

lonely planet Hotels & Hostels

Want more Sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little ol' book? Craving more detail – including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to lonelyplanet.com/hotels and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

SLEEPING

top picks

- Soho Hotel (p342)
- Rookery (p354)
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SLEEPING

Accommodation in London is among the most expensive on earth, and you can expect to spend a very large portion of your travel budget on it. At the same time, despite the increase in hotel rooms in recent years, demand still outstrips supply in this, the capital of Europe, so it's essential that you book at least part of your accommodation before arriving, especially during holiday periods and in summer.

Another problem here can be quality – even in the midrange. A large part of readers' letters sent to Lonely Planet about London and the *London* guide concern accommodation, many of them complaining about the quality and cleanliness of hostels, guesthouses and some hotels, 'fauna' in the rooms and the rudeness of staff. Hopefully the descriptions in this chapter will help you make your choice.

Of course it's not all bad news. A miniboom in hotel building continues apace, with thousands of new rooms expected before the Summer Olympics open here in 2012. A slew of upmarket boutique hotels have brought a real sense of style to the city's digs, and scores of midrange hotels and B&Bs are following suit. At the other end of the spectrum, some places have begun to fill a gap in the market by providing boringly functional but affordable rooms. A very exciting trend recently has been the convergence of these two extremes in a new crop of 'budget boutique' hotels, providing a bit of chic at reasonable prices.

ACCOMMODATION STYLES

London has a superb range of deluxe hotels (from £350 per double) and you'll be spoiled for choice with old classics that combine the best in traditional atmosphere and modern comforts. There's also good choice in the top-end category (anything from £180 to £350), which offers superior comforts without the prestige. Also in this bracket you'll find many of the boutique and style hotels that have sprung up in recent years. Below £180 there's a bit of a slide in quality and choice. Although there's an increasing number of terrific places to rest your head without haemorrhaging your budget, it's still not enough. And if you were expecting to spend less than £100 a night on a double room during the week, your lodgings probably won't provide the most cherished memories of your trip. (On the other hand, you will find some good weekend deals for that price.) In London, cheap means less than £80 per en suite double. After B&Bs,

the cheapest forms of accommodation are hostels, both the official Youth Hostel Association (YHA) ones, of which there are six in London, and the (usually) hipper, more party-orientated independent ones.

Hotel rooms in the UK are subject to a 17.5% 'value added tax' or VAT. Many hotels quote rates inclusive of VAT, while others do not so it always pays to ask if you are uncertain. Remember, though, that many hotels – especially deluxe ones – regularly offer promotional deals on the internet that are much lower than their published rates. Unless otherwise indicated, accommodation prices quoted in this book include breakfast.

The accommodation options in this guide are listed by area and then by price, from most to least expensive. See the boxed text, *left*, for more information on accommodation prices. The choice is enormous, but the lower end is consistently oversubscribed, so if your budget is limited it's a good idea to book well ahead. Good resources for finding and booking hotels include www.hotelsoflondon.co.uk, www.londonlodging.co.uk and www.frontdesk.co.uk.

LONGER-TERM RENTALS

Apartments & Serviced Apartments

If you are visiting London for a few weeks or several months, staying in a short-term or serviced apartment is the best way to get a sense of

living in the city. Many agencies in *Loot* (p396) or other small ads have pretty insalubrious properties; ask to see rooms first. Some better agencies and their daily rates are listed here.

UPTOWN RESERVATIONS

☎ 7937 2001; www.uptownres.co.uk; s/d/tr/q £72/95/125/135, apt per week from £550

Offers short-let apartments or B&B accommodation in stylish private homes, mostly the West End, the City, Kensington, Chelsea or Knightsbridge.

196 BISHOPSGATE

☎ 7621 8788; www.196bishopsgate.com; studio/1-bedroom apt from £180/217, cheaper after 6 nights
Luxury serviced apartments in the City opposite Liverpool St Station. Has longer-stay properties.

ASTON'S APARTMENTS

☎ 7590 6000; www.astons-apartments.com; s/d/tr/f from £68/94/131/173, weekly rates 5% less
The company has three Victorian town houses in South Kensington, divided into serviced apartments of varying sizes.

CITADINES APART'HOTEL

☎ 0800 376 3898; www.citadines.com; 2-person studio £105-149, cheaper after 6 nights
Ever popular French chain has four apartment blocks throughout the city, including a *Holborn/Covent Garden branch* (Map pp72-3; ☎ 7395 8800; 94-99 High Holborn WC1; t Holborn).

ACCOMMODATION LONDON

☎ 8459 6203; www.accommodationlondon.net; s/d from £52/70, cheaper after 6 nights
Has some 300 studio flats and rooms in shared houses for foreign-passport holders (only) in the Willesden Green area. Clean and well-equipped properties, decent prices, popular with younger travellers.

Rooms & Flats

Most newcomers to the city still find leasing expensive (note that almost all rented accommodation in London is furnished). At the very bottom end, bedsits (£300 to £600 per month) are single furnished rooms, usually with a shared bathroom and kitchen, and they are always pretty grim. A step up is a self-contained studio (from £600), which normally has a separate bathroom and kitchen. You'll rarely get a two-bedroom flat for less than £1000. Shared

accommodation offers the best value, at £300 and upwards for a room in a flat or a house with several bedrooms. Most landlords demand a security deposit (normally one month's rent) plus a month's rent in advance.

To get abreast of current prices, consult the classifieds in publications such as *Loot*, *TNT*, *Time Out* and the *Evening Standard's* Wednesday supplement *Homes & Property* (www.homesandproperty.co.uk). Some of the better websites are *Gumtree* (www.gumtree.com), *Move Flat* (www.moveflat.com) and the primarily gay *Outlet* (www.outlet4homes.com).

RESERVATIONS & BOOKINGS

The London tourist organisation *Visit London* (☎ 0870 156 6366; www.visitlondon.com) offers a free booking service with a wide range of accommodation options and always has special deals. There's also the *British Hotel Reservation Centre* (☎ 7340 1616; www.bhronline.com), which has kiosks at Gatwick Airport, Heathrow Airport and Paddington, Waterloo and Victoria stations. There's also a kiosk on the mezzanine level of the Britain Visitor Centre (p400). Another excellent source for hotel bookings and discounts is *LondonTown* (☎ 7437 4370; www.londontown.com).

You can book a hostel through the *YHA central reservations system* (☎ 0870 770 6113; www.yha.org.uk). If you want to stay in a B&B or private home, reservations can be made through the following agencies.

LONDON HOMESTEAD SERVICES

☎ 7286 5115; www.lhslondon.com; per person £16-40
Small family-run business offering B&B rooms in private homes across London.

AT HOME IN LONDON

☎ 8748 1943; www.athomeinlondon.co.uk; s/d/tr/f from £45/69/85/101
This is worth looking at if you're considering staying two to four weeks, as some properties have weekly rates and minimum stays. However, daily rentals are more common.

LONDON BED & BREAKFAST AGENCY

☎ 7586 2768; www.londonbb.com; per person £25-55
Offering spare rooms in London homes. You share with the homeowner, many of whom tend to be of a mature age. Properties are concentrated for the most part in central and North London.

PRICE GUIDE

The symbols below indicate the cost per night of a standard double room in high season.

£££	over £180
££	£80-180
£	under £80

AIRPORT HOTELS

London's airports have plenty of hotels to cater for passengers with early morning flights. If you're one of these, the best thing to do is to go to the relevant airport website (see p381) and click on 'Airport Information' where you'll find a link to hotels at or near the airport and the best rates currently available. Otherwise, these easy options are worth considering:

Hilton Gatwick (☎ 01293-518080; www.hilton.co.uk/gatwick; South Terminal, London Gatwick Airport; r from £159) Conveniently connected to the airport building via a short walkway, this hotel is notable for its very large rooms and triple glazing.

Radisson SAS Stansted (☎ 01279-661012; www.stansted.radissonsas.com; Waltham Close, London Stansted Airport; r from £149) A two- to three-minute walk from the main terminal building, this hotel has 500 rooms in three 'styles': Urban (mostly red), Ocean (mostly blue) and Chili (mostly yellow). We don't know, either.

Park Inn Heathrow (☎ 8759 6611; www.rezidorparkinn.com; Bath Rd, Heathrow; s/d from £127/145) With 880 rooms, the largest of the Heathrow hotels and one of the closest to the airport, this is much more luxurious than you'd expect for the money, but is sometimes overrun with guests. Take H2 Hoppa Bus (£4 per person).

WHERE TO STAY

Where you choose to stay in London will have an effect on the kind of time you have here and the image of London you'll take home, so geography should be as important a consideration as comfort, style and expense. Base yourself in the West End and you'll soon get into the throbbing rhythm of London at play. If your idea of the British capital is one of stately Georgian houses, Regency crescents and private parks in the centre of leafy squares, book a place in Chelsea or Mayfair. Hoxton, Clerkenwell and Shoreditch are where it's at right now, and there are a few good places to stay here at London's cutting edge. Culture vultures and/or those with literary aspirations should look to Kensington, Bloomsbury or even Fitzrovia. Want workaday London, with barrow boys shouting out their wares in Cockney accents alongside ethnic Pakistanis selling prayer rugs? Choose somewhere out in the East End. If you want to feel how most Londoners live, you might hang out in Camden or Stoke Newington. If you don't care how Londoners live, you might pause with the travelling circus in Earl's Court or Shepherd's Bush.

THE WEST END

You're really at the hub of London life in the West End, where you won't have to worry about running for the last tube home. The city's major theatres, as well as some of its best dining and drinking, is right on your doorstep, as are many major attractions. Of course such a privilege doesn't come cheaply.

Moderately priced hotels in the centre are as scarce as hen's teeth. Having said that Bloomsbury is a haven of B&Bs and guest-houses, and tucked away in leafy Cartwright Gardens, north of Russell Sq and within easy walking distance of the West End, you'll find some of central London's best-value small hotels. At the other end of the accommodation spectrum Mayfair can boast hotels so grand that many of them are tourist attractions in their own right.

SOHO & CHINATOWN

COURTHOUSE HOTEL KEMPINSKI

Map p68 International Hotel EEE
 ☎ 7297 5555; www.courthouse-hotel.com; 19-21 Great Marlborough St W1; r £270-390, ste from £550; t Oxford Circus; a ∞
 Oscar Wilde, John Lennon and Mick Jagger all made appearances at this former magistrate's court, now a 112-room luxury hotel just south of Oxford St. Special features include a spa and pool as well as a bar whose tables sit within original prison cells – authentic iron bars cordon off the lounge area.

SOHO HOTEL Map p68 Hotel EEE

☎ 7559 3000; www.sohohotel.com; 4 Richmond Mews W1; s £255, d & tw £315, ste from £370; t Tottenham Court Rd; a
 One of London's hippest hotels, the Soho is in a reconverted car park just off Dean St. All the hallmarks of the eclectically chic hoteliers and designers Tim and Kit Kemp have been writ large over 91 individually

designed rooms, the colours lean towards the raspberries and puces and there's a stunning black cat Botero sculpture at the entrance.

