

2011

Neighborhood Storybook





# NEIGHBORHOODS

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# Every neighborhood has a story.

A history told through landmarks and legends.

A culture that gives it a distinct sound, a unique color palette and a taste of its own. It is part of the local fabric, defined by the people and personality of the neighborhood.

What makes Hotel Indigo® different is that we're part of the neighborhood – the pulse, the rhythm, woven into the fabric, not segregated or delineated. We're at the heart of it all.

Over the course of interviewing Hotel Indigo General Managers all over the world, we found each story to be unique and each hotel a true reflection of its own neighborhood.

But there was one constant that every story shared: the genuine effort to ensure guests leave feeling more relaxed, more energized and a little more connected to the neighborhood around them than they were before they checked in.

Hopefully these stories have a similar effect on you. That you discover a few new locations, learn a few new things and feel a little inspired along the way.

**Welcome to the neighborhoods of Hotel Indigo.®**





## Visual Music.

There is a distinct energy flowing through the lobby of the Hotel Indigo Atlanta. A rhythm that feeds off of Peachtree Street as it runs past the many restaurants, shops and concert venues that make up the heart of the city's cultural center.



It is the kind of energy that you get when a few ideas scribbled down on a napkin turn into a set of blueprints, one person's vision becomes a team of people paying attention to every last detail and a concept becomes an industry changer.

Familiar territory for this hotel that, in October 2004, made its mark with a fresh design and approach: an urban oasis that created a balance between art, architecture and nature with an emphasis on hospitality and comfort. As the lone hotel grew into a brand, the philosophy also grew into something more. It became about a place to connect and discover the local surroundings.

That connection provided unexpected results by resonating not just with guests and staff, but the neighborhood itself. On any given night, you might walk into Hotel Indigo Atlanta Midtown's 683 Bar and Bistro and see someone in town on business engaged in conversation with a group of concertgoers who stopped by for a drink after a show, or a couple spending a much needed romantic night in the city and some of the regulars who live down the street.

That neighborhood feeling served as the inspiration for the latest iteration of the Hotel Indigo experience. The theme "Visual Music" came from the hotel's designers who stumbled upon the idea during a visit to the Fox Theater across the street that revealed a story from the city's history filled with some of the biggest names in music. A story that is now being shared on the walls of the hotel's café and bar through a collection of photographs of the ongoing "graffiti art" that fills the projection room at the Fox, with notes written by cast and crew members sharing a rare, behind the scenes look that the artists probably never thought you'd see.

As the lighting in the hotel lobby subtly changes to match the mood of the afternoon, I met with Hotel Indigo Midtown's very first General Manager and her team to talk about being first on the block...again.

***When you said "renovation," you weren't kidding.***

As the saying goes, "When you're through changing, you're through." The people are the same, you can still get a great cocktail and good food with a Southern flair here, but as the first Hotel Indigo, we were ready to renew the experience. The more research we did in this area, the more we got lost in the great music history that energizes this part of town. We hope our guests and neighbors do the same.

***What about the history? Bands play everywhere.***

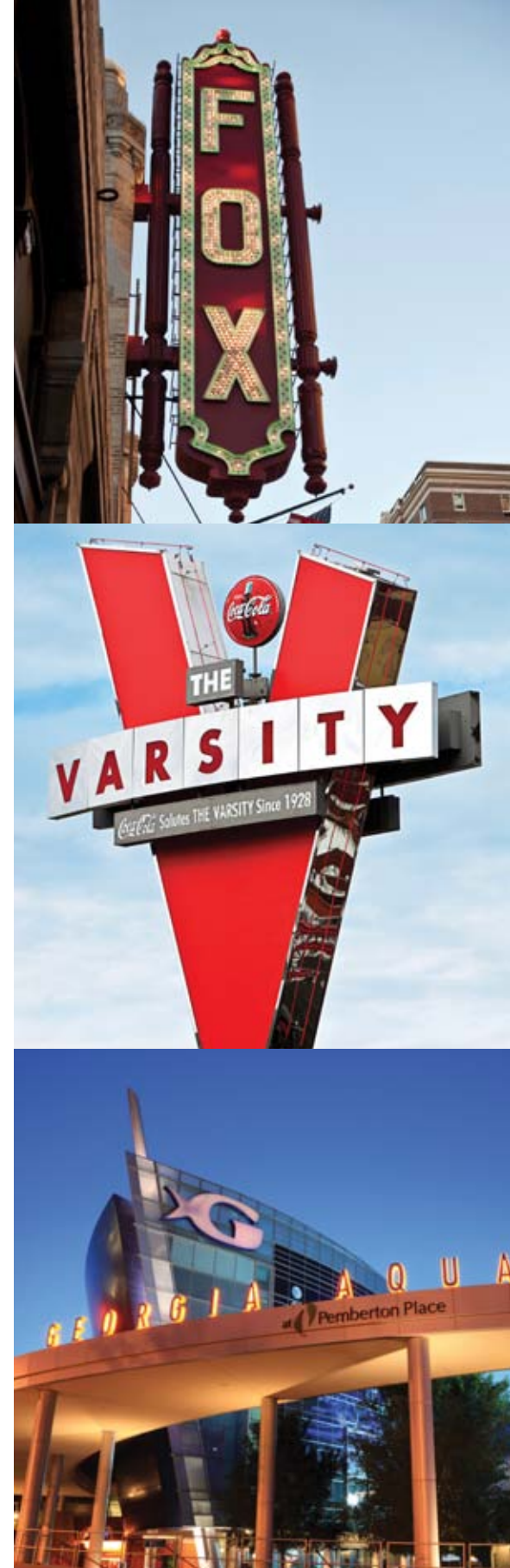
This is different. The Fox, which was originally a movie theater, was nearly demolished to make room for a parking lot in the late 70s. There was a real underground movement to save The Fox and the names associated with it are remarkable. Springsteen, the Who, the Stones, the Allman Brothers, Bowie and so many more – in the day when they were at the height of their superstardom. They saved the music, and in turn, the music saved the neighborhood. Now, the Civic Center, Center Stage, the Tabernacle, the Woodruff Arts Center and, of course, The Fox are the soul of the city.

***So your desired effect is to have people staring at the walls?***

It's a lot of fun to look at. Ultimately, you want everyone who walks into a space to have an emotional response and when we saw that wall at the Fox Theater with all of the show graffiti, we knew we had something. We took photographs of every scene and literally scanned in shopping bags filled with tickets and passes from concerts dating back to the 70s that belonged to an employee still working there. But, it's also just a great setting, deliberately designed with a rhythm and flow. Everything captures the energy of the neighborhood, right down to the fabric on the furniture and the chandeliers, which were repurposed by a local artist to reflect the mood of the room. There are great details for guests to discover everywhere they turn, from the piano inspired bar to the front desk pods shaped like drums to the banquettes which were influenced by the shapes of treble clef notes and guitars.

***This all sounds great, but tell me why you needed a self-service wine bar...***

That's in the true spirit of Rock & Roll. Didn't someone once say...Love All. Serve All.







## Heart of Gold.

As the second Hotel Indigo to open, there were a lot of eyes on this new hotel. After success in Atlanta, The Windy City was identified as the next place to build the brand. Just north of Chicago's thriving business district, on a residential, tree-lined street of the affluent Gold Coast, there is the kind of shopping that puts most other cities' idea of "premium options" to shame.



Not to mention restaurants to suit every taste, the world famous Lincoln Park Zoo and the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan. The Hotel Indigo Chicago Downtown Gold Coast makes its home in the former Claridge Hotel surrounded by the style, history and prestige of well-preserved historic mansions. Much like these homes, whose residents chose to invite the public to explore the narrow stone paths that open up to exquisite gardens, the hotel made a key decision to embrace the area and the people who live in and around the Gold Coast Area in a way that helped to begin to set a tone for Hotel Indigos that have opened since – it became an open door and welcoming part of the neighborhood to all.

The hotel's permanent art collection features neo-impressionist and former neighborhood resident Bill Olendorf's original paintings and serigraphs. It's here where I meet the General Manager who has invited me to stroll along the Gold Coast.

***Your website uses a lot of phrases like “warm,” “cozy” and “nestled.”***

Don't let the adjectives fool you. Our hotel is chic in design and décor. The amenities we offer are luxurious and the location is as well...the Gold Coast. But we believe that there is nothing more luxurious than feeling comfortable and casual. Whether it's the plush rooms, the “fresh from the local farmers market” taste of our restaurant, or the wine bar serving the finest selection of international wines by the glass, it's truly a retreat from the busier sides of Chicago.

***I would like to live here.***

That's not surprising. Our goal is for our guests to leave feeling completely refreshed and recharged. That might mean a tour of the beautiful urban gardens around the neighborhood, a night out on the Miracle Mile, a day at the spa and some of the best shopping in the world, or it could be a short walk to the Museum of Contemporary Art. You could have a very full life here.

***I hear there used to be ice-skating on the roof?***

Yes, this used to be the Claridge Hotel, which was a very luxurious place to stay in its day. We were one of Olendorf's favorite places in Chicago. He sort of turned the Claridge into his own little gallery. As the story goes, he was often spotted incognito wandering around with a glass of wine, listening to the guests comment about his work. It's a fascinating piece of history in a neighborhood that is very protective of its own heritage. We wanted to embrace that and the more we did, the more involved our own staff started to become in this community.

***How so?***

Every year we have a charity we like to support, whether it's sending care packages to our servicemen and women or supporting a local animal shelter. We've delivered cupcakes to our local fire station to thank them for the job they do. We had a local resident who stayed with us for some time as she was battling an illness and our staff took turns checking in on her.

***That seems like a trait that is hard to find these days.***

I think it is important. We have very little turnover here and lots of returning guests, regulars and neighbors, so we've developed relationships with them over time. We care about them personally, and keep up with their lives – their children and grandchildren, what's going on at work, and of course their pets.

***Between warm and cozy, which one would you choose?***

Have you been in Chicago during the winter?







## Deep in the Art of Texas.

Dallas is on the wild frontier, at least when it comes to being cool. The arts and culture scene in this city is definitely more than guitar twangs and tall hats, and you're way more likely to find Cowboys in the football stadium than the local bars.



The Dallas Arts District is the largest in the country, a sprawling 19-block area of cultural attractions that bring visual arts, music and theater together. Combined with a rich history and world-famous sports attractions, visitors are drawn to downtown for more than just business and when they come, they tend to stay at the Hotel Indigo Dallas Downtown.

Inside the hotel, the space is accented with broad, sweeping patches of bright color and sleek hardwoods that make it feel more like an artist's studio than the typical hotel lobby. As a registered National Historic Landmark, images of the building and the surrounding neighborhood as it was in the 1920's are spread throughout the hotel as a reminder of its rich history.

Just across the street, a walk through the recently opened Main Street Garden Park has become an essential part of an evening out for people taking in dinner and a show at the legendary Majestic Theater. According to the hotel's General Manager, this area represents the city at its absolute best.

***Being a few steps from the Majestic Theater must be terrible for business.***

It doesn't hurt. It's a huge part of the cultural scene here, but it's actually just one of the places you can go for a show. Sometimes we have performers stay with us who are coming through town to perform at the House of Blues, so you're really never sure who's going to come walking through the doors. The hotel just really clicks with people who are into art and music, or really anyone who's looking for a change from the "big box" style hotel that they're used to staying in.

***So, what's so bad about the "big boxes"...***

Nothing at all, if that's what you're into. We're just proud of the fact that we can offer something different that really fits in with the neighborhood. It helps that we are literally in the heart of Main Street and that guests walk to so many great restaurants and bars, as well as the retail district. Right down the street is the flagship Neiman Marcus store, which lots of our guests have gotten lost in before. Plus, there's the Aquarium, the Swiss Avenue Historic District and the Perot museum... truly something for everyone.

***So, where are the cow skulls and horseshoes on the walls?***

We don't really have that kind of flavor here. The hotel was originally built in the 20s which gives it a real classic kind of feeling, but with a little modern twist. We're also located near some historical landmarks like the former Dallas Police Headquarters and the Old Dallas Library. Downtown is being revitalized every day, but we've kept a lot of the city's heritage intact too. People tell us that you'd never know you were in the middle of downtown when you walk in the door.

***You have maintained the Texas hospitality though...they were so nice that I thought I was being mistaken for someone else.***

We do our best for all of our guests. Along with business travelers and tourists, we have a lot of patients from Baylor Hospital and their families who stay with us. Recently, we had a little girl stay who had a birthday while she was going through treatments, and we threw a birthday party for her, with a cake, presents and decorations... I couldn't tell who enjoyed it more, the family or the staff. It's that kind of connection that really makes me proud to work here.

***That's amazing. Someone should write a song about it.***

It could happen. Like I said, you never know who is going to come through these doors.







## The Perfect Fit.

It probably didn't take you too long to figure out that the Hotel Indigo Houston at the Galleria is just a short walk from Houston's famous Galleria Mall. A retail Mecca which is known for the kind of shopping, dining and entertainment that often inspires comments like "I had no idea an iPhone case could cost \$23,000."



Fortunately, with its vibrant colors, accommodating staff and cool sense of style, the hotel fits in from an upscale standpoint, but at the same time doesn't charge for a diamond-encrusted bottle of water in your room. Guests are greeted by artwork that hangs throughout the hotel that all at once captures the elegance of the Crossroads that connect the Western Suburbs and downtown Houston, along with the serene beauty of a city that makes its home on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico.

More important though, guests are greeted by a staff who, in the words of the hotel's General Manager, will go so far as to read facial expressions and adjust accordingly.

***What if someone's facial expression says, "I just spent \$2,000 on a pair of jeans?"***

Well, we've seen that face before. Believe me, it's easy to do at the Galleria. I know the idea of reading expressions seems like a natural response. Something as simple as coming around the desk to push the button on the elevator actually sets the tone for the kind of hospitality we want to be known for.

***I've heard that spirit extends outside the hotel as well.***

Definitely. We are very proud of the work we do with the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Foundation and our NFL team, the Houston Texans, by donating hospitality rooms to the team's Wounded Warriors program. It's important to make our soldiers feel at home and thank them for their service. It's the least we can do and you can tell our staff is truly honored to be a part of something so meaningful.

