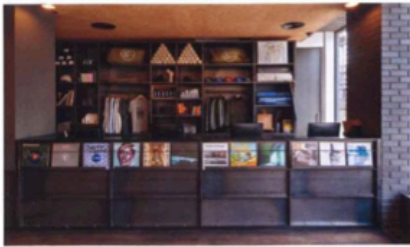


Hotel lobbies

Whether it is the grandest hotel or a property for those on a budget, the impact of the lobby is paramount in setting guests up for what lies ahead during their stay. *Janet Harmer* takes a look at the latest lobby designs, which are all about providing the friendliest welcome, a social hub, versatility and fun



Ace hotel London Shoreditch London E1

The creativity industries of the surrounding locality are reflected in the lobby of the 258-bedroom Ace hotel London Shoreditch, launched in 2013. Created by Universal Design Studio, the space features a series of room-like zones, divided by the arrangement of furniture and full-height Crittal glass and steel screens. Organic and locally sourced materials featured throughout include a cork ceiling fitted with copper light fixtures, timber parquet flooring, and a 16-seat communal table made of cast iron, oak and copper. With the lobby merging into the café, bar and gallery area (featuring rotating exhibitions from local artists) and a different DJ every night of the week, this is a space designed for easy, on-going social interaction.



The Goring London SW1

Ravishing, explains David Morgan-Hewitt, managing director of the five-AA-red-star, 69-bedroom Goring hotel, is the word that crops up time and time again when guests comment on the hotel's dramatic new lobby. Whimsical country scenes, hand-painted on silk wallpaper by Fromental, inject a humorous element into the glamorous and dramatic new look front hall designed by Russell Sage. "The £1m cost is the best return on investment we have ever spent," says Morgan-Hewitt. "There are so many new deluxe hotels in London, we needed an identity, and this is it. The lobby now matches up to the sumptuousness of the rest of the hotel."



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Z Shoreditch London EC1



The 111-bedroom Z Shoreditch is the latest property to open within the group of six boutique, budget hotels. Like all its predecessors, the Shoreditch hotel has a lobby space that offers complimentary cheese and wine to all guests, every evening between 5pm and 8pm – something that Bev King, the founder of Z Hotels, says is one of the best things he has ever done. "Out of the 10,000 or so reviews that have been posted about the hotel on social media sites, around 85% positively mention the cheese and wine," he says. "It is not often that guests in a city centre hotel will speak to one another, but with the offer of something to eat and drink and a communal table in the centre, you will often find everyone chatting to one another."

London Marriot hotel Park Lane London W1

The new-look lobby at the 157-bedroom London Marriott Hotel Park Lane is part of a wider £20m refurbishment of the entire property. While intended to still be luxurious, the design by RPW Design – featuring artwork curated by Peter Millard – is fresher and more informal than the heavier, traditional-looking lobby of old. A new central stairway leads to reception, where two check-in desks with seats provide the delivery of a more personal service. Nicolas Kipper, general manager of the hotel,

