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Introduction

What makes a hotel unique? Is it the location? Is it an amazing view? Comfortable rooms with large bathrooms and a sumptuous bed? Knowledgeable concierge and smiling, attentive staff? Large public rooms with impressive flower displays? A good business centre? A wide choice of dishes at breakfast? My answer would be 'yes' to all of the above and you can probably find a handful of hotels that really fit the bill. There is something else though that is needed to be really special. The problem is trying to describe it would normally be quite challenging – it is just 'in the air', an atmosphere, an ambience, a feeling – something intangible?

What makes a hotel different is the unique experience it offers to its guests in terms of accommodation, food, service and the extras.

Top 5 hotels with unique features

1. Magic Mountain Hotel, Huilo Huilo Reserve, Chile

The Magic Mountain Hotel is in the Huilo Huilo reserve, which covers 60,000 hectares of Valdivian forest, and has natural hot springs, unexplored lakes and direct access to the Mocho Choshuenco volcano. Accommodation ranges from rooms in the main lodge, which has a waterfall cascading from the pinnacle of the roof, to secluded forest lodges.



2.The Caves, Negril, Jamaica

The Caves enjoys a stunning cliffside location in Negril. Accommodation is comprised of just 12 variously configured, secluded cabins set in jungle-like gardens at the top of the cliffs. The caves themselves are used for private candle-lit dining — a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



3.Jumbo Stay, Stockholm Arlanda Airport, Sweden

This former Jumbo Jet, dating from around 1976, has been converted to provide overnight accommodation. Choose between an en-suite room, budget dormitory or twin rooms. The best room is a luxury cockpit suite complete with panoramic view – you might even catch some planes landing at Stockholm Arlanda next door.



4. Hurawalhi, Maldives

Hurawalhi – a circle of soft-sand beaches fringed by aquamarine waters – distinguishes itself from other Maldivian resorts with truly remarkable sea life and the world's largest underwater restaurant.



5.Free Spirit Spheres, Vancouver Island, Canada

Set among the trees of the west-coast rainforest on Vancouver Island are handcrafted, UFO-like spheres made from cedar, Sitka Spruce and fibreglass. The three globes are tethered to the trees with ropes, and sway gently in the breeze.



5 features that make any hotel feel like a luxury and unique hotel

1. Simple Booking

Whether you book a hotel online, on the phone, or through a travel agent, it should be a simple process. It should be easy to contact a knowledgeable, helpful person if you have questions, changes to your initial booking, or special requests. Anything else is a red flag.

2. Fast, Friendly First Contact

When you first pull up to a hotel entrance or walk into the lobby, your initial encounter tells you plenty about the type of place you're staying.

Harrison says, "A guest's first contact with the hotel is the valet, doorman, and bellman. These staffers must communicate welcome, in words, smiles, and body language. They should be happy to serve guests, and not angling for a tip."

3.A Genuinely Cheerful, Helpful, Knowledgeable Staff

There's a fundamental difference between fake cheerfulness and genuine warmth. Great hotels hire people with intuitive qualities: observant, empathetic, kind, and funny. Harrison describes them as people "who quietly make guests feel comfortable and important."

4. Distinctive, Well-Appointed Guest Rooms That Are Exactly What You've Asked for

One way the better hotels and resorts distinguish themselves from low- and mid-range chains is with distinctive accents and amenities that help you experience the local flavor. Harrison says she looks for "refined goods and services that show true taste and respect."

This includes high-quality bath and beauty products, and a sampling of local treats like snacks and other goodies. Also expect ample drawer and closet space, a safe; puffy hangers, free bottled water, robes and slippers, and an iPod dock.

5. On-Site Services That Delight

The guest rooms are critical to a superior hotel experience, of course, but what really sets great hotels apart is the range and quality of services that make your stay a special experience — without needing to upgrade to "club-level." Harrison's list of these services includes:

24-hour fitness center

The facility should include at least a range of basic equipment: a StairMaster, a treadmill, a stationary bike, free weights, and floor mats.

A social lobby

Look for an area away from the drafty entrance, with couches and wifi. Bar service for the social lobby is nice, too.

Referral service

You should be put in touch with reliable providers for babysitting, petsitting, dog-walking, etc., before or after you arrive for your stay.

A concierge

A concierge deserving of the title doesn't push guests toward tourist traps. This should be someone you can rely on for spot-on recommendations, and help getting where you need to go in comfort and on time.

And the basic services:

- * Unpacking and packing
- * Laundry
- * Room service

Conclusion

When you travel, there are always plenty of options when it comes to choosing accommodations. All too often, travelers fall back on well-worn choices, choosing the stay at a large, chain hotel with buildings in multiple cities in many different countries. This is an understandable decision because the traveler knows exactly what they're getting when they book with these larger companies. However, what isn't talked about nearly as often is what is missed when a chain hotel is picked over a unique hotel. Yes, you know what you're getting, but that's because it is the same in every single city in every single country, which results in a less rich traveling experience. Staying at a unique hotel can provide a far richer experience when it comes to exploring the area and the accommodations provided.

List of sources

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