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THE INSIDER

HOW TO MAKE A HOTEL COOL

BY SEAN MACPHERSON



MacPherson outside his new Ludlow Hotel.

New York City hotelier Sean MacPherson owns, among others, the Bowery and Maritime. His latest, the Ludlow Hotel, on the Lower East Side, opened in June.

The best hotels have human fingerprints. I don't need to like the person's style, but I want to feel their presence and a sense of place. The **Grand Hôtel Nord-Pinus** (*nord-pinus.com*; \$\$), in Arles, France, is so French, but it also has a strong Spanish influence that reflects the owner's quirky taste: a vintage bar and furniture mixed with bullfighting memorabilia and Peter Lindbergh photographs. At the **Saint Cecilia** (*hotelsaintcecilia.com*; \$\$), in Austin, Texas, you feel Liz Lambert's heartbeat throughout the hotel. The mini-bar, for example, has personal choices such as salted-caramel gallettes, prosciutto, and Mexican Coke.

A hotel should tell a story. **Bemelmans at the Carlyle** (*rosewoodhotels.com*) in New York is the benchmark for all hotel bars because it has that history—with Ludwig Bemelmans's murals and the Kennedys drinking there—yet it's still very much alive with music and performers. It's not a bar that could ever exist in, say,

L.A. My newest property, the **Ludlow Hotel** (*ludlowhotel.com*; \$\$), is inspired by my time in New York during the 1980's. There was this tremendous art scene, with Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat running around. And they weren't mythological characters like Hemingway and Picasso in Paris; this was in our lifetime. Plus the music, like the Ramones, Blondie, and early hip-hop. There was a vitality to the city and you could still get an apartment for \$400 a month. So I gave the Ludlow that feeling of loft living, not in a literal way but the *sensation* of it. I imagined a kid that may be down and out, living on the Lower East Side, but he had some nice furniture his parents gave him and a cool place, so it was going to be okay.

Don't state what's already implied. Let the product speak for itself. If you allow the guest to interpret the hotel, then it will be exactly what they want it to be. Give room for people to make it their own. At some hotels, the first thing they tell you is how cool they are. That's like someone telling you they're smart. "Cool" is almost invisible when it's done well. You don't even notice why; you just feel it. —As told to Sara Bliss

TYPOGRAPHY

WHAT YOUR INSTAGRAM FILTER SAYS ABOUT YOU

A picture may speak a thousand words, but a filter is a look into a traveler's soul. Here's what you're projecting with your choice of special effects.

THE FILTER				
Earlybird	Inkwell	Kelvin	Sutro	[No Filter]
THE PERSONA				
To blaze with hard-edged modernity! You yearn for the softly faded era of steamer trunks and hot-air balloons. Jules Verne is your Virgil. Your ideal evening starts with a Delmonico steak and an oyster roast, and ends at the kinoscope. In your luggage: a hoopskirt and a stovepipe hat.	Ahh, you swoony love child of Ansel Adams and Henri Cartier-Bresson.... Don't we <i>all</i> want to live in Paris between the wars? Your photos don't capture light—they capture <i>truth</i> . Color? A cloying distraction. Not only do you shoot in black and white, you only wear black and white.	You don't go anywhere unless it's 75 degrees, sunny, and within earshot of the Pacific. "In search of the perfect wave" isn't just a credo, it's your torso tattoo. Clouds don't exist in your world. Neither does tartar. Every summer is endless; every barrel is epic; every hour is golden.	You're drawn to the darkness at the edge of town. Bad hotel lighting never bothers you; hell, you travel with your own blackout shades. The message on your door is the message on your heart: DO NOT DISTURB. Next vacation: Nome. Or outer Minsk. In winter.	Purity is your doctrine. Your body is a temple, your art needs no adornment, your eye needs no doctoring. (You probably don't eat salt, either.) Why are you even on Instagram, anyway? #timetostartatumblr.
—NATE STOREY				