

Hotel B: Art and Elegance in Lima's Barranco District

Outside the Hotel B, Lima's premier boutique hotel in the bohemian Barranco district, two bicycles embellished with the hotel's signature "B" are parked. One is black, one is white. Two suited and dapper doormen, one in white, one in black, greet me as I exit the cab. The façade of the hotel is white and the white highlights the building's ornate features. I pass through the iron-grille front doors and marble entrance. The hotel makes a wonderful first impression.



My stay at Hotel B (pronounce "b" as in "bay") is a shot of urban energy and refinement. It's especially welcome after nearly a month of travel to some of Peru's natural wonders, rural regions and villages. The Hotel B and Barranco prove too that Lima is a destination well worthy of an extended stay, regardless of Peru's other marvels.

Inside, art doesn't just decorate the walls, it's part of the elegance and vibrancy of the hotel and the artsy and bohemian neighborhood on which it stands.



Art, Aesthetics and History Abound

The original two-story building was built in 1914 as a private home. At the time, Lima had a flush economy and was celebrating 100 years of independence. The Belle Époque mansion and others in the Barranco neighborhood served as seaside retreats for many of the city's wealthiest citizens.

Today, the hotel is a 17-suite boutique hotel and the restaurant and bar a vital addition to the neighborhood.

The property was purchased in 2010 by a group of eight serious art collectors. The extensive renovation plans kept or restored tile, woodwork, French doors and other glamorous embellishments. A contemporary three-story addition for additional rooms, service space, and outdoor rooms was also included.

The Hotel B opened in May of 2014.

Three of the co-owners—sisters—own the art gallery next door, Lucia de la Puente Galeria de Arte.

The hotel benefits because, with the exception of five permanent pieces, the artwork in the hotel rotates every six months. The works are by Peruvian and other South American artists.

While the art collection and most of the furnishings are contemporary, the bones of the building, furniture and fixtures create a fusion of styles.

Hospitality

Everyone at "Team B" is professional, gracious and warm. At the front desk, I'm helped with restaurant recommendations and reservations, cabs and cars. They have an intimate knowledge of the galleries, museums and artists, and provided a walking route that ensured I'd visit my top spots. (Their cheerful and colorful fold-out walking map of Barranco's hot spots becomes the only guide I need.)

And I have to add this: if you happen to be traveling solo in Peru on your birthday, the staff knows how to make you feel special—trick candle and all!





The Rooms



Some of the rooms overlook Calle San Martin and some are interior rooms that overlook the light-filled courtyard.

My Aposento room is one of eight in its class. The original works of art are interesting and contemporary—pieces far more welcome in my home than what we usually find inside hotel rooms. Room art rotates just as it does elsewhere in the hotel. Fresh flowers and a room key with an opulent tassel brought a smile.

There's a comfy king-sized bed, a couple of plush chairs that convert to a lounge.



Two lovely armoires lined with velvet wallpaper conceal closet space, a refrigerator, an “honesty bar” with healthy and indulgent local products, a room safe, and storage shelves. There's a desk for working and a freestanding bathtub for relaxing. (Soak-ready with a loofah and bath salts.) I love the high ceilings, the woods and tile work.





And the bathroom, ah, yes. My bathroom sports two sinks and a walk-in shower with a rain shower head. Yes, I made use of the electric wall towel warmer. I enjoy the 'El Huerto de mi Amada' fig & herb shampoo, conditioner and body wash, available in full-size bottles.

In-room amenities are many. Hogartex bed linens (made from Peruvian Pima cotton) are luxurious. Towels and robes are plump and soft. The room provides plenty of outlets for charging electronics, including at the bed and the desk.

The four Alcoba rooms are a bit smaller but just as elegant and well-appointed.



The Atelier suites are often reserved by couples for wedding or anniversary celebrations. These largest suites include sixteen and half foot ceilings, exposed dark wood beams especially luxurious bathrooms, with a lovely little balcony.

