REVIEW: The New York EDITION is almost a Ritz-Carlton

If you've been following Marriott Group recently you'll see that there's a new chain of hotels that they have been adding to their roster, named the EDITION hotels. These have been marketed alongside the Ritz-Carlton group, and can be booked via Ritz-Carlton's app and website. They are, from what I can tell, the younger more fashionable outgoing sibling of the family.

One of my first stays at the EDITION happened in New York recently. Located at 24th and Madison, on the East side of Madison Square Park, the New York EDITION Is smack dab in lower midtown just above East Village. The location is pretty nice if you are looking to spend some time in downtown, and some time in uptown but want to avoid the mess that is known as Times Square. The hotel itself is a beautiful affair. When you walk in you're greeted by a sunken lobby built in marble hurricane candles (at night), and uplighting built into the ground. The feeling is sultry, sexy, and modern. Modern couches are draped in faux fur, and the far end of the lobby is adorned by a fireplace, giving the whole lobby a warmth and homey feel.



The beckoning lobby, fireplace, fur, and all

The elevators are also pretty unique, in that they’re electronic. You enter your floor number and an elevator bank

is assigned to you, some might say it feels a bit corporate, but I think it makes waiting for an elevator something of the past in this place. The rooms are on the smaller side, and extremely modern. I appreciated the decor but felt that the rooms were a little cold. You would think with the wood floors, the luxurious textures, and the small space they would feel cozier, but I think the use of all the off-palette white and tan resulted in a colder feel.



The rooms have a tan uniform color palette to them. This opens up the small spaces a lot

The second floor lobby is really a different affair in itself. It oddly looks nothing like the rest of the hotel, but hosts some incredible mixologists and a cool restaurant which I never got a chance to dine in. The bar itself is called the “Gold Bar”, which made no sense other than through the indication of portraits with gold frames. The common room

space next to it with the pool table was also an odd choice for this hotel, but only because in my mind the hotel was supposed to be an offshoot of a Ritz-Carlton.



Yes, it’s called the Gold Bar

Overall, my experience was almost exactly what I expected it to be. It was as if I was staying at a Ritz that wasn’t quite a Ritz, but could’ve been one with a little more grandeur and magnificence. All said, I’d love to check out more of these in the future!

PROS:

- Marriott Group rewards and benefits!
- Price wise, it’s a little more affordable than a comparable Ritz-Carlton in the area
- Very chic and modern, it felt like a luxe nouveau-riche hotel in a city that is constantly reinventing itself

CONS:

- The rooms felt a bit cold and austere to me

SECRETS:

- It is very easy to miss the bar which is on the third floor, and I highly recommend visiting it for a drink and a snack

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- This one is kind of a no-brainer. You have to visit the extremely close Shake Shack, which is in Madison Square Park right next to hotel less than a stone's throw away. This is a New York burger staple and one of my favorites!

REVIEW: Le Meridien New Orleans – The Newest Luxury Hotel in the City

So i've been to New Orleans a few times, and have had the pleasure of staying at quite a few hotels there. This one, is so far, one of my favorite. Let me tell you why. It's NEW! This used to be the W New Orleans (not to be confused with the W New Orleans in the French Quarter). The last time I visited this property it was back in 2014 and it was definitely showing its age. The renovation on the property and rebranding of it as a Le Meridien happened within the last year in 2016, and when I say renovation, I don't mean a fresh coat of paint and some lipstick. SPG pulled out all the stops on this one, gutting the building and changing the entire

layout of the common spaces.

The result, as you can see below… Is stunning!



This is the front desk. It’s nice.

You are greeted by stunning textures, surfaces, the combination of marble, antique wood, and mirrored surfaces is something that is a nice juxtaposition from the city of New Orleans, which itself has lots of character, but is older and antique in character.

The lobby is a great place to have a coffee, a drink (which you can walk around with in NOLA – just like in Vegas), and relax.

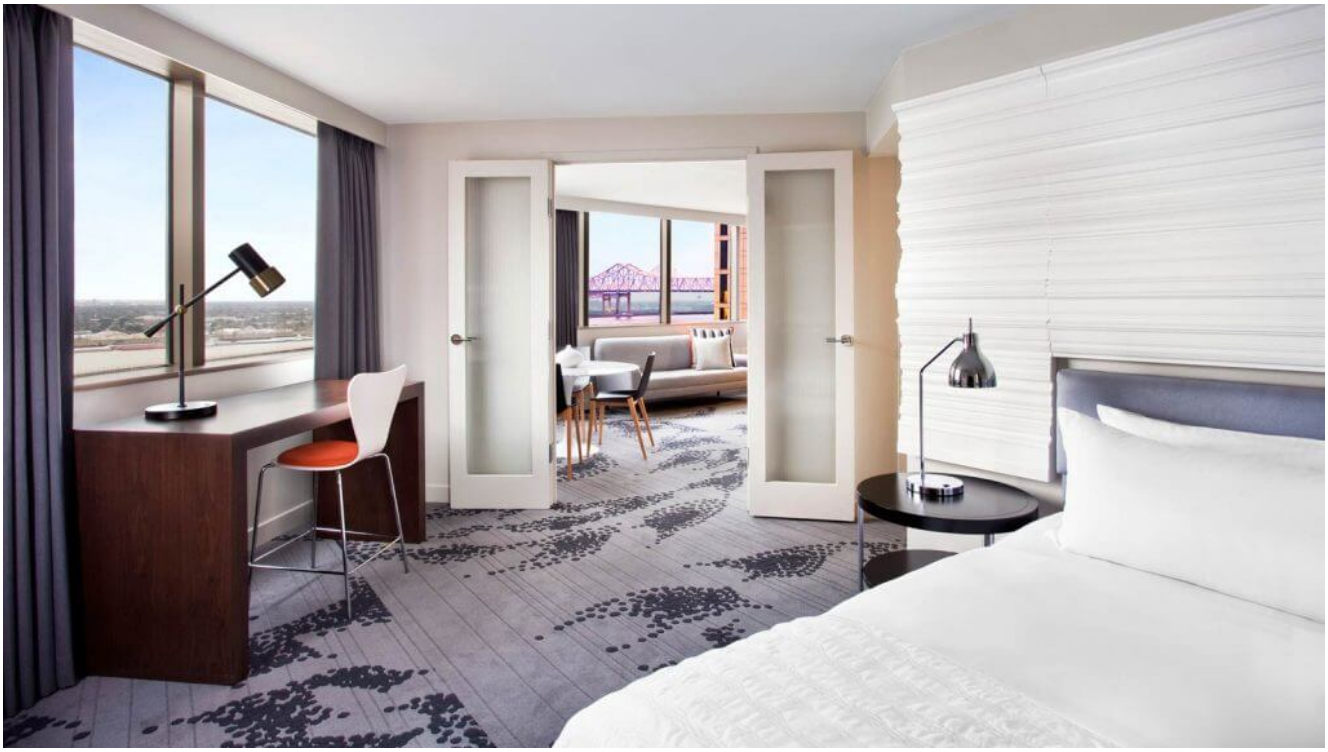


Yup. That’s an awesome lobby area too. Cozy, visually interesting, and thoroughly relaxing

