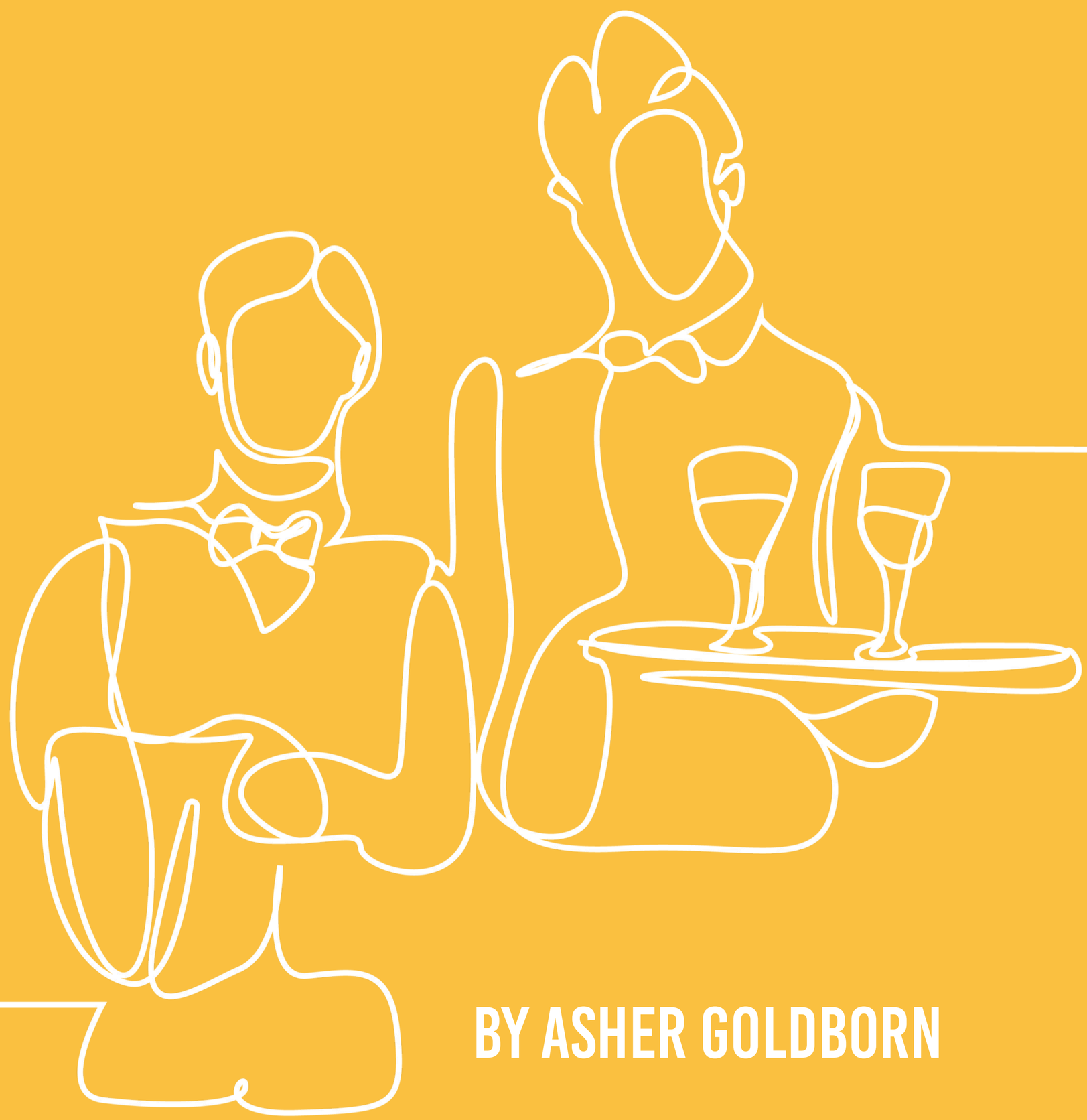
THE SIGNATURE SUITE:

A Digital **Playbook for Boutique Hotels** That Want to Look Iconic Online



BY ASHER GOLDBORN

TABLE EIGHT

WE MAKE CONTENT EASY

OVERVIEW

In 2025, London’s boutique hotel scene is becoming a living gallery of experience-driven branding, tech-powered service, and values-led positioning. This guide will serve as a conversational playbook for hotel marketing managers, blending real-world case studies, bold examples, and storytelling wisdom to help boutique 4-star hotels elevate into 5-star icons.

Each chapter will deliver:

Straightforward Insights Clear, jargon-free guidance on what’s working right now in boutique hotel marketing — especially in London's competitive landscape. From Google rankings to Instagram hooks, we decode the digital moves that get results.

Real Stories & Case Studies
We name names. Expect real-life examples from London’s most magnetic boutique hotels — from The Hoxton to The Laslett, Henrietta, Leman Locke, and more. You'll see exactly how they build perception, trust, and brand heat.

We break down what makes standout boutique hotels shine — from Instagram grids that captivate, to GMB profiles that convert, narrative room descriptions that sell the stay, and review strategies that read like guest love letters.

Practical Tools You Can Use Today
This isn’t just inspiration — it’s action. Inside, you’ll find checklists, copy scripts, TikTok hook templates, room makeover formulas, and the full 88-Day Boutique Glow-Up Plan. It’s everything you need to elevate your hotel’s digital presence — fast.

ABOUT ME

I’m Asher Goldborn — a Creative Director with a background in building campaigns for major brands and iconic artists.

But honestly? None of that matters as much as what’s in this book.

Because The Signature Suite isn’t about me. It’s about the standout hotels that are already showing us what works — the proven systems, the scroll-stopping moments, and the emotional hooks that guests remember. My role here is simple: I connect the dots, decode what’s working, and tell those stories in a way that makes them usable.

I’ve spent my career finding patterns, tracking cultural shifts, and building brand frameworks that turn ideas into results. Now, I’ve turned my attention to boutique hospitality — where strategy meets soul.

This book isn’t theory. It’s clarity.
And while I may be the narrator, the facts — and the hotels who are getting it right — do most of the talking.



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DEAR HOTEL MARKETING MANAGER,

If you've ever walked into your lobby just before golden hour and thought, "God, this place is gorgeous," — then this chapter is for you.

You already know your hotel has something. A warmth. A feeling. An attention to detail that doesn't scream luxury — it whispers it.

But here's the catch:
In 2025, your potential guests are judging you before they even know you exist.
And most of them?

They're meeting you not in your foyer — but on Google, Instagram, or a TikTok someone else posted about your avo toast.

WHAT IS 5-STAR IN THE EYES OF THE INTERNET?

Forget the marble and Michelin for a moment.
Online, 5-star perception is built on three things:

Consistency – Across platforms, brand voice, visuals, and guest experience

Emotional Signature – A vibe, a value, a “this is so you” moment

Search Presence – Are you seen? Are you clickable?

Let’s break these down with stories and examples.

PARABLE: THE BOUTIQUE IN THE SHADOWS

Two hotels sit opposite each other on a quiet Bloomsbury street.

Both have great beds, local coffee, and service that remembers your name.
But one is always full. The other isn't.

Why?

Because one hotel learned how to show up before the stay.

Their Google Reviews read like love letters.

Their Insta Reels hit 50k views.

Their rooms were booked because their website felt like a stay in itself.

The other?
Still beautiful. Still quiet. Still unseen.

REFLECTION: WHAT DO YOU REALLY SELL?

You don’t just sell “rooms” or “nights” — that’s transactional.

