

Quite simply, it's deVigne

If you loved the Eighties, you'll love The Mandeville ... it should wear shoulder pads

BY NICK CURTIS

TO STEP into The Mandeville Hotel in Marylebone is to step back in time. Not to the genteel 1870s when it was built, but to the New Romantic 1980s. Since its makeover by designer Stephen Ryan last year, every surface in the privately owned Mandeville seems to have been mirrored or marbled or coated in studded white leather and purple suede.

The deVigne bar features a series of identical Tudorbethan portraits "customised" with blobs of chewing gum and framed in what looks like hardened KY Jelly. In the deVille restaurant, a brace of giant black mannequins in carnival masks looks ready for a Visage video. Ryan says he is "attracted to the geometry of classically-inspired furniture", but I think he's more inspired by Leigh Bowery and Joan Collins. If the 142-room hotel were symmetrical, rather than on a corner plot, I believe he'd have given it shoulder pads.

As teenagers of the Eighties, me and the wife rather liked it. Clearly, so too did the much younger guests at breakfast, and the decidedly mixed crowd

HOTEL REVIEW

who packed the bar on Friday night. "Appaaarently," confided our waiter at lunch on Saturday, "Stephen Ryan is doing Michael Douglas's house too." Really? Catherine Zeta-Jones must have been a Blitz kid in her youth.

Anyway, The Mandeville is a hotel that does exactly what it says on the packet. It gives you luxurious rooms and polite service, offers you food and drink, but otherwise leaves you alone. There's no gym, no spa, no cinema.

Lying slap-bang between Selfridges and Marylebone High Street, the hotel's selling point is its location. The Mandeville serves best as a quiet, covert HQ from which to plan shopping sorties.

We arrived early on Friday evening. Upstairs, our deluxe room was cool and still, but downstairs the deVigne bar was in full swing. Despite the garish decor it's a rather lovely, spacious and welcoming room. The Citron martinis were good and generously sized, especially at the reasonable (for a four-



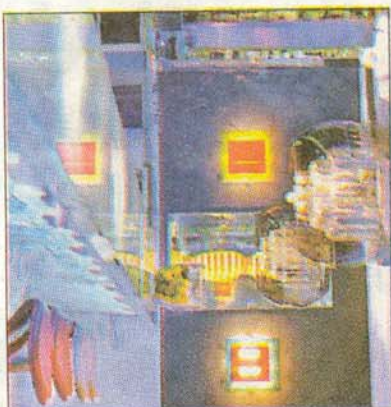
Looking good: the spire of the Hinde Street Church dominates the penthouse view

star hotel) of £8.50. At the table next to us, a birthday party was in full, glass-smashing swing. However, we could feel a quiet night with the TV calling us, so we ordered a couple of sandwiches from room service which were entirely sufficient to our needs.

A £15 bottle of Fumees Blancs Sauvignon Blanc meant we slept remarkably well, not a sound nor a

peep of light made it through the heavy curtains.

Suitably refreshed, it was off to Oxford Street and the boutique joys of Marylebone. I loathe shopping in general and Oxford Street in particular, but knowing we had a nearby base gave us a sense of mission. Debenhams, Selfridges and Daunt Books all fell like ninespins in 90 minutes.



Light fantastic: the welcoming bar

Back at the deserted restaurant, my wife's succulent, perfectly blue beef fillet was the stand-out dish of its inoffensive set-lunch menu.

It's a shame shoppers haven't adopted it as West End workers seem to have adopted the bar. I liked The Mandeville a lot. Ah well. It's probably only a matter of time before the 1980s become fashionable again.

The Mandeville Hotel
Mandeville Place, W1
020 7935 5599, www.mandeville.co.uk

Room to book: the Penthouse, with its own entrance, staircase and terrace overlooking Marylebone rooftops and the spire of Hinde Street Church.
Hoorary: bargain cocktails and a quiet place to lie your head after drinking them.
Boo: not much choice in the restaurant, breakfast costs extra.

Thing to steal: flat-screen TVs small enough to fit into a suitcase.

Rates: from £275 for a petite double to £550 for the Penthouse (Continental breakfast buffet £15 per person, English breakfast £20, champagne breakfast £27.50). Set lunch in the deVille restaurant £15 (two courses) or £19 (three courses). Set dinner £18 (two courses) or £23 (three courses).