

Hotels

The Hotelegraph

FirstNight Z Hotel, Shoreditch

A superbly-priced, contemporary hotel in a lively area of London

TELEGRAPH RATING
8/10

The latest of four Z Hotels in London, offering fantastic value for money in one of the capital's trendiest districts.

Location 9/10
Situating a stone's throw from Old Street roundabout, in the heart of Shoreditch, Old Street underground station, with easy access to Liverpool Street, is less than a two-minute walk away, making this a convenient option for business and leisure guests. Bustling bars, clubs and restaurants dot the surrounding streets and The Bower, a new shopping and restaurant quarter opening this spring, are all within walking distance.

Style/character 7/10
Z Shoreditch is housed within the old Alexandra Trust Dining Rooms; built in 1898, the building was once used to provide cheap meals for working-class men and women living in the East End. The exterior retains the original arched entrance but a modern café in the reception area lends a more contemporary feel. The atmosphere is relaxed and, in terms of interior touches, high ceilings and colourful furniture add to a sense of avant-garde style – not to be expected when prices are so affordable.

Glass doors and a large bay window create intimacy with the flurry of activity taking place on the street outside, instilling excitement – and rightly so – at staying in this lively part of the city. Elsewhere, space has been utilised well and the decor is relatively simple, but clean and tasteful none the less.



The Z's modern reception café, top; the arched entrance, above

Service 8/10
All staff were cheerful, attentive and happy to offer advice on the best restaurants and bars locally. The hotel's café operates semi-self-service, whereby daily dining options are run on a buffet basis, yet small snacks can be prepared by staff outside these times. Room service is not available.

Rooms 7/10
The 111 rooms are unassuming, each with its own en suite wet room. All of the pillows and mattresses are handmade from natural materials and consequently the beds are wonderfully comfortable. Each room also houses a sleek 40in television with free access to Sky channels. Despite its proximity to busy City Road and the Old Street roundabout, even the street-side rooms are completely soundproofed owing to the inclusion of triple-glazed windows. It is worth asking for an exterior-facing room as these

include windows and a bit more space.

Food and drink 7/10
Complimentary cheese and wine is offered each evening between 5pm and 8pm, a lovely touch that encourages guests to socialise. There is also a help-yourself fridge containing fizzy drinks, bottled water and small pots of ice cream – chargeable before 11pm but free after this time. Breakfast is available upon request – options include cooked dishes or cereals and croissants.

Value for money 9/10
Double rooms from £75, excluding breakfast (£12.50). Free Wi-Fi.

Access for guests with disabilities?

There are six specially adapted rooms.

Family-friendly?

Yes – duplex rooms are available for families.

The details

136-144 City Road, London EC1 (020 3551 3700; thezhotels.com).

Victoria Monk

Hotel directory Browse our extensive selection of hotel reviews, featuring accommodation to suit all budgets; telegraph.co.uk/hotels

The Fab Five

Our guide to the best hotels in the New Forest - from country house hotels to cosy pubs with rooms

Welcome to the New Forest, 145 square miles of ancient heath and woodland where ponies, donkeys, pigs, cattle and deer still freely roam. A few years ago, it was an area of England that offered hardly anywhere decent to stay – a caravan on a campsite was almost your best bet – but now that city folk have cottoned on to its proximity to London and to the coast, its unchanged beauty (it looks very little different from when it was William the Conqueror's hunting ground) and its pretty towns and villages, excellent accommodation has rapidly appeared. And the variety is astonishing: the area is home to one of Britain's hippest and most luxurious country house hotels, and one of its cosiest pubs with boutique bedrooms. There is something for everyone, and everyone's wallet, in the following list.

Lime Wood, Lyndhurst

It's the attention to detail throughout Lime Wood that makes it special. The oak doors are thick, the paint finishes lush, the brickwork laid to the architect's design; soft floor lights switch on automatically as you walk into the bathroom: a million-pound glass roof retracts above the inner courtyard at the press of a button; stylised sitting rooms melt one into the other – pale lemon into lilac into mint green – each with an open fire.



Double rooms from £315

To read the full review and check availability, see: telegraph.co.uk/limewood

The Mill at Gordleton, Lymington

The Mill is situated on the River Avon, five minutes' drive from the Georgian sailing town of Lymington, with its well-known Saturday market. Liz Cottingham runs the Mill with hands-on efficiency and great enthusiasm, and has created a place that appeals to all, with a cosy bar, an elegant restaurant and outdoor dining in warm weather. There is also a new knot garden and a secret garden, utilising an old Victorian swimming pool as a pond.



Double rooms from £150

To read the full review and check availability, see: telegraph.co.uk/millatgordleton

The Manor at Sway, Sway

Those looking for a quiet but stylish base in the New Forest, with reasonable room prices, will find this a useful new address. At the back it surveys five acres of lovely, sloping, wooded gardens, and the house has been given a fabulous new look by designer David Benheim. In the airy sitting room, William Morris fruit wallpaper is



teamed with lime-green sofas and black-and-white cushions and rugs – it works.

Double rooms from £90
To read the full review and check availability, see: telegraph.co.uk/manoratsway

Montagu Arms, Beaulieu

The hotel is located on a busy corner between the High Street and the Beaulieu River, in the New Forest village of Beaulieu. With regard to the interiors, the dark oak hall has never changed – and nor should it – but the sitting room has been transformed into something quite stylish. If the Montagu Arms' style appeals more to oldies, the Michelin-starred cooking of delightful Matthew Tomkinson would be a hit anywhere.



Double rooms from £228

To read the full review and check availability, see: telegraph.co.uk/montaguarms

Master Builder's, Bucklers Hard

Master Builder's overlooks the river in the 18th-century hamlet where several of Nelson's warships were built. Wake on a sunny morning in a quirkily luxurious main-house bedroom and watch the river come to life. I defy you to say you know a more captivating view, anywhere.

Double rooms from £130

To read the full review and check availability, see: telegraph.co.uk/masterbuilders

For a full list of the best hotels in the New Forest, see: telegraph.co.uk/newforesthotels10