The rooms themselves have gone through some pretty significant renovations. They have beautiful bathrooms in particular, with minimalist countertops and low edge sinks – my personal favorite. The building itself is pretty tall and centralized, next to the Harrah’s casino and only about 5 blocks away from Bourbon street.



The very sexy renovated bathrooms – if you can’t tell i’m a big fan



This is one of the smaller suites, notice the views, the textured walls, and the bright lighting

To top it off, the service is top notch, it is definitely a hotel where you get a great value, and the gym up top really takes the cake, with 360 degree views (if you actually decide to workout while you're in NOLA).

PROS:

- Newly renovated, it's a great place to be! (2016)
- It's got a great lobby to hangout in, with indoor and outdoor spaces
- Prices are highly competitive

CONS:

- Some would say location, since it's not directly on Bourbon Street, but this can be a personal preference

SECRETS:

- The hotel has high capacity, so more likely than not you

can ask for a late check-in and then ask for a higher floor with a great view

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- Everyone knows that New Orleans is the city of food and soul, and I highly recommend having breakfast over at the Ruby Slipper Cafe
- Of course there's the requisite Cafe Du Monde
- And lastly, Commander's Palace – with old school group waiters/waitresses and good ol' southern fare
- But, the one thing you NEVER want to miss, is a ride on an airboat to go into the swamps and see some Alligators. They're harder to spot in the winter time as the water gets cold, but if you choose a tour company that tends to take their airboats out on the side of the Gulf you're likely to see more of them. Airboat Adventures is one of those tour companies I highly recommend! (I've had bad luck with others)

REVIEW: The London Hotel in New York Is Just Plain Awesome

Lets just start by saying that there are a LOT of hotels in New York, just as there are a lot of people/restaurants/cars/pick your item here. I've managed to stay in approximately a dozen different ones but always seem to come back to the same handful. The London in New York is in that handful.



The London’s signature entrance, you go to enough of these around the world and you know what you’re gonna walk into

What makes this hotel unique amongst the sea of possibilities really is the simplicity of it. You know you’ll get modern accommodations, great service, and no frills. Some might call it austere, but I call it New York. Most of the times you choose a hotel in NY based on where in town you want to be. This one is great if you’re spending time uptown or midtown. Its prime location near MOMA, Times Square, and Central Park make it a holiday time favorite of mine.



The lobby is classic black and white, timeless and elegant

What I love the most about the London, though, are the views. It’s one of the tallest buildings in midtown, and with that comes some pretty epic straightline views all across the city. Make sure to ask for the highest room possible when staying here. The rooms themselves have these beautiful aged wood floors, and simple modern furnishings. I wouldn’t call this the plushiest hotel, but the simplicity of it sits well in my book.



The views. That’s the best part of this hotel by far

PROS:

- The Epic views
- The location puts you in midtown without putting you next to Times Square
- Did I mention the views?

CONS:

- Not a lot of frills at this hotel, what you see is what you get

SECRETS:

- The best views IMO are of Central Park so look for that north facing room if you can!

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- There’s too many things to mention in NYC, but one of my first stops is always one of the MomoFuku chain of restaurants.

REVIEW: The Island Hotel in Newport Beach – The Best spot for 4th of July Fireworks in Orange County

So for those who haven't been to the Orange County coast of California, you may not be familiar with the swathe of land that covers approximately 60 miles from Northern tip to Southern tip. This swathe of land also happens to have an incredible variety of hotels from resorts such as the Rancho Valencia in the south, to the Island Hotel in Newport Beach all the way on the North. My preference has always been for the resorts on the Southern end of Orange County (Including the Ritz-Carlton in Laguna, the Monarch Beach in Laguna, or the Montage also in Laguna).

However, sometimes you need to be in a particular place and don't feel like driving an hour just to get to somewhere you need to be. If it so happens that you need to be spending time in Huntington Beach or Newport Beach – then your best option, in my opinion, is the Island Hotel.

This property isn't particularly new, nor is it particularly flashy, but what it does have it does very well. The tone of the property is muted and beach-reminiscent. Pastel tones carry the property and make it feel light and airy and even though it is still a few miles from the Ocean one would think they were right on the beach when entering the lobby.



Check out those pastel beachy tones

The rooms themselves have great expansive views, as the building is exceptionally tall and although they’re not as updated as I would personally prefer, they still have a well-built luxurious quality to them and the mattresses are comfortable, the entertainment systems are updated, and bathrooms are kept exquisitely clean.



The rooms aren’t the most modern, but they’re comfy and luxurious still

My favorite features at the hotel are the poolside fireplace – a great place to have a glass of wine and unwind for the night, and the rooftop lounge – replete with awesome views all the way to Los Angeles and of course towards the Ocean.



This is where you want to spend your time when you're here



Oh yea, spend some time up top as well. It's on the 12th floor

PROS:

- This hotel has excellent service, and even though its not the newest property it has been very well maintained
- The fireplace and rooftop lounge really are excellent features that you don't find in many hotels in the area
- They have an incredible room service menu and it's 24/7

CONS:

- The hotel could use a slight update, things are wearing well but it wouldn't hurt to refresh the colors or furniture to something more modern

SECRETS:

- I highly recommend checking last minute rates at this hotel, they are often pretty cheap. Also, you can often get a good room upgrade once you get to the hotel, the suites are pretty great bargains and are very nice – a step up from the standard accommodations and worth the extra $$.

