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The GUEST HOUSE at GRACELAND

Southern Hospitality. Modern Style.

Story by Lyda Kay Ferree,
The Southern Lifestyles Lady.
Photography submitted by
The Guest House at Graceland.

On a cold, rainy night in December I checked into The Guest House at Graceland just steps away from Graceland Mansion. Inspired by the same warm Southern hospitality that Elvis Presley always showed his guests, every aspect of this new hotel reflects Elvis' personal style and the unique character of Graceland Mansion.

From the moment I arrived until I departed the following day, I felt Elvis' presence at The Guest House at Graceland. I met friends in the lobby where we stood beneath a round, mirrored ceiling based on Elvis' bejeweled cape. The music of Elvis serenades arriving guests. Each floor at The Guest House at Graceland has photographs of Elvis artifacts outside the elevators with a number to let guests know what floor they are on.

In the guest rooms a 50-inch flat screen television may be tuned to one of multiple Elvis channels. Guests may choose from his music of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s as well as movies and TV specials. You may also watch a guided tour of Graceland or dial in the Graceland cam aimed at the front door of the mansion.

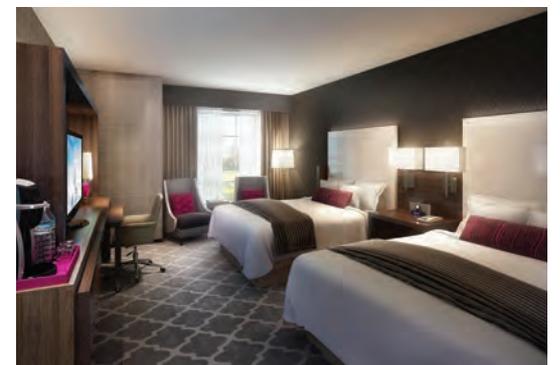
The hotel's artwork features images of Elvis' clothing, his TCB (Taking Care of Business was

his slogan) necklaces and his sunglasses. The staircase at the south tower entrance is a replica of the staircase at Graceland Mansion, and the light fixtures in the Fountain Room has the TCB logo and design on it. "It's very subtle and well done," said Mike Pramshafer, Vice President of Sales & Marketing. "It's not in your face."

Elvis would be proud. He always wanted to open an intimate guest house on the Graceland grounds to take care of his overnight visitors, but it never happened.

Elvis Presley Enterprises, the overseer of the mansion, supervised the blueprint for the 450-room resort hotel at 3600 Elvis Presley Boulevard in Memphis. The hotel, which has earned a AAA Four Diamond Hotel rating from the American Automobile Association, opened October 27, replacing the Heartbreak Hotel where fans had stayed since the 1980s. It is one of the largest hotels in Memphis.

The developer of The Guest House Hotel was DreamCatcher Hotels, a Memphis-based hotel brand known for its innovative approach to the hotel experience, and the Hnedak Bobo Group, also of Memphis, was the architect of the project. Priscilla Presley oversaw the design and décor of the 20 stylish specialty-themed VIP Suites, many of which are on the top floor



"When Elvis had friends and family visit Graceland, he would have them stay at a hotel down the street. He would have been thrilled to have had his own guest house where friends and family could stay so close by. Lisa and I and our entire family are excited that visitors from around the world can now experience our unique resort hotel—The Guest House at Graceland." — **Priscilla Presley**



of the hotel known as “The Upstairs”—evocative of the upstairs at Graceland Mansion, which was the private living quarters for Elvis and his family. Priscilla was a guest in one of the suites during the grand opening of the hotel.

My guest room was well-appointed and comfortable. The bedding was plush and a silver lame drape shut out the lights of Elvis Presley Boulevard. Silvery striped wall coverings contrast with a black diamond pattern on one wall. My bathroom was spacious and contemporary. An activities calendar in my room listed the daily and ongoing events.

The evening of my visit at The Guest House Hotel I attended a Pat Kerr Tigrett Princess Diana exhibition in a function room at The Guest House.

Then I indulged myself in Delta’s Kitchen. (Delta was Elvis’ aunt who enjoyed cooking for him.) The restaurant was buzzing with guests that night. I was in the mood for a good burger, so I ordered The Big Burger, which was juicy and delicious and topped with fried green tomatoes served with sweet potato fries. Talk about indulgence!

There are four dining options at The Guest House at Graceland: Delta’s Kitchen, a full service restaurant open for breakfast and dinner; EP’s Bar & Grill, a sports bar open for lunch and dinner; the Lobby Lounge; and Shake Rattle & Go for to-go deli items and beverages. A Bar Lounge serves appetizers. A Sunday Brunch is offered occasionally and may be part of a package. (Two full-service restaurants—Delta’s

Kitchen and EP’s Sports Bar—offer indoor and outdoor seating.)

After dinner I met friends in the Lobby Lounge where a contestant on American Idol was singing. There was a lively group in the Lounge that night. Live entertainment is offered in this lounge every night from 7-10 pm. A pianist plays there four nights a week and a guitarist performs there as well.

The following morning I ate a bountiful breakfast buffet before touring the hotel with a friendly concierge (The entire staff was welcoming and accommodating.) who showed me a VIP Suite and the state-of-the-art 464-seat theatre for live music, movies and entertainment shows all year long. It is also ideal for presentations or ceremonies.

Hotel packages are available. On February 10-12 there will be a Motown Weekend and on February 24-26 a Gospel Weekend will be held at The Guest House. The packages are available online (www.GuestHouseGraceland.com) or call the hotel’s toll free number: 800.238.2000.

There is over 25,000 square feet of event space, a state-of-the-art fitness center, a large outdoor pool and a gift shop where tour tickets to Graceland may be purchased.

Currently most of the weddings are held in a chapel at Graceland, but in the near future wedding ceremonies and receptions will be held at The Guest House.

“The Guest House at Graceland is described as a resort,” said Pramshafer. “We have an 8000-square-foot entertainment area in the back which separates us from other properties,”

he said. “There is a 4,000-square-foot lawn for wedding ceremonies, group receptions, family games in the summer and a large swimming pool with a fire pit and Jacuzzi. That is what makes us a resort.”

Pramshafer added that the hotel’s programming may be live entertainment, activities or games. “We want to provide something for everybody so they don’t have to leave even though we offer shuttles to downtown Memphis/Beale Street and the airport. “We have programming throughout the entire property. That separates us from other properties,” he said.

Other features at The Guest House include concierge service and room service, and the hotel is pet friendly.

“Our brand is Elvis,” said Pramshafer. “It is a worldwide brand, one of the strongest brands in the world. We have a campus here consisting of Graceland Mansion and The Guesthouse at Graceland. However, the design of the property and the décor are such that The Guest House is also a corporate hotel.”

Future plans call for Elvis Presley’s MEMPHIS, a new entertainment district which will replace the existing ticket office for the Mansion tours, to open March 2.

WHAT TO KNOW

The Guest House at Graceland
3600 Elvis Presley Blvd., Memphis, TN 38116
Reservations and Packages: 901.443.3000 or 800.238.2000
Group Sales: Call 901.473.6084
www.guesthousegraceland.com