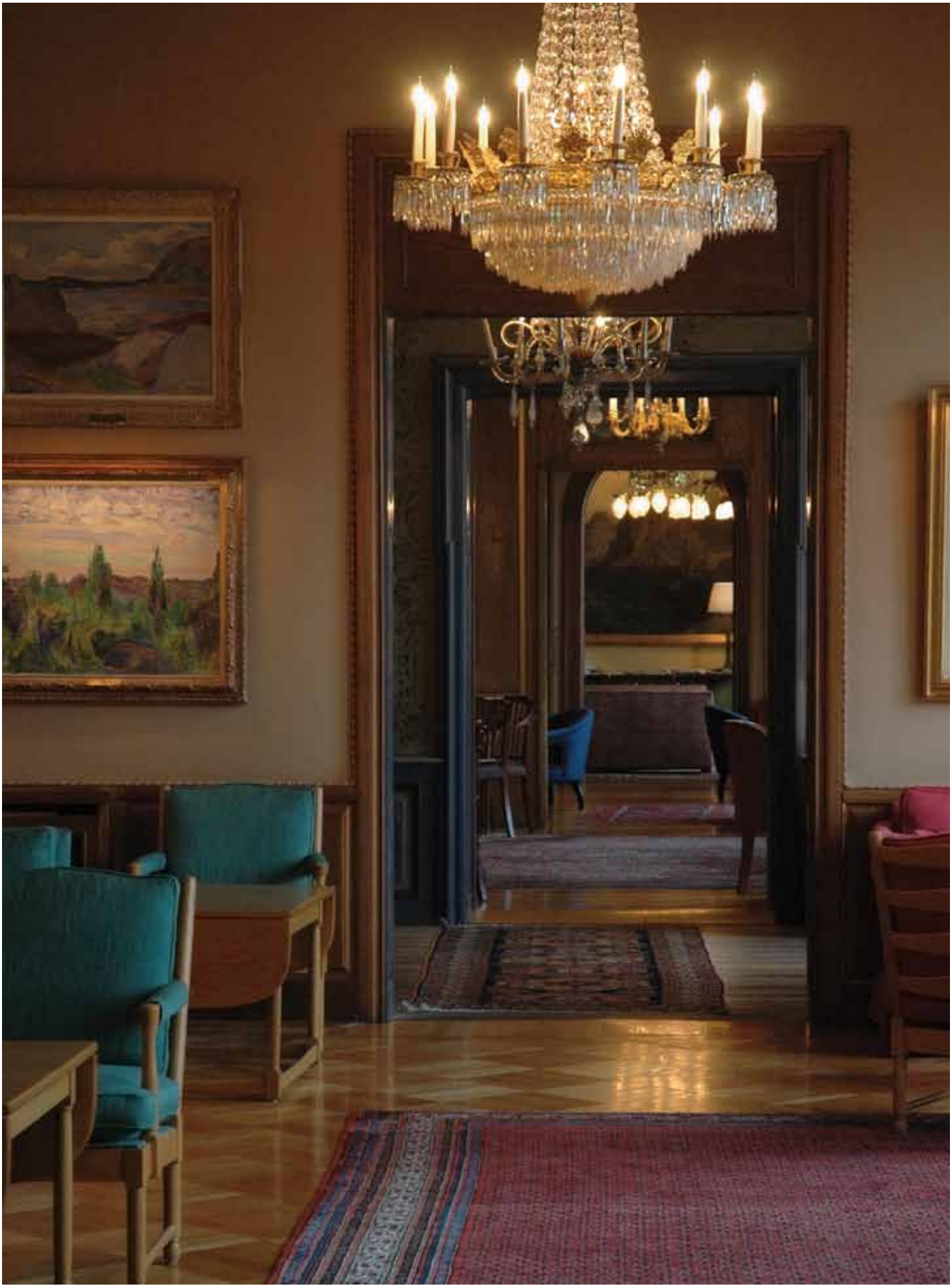


Norske Selskab

Norway Club is an old and prestigious gentlemen's club. Founded in 1772, it is the world's fifth oldest gentlemen's club.

The club is centrally located in Oslo, next to the Parliament. The facilities are beautiful – characterised both by culture and tradition.

Members

Our members are worthy persons from business, culture, science and public administration.
The club has about 1,100 members, and a long waiting list of applicants. New members are carefully chosen and must be recommended by at least two existing members.

The club is open to members and their guests from 11:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on all working days. Each member can bring up to four guests. Guests must respect the dress code and the other rules of the club.

The club facilities

The large building that houses Norske Selskab is fully owned by the club.

The club is located on the second floor, and contains a grand dining room, five sitting rooms, a library, a billiard room and lounges set up for playing cards. The club's administration, wardrobes, kitchen and staff facilities are located on the same floor as the club facilities.
The sitting rooms have a historic, traditional atmosphere, with an elegance and style that certainly make them unique. The rooms also contain one of Norway's most prestigious art collections of national painters from the turn of the previous century.

The club is accessed through the entrance at the centre of the Akersgaten 18 building, from which stairs and an elevator lead to the club floor. A friendly staff greets the guests in the reception room on the club floor.

