

HOTELEGRAPH

THE REVIEW

The Laslett, Notting Hill

This cool and stylish new addition to west London boasts some impressive creative talent

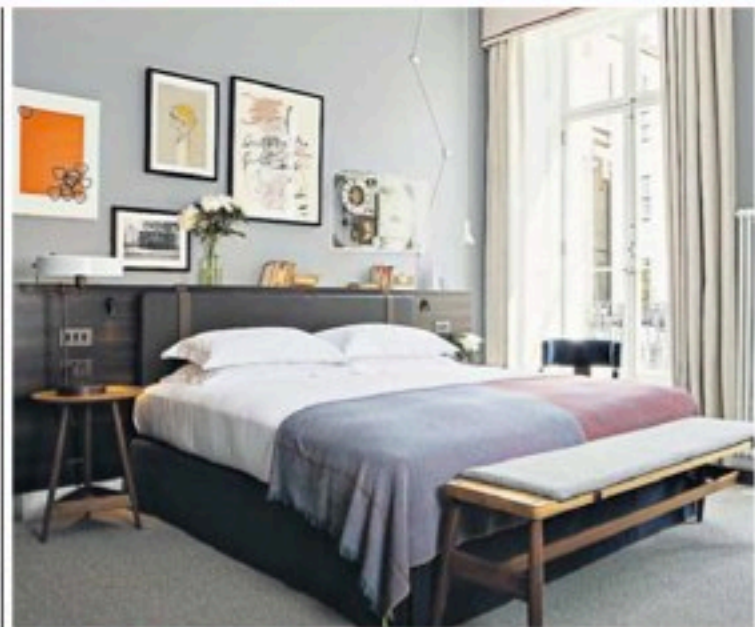
Notting Hill is oddly short of decent hotels and The Laslett has stepped neatly into the gap, converting five Victorian stucco terrace houses into a luxury hotel, one minute's walk from Notting Hill Gate. The owner, Tracy Lowy, knows everyone in west London, so expect creative "westies" in the bar, and food, artworks and décor supplied largely by local, frequently famous, talent.

Location 9/10

The hotel has views of millions of pounds' worth of stucco facades in one direction and in the other an attractive Mary Poppins chimneyscape. It's full of light, particularly on the upper floors. The Gate and Electric cinemas, Portobello Road Market, dozens of restaurants and boutiques and Holland Park are all within 15 minutes' walk.

Style/character 8/10

Prepare to name-check a cool, restrained grey-and-white palette sets off lighting by Simon Day; art by Londoners - from Barbara Hulanicki of Biba fame to artist-novelist Harland Miller; antiques by Jerome Dodd on the Golborne Road; super-chic flowers by Scarlet and Violet; and witty scribbled signage by Tracy's husband, Laurence Dunmore, film director and graphic designer of Enya's *Watermark* album. As you walk in, look for the wacky pair of Victorian shoes found under the floorboards.

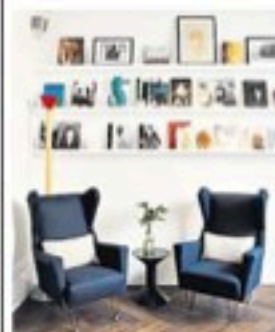


Service/facilities 7/10

This is the first hotel in the Living Rooms group, which specialises in stylish serviced apartments, and they are used to outsourcing everything from spa treatments to food, employing multi-skilled, well-informed staff, and supplying excellent room service - including a selection from the restaurant menu. Each room has a Big Bar containing retro sweets, spirits and mixers and snacks for sale, but there are no kettles.

Rooms 9/10

By running a spinnelike corridor through all five buildings, space has been used to carve out 51 finely proportioned rooms. Lower floors have 14ft ceilings with linen curtains, upper floors



Housed in five converted Victorian stucco terrace houses, The Laslett has a cool and restrained décor that is full of light

OUR RATING
8/10

are flooded with light, and single rooms are charming, with mezzanine floors. Suites have convertible daybeds and tables. Bathrooms feature subway tiles, Belgravia fittings, full-sized Neal's Yard toiletries and black-and-white-tiled floors. The windows open and the light switches are simplicity itself. Joy!

Food & drink 8/10

The Henderson Bar supplies seasonal specials by nearby restaurant legend Sally Clarke, with Neal's Dairy cheese and charcuterie by Cannon & Cannon. All-day dining in the bar, library or lobby, as you choose. Spaces are intimate; this is possibly not the place to conduct an affair or discuss your salary.

Value for money 8/10

Double rooms from £250 in low season; rising to £450 in high, excluding breakfast. Free Wi-Fi.