***In such an upscale area, is it tough keeping up with the trends?***

That's the beauty of being a boutique hotel like we are. As much as we fit in to the neighborhood, everything from the artwork to the amenities are designed to help guests feel relaxed and removed from the everyday experience. I think the mosaic in the lobby really captures that mood. It's a bench at the Crossroads and it captures the color and culture around us.

***The rooms feel really spacious – is that to hold all of the shopping bags?***

Our guests are always surprised at the layout of the rooms and how stylish they are. When we renovated the building, we intentionally kept the space more open and added a lot of color – it's what makes us different from other hotels.

***Speaking of unique, can you talk a little about the Water Wall?***

It is almost mandatory that you visit the Water Wall. It's a 64-foot-high fountain that looks like a Roman theatre stage where 11,000 gallons of water spill over the wall per minute. It is really powerful, but so serene too. I love sending guests to see it, because it is right there among all of the office buildings and the Galleria area, not what you're expecting.

***So, it's not your average water fountain?***

You know nothing is average in Houston. This is such a diverse city and there's so much to do and the hotel is right in the middle of it all. A vibrant nightlife, a very eclectic arts scene or you can just take a nice walk around the park next door. If you're a sports fan like a lot of our guests, we are only a few minutes away from the homes of the Rockets, Texans and Astros.

***Okay last question, what does a \$23,000 iPhone case look like?***

I don't know, but I'm sure I'll be able to tell by the look on someone's face if they bought one.







## A Breathtaking First Impression.

The beautiful white sand beaches around Sarasota, Florida draw people in from all over the world, but it's the welcoming vibe of this coastal city that keeps them coming back. A city which was once not much more than a quiet, little fishing town has blossomed into a hub of culture and sophistication on Florida's Gulf Coast.



Just a short stroll from downtown is the Hotel Indigo Sarasota. The building has a style that reflects its newly modernized surroundings. From the moment you step onto the large brick roundabout in front of the doors, it's clear this is not your ordinary beach hotel. The lobby is open and spacious, with the restaurant, bar and front desk forming one large communal area with oversized, inviting chairs and imagery of the famous Gulf just outside.

Meeting with the hotel's General Manager in what is, in essence, a large family room, we talked about this reenergized city, the best way to take in a sunset and the cultural impact of being home to the Greatest Show on Earth.

***Dr. Beach voted Siesta Key as the number one beach in the nation – how nice for you.***

While the beaches are magnificent, we do not consider ourselves to be a “Beach” hotel. Centered around the Bay, Gulf and Mayak River, Sarasota has been a hub for ecotourism with kayaking, birding, paddle boarding, sailing, fishing and snorkeling.

***How does Sarasota being home to the Ringling family impact what your staff wears?***

Well it's not all about clown noses and oversized shoes. The real impact that John and Mable Ringling left on the community is truly remarkable. Their philanthropy has led to one of the most robust performing arts and theatre scenes in the nation, highlighted by the Sarasota Opera House, Sarasota Ballet, the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, over 20 Art Galleries influenced by the Ringling College of Arts and Design and much more, all within in walking distance of the hotel.

***Any place you recommend before a show?***

St. Armand's Circle features upscale dining and shopping that our guests seem to enjoy just as much as a day on the beach. There's a lot of sophistication around here, but it's a very unpretentious, friendly community.

***I've always found it hard to be pretentious while on a bike.***

You noticed. We actually rent bicycles out from the hotel so you can breeze around town all you want. They all come complete with baskets so you can ride down to the local farmers market and load up on some fresh fruit and postcards to brag about your stay.

***It sounds a little too good to be true.***

When you have the caliber of people working here like we do, that's going to be a common response. To us, too good to be true means doing the unexpected – one of my favorite examples was when we had a young couple staying with us during a family reunion. Our chef made them a nice dish to take with them so they could make a good first impression; no one wants to show up empty handed at a reunion.

***Yeah, but now you've set the bar pretty high for the next family reunion.***

We're ready. I think it's such a great example of doing something that comes easy, but really makes a difference both in the hotel and in the neighborhood.

***Don't tell my boss, but I'm cutting this interview short to catch the sunset.***

I don't blame you.







## An Oasis of Culture.

Scottsdale, Arizona is located about 25 minutes from Phoenix, but this exciting desert burgh is more than just a suburb. With its plentiful nightlife, artistic presence and tourist-friendly atmosphere, Scottsdale has been compared to Miami's South Beach... only without the humidity or the ever-present ghost of Don Johnson's pastel wardrobe.



Hotel Indigo Scottsdale is located in the perpetually busy downtown area, but the hotel is anything but business as usual. From the front desk that sits on the second-floor, to the panoramic views of nearby Camelback Mountain, to the gorgeous patio deck over the pool – there’s always something new to discover. But, despite its modern and upbeat look, this hotel has its roots firmly planted in the ageless Arizona desert. Images of cactus flowers and red dunes are matched with the work of local artists, creating a unique theme to each floor that embraces the ever-present characteristics of the Southwest United States.

Sitting by a roaring fire looking out on a truly majestic mountain range, my conversation with the hotel’s General Manager felt more like we were on a movie set than at a hotel.

***So, putting the Front Desk on the second floor is kind of an interesting use of space for a boutique.***

Well, it’s just one of the things that makes our hotel unique. We were lucky enough when designing the hotel to have the freedom to be creative in how we planned to use this great space. We decided to go for something a little different. And the guests really love it!

***Unique seems to be a theme here... does that impact the kind of guests you get?***

We get everyone from big business clients to weekend getaway travelers. The climate here is so warm and dry and that it’s a snowbird’s paradise. It’s a great place to get away from the cold up north and have some fun. We get a lot of sports fans here as well; every major sports league has some kind of facility in town. The Rockies, Cubs and Giants all have their spring training camps in our backyard here in Scottsdale.

***What if I’m not a sports guy? I have weak knees.***

Downtown Scottsdale has everything from theaters to art galleries to some of the best bars and other nightlife I’ve ever had the pleasure of enjoying. The best part is that it’s all very close and we’re in a really safe, friendly area, so you can walk or bike to just about anywhere you’d like to go. It’s a real outdoor community. That’s what makes us a big hit with business travelers. They can come for business and still enjoy the outdoors, take in a game and let loose with a great night out on the town.

***Sounds like a real party.***

It can be if you want! Of course, there are lots of other things to do. We’ve got golf courses and Chaparral Park nearby, lots of great restaurants...and if you get the chance, I’d recommend hiking up Camelback Mountain over there. It’s a great day out and the view is amazing.

***Speaking of viewing, the artwork in the hotel feels truly authentic.***

The hotel has a really close relationship with a lot of local artists. That’s why we feature their artwork in the hotel. There are so many different cultures represented in Scottsdale that a lot of really beautiful art that comes out of our diversity. And it’s not just local artists...we’ve had a lot of big-name musicians and other performers seek us out when they are in town because we have a reputation as the cool place to be. And we’re just fine with that!

***What’s the weirdest alias a star has ever given you when they stayed?***

I can’t tell you that.

***Come on...just one name.***

I respect every guest’s right to privacy.

***Don Johnson?***

Nice try.







## Not Politics as Usual.

In Canada's capital city, the pace of life moves faster than a hockey game with far less fighting. As the center of government, the area around Parliament Hill is constantly abuzz with the business of politics as Canada's biggest decisions are made. But this doesn't mean that it's always business as usual in Ottawa.



The Hotel Indigo Ottawa Downtown City Centre is just a few blocks away from Parliament Hill, located in a century-old brick building that looks a little out of place in the bustling business district. It's this same uniqueness that gives the hotel its charm. Guests enter through the building's original doors, sharing the same entrance as countless members of Parliament, Canadian business luminaries and, as one foggy urban legend has it, even Elvis Presley.

The hotel opens up into a massive 6-story atrium that fills the room with warm natural light during the day and glows a calm blue at night. Yet, despite all of the Elvis-worthy grandeur of the lobby, the hotel's General Manager says it's the mix of sophisticated style and cozy charm that's helped the Hotel Indigo bring a little splash of color to the Great White North.

***So, is this where all the cool secret government meetings are held?***

I can't say, but if I told you...

***You are the coolest general manager ever.***

I'm kidding, but truthfully, the building itself has an important place in the city's history – among other things, during World War II it was used for housing Canadian soldiers. Hopefully though, you can tell we've added a few amenities here and there.

***I bet the lighting and color tones in the lobby didn't change to match the time of day back then.***

Probably not, but today, from the rooms to this atrium to the artwork around the hotel we want to create a true escape for our guests.

***Color seems to play a big part around here.***

The artwork and the overall design have a very fresh, organic feel to it. I think we offer an upscale comfort that allows guests to relax and the setting truly enhances the experience. Photographers will often use the hotel for photo shoots because it feels very cozy and bright.

***What if I refuse to be cold, where should I go?***

I know that's the perception, but it's absolutely beautiful in the summer. The winter months are pretty magnificent as well. When the Rideau Canal freezes over it becomes the world's longest skating rink. It's something to see.

In terms of what to do, we're right by the National Art Gallery and National Arts Center, so there's a lot of culture nearby as well. Ottawa plays host to festivals and events all year long, like our jazz festival...so there's always something to do, even after hours, including some of the best jazz music you'll ever hear.

***Canada isn't really the first place you think of when you think of a hip jazz scene.***

This is a really diverse city and there is a lot of energy here. Our guests are always surprised at just how much there is to see and do around the city and our staff is always willing to help you find places both touristy and off the path.

***Okay, give me the most off the path place you can think of.***

I would, but if I told you...

***So, so cool.***

I try.







## Bird Watching in Buffalo.

This is truly a unique part of America. The line between a busy, modern city and a scenic small town is blurred and people like it that way. Downtown features all the trappings including a counter culture nightlife, theater district and big business. The difference is that it's surrounded by farmland and a very photo friendly landscape that is nothing short of inspiring.



It's this combination that makes the Hotel Indigo Buffalo – Amherst stand out in its neighborhood.

The hotel, just a short drive from the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, sits surrounded by the peaceful green space of the University of Buffalo's North Campus, where students can often be seen walking across the large grass fields to get to class. The Amherst Bike Path winds through sections of town left untouched by development and visitors often end up at the Great Baehre Swamp to birdwatch among other things. Yes, bird watching in Buffalo...kind of sums up what the Hotel Indigo is all about.

A peaceful oasis amid a big city that is depicted throughout the hotel with images of neighboring nature settings like Glen Falls. The feel of the outdoors doesn't just extend to the artwork; the building itself has an openness that feels more like a European open-air courtyard, which gives eating a plate of hot wings with the hotel's General Manager a very sophisticated feel.

***When you think of big cities, trees aren't usually the first thing to come to mind.***

Yes, we have a lot of green space around despite being only a few minutes from downtown. People find it very relaxing as soon as they enter the lobby, which is an experience in its own right. Everything is very seasonal from the sights and sounds to the scents.

***If I may, what does Buffalo smell like in say, October?***

Cranberry-Apple Marmalade.

***I have to know who's got the best wings.***

Our restaurant is a great place to start, though we are not the Anchor Bar, we know how to do it. We have all sorts of Buffalo staples here and we deliver what you want when you want it. If you'd like a New York Strip steak at 9AM or scrambled eggs at midnight, we'll make it for you.

***It seems like that attitude is a real part of the culture here. Is that caused by smelling too much Cranberry-Apple Marmalade?***

We definitely take great care to get to know our guests, whether it's families here to send their kids off to college or the crews that often come over from the airport. I'll tell you a fun story: we had a guest traveling with her daughter who lost a tooth while she was staying with us and was very upset because she didn't think the Tooth Fairy came to hotels. Our front desk employee ordered a gift basket with a teddy bear and a several coins and had it sent up after she had gone to bed.

***That's the nicest thing I've ever heard. Did you frame the tooth?***

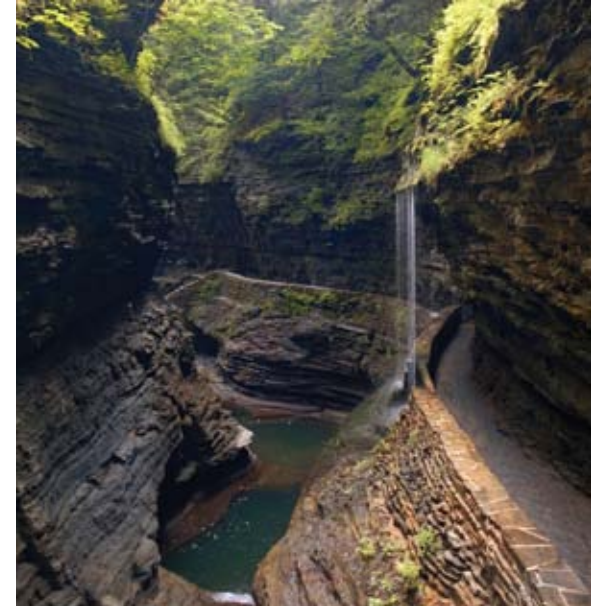
Well, no. But, we really do love it when families come to stay with us. With all of the outdoor activities like the bike trail, plus easy access to the rest of the city, there's something for everyone. If you're not as outdoorsy, we're close to some of the local watering holes that are distinctly Buffalo, including Duff's Restaurant, the Pearl Street Brewery and we've got lots to watch as we proudly host the two greatest teams in the NFL and NHL.

***I forgot what an insane sports town Buffalo is.***

We pretty much live and breathe Bills and Sabres around here.

***Please don't tell me that you make the lobby smell like a hockey player during the playoffs.***

Who's to say that a hockey player doesn't smell like Cranberry-Apple Marmalade?







## At the Corner of Music and Education.

Inside the Hotel Indigo on Music Row, the warm colors and tones of the lobby feel as intimate as the music played there every night by up and coming singers and songwriters. Well, most of them are up and coming. Some of the bigger names in country and rock who come to town might check-in anonymously, but after a while they all find the draw of the red, baby grand piano in the lobby just too hard to resist.



In every room of the hotel, images of guitars and pianos share the space with murals depicting scenes from Nashville that leave no question why musicians have come here for years to find their inspiration. Inspiration, in fact, seems to be what drives the neighborhood around this Hotel Indigo. On a street lined with recording studios, you're only about a mile from one of the most prestigious schools in the nation, Vanderbilt University.