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- Check out Balboa Island – rent a Duffy and cruise the harbor, eat frozen dipped bananas at the original Banana Stand
- This is the best place to spend 4th of July, but book early, as the Island Hotel is the BEST place to watch fireworks down in Orange County (the height of the building really lends itself to this)

REVIEW: The Andaz West Hollywood – Your spot on the Sunset Strip

I've stayed at nearly every hotel on Sunset strip, and most of them are pretty unique in their own way. The Andaz West Hollywood stands out for being the most modern and updated of the properties on the strip, and whenever someone asks for a recommendation for something modern this is where I send them.



The view from Sunset Strip (Your ad on side of building may vary)

The lobby is clean and small, with an open check-in concept that Andaz is known for. This means that there is no large check-in front-desk with employees standing at the ready. Instead, there's a few laptops on some unassuming desks located next to refreshments and couches. The feel that this is supposed to connote is one of casualness and modernity. It does the job.



The minimalist lobby, notice the check-in "stands" in the distance

The hotel itself is a smaller property, but that's because the Andaz believes that this property is all about the location around it and they don't expect you to spend a lot of time

within the hotel. There is a restaurant on the side of the lobby, which is beautiful, but rather expensive. It's not a bad place to grab a bite, but I would recommend checking out everything else that Los Angeles has to offer – it IS the foodie capital of the US.

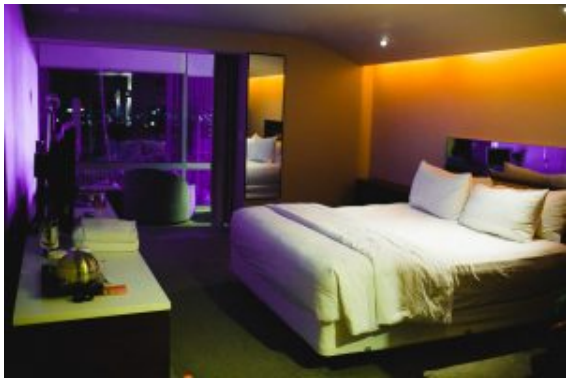


The lobby restaurant is gorgeous AND expensive

The reason you come to this hotel, though is because the service is good, the rooms have beautiful floor to ceiling windows with breathtaking views, and there's a very cool rooftop pool with expansive views of the surrounding Hollywood Hills, Downtown LA, and sometimes when there's not so much smog – views all the way to the Pacific.



The rooftop pool where you'll want to spend a lot of time



Floor to ceiling windows unveil the beautiful view from the high-up Andaz which is already on the high-up Sunset strip area

PROS:

- One of the only modern hotels on Sunset strip
- The views from the rooms and rooftop pool are pretty fantastic
- Walking distance to everything in the area (and there's a lot)

CONS:

- There's not a lot to the hotel itself, it's a small property

SECRETS:

- This is a place you want to stay at during the summer months or when it's hot in LA, because otherwise the rooftop pool and lounge is otherwise pretty useless

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- This is Sunset strip, which means you are within walking distance to some pretty legendary bars and restaurants. Check out the lounge at Chateau Marmont, it's cheeky and hip and always "in".
- Walk over to the Rock & Reilly's bar if you want a cool

place to have a drink and watch a game. This bar also has an incredible selection of whiskeys (Go figure – it’s an Irish pub)

REVIEW: A little slice of heaven – Andaz Papagayo

Staying at this hotel was one of the best experiences I have had in a while. I know, it may sound like hyperbole, but the Andaz really knows how to do things right when it comes to their resort in Costa Rica. I was lucky enough to stay here during low season which turned out to be a blessing in disguise as the resort was exceptionally placid and relaxing with only a few people around.



This is the view that you'll be seeing every morning as you have an amazing breakfast

One of the first things you'll notice when you enter the Papagayo Peninsula and then the Andaz is just how secluded it all is. Costa Rica, in general is already a getaway, but at the Andaz the buildings just meld into their environment making guests feel at one with the nature around them. When I was choosing whether to stay at this hotel, or the Four-Seasons down the street I decided upon the Andaz due to its newer build and more zen-like atmosphere. I did get a chance to visit the Four Seasons one night and my decision, in retrospect, was correct.

There's a lot of things to love about this property, its direct beach access and water-based activities, including jet-skiing, snorkeling, paddle-boarding, and snorkeling, to its

beautiful set of infinity edge pools that span across the entire width of the resort. What I love most about the hotel, however, was the fact that the management has spent a lot of time training the staff to make you feel as if you were an old friend, and valued guest. This is especially important when you're at a secluded resort and spend a significant amount of time on the property.



Modern, relaxing, and awesomely integrated into the mountainside – Big ups to the Andaz hotel chain for this one!

The staff went out of their way at each moment to know the names of the guests, to know my personal preferences in drinks and food, and to impart some personal tidbits about Costa Rica – once they knew it was my first time there. The concierge was extremely helpful in planning activities, and one of my favorite things about the resort was the mixology bar and the mixologists on staff. The complexity and innovation that went into some of the beverages that the staff made for me was

almost incomprehensible (yes, it's that good).



They take mixology to a whole 'nother level here. I really can't begin to describe how amazing the drinks are at the Andad Papagayo

The spirit of "Pura Vida" (Google it, because that's a whole 'nother article in itself), is especially prevalent here, and I cannot hesitate to recommend this as a must-see and must-stay at property if you're ever in Costa Rica.

PROS:

- Beautiful modern property with amazing rooms/bathrooms, it's a lot newer than the more expensive Four Seasons next door, and a lovely property
- The service is bar-none. I would put it at the same level as a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, which is saying a lot
- All the awesome activities were put together with lots

of planning and thought, the mixology classes, coffee classes, forest hikes – you won't feel at a loss when finding things to do here
- The food is incredible, lots of amazing cuisine for vegetarians to meat lovers alike

CONS:

- Some of the restaurants were closed on certain days due to it being low season, but that ended up not being an issue as there were shuttles to the Four Seasons next door when added variety was needed

SECRETS:

- Check out the adults-only pool next to the spa, it's got a nice secluded atmosphere to it
- The ceviche at Ostra is incredible and a must have

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- I highly recommend the ATV tours through the company that Andaz's concierge uses, it's a fun adventure through rivers and rainforest that shows some of the beauty of Costa Rica (hidden waterfalls, local towns, etc)

REVIEW: The W Scottsdale Hotel

So I already wrote about one of my favorite hotel's in Scottsdale (you can read about it here), but the W is probably my second favorite and depending on my mood it sometimes comes in #1 as well (Variety and all that jazz).



