

WEEKENDERS

HOTEL HIT SQUAD SHERELLE JACOBS



MEET THE TEAM
Sherelle is *The Telegraph's* expert on the travel predilections of millennials. She can be found scouring the hotel lobby for hashtag fodder or drinking from a jam jar in the bar.

The hotel brand for hipster types has pulled it off again with The Hoxton, Southwark. Bring your houseplant...

These days, "hipster" seems not so much a trend as a conventionally quirky old friend. Wax-moustached writers have become twee rather than edgy. Draughtily exposed brick walls and upcycled steel bar stools have a drab, comforting familiarity to them. And there's something soothingly reassuring about rooms filled with outlandish, ungripping abstract art.

Perhaps that is why, 13 years after knitting societies first started breaking out across east London and brown brogues rose curiously from the dead, the Hoxton hotel group – one of the most identifiably hipster brands in the world – remains such an international cult.

The first Hoxton hotel opened in 2006 in an empty car park in Shoreditch (where else?) and since then the company has opened eight more, targeting the global hipsterhood's main spiritual seats, from Amsterdam to Williamsburg.

Its latest addition, just launched a hop and skip from the Southbank, is

already doing a storming trade, offering cool, affordable room and board. It is a very clever business model that can pitch as trendy those measures that seek to keep prices low. Thus, reception is stocked with surfers' journals but no porters, and breakfast (juice, fruit, snack bar) is delivered to your room in a brown paper bag. Ground-floor socialising areas peddle the idea of the "exotic safe space": think millennial pink leather sofas, huge succulents skimming the ceilings, and 30-somethings sipping white port cocktails at the brushed copper bar.

Life revolves around eating and drinking. If you manage to find a pew among the crowds sporting pompadour hairstyles and oversized T-shirts, the French Riviera-themed cocktail bar on the ground floor offers sprightly concoctions mixing sherry and pink pepper tonic, or vermouth and grapefruit soda. If I have a criticism, it's that in its quest to lure hip millennials, the bar slips into a parody of itself: for an extra £1.50, punters can add health "boosters" such as anxiety-fighting CBD bitters and fat-busting ashwagandha to their drinks.

You'll need to acclimatise your eyes and ears to the ground-floor Mediterranean restaurant, Albie, which pulsates with electro music and has moody lighting that leaves some diners almost eating in the dark. Still, the food is rather good; think hulking vegetarian provençal boards with doorstop-thick homemade focaccia and glorious olive tapenade. The crab linguine with parsley oil is marvellous, and the sharing plates, such as Welsh rack of lamb with tomato fondue and courgettes and rigatoni pasta with



broad beans and baked ricotta, served in a huge Le Creuset pot, steam and hiss with homespun deliciousness. The lavender crème brûlée, the closest human-kind will get to ingesting the delight of a summer stroll through a Provençal garden, makes it worth the pilgrimage just for dessert.

But it is the hotel's 14th-floor rooftop restaurant, Seabird, with views of the Shard and the London Eye, that really steals the show. It has something of the Belmond Reid's Palace in Madeira about it, with its blazing orange birds of paradise and rattan furnishings – but for the grey, brutalist ceiling, and staff sporting man buns and piercings.

THE HOXTON SOUTHWARK

8/10

40 Blackfriars Rd, South Bank, London SE1 8PB (020 7903 3000; thehoxton.com)

Seabird boasts the longest oyster menu in London; you can sample intense, mineral-flavoured specimens from Morecambe Bay, briny, salty varieties from Jersey, and sweet, tart offerings from the Essex estuary. Sharing platters, with whelks, clams and langoustines, are delicious and affordable for London (starting at £45). The sharing dishes, such as octopus roll served like a hot dog in a brioche bun, and the crab croquettes, cleverly reconcile the seafood theme with the millennial target market's insatiable appetite for comfort food.

When I went to bed, I felt instantly at ease in my concrete-ceilinged cocoon, nestled against the Gothic crimson bedhead and surrounded by sketches of sharks and human hearts. As a Londoner who has never felt at home in London (owing perhaps to my West Midlands roots) it seems that over the years I have become immune to hipsteriness. It neither impresses nor irritates me. I find it as blandly pleasant as a cup of tea. After enjoying a rain shower (with "wood" scented shower gel) in my pond-green, subway-tiled bathroom, I faded into a carefree sleep, with jazz floating in the background from the Roberts radio.

Although there are not many facilities as such, The Hoxton Southwark will have a co-working space (from early 2020) with day beds (presumably for dreaming up "disruptive" apps), ergonomic chairs and dog-friendly areas. Meanwhile, the first floor is already hosting exhibitions that showcase local artists and – of course – houseplant workshops.

Double rooms cost from £139, including breakfast.



EXCLUSIVE OFFER

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- ◆ Sherry and homemade biscuits in your room on arrival
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Enjoy an indulgent stay at this 17th-century inn, set in the glorious Cotswolds. The charming residence offers rustic luxury at its finest, including a restaurant serving delicious dishes made with organic produce – a haven for foodies.

Take a walk in the surrounding countryside (nearby attractions include Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of Winston Churchill) and return to a warming fire.

Telegraph Travel writer Harriet O'Brien says: "The inn offers the best of all worlds: a rural setting in a classically good-looking Cotswolds village, relaxingly stylish bedrooms, two-AA-Rosette organic food and a bar much loved by locals."

Book by Nov 30 for stays until Nov 27 2019 and from Jan 2 until Jan 29 2020. Call 0330 173 2457; quote TELH1310; see terms: telegraph.co.uk/tt-killingworth



PILLOW TALK

HOT HOTEL

Palisociety's first hotel on the East Coast of the US brings a slice of colourful fun to Miami Beach. Lovers of Instagrammable decor

will feel right at home in the arresting coral-pinkish rooms, replete with pretty tiles and porcelain artworks. It will also feature an all-day restaurant, a cocktail lounge that is equal parts

co-working space and social hang-out, and a super-chic outdoor pool. Rooms £97 (001 323 327 9702; palisociety.com)

WEDDING BELLS

Romantic spots are 10-a-penny on the Greek island of Santorini, but it's hard for a loving couple to catch a quiet moment amid crowds of sightseers. A few idyllic spots still



remain, however, including the charming wedding chapel at the Erosantorini hotel. Set on a hilltop overlooking the volcanic island's dramatic caldera, it's the perfect place to say "I do". Rooms £670 (0030 211 0129 116; erosantorini.com)

KYOTO COOL

Excitement is ramping up at Atelier Ace HQ as the

brand prepares to open its first Asian hotel next spring. Set in Japan's former Imperial capital, Ace Kyoto already has one big name on board in the form of Kengo Kuma, the architect behind Tokyo's new Olympic Stadium. Now he is joined by Commune Design, a Los Angeles-based studio and



frequent Ace collaborator, which will set about infusing the part-historic, part-new property with an "aesthetic dialogue between American and Japanese design".

acehotel.com/kyoto

For more hotel news, see: telegraph.co.uk/tt-pillowtalk