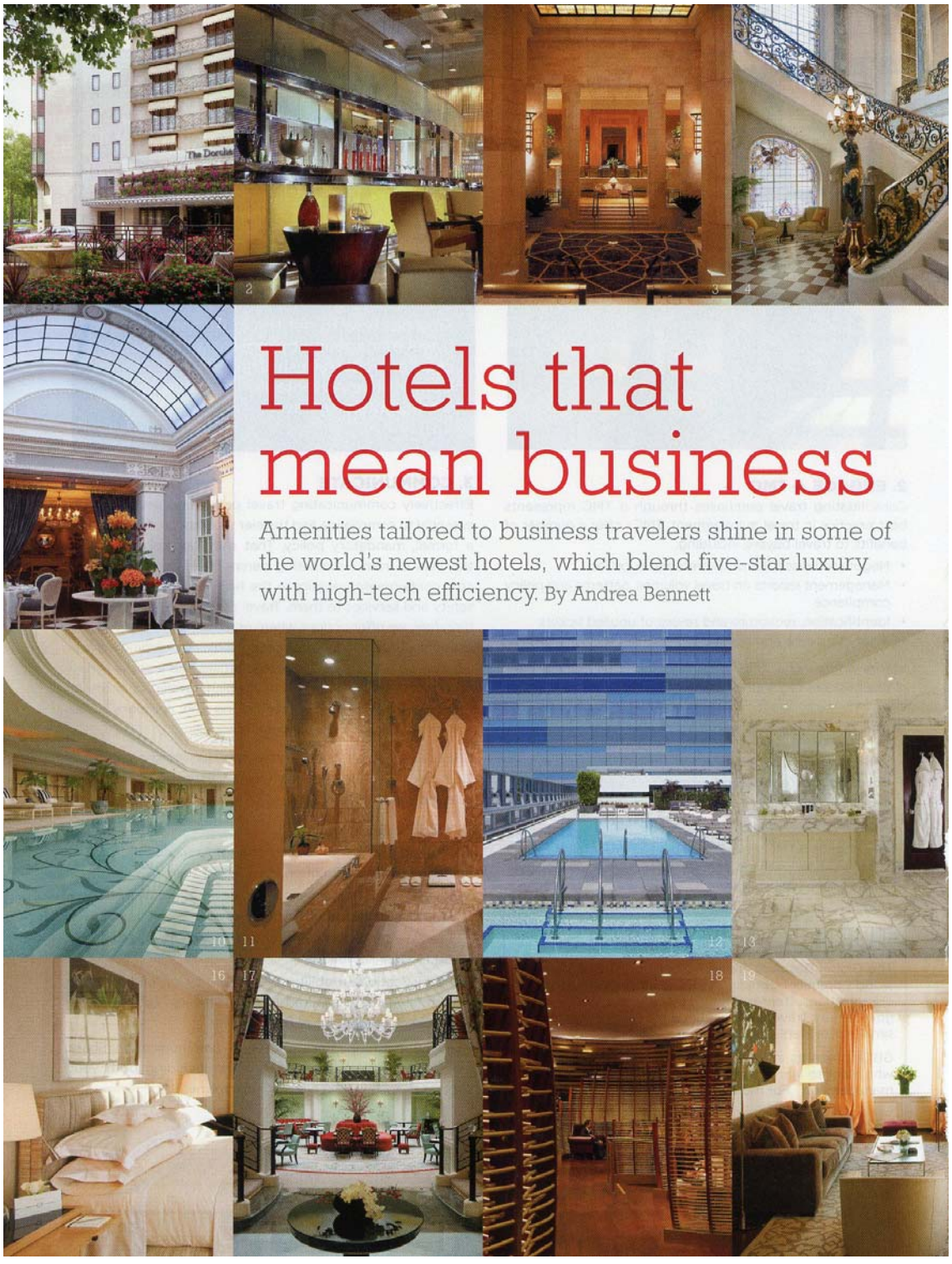
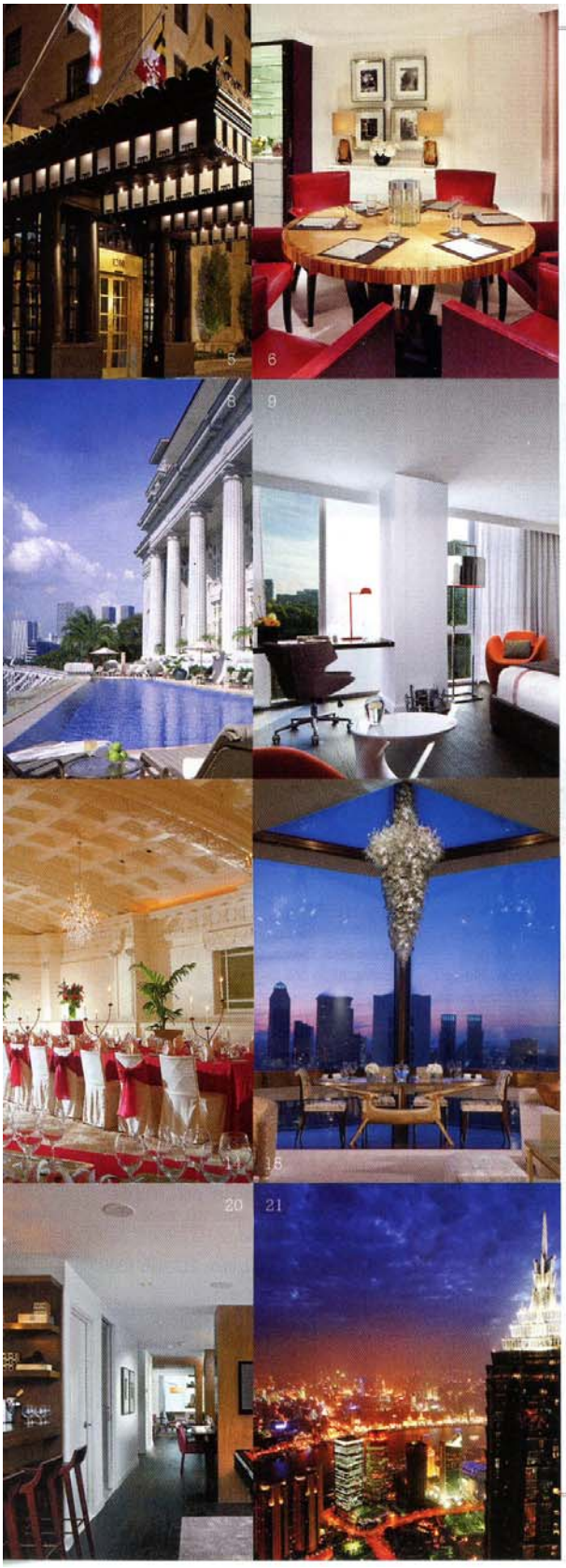
EXECUTIVE TRAVEL
SAVOR THE JOURNEY
OCTOBER 2011