On the following pages we will take you on a tour through the club facilities

The Toddy Room

From the reception you enter Toddy, where the view of Wessel Square, the Parliament building, the Royal Palace and the National Theatre can be enjoyed. Here, paintings from the 1920s to the 1940s are showcased. The other sitting rooms closest to the entrance are designed according to the famous national architect Arnstein Arneberg's plan from around 1930. The style is closest to Art Deco. The innermost sitting rooms were designed in 1912/1914, clearly reflecting the Art Nouveau style.

The Domino Room

After walking through Toddy you will enter the Domino Room, our lounge featuring modern paintings.
The collection of contemporary art contains the famous Norwegian artists Weidemann, Rose, Strand, and others.

The Dining Room

From Domino you enter the grand Dining Room, where up to one hundred persons can be seated. The room is dominated by the great painting “En aften i Norske Selskab” (“An Evening at Norske Selskab”), painted by Eilif Petersen and commissioned by the club in 1892. It features a meeting of the founders of the club in Copenhagen in 1772. Based on existing portraits, the people portrayed in the painting are recognisable. Reproductions of this

painting are used by historians to chronicle the process leading up to Norwegian freedom and independence. Another notable painting in the dining room is “Skibbrudd” (Shipwreck) by Johan Christian Dahl, painted in 1833. This painting is considered one of his major works.

The Danish Room

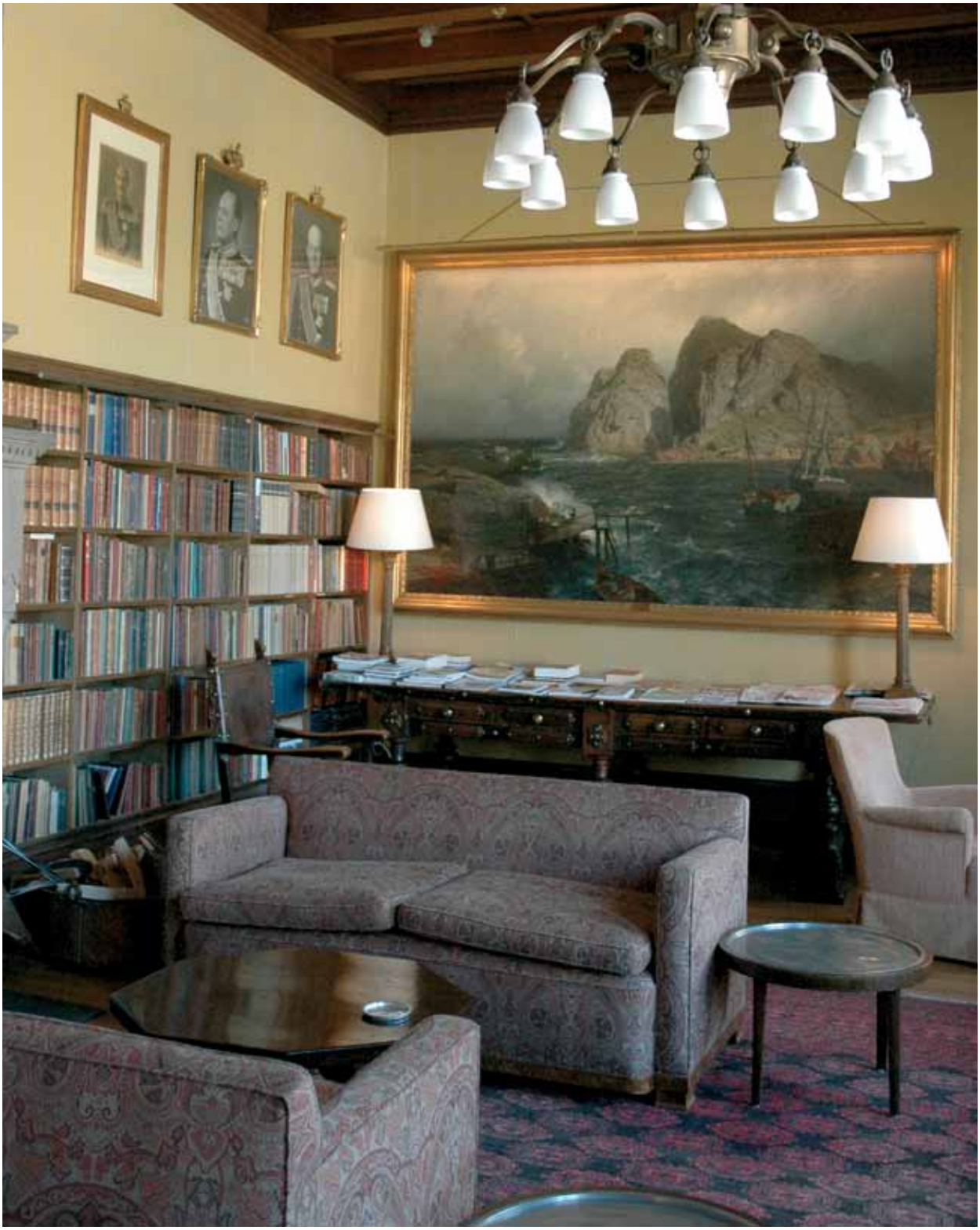
Upon your exit from Toddy in the opposite direction, you will first enter the Danish Room. This room is furnished in memory of our founders and the original members dating back to the club's early days in Copenhagen in the late 18th century. Portraits decorate the walls and there is also a punch bowl which was used by the founding fathers. This bowl is featured in the grand painting in the Dining Room. It is made by Herrebø, a famous Norwegian porcelain manufacturer in the 18th century. The chandelier was also made in the 18th century, by the Norwegian glass factory Nøstetangen. Today there are only 10 Nøstetangen chandeliers left in the world, including the one at Norske Selskab.

