

Designer chic on the Riviera

Voted the ninth best B&B in the world by TripAdvisor users, The 25 in Torquay certainly has a reputation. Bronwen Weatherby discovers if it lives up to the hype

ON a last-minute trip to Torquay for the weekend, my partner and I had the pleasure of staying at The 25. The boutique B&B has quickly become one of the jewels in the English Riviera crown and if incredible decor, excellent service and the scrumptious food is your thing then you would be silly not to book a stay.

The destination of our getaway prompted both looks of confusion and in some cases horror, and quips about Fawley Towers had me feeling uncertain

about heading down to the seaside town. But, during my first time in the Devonshire resort, both the area and even more so the B&B came to dazzle me beyond my expectations.

The multi-award-winning The 25 appears nestled in a strip of hotels and bed and breakfasts which lead to the bay. Among them, it appears like a finely carved gem and it does not take you long to see why it is now ranked number nine in the world for boutique B&Bs on TripAdvisor.

The drive from Bristol on Friday was a



One of the B&B's 16 rooms

short hassle-free jaunt in what seemed like a straight line and we arrived in the knowledge there is free onsite parking for guests.

Greeted in reception by a brilliantly designed multi-coloured mannequin light, we were walked through the B&B to our room on the first floor by our host and one of the owners Andy.

Immediately, The 25 stood out for its chic interior with a twist with everything prepared to enhance the guests experience from the moment they arrive.

This place offers luxury with a difference, combined with a very high attention to detail in each room.

The living room area, open to all guests, was surprisingly traditional with its high ceilings and sumptuous sofas oozing an elegance and class it is hard to come by in most hotels these days, let alone B&Bs.

Not without a modern twist, the room came fully equipped with an iPad - provided in each room - wifi and an honesty fridge with drinks and nibbles to pilfer as you choose.

It was sat in there that Andy later brought us a glass of prosecco, lager and a plate of homemade brownies which were shockingly delicious.

Led to our room - the smallest of the six uniquely designed - the Goodrington Room was cosy and perfect for a short getaway.

In it, there was still space for a king size bed, a dressing table, two chairs, a table, a rail for clothes and stunning ensuite which had a great shower.

The room, like all the rest, was truly unique and had the wow-factor, decorated and set up with real thoughtfulness down to the jars of sweets, Elemis toiletries and pillow spray and complimentary tea and coffee.

On the table nearest the window there were also sweet baked goods in a small glass display - which would be replaced with something different every day of your stay, said Andy - who bakes them himself.

Here too was a perfect blend of design and tech, with an iPad, TV and Alexa to adjust the mood lighting.

It was late by time we ventured out that evening to eat and explore the area but there were plenty of the bars and restaurants around a 10 minute walk from the B&B that were still serving.

There is a handy list of eateries compiled by The 25 owners Andy and Julian and displayed on their website for anyone unfamiliar with the area. It is broken down into distance from the B&B as well as the type of restaurant it is and price to eat there.

We settled on an Italian restaurant on the Bay overlooking the sea. The weather being fine coupled with the palm trees below us, it felt like we could have been in Spain or the south of France.

Satisfied with our meal and bottle of wine we enjoyed the walk home to The 25 where we enjoyed a very restful nights sleep in the dreamiest of beds.

At breakfast, we were greeted with an impressive selection of foods, including cereal, fruit, homemade yoghurts and granola, juices, fresh pastries and of course a comprehensive cooked breakfast menu also offering vegetarian options.

The more you also got to explore the place, the more you found yourself met with antique cabinets, chandeliers and ornaments at every twist and turn.

Proprietors Andy and Julian Banner-Price, formerly a call centre boss and IT manager, had no experience in the hospitality trade before starting out less than a decade ago running a successful country house hotel in North Wales.

Moving on to a new challenge, the couple made the decision to venture down south to create something truly beautiful and distinctive in The 25, creating yet another roaring triumph.

Chatting with Andy and Julian they said their desire to make The 25 a Boutique B&B specifically came from the desire to create something intimate and luxurious.

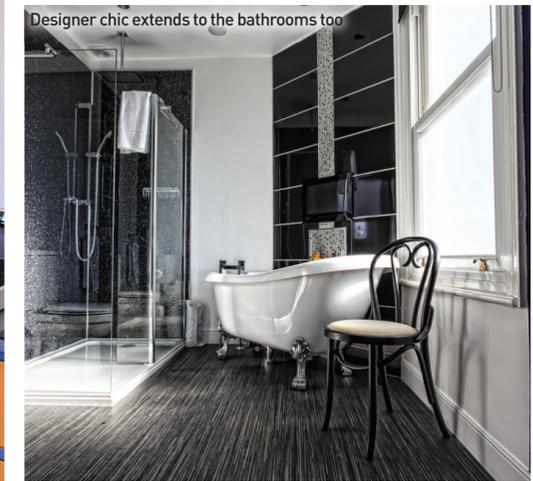
And it is safe to say they have achieved that. Everything at The 25 intends to give their guests full relaxation and ease. From the key fobs you are given to come in and out of the B&B as you choose, the honesty fridge in case you get peckish after having a few wines in one of the

FACTFILE

- » Bronwen's room is from £125 a night.
- » The 25 has won over 20 awards and counting since it opened in 2015
- » It is an adult-only B&B
- » It has six rooms all with a different theme and unique design
- » www.the25.uk



The full English breakfast



Designer chic extends to the bathrooms too



The trendy reception area

numerous bars and restaurants; even the iPads, wide-screen TVs and espresso machines in each bedroom make the difference even if it is so you don't have to venture out early to get a morning coffee.

The little things are what makes the time spent at the B&B eternally special, from the sweet goods by your bed to the water and snacks they give you as you head off on your journey home - they really do have hosting down to a tee.

The design-focus and cleanliness of The 25 did in no way detract from it being a very welcoming place to spend your holiday. The comfortable atmosphere means staying there is like being at home while feeling like an undeniable treat.



The exterior of The 25