You sell:

the way light hits the velvet headboard at 8:15am

the moment someone breathes in the rosemary candle at reception

the story someone tells their friends about the handwritten note from your GM

TRY THIS:
THE 5-STAR LITMUS TEST

Put yourself in the shoes (or slippers) of your ideal guest. Ask:

Touchpoint	What they see today	What they should feel
Google search	Nice 4-star hotel London	“Oooh… this looks special”
Instagram grid	2 brunch shots, 1 blurry event	“They get me — I’d stay here”
Website home page	Room rates & offers	“This place feels curated”
Reviews (Google/Trip)	Staff was kind	“They remembered my name”

REAL HOTEL CASE STUDY: THE LASLETT, NOTTING HILL

A 4-star boutique that feels effortlessly 5-star online.
Why?

Editorial-style photography that mirrors high fashion magazines

Storytelling infused throughout: from their “neighbourhood favourites” to bespoke playlists

Their reviews say more than “comfortable bed” — they say “unexpectedly memorable”

That’s the fifth star right there.

YOUR TURN: FIND YOUR SIGNATURE MOMENT

What is the most emotionally resonant moment your guests experience?
(Hint: It’s rarely the check-in.)

It might be:

The handwritten birthday card left on the pillow

The barista who remembers a name and a latte order

The perfectly framed view from Room 204’s window

Now ask yourself: Do they see that online before they arrive?

If not — that’s your first 5-star opportunity.

TO CLOSE THIS CHAPTER:

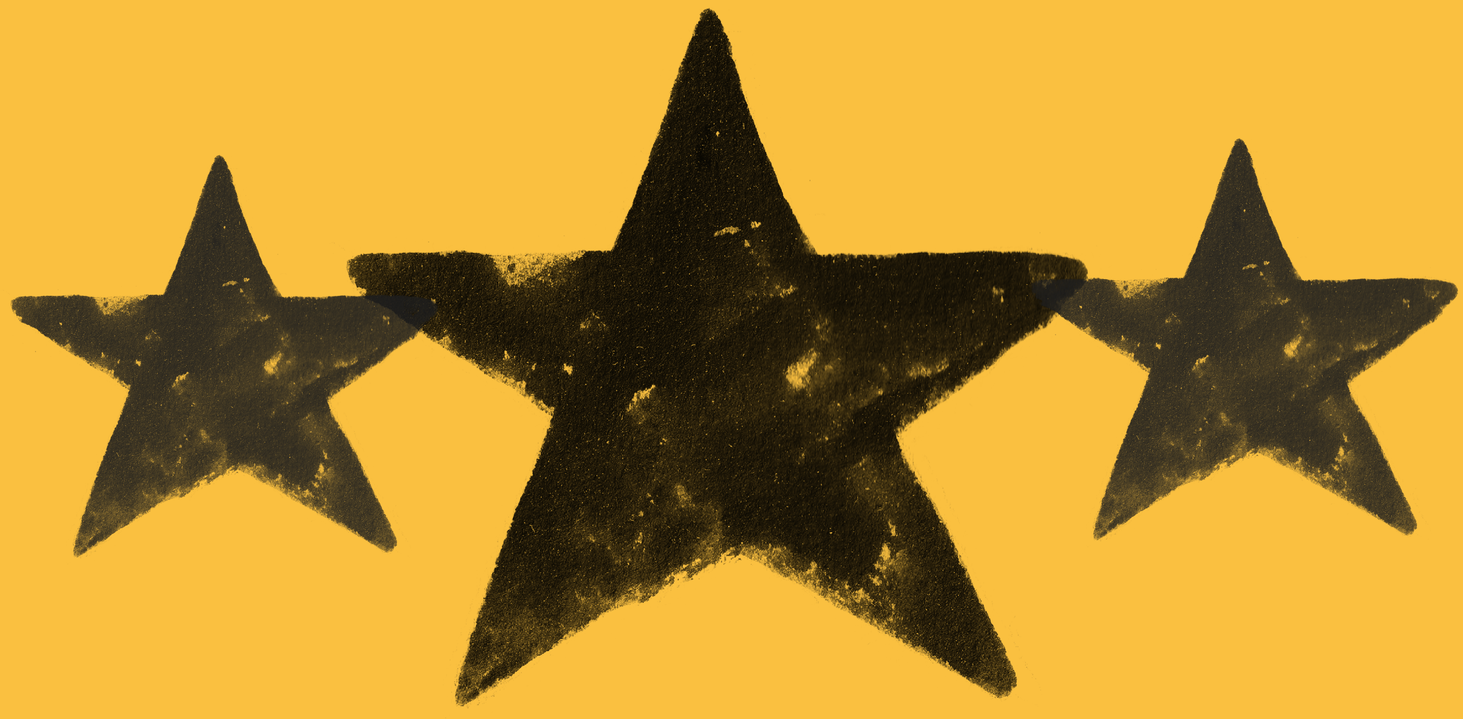
Showing up like a 5-star icon online isn’t about pretending to be something you’re not.
It’s about amplifying the beauty you already have — with intention, clarity, and consistency.

The magic is there.
Now let’s make it visible.

CHAPTER 2

STEAL FROM THE STARS:

What 5-Star Hotels Do Digitally (That You Can Totally Copy — and Do Better)



Luxury is less about chandeliers and more about choreography. Online, it's a curated dance — and your boutique hotel can lead.

CASE 1: CLARIDGE'S – THE ART OF EDITORIAL ELEGANCE

What they do:

- Their website reads like a coffee table book — light, space, and refinement in every scroll.
- Instagram is seasonally designed — winter windows, spring menus, autumn suites.
- Voice is consistent: calm, collected, classic.

What you can copy:

- Choose 5 words that define your visual tone (e.g. warm, sleek, quiet, golden, heritage). Use them everywhere.
- Update your seasonal content — change imagery, language, and menus each quarter.
- Swap "offers" for "occasions" on your site — invite, don't discount.

Mini Exercise:

Write a one-line email header your GM would send to a VIP guest — poetic, personal, persuasive.

CASE 2: THE NOMAD LONDON – THEATRICAL LUXURY IN A SCROLL

What they do:

- Instagram Reels are mini movies — slow-motion pours, candlelit corridors, sultry soundtracks.
- Every room is staged like a scene from a noir film.
- Collaborations with artists and musicians give the hotel a sense of cultural curation.

What you can copy:

- Use music as part of your brand — create seasonal Spotify playlists and embed them on your website.
- Film your lobby at dusk, not noon. Mood > light.
- Partner with 1 local creative to do a “residency” — art, sound, design.

Mini Exercise:

“Behind the bar: 3 cocktails that taste like London in winter.”

(Record it as a reel with ASMR glassware and velvet sound.)

CASE 3: THE HOXTON — CULTURE, NOT JUST ROOMS

What they do:

- Builds community with real local stories — from barbers to gallery owners.
- Visuals are candid, not curated. Think: “your cool friend’s flat.”
- Website uses personality-first language (“Nail your morning routine in Shoreditch” > “Explore our amenities.”)

What you can copy:

- Host one IG story series: “Neighbourhood Notes” — 60-second guides from your own staff or partners.
- Replace generic headlines with conversational ones.
- → “Our Rooms” becomes “Where You’ll Wake Up With a View.”
- Show team moments: birthday cake in the back office, latte art practice, lobby plants getting watered.

Personalisation prompt:

Name one local spot your guests always ask about. Make it a feature in your welcome email or on your homepage..

CASE 4: THE LASLETT - BOUTIQUE WITH A BRITISH VOICE

What they do:

- Inspired by its Notting Hill location, the tone is neighbourly yet editorial.
- Their online copy uses charm and British wit without clichés.
- Features creatives, poets, and chefs in residence.

What you can copy:

- Give your team bios a twist — make them unexpected. “Emma, Front Desk. Can recommend the quietest corner in Hyde Park for a picnic.”
- Use homegrown language — swap “luxury” for “lovely,” “charming,” or “dashed handsome.”
- Create an “Our London” blog — but from your lens, not generic guides.

