



Hotels debut outdoor spaces in time for summer

By Nancy Trejos, USA TODAY

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Summer's almost here and Hotel Check-in recently tried a couple of outdoor spaces offered by hotels. Hotels are capitalizing on their outdoor space, adding seating wherever they can find a pretty spot outside, from rooftops to sidewalks to terraces to gardens.

A haven in the middle of midtown Manhattan

NEW YORK - Haven, a new rooftop venue at The Sanctuary Hotel in Midtown Manhattan, doesn't have much lighting.

No, the owners are not going for that dark moody ambiance. There's simply not much need for lighting. When the sun goes down, Times Square lights up this charming rooftop getaway at the heart of the Theater District.

Across the street from Haven is a Gothic-looking church that looks out of place against the near-blinding lights of Broadway. So New York.

"It's one of the coolest things up here, and we didn't have to pay for it," general manager Jeremy Poon joked about the church as he led me on a tour of the hotel.

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Haven officially opens June 14, but it's already had its soft opening. Last Friday, its 150 seats were almost filled up. So was its 14-foot communal table with seating for 20.

The space includes a full bar with concrete countertops and custom cedar high-top tables. Cocktails range from \$13 to \$16, and include the Aura (Bombay Sapphire Gin, fresh raspberries, freshly squeezed lemon, mint leaves, and simple syrup) and Cielo (Herradura Silver Tequila, Cointreau, Guava Nectar, and fresh sour mix.) I tried a tequila cocktail and the chicken spring rolls, both quite satisfying. A full French-influenced menu will debut soon.

Owners Hank and Brandon Freid, principals of the Impulsive Group, wanted to create a French country feel. Hence the trees and floral arrangements and reclaimed cedar wood furnishing. There are plush earth-tone seating areas and cabanas with sheer white fabric. The lounge covers 2,500 square feet but it feels more intimate than that. And that's the goal.

"I'm not looking to have necessarily a DJ up here every night, to have 300, 400 people up here," says Hank Freid. "We don't want to have people on top of each other."

Here's hoping it doesn't come to that.



▶ CAPTION

By Steven B. Ekerovich