Access for guests with disabilities

Wheelchair access via a slope entrance, two lifts, three accessible rooms and vibrating alarm pillows for the aurally impaired.

Sophie Campbell

The view that costs £48,000 a night

John O'Ceallaigh reports on The Mark's lavish new penthouse suite - a billionaire's bolt-hole in Manhattan

When the first residents arrive at the newly opened five-bedroom penthouse suite at The Mark in Manhattan, it's fair to say they'll be the most valued (and valuable) hotel guests in all of New York City. Occupying some 12,000 sq ft and the entire 16th and 17th floors of an Upper East Side landmark building, this isn't just America's largest suite; at \$75,000 (£48,250) a night, it's also the most expensive.

That hotel rooms can be so costly seems incomprehensible. In global terms only one other suite comes close: Geneva's President Wilson Royal Penthouse, which sells for about £40,000 a night. It might make things slightly easier to think of this space as a billionaire bolt-hole in one of the world's priciest cities - and that is, in fact, what it was originally meant to be. When The Mark opened in 2009 the penthouse was advertised for sale as a \$60 million home. A buyer was never found and the space languished unused for years until the decision was made to transform it into one of the world's most extravagant hotel rooms.

Guests enter the penthouse directly from one of the three elevators that service the suite. They should be impressed from the moment their feet touch down on the white oak floor. An atrium opens to the main living room, also known as the Grand Ballroom due to its 26ft-high ceilings. It's here that hotel guests' friends might gather should they pop round for a cocktail, before a chat by the oversized fireplace or a sing-song at the grand piano.

The dining room accommodates up

The 2,400 sq ft roof terrace of The Mark's penthouse suite, right, has enviable views

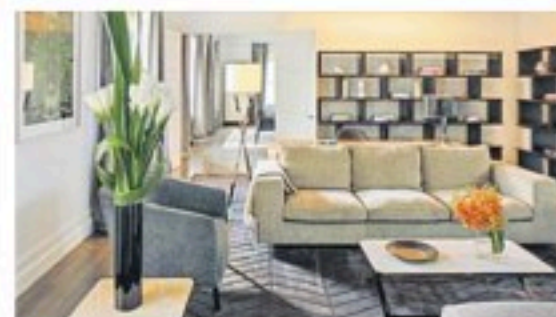


to 24 people, and an adjacent kitchen laden with Miele and Gaggenau appliances is as well equipped as that of a high-end restaurant. (Of course residents may not even enter that room, and certainly aren't expected to use the facilities themselves, but these high-level specifications will likely be appreciated by whoever is hired to cook for them.)

Three-Michelin-starred Jean-Georges Vongerichten, who oversees The Mark's ground-floor restaurant, is one of the high-profile chefs who can be enlisted to prepare a private dinner should the penthouse's inhabitants fancy an evening in. Whether they lounge in the library or retire to bed, every piece of furniture is made to the specification of French interior designer Jacques Grange and is unique.

Bigger than many New York apartments, the master bedroom features its own sitting room with free-standing fireplace and two sprawling dressing areas with walk-in wardrobes decorated in what the hotel poetically calls "a mint sea foam" green. The bathroom has heated floors and an infinity bathtub. (By comparison, the other bedrooms are surprisingly sparse and squat.)

Even the most demanding traveller will be impressed by the 2,400 sq ft rooftop terrace, where one of the suite's biggest selling points can really be appreciated. Beyond the rooftop gardens and patios that crown the surrounding apartment blocks, the views stretch to central Manhattan. The cap of the Chrysler Building and



The interior, left, has been designed by Jacques Grange

the \$55,000-a-night Ty Warner penthouse in the 1M Pet-designed Four Seasons (previously the city's most expensive hotel room) are visible to the south; Central Park and the Metropolitan Museum of Art stand to the west. It's a certainly spectacular panorama.

The Mark expects the suite to attract Middle Eastern and Asian guests primarily, and should those visitors have other requests the hotel says "it's a given" that they'll be accommodated

These are grandiose gestures, but they pay handsomely

(with the usual luxury-travel industry caveat that they must be legal and moral). If at midnight someone needs a suit from nearby department store Bergdorf Goodman, it can be arranged; or if you need to have a work out in situ, a private gym can be installed and a personal trainer made available for one-to-one fitness sessions. To explore beyond the hotel's periphery, a car of the guests' choice will be at their exclusive disposal for the duration of their stay.

Grandiose gestures, but when your guests are spending more to stay with you than any other hotel customers in the country, it pays handsomely to ensure they're completely satisfied.

Call 001 212 744 4300 or visitthemarkhotel.com for more information.

To read the full reviews and check availability, see telegraph.co.uk/themark