HAZLITT'S Map p68 Hotel EEE
 ☎ 7434 1771; www.hazlittshotel.com; 6 Frith St W1; s £175, d & tw £205-265, ste £300; t Tottenham Court Rd; a

Built in 1718 and comprising three original Georgian houses, this is the one-time home of essayist William Hazlitt (1778–1830), and all 23 rooms are named after former residents or visitors to the house. Bedrooms boast a wealth of seductive details, including mahogany four-poster beds, Victorian claw-foot tubs, sumptuous fabrics and genuine antiques. It's a listed building so there is no lift.

PICCADILLY BACKPACKERS

Map p68 Hostel E
 ☎ 7434 9009; www.piccadillyhotel.net; 12 Sherwood St W1; dm £12-19, s/d £38/56; t Piccadilly Circus
 The most centrally located budget accommodation in London, Piccadilly Backpackers has more than 700 beds spread over five floors, with dormitory rooms containing anything from four to 10 beds. Rooms are bright and clean and we especially like the new pod dorms with wooden bunk beds in their own little compartments.

YHA OXFORD ST Map p68 Hostel E
 ☎ 7734 1618; www.yha.org.uk; 3rd fl, 14 Noel St W1; dm £19-25; t Oxford Circus or Tottenham Court Rd

The most central of London's six YHA hostels is basic, clean, loud and not particularly all that welcoming. Most of the 76 beds are in twin rooms though there are dormitories with three and four beds. There is a large kitchen but no meals are served apart from a packed breakfast.

COVENT GARDEN & LEICESTER SQUARE

ST MARTIN'S LANE Map pp72–3 Hotel EEE
 ☎ 7300 5500; www.stmartinslane.com; 45 St Martin's Lane; standard s & d £220-270, garden r £310, ste from £600; t Covent Garden or Leicester Sq; a ∞
 A 'slice of New York urban chic' just a stone's throw from Covent Garden, this

Philippe Starck–designed hotel is so cool you'd hardly notice it was there. ('What, in that glass box!?!') Its 204 rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows with sweeping West End views, the public rooms are bustling meeting points, and everything (and everyone) is beautiful. The overwhelmingly yellow reception area plays havoc with some complexions.

HAYMARKET Map pp72–3 Boutique Hotel EEE

☎ 7470 4000; www.haymarkethotel.com; 1 Suffolk PI SW1; r from £245-310, ste from £385; t Piccadilly Circus; a
 Named by *Condé Nast Traveller* as one of the world's finest hotels *before* it opened, the 50-room Haymarket in a John Nash building next to the Theatre Royal is further proof that London is becoming the epicentre of stylish boutique hotels. It's the progeny of Tim and Kit Kemp and it shows – from the hand-painted Gournay wallpaper to the 18m pool with funky drawing room.

COVENT GARDEN HOTEL

Map pp72–3 Boutique Hotel EEE
 ☎ 7806 1000; www.coverntgardenhotel.co.uk; 10 Monmouth St WC2; s/d from £225/275, ste from £375; t Covent Garden or Tottenham Court Rd; a
 As fresh as the morning but in a stylishly reserved British sort of way, this 58-room boutique hotel housed in an old French hospital and dispensary uses antiques (don't miss the beautiful marquetry desk in the drawing room), gorgeous fabrics and quirky bric-a-brac to stake out its individuality. There's an excellent bar-restaurant just off the lobby called Brasserie Max.

TRAFALGAR Map pp72–3 International Hotel EEE

☎ 7870 2900; www.thetrafalgar.com; 2 Spring Gardens SW1; s & d from £200, ste from £375; t Charing Cross or Embankment; a ∞
 The demand for designer digs was so strong in London a few years back that even the Hilton got in on the act with this tastefully minimalist hotel on the south side of Trafalgar Sq. Now it's become the capital's 'first unbranded Hilton property' (meaning no logo) though the stylish 129 rooms, jaw-dropping roof terrace and the two-tier Rockwell bar, with the largest selection of bourbon outside the USA, are all still in place.

top picks

B&BS

- Aster House (p353)
- B+B Belgravia (p352)
- 66 Camden Square (p355)
- Gate Hotel (p358)
- St Alfeges (p360)

KINGSWAY HALL Map pp72-3 Hotel EEE

Map pp72-3 Hotel EEE
% 7309 0909; www.kingswayhall.co.uk; Great Queen St WC2; s & d from £195, ste from £325, breakfast extra £15.25-26.95, weekend rate incl breakfast £165; t Holborn; a w
Tipping its cap fairly determinedly at the professional traveller, Kingsway nonetheless manages to provide 170 smart, comfortable and very central rooms for anyone with less business and more play on their mind. The atmosphere is more relaxed on the weekend, when rates are considerably cheaper.

SEVEN DIALS HOTEL Map pp72-3 Hotel EE

Map pp72-3 Hotel EE
% 7240 0823; hotels@orange.net; 7 Monmouth St WC2; s £65-85, d £75-95, tw/tr £100/115; t Covent Garden or Tottenham Court Rd; a
The Seven Dials is a clean and comfortable budget/midrange accommodation in a very central location. The 18 rooms come in a number of varieties – from single with shared facilities to triple with bathroom – and half face onto charming Monmouth St. Just don't expect the Ritz at this kind of money.

FIELDING HOTEL Map pp72-3 Hotel EE

Map pp72-3 Hotel EE
% 7836 8305; www.the-fielding-hotel.co.uk; 4 Broad Ct, Bow St WC2; s/d from £85/105; t Covent Garden
You can almost feel the pulse of the West End – and the odd high C from the Royal Opera House a block away – at this 24-room hotel, located in a pedestrianised court in the heart of Covent Garden. It's named after the novelist Henry Fielding (1707-54) who lived on the street. Space is at a premium but you can't beat the location at this price.

HOLBORN & THE STRAND

SAVOY Map pp72-3 Hotel EEE

Map pp72-3 Hotel EEE
% 7836 4343; www.fairmont.com/savoy; Strand WC2; s/d from £389/409, ste from £589; t Charing Cross; a

No doubt the grand dame of the Strand will still be under wraps as she undergoes a £120 million face-lift when you read this, but the 260-odd room hotel remains a beacon in these parts. Built on the site of the old Savoy Palace in 1889, the Savoy has welcomed the high, the mighty and the not-untalented, including a certain Monsieur Monet who immortalised the views from the 'river rooms' on canvas. Fun fact: the Savoy's forecourt is the only street in the British Isles where motorists must drive on the right.

ONE ALDWYCH Map pp72-3 Hotel EEE

Map pp72-3 Hotel EEE
% 7300 1000; www.onealdwych.co.uk; 1 Aldwych WC2; s/d from £340/360, ste from £575, weekend rate from £185; t Covent Garden or Charing Cross; a w
Housed in what were once Art Nouveau newspaper offices (1907), One Aldwych is a merry and upbeat hotel with 105 rooms and modern art everywhere (we love the bronze of a rower in the lobby). The spacious and stylish rooms are replete with raw silk curtains, natural tones and bathtubs with room for two; the health club has an 18m-long swimming pool.

WALDORF HILTON

Map pp72-3 International Hotel EEE

Map pp72-3 International Hotel EEE
% 7836 2400; www.hilton.co.uk/waldorf; Aldwych WC2; r from £320, breakfast extra £22, weekend package from £289; t Temple, Covent Garden or Charing Cross; a
The glorious Edwardian splendour of this renovated old pile still lives on in the heritage-listed Palm Court, the splendid hall where a certain Lonely Planet author is known to have once taken his mother to the weekend tea dance. So thorough is the break from the past elsewhere, however, that the 299 rooms are now divided into either just 'contemporary' or 'design' (the latter is slightly trendier and more minimal).

BLOOMSBURY

GRANGE BLOOMS HOTEL

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE
% 7323 1717; www.grangehotels.com; 7 Montague St WC1; s/d from £145/159; t Tottenham Court Rd or Russell Sq
This elegant and airy 18th-century town house has the feel of a country home, which belies its position in the heart of London (in

what used to be the grounds of the British Museum). Think floral prints, classical music, portraits on the walls of the 36 guestrooms and a delightful terrace garden in back.

AMBASSADORS BLOOMSBURY

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE
% 7693 5400; www.ambassadors.co.uk; 12 Upper Woburn WC1; s/d from £145/155, weekend rate from £115/125; t Euston; w
This 100-room hotel in a gem of a *belle époque* building just south of Euston Rd has received a long-overdue face-lift and is now ready for action. The emphasis here is on comfort, the style is contemporary and the attached Number 12 bar a welcome addition to the area.

ACADEMY HOTEL

Map pp92-3 Boutique Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Boutique Hotel EE
% 7631 4115; www.theetoncollection.com; 21 Gower St WC1; s/d £115/145, breakfast extra £11-15, weekend rate r incl breakfast from £130; t Goodge St; a
This terribly English 49-room hotel is set across five Georgian town houses but has a slight Regency feel. Quality rooms are kitted out with fluffy duvets, plump cushions and bolster pillows. There's a conservatory overlooking a leafy back garden with fish pond, and a contemporary-looking bar in blue tones called the Library.

MORGAN HOTEL Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE
% 7636 3735; www.morganhotel.co.uk; 24 Bloomsbury St WC1; s/d from £80/100, ste £120; t Tottenham Court Rd
In a row of 18th-century Georgian houses with 20 rooms alongside the British Museum, this is one of the best midpriced hotels in London, where the warmth and hospitality more than make up for the slightly cramped guestrooms. The larger suites are well worth the extra money.

HARLINGFORD HOTEL Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE
% 7387 1551; www.harlingfordhotel.com; 61-63 Cartwright Gardens WC1; s/d/tr/f £79/99/110/115; t Russell Sq
With its 'H' logo proudly sewn on your bedroom cushion, and a modern interior design with lots of lavender and mauve and green-tiled bathrooms, this stylish Georgian hotel with 43 rooms is arguably the best on the street. You'll recognise it from all the ivy in front.

ARRAN HOUSE HOTEL Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE
% 7636 2186; www.arranhotel-london.com; 77-79 Gower St WC1; dm £18.50-23.50, s/d/tr/q £55/95/113/117, with shared bathroom £45/72/90/105; t Goodge St
This welcoming place in Bloomsbury provides excellent value for the location and even has a garden. The 28 rooms range from basic dormitory-style accommodation to bright well-furnished doubles with bathrooms. The lounge is pleasant, guests can cook for themselves and there are laundry facilities.

