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NEW EUROPEAN CITY HOTELS

From the recently refurbished to the brand-spanking-new, these are the hottest hang-outs in Europe's hippest cities. What more excuse do you need to book a super-stylish spring break?

Words Ben Spriggs



DYLAN HOTEL Dublin, Ireland

BEST IN... Dublin – enjoy the craic in the city that Joyce, Beckett and Swift called home.

WHY? If you're after a romantic weekend away, follow in the footsteps of some of the world's most famous poets. The glamour-fest that is the Dylan opened last September and is already the place to see and be seen. But the mystery remains: was it inspired by Bob or Thomas?

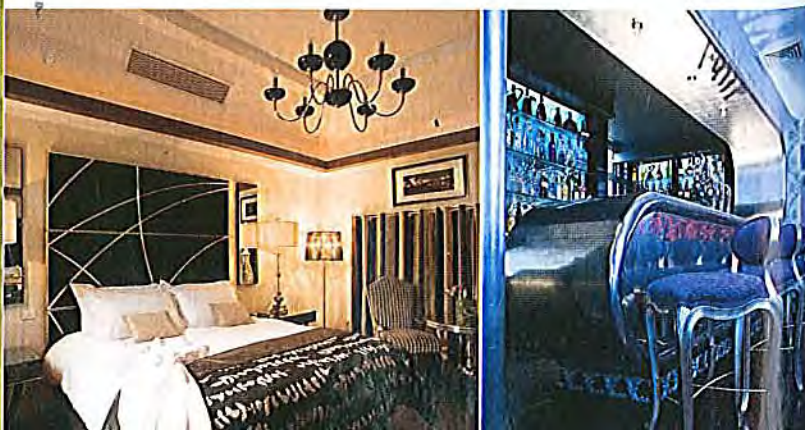
WHERE? In a leafy suburb on the edge of the city, rather like an Irish Notting Hill, it's 30 minutes from the airport – perfect for a weekend break.

STAYING IN The interiors here will knock your socks off. From the padded leather walls of reception to the muted grey library with its sink-in-soft velvet chairs, you can't fail to be impressed. The hotel's bar is fashioned entirely out of pewter and bounces light into the faces of the bold and the beautiful who congregate there. The restaurant is rapidly gaining a reputation as one of the best places to eat in the city, and we can understand why – the steak we sampled nearly had us sobbing with joy. Upstairs, each room comes with its own ready-loaded iPod (Frank Sinatra's a must for late-night crooning), the must-pinch toiletries are by Italian fashion house Etro, and you can even choose what kind of pillow you want to lay your head on.

STYLE STEAL Go for strength in numbers and copy the Dylan's idea of grouping lots of oversized hurricane lanterns filled with candles on the terrace and into the foyer. Talk about impact.

GOING OUT So much to do, so little time. Link arms with your lover and stride into town. It's about a 10-minute walk into the centre, but you really do get to experience the Georgian grandeur of the place on your way there. Drink Guinness, chat with the locals and indulge in a bit of shopping in Brown Thomas department store before heading home.

MORE INFO Rooms start at around £265 per night. Call 00 353 1 660 3000 or visit www.dylan.ie.



HOTEL DE ROME Berlin, Germany

BEST IN... Berlin – definitely the capital of cool for culture vultures and those in the know.

WHY? Trendsetters are all hitting the German capital for its eclectic mix of music, museums (the city has more than 170) and modern design. The history of the place is staggering, too, if, at times, a little eerie. For instance, this fabulous new hotel (from the master of modern luxe Sir Rocco Forte) overlooks the square where the Nazi book burnings took place.

WHERE? The hotel's right in the thick of things, just off the stunning boulevard Unter den Linden and a short stroll from the Brandenburg Gate. And if you like a bit of Wagner with your wurst, the opera house is next door.

STAYING IN Designer Tommaso Ziffer, who worked his magic on the gorgeous Hotel de Russie in Rome, has come up trumps again. He's converted this former bank into a super-sophisticated haven, where calm reigns over the hubbub of the city outside. Ironically, the refit has probably broken the bank as absolutely no expense has been spared with the materials – velvets, leather, deep carpets and polished wood abound. Try to book into one of the first-floor suites – they were once the offices of the bank's directors and the mahogany panelling is out of this world.

STYLE STEAL Take inspiration from the mammoth urns and table lights in the hotel's lobby and lounge and play with scale back at home.

GOING OUT The city's cool hunters will point you in the direction of Bangaloo, a hipper-than-hip dinner club with the most dazzling interior – everything from the carpets to the walls and upholstery is white. Beforehand, head to 6vorone in Wilmersdorf to sample one of 50 vodkas and to hang with the swanky crowd. Also, pick up some of the new heavenly home fragrance by interior designer Jacques Garcia from chic store The Corner Berlin.

MORE INFO Rooms from around £215 per night. Call 00 49 30 4 60 60 90 or visit www.hotelderome.com or www.roccofortehotels.com



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