Headline swap test:

Change “Exclusive Offers” to “Something Just For You (Because You Deserve It)”

CASE 5: ARTIST RESIDENCE - STORY IN EVERY ROOM

What they do:

- Highlights vintage furniture, handpicked art, and real stories behind the decor.
- Their online brand reads like a slow travel journal.
- Reviews are full of adjectives like “soul,” “quirky,” and “unexpectedly emotional.”

What you can copy:

- Add tags to each room: “The Book Lover’s Hideaway,” “The Morning Light Suite.”
- Post behind-the-scenes from your interiors: sourcing, styling, restoring.
- Use “slow stay” language: “Come early. Leave late. Read more.”

Visual Hook Idea:

Take a photo of one object in the room (a teacup, lamp, or painting) and tell its story on Instagram.

YOUR DIGITAL MANIFESTO BEGINS NOW:

Your boutique doesn’t need the budget of a palace —
It just needs the voice of a host who knows exactly how to tell a story.

You don’t sell beds.
You sell belonging.

You don’t promote discounts.
You curate desire.

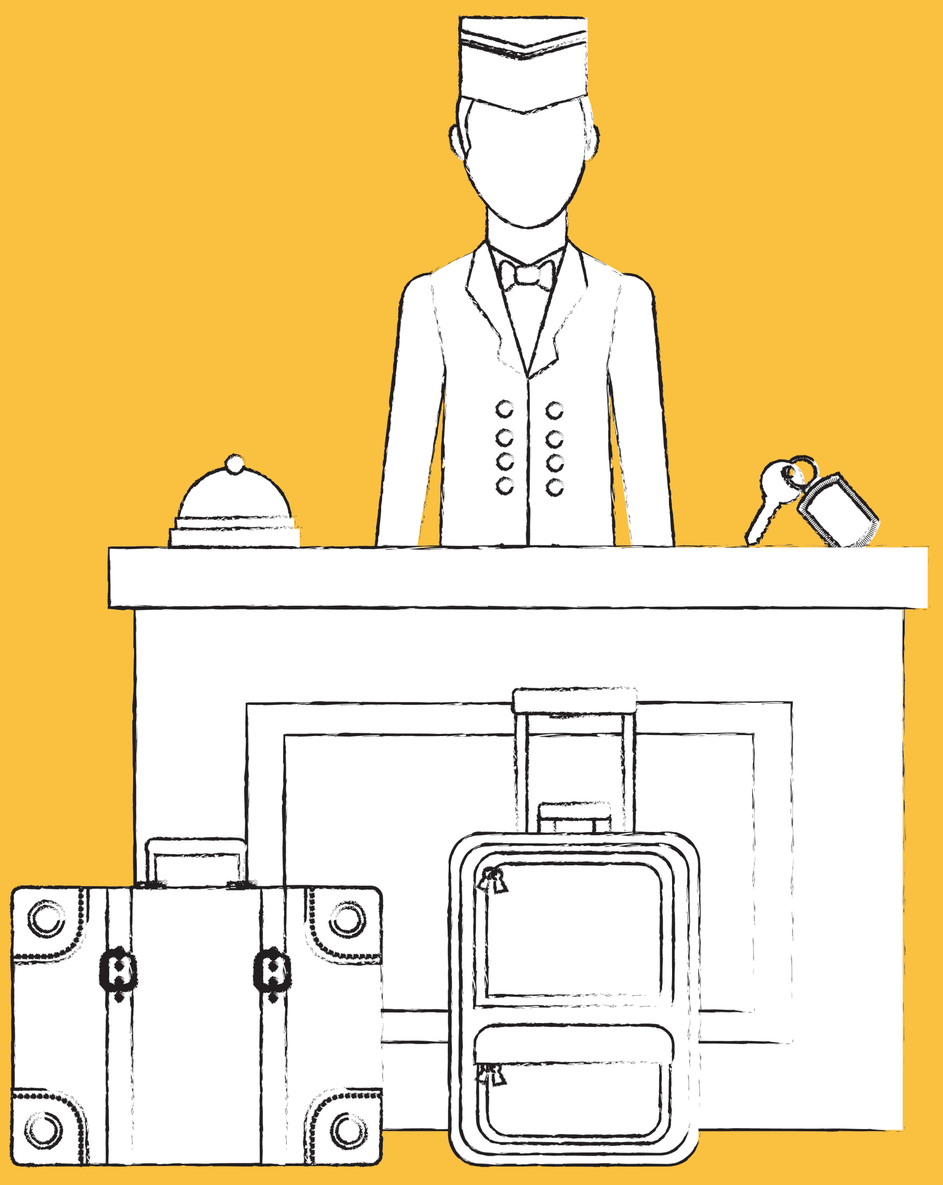
CHAPTER CHECKLIST - STEAL FROM THE STARS

1. Define your visual tone in 5 words
2. Rewrite your Instagram bio in your hotel's real voice
3. Script a 30-second "room reveal" Reel
4. Update your website homepage for storytelling (not listing)
5. Create a guest welcome email that feels like a letter

CHAPTER 3

GOOGLE LOBBY TEST:

How to Win at First Search



Before they feel your linens, they feel your link. Make sure it's love at first click.

THE REALITY: YOUR GUEST'S JOURNEY STARTS WITH A SEARCH NOT WITH YOUR INSTAGRAM.

Not even with your website.

Nine times out of ten, it starts with:

> "Boutique hotel Notting Hill"
> "Cool 4-star hotel near Covent Garden"
> "Romantic weekend London stay with good breakfast"

And guess what?

Google decides whether you show up — and what you look like when you do.

GOOGLE = YOUR NEW RECEPTION DESK

You only get a few lines, three pictures, and one glance to make an impression.

This chapter teaches you how to:

- Appear at the top of local search
- Make your listing feel 5-star
- Turn browsers into bookers with story-driven search results

CASE: THE PILGRM, PADDINGTON - SMALL HOTEL, MASSIVE GOOGLE GAME

What they do:

- Their Google My Business listing includes seasonal photos — no stock, no fluff.
- Descriptions use personality-rich keywords (e.g. “slow mornings and sourdough toast”).
- They reply to reviews like real humans, not bots.

What you can copy:

- Upload real guest-eye view photos — hallway shadows, coffee steam, keycard moments
- Use “emotional SEO” in your business description (see next section)
- Set a weekly “Review Hour” where you respond with grace and brand voice

THE “EMOTIONAL SEO” HACK

Want to show up on Google like a 5-star darling?

Blend relevant keywords with luxury feels.
Here’s how:

Touchpoint	What they see today
“hotel with good breakfast”	“Wake up to slow jazz and sourdough in bed”
“romantic hotel London”	“Where the rooms blush at candlelight”
“hotel near Soho nightlife”	“London’s culture on your doorstep — and silk on your pillow”

Update Your Description With This Formula:

[What you are] + [Who it’s for] + [What it feels like]

“A design-led boutique hotel in East London, made for city dreamers and weekend wanderers. Where music hums through the lobby and breakfast comes with sunlight.”

