



1 The Tank Stream Hotel in Sydney. The original building was only 10 storeys high; later, four new floors were added.

2 The Premium Queen room.

3 Bathroom vanity table and sink.

— Photos: The Tank Stream Hotel



One rate to rule them all

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If you're the sort of tourist who doesn't like paying more for extras, then you're the kind of guest The Tank Stream Hotel wants to check in. It's the newest bed-and-no-breakfast lodging in the heart of Sydney, Australia, designed for business travellers who don't need the frills, and holidaymakers who don't want to spend all day cooped up in a room anyway.

The hotel works like this: Location, location, location, and that's why they can get away with offering luxury on the fundamentals (Wi-Fi, coffee machine, snacks and juices, amazing bathroom toiletries, all you can watch movies on TV) while rolling back on non-essentials like a pool, gym, room service, complimentary breakfast, and outgoing calls on the phone.

If that sounds sacrilegious, then there are other hotels in Sydney's business district that will gladly charge you for all those additional services.

Being in the centre of the city, on the busy Pitt Street, The Tank Stream has everything right at its doorstep – food, entertainment, shopping and attractions. So they've eliminated similar services from the room tariff, making the bill you've worked out at the start of your stay the same bill you get at the end of your trip.

"I'm a thrifty tourist," says Tan Boon Lee, the managing director of

Sydney's Tank Stream Hotel offers a luxurious, no-frills stay with nothing extra added to your bill.



(From left) Ezio Russa; Carol Giuseppe, CEO of Tourism Accommodation Australia; and Tan Boon Lee, managing director of Tank Stream Holdings, pouring a toast to mark the official opening of The Tank Stream Hotel in Sydney, Australia, on Nov 4. — The Tank Stream Hotel

Tank Stream Holdings, CEO of Tan & Tan Developments, and executive director of IGB Corporation. "I like to put my own bag in my room. I don't like to be charged for taking this or using that. Just tell me the bottom line: How much I need to pay. Don't tell me, this is an add-on, that's an add-on. I really hate that."

Having spent 27 years in property and hotels, Tan believes there are plenty of others who share his discretion. But it's not like he's built a budget accommodation, either. The Tank Stream is under the St Giles brand, and it's a four-star establishment with 280 rooms, each fitted with enough bells and whistles to make you consider stay-

ing in bed and binge-watching the telly all day.

You would think that was reason enough to have someone available to send a meal up to your room. After all, the menu prepared by Malaysian-born Jun Wong, the head chef of Le Petit Flot (the hotel's contemporary French restaurant) is luscious. But you'd be wrong.

"There are two things guests use a lot of – room service and phone calls," concedes Ezio Russa, director of rooms and marketing at The Tank Stream Hotel, and someone who has spent over 30 years in the hospitality industry. "But we took room service away because you can just walk out and get all kinds of food. And you can receive phone calls in the room but you can't call out. That's a big cost saving."

"We do have service staff on request," adds Tan. "But our guests are very independent travellers. They know what they're doing. So this is exactly the sort of hotel I would stay in. But it's also got to be in the right location or it's not going to work. You can't put a hotel like this out of town."

The hotel is part of a 1960s era block that sits on the site of a historical tank stream, a fresh water tributary that supplied water to the New South Wales colony in the late 18th century. It's 20 minutes from

The Tank Stream Hotel

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Sydney airport, and even closer to landmarks such as Darling Harbour, Sydney Opera House, Queen Victoria Building and Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Meanwhile, the original corner lot was only 10 storeys, and four more floors were added for the hotel.

John Bailey, director of design at IGB Corporation Bhd and the head of architecture and interior for The Tank Stream, says the structure of the building meant he didn't have to create typical square rooms. Though his ID required a greater amount of repetition in room planning, he had more freedom in the shape of the space.

"I haven't drawn a straight line for a long time," says Bailey with a laugh, when it's pointed out that almost all the rooms seemed designed with acute angles. "I don't like corners and I'm not scared of angles. I don't know what goes in a corner anyway. A potted plant? I've always liked to make a room more fluid."

Russa adds that his favourite room is 1512 because, "It has one of the most fantastic views of Pitt Street right down to Harbour Bridge – and the way it's configured, you can just lie down in bed and look out the window to see the view."