October 2011



Hotels that mean business

Amenities tailored to business travelers shine in some of the world's newest hotels, which blend five-star luxury with high-tech efficiency. By Andrea Bennett



The world's newest luxury hotels may be investing in opulent design and spectacular artwork, but the smartest among them are spending on the amenities that will romance the high-end business traveler.

Following two years of restrictions from corporate travel departments and business travelers' defections to less pricey (often so-called select service) brands, "the business traveler is back," says Joe McInerney, president of the American Hotel & Lodging Association. As corporate travel picks up from 2009 lows, rates may be bouncing back, but so is competition among hotels to secure the loyalty of the power executive. And the key to clinching their allegiance, he says, is to offer them the business amenities they want without gouging them in the process—despite their ability to pay (or bill to a third party). Today's business traveler, says Forrester Research analyst Henry Harteveldt, "is time-starved and craves digitally consumable information and entertainment." To truly distinguish themselves, he says, hotels have to think creatively, particularly since many have already upgraded bedding and bathroom fixtures. "Hotels need to offer relevant services, whether for free or for an additional (but reasonable) fee."

To that end, notes Bjorn Hanson, dean of New York University's Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports Management, luxury hotels are taking a page from the rule books of select service hotels, the earliest adopters of services like free Wi-Fi and telephone calls. Some business travelers, he says, "have found that the select service experience is preferable, with its kiosks and free Wi-Fi, and upscale hotels are now answering their demands." Enter in-room exercise equipment, downloadable applications that allow guests to use smartphones as key cards, and use of e-readers and tablets.

