

Return to Antiquity

Nick Walton returns to the city of his birth, a city which has resisted the temptations of modernity and retained the stone edifices and Old World culture from which it was born. Whenever I return to Auckland, I can't help but beam with pride. It is not so much that the city has developed into some South Pacific metropolis, quite the opposite. Although the design trends of the 80s were adopted with a rather malicious flare, most of my city has retained an air of antiquity; a wink and smile of elegant charm which can be seen in some of the city's oldest and most important buildings, and increasingly in some of the newer boys on the block.

MOLLIES

Discover romance, sophistication and luxury at one of Auckland's multi-award winning urban boutique hotels; Mollies in St Mary's Bay.

NESTLED IN THE TREE-LINED STREETS OF A QUIET, UNASSUMING Auckland suburb, Mollies is one of those little secrets businessmen are reluctant to tell colleagues, taxi drivers discuss in hushed tip-expectant tones and every gorgeous character that walks in or out could be an opera singer, an elusive celebrity, a corporate looking for seclusion or a well maintained mistress.

Mollies is an incredibly flexible little hotel that can handle any situation; from fine dining and high teas in the antique-studded living rooms, through to intimate gourmet dinners and larger functions out in the sunshine of the Terrace Bar. The rooms and living spaces share an air of individuality; antiques adorn hallways of polished wood floors, cream walls and some rather imaginative artwork. Suites have more in common with guest rooms at a luxurious manor house than a conventional hotel – that said, there is nothing conventional about Mollies.

With 12 superb rooms, hidden down quiet corridors and vestibules of a beautiful era-villa, the suites are broken into three categories; Premium Villas, Villas and Junior Suites. Although they may share similar titles, each room is a piece of art in itself, with gleaming grand pianos, antique coffee tables, patios and ornate candelabras all par for the course.

Mollies still cradles the flame of Old World sophisticated service. It's one of those places where a request for afternoon coffee in the garden, a specialized magazine in the mornings or a twilight night cap, are not met with the rolling eyes and dramatic sigh





of the would-be-waiter. From a private dinner in one of the doll-house rooms right through to a thrilling day sailing on the harbour, Mollies' staff pride themselves on delivering the best possible experience to their guests, no matter how peculiar their requirements.

This is perfect for business travellers who have tired of cookie-cutter hotels and are looking for something private and unique in which to conduct those all-important board meetings or confidential business lunches. All the technology a techno-geek could shake a stick at is on hand; large flat screen televisions, high speed Internet access, whiteboards and projectors are blended in with a luxurious living room ambience that features natural sunlight and coffee breaks amongst the lush manicured gardens.

For after hours, Mollies is also a great venue for special occasions, from multi-course gourmet extravaganzas, right through to wedding receptions and stylish cocktail parties that would have the A-list waiting by their letter boxes with baited breath. And for those staying over after the event, checking in is like being slipped the keys to the incredibly stylish friend's home, where you are limited only by your own imagination.

Where does all the inspiration come from to convert the once rather-stodgy Harbour Bridge Motel into something a Manhattan stylist would envy? Mollies is the love child of Frances Wilson and Stephen Fitzgerald; right up there with opera, design and fine antiques, naturally. The result of their labors is a wonderfully eclectic yet soothing and sophisticated environment, where impromptu operatic recitals and spontaneous cocktail hours remain the norm. A winning formula it seems, as this Small Luxury Hotels property is a regular accolade winner and a favourite of return guests who call this strange, beautiful, and unashamedly different little hotel, their home away from home.

www.mollies.co.nz