CRESCENT HOTEL Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE
% 7387 1515; www.crescenthotellofondon.com; 49-50 Cartwright Gardens WC1; s £54-79, d/tr/f £95/108/118, s with shared bathroom £49; t Russell Sq
In the middle of academic London, this friendly, family-owned hotel built in 1810 overlooks a private square flanked by student residences. While the 27 rooms range from pokey singles without facilities to relatively spacious doubles with bathrooms, all are comfortable and maintained at a very high standard.

HOTEL CAVENDISH Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE
% 7636 9079; www.hotelcavendish.com; 75 Gower St WC1; s/d/tr/q £75/90/120/140, with shared bathroom s £45-55, d £55-75, tr £65-85; t Goodge St
Run by an amiable family, this hotel has 32 recently renovated rooms both en suite and with shared facilities, and a lovely walled garden. The rooms are small but comfortable and the welcome here's always warm.

JENKINS HOTEL Map pp92-3 Hotel EE

Map pp92-3 Hotel EE
% 7387 2067; www.jenkinshotel.demon.co.uk; 45 Cartwright Gardens WC1; s £52-72, d/tr £85/105; t Russell Sq
Close to the British Museum, this hotel in business since the 1920s has 14 comfortable rooms and a friendly welcome. Enter from Burton Pl. Guests get to use the tennis courts in the gardens across the road.

JESMOND HOTEL Map pp92-3 B&B E

Map pp92-3 B&B E
% 7636 3199; www.jesmondhotel.org.uk; 63 Gower St WC1; s/d/tr/q/f £50/75/95/110/120, with shared bathroom £40/60/80/100/110; t Goodge St
We've received more than a few letters from readers singing the praises of this

top picks

BOUTIQUE HOTELS

- Guesthouse West (p358)
- Mayflower (p359)
- Southwark Rose Hotel (p351)
- Rockwell (p358)
- Zetter (p355)

B&B in Bloomsbury. The 16 guestrooms – a dozen en suite – are basic but clean and cheerful and it's a good choice if you're travelling in a small group. There's laundry service.

AROSFA Map pp92–3 Hotel E

☎ 7636 2115; www.arosfalondon.com; 83 Gower St WC1; s £50-55, d/tr/q £75/88/102; ☎ Euston or Goodge St

While the 15 rooms might be small and feature refurbished but tiny bathrooms, Arosfa (that's Welsh for 'a place to stay') does offer excellent value for such a central location. Beware that some doubles are larger than others, and light sleepers should get a room at the back.

RIDGEMOUNT HOTEL Map pp92–3 Hotel E

☎ 7636 1141; www.ridgemounthotel.co.uk; 65-67 Gower St WC1; s/d/tr/f £50/70/87/96, with shared bathroom £39/54/71/86; ☎ Goodge St

This old-fashioned hotel offers its guests a warmth and consideration that you don't come across very often in the city these days. About half of its 30 utilitarian rooms have bathrooms. It also has a laundry service.

GENERATOR Map pp92–3 Hostel E

☎ 7388 7655; www.generatorhostels.com; Compton Pl, opp 37 Tavistock Pl WC1; dm £10-25, s £35-50, tw £40-50, tr £54-80, q £54-100; ☎ Russell Sq With its industrial décor, blue neon lights and throbbing techno the huge Generator is one of the grooviest budget places in central London and not for the faint-hearted. The bar stays open until 2am and there are frequent drinking competitions. Along with 214 rooms, which have dorm rooms of between four and 14 beds, there are pool tables, safe-deposit boxes and a large eating area, but no kitchen.

FITZROVIA

SANDERSON Map p68 Boutique Hotel EEE

☎ 7300 1400; www.sandersonlondon.com; 50 Berners St W1; d from £220, loft ste £760; ☎ Oxford Circus

Don't be deterred by the white aluminium and grey-green glass façade of a 1960s-era corporate HQ: this über-designed 'urban spa' – recognise Philippe Starck's hand, by any chance? – comes with a lush bamboo-filled garden, artworks and installations, bed sheets with a 450-thread count and a jumble of personality furniture, including a Dali 'lips' sofa and swan-shaped armchairs. It's a quirky, almost surreal place, with 150 rooms, and decadent enough to die for.

MYHOTEL BLOOMSBURY

Map p68 Boutique Hotel EEE

☎ 7667 6000; www.myhotels.com; 11-13 Bayley St WC1; s £205, d & tw £235-265, ste from £355, weekend rate r from £129; ☎ Tottenham Court Rd or Goodge St; a

Its less-than-inspired name notwithstanding, this stylish place was one of London's first boutique hotels and still bears the classic boutique combination of colours (blacks, greys and reds) in its 78 guestrooms. The library is a welcome retreat for chilling but we're not sure about the attached branch of *Yo! Sushi* (p275). The quirkier *Myhotel Chelsea* (Map pp138–9; ☎ 7225 7500; 35 Ixworth Pl SW3; ☎ South Kensington) has 45 rooms.

CHARLOTTE STREET HOTEL

Map p68 Boutique Hotel EEE

☎ 7806 2000; www.charlottestreethotel.com; 15-17 Charlotte St W1; s/d from £210/240, ste from £350; ☎ Tottenham Court Rd; a

This wonderful 52-room hotel, where Laura Ashley goes postmodern and comes up smelling of roses, is a favourite of visiting media types. The bar buzzes by night, while Oscar restaurant is a delightful spot any time of day, but particularly for afternoon tea.

GRANGE LANGHAM COURT HOTEL

Map p68 Hotel EE

☎ 7436 6622; www.grangehotels.co.uk; 31-35 Langham St W1; s/d from £145/165, breakfast extra £5-13; ☎ Oxford Circus

This 60-room hotel has a lovely black-and-white tile exterior but rather ordinary

guestrooms and public areas (who chose the tartan armchairs and that diamond-patterned carpet?). But it's in a great location just north of Oxford St and Soho.

ST JAMES'S

RITZ Map p68 Hotel EEE

☎ 7493 8181; www.theritzlondon.com; 150 Piccadilly W1; s/d from £399.50/493.50, ste from £728.50; ☎ Green Park; a

What can you say about a hotel that has lent its name to the English lexicon? Arguably London's most celebrated hotel, this ritzy 136-room caravanserai has a spectacular position overlooking Green Park and is supposedly the royal family's 'home away from home'. The Long Gallery and Palm Court restaurant have Louis XVI themes; book weeks ahead if you want to sample afternoon tea (£36). A planned extension on Arlington St just east will add 45 rooms.

METROPOLITAN Map pp96–7 Hotel EEE

☎ 7647 1000; www.metropolitan.co.uk; 19 Old Park Lane W1; s & d from £325-405, ste from £475, breakfast extra £25; ☎ Hyde Park Corner; a

In the same stable as the Halkin, the 155-room Metropolitan is another minimalist hotel – 'stripped of nonessentials' (as they say) and decorated in shades of cream and burlwood. It attracts a supertrendy, well-heeled crowd (more rock star than royal, really). The hotel's Japanese restaurant, *Nobu* (p245), is outstanding.

SANCTUARY HOUSE HOTEL

Map pp96–7 Hotel EE

☎ 7799 4044; www.fullershovel.com; 33 Tothill St SW1; s & d £160-195; ☎ St James's Park; a

A cut above your average pub hotel, the 34-room Sanctuary lives up to its name, although it's just a few minutes' walk from Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. The style is very much cosy English country cottage and some of the refurbished superior rooms even contain four-poster beds. Rates don't include breakfast.

MAYFAIR

BROWN'S Map p68 Hotel EEE

☎ 7493 6020; www.brownsotel.com; 30 Albemarle St W1; s & d from £310, ste from £800; ☎ Green Park; a

A stunner of a five-star number, this 117-room hotel was created in 1837 from 11 houses joined together. Some traditional features retained from an earlier refurbishment of the public areas include stained-glass windows, Edwardian oak panelling, working fireplaces and gilt mirrors. The 117 updated rooms have soft colours and works by young English artists.

CLARIDGE'S Map p100 Hotel EEE

☎ 7629 8860; www.claridges.co.uk; 55 Brook St W1; s/d from £460/495, ste from £740, breakfast extra £21-28; ☎ Bond St; a Claridge's, with 203 rooms, is one of the greatest of London's five-star hotels, a cherished reminder of a bygone era. Many of the Art Deco features of the public areas and suites were designed in the late 1920s, and some of the 1930s-vintage furniture once graced the stairwells of the decommissioned SS *Normandie*. Foul-mouthed celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay reigns over the kitchen (see p245).

DORCHESTER Map p100 Hotel EEE

☎ 7629 8888; www.dorchesterhotel.com; Park Lane W1; s/d from £385/465, ste from £710, breakfast extra £25; ☎ Hyde Park Corner; a This opulent *tour de force* has been the hotel of choice for movie stars, fashionistas and those with a wallop of cash to spend and an image to cultivate since it opened for business in 1931. The lobby is possibly the most lavish in London and the enormous ballroom with its sparkling mirrored walls remains one of the most grand today. In the 250 guestrooms a mixture of antique and individual furniture, four-poster beds, chaise lounges and roaring fireplaces evoke an English country-house feel.

CHESTERFIELD Map p100 Hotel EEE

☎ 7491 2622; www.redcaronationhotels.com; 35 Charles St W1; s £180-225, d & tw £205-305, ste from £325, breakfast extra £17.50-19.50; ☎ Green Park; a

Just a block west of Berkeley Sq, the 110-room Chesterfield comprises five floors of refinement and lustre hidden behind a fairly plain Georgian town house. It has ceilings with mouldings, marble floors and period-style furnishings as you'd expect from one of the grand dames of London digs. We love the four themed suites (Music, Garden, Theatre and Study).

NUMBER 5 MADDOX STREET

Map p68 Hotel EEE

☎ 7647 0200; www.5maddoxstreet.com; 5 Maddox St W1; ste £260-640; † Victoria; a

This all-suite hotel with a dozen units aims to provide a 'contemporary, urban sanctuary' and succeeds, making you feel more like you're 'super styling' in your own rented pad than staying in a hotel. On show are Eastern themes, natural tones and an exquisite eye for detail along with all the technical facilities the contemporary traveller could require. Reception is on the 1st floor.

MARYLEBONE DORSET SQUARE HOTEL

Map p100 Hotel EEE

☎ 7723 7874; www.dorsetsquare.co.uk; 39 Dorset Sq NW1; s £176, d from £258, ste from £411; † Baker St

Two combined Regency town houses contain this enchanting 37-room hotel overlooking leafy Dorset Sq, where the very first cricket ground was laid in 1814 (which explains the cricket memorabilia in glass cases in the lobby). Guestrooms are small but almost dreamily decorated with a blend of antiques, sumptuous fabrics and crown-canopied or four-poster beds.

MANDEVILLE Hotel EEE

Map p100 Hotel EEE

☎ 7935 5599; www.mandeville.co.uk; Mandeville Pl W1; r from £250, ste from £400; Bond St; a √

This wonderful new deluxe hotel, within listening distance of the Wigmore Hall and within view of the Wallace Collection, has 142 luxuriously appointed guestrooms designed by Stephen Ryan. What we find unforgettable are the explosively coloured DeVigne Bar (another Ryan creation) and the view from the roof terrace of the Penthouse Suite (£650).

