

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:

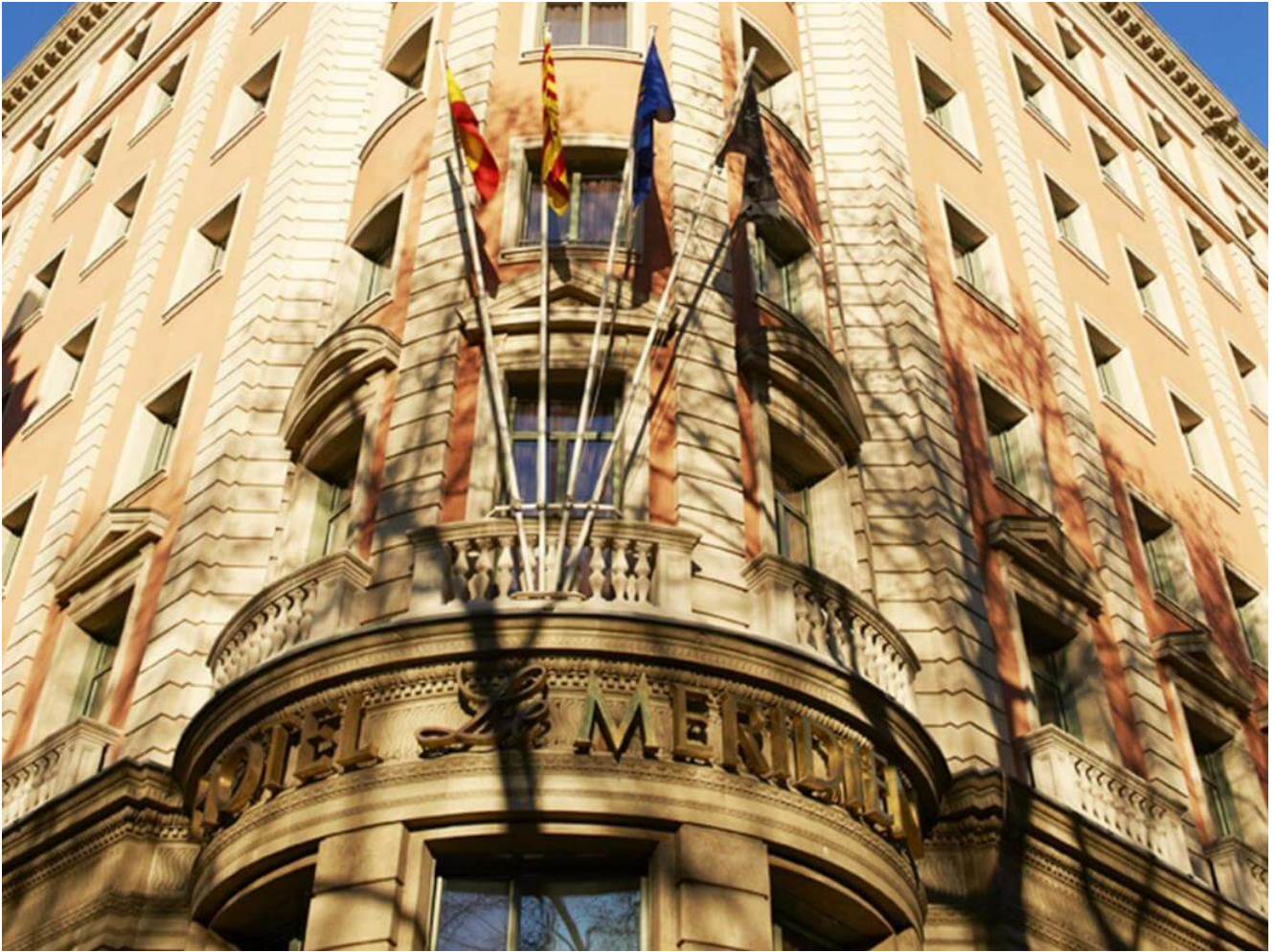
- The hotel has high capacity, so more likely than not you

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 Le Meridien Barcelona



This hotel is a little gem in the middle of Las Ramblas. Le Meridien's are often overlooked by travelers in lieu of larger name chain hotels, but they usually provide the boutique service and luxury that you would expect to find at something comparably higher in price.

I chose this hotel for an extended stay in Barcelona, which resulted in me actually calling this place my home for a bit of time in late Fall a few years back. It is set in a very centralized part of Barcelona – right in the middle of Las Ramblas, which is essentially the main street in the city.

This made for extremely easy access to shops, restaurants, bars, cafe's, and pretty much everything else you could ask for when roaming and getting lost in Spain's best city metropolis (Madrid just isn't Barcelona if you ask me).

The lobby was a great place to have an afternoon cocktail, and the rooms were modernly appointed and clean with great

attentive staff. Although the property has over 200 rooms it felt much more like a boutique hotel where they knew your name and service was remarkably quick everytime I needed something brought to my room.



Modern rooms here felt cozy, sophisticated, and noticeably well insulated, making for some very restful nights in the city

The hotel really embodies something which I find to be an epitome of European cities that have been around for centuries but have since grown up with the times, beautiful old world exteriors – but with modern luxurious interiors. This is the city of Gaudi after all, and interior decor and character and soul should be present at any hotel worth its price of admission. I felt as if Miro inspired some of the furnishings, colors, and overall decor of this place.



Modern bathrooms with granite, wood, and clean lines made this place feel like it had more character than your average luxury hotel

Of course, the best part of this hotel is and always will be its location. I don't think Le Meridien will ever let go of this property. I highly recommend it if you're visiting Barcelona.



Barcelona is all about lounging, and this lobby was built specifically for that purpose. Kudos to SPG & Le Meridien!

PROS:

- Great lobby to socialize in and hang out during nighttime hours
- Rooms were modern but with lots of character and warmth
- Staff was very attentive for what is a relatively large hotel
- The location couldn't be any better for walking to lots of great destinations

CONS:

- There are certainly many newer choices and I haven't reviewed some other top hotels in Barcelona but this one is a solid choice

SECRETS:

- Eat breakfast here at the restaurant downstairs, it's magnificent

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- I'm biased, but I think everyone should visit the Miro museum while in Barcelona