



The Cavendish
London

A Brief History

Legendary Location, Stylish Experience

Providing a Stylish Experience Since 1836

81 Jermyn Street has been the site of a hotel since the end of the eighteenth century and although the building has changed over the years, we remain true to our traditions of splendid food and hospitality whilst now combining these with modern day conveniences.



Entrance, 1920's

The Most Fashionable Place to be Seen

Jermyn Street is situated within the district of St. James's, which has long been known for its aristocratic associations. In the early nineteenth century it contained a whole range of hotels with Cavendish Hotel previously being known as Miller's Hotel and the Orleans Hotel before finally having its name changed in 1836 to Cavendish Hotel.

By this time, the street was home to generals, princes, bankers and was seen as being particularly fashionable. This was, in part, attributed to the 'Regency Dandy' Beau Brummell (1778 - 1840) who was known for his friendship with the Prince Regent and his sartorial elegance. Brummell's statue is situated close to the hotel at the entrance of Piccadilly Arcade, surrounded by many stylish gentleman's shops and British craftsmanship.



Lobby, 1920's



Portrait of young Rosa Lewis

From Dandy to Duchess

The hotel's most famous owner was the formidable Rosa Lewis, whose story was told in the 1970's BBC TV series 'The Duchess of Duke Street'.

Born in 1867, being the fifth of nine children, Rosa wasn't born into London society but certainly became a leading light in it with her skills for cooking and entertaining. After leaving school at 12 and becoming a general servant, she worked her way up through the hierarchy of domestic service eventually running the kitchens of the Duc d'Orleans at Sandhurst.

With her skills for producing a lighter French style of cooking, she soon became hugely popular with the society hostesses of the time and was invited to cook in private houses for dinner parties as well as for Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Prince of Wales. This led her to be known as the 'Queen of Cooks.'

After marrying Chesney Lewis in 1893, the couple acquired the lease to the Cavendish Hotel in 1902. However, with her husband and his sister in charge, the hotel quickly amounted debts and fraud was suspected. In 1904 Rosa divorced Chