

Travel Holiday Deals

## Travel

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23.09.10

## NUMBER ONE SOUTH BEACH 4 Harrowside West, Blackpool

Miracles can happen. Just ask the good folk of [Blackpool](#). A few years ago, local footie team the Tangerines were in the lower leagues and now they are riding high in the Premiership. As if in celebration, the illuminations have now been turned on.

The famous Northern seaside resort's hotels have also raised their game. Number One South Beach, a high-end guesthouse, was the brainchild of two couples with many years' experience in the hotel trade who wanted to give Blackpool a boutique-style hotel that would appeal to all, not just the resort's traditional Northern visitors. So they bought a "tired" hotel on the town's South Beach for around £300,000 and spent a further £600,000 turning it into a modern, stylish 14-bedroom boutique property that would impress even soft Southerners such as myself.



Seaside style: Drama, one of the individually designed rooms at Number One, with distinctive silver and black decor

The five-star Number One South Beach has since won a string of awards, and attracted a variety of well-known guests from the Pet Shops Boys' [Neil Tennant](#) to Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen — whose artwork, incidentally, is displayed in the dining room. So does the hotel live up to the hype? My wife and I arrived on a Friday evening, having caught a fast train to [Preston](#) and changed there for Blackpool North.

The hotel was a £10 cab ride away. Our room, the Hip Hop suite, decorated in soothing blues and greens, had all the little trimmings you would look for in a boutique property — be it the Egyptian cotton bed linen or the bathroom's blue glass washbasin and flat-screen television.

French windows opened onto a mini-balcony with a sea view. There are cosier touches here that you wouldn't find in a larger hotel.

After the barman clocked off at midnight, they opened an "honesty bar" — inviting guests to help themselves to drinks, and do the decent thing. "I'm sure the odd beer has gone unaccounted for but by and large it works very well," said Claire Smith, one of the co-owners.

The following morning's hearty breakfast fuelled us up for the day ahead. The [Lancashire](#) resort might have something of a reputation — if you want to see hordes of youngsters getting boozed up, head into town on a Friday and Saturday night — but it's also got a charm and personality all of its own, as we soon discovered.

The 518-ft high, [Eiffel Tower](#)-inspired Blackpool Tower, which opened to the public in 1894, is still packing them in more than a century later.

Indeed, the town is something of a treasure-trove of Victorian architecture. And then there were the trams, which are guaranteed to bring out the excitable little boy in every grown man.

Lastly, there was the Pleasure Beach Resort with its rollercoasters and other attractions, which has just as much to offer visitors as any theme park down south.

My wife and I returned to the hotel for dinner. I had the delicious parsnip soup followed by the sea bass; my wife opted for the fillet steak. For dessert, I had [Eton Mess](#). The verdict? First-class. The damage? About £60 for two including drinks plus service.

With the Tangerines rubbing shoulders with the Premier League's big boys, what better time to head for Blackpool — and Number One?

*Number One, South Beach (01253 343900; [numberonesouthbeach.com](#)) has doubles from £130 B&B. Virgin has returns from Euston from £27 [virgintrains.co.uk](#))*