It's about 10 minutes before nine here in the bar, and a guest/country star of the future is about to go on. There is a buzz in the room that the band might be joined by a fellow musician who happens to have just wrapped up a recording session down the street. In other words, it's a normal night here at Hotel Indigo Nashville Music Row - Vanderbilt.

As the General Manager of the hotel brings me a beer provided by a local brewery, I start to wonder if the staff here has seen enough of these shows now to know who has what it takes to make it.

***There really is a lot of creative energy here.***

You're right about the energy. There is music here every night...it's a lot of fun seeing these young artists really putting it out there. You never know who's going to show up either. Alongside that, you have people staying here who are somehow involved with Vanderbilt. Let's just say that between the two, we have a lot of smart people staying here.

***How does anyone sleep?***

It's our job to make sure everyone feels relaxed and at home. And everything, really everything, right down to the colors of the walls was chosen for that very reason. The rooms, the food with a local flavor – we really want every part of the experience our guests have to feel unique and refreshing.

***Okay, but when a star is staying here, they get the star treatment, right? Like extra, extra soft towels?***

We treat everyone the same. The staff is very service oriented and quick with a smile. I think that's why so many musicians stay here. It's a very cool and casual environment. You can just be yourself.

***Do you get a lot of people playing chopsticks on that red baby grand piano?***

It's pretty impressive isn't it? One night Neil Diamond came in after a concert and sat down and started playing. It was fun watching people start to realize what was going on and just seeing the group around him get bigger and bigger.

***Did he play "Chopsticks"?***

No. Thankfully, he played songs from his own collection.







## The Garden City Getaway.

Pull up to the front of the Hotel Indigo Newton Riverside and you might feel like you've gone back in time – 1965 to be exact. That's when the building was originally built just a short stroll away from the Charles River where locals from nearby Boston would make their way to this affluent Massachusetts neighborhood on the trolley to spend a leisurely afternoon full of arcade games, picnics, outdoor theatre and ballroom dancing.



Surrounded by lush New England foliage, whose colors alone bring travelers from all over the world, the hotel sits square between a golf course and a liberal arts college. And barely a quarter-mile down the road, the same subway terminal that brought folks to the neighborhood so many decades ago, now shuttles hotel guests straight down the Green Line to Fenway Park and the heart of Beantown.

Meeting in the lobby of the hotel whose colors blend perfectly with the trees outside, the hotel's General Manager splits time talking with me about what makes this location so unique and going back and forth with a regular guest about how the Red Sox are looking these days.

***So, it seems the locals really consider this neighborhood a getaway from the fast pace of downtown Boston.***

It is actually why a lot of the staff we have are here. Newton has all of the character, the history, the culture you expect. But when you get to Hotel Indigo, with the European-style rooms, an award-winning upscale steakhouse and outdoor pool that makes guests feel like they're vacationing....it's a true escape in every sense of the word.

***People love to talk about that pool on TripAdvisor...***

Well once you see it, you get it. Still, it's been a very pleasant surprise. Not only do guests enjoy it during their stay, but it is a huge hit with people from the area. People love to rent the cabanas for bachelorette parties, corporate outings or just to spend the afternoon. We actually offer neighbors a discounted pool pass. It's really kind of an anomaly. You're enjoying this hip, urban vibe but you're in the affluent neighborhood of Newton.

***In the spirit of smooth transitions, take us from the pool to the steakhouse...***

Well I actually think a day at the pool followed by a nice steak dinner sounds pretty good. We're very proud of the work the staff and chef have done to help build its reputation as a real dining destination. Other hotels' shuttles will actually drop their guests off to eat here; that says a lot.

***Home of the Fig Newton, correct?***

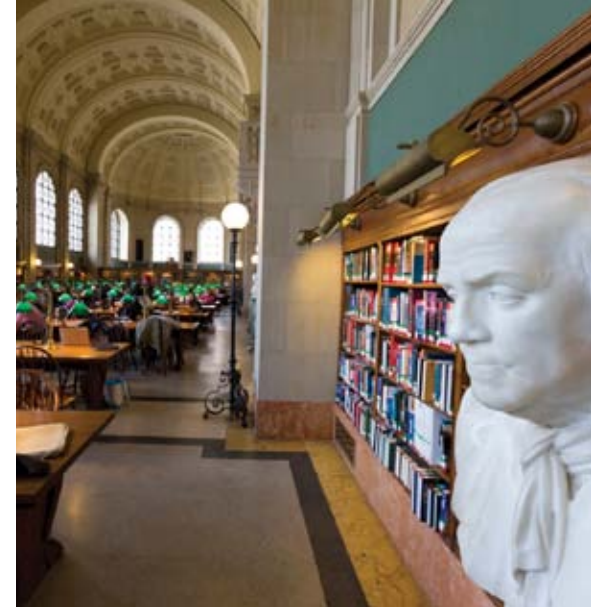
Among many other things. Newton was recently ranked #3 in CNN/Money's List of America's best small cities. It's divided into 13 villages that offer the best of small town New England charm and yet, you're just a short train ride away from one of the greatest cities in the world. Our hotel only enhances the experience.

***That's just one of many public displays of affection for the hotel, isn't it?***

We were recognized as the Editors' Choice for "Best Modern Décor" in *Yankee Magazine's* "Travel Guide to New England." The hotel's interior design changes to reflect the season, so our guests who are here more frequently can enjoy a unique experience with each visit. And the design is only enhanced by the people who work here – several also live in the neighborhood, so they'll take guests' mail by the box on their way home or stop at the grocery store to pick up items you may not always find at a hotel. Little personal touches that you could otherwise only get in your hometown.

***Like maybe a pair of Red Sox tickets?***

I can't make any promises there; let's start with a box of Fig Newtons.







## Designed to Stand Out.

If there's one thing you learn about Columbus, Indiana, it's that the city itself seems to defy convention. It's in the way it looks, but also in the way it forces you to look at it. Thanks to modern architects brought to Columbus by local philanthropist and visionary, J. Irwin Miller, Columbus has become a nationally recognized architectural wonderland.



There are these odd, elegant shapes, unexpected angles and interesting forms rising up all around you. It's why, right now, bus tours are making pilgrimages to this artsy little community.

In the middle of it all is the Hotel Indigo Columbus Architectural Center, and the middle is really the best place to be if you want to learn more about a place. So, I met up with the General Manager in the lobby and couldn't help but notice a fluffy white, Bichon Frise that looked at home on a contemporary piece of furniture.

***Who's your friend?***

This is Miles, our Doggy Ambassador. We think he adds to the spirit of the hotel. Everyone looks after him. Children love him and he loves the attention. He's a great conversation-starter. We even sell his stuffed animals for guests to take home to their kids.

***So, basically I just pet an employee.***

He does have his own business cards, but we like to think of him as family.

***What are some ways you bring the architectural spirit of the community into the hotel?***

The red accents throughout the hotel were inspired by the suspension bridge you crossed to get into the city. This 'womb chair' was designed by Eero Saarinen, who designed the St. Louis Arch as well as North Christian Church. His father, Eliel, also designed First Christian Church, which is down the street.

***You've mentioned the community a couple times. What makes it so Columbus?***

It's just different. We have a really cool children's museum, Kidscommons, which has a two-story slide that is shaped like a toilet. The Cinema shows art and independent films and hosts local comedians, plus we have fantastic restaurants lining our streets. And definitely visit Zaharakos. It's a true old-fashioned ice cream parlor that looks exactly the way it did when it served up its first scoop in 1900. All of it is special.

***Tell me a little about your restaurant, The Gallery.***

We're known for what's on the walls as much as the menu. We partner with the Columbus Museum of Art and Design to showcase work from local artists and host meet-and-greets with them. We are proud to have won a "Business in the Arts" award for these events.

***Speaking of art, that is one big picture out front.***

It's great isn't it? It was part of a contest to spotlight local artists. The winning picture is a 55-ft depiction of local beauty that we wanted to share with our guests.

***What do the guests think of your distinct style?***

The personal service stands out. We try hard to create memorable experiences. We also listen to our guests and act on it. We had a group of guys from New Zealand coming to stay, but their flight was delayed. We knew they really wanted to rent bikes to ride around town, so we went to a local bike store to rent them and had them waiting upon their arrival.

***Not a lot of hotels work like that.***

We just believe in treating everyone special, whether they're a guest or neighbor. We partner with non-profits like the Columbus Area Arts Council and the Columbus Philharmonic, area dog parks and the Humane Society. We even host Canines and Cocktails, a happy hour once a month in the summer where locals stop by with their dogs to grab a treat and drink our 'Puppy Punch' cocktail.

***What does Miles think about all those dogs on his turf?***

He gets right in the middle of it, but you can ask him yourself at [miles@dorahotelco.com](mailto:miles@dorahotelco.com).







## A Midwestern Oasis.

If you ask the people who call Fishers, Indiana, home, they'll tell you this is the perfect little Midwestern community to raise a family, to work and live the good life. *Business Week* even called it "the most affordable suburb in America." Not bad for an old trading post prairie town, originally called Fishers Switch, which sprang up as a train station in the late 1870s to help pioneer the rest of the Midwest.



While those locomotives have all but stopped, the quality of life hasn't – fishing and waterskiing at Geist Reservoir, renovated playgrounds, the State Fair right down the street. It all has a small town feel that's just far enough away from the Indianapolis city lights.

Much like that iconic station, Hotel Indigo Indianapolis Fishers has become a welcomed way station for travelers along their journey to a nearby convention, a meeting downtown or, in my case, for an interview with the General Manager.

***Why do I feel like I'm waiting for the next train?***

Probably has something to do with the railroad pictures throughout the hotel. It's one way we share our neighborhood story; reminds guests how they would have gotten here in the old days. Now that train only runs about once a year during the Indiana State Fair, shuttling people to the fairgrounds about 10 miles away to Indianapolis on the same tracks that put Fishers on the map.

***I don't want to gossip, but what do people in Fishers say about Hotel Indigo?***

I don't gossip either, but I'd say we more than fit in with the neighborhood here. If you talk to guests, or look at their reviews online, they might say something about the unexpected service, and that we listen and then act on it. I can tell the second someone walks through our front door...they stop and just look around. You can tell they're taking it all in. Everywhere else people head straight for the front desk. Here they take a moment.

***You sound pretty proud.***

Yeah, you have to be proud of where you work.

***What else might your guests take away?***

We have a beta fish named Bubbles that you can take to your room as kind of a loaner pet. And there's Fibi, our lobby dog. She's a borki – half Yorkie, half Bichon Frise. You know, I think people expect our beautiful rooms, unique designs and that our service is as good as it gets, but fast-forward a year from now and that same guest will remember how easy going we are and how at home they felt here.

***Where can I get a good taste of the neighborhood culture?***

Which century? Visit Conner Prairie Living History Museum to sample 19th century life in the Midwest. There's Prairie Town, a replica pioneer village with a blacksmith, schoolhouse, pottery shop and I think you can walk around with a giant turkey leg, if you want. Peterson's on 96th also serves a nice lobster and strip steak if that's more your thing.

***Lots of your guests come for business in Indianapolis. How do you take care of them?***

We say it all the time, but we listen to every guest. It doesn't matter if their needs are big or small. My favorite example of this is when we had a local mom who called ahead to ask about our pool. She told us her young son was having ear surgery downtown and wanted to swim one last time before he had to give up swimming for a while. So when they checked in, we surprised him with pool toys to take his mind off of the surgery. Things like that make us, and them, smile.

***So, you have your "fair share" of fairs in Fishers – The Fishers Freedom Festival, the Flavor of Fishers and the Fishers Renaissance Faire. Of the three, which one is your favorite?***

They're all great at showing off the best of our town. I love them all.

***Come on...***

It's a fair, what's not to love.







## From Barons to Baby Gifts.

Halfway between Chicago and Milwaukee lies an idyllic Illinois community, far removed from the busy streets of the Windy City. Forests, open fields and roads lined with fountains celebrate the beauty of the old Midwest.



In the early 1900s, Vernon Hills became known as the town where Chicago's wealthy industry barons built their country estates. One of these estates, the iconic Cuneo Mansion and Gardens, serves as inspiration for the artwork throughout the Hotel Indigo Chicago – Vernon Hills.

Photography and murals with images of the Italianate architecture and lush prairie gardens are prominently featured as a symbol of the elegance and beauty that defines the area – an affluent suburb that seamlessly mixes the corporate world with family life, which is why even the floor plan at the Hotel Indigo works well. Most reviews online have words in common: “HUGE” rooms, “open and spacious” and “not like anything else in town.”

The landmarks, the photography, the restaurants; they all seem to come together with the intent to fit in with the luxurious lifestyle that has been the norm here for over a hundred years. Even the hotel space itself evokes a spacious, upscale feel– the front desk occupies a two-story lobby that feels expansive without being unwelcoming. It was here that I joined the General Manager of the hotel to find out a little more about this unique location.

***The mansion down the street is impressive, but this place feels like a palace!***

Well thank you very much! We do our best to make sure our guests feel like they're being pampered a little when they stay here. That's why, among other things, every room is a studio suite with a sitting area.

***So every guest has their own little living room?***

Yes! It's the little touches that make it feel like home.

***Is that why people keep coming back?***

We're a boutique hotel with a small staff located near a lot of Chicago's most important corporate offices, which is something of a rarity. The employees know that if they're helping a guest, they have to get it right because they'll see them again. We have a lot of repeat visitors who know us by name. We buy them baby gifts; they give us pictures of their kids. We think of the hotel as our home, and our guests are like extended family coming to stay with us.

***I've got a couple of hours; what should I do around town today?***

Definitely check out the Cuneo Mansion and Gardens, as well as Independence Grove, a beautiful area for hiking and bike paths. We're also close to Six Flags Great America & Hurricane Harbor, Great Lakes Naval Station, Gurnee Mills Mall, Chicago Botanic Garden and Glacier Ice Arena.

***There's a little something for everyone.***

That's what is so appealing about this location. As an all studio suite hotel though, we have become popular with families as well our corporate travelers. Like so many years ago, it's a great escape for Chicagoans and business travelers too.

***...Which explains the martini bar in the hotel.***

Very observant. There's really nothing else like it in the area. We serve over 25 different martinis. Our guests love it, and our corporate neighbors sometimes come by as well at the end of the day.

***25 martinis? Now THAT'S fancy. Does it come with a monocle?***

There's no need for one, come as you are!