The Arneberg Salon

From the Danish room you will enter into the Arneberg salon – our most spacious sitting room. It features an important collection of paintings from the turn of the 20th century, including four paintings by Edvard Munch. A selection of national and international daily newspapers is at hand in this room as well.

The Christiania Room

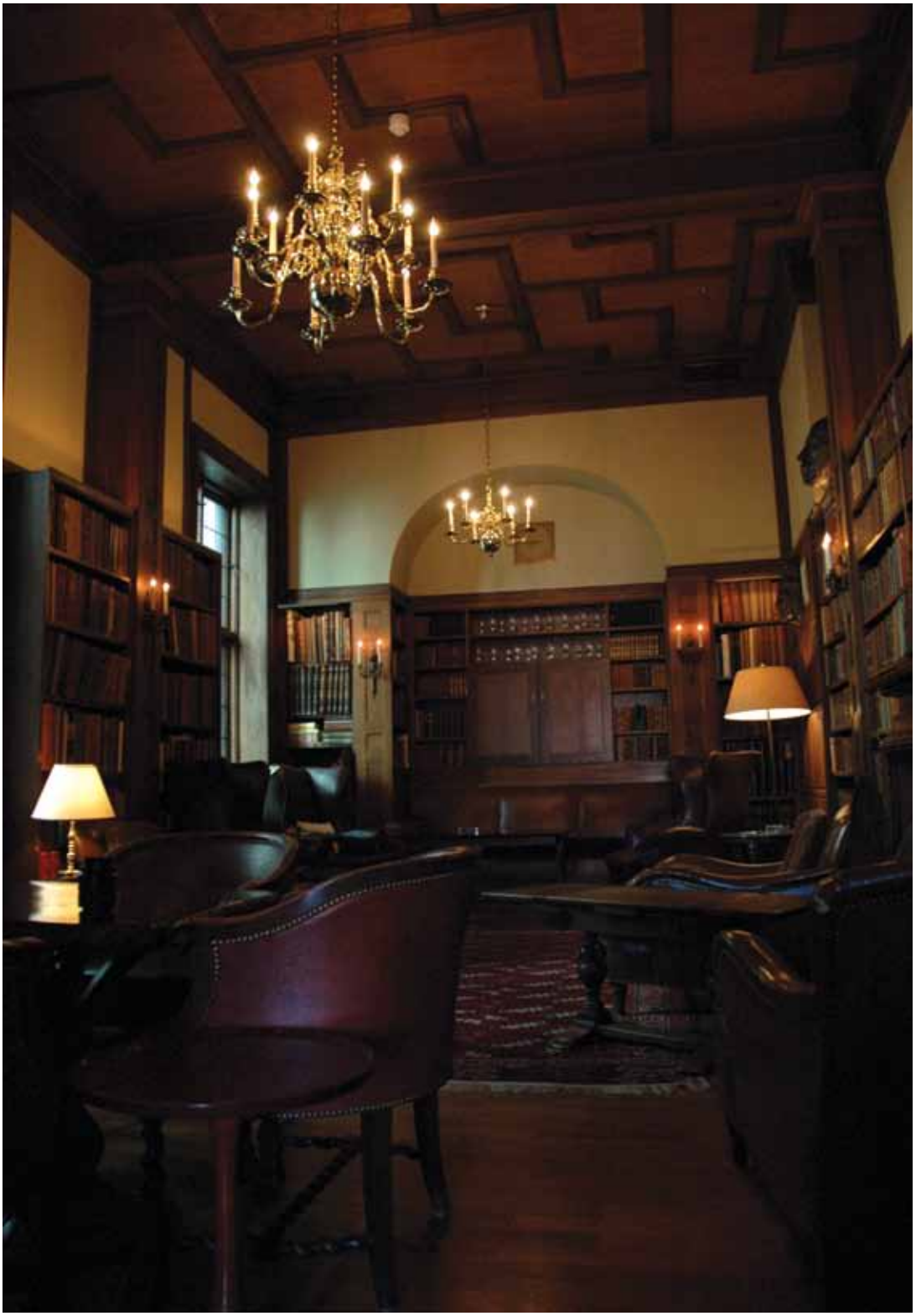
In the next room, the Christiania room, you enter the Art Nouveau part of the club. It features portraits of various honorary members and outstanding officers of the club from 1818 up to present day.



The Corner Room

From the Christiania Room you will enter into the Corner Room, in which portraits of the three last Norwegian Kings are exposed.

There is also an important painting by Hans Gude, as well as a selection of books from our well stocked library.



The Library

From the Corner Room you enter the Library which also houses a concealed flatscreen TV with online cable connection.

One of the noticeable works featured here is the first edition of Henrik Ibsen's earliest drama: Catilina.