Probably the #1 reason why I like the W in Scottsdale – its pool – and let's not forget, it's always hot in Scottsdale so this is of prime importance.

So you're probably wondering, how does it compare to the Valley Ho? Well, they're two different spots. The Valley Ho is very much a boutique hotel with all the associated qualities, there's less of a corporate feel, some cheeky elements and details, and a property that feels much more tailored to an off-the-beaten-path experience. The W, however, does much of this in the traditional W manner – which is to say, corporate but still with some passion and uniqueness.

The rooms are probably the second best part of this hotel (after its very cool elevated rooftop pool area). They are clean, modern, large, and have great views of the surrounding area.



Clean, warm, modern, and luxurious. It matches the desert vibe quite well

Lastly, I can’t help but mention that the lobby and public spaces are spot on (albeit a bit small) for a W. The fireplace and little cubby areas throughout the lobby make for great spots to hideaway and have a drink and some great conversation – just what hotel lobbies were meant for.

PROS:

- Great pool, like really great – lots of space, lots of chairs, and lots of fun
- Even though it’s not the newest hotel it’s still got a modernity and class to it

CONS:

- Not necessarily a con, but across town there exists a pretty good hotel called the Valley Ho, you’ll just have to pick your poison

SECRETS:

- You have to check out the SPG points + cash options on this one, because it’s an expensive hotel in general and you can save a lot of money with the cash + points booking options

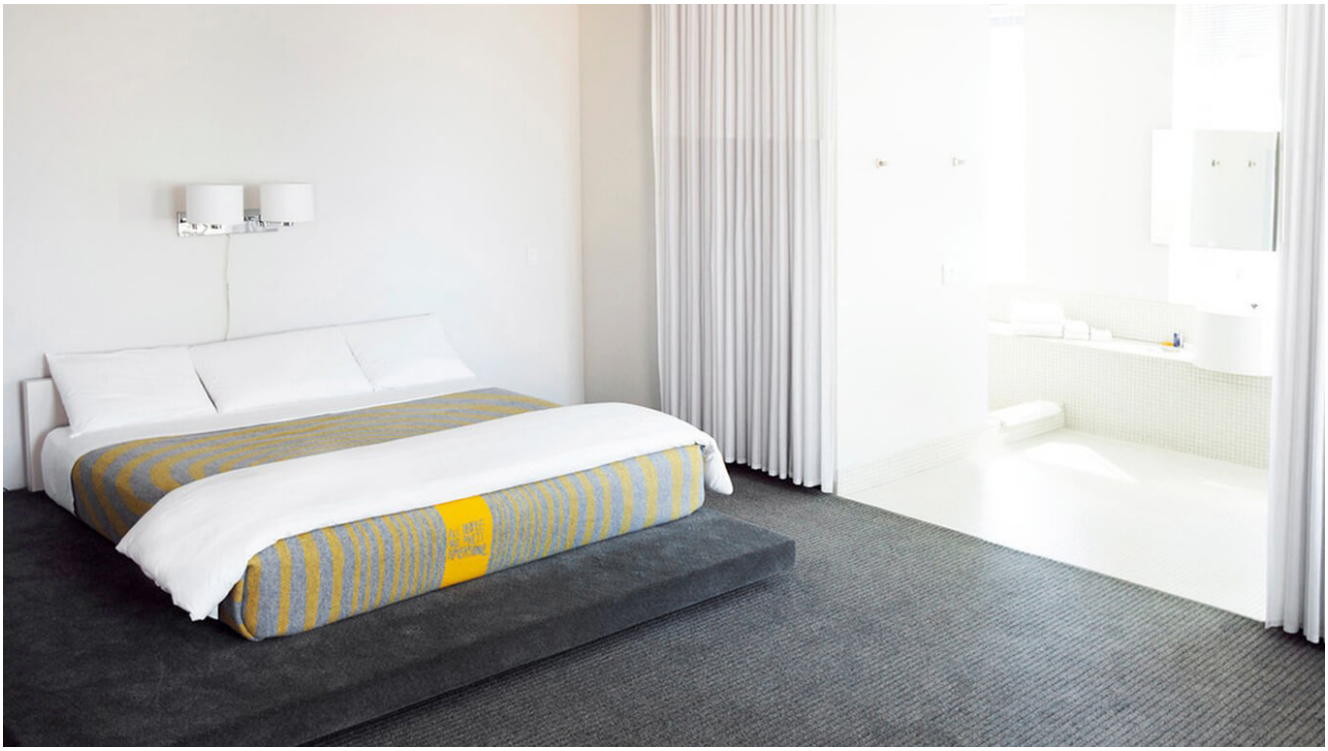
THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- Take a golf cart ride with one of the local carts that roams around downtown Scottsdale, and have them give you a tour. It’s a cool little town with some pretty unique dive bars, restaurants, and art galleries and the best way to get a lay of the land is to have a golf-cart tour!

