

Cincinnati Welcomes 21c Museum Hotel

Written by Jaunting

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Cincinnati just welcomed the highly anticipated and forward-thinking [21c Museum Hotel](#) to its bustling downtown. My sister, Jenny, and I were familiar with its sister property in [Louisville](#), Kentucky, which has repeatedly been on the [Condé Nast Traveler Gold List](#) for the past 3 years, so we were eager to explore its offerings; we decided to have a drink there after work.

21c is housed in the original Metropole Hotel building on Walnut Street, across from the Aronoff Center for the Arts. Built as a luxury hotel in 1912, it was converted to low-income housing units in the 1970's, but has now been reborn and restored to its former glory with an artistic twist. We were greeted on the street by a giant chandelier that flickers and breathes, its sighs inviting you to come inside and explore its mysteries. What we first discovered is that 21c is first and foremost a [museum](#), that happens to have a boutique hotel and excellent restaurant, [Metropole](#) attached. The focus of the management is art in all its modern forms; the 8,000+ square feet of art is all by living artists and encourages you to relax and create your own interpretation.

You can grab a drink at the cocktail lounge or traditional bar at Metropole and then traverse the galleries with glass in hand. This is no stuffy gallery, as you are able to be humorous and explore all aspects of art, perhaps even rearrange one of the giant yellow penguins haphazardly placed around the building. We were greeted by one on the elevator, apparently placed on "time out" as it had its nose in the corner, seeming to pay penance for some unknown misbehavior. We particularly enjoyed the surreal photography, light displays and the enclosed courtyard featuring LED tapestries that stretch toward the sky, giant bean bag chairs placed underneath for you to come and cuddle with your sweetie.

Our wonderful host and tour guide, Barbara, was kind enough to show us one of the [corner guest suites](#)

of the hotel, which was designed by

[Deborah Berke](#)

and showcases custom minimalist furniture. The spacious bath displayed modern elements combined with historic local

[Rookwood](#)

tiles, every comfort for the guest in mind. The hotel boasts 156 rooms and provides a perfect center of luxury to explore the downtown Cincinnati entertainment district. Every comfort is in mind, including turndown service and fluffy bathrobes, as well as access to the spa. The hotel also provides a plethora of meetings rooms, most of which double as galleries, and even offers the restored ballroom for receptions up to 350 people. We also met General Manager

[Gerry Link](#)

, a hospitality-industry veteran, who is eager to share 21c with the city of Cincinnati.

After such an impressive and whirlwind tour, Jenny and I headed down to the 90-seat Metropole restaurant. The surroundings are chic and trendy, yet incredibly warm and cozy due to the huge

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open flame -- executive chef [Michael Paley](#) 's idea for creating signature dishes cooked over the crackling, wood-burning hearth. The interesting menu also features house-made charcuterie items, locally sourced meats, breads, vegetables, coffees and teas. Our friendly and knowledgeable bartender helped us select some wines based on our preferences, but the bar really prides itself on its bourbons and ryes, a nod to 21c's Louisville, KY roots.

21c is the perfect new attraction in Cincinnati, as it has it all -- museum, bar, restaurant and a place to lay your head. We're looking forward to our next visit.

Room rates start at \$199/night