

# Peeling away the Big Apple needs a New York State of Mind

Hotel chain YOTEL describes itself as the “pit-stop for the non-stop” and is positioned as an affordable luxury option for travellers. With its Times Square location on Tenth Avenue/W 42<sup>nd</sup> Street it would be hard to find a more central position from which to explore manic but marvellous New York.

And partnering with North American airline JetBlue, which is now flying non stop between Edinburgh and JFK International Airport, it's never been easier for Scots to take a holiday-sized bite out of the Big Apple.

Situated in Midtown Manhattan, [YOTEL Times Square](#) is a quick and easy walk to all the best shows Broadway has to offer, on the doorstep of Hell's Kitchen, and as the name suggests a heartbeat away from one of the world's most visited tourist attractions, which draws an estimated 50 million visitors a year.

YOTEL has replaced the tradition check-in desk with “Mission Control” – self service kiosks which make it simple and fast to check in and avoid irritating queues, and a quirky addition which will keep the kids (and adults) engrossed, is the world's first robotic luggage concierge – the YOBOT – which

springs into action to safely store luggage in one of the 150 bins if you have a later departure time.

With 12 different room types and affordable price points for solo travellers, couples and families, one of the most popular is the Skyline View – a stylishly compact space using YOTEL's signature smart design which maximises the 170 sq ft space, and located on floors 16-26 you can expect unparalleled views of the city.

The adjustable queen-size SmartBed™ reclines from a couch to a fully flat bed with memory gel foam mattress at the touch of a button. Luxurious shampoo, conditioner, shower gel and hand and body lotion are provided by YOTEL's amenity partner Urban Jungle and the rainshower was one of the best I have experienced.



The YOBOT



YOTEL Times Square terrace





Stylish and compact

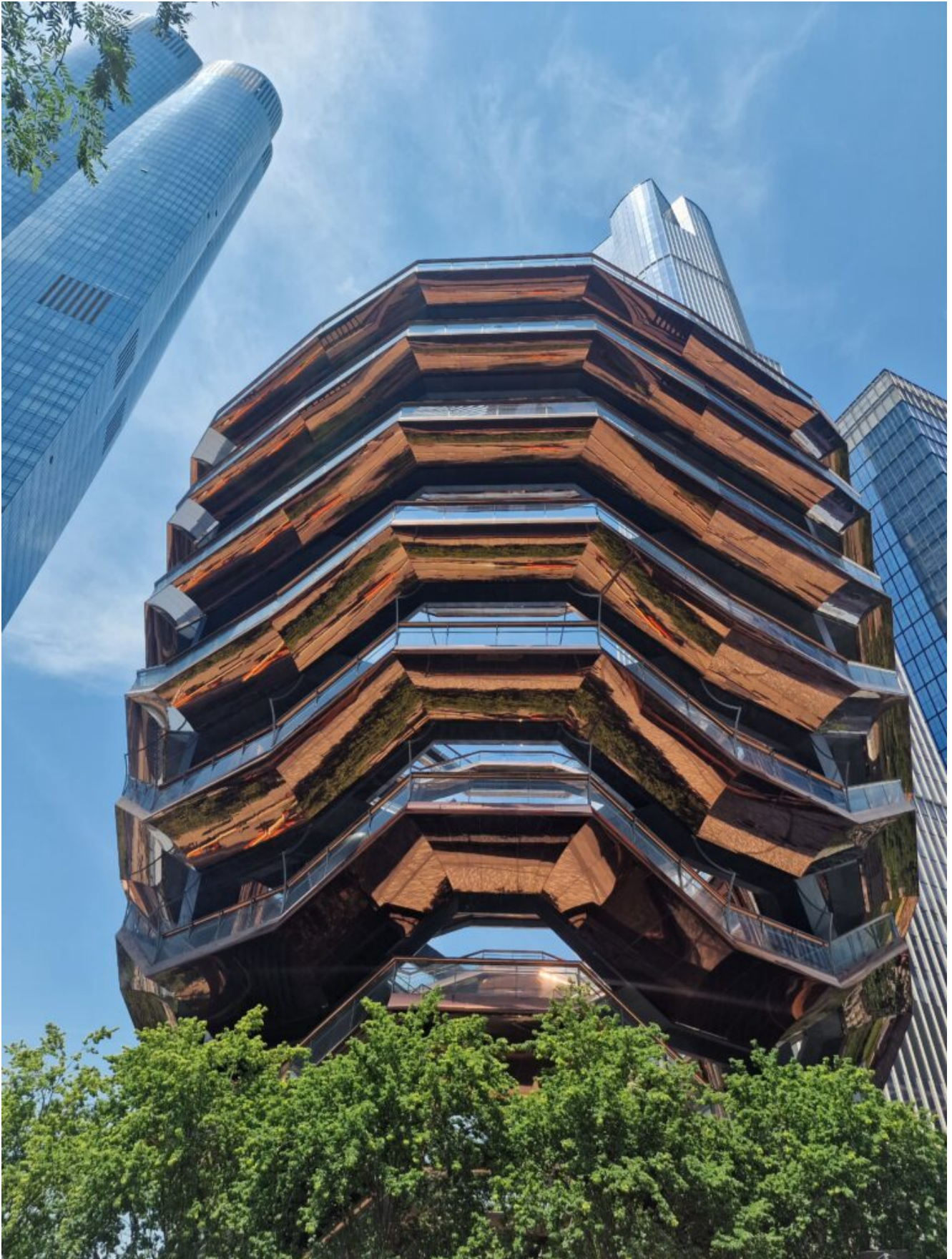
Oh, and YOTEL Times Square also happens to have one of the largest roof terraces in NYC – with spectacular views drawing a young and trendy crowd, not to mention it's own theatre, The Green Room 42, which showcases up and coming Broadway acts.

