



OUR MAN ON THE GROUND TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE

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SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

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Market Street Hotel Edinburgh

September 24, 2019 Our Man On The Ground Edinburgh, Hotels, Scotland 0



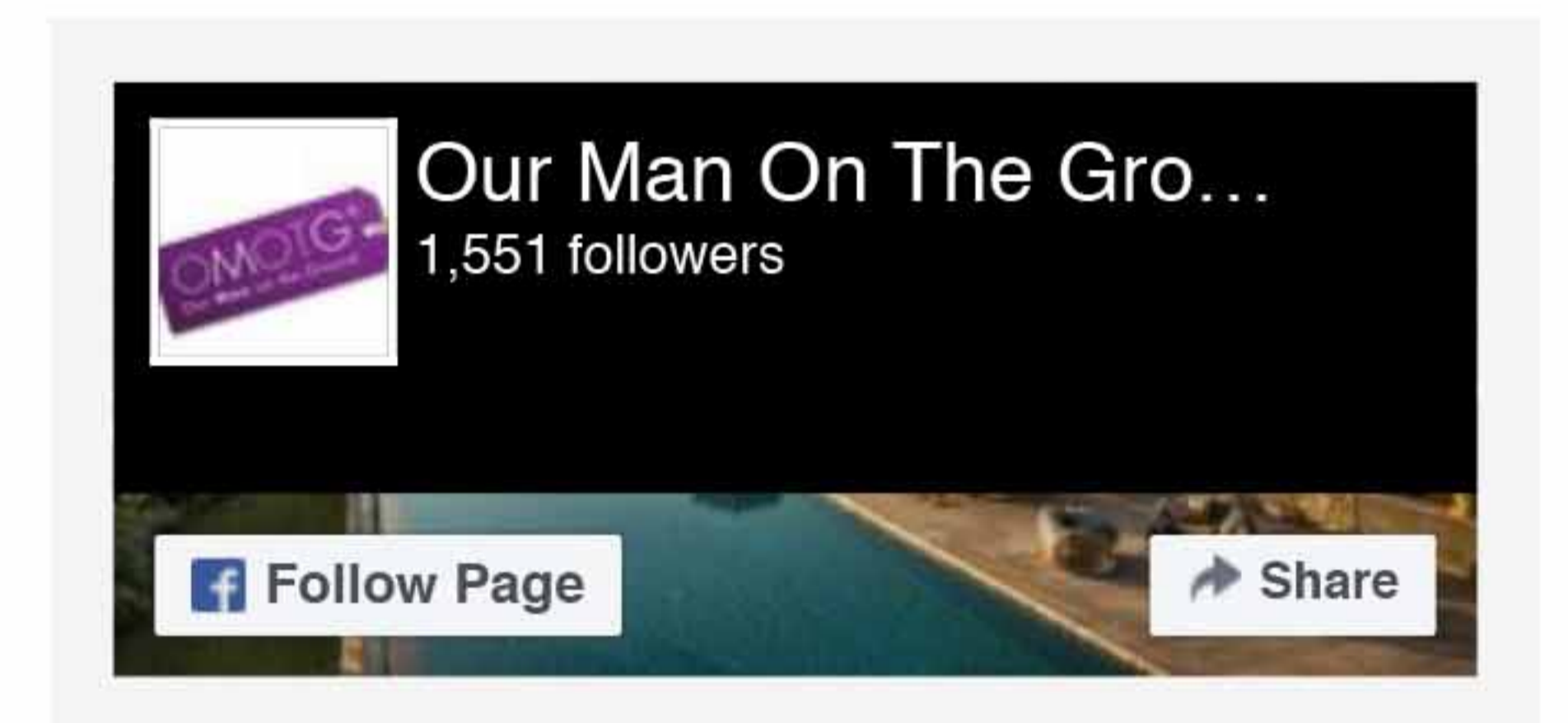
There are people doing a 'silent walk' wearing headphones, gesticulating wildly and singing Freddie Mercury songs in Edinburgh's city centre. They're pretending or believing that they're on stage with Queen. Nearby there's a man in a kilt playing bagpipes and someone else vying for airspace by strumming flamenco love songs on a guitar.

There are crowds, women in Regency dress, buskers, street performers (including the Grinch and a mime artist sprayed gold) plus tour guides, and people handing out fliers. Enough fliers to cover the Forth Bridge. 'Feminist comedy at 1,' declares one. '2 for 1 tickets for 2:30 performance of...' reads another.

We're here for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the Edinburgh Art Festival, the Royal Military Tattoo, the Edinburgh International Festival and the Edinburgh International Book Festival. Let me give you a tip. If you're thinking of visiting Edinburgh for any of its 11 festivals, (the five above take place in August; it's the world's leading festival city), there's a newly opened hotel to consider.



