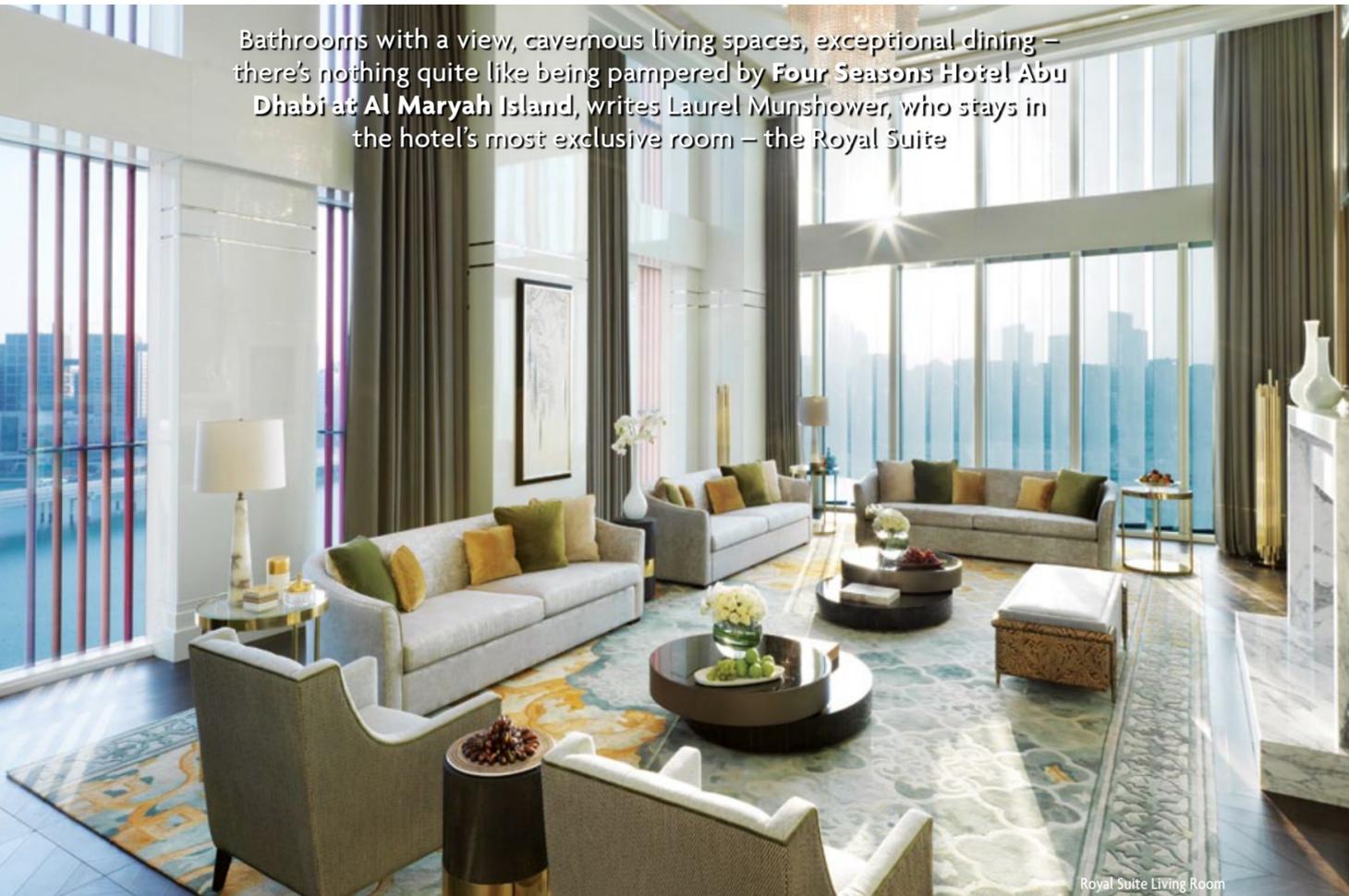


# THE ROYAL TREATMENT

Bathrooms with a view, cavernous living spaces, exceptional dining – there’s nothing quite like being pampered by Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al Maryah Island, writes Laurel Munshower, who stays in the hotel’s most exclusive room – the Royal Suite



Royal Suite Living Room



One of the hotel's 2,000 artworks



Royal Suite bedroom



Royal Suite bathroom

favourite things waiting in-room, from preferred toiletries and linens to snacks and even exercise equipment.

It’s a pleasure preparing for an evening out in this suite; clothing and accessories neatly displayed in my dressing room, jazz from one of the hotel’s music stations pouring from speakers throughout the suite. Tempting though it is to stay in and order room service, the hotel’s restaurants (there are six distinct dining and drinking options) are a greater temptation, and I grab a seat at Butcher & Still. Inspired by steakhouses of Twenties-era Chicago and filled with authentic touches, the restaurant itself is an experience. The atmosphere is lively despite Ramadan, and the space fills up with merry groups of diners. Piping-hot bread emerges from a bread oven, and skilfully seared steaks are served alongside Americana decadences such as cheesy corn and cherry pie. It’s a concept restaurant that nails it from start to finish.

I spend much of the remainder of my stay idling amid water – be that in my regal bathtub-with-a-view scented by soothing oils, or poolside in an oversized lounge, where I’m duly handed a mini-cooler filled with ice and chilled water bottles. How sweet it is to get the royal treatment... even if only for a weekend.