CUMBERLAND HOTEL Hotel EE

Map p100 Hotel EE

☎ 0870 333 9280; www.thecumberland.co.uk; Great Cumberland Pl W1; s £100-295, d £120-370; † Marble Arch; a √

You'll be forgiven for thinking you've accidentally stumbled into a contemporary art gallery in the hangar-sized lobby with larger-than-life sculptures and backlit Perspex columns. Some of the more than 1000 guestrooms have views of nearby Hyde Park. Celebrity chef Gary Rhodes is in charge of the in-house brasserie-bar called Rhodes W1.

DURRANTS HOTEL Hotel EEE

Map p100 Hotel EEE

☎ 7935 8131; www.durrantshotel.co.uk; George St W1; s £115-135, d/f £185/199, ste £325, breakfast extra £11.5-14.50; † Bond St; a

This sprawling 92-room hotel, just behind the Wallace Collection and excellently placed for Oxford St shopping, was once a country inn and still retains something of the feel of a gentleman's club. The same family has owned it since 1921.

LEONARD HOTEL Hotel EE

Map p100 Hotel EE

☎ 7935 2010; www.theleonard.com; 15 Seymour St W1; s/d from £110/170; † Marble Arch

Originally four separate town houses and later a hospital, the Leonard has 46 guestrooms that are somewhat conservative in appearance but elegant and very comfortable nonetheless. Eschew the standard rooms if you can; they're on the 5th floor and the lift finishes at the 4th.

HOTEL LA PLACE Hotel EE

Map p100 Hotel EE

☎ 7486 2323; www.hotellaplace.com; 11 Nottingham Pl W1; s £99-135, d £134-145, f £160, ste from £160; † Baker St

The 18 rooms here are very much in the traditional mode, but impeccably cared for, and some have updated bathrooms. The friendly family management has installed a 24-hour wine bar downstairs, with comfy – and stylishly colourful – modern lounge chairs.

SUMNER HOTEL Hotel EE

Map p100 Hotel EE

☎ 7723 2244; www.thesumner.com; 54 Upper Berkeley St W1; s £125, d £140-160; † Marble Arch; a

This new town house hotel just north of Oxford St and west of Portman Sq offers incomparable value for such a central location. The 20 rooms are contemporary, comfortable and of a good size but the focal point of the hotel is the sitting room with an original fireplace and hardwood flooring.

EDWARD LEAR HOTEL Hotel E

Map p100 Hotel E

☎ 7402 5401; www.edlear.com; 28-30 Seymour St W1; s £55-66, d & tw £67-99, tr £82-99, f £97-125, with shared bathroom s £42-53, d & tw £60-74, tr £65-90; † Marble Arch

Once the home of a Victorian painter and poet (well, composer of limericks), the 31 rooms of this flower-bedecked terrace hotel offer basic accommodation at spectacular prices. Indeed, never undersold, the man-

STUDENT DIGS

During university holidays, many student dorms and halls of residence are made available to visitors. Accommodation might not be of a high standard, but it certainly will be cheap.

Try **LSE Collections** (☎ 7955 7575; www.lse.ac.uk/collections/vacations; s/d/tr £48/67/86, s/d with shared facilities £31/49) the agent for the London School of Economics, whose halls include the 800-bed **Bankside House** (Map p126; ☎ 7107 5750; 24 Sumner St SE1; † Southwark) on the South Bank and the **High Holborn Residence** (Map pp72–3; ☎ 7107 5737; 178 High Holborn WC1; † Holborn) with 495 beds near Covent Garden.

Halls administered by **King's College Conference & Vacation Bureau** (☎ 7248 1700; www.kcl.ac.uk/kcvb; s £27-39, d £53-58) include the **Great Dover St Apartments** (Map p126; ☎ 7407 0068; 165 Great Dover St SE1; † Borough) with 750 rooms in Borough and the **Stamford St Apartments** (Map p126; 7633 2182; 127 Stamford St SE1; † Waterloo) with 537 rooms near Waterloo.

Other options worth trying include the following:

International Students' House (Map p100; ☎ 7631 8300; www.ish.org.uk; 229 Great Portland St W1; dm £12-19, s/d/tr from £34/52/63; † Great Portland St) Unusual for a hall of residence this 700-bed place near Regent's Park has rooms available all year.

Finsbury Residences (Map p150; ☎ 7040 8811; www.city.ac.uk/ems; 15 Bastwick St EC1; s with shared facilities £19-21; † Barbican) These residences between Islington and the City comprise two modern halls with 320 rooms belonging to City University London.

agement claims that 'if you can find a hotel as close to Oxford St that quotes a lower price, we will match it'.

PARKWOOD HOTEL Hotel EE

Map p100 Hotel EE

☎ 7402 2241; www.parkwoodhotel.com; 4 Stanhope Pl W2; s/d/tr/f £75/89/99/115, with shared bathroom s/d/tr £49.50/68.50/79; † Marble Arch

You certainly get value for money at this small hotel. The 16 refurbished rooms are pretty in pink and yellow with candy-striped spreads, crown canopies and potted plants. All but four guestrooms are en suite, although the bathrooms could stand with some updating.

GLYNNE COURT HOTEL Hotel EE

Map p100 Hotel EE

☎ 7258 1010; www.glynnecourt-hotel.com; 41 Great Cumberland Pl W1; s/d/tr/f £45/85/90/95; † Marble Arch

Fairly typical for this price range and location, the Glynn Court has 15 rooms housed in an historic listed building dating back to the late 18th century. The owners are eager to please and will be happy to tell you about the colourful history of 41 Cumberland Pl.

THE CITY

Staying in this area gives you the chance to see London from the other side and it's a relatively recent development; until just a few short years ago the City offered virtually

nothing in terms of accommodation. With the West End perpetually overrun by crowds, the City is refreshingly quiet at weekends, yet offers easy access to such attractions as the Tower of London and the restaurants and bars of Shoreditch and Hoxton.

THREADNEEDLES

Map p110 Boutique Hotel EEE

☎ 7657 8080; www.theetoncollection.com; 5 Threadneedle St EC2; s & d £295-355, ste from £400; † Bank; a

Discreetly located in the heart of the City, Threadneedle is an elegant 70-room boutique hotel that has been converted from a 19th-century bank. The centrepiece is the grand circular lobby, which is furnished in a vaguely Art Deco style and covered with a hand-painted glass dome. Rooms are just as elegant, with arty photography livening up the sand-coloured walls.

GREAT EASTERN HOTEL Map p110 Hotel EEE

Map p110 Hotel EEE

☎ 7618 5010; www.great-eastern-hotel.co.uk; Liverpool St EC1; s from £305, d from £325; † Liverpool St; a √

While the dark-wood lobby still has a masculine feel, this stylish 267-room hotel attached to Liverpool St station has been softening the décor in some of its rooms and public areas, including a red neon sign above reception reading 'You Make My Heart Go Boom Boom'. The hotel sits

on the site of what was the Bethlehem Royal Hospital (more commonly known as Bedlam) for more than 400 years from the middle of the 13th century.

GRANGE CITY HOTEL [Map p110](#) [Hotel £££](#)
% 7863 3700; [www.grangehotels.co.uk](#); 10 Coopers Row EC3; s & d £293-351, weekend rate from £80, breakfast extra £24; **t** Tower Hill; **a** **v**
Many of the 307 rooms in this classy, five-star city hotel have close-up views of Tower Bridge and the Tower of London, and it's popular with conference guests and tourists alike. Other pluses include a state-of-the-art spa with 25m pool and a wing catering solely to women.

YHA LONDON ST PAUL'S [Map p110](#) [Hostel £](#)
% 7236 4965; [www.yha.org.uk](#); 36 Carter Lane EC4; 11-bed dm £17.20, 5-8 bed £21-26.50, 3-4 bed £21-27.50, s £27.50-34, d £47-60; **t** St Paul's
This excellent 193-bed hostel stands in the very shadow of St Paul's Cathedral and opposite the Tate Modern. Most rooms have

two, three or four beds though 19 rooms have five to 11 beds. There's a licensed cafeteria called Big Bitez but no kitchen.

CITY YMCA LONDON [Map p150](#) [Hostel £](#)
% 7628 8832; [www.cityymca.org](#); 8 Errol St EC1; s with shared bathroom £34.90, tw £59.50; **t** Barbican
Much nicer than its nearby Barbican counterpart, this 112-room budget hotel on four floors has better bathrooms, bedrooms with TVs and phones for incoming calls. It's very handy for Shoreditch, but you should book about one month ahead. There are also weekly rates (singles/twins from £172.50/283).

THE SOUTH BANK

With this once-neglected riverbank now one of the city's most vibrant stretches, the South Bank has become an increasingly good and useful base. Restaurant and bar pickings are slimmer than in the West End, but ever on the up. And who wouldn't be tempted by the

CHAINS WITHOUT FRILLS

London counts several discount hotel chains that offer clean and modern – if not especially full of character – accommodation for reasonable rates.

EasyHotel ([www.easyhotel.com](#)) uses the same pricing model as its sister easyJet airline to get bods on beds. It's a functional hotel that offers the best deals to early birds, with rates from £35 to £60 per room. Each of the garishly orange plastic-moulded rooms contains a bed next to a sink and a shower and toilet unit. There are no phones in the rooms, TV is an optional extra (as is cleaning and fresh linen at £10 a pop) and some rooms have no windows. There are several branches in London, including **easyHotel Earl's Court** ([Map p177](#); 14 Lexham Gardens SW5; **t** Gloucester Rd) and **easyHotel Victoria** ([Map pp138-9](#); 36-40 Belgrave Rd SW1; **t** Victoria).

Express by Holiday Inn (% 0800 434 040; [www.hiexpress.co.uk](#)) is the most upmarket of the chains listed here, and is most notable for its clever locations. Of the 18 or so properties in greater London, for example, is the so-called **London City branch** ([Map p150](#); % 7300 4300; 275 Old St EC1; **t** Old St) in the heart of the Shoreditch nightlife area and the **Southwark branch** ([Map p126](#); % 7401 2525; 103-109 Southwark St SE1; **t** Southwark or London Bridge) just behind the Tate Modern. Rates vary wildly but start at about £115 for a double during the week and sink to as low as £70 at the weekend.

Premier Travel Inn (% 0870 242 8000; [www.premiertravelinn.com](#)) is London's original cheap chain, herding them in and out of mostly converted older buildings at 18 properties. Hotels are fairly bare-bones beds are soft, the second bed is a pull-out sofa and there are more rules here than in a Victorian grammar school, but at from £94 a night per room on weekdays (£82 at weekends), few guests complain. The original property is in **County Hall** ([Map p126](#); % 0870 238 3300; Belvedere Rd SE1; **t** Waterloo) near the London Eye but it doesn't have river views. The **Euston branch** ([Map p168](#); % 0870 238 3301; 1 Duke's Rd WC1; **t** Euston or King's Cross) is handy to the train stations but is on a very busy street.