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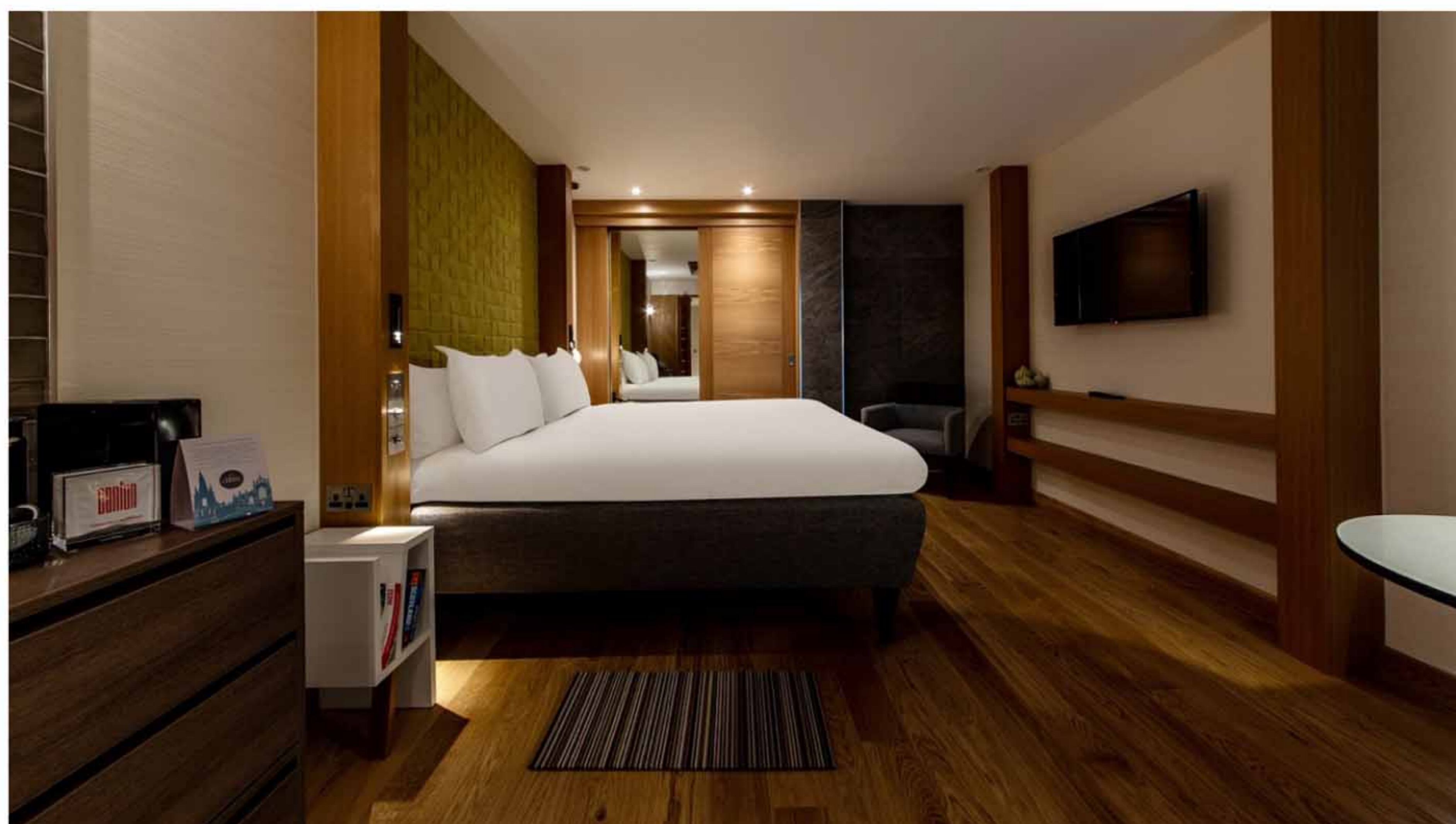
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It's the Market Street hotel, a boutique hotel that's probably no more than the distance of hmm, say 50 bagpipes (lain on the ground) from Waverley Station. In the heart of the city centre, in other words. And a mere few bagpipes away from Old Town and the Castle.

Standing by alcoves of down-lit jars of candies beside five golden bowls of flickering flames, we're welcomed at the Market Street hotel reception desk with a glass of bubbly. (If the glass of fizz is just an opening-week gambit, don't worry there's a permanent Champagne bar also situated on this, the rooftop, floor.)

