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**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
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**London Hotel Breaks - Grange Holborn Hotel 5\* (Holborn)**

**By Steven Cronin**

Contemporary design reflecting one of the world's most fashionable cities - the Grange Holborn

Hotel contrasts some of London's more traditional accommodations. The modern architecture and décor mirror a city eager to keep its standards, striving to remain the benchmark. Your stay at the Grange Holborn Hotel will be one of luxury. Service is exquisite and obliges your every need.

Situated where West End greets the city, the hotel is ideally placed for shopping adventures in Oxford Street, or maybe you prefer the surreal experiences of Covent Garden. The Holborn tube station is barely 400 metres walk and offers easy access to the city's financial district.

Bed and full breakfast (based on two people sharing) will cost you £89 (per person per night) during spring, and £92.50 throughout summer and winter. For those travelling alone a supplement of a similar amount will incur. A mid-week (Monday to Thursday) supplement valid for summer and winter will cost a further £32.50.

**Royal Garden Hotel 5\* (Kensington)**

The 5 AA red star Royal Garden Hotel parades elegance and panache to very high standards. The Royal Garden sets the yardstick others strive for, and invariably fail. Boasting a total of 396 sizeable rooms, many have magnificent views over the majestic Kensington Palace and its beautiful gardens. The hotel features two marvellous restaurants and serves three stylish bars. For the more health conscious a health club is on site and also a spa.

Based in up-to-the-minute Kensington, the hotel resides just 4 minutes walk from High Street Kensington tube station, presenting easy access to most of the city and London's vast library of attractions.

Bed and full breakfast (based on two people sharing) will cost you £102 (per person per night) during spring. Through summer and winter the price drops slightly to £87.50. The single person's supplement is £93 in spring, falling to £87.50 in the course of summer and winter. A mid-week (Monday to Thursday) supplement of £7 is valid during spring. This rises to £32.50 throughout summer and winter.

A deluxe room upgrade is available from an extra £40 per room per night.

Please note all prices are correct at time of press (December 2005). For reservations call Superbreak on 0870 701 2200. Lines are open 8am - 11pm 7 days a week (excluding Christmas Day).

Steven Cronin owns the Sargas Travel online magazine featuring travel reviews, news, inspiration, advice and special offers. For further reading please visit

<http://www.sargas.co.uk>

## **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 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

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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.

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

<http://www.chicretreats.com>



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