

HOTEL INTEL

LIGHTHOUSE
A SEXY BEACON
FOR TEL AVIV

Upscale hotel boasts attentive service,
prime location in Israel's 'capital of cool'



ROCHELLE LASH

The Lighthouse is an upscale boutique hotel, one of the latest of Brown Hotels' collection of trendy properties.

When Brown Hotels says trendy, it means fashionable and hip, with cocktail culture, adventurous design and sex appeal. But also with substance and service.

The Lighthouse has attentive service and superior contemporary accommodations, all at relatively moderate prices, for Tel Aviv. And it's a generous package. Guests are treated to complimentary wine at any time at the lobby bar, as well as entrance to the Tel Aviv Museum and an amazing breakfast that costs \$45 for non-hotel guests.

"Travellers come to The Lighthouse because we're an authentic part of Tel Aviv's lifestyle," said Leon Avigad, Brown Hotels' founder. "Visitors want to feel the city and they can do that with our prime location, accessible boutique size and well-informed staff."

The Lighthouse is two blocks from the Mediterranean Sea and the city's exceptional beachfront promenade, as well as a five-minute walk from Carmel Market, a Tel Aviv must-see. The hotel is at the epicentre of Tel Aviv, a world capital of cool where 30 per cent of the population of 443,000 is between 18 and 35. (Greater Tel Aviv counts about 1.4 million citizens.)

The scene: The Lighthouse embodies at least one of Tel Aviv's personas, "the city that never sleeps," an allusion to the 24-hour lifestyle of sun-drenched beach romps, sumptuous dining and epic nightlife.

IF YOU GO

The Lighthouse: 972-3-974 7045, Migdalor Tower, 1 Ben Yehuda St. (near Allenby), Tel Aviv; brownhotels.com. Brown Hotels include Brown TLV, Brown Beach House, The Dave, Poli House and WOM Allenby pod hotels, all in Tel Aviv, plus hotels in Jerusalem and Croatia.

Price: The Lighthouse starts at \$330 Cdn, including breakfast buffet and hot dish, bicycles, Wi-Fi, sundeck/ soaking tub, Nespresso, bottled water, lobby wine, beach towel, Tel Aviv Museum entry, nearby fitness centre. Best rate guaranteed. Five per cent off for booking online. Advance booking, 45 days, has 12-per cent discount. Culinary tour available.

HaSalon: 052-703-5888, facebook.com/hasalon; Ma'avar Yabok 8, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel.

Tel Aviv Tourism: visit.tel-aviv.gov.il

The 18th-floor Haiku SkyBar is a dazzling new hot spot that rocks with heat, buzz and the drama of stunning 360-degree views. Up to 600 revellers converge for rooftop parties of cocktails, dancing, sushi and techno music.

For the morning after, the fifth-floor terrace is a tranquil, semi-private refuge with a sundeck and a two- or three-person soaking tub.

Food? Enjoy! In Israel, you can expect a phenomenal breakfast



The Haiku SkyBar atop The Lighthouse is among Tel Aviv's top nightspots. MAX MORRON/THE LIGHTHOUSE



Several rooms at The Lighthouse in Tel Aviv, near the Mediterranean Sea, have private terraces. ASSAF PINCHUK/THE LIGHTHOUSE

buffet of Mediterranean salads, fruit and pastries, plus cooked dishes such as the traditional shakshuka (eggs baked in spicy tomato sauce). Here, executive chef Maor Sabag adds a hint of Japanese fusion with tasty bowls of noodles marinated in orange and ginger.

This is only the beginning. The Lighthouse is expanding from 100 rooms to 260 and adding a rooftop pool and a full restaurant.

Services: The Lighthouse's staff members are so friendly and helpful they seem like family. Energetic and plugged into the city, the front desk organized my visit within minutes. Dinner reservations. Check. The essential What's App for messaging. Downloaded. A welcome glass of chilled Israeli Chardonnay. Done, and done again.

The deluxe details are products of Avigad's professional background. He started as a bellboy,

picked up an MBA in England, graduated to senior management and gained experience at St-Moritz's famous Badrutt's Palace and Israel's landmark Dan Hotels.

The rooms feature luxuries: fine linens, Nespresso machines, posh Molton Brown toiletries, Bluetooth connections, bathrobes and twice-daily house-keeping.

If you are a view person, you can choose the Mediterranean Sea or the Tel Aviv skyline. Several rooms have sitting areas, sofa beds and bathtubs, and 12 rooms have balconies with private whirlpools — and that's a feature that you don't see often.

Celebrity dining: Pending the opening of the Lighthouse's restaurant, I scored a seat at HaSalon, an exclusive dining spot by Eyal Shani, Tel Aviv's most famous and prolific chef-restaurateur. Bon Jovi made the scene that night, so HaSalon was abuzz with a glamorous entourage arriving in limousines. As usual, the wine flowed and the chefs made magic in the open kitchen amid amazing displays of vegetables, aged steaks and seafood. I had octopus, shrimp and a Romanian-inspired cornmeal dish, mamaliga.

Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, HaSalon (the living room) is an insiders' restaurant operating in an industrial-chic former warehouse. It's always festive and entertaining, but after 10 p.m., it's downright bacchanalian with guests mingling and dancing on the tables. HaSalon also opened recently in New York City.

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