

CHECK IN
MARLTON HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY

A Bohemian Neighbor Sheds Its Image

Rates

Basic rooms start at \$295.

Basics

During its bohemian heyday, scores of artists and writers stayed at the Marlton House, built in 1900 and beloved for its prime Greenwich Village location and cheap rates. Jack Kerouac drafted "The Subterraneans" and "Tristessa" there, and when she shot Andy Warhol, the radical feminist writer Valerie Solanas called the Marlton home. Decades later, after the Marlton's stint as a New School dorm, the hotelier Sean MacPherson and his partners spent at least \$10 million transforming it into a "baby grand hotel," opening last September. Previous ventures include the Bowery, Jane and Maritime hotels.

Location

The nine-story Marlton is on Fifth Avenue and West Eighth Street in the heart of Greenwich Village with its many restaurants and charming residential blocks. Washington Square Park is several blocks south; Fifth Avenue shopping is about a 10-minute walk north.

The Room

Narrow hallways with Persian runners led to my compact but gorgeous Queen Room, the least expensive option, on the sixth floor. The first of many French details greeted me upon entry: a chicken wire closet door, behind which was a minibar stocked with Champagne, Brooklyn-made Moonshine and Emergen-C, a vitamin boost for any resulting hangover. Brass reading lights flanked a gilded bed frame, whose blue fabric headboard provided a pop of color. Draped across the bed was a faux-fur blanket that I loved for its substantial weight. A black, spidery light fixture dangling from the ceiling added a contemporary twist to the vintage vibe. The cozy room with oak herringbone floors and delicate crown moldings gave me the feeling of being in someone's brownstone.

The Bathroom

The black-and-white tile floors and accordion wall mirror had character, but there was no getting around the size. It was perhaps the smallest hotel bathroom I've encountered. On the upside: The shower provided great water pressure and there were luxury Côté Bastide products.

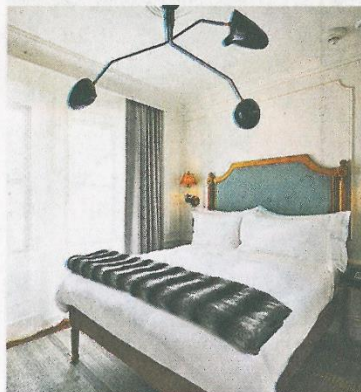
Dining

Although the hotel provides complimentary breakfast, it doesn't offer in-room dining. On a Saturday evening in January, I



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNIE SCHLECHTER

The lounge at the Marlton in Greenwich Village, a favorite of Jack Kerouac, and two bedrooms.



ventured downstairs to explore the buzzy bar and restaurant Margaux, a 98-seat cafe with a spectacular skylight and floral tiles Mr. MacPherson hand-selected in Argentina. Both spots were packed by 7 p.m. (as they were on a more recent visit), and I hadn't made a reservation, but the hostess put my group on the top of the list when I said I was a hotel guest. During our brief wait, we sampled house-made cocktails, including the spicy Tijuana Zebra (tequila, grenadine and ginger beer). Service was slow in the restaurant, but the quality of our meal made up for the delay. We tried a vegetarian farmer's board (avocado hummus, spicy sweet potato and quinoa tabbouleh, \$19); wild mushroom risotto (\$17); spicy kale salad sprinkled with fresh jalapeños (\$10); and a cheeseburger (\$14). The risotto and kale salad were standouts. The next morning, I skipped breakfast at Margaux, grabbing a latte and fresh kale Cheddar scone from the lobby coffee shop and sprawled out in the lounge.

Amenities

Lovely seating areas and a welcoming wood-burning fire; free Wi-Fi.

Bottom Line

The Marlton is a snug and affordable alternative to larger hotels, and it's a must for anyone seeking to replicate downtown living. *MILLIE KERR*

The Marlton Hotel, 5 West Eighth Street, New York City; 212-321-0100; marltonhotel.com.