

Eight Reasons to Visit Denver's New Halcyon Hotel

This boutique hotel in the heart of Cherry Creek is a must-make pitstop before heading to Aspen.

By [Cindy Hirschfeld](#) 11/29/2016 at 12:03pm



IMAGE: [COURTESY: HALCYON](#)

1. The friendly hipster vibe (Oxymoron? No)

The [Halcyon](#), which opened its doors in August, fits squarely in the current trend of reinventing the hotel for the social millennial crowd. The experience begins the moment you walk through the door. In place of the traditional registration desk, guests are greeted at the “kitchen counter,” a marble-topped café-style bar that serves up complimentary beverages, including wine and coffee, until 10 p.m. and, at certain times of day, snacks from the hotel kitchen. Employees throughout the lobby wear small leather cross-body bags holding iPads, so they’re able to check guests in and out on the go.



The “kitchen counter” in the lobby replaces the traditional registration desk. IMAGE: [COURTESY: HALYCON](#)

Accessed through a large archway, the lobby’s “den” includes several conversational seating groups, oversized art books on display, and artfully curated *objets*, all set against a background of white brick walls and a striking marble fireplace surround. The overall ambiance is modern and fresh. For these reasons and more, the hotel (under the same ownership as Union Station’s [Crawford](#)) has already become popular with Front Range visitors from mountain towns; in fact, the first person I ran into was pro skier Chris Anthony, visiting from Vail.

2. Sleek rooms with flair

The 154 rooms, which vary in size from about 300 square feet to the 1,300-square-foot presidential suite with a huge terrace, were designed to have a high-end residential feel. Doormats outside each room bear sayings like “Sleep Well,” “Live Well,” and “Namaste,” while daily newspaper delivery is via a door-side leather pouch. Inside, leather and brass accents define the furnishings, including the distinctive headboards and a glassware rack above the

minibar, complete with cocktail shaker—mix up a drink with the hotel’s exclusive rum from local distiller Laws (\$50). A hanging leather pouch on the wall with hotel info (check out the Halycon’s quarterly in-house magazine), vertical record player (a partnership with venerable Denver shop Twist and Shout supplies the vinyl), and small shelf for keys next to the door are among the detailed touches ranging from fun and quirky to highly useful. Each floor has a station by the elevators with filtered water, hot tea, apples, trail mix bars, and occasional treats like mini-muffins.