Other Facilities

In the inner parts of the club there are three rooms designed for card playing. There are also library books in these rooms. This section also contains the Board Room with all state-of-the-art electronic equipment available for the free use of club members. Many members find it convenient to hold meetings at the club, combining it with a good meal and a relaxing atmosphere.

The club also has a Billiard room, located next to the entrance area/reception.
As the club building underwent complete renovation in 2002–2004, the club facilities were also redecorated and restored during the same period. The purpose of this renovation was to restore the club to its original grandeur and splendour, and this was successfully done in accordance with the traditional appearance. The technical standard is now fully modern, with new electric facilities, air-conditioning, modern ventilation systems and automatic sprinkler installation in the event of fire.

Card-playing room

Billiards

Meeting room

Lunch snacks

Art & Antiques

The club has a substantial art collection comprising the main Norwegian artists from the period 1814 to 1914. In the last years there has been a focus on acquiring modern art from the period 1914 to the present day. Thanks to a substantial art interest and dedication to culture amongst our members, we are able to show most of the representative Norwegian artists from 1900 to 2000. This includes painters, sculptors and photographers.

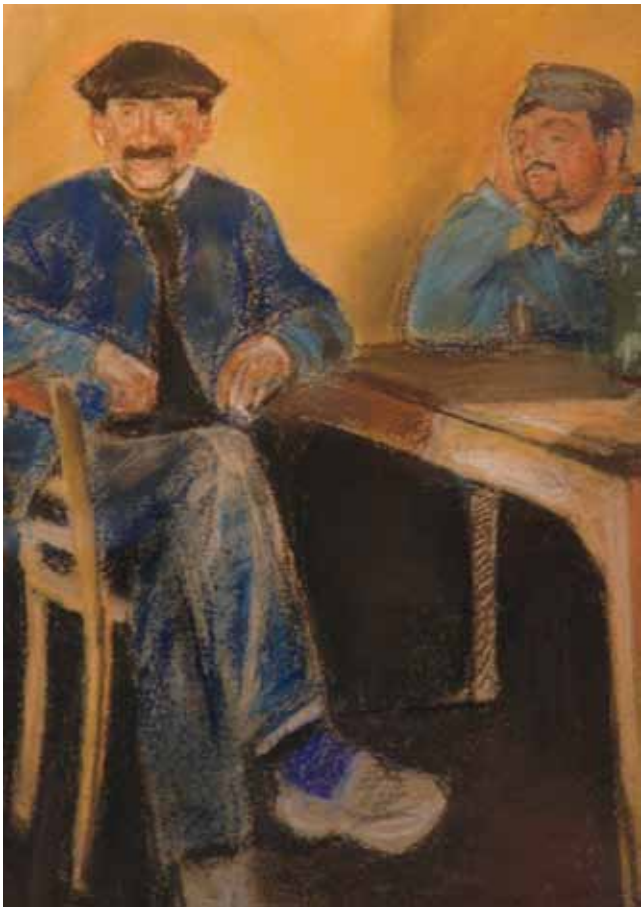
The classical part of the collection includes in particular works by the following artists:

Nicolai Astrup
Harriet Backer
Johan Christian Dahl
Per Deberitz
Thomas Fearnley
Kai Fjell
Hans Gude
Hans Heyerdahl
Ludvig Karsten
Christian Krohg
Edvard Munch
Gerhard Munthe
Eilif Peterssen
Christian Skredsvig
Harald Sohlberg
Adolph Tidemand
Frits Thaulow
Erik Werenskiold

Modern artists that are presently represented either on our walls or with sculptures are:

Anna Eva Bergmann
Per Barclay
Håkon Bleken
Arne Durban
Gunnar S. Gundersen
Marianne Heske
Jens Johannessen
Kjell Nupen
Ørnulf Opdahl
Johs. Rian
Leonard Rickhard
Tom Sandberg
Inger Sitter
Svein Strand
Knut Rose
Per Ung
Oluf Wold-Torne
Jacob Weidemann

Right: From the famous painting by Eilif Peterssen: "An Evening in Norske Selskab" in Copenhagen in the 18th century. The poet Johan Herman Wessel in the middle, raising his glass of punch.



"In the Café in Paris" by Edvard Munch (1890)

The club also possess a significant collection of silver. This includes art nouveau cutlery which is used daily in the restaurant. The collection of lamps from Nøstetangen and other famous designers are substantial and illuminate the many rooms.

