

From Morocco to Memphis



The Luxury Moroccan Room



Treatment centre



The Elvis Room

SIP champagne on the antique chaise longue in the Venetian Room. Take a turn for the serene in the feng shui Oriental Room.

Or gaze at the city's skyline in the New York Penthouse, before sinking into the hot whirlpool bath.

Brighton has long been associated with its funky boutique hotels. The owners of Sea Spray were among the first to introduce themed rooms, eight years ago.

Now, after buying the building next door, they've doubled room capacity, created four more suites and three luxury double rooms – and introduced even more inspired themes.

With black velvety carpet, crisp white sheets and deep red furnishings, the Indulgence Suite is pure luxury.

Whisking you straight to Graceland, the Elvis Room boasts

SEA SPRAY
New Steine, Brighton,
01273 680332,
www.seaspraybrighton.co.uk

a leopard-print throne, Hawaiian gala and Memphis memorabilia.

The newest theme, Indian Summer, provides a colourful and fun place to rest your head, while the Luxury Moroccan double room is the perfect fez res to sip your mint tea.

Themes already in place include Salvador Dali, Hove Actually, Boudoir, Renaissance, Beach Hut and Andy Warhol.

Over the years, co-owners Karen Durbridge and Tania Colella learnt customers were looking for sophistication, as well as fun, so the new rooms are particularly decadent.

"Some rooms are self-indulgent – I'm a huge fan of Elvis, so we had to have an Elvis-themed room. It's very

popular – the Elvis fans are strong and loyal," says Karen.

"Some people want to try a different room each time. They like not knowing what to expect."

It has certainly got people talking. A recent feature in the Guardian said: "It is a tightly run operation with a kick of something special – just the ticket for a weekend of jolly, madcap, very British japery."

Designing and creating rooms inspired by everything from geishas to the Renaissance period must be fun – but there are hazards: "I'm always on the look-out for items for the rooms. I go out to buy a pair of shoes and end up in an interior design shop," says Karen.

With the expansion of the hotel comes a treatment room, offering massages, spray tans and aromatherapy, reflexology, reiki, facials and waxing.

And soon to be introduced is a fine wine and champagne bar.

Karen and Tania moved to Brighton from London in 1998.

"My dream was to give up the rat race. We loved Brighton and knew it well. We knew we wouldn't miss London because Brighton is so busy itself.

"At the time, a lot of the guesthouses were owned by people of a certain age, nearing retirement. We wanted to target the younger market, who we could relate to, and thought the themed rooms would fit in with that. We wanted to put the magic and fun back into the hotel experience."

The hotel has no restaurant but the concierge service can cater for most whims, including table bookings, where they'll match you up with a restaurant relating to your room theme, if the mood takes you.

Guests range from musicians and artists appearing in the city to families and couples celebrating a special occasion.

"When we started eight years ago, it was just us and Pelirocco doing this sort of thing.

"Brighton grows year on year and I don't think the boutique market has reached saturation point at all. In fact, we are turning people away."

Added extras include shower speakers and room fridges and paid-for perks include late check-out and use of a personal trainer and cheap day rate at a local gym.

Leilah Nicola

INFO Double rooms vary in price from £95 to £200 a night at the weekend with special offers during the week. Rates also include breakfast menu.



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