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The Best (And Newest) Airport Hotels In The World



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Naumi

The Naomi hotel at Auckland airport opened on February 1.

Parking places for the soul, lacking balm for missed flights or ridiculously early starts, airport hotels rarely think outside the double glazed box they dwell in. Usually with a slightly depressing 1980s feel to them, airport hotels have a captive audience and even if they can be charged to expenses, they're rarely worth the money. But a few brave additions have joined the corporate players and bringing intelligence and wit to the mix.



CitizenM

The lounge at the Citizen M Hotel at Charles de Gaulle airport

When **CitizenM** opened at Schiphol Airport in 2008, it represented a real break with the past. Artworks, books - and above all - a restaurant and bar open 24 hours a day. Rooms tend to be standardised, but it's a company that's put time and effort into the communal spaces. The same goes for **CitizenM** at Charles de Gaulle airport. Light, bright with good design values, it can even claim to have design values; one side of the building is dominated by a Julian Opie artwork.



Bloc Hotels

A VIP room at Bloc at Gatwick.

Taking the airport box concept and running with it, **Bloc** strips back to the essentials at Gatwick; rooms are small, there's no restaurant but thread counts are high. And it's been successful. There's also a Bloc in Birmingham, with another airport hotel in the offing, along with two other city destinations in the next few years. .



Bloc Hotels

A standard room at Bloc Hotel at Gatwick

In New Zealand, the 193-room **Naumi Auckland Airport**, which opened in February, has millennial appeal in spades. with private patios and balconies, ten power points per room, an outdoor swimming pool, its own garden, restaurant and bar plus fully equipped gym. Asia has a good track record in adding swimming pools to the airport hotel mix, most notably the Regal in Hong Kong and Crowne Plaza at Changi in Singapore.



Crowne Plaza

Asian hotels, such as the Crowne Plaza at Changi Airport, brought swimming pools to the airport hotel experience.

There are also a handful of airport hotels that - while not revolutionary - are still significantly better than the airport norm. The **Sofitel** at London's Heathrow is most people's preferred choice. It's certainly mine. The **Fairmont** at Vancouver airport also regularly wins awards. It's got plenty of Pacific Rim touches, including swimming pool and spa, but rather than aiming to be an escape from the airport, it embraces it; the bar allows you to drink while watching planes depart on the runway.



Jumbo Stay

Cuddling up in the cockpit is an option when you book into Jumbo Stay in Stockholm.

As ever in the travel world, Scandinavia throws the best curveball. If you really want to feel part of the aviation matrix, **Jumbo Stay** at Arlanda Airport in Stockholm has a double bed in the flight deck, plus 76 beds in 33 rooms, contained within a decommissioned 1976 Boeing 747. Apart from the flight deck cabin, it's firmly aimed at the hostel crowd with mostly dorm rooms. There's a snack bar and a free shuttle takes passengers on the five minute ride to the airport.



An early look at the TWA Hotel due to open in 2019. Photo credit: Timothy A Clary AFP/Getty

However, In 2019, the **TWA Hotel** will open in Eero Saarinen's soaring 1962 building that Robert AM Stern described as the Grand Central station of the jet age.



Aviation's past will be lovingly preserved at the TWA Hotel when it opens next year. Photo credit: Timothy A Clary AFP/Getty

The 505 rooms will look out onto the runway, there will be eight restaurants and bars - plus a museum about TWA and mid century design - but it will all be in the detail. It's going to have a rooftop observation deck with swimming pool plus a 10,000ft fitness studio, all features that were far beyond the imagination of the airport hotel designers of the 20th century.

However, there will still be room for the classic Solari split-flap airport message board, proving that everything comes full circle.