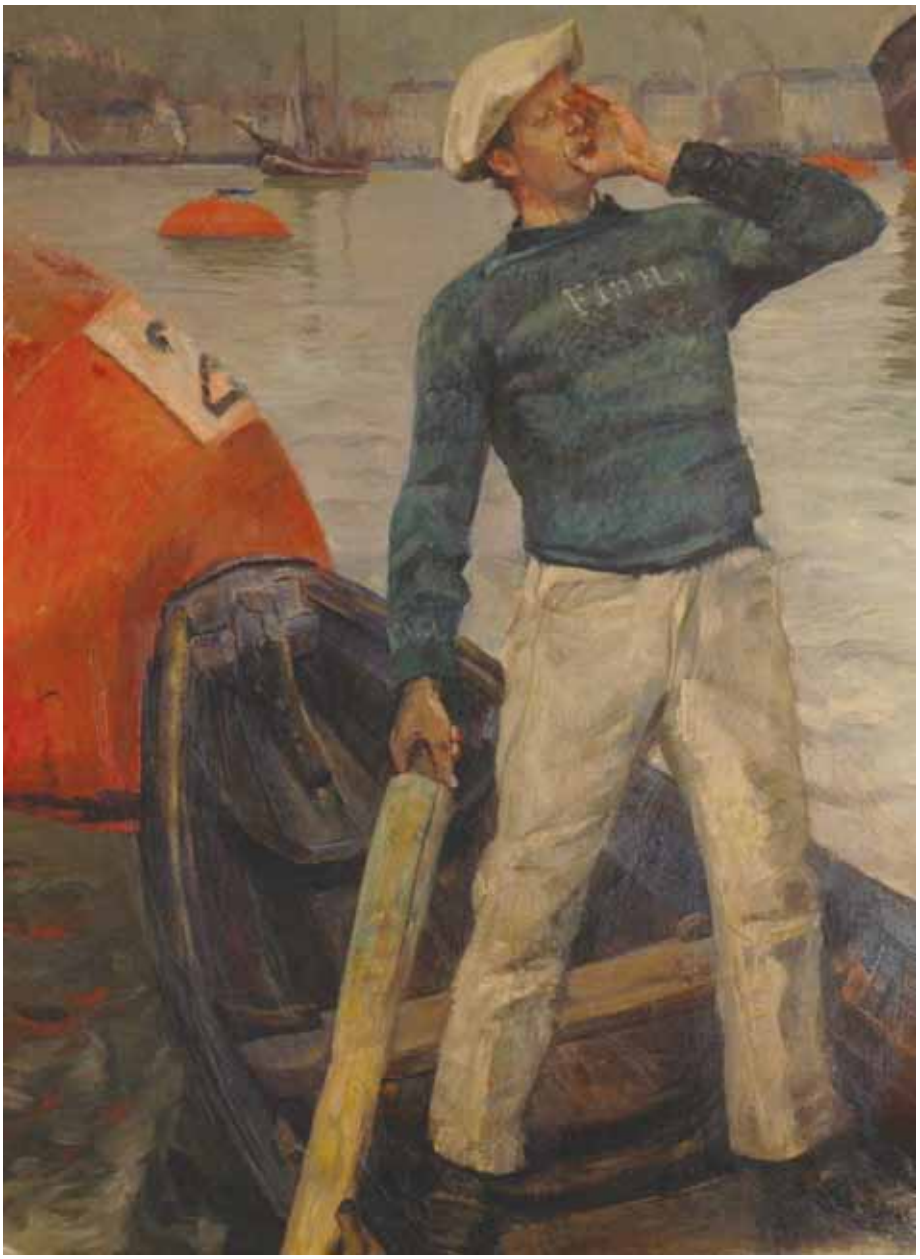
The club library contains approximately 15.000 titles. It is frequently supplemented and expanded by donations from the club members. The objective is to focus the collection and to modernize the catalogue system.

Extracts from the art collection

"Shipwreck" by J.C. Dahl (1833)

"Harbor of Refuge" by Hans Gude (1880)

"Farewell to the Old Parents" by Adolph Tidemand (1855)



"Haul!" by Christian Krohg (1893)

"Spring" by Gerhard Munthe (1893)