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS GLOW-UP CHECKLIST

- Upload 15–20 fresh photos (not just rooms — show candles, hallways, humans)
- Write a 750-character description that reflects tone + location
- Add “high-intent” keywords like: boutique hotel London, 4-star hotel with charm, romantic hotel with breakfast included
- Respond to all reviews — even the awkward ones — with warmth
- Add your menu, events, and seasonal promos as Posts (yes, Google loves Posts)

CASE: LEMAN LOCKE - APARTMENTS THAT WIN AT SEARCH

What they do:

- Use Google Q&A to proactively answer guest questions (e.g. “Do rooms have kitchenettes?” with a poetic answer)
- Feature team portraits in their GMB photos
- Use interior design keywords (think: “Scandinavian minimalism meets Shoreditch soul”)

What you can copy:

- Add Q&A to your Google profile and answer in your tone of voice
- Upload 3 “team culture” images (staff, drinks together, setting up for service)
- Use design style keywords — “art deco,” “Scandi,” “bohemian,” “mid-century”

REVIEW RESPONSE FRAMEWORK: FROM BORING TO BOUTIQUE

Instead of this:

“Thank you for your kind words. We hope to welcome you back.”

Try this:

“You just made the whole front desk smile. Come back soon — Room 202 still smells like sandalwood and coffee.”

QUICK EXERCISE: REWRITE YOUR GOOGLE DESCRIPTION RIGHT NOW

Here’s a plug-and-play starter:

Nestled between [local landmark] and [neighbourhood], [Hotel Name] is your escape in the city. Think hand-poured coffee, tucked-away corners, and nights lit by candlelight. Designed for the curious, the calm, and the creatively tired.

BONUS TIP: YOUR GOOGLE PHOTOS = YOUR REAL BROCHURE

Photos that perform best:

- A room with sunlight pouring in (AM and PM versions!)
- Flatlay of breakfast or books on the bed
- View out the window with curtain silhouette
- Real people (staff, guests — with permission)
- Mood-lighting hallway shots

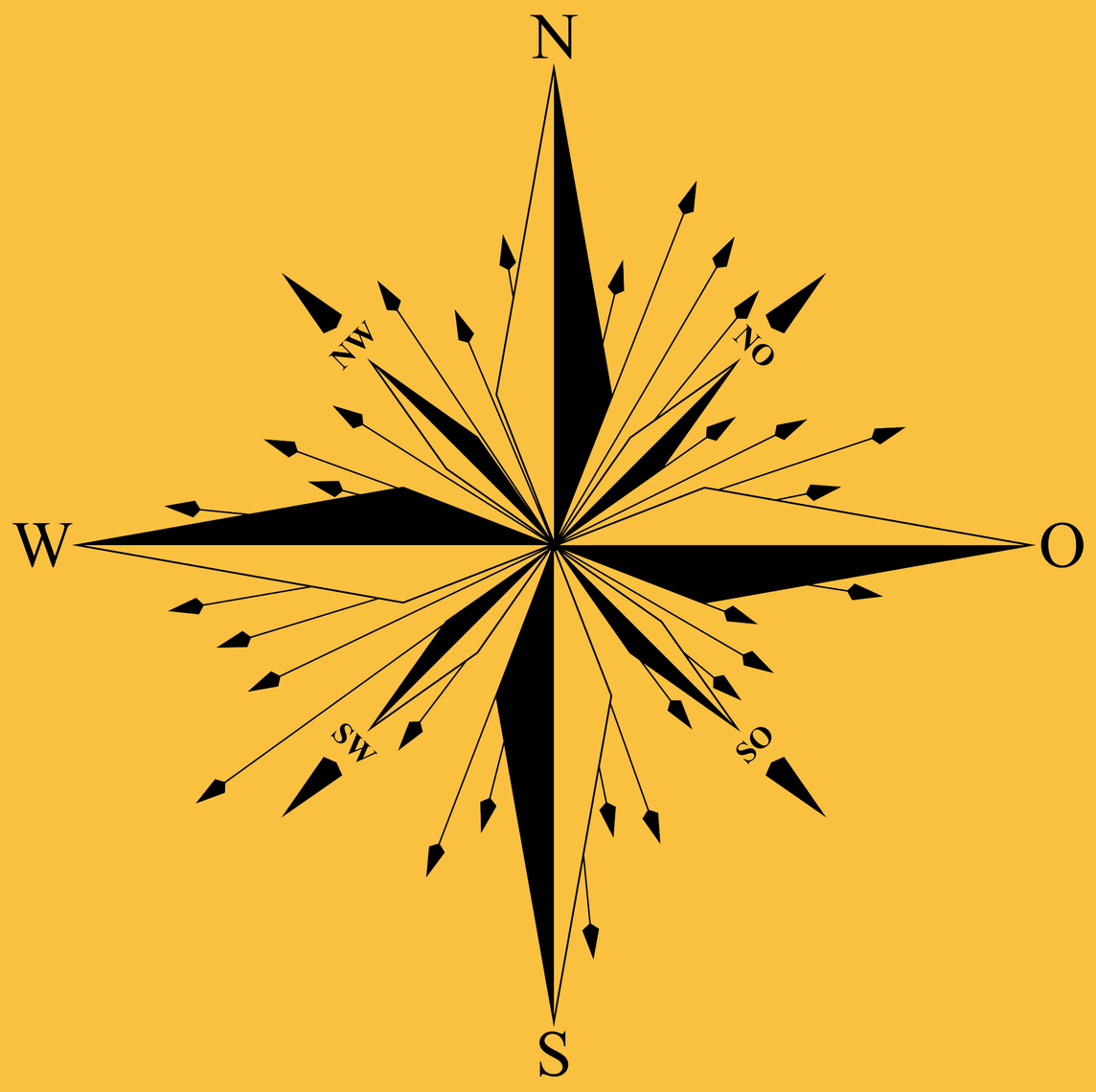
CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Google is your first impression — make it a masterpiece.
- Your job isn’t just to show up.
- It’s to seduce the searcher.
- Let the first click feel like a first sip of Champagne — light, fizzy, full of promise.

CHAPTER 4

INSTAGRAM IS YOUR FOYER:

Make It Magnetic



If your website is the facts,
Instagram is the flirt.

WHY INSTAGRAM STILL MATTERS (A LOT)

Before your guest reads a review, checks availability, or even googles you, they're likely scrolling.

Not searching.

Not planning.

Just feeling.

And if your Instagram is:

- inconsistent
- overly promotional
- or visually dull
- You've lost them — no matter how good your rooms are.

CASE: TREEHOUSE LONDON - WHIMSY WITH A VIEW

What they do:

- Their feed mixes storytelling + rooftop escapism
- Posts feel like Polaroids from a city-loving friend
- They lean into quirk, not just quality

What you can copy:

- Use captions like you're writing a postcard, not a brochure
- Alternate between spaces, moments, people, and rituals
- Create highlight bubbles like: “Mornings,” “Check-ins,” “Cocktails,” “In Bed”

Story Prompt:

3 things our guests always photograph — and why they’re totally right.

www.instagram.com/staytreehouse/

CASE: THE STANDARD – COOL WITHOUT TRYING

What they do:

- Their grid isn't perfect — it's personality-led
- Uses bold text, humour, behind-the-scenes
- Posts feel like art direction from a fashion shoot + a text from your best mate

What you can copy:

- Choose one tone of voice and dial it up to 10
- Don't be afraid to be funny, honest, or beautifully odd
- Include staff, not just spaces — hospitality is human

Caption Formula:

Room 305. Light at 4:30pm. A book you won't finish. This is the stay

www.instagram.com/thestandardlondon/

YOUR GRID =
YOUR MOODBOARD

If your grid feels:

- cold → you'll attract deal-hunters
- curated → you'll attract aesthetes
- warm + real → you'll attract belongers

Let's aim for that last one.

