



BUSINESS TRAVELLER

THE TEST SOFITEL BRISBANE



EXECUTIVE HOTEL OF THE MONTH

THE PITCH "The hotel's reputation as the leading choice in five-star accommodation is absolutely deserved."

THE LOCATION Unbeatable. What it lacks in river views the Sofitel makes up for in convenience, with easy access to both the business and retail areas of the CBD via a series of escalators to Ann Street and Anzac Square. Sitting directly above Central Station the Sofitel also has direct access to the city's Airtrain rail service, which is becoming the only way to get to or from the airport (\$26 return).

THE ROOM With clean lines and a masculine feel, the tastefully appointed luxury club room is decorated in tones of cream and charcoal with blond wood accents. The signature king-size "Mybed", with its feather overmattress cover, really does live up to the claim of sleeping on clouds (and there's also a pillow menu), but the small bathroom could

be troublesome if more than one person was staying in the room. A personal Nespresso coffee machine is a bonus.

DOING BUSINESS During T+L's January visit the business centre was closed, with the front desk providing basic business needs. When it's open (Monday to Friday 8am-4.30pm) it has services including conference rooms, secretarial services, and internet access (55c per minute). Upgrading to a Club Sofitel room gives access to the 30th-floor Club Sofitel lounge. With its views over the city, the lounge provides a comfortable meeting or relaxation space, with tea, coffee and snacks throughout the day, as well as serving a superb buffet breakfast and pre-dinner drinks with lavish canapés. Two iMacs with high-speed broadband, connected to printers, are available for use (free of charge) plus there's wireless access - at a price. In room high-speed broadband costs 55c per minute, capped at \$29 for 24 hours.

HITS Stephanie's Spa Retreat provides indulgent treatments. There's also a compact gym and pool. Friendly staff and good service: at breakfast the Club Sofitel manager took my flat mobile phone to the concierge desk 30 floors below to be recharged.

MISSES Wireless access in the Club Sofitel lounge costs \$5 for 30 minutes, \$20 for two hours or \$30 for 12 hours - more expensive than in-room charges. It's a bit rich, given most five-star hotel groups provide free access as part of executive club "membership". - SALLY WEBB

THE GUIDE

HOTEL Sofitel Brisbane
ROOM COUNT 429
MEALS The Thyme 2 restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Cuvee Lounge Bar offers mezze plates to accompany drinks.
COST Superior rooms from \$284, luxury rooms from \$329, luxury club rooms from \$384.
CONTACT 249 Turbot Street, Brisbane, 07 3835 3535, sofitelbrisbane.com.au

T+L Q+A



ALISON ROBERTS-BROWN
 ASIA-PACIFIC DIRECTOR FOR SMALL LUXURY HOTELS OF THE WORLD.

What makes a good hotel room for a business person?

Business travellers want a room to be instantly "user-friendly" and comfortable as they are time-poor and need to focus on work - not spending time familiarising themselves with a strange room. Rather than having to search for the room service menu, the light switches and the air-conditioning control, everything should be easy to recognise and functional.

What's the one thing a business traveller can't do without in a room?

Connectivity goes without saying these days. Having 24-hour room service is important too, especially if you are arriving in a new city and time zone. It's nice to know that you have access to wonderful food in the hotel, however I am quite adventurous and so, if the hotel's concierge can recommend a quaint local eatery just around the corner from the hotel, I will often go out and explore and soak up the atmosphere.

Big hotels are often chosen over small for a business traveller. Why?

This may have been the case in the past when large companies were able to negotiate attractive rates at the big chain hotels. But the smaller, boutique hotels offer this as well now. The trend that we are seeing at SLH is that the business traveller is looking for personal service - they don't want to be just another number, which can often be the case at the large hotels.