



PRESS RELEASE

25 January 2010

Christchurch's new Novotel blends heritage with cutting edge design and art

The new 193-room **Novotel Christchurch Cathedral Square** opens its doors today, offering guests a combination of heritage, cutting edge design, and exceptional local art.

The Novotel is located in the heart of the city on Cathedral Square, and has incorporated the heritage-listed Warner's Hotel, originally built in 1863, into the complex.

As part of the development, the Warner's Hotel was fully restored to its former grandeur, with specialist tradesmen using tools over 100 years old to repair the building's architraves and re-lay tiles in the foyer.

A new building has been constructed behind the existing hotel, adding 170 rooms to the existing 23 heritage rooms and suites.

General Manager of the Novotel, Zayne Boon, said guests could choose between rooms that had their origins almost 150 years apart.

"It is quite remarkable for a hotel to be able to offer rooms that either date to the mid 19th century or the 21st century, but the Novotel manages to seamlessly provide a taste of the old and new," he said.

"The Warner's Hotel has been a landmark in Christchurch for almost 150 years, but the past two decades weren't kind to the hotel and by the time it was closed to enable the Novotel development it was a shadow of its former self. It has been a difficult assignment to work on both restoring the original hotel while constructing a brand new building, but I believe the hotel now offers the best of both worlds for visitors to Christchurch."

Mr Boon said that the challenge posed to Christchurch-based architect Richard Dalman, of Dalman Architecture Limited, was to offer a first-rate modern hotel while protecting and celebrating the historical value of the iconic Warners Hotel.

"The design features incorporated in the new Novotel Christchurch Cathedral Square have been chosen to ensure the contrasts between old and new seem natural, yet appreciated," says Richard Dalman. "Modern décor has been mixed with some historic features to provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere while ensuring the functional requirements of a modern central city hotel are met.

"The blend of modern and heritage, rich and minimal, hard and soft provides for interesting juxtapositions resulting in spaces that celebrate the hotel's place in the city," he says.

Rather than theme the design to any specific historic period, Richard Dalman says they chose to create a stylish interior that focused on the location: on the edge of Cathedral Square in the Garden City.

“Upon entering through the historic portico of the old Warner’s Hotel, guests immediately feel a link with the past, but also realise they are now in something more than a much loved, yet well-worn pub,” says Dalman.

“Polished porcelain floor tiles, complemented by timber veneer walls, textured wallpaper and a feature wall, instantly create the feeling of luxury. Behind the reception area is a wall of curving stainless steel over “carved” flowing panels depicting the Avon River and the braided rivers of the Canterbury Plains.”

A feature of the interior design is the use of local artists to ensure the hotel lives up to its identity as a Canterbury icon.

The signature piece is a Neil Dawson “chalice” – a smaller version of his dramatic public sculpture in Cathedral Square. The hotel also features a Jeff Thomson corrugated iron lattice work which sits above the business centre, evoking thoughts of Maori weaving and the street grid system that is very much part of central Christchurch. Two small Stephen Bambury metal cross works also symbolise the grid and the form of Cathedral Square.

A grand sweeping staircase leads up to the first floor bar and restaurant, where the area has been divided into a number of spaces by golden sheer drapes, a curving wine display wall, and pivoting timber fin screens. The restaurant boasts views overlooking Cathedral Square and focuses on local Canterbury produce and South Island wines.

The Square restaurant debuts “**personal dining pods**”, which provide solo diners with a discretely designed television screen as well as internet access.

Conferences will be a key focus of the Novotel, with five meeting rooms and a capacity for up to 200 delegates.

Recreation facilities include a start-of-the-art gym.

Rates start from NZ\$169 per room per night and can be booked via www.novotel.com, Accor Reservations Service and through all travel agents.

As the mid-scale hotel brand within the Accor group portfolio, Novotel offers close to 400 hotels and resorts in 60 countries, situated in the centre of major international cities from business districts to tourist destinations. Novotel’s consistently high standard of service contributes to the wellbeing of both business and leisure travellers: think spacious, modular-design guestrooms, balanced cuisine available 24/7, excellent meeting facilities, attentive staff, dedicated children’s areas and rejuvenating wellness facilities. The Novotel group is a pioneer in sustainable development and all Novotel hotels participate in the Green Globe worldwide environmental certification programme. More information on Novotel hotels: novotel.com.

Regional Contact

Peter Hook
General Manager Communications Accor Asia Pacific
Tel : +61 2 92809860
Email: peter.hook@accor.com