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## **Boutique Hotels - A Traveller's Paradise**

### **By Chic Retreats**

For many, holiday accommodation plays second fiddle to location and amenities. For the true traveller though, it's an important part of the experience.

We tend to take travel for granted. It's easy and cheap to hop on a plane to any one of hundreds of destinations across the world, book into a hotel that's the same as all the others and find familiar food and drink. That's not the real essence of travel though, as those who still choose to do it "properly" know.

#### **Experience**

The purpose of travelling is to experience new countries as they really are. Tasting the food, talking to the people, taking in the culture and living with the styles and furnishings are all part of the memories and understanding that you take away with you. Chain hotels and those just devoted to accommodating as many people as possible as cheaply as possible often can't deliver this experience, which is why the market for boutique hotels is growing.

**Design** - Boutique hotels pay close attention to the design of their hotel. Everything from the colour on the walls to the way the staff greet you is designed to give you a complete experience. Traditional furniture and hand-made fabrics are accented by carefully chosen accessories to ensure that nothing is out of place and that whilst guests are made to feel at home, it is in an authentic environment.

**Location** - If you're planning a trip to a new city, and you want to be sure of a complete experience, you should consider staying in a boutique hotel. Unlike purpose-built hotels, these hotels are usually located right in the heart of the city, often in older, more traditional buildings. Sympathetic design means that original features are usually retained, although contemporary design and décor are often placed around them, so you get a great hotel in a great part of town.

**Service** - If you want to know the best local market to visit, the least-explored historic monuments or just want to hire a bike to explore the countryside, the staff at your boutique hotel can help. Their priority is ensuring that you have everything you need, so whether you want to go to the best traditional

restaurant or find the best walking route around the city, just ask.

Chic Retreats is a collection of small, independent hotels around the world that offer the traveller a true taste of luxury and service. Visit our website by clicking on

<http://www.chicretreats.com>

## **Turning A Trip Into An Experience**

### **By Chic Retreats**

Don't underestimate the difference that staying in a boutique hotel can make to your next journey.

How often do you hear someone say, "I can't wait to stay in the hotel"? Discussions about forthcoming holidays nearly always centre on the things we want to do, or the places we're looking forward to seeing, and the place where we're staying doesn't feature at all. All that changes once you've booked into a boutique hotel.

These hotels have been lovingly created by their owners in order to offer you an experience, not just a place to stay. The belief that your holiday or business accommodation should be well designed and provide great service is one that has resulted in hundreds of "boutique" hotels opening up around the world, to cater for the increasing number of travellers who want to stay somewhere special.

### Anticipation

Anticipating your holiday is one of the things we all love. In the weeks before we leave home, we get increasingly excited and really look forward to taking a break from our everyday lives and having new experiences. This anticipation can often be flattened when we reach the hotel, which turns out to be impersonal and indifferent; unless you've booked boutique:

- Welcoming - boutique hotels are designed to be welcoming, so you are looked after from the minute you arrive.
- Different - you'll notice lots of differences from regular chain hotels as soon as you arrive. From the way you check in to the design of the rooms and the public spaces, and the facilities on offer, you'll know immediately that you are staying in an individual hotel.
- Design - all the things you want to do with your home but haven't had time to do. It might be polished wooden floors or spectacular artwork; Egyptian cotton bedding or funky armchairs. It's this design and detail that makes boutique hotels different from all other traveller accommodation.
- Facilities - large hotels have pools and spas, but they're impersonal. The facilities at small, individual hotels are designed to make you feel at home whilst indulging in treatments or taking advantage of concierge services.

## The experience

The low number of rooms at most boutique hotels defines your experience: you're one of a small number of guests who are benefiting from the great designs and flawless service that these hotels provide. You immediately feel more relaxed and you're able to enjoy your holiday as an all-round experience. Book again for next year, so that you can tell everyone how much you're looking forward to staying in the hotel.

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