

Front desk 42 The Calls, Leeds



42 The Calls certainly makes full use of its inherited industrial assets

Locum Destination Review showcases best practice in all sectors of the destination industry. In this issue, we explore the success of 42 The Calls in Leeds, and look at how its owner, The Scotsman Hotel Group Ltd, hopes to capitalise on its winning formula in new ventures.

With the expansion of hotels to include a wide range of new facilities, the variety of products and services some offer call for them to be taken seriously as destinations in their own right. Often, though, the success of a 'destination hotel' is due not to the number of alternative products it can cram in but rather to its ability to select and concentrate on those aspects most appropriate to its strategic objectives.

A fine example of a 'destination hotel' which has successfully achieved a carefully planned mixture of top-range offers is 42 The Calls in Leeds. This hotel has selected three main areas in which to aim at excellence: its architecture, its catering offer and its corporate hospitality facilities. Through a combination of its efforts in these areas, 42 The Calls has firmly set out to woo business guests as its main clientele.

'From the moment you arrive, you appreciate being somewhere rather special' – the strapline lures guests seductively. What makes 42 The Calls so special? It is probably the emphasis on quality (of architecture, furnishings, catering), the customer focus, and the developed destination thinking that has so clearly gone into the hotel's marketing. There's nothing a weary, and well-heeled, business traveller likes more than luxury subtly delivered; there's nothing city regenerators like

better than a renovation so radical that the affluent are attracted to formerly down-at-heel areas.

Old meets new

The hotel building is a conversion of three formerly derelict riverside corn and flour mills located on the river in a once run-down area of Leeds to the south of the city centre. It exploits its industrial Yorkshire heritage by making full use of the building's original Victorian features, including wooden joists, hoists and cast-iron pillars. The hotel building faces Tetley Brewery Wharf, itself regenerated as a tourist attraction. The hotel's stunning exterior is beautifully lit at night, capitalising on its waterfront location.

Inside, formerly bare brick walls are now a



stylish and subtle cream, on which sit colourful modern art pieces. The hotel's bedrooms vary in size and style, but no expense has been spared in ensuring high levels of traditional and modern creature comforts for all of them. In addition to luxurious surroundings, guests in each room are provided with three telephones, satellite TV, a CD player – complete with speakers in the bathroom – and an extensive library of CDs available from reception. It is fair to say that the hotel has made maximum use of its architectural heritage as the foundation for a very contemporary visitor experience.

Eating in

Guests at 42 The Calls are presented with a carefully developed selection of catering choices for different times of the day. Breakfast is promoted as a speciality of the hotel. Among the many unusual foods on offer are selections of ten varieties of bread and nine types of sausage. All possible moods are catered for: breakfast may be taken either in the dedicated breakfast room or in the bedroom, with the food being served directly to guests through a purpose-built delivery hatch system.

For evening meals, guests again have a choice of venue. Two upmarket restaurants, the Michelin-starred 'Pool Court at 42' and award-winning 'Brasserie Forty Four' (which

also provides room service for visitors), which are separately owned, occupy the hotel building. Both restaurants are included in the AA Best Restaurants Guide and have received many other plaudits, as well as maintaining excellent reputations with residents and non-residents alike. For those diners with children, early suppers are provided in bedrooms.

Business choice

In terms of venues for meetings, seminars and presentations, business guests are spoilt for choice. The largest suite is the Blue Room, situated just across the quiet cobbled street from the main hotel entrance, which is equipped to accommodate up to 70 people. This purpose-built facility comprises a reception area with double doors leading through to an immaculate conference suite, complete with fabric-lined walls and deep pile carpets. The Fletland Suite, on the hotel's third floor, seats up to 55, and benefits from its riverside location by offering guests a balcony on which drinks may be taken before and after meetings. The River Room, on the ground floor, can cope with up to 50 guests, theatre-style, and with its own kitchen is able to facilitate corporate entertainment. As if these possibilities weren't sufficient, three smaller venues, the Penthouse, Aire and Calder Suites, which can accommodate up to 15 theatre-style or up to 12 boardroom-style, are also available, along with six 'Syndicate Rooms'. As an incentive to managers looking to stage important meetings at the hotel, bookings made for the three smaller suites

come with the added bonus of complimentary overnight accommodation for themselves.

Not too surprisingly, 42 The Calls was named the *Which? Hotel Guide* 'Business Hotel of the Year 1999'. Its continued success is likely, given an ongoing commitment to refurbishment and upgrading. Air-conditioning is now installed in all public areas, for example, and improvements to smaller details such as the linen and bathrobes have added to the quality of the experience since opening.