Travelodge (% 0870 085 0950; [www.travelodge.co.uk](#)) charges roughly the same price as Premier Travel Inn. Here you get a nicer room, but few public facilities; there's usually no lounge, the reception areas are small and service can be rather brusque. Of the 16 properties in greater London, central ones include the **Travelodge Liverpool Street** ([Map p110](#); % 0870 191 1689; 1 Harrow Pl E1; **t** Aldgate), which is just west of Petticoat Lane, and the **Travelodge Covent Garden** ([Map pp72-3](#); % 0870 191 1745; 10 Drury Lane WC2; **t** Holborn or Covent Garden).

thought of staying near the Tate Modern, where you can wander among the wonderful epicurean delights of Borough Market when you pop out for a coffee break? Further westwards you'll find yourself near the London Eye and convenient to Waterloo train station.

WATERLOO

LONDON MARRIOTT COUNTY HALL
[Map p126](#) [Hotel £££](#)

% 7928 5200, 0870 400 7200; [www.marriott.co.uk/lonch](#); Westminster Bridge Rd SE1; r from £249, with river views from £279, breakfast extra £19.95-21; **t** Westminster; **a** **v**
This elegant 200-room hotel is famed for its fabulous close-up views of the Thames and the Houses of Parliament. It was formerly the headquarters of the Greater London Council; the atmosphere in the traditional rooms remains somewhat stuffy. There's a 25m-long pool on the 6th floor.

BANKSIDE & SOUTHWARK

SOUTHWARK ROSE HOTEL

[Map p126](#) [Boutique Hotel ££](#)

% 7015 1480; [www.southwarkrosehotel.co.uk](#); 43-47 Southwark Bridge Rd SW1; d & tw £125-170, breakfast extra £7-12, weekend rate incl breakfast £90; **t** London Bridge; **a**
Billed as London's first 'budget boutique' hotel, this 84-room place just minutes from the Thames is very versatile. Service is good, prices are reasonable and while the rooms are compact, they're stylish in a vaguely minimalist way with plum-coloured headboards, white fluffy duvets and silver lampshades. There's a great lounge bar on the 6th floor.

MAD HATTER [Map p126](#) [Hotel ££](#)

% 7401 9222; [www.madhatterhotel.com](#); 3-7 Stamford St SE1; r £135, breakfast extra £6.75-9.35, weekend rate incl breakfast £70-80; **t** Southwark; **a** **v**
Its 30 rooms across three floors are quite generic, but the Mad Hatter feels slightly homier than most chain hotels, thanks to its traditionally styled reception area and an adjacent pub bearing the same name.

BOROUGH & BERMONDSEY

ST CHRISTOPHER'S VILLAGE

[Map p126](#) [Hostel £](#)

% 7407 1856; [www.st-christophers.co.uk](#); 163 Borough High St SE1; dm £10-22.50, d & tw £46-56; **t** Borough or London Bridge

This 172-bed place is the flagship of a hostel chain with basic, but cheap and clean accommodation in five London properties. There's a roof garden with sauna, solarium, hot tub and excellent views of the Thames as well as Belushi's bar below for serious partying. Dorms have four to 12 beds. Its two nearby branches (same contact details) are **St Christopher's Inn** ([Map p126](#); 121 Borough High St SE1), with 48 beds, another pub below, a small veranda and a chill-out room, and the **Orient Espresso** ([Map p126](#); 59-61 Borough High St SE1), with 36 beds, a laundry, café, and dormitory for women only.

DOVER CASTLE HOSTEL [Map p126](#) [Hostel £](#)

% 7403 7773; [www.dovercastlehostel.co.uk](#); 6a Great Dover St SE1; dm £13-17; **t** Borough
This 80-bed hostel in a four-storey Victorian terrace house has a newly refurbished bar below it as well as TV lounge, kitchen facilities, luggage storage and internet access. It's a somewhat frayed but friendly place to stay. Dorms have four to 12 beds.

HYDE PARK TO CHELSEA

Gracious Chelsea and Kensington present London at its elegant best, though count on little to nothing in the midrange or budget categories. The theme of many top-end hotels in this part of London seems to be antiques – particularly the Victorian variety. Accommodation is more modest in Victoria and Pimlico, but you are near major transport links. Victoria may not be the most attractive part of London, but you'll be very close to the action, and the budget hotels in this area are better value than those in Earl's Court. Pimlico is more residential though convenient for the Tate Britain at Millbank.

CHELSEA & BELGRAVIA

[41](#) [Map pp138-9](#) [Hotel £££](#)

% 7300 0041; [www.41hotel.com](#); 41 Buckingham Palace Rd SW1; s & d from £200, ste from £395; **t** Victoria; **a** **v**

This hotel situated in a lovely old town house opposite Buckingham Palace's Royal Mews almost feels like you're staying in a private club. It offers the services of two full-time butlers working around the clock as well as 28 classically designed black-and-white rooms.

top picks

GARDENS & COURTYARDS

- Academy Hotel (p345)
- Garden Court Hotel (p357)
- Hempel (p357)
- Number Sixteen (opposite)
- Sanderson (p346)

JUMEIRAH LOWNDES HOTEL

Map pp138-9 Boutique Hotel £££

% 7823 1234; www.jumeirahlowndeshotel.com; 21 Lowndes St SW1; r from £199, ste from £299; t Knightsbridge; a v
'Elegant' and 'intimate' are two words constantly used to describe this well-located and recently renovated boutique hotel, which is pretty funny considering the proprietors also own the overblown Jumeirah Beach Hotel in Dubai. The 86 guestrooms at the Lowndes have beige and brown tones offset by multicoloured (though subtle) blankets and drapes.

B+B BELGRAVIA Map pp138-9 B&B ££

% 7730 8513; www.bb-belgravia.com; 64-66 Ebury St SW1; s/d/tw/tr/q £97/107/117/137/147; t Victoria; v

This B&B, stunningly remodelled in contemporary style, boasts a chic black-and-white lounge where you can relax before a fire or watch a DVD, and 17 earth-toned rooms that aren't enormous but have flat-screen TVs. To our mind, it's truly the direction mid-range accommodation should take in London. Guests get to use hotel bicycles for free.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE, KENSINGTON & HYDE PARK

BLAKES Map pp138-9 Hotel £££

% 7370 6701; www.blakeshotels.com; 33 Roland Gardens SW7; s £175, d £265-275, ste from £645, breakfast extra £25; t Gloucester Rd; a
For classic style (and incognito celebrity spotting), one of your first choices in London should be Blakes: five Victorian houses knocked into one and painted an authoritative, very serious dark green. Its 48 guestrooms are elegantly decked out with four-poster beds, rich fabrics and antiques set on bleached hardwood floors.

LANESBOROUGH Map pp138-9 Hotel £££

% 7259 5599; www.lanesborough.com; Hyde Park Corner; s £315-375, d £435-525, ste from £625; t Hyde Park Corner; a v
This is where visiting divas doze and Regency opulence meets state-of-the-art technology. The 95 guestrooms are lavishly appointed, including the three-bedroom Royal Suite, at £6000 among the most expensive digs in town. The staff, as you might expect, are impeccably dressed and know it.

HALKIN Map pp138-9 Hotel £££

% 7333 1000; www.halkin.com.bz; 5 Halkin St SW1; r from £350, ste from £550, breakfast extra £20-25; t Hyde Park Corner; a
The chichi Halkin is for business travellers of a minimalist bent. Bedroom doors are hidden within curved wooden hallways, and the 41 rooms are filled with natural light, cream walls and wood panelling. Gratefully they are as stylishly uncluttered as the staff, who wear Armani-designed uniforms. **Nahm** (p253) on the ground floor is one of the best Thai restaurants in London.

CADOGAN HOTEL Map pp138-9 Hotel £££

% 7235 7141; 75 Sloane St SW1; s & d £260-355, ste from £395, breakfast extra £15-19.50; t Sloane Sq; a v
This 65-room hotel is a wonderful hybrid, with two lower floors contemporary in style and the rest a wonderful vestige from Edwardian times, filled with reminders of a bygone era: polished oak panels, wing chairs, rich heavy fabrics and a refined drawing room for afternoon tea. Not surprisingly, the two rooms that are the most indulgent (and fun) are the room (No 118) where Oscar Wilde was arrested for 'indecent acts' in 1895 and the Lillie Langtry room - all rose wallpaper, feather boas and pink lace - where the eponymous actress (and mistress to Edward VII) once lived.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE HOTEL

Map pp138-9 Hotel £££

% 7584 6300; www.knightsbridgehotel.co.uk; 10 Beaufort Gardens SW3; s £160-175, d & tw £195-210, ste £330, breakfast extra £16.50; t Knightsbridge
The Knightsbridge occupies a 200-year-old house just around the corner from Harrods and has elegant and beautiful interiors done in a sumptuous, subtle and modern

English style. Some of the 44 rooms, although beautifully furnished, are very small for the rate asked though the bathrooms in granite and oak are lovely.

BAGLIONI Map pp138-9 Hotel £££

% 7368 5700; www.baglionihotellondon.com; 60 Hyde Park Gate W1; r from £300, ste from £320, breakfast extra £22; t Gloucester Rd or High St Kensington; a v
This luxury Italian hotel overlooking Kensington Gardens has raised an ostentatiously bejewelled finger to minimalism, with its baroque lobby (black glass chandeliers, a water feature in the lobby, gold reception desk) and opulent low-lit rooms. It's over the top, in a refreshing, fun way.

LEVIN Map pp138-9 Boutique Hotel £££

% 7589 6286; www.lhotel.co.uk; 28 Basil St SW3; r from £195, ste from £295; t Knightsbridge; v
There seems to be nothing but praise for this new boutique hotel with a dozen rooms. Sister property to the Capital Hotel and its fabulous **Capital** (p252) restaurant with two Michelin stars, it doesn't need to shout about its comforts, amenities and great location round the corner from Harrods.

GORE Map pp138-9 Hotel £££

% 7584 6601; www.gorehotel.co.uk; 189-190 Queen's Gate SW7; s £130-170, d £190-210, breakfast extra £10-15; t Gloucester Rd or High St Kensington; a
Charismatically kooky, this splendid 50-room hotel is a veritable palace of polished mahogany, Oriental carpets, antique-style bathrooms, potted aspidistras and portraits and prints (some 4500, in fact) covering every square centimetre of wall space. The attached Bistrot One Ninety is a fine place for brunch or a pre- or postconcert drink for the nearby Royal Albert Hall.

