



Ista



37th Crescent



Mapple

BANGALORE BOUTIQUE BUSINESS HOTELS

A deep pocket may not be a pre requisite for a business visit to the IT city any more. There are some new first class hotels that have driven Bangalore's astronomical hotel rates a little lower, thankfully.

Costing between Rs 5,000 and Rs 10,000, these hotels are smartly located, either near the Central Business District or in the busy industrial area of Whitefield. Their location will also help you avoid the city's infamous traffic snares.

Not following the usual city-hotel layout, these properties, positioned as Boutique Business Hotels, are heavy on character and individuality. To draw traveller, these boutique hotels have opted for smarter and more stylish packaging. Following the contemporary, minimalistic approach of design, each of these three new properties is trendy and simultaneously exudes warmth and cheerfulness. Falling somewhere between the 4-star and 5-star categories, these hotels cater specifically to the frequent corporate traveller offering facilities at par with five star hotels in the city.

They come packaged with wi-fi, multiple restaurants, banquet space, business centre, health club, gym, flexible check-in, mini-bar... They do not sell short on comfort, quality or service but cut out the extra frills. Leaf through, for a sample of what they are all about.

ISTA Lakeview Boutique

Stay: Good news for Ananda fans, now you can taste their hospitality in the Garden City as well. The promoters (IHHR) of the destination spa launched their second brand – business hotel, Ista, last July in Bangalore. Ista sits where the famous Lido theatre used to and is the first of many that the group plans. The second one in fact will also be in Bangalore followed

by another in Hyderabad by August this year.

Conceptualized by Hong Kong-based designer Chandu Chadha, who has also designed The Ananda property in Mauritius as well as many Hyatt and Oberoi hotels, the

Bangalore Ista is aptly named; Ista literally means sacred space offering solace in an otherwise 'always on the move' city! The eight-storey hotel by the Ulsoor Lake is a clutter-free contemporary edifice with the signature Ananda touch, which balances the otherwise modish interiors. Contemporary design elements... steel, white and glass are meshed with bright-coloured murals depicting images from Indian epics. The look enhanced by abstract embellishments is innovatively created from silver leaf and melted acrylic.

The 143-key hotel is part of a mixed use development project and features a shopping plaza and multiplex which are scheduled to open in a couple of months.

Sleep: The rooms here are a sheer delight and with lake views, private terraces and cityscapes, there is quite a

varied choice on offer. Categorized as premium, executive, deluxe and luxury, the 143 rooms follow a minimalist design theme with chrome lights, paraquet and pergo flooring and laminated ceilings. The rooms vary between 990 sq ft to 450 sq ft. The four luxury suites are located on the 5th floor which feature a living room, a bedroom, a four-fixture bathroom and a private terrace-garden. The premium and deluxe rooms spread over five floors feature pergo flooring, overhead lights, remote control units, LCD screens, a bedside table that doubles up as a worktable and a picture window. The bathrooms also come with a view and are small compact units with a three-fixture fitting minus the bath. Respecting the fact that many guests staying with them are working in the BPO industry,

We present you
with three brand
new Boutique
Business Hotels in
the IT City of
Bangalore. They
are unique, stylish
and, most
importantly, come
with the tag
'sensibly-priced'.

Nikhil Chopra, GM, Ista Bangalore shares that special care is taken to cut off lights passing from under the door into the rooms during the day.

Sup: There is a lounge bar Liquid, a 24X7 European coffee shop, Lido and Zaman, a Indian eatery all situated on the second level. All three dining options have alfresco sections. The W-shaped Lido has the makings of the regular 5-star hotel coffee shop as it opens out to the tropically landscaped pool featuring gazebos. But that's where the regular-ness ends, as the 64-cover coffee shop pays tribute to its namesake by screening Broadway classics. Italian and European cuisine dominates the menu.

The lounge bar features both indoor (12 covers) and outdoor (40 covers) seating. Dropping the usual subtle colours, Liquid makes a dramatic statement with its red hues and stark blacks while the terrace is quite Mediterranean in character, featuring five cushioned alcoves partitioned by silver-embossed white curtains.

