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Boutique Hotels Are Here To Stay

By Chic Retreats

Boutique hotels aren't a passing fad or a here-today-gone-tomorrow trend. They are a growing sector of the hospitality market.

When the first "boutique" hotel opened in New York in 1984, it caused a stir. Shedding tradition, its whole purpose was to turn a paid-for bedroom into a whole new travel experience. Since then, small, chic hotels have sprung up all over the world; some more successfully than others. Those who have followed the fundamental theme of design-led individuality have experienced incredible success and that in turn has spawned a new generation of these stylish hotels.

What are the essential characteristics of this type of hotel that will ensure its place in the industry?

Individuality - boutique hotels are all different. Housed in a wide range of buildings, many of which weren't intended as hotels or even houses originally, they use design and architecture to create entirely individual structures and spaces that catch the attention and stimulate the senses. Whatever theme or style has been chosen, you'll never stay in a boutique hotel that's exactly the same as the last one you stayed in.

Style - personality and style matter to these hotels. It's what gives them their intimate atmosphere; their air of authenticity. Boutique hotels go for style that's deliberately introduced and followed through to the smallest of details, resulting in all-round quality that's really appreciated by the guests.

Service - many other parts of the service industry could learn from these small hotels. Their low guest numbers gives them the opportunity to shine when it comes to looking after residents, and their service is always discreet but immediate; helpful without pestering and always pleasant, never patronising.

Quality - discerning guests know quality when they see it; from the finest bed linen to the freshest ingredients. A boutique hotel takes the time to source materials, furnishings, fabrics and accessories of the finest quality, ensuring that guests are always experiencing comfort and style.

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Boutique hotels are here to stay because we like them. For not much more cost than an average high street hotel, they allow us to enjoy the experience of travelling. They give us good design, a high standard of decoration and fittings and outstanding service, reminding us that we often set our standards too low when we travel. They allow us to relax and spend our time exploring and enjoying our destination rather than sorting out problems with the accommodation. They remind us that where we stay is as important as where we go.

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

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Hotels: Why Small Is Beautiful

By Chic Retreats

What is it about staying in a big hotel that annoys you? Maybe it's the impersonal service, or the amount of time you have to queue to check in. Perhaps it's the buffet breakfast that's been under hotplates for a while, or the fact that your room looks like every other room you've ever stayed in. Large hotels are great for some occasions, but it's worthwhile looking at boutique hotels to regain some enjoyment from your stay.

So what is it about small hotels that enchants you? If you've stayed in a boutique hotel before, then we can make a fairly accurate guess:

The design

Properly designed hotels are so different from regular hotels that you notice the difference as soon as you walk in. The furniture, the artwork, the colours and the flooring all convey a message that this hotel has been designed for a purpose; to make you feel at home.

The attention to detail

The purpose of a boutique hotel is to make your stay comfortable and stress-free. The design includes attention to details that enhance your stay. It could be the fact that you can tailor your own breakfast in the morning, or that your shoes are shined and your laundry done overnight. It may be the fact that your bedroom opens directly onto the beach or the welcome tray that's in your room on arrival. It's the details that make a difference, and boutique hotel owners know it.

The numbers

The main characteristic of a true boutique hotel is the number of rooms. A lower room count means that the hotel is dedicated to ensuring that your stay is as perfect as possible. Too many people to look after often results in poorer service, whereas a higher service-to-guest ratio means that you should never have to worry about asking for anything - in fact, staff usually anticipate your needs.

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The locations

By their nature, big hotels require big buildings. Boutique hotels can run from small, individual buildings, using their unique architecture and features in the design and layout of the hotel. It means better city centre locations, better views and more interesting interiors. Location is as important when you're choosing a hotel as when you're buying a house, and boutique hotels can usually deliver.

Boutique is small and small is beautiful; particularly when it's combined with classic design, detail and service.

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