

Sneak preview of Twelve Picardy Place



It's a Hotel. It's a really nice Hotel with great rooms. It's really exclusive...

Well that's the understatement, wouldn't you say, but when I was asked to review the latest addition to Edinburgh's burgeoning boutique hotel trade I really wanted to sum it up in just a few words and *Understated* is that word.

I've been in a few designer/boutique hotels/restaurants over the last few years and I was beginning to think that the formula was becoming a bit old hat. They all seem to rely on desperately dark spaces, skinny new age staff, designer and often uncomfortable furniture and that awful purple back lighting that seems to have infected the poor Scott Monument. Oh no, I'm describing the Dakota Hotel chain, oops! Where has all the individuality gone, where is the bespoke room choice, the tailored feel.

Well, I think I found it at the preview night at Twelve Picardy Place.



Now I know this was a bit of a show-off night and I know I'm a huge fan of their restaurant, [Steak](#), but I was pleasantly surprised by my tour round this refurbished, refurbishment of a genuine Georgian Town House.

Ever since my time as an architect student back in the early 80s, (but you look so young! Ed.) Edinburgh has always been terribly precious about its New Town heritage and any new builds or refurbishments. Glasgow might have been "Miles Better", but Edinburgh was always "Slightly Superior". They never needed to prove anything. The world heritage site shone

out like a beacon of brilliance in a world of cost-constrained developer design, where generally design was always a dirty word and any taste was definitely in the developers' mouths.

So understated it is. A calm and quiet haven situated on the maddest road intersection in Scotland. Theatres, cinemas, bars, restaurants, Edinburgh's gay quarter, strip joints, chip shops with residents DJ's and now...aaaaah! A relief, a respite and place to rewind, relax and watch the madness outside from the comfort of your own bath. More of that later...

✘ Yes there's the obligatory skinny jeans attired receptionist, but they were as charming and as attentive as the rest of the Steak crew are. But wait a minute, designer chairs that were comfy? Yes, and lovely too. They share a bar with Steak so that's über cool and full of all the right drinks. The décor as we moved upstairs to view the rooms was, you guessed it, understated. No daft flower power patterns, no, thank goodness, purple back-lights, just a good paint job that lets you take in the stupendous staircase and wonderful cupola that was allowed to dominate your journey upstairs.

And the rooms? Well you guessed again. Lovely, left, mostly, alone to be themselves and let you take in the best of that Georgian speciality, proportion. Well lit from the beautifully restored 12 pane windows with very subdued secondary lights that you hardly noticed, and not a purple back-lighter in sight. (I think they must have turned the one off from the brochure, when they knew I was coming.) The furniture was modern and functional and matched the tasteful paint job. The only nod to daft post-modern tendencies was the giant Scottish photo scene that passed for wallpaper. I couldn't complain because for all their giant scale, they still didn't dominate the balance and poise of the room and they were lovely photographs. (Hats off to Colin Mackenzie) No it was great. All topped off with a real fire, perfect to lounge in front off, while enjoying the whole experience.

Bathrooms are always hard to get right in refurbishments, often lost in a room too large. But here they very nearly hit the mark. The grand master monster suite had a bath centred on one of the street façade windows, so you could quite happily sit sipping a cocktail from the room's cocktail kit watching the madness unfold below you. Then again you might cause a bit of a stir as you got out, reaching for your beautifully sumptuous towel, while covering yourself in every conceivable body pampering lotion known to man. I might give it a try though.

No I think HK Surveying & Design have done a damn fine job, shame some of the finishing didn't quite match the design intent but that can always be fixed. Also, I would like to see a breakfast menu served in the fantastic space that is Steak. A help yourself menu of 'muffins and coffee' doesn't do justice to your experience and for me wouldn't be the ultimate experience that the management claim.

Well to end on an understated note. It was great!

PHOTOS by [Chris Mackenzie Photography](#)