

Join the club

Executive floors and lounges aren't just for business travellers, finds Aby Dunsby

@AbraDunsby

Step into some of the world's most impressive executive floors and club lounges, and it's no longer just about laptops and lengthy business meetings.

Though hotel club lounges were traditionally created with the business traveller in mind, they now offer plenty of perks for the luxury-seeking leisure traveller too: think world-class food, cocktails on tap, spa facilities and even dedicated children's areas.

"Access to a hotel's executive floor or club lounge instantly adds a little something special to a stay," says Ross Sinclair, product manager at Travel 2. "If you are

celebrating a special event or are on honeymoon, then adding access is a must. The personal touches and feeling of exclusivity afforded by the concierges catering to your every whim is often the icing on the cake."

Those who like a big resort's facilities but find less pleasure in the clamour of the hotel lobby will find the exec area a haven of tranquility, where they can sip a cocktail as they're checked in by lounge staff, or head to a club room complete with extras such as fluffy dressing gowns, pillow menus and private hot tubs.

We take a look at the exec areas and club lounges offering

a level of service that is really worth paying that bit extra for.

▶ FAMILY FUN

A hotel club lounge used to be the last place where kids would want to hang out, or even be allowed in for that matter, but no longer. There are now plenty of child-friendly lounges that welcome families staying in premium clubrooms or suites within a hotel or resort.

Jumeirah hotels are a prime example, boasting club lounges that are open to children. At Jumeirah Beach Hotel in Dubai, the Premium Leisure Club facilities include a children's

computer room, while families also have quick-and-easy complimentary access to Wild Wadi Waterpark and Sinbad's Kids Club (for those aged two to 12) through a dedicated entrance just beside the Club. Other benefits include exclusive access to the executive pool and beach.

Madinat Jumeirah's Premium Leisure Club is just as family-oriented, kitted out with a purpose-built playroom and computer room for kids, while at the lavish Jumeirah Emirates Towers, children are welcome in the Club Lounge until midday.

At Atlantis the Palm, Imperial Club guests with families

➔ benefit from complimentary daily access to the kids' club (for children between three and nine; open 10am-6pm) and Club Rush (for teens aged between 13 and 17; open 2pm-6pm). Rooms with access to the Imperial Club start from £273 per night.

At family favourite Club Med, several 4T-rated resorts incorporate a '5-Trident' luxury space, where clients paying for the most expensive rooms are granted access to upscale customer services without missing out on the friendly Club Med vibe. So as well as access to all the usual activities, kids' clubs and services, they'll get extras such as a dedicated contact to book babysitting, plus at Club Med Val d'Isère, 5T guests have their own private terrace with hot tub.

▶ FEAST ON THIS

Hankering after a hefty breakfast? Craving a cocktail? Clients with a love of food and drink will get even better value from their VIP lounges, which often boast an extensive offering stretching from breakfast right through to post-dinner tipples and canapes.

Guests are invited to graze throughout the day at opulent Vietnam hotel The Reverie Saigon, which serves a complimentary breakfast followed by afternoon tea, evening cocktails and canapes, snacks and all-day refreshments. Lounge access



VIP lounges often boast a food offering that stretches from breakfast through to post-dinner tipples and canapes

is available to those in junior suites or above, which start at £553 per night.

The selection in the club lounge at American landmark hotel the Sheraton New York Times Square is equally belt-stretching: the lounge is open 24 hours a day and food is served non-stop, with daily continental breakfast accompanied by all-day snacks and drinks, evening hors d'oeuvres - and mugs of Starbucks coffee. Club rooms start from \$329 a night.

Food is also the focus in the newly renovated Prestige Executive Lounge at Park Bosphorus Hotel Istanbul, which serves up breakfast, snacks, and alcoholic and booze-free drinks all day long. Executive suites start at £180 per night and include access to the lounge.

Nearby at the Skyline Club Lounge in the Mövenpick Hotel Istanbul, round-the-clock refreshments are accompanied by an exclusive cocktail hour, where clients have a chance to



ABOVE: Club Med Val d'Isère

socialise with other Club Lounge guests (room rates start from €84 per night).

