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THE POST OAK HOTEL AT UPTOWN HOUSTON

Texas glam.

TILMAN FERTITTA, owner of the Houston Rockets, Landry's, the Golden Nugget Casinos, and star of CNBC's Billion Dollar Buyer, has brought all his favorite hotel features to bear in The Post Oak Hotel, Houston's splashiest new stay in a fashionable neighborhood five minutes from the Galleria.

We were greeted swiftly at the entrance and guided through the two-story, atrium-style lobby to reception counters at the far end. After a quick check-in, which we spent staring at the swimming pool through the floor to ceiling windows behind the front desk, we were shown to our Executive Suite, a corner one-bedroom orientation.

Fertitta's attention to detail is evident everywhere—at turn-down, bedside water bottles are accompanied by cut-crystal glasses, and there's lavender pillow spray to promote slumber. The bathrooms, even at entry level, are like a checklist for comfort: clad in gray-veined white marble, with soaking tubs equipped with bath salts and TV screens, a large walk-in shower, separate WC, double sinks, good lighting for makeup, and soft deep towels...check, check, check.

In our category, the entryway has a digital control for mood lighting. The living area has comfortable seating, a desk, Bluetooth access for devices, and a generous bar with Dean and DeLuca snacks. There is even a personal weight rack in case you're too rushed to hit the fitness area. The décor is done in shades of taupe with contrasting dark brown patterns in the curtains and carpet, and clear acrylic lamps. It all stops just short of going a little over the top. The only drawback we could find was the view over the raised freeway, but the floor-to-ceiling windows are double-paned, so noise isn't an issue.

If over-the-top is your cup of tea, consider the 5,000-square-foot, two-bedroom Presidential Suite, reached via private elevator from either underground parking or the rooftop helipad. There are two Motherwells (the hotel's art collection includes Frank Stella, Alex Katz and Friedl Dzubas, among others), a terrace, a gym, a kitchen, dramatic book-matched marble. It's among the most expensive suites in the world.

This is Texas, so of course there's a larger than life component to this hotel. In the lobby, there is Post Oak



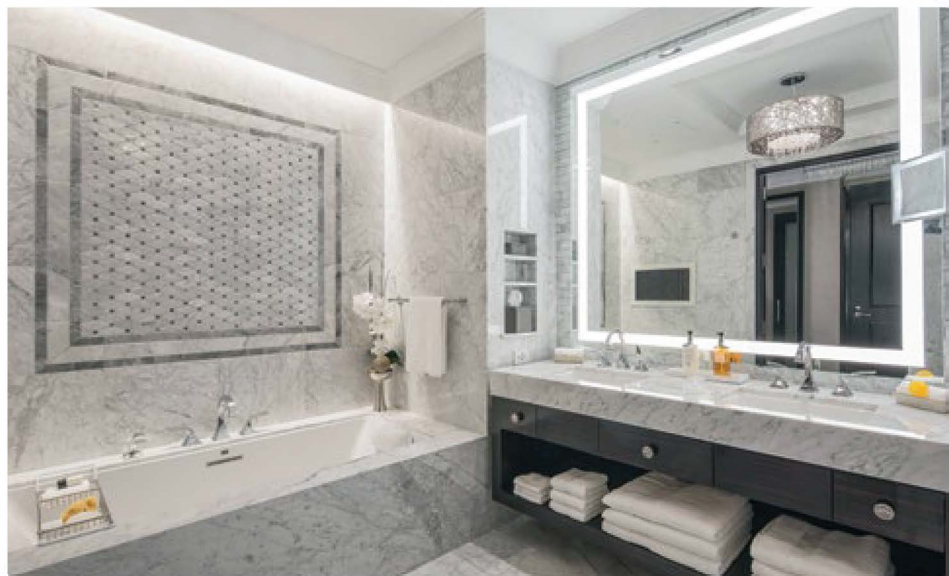




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Motors, a two-story showroom with the latest from Rolls, Bentley, and Bugatti. In the adjacent shop called 29 North, you can buy anything from fancy cowboy boots to jewelry to alpaca sweaters.

In the way of F&B, the hotel has Texas's first Mastro's Steakhouse, Willie G's Seafood, a patisserie, a bar, Craft F & B (a brew-pub with burgers and pizza), and H Bar, a wine shop to entice the pickiest of oenophiles. At Bloom & Bee, right off the lobby and pool area, the menu emphasizes healthy locally-sourced foods that range from Mediterranean to Tex Mex, with sushi tossed into





PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE POST OAK HOTEL AT UPTOWN HOUSTON

the mix. It's also where breakfast is served—no buffet here—a la carte, with a nice long menu.

During our stay, the spa had not yet opened, but plans called for a 20,000-square-foot complex, with up-to-date options including In-Skin machines and natural products such as Cinq Mondes. The 24-hour fitness center offers a range of TechnoGym equipment and Peloton bikes. We ducked into the salon for a luxurious pedicure accompanied by a glass of champagne, as relaxing as a massage.

Of course, being so near the Galleria, we thought we'd take a look. Transportation was swiftly arranged in

the hotel's black SUV. Henry, the affable driver, gave us his number to call when we were ready for pickup, and somehow he managed not to keep us waiting despite a busy schedule of ferrying guests around.

We found the service cheerful and eager to please. Housekeeping was excellent. At dinner one night, we found ourselves abandoned as the restaurant filled, but the apologies were profuse once we made our concerns known. There is a strong desire for perfection here.

The Post Oak is without question the premier stay in Houston, and one we'd gladly repeat on a future trip. If we had any reservations about the hotel, it might be that it's a bit self-consciously opulent, but then again—sometimes a little opulence is exactly what the doctor ordered. ●●●

DOS & DON'TS

DO understand that the pool is visible from the lobby, Bloom & Bee, and the bar. In fact, in the evening, the bar spills out onto the pool terrace. Taking a cabana is probably the best bet.

DO visit the third-floor library, where a collection of Assouline art books can be pored over from comfy leather Greek-key chairs with nail head trim.

DO take into consideration that the Post Oak is in uptown, a 15-to-20-minute car ride from downtown.

DON'T hesitate to bring the family or your pet. Everyone is welcome here.

The Post Oak Hotel at Uptown Houston

Houston, Texas

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