## The important bit

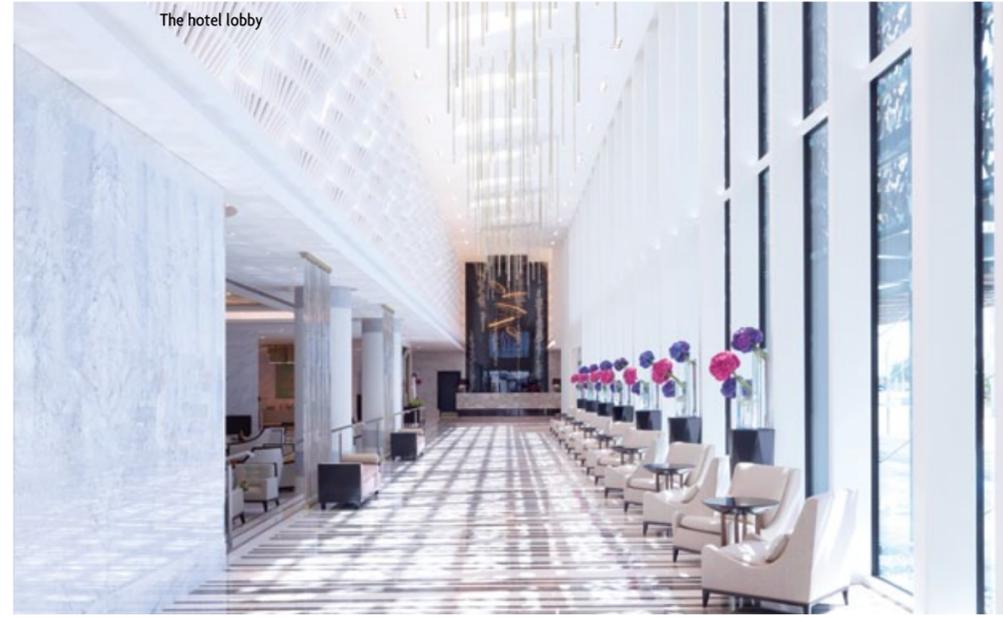
**WHAT:** Royal Suite  
**WHERE:** Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al Maryah Island  
**PRICE:** From AED35,000 (US\$9,530) per night  
**TEL:** +971 2 333 2222  
[www.fourseasons.com/abudhabi](http://www.fourseasons.com/abudhabi)

Arriving at Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al Maryah Island from Dubai seems meandering. The benefit to this is getting a swift understanding of just how well located the hotel is – made better in due comfort from within one of the hotel’s plush Mercedes-Benz sedans laden with reading material and Wi-Fi. Sandwiched between the city itself and cultural- and entertainment-destination islands Saadiyat and Yas, 10 minutes from the Corniche and just 20 from the airport, it’s conveniently located to pretty much everything. And that’s before I’m told the hotel has direct access to The Galleria, an upscale mall filled with Fifth Avenue-worthy designers, for those on a shopping escape; is steps from the Abu Dhabi Global Market, for those financial-types on business

trips; and as the island continues to develop, will be part of a Manhattan-like business and lifestyle setting. It’s Ramadan when I arrive, so entering the hotel is subdued. Normally fresh juices and cooling towels would be offered, and Al Meylas, the tea lounge and “living room of Abu Dhabi”, would be alive with guests socialising – a buzzy atmosphere that I glimpse post-Iftar. But I don’t need the entertainment, as I’m swiftly escorted to the one-and-only Royal Suite. On the way there, it’s clear that the hotel’s artwork is beyond the standard hospitality fare. Inspired by its proximity to Abu Dhabi’s upcoming Louvre and Guggenheim museums, both the design and some 2,000 pieces of art showcase local themes with modern twists; this is evident as soon as you enter, with seven column-like sculptures that represent the

seven emirates, and an articulated, pearlescent wall mimicking the water of the Gulf and the region’s heritage in the pearl industry. I soon find that while everything here is stunning, little of it is arbitrary. Exiting the lift on the way to my suite, I notice dusky-coloured strips outside a window. I’m told these so-called “baguettes” adorning the building take their look from fabrics hanging on display in a souk, and reflect 80 per cent of the sunlight, helping the hotel achieve its Estidama Pearl 5 rating – the best possible – for eco-sustainability. The property is fascinating, but I’m positively gobsmacked when I enter the Royal Suite. To my left, a lengthy corridor lined by a number of doors eventually – eventually – stops at a bedroom; to my right, a cavernous living room with two-storey floor-to-ceiling windows calls for my immediate

attention. There are large platters of snacks – chocolates, Arabic pastries, dates – and the space is flooded with natural light and ample seating. I love the fireplace, but with a “real feel” temperature outside flirting with 50°C, I refrain from turning it on. Setting off on an expedition around the rest of the suite, I find a dining room, office, guest bathroom, his and hers dressing rooms, pantry with a separate entrance for hotel staff, bedroom with an ultra-plush Four Seasons Bed and sitting area, and – my favourite – an enormous marble master bathroom with a large rain shower; free-standing bathtub overlooking the waterfront and city, and accompanied by Sodashi oils; and a “hers” sink with Annick Goutal toiletries and a “his” with Lalique. If you’re a regular in Four Seasons’ top-end suites, the experience is even more personalised with a few of your



The hotel lobby