REVIEW: The Standard Downtown LA

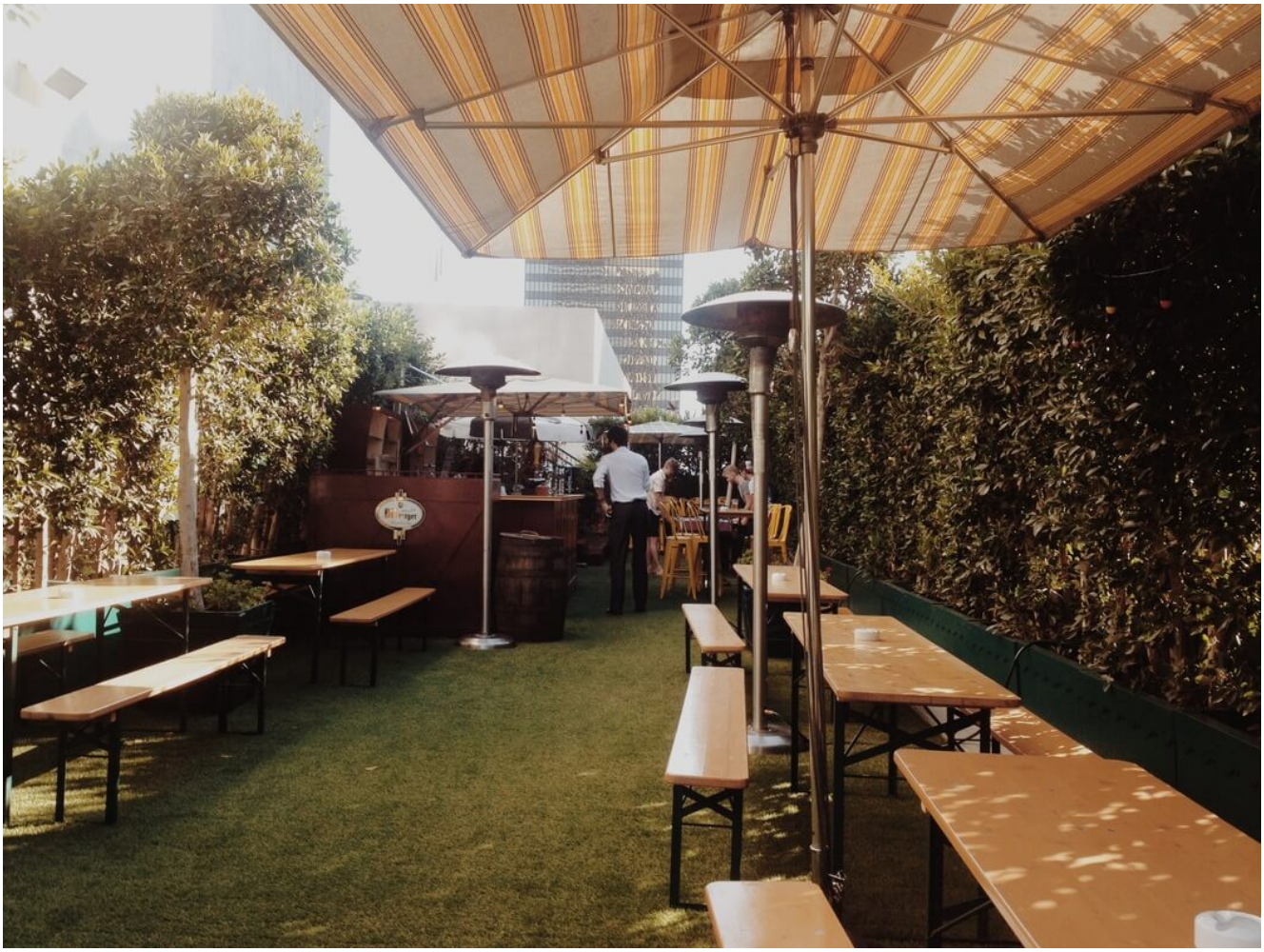
I’m an LA native, but that doesn’t keep me from having constant Staycation’s when i’m in my own city. I usually opt for the Ritz-Carlton in Marina Del Rey, due to its 24 hour hot tub and pool area, and its prime beach location on the Marina, but every now and then I opt to visit the Standard in Downtown LA.

When friends visit from out of town I always recommend this hotel amongst a few others, mostly because of how unique downtown LA is (it’s come a long way in the past 10 years), and because the Standard in Hollywood really can’t compete with it’s sister across town.



Minimalistic, mod, and very hip – that’s the Standard

There’s a lot to like about this place, but what always comes to mind first is its rooftop area. There’s an incredible infinity pool with 360 degree views of the downtown skyline, signature waterbed pods, and a small version of the German Biergarten that mimics the feature of the Standard Highline back in NY.



Who can’t turn down a good beer and german sausage? (Vegetarians)

There’s often something going on here every weekend, and most recently they’ve even added a second floor ping pong bar. If personality were the determinant factor in a hotel contest, I think the Standard in Downtown LA would get first place (with the new Mama’s Shelter coming in #2).



Great weather and great views – This is the best place to take advantage of both! Rooftop @ the Standard

The rooms themselves are pretty Standard Standard (that wasn't a typo). You're going to get modern, minimalistic, and slightly quirky. If there's a downside to any of this, it's that the service isn't necessarily the best, and the crowd can be a bit abrasive on certain weekends as it attracts the local scenester crowd of LA. That's a whole 'nother subject.

PROS:

- It's got a lot to offer just within the hotel, I come to this place even when i'm not staying here
- Location wise, downtown LA is great and it's only getting better
- The rates are always pretty competitive here

CONS:

- Although I would never say the service is terrible, it's not a forte for this hotel – it's almost too cool to worry about service

SECRETS:

- If you want to get a pod, be sure to reserve one way ahead of time, as they get taken very quickly

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- Downtown LA is one of the fastest growing and gentrifying areas in Los Angeles. There's almost too much to list and it grows every day, but I really recommend eating at Redbird and if you're a sushi fan Sugarfish (which is incredible sushi at a great price and an LA staple).

REVIEW: The Hotel Del Coronado

The Hotel Del Coronado is a hotel that holds a special place in my heart. Having grown up in Southern California, my family spent many summers down in San Diego, and one of the go-to spots that we would always visit was the Hotel Del Coronado. It was always the family tradition to spend some time on the beach in front of the Hotel Del and to grab one of their juicy burgers while watching the sun set over the Pacific.

However, it was NEVER a family tradition to *stay* at the Hotel Del Coronado. Why? Because the rooms were either in the old "Victorian" tower and old and stuffy, or they were in the "newer" tower which was just not quite as nice as the Loews Coronado Resort.

Everything else about the property was exquisite – the public spaces had an old school elegance, the elevator harkens back to the 1800's with manual controls, and the ballroom is a

sight to behold by itself, but we never chose to actually stay in the rooms at the Hotel Del.

This changed recently, because as of 2014, a major renovation was completed at the Hotel Del Coronado. The rooms in both towers have received significant changes, and the public spaces have been refreshed, with special care taken to preserve the national treasure that the hotel actually is (it’s a historic site – and yes, some swear it’s haunted ;).



One of the renovated rooms at the Hotel Del Coronado – I can now highly recommend it!



