



Crystalbrook Little Albion

} Sydney, Australia

Settle in to stylish digs within Sydney's most happening inner-city neighbourhood. *By Natasha Dragun*

Sydney has its fair share of big-name international hotels with shiny logos and cookie-cutter rooms. Little Albion is a tonic to oft uninspiring options. It's so well integrated into the Surry Hills neighbourhood it calls home that I walk past it twice before noticing the back-alley entrance, via a courtyard where a trendy couple, hand in hand, drink coffee in the sun.

There are charms throughout, but the first is the hotel's setting

within a handsome Victorian Gothic-style former convent, which Terence Young Architecture transformed into a space awash with light and greenery. The second is the attention to design detail: exposed brick walls, gem-toned velvet sofas, brass finishings, polished concrete, marble and wood. It feels like it belongs here.

Rooms are all individual in layout, as expected within a property bearing such bones.

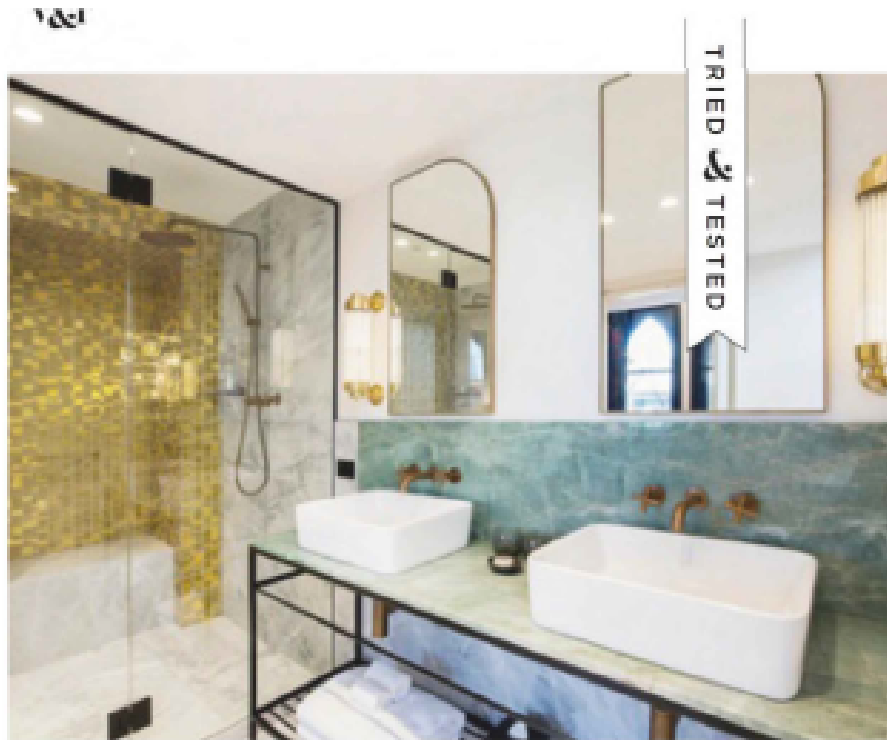
Some accommodations are spacious with street views and kitchenettes; others intimate with herringbone floorboards and Juliet balconies; the Albion Suite comes with a fireplace, gold-mosaiced shower and bedside soaking tub. You can even bring pooch along.

There's no restaurant in the building, but when you're surrounded by some of Sydney's most in-demand eateries, this doesn't seem like an oversight.

The likes of Nomad, Chin Chin, Firedoor and Polly are all a short stroll away, not to mention pubs and bars and an arthouse cinema, plus the city's main transport hub of Central Station.

There is an honour bar, however, where you can mix yourself a pre-dinner cocktail or come home to a late-night ice-cream (Golden Gaytimes are the ultimate end to a big evening). Or take your bottle of wine up to the rooftop, your outlook the red-brick roofs of terrace houses all the way to the towers of the CBD.

Like other properties under the Crystalbrook banner – the Australian brand offering boutique properties across Queensland and New South Wales – Little Albion is attentive when it comes to the environment, which means recycled bamboo room keys, water in paper cartons rather than plastic bottles, and luxe bathroom amenities stocked in refillable containers. Touches that are not only nice, but essential in today's travel world. Rates start from \$245 per night; crystalbrookcollection.com.



TRIED & TESTED



004 TOP: Stylish bathrooms; each room at Little Albion is individual in design