

London Hotels Displaying Great Art

If you want art in London, you might head to Tate Britain, the National Gallery or Sotheby's for example. Or for something more cutting edge, you could be tempted to check out the Saatchi Gallery or Tate Modern.



But you might also find your hotel to be an equally good place to find contemporary art – since many London hotels are now looking to artists to help them foster their own distinctive character. An increasing number of London hotel lobbies are turning into proper little art galleries!

At the rather stylish Cavendish Hotel, for example, a huge painting of London landmarks in whirling motion looms over the concierge's desk. The London Eye, Big Ben, Tower Bridge, Routemaster buses – it's all here, and features the Cavendish's trademark purple tinge, as well.

What better place to showcase the attractions of London? In fact the Cavendish is so proud of this specially commissioned painting, it has printed postcards of it for its guests to make use of.

At well-regarded luxury hotel The Arch, Vincent Poole was commissioned to create 'New Shoes', the artwork that you see as you enter – a woman's silhouette glowing with the bright colours of shop logos and price tags reflecting the local neighbourhood's shopping streets. It's very bright, very new, witty and a bit irreverent – and it links into the local area too.

There's also an intriguing alphabet in the corridor leading to the Martini library, made out of monochrome photographs of London architecture. Again, it's witty and stylish – and up-to-the-minute.

The Rafayel on the Left Bank Hotel has also commissioned its own art – and even opened an art gallery next to the hotel, as well as holding art exhibitions in its public spaces. It's definitely one of the more colourful luxury hotels – you generally get a feeling when visiting modern hotels that muted colours and old-style elegance are out, zingy lime green and bright terracotta or scarlet are in – and the art is also alive with colour.



And the Town Hall hotel in Bethnal Green is another to have commissioned new art, including a stag's head – like the old baronial style hunting trophy except entirely covered in carpet! Witty and maybe a bit disturbing...

Equally disturbing is the rather haunting picture of little girls staring at you from a rose garden in the appropriately-named Rose Lounge in the highly-rated Sofitel St James. You'll remember it long after you leave. Art shows are also sometimes held in the Sofitel St James' public areas – like the inspiring "fashion stills" event.

A couple of hotels east of the centre have decided to promote local artists. The free WiFi Hoxton Hotel for example prominently displays the creations of the abundant artistic talent in its local area. The Andaz near Liverpool Street – a hotel proudly plugged into its locality has a partnership with nearby Whitechapel Gallery to display some of its works in its lobby.

Last but not least is the gorgeous art you'll discover at the top-rated Egerton Hotel in Knightsbridge – one of the city's best townhouse hotels – which is even showcased in its own little "Art at the Egerton" leaflet. Particularly noteworthy are the prints by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

Art in hotels, of course, isn't there to be Great Art in the way a Von Gogh or a Botticelli is. It's there to decorate, perhaps to amuse, and above all to back up the hotel's mission statement. So in a youthful, contemporary hotel you'll get witty takes on the classics, or lively, stylish works, while in a more conservative hotel you might get nineteenth-century watercolours.



Few hotels have gone as far as the Langham Place in Hong Kong, which has actually created an audio tour to its collection of contemporary Chinese art. Or Maison Moschino in Milan which features surrealistic and fairy-tale settings that turn the rooms themselves into works of art.

But it's nice to see originals on the walls – just as it's nice to find hotels which have an original character

of their own and not just the standard corporate “four-walls-and-a-bed in different shades of grey”.

Finally, the first art’otel London (part of the international art’otels chain) will open in the Hoxton area in 2013 and will include a public arts centre, gallery, video studios and photo studios.

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