

Review – One Square at the Sheraton Grand

Being a traveller is overrated, I'm more than happy to be a tourist. You can keep your beach huts, backpacking, and stuff your Airbnbs where the sun don't shine. I love hotels, the bigger and more ostentatious the better. I've never felt the need to feel like a 'local' on holiday.



Airbnb dwellers seem to pride themselves on the 'real experience' of living in a city for merely a long weekend. Fine, if the authenticity you crave is your neighbours hating you for driving the rental markets up and thus giving two fingers to the local economy.

It was recently reported that a stairway in Edinburgh had eleven Airbnb lock boxes out of 13 flats. Of course this was

the Cowgate and most of those would have once been council flats, now privately owned and exploited by pseudo-woke landlords and tourists of the insufferable variety. At least Thatcher can take the ultimate blame for these sorry circumstances as well as everything else.

So hotels like The Sheraton are my kind of holiday heaven: large, reliable, luxurious and comfy. I'm on a third Tinder date – with the same guy! I half expect someone from Tinder HQ to turn up with a carriage clock or at least a parchment certificate.



We meet in the hotel bar which, to put it mildly, resembles what I imagine to be the VIP departure lounge in the movie Logan's Run. The plot here was that everyone lived in a big glass dome, not unlike a posh Centre Parks, and the oldies were dispatched to somewhere 'nice for their retirement'. Or were they bumped off instead? Filmmakers of the 1970s definitely had a way of solving the ageing population crisis.

I'm not against the rather bonkers design of The Sheraton bar, but have an issue with the width of the tables. Deafness runs in my family and I fear I may just have to smile and nod at my date, same way I communicate with non English speakers on holiday. However, the Silver Fox, as I shall refer to him, is

a dynamic kind of chap and pulls a stool nearer me. Perhaps he's losing his hearing too? We could go to lip-reading nightclasses together! Alas no, he merely wants to hold my hand. So before I put you off your dinner*, let me tell you about mine...

One Square at the Sheraton Grand is rather nice. There's clearly a raucous do in the nearby function room, which I find quite pleasant. I imagine it to be someone's retirement party after years of service at Scottish Widows. A free bar drunk dry kind of evening. We're sat at a window table with a lovely view of Festival Square and the Usher Hall. The interior designer has sobered up for this area and the drapes and furnishings are elegant and rather comfy.

The menu is what you might call reliable with touches of naughtiness and whimsy. They even have a vegan menu, probably great for all the millennial graduation lunches and dinners to come in the summer. There's nothing quite like chastising your folks for ruining the planet after they've paid for your education, the selfish cretins.



We opt to share seafood starters: Crab with Apple, Coriander and Fresh Radishes, which is crisp, clean fresh crab gorgeousness, and some unctuous, Scottish Shellfish with

Thistly Cross Cider and Shallots. The shellfish was super tasty and of the highest quality, incidentally what I'd also put on my Tinder profile.

For mains SF had a Skate Wing with Crispy Capers, Bitter Lemons and Brown Butter, the wing of a proportion that could have swam the Atlantic with Ben Fogle on its back. And hopefully not return. It was beautifully done, and to me there's no better way to eat a nice piece of fish.

I had Free Range Chicken Breast with Wild Mushrooms on Brioche Toast with Chicken Hollandaise. I wouldn't be surprised if they cooked the chicken sous vide as it was by far the juiciest I've tasted. The mushrooms and sauce were divine, wealthy to the point of early retirement but light and fresh too.

One thing to remember if you're taking a Tinder date to One Square, if they go to the lavatory and take their time, worry not! They will return, but might take a while as the loos are a distance away and it's easy to get lost. Just to reassure you there.

The food at One Square is fabulous and special, no easy feat. Their new Executive Chef Shaun Woodhouse clearly knows how to create a great offering amongst the many demands of a hotel kitchen.

The restaurant space, though pleasing, could do with more cordoning off from the corridor: nothing a couple of extra drapes couldn't solve, and some music might not go amiss either. The service, as you'd imagine was pleasant in the extreme, but I'd have liked to see someone who has clear 'ownership' of it and felt the lovely maitre d' with the man-bun is the very chap to not only put in charge, but be made to 'feel' in charge.

Small pickings. As someone who has only ever been self employed or freelance it's fun to be in the bustle of the

corporate world of Lothian Road and being in the Sheraton gave me a holiday vibe.

Yet, was it a perfect date night venue? Well romance, my friends, is not a destination but a journey... Yeah, whatever! SF nailed down another date before we'd even finished the cheese board.

*I guarantee dinner at One Square is far more digestible than reading this review.

One Square

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