Here's a 12-tile layout format that consistently performs:

Grid Style	Content Example
1. Guest ritual	1. Coffee by window, towel turban moment
2. Team in action	2. Barista pouring, housekeeper straightening pillows
3. Neighbourhood spot	3. Partner café, hidden alley, flower shop
4. Story quote	4. "We came for one night. We stayed three."
5. Room glow-up	5. Light changing across a space
6. Menu tease	6. Drink pour, dessert close-up
7. Mood board	7. Curtain texture, tile detail
8. Guest review	8. A poetic pull-quote with stylised text
9. Staff pick	9. "Emma's favourite reading corner"
10. In-room object	10. Key, robe, art book
11. Seasonal touch	11. Autumn leaves on windowsill
12. Guest UGC	12. Reshare their post with a thank you ~

INSTAGRAM REELS = BOUTIQUE MINI-MOVIES

You don’t need a production crew. You need:

- 15 seconds
- one strong vibe
- a hook + a reveal

Top Reels Ideas That Convert:

- “What it’s like to check into our hotel in 30 seconds”
- “5 things that make this room feel like home”
- “Our breakfast chef’s favourite playlist to cook to”
- “London through your window at night”

Bonus tip:

Add your hotel name as the first overlay text in every reel. Make it familiar.

HIGHLIGHTS THAT DON’T FEEL LIKE LEFTOVERS

Highlight bubbles = your hotel’s short films. They need to be:

- intentional
- curated
- emotionally named

Replace:

❌ **“Food” →✅ “Morning Plates”**

❌ **“Rooms” →✅ “Where You’ll Wake Up”**

❌ **“Bar” →✅ “Martinis & Mischief”**

❌ **“Guests” → ✅ “Your Stories”**

❌ **“Offers” → ✅ “For You (Shhh)”**

STYLE FIRST, THEN STRATEGY

Your brand should have a visual signature:

- Warm shadows or crisp whites?
- Editorial or candid?
- Wide shots or cosy vignettes?

Choose a style and don’t deviate. Even iPhone content can feel 5-star if your visual language is clear.

Free Mood Words Bank
Choose 3 to guide your content style:

golden / velvet / hush / playful / crisp / poetic / soulful / dreamy / cinematic / local

GUEST CAPTION PROMPT LIST

These are for when guests tag you — reply with class, brand voice, and maybe even a touch of poetry.

Situation	Reply Caption
Morning room shot	“Golden hour looks good on you. Room 204 forever.”
Food photo	“That’s our secret sauce (and you nailed it).”
UGC from bed	“This is the energy we adore. Soft sheets and slow starts.”
Cocktail cheers	“Cheers to you — come back soon. We’ll save your favourite seat.”

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Instagram is your mood before your menu.

Your feel before your facts.
Your guestbook in real time.

Curate it like a memory. Use it like a mirror.

And always ask — if this was my only impression of us, would I book?

CHAPTER 5

REPUTATION ENGINEERING:

Reviews That Read Like Romance



A five-star review isn't a score —
it's a story. And stories sell.

LET'S GET HONEST

Most hotel reviews sound like this:

"Nice room. Friendly staff. Would stay again."

Lovely? Sure.

Useful? A bit.

Magnetic? Not even close.

This chapter will help you inspire, prompt, and elevate the way your guests talk about you online — so their reviews don't just fill space... they convert new bookings.

CASE: THE HENRIETTA HOTEL - REVIEWS THAT FEEL LIKE DIARIES

What they do:

- Their reviews mention the tiny touches — lavender pillow spray, breakfast playlist, handwritten notes.
- Guests describe feelings, not just features.
- They regularly respond with warmth and specificity, like:

> “Thank you for noticing the playlist! That was Carlos’s Sunday morning mix — we’ll let him know he has a fan”

What you can copy:

- Train your team to plant memory moments guests will want to mention
- Use review response as brand voice storytelling
- Pull 1 guest quote each week and turn it into a social post or testimonial graphic

THE GUEST MEMORY FUNNEL

To write a review that reads 5-star, the guest needs to:

1. Feel something unexpected
2. Remember a specific detail
3. Want to share it

So you need to create those micro-moments during the stay, then gently nudge them post-checkout.

HOW TO PROMPT REVIEWS (WITHOUT SOUNDING DESPERATE)

Forget “please leave us a review!” — that’s transactional.
Try one of these conversational prompts instead:
In-person (checkout or bar):

> *“We always love hearing which part of the stay stood out – it helps us do more of the good stuff.”*

In your follow-up email:

> *“Got a favourite moment? If you share it in a review, it might just inspire someone’s next little escape.”*

In your room welcome note:

> *“If something makes you smile, whisper it to the internet. Future guests will thank you.”*

REVIEW MAGIC WORDS LIST

If you want 5-star energy, encourage language that evokes feeling, not facts.

Words to spark:

Ritual
Hidden gem
Thoughtful
Unexpected
Warm
Dreamy
Cinematic
Familiar
Intimate
Curated

Words to avoid encouraging:

Cheap
Clean
Convenient
Standard
Fine

HOW TO USE REVIEWS AS MARKETING GOLD

Turn reviews into Instagram carousels

— One quote per slide, styled with your brand colours.

— Bonus: overlay a guest’s photo (with permission) behind the text.

Add a review block to your homepage

But not a widget dump. Use editorial layout:

> “I still think about that grapefruit spritz and jazz echoing from the lobby. Best solo weekend I’ve ever had.”
>
> – Alex, September 2024

Use reviews in sales decks & pitches

Especially if you’re attracting press, brand partners, or group bookings.

REVIEW RESPONSE TEMPLATE (MAKE IT BOUTIQUE)

Instead of this:

❌ “Thank you for staying with us. We’re glad you enjoyed your visit.”

Try this:

✅ “Your words just made our whole team smile. We’ll be saving your quote about the ‘sunlight and silence’ for future guests — it says everything we aim for.”

Or this:

✅ “Yes! The Room 204 window is our favourite for late afternoon reading. You noticed the magic.”

CASE: THE PILGRM - “WE STAYED FOR THE COFFEE, CAME BACK FOR THE QUIET”

They’ve made reviews part of their aesthetic — using elegant typography, moody colour blocks, and poetic fragments from real guest comments across their socials and in-room welcome books.

What you can copy:

- Feature your best guest quote in every email footer
- Print one review and hang it in your back-of-house staff room
- Read reviews aloud at weekly team meetings as feedback fuel

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Instagram is your mood before your menu.

Your guests are already writing your marketing copy — they just don't know it yet.

Design the experience to create the moment.
Prompt the review to share the story.
Respond in a way that continues the emotion.

That's reputation engineering — and it's pure 5-star strategy.

CHAPTER 6

LUXURY IS A FEELING:

How to Sell More Without Lowering Price



People don’t pay for rooms. They pay for how they want to feel inside them.

HERE'S THE TRUTH:

Most boutique hotels can't outspend the big players.
But they can out-feel them.

Because luxury in 2025 is no longer just about amenities

It's about mood, memory, and meaning.

This chapter teaches you how to raise perceived value — so you don't have to lower prices to compete. You just need to sell better stories, moments, and feelings.

CASE: THE BEAUMONT - THE STAY WITH A STORY

What they do:

- Created a fictional character, “Anthony Beaumont,” and made the hotel his legacy.
- Rooms feel like time capsules, not just places to sleep.
- Their site doesn’t say “book now” — it says “begin your story.”

What you can copy:

- Give each room category a narrative identity (“The Creative’s Den,” “The Dancer’s View,” “The Winter Window Suite”)
- Use emotional anchors in descriptions — “velvet silence,” “sunrise shadows,” “late-night jazz through the walls”
- Package stays as stories — not just perks (e.g. “A Writer’s Weekend” instead of “2-Night Offer”)

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LUXURY PRICING

People justify luxury pricing when:

1. They feel seen
2. They feel special
3. They feel they're part of something bigger

So stop selling "inclusions."
Start selling feelings.

WORDS THAT WIDEN THE WALLET

Instead of...

1. Free breakfast
2. Upgrade available
3. Welcome drink
4. Book direct & save

Try...

1. Mornings curated with sourdough + soul
2. Unlock your next favourite memory
3. A first sip that tells you you've arrived
4. Your stay, your story — start here

~~PRICING ≠ VALUE.~~

PERCEPTION = VALUE.

Imagine this:

Two hotels.
Same rates.
One says:

> “Luxury double room with rainfall shower and blackout blinds.”

The other says:

> “A slow morning sanctuary where you lose time in the steam and don’t need to set an alarm.”

Which one gets booked?
The one that speaks to the heart, not the hardware.

MIRROR YOUR GUEST'S ASPIRATIONS

When someone is booking a boutique hotel, they're saying something about who they want to be for those 48 hours.

Are you reflecting that?

Guest Type

1. The city escapee
2. The creative weekender
3. The solo romantic

Emotional Pitch

1. "Space to breathe, tea to linger over"
2. "Rooms that inspire mid-thought scribbles"
3. "A stay that makes stillness feel sexy"

SELLING WITH SOFT POWER (NOT HARD DISCOUNTS)

Don’t say: “Get 15% off for two nights.”

Do say: “Stay a little longer — the second night’s on us, and so is the jazz.”

Don’t say: “Offer ends soon.”

Do say: “Only a few weekends left for this kind of calm.”

VISUAL = VALUE

Luxury isn’t loud.

In fact, it’s often quieter, warmer, and more restrained than mass-market design.

Apply this to:

- Your colour palette (muted over bright)
- Font choice (editorial serif over functional sans)
- Photography style (shadow + story over overexposure)

Want to look 5-star? Style like Kinfolk, not Kayak.

CASE: ONE HUNDRED SHOREDITCH - COOL, CALM, CONNECTED

What they do:

- Use muted pinks, soft copy, plant-led imagery
- Brand voice feels like a friend with excellent taste
- Package names include: “Late Check-Out Sundays” and “Easy Like Shoreditch Morning”

What you can copy:

- Use your tone and visuals to slow the scroll
- Package offers with mood-first names
- Tie pricing to atmosphere, not amenities

BUILD YOUR OWN EMOTIONAL PITCH LINE

Use this formula:

> “A [emotion] space for [persona] who want to [aspiration] — and don’t want to rush it.”

Examples:

> “A golden-hour hideaway for city dreamers who need their mornings to last a little longer.”
>
> “A quiet corner for introverts who still love a Soho postcode.”

CHAPTER SUMMARY

You don’t need to charge less — you need to feel worth more.

- Because true luxury isn’t loud.
- It’s layered.
- It’s lived-in.
- And it’s absolutely worth it.

CHAPTER 7

NARRATIVES OVER AMENITIES:

Storytelling as a Sales Strategy



Facts fill a page. Stories fill your rooms.

WHAT ARE YOU REALLY SELLING?

You might say:

> “We offer high-thread-count sheets, a rainfall shower, and complimentary Wi-Fi.”

Your guest hears:

> “Same as everyone else.”

But what if you said:

> “Mornings that stretch out slowly. Light that drips in through linen curtains. Showers that feel like pause buttons. And silence — but the good kind.”

Suddenly, it’s not just a room.

It’s an experience.

A desire.

A yes.

CASE: THE LASLETT - STAY INSIDE THE STORY

What they do:

- Rooms are inspired by Notting Hill's creative past.
- Website copy feels like editorial travel writing, not sales.
- Even their breakfast is introduced like a character in a novel.

What you can copy:

- Build story scenes, not just feature lists
- Write room descriptions that describe feelings, rituals, and guest archetypes
- Inject references to music, weather, seasons, or culture — they deepen connection

Example Rewrite:

Before:

"Deluxe King Room with city view. Includes coffee machine, desk, and air conditioning."

After:

"Your quiet corner above the city — where the mornings smell like espresso and the curtains know how to dance in the breeze. For guests who write lists they never follow, and never want to leave on time."

WHY STORIES SELL BETTER THAN SPECS

Because stories:

- Trigger emotion
- Make us visualise
- Activate imagination
- Help us see ourselves in them

And when a guest sees themselves in your story — they book.

BUILD YOUR SIGNATURE STORY STYLE

Every boutique hotel should define its core story tone:

Tone	Example Phrases
Romantic	“Wrapped in golden light. Designed for lingering.”
Urban Cool	“Concrete, cocktails, and curated playlists.”
Soulful	“Made for moments between meetings, or thoughts between chapters.”
Playful	“Room keys, record players, and rooftop daydreams.”
Escape	“No check-in line. No loud clocks. Just stillness.”

WHERE TO USE STORYTELLING

Room Descriptions

Not just “features” — but moments waiting to happen.

Website Flow

Turn “About Us” into “Our Story”

Turn “Gallery” into “Moodboard”

Turn “Location” into “Our Neighbourhood Guide”

Booking Emails

“We’re prepping your stay. The windows are clean, the sheets are crisp, and your minibar knows you well.”

Instagram Captions

Swap “Book now” for:

> “Room 301 after 4pm. Light. Quiet. A page half-turned.”

In-Room Materials

> “If you’re reading this in bed, we’ve done our job.”

CASE: THE PILGRM - THE HOTEL THAT READS LIKE A ZINE

What they do:

- Use typewriter-style fonts, journal-like graphics, and tactile language
- Their copy never sounds “corporate” — it sounds lived-in
- Describes their spaces as “conversations between old and new”

What you can copy:

- Write your room types as personas
- Include quotes from real guests in the room book
- Give every floor, hallway or door a nickname or narrative

Bonus Idea:

Create a short story series: “Notes From Room 207” — fictionalised guest moments that blend reality and poetry.

TEMPLATE TIME: MINI-STORY ROOM COPY

“This room has secrets. The light at 5:08pm is one of them. The headboard was made by a man in Brixton who only works with walnut. There’s a chair in the corner that guests have used to journal, kiss, and spill wine on (once). We cleaned it. You’re good.”

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Facts are forgettable.
Stories are repeatable.

You can’t always add another feature.
But you can always add another feeling.
That’s the story edge — and it’s what 5-star brands are mastering.

So don’t just show the room.
Invite them into the scene.

CHAPTER 8

TURN YOUR STAFF INTO BRAND INFLUENCERS

People Power:



The most powerful part of your brand might be standing behind the front desk.

LET’S TALK REAL:

Big chain hotels have concierge apps and robotic butlers.

You? You’ve got Daniel at the bar who makes everyone feel seen, and Clara who adds extra oat milk without asking.

In a boutique setting, your staff are your brand influencers.

Not just behind the scenes. But online. In reviews. On Instagram. And in the stories guests take home.

Let’s tap into that.

CASE: THE HOXTON – STAFF WITH PERSONALITY

What they do:

- Team members appear regularly in social content — as real humans, not actors.
- Captioned with charm: “Meet James, our GM by day, vinyl snob by night.”
- Staff post on their own social accounts with pride — and it’s reshared with branded flair.

What you can copy:

- Introduce your team on Instagram like cast members in a film
- Let them take over your stories — “A Day in the Life of Front Desk at 8am”
- Use Reels: Staff picks, playlist recs, favourite guest moments

STAFF AS STORYTELLERS = TRUST X 10

Your guests trust:

- Faces more than logos
- People more than promotions
- Recommendations more than taglines

So make your team part of the narrative:

- Have housekeeping share “how to make the perfect boutique bed”
- Let your chef intro the breakfast menu with behind-the-scenes plating
- Let reception staff share their favourite local spots via stories

Mini-Series Idea:

Ask the Team: ***One minute videos of staff answering questions like:***

- "Where’s your favourite place for a sunset drink nearby?”
- “What’s your secret to getting early check-in?”
- “If this room had a soundtrack, what would it be?”

GUEST REVIEWS TELL YOU THE TRUTH

Go back and read your Google or TripAdvisor reviews.

Are guests:

- Naming your staff?
- Highlighting human interactions?
- Talking about service moments with feeling?

If not — you're missing moments that matter.

If yes — amplify it.

Put quotes about staff into Instagram captions, room booklets, and welcome emails.

INTERNAL CULTURE = EXTERNAL PERCEPTION

If you want guests to feel the love, it starts inside:

- Create a “Brand Language” guide for your team (phrases to use, tone to carry)
- Celebrate team wins publicly (Instagram shoutouts, mini awards)
- Let your team’s personalities show — don’t “script” their hospitality

Idea:

Start a “Wall of Wow” — guest reviews printed and stuck in the staff room weekly, highlighting team-specific praise.

CASE: THE HENRIETTA HOTEL - THE TEAM FEELS LIKE FAMILY

What they do:

- Staff bios on the website include their favourite room, drink, and London view.
- Uniforms feel personal — tailored, styled, and never stiff.
- Guests refer to staff by name often — and the team responds to reviews like friends.

What you can copy:

- Add personality to your staff bios on the site
- Use photography that shows them laughing, pouring, arranging — not posing
- Feature team recs in a “Curated by [First Name]” format (e.g. bar menus, local guides, playlists)

INSTAGRAM CAPTION TEMPLATES FEATURING STAFF

Scenario: Bar staff favourite drink

Caption: “Shoutout to Jamie for this smoky mezcal number — invented during lockdown, perfected with lime & late-night tunes.”

Scenario: Housekeeping ritual

Caption: “Every pillow is fluffed by hand — and Jess insists on doing one final bounce to test the cloud level.”

Scenario: Local tips

Caption: “Our team’s Friday favourite: The Gallery Café on Redchurch St. Big flat whites. Bigger smiles.”

STAFF TAKEOVER STORY IDEAS

Series Title	Format
1. Check-in With Me	1. A morning in the life of front desk
2. Prep & Pour	2. Bar staff’s cocktail ritual
3. My Favourite Room	3. Staff giving a quick room tour and what they love
4. Secret Corners	4. Staff revealing hidden gems in the hotel
5. Play My Playlist	5. Spotify link + photo of team member with a vibe

TEMPLATE TIME: MINI-STORY ROOM COPY

“This room has secrets. The light at 5:08pm is one of them. The headboard was made by a man in Brixton who only works with walnut. There’s a chair in the corner that guests have used to journal, kiss, and spill wine on (once). We cleaned it. You’re good.”

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Your team is more than staff. They're the face, voice, and heartbeat of your boutique brand.

- Let them be seen.
- Let them be heard.
- Let them shape the story — online and off.

When guests remember your people, they remember you.

CHAPTER 9

ONLINE GUEST JOURNEY:

Discovery, Desire, Decision.



Guests don’t just find you — they fall for you. But only if you guide the story.

WHAT'S ACTUALLY HAPPENING IN A GUEST'S MIND?

Booking a hotel is not a rational checklist.

It's emotional. Sensory. Personal.

A guest isn't asking:

> "Does this hotel have air con, Wi-Fi, and good reviews?"

They're wondering:

> "Will I feel like the main character here?"
>
> "Will this stay give me something I can share — or keep?"

Your digital experience needs to reflect that.

THE 3-STAGE BOUTIQUE BOOKING JOURNEY

1. Discovery

Where they find you. Often by accident. Always with curiosity.

Touchpoints:

- Instagram
- Google
- Reels, TikToks, Pinterest
- PR or influencer tags
- TripAdvisor

What they want to feel:

- Intrigued
- Drawn in
- Like this place gets them

Goal: Capture attention with aesthetics, stories, voice, and vibe.

THE 3-STAGE BOUTIQUE BOOKING JOURNEY

2. Desire

Where they’re considering you. Comparing. Questioning.

Touchpoints:

- Your website
- Your reviews
- Your GMB (Google My Business)
- Your vibe versus others

What they’re asking:

- “Does this feel like me?”
- “Will I regret this choice?”
- “What’s the difference between this and a cheaper 4-star down the road?”

Goal: Build emotional trust + clarity. Use storytelling, design, and tone to speak to their identity.

THE 3-STAGE BOUTIQUE BOOKING JOURNEY

3. Decision

Where they click. But also where they dream.

Touchpoints:

- Booking engine
- Last review read
- Final Instagram post they scrolled
- Confirmation email

What they want to feel:

- Reassured
- Excited
- Like they just made a great personal choice

Goal: Remove friction. Add delight. Make the confirmation feel like a welcome.

CASE: LEMAN LOCKE - DESIGNED LIKE A GUEST JOURNEY

What they do:

- IG grabs attention with soft-focus lifestyle moments
- Website is minimalist but narrative-rich
- Booking flow has micro-stories on every room type
- Confirmation email includes: Spotify playlist, local insider guide, and a gif that says “We can’t wait to meet you”

What you can copy:

- Break your journey into 3 phases
- Add one emotional touchpoint per phase
- Personalise the confirmation experience (e.g. first name, curated tips)

JOURNEY AUDIT WORKSHEET

Phase	Key Page / Platform	Does it evoke emotion?	Is your tone consistent?	Do you guide next action?
Discovery	Instagram bio / reels	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Desire	Website rooms / About page	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Decision	Booking flow / confirmation	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

If there are too many "No"s — time for a digital glow-up.

BOUTIQUE BOOKING TOUCHPOINT IDEAS

Touchpoint	Make It Boutique
Homepage Headline	“Your London hideaway. Quiet, light, and local.”
Room Page CTA	“Come for the view. Stay for the Sunday morning silence.”
Booking Engine Reminder	“Still dreaming about Room 205? Don’t wait.”
Confirmation Email	“Everything’s ready — we’ve set the lighting and warmed the playlists.”

REDUCE FRICTION, ADD FEELING

Friction = Unclear steps, boring forms, broken links

Feeling = Subtle joy moments, helpful nudges, soft humour

Example:

- Don’t say: “Your booking is confirmed.”
- Say: “Your stay is in the diary — and the kettle’s already thinking about boiling.”

VISUAL JOURNEY FLOW (FOR THE FUTURE CHAPTER DESIGN)

DISCOVERY

nstagram Grid →

Google Map Listing →

Guest tag in a story

↓

DESIRE

Website (Rooms →About → Offers)

TripAdvisor Reviews →

Email sign-up / Blog post

↓

DECISION

Booking Flow →

Confirmation Email →

Pre-stay Welcome Guide / Spotify Playlist

CHAPTER SUMMARY

A boutique brand doesn’t just look beautiful — it feels guided.

You’re not throwing information at guests.

You’re walking them through an emotional experience — one step at a time.

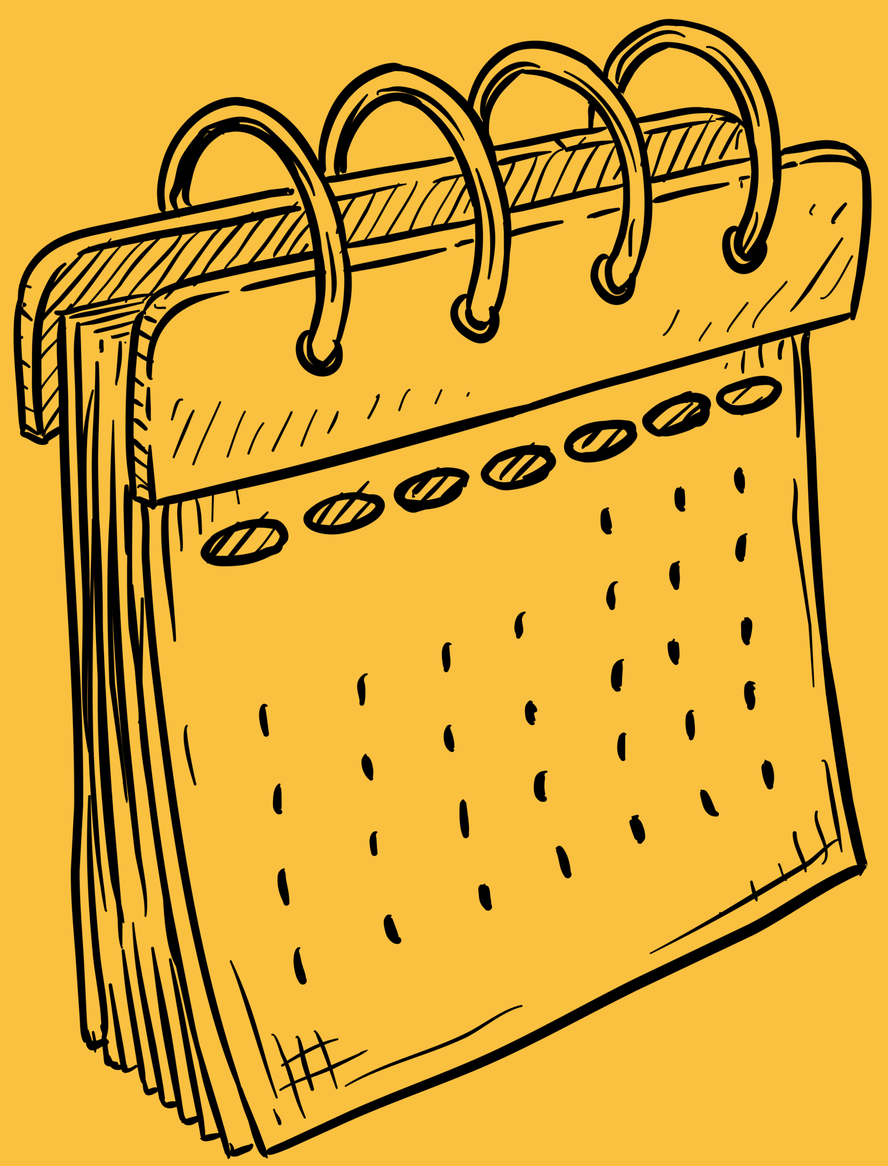
And if each step feels like your signature?

That’s when they book.

CHAPTER 10

THE 88-DAY BOUTIQUE GLOW-UP PLAN

Powered by Table8Media



Because elevation isn’t an idea — it’s a strategy. Let’s make it happen in 88 days.

WHY 88 DAYS?

It’s not random. It’s rhythm.

- 88 keys on a piano — complete range.
- 8 is infinity on its side — momentum.
- 88 days = 12 weeks + 4 bonus moments of magic
- And… it’s Table8Media’s stamp of intent. Sharp. Memorable. Actionable.

This chapter is your game plan for transformation — turning your boutique hotel into a digitally magnetic, emotionally resonant, 5-star perceived brand.

TABLE EIGHT

WE MAKE CONTENT EASY

HOW IT WORKS:

- Split into 3 ACTS: Refine → Reveal → Radiate
- 4 Weekly Focuses Per Act
- Tools Provided: Checklists, prompts, campaign ideas
- 4 “Magic Weekends” for resets, refreshes, and reflection

TABLE EIGHT

WE MAKE CONTENT EASY

ACT I: REFINE (DAYS 1-28)

Get clear on who you are, how you speak, and what guests really feel.

Week 1: Brand Identity Reboot

- Define your 5 emotional brand words
- Audit all copy (website, Insta, emails)
- Build your brand tone cheat sheet
- Tool: Brand Voice Matrix

Week 2: Visual Language Lock-In

- Set filters, fonts, photography style
- Choose “hero content” per platform
- Capture 12 iconic new hotel images
- Tool: Visual Style Guide Template

Week 3: Review & Reputation Audit

- Respond to every review with voice
- Pull 5 best guest quotes for use
- Add review quotes to homepage + email
- Tool: Response Script Pack

Week 4: Team Storytelling Activation

- Photograph 5 team members
- Launch “Meet the Team” IG series
- Host a story workshop with staff
- ~ Tool: Internal Brand Culture Deck

Magic Weekend 1: Pause & Reflect

- Team wine + brainstorm
- Print out best reviews in lobby
- Ask 3 guests what made them feel something

ACT II: REVEAL (DAYS 29–56)

Put your new tone, style, and stories into the world.

Week 5: Website Reframe

- Rewrite room copy using narrative tone
- Rename CTAs and homepage sections
- Add emotional touchpoints to booking flow

Tool: Room Description Rewrites

Week 6: Instagram Reinvention

- Launch new grid strategy
- Plan 6 Reels (vibes, team, rituals, rooms)
- Refresh highlights with boutique tone

Tool: IG Grid Planner + Reel Hooks

Week 7: Google Glow-Up

- Rewrite GMB bio using “emotional SEO”
- Add 10 fresh guest-view photos
- Set up Q&A section on profile

Tool: Google Profile Script Kit

Week 8: Email & Booking Flow Rework

- Update auto-responders with tone
- Build a “Before You Arrive” email guide
- Add Spotify playlist + surprise detail

Tool: Pre-Stay Email Template

Magic Weekend 2: Reset + Style

- Shoot 20 new photos (AM + PM light)
- Record a 30-sec lobby video
- Write your “Why We Do This” manifesto and hang it in staff area

ACT III: RADIATE (DAYS 57–88)

Push energy into the world. Own your new perception.

Week 9: Influencer & UGC Plan

- Curate a guest gallery on IG
- Send DMs to 10 micro-creators
- Feature 3 guest stories on your site

Tool: Influencer Collab Kit

Week 10: Signature Campaign Launch

- Theme: “This Room Has a Story”
- Bundle one emotional stay offer
- Launch across IG, email, website

Tool: Campaign Builder Template

Week 11: Local Love Collabs

- Partner with 1 indie café / florist / gallery
- Shoot a “Neighbourhood Recs” video
- Add local culture to your website + welcome book

Tool: Collab Toolkit

Week 12: Boutique Booking Blitz

- Run 7 days of soft CTAs
- Feature UGC daily
- Add “Guest Quote of the Day” to stories

Tool: 7-Day Social Calendar

Magic Weekend 3: Champagne & Check-in

- Invite 3 influencers for a soft stay
- Host an internal feedback review
- Pop a bottle — your glow-up is real.

MAGIC WEEKEND 4: LEGACY BUILD

End with:

- A full 2025 content calendar
- A “What We’ve Learned” team workshop
- A printed booklet of your best captions, reviews, and images

Frame the best quote of the season in the lobby.

Let guests feel the story — even when they’re checking out.

TABLE EIGHT

WE MAKE CONTENT EASY

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This is your boutique evolution plan.

No fluff. No overwhelm. Just intention → action → magic.

88 Days from now, you'll still be a 4-star on paper.

But online? You'll feel like a five-star icon.

And your guests?

They'll feel it too — before they even arrive.

TABLE EIGHT

WE MAKE CONTENT EASY

FROM TABLE EIGHT TO YOU:

This isn’t just a guide. It’s your signature suite strategy.

Refined. Human. Emotional. Boutique to the core.

If you’re ready to bring it to life — My team at Table Eight Media are already thinking in light, music, and moodboards.

www.Table8Media.com

LET’S NOT JUST CHANGE HOW BOUTIQUE HOTELS LOOK.

LET’S CHANGE HOW THEY FEEL – EVERYWHERE.

TABLE EIGHT

WE MAKE CONTENT EASY