




SUITE SPOTS

Australia's boutique hotels just keep getting better, writes Christina Pfeiffer.





Although large corporate hotel chains may provide a consistent standard of comfort and service, the atmosphere can be rather impersonal. So more travellers are turning to boutique hotels that offer character and individuality. Here are some of Australia's rising stars.

Diamant Hotel, Canberra

Canberra's newest boutique hotel opened in June in the revamped 1920s heritage-listed Hotel Acton building. Set in the new NewActon entertainment precinct by Lake Burley Griffin, the 80-room hotel is a blend of contemporary design and old-world architecture. Sculptures, modern-art installations and modern paintings decorate the hotel. Guestrooms come in three design schemes and are equipped with high-tech trimmings, such as Bang & Olufsen televisions with cable, DVD players, fully stocked automated mini bars, fast internet access and MP3 connections.

15 Edinburgh Avenue, Canberra, (02) 6175 2222, www.diamant.com.au, rooms from \$160 a night

Limes Hotel, Brisbane

Brisbane's Limes Hotel, which also opened in June, is located in funky Fortitude Valley near trendy shops, cafes and bars. The 21-room urban retreat is the first Australian member of Design Hotels, a Berlin-based company, which markets a collection of 170 boutique hotels in 41 countries. Continental breakfast, in-room beverages, wifi and broadband internet, Dello Mano brownies and passes to the Valley Metro Fitness First gym are included in the room price. There's an open-air rooftop bar and cinema.

142 Constance Street, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane (07) 3852 9000, www.limeshotel.com.au, rooms from \$269 a night

Emporium Hotel, Brisbane

Located in Brisbane's cool Emporium retail precinct in Fortitude Valley, the Emporium Hotel made waves when it opened in the middle of last year. The decor is flamboyant, combining antiques, artworks and contemporary design. The 106 studio suites have Bose sound systems, 106-centimetre plasma televisions, wireless internet, marble kitchenettes and in-suite laundries. Molton Brown bathing therapies, bathrobes with matching slippers and a choice of eight pillow options are also standard. In-suite dining is serviced by the Belle Epoque French bistro nearby. Worth checking out is the rooftop terrace with its 15-metre outdoor heated saltwater lap pool, sauna and sunbaking lounges.

1000 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, 1300 883 611, www.emporiumhotel.com.au, rooms from \$250 a night

The Storrier, Sydney

Sydney's newest luxury boutique hotel is the first of seven Australian art hotels on the drawing board for the A Hotels Group. No two rooms are the same in this 70-room development, which is set in a slickly renovated art-deco building one street back from Kings Cross's main drag. Original oils, prints and photography of renowned Australian artist Tim Storrier adorn the walls of the hotel. Rooms come standard with a kitchenette, an LCD flat-screen television with Foxtel, video-on-demand, high-speed internet and Molton Brown toiletries.

15 Springfield Avenue, Potts Point, Sydney 1800 621 133, www.thestorrier.com.au, rooms from \$160 a night

Diamant Hotel, Sydney

If you believe in the adage location is everything, then Sydney's Diamant Hotel wins the prize. Located on the border of Kings Cross and Darlinghurst, right on the doorstep of Sydney's nightlife, the airy boutique hotel has big views over the city and harbour. Seventy-six chic rooms feature plush king-size beds, plasma televisions, wireless internet, iPod docking stations and Kevin Murphy toiletries.

14 Kings Cross Road, Potts Point, Sydney, 1800 037 544, www.diamant.com.au, rooms from \$178 a night

The Richardson, Perth

Perth's newest boutique hotel has an entire floor devoted to a spa. It is in a nine-floor building surrounded by lush gardens and has 74 guestrooms, a two-level business centre, cocktail bar and heated pool. Rooms have king-size beds and a choice of six types of pillows, LCD flat-panel televisions with Foxtel channels, high-speed broadband and two telephone lines. Opus Restaurant serves up inventive French fusion cuisine in glamorous surroundings and is building a reputation as one of the best restaurants in town.

32 Richardson Street, West Perth, (08) 9217 8888, www.therichardson.com.au, rooms from \$395 a night

Adelphi Hotel, Melbourne

A makeover late last year revitalised the hotel's 34 boutique mini-suites with new therapeutic mattresses and pillow selections, as well as non-allergenic quilts and linen. Each suite has Bose iPod speakers, an in-room aromatherapy program and in-room toiletries created by Kevin Murphy. There are nice touches, such as WS Badger Sleep balm, provided free on turndown, Adelphi-branded shave cream and coffee.

187 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, (03) 8080 8888, www.adelphi.com.au, rooms from \$245 a night



Individual touches ... the Emporium's cocktail bar (above) with its ornate chandelier; the Adelphi's rooftop swimming pool (left), which overhangs Flinders Lane; and (far left), the foyer of the Diamant Hotel, Canberra, designed by SJB Interiors, featuring Corallo armchairs, rugs by Tai Ping and Flos light fittings.