



This hotel's *the* bee's knees

Is this Sydney's best address? A hotel that's: five-star; centrally located to theatre, shopping and the CBD; with an executive club lounge that reeks of privilege; immaculate guest rooms and luxurious bathrooms from the pages of an elite designer interiors magazine ... and a fitness, health and spa regime to live for.

Swissotel Sydney is one of the exclusive international cache of Swissotel Hotels & Resorts, in turn one of the elite brands curated by the Accor Hotels group of more than 4000 properties around the globe. The brand breathes Swiss finesse: friendly hospitality, impeccable design, efficient like clockwork.

Yet Swissotel Sydney - rising atop Sydney's leading Myer department store complex, on the Market & George crossroads opposite the State Theatre, QVB and Westfield retail temple - is not some formulaic hospitality destination ... but alive with wit, panache, warmth and an ambience that gathers guests in an embrace, making them feel immediately, assuredly "at home". We loved the smiling hello of the slickly uniformed concierge (did I see him click his heels to attention?), our genuine pleased-to-see-you welcome at the reception desk, the "happy to go out of my way" greeting by the spa manager, and the sheer delight of the a-la-minute chef in the executive lounge when we accepted his offer of a freshly stir-fried calamari appetiser with our complimentary cocktails.

The rooms are a sealed silent sanctuary against city sounds with the kind of crisp pure white linen duvets, bed sheets and pillows that make women think of George Clooney and men of dream of ruffling them up. Ours, with plush moody carpeting and a gleaming spacious ultra-cool bathroom trimmed in premium black and milk-coffee coloured tiles - with an abundantly-appointed vanity, bevelled glossy wide-framed mahogany-style mirror and heavy frameless shower - begs bathers to light candles, draw a

long deep soothing tub and luxuriate.

This, of course, will follow your desire to enjoy, say: a drink or snack in the Crossroads bar (surprisingly, stirring, dressed in unexpected post-modern decor of flying strawberry lampshades, purple tartan carpet and expansive outré armchairs); dinner in-house at JPB restaurant (ideal on cold and stormy nights); a sumptuous Savoy-style high tea; or spa treatments, rejuvenating massages with alpine therapeutics, a gym session, men's/women's sauna, the heated outdoor swimming pool, and a stimulating spell in the jacuzzi.

And ... no other hotel offers your own fresh honey hand-extracted daily from the honeycomb, from Swissotel Sydney's own bee hives - thriving on the sunny CBD rooftop! The raison d'être is not mere novelty: Swissotel worldwide offers a healthy "Vitality" program to boost guests' wellbeing while travelling: welcome drinks of fresh fruit and vegies; walking and jogging maps; a nutrient-filled \$25 Vitality lunch of a detox shot of spirulina, wheatgrass, beetroot or acai plus a Vitality bowl, power protein salad or sandwich and cold-pressed juices. This is where the honey comes into play, in a menu highlighting fresh seasonal produce. During annual Vitality Week, Mon-Sun 18-24 September, guests enjoy Kombucha tea on arrival, fresh fruit and vegetable offerings, special breakfast bowls, and daily walks hosted by cheery staff. Equally, no other can match Swissotel Sydney's luxury Spa & Sport fitness centre and oasis, awarded Australasia's best Luxury Urban Escape for the past two consecutive years.

My favourite spot is the Executive Club Lounge: a carpeted cosy enclave (with wide fuel fireplaces in cooler months) and a sensational selection of first-rate complimentary drinks, canapés, reading material, TV and attentive personal service. Parking - valet or subsidised budget - available. Taxis at the door. Most major attractions within walking distance. Swish.

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