## The Broadway Next Door.

Rahway, New Jersey is a short train ride from New York City, but it is way more than just another stop along the way. Even though the brick buildings and homes spread throughout the city are reminders of a history that dates back to the Revolutionary War, some of the most important technology-focused companies in the world call Rahway home.



The tallest building in the city, however, belongs to the Hotel Indigo Rahway – Newark. From the penthouse, you can see the New York City Skyline clear as day. The contemporary rooms and plush lounge just off the lobby fit right in with the vibrant style that lights up Broadway, but actually represent the many performance spaces that are an easy walk from the hotel and draw acts from near and far. I met up with the General Manager in the lounge to talk about the culture of Rahway and how the hotel truly has its own role in the community.

***Where'd all the funky artwork come from?***

We actually have many local artists who provide us with their work so we can display it throughout the hotel, like in our hallways and common areas. It's part of our dedication to the huge arts scene here in Rahway. We also try to support our local musicians, having them play here on a regular basis. We attract a lot of actors, screenwriters...Carl Sagan even spent time here.

***So, do you have some artists and actors working here as well?***

Some. It's a great group of people who are truly dedicated to their jobs. They're willing to go above and beyond the call of duty in a way that I have never seen at other hotels. A while ago, we had a guest who had left her purse on the express train bound for New York City. One of the team members managed to get through to someone on the train and have them retrieve it for her. I can't even imagine how difficult her vacation would have become if he hadn't been able to do that for her.

***How does such a small town have such a big performing arts community?***

It's always been a part of Rahway's charm. It started with Vaudeville acts and silent movies in the twenties. Now, we have everything from live comedy to hip hop shows to flamenco dancing. The good thing about being in a small area is that you're close to it all. Open mic nights, poetry readings, chess, soccer tournaments, salsa lessons...

***Okay, I think I get it.***

Traditional Irish music, dance clubs, art galleries, live theater...

***Lots of fun stuff...***

Just down the street is the Union County Performing Arts Center, which is the main venue for the larger shows in the areas. I'd recommend checking it out. It's a great old building highlighted by the original pipe organ that still plays like new. You have to hear it.

***With so much happening outside, I am pleasantly surprised by how many people are hanging out in here.***

Well, the hotel has its own history and draw too. It's been part of an old gas station, a restaurant and a bank. When they were breaking ground on this site to begin constructing the hotel, they discovered an old bank safe from the 1700s. This town just has a lot of character wherever you look.

***You should deliver room service through those drive-thru bank tubes.***

That might get a little messy.







## A True Executive Retreat.

Centuries ago, a 90-foot White Oak signaled to visitors they were approaching Basking Ridge, New Jersey. The tree still stands, but today if you're doing business at one of the nearby corporate headquarters, you find your way into town via I-78.



To say Basking Ridge is an affluent area would be an understatement. Tenured college professors and retired executives live how the rest of us only dream – filling their days with golf, horseback riding and long walks through the rolling countryside.

If you were to go on one of these walks, you would see evidence of the farmlands that used to dominate the area, now repurposed as equestrian playing fields. Still, the main roads run through this pastoral setting, making everyday conveniences easily accessible for the people who live here. A few miles off the main road, nestled beneath a canopy of oak trees, the Hotel Indigo Basking Ridge, looks like a stately, classic country house.

You know how comfortable it feels to stay at your parents' for a few nights? That's the feeling here as I sit by the fireplace in the lobby across from the hotel's General Manager, swallowed up by giant sofa cushions.

***I am way too cozy right now. Will you put a blanket over me if I fall asleep?***

We always do.

***Okay. So I'm a retired Wall Street guy. What makes Basking Ridge the ideal place for me?***

You're looking to settle into a community and get away from the city while still enjoying modern conveniences and culture. You've always wanted to surround yourself with nature and the serenity it offers, and Basking Ridge has that in spades. Are you really a Wall Street guy?

***Don't ruin it for me.***

A lot of our guests enjoy walking outside around the hotel. There are a few other buildings around, but you wouldn't know it since they're concealed by trees and tend to blend into their surroundings. If you're not familiar with the area you may think you're in the middle of nowhere...in a good way.

***What draws people to this neighborhood?***

It's quintessential small-town America, with locally owned stores and truly friendly people. All of the retail and office spaces are in old 19th-century homes with modest signs out front. One of the highlights is an outdoor marketplace that sells homegrown foods, including an amazing tomato soup.

***I heard you've hosted a lot of locals after snowstorms. Did you serve them tomato soup?***

People from town have come here to escape blackouts and blizzards. They leave their rooms in the morning and settle into one of these couches by the fire with a book or their laptop. We have the news on so they can keep up with current events and of course, the bar is open.

***I hear the artwork in the hotel has some real patriotic history behind it.***

They reference the Old Oak of Basking Ridge, which is about 600 years old. There is a legend that George Washington often rested under the old oak in the cemetery when he rode from his headquarters in Morristown to visit his troops. Like the rest of us, the General probably wanted a place where he could get away from it all.

***You're really talking about the hotel aren't you?***

I was trying to help you bring it all back around.







## Choose Your Adventure.

You could say that what makes the greater Miami area so cool is that it's never been able to be defined as any one thing. It is swamplands, dairies and lush orange groves dating back to the 1950s, beautiful beaches, premiere shopping, a booming college town, a major hospital hub and home of the famous US-1 freeway, which conveniently connects it all to the Hotel Indigo Miami – Dadeland.



Like the city itself, the hotel is tough to classify as one thing. It has a unique 1970's architecture, oversized seascape murals full of underwater creatures that jump out against white stone floors, white walls and white pillars reminding you exactly how close you are to the water. I'm told that the service levels and customer satisfaction here are consistently rated one of the highest in the area. I wanted to review it for myself so I tracked down the General Manager, who was greeting guests as they stepped off the hotel shuttle.

***I read on TripAdvisor that your hotel is "The best kept secret in Miami." Do you ever pick up guests from other hotels and bring them here to experience it?***

People know where to find us. We are so close to one of the world's best hospitals – guests come from all over for specialized treatment nearby and they depend on our shuttles to make those appointments. We also have many business and leisure travelers who want to be close to the fun of South Beach, but able to get away from it when they need to.

***Is that why so many are singing your praises?***

When you're genuine and sincere, everything else clicks. We make the lobby feel more like a gathering place. And we treat everyone like family. It's about taking care of people in ways they might not expect. That's what makes our service inspiring.

***How do you help to inspire the neighborhood?***

We're active with Baptist Hospital. We've held a number of benefits here for the Chamber of Commerce. And almost every one of our team members are bilingual as they are part of the large Latin American population in the area. We like getting out there and being a part of our neighborhood.

***So, what do you suggest I do today in your neighborhood?***

The first thing we always ask is, "what are you into?" Kite surfing, waterskiing, paddle boarding, tropical gardens, the zoo, swampboat alligator tour, skeetshooting, diving, fishing. I could go on. Just hop on the shuttle and start with Matheson Hammock Park and Beach. It has a little bit of everything.

***You make it sound like I'm auditioning for some kind of extreme game show.***

We have a pool if that's your thing. If you want to relax on Biscayne Bay, go sight-seeing, shopping or taste authentic Cuban food or something from the Argentinian bakery across the street, we'll point the way. I love sending people to the Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden, which is this exotic collection of tropical plants and trees from around the world.

***What if I want to eat fresh seafood, but not swim with it?***

I can name fifteen places within fifteen miles of here. There's Captains Tavern – they are a local spot serving only the freshest food. Want South Beach's best? Joe's Stone Crab...

***What's the best way to see it all?***

You'd be surprised how many people rent a convertible. But a cab will get you everywhere you need to go if our shuttle can't. A few guests recently went skydiving. That sounded kind of cool. We had a couple last week who took a helicopter ride that skims over the ocean. Best way to see dolphins, really.

***I'll start with a shuttle ride.***

Around here, most adventures do.







## Always the Place to Be.

In the 1960s, Latham, New York, was seen by many as a quiet hamlet on the way to Albany, the state's capital and sister city six miles away, making it an ideal spot to open a transportation terminal for loading and unloading goods. As the times and tastes changed, so did this commercial way station, which went another direction entirely and became the Park V Café & Lounge, one of the hottest discos this side of Studio 54.



Not long after the last pair of platform shoes danced through its door in the early 1980s, Park V became a local restaurant for a decade or so, and then a hotel was built onto it. In 2008, the property did what it does best – transformed itself into something that resembled nothing that came before it, the Hotel Indigo Albany Latham. That’s where I sat down with their General Manager to dive into their unique backstory and one of the best burgers I have ever eaten.

***How do you explain the evolution from depot to disco to boutique hotel?***

This property has always been a place that offered something people want: a fill-up and a hot cup of coffee, a night out in your best dancing polyester or just inspired service and a great night’s sleep.

***Have you considered bringing back the old disco ball on Saturday nights?***

No, but I like to think this place was ahead of the times then, and it is now. We’re proud of the heritage here. Seriously, where else would you find that kind of story? By the way, I should mention that you are sitting where the stage used to be.

***This isn’t the first time I’ve eaten a hamburger on a dance floor. So what brings people here now?***

We’re the hotel in the area with this modern, boutique vibe carried through from the lobby to the rooms. Siena College and University of Albany are nearby, so we get lots of graduation guests. Some wedding parties. We’re also only a quarter-mile from the Albany International Airport and get a good deal of corporate travelers. There’s a racetrack 20 miles away, which brings a lot of business. Our hotel is near premiere shopping spots like the Colonie Center Mall downtown and Pearl, Broadway and Lark Streets.

***I see pictures of fields, ferns, acorns, apples...in a lobby that looks like Latham from the future. What makes all these nature murals work with this contemporary motif?***

Nature is all around us, and we’re surrounded by farmland. There are these great orchards not too far from here where you can go apple picking. There’s also Crossing of Colonie, a 300-acre park with great running and biking trails, a farmer’s market, a skating rink in the winter and the Albany Pine Bush Reserve, which is a 3,000-acre preserve of rare plants and wildlife. So, we chose art that both captures the area and complements our place within it.

***Where do you see Hotel Indigo Albany Latham in another 30 years?***

Continuing to reinvent itself and still playing an important part in the community. Hopefully still surrounded by all of this nature. A place that travelers seek out for something interesting and a little different.

***Would you say that your role in community is different as well?***

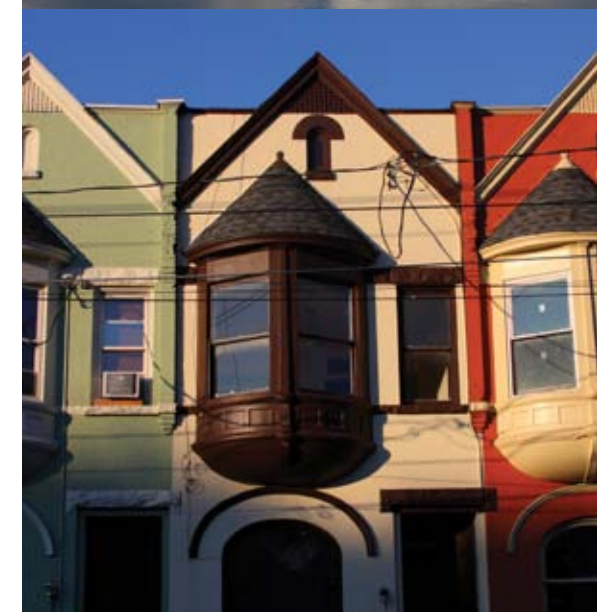
We believe in actively reaching out and giving back. We sponsor the local Ronald McDonald House and help with individual fundraisers for parents of children with the most aggressive forms of cancer. We’ve sponsored events for Coaches versus Cancer, helping local college basketball coaches raise funds and awareness. Habitat for Humanity is another partner. We host events here for their corporate sponsors to help raise money for the local chapter.

***Are any interesting visitors still passing through?***

You might like this. We had this sweet, older gentleman and his wife stop by not too long ago asking if this was the same place he used to visit 35 years ago. I had to ask if he meant the depot or the disco.

***What did he say?***

He was looking for the apple orchard.







## Making Connections.

Think about what a perfect day is like – it's refreshing, you wake up feeling good and people seem abnormally nice as they go out of their way to help you. On a perfect day, you also probably have a great meal, great conversations, endless choices of what to do and where to go and ultimately, you find yourself walking down a colorful hallway with quirky, colorful striped carpeting that makes you happy.



Okay, that part might sound more like a hallucination than a perfect day, but you get the point.

Self-described as a stately townhouse overlooking Norfolk Square, the Hotel Indigo London – Paddington has maintained the traditional exterior that fits the style of this neighborhood that at one time was the sole supplier of all of London’s dairy products. True to the hotel’s reputation though, the interior offers something entirely different.

The inviting glow of the front desk is offset by a glass spiral staircase that leads to stylish rooms with artwork that captures the true character of the neighborhood, which the hotel’s General Manager pointed out to me when we met in their brasserie for a chat.

***Let’s start with the building itself, the exterior has a real timeless feel to it.***

The area is filled with numerous small garden squares, Victorian buildings and lots of green. We had to rebuild much of the hotel, but it is in a conservation area, so much of the refurbishing was done with the intention of capturing the historic feel of our surroundings.

***Not too many cows left in town, though.***

No, that was quite some time ago. Paddington has become a very important part of London’s business landscape. The area is very affluent, but there is still a true sense of community here. All of the locals know each other and support the local restaurants and shops, which are all within walking distance of the hotel.

***One of those restaurants being right here in the hotel.***

Yes, the London Street Brasserie is very popular with our neighbors with a truly international flavor to the menu, and we do use local produce in our dishes. The restaurant has its own street entrance and I’d say close to half of the guests who dine here are either from here or live nearby and took the train here.

***The trains do make it seem like you’re the center of the universe.***

Well, the center of London perhaps. We are just down the street from Paddington Station, which is a main train station for business people and tourists. It is actually more convenient for travelers coming from Heathrow to stay in Paddington than it is to stay in Heathrow itself. I say this because the train gives you access to Hyde Park, Little Venice, Grand Union Canal – really the best of London is all very accessible.

***My sources tell me that London Paddington is the birthplace of Elvis Costello, Emma Thomson and Prince William.***

***If you only had one room left, who would get it?***

I am sure both gentlemen would say ladies first.







