

The Huxley

Signature Pub Company has revamped the bar at Edinburgh's Rutland Hotel

Where to find it

1 Rutland Street
Edinburgh EH1 2AE
Tel: 0131 229 3402
www.thehuxley.co.uk

Who did it

Design: Tibbatts Abel
Furniture: Acanthus
Lighting: Chandelie Lighting
Main contractor: WFC

More than four years after turning the run-down Rutland Hotel in Edinburgh city centre into a stylish hotel, Signature Pub Group has invested in an update for its bar. Formerly the luxurious Rutland bar, it has been reinvented as The Huxley, with an emphasis on comfort, cocktails and beers.

For the refurbishment, Signature Pub Group returned to the designers who worked on the original project, Tibbatts Abel. The result is a new look that has industrial influences but retains a feel of quality and comfort, says designer Adam Tibbatt. "It has been a success in creating a more welcoming cool template for customers."

Tibbatts Abel reduced the size of the bar counter to increase space for vertical drinking and improve circulation. Vintage upholstered chairs and leather sofas give the venue a laid-back look and a "home away from home" feel. A raised area has been extended to form a large lounging and dining zone, with more independent spaces created through the use of a dual-purpose screen and drinks shelf.

As part of a lighting system that adapts through the trading hours, Adam devised a dropped ceiling raft with cast-iron bell-shaped lights to create a point of difference in the front of the bar. The large windows looking out on to the western end of Princes Street have been retained, filling the

venue with natural daylight. Offering free wi-fi, it is a popular destination for shoppers and business people in the daytime, shifting into a cocktail bar in the evening.

The drinks list has been put together by Signature Pub Group's operations manager Hazel Ward, whose background includes training bartenders. Priced between £5.50 and £7.95, the cocktails include original serves such as the Huxley Harpoon made by mixing Edinburgh Gin with apricot jam, cranberry juice and vanilla sugar. The Velvet Revolver combines Matusalem Platino Rum shaken hard with Green Chartreuse, Velvet Falernum, lychee and fresh lime, while a twist on a Negroni sees ruby port, a hint of raspberry and Aperol mixed with Bombay Sapphire gin. Beer is used for the Full Moon, which is made with Maker's Mark bourbon, fresh lemon, honey water and egg white, topped up with a creamy hit of Blue Moon wheat beer.

The Huxley has an impressive range of beers, with 13 on draught including Birra Moretti, Bitburger and Blue Moon as well as Scottish beers such as Williams Bros' Caesar Augustus IPA-style lager, Harviestoun's Schiehallion, Deuchars IPA and Caledonian 80/-. The bottled selection is just as eclectic, featuring American beers Goose Island Honkers Ale and Anchor Steam Beer, Cooper's Sparkling Ale from Australia, Pacifico Clara from Mexico, Peroni Nastro Azzurro and Leffe Blonde, plus

plenty of Scottish options including Black Isle Organic Red Kite, West brewery's St Mungo's, Williams Bros' Profanity stout and Stewart's Hefeweizen as well as "Sassenach" options Camden Hells Lager and Sam Smith's Organic Cherry. Magners is available on draught and in bottles alongside Rekorderlig's bottled fruit ciders.

Upstairs, the original restaurant was transformed into Kylee Restaurant & Grill in 2011 under executive chef David Haetzman. His bar food menu for The Huxley includes dishes such as a scotch egg made with venison and black pudding and a sausage roll made with spicy lamb accompanied by barbecue beans.

The former late-night lounge bar in the basement, The One Below, has now been turned into Kylee's private dining room, again designed by Tibbatts Abel. Opulently decorated and furnished with thick carpets and polished mahogany furniture, it seats up to 16 people for dinner or accommodates 40 for more casual drinks and canapés.

Signature Pub Company general manager Murray Ward, who has run restaurants and bars in Edinburgh and Glasgow since the late 90s, says they hope the new bar will reignite Edinburgh's West End. "Having visited a variety of venues both in the UK and abroad, we felt that The Huxley would make an excellent addition to Edinburgh's eating and drinking community."