

MAKE A BEELINE FOR BROOKS

Built in 1996, Brooks Hotel features 100 bedrooms and is renowned for its service and style. I was greeted by Connor O'Connell, the enigmatic concierge, who immediately reinforced my love of Dublin and the people who live in it. I was in a Junior Suite and the first thing I noticed was the massive bed with the five pillow menu. The size of the bed was matched by that of the bathroom, which had a tub with a TV, and an interesting shower head in the shape of a captain's wheel. I'm still not sure about the tailor's dummy standing in the corner of the room but there's no doubt this is a classy, boutique establishment, a member of the small luxury hotels of the world.

The hotel is currently running 'The Dublin Experience' package, in which guests are greeted on arrival with a glass of Guinness which can be enjoyed in the Cafe Lounge or Jasmine Bar. The three-night package includes accommodation, full Irish breakfast, tickets to the Little Museum of Dublin and complimentary Wi-Fi. The package costs from €265 per person sharing and is valid until October 31. Centrally located, the hotel is the perfect base to explore the city with St Stephen's Green, Trinity College, Christ Church, Dublin Castle and the National Museum of Ireland all within walking distance.

brookshotel.ie



is the best selling stout on the planet. The main building is seven storeys high and includes not only a history of the product but an insight into how it is made. There are interactive displays, TV commercials, quizzes and the chance to sample a complimentary pint of the product.

But the crowning glory – quite literally – is the Gravity Bar on the top floor, which offers panoramic views over the whole city. Quite simply, the Storehouse is one of the finest tributes to alcohol I have ever encountered.

A CRAIC APPEARS

Back on the bus, I take in Kilmainham Gaol, Phoenix Park and the National Museum before deciding to walk back into town along the banks of the River Liffey, which neatly bisects Dublin from east to west. Approaching the popular and trendy

Temple Bar area, a sound reaches my ears and I'm drawn, almost Pied Piper-ish, into a brightly-coloured pub.

A duo on penny whistle and guitar are belting out Irish music and the punters sway in time with the infectious music. There is laughter, there is gaiety and as the 'liquid sunshine' starts to persist down outside, there is no finer place to be than supping a pint of black gold while listening to the band.

This, then, is the craic, a word that has no exact English translation but which basically means 'fun'. The Irish are famous for it and in Dublin there's always somewhere to go and something to do. And the great news for visitors is that everyone is welcome...and you don't even have to bring a bottle.
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Previous page: Temple Bar in Dublin. Picture courtesy Tourism Ireland

This page: Top: A Junior Suite at Brooks Hotel

Middle: The Guinness Storehouse

Above: Irish music in Temple Bar