

The cool hotel guide

Brindleys, Bath

Brindleys, set in a distinguished Victorian stone house in a quiet residential street just east of Bath's North Parade Bridge, is something of a family affair. It's financed by Michael Jones, who works in investment management in London and who lives with his wife Sarah — a francophile who decorated the hotel in a "modern French" style — about 800 yards away. "I love the neighbourhood and we had always dreamed of doing something like this," says Michael.

James Grundy, who once worked at the upmarket Stoke Park Hotel in Buckinghamshire, is the manager (and is also the nephew of Michael and Sarah). Anel, his South African wife, serves breakfast and has painted many of the bright pictures in the rooms.

We learn all this fairly quickly as James, a friendly chap, is quite a chatterbox. He



takes us up to Room Three on the first floor, one of six rooms, each slightly differently decorated. Ours is yellow and pale grey; its grand bed with a curving whitewashed headboard would not look out of place in a French chateau. Above hangs a crystal chandelier and the furniture, including bed-tables and a cabinet of drawers, is French antique style.

It is very elegant — quite a boudoir — and there is a neat bathroom with REN

products and his and her sinks. There is plenty of space to spread out, though there is only a shower (no bath in Bath). Nice touches include mini-KitKats next to the kettle, a white rose in a vase, and a bowl of Murray Mints.

The main drawback is that the bedroom seems small and a bit too cluttered. And this is one of the biggest rooms in the self-styled "boutique B&B".

Brindleys, which is named after the

The bedrooms at Brindleys have French antique-style furniture

house, fits in with what is becoming a nationwide trend for posh little B&Bs — helping slowly to improve the British B&B reputation (which, in my experience of old-fashioned establishments, is usually dire). It feels almost as though a new category of "little smart hotel with breakfast" is evolving.

A walk to Bath Abbey takes about five minutes. The centre of town bustles with tourists, but we return to the peace and quiet of Brindleys, on the edge of Widcombe, a picturesque suburb. Later we walk along an isolated stretch of the Kennet and Avon Canal to eat dinner at the Ring O Bells pub. After a blow-out tapas meal of squid with chilli jam and spicy meatballs, and listening to live jazz with locals (no tourists), we return to sleep well and eat a fine English breakfast. There is nothing French about it at all — except the croissants on the side.

Tom Chesshyre

Need to know

Brindleys (01225 310444, brindleysbath.co.uk), 14 Pulteney Gardens, Bath BA2 4HG. B&B doubles from £110. **Room** 8 out of 10 **Service** 9 **Food** 8 **Value** 7.5 **Cool factor** 8 **Score** 8.1

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