The 98-bed hotel – which opened after a £20 million makeover – is Scotland's first member of Design Hotels, a curated collection of hotels with cutting edge design and architecture and said to recognise those places with a passion for culturally-rooted hospitality. Its interiors are by award-winning Amsterdam design studio FG Stij.



This translates into compact rooms with groovy design details: bleached wood, splashes of fluorescent lime fabrics and the occasional bit of tartan; modern design classics – from the likes of Fritz Hansen – alongside handcrafted pieces; plus snazzy bits and pieces in the bedrooms, such as a retro-style Roberts digital radio and state-of-the-art Dyson hairdryer-cum-spaceship. Oh and bathrooms (more like anterooms, really) have a solid stone basin in the vestibule and rainfall showers in the weeny bathroom.

We gather the arsenal for a good night's sleep by calling for our favourites from a range of five pillows: memory foam to tencel (wood) and by selecting to hang on the door the sign that reads, 'Counting Sheep'. (The other room sign, 'Flown the nest' may not have the desired effect.) There's nothing to be done about the lack of fresh air: the windows don't open. Too bad.

Next we nip up to the rooftop lounge, Nor' Loft, which overlooks the ooh-ah panoramic vista of the Scott Monument, the Observatory, Princes Street and the Castle. Rather than the name of the lounge being my poor attempt at och aye, a Scottish accent, it's a moniker that actually remembers the Nor' Loch: a lake which – between the 15th and 17th century – filled what's now Princes Street Gardens.



It's in this seventh-floor rooftop space that we discover all-day dining, a champagne-tasting table and a big enough champagne selection (over 20 labels from prestige to small growers) to keep the most ardent vinophile happy. Plus there's an open kitchen (where they cook up classic flavours and locally sourced, seasonal dishes). For breakfast there's everything from tattie scones to Stornaway black pudding or grilled grapefruit with Demerara agar and toasted coconut.



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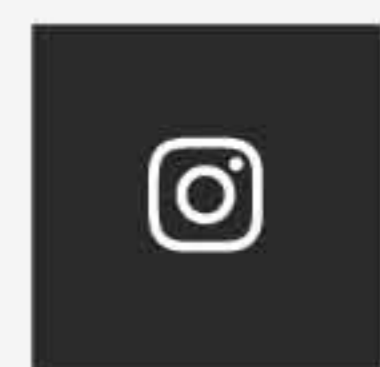
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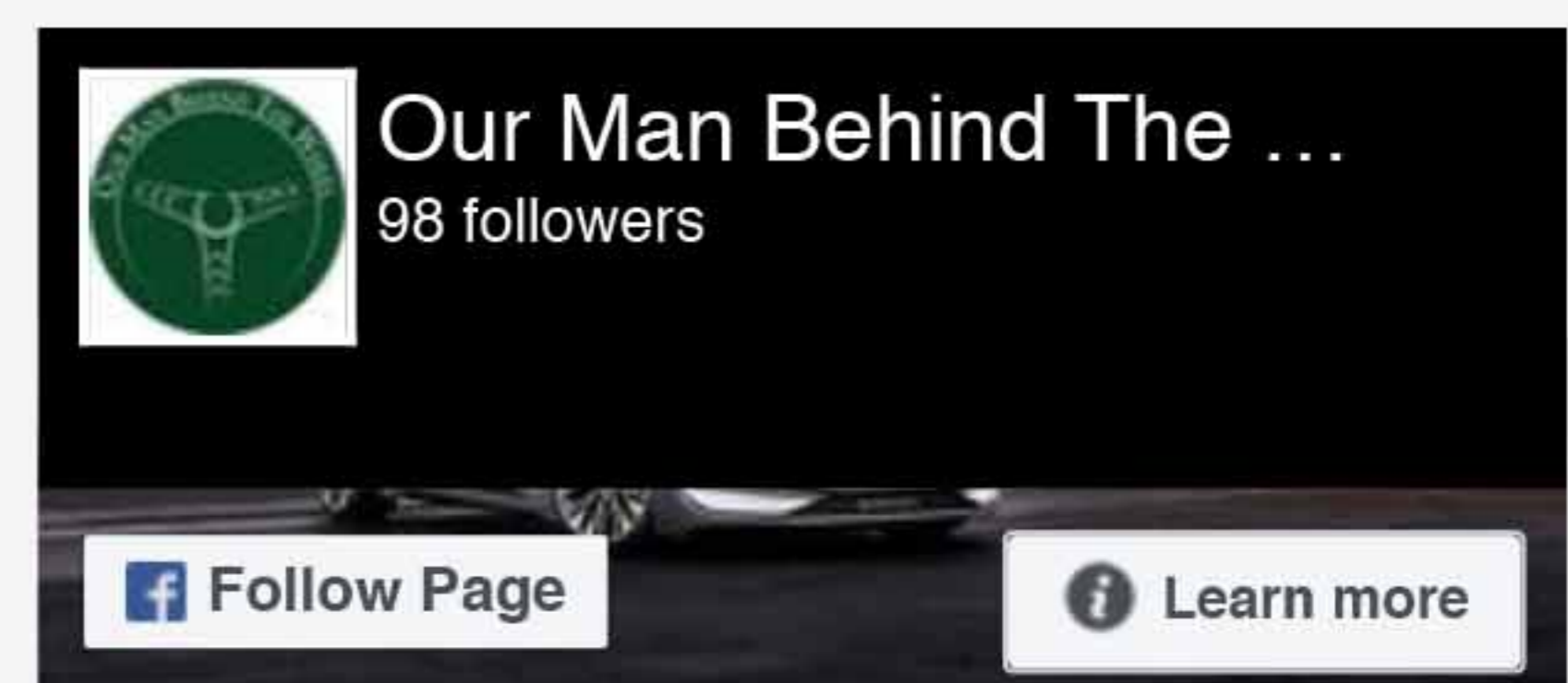
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When it's time to hit the festival and the city-wide street party again, we choose from a list of cabaret, comedy, dance, kids' events, music, theatre, visual art and book events, punctuated by visits to food stalls (everything from pork belly noodles to sushi) and bars (everyone seems to hold a pint of beer in their hand; but we go for the orange and ginger shots), and on and on.

