



PULLMAN WUXI NEW LAKE

Pullman Perfection

True hospitality is a magic of sorts. It is experienced in those rare moments when quality of service, elegance of product and a pleasing puff of crisp freshness create a sparkle that only true world-class hotels can. GLENN ROGERS visits the PULLMAN WUXI NEW LAKE to experience it first hand.



“I guess it comes down to how one can inspire people. Having a grand hotel means nothing unless you can provide a level of service that rivals the best.” -- Humayoon Shaikhzadeh, General Manager, Pullman Wuxi New Lake.



World-class quality hospitality is a living reality in Wuxi, an old city in southern Jiangsu province, People's Republic of China. Split in half by Lake Tai, Wuxi borders Changzhou to the west and Suzhou to the east.

A less-than 45 minute pleasurable train ride from Shanghai, Wuxi is growing in importance as a tech-centre of sorts, which explains the growth of industry in that once-forgotten city that today is a promising investor's paradise.

This is my first visit to Wuxi. In my capacity as Asia's Mr. Hospitality, it falls to me to review this relatively-new hotel and place before our more than 1.2 million-strong readership, my discoveries.

As my train pulls up at Wuxi station, I keep all expectations at bay, save the hope that the hotel isn't too far, the check-in is brisk and I can get in a short nap before work begins.

View to A Skill

The hotel's car awaits. I am soon relieved of my bags to sink into its plush comfort and enjoy the ride. Spacious, the city begins to feel like a sort of 'getaway' but then again, I live in Hong Kong so any city with room enough to do the twist, feels wide.

The air seems noticeably cleaner and just as the sun sails out of the clouds to shine on the entrance of the hotel, my limousine pulls up. A smiling doorman reaches for the door. Hereon starts my



latest adventure.

Truth be told, a lobby does its part when it comes to first impressions. This one's spacious, sparkling, well lit, grand and in general – uplifting.

Check-in is swift as I am in a club floor. I am checked in, in the comfort of my suite. My corner suite affords expansive views of the city and I begin doing my usual quality checks soon after my bags arrive and I am alone.

It's hard to say how they've achieved this but the appointment of suite suggests it would appeal to business and leisure travellers alike.

Sparklingly clean, the restroom's amenities offer that resort feel while the

a rich rest until all that must be heard from my suite is a sound of a very tired traveler lost in the rapture of slumber.

For All Reasons

I awake in time for my hotel tour. This is the part where I (try to) notice everything, including the width of the corridors that matter to claustrophobes like me as well as the presence or absence of cigarette smoke wafting up from the corridor's carpets.

None, here, I'm pleased to discover as my first stop is the Executive Club. It's what most guests need to unwind, meet privately, enjoy a glass of wine while surfing the Net, pretending to work, or

vention & Exhibition (M.I.C.E) services, the hotel has a wide(r) choice of venues to suit most needs and a visit to <http://www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-7545-pullman-wuxi-new-lake/meeting.shtml> unravels the possibilities, particularly with the page's convenient "toolbox".

For Twylit Hours

Business aside, the hotel offers La Cuisine – an all day dining restaurant featuring an open kitchen and cuisine to tantalize most. The breakfast buffet is served here too and it is a marvelous feat in its own right.

Catering to the most discerning guests, it gets the little things right in terms of both product and presentation.

From the elegant glasses caressing top quality yoghurt, unsweetened cranberries and an array of condiments from those preferring a local flavor, to the exquisite tableware, every spot is a photo-opportunity.

Happy staff bearing fresh hot drinks help light up the morning.

The hotel's Le Chinois Chinese Restaurant and The Banzai, both signature restaurants are well regarded by regular guests for their fresh, authentic and innovative fare. Menus of both restaurants appear modestly priced which is yet another reason for their growing popularity.

Just the sun sets, I step into the hotel's famed Aqua Lounge to take in just the feel of the bar. Creatively lit, it has private recesses for those confidential chats and for those preferring the elegance of

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rest of the suite's elegant appointment makes a statement of its own.

Wi-fi connection up and running, I check mail, browse a bit and dart off into the shower to wash away my tiredness. I do sing in the shower but that's just to test the acoustics and absolutely nothing to do with my imagination. It shows though just how quickly, this suite has become home to me.

All dried and patted down, I grab the laptop and make for the soft, comfy bed. Nothing gets done on the information superhighway. The soft pillows, the comfortable mattress draw me deep into

just...be.

Moving on to the rooms, we view the Executive, Deluxe, Superior rooms and the Superior Suite, each in a class of its own – all immaculate, doubtlessly thanks to a well trained housekeeping force that's surely this hotel's better asset.

We move on to the impressive Emerald Grand Ballroom – the venue of choice for most self-respecting companies looking for that all-on-one service package where the hotel does it all including the audio-visual, f&b, pre-and-post event arrangements etc.

Offering Meeting, Inventive, Con-

the warmly lit bar, it has the ambience of ethnic chick and creative lighting that strikes the right chord. It's a place to unwind and lose yourself for a bit.

My Down Time

Tours wear me down as there is so much to note and remember and such a little time to do it in. I need a little private time to go away and compose. In time, I discover the gym. Well appointed, it hosts all that you need for a complete and total workout. I enjoy a few relaxing moments and make for the pool that's luckily mine for the time being. I float. I think. I be.

The hotel has a well-appointed spa too and ordinarily, I'd have requested a massage but there is more to do.

