



checkin

[THE LEVIN, LONDON, ENGLAND]

Offering the style and luxury of a grand hotel in a boutique London townhouse, The Levin is a home away from home for guests and the perfect base to explore the English capital, says Valli Little.

check in.

making an entrance

The entrance on London's Basil Street is discreet, but this diminutive hotel offers grand-scale luxury. Located a stone's throw from chic Knightsbridge, The Levin offers a central location in the English capital. When you check in, you'll be warmly met by hotel manager Harald Duttine or one of his staff in the opulent reception.

wow factor

Celebrated hotelier and restaurateur David Levin's vision of a grand hotel in miniature form makes The Levin a unique inner-city retreat. The small size and exclusivity mean you're unlikely to see or hear other guests, while the interior oozes charm with a nod to the decorative glamour of the 1930s. The colour palette is calming with luxe fabrics and finishes, and designer lighting – the chandelier in the stairwell is an 18-metre cascade of iridescent glass.

what are the rooms like?

The rooms are stylish and cosy, featuring plush nooks to lounge in, wi-fi, flat-screen TVs, writing desks and fireplaces in some, while a well-stocked library of English novels is a charming addition. The bathrooms are generous with deep tubs and welcome extras, such as heated towel rails. Prices start from \$450 per double per night, including continental breakfast.

what's the food like?

A continental breakfast is served in-room, making the thought of lingering in bed or on your balcony (a rarity in the city) tempting. Alternatively, a full English breakfast is served in the hotel's basement restaurant, Le Metro, which also offers reasonably priced British classics from shepherd's pie to beef and Guinness sausages with mash. Here you can also enjoy traditional afternoon tea.

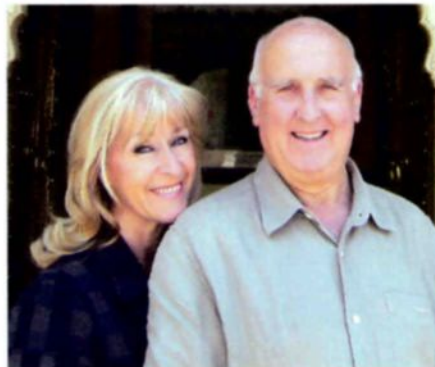
what's the bar like?

In each room, a Champagne bar replaces the traditional mini bar, offering a selection of bubbles from the best Champagne houses. Fix yourself a Champagne cocktail using one of the supplied recipes as a guide or unwind with a glass of one of Lynne and David Levin's wines from their Loire Valley vineyard. There is also a self-serve bar in reception for a nightcap.

what's nearby?

Harrods and Sloane Street are the ultimate shopping destinations for high-end brands and UK institutions Jo Malone and Topshop. There are plenty of options to refuel along the way and the champagne bar at the top of Harvey Nichols is not to be missed. For dinner, head to the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park Hotel for Heston Blumenthal's new Dinner where you can try his 'meat fruit' – chicken liver parfait in the shape of a perfectly round mandarin – and Daniel Boulud's Bar Boulud for stylish French bistro fare. Hyde Park, Buckingham Palace and the V&A Museum are all within walking distance, too. **d.**

Thanks to The Levin (28 Basil St, London, thelevinhotel.co.uk) and Qantas who fly daily to London from Australia (qantas.com.au).



From top: enjoy a continental breakfast on your balcony; one of the lavish bedrooms; Lynne and David Levin; Le Metro restaurant. Previous page (from top): the chic reception lounge; The Levin's understated entrance.