



HOT SPOTS

Rachael Barker

Naumi, Singapore

What is it? A quirky boutique hotel in the heart of Singapore's central business district, the Naumi reopened in October after a year-long renovation, despite having first opened its doors only back in 2007. The property – one of two under the brand in the Lion City, the other being the Naumi Liora – is a short walk from an MRT (Singaporean for “MTR”) station and a stone's throw from the Formula One racetrack and several shopping malls. Nearer still is the iconic Raffles Hotel, just across quaint Seah Street, with its fun collection of bars and restaurants.

Handy. So what's the vibe? The management has clearly taken the sexy route this time around – on each of the leather-walled guest-room corridors hangs a suggestive 3D slogan; including the vaguely sinister “Make my day ... luv” on one floor, a not-so-subtle “Yes” on another and the rather more forward “I know you want it” somewhere in the middle. As a chat-up line goes, it would be interesting to know how that last one usually pans out. All up, there are 73 rooms and suites, with the pieces de resistance being the two Andy Warhol suites (above centre) and the two named after fashion icon Coco Chanel (above left). The Warhols are raucous and fun with wacky furniture and sumptuous round bathtubs while the monochromatic Chaneles are of a more chic and sophisticated design. What is particularly clever about each

of the rooms is the use of space; your yoga mat and ironing can be tucked snugly into a drawer under the bed and, inside a wall in each standard room, is secreted a door-sized minibar (guests may need help finding these). Bathrooms are equipped with “magic” glass walls that, at the flick of a switch, turn from transparent to opaque.

What's special about the hotel? One highlight is the Naumi Angel service. During the evening turndown rounds, a smiling “angel” will appear at your door offering kind words and – more importantly – complimentary drinks, and there could be a marshmallow in it for you, too. These cheerful cherubs are more than happy to answer questions and offer advice on the city and your surroundings. Also noteworthy are the meeting rooms, this being a hotel also directed at business travellers. The two Varta rooms are furnished with modern, funky pieces such as an industrial take on chandeliers and gold lamp stands in the shape of guns. One room features a long boardroom table while the other offers comfortable sofas and a more relaxed atmosphere. The wall separating the two spaces can be removed to create one convivial setting (right centre).

On the exterior of the building is a groovy bit of graffiti showing an Andy Lau Tak-wah-type character hoisting a massive 1950s car over the “Naumi” sign but – get this – the

headlights on the car are not part of the paintwork; they are real! Impressed? Me too!

What is there to do? Considering what's on the doorstep, it is unlikely that guests would want to cocoon themselves inside the property, but should you become exhausted by the shopping or have enjoyed one too many Singapore slings across the road at the Long Bar the night before, you might like to spend the day on Cloud 9 (above), Naumi's rooftop terrace. Here, a huge infinity pool, a bar and super-comfy sofas look directly over the sweeping Raffles property below and onto the CBD's orchard of high-rises.

What about the food? The hotel's one restaurant, Table by Rang Mahal (right), is near the entrance, next to the discreet reception desk. With low-key Indian-inspired decor, it is open all day and serves contemporary cuisine inspired by the subcontinent.

What about the people? Possibly the hotel's greatest asset, the staff are supremely laid-back, friendly and attentive.

That's a lot of pros, what about the cons? OK, well, the in-room Apple rechargers might be a little dodgy; my iPhone 5 stammered something like “this device is not certified and may not work reliably with this iPhone”. And if I were an extreme quibbler, I would

point out that the drawers in the desk do not fit perfectly.

What's the bottom line? Standard rooms start at S\$600/HK\$3,650 while a Coco Chanel suite will set you back S\$1,000. For more details, go to www.naumihotel.com.