



Hotel

» WHERE TO STAY NEXT

CENTRAL

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and Amy Alipio

The Big Apple Within Reach

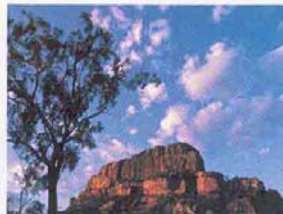
Everybody loves New York for its bracing energy and indomitable spirit. But the tireless city also boasts nearly 71,000 hotel rooms where visitors can do the unthinkable: sleep. Another 5,000 rooms will throw open their doors by the end of 2007. Yet the city's continuing popularity translates to ever increasing room rates: A budget hotel in Manhattan can now mean anything under \$200 for a double. But deal-seekers, take heart: The city has plenty to satisfy those looking for a good-value spot with Big Apple style. » (open foldout to continue)

hotel confidential

Hut, Two, Three, Four Loews Annapolis Hotel (www.loewshotels.com) invites guests to get fit with a morning run on the grounds of the nearby U.S. Naval Academy (photo ID required). The 6:45 a.m. jog, led by a Naval Academy graduate, begins after a wake-up call playing "Reveille." Loaner iPods motivate early risers with military chants.

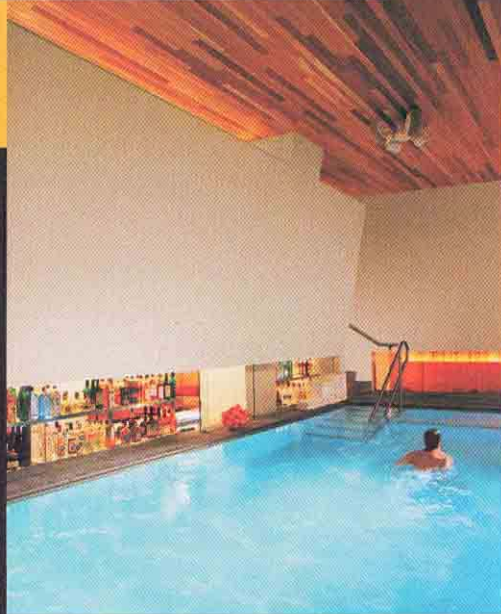
Hotel We Love It's not every day you find the perfect inn, one that's not too stuffy or doesn't feel like grandma's house. The **Clifton Inn**, a country estate in Charlottesville, Virginia (www.cliftoninn.net), boasts 14 tasteful rooms and cottages—stocked with port and Bose CD players. Dinner at the inn's restaurant features lavender martinis, complimentary bite-size appetizers, and Asian-inspired dishes. Proper tea and a gourmet breakfast come with your stay.

Kakadu Camping Aussie Adventure Holidays (www.aussieadventure.com.au) has opened a bungalow tent camp with beds, linens, and ceiling fans on the Aboriginal lands of Australia's **Kakadu National Park** (below). A three-day, all-inclusive tour (excluding dinner) departs from Darwin. From \$668 per person.



With its stylish lobby, the Bryant Park Hotel draws visiting models during New York's Fashion Week.

PHOTO: PATRICK GLETT; PHOTO: SHOOTING/ALAN/ALAN



“New York should shout about its hotels,” says Ben Elliot, co-founder of the string-pulling global concierge service Quintessentially. “And what the city does best are the old classics, the ones with romance and nostalgia, where visitors can enjoy the city’s history and eccentricity.”

A classic worth shouting about is the **Gramercy Park Hotel** (www.gramercyparkhotel.com; from \$450), presiding across from the only private park in Manhattan. The 1925 glamour-puss (where Babe Ruth caroused and Humphrey Bogart got married) was swiftly devolving into a has-been—before Ian Schrager treated the Gramercy to a lavish renovation. Re-opening in July, the place will beguile with 185 sumptuous rooms (created with input from artist Julian Schnabel) and a surefire dining hot spot from Michelin-starred restaurateur Alan Yau. Best of all, guests can ask for coveted keys to Gramercy Park, where sunshine seems to drizzle over willow trees.

Another revamped classic, the 1903 midtown **Mansfield** (www.mansfieldhotel.com;



from \$259), originally designed by architect James Renwick (of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral fame), claims 125 rooms and a mahogany, book-lined clubroom that makes you want to drink Scotch and solve mysteries.

