

Business Traveller

MIDDLE EAST



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BAHRAIN BD1
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The Hari, London



The Hari has a very intimate, almost nightclub feel to it, though thankfully without the loud music.

BACKGROUND The Hari is a new name for a hotel that has been through several incarnations and now is a member of Preferred Hotels and Resorts. It is in the centre of Belgravia, but away from its main roads. The outside has a glass frontage, which sounds awful but looks fine, despite being surrounded by stucco town houses and offices. The hotel normally has a smartly-dressed doorman standing outside or just inside the doors (depending on weather), and also bikes for use by hotel guests lined up by the side of the entrance.

I arrived on a warm summer's evening and stepping into the lobby was like stepping into shadows after the bright light outside. The Hari has a very intimate, almost nightclub feel to it, though thankfully without the loud music.

WHERE IS IT? On the corner of Chesham Place and Pont street. The German embassy is a few steps away and if you fancy a run in the morning Hyde Park is about five minutes away. Underground stations include Knightsbridge on the Piccadilly Line for access to Heathrow.

ROOM FACILITIES The new name comes from the developer and manager – Harilela Hotels. A further Hari Hotel is planned for Hong Kong in 2019, apparently. Meanwhile this property has 85 rooms and 14 suites. Again, the design is certainly unusual. My room on the second floor looked out into the main square and had already been prepared for the evening with black out blinds and curtains drawn. These are very effective, and allowed me to sleep undisturbed both by light and also noise (the hotel has good sound proofing and the windows are very effective).

The design of my room involved lots of wood panelling, a wood floor and a Nespresso maker on the work table. There was a mini bar, though it took a lot of knocking on the wooden panelling of the room to work out where it was. The side table had magazines on it. Free wifi was very fast, and the hotel has the excellent Handy phones for free phone calls and mobile data. Rooms start at 23sqm and range up to the Penthouse at 70sqm. My Studio King Suite (44sqm) had three window alcoves – one with a work desk, one with a sofa and the third one in the

bathroom and holding the bath. This did cause me some concern in case I exposed myself to passing pedestrians, though I think the windows were slightly reflective and there was no signs of alarm from the street below despite standing in the bathtub to check. Most rooms have walk-in showers with a choice of rain or normal shower heads, so this will not be an issue, although selected King Deluxe, King Premium and suite categories have bathtubs. Bathroom amenities are by Noble Isle.

RESTAURANT AND BAR The restaurant has been through a couple of changes since we last reviewed it, and is now the Il Pampero. I've heard good things about it, but have not eaten there. For breakfast the next morning I can say it's a lovely designed space with a central bar and plenty of booths. Upstairs, the bar – known as The Snug – on the first floor / mezzanine, offers afternoon tea and then morphs into a comfortable place for evening or late night drinks. Behind the bar up a few more steps is the Garden Terrace with lots of greenery and a retractable roof which means you can sit out there and have a cigar, a welcome treat for cigar smokers in central London.

BUSINESS AND MEETING FACILITIES There is a meeting room for up to 24 (though it can be sub-divided) just off the main restaurant which it calls The Muse – it has floor-to-ceiling windows, solid oak table, fireplace and offers projector, plasma screen TV, conference phone and free wifi.

LEISURE FACILITIES A small gym is on the first floor and is well equipped. *Tom Otley*

VERDICT This is quite a find – a boutique hotel, the first of its brand, and with staff and amenities which make it a great choice. Many hotels in this area are either corporate or have a mannered “country house / town house” feel, the Hari is very different and all the better for it.

HOW MANY ROOMS? 85, of which 12 are King Superior rooms, 23 are King Deluxe, 29 are King Premium, seven are Double Premium, and the rest are suites of varying categories.

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