

Room Service

Edited by James Ellis travel@ukmetro.co.uk



Michael Bond's first **Paddington Bear** story was inspired by newsreels of child evacuees with labels around their necks and their possessions in small suitcases leaving London during World War II.

Adding a touch of colour

Hotel Review BY KYLIE MARTIN

Name: Hotel Indigo Paddington
Where: 16 London Street W2
Official rating: Four stars
Cost: From £125 for a double room
Contact: Tel: 020 7706 4444
www.hotelindigo.com/lonpaddington



Why go there? This newly opened 64-room boutique hotel is part of the giant InterContinental Hotels Group so you get the intimacy of a lifestyle hotel with the service of a global company. But visit soon: there are already 22 Indigos – this is the first outside North America – and plans for another 200. As the chain expands, it may be more difficult to avoid the homogeneity of a large group.

Highlights: Playing 'guess the spot' while admiring the oversized murals of local scenes, breakfast in the brasserie and hunting for haikus.

What's so good about it? In a row of converted Georgian townhouses, this hotel is textural as well as textual. Richly coloured soft furnishings and

layers of plush bedding beg to be stroked, while words call out from the walls and poetry lurks in unexpected places. The interior takes inspiration from the Fibonacci mathematical sequence (also known as phi), which some claim is the basis for the 'architecture of the universe'. It's about bringing together maths, art and nature in perfect symmetry. It makes great pub quiz fodder – the medieval Italian mathematician Fibonacci brought the Arabic number system to Europe.

A glass staircase climbs to the colour-coded upper floors, while comfy armchairs and a wall-mounted fire beckons visitors to the brasserie. Upstairs, stripy carpets and suspended

blue sky ceilings lead to the rooms. They are small but well-designed, with some opening on to private terraces. Photo murals dominate the walls behind higher-than-average beds with ribbed leather headboards – they made me feel like Goldilocks in father bear's bed but are perfect for watching the generous flat-screen TVs. We loved the luxury touches – Aveda products, plump cushions and fluffy robes. Haikus hide everywhere – on water bottles and hotel literature. Why? The ancient form of poetry is based on phi numbers, of course.

British and organic produce are the stars of dinner in the Phi Brasserie, while a window display of locally made cakes entices a steady stream of walk-ins. The menu changes seasonally, as do other elements of the hotel such as lighting, signage, music and even scent. And there's a Fitness Studio and free Wi-Fi.

What we didn't rate: The atmosphere in the rear of the brasserie was a bit too Starbucks-like and the vegetarian choices could be more inspiring. The in-room beverage pack would be



improved by adding herbal tea bags and we'd have liked some literature on the Fibonacci theme.

What else can you do in the area? Stroll in Hyde Park; tour Paddington Station, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1854, and say

hello to the Paddington Bear statue; or visit a reconstruction of the St Mary's Hospital lab in which Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin in 1928.

Bed quality: ★★★★★
Staff quality: ★★★★★