New pastures

The Scotsman Hotel Group Ltd, owner of 42 The Calls, is currently preparing to roll out the success of its first hotel through a new development in Edinburgh. With the same degree of planning and targeting, The Scotsman hotel will open in early 2001. Like its sister hotel in Leeds, it will occupy a converted building, but this time a much larger one, the former home of the Scotsman newspaper offices. The hotel will feature 68 individually designed rooms, with a guest capacity significantly larger than 42 The Calls. The successful recipe of two high-class restaurants will again feature, in addition to a lounge bar with its own private dining facilities and a further bar with its own vast collection of malt whiskies. Further similarities will be found in The Scotsman's impressive array of business and conference facilities, the main two of which will be able to handle just under 240 delegates between them theatre-style, and its stylishly furnished bedrooms. A previously unseen element will

also be incorporated into The Scotsman's visitor offer: a £2m health club, complete with state-of-the-art swimming pool.

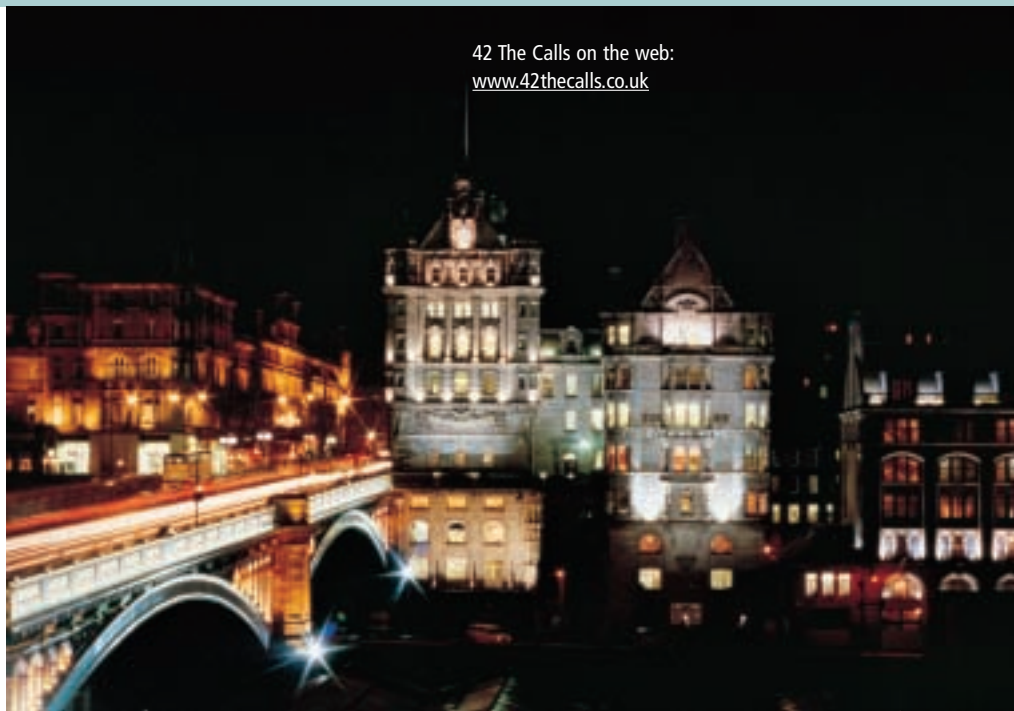
The Scotsman Hotel Group Ltd is aiming to expand to ten 'destination hotels' in the coming years. Clearly, by carefully developing an environment in which business, leisure and pleasure sit side by side, 42 The Calls has succeeded in winning the praise of guests and critics alike.

The Scotsman's planners have decided that the new, larger property demands a commitment to an additional element in the form of a health club, enabling guests to relax in style before sampling the delights of the hotel's cuisine. If The Scotsman is anything like as successful as 42 The Calls, the pool will be seeing rather a lot of action.

These hotel ventures depend on creating loyal return customers, many of them on expense accounts, to cover opening costs and make a profit, in turn supporting (essential) renewal of the product. They offer the business visitor the experience of luxury – the feeling of being pampered, catered to and provided for. 'The feeling of being somewhere rather special' depends on a (seemingly) personalised package of products offered to each and every guest. The lucrative UK business travel market is ripe for the promise of haute cuisine, after a trip to the gym, after clinching a deal in an appropriately intimidating hired boardroom. And all without leaving the building. Now *that's* worth paying for, and returning to.



Breakfast is promoted as a speciality of the hotel, with a room all to itself



42 The Calls on the web:
www.42thecalls.co.uk

The Scotsman will also occupy an impressive converted property