



## Road Trip: San Diego. Sofia Hotel Tempts Like a Green Fairy.

BY ALEX STORCH FOR LA2DAY.COM APR 4, 2009



"You know, I've never been to Los Angeles." These are the words from an employee at the **Sofia Hotel** that spun around my head on the way up to my suite. Did this really classify me as some sort of world traveler in their eyes? Had I picked somewhere in the city for my weekend stay that was so remote that LA was a distant dream? More research was certainly required.

After 18 months of renovation, the Sofia Hotel now sparkles with a sophisticated, renewed charm. San Diego hotels each have their own particular style, especially the boutiques that lie outside the chains. Sofia is a modern hostess, but with a classic mindset. She drinks Manhattans and wears vintage, but not things you'd find on Melrose. The things you'd have to dig out and discover.

Speaking of discovery, the hotel is within walking distance from Seaport Village, the convention center, Little Italy and the hundreds of different restaurants and night attractions. The hotel even leads weekend "walkabout" tours of the Gaslamp Quarter. "The complimentary Gaslamp Walkabout Tour is a guided tour lasting approximately one hour and our animated guide takes a walk through the Quarter and along the Embarcadero pointing out all of the history of San Diego and the buildings along the way," said Assistant General Manager John Maclean.



Since I was from faraway Los Angeles, I decided to expand my adventure to the Sofia's restaurant, called Currant. American-French cuisine reigns supreme here, along with their unique specialty drink: absinthe. Since the people next to me had already fallen under Sofia's charms and ordered Manhattans, I decided to "kick it up a notch" (and also make another Food Network reference, apparently) with the restaurant's unique specialty drink: original absinthe.

The bartender, Bobby Jones, told me that Currant offers four different kinds of absinthe, including both the original style that used to poison (or inspire) Van Gogh and Verlaine. Then there's the new Lucid absinthe, which is "the original stuff on crack."

It's a full preparation, involving burning sugar, a glass container with spigot of running cold water, and a few short prayers. Certainly it gets everyone talking, and I learned about how the other guests like the "sophisticated New York feel" of the hotel. I also had some delicious thyme-seasoned fries, and the "popcorn of the moment," according to the menu, though my alcoholic haze prevents me from telling you what that was.

I settled in to my room for the night, a fifth floor corner suite with a view of the street. I noticed the original old windows (which don't open, an important thing to remember if your brain is swimming in absinthe), the old-fashioned desk and lamps, microwave, refrigerator, and ceiling mounted shower.

They also had a 24-hour yoga studio and health center, with an on-call instructor. I'm not the slightest bit flexible, and would certainly have garnered a few nicknames from the staff had I made a yoga appointment in the wee hours of the morning, but I confess to considering it.



"Since opening just over two years ago," said Maclean, "The Sofia Hotel has positioned itself as the value boutique hotel in downtown San Diego. Our location is fantastic as well as the decor and ambience, but our guest service ranks consistently top of our competitive set and guests return because of the same."

Sofia, alluring and convenient as she is, will certainly provide said excellence and perhaps even a little visit from the Green Fairy.

### THE DETAILS: The Sofia Hotel

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San Diego, CA 91201  
800.826.0009  
<http://thesofiahotel.com>

Story by Alex Storch.

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