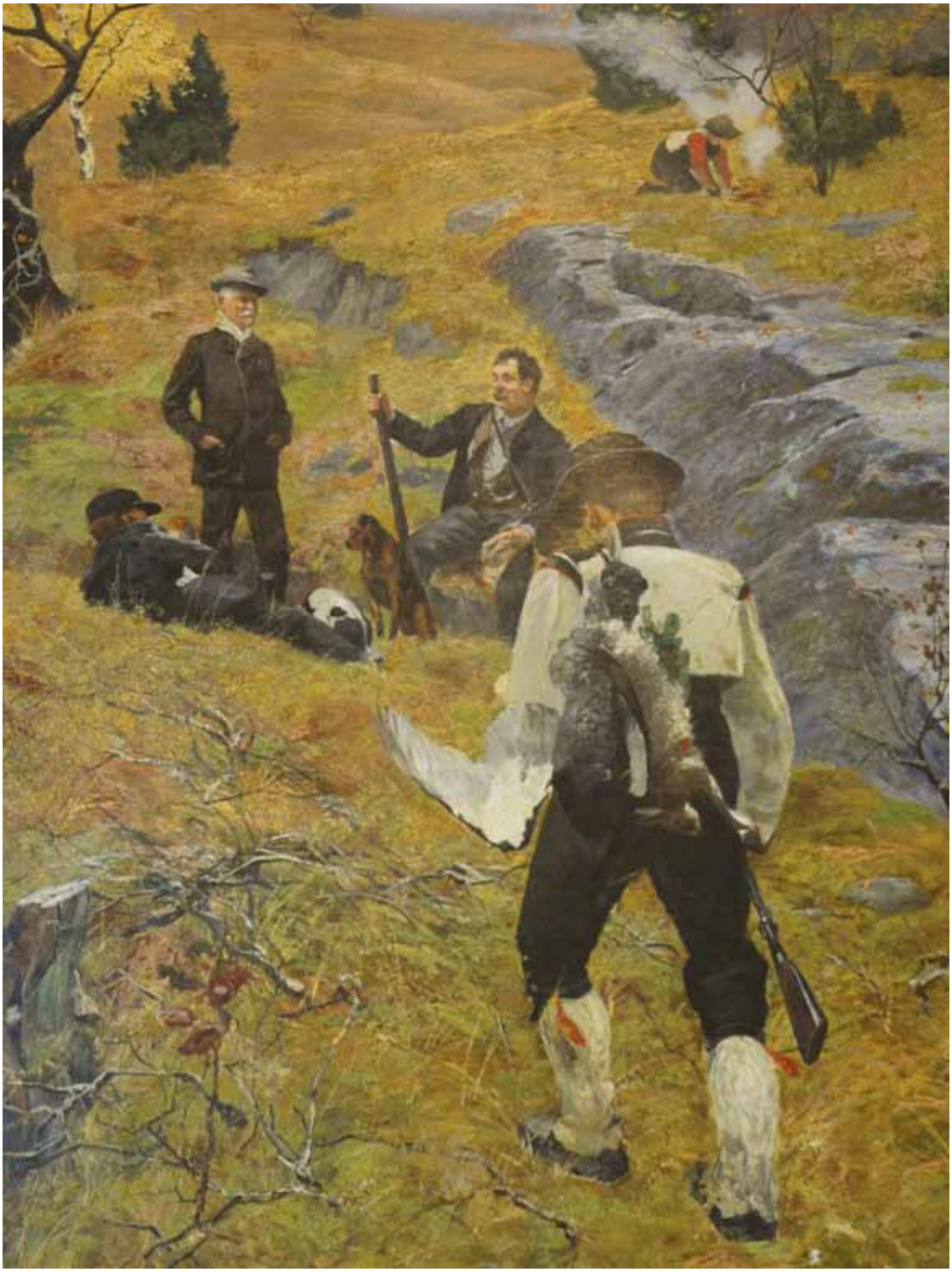
"Vestal Virgin" by Hans Heyerdahl (1890)

"Little Elvedal" by Harriet Backer (1894)

"Young Boy" by Erik Werenskiold (1885)

“Dead Nature in a Bottle of Perfume” by Svein Strand (1988)

“Interior in the Sofa” by Ludvig Karsten (1917)



"Rest during the Hunt" by Frits Thaulow (1890)

"Women Waiting" by Kai Fjell (1940)

Wining and dining

The club has a gourmet kitchen as well as a well-stocked wine cellar which holds a broad selection of quality wines to suit any preference.

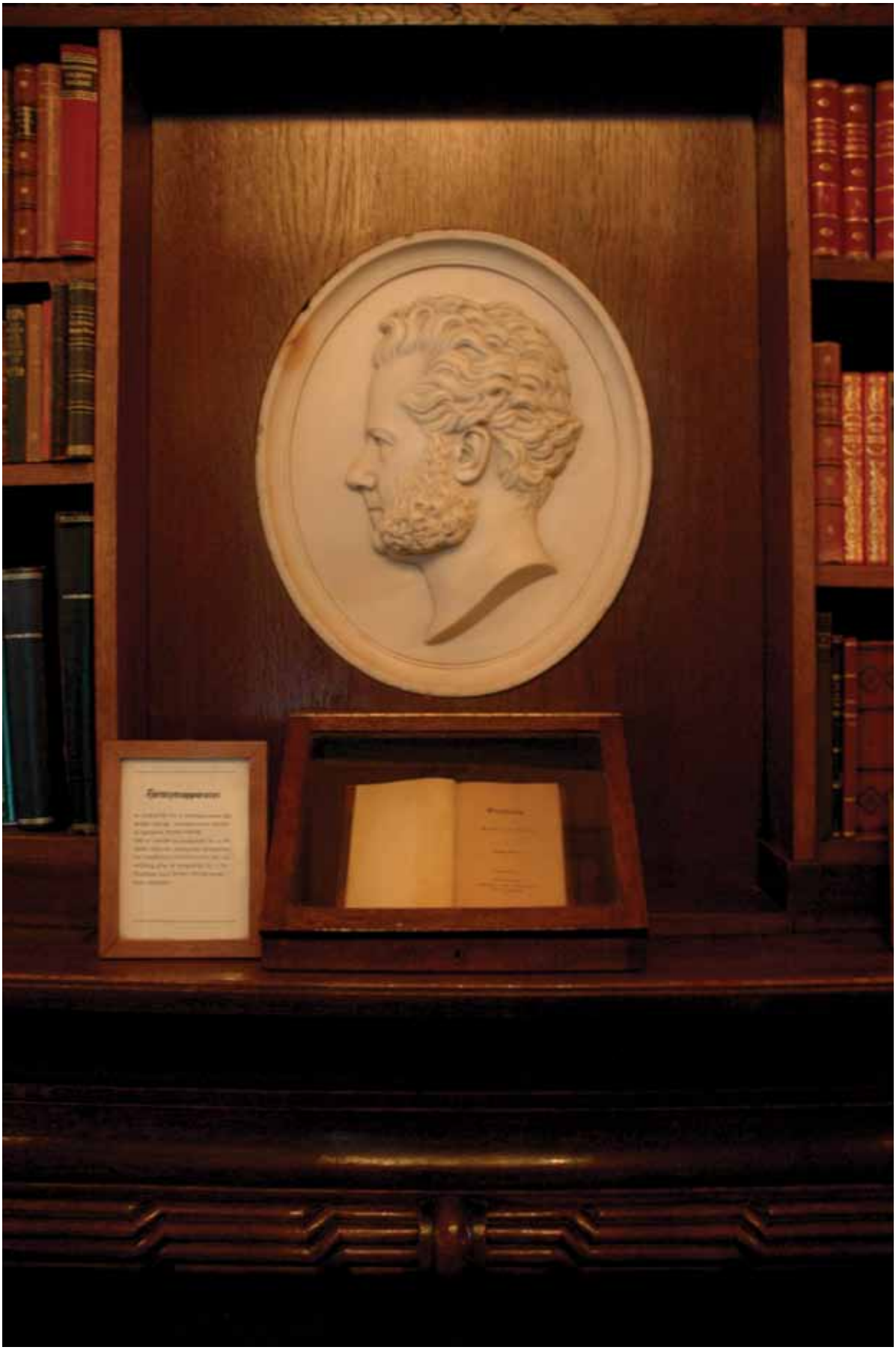
Emphasis is put on discreet and attentive service.

