

ROOM KEYS

Summertime in the city

The Evelyn Hotel

7 E. 27th St., New York, NY
theevelyn.com

Scaffolding obscures the whimsical facade of the newly rechristened Evelyn Hotel in Manhattan's NoMad neighbourhood. The hotel, until last year known as the Gershwin, is in the midst of an ambitious renovation. So far, \$30 million has been poured into overhauling the property's 160 rooms, but the transformation is not complete, making this year a good time to grab a deal on what will become a much pricier stay by the time the finishing touches are in place.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The cultural centre of the city a century ago, the area north of Madison Square Park is now known as NoMad, and it's in the midst of a revitalization, including the addition of businesses like Mario Batali's popular fine-food court, Eat-aly. At E. 27th and Madison, the Evelyn is a few blocks from

the Flatiron building, Empire State building — and two doors down from the Museum of Sex, for those so inclined. Madison Square Park is vibrant and welcoming with its changing displays of public art. The hotel is central and convenient to anywhere else you want to go, via 28th and 23rd St. stations, with access to N, R 4 and 6 trains.

THE VIBE

The Evelyn has the feeling of a place in transition, with the freshly renovated rooms contrasting moodier common areas. The expansive lobby space, once a bar, is set for transformation into a restaurant. Now it feels something like the backstage of a theatre, with a whimsical and eclectic mix of leather and tufted velvet furniture grouped together at the back of the dimly lit room. Elevators are old and slow, but have a historic charm, although they too are slated for an upgrade.

THE ROOMS

The Evelyn was named for Evelyn Nesbit, a chorus girl in the early 20th century remembered as the world's first supermodel, and her photo hangs on the wall of every room, along with a mix of historic images. The hotel has something of a musical theme with a sheet music on the bathroom tiles, fun trombone-inspired chandeliers and a gramophone

for plugging in your iPod. My executive suite, which features a separate living room area with a retro tufted leather couch, has a walk-in shower and jacuzzi tub. Rooms have been painted a soothing shade of grey, with fresh Frette linens on the beds (king, queen or double depending on room type). Modern touches like USB ports on the bedside electrical outlets, and Lutron lighting are welcome luxuries.

THE REST

The hotel is part of the Triumph Hotel Group, which runs seven historic properties around the city, and offers free walking tours with local operator Streetwise New York. (The day I toured NoMad, there was a couple staying at another Triumph hotel who were on their third tour, they liked them so well.) There's no food and beverage option at the Evelyn at the moment, but there's a coffee shop next door, and it's New York, so options are abundant. The hotel also offers free wifi, as well as valet parking and use of a nearby fitness centre.

Rates start at US\$239 per night, with promotional packages available.

Jessica Leigh Johnston,
Weekend Post

Stay provided by the Evelyn.