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Creating A Boutique Hotel

By Chic Retreats

Renovating and designing a new hotel is a daunting task; even more so when you've decided to create a chic, boutique place to stay.

How do they do it? Owners of boutique hotels often transform buildings no-one would touch into hotels that everyone wants to go to. It takes a lot of hard work, planning and an eye for design and detail to create a successful boutique.

Imagination

Imagination is a key skill when it comes to creating a stunning small hotel. To see a building that is either derelict or in need of substantial renovation, and know that you can transform it into a stylish, desirable place to stay is a talent that not many people have. You need to be able to see the arrangement of the guest rooms, the provision of public spaces, the kitchens and offices and the outdoor spaces. If you don't have a vision, it can be very difficult to pull off a successful make-over.

Experience

Although many boutique owners are first-time hoteliers, many have either hospitality or design experience. This helps to ensure that every angle is considered and that as much attention is paid to the running of the hotel as to its style. Understanding the market you are trying to attract, and designing your hotel with that in mind means that you are more likely to be successful. Equally, a knowledge of which design ideas work and which don't is invaluable when creating a boutique hotel. Design is a key factor in turning a basic small hotel into an individual chic hotel and you need the experience to get it right first time.

Determination

Transforming a building into a hotel is a long, hard job. You need determination, focus and strict controls to ensure that everything is finished as close to your deadline as possible and within your budget. Research at the beginning of the project should allow you to set realistic deadlines and

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financial plans which in turn will contribute to the success of your project. There are bound to be times when things go wrong, but determination and a clear vision of the end product will help you succeed.

Personality

Some of the most successful boutique hotels are those where the personality of the owner or designer shines through. This is what gives these hotels their characteristic individuality, which attracts a lot of guests and repeat visitors. Personality can be evident in themed rooms, the choice of art, music or food and in the way that guests are treated during their stay. Never underestimate the importance of a hotel's personality when it comes to marketing and occupancy rates.

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 by clicking on

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What Makes A Hotel "Boutique"?

By Chic Retreats

The term "boutique hotel" has been widely used in recent years, but what does it mean and why should you stay in one?

There are lots of companies that claim to specialise in boutique hotels. For many, a boutique hotel is simply one that's not part of a national or international chain and that distinguishes itself by its design, location or additional features. Many hotels aspire to be a boutique hotel without actually achieving it. Overall, there are four main elements to the true boutique hotel:

Size

Large hotels can be cool, trendy and chic, but they can't be boutique. Just as the word is used to describe small, design-led specialist shops, so it applies to hotels. Hotels that apply the term "boutique" to themselves or have it ascribed to them are usually small - certainly less than 50 rooms and in some cases with only one or two. Their size contributes to the atmosphere and service that characterises a hotel with a difference. Whilst size might count in terms of the number of rooms, it doesn't follow that those rooms must also be small. In fact, a hotel that could easily accommodate 20 rooms might choose instead to create just ten, but make them spacious and luxurious, catering to the boutique market.

Design

When the first boutique hotel was opened in New York in 1984, by hotel entrepreneurs Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell, it was praised for its original design and quirky nature. Designed for those who really wanted to participate in their travel rather than passively take it all in, Morgans, and those that followed it, challenged the way we thought about hotels. Although Schrager would not now describe his hotels

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as boutique, the name has been applied to those hotel who followed in his footsteps as far as design is concerned. From clean and contemporary to themed rooms and classic elegance, a boutique hotel must have a clear design theme and attention to detail.

Service

The hallmark of an excellent boutique hotel is its service. Whether the hotel chooses to assign a personal butler to each guest, or just hires and trains staff to anticipate your every need, the service at a boutique hotel is really what it should be at any hotel: ensuring that your stay goes without a hitch, that you can get transport, opera tickets or excellent meals when you want them and making you feel at home rather than feeling like you're a nuisance.

Location

Boutique hotels are scattered all over the world, from 24-hour cities like New York, London and Rio De Janeiro to island havens in the Indian or Pacific Oceans. What often sets them apart are the buildings that contain them. From former plantation houses to old textile mills, towers and palazzos, the type of building often forms the basis of the design and it is the blend of architecture, design and service that turns what could be just another hotel into a boutique one.

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