# The Alan, Manchester



So, where are we?

If you could put down a pin to choose where you wanted to be in Manchester, you’d put it down here, right on Princess Street. Five minutes’ walk from gay Canal Street and with everything from Harvey Nichols through the Manchester Art Gallery, Albert Square and the hip Northern Quarter all within ten minutes. You can even walk from Piccadilly Station, where you come in from London or wherever.

And where we’re staying...?

The Alan, a brand-new hip hotel that has been designed not only with sustainability in mind – everything from the ‘marble’ floor to the lighting to the furniture has been reclaimed, reused, repurposed – but to take Manchester hotels to a whole new level of hip, from the huge entrance that opens out to restaurants on both sides to the deconstructed rooms with views.

What’s the style?

Cool and contemporary. Check-in is conducted on the hoof – you just perch somewhere while they iPad you in – while menus and ‘what’s on’s are projected onto the walls. The Atrium space – bright, airy, big - brings in light from six floors up while the eating/co-working spaces to each side have little booths hung with lights, avant-garde music and a well-stocked bar for locally-roasted coffee, craft brews and cocktails, which they do very well, by the way.

And the rooms?

Bearing in mind this was formerly a very ‘whatever’ hotel, you really would never dream it hadn’t always been on the cutting edge of cool. Bare pink plaster contrasts with minty green on the totally deconstructed ceiling, where you can see every pipe and part of the air-conditioning unit, while the furniture is velvety and blobby-modern. If you’re at the front, you’re looking onto the beautiful Manchester Art Gallery through warehouse-style windows hung with drapes while floors are bare floorboards strewn with rugs and bathrooms served by reclaimed mirrors and Haeckels products. You feel like you’re in a music video, basically.

Is there a story?

The fact that it’s independently owned by someone who actually wants to make a difference to the way people spend their time at hotels is the main story (the name is actually his middle name). And the fact that it slots so perfectly into this diverse part of town – between Chinatown and the Town Hall – and attracts the locals speaks volumes.

And to eat?

As you might expect, everything is locally- and ethically-sourced and goes from delicious hip breakfasts (avocado on toast with foraged garlic to full English) through lunches of mac‘n’cheese, salt beef sandwiches or vegan baba ganoush to dinners that span the globe with lamb fat cabbage (highly recommended by the staff) through cauliflower tikka to Cheshire beef tartare, while the menu actually has a section called The Butcher’s Quarter for unrepentant carnivores.

So, to sum up...

It’s no small feat to throw something entirely new into the mix of a city as forward-looking as Manchester but the team at The Alan are clearly up for a challenge. The fact that they’ve pulled it off so brilliantly – and manage to be outstandingly fun and friendly even in a town known for its fun and friendliness – deserves a high five at the very least. Maybe a high six.

thealanhotel.com