



VIRGIN HOTELS MAKES ITS DEBUT IN CHICAGO

World's first Virgin hotel rolls out the red carpet for guests

NEW YORK (January 15, 2015) — Today marks a milestone in the history of the Virgin brand with Virgin Hotels opening the doors to its first property, Virgin Hotels Chicago. The new hotel brand will join a stellar portfolio of hospitality companies led by Virgin Group and its founder Sir Richard Branson, and offer the same excitement, heartfelt service and smart innovation that Virgin is known for.

"It's been a long held dream to start beautiful, comfortable, fun hotels for guests and give them what they want and need while being gentle on their wallets," said Richard Branson, Virgin Group Founder. "I'm tremendously proud of the brilliant Virgin Hotels team, and I look forward to hosting our fans and spending more time in Chicago."

Since the brand's inception, eliminating fees and surcharges have been top priority, along with creating an experience that allows guests to feel that Virgin Hotels is their place in the city. A champion of the customer, the hotel brand offers free Wi-Fi (at unlimited bandwidth) and has eliminated early check-in fees, late check-out fees, room service delivery charges, business center transactions, and other services that have caused frustration for travelers.

"Chicago is an exhilarating and historic city, and a place we're happy to call home for the first-ever Virgin Hotel," said Raul Leal, CEO of Virgin Hotels. "It's an exciting time for our team as we get to unveil our new approach to room design, service, and entertainment within the hotel industry. We hope our fans recognize the subtle yet authentic Chicago touches throughout the hotel, and come to think of us as their place away from home whether they're traveling or a local."

Virgin Hotels Chicago is located in the heart of Chicago's Loop district in the historic Old Dearborn Bank Building at 203 N. Wabash Ave. The 26-story Art Deco building, a Chicago landmark, offers 250 guest rooms, including 40 one-bedroom suites and two Penthouse Suites.

Several of the building's original features remain intact and are showcased throughout, like a beautiful 1920s oak Cigar Bar that serves as the hotel's front desk, ornate brass elevator doors, and the original mail slot and chute serving all floors.

At the heart of Virgin Hotels Chicago is The Commons Club, a dynamic space where guests can dine, drink, work and mingle, as well as attend the nightly hosted Social Hour. The vibe is one of a private members club, without the fees, where guests and locals alike are welcome. The two-story space it occupies was the original bank floor with its beautiful coffered plaster ceiling.

The Commons Club menu, created by Chef Rick Gresh, features a variety of internationally influenced small plates, from Stuffed Potato Tots to a Cauliflower Caesar to Cider Mussels to a Lobster Flatbread. The dinner menus Large Plate options also embody unique and flavorful compositions, like the Fatty Noodles, a delectable combination of lobster, udon noodles, Sriracha, furi spice and rapini or the Eye of the Ribeye, Chef Gresh's one-of-a-kind black truffle tattoo technique adorned on a Ribeye served with bone marrow mac n cheese. The Commons Club is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The hotel will have four additional dining options, including Miss Ricky's, a 23-hour, All-American diner and a rooftop bar and lounge, all opening between February and April of this year. Seating from 12 to 108, Virgin Hotels Chicago has three modular spaces on the third floor to accompany any type of social event, dinner or meeting.

Virgin Hotels Chicago will feature a two-chamber room layout, with small touches that make traveling for business or leisure an easier experience. All guest rooms are divided into two spaces by sliding doors, complete with a peephole. The dressing room includes a full vanity, make-up desk and mirror, an extra-large shower with a bench, and his and hers closets designed by Poliform. Slide open the privacy door and guests will enter the lounge with a red SMEG mini-fridge, LG Smart TV, custom designed table that swivels and a Poltrona Frau task chair. Tired of searching for an outlet, guests can look no further than their bedside to find ample outlets for their smartphone, computer or other electronic devices.

Virgin Hotels has also taken working from bed to another level. The brand's patent pending, ergonomically designed bed is the ideal space for setting up shop while on a long business trip, or to pop open your computer and stream a movie. Plush bedding rounds out the experience creating ultimate comfort whether guests are working, recharging or playing.

What's next?

Virgin Hotels has plans to open a second location in Nashville in the summer of 2016 and a third property in New York City in the fall of 2017. The team will announce two additional locations by the end of 2016, as well, with the brand hoping to have 20 locations by 2025.

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ABOUT VIRGIN HOTELS:

Virgin Hotels is a lifestyle hospitality brand that combines heartfelt service, straightforward value and a seamless, personalized hotel experience with the track record of innovation and smart disruption that Sir Richard Branson's global Virgin Group has pioneered for over 40 years. Each property will intermix a passion for food and beverage with music and culture, fusing with the local landscape and providing a vibrant and inclusive environment for travelers and locals, alike. Chicago opened in January 2015, with New York, Nashville and others to follow. For more information, please visit www.virginhotels.com.