

Historic Victorian hotel launches as Sofitel Mansion & Spa

On Wednesday 14 February 2007, The Mansion Hotel at Werribee Park will be changing its name to Sofitel Mansion & Spa and officially joining the Sofitel network. It will also feature on exclusive Spa.

When it relaunches as Sofitel Mansion & Spa, the hotel will be regarded as one of Australia's finest boutique hotels featuring a range of exclusive five star services and amenities. In the past 12 months, nearly \$1 million has been invested on upgrading the hotel's facilities.

Opened in 2000 and located just over 20 minutes south west of Melbourne behind the original 1870s mansion, Sofitel Mansion & Spa offers 91 deluxe guestrooms, each elegantly remastered with superb luxuries including Sofitel My Bed, LCD TV screens and a range of new soft furnishings.

More than 125 years ago, The Mansion at Werribee Park was recognised as the best example of an ideal English Estate in Australia. Now, after a magnificent history, The Mansion Hotel has evolved from it and is the ultimate boutique retreat for those who expect the best.

History

The Mansion itself was built by Scottish immigrant squatters, Thomas and Andrew Chirnside, as the centre of their 93,000-acre pastoral empire. The Chirnsides wanted, and created, an English estate in the Colony.

The 60-room residence was the largest private residence ever built in Victoria.

In the 1920s, the Mansion passed into the hands of the Catholic Church. An adjoining 200-room St Joseph's Wing was built, and the property became the Corpus Christi Seminary.

In 1973, The Victorian State Government purchased the property from the Catholic Church to ensure its preservation and restoration, and it became a prime heritage tourist destination.

Then, in 1997, The Mansion Group won the tender to develop and manage a 5-star boutique hotel within the former St Joseph's Seminary Wing.

Features

The old Seminarians would have been bewildered by the luxury and beauty of the Sofitel Mansion & Spa. Each of the 91 new rooms follows a contemporary design and features all of the conveniences demanded of a luxury hotel.

Sofitel Mansion & Spa's conference and banquet facilities can cater for 10 to as many as 200 people. A range of impressive conference venues provides appropriate facilities for groups, small and large, even in the Hotel's extraordinary and extensive formal gardens.

The Hotel's award-winning restaurant, Joseph's, offers superb views of the gardens from its comfortable table or from its stylish bar. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, it serves superb modern European cuisine and is home to one of Melbourne's finest wine lists.

The Hotel has a peaceful and restful library and all of the latest business facilities - complete audio-visual presentation equipment, fax/modems, high-speed Internet and wireless access, and secretarial support.

No less important to modern life is LeSpa, which includes a 17-metre indoor swimming pool and spa, steam rooms, modern gymnasium and eight superb massage, relaxation and beauty treatment rooms including the exclusive Lancôme beauty suite.

Treatment products are by Decleor, and there is a team of highly-trained therapists who use their aromatherapy and phytotherapy products to ensure guests feel pampered and revived.

Six floodlit tennis courts have been restored to their original form, and guests may use the adjacent 18-hole Werribee Golf Course, which is set along the banks of the Werribee River, and offers a picturesque and challenging layout.

The Shadowfax Winery is also part of the property. Tastings and cellar-door sales are available every day, or guests can simply enjoy delicious gourmet delights from the deli, and a stroll around the vineyard.

At the Hotel, the service style offered by the team of trained and professional staff is efficient and unfussed. Guests are made to feel welcome, with no request or requirement being too much trouble.

Sofitel Mansion & Spa is set in the heart of important tourist venues - the Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre, the Polo Academy and Victoria's Open Range Zoo. The Werribee River meanders past the property and spills into nearby Port Phillip. Estuary fishing, and Port Phillip Bay's best whiting areas, are minutes from the Hotel's front door.

Since its opening in June 2000, Sofitel Mansion & Spa has delighted visitors and found its position at the forefront of the world's small luxury hotels. It was also named Best Deluxe Accommodation at the prestigious 2004 Victorian Tourism Awards for the third consecutive year and as a result, has been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

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