All rooms include high-speed internet and local phone calls, and large plasma tv. Complimentary ironing services and shoe shine are available. In-room massage services, and packing and unpacking services are available. Not always available from boutique hotels: 24 hour room service from a full-service menu.

Turn-down service brought not only a chocolate, but an Emily Dickinson poem. And I adore the sly black tie to ties around the door knob outside your room to request privacy. (A white tie on the door knob alerts you that housekeeping staff is in your room.)

Needless to say, I enjoy every moment in the room.

Breakfast and Afternoon Tea

Breakfast is included, and features a buffet of breads and pastries, charcuterie and cheeses (including a wonderful *queso crema*), smoked fish, olives, avocado, sweets, pastries, jam, honeys and yogurt parfaits. There are hot dishes (try the *saltados*, Peruvian stir-fries) and a menu of egg, pancake, and waffle entrees. There's a selection of fresh, organic juices created by Natural Chef/Nutritionist Fernanda de la Puente.

A Peruvian *Lonche*, or Afternoon Tea, is served from 4:30 to 6:30 and it's the perfect opportunity to take a break from site seeing and relax. The buffet includes a spread of finger sandwiches, croissant sandwiches, hot *hors d'oeuvres*, canapés, crackers and spreads and wonderful cakes and sweets.



Relax with a pot of tea, specialty coffee, or juice. Or, turn this high tea into happy hour with a cocktail from the bar. Best of all, the Tea is complementary for hotel guests.



Hotel Dining and Space to Relax

Barranco (indeed all of Lima) has incredible restaurants—and you can count the Hotel B among the neighborhood's best places to eat and drink. The hotel's restaurant and bar offers traditional Peruvian and Mediterranean dishes, with plentiful seafood and meat dishes from Chef Diego Rosario. The Bar particularly conjures Lima in the 1920's. Enjoy Peruvian pisco, cocktails (including a particularly extensive selection of gins and a gin and tonic menu), and South American wines.

Seating for breakfast, tea, lunch or dinner is available in the Courtyard as well. The roof opens for ventilation and sunlight; a smart feature in a city that so rarely gets rain. The teatina skylights are another great architectural feature.

While the restaurant and bar are open to the public, the spacious rooftop terrace, accessible from staircases at either end of the hotel, are reserved for guests. The house iced tea is available, or ring to have cocktails and food sent up.

Enjoy a view of the Pacific Ocean, just a block away.

Relax in the Lobby, Library or the Sitting Room. There's a great collection of books on South American art and architecture books.





I particularly enjoy climbing up to the terrace from the winding staircase, one of two ways up.



A Neighborhood Asset

Hotel B is very much a part of the neighborhood culture. It's a popular spot for events, small weddings or pre-wedding celebrations. The bar and restaurant definitely welcomes residents, including artists who live in the neighborhood, as well as hotel guests.

Cocktail classes, cooking classes and half-day walking tours of Barranco can be arranged through the Concierge, a great way to get an intimate look at the neighborhood and Peruvian cuisine. (These require some notice, so ask about the options when you book your reservation.)



Location, Location: Explore Barranco

Hotel B is located in Lima's Barranco district, the city's bohemian district. The hotel is just a block away from the walking/bike path that allows fabulous ocean views and access to the beach below on the Circuito de Playas.

But it's the walkable streets and all they offer than make the Hotel B "the" place to stay in Lima. There are most than a dozen art galleries, three of the city's best art museums, shops selling artful wares, fabulous restaurants, bars and coffee shops. Do stroll the residential side streets as well for some great architecture.

Hotel B: Art and Elegance

Well deserved, the Hotel B is the first Peruvian hotel to be listed with Relais & Châteaux and a Gold List winner at Conté Nast.

For travelers who appreciate art and refined, modern elegance, Hotel B is not just the place to stay

to stay in Barranco, but also the preferred hotel in Lima.

For More:

- Hotel B, <http://hotelb.pe/>
- Visit Peru, Official Tourism Bureau, www.visitperu.com/visit-peruinfo/english/

- Cover photo of the Hotel B Bar courtesy of the Hotel B. All other photos by Nancy Zaffaro, except as credited.