All-inclusive stalwart Sandals provides a suitably swish option for club-level holidaymakers. Club Sandals guests are granted 24-hour access to Club Sandals Lounges, where there are plenty of tempting treats to tuck into, including snacks and pastries, fruit, sandwiches and wraps, and a choice of alcoholic beverages. Club-level guests also receive complimentary all-day room service.

Those extras don't have to stop at the hotel lobby, however. All-inclusive ➔



Funway Holidays offers a week in a Preferred Club garden view room at AMResorts' five-star Dreams La Romana Resort & Spa in Dominican Republic, from £1,179 including British Airways flights from Gatwick, departing September 8. funwayagents.co.uk

Travel2 offers seven nights at Sandals Barbados in a Beachfront Club Level Suite on an all-inclusive basis, including Gatwick flights and transfers, from £2,479. Valid September 1 to October 22. travel2.com



LEFT: Junior Suite, The Reverie Saigon



BELOW: Club executive lounge, Jumeirah Emirates Towers

Sandals
 MORE QUALITY INCLUSIONS THAN
 ANY OTHER RESORTS ON THE PLANET

WE OFFER MORE
 GOURMET DISCOVERY DINING &
 PREMIUM BRAND DRINKS

When staying at Sandals your clients have the opportunity to discover and experience new and diverse cuisines every day. With up to 16 restaurants per resort, dining is sure to be one of the most impressive highlights of their luxury all-inclusive holiday.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
 THE WORLD'S LEADING ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS

Call Agency Sales 020 7590 0210
 Email agencysales@sandals.co.uk
 Visit sellingsandals.co.uk



HOTELS, RESORTS & SPAS CLUB LOUNGES DESTINATIONS



LEFT:
 Mövenpick
 Hotel Istanbul

RIGHT:
 The Residence,
 JA Palm Tree
 Court



→ packages at the high-end Royal Jasmine Suite or The Residence at JA Palm Tree Court, part of Jebel Ali Golf Resort, include a dinner cruise on *Bateaux Dubai*, and a complimentary dinner in the resort's VIP restaurant, Signatures. A Royal Jasmine Junior Suite starts from £540 per room including breakfast, lunch and dinner, but excluding service charge and taxes.

▶ **ADDED EXTRAS**
 The 'hotel within a hotel' concept an exec lounge or area embodies is ideal for those looking to enhance their luxury experience as much as possible, and an

“
A hotel exec lounge is often at the top of the building, so breathtaking views come as standard

upgraded room usually means plenty of high-end add-ons, too.

At AMResorts properties, anyone with a penchant for luxury can upgrade to the Preferred Club (found at Secrets, Dreams and Now Resorts & Spas), the Xhale Club (at Breathless Resorts & Spas) or Sun Club (at

Sunscape Resorts & Spas).
 “Our Preferred Club benefits offer fantastic value for money,” says Sarah Spooner, business development manager at AMResorts Collection. “With access to private lounges, guests benefit from private check-in and check-out services. Preferred Club guests will also receive lots of added extras, including à la carte breakfast, rooms in premium locations, private beach areas, Preferred Club pools and more.”
 The most impressive Preferred Club options are at Secrets The Vine Cancun, where upgraded guests have their own floor and access to a private concierge; and at Dreams Riviera Cancun Resort & Spa, where club guests receive a day's complimentary access to the

hydrotherapy spa circuit.
 Free spa facilities are also an added extra for upgraded guests at Sheraton Porto Hotel and Spa, where those staying in club rooms get 24-hour access to the Sheraton Fitness gym and benefit from unparalleled views of Porto from the lounge. Standard club room rates start from €200.
 A hotel exec lounge is often found at the top of the building, alongside the plush suites and penthouses, so breathtaking views come as standard. A prime example is waiting for clients who choose the Hotel Arts Barcelona, where the lounge's double-height windows look out across the Mediterranean and the Port Olympic. Rooms start from €465 per night for a deluxe sea view room.



Sandals