## Where the Sun Always Seems to be Shining.

Read the customer reviews about Hotel Indigo Miami Lakes on TripAdvisor and you'll notice a few things. First, "a great find" is a very common phrase. Second, there is a true appreciation for the architecture; built in the 60's as the original Miami Lakes Golf Club, the newly renovated hotel features an exterior design that resembles a Key West bungalow and is located directly on the Senator golf course at Shula's Golf Club.



The postings that jump out the most, though, are the ones about how friendly everyone seems. Not, “this is my job and I have to do this, friendly,” but really, truly nice people who actually are interested in how your day has been or what you’ve been up to lately.

It might just be because that’s the way things are in a neighborhood like Miami Lakes with its endless supply of parks and lakes, where it’s just as easy to ride a bike or walk as it is to drive and where the restaurants and shops line Main Street.

I met with the General Manager of the Hotel Indigo Miami Lakes first thing in the morning because I was told that 23 Bar & Bistro is a great place to get a “feel for the neighborhood.” We sit in the hotel’s lush, perfectly serene courtyard in a Tiki hut appropriately surrounded by tropical plants, the cool, chic sounds of Spanish guitar and what I thought to be the distant sound of mooing.

***What is with all of the cows here?***

In the 20’s, Miami Lakes was primarily land for growing sugar cane, but a flood turned the area into swampland. In the 60’s, the Graham family started what became the largest dairy farm in the South, cows and all. The Graham’s blueprints for this area are built around families and the importance of community, that’s why Hotel Indigo fits in so well. There were plenty of open spaces in those blueprints, though, and a great result from that is, well...the cows are still here.

***It must be really tough to come to work here every day.***

It’s not just how beautiful it is here, but the warmth of the people, the staff, the guests, the “regulars” from the neighborhood who stop in for a quick bite prior to their round of golf or an evening cocktail at the bar after a long day at work. It just feels like everyone knows each other, asks how their kids are doing, about a recent trip or about a round of golf. Our staff lives here, their kids go to school and church together with people from around town. Our greatest effort is to make Hotel Indigo a home away from home for all parties involved.

***Do the local sports heroes stay here?***

We respect our guests’ privacy, but we are just a few minutes drive away from Heat, Dolphins and Marlins games, South Beach, the main ports and airports and some of the best shopping districts in the world. That’s the great thing about Miami Lakes – you can do everything here and Hotel Indigo is right in the middle of it all.

***You sound like you are running for mayor.***

I’m just proud of what we have here – business travelers, romantic getaways, golf weekends and a truly great mix of Main Street U.S.A and the Latino culture. The hotel reflects the best of all Miami has to offer. Our restaurant offers fresh baked goods and coffee in the morning and incredible Latino cuisine, and I’ll put our tapas up against anyone’s any day.

***I’ll be the judge of that.***

Be my guest.







## Hollywood East.

In a city known for doing some storytelling of its own, Hotel Indigo Jacksonville – Deerwood Park features the architecture, cuisine, culture and history that make Florida’s largest city unique and allow guests and locals alike to make a true connection with their surroundings.



In the 20s and 30s, Jacksonville was a destination for New York-based filmmakers and stars with names like Barrymore and Hardy who used the beaches, buildings, farms and jungles to make thousands of silent films. The stories of those times and legends of those days live on in artwork and photographs that decorate the stylish hotel that sits quietly on the lakeside of Tapestry Park. It's a European themed village known for its gabled roofs, brick streets and antique clock in the heart of the town square. One that is buzzing with young, urban professionals who fill the shops and restaurants most nights of the week, creating a social scene that's like, well, something out of the movies.

Hotel Indigo sits at the end of a long boardwalk alongside a quiet lake, and this is where I am today with the hotel's General Manager, talking about Jacksonville's history of being the "Hollywood of the East" and why this particular hotel might be getting the best reviews of all.

***Hotel Indigo Jacksonville – Deerwood Park seems to be a real hit on the Internet.***

Well, I think we are a nice surprise for a lot of our guests. As big a city as Jacksonville is, the hotel and the Tapestry Park village area as a whole provide a much-needed escape for business travelers and people just looking to recharge a little.

***It does feel like a true escape here. What do you credit?***

Well, it starts with the location, the boardwalk, the lake, the local shops and restaurants...they all work together really well to create that feeling. Our hotel, the style of the building, the design inside, it all feels very complimentary of each other.

Our restaurant, 98FORTY East Bar & Bistro, overlooks the lake and offers a fresh menu inspired by our neighborhood growers, brewers and bakeries – bakers like the Village Bread, that hotel guests and our neighbors love. The bar provides more of a social scene where guests and locals enjoy the relaxed, casual atmosphere and locally hand-crafted brews. I really think it all starts with the staff here.

***I did see loads of positive comments about your staff in online reviewers' posts.***

Our staff definitely gets noticed. It really comes from having people who truly love what they do, helping our guests, creating a community vibe where people can feel and act like themselves. It's like a bed and breakfast with a few more rooms and the kind of luxury you expect from Hotel Indigo. The thing I like most about those postings is that it means we connected somehow, that they remembered the experience positively after their stay. That means a lot and it says a lot.

***Tell me more about be the silent movie capital of the world.***

It's pretty cool isn't it? Jacksonville has just about everything you could want geographically and these filmmakers realized it back in the 20s and 30s. At one time, there were nearly 30 movie studios here, making thousands of silent films. We have a lot of movie fans stay with us during the Jacksonville Film Festival. The festival is committed to connecting Jacksonville to its early moviemaking roots. A lot of those guests really love the artwork at our hotel, inspired by that era.

***So, when it comes to your hotel would you prefer "two thumbs up" or "5 stars?"***

Well, you know we love our stars. They shine pretty brightly here in Jacksonville.







## Bayside Beauty.

It's a funny thing being on a peninsula within a peninsula. For one thing, you're almost completely surrounded by water. But because that water is the Tampa Bay, and that place is Florida's historic downtown Saint Petersburg, what you feel is completely connected to everything around you.



The ‘everything’ is a close-knit community of art, history, shopping, strolling, sight-seeing, sailing, skiing and pointing at pelicans and porpoises under a perfectly blue sky. There are graceful parks, broad streets lined with swaying palms, Spanish architecture and great local restaurants when you need to sit for a bit. Today, warm breezes blow off that bay a few blocks away from the Hotel Indigo Saint Petersburg Downtown, a local landmark in its own right.

I met with the General Manager on the hotel’s sweeping front porch and sat down at one of the many comfy chairs and bistro tables, beneath the soft whirl of the ceiling fans.

***Tell me a little about St. Pete, and can I call it St. Pete?***

That’s the best thing about Saint Petersburg; it’s whatever you want it to be. Always has been ever since it was founded in 1875.

***Is it safe to assume that the city was founded by a group of painters and artists?***

No, but it may as well have been. Everyone here shares an appreciation for the city’s rich art history and our place in the art world. Just down the street are the Dale Chihuly Collection, the Salvador Dali museum, plus two dozen nearby boutique galleries. It’s why we consistently rank in American Style Magazine’s Top 10 Arts Destination for mid-sized U.S. cities. Here in the hotel we celebrate local artists with parties several times a year and you can buy the art right off the walls.

***This building seems to have a real history to it. I’ve heard it’s on the city’s ghost tour.***

Originally, this building was constructed in 1926 as a private home, then it was converted to a hotel, then a hospital, then a nursing home, back to a hotel, then another hotel. Those are the original doors, stained glass and wood. But for the record, I’ve never seen anything strange. We’re an old building in an old city, and both have a rich history so naturally people are curious.

***So...other than being a great location for a hotel, what makes your hotel stand out?***

We introduce people to the neighborhood by recommending places we think they’ll enjoy. I recently sent a woman to see Flamenco dancers and she came back with a few new dance moves she shared in the lobby. The hotel is so close to distinct St. Pete destinations like our beaches, the Pier...one of my favorite places to send people is the Saturday morning farmer’s market. It’s all literally right in our neighborhood.

***Where would you send me?***

I’d start with brunch at our local tavern followed by a little browsing at Bananas Music, which is probably the largest vinyl retailer in the world. Then maybe a Rays baseball game, followed by a trip to the casino on the gulf.

***What if I just want to kick back and watch a sunset? Where’s the best view?***

You’re sitting in it.







## **Courting the City of Palms.**

Fort Myers, Florida has all of the makings for a great story. Once home to a Civil War fort, its colorful riverside historic district is now paved with red bricks, lined with palm trees, boutique galleries, restaurants and condos. In the early 1900s, the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and Tamiami Trail Bridge brought a booming industry to town and put the place on the map as a winter hotspot.



A place so appealing, Thomas Edison and Henry Ford came here for inspiration. Today, innovators, artists, musicians, business professionals and lots of attorneys are drawn to this historic community and its warm weather.

I wanted to talk with someone who knows the neighborhood better than anyone. As it happens, Hotel Indigo is the only boutique hotel in the neighborhood. The General Manager invited me up to the Rooftop Lounge to watch the sunset over the downtown riverview from a really comfortable wicker rocking chair.

***I think I see a manatee.***

That's a kayak. But you can see manatees and dolphins from those bridges over there. If you look out toward Main Street you will see the courthouse with a beautiful American eagle sculpture carved from a 100-year-old banyan tree that was destroyed during Hurricane Katrina. A sculptor named Marlin Miller transformed it into something inspirational for the entire community. He stayed with us for two weeks while completing his project and the town had the unveiling reception for him in our lobby.

***Bubble lamps in the lobby, colorful local artwork, murals on the roof...where do you get your inspiration?***

It's all around us. Fort Myers is very much an artists' community. We have one of the largest art festivals in the country. The first Friday of each month, local galleries open their doors for a citywide Art Walk. Even the mural on our roof was painted by a local artist who won our "call to all artists" contest.

***So, how do the lawyers fit in to all this? I'm guessing you know some good lawyer jokes.***

I know some good lawyers. Within three blocks of the hotel there are about 15 law firms. Probably because we have both a federal and superior courthouse in the same building, right across the street. We've had times when lawyers, defendants, plaintiffs and jurors are all staying here at the same time as bridal parties, musicians and vacation groups.

***That must make for interesting happy hours.***

We wouldn't have it any other way. We have great relationships with the local neighbors and business community and they love to host their events here. We really enjoy being hosts to the neighborhood.

***By "being hosts" you mean doing whatever it takes?***

Whatever is best. A quick story: Not long ago we had a visually impaired guest. One of our team members took the time to find out how many steps it would take to get from our front desk to the elevator, and from there to their room. We are small enough to take care of every guest and still offer the amenities of a larger hotel.

***Roughly translated, your restaurant Vino de Notte means "wine of the notte?" What is a notte?***

Actually it means "wine of the evening."

***I hear it's as popular with the locals as your chef.***

Yes. Our chef recently won first place in the chili cook off on Fort Myers Beach and then first place again in the local hotel pig roast. He swears by fresh, local ingredients. We are big supporters of our local farmers market.

***With this line of questioning, do you think I have what it takes to be a lawyer?***

Have you ever studied law?

***I have read every John Grisham novel.***

That's a start I guess.







## An Authentic Discovery.

When you first visit San Jose, Costa Rica, you cannot help but hear a few common phrases. Things like “I saw a volcano today.” “I zip-lined through a rainforest” And, the local favorite...”pura vida” which loosely translates to “don’t worry, be happy.” This makes a lot of sense for a country well known for its easy going lifestyle.



Costa Rica is where you go to see active volcanoes ooze molten lava. Many go for the lush rainforests, breath-taking waterfalls, the picturesque pastures, rich culture, booming international businesses, charming local villages, amazing traditional cuisine and centuries-old churches. For those seeking a special kind of sanctuary, Hotel Indigo San Jose Forum Costa Rica is where you stay.

It helps to understand that this hotel is located almost exactly at the center of Costa Rica, close to Forum 1 and 2, the country's largest businesses parks. From the hotel lobby, you can take a five-minute ride to the ultra modern Multiplaza shopping mall. There are also trendy little suburban neighborhoods popping up. And somehow even with all this commercial development, San Jose is more connected to the culture than ever before, as the General Manager tells me over a cup of fresh-brewed coffee.

***Let me start by saying this is some good coffee.***

The beans are grown locally and exported everywhere. Did you know that most of the coffee you can get at chain coffee stores comes from this region?

***You are my new favorite barista. What else makes San Jose such a special place?***

love. I like sending people to the most traditional craft pottery or to the Santa Ana Church a few miles away. It's about 150 years old, from the original Spanish colony and always been a symbol of the area.

***Some would say your heated outdoor pool is a treasure.***

When you're out there, you have no idea that you're in the middle of a huge business complex and you're totally transported to this relaxing, peaceful oasis that's full of positive energy. The three-story waterfall mural helps. But my favorite place is our lounge. It's partially covered, which is great during the rainy season.

***I can taste the positive energy in this coffee. It's pretty bold.***

It's authentic. Everything about our hotel is. The bold, vibrant greens and oranges. The mixture of locally influenced textures, shapes and ceramics right down to the wood floors. Even our murals and photos capture the true beauty of our mountains, plants, trees and flowers. And the wide-open lobby was designed to keep guests interacting and talking with each other.

***Is it true that the only Spanish word I need to know around here is "chifrijo?"***

You will go a long way, for sure. Chifrijo is our traditional layered dish – rice, red beans, pork rinds, diced tomato, and maybe some pico de gallo with a few fresh tortilla chips on the side. You can get it just about anywhere around here, just takes a while to prepare because it is so good. It's worth the wait.

***What about something I won't find anywhere else?***

Visit the Arenal Volcano. When it gets dark, you can see glowing, hot lava pouring out and feel the ground rumble. Or the Poas Volcano, close to the magnificent La Paz gardens and waterfalls, this is a wonderful wildlife preserve that you must visit while in Costa Rica. We arrange tours from our hotel.

***If I visit the rain forest should I bring an umbrella?***

I'd at least pack a poncho wherever you go during the rainy season, April to November.

***Are you sure, because I want to blend in with the locals?***

If you want to blend, then all you need to know is "pura vida."







## An Extraordinary First Impression.

Hotel Indigo Toronto Airport lies, you guessed it, right by the Toronto airport. But unlike most airport hotels, this hotel is unique, attractive and modern – with a lot of cozy nooks to make travelers feel at home, or in this writer's case, the cooler more sophisticated version of home.



