

DESTINATIONS

THE US | NEW YORK



FROM FAR LEFT:
Hard Rock Hotel
New York's RT60
rooftop bar,
atrium, guest room
and NYY Steak
restaurant

PICTURES: Chris Sanders



Hard Rock Hotel New York

Tried & Tested

THE FACTS: Bathed in the glow of Times Square's larger-than-life digital billboards, Hard Rock Hotel New York is right in the thick of it, on the street formerly known as Music Row. This stretch of West 48th Street was once packed with stores selling instruments catering to the city's thriving community of musicians, and the hotel pays homage to this. The property opened in April 2022 and is packed with a wealth of music memorabilia, such as Joey Ramone's leather jacket, Zakk Wylde's famous black-and-white "bullseye" guitar, a black-and-gold bustier Madonna once owned and various clothes worn by Cher, John Lennon, Jay-Z and Beyoncé.

BOOK IT: Rooms from \$449 per night. Virgin Atlantic flies direct between Heathrow and New York JFK, with return fares from £348, based on a seven-night stay with a March 6 departure. hardrockhotels.com/new-york virginatlantic.com

ACCOMMODATION: The hotel's 446 rooms range from King Rooms to Platinum Suites, all with floor-to-ceiling windows. Mine looks over Times Square, and features glam decor, with a midnight blue, wood and gold colour scheme. The bathrooms feature rockstar-worthy marble and gold fittings and tiling – even held in place with glittery grouting. Music features heavily, with a small guitar embroidered into the crisp white sheets, plus a giant, guitar-playing, aviator-wearing Bruce Springsteen etched into the glass of the sliding screen door between the bedroom and bathroom. Wi-Fi is included, while the rooms have USB charging points and Lavazza coffee machines.

ACTIVITIES: For guests who want to linger in their rooms, the hotel can deliver a Fender guitar, plus amp and headphones, or a Crosley record player (though be sure to put your request in a little ahead of time as this is a popular service). There's a fitness centre, or guests can have a yoga mat delivered to their room – with Rock Om yoga videos available through the TV. A changing roster of buskers and musicians perform in the Sessions Restaurant & Bar – on our visit, typewriter poet Alexis Manzano AKA Apple Tree Poetry was in attendance, and wrote us an homage to New York City on an apple-shaped card.

RESTAURANTS & BARS: Sessions is also where to come for breakfast (though there's a full room service menu served in the mornings too, from healthy breakfast bowls to eggs all kinds of ways). The dramatic three-storey-high atrium also serves lunch (our grilled black bass with blood orange, barley and dukkah was healthy yet satisfying, while the menu features steaks and sandwiches too), and morphs into a bar in the evenings. Below at street level is NYY Steak, which serves a fantastic selection of sustainably sourced steaks – our kobe striploin cut just melted at the first bite, and crème fraiche and caviar added a fancy twist on waffle tots. In the basement is 400-capacity live music spot The Venue – complete with original CBGBs door and awning encased in glass – while rooftop bar RT60 has a slick wood, gold and forest green decor and terrace space on either side, surrounded by skyscrapers. **TW**

REVIEWED by Clare Vooght