The Thanksgiving dinner at the ballroom is exquisite and HIGHLY recommended

The best part of the Hotel Del Coronado is that it embodies the beachy California vacation vibe that so many try to replicate but very few actually achieve. It also has so much history to it that it's practically a given that should a president or governmental figure visit San Diego they stay at the Hotel Del Coronado.

Service is also incredible at the Hotel Del, but it's much better if you choose to stay in the Victorian historic side of the hotel, this is something I highly recommend doing – especially post-renovation.

If you do visit the Hotel Del, be sure to visit the underground gallery and marvel at the history of the place –

it’s all setup in a mini-museum type setting. All in all, I am happy to now be able to recommend the Hotel Del Coronado as a prime property that everyone should stay at if they visit Coronado island.



Get your burgers at the pool and just marvel at the great weather and the historic beauty of the Del

PROS:

- Location wise, the Hotel Del Coronado is the best place to be on Coronado Island, the nearest competition is the Loews and it’s located in a more rural area down the

peninsula
- The hotel has so much character, it’s not just another cookie cutter resort

CONS:

- The service could be slightly better, it’s not bad by any means but it doesn’t necessarily reach the levels of smaller Ritz properties or the Mandarin Oriental’s standards
- The pool is a bit small and has very little seating

SECRETS:

- Try brunch at the ballroom, its better food than the rest of the restaurants, and the environment is stunning

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- Rent a surrey (four person bike) and just ride around Coronado island. It’s a great way to spend the day and enjoy the beauty of the island, the greenery of the golf course on Coronado, and to check out all the little shops around the peninsula

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REVIEW: Montage Laguna Beach



The Montage is one of those hotels I've grouped into "wedding hotels" of Laguna Beach – alongside the The Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel and the The Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point. They're all relatively close to each other, within a few miles, and they all have very similar features – grand entrances and public spaces, large pools with lots of chairs to lay out in, wedding-ready venues within the properties, and very similarly styled rooms that won't offend anyone.

These aren't the types of hotels i'd normally recommend when traveling – because I feel that there are so many different options out there to spend your money at and my personal preferences skew towards the unique. However, between the three I would recommend the Montage or the Ritz. Why you ask? The Montage and Ritz both have a bit more character than the Monarch Beach. They feel like they have a bit more soul and offer something slightly different than the standard large beachside resort. That being said, you really can't go wrong

with any one of these hotels.



My favorite part of the Montage is the restaurant there – The Studio

The best part of the Montage Laguna Beach is the separate standing restaurant the Studio. It's got incredible fare and the view during sunset is outstanding, if you stay at the Montage (or if you're around the Montage Laguna) I highly recommend visiting the Studio.

PROS:

- Grounds are incredibly beautiful, and the restaurant "The Studio" is a great place to check out
- Location is superb, within walking distance of Laguna Beach shops
- Service is impeccable, on par with the Ritz in Laguna and slightly better than the Monarch Beach

CONS:

- The decor, although classic, is slightly bland
- The pool area and cabanas can be pretty crowded on weekends when the hotel is full

SECRETS:

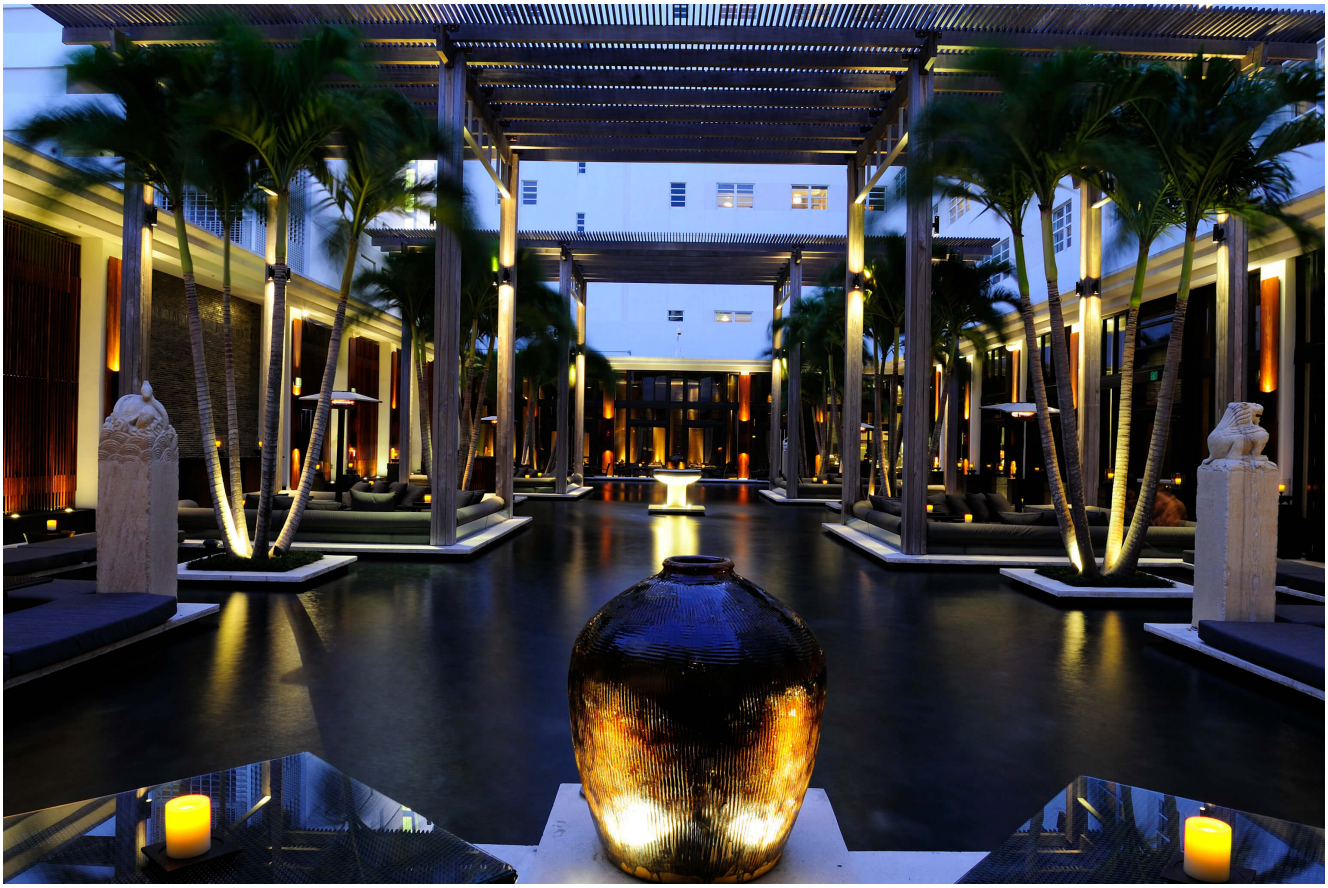
- Ask for a room further away from the lobby in order to gain more privacy. The hotel has some more secluded wings which are great for a romantic getaway