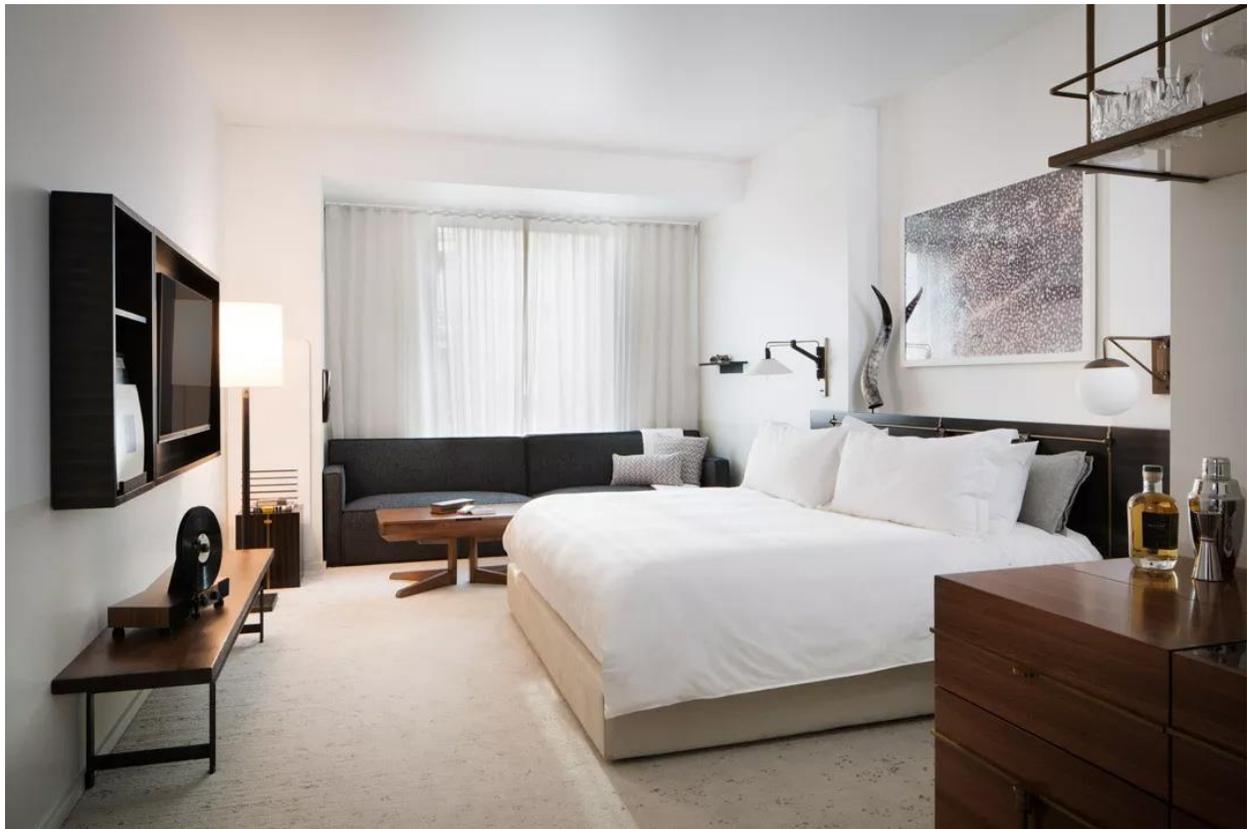


IMAGE: [COURTESY: HALCYON](#)

3. The active-focused amenities

Don't want to haul along a bag or trunkful of outdoor gear? The hotel's gear garage plays off the idea of staying with a friend who lets you borrow a bike or longboard to explore the neighborhood. In addition to both of those items, the first-floor space offers fly-fishing gear (nearby Orvis is a partner), Vespas, Osprey backpacks (each containing a GoPro, Swiss Army knife, binoculars, and a Frisbee), Arc'teryx jackets, sleds, snowshoes, night vision goggles, and more. The Halcyon is also developing partnerships with nearby outfitters for guided excursions beyond Cherry Creek. And each room has a Manduka yoga mat in the closet—use it in the fitness center or the privacy of your own quarters.



The Gear Garage loans out sports equipment.
IMAGE: [COURTESY: HALCYON](#)



Canine guests can get treats at the bell stand.
IMAGE: [CINDY HIRSCHFELD](#)

4. It's pet friendly

Given the Halcyon's home-away-from-home intent, it's only natural that pets are welcome, too. During our stay, my family met a basset hound who seemingly took up residence on the couch in the lobby, an eight-week-old Pomeranian puppy, and sundry other four-legged guests, including our own two mutts. There's a \$100 one-time fee total, and dog beds and in-room kennels are available on request. Your pooch won't want to pass up the treat jar at the bell stand out front, either.

5. The kick-ass hotel restaurant

When the edamame is good enough to comment on, the bar is set high—and [Departure](#) delivers. Open for lunch, dinner, and weekend brunch, it's the brainchild of *Top Chef* runner-up Gregory Gourdet, who also culinary directs the restaurant of the same name at Portland's A-list The Nines hotel. Against a striking backdrop—a mashup of retro air travel style and Jetson's futurism—Gourdet's chefs turn out modern Asian dishes like richly satisfying big-eye tuna poke with avocado, yuzu, and chili, and melt-in-your-mouth Harami-beef skirt steak kushiyaki that's been grilled over petrified Japanese charcoal. The menu includes a variety of dim sum (try the short-rib buns with kimchi and Korean miso), sushi, wok-fired dishes, and entrees like a whole sea bass with green mango salad. Bonus for ultra-health-conscious types: many vegan, gluten-free, and paleo options are available. Definitely save room for dessert: the coconut sticky rice and guava mousse with coconut ice would hold their own against the best pastry menu. The requisite craft cocktails continue the Asian theme with ingredients like shochu, green-tea infused vodka, and Japanese whisky. Eight types of sake are also available by the glass, as is a tightly edited, eclectic wine list.



Vietnamese Duck Curry at Departure.
IMAGE: [MICHAEL PERSICO](#)

And there's more ... Quality Italian, the midtown New York steakhouse, will open off the lobby next spring.

6. The shopping

Whether you're after mountainwear to take home (Arc'teryx and a newly opened Ibex merino wool emporium are right across the street) or want to spend a couple of hours browsing the racks at Neiman's or Nordstrom (the Cherry Creek Mall is about three blocks away), you're in the heart of Denver's best shopping district. Other close-by stores of note are Room and Board, Margaret O'Leary, Eileen Fisher, and an urban outlet of Perch, Vail's signature indie fashion boutique. Call for a pick-up in the hotel's complimentary Range Rover if you get too laden down with bags.



IMAGE: [COURTESY: HALCYON](#)

7. The view from the rooftop pool and lounge

Take in Denver and its environs—east to the plains and west to the mountains—from the Halycon’s pool and [Departure Elevated](#), the adjacent bar that’s open to the public. In addition to a slew of lounge chairs, seven TV-equipped cabanas line the pool deck—perfect for a short snooze. The bar offers a more casual spin—small bites and cocktails—on the Asian fare served in the ground-floor restaurant and has quickly become a Denver hot spot.

8. The extracurriculars

In honor of the hotel’s art program, which includes pieces by more than 40 Colorado artists, the Halycon launched monthly late-afternoon Fireside Chats (free and open to the public) with some of the artists represented. On Saturdays through December 17, four Style Suites at the hotel feature clothing, jewelry, and makeup from local boutiques, along with tips on holiday apparel and party looks.

Halycon, 245 N. Columbine St., 720-772-5000, rooms from \$219, including complimentary daily breakfast