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## Why You'll Return To A Boutique Hotel

### By Chic Retreats

Any good hotel will attract return customers, but boutique hotels often have a higher return rate than others.

Once you've stayed in a boutique hotel, you'll understand what all the fuss is about. For the same money as you can spend on a city-centre chain hotel, you can stay in an individual place where the design is intrinsic to the experience and where the service ensures that your stay is comfortable and relaxed. If you choose a boutique hotel once, the chances are you'll book again for your next trip because:

You feel more relaxed - a small, quality hotel is full of charm and the owners and designers work hard to create an intimate atmosphere that helps you to relax before you've even checked in. The reduced number of rooms means that you don't have to fight for tables in the dining room or a comfortable chair in the lounge, and staff are always on hand to help with any queries or requests you might have.

Quality counts - chic hotels pay attention to detail and that means that everything is of the highest quality. From bed linen to breakfast ingredients, the quality of furniture, fittings, materials, fabrics and produce is all designed to give you a true taste of luxury at an affordable price.

It costs less than you think - although some of the high-end boutique hotels are expensive, you can probably afford to stay in the majority of boutique hotels around the world. Whether it's for a city weekend, or two weeks by the beach, you'll be surprised at how affordable a good boutique hotel can be.

It's as individual as you are - national and international chain hotels make up most of the overnight hospitality market, but there are people who like individuality and want to express it through the places they choose to stay. By staying at a boutique hotel, you are experiencing an individuality of style, design and service, and because each one's different, you never get the feeling of duplication that can happen in big hotels across the world.

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They're where you want to be - location is an important factor for a boutique hotel. Whether it's in the middle of the city, on a private stretch of beach or nestled in acres of tropical gardens, this type of hotel offers a hard-to-beat location advantage.

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>

### **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

The hallmark of an excellent boutique hotel is its service. Whether the hotel chooses to assign a

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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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