NUMBER SIXTEEN

Map pp138-9 Boutique Hotel ££

% 7589 5232; www.numbersixteenhotel.co.uk; 16 Sumner Pl SW7; s £110, d £150-250, breakfast extra £14.50-16.50; t South Kensington
With cool grey muted colours, tasteful clarity and choice art throughout, Number Sixteen is a stunning place to stay, with 42 individually designed rooms, a cosy drawing room and fully stocked library. And wait till you see the idyllic back garden set around a fish pond with a few cosy snugs or have breakfast in the conservatory.

ASTER HOUSE Map pp138-9 B&B ££

% 7581 5888; www.asterhouse.com; 3 Sumner Pl SW7; s £100-120, d & tw £165-220; t South Kensington; a
What's made the Aster House the winner of Visit London's best B&B award not just once but three times? No doubt the quintessential English aura, the welcoming staff, the comfortable rooms with good-quality furnishings and sparkling bathrooms and the reasonable price all had something to do with it. Oh, and that's not to mention the lovely garden with its own little duck pond.

VICARAGE HOTEL Map p177 B&B ££

% 7229 4030; www.londonvicaragehotel.com; 10 Vicarage Gate W8; s/d/tr/q £85/110/140/155, with shared bathroom £50/85/105/112; t High St Kensington
Gilt mirrors, sconces, chandeliers and striped red-and-gold wallpaper greet guests as they enter this former Victorian home. The 19 rooms are less lavish, but atmospherically olde-worlde English all the same. The 3rd and 4th floorrooms have shared bathrooms.

HOTEL 167 Map pp138-9 Hotel ££

% 7373 0672, 7373 3221; www.hotel167.com; 167 Old Brompton Rd SW5; s £79-95, d & tw £99-110, tr £119-130; t Gloucester Rd
The mustard colour of the exterior sets the tone for this slightly quirky, slightly shabby 19-room hotel. Inside potted palms, a black-and-white tiled floor and ceiling fans lend a plantation-type feel to what was once a private Victorian residence.

YHA HOLLAND HOUSE HOSTEL

Map p177 Hostel £

% 7937 0748; www.yha.org.uk; Holland Walk W8; dm £19.50-22; t High St Kensington
This hostel has 201 beds and is built into the 17th-century Jacobean wing of Holland House, overlooking Holland Park. It's large, very busy and rather institutional, but the position is unbeatable. There's a café and kitchen, and breakfast is included.

VICTORIA & PIMLICO

CITY INN Map pp96-7 Hotel ££

% 7630 1000; www.cityinn.com; 30 John Islip St SW1; s & d £110-305, ste from £415; t Victoria/Pimlico; a v
The 460 rooms and suites at this large hotel just down from Lambeth Bridge are

uncomplicatedly modern, with big, fluffy white duvets and pillows, black armchairs and blond wood. Some rooms have stunning views of the Thames.

WINDERMERE HOTEL *Map pp138-9* *Hotel ££*
% 7834 5163; www.windermere-hotel.co.uk;
142-144 Warwick Way SW1; s £89, d & tw £114-139,
f £155; t Victoria

The award-winning Windermere has 20 small but individually designed and spotless rooms in a sparkling white mid-Victorian town house. There's a reliable and reasonably priced restaurant on site called the Pimlico Room.

MORGAN HOUSE *Map pp138-9* *Hotel ££*
% 7730 2384; www.morganhouse.co.uk; 120 Ebury St SW1; d/tr/f £92/112/132, s/d/tr with shared bathroom £52/72/92; t Victoria

The Morgan House might be humble but it knows how to do pretty, with small bunches of fresh flowers placed in rooms using white or blue/mauve tones. The options range from a compact but livable single to a family room. The best rooms in the house are the two doubles in the back: No 2 with shared facilities and No 8 with en suite.

LUNA SIMONE HOTEL *Map pp138-9* *Hotel £*
% 7834 5897; www.lunasimonehotel.com; 47-49 Belgrave Rd SW1; s £55-65, d £70-90, tr £90-110, q £100-130, s with shared bathroom £35-45;
t Victoria

If all of London's budget hotels were like this central, spotlessly clean and comfortable 35-room place, we'd all be happy campers (or maybe that's what we *wouldn't* be). Modern art and some partially slate-tiled bathrooms provide some focal points, and there are free storage facilities if you want to leave bags while travelling.

VICTORIA HOSTEL *Map pp138-9* *Hostel £*
% 7834 3077; www.astorhostels.com; 71 Belgrave Rd SW1; dm £17.50-20, s/d £35/60; t Pimlico
Part of the Astor group of hostels, this central place has 60 beds so it's busy without being too impersonal. It's staffed by travellers who are between trips and is conveniently located within easy walking distance of the Tate Britain and Westminster Abbey. Dorms have between four and eight beds.

WELLINGTON *Map pp138-9* *Hotel £*
% 7834 4740; www.the-wellington.co.uk; 71 Vincent Sq SW1; s/d with shared bathroom from £35/45; t Victoria
This very sterile but clean former student residence on a large leafy square has 91 singles and doubles. It is easily reached on foot from the Victoria train and coach stations as well as the Tate Britain.

CLERKENWELL, SHOREDITCH & SPITALFIELDS

Clerkenwell, Spitalfields and especially Shoreditch, with its northern extension Hoxton, are very popular neighbourhoods, and there are a few good places to stay here. Accommodation choices are, for the most part, at the top end, but a midrange US-based chain of hotels has a branch here and the arrival of the no-frills Hoxton Hotel in the thick of things is changing the face of the neighbourhood by day and night.

HOTEL SAINT GREGORY *Map p150* *Hotel £££*
% 7613 9800; www.saintgregoryhotel.co.uk; 100 Shoreditch High St EC1; s & d £229-329; t Liverpool St; a v
A few minutes' bus ride from Liverpool St train station and close to the nightlife of Hoxton and the shopping of Spitalfields, the modern Hotel Saint Gregory has 198 pale rooms with attractive furnishings and very stylish bathrooms.

ROOKERY *Map p150* *Hotel £££*
% 7336 0931; www.rookeryhotel.com; Peter's Lane, Cowcross St EC1; s £175, d & tw £205-265, weekend rate s/d from £119/149; t Farringdon; a
This higgledy-piggledy warren of 33 rooms has been built within a row of 18th-century Georgian houses and fitted out with period furniture (including a museum-piece collection of Victorian baths, showers and toilets), original wood panelling shipped over from Ireland and open fires. Two highlights are the small city garden and the two-storey Rook's Nest suite (£495; £295 at the weekend).

MALMAISON *Map p150* *Hotel £££*
% 7012 3700; www.charterhouse.co.uk; Charterhouse Sq EC1; s & d £215-235, ste from £285, weekend rate from £120;
t Farringdon; a v

Facing a picture-postcard leafy square in Clerkenwell, this conservatively chic 97-room hotel is within easy walking distance of the City as well as the bars and restaurants around Smithfield Market. Public areas at the 'Mal' are moodily low-lit; rooms are colour-by-numbers hip.

ZETTER *Map p150* *Boutique Hotel ££*
% 7324 4444; www.thezetter.com; 86-88 Clerkenwell Rd; s & d £176-235, ste from £235, breakfast extra £9-16, weekend rate incl breakfast £150-200;
t Farringdon; a
Mixing the homely comforts of knitted hot-water-bottle covers, blankets decorated with double-entendre Zzzzs and vintage Penguin books with hi-tech flat screens and air-conditioning (using water from the hotel's very own bore hole), this well-positioned establishment is miles more stylish and versatile than you'd expect from what was once a humble warehouse in Little Italy.

HOXTON HOTEL *Map p150* *Hotel ££*
% 7550 1000; www.hoxtonhotels.com; 81 Great Eastern St EC2; r £79-149; t Old St; v
This one-time car park takes the easyJet approach to selling its rooms – book long enough ahead and you might find yourself with a room for as little as £59 a night. The 205 guestrooms are simple but well designed – we like the way walls and carpets colour-coordinate – and are equipped with flat-screen TVs, work stations and fridges with complimentary bottled water and milk. And you couldn't get closer to the hip nightlife district of Shoreditch.

THE EAST END & DOCKLANDS

RCA CITY HOTEL *Map p156* *Hotel ££*
% 7247 3313; www.cityhotellondon.co.uk; 12 Osborn St E1; s/d/tr/f £140/150/160/190; t Aldgate East
This 87-room place is not exactly no-frills but has a long way to go before it features in *Wallpaper** magazine. Still it's at the southernmost extreme of Brick Lane so is well suited for those with business in the City or out on the town in Shoreditch. A planned addition of 25 rooms will be air-conditioned.

NORTH LONDON

North London is not particularly noted for its density of hotels. However, if you wish to base yourself away from the main tourist areas, it does possess a couple of decent options in several neighbourhoods, including King's Cross, Camden and even Hampstead, one of the city's leafiest and most sought-after residential areas. Here you're really living among Londoners, plus there's easy access to the wonderful green expanse of Hampstead Heath. Camden makes a good base if you're into live music or the weekend market.

CAMDEN

66 CAMDEN SQUARE *Map p168* *B&B ££*
% 7485 4622; rodgerdavis@btinternet.com; 66 Camden Sq NW1; B&B per person £45-50; t Camden Town
This glass-and-teak B&B combines space, light and comfort in a quiet North London square not far from Camden Town and Regent's Park. The owners are fans of things Japanese and the whole house is attractively minimalist – apart from the occasionally noisy macaw.

ST CHRISTOPHER'S INN CAMDEN *Map p168* *Hostel ££*
% 7388 1012, 7407 1856; www.st-christophers.co.uk; 48-50 Camden High St NW1; dm £16-18, tw £50; t Camden Town
This 54-bed branch of the popular hostel chain is five minutes from Camden Town tube station along the High Street, atop the very busy Belushi's bar, which has a 2am licence. Staff are very friendly, there's no curfew and the lodgings are nice and clean, although some of the private rooms are very small. Dorms have between six and 10 beds.

KING'S CROSS & EUSTON
YHA ST PANCRAS INTERNATIONAL *Map p168* *Hostel £*
% 7388 9998; www.yha.org.uk; 79-81 Euston Rd NW1; dm £21-26.50, tw £60-68; t King's Cross/St Pancras or Euston; v
The area isn't great, but this 152-bed hostel is modern, with kitchen, restaurant, lockers, bicycle storage and lounge, and it's in the hub of London's transport links. The more expensive rooms have private bathroom.

CLINK Map p168

Hostel E

‰ 7659 1290; www.clinkhostel.com; 78 King's Cross Rd & 4 Great Percy St WC1; dm £15-26, s £58-70, tw £56-70, tr £75-87, with shared bathroom s £50-60, tw £48-60, tr £66-78; † King's Cross/St Pancras; √√

This fabulous 350-bed hostel brought to you by the same people who own nearby Ashlee House is housed in a 19th-century magistrates courthouse where Dickens once worked as a scribe and members of the Clash made an appearance in 1978; some parts of it, including seven cells converted to bedrooms and a pair of wood-panelled court rooms used as a café and an internet room, are listed. Inside the place is as new as the morning with pod beds (including storage space) in the coloured-coded dormitories (four to 16 beds) and about a third of the 128 rooms with their own bathroom en suite. There's a generous-sized kitchen and a bar in the basement.