Also eminently civilized, Kimpton’s **70 Park Avenue Hotel** (www.70parkave.com; from \$265) seems immaculately tailored to the BlackBerry-and-Boss crowd. Light fills rooms washed in shades of linen and beige.

With its gold-crowned roof, the **Bryant Park Hotel** (www.bryantparkhotel.com; from \$375) stands as tall and slender as its runway-model guests. Lofty suites (with iPod docks) look upon Fifth Avenue’s New York Public Library and Bryant Park, where in warm weather kids ride a merry-go-round to the strains of Edith Piaf.

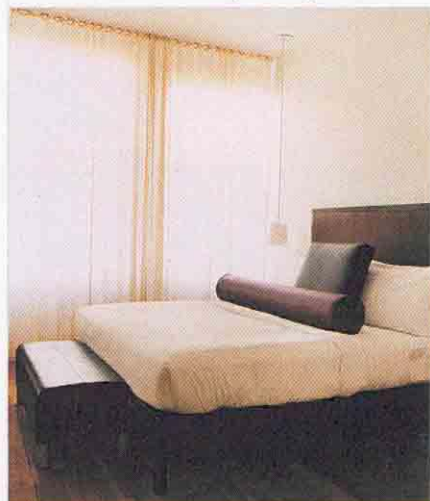
If supermodels check their Vuitton valises at the Bryant, their makeup artists and personal assistants opt for the trendy **Hotel QT** (www.hotelqt.com; from \$175), a few deep breaths away from Times Square. From hotelier André Balazs, QT markets itself as a youth hostel for grown-ups (rooms, small even by Manhattan standards, have bunk beds).

Corporate overnighters more concerned with free Wi-Fi than thread count book a basic room at recently opened **Holiday Inn Express Fifth Avenue** (www.express5thavenue.com; from \$189) or **Hilton Garden Inn Times Square** (www.timessquare.stayhqi.com; from \$199).

Veteran visitors questing for something off-center might consider heading to the Lower East Side. The **Hotel on Rivington** is surrounded by vintage clothing shops. (Check out Edith & Daha across the street for bohemian shoes and handbags.) The 21-story hotel’s glass-walled rooms have a “yeah, baby!” Austin Powers look; many bathrooms come with Japanese

soaking tubs and showers facing the Brooklyn Bridge (www.hotelonrivington.com; from \$325). The **Blue Moon Hotel** (www.bluemoon-nyc.com; from \$225) occupies a revamped 19th-century tenement building, in the neighborhood’s old pushcart and pickle-packing district. Faithful to the area’s Jewish heritage, the 22-room hotel offers an automatic Shabbat elevator.

In Hell’s Kitchen, a real find is the **414 Hotel** (www.414hotel.com; from \$180)—a Euro-style auberge cached on a tree-lined street, geraniums popping cheerfully out from window boxes. Courtyard rooms provide that priceless New York luxury: silence. The **Cosmopolitan Hotel-Tribeca** (www.cosmohotel.com; from \$145) has rooms that are clean and cut-rate (albeit often noisy). The Upper East Side’s **Bentley Hotel** (www.hotelbentleynewyork.com; from \$169), a 15-minute walk to Madison Avenue, helps save pennies



Clockwise from above: Bryant Park Hotel’s rooms offer Napa leather and Frette linens; at the Hotel on Rivington, star fruit yellow tiles cover a bathroom wall; Hotel QT pairs its lobby pool with a swim-up bar.

for what really counts (i.e., shopping).

A slowly gentrifying Harlem also finds itself on the tourist track. A Courtyard Marriott is due to open later this year, while **102Brownstone** (www.102brownstone.com; from \$200), a hideaway on bustling 118th Street, is a homier option. Three of the six rooms come with kitchens, making you feel like a local, if only for a New York minute.

—Olivia Stren

hot tips

Homes Away From Home As luxury destination clubs become more popular, many with exorbitant membership fees and hefty annual dues, we love the fee-free **Time & Place** (www.timeandplace.com), which offers 64 stunning properties to rent from a beach cottage in Naples, Florida, to chic apartments in Washington, D.C., and Paris.