A narrow corridor from Liquid leads to the contemporary Indian restaurant, Zaman. The 32-cover restaurant overlooks the Ulsoor Lake and its walls sport shades of brown and beige while the ceiling is made of silver leaf with self-embossed motifs.

Fills: If the promoters are the people behind Ananda, there has to be a spa. Though not aspiring to be its famous sister-hotel,

Ista's spa is a modest one with both European and Indian therapies on offer and has wet areas as well. A compact gym is located adjacent to the spa and overlooks the landscaped pool. The conferencing facilities here are top-notch. The first level is completely dedicated to two conference rooms each with a capacity for 200 guests theatre-style, a pre-function area, fully equipped boardroom and five workstations.

11, Swami Vivekanand Road, Ulsoor, Bangalore.

Call: 080-25555 8888. www.istahotels.com

Moneywise: From Rs 12,000 per night, the cost covers bed and breakfast.

37th CRESCENT Bold & Beautiful

Stay: Located off Residency Road, this trendy, character-laden boutique business hotel is a riot of colours. Chennai-based Sajid Khan who has been designing homes for southern filmstars, in his first endeavour to design a hotel, has aspired to create a contemporary space, a little away from the usual-pastel shades and steel-glass finish.

The walls at 37th Crescent are splashed with purple, yellow and orange tones and blended with a cream base to offset the brightness, right from the lobby to its rooms. No artifacts or objet d' art will be in sight here as the 64-room property is interestingly embellished with dry flowers, bamboo shoots, glass



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tubes and coloured stones. The one year old hotel was introduced for a specific purpose, explains General Manager, Renu Verghesse, that of finding a sensibly priced 5-star hotel in the CBD. "While we are positioned as a four-star, mid-market hotel, we are at par with 5-star hotels in service and facilities" he added.

There are plenty of cosy corners in the corridors running through the five-storey building created by sofas and armchairs strewn alongside or in front of a water body or bamboo-shoot deco.

The five-storey hotel's first level houses a boardroom, four suites and a Jazz bar and the fifth level has the gym, a wide expansive terrace and a Southeast Asian restaurant.

Sleep: The other three floors (second, third and fourth) house 18 rooms each and are split by an atrium which leads to a skylight. The 64 rooms here vary between 400 sq ft to 300 sq ft and are furnished with Malaysian furniture and Chinese beds. Space here has been optimized and thus cupboards and luggage racks form a composite z-shaped wooden rack unit. The lights used are chrome-finished silver-feathered ones and the rooms have a lot of leatherette. The three-fixture bathrooms currently

don't have the baths, but that's going to change soon. The atrium which splits the three levels and opens into a skylight alternates as an alfresco café.

Sup: If you dig jazz, check-out the 33-cover I-shaped Jazz Bar. The Strawberry Moon is a true-blue Jazz Bar with posters of Jazz artistes like BB King, John Coltrane adorning the black-and white striped walls of this retroesque bar. The 34-cover seating here is a mix of low couches and polka-dotted stools. Then there is a coastal cuisine specialty restaurant on the lobby level run by Southern filmstar Mohanlal. In sync with the fare on offer, The Harbour Market is the replica of a Malabari coastal market. The hotel recently added a Southeast Asian eatery on the fifth floor which features a richly painted mural of The Great Wall of China. The food is authentic, promises Verghesse, Chinese specialty chef Andrew who has worked at Mandarin in The Ashok Bangalore is in charge here.

Frills: Situated in the busy Central Business District, the hotel is fully equipped to deal with your work needs. There are three conference rooms on the basement level and a 14-seater boardroom on the first level. There is a beauty salon and a health club too to refresh your body.

37th, Crescent Road, High Grounds, Bangalore

Call: 080-4037 3737. www.37crescent.in

Moneywise: Rs 5,500 per night for a Deluxe room and Rs 7,500 per night for a Suite on a double occupancy basis.

MAPPLE

A leaf out of book on relaxation

Stay: The new entrant at Whitefield is Mapple, promoted by Delhi-based Sanjay Wadhawan who launched the first property in Hyderabad last December. The big plus about this hotel is that its just five minutes away from HPCL, the industrial area, the 30-minute drive to the city centre.



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