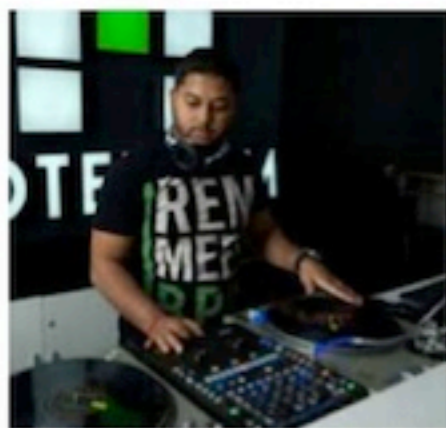


Giving Brooklyn a spin at the Hotel BPM

By Felicity Long

Can a hotel in a gritty, not-quite-there location qualify as a luxury property? If you judge luxury by the deep pockets of its guests, its upscale amenities and its hipper-than-thou vibe it can, at least for a segment of today's well-heeled young traveler.



Hotel BPM Brooklyn founder DJ Bijal.

The Hotel BPM Brooklyn – BPM stands for “beats per minute” – in the borough’s Sunset Park section opened in September and has already made a splash among guests who value the cachet of rubbing shoulders with some of the biggest DJs in the music industry. The property, which was founded by celebrity DJ Bijal, hosts open-bar DJ nights in the Club Level Bar Lounge, fills its guest rooms with XXL and Vibe magazines and its minibar with Blackwater, Real Beanz Iced Cappuccino, Mercy and Koh Coconut water.

To be clear, the property is a midscale build, and its location doesn't boast much within walking distance to appeal to a traditional luxury traveler. In addition, the guestrooms are minimalist in the extreme.

On the other hand, Frette linens adorn the beds, flat-screen TVs offer Netflix and Hulu, there are killer sound systems in every room, the bathrooms are tricked out with Bee Kind toiletries from Gilchrist Soames and a personal trainer is available on request. Breakfast is served gratis to guests every morning in the lounge. And, above all, the service is attentive and first-rate.

“The hotel reached out to me because of my background in luxury, not because of my knowledge of hip-hop,” said Paul Ruffino, the property’s managing director, whose background includes a stint at the posh Resort at Pelican Hill in Laguna Beach, Calif.

Ruffino acknowledges that the locale wouldn't work for a large swath of the luxury market – BPM is about a half-hour drive from midtown Manhattan – but plays up the property's proximity to the new Barclays Center, a sports and concert arena that is home of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets and has already hosted headliners Jay-Z and Barbra Streisand since its opening in September. The hotel is about 10 minutes from the arena by car, and more importantly is partnering with the Barclays to present the Golden Gloves amateur boxing championships for the next three years.

“The biggest benefit of this partnership is that we get reciprocity of services, so if our guest needs a good seat for a basketball game or a concert, we can absolutely help them do that. In fact, we have been able to provide luxury seats at a Nets game in the Calvin Klein [Courtside Club], which is something they wouldn't have been able to do on their own,” Ruffino said.

So who stays here? NBA players who could go to a more traditional luxury property, Ruffino said, as well as musicians, fashionistas and, of course, A-list DJs from around the world. About 20% of the clientele so far are international, he added.



A guestroom at the Hotel BPM Brooklyn.

“They choose to stay here because we're a younger, hipper demographic. When a dance band called Sensation came to the Barclays Center in October, the hotel completely sold out,” he said, adding that members of Jay-Z's and Streisand's entourages also stayed at the property during those concerts.

Rates tend to fluctuate, depending on what special happenings are on tap, he said, spiking during games and concerts at the Barclays as well as during Fashion Week and during other New York events that attract a “hipper” crowd.

“We are already almost sold out for Super Bowl 2014 [at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, just west of Manhattan], and those rates will be about \$440 a night,” he said.



Hotel BPM Brooklyn.