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The Jolly Roger

26 May 2005 | Classic Driver



All recently-opened hotels are now calling themselves ‘Design Hotels’. It’s usually just a label applied to the latest combination of glass and steel, but the new owners of the Roger Williams Hotel in New York weren’t able to do this as there were strict rules as to what could be done to the 131 Madison Avenue (31st Street) address.

The entrance to the Hotel looks like any other bar in Midtown Manhattan. On the left is a simple sign, where the word “Roger” is spelt out, and you then step over the threshold into the “Living Room” or hotel lobby, a room that boasts 20-foot high windows with an atrium ceiling. It gives the guests a spacious, but nevertheless cosy, atmosphere. The 190 rooms are modern and well-equipped with warm colours combining with functional design to give the impression of being in a friend’s home rather than a hotel.

"We wanted to offer guests an atmosphere like no other hotel in Manhattan," states Errin Savino, executive vice president of Oceana Hotel Group, Hotel Roger Williams' parent company. "The market is flooded with monochromatic, sterile hotels with stern staff that intimidate guests. Our staff is welcoming and accommodating and our use of colour engages our clientele emotionally."



A further characteristic of the Roger Williams is the fact that there is no restaurant in the conventional sense. Gourmet specialist Jonathan Morr, of APT, Bond Street and Republic, conceptualised the food and beverage programme for the Hotel. A distinctive component is the "Breakfast Pantry," which serves such breakfast items as; pain au chocolat, fresh baked scones, European meats and cheeses, frittata, sliced cakes and a medley of fresh fruit. The breakfast also offers out of town travellers regional delicacies like croissants from Balthazar, smoked salmon from Petrossian and bagels from H&H.

In the evenings, soft candlelight sets a dramatic tone as a granite-floating staircase leads you to the "Mezzanine Lounge", an escape from the midtown bustle with a colourful, warm homey feel. Patrons can sip specialty cocktails like Tequila Mockingbird and The Jolly Roger Martini, eat olives and almonds, or sample Nouveau American light cuisine such as caviar dip with potato chips, saucisson sec or margherita pizzette.



Health enthusiasts can work out on state-of-the-art treadmills and elliptical machines while watching mounted plasma screen TVs at the fitness centre located on the mezzanine level. Hotel Roger Williams is located near many of the attractions that have made New York one of the most exciting cities on the planet. Such as the Empire State Building, Madison Square Garden, Herald Square, Jacob Javits Convention Center and Manhattan's finest shopping and restaurants.

Rates start at \$330 per night for a garden room and run to \$500 for a suite. For more information

visit www.hotelrogerwilliams.com.

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