

New hotel breaks the New Hampshire mould

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE MARCH 31, 2012



The media room at Six South Street offers handy mini-offices that are equipped with video screens for presentations.

Photograph by: Six South Street

If we think of Ivy League universities, we imagine serious academic halls in patrician communities, all steeped in history. The venerable town of Hanover, N.H., founded in the 1760s and home to Dartmouth College, fits the bill, but a new establishment, Six South Street, breaks tradition.

Six South Street is a stylish boutique hotel with minimalist lines, striking, post-modern interiors and lots of user-friendly features for its plugged-in clientele. Everything is bright, airy and semi-open, with guests flowing smoothly from the lobby to the media room to the Bistro at Six.

“We definitely broke the mould,” said general manager Donald Bruce, “and not only for Hanover, but our contemporary look and feel might be unique in the state of New Hampshire.

“We’re often compared to a W Hotel, although not quite as big-city. We’re more like a less glitzy, Ivy League W.”

Once you toss your keys to the valet parker, you enter glass doors and glide over glossy stone floors. The small welcome lounge – a boutique lobby – is a design standout, with cranberry velvet sofas and

large windows. A media room is available to travelling salespeople, students and anyone else who needs guest computers and the handy mini-offices that are equipped with video screens and chairs set up for presentations.

The Bistro at Six serves casual fare with a southwestern accent in dishes like grilled shrimp with lime or black bean salad with cilantro dressing, plus there are burgers, pastas, classic main courses of chicken, fish and meat. On Friday and Saturday nights, the big draw is the prime rib special.

The 69 guest rooms and suites are fresh and unfussy, decked out with white cotton duvet covers, honey-colour furniture and contemporary art. Functionality is important at this modern hotel, so rooms have flat-screen televisions, working desks with ergonomic chairs, iPod docks and extra bedside outlets so you can conveniently recharge all your mobile devices.

Because it is a totally new building, Six South was able to go green in a big way. It has LED lighting, a structural frame of recycled steel, geo-thermal heating and cooling, low-energy operating systems and an innovative laundry system that uses cold water and ozone to replace traditional chemicals. The hotel is covered with a "cool roof," a white synthetic membrane that reduces energy costs and pollution. Even the staff uniforms are made of recycled yarns created from discarded recycled plastic bottles.

Another thing that sets Six South apart from many

establishments in small New England towns is its international clientele. If you linger over coffee in the breakfast room or spend cocktail hour in the lounge, you'll overhear the conversations of people from around the world. Dartmouth is a major draw for visiting students, professors, researchers and consultants.

Six South Street is steps from Hanover's charming Main Street and Dartmouth's Green, the main campus bordered by ivy-draped brick buildings. The most prominent establishment in Hanover since the college opened in 1769, Dartmouth is the smallest of the eight Ivy League schools with about 6,000 students.

All of this highbrow thinking has created a community that appreciates and cultivates the arts. Here are a few must-sees:

For a unique break, afternoon tea is served on weekdays in stately Sanborn Hall, an exquisite library that is part of Dartmouth's English department. The ritual began during the mid-1880s, when Prof. Edwin David Sanborn invited students to his home to study and socialize. The Sanborn's rare book collections and hand-carved reading alcoves are fascinating, and you can't beat the price of a cuppa: 10 cents, including cookies.

The Hood Museum of Art harbours an astonishing 65,000 treasures acquired by Dartmouth curators over a 240-year period, one of the oldest and largest collections of any college in the United States. The centrepiece is an exhibit of ancient Assyrian works, and the museum also houses American, European, Native American and African art. Upcoming shows include the modern masterpieces of Men of Fire: Jose Clemente Orozco and Jackson Pollock. (April 7-June 17), and the photographs of Canadian Edward Bertynsky, Nature Transformed (April 21-Aug. 19).

Next door, the equally top-drawer Hopkins Centre for the Arts presents professional and student dance, film, theatre and music. The spring lineup includes classical concerts by the Takács Quartet and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Latin jazz by Poncho Sanchez and Terence Blanchard and a riveting documentary on stage, ReEntry by American Records, a theatre company that will dramatize the world of returning war veterans.

In July, the "Hop" will kick off a summer-long celebration of its 50th anniversary with Hands On Pianos, a music project featuring refurbished old pianos set up in the streets. HOPfest, an all-free festival on July 19 and 20, will showcase a beer garden, an outdoor film screening and the Asphalt Orchestra, New York's exciting, alternative 12-piece marching band.

If you are in town on June 10, you'll experience the soul of Hanover. Scores of Dartmouth graduates will be criss-crossing the Green to their commencement ceremonies, all decked out in black caps and gowns, with different-coloured sashes representing individual academic departments.

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IF YOU GO

Hanover is a three-hour drive from Montreal via Vermont Interstate 89 south through Burlington and White River Junction, Vt. and Highway 91 to Hanover

Six South Street: 603-643-0600, sixsouth.com; 6 South St., Hanover N.H. Breakfast served daily. Bistro at Six opens at 5 p.m., Mon.-Sat.

Price: \$239-369, including wireless Internet and telephone calls throughout North America, use of fitness and media rooms. The All-Day-All-Night Package, for an additional \$24, features an early and late arrival/departure. Among promotions are the \$1 breakfast or \$1 cocktail, and CAA or seniors' rates. Valet parking, \$18 a day. Pet-friendly, \$25 a day.

Dartmouth College: 603-646-1110, dartmouth.edu, Hanover, N.H.

Hood Museum of Art: 603-646-2808, hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu; Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.

Hopkins Center for the Arts: 603-646-2422, hop.dartmouth.edu; Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.

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