



In a historic building that once received less willing guests, London's swishest new hotel is judged a winner for its grit-meets-grand interiors, refined dining and wickedly good style.

BY KERRY PARNELL

HOLDING

COURT

GLASS ACT

Styled on an Edwardian greenhouse, the light-filled, leafy atrium is the setting of the hotel's main restaurant.

HITTING THE HIGH NOTES

The Royal Opera Suite's mix of rich textures and abstract art reflects the mood of the hotel – a grand residence tempered with a bohemian spirit. Opposite: Bathrooms feature marble mosaic tiles, sconces, and matching vanities and mirrors.



m eet the English capital's most arresting new luxury hotel, and that standing is not just thanks to its venerable location. After the city had been locked down for months, NoMad London materialised in May in a former lock-up – the reimaged historic Bow Street Magistrates' Court and Police Station where the likes of Oscar Wilde, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and the Kray twins were once guests. In the heart of Covent Garden, opposite the Royal Opera House, it's a killer location and the property now features the kind of high-spirited interiors that even Wilde would have admired.

They're the work of New York design studio Roman and Williams, known for blending historic preservation and contemporary cool. At NoMad the eclectic toolbox includes moody colours, bright velvets, abstract art, vintage chandeliers and mosaic tiles. The 91 rooms, including 21 sprawling suites, have an intimate feel akin to a stately home. Studio principals Stephen Alesch and Robin Standefer, who started as Hollywood set designers, tell me it was about balancing the "grit and strength" of the building with softer interiors. "We combined richly textured textiles, aesthetic-inspired woodwork and ethereal murals to create a space that evokes a grand residence, but is always tempered with a bohemian spirit."

The hotel's heart is its magnificent atrium, which houses the main restaurant. Festooned with cascading greenery and filled with natural light, it's evocative of an Edwardian greenhouse. "The atrium, which was an old police yard, really serves as the nexus of the hotel," the designers say. "We redesigned it by enclosing the space with a glass ceiling and steel structure. A once intense place has now become beautiful and hopeful." And near impossible to get into. The wildly popular eatery is headed up by chef Ashley Abodeely, who excels at moreish plates such as tagliatelle with king crab and chicken stuffed with brioche, lemon and parmesan. At The Library you can wine and dine among the bookshelves, while Side Hustle, in an erstwhile police station, offers Mexican dishes and agave-based cocktails from mixologist Leo Robitschek.

Still to come is a late-night lounge, Common Decency, slated to open later this year. The building's original courtroom, meanwhile, has been transformed into the Magistrates' Ballroom, with a dramatic cloud mural hand-painted by artist Claire Basler. It also incorporates the Bow Street Police Museum, which tells the story of the Bow Street Runners, London's first professional police force established in 1749 by magistrate (and novelist) Henry Fielding. Visitors can immerse themselves in local history on a walking tour, before retreating to their urbane rooms kitted out with oriental rugs, clawfoot bathtubs and Victoriana trappings, and becoming the first residents of the building who legitimately never want to leave.

This is the fourth NoMad hotel from the Sydell Group, and the first outside the US. Its outposts in

New York, Los Angeles and Las Vegas are equally discerning and magnets for creative types, digital nomads and power brokers. NoMad is the Sydell Group's second London hotel, following its 2017 launch of The Ned, in collaboration with Soho House, in a former bank. Like all the group's lodgings, NoMad London displays a transatlantic ethos, vintage leanings and an impressive art collection. The hotel is peppered with 1,600 works by British and international artists celebrating post-war American art and the European avant-garde. So, yes, you might think on checking in. Lock me up and throw away the key.

Rooms from £455. thenomadhotel.com



EXPLORE

COURT OF APPEAL

This Grande room features a breakfast table, club chairs and an eye-catching jumble of art and antiques. Opposite: Clockwise from top: The reception area hints at the period drama within; the former Magistrates' Court has been transformed into a sumptuous ballroom with a cloud mural by Claire Basler; a view over the atrium from a lounge area.



LONDON CALLING

THE LONDONER

One of the city's largest stays is Edwardian Hotels' *The Londoner*, in Leicester Square, opening this month. Styled as "the world's first super-boutique hotel", it reaches over 16 floors, with 350 guestrooms and suites, a rooftop lounge and health retreat. Rooms from £400. thelondoner.com

THE MAYFAIR TOWNHOUSE

The hotel group behind Cliveden and Chewton Glen has developed *The Mayfair Townhouse*, now fully opened after a thwarted launch before

lockdown. Its 172 rooms and suites are inspired by Oscar Wilde and it calls itself the "dandiest stay in London". Rooms from £252. themayfairtownhouse.com

PAN PACIFIC LONDON

Another major arrival is *Pan Pacific London* in Bishopsgate Plaza. The first European hotel for the Singapore group, its gleaming bronze tower contains 237 guestrooms and suites and 160 private residences, gardens, restaurants a well-being floor with infinity pool. Rooms from £325. panpacificlondon.com

BEAVERBROOK TOWNHOUSE

A Chelsea outpost of the famed *Beaverbrook* hotel in Surrey, this newbie brings the country house feel to the city. Set in two Georgian townhouses on Sloane Street, the boutique inn has 14 suites and a Japanese restaurant. Rooms from £300. beaverbrooktownhouse.co.uk