In between hitting shows, music performances, art exhibitions and many more, we find time to visit Edinburgh Castle (an historic fortress on Castle Rock, complete with doggie cemetery and crown jewels) and Britannia, for a peek at the Queen's single bed in her erstwhile former royal yacht.



It's hard to recommend things as they may not be performing next year. But don't miss Purposeless Movements if it's at the Festival again in 2020: it's a funny and illuminating show about the experience of those with cerebral palsy and makes for uncomfortable watching. It mixes music, video, movement and text. Additionally, Roots is a whimsical and charming show that fuses stagecraft, music and the early days of cinema.

What else not to miss, if they're back again? Bag seats next time (any time) that the sensitive and eloquent Victoria Hislop is speaking at the book festival (or any festival). We find another winner too in the London Symphony Orchestra, a bravura performance that elicits the loud exclamation of "Wow!" from one audience member after the first movement of John Adams's, Harmonielehre. It doesn't stop here. Even past midnight there's always something going on in the city.

We return to the Market Street hotel for some welcome respite from the festival air that's full of passion, madness, enthusiasm and possibilities. In the hotel we find peace and tranquillity as we look over its two outdoor rooftop terraces across twinkling and panoramic city views. During the day, this vista is always bathed in sunlight, of course, because that's what the weather's permanently like in Edinburgh. Not.



All too soon it's time to return home. We travel by train in order to enjoy the spectacular windswept beach scenery just north of the border, but be warned: if the air-conditioning in the train carriage descends to Cairngorm-snowy-peak levels or a (false) emergency announcement is relayed again and again during much of your journey...your asking cabin staff for help, tweeting LNER, emailing their customer services or even contacting their press office is futile.

You could call such a journey a fitting end to the surprises, unexpected events and drama of the festival.



There are 11 major festivals which happen year-round in Edinburgh, with five taking place in the month of August alone. To find out more and to plan your trip to the Festival City, please visit:

www.edinburghfestivalcity.com.

The Details

Market Street hotel, 6 Market Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1DE, Scotland.

Tel: +44 (0)131 322 9229

Website: www.carlton.nl/en/market-street-hotel-edinburgh

Email: stay@marketstreethotel.co.uk

The hotel is located in the heart of Edinburgh and a short distance from the Old Town, famous Royal Mile and Edinburgh Castle. There are also plenty cafés, restaurants and boutique shops close by. Edinburgh Waverley Station is just a 2-minute walk away.

Type of Hotel: 4-Star Boutique Hotel

Number of Rooms: 98 rooms including complimentary Wi-Fi

Price Band: Low to medium

Insider Tip: Recommend you book a room the second the August Festival dates are announced.

Fact Box: Situated at the heart of Edinburgh on bustling Market Street, the hotel features 98 urban boutique rooms, with prices starting from £170 per night. With panoramic views of the city, the hotel's rooftop Champagne Lounge – Nor' Loft – will offer an unrivalled selection of champagnes and small plates and bring a completely new, unique and vibrant energy to the capital.

Reviewer's Rating: 7/10

Author Bio:

Caroline Phillips is an award-winning freelance journalist based in London.

Photographs courtesy of Market Street hotel, Part of Carlton Hotel Collection