All fresh and rejuvenated now, I decide to go harass the staff. It's always good to see just how much staff actually

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him all the arrangements while I meet with the General Manager who I must credit with bringing out the best in the staff and for putting together this hospitality triumph that is by most yardsticks, no mean feat.

We settle for a coffee at the coffee shop near the lounge to learn just what it takes to get this fabulous hotel running with the precision of a Swiss watch.

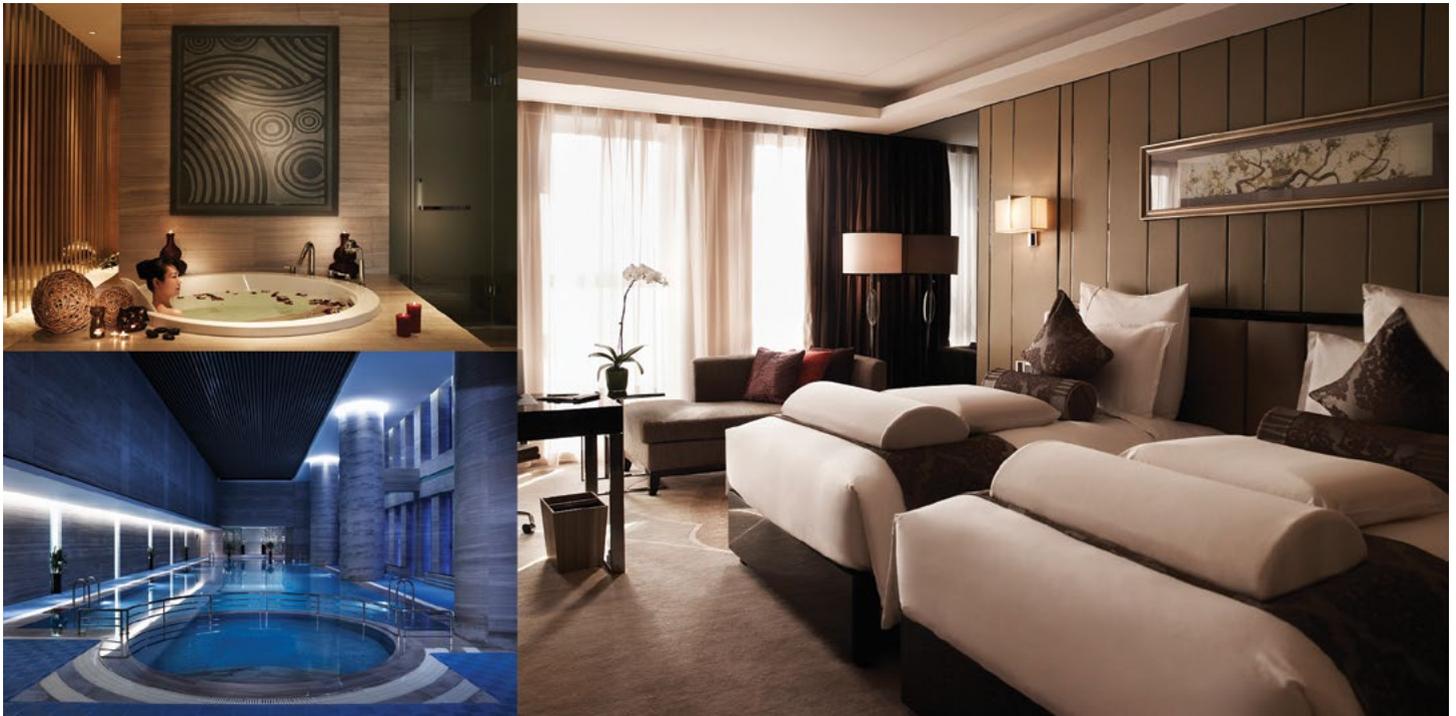
“I guess it comes down to how one can inspire people,” says Humayoon Shaikhzadeh. “Having a grand hotel means nothing unless you can provide a

than 10 minutes!

Does this General Manager really expect me to find fault with his product or people? I kept thinking about this as my train pulled out of Wuxi station and a text message came in from the hotel's Front Office Manager asking if I had boarded safely, reminding me that the awaiting driver has my photograph and would meet me at the main gate at Shanghai station.

“Any problem, please call me,” ended the message.

My flight took off on time and en



know of their hotel, how conversant they are in English and how friendly. Pleasantly, the concierge, front office, event the waiting staff have a good working knowledge of the English language, appear to have a sense of ownership of the hotel and a modest pride in going the extra mile to make that subtle difference to a guest's stay.

Too Much, Too Soon

All too soon, my short stay comes to a close and needlessly I fret over my departure from Pudong Airport which is a long way from where I am. The Front Office Manager invites me to leave to

level of service that rivals the best. Here at the Pullman Wuxi New Lake, we take pride in continuous improvement, which is why guest's feedback is all-important. You've seen, lived and reviewed more hotels than any GM possibly could. Your criticism would be invaluable to us. Where could we improve?"

What could I say?

Concierge shows up, just then, to announce that my flight's been reconfirmed, the train ticket (Wuxi-Shanghai) has been booked, a car's waiting to take me to Wuxi station, a car is standing by in Shanghai to take me to Pudong Airport in time for my flight. All done in less

route to Hong Kong, I kept reliving my moments at the Pullman Wuxi New Lake hotel, regretting only that...they had been too few. ■

For additional information please contact the hotel directly via visit <http://www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-7545-pullman-wuxi-new-lake/index.shtml>