

HOTEL INTEL

# Luxurious Norman tops Tel Aviv's boutique list



ROCHELLE LASH

The sophisticated, artistic Norman Hotel is a first-rate ambassador for the sensational metropolis of Tel Aviv, and since opening a few years ago it has been collecting best-of accolades faster than you can say "Mazel tov".

The Norman has been named among the best hotels or best boutique hotels in Tel Aviv by sources such as cntraveler.com (Condé Nast), nytimes.com, robreport.com, TripAdvisor.com, secrettelaviv.com and telegraph.co.uk.

That is high praise in Tel Aviv, a pace-setting city experiencing a current boom in hotels, plus acclaimed for nightlife, technology, cuisine, culture, gay pride and beach bliss, stoked by more than 300 days of sunshine a year.

The Norman is at the centre of it all, two blocks from famed Rothschild Blvd., and near Tel Aviv's top cultural institutions, including the Charles Bronfman Auditorium, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Carmel Market and Azrieli Towers.

**The scene:** The Norman is petite, prestigious and poised, with staff dressed in chic outfits and exquisitely crafted interiors. The hotel's furnishings and artwork, an elegant ode to the mid-century, are as carefully curated as those of a museum.

The Norman has two exceptional restaurants, Mediterranean and Japanese, which stand out even in a gastronomic superstar such as Tel Aviv. And Condé Nast Traveler voted The Norman's breakfast — the traditional Israeli buffet of Mediterranean salads, cakes and shakshuka baked eggs — one of the 10 best in the world.

The Library Bar, a stylish, clubby rendezvous, serves creative cocktails such as the Galilee Martini made with Israeli gin, fine Israeli wines and the most extensive Champagne selection in Israel.

The rooms feature comforts such as Frette sheets, Nespresso machines, customized toiletries and user-friendly touch pads to control electronics. On the wellness front, the Norman offers



The Norman Hotel is a good example of Bauhaus architecture. PHOTOS: SIVAN ASKAYO/THE NORMAN HOTEL

massages, private yoga, a fitness room and a rooftop pool.

"We are passionate about our hotel, and we're always working on details," said general manager Yaron Liberman, a Swiss-trained alumnus of The Breakers in Palm Beach. "But it is more about our people than our physical attributes. We pride ourselves on their service and approach."

**Art/design:** Most compelling, The Norman is eye candy for aficionados of architecture and design. It spans two important 1925 buildings in Tel Aviv's White City, the world's largest collection of original Bauhaus. This UNESCO World Heritage Site encompasses thousands of examples of an art movement that was spawned 100 years ago in Germany.

The Norman itself is a work of art. The sophisticated interiors reflect timeless elegance. The decor is graceful, sensual and glamorous, a collection of refined furniture and accessories that reflect the 1920s to the 1940s.



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Gently curved tables and silk fainting couches are set against walls decorated in the colours of pearl and alabaster.

The Norman's artisanal touches include hand-painted ceram-

ics, stencilled walls, mirrored glass, embroidered drapery and bronze motifs carved into wood floors. The guest rooms' playlist sets a gentle, romantic mood with tunes by Maurice Chevalier,

IF YOU GO

**The Norman Hotel:** 800-398 8751, 972-3-543-5555, thenorman.com; 23-25 Nachmani St., Tel Aviv. A member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World. Custom airport service and tours, some by bicycle, are available.

**Prices fluctuate:** Rooms start at approximately US\$680; suites at US\$950; including rooftop pool, bicycles, evening turndown, in-room Nespresso/tea, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, 24-hour Technogym, 24-hour concierge. Holiday prices might be higher.

**Dining:** Alena: breakfast/dinner daily; lunch on Sun.-Thurs. Dinings: dinner nightly; lunch, Fri.-Sat. All-day menus daily at Library Bar and rooftop pool.

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

Nat King Cole and Rudy Vallée.

The main building, No. 23 Nachmani St., houses the pool, indoor and outdoor dining, lounges and deluxe rooms. Next door at the more secluded No. 25, full-sized suites overlook a private garden of lemon and orange trees. The Norman will soon expand to No. 20, with long-term residences and a full spa.

**Cuisine:** Alena's executive chef Barak Aharoni explains his philosophy of seasonal, contemporary and Mediterranean cuisine: "If we source the best produce, we create beautiful dishes with simplicity."

Veggie highlights include leek tatin with goat cheese; Levantine-inspired quinoa with edamame, almonds, pecans and mint; grilled cauliflower; and ricotta-dough pasta with charred aubergines. Among Aharoni's favourites are grilled chicken with olives and kale, lamb chops, fish with braised fennel and the beef filet.

Dinings, an even more precious gourmet venture, is The Norman's penthouse Japanese restaurant. It serves Izakaya-style small plates (named for Japanese taverns specializing in sake) as well as delicacies such as lobster yuzi, salmon or tuna tartare, seared beef tataki and a full list of sushi, rolls, nigiri and sashimi.

The Norman also has all-day menus for the Library Bar and the pool.

Rochelle@rochellelash.com

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