A peaceful hue sets the tone in the front lobby, along with public lounge areas, specifically designed for guests who've spent the day standing in airport security lines, while the artwork throughout the hotel depicts the beauty of the area, currently featuring horse racing that goes on just a few miles away at the Woodbine Racetrack.

Just off the lobby, the Elmbank Bistro is a nod to the historic surrounding neighborhood, a small farming community that thrived from the early 1800s until the early 1900s.

Staying true to its roots, no pun intended (okay it was), the bistro uses locally grown produce and it can safely be said that nothing off the menu here has ever been compared to airline food. Even more noteworthy to some is that the bistro offers beer brewed just a block down the street at the Molson Brewery, which some find the perfect reason to stay at the Hotel Indigo in its own right.

In talking with the General Manager, it becomes apparent that they have something to offer for everybody, which by the diversity of the guests is as much a necessity as it is a courtesy.

***With guests coming in from all over the world, is staffing any different?***

We picked our team very carefully, one from each country. I'm just kidding. But we do happen to be very diverse in terms of our cultural backgrounds, due to this being such a vibrant, international city. More importantly though, we have people who can work in a very fast-paced environment. You have to really be "on the ball" because things happen very quickly... airport shuttles are arriving all the time. Our focus is to take the stress out of travel, not add to it – what we call "inspired service."

***Inspired service? Does that mean you give business travelers a good pep talk before a presentation?***

No. It's about doing things differently than other hotels. For example, we know people are usually stressed when their flights first land, so in addition to the bar, we have a Tea Lounge, where guests can grab a cup of tea and a book from our library so they can wind down after a flight. We also have a cocktail hour one night a week, which usually lasts more than an hour, so our guests who don't have as much time for sightseeing can still enjoy themselves.

***The horse racing artwork is nothing short of stunning. Do you have a penthouse suite for the big winners at the track?***

To me, every room feels like a penthouse suite. There's a very comfortable, but sophisticated feel to the hotel. I am very proud that we are the first impression that a lot of people get when they come to Toronto.

***You're also close to Canada's Wonderland Amusement Park. Which ride do you recommend?***

I hear the Leviathan is a roller coaster rider's dream – 306 feet high, 148 km/h – are you up for it? We can arrange to have someone take you there.

***I'm probably more the cup of tea in the library kind of person.***

Like I said, we have something for everybody here.

***I'm afraid of heights, okay?***

We don't judge here.







## It's the Perfect Day.

When was the last time you stood in a hotel lobby and thought, “what a nice breeze?” At the Hotel Indigo San Diego - Gaslamp Quarter, the glass “nanawalls” that open and close in the front lobby allow for that very intentional “it’s the perfect day” feeling to be the norm.



Named for the gas lamps that lined the pedestrian friendly streets of Downtown San Diego's "New Town" in the 1860's, the Quarter is where you go in San Diego for music, dining, shopping, nightclubs, festivals, a ballgame...basically, it's where you go in San Diego.

And if the Quarter is where people go to experience the best of the city itself, Hotel Indigo is where people stay to experience the best of the Quarter. Whether it's spectacular views, a restaurant menu with recipes filled with local flavor, or a simple conversation with a staff member about the best hole-in-the-wall bar in town – everything about Hotel Indigo says it's not your ordinary hotel. To find out what makes things work so well here, I met with the General Manager of the hotel on the Meditation Terrace – yes, the Meditation Terrace.

***Standing here, it's only fair that I ask if you are at one with anything?***

Well, to begin, we're definitely at one with the neighborhood. Everything that is great about the Gaslamp Quarter has been key to the design of this hotel. Building this hotel – the architecture, the environmentally responsible construction, the artwork, the open air setting – it all represents an understanding of our natural environment. But, we've also captured the real sense of the area's history and culture and the energy of the vibrant, young population.

***When you say young and energetic, tell me more.***

I mean great people. We hire based on more than hotel experience here. We hire people who live here. The things they are passionate about are here. They know the difference between a tourist destination and that cool little club off the beaten path. As beautiful as the views are, as fashionable and urban cool as it is here, it really is all about the passion people bring to their job every day.

***If you made a pie chart of guests, how big would the surfer dude slice be?***

Actually, you wouldn't believe how diverse that chart would be. This is a town built for pedestrian traffic, so we're within walking distance to museums, boutiques, clubs, music festivals, PetCo Park where the Padres play. We get everyone from business travellers to staycationers, to people who drive here from Phoenix and Vegas just to beat the heat.

***You say pedestrian traffic – any regulars on the Meditation Terrace?***

That's for guests, but there are other reasons we have become pretty popular with our neighbors. We take a "boat to the table" approach with our seafood, grow our own herbs on the eco-roof garden and use only seasonal ingredients in the open-air style Table 509 Bar and Kitchen. And when the sun sets on the Pacific, the cocktails and breathtaking views from Level 9 Rooftop Bar make it one of the most awe-inspiring spots in the city.

***Sounds perfect.***

Like a cool breeze.







## Alternative Country.

A famous singer from a famous Athens, Georgia band once said that the beauty of the town is that it's so off the map; there's no way it could ever be the East Village or L.A. scene.



That singer also penned the lyrics “birthday party, cheesecake, jellybean, boom!” in a prophetic declaration that the world as we knew it was ending.

While some might argue about that sentiment, he was right about Athens in that there is no place like it. A classic college town that lives and breathes Bulldog football, but gets its real street cred from a culturally significant folk art scene and a musical history that has seen some of the biggest names in rock get their start playing fraternity houses up and down Milledge Avenue.

A youthful attitude, but a timeless feel is how the General Manager of the Hotel Indigo Athens – University Area describes the town. That description could just as easily be used for the hotel itself. Located in the heart of downtown, the architecture is inspired by the countryside of Athens, shaping the modern farmstead aesthetic for the hotel.

***I feel like I am literally sitting in a piece of folk art.***

I don’t think there’s a hotel that captures the feeling of its neighborhood more than this one. The exterior alone looks like a covered bridge that truly fits in with the character of Athens. Just as important, the hotel was built with a true consideration for the environment. Those red fins you see on the exterior not only add to the look, they help reduce heat within the building.

***It’s like some health foods...it looks so good that you can’t tell it’s actually good for you.***

We are proof that you can have style and substance. That’s Athens for you though...very independent and supportive of each other. We embrace that community spirit. Every morning, the coffee we serve is from a local brand. We display work from area artists in the Gallery@Hotel Indigo-Athens. One of my favorite events is our weekly Live after Five session featuring local musicians who play on our patio.

***I hear you serve up a mean S’more on the patio too.***

There’s nothing better during the winter months around here. We like to do the little things that just seem to keep the atmosphere very casual and upbeat. I think that not only makes us popular with guests, but locals too. We have a lot of regulars who come to check out the art exhibit, dine with us or just grab a drink at the bar after work.

***This place does seem exceptionally upbeat...is that just an extension of being eco-friendly?***

That comes from a staff that really cares about our guests. It makes our job more fun. One of my favorite moments was when a couple decided to have a spur of the moment wedding. The hotel staff brought it all together in record time. It was beautiful.

***Did you cry?***

I might have choked up a little.

***Tell me about the artwork in the hotel, and more importantly how often people try to sneak the posters out under their shirts.***

I love the photos because they’re so unique to the city. The concert posters are from musicians who got their start here. They are locally printed with frames made by local artists, constructed from reclaimed barn wood. To answer your question, I can safely say that we haven’t caught anyone with a picture of R.E.M. under their shirt.

***One final question... what does “birthday party, cheesecake, jellybean, boom!” mean to you?***

I think it means live each day to the fullest and boy, do we try.







## Unexpected Chemistry.

Somewhere in the middle of North Carolina lies an unincorporated region of 7,000 acres of land with more high tech companies than you can shake a test tube at. Named Research Triangle Park (RTP), it's the nation's first research park and perhaps the only one with its own zip code. Home to GlaxoSmithKline, IBM, Cisco Systems and dozens of other headquarters, it's a veritable factory for innovation.



Before 1950, RTP was a quiet no-man's-land between sister cities Raleigh and Durham, described by locals as "nothing but scrub pine and opossums." Now it's a hotbed for bioscience and government research. Yet, despite being freshly discovered territory, it's only a few miles from historic Durham and the state capital Raleigh. In recent years, these great cities have made the short lists of pretty much every national article on up-and-coming cities.

When I visited the office park's newest digs, the Hotel Indigo Raleigh Durham Airport at RTP, I found it as fresh and vibrant as the research going on nearby. As their General Manager sat down with me, where else, under the large picture windows in the corporate boardroom, we got to talking.

***Is this where you entertain the CEOs?***

More often it's where we host training sessions for start-up companies. We're in the top three hotels as far as function space goes in our area. But, the PhDs are usually gone after the workweek. Then, we get prospective students, parents and alumni coming for college visits and sporting events. We're in ACC territory, pretty much equidistant from Duke, University of North Carolina and North Carolina State campuses.

***I feel undereducated in comparison. Does everyone here drink water out of beakers?***

I can't speak for the researchers, but I will point out that we're second only to Washington, D.C. in terms of PhDs per square mile. On the weekends you'll see more bicycles than vehicles on the road, and we're one of the few areas to actually grow during recession times. Even the television we watch around here is different. I'd like to start a trivia night at the hotel and tap into some of that brainpower.

***Like, "What's the atomic number of Helium?"***

Too easy. Plus, our PhDs like their sports trivia like everyone else, and a few miles from here you can see the Durham Bulls, the minor league baseball team from the Kevin Costner movie 'Bull Durham'. Raleigh and Chapel Hill are also close by with their unique offerings, but we usually send our guests to Durham's historic tobacco district. You can see an off-Broadway show at the DPAC (Durham Performing Arts Center), and there are plenty of shops and restaurants in the old factory warehouses that have been restored.

***It sounds like PhDs can unwind with the best of us.***

In between moments of genius, they'll grab a cocktail or locally sourced snack from the hotel cafe and relax under the shade of our pine trees. Spring here is unbeatable, and since our weather is so mild we use the front and back patios almost year-round. Then, in a twist on Southern hospitality, we hand out fortune cookies at check-in. Each fortune offers a free breakfast or item from our shop.

***It's the luck of the draw, just like the success of a start-up. Am I reaching?***

I suppose the cookies could be a metaphor for this area. Who would have thought that our own version of Silicon Valley could emerge from miles of worn-out farmland full of pine trees and opossums?

***Is that a trivia question?***

Gotta start somewhere.







## The Scent of Style.

There's a reason why so many movies make New York City the backdrop for their stories. Why the "I heart NY" t-shirt has been a part of most people's wardrobes at one time in their life. And why taking a walk is the only thing a tourist needs to do to get their money's worth. It's because New York doesn't just have something for everyone, it's more like there are entire districts for everyone.



From shopping to banking to theater to food, it is exciting, busy, relentless, fast-paced, fun, intimidating and inspiring all at once.

So, as a boutique hotel built with the intention of creating an escape for guests, it is fitting that the Hotel Indigo New York City – Chelsea, while just a short walk from Times Square, Madison Square Garden and the hundreds of stores and restaurants at every turn, sits just off of the sidewalk of 28th street nestled in between the shops of the flower district.

Just hours after a Halloween Party that looked more like an episode of Project Runway, I sat in the ultra-hip skyB lounge with the Hotel Indigo Chelsea General Manager to talk about how to stand out in a city where everyone and everything is trying to stand out.

***I don't know if I'm more impressed with the parties you throw or how cozy the beds are.***

Well, we are just a block away from the Fashion Institute so we have a reputation to keep. The artwork throughout the hotel represents the different elements from our surrounding neighborhoods, flowers and fashion. You'll notice the headboards on the beds even have their own style.

***Being in the flower district makes you the best smelling street in New York by far.***

Definitely. It's one thing to be seasonal; it's another to have fresh cut flowers daily to set the mood. I think it's just another small touch that adds to a very relaxed atmosphere that even the locals find appealing. I'd say well over half of our guests for cocktails and dinner are New Yorkers.

***The restaurant is making quite a name for itself.***

The word spread pretty quickly about caféB. It's the flavors of Italian contemporary cuisine with a fusion of international dishes. Good food and a fashionable Milanese atmosphere. The skyB lounge has its own scene too...you should look at the Facebook page, you'll see...

***...It's where all the beautiful people go?***

I was going to say you'll see how fun it is. A great crowd. We have a very eclectic mix of guests, a lot of fashion industry execs from Hugo Boss, Ralph Lauren, Banana Republic and more stay with us because we are so close to the fashion district.

***What's the one place you tell guests they should see?***

Well it depends on the person really. Our bellmen will often listen as guests are checking in so that they can offer suggestions on where to go - where to eat, shop, when to walk, take a train or cab. Sometimes it's intimidating to even ask, so we try to make it easy. Personally, I like to direct people to the High Line, which is an elevated public park that runs through the West Side Neighborhoods and the Meatpacking District. It is such a wonderful project that really gives a unique view of New York.

***If the hotel had been in the Meatpacking District, do you think the artwork would have featured giant sides of meat?***

I am really glad we don't have to worry about that one.







## Always Connecting.

San Antonio's bridges once brought farmers to their commercial markets, but now they now connect the twin personalities of the city: its upbeat, energetic downtown and the pleasantly picturesque old town.



Hotel Indigo San Antonio Riverwalk lies among these bridges in a burgeoning arts area between the financial and medical districts. Guests typically come here after they've seen the Alamo, done the Horseshoe and are looking for a taste of San Antonio as the locals know it.

As you cross over the river to the hotel's front gates, you feel like you've set foot across the border instead, ending up on the stoop of a grand Spanish style villa. Walk through the doors and take in the enormous bar, loft overhang and subdued lighting. Framed by the French doors that lead back into the hotel bar, you can settle down with a glass of wine on the outdoor patio and kick up your feet to take in the serene sights and sounds of San Antonio's Riverwalk.

That's what we did, anyway. Not a bad way to interview the hotel's General Manager as the floating Taxis make their way down the San Antonio River below us.

***Tell the truth; is this the nicest patio on the river?***

I don't like to brag, but I will say there's a reason why it's tough to get a room here on the weekend. The Riverwalk is actually the number one tourist attraction in Texas – the hotel gives you access to all of the restaurants, shopping and activities. My personal favorite time is during the holidays when carolers from schools and churches sing from cruise boats for everyone to hear. It's very festive.

