

A walk through time, back to the ages of prohibition, the Sofia Hotel opened its doors to a once-quiet downtown San Diego. It originally opened in 1927 as the Pickwick Hotel and housed the KGB radio station until 1944. It was the first luxury hotel in San Diego to offer an "en suite" bathroom and was far ahead of its time. The hotel still has hints of its 1920s elegance, while combining a modern, turn-of-the-century atmosphere. The renovation left a chic boutique hotel located at 150 W Broadway in downtown San Diego. The organic ambience radiates Sofia's long corridors with warm and soothing vibes.

Choose from 211 guest suites with plush accommodations. There's a sense of comfort in every room, as Sofia offers fine linens and white down comforters, Sharper Image electronics, contemporary vanity bathroom features, and a variety of in-room spa treatments. VIP suite upgrades include spa tubs, fine art, plush cushions and lounge accessories. Also catering to your hospitality needs outside the suite are the Spa Sofia and Harkishan

Yoga Studio, which offer yoga instructors and personal trainers on call, along with a health center offering full body fitness and spa rejuvenation throughout your stay. Sofia is centrally located, adjacent to all the top dining, nightlife, and entertainment offerings in the Gaslamp Quarter.

If you have work on your mind, you can always take advantage of the business center, which hosts three computers offering complementary internet and printing. You can map out an itinerary for your stay as to where to eat, shop, and play, and the front desk staff are eager to offer suggestions of the best places locally.

When hunger finally sets in, there's no need to go very far, because attached to the Sofia is Currant Restaurant, an "American Brasserie," which looks very classy without being stuffy. Patio seating is available for one of the many perfect weather days, where planted herbs and plenty of people-watching help create the ambience. The service is friendly and the presentation is simple

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the Sofia Hotel

by Jacqueline Sayward

but elegant. You are given a beautiful bottle of cold water along with a well thought-out menu of exotic and organic foods. Many guests return for dinner after experiencing the duck confit canard salad or the winter salmon, making your mouth water for more. Each item on the menu also has a tremendous wine that Assistant Manager Jeff Nabours has hand picked to complement the meal. "I try to look for more of the small vineyard wineries," said Nabours. "Southern French wines are my favorite to chose because they hold up well with our more hearty meals, such as the pan roasted pork tenderloins with red wine braised figs, or the steak au poivre with peppercorn-cognac gravy." Whether you are looking for a quick happy hour stop, lunch, breakfast or a formal dinner, Currant is a must-visit if you are staying in downtown San Diego. The happy hour and bar menus are a real bargain.

Sofia, a younger version of her predecessor Pickwick, still upholds the charm and elegance she once did in the 1920s, but now that she is modern and full of class, it's an alluring invite to partake in her glory and comfort.