OTHER THINGS IN THE AREA:

- Who doesn’t like ice cream? Or its Italian brethren – Gelato? One of my favorite spots down the street from the Montage is Gelato Paradiso. Take a walk, grab some ice cream, and enjoy the quaintness that is Laguna Beach

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REVIEW: The Setai Miami



The Setai is quite a fancy place – this area outside of the main lobby is where they regularly hold bikini shows during swim week in Miami

This hotel was one of my first forays into luxury travel shortly after I made my first monies (I can't say money – I swear). Consequently, it holds a dear place in my heart, and I have been back many times since the hotel was first opened back in 2004. It's gone through quite a few owners and phases since, and I can't say that it's as great as it was back in 2004-2007 but it is still an amazing property and still ranks at the top of my list for quality of service and luxuriousness.

The first thing you notice when you enter the Setai is the very unique decor. This is because the builders were Indonesian and imported most of the materials from Southeast Asia, opting for teak from that region and exotic manta ray skins and handmade items imported specifically for the hotel from Indo, Philippines, and Malaysia.

The result is stunning, with a sexy Asian elegance that you won't find in many US based hotels other than a few select Mandarin Orientals (like the one in Vegas).

There are two distinct areas to the hotel, the standard hotel room side with its own lobby, and the suite towers which have their own entrance and smaller lobby.

The pool is also one of my favorite aspects of this hotel, with three pools each at a different temperature so that you can roam from one to the other based on your whim.



Three pools each with their own temperature

I highly recommend checking out the suite towers when you book, although they are not reasonably priced by a long shot, they're worthy of special occasions, and the corner units with their floor to ceiling glass walls and the height of the building (it's one of the tallest in South Beach) makes for spectacular views that you won't find anywhere else on Collins Ave.



The Asian theme is throughout, the rooms are relatively small by suite standards but the glass makes you forget about the size

Before the Fontainebleau was rebuilt, and the Soho Beach House was established this was always my first choice, but since those two have come into existence I only choose the Setai if there's a great deal to be had.

The service is bar-none though, and the concierge service is exquisite. However, since the changes in ownership some of the previous amenities have been deleted, including complimentary service in a fleet of Range Rover's and Rolls-Royces.

PROS:

- You can't beat the views here, it's one of the tallest buildings on South Beach
- The pools are spectacular, and if you want to relax in South Beach it really doesn't get better than this.

CONS:

- The price is pretty high even for a luxury hotel

- The service is not as good as it used to be, and they have deleted many amenities

SECRETS:

- Try out the Passion Fruit Martini, it’s one of my favorite drinks ever, and i’m not into sweet drinks normally. It has a nice spicy kick to it!
- If you are trying to get a great rate, google “Setai Miami Rentals”. The condo units owned here often have great rental rates, especially off-season



Order the Passion-Fruit Chili Martini (or two)

OTHER THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

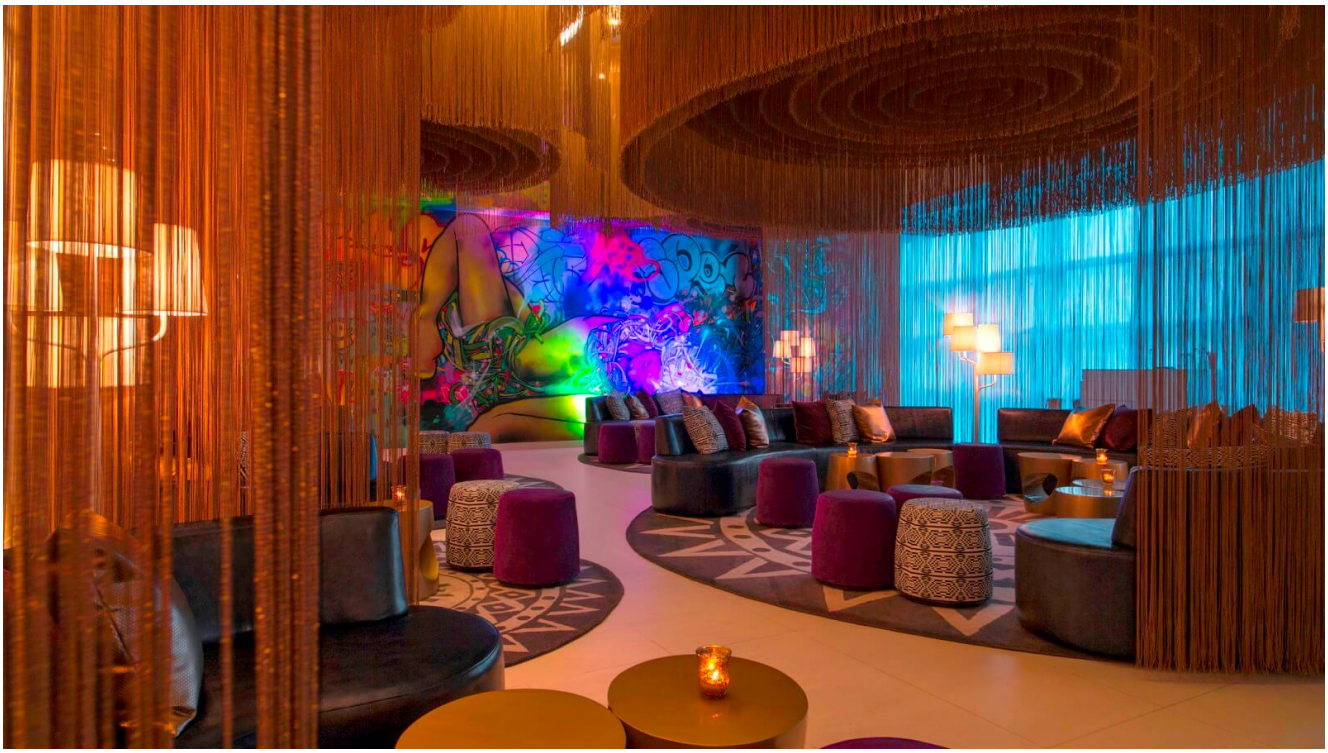
- I’ve mentioned some of these in my other post from South Beach here

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REVIEW: W Bogota – It's real Colombian here!