ASHLEE HOUSE Map p168

Hostel E

‰ 7833 9400; www.ashleehouse.co.uk; 261-265 Gray's Inn Rd WC1; dm £14-22, s £35-39, tw £46-54, tr £63-81; † King's Cross/St Pancras

This most welcoming, clean and well-maintained backpackers hostel has 170 beds on three floors, all conveniently close to charmless King's Cross station. The lobby, with a huge Underground map on the wall and shaggy-sheepskin sofa backs, looks interesting and although some dorms are pretty cramped (there are four to 16 beds to a room), they have cheerily striped duvet covers, washbasins and double glazing to keep out noise from the busy street. There is a TV lounge in the basement, plus a laundry, decent-sized kitchen, free left-luggage room and internet access.

HAMPSTEAD & HIGHGATE**LA GAFFE** Map p166

Hotel EE

‰ 7435 8965; www.lagaffe.co.uk; 107-111 Heath St NW3; s £70, d & tw £85-95, tr £125; † Hampstead

Perched above a popular Italian restaurant of the same name (see p264), La Gaffe is an eccentric but nonetheless comfortable and cheery 18-room hotel in a 200-year-old cottage in an affluent and very residential area.

HAMPSTEAD VILLAGE GUEST HOUSE

Map p166

Guesthouse EE

‰ 7435 8679; www.hampsteadguesthouse.com; 2 Kemplay Rd NW3; s/d £70/90, with shared bathroom s £50-60, d £75, studio apt s/d/tr/f £95/125/145/160, breakfast extra £7; † Hampstead

Only 20 minutes by tube from the centre of London, this is a lovely nine-room hostelry with a quirky character, rustic and antique décor and furnishings, comfy beds and a delightful back garden. There's also a studio apartment that can accommodate up to five people.

REGENT'S PARK**MELIA WHITE HOUSE** Map p166

Hotel EE

‰ 7391 3000; www.solmelia.com; Albany St NW1; r from £115; † Great Portland St; a √√

This enormous 545-room hotel in a white-tile Art Deco building might appear a bit 'standard issue' inside and too used to welcoming groups. But the location, just west of Regent's Park and within easy walking distance of Soho and three Underground stations, and the great price make it a winner.

WEST LONDON

From the style hotels of Notting Hill to the budget hostels of Earl's Court, this area has traditionally offered a broad range of accommodation options. Bayswater is an extremely convenient location, though some of the streets immediately to the west of Queensway can be run-down and depressing. Parts of Paddington are pretty seedy, too, especially right around the station, but there are lots of budget and midrange hotels and it's a good transit location; you can reach Heathrow in 15 minutes via the Heathrow Express. St John's Wood and Maida Vale are quiet, leafy neighbourhoods with a few attractive accommodation offerings.

ST JOHN'S WOOD & MAIDA VALE**COLONNADE** Map p175

Hotel EE

‰ 7286 1052; www.theetoncollection.com; 2 Warrington Cres W9; s £95-135, d £110-165, breakfast extra £10-15; † Warwick Ave; a

A charmer in lovely Little Venice, the Colonnade is the handsome Victorian structure where Sigmund Freud sheltered after he fled Vienna. Apart from three in the base-

ment, the 43 guestrooms are light, spacious and relaxing and just up from the Grand Union Canal.

PADDINGTON & BAYSWATER**HEMPEL** Map p175

Boutique Hotel EEE

‰ 7298 9000; www.the-hempel.co.uk; 31-35 Craven Hill Gardens W2; d from £295, ste from £480; † Lancaster Gate or Queensway; a

This stunner of a boutique hotel, designer Anouska Hempel's minimalist symphony in white and natural tones where Kyoto meets 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, still has the ability to wow us some 10 years on. The 42 rooms and studios are effortlessly beautiful, comfortable and unique (one room even contains a bed within a cage suspended over a living area) and the Japanese-style garden opposite is a restful oasis.

ROYAL PARK Map p175

Hotel EEE

‰ 7479 6600; www.theroyalpark.com; 3 Westbourne Tce W2; s £170, d £195-225, ste from £265, weekend rate s/d from £130/150; † Lancaster Gate; a

With tasteful Regency furniture throughout the lounge and immaculate bedrooms (plus discreetly placed plasma TVs etc), this 48-room hotel just north of Hyde Park is a classic example of a renovation gone right – indeed, even the sparkling bathrooms retain a semiperiod look and feel.

VANCOUVER STUDIOS Map p175

Hotel EE

‰ 7243 1270; www.vancouverstudios.co.uk; 30 Prince's Sq W2; s £79, d & tw £110-140, tr £155; † Bayswater

Everyone will feel at home in this broad church of 45 winning and very affordable studios. Rooms all contain kitchenettes but otherwise differ wildly – ranging from a tiny but well-equipped single to a generously sized family room with balcony and embracing all styles of decoration from faux-mink throws to Japanese to gingham. There's even a walled garden.

GARDEN COURT HOTEL Map p175

Hotel EE

‰ 7229 2553; www.gardencourthotel.co.uk; 30-31 Kensington Gardens Sq W2; s/d/tr/f £68/105/140/160, with shared bathroom £46/70/90/100; † Bayswater

Noteworthy for its Beefeater statue grasping a battle-axe, the spotless Garden Court is truly a cut above most classic English

properties in this price bracket. While the décor retains a few restrained traditional twirls, a recent overhaul has added a lift, modern bathrooms and some discreet designer touches in its 32 guestrooms. Guests have access both to the hotel garden and the leafy square across the street.

PAVILION HOTEL Map p175

Hotel EE

‰ 7262 0905; www.pavilionhotelluk.com; 34-36 Sussex Gardens W2; s £60-85, d & tw £100, tr £120; † Paddington

The quirky Pavilion boasts 30 individually themed rooms: Honky Tonky Afro has a 1970s and Casablanca a Moorish theme while Enter the Dragon conjures up Shanghai nights and Indian Summer is a tribute to Bollywood. They're meant to reflect the hotel's slogan – 'Fashion, Glam & Rock 'n' Roll' – and are a lot of good fun (and value).

CARDIFF HOTEL Map p175

Hotel EE

‰ 7723 9068; www.cardiff-hotel.com; 5-9 Norfolk Sq W2; s £49-55, d/tr/q £89/99/120; † Paddington

Run by the same family for half a century, the Cardiff overlooks lovely Norfolk Sq, a positive oasis in the warmer months. The 60 guestrooms are of standard size and level of décor but offer one of the best mid-range deals around. The cheapest singles have shower but no toilet en suite.

STYLOTEL Map p175

Hotel EE

‰ 7723 1026; www.stylotel.com; 160-162 Sussex Gardens W2; s/d/tr/q £52/80/95/110; † Paddington

The industrial design – scored aluminium treads, opaque green glass, lots of stainless steel – of this 39-room hotel is as self-conscious as the name and you probably wouldn't want to tussle with the scary-looking angular-backed chairs in the basement breakfast room. But it's a real joy to get such a clean, sleek and contemporary look at these prices.

OXFORD LONDON HOTEL Map p175

Hotel E

‰ 7402 6860; www.oxfordhotellondon.co.uk; 13-14 Craven Tce W2; s/d/tr/f from £50/60/76/86; † Lancaster Gate

For a humble establishment, the 21-room Oxford sure tries hard with its sunny yellow walls and blue checked bedspreads, although the swirly carpets in the breakfast room and doggy stairs are a reminder of how tired things used to be.

LEINSTER INN Map p175 Hostel E
% 7229 9641; www.astorhostels.com; 7-12 Leinster Sq W2; dm £13.50-18.50, s £28.50-41, d £46-60, tr £57-66; † Bayswater

In a large old house near Bayswater tube station and close to Portobello Market, this 372-bed hostel is the largest in the Astor stable and has a café, laundry and bar open till 4am. Dorms have between four and eight beds. Private rooms at the cheaper end have shared facilities.

NOTTING HILL & PORTOBELLO

PORTOBELLO HOTEL Map p175 Hotel EEE
% 7727 2777; www.portobello-hotel.co.uk; 22 Stanley Gardens W11; s/d/tw £142/190/210, ste from £242; † Notting Hill Gate; a

This beautifully appointed 24-room place is in a great location and has been a firm favourite with rock and rollers and movie stars down the years. Rooms and furnishings are eccentric in a funky, eclectic way and there's a 24-hour bar to fuel guests on their merry way.

MILLER'S RESIDENCE Map p175 B&B EE
% 7243 1024; www.millersuk.com; 111a Westbourne Grove W2; s & d £165-185, ste £230; † Bayswater or Notting Hill Gate

More a five-star B&B than a hotel, this '18th-century rooming house' is chock-a-block with curiosities and antique furnishings, and quite literally brimming with personality and *objets d'art*. The seven rooms come in all shapes, sizes and shades of antique opulence and are tailor-made for a romantic sojourn. Enter from Hereford Rd.

LENNOX Map p175 Hotel EE
% 0870 850 3317; www.thelennox.com; 34 Pembroke Gardens W2; s £100-125, d & tw £165-185, ste £220; † Notting Hill Gate

Behind an elegant neoclassical façade on a quiet and leafy street is this soothing contender for London's best small hotel. A bright and breezy welcome sets the tone, although you'll probably best remember the Victorian knick-knacks, zebra-patterned seat cushions and Bakelite bedside radio. The best of the 20 guestrooms are up the top.

GUESTHOUSE WEST Map p175 B&B EE
% 7792 9800; www.guesthousewest.com; 163-165 Westbourne Grove W11; s & d £155-185, Sun, Mon &

Tue rate £140-170; † Westbourne Park or Royal Oak; a

A fashionable take on the B&B concept, this lovely guesthouse in three town houses features 20 refreshingly bare and simple yet chic guestrooms with modern four-poster beds, flat-screen TVs, shiny kettles and cream mosaic-tiled bathrooms. The breezy terrace rooms on the ground floor have French doors leading onto a communal wooden terrace and modern artwork hangs in the communal lounge.

GATE HOTEL Map p175 B&B EE
% 7221 0707; www.gatehotel.co.uk; 6 Portobello Rd W11; s £55-70, d £75-100, tr £90-110; † Notting Hill Gate

The seven guestrooms in this old town house with classic frilly English décor and lovely hanging flower baskets all have private facilities. The management is very welcoming and helpful and you're as close as you're going to get to the action of Portobello Rd at this price.

