

Savoy

Strand, WC2R 0EU (7836 4343/fax 7240 6040/www.savoygroup.com). Covent Garden or Embankment tube/Charing Cross tube/rail.

Rates £341-£410 single; £405-£499 double; £546-£1,821 suite. **Credit** AmEx, DC, MC, V. **Map** p401 L7.

Built in 1889, the Savoy is London's original grande dame. And what a legacy. Monet painted the views from the River Suites; Noel Coward played in the Thames Foyer; and Vivien Leigh met Laurence Olivier in the Savoy Grill. More importantly, a bartender invented the Martini at the chic American Bar. So you know this place is glamorous. But where the Ritz is ostentatious, the Savoy's grandeur is more dignified. Its aesthetic is mixed: neo-classical, art deco and gentlemen's club. Bedrooms are luxurious but restrained: most people remember the water-cannon showerheads and – in certain rooms – the Thames views. The rooftop gym, with a small pool, is another forte. The legendary Savoy Grill has had a revamp: chef Marcus Wareing updated the menu and Californian designer Barbara Barry jazzed up the decor. A new casual restaurant, Banquette, is a chi-chi homage to a 1950s American diner.

Hotel services Bars (3). Business centre.

Concierge. Disabled-adapted rooms. Gym. Internet (dataport). No-smoking rooms. Pool. Restaurants (3). Spa. TV (pay movies, DVD).

Zetter Restaurant & Rooms

86-88 Clerkenwell Road, EC1M 5RJ (7324 4444/fax 7324 4445/www.thezetter.com). Farringdon tube/rail.

Rates £153-£211 double; £282-£305 suites. **Credit** AmEx, MC, V. **Map** p 402 O4.

It was only a matter of time before trendy Clerkenwell got a hip hotel. And the Zetter pushes all the right buttons: its snazzy Italian restaurant is buzzing; the lobby is decked out in a chic retro style; the popular Match Bar is just across the road. In true Clerkenwell style, the hotel is housed in a converted warehouse, complete with a dazzling atrium. The bedrooms, done up in creams and greys, are small but stylish. Their ecological credentials are impeccable: if you open a window, the air-con goes off; water comes from the hotel's own well. Instead of minibars, posh vending machines in the corridors dispense gin and tonics, champagne and cappuccinos. The rooftop suites have fantastic wooden decks (and, of course, the best views in the house). Not quite the Sanderson, then, but almost as easy on the eye – and much easier on the wallet.

Claridge's

55 Brook Street, W1A 2JQ (7629 8860/fax 7950 5481/www.claridges.co.uk). Bond Street tube. **Rates** £234-£406 single; £246-£450 double; £375-£4,524 suite. **Credit** AmEx, DC, MC, V. **Map** p400 H6.

'When I die,' Spencer Tracy once said, 'I don't want to go to heaven; I want to go to Claridge's.' Perhaps he was an art deco fan: the hotel's 1930s interior is so convincing you could skip the Victoria & Albert museum. The rooms are subtle and classy: soft mauves, olive greens and dainty antiques, with the odd flamboyant twist. The rooftop gym is almost too beautiful to get sweaty in – and the spa is so classy you expect to bump into Audrey Hepburn (this was her favourite hotel). In the swish bar, customers get through an average of 90 bottles of champagne per night. Then there's Gordon Ramsay's famous restaurant (see p206). Despite the chef's recent foray into reality TV, it's lost no cachet: there's still a three-month queue to get a table.

Hotel services Bar. Business services. Concierge. Gym. Internet (dataport, high-speed). No-smoking rooms. Restaurants (2). Room service. Spa. TV (pay movies).

Miller's Residence

111A Westbourne Grove, Notting Hill, W2 4UW (7243 1024/fax 7243 1064/www.millersuk.com). Notting Hill Gate or Westbourne Park tube. **Rates** £176-£217 double; £270 suite. **Credit** AmEx, MC, V. **Map** p394 B6.

Nobody's heard of Miller's Residence. And we're almost sorry to spill the beans. But the truth is, this discreet little B&B is possibly London's most romantic hotel. The unmarked red door off Westbourne Grove doesn't look promising. But the interior is a glittering Aladdin's Cave: the rooms are dripping in gilt, chandeliers and ornate mirrors; the 18th-century furniture is straight out of a period drama; and the shiny candelabra, baubles and gewgaws add a bit of sparkle. Despite the antique treasures, it's not stuffy: there's a casual, bohemian feel, with well-worn, comfy sofas, old Persian rugs and relaxed staff. In the salon, help yourself to whisky and curl up by the massive oak fireplace. Ordinary name, extraordinary place.

Hotel services Internet (dataport). TV.