***Bridges are a pretty big part of your scenery down here, aren't they?***

Well, as you can tell by the artwork throughout the hotel, the bridges are a true part of our identity here. Not to get too sentimental, but I think they are really a symbol of what San Antonio is all about. The bridges are a real connection to the past and they play a part in the culture, the beauty of this town. You know they were originally built to help local farmers bring their produce to the neighborhood markets, and those same bridges today are used by local vendors for the dishes on our menu inspired by South Texas recipes. That's pretty cool if you think about it.

***Cool and sentimental.***

That about sums it up.

***The hotel is pretty much close to everything in town, isn't it?***

I'd say so. One of the most popular attractions nearby is the Horseshoe, which offers a view of some of the most beautiful architecture in San Antonio along the river. There's a river taxi that picks people up right from our stairway as well that goes either south to the heart of the river where most of the restaurants and shopping are or north to the New Pearl Brewery. There's also the Blue Line Trolley that picks passengers up less than a block from us and will take you all to the Alamo.

***The city sounds like one giant resort, where does the hotel fit in to that.***

Just look around you. I like to call it laid back luxury. We're very easy going and down to earth here. Sure they love the property, but it's the welcome and the sincerity that keeps them coming back. That's why who we hire is just as important as the location – they really go out of their way to connect with the guests.

***Please, leave the puns to the professionals.***

Just trying to help...that's my job.







## A Blue Ridge State of Mind.

Asheville, North Carolina has it pretty easy. Set along the Blue Ridge Parkway, visitors are treated to majestic mountain views that simply force you to take a deep breath of fresh air and think to yourself, “I’m going to live here someday and write that novel, sell my paintings or figure out how to play my favorite Radiohead songs on the bongos.”



Until that day comes, there is the Hotel Indigo Asheville. On the northern end of the city, it's a newly built modern high-rise designed with the intention to blend the urban concrete and steel with the beauty of the surrounding mountains. It is, in the most deliberate sense, a true symbol of what Asheville is: modern, rugged, organic, contemporary and about as comfortable as your favorite tie-dye.

I was greeted by the General Manager in the lobby and from the moment you walk in, art is king. All of the imagery in the hotel comes from local artists. We sat down in the 151 Bar for an afternoon wine and cheese tasting... particularly interesting because the cheese was made right there on site – which only seemed appropriate for the down to earth, organic feel that thrives in this town.

***Have you ever had a guest who just decided to stay forever?***

It wouldn't surprise me. We have the best view of the mountains in town. And when you walk out the doors, there are music venues, restaurants, eclectic stores and beautiful architecture everywhere you look.

Our main objective, when we started to build the Hotel Indigo here, was not to change the neighborhood, but to completely immerse ourselves in it. The key to that was to show the town that we were sensitive to the look and feel of the city and also contribute on a very person-to-person level – because diversity is everything in Asheville.

***Are you sure it's not all the microbreweries here that are making people so accepting?***

Well, Asheville is about as close to Utopian society as you can get. So, even the food we serve here (the hotel's 151 Boutique Bar and Kitchen) is locally grown... "from the farm to the table," we like to say. That goes for the beer too. We carry a lot of the local brews and wines.

***As eclectic as Asheville is, there's got to be a few people on the far side of quirky.***

There's a street performer who wears gold suits and plays a gold guitar. One guy rides around town on a unicycle dressed as a nun. He's "part of the landscape." There are street musicians and performers, a lot of violins and fiddles and every Friday, there's a drum circle where sometimes hundreds of people are in attendance.

***Have you ever taken the lead in a drum circle?***

Well, the idea of the drum circle is that everyone is in sync, so...

***So...no.***

I might be a little rhythmically challenged when it comes to the drums, but it's all in fun. Our hotel and Asheville is for the young and the young at heart. A large portion of our guests are young, active couples on a romantic getaway or looking to get outdoors. They like the excitement of the nightlife and music downtown. They like hiking, mountain biking and outdoor activities. But Asheville is also a town known for high-tech, government and medical industries.

***So boring stuffy business people can stay here too?***

Nobody is boring in Asheville. My point is the city and the hotel itself are really accommodating for people who enjoy upscale luxuries, but are casual and down to earth. They want the luxury but not in a stiff or uptight fashion. We like to say that people check in wearing normal clothes but come out of their hotel room looking like a local in tie die.

***Do you think I'm boring and stuffy?***

I think you march to the beat of your own bongo...and that's totally fine by me.







## The Heart and Soul of Music City.

Nashville brims with creative energy, bringing visitors from all over the world to see the spots where Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton, Bob Dylan and other legends made music history. The downtown area is home to many of the city's most famous honky-tonks and other spots, which draw local musicians and tourists alike all year long. No matter where you go in Nashville, you can tell that life follows the beat of a different drum.



As you would expect, the Hotel Indigo Nashville Downtown fits right in. Located in a building converted from the offices of two competing banks, right near the row of clubs on Printer’s Alley, this amazing location is within walking distance of the Ryman Auditorium, Tennessee Sports Museum as well as the homes of the Tennessee Titans and Nashville Predators.

In a room facing the beautiful Cumberland River, I met with the General Manager at the 315 Bar and Grill where we talked about how the Hotel Indigo Nashville Downtown is able to remain unique in one of the most eclectic cities in the country.

***I’m sorry to start with a metaphor, but the artwork here...it’s like your own remix to a classic song.***

That’s a good description. Our murals depict local music and architecture from around the neighborhood, which is what I think are the two things that make Nashville unforgettable. The hotel also has an art gallery with works by local artists that changes every month. It’s a really great way to show off what makes Nashville so unique.

***Speaking of architecture, is it weird having one hotel in two buildings?***

It’s really pretty fascinating. The building used to house two banks. Each one built their floors offset by several inches to prevent the other business from buying them out and combining the space. Well, we went ahead and did that anyway. So there’s a point where the whole thing slopes up a few inches in the middle. It’s very...charming. We’ve kept all the original marble, separate elevators for each building and the old bank vaults, which we use for storage. A lot of our guests ask to go check those out.

***Has anyone ever come just to see the vaults?***

Probably not, but it’s fun and different. We mostly house business travelers, though plenty of visitors stop by when they’re checking out places like the Grand Ole Opry or going to a sporting event. The business crowd prefers us, not just because they’re close to the business district, but at the end of the day, there’s entertainment everywhere you look.

***You seem to be a big part of the local community...***

We like that we can help our neighborhood. When the city was damaged by flooding a while ago, we partnered with the TV show Extreme Home Makeover to provide food and shelter for people working to rebuild the local school after it washed away.

***Did you get to yell, “move that bus?!”***

I might have. The staff really put a lot of work into it and truly enjoyed the experience.

***Your employees sound like rock stars.***

Definitely. It’s good to be a rock star when you’re dealing with stars. You never know who you’ll be waiting on next. Whether it’s a member of Lynyrd Skynyrd in the bar after a show or Carrie Underwood checking in for the weekend. It’s a really exciting place to be.

***Would you tell Carrie Underwood that I love her?***

Her husband plays in the NHL...you might want to keep those feelings to yourself.







## On the Corner of History.

Transforming the historic Gibbs Building into an inviting destination for locals and tourists alike, the Hotel Indigo San Antonio at The Alamo is at the crossroads of this country's history, literally. Well, the corner of Alamo and Houston to be exact, where the 1909 Bar & Bistro sits diagonally to the famous Spanish mission that serves as a monument to the tales of Jim Bowie and Davey Crockett's battle against General Santa Anna's army.



The hotel serves as a true representation of today's San Antonio; modern and relaxed with a contemporary style that embraces the rich history and culture in a way that feels truly authentic to the unrivaled heritage. Just a few blocks from the famous San Antonio Riverwalk, whose shops, restaurants, festivals and live music keep the town jumping year round, the Hotel Indigo has virtually become an attraction in its own right.

Built within a space that once was home to a former Sherriff's weekly poker nights, doctor's quarters, tattoo parlors and office suites, it seems like nearly every stylishly renovated room has a story of its own. Even the one that belongs to the General Manager, where we sat and talked about being a part of one of the most charismatic cities in the U.S.

***Can I assume you need a degree in American History to be the GM here?***

No, but history buffs definitely appreciate being able to stay so close to the action. In fact, my office sits where William Barrett Travis was shot and killed defending The Alamo.

***So your office is a tourist attraction?***

You could say that, well at least I get to visit it every day. But, seriously, our hotel is really located in a place that is special to a lot of people and you can feel it...especially when the plaza just outside is busy with tourists, street vendors and bands. We get a wide mix of people who come to San Antonio for The Alamo, but just as many or more who are here to enjoy the city itself.

***Do guests expect you to wear cowboy hats with fringe and use phrases like "Howdy Pardner"?***

Not exactly, but the staff does go out of their way make it fun for them. One of the things I'm most proud of here is that we don't really treat what we do like a job. San Antonio is a family-oriented city and that is something that carries over here. So, whether we're sending a few members of our staff out to nearby restaurants so they can make dinner recommendations to guests or offer a little informal history lesson here or there...it's all about creating a unique experience for the guests that's genuine and doesn't feel scripted.

***Was there ever any consideration to keeping the tattoo parlor that was once here open?***

This building still fascinates me. It was built in 1909 by Colonel C.C. Gibbs, a legendary Texan in his own right and I can tell you he spared no expense. They don't make 'em like this anymore! We have preserved a lot of history and converted it into a really gorgeous hotel. The 1909 Bar & Bistro alone has become very popular with locals and guests for some upscale dining or just to grab a quick appetizer and a drink before going out on the town for the night.

***Party at The Alamo!***

I like 'Remember The Alamo' better, but whatever makes you happy.







## Vaulted Treasures.

Walking past the Hotel Indigo Tower Hill in London, you might notice the droplets of light over the desk that create a warm welcoming glow within the distinct red granite lobby. Located in one of the most historic thoroughfares in London, in what was once one of the neighborhood's most prominent banks, the interior of the hotel provides a nice change of pace among the "all business" personality of the financial district.



Surrounded by the historic buildings that stretch across the “Square Mile,” Hotel Indigo London - Tower Hill is a stunning reflection of the local neighborhood and its sense of taste for the finer things – without losing the ability to have a friendly conversation or two along the way.

The unique blend of ‘old’ and ‘new’ is reflected in every element of the hotel. In The Square Mile Kitchen & Lounge where a menu of old neighborhood favorites made fresh with locally sourced produce is accompanied by the contemporary design of the restaurant. There are interesting details around each corner from the original bank vault to the wall-to-wall windows and double-glazing to ensure bright light, even on the foggiest London days.

Those windows offer amazing views of the Tower of London, Tower Bridge, the Gherkin and St. Paul’s Cathedral. It is from this amazing and historic view that I sat down with Hotel Indigo Tower Hill’s General Manager to talk about capturing the feeling of a neighborhood built around stocks and bonds.

***On the way in, everyone I’ve passed by said hello, I lost count after a while...***

That’s a good thing! Our staff are very different from that of most other London hotels. We sought out warm, welcoming people first and foremost – hotel experience is a requirement, but having a personality that loves to take care of guests was essential. You can learn how to check someone in; you can’t teach someone to be a sincere, caring person.

***Are there any British phrases you’d say are overused here?***

Well, it’s funny you ask that...but it’s actually “wow.” In fact, it’s generally the first word out of our guests’ mouths when they open the doors to their rooms – our staff even joke about it. They’re absolutely breathtaking. But the real “wow” comes when they start to notice the size, especially for London, and all the thoughtful in-room touches; it’s all about the detail. Each of the 46 guest rooms and bathrooms are individually styled, all with four-poster beds and brick walls reminiscent of the Roman Wall that was built in the late 2nd and early 3rd century. You can even visit sections of the remains that are down the road from our hotel.

***The Roman Wall, a vault...there’s a real blend of old and new here.***

Well, there’s a lot of history right here in the neighborhood and within the hotel itself to draw from. We are fortunate to have elements like an original bank vault door in the hotel, and we’re so close to the Tower of London and Tower Bridge which you see reflected throughout our hotel. Photographs and murals of the neighborhood’s historic architecture are featured in every guest room as well as the lobby – yet we offer all of the modern luxuries and amenities that our guests would expect.

***I heard the rooms have free minibars?***

In each room, stocked with snacks and drinks at no additional cost. We care about the ‘little’ things at Hotel Indigo and making sure our guests are well looked after while they are with us.

***Wow.***

I should say so.







## An Icon in the Making.

If you know a little about Long Island, odds are you may know it as an affluent suburb for throngs of execs from Manhattan, you've heard of The Hamptons and certainly heard something about the East End. There are world-class white sandy beaches, renowned nightlife and the Hampton Jitney that shuttles *Sex and the City* types to and from Manhattan.



The East End is an eclectic mix of quaint little towns and villages, including Riverhead, which is where you will find Hotel Indigo Long Island, perched on twelve private acres at the end of the Expressway. It takes all of three minutes to see that you're close to most everything, and far from what you would most expect.

Yes, there are glorious beaches nearby. Yes, there are trendy celebs with small dogs in beach bags minutes away from the lobby. But there's a greater sense of community here. One big happy community of over 50 truly inspired wineries, bed & breakfasts, bookstores, fresh local food purveyors, a legendary lighthouse, surfing, championship golf and endless live music that keeps it all in rhythm.

I joined the General Manager on the patio next to the fireplace and stunning poolscape to prove there is more to area than designer flip-flops.

***I feel like I'm on vacation at a ski lodge and there's a chance we might bump into the Rat Pack.***

It's a pretty swanky joint. We kept the 60's feel of the original hotel, and gave the whole place this retro look. Lots of tall chalet-style ceilings, stone and dark wood finishes anchored by three fireplaces. The guest rooms are beachy and spacious with funky shapes and vibrant colors. What I like is that somehow this all pairs perfectly with the surrounding neighborhood.

***What are some of your favorite places off the map?***

The North Fork wineries and vineyards are some of the most amazing I've ever experienced. And I have to say, this patio right here is another hot spot. We're big believers in trying to make moments...and more moments happen by that fireplace, whether it's with a guitar, a glass of local wine, a nice cigar or a romantic dinner. The patio is like the area itself – it means different things to different people.