Lunch and dinner are served on every weekday.

Club members may on special occasions also use the club for private functions.

Armagnac
1947
Armagnac
1952
Armagnac
1953

LOUIS LATOUR
1995
CORTON



Youth portrait of Henrik Ibsen and the first edition of his first play *Catilina*

A historic cultural institution

Norske Selskab was founded in 1772 by Norwegian students at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. At the time, the two countries were united, and Norway did not have its own university.

This is a long time ago. Beethoven had not yet started composing; he was only two years old. Napoleon had not yet received his sabre; he was three years old. Goethe was slightly older, but not much. He had just started working on Faust.

The United States of America did not yet exist. It would be another four years before the Declaration of Independence was written by Thomas Jefferson. And the French revolution? Another seventeen years would pass until 1789. The Enlightenment forms the historic backdrop of the time, with Voltaire as one of its most influential philosophers. Under the rule of the Danish State Governor Struensee, Denmark was strongly influenced by this Enlightenment. Struensee embraced many of its ideals, such as the increased freedom of the press. He introduced a mood of optimism and progress. However, this optimism was not shared by everyone. Struensee's weak point was his amorous relationship with the Danish Queen, exposing him to schemes and intrigues – and finally resulting in his impeachment and gruesome public execution. This happened only two months before the founding of Norske Selskab.
Among the students who were the founding members of our club, many were considerable intellectual persons. When Norway finally won its national Magna Charta in 1814, many of these men became key public servants. The poet Johan Herman Wessel was also among the initial club members. He is an important figure in the contemporary Norwegian and Danish history of literature.

Literature and culture formed the foundations of the club. At the time, the two cultural styles of Classicism and Romanticism were diametrically opposed to one another. The Norwegian students were strong supporters of Classicism, with its roots in French culture and Antiquity. Romanticism was rooted in Germany, with the poet Ewald being a prominence of the time. He was not much appreciated by Wessel and his founding father friends in Norske Selskab!

Sculpture of Johan Herman Wessel - poet and founding father.
Located in the Wessel Square in front of our building. Donated to the city of Oslo from Norske Selskab in 1885.

It is fair to assume that Norway's freedom and eventual independence to a large extent was rooted in the community established by these outstanding Norwegian students through their activities in the club. Through the 19th and 20th centuries Norske Selskab has maintained its position as a meeting place for notable members of the Norwegian society.

The University of Oslo was inaugurated in 1811. In 1813 the members of Norske Selskab found that the

The punch bowl used in Copenhagen and featured in the Dining Room painting.

club in Copenhagen was no longer needed, and it was thus dissolved the same year. Many of its former members participated in the Norwegian Constitutional Assembly at Eidsvoll in 1814, and many of these became among the most prominent public servants of the new Norwegian nation. One of them was Johan Randulf Bull, who was appointed the first Chief Justice of the Norwegian Supreme Court in 1814. In 1818 he and other former past fellow members decided that Norske Selskab ought to be reconstituted. Accordingly, the club was formally reconstituted in Christiania (the former name of Oslo) the same year. This is the reason why the years 1772 and 1818 are included in the club's logo.

During World War II the club was closed by the German occupation administration. This happened in 1941, and the club would not re-open until the autumn of 1945. Apparently, the occupation power wished to prevent the forming of resistance groups within the club. However, the members were already in staunch opposition to the Germans, and many of them fought actively with the allies as air force pilots, in the merchant fleet, in the navy, in the army, and in the local resistance movement behind enemy lines.

The traditions of the club are carried on by the members of today. At the same time, the club evolves in tune with the developments of society.

