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CHECK IN

REFINERY HOTEL, MANHATTAN

For Showing Off Your Finest Bonnet

Rates

From \$459 for a studio queen.

The Basics

This luxury hotel in the heart of the fashion district in Midtown was converted from a former hat factory from the early 19th century. The 11-month-old property has 197 rooms on 12 floors and a distinct contemporary feel, with touches paying homage to the building's millinery days. Every staff member, for example, wears a pin adorned with needle, thread and scissor charms, and the desks with cast-iron legs in the rooms are meant to resemble early 19th-century sewing machines. Original works from local artists adorn the walls.

Location

The Refinery is on a nondescript block of West 38th Street but has a prime location: Times Square, the theater district, Bryant Park and the Empire State Building are all within a 10-minute walk. Most major subway lines are also nearby.

The Room

My husband, Mahir, and I had booked a 250-square-foot studio queen, the lowest category of room, but were upgraded free of charge to a 400-square-foot Empire State studio king, which had views of the landmark it's named for. Tasteful décor was clearly a priority: A long hallway led to a crisp and inviting bedroom with high ceilings, plenty of natural light, gleaming hardwood floors, two large blue and red abstract paintings and a large contemporary floor lamp with a red patterned shade. All rooms are decorated in a similar style. There was also a comfortable chair, 42-inch flat-screen television and robes and slippers from Frette, the luxury Italian linen house.

The Bathroom

A frosted-glass door slides open into the spacious bath, which has white marble floors, attractive chrome accents and a hanging light fixture. The divine-smelling toiletries come from Le Labo, a New York City fragrance house. Our one nitpick was the small single-sink area with limited counter space.

Amenities

A rooftop with indoor and outdoor seating is a hideaway in the heart of Midtown and has already become a popular happy hour spot for the fashion set working in the area. The lobby bar, Winnie's, is an equally stylish place to imbibe and features live jazz and piano performances. Wi-Fi and a daily newspaper are complimentary, and there is also a small gym on the second floor.



PHOTOGRAPHS FROM REFINERY HOTEL

The Refinery Hotel, in a former hat factory in Midtown Manhattan, has a rooftop deck.



Room Service

Parker & Quinn, the property's American bistro, provides all the food for room service. Our \$35 breakfast of mixed fruit, an omelet, toast, tea and coffee arrived in 15 minutes, but the presentation was sorely lacking: The food came in black plastic takeaway boxes with plastic utensils and in a brown paper bag. The eggs had no condiments such as salt, pepper and ketchup, and the fruit was an unappetizing small portion of not-so-sweet mixed melons. A representative said recently that the hotel has rolled out a more refined room service.



Bottom Line

With its hat factory history, good location, upscale finish and an eager-to-please staff, the Refinery is a definite draw and is an ideal place for travelers who are looking to be near the city's major tourist attractions. It lacked the polish of other well-established luxury properties in town, but that may improve over time, and its charm more than makes up for it. *SHIVANI VORA*

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