

TOP 25 BUSINESS HOTELS 2009

Our annual guide to Europe's top offerings for the business traveller

This year, *CNBC Business* has refined its criteria for ranking Europe's best hotels for business travellers. While we still insist upon outstanding service and facilities, in these straitened times, value for money must be considered, too. We're not necessarily prescribing austerity – an ionised pool and snappy room service would make most business travellers more productive – and luxury and value are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, there is a case that those four-figure thread counts or lobby harpists are good calls for the chronically insomniac or the highly strung go-getter.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the best "business package" currently offered by our top-rated hotel in 2008, The Four Seasons George V Paris – one of the world's greatest addresses – weighs in at €780 a night. Sure, it includes breakfast and internet access, and is only €50 more than the room-only rack rate but it would take more than a croissant basket and some sweet dreams of Carla Bruni to persuade your financial director that this was your smartest booking in the prevailing climate.

Another absentee from our list this year is the Hotel Adlon Kempinski, possibly the best hotel in Europe's most happening city, Berlin. Staff in the hotel's fluffy new spa and 24-hour business centre may bend over backwards to

please but to charge €27 for 24-hour in-room Wi-Fi – in a city where free connectivity is as omnipresent as performance artists – is as much bad manners as it is bad business. Other illustrious hotels have been struck from our list for this reason – plus the even bigger outrage of charging for that bedside bottle of mineral water – unless they have really made amends in their pricing policy, rather than simply adorning the crime scene with a pillow menu.

So this year we are honouring the best hotels for business in terms of location, service, amenities, style, ambience, and value for money. Oh, and we've also considered the ease of website booking – after all, time is money too.

I Mama Shelter, Paris

Vive le credit crunch! With 172 compact rooms set over seven breeze-block baring floors, Mama's all about witty Philippe Starck style on a budget: tongue-in-cheek, down-home Americana for iPhone-toting creatives. Rooms range from the basic Mama (17m² from €79) to Big Mama (35m² with living room and terrace, from €139). By day, communal areas are perfect for working and meeting, with free Wi-Fi throughout. All rooms offer iMacs, TV, radio, Skype, or playing CDs and DVDs. At night, though, the buzzy lounge-bar becomes a great place to unwind. mamashelter.com

MAMA SHELTER

