

## STUART HASTINGS

Travel Writer

EVERYONE likes a bargain, and when you are stopping in what is billed as one of the world's best hotels, even more so.

I was chatting with the concierge at the Milestone Hotel, Kensington, about our previous night's experience before a burlesque show.

We had booked a pre-show meal at the Med Kitchen in Cambridge Circus, just off Shaftesbury Avenue... a remarkable three courses plus cocktail for £15 each.

"How much?" he said. "I paid £45 each for two courses, and wine extra!"

Ah I said, you should have booked through toptable.com

This website was a tip from my daughter and it's well worth knowing.

One night in London may seem indulgent, but when you are stopping in a hotel rated as number one in the world for service, beating the Mandarin Oriental in Munich, the Amanpuri in Phuket, and The Oriental in Bangkok, you get the picture.

When a guest expressed an interest in rare antique model soldiers and tanks, a dealer was found for him the next day.

Their mantra is "no request too large, no detail too small."

Built in the late 19th century as two townhouses,

'No request is too large, no detail too small' is the boast

this Grade 2 red-brick listed building now has a 21st century elegance and a unique character.

And there's a Chatsworth connection. In 1911 the house was the home of Algernon Bertram Freeman Mitford, grandfather of the Mitford sisters – Nancy the novelist, Diane the beauty, Unity the fascist, Jessica the communist and Deborah, who became the Duchess of Devonshire.

It's opposite Kensington Palace Gardens which means that the Albert Hall, Knightsbridge designer shops, Harrods and The Ritz are all within walking distance.

We got a cab into town, but we could have got a number 9 bus, which is what we did after midnight – it dropped us yards from the hotel. High St Kensington Tube station is a five-minute walk away.

It's the little things and the attention to detail that sets the Milestone apart.

A letter/checklist arrives after booking – or as they quaintly describe it, a 'pre-arrival guest questionnaire' – so you can detail any dietary requirements, a choice of newspapers and pillows, and



Great service: The Milestone Hotel, Kensington

# World award is a Milestone

## FACTFILE



**Service with a smile:** The Milestone Hotel reception area

■ THE Milestone is part of Red Carnation Hotels, luxury hotels in London, Dorest, Guernsey, Geneva, Palm Beach and Cape Town. It has been voted: Number One British Hotel (Condé Nast Traveler Gold List World's Best Hotels 2009), Best Hotel in the British Isles, (Condé Nast Traveler Readers Choice Awards 2008), Hotel of the Year 2008 (Ensemble Travel Group) and Number One in

the World for Service (Travel and Leisure's world's best service reader survey, '08).

Room rates:

- Queen Bedded Rooms: £265 high season, £235 low.
- Park Queen: £295, £265.
- Deluxe King Rooms: £315, £285.
- Deluxe Studio: £385, £355.
- Junior Suites: £599, £569.
- Grand Master Suite: £799, £769.
- [www.milestonehotel.com](http://www.milestonehotel.com)

even what music you would like on your pre-programmed iPod.

Each iPod is also pre-programmed with nine walking tours of London.

Naturally the concierge can get you tickets for any show in London or a table at any restaurant.

If you want a shave at the Royal barbers Truefitt and Hill, or want to be measured for a suit in your room, no problem.

The full English breakfast, with freshly-squeezed pink grapefruit juice, brought another first.

What, we asked, were these dark crystals in a bowl?

"Black salt" was the

answer, "from Hawaii" Where else?

For people who can't bear to leave loved ones at home, they welcome pets and have a dedicated pet concierge.

If you are feeling fit there's a swimming pool, gym, sauna, and personal yoga instructors.

With 57 guest rooms and suites, the Milestone offers exemplary service.

Rooms are from 18 square metres to suites up to 62 square metres, all luxuriously furnished.

One lady guest I was speaking to about the hotel's ambience said: "I feel so relaxed, it's just like being at home."

Praise indeed.