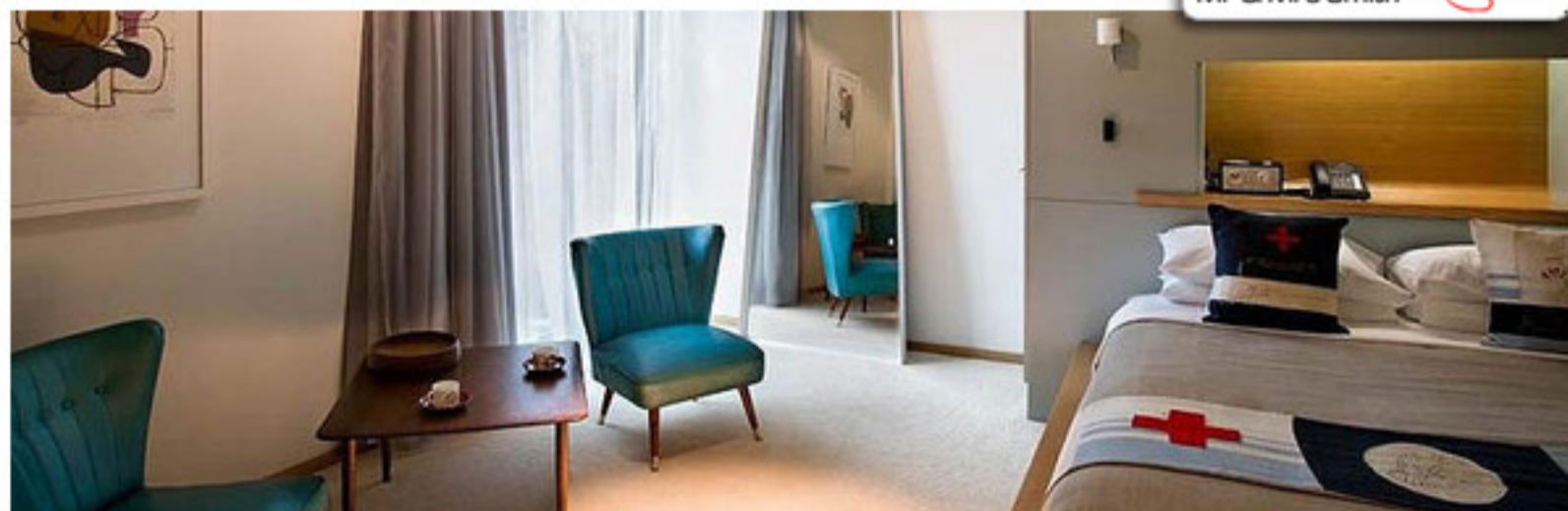


OHTEL, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

Reviewed by Mr & Mrs Smith

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What do you get when you combine a happening harbourside location, a cool concrete cliffside building, sexy bathrooms and funky vintage-modern interiors? **Ohtel**, Wellington's hippest boutique hotel in the heart of New Zealand's North Island capital. We love its owner's handpicked collection of 1950s and 1960s design classics teamed with local accessories and thoughtful details.

Packing tips

Binoculars for looking out to sea. Views from bedrooms include Chaffers Marina, Waitangi Park, the harbour and CBD, and look especially magical at night.

Hotel restaurants

The hotel doesn't have an in-house restaurant, but a simple Cool or Hot breakfast (available from 7am to 11am), coffee, cakes, ice cream and light meals are served in the small ground-floor lobby at the front of the property, which is also home to the bar. Decor is quirky vintage, fitting the hotel's modern-retro mood. Staff can also give you the lowdown on the many high-end and more casual restaurants and bars nearby.

Hotel bars

The sophisticated lobby bar serves up drinks from midday until 10pm, along with a quirky mix of iTunes (there's over 5,000 songs on the playlist, from funk to electronic, which you can also access in your room). If guests want to stay up drinking later staff will never close the bar, but well-stocked minibars mean you won't go thirsty back in your room.

Activities

Ohtel's savvy seaside location by the marina yet just on the edge of Wellington Harbour, means you're near all the action without the noise and hassle of the city. If you fancy a walk, you've got Oriental Bay beach, Waitangi Park and Mount Victoria Lookout at your doorstep. You're also adjacent to the entertainment district with a clutch of the city's best theatres at your disposal: the Downstage, St James, Opera House and Circa Theatres are all just streets away, offering a wide mix of arts, music and dance, as well as art deco movie house the Embassy Theatre and edgy clubs and bars. Cultural sites are well represented too, with both the much loved Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tangarewa and the Museum of Wellington City & Sea, which explores local maritime and Maori heritage, a short walk away. Further afield, there's the cable car up to the Botanic Gardens for great views and greenery, or architecture buffs can check out Parliament House and the iconic, adjacent Beehive, a Modernist building designed by Sir Basil Spence. Fitness addicts should jog across Oriental Parade to the Freyberg Pool & Fitness Centre, where a heated outdoor pool, spa and sauna awaits.

Ohtel can also hook you up with local tours, sightseeing and leisure activities, including the gym and pool, and can arrange to have bills charged back to you at the hotel. Options include wine, food and helicopter tours, or if you need a *Lord of the Rings* fix, Ohtel can also point you in the way of a guided trip around the movies' Wellington-area Middle Earth locations. Its other recommendations include the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, about two kilometres west of the city, home to native bird species and wetlands, where walking tracks abound.

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Contact

Book **Ohtel** with Mr & Mrs Smith or call 0845 034 0700

Rates

NZ\$465-NZ\$565, including free local calls, WiFi in the hotel lobby and tax at 12.5 per cent. Breakfast, NZ\$25 a person.