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## Five Great Reasons To Stay In A Boutique Hotel

### By Chic Retreats

If you've never stayed in a boutique hotel before, here are some reasons why you should book one today.

There are so many cool hotels to stay in around the world that there's almost certainly one at your next holiday destination. Why choose boutique?

#### Location

Boutique hotels are usually in enviable locations. A townhouse right in the middle of the city, a chateau in rural France or a stunning beach retreat in the Maldives, boutique hotels exist to provide you with the very best location for your holiday. City hotels are in prestigious shopping areas, next to great restaurants, within a stone's throw from the theatre or stumbling distance from the top nightspots. They provide a retreat in the middle of town where you can wind down, rest your weary feet and take advantage of the staff's outstanding local knowledge. Alternatively, chill out on a private beach, where your bedroom doors fold open onto the sand and where you can snorkel without seeing another human being. Or just take in the countryside from a castle on top of a hill.

#### Design

If you want to experience real design, choose a boutique hotel. More than a few art-deco ornaments or modern art in the foyer, these hotels have design running through their core and it is a pleasure to stay somewhere that's been designed and decorated with an eye for detail and finish. From the accessories in the bathroom to the china in the restaurant, everything is design-led, without being design-conscious.

#### Size

By their nature, boutique hotels are small. Even in large buildings, these hotel owners reduce the number of rooms available so that they can increase the size of the rooms and the public spaces and provide better service. The size of a hotel in this sector isn't based on how much floor space it has, but

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how many rooms it offers, because this affects the ambience and the service.

### Service

Service is all-important in boutique hotels. Hotel staff are trained to ensure that guests want for nothing, and yet the service is discreet, so guests don't feel hassled or intimidated. The lower number of guests at each hotel means that the service can be impeccable, and it usually is.

### Price

The term "boutique hotels" may give the impression that these hotels are all expensive, but that's not the case. In fact, you may be surprised by how affordable many of them are. For the same price or very slightly more than you might pay for a very ordinary chain hotel, you could be staying somewhere with real atmosphere and real service. Whilst some of the boutique hotels are very exclusive and

therefore very expensive, many of them are perfectly affordable.

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

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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.

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### 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 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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