

BEST LAWYERS ISSUE

SAN DIEGO[®]

MAGAZINE

EXPLORING
THE CITY'S
CHIC
BOUTIQUE
HOTELS



Best
Restaurants
Ballot Inside

Duncan Hunter:
Does He Really Think
He Can Be President?

Padres Family Baseball
with the Brothers Giles

Savoring Two Hot New
North County Restaurants

APRIL 2007




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A photograph of a modern hotel lobby. In the center, an elevator with a glass door and a control panel is visible. The lobby is framed by dark wood paneling and has a warm, ambient lighting. In the foreground, there are several large, lush green plants. The overall atmosphere is sophisticated and contemporary.

CHIC BOUTIQUES

THE SOFIA HOTEL

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DOWNTOWN HOTELS ARE
MORE HIP THAN EVER.
TAKE A TOUR OF THE
CITY'S SWEET SUITES AND
ROOFTOP BARS, AND MEET
THE CONCIERGE STAFFS
WHO PAMPER AND PLEASE.

BY MARCIA MANNA

WANT TO SIP Tazo tea on a sunny terrace after a poolside foot massage? Discuss a business proposal in a private cabaña? Perhaps your idea of heaven on earth is nursing a brew while relishing a view of Petco Park from a rooftop bar.

Savvy business and leisure travelers want more than a bed to lay their heads on—they want an experience that enlivens the senses while meeting comfort and business needs.

Personalized service and a sense of place are the hallmarks of successful boutique hotels, a mushrooming trend in the hospitality industry. And they're not just for weary travelers. Locals find them a chi-chi place to see and be seen.

Whether the ambience is urban chic or historic and elegant, downtown's hippest hotels fill the bill with distinctive décor, luxurious amenities and staff trained to make wishes come true.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
AMY K. FELLOWS

THE SOFIA HOTEL



Once it was billed as “A Room and a Bath for Two and a Half.” That was back in 1927, when the Sophia was the Pickwick Hotel, known for having the most modern accommodations in the city. In 1936, Art Linkletter became the station manager of KGB radio, and his broadcast studio and offices took up the first two floors.

Eighty years later, as part of the downtown revitalization, the Pickwick Partners invested \$16 million in renovations and reopened as The Sofia Hotel. The outside gothic architecture has been retained, but inside, everything is new. The hotel nearly sold out when it reopened in January—and with its reasonably priced guestrooms and ideal location, it’s no wonder.

In the lobby, there’s a blazing fireplace and groupings of couches and chairs in classic earth-tone fabrics. Leaf motifs decorate the shades of low-lit lamps, and capiz-shell window panels diffuse the light from outside.

The Sofia is a nonsmoking building with 212 rooms that feature 20-inch flat-screen televisions, white down comforters and modern bathrooms that retain a retro look, with vintage faucets and deep white porcelain bowl sinks.

The hotel provides in-room massages and high-speed Internet access, and there is a 10-mat yoga studio on site. An American Brasserie, the signature restaurant, is due to open this spring.

The friendly staff looks spiffy in custom uniforms and are committed to going above and beyond the call of duty. A member of the bell staff once ran out to buy chicken soup and served it to a guest who came down with the flu.

150 West Broadway, 800-826-0009; thesofiahotel.com
\$160 to \$450