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More Than Rooms And Food

By Chic Retreats

In general, we have low expectations of our hotels. As long as the room is decent and the food's

OK, we won't complain. Boutique hotels hope to change that attitude.

Hotel rooms aren't cheap, so what do we get for our money? In many cases, it's not much. A reasonable room that's clean, a bathroom that's functional and food that's often not as good as it should be. These hotels should now expect to come under pressure from the smaller, boutique sector, where space, design and cuisine are all important.

The rooms

Unlike mainstream hotels, where every room in every hotel is the same, boutique hotels strive to create individuality through design. These hotels will usually be designed to a theme; in some places that theme will be obvious in the room names, the furnishings, the artwork and the finishing touches, and in others it might be very subtle, such as an Asian influence, or bringing the colours and textures of the landscape into the hotel.

Above all, it's the attention to detail, comfort and style that differentiates a boutique room from other hotel rooms. Guests' needs are carefully considered from start to finish, so there is often a range of exclusive toiletries in the bathroom which in turn is fitted with the latest shower or Jacuzzi bath. The room will be cleverly designed and functional so that there's always somewhere to put your luggage, plenty of storage space and all the high-tech equipment you need to run your life during your stay. The superior levels of comfort and service at a boutique hotel is what makes it stand out.

The food

Although not all boutique hotels have a fully-operational restaurant on their premises, many have understood that the guest who likes a well-designed room will also appreciate good food and wine. Integrating an excellent restaurant into a small hotel is difficult, but if it is properly planned and executed, it can be an additional benefit to guests as well as establishing a reputation for the hotel within the local community. For guests to be staying in the hotel where all the locals go to eat is a real

marketing coup - whether it's a funky city centre brasserie, or a formal restaurant in a rural retreat. Many boutique hotels focus on the standard of their food - freshly prepared breakfasts, light lunches or formal dinners - precisely because it contributes to the overall experience of staying in a small hotel.

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

<http://www.chicretreats.com>

Are Sun Rooms Safe?

By Matt Shupe

Most Americans prefer having a roof deck in their homes just so they can have their private tanning sessions. Others opt for sun rooms or solariums to get that sought-after tan.

The concept of a solarium or sun room has changed over the years, from the rooftop solarium of a house as it is known in Rome to the castle roof solarium as it was known during the medieval period. During the olden times, solariums were typically located at the upper floor of the house, usually with large windows surrounding the room to welcome sunlight.

Solariums were not really made for tanning then, because medieval women used the solariums as their nook where they spend hours gossiping and exchanging pleasantries.

During the modern times, the sun rooms became more extravagant and elegant. Today, sun rooms are built surrounded by window glasses. Some sun rooms are even built with walls made of glass. Sun rooms today are also used by the family members as a relaxation area where they can entertain visitors or host parties. Today, sun rooms are also built to serve as greenhouses where exotic plants are kept and grown.

The concept of using sun rooms as tanning rooms is relatively new but it has attracted homeowners who find the idea practical. Instead of going to tanning shops or spas, there are home owners who buy use the sun rooms for personal tanning sessions.

Solariums or sun rooms are more popular during summer when the whole household can avail of in-house tanning services. Some get their own portable beds and stay in their sun rooms the rest of the day.

Having your own sub room can be practical and cost effective. It can save you time and money in going to tanning salons. However, people who use sun rooms for tanning purposes should be aware of the dangers of too much exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Even if you are just in you sun room, you have to make sure you are protected by wide-brimmed hats. To be more practical about it, use sun protecting creams or sunscreens with higher protection level. The common belief is that a person does not need sunscreen if he is jus tin the confines of his home.

Of course, a sun room is just within your home but you are getting more sun exposure there so you have to protect your skin and your eyes.

You can enjoy your sun rooms but do not endanger your health by enjoying your sun rooms without proper protection.

The author is a regular contributor to

<http://www.sunroomtips.com>

where more information about

sunroom designs and sources is freely available.



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