***How far do I have to go from the patio if I want taste something homegrown?***

About as far as our menu. Our restaurant only serves local vegetables, fruits, dairy, meats, fish and, of course, locally produced wines.

***So, this idea of "locally inspired" is more like a mantra than a marketing plan.***

We believe that locally inspired happens everywhere. We partner with all of our neighbor vineyards and go so far as to pair these winemakers with our chef. We only serve Hampton Coffee Company, offer North Fork Potato Chips as a snack, which I can probably pair with at least one of our 20 local wines. Everything we do is attached to a nearby region.

***How does your hotel manage to stand out in a region that practically invented "standing out?"***

You can't succeed if you're not loved by your community and that's what really guides us. For example, this year alone, we'll give out around 700 rooms to local charity auctions. We're also the title sponsor of Long Island Winterfest, six weeks of live music at neighborhood vineyards, plus six straight Saturdays of swinging jazz at our hotel called Live at Indigo. The music scene here is huge.

***Rat Pack huge?***

It is definitely its own thing. Sinatra would be pleased.







## The Past, Present and Future.

A symbol of both old world and new, Hotel Indigo Shanghai sits along the south end of the Huangpu River. In what seems a contrast to over-the-top Chinese hotels, and yet a perfect complement to the neighborhood's distinct Asian culture.



Walking though the lobby, you're struck with a sharp local awareness: the rusty shipyard metal installations, a retired rickshaw, murals of a 15th century garden. A fusion of traditional Chinese culture, contemporary Asian art and local industry – all at once a reflection of The Bund, a dockside architectural mash-up of classic and contemporary Asian and Victorian influences.

Today we sat down with the General Manager for afternoon tea at the rooftop bar against spectacular skyline views of old China, new China, bustling city streets, the most colorful markets and busy river barges. In fact, whichever floor you're on, you'll see Shanghai as few have.

***What makes this the most blogged about hotel in the entire world?***

For now, we're only the most blogged about in China, but something of a sensation in Shanghai. The city itself has become this energetic, stylish snapshot of where the world is heading, and Hotel Indigo is proud to lead that modern day renaissance.

***Does every guest say that they feel a little cooler being here, or is it just me?***

We've definitely become this hidden little gem. Local artists pop in to check out our décor. International travelers come to be in a global business hub. And vacationers, they get the best of China with an inspired taste of Shanghai, which they can see from the panoramic floor-to-ceiling windows in their rooms.

***Can you explain the 15th Century Yu Yuan Gardens imagery throughout the hotel?***

The beautiful Yu Yuan Gardens are just down the street, and there's this ancient tranquility that we wanted to honor by applying to our fresh space. Plus, pictures need less watering.

***Seems like you really embraced the culture. How was that received locally?***

Our neighbors embraced us. We had the luxury and responsibility of creating a new hotel experience in China. Designing it respectfully, with the neighborhood in mind, allowed us to pass that story onto guests from around the world while completely surrounding them with inspired touches. It's in the way we greet you, to the way we serve you tea before check-in, to what we talk about while we walk you to the elevator.

***Is it true you went on a 5-hour roadtrip to find this teacup?***

A two-day trip, actually. Every teacup, every pot, every saucer and every spoon had to be the real deal, 100% Shanghai, but we needed a lot of them and a special factory to craft each one.

***Can I take that rickshaw for a spin?***

How about another cup of tea?







## Dramatic Reflections.

Welcome to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where French sensibility meets sweet southern drawl, cypress trees drape wraparound porches and the Mississippi River sets the tone for this colorful, Cajun college town.



The Hotel Indigo Baton Rouge Downtown curves around the corner of Convention and Lafayette streets in the heart of historic downtown. It's the kind of place where the bellman knows you by name and the bartender knows you by drink. Reflections of the neighborhood – Arsenal Park, the bridge over the Mighty Mississippi, the Old and New State Capitols and at least half a dozen art galleries and theaters reveal themselves through the hotel restaurant's large picture windows. The bar, buzzing with locals stopping by after work, is the perfect place to enjoy a little conversation with the hotel's General Manager over a plate of southern style BBQ Shrimp and Gouda grits.

***How come everyone except me is wearing a suit?***

Our lunch crowd is mostly lawyers and executives who work in the neighborhood. In this town if you can't cook, you don't fit in.

***Creole or Cajun? I can never remember the difference.***

Creole is New Orleans and Cajun is Southern Louisiana. So Baton Rouge is sort of where the two meet. This is a serious food town and what you're eating is one of my favorite dishes. That butter sauce is made with local beer from the Tin Roof Brewery.

***I hear there's a secret passageway beneath the building.***

It's a tunnel called Peacock Alley that was built in the 1920's. It connects us to the building across the street. Back then they were sister hotels and the staff used the tunnel to travel back and forth. But legend has it that one of our famous former governors used it for... more romantic reasons.

***Those were the days. Is this still a romantic part of town?***

It's historic, artistic and yes, very romantic. Our neighborhood is home to a lot of the theaters and galleries in town. Hotel Indigo sponsors the Baton Rouge Arts council and we show our support by holding benefits and events for our friends in the art community here. Personally, I love the Shaw Center for the Arts, a beautifully converted turn-of-the-century drug store that now houses the Louisiana State University Museum of Art.

***These windows show off the neighborhood. You almost don't need artwork.***

Not a bad view. The art around the hotel is just icing on the cake. It captures the beauty of Arsenal Park. Much of what we do here is influenced by the neighborhood. From loaning out bicycles so the guests can tour the town at their own pace to our bartender resurrecting old New Orleans drink recipes, we want our guests to leave with a true sense of a really unique little town.

***I bet this bar has seen some heroic acts of Southern hospitality.***

We're good to our regulars, like the gentleman who likes a Scotch on the rocks before he goes to bed. Our bartender bought a special ice tray so he could make just the right sized cubes.

***That might be overdoing it just a little.***

Not at all, that's just how we do things on the bayou.







## A New Kind of Power Station.

There are certain expectations that come with every hotel, but being a symbol of the city itself is not always one that comes to mind. That is until you find yourself at the corner of Waterloo and Blythswood, where the Hotel Indigo Glasgow stands in the heart of the rejuvenated financial district.



Originally built in the 1800's as a Power Station for streetlights and trams that carried residents up and down the River Clyde, the brick and cast iron Victorian architecture is infused with the modern comfort and design that represent what Glasgow is today – an international destination for business and an innovative center for architecture and art.

Murals by local artists celebrating the city's rich history line the walls of the 95-bedroom hotel, while local dishes prepared with fresh, locally produced ingredients fill the menu in the ultra-hip Limelight Bar and Grill which has become a destination in its own right.

Seated in a chair that's wild pink pattern somehow seems to bring out the best in my not-so-vibrant attire, I am enjoying a pint, getting a quick who's who lesson from the hotel's General Manager on the portraits of Glasgow's favorite sons and daughters whose faces all seem to approve of the scene here in the Limelight.

***I am going to take a chance and say that this is the only establishment in the world that has portraits of the First Minister of Scotland and Gerard Butler on the same wall.***

We are very proud of all of our Glaswegians. The city's history goes back nearly 2000 years. It was very important to us to make sure we present our hotel in a way that honors the tradition and the culture as it was and as it is. When you first walk in, there will be no mistaking that this hotel is truly a part of this city.

***So what's old and what's new?***

Well, if you do some exploring through the hotel, you will find some elements left over from the actual power station. It's fascinating, really, how this conversion to a hotel was able to keep so much of the original architecture. We actually merged a lot of glasswork with the existing brown brick to update the building without changing it too much. It makes us look very unique from the street. The mixture of Victorian gives a very different look to everything too. All of the rooms have these wonderful high ceilings that make it feel like you're living in a palace.

***Living in a palace?***

Well, I'd like to think our guests truly feel like they are treated like royalty by our staff. More important is that they leave feeling like their stay was a truly unique experience. History has a prominent place in the hotel, but it's also a very youthful and energetic atmosphere, with luxuries even the most well-travelled businessperson will appreciate. Glasgow's a very welcoming and beautiful city; places like Hotel Indigo and Limelight show that there's a real energy that connects the old with the new.

***So it's not all pubs and kilts.***

You'll see your fair share of both, but we're also in the middle of the financial district – a short walk in either direction to local cuisine to world-class shopping, museums, historic theaters, sporting events, the River Clyde. You're right though; the pub culture is very big in Glasgow and that's why we've dedicated an entire floor of the hotel to it. That beer you're drinking is locally brewed and one of our most popular.

***So, each bedroom features paintings of a historic moment in Glasgow's history. Which moment do you wish you had been around for?***

Glasgow started out as a really small salmon-fishing village, but being at a main crossing point of the River Clyde we've seen our share of battles. I wouldn't mind being a hero of Glasgow.

***Would you want Gerard Butler to play you in the movie?***

Without question, kilt and all.







## The Fabric of a City.

Situated squarely on Chapel Street, one of the city's original 13th century roads at the edge of the River Mersey, stands the impossible-to-miss Hotel Indigo Liverpool. It is easily the most colorful character in this lively commercial district.



But what helps to make this hotel unique from other Hotel Indigo locations also sets it apart from everything else around it. For one, it's a new building, not a renovation. Yet standing here, looking up, this multicolored marvel perfectly complements the historic Saint Nicolas church and the thriving businesses that share the street. Bright yellows, purples, blues, greens, oranges – it's actually this vibrancy that makes the loudest statement about its 18<sup>TH</sup> and 19<sup>TH</sup> century cotton trading heritage.

We're talking about a city built on cotton trade – and a hotel built where the warehouses used to be. There are eye-popping dyed accents everywhere. An intensely vivid theme that's lovingly woven into every guest experience, splashed onto lobby murals, stitched into fabrics and strung through restaurants, hallways and rooms.

Wanting more, I joined the General Manager for lunch at the hotel's acclaimed restaurant, Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar & Grill which was opened by the same celebrity chef who trained Hell's Kitchen's spitfire Gordon Ramsey.

***What do the neighbors think of your gem of a hotel?***

Liverpool is a vibrant city, but honestly we were a little surprised we got away with the design scheme. Turns out, even the most conservative locals are happy with the way we threw back to our heritage. Of course, it didn't hurt that we brought goodie bags to our neighbors when we moved in, then invited them over for drinks that had our story mixed right in, like our signature Cotton Candy Cocktail.

***So, what else do people talk about when they stay here, besides the tasty pink drinks?***

It's the little touches, because you have to get the big things right – it's what's expected. So we concentrate on the little things so that every guest leaves inspired. Like how we love introducing guests to local flavors, especially our homemade cupcakes. And one time we knew that a particular guest had a favorite soda, so we stocked his fridge with a case of it. It really is the unexpected little things.

***I have an idea of why travelers choose your location, but why did you?***

For lots of the same reasons. Liverpool is consistently ranked one of the best cities in the UK. There are miles of walkable window shopping, dining, quirky markets, great nightlife and two pro football teams minutes away. And working here, you can be yourself. Like anyone, I want to be inspired, and try to inspire others with customer service the way it should be done.

***Liverpool is the birthplace of The Beatles. What would the Fab Four think of all this?***

Whether it's because of the colors, accommodations, service, story or the people, we think all of our guests feel a little more creative when they leave here. Everyone gets something more out of a journey that connects us with greater experiences along the way.

***Are you saying what I think you're saying, that Hotel Indigo Liverpool is the Beatlemania of your industry?***

More like the Strawberry Fields.

***Lastly, why can't I unshrink a cotton sweater?***

One of the many fascinating things about the fabric, I guess.







## A Splash of Color.

Once an industrial city, the smoking chimneys and sooty streets of Birmingham have been transformed into a metropolis of innovative architecture and upscale boutiques. The symbol of this transformation from historic manufacturing town into modern commercial hub, The Cube, a spectacular and highly symbolic skyscraper stands squarely at its center, overlooking new Birmingham with spectacular 360-degree views.



With its shimmering structure, The Cube's mosaic exterior is nothing short of awe-inspiring. But it's not glamor for the sake of glamor; it's designed to interact with its environment by casting a colorful reflection on the surrounding canals that wind their way through the city. The Cube is home to a rich mix of residential apartments, boutiques, offices, the city's first rooftop restaurant and, appropriately enough, the exquisitely designed Hotel Indigo Birmingham that is quickly winning over the neighborhood with its stylish but casual approach to luxury.

Taking the lift up to the 25th floor, I figured this was the perfect opportunity to chat with the hotel's General Manager.

***The Cube opening has been years in the making. How has it been received?***

It was a true event for our city. I think it is a real source of pride for the people who live here to have such a magnificent structure to represent what they and the city stand for.

***I'm guessing you're the envy of all the other hotel General Managers in the area.***

It's quite funny. The other GMs have been curious, in a positive way. Our hotel is something different that our industry needs. We're not a fit-in-the-box hotel, so I think we're going to attract guests who are looking for a bit of a different touch.

***What makes it different?***

Well for one, we take time to educate our guests about Birmingham and what's available to them; leaving a message in their room about what's going on around town so that even someone here for a one-day visit feels like they are connected and a part of things.

***Birmingham has really transformed itself. How does it keep from becoming just another big city?***

The optimism. The last ten years of growth have given the area a real positive feeling that goes very well with the physical layout of the city. The canals are very symbolic to our identity. They're like the arteries, which is why they played such a significant role in the hotel's design.

***Canals and water influencing bricks and mortar?***

It's the flow of the hotel. Canal boats are mysterious things, in various colors and shapes, and they're all named after loved ones and lost pets. So we pulled inspiration from them and made color the visual transition from floor to floor and room to room. We even have a pink front desk – it sounds odd, but it's perfect!

***Speaking of perfection, I hear you're working with Marco Pierre White.***

We like to call him the Godfather of modern cookery. Our guests and the locals will have the opportunity to enjoy the best from someone who has the highest standards in cuisine that you'll find.

***It seems like you'd never have to leave The Cube if you didn't want to...***

But, there's so much to see and do! I do know what you're saying though. The site was previously a Royal Mail distribution center. Now, it's the cultural center of the city – chic, modern, high-class retail area, a destination where the posh go to eat and shop. I have to admit, we're enjoying the label as the hotspot center of Birmingham. There's a lot of good energy in the hotel every day.

***I thought that energy was because of those fabulous beds?***

A good night's sleep never hurt anybody.

