

WE CHECK OUT WORLD'S BEST B&B IN TORQUAY



BLOOMING NICE
...orange colour
Oddicombe
Room



WILD THING
...zebra
head in
Torre Suite

GRAND
The 25

FAULTLESS TOWERS

BASIL DAZZLE
...top hosts Andy,
left, and Julian.
Inset, cast of
Fawlty Towers



SO much for Fawlty Towers – Torquay is now home to the world's best B&B.

Famous for John Cleese's sitcom about a failing hotel, the Devon seaside town now hosts a family-run boutique bolthole that would blow Basil Fawlty's mind.

Crowned Best B&B by TripAdvisor for the second year running, The 25 boasts a perfect run of 764 five-star reviews on the site and is as far from Fawlty Towers farce as a B&B can get.

We checked in to check it out...

WHAT'S IT LIKE? Run by Andy and Julian Banner-Price, The 25 is one of at least a dozen Victorian B&Bs along Avenue Road, leading to Torre Abbey Sands beach.

Set away from the pavement, with parking for guests out front, the three-storey house has a luxury vibe from the moment you arrive, starting with a welcome drink and a slice of homemade cake in the drawing room. Decorated in a Victorian style that Andy explains is a nod

to the couple's first hotel venture – a country house in Wales – it is a place to relax in the evening or meet other guests. Covid security is taken seriously, with guests asked to mask up in corridors and have a temperature check at check-in.

ROOMS ANY GOOD? Immaculate. They are finished with painstaking attention to detail, which extends to his perfectly symmetrical tiling around the bathroom sink.

Before opening in March 2015, Andy and Julian modernised the electrics, plumbing and internet, so plug sockets are in the right places, the showers are high-pressure and the wifi is blazing fast.

Impulse buy

There's a Nespresso machine, free mini-bar, mood lighting, hairdryer and straighteners, a dressing table, seating area, Elemis smellies, a no-mist heated bathroom mirror – and homemade cakes delivered daily.

Andy says his "funky" boutique decor – think glitter wallpaper and diamanté upholstered headboards – started with an impulse buy of a zebra head for the Torre Suite bedroom, which pushed him off course from plans to match the drawing room's traditional look.

You do not have to want your own lounge wallpapered with a giant orange flower, as in the Oddicombe Room, to enjoy Andy's flashy style for a weekend.

The interiors extend to custom-painted mannequins, including the Shoalstone Suite's very own Andrew Sachs tribute – Manuel The Man Lamp, a headless dummy-cum-floor

lamp. Julian, a former IT manager and all-round tech whizz, ensured the internet zings and decked out rooms like an Apple Store – with iPads, Netflix, mood lighting, TV in the shower, and Alexa voice commands to control it all.

EAT HERE OR GRAB A PIZZA? Breakfast was flawless, with a buffet (now a-la-carte due to Covid) of homemade yoghurt, smoothies, fruit bowls and a pastry selection. Along with a full English, they offer kippers, scrambled egg and smoked salmon, or a sausage or bacon muffin. My wife adored the cheese-loaded "Banner-Price beans on toast" while the hollandaise sauce on my eggs Benedict was perfect.

Trendy Westup Torquay, overlooking the harbour, is perfect for a coffee or light lunch, while we ate Brixham scallops and St Austell Bay mussels at On The Rocks restaurant and bar.

WHAT ELSE? The B&B is a short stroll from Torre Abbey, the beach and lively harbour beyond.

SO YOU'D GO BACK: Visit The 25 and you won't have a bad stay. The food will be flawless, rooms spotless and service efficient. Best of all, you will leave The World's Best B&B feeling just a bit spoilt.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE? One night's B&B is from £64.50pp based on two sharing. Open Friday and Saturday nights until end of November. Re-opening on January 29. Book direct at the25.uk to enjoy free mini-bar.

JACOB LEWIS