YOTEL Times Square @stephenrafferty/BonnieViaggio.com

It is an easy walk from the hotel to many of the main Manhattan attractions, including [Hudson Yards](#). New York's newest neighbourhood is spread over 28 acres of former industrial land and rail yards and is a stylish mix of restaurants, public plazas, office and retail space, gardens, hotels and a 1 million sq ft shopping mall with designer outlets. The largest private development in the US and one of the most complex construction projects ever undertaken in New York, Hudson Yards has a year-round roster of entertainment, top music acts and it is a major attraction for sport fans looking to catch big ticket events on super-sized screens, as



witnessed during the Paris Olympics and the current US Tennis Open.



Hudson Yards – Pic Stephen Rafferty



While there, [don't miss The Edge](#), the highest outdoor sky deck in the western hemisphere with 360-degree views of the city and Hudson River at 1,131 ft on the 100<sup>th</sup> floor, and where you can enjoy a beer, albeit at skyscraper style prices of around \$17, or a glass of fizz in the Champagne Bar. The elevator will whisk you up to The Edge's 7,500 sq ft viewing area in just 52 seconds, and if you can stomach it look down and take the obligatory pictures through the glass floor, or lean out to enjoy spectacular views across Manhattan using the 9ft tall, angled glass walls.



Looking over the Hudson River from The Edge – Pic Stephen Rafferty

Hudson Yards is also a starting point for walking the line – [the High Line](#) – dating from the 1930s when an elevated rail line was introduced to improve safety and prevent pedestrian deaths, as freight trains delivered millions of tons of meat, dairy and produce. By the 1980s, freight had halted and the

line fell into disrepair, badly neglected and destined for demolition.

Luckily, the community rallied together and a lengthy campaign to save the High Line for future generations resulted in the park you see today, which has become a global inspiration for cities to transform unused industrial zones into dynamic public spaces.

It is now a 1.5 mile long urban park with 500-plus species of plants and trees, a city-centre oasis of calm which on both sides offers views of traditional and modern architecture and is a place for locals and visitors to relax, with community programmes, world class art work and performances free for all.











A 15-minute stroll down to the waterfront from YOTEL Times Square takes you to Pier 83, where the [Landmarks Cruise](#) casts off down the Hudson. While the \$88 ticket price might seem



hefty it is well worth it – in fact worth it alone for the non-stop entertaining and informative 1 hour 30 mins commentary from veteran tour guide Andy Sydor. Have your camera at the ready to capture NYC's most famous landmarks as the boat passes the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, then slips under the Brooklyn, Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges up the East River before returning to midtown Manhattan.

Top tip – check out the official [New York CityPASS](#) which allows 40% discounts on many top attraction and free admission to the Empire State Building Observatory and the American Museum of Natural History, plus up to three other must-see attractions including the Guggenheim Museum, the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and this aforementioned Circle Line sightseeing river cruise.









While in New York I did take the opportunity to visit the 9/11 Memorial at the World Trade Centre (easily reached by subway from YOTEL) – a truly humbling experience on reading the inscribed names of the deceased and the many heroes who died trying to save fellow New Yorkers.

YOTEL has a partnership with JetBlue which benefits all members of JetBlue's [TrueBlue® loyalty programme](#). Members of all levels can earn TrueBlue points on stays at YOTEL locations around the world, will be eligible for exclusive discounted room rates, and receive a complimentary amenity on arrival, while [TrueBlue Mosaic®](#) members benefit even more with complimentary room upgrades and late check-out.

On the outbound New York journey I was fortunate to experience JetBlue's business class product, Mint, which is indeed minted, and returning home to Edinburgh my boarding card was for the airline's standard Core product.



Core is probably a misnomer because I was delighted with the extra leg room, Wi-fi available throughout the flight (just under seven and a half hours) and complimentary snacks and drinks. On landing back in Scotland, the super-quick disembarkation process meant that, unusually for Edinburgh, I was through passport control in no time.

\*Stephen Rafferty travelled courtesy of JetBlue and [YOTEL](#). Limited roundtrip fares from Edinburgh to New York start at £399 and \$499 in Core and £1,999 and \$2,999 in Mint. Rates for [YOTEL Times Square](#) start from \$139 in low season and \$249 in high season.

For more information and the best fares, visit [www.jetblue.com](http://www.jetblue.com)