This has got to be one of the cooler W hotels in terms of design and style. Its a small one but its great location and great room rates make it a great home base if you find yourself in the city of Bogota.

What you immediately notice when you enter this property is the moodiness of the place. This is not unlike most W hotels which have slightly darker surroundings and evoke a sense of sensualness and mystery.



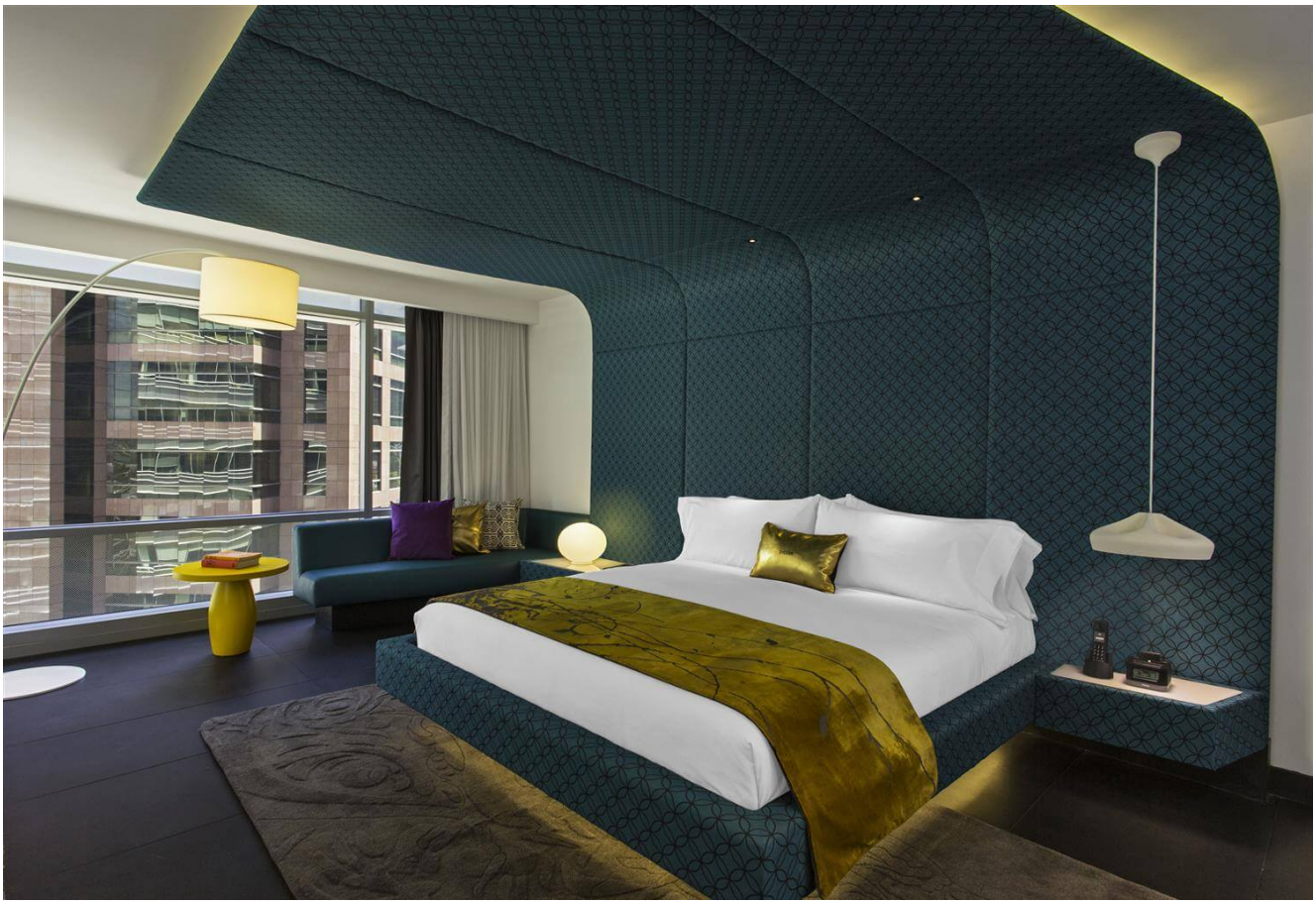
That's one sexy lounge. It's also a great place to hang out in before you head out for the night!

If you book early enough, check out the suites – they go for great prices, and they're totally worth the price. For less than $200 I was able to get a suite with its own game room and pool table, and this was during peak holiday season!

The service was above average for a W hotel, they were

extremely accommodating when we needed to check in early and even though the room wasn’t ready they gave us complimentary spa access in order for us to freshen ourselves from our journey.

The rooms themselves were in great condition as of this writing, and had a whimsical and charming quality to them. Especially awesome were the bathrooms, with LED lighting in the showers and gold fixtures that couldn’t help but remind me of something that would be in the infamous Pablo Escobar Mansion.



The gold touches really make this room pop visually. It’s got some of the most interesting contemporary furnishings i’ve ever seen in a room. Clean yet warm and inviting



Gold tiles, a gold shower, and gold fixtures. Remember, gold is best!

PROS:

- Its got a bathroom that stands out and makes you wanna smile
- The service is on par with some higher tier hotels
- The rates are phenomenal for the quality of hotel you are getting into

CONS:

- It’s a smaller property so it doesn’t have a grand feeling to it

SECRETS:

- They really appreciate SPG loyalty here so remember to use your SPG card if you have one. Also, they have a disproportionate amount of suites so it’s relatively easy to upgrade at the front desk, I highly recommend

trying that out if you didn’t book a suite ahead of time

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- You really should check out Tabula when you’re here. Anthony Bourdain recommends this restaurant and so do I.