Nøstetangen chandelier from the18th century

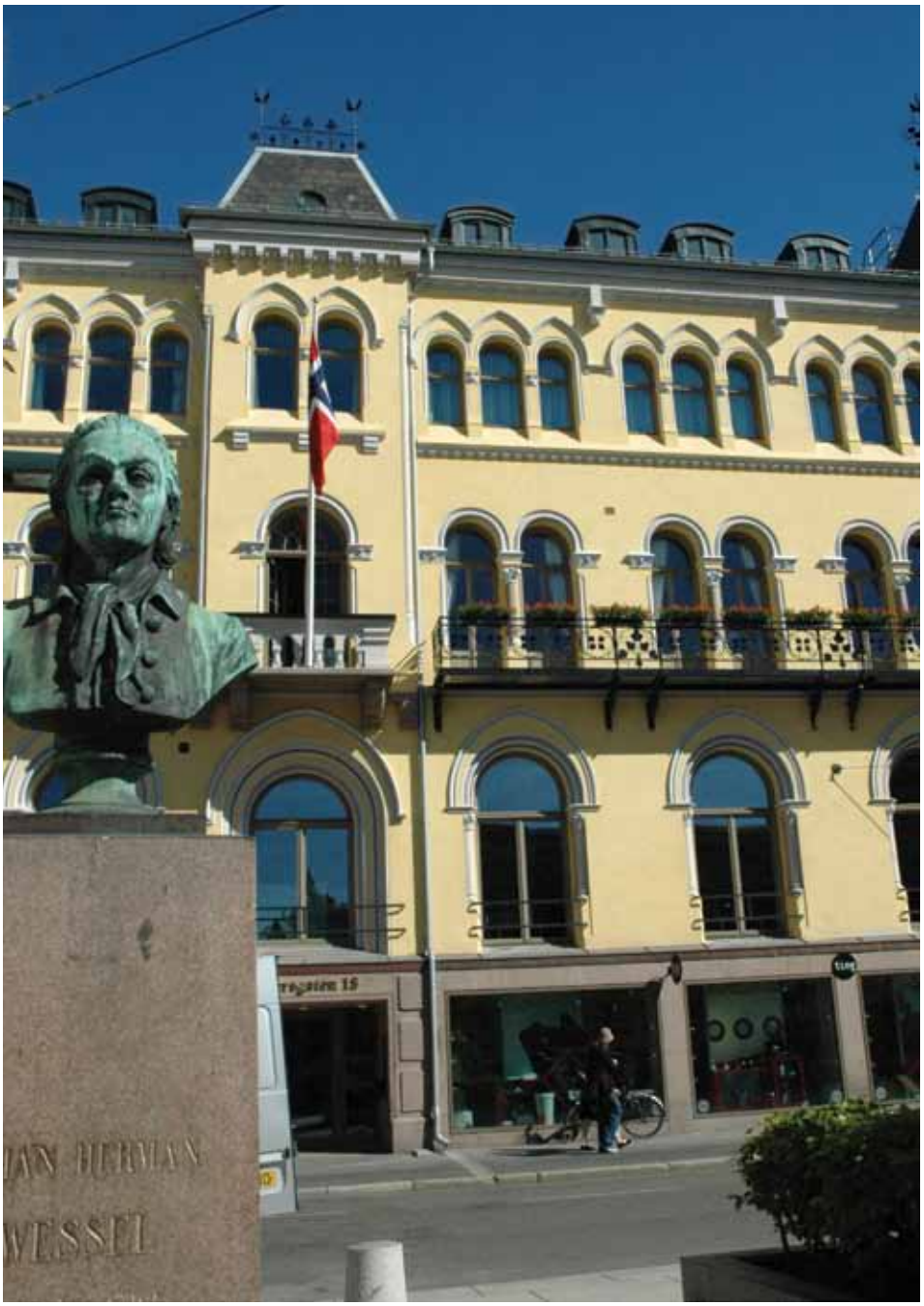
CORSO COMO

The club building

The estate where the Club is situated, Akersgaten 18 and Øvre Slottsgate 9, is fully owned by AS Klubbygningen. This is a limited liability company in which all the shares are owned by the Club.

The Club building was constructed between 1871 and 1873, in two stages. The building was designed in the style of Neo Gothic by the architects Steckmest and Due. Norske Selskab has been located in this building ever since its completion.
In the years 2002-2004, the building was completely renovated as well as significantly expanded. The architect was Birger Lambertz-Nilssen. The total floor space of the building as it appears today is 7,600 square meters. The second floor houses the club, which totals 1,400 square meters. The rest of the building is rented to the Norwegian Parliament as well as to several shops at street level.
The property comprising Øvre Slottsgate 9 is a building which was probably built in 1848. It was purchased at the same time as Akersgaten 18, and it is assumed that it was used as living quarters for club servants in the early days. The building on Øvre Slottsgate 9 was connected to the Akersgaten 18 building in the recent renovation, creating a single property.

Security arrangements have been made in co-operation with the Parliament. Their strict security requirements ensure that the whole building is controlled by top quality safety measures.



Opening hours:
Weekdays: 11:30 – 23:00, Fridays: 11:30 – 19:00
Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays: Closed

Accommodation: Special arrangements exist with the Continental Hotel and Thon Hotels/ Hotel Bristol, Oslo.
Dress-code: Jacket and tie. Mobile phones are not allowed used in the club.
Ladies: Admitted on special occasions.
Settlement: Cash or credit cards: AmEx/Eurocard/Mastercard/Diners/Visa
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