



Yotel Boston is a high-tech micro-hotel in the thriving seaport district. There are also Yotels in San Francisco and New York.

AT YOTEL BOSTON, THE FUTURE IS NOW

Thanks to smart design and the latest tech, these small, inviting rooms pack a punch



ROCHELLE LASH

I have seen the future of hotels and it looks a lot like Yotel Boston.

The avant-garde Yotel calls its genre micro-luxury. The brand's idea is to be an affordable getaway in a major metropolis. Since Yotel is a relatively new concept, it follows that it also is high-tech and high design.

British businessman Simon Woodroffe launched his vision in the early 2000s. He had enjoyed a first-class airline flight so much that he built a hotel brand around that sort of minimalist comfort.

First came YotelAir, airport micro-hotels in London, Paris and Amsterdam where weary travellers can rent tiny rooms by the hour to rest up during long layovers. Then came Yotel, urban micro-hotels in New York, San Francisco and Boston. They're distinctly modernist and futuristic, with advanced tech conveniences, including the new Yo2D2, a robot butler, in Boston.

Yotel's designers have been so clever with tight spaces that the guest rooms are inviting even though they're compact to the max. My bad! Did I say guest rooms? Here, they're called cabins, and to continue Yotel's airborne theme, the front desk is known as mission control. The staff — called the cabin crew — wear a cool ensemble of a blazer over dark-wash jeans and a T-shirt with the purple Yotel logo. Converse sneakers finish the relaxed next-generation look.

"Yotel is an innovative hotel brand," general manager Chris Hartzell said. "We offer everything you need and nothing you don't. Our comforts and conveniences are progressive, modern-day luxuries that are meant to give back time.

"With our speedy check-in kiosks, handy app and signature SmartBed, each guest enjoys a first-class, non-traditional hotel experience at a relatively affordable price."

One unusual offering is Yotel Boston's Meditation Mondays — free for guests — which are guided wellness sessions.

The technology: Yotel's advanced tech appeals to travellers on the go. It's a bit of a do-it-yourself visit. You can save time with a self-check-in at a kiosk, similar



Yotel Boston's robot butler, named Yo2D2, will deliver items to your cabin. BEN ESAKOF

to an airline system.

The Yotel app allows you to book reservations, choose early or late checkout in advance, and at no extra charge, use keyless room entry, view billing, receive messages or tune into a brief relaxation video.

The new tech sensation Yo2D2 delivers linens and other items to your room. No tip necessary. The bot also greets guests with clever messages on its touchscreen. If you would like to make friends, Yo2D2 mingles in the lounges and has even been known to

dance a little.

"Technology needs to be functional," Hartzell said. "Our guests have been fascinated and entertained by the robot, but more importantly, Yo2D2 is freeing up the crew to assist guests in other ways."

The rooms: Yotel Boston has 326 cabins in several king and queen types. About 85 per cent of the cabins in Yotel Boston are queen rooms. They're models of efficiency, with not a centimetre wasted. I spoke to a trio of girlfriends who shared a premium queen with bunk and had a great time. And the first king cabin and the VIP views suite sleep four using a pullout sofa.

The cabins have adjustable beds that incline during the day to save space and recline at night for sleep. You will have good-quality bedding and a small open closet, plus bathrooms with heated towel racks and rain showers.

Each room also has an entertainment hub built around a large flat-screen TV. The room decor is bright and white, but you can adjust the TV screen with a Pantone colour wheel and LED lights will glow according to your mood — greens, blues, pinks and yellows. Yotel encourages guests to BYOD — bring your own devices — so everyone can stream audio through the TV.

Food: The hotel's ground floor is home to the inviting Club Lounge, where you can nibble,

IF YOU GO

Yotel Boston: 888-329-4753, 617-377-4747, yotel.com; 65 Seaport Blvd., Boston

Price: Rates fluctuate. Currently, rooms for two start at US\$199 to US\$359. Rooms for four start at US\$399 to US\$519. Summer rates might be different. Discount for CAA and AAA. Rates include Wi-Fi, calls within the U.S., coffee corner, fitness room, library and HDMI cables on loan. Valet parking available.

Boston Tourism: 617-536-4100, bostonusa.com

dine or drink in the bistro-bar or on the terrace in summer. It's breakfast and all-day dining with such dishes as turkey chili, Cobb salad, wings, lamb gyro, beef sliders, shepherd's pie and braised short rib flatbread.

The Sky Lounge, a 12th-floor rooftop, is great for cocktails, small bites and the views of Boston Harbor.

The neighbourhood: Yotel fits perfectly in Boston's dynamic seaport district, where towering glass condos, trendy restaurants and new-generation shops are creating a new city within a city. Yotel Boston sits atop a subway stop — a perfect match to the hotel's accessibility and practicality.

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