

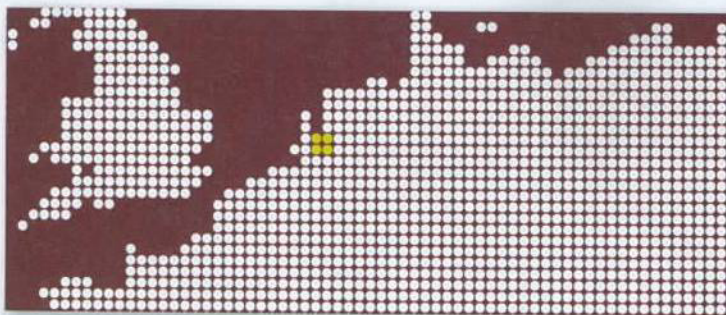
BRITISH AIRWAYS

BusinessLife

BUSINESS WITH ATTITUDE

JANUARY 2008

**YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S COMING UP THIS YEAR:
THE HOTTEST HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS AND
COOLEST CARS THE NEWEST TRENDS IN SPAS,
FASHION AND THE MEDIA AND WHY THE WORLD
COULD END IN MAY (BUT PROBABLY WON'T)
PLUS A COMPLETE CALENDAR OF THE YEAR'S
SPORTING EVENTS AND A WEEK IN THE LIFE
OF TOP TENNIS PLAYER JELENA JANKOVIC**



HOTEL: LLOYD HOTEL, AMSTERDAM

State of the art

This democratic hotel promotes creativity at every level, says Amanda Morison

The self-styled Lloyd Hotel & Cultural Embassy has what might be termed a colourful history. Originally built as a refugee hospital, it became the Dutch equivalent of a borstal before its current incarnation as a hotel. Even as a hotel, it doesn't follow convention. Rooms are graded from one- to five-star instead of using terms such as 'de luxe' or 'standard'. The idea is to provide an environment that will satisfy a five-star guest (hip surroundings and good food) without an atmosphere or price that might be off-putting to those on a one-star budget. In practice, this can mean famous DJs checking in alongside struggling musicians on their first tour, or successful business types mentoring fledgling start-ups in the bar.

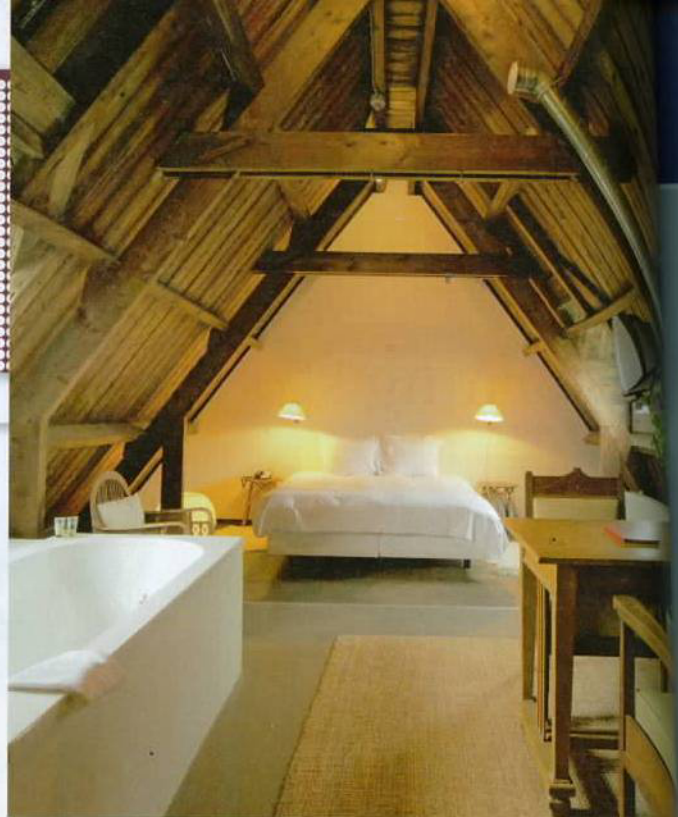
Décor-wise, the emphasis is on a pared-down design aesthetic rather than all-out luxury. Even

the top-graded rooms could be described as utilitarian chic. Five-star rooms are large, one-star have single beds and shared bathrooms. Three-star rooms are all about clever, space-saving design – some even have foldaway bathrooms, and one is a wet room and bedroom combined,

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the bed far enough away from the shower not to get soaked.

Public rooms are crammed with original design features and one-offs by famous Dutch designers such as Jurgen Bey and Piet Hein Eek. The Lloyd is as much a gallery as a hotel, with the 'Cultural Embassy' part of the



package aiming to "enhance your experience" by offering the opportunity to, say, learn how to make dumplings, enjoy poetry readings or drop into the midnight gig of a new band.

The restaurant's simple wooden tables and straight-backed chairs preserve some of the character of an institution canteen. The food is just as democratic and varies from 'one-star' dishes, such as chips and soup, to 'five-star' oysters and steaks. Regardless of the price, the focus is on back-to-basics quality and freshness.

Sticklers for convenience might quibble over details such as dim lighting in the bedrooms and pared-down facilities. Service is warm but unfussy, there are no porters to relieve you of your bags, and an iron and ironing board brought to your room replace a trouser press or laundry service.

But the point of a stay here is about exploring your creativity as much as providing a bed for the night (and if you don't like the sound of that, you'll probably also hate the idea of holding a meeting in one of the Lloyd's popular venues – the five-star bedroom with a central bath). For larger gatherings (and ones that a tub won't improve) there are two conference rooms that can accommodate up to 80 people.

It's an exciting place to stay, even if it feels rather more like an art college than a hotel – especially if you're in one of the rooms with a shared bathroom.

DETAILS

COST Rooms from €95 to €450
ADDRESS Oostelijke Handelskade 34
CONTACT +31 20 561 36 04,
lloydhotel.com **FLIGHTS** BA flies up to six times daily from London Heathrow and four times daily from London Gatwick to Amsterdam

HOTEL NEWS

PARIS

The recently opened **Hôtel des Académies et des Arts** (right) in Paris has just 20 rooms. It's a great spot for intimate meetings, with a library, a small seating area with fireplace and a bistro. The breakfast room is also used for screenings. Doubles from €210. For details, visit hoteldesacademies.com, or call +33 1 43 26 66 44.



GENEVA

The **Grand Hotel Kempinski** recently reopened after two years and many millions spent on renovation works. With the largest meeting and conference space in Geneva, the ten meeting rooms host up to 600 delegates, while larger-scale presentations for up to 1,300 can be hosted in the auditorium. The hotel is 15 minutes by car from the airport. Visit kempinski-geneva.com.

PRAGUE

Formerly the Prague Renaissance, the **Hilton Prague Old Town** is the group's second hotel to open in Prague, as part of an ongoing push into Eastern Europe. A multi-million dollar refurbishment overseen by Alexandra Champalimaud includes a refit of all rooms, the creation of 15 suites and the introduction of a Gordon Ramsay Maze restaurant. See hilton.com.