The new amenities, Harteveldt adds, are smart for business; providing tablets "may help get the guest out of his or her room and into a lounge or restaurant, where the guest might spend some money on food or beverages." Plus, "wow factor" services might get the hotel discussed not only at a party, but on social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter. The challenge for hotels, of course, is that the bar is constantly being raised. From airport transfers in a Maserati (at the Armani Hotel in Dubai) to microchip-embedded in-room dining carts (at the Jefferson in Washington, D.C.), to fully contained in-room offices (at the Elysian, Chicago), luxury hotels are wooing executives like never before. Here, 10 recently opened hotels that are taking business amenities to new levels.

1. The Dorchester, London 2. Fullerton Hotel, Singapore 3. The Four Seasons, New York 4. Shangri-La, Paris 5. The Jefferson, Washington, D.C. 6. The Dorchester, London 7. The Jefferson, Washington, D.C. 8. Fullerton Hotel, Singapore 9. Thompson Hotel, Toronto 10. Peninsula Hotel, Shanghai 11. The Four Seasons, New York 12. Ritz-Carlton, Los Angeles 13. The Dorchester, London 14. Fullerton Hotel, Singapore 15. The Four Seasons, New York 16. The Mark Hotel, New York City 17. Shangri-La, Paris 18. Ritz-Carlton, Los Angeles 19. The Mark Hotel, New York City 20. Thompson Hotel, Toronto 21. Park Hyatt, Tokyo

New York City

THE MARK

Best in business: Complimentary Wi-Fi and local calls; 24-hour check-in (your room will be ready whenever you get in); an iButler for any IT problems; local mobile phones available at check-in; a business cart with Mac or PC laptops, printers, Polycom videoconferencing equipment and game consoles; and complimentary 24-hour business center with printing, scanning and office supplies. In-room touchscreen Crestron panels control temperature, entertainment, shades and lighting.

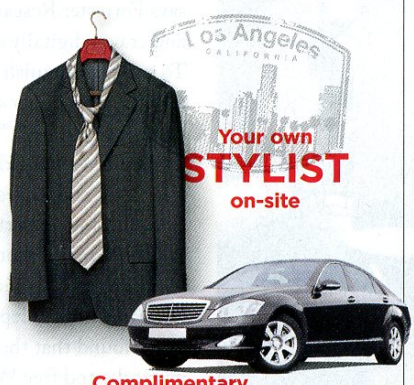
Wow factor: Your own "212" area code lets you do business like a true local.

Contact: *themarkhotel.com*; 212-744-4300; 25 E. 77th St. at Madison Ave.

Rates: From $495.

Los Angeles

RITZ-CARLTON



Best in business: Walking distance to the Los Angeles Convention Center, and a five-minute drive to MOCA, Ahmanson Theatre and Los Angeles City Hall. But you may never venture out of the 3,000-square-foot Club Lounge with its multiple daily food presentations (not to mention free Wi-Fi, dedicated concierge and business center, and spectacular views over Los Angeles). Round-the-clock room service; on-site car rental service; complimentary weekday morning and evening car service; complimentary shoe shine, same-day laundry and a selection of clothes hangers to properly accommodate your business attire. Want an entire office (printer, scanner, et al.) sent to your room on arrival? Done.

Wow factor: The expansive view from the only luxury spa in downtown L.A. and an on-call stylist (don't bother packing—just call ahead for wardrobe).

Contact: *ritzcarlton.com*; 213-743-8800; 900 W. Olympic Blvd.

Rates: From $399; weekends from $299.

Chicago

ELYSIAN

Best in business: No business center here—there's no need, with all the in-room amenities. Free hotel-wide Wi-Fi; in-room conference call capabilities; international television channels; Bowers & Wilkins integrated sound system; laptops, printers and iPods available upon request; and 24-hour business concierges to handle anything from technical to business assistance issues. Five Lexuses transport guests from this heart of the Gold Coast location to anywhere in town.

Wow factor: The 14,000-square-foot spa has a barber suite and lap pool, and the on-site Marc Jacobs store will make sure you're outfitted properly.

Contact: *elysianhotels.com*; 312-646-1300; 11 East Walton.

Rates: From $395.