

out&about.

checkin



[THE BLACKMAN, MELBOURNE, VIC]

The latest opening in the Art Series hotel group – joining The Cullen and The Olsen – pays tribute to living legend Charles Blackman. Danielle Oppermann discovers that this boutique Melbourne bolthole offers a splash of colour just a few minutes from the CBD.

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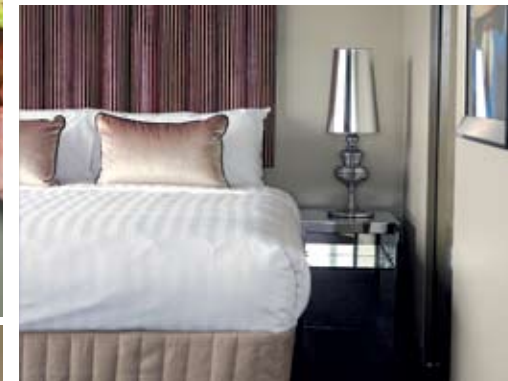


making an entrance

The building's modern glass exterior, with multi-storey murals and lightboxes of Charles Blackman's works, sets the scene even before you step into the foyer with its gallery-style prints from his well-known Alice In Wonderland series. The paintings' theme carries through the hotel, adding colour and quirky detail to everything from the bathroom screens to the White Rabbit-shaped 'Do Not Disturb' signs and gingerbread labelled 'Eat Me' in the rooms.

wow factor

For the full wow factor, head straight for the two penthouse suites. One overlooks St Kilda Road past the Shrine of Remembrance and CBD all the way to the Dandenongs; while the other has views across Albert Park to Port Phillip Bay, giving it pole position at Grand Prix time.



what's the room like?

Rooms fit both the hotel's boutique feel and reasonable budget. Modern, neutral tones and shiny surfaces are broken up by pops of colour from the artworks, vibrant cushions and throws. Our Studio Balcony Suite (from \$179 per night) is well equipped with a kitchenette and dining table, a 42-inch flatscreen and iPod dock. The bathroom is small but functional (with a good hairdryer, hooray), and there's a small balcony to take in the views over St Kilda Road (ask for something on the Albert Park side for a greener outlook).

how's the food?

Both the dining options are casual but cool, without that 'hotel restaurant' feel. One is the bright, all-day French bakery and cafe Depot de Pain. Young staff with authentic accents serve up croissants and croque madames at breakfast, baguettes at lunch, and feathery macaroons whenever you need a sugar hit. On the other side of the foyer is Italian trattoria Classico, which offers a bar with tasting plates and is now open for lunch to make use of the outdoor terrace. The restaurants take care of room service, too.

what's nearby?

Just south of the city, you're not exactly in the heart of any one area here, but on the plus side you're a stone's throw from many. A five-minute tram ride saw us heading off in all directions to the CBD, St Kilda, South Yarra or Prahran. Closest to the hotel are Albert Park, the Shrine, the National Gallery of Victoria and Shannon Bennett's Cafe Vue. The hotel runs a free shuttle into town on weekdays, and also offers Swedish Kronan Classic bikes and a Smart Car for hire.

feeling arty?

Take a (three-hour, \$60 per person) tour of all three Art Series Hotels with the group's curator, Jane O'Neill, to learn more about the works by renowned Australian feature artists Adam Cullen, John Olsen and Charles Blackman. **d.**

The writer was a guest of The Blackman, 452 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne, (03) 9039 1444, artserieshotels.com.au/blackman.

From top: views across Albert Park; enjoy lunchtime baguettes at Depot de Pain; the rooms are decorated in stylish neutral tones; one of the two penthouse suites. Previous page: Charles Blackman's works feature throughout the hotel; Blackman's *Tall Alice* graces the building's exterior.

