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# Hotel Review: Sir Albert Hotel in Amsterdam



The Sir Albert's exterior. Sir Albert Hotel

By Jan Benzel

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## Rates

From 200 euros, or about \$270, at \$1.35 to the euro.

## Basics

The Sir Albert, in a red-brick 19th-century former diamond factory, opened a year ago with all the accouterments of a boutique hotel served up with more personality — and less hipper-than-thou attitude — than many. Its website anthropomorphizes Sir Albert as an invisible aristocratic type (think Charlie of “Charlie’s Angels”) who has thrown open his family manse to the guests, the sort of chatty but charming host who would leave a Post-it on your bathroom mirror. The sleek five-story hotel has 90 rooms and suites, and a small but comfortable sitting area called the Study on the ground floor, with shelves laden with books, cushy brown chairs and a slate floor softened by a Persian rug. An odd piece of ceramic art in the reception area looks at first glance like breasts on parade, but on inspection turns out to be rows of hippopotamus snouts.

## Location

The grand art palaces of the Museumplein (the Van Gogh Museum, the Stedelijk, the gloriously restored Rijksmuseum) and the Royal Concertgebouw are a 10-minute stroll away. Around the corner along a canal you can find small laid-back restaurants and bars and a mini red-light district.

## The Room

We booked a Sir Boutique, the least expensive, and tubless, but when the Sir Albert emailed to ask if we had any special requests, I replied that I longed for a bathtub. Perhaps because it was a relatively quiet summer weekend we were ushered into a more spacious Sir Deluxe, at the same rate. Room 114 was blessedly quiet despite a lively crowd spilling into the street below from the ground-floor hotel restaurant, Izakaya, Asian Kitchen and Bar. Wide-planked wooden floors, painted black, were accented by a well-worn Oriental rug in mustard shades, and a cowhide-patterned throw was folded at the foot of the queen bed. An Illy espresso machine was at the ready, and artisanal snacks were provided. Pillows too firm? No problem: Squishier ones arrived within minutes.

## The Bathroom

Spacious and well appointed, with a stylish bowl-shaped sink and a rain shower head in the luxuriously long tub. Some suites have tubs in the rooms.

## Amenities

The Sir Albert has a small stable of sturdy bicycles available for guests to rent (make sure to reserve). A spin around the nearby Vondelpark is a good way to get started pedaling in a city where bicycles rule. Guests can use gym and spa facilities at a nearby hotel.

## Dining

Izakaya, well designed and wildly popular, lays out a generous but predictable breakfast buffet. A promptly delivered room-service breakfast for one was pricey (25 euros) but plenty of food for two. Better: Try a midafternoon snack at the restaurant’s terrific bar, which has liquors from around the world and inventive small plates. We took a break between the visual feast of Vermeers and Rembrandts at the Rijksmuseum and a sunset tour on the canals to try some of the excellent wines on the tasting menu and tide ourselves over until the Indonesian rijsttafel (rice table) we planned to have as a late dinner. The friendly staff is also helpful in steering guests to other dining spots in the city.

## Bottom Line

A well-situated hybrid of new and old Amsterdam offers cosmopolitan hipness with surprising warmth and a sense of humor.

**Sir Albert Hotel**, Cuypstraat 2-6, Amsterdam; 31-20-305-3020; siralberthotel.com.

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