PORTOBELLO GOLD Map p175 Guesthouse EE
% 7460 4910; www.portobellogold.com; 95 Portobello Rd W11; r from £70, apt £170; † Notting Hill Gate

This homely guesthouse above a pleasant restaurant has seven rooms of varying sizes and quality of furnishings. There are several small doubles and the so-called Large Modern Suite has antique furnishings, a four-poster bed and open-hearth fireplace. The Roof Terrace studio is more up to date and has a galley kitchen and exclusive access to the roof.

EARL'S COURT

ROCKWELL Map p177 Boutique Hotel EE
% 7244 2000; www.therockwellhotel.com; 181 Cromwell Rd SW5; s £120, d £150-180; † Earl's Court; a

A very welcome addition to the greater Earl's Court neighbourhood, the 40-room Rockwell is a 'budget boutique' hotel *par excellence*. The décor puts a contemporary spin on English traditional and the rooms and restaurant overlooking the garden are a delight.

TWENTY NEVERN SQUARE Map p177 Hotel EE
% 7565 9555; www.twentyneversquare.co.uk; 20 Nevern Sq SW5; s £99-120, d £110-140; † Earl's Court

This 20-room sister establishment of the **Mayflower** (below) replicates the colonial style here, although with a little less black tile and a lot more carved wood that seems to whisper Batavia rather than Bombay. Several rooms come with four-poster beds but the focal point is the charming breakfast room-cum-bar in a conservatory in the rear of the building. A third property in the group, the **New Linden Hotel** (Map p175; % 7221 4312; www.newlinden.co.uk; 58-60 Leinster Sq W2; † Notting Hill Gate), is between Westbourne Grove and Notting Hill.

MAYFLOWER Map p177 Boutique Hotel EE
% 7370 0991; www.mayflowerhotel.co.uk; 26-28 Trebovir Rd SW5; s £69-75, d £89-105, tr/f £110/135; † Earl's Court

One of London's cheaper boutique hotels, the 46-room Mayflower has chosen an updated colonial style, with wooden carvings from India, ceiling fans and black-tiled bathrooms. The deluxe doubles all have private balconies and individual furnishings such as a carved double bed.

BASE2STAY Map p177 Hotel EE
% 0845 262 8000; www.base2stay.com; 25 Courtfield Gardens SW5; s/d from £89/99; † Earl's Court or Gloucester Rd; a

Base2stay has endeavoured to filter out all the 'unnecessary' extras most hotels offer and concentrate on the 'important' things like communications facilities, music systems and kitchenettes. The result is a pared-down but extremely comfortable 67-room hotel.

RUSHMORE Map p177 Hotel EE
% 7370 3839; www.rushmore-hotel.co.uk; 11 Trebovir Rd SW5; s £60-70, d £80-90, tr & q £110-130; † Earl's Court

The soft pastel colours, draped fabrics and simple-yet-elegant designs of this modest hotel create a cheery, welcoming atmosphere. All 22 guestrooms, which have renovated bathrooms, are of a decent size and the triple on the 3rd floor is particularly spacious with French windows opening onto a private terrace.

PHILBEACH HOTEL Map p177 Hotel EE
% 7373 1244; www.philbeachhotel.co.uk; 30-31 Philbeach Gardens SW5; s/d/tr £58.50/81/95, with shared bathroom £49.50/63/81, student s/d £35/50; † Earl's Court

This gay-run hotel has 38 rooms open to men and women and the interiors are simple yet stylish. One of the nicest rooms on offer is 8A, a double with bathroom en suite and a private balcony that overlooks the garden. The Philbeach has a lovely Thai restaurant called the Princess (open for dinner only) and Jimmy's Bar in the basement.

MERLYN COURT HOTEL Map p177 Hotel E
% 7370 1640; www.merlyncourthotel.com; 2 Barkston Gardens SW5; s/d/tr/f from £50/70/80/90, s/d with shared bathroom £40/60; † Earl's Court
The Merlyn Court's 12 humble rooms are unremarkable, but the atmosphere is wonderful and it's very close to the Earl's Court tube station on a quiet street. The management is very friendly.

ACE HOTEL Map p177 Hostel EE
% 7602 6600; www.ace-hotel.co.uk; 16-22 Gunterstone Rd W14; dm £15-23, d £80-90, with shared bathroom £44-58; † Barons Court; √
Squeaky clean and on a quiet residential street west of Earl's Court, this 157-bed place has a contemporary, upbeat feel to it and a fabulous back garden, complete with hot tub. Accommodation is in dorms with between three and eight bunk beds, and there is private accommodation in double rooms, some of them en suite.

YHA EARL'S COURT Map p177 Hostel E
% 7373 7083; www.yha.org.uk; 38 Bolton Gardens SW5; dm £17.20-24.50, tw £57; † Earl's Court
The Earl's Court YHA hostel has had a remake in recent years but the great atmosphere remains. The whole place is cheerful but basic: most accommodation (186 beds) is in dormitories of between four and seven bunk beds. There's a good-sized kitchen and a garden out the back.

BARMY BADGER BACKPACKERS Map p177 Hostel E
% 7370 5213; www.barmybadger.com; 17 Longridge Rd SW5; dm £16-17, d & tw £36; † Earl's Court
Smack bang in the middle of a residential area, this Victorian town house turned backpackers haven is smaller than many other hostels in town, giving it a lovely homely feel. As a result, some guests settle in for the long haul, attracted no doubt by the lovely back garden and even more attractive weekly rates. There's a small

top picks

BEST POOLS

- Courthouse Hotel Kempinski (p342)
- Grange City Hotel (p350)
- Haymarket (p343)
- London Marriott County Hall (p351)
- One Aldwych (p344)

kitchen, laundry and 42 beds in 14 rooms. Dorms have four or six beds and there are five twins (three en suite).

SHEPHERD'S BUSH & HAMMERSMITH

K WEST Map p177 Hotel ££

☎ 7674 1000; www.k-west.co.uk; Richmond Way W14; s £99-119, d £129-165, breakfast extra £10.50-22; t Shepherd's Bush; a √
K West is a hip and stylish 220-room place just off Shepherd's Bush Green. It doesn't look like much from the outside but inside dark wood and suede versus stainless steel and sandblasted glass run the bedroom gauntlet. Many people come to stay here to take advantage of the indulgent pampering at the K Spa.

ST CHRISTOPHER'S SHEPHERD'S BUSH Map p177 Hostel E

☎ 7407 1856; www.st-christophers.co.uk; 13-15 Shepherd's Bush Green; dm £18-21, tw £56; t Shepherd's Bush
St Christopher's Shepherd's Bush operation is right in the middle of the action with no curfew and the tube and a sprawling pub right on the doorstep. The accommodation is rather cramped, but special offers can often mean beds at £10 per night.

GREENWICH & SOUTHEAST LONDON

Somewhat insulated from the hustle and bustle across the Thames, Greenwich often feels more like a village than most other London neighbourhoods and no doubt you'll think you've moved to provincial England if you stay out here. It's ideal for those who fancy getting up early to go for a jog through Green-

wich Park, complete with great river views, or anyone going to a concert at the O2 (formerly Millennium Dome). Night revellers will find it less attractive as it's difficult to return to late at night.

GREENWICH HARBOUR MASTER'S HOUSE

Map p180 Apartment ££

☎ 8293 9597; http://website.lineone.net/~harbourmaster; 20 Ballast Quay SE10; s & d £75-85, tr & q £85-95; c Greenwich, DLR Cutty Sark
This self-contained basement apartment is right on the river in a Grade II heritage-listed Georgian building. It combines mod cons such as TV, video, heated towel rails and full kitchen with the charm of vaulted white-brick ceilings and a vague maritime feel. As it's quite compact, it's likely to work best for couples.

ST ALFEGES Map p180 B&B E

☎ 8853 4337; www.st-alfeges.co.uk; 16 St Alfege's Passage SE10; s/d from £50/75; c Greenwich, DLR Cutty Sark

This gay-owned B&B situated in the centre of Greenwich has three rooms, individually decorated in shades of blue, green or yellow; the last two share a bathroom. The owners do their best to make everyone, gay or straight, feel at home, with chats and cups of tea. For such a central location, the immediate neighbourhood is quiet. Turn the corner into Roan St to find the main door. Discounts are offered for longer stays.

YHA LONDON THAMESIDE

Map p180 Hostel E

☎ 7232 2114; www.yha.org.uk; 20 Salter Rd SE16; dm £17.20-24, d & tw £53; t Canada Water; √
The facilities at this large flagship YHA hostel are very good, but the location is a bit remote. There's a bar, a restaurant, kitchen facilities and a laundry. Dormitory rooms have from four to 10 beds; the two dozen doubles and twins have bathrooms en suite.

ST CHRISTOPHER'S INN GREENWICH

Map p180 Hostel E

☎ 8858 3591; www.st-christophers.co.uk; 189 Greenwich High Rd SE10; dm £13-20, tw £45.50; t Greenwich, c Greenwich
The Greenwich branch of this successful chain of hostels has 55 beds and is quieter than some of its more centrally located

sister properties (though it stands cheek-by-jowl to Greenwich train station). Dorms have four to 12 beds, there's just one twin room and there's a pub on site.

NEW CROSS INN Map p180 Hostel E

☎ 8691 7222; www.newcrossinn.co.uk; 323a New Cross Rd SE14; dm £10-16, d & tw £60-72; c New Cross Gate, New Cross
Sister property to the **Dover Castle Hostel** (p351) in Borough, this 80-bed hostel is in New Cross southwest of Greenwich. Rooms have basin and fridge, there's a big bar and two new kitchens. Reach here most easily by train from London Bridge station in about six minutes. Dorms have four to eight beds.

SOUTHWEST LONDON

Suburban Southwest London is not an obvious place to base yourself for a trip to London – it's quite a slog to the centre and more expensive than other parts of suburbia. However, anyone wanting to stay in a quieter, more-refined part of London will be right at home here – near greenery and within reach of the river.

PETERSHAM Map p208 Hotel ££

☎ 8940 0061; www.petershamhotel.co.uk; Nightingale Lane TW10; s £135-160, d £170-235, ste £300, weekend rate s £95-120, d £150; t Richmond or c Richmond then bus 65
Neatly perched on the slope down Richmond Hill leading across Petersham Meadows towards the Thames, the Petersham offers stunning, Arcadian views at every turn. And its restaurant, with its large windows gazing down to the river, has the very best of these. The 60 rooms are classically styled and offer a wonderful escape from the city – if that's what you're after.

RICHMOND PARK HOTEL Map p208 Hotel ££

☎ 8948 4666; www.therichmondparkhotel.com; 3 Petersham Rd TW10; s £84, d £95-110; t Richmond, c Richmond
This hotel at the bottom of Richmond Hill is a pleasant midrange place for anyone wanting to be in the centre of Richmond. All 22 rooms have private facilities and are comfortably furnished. While Continental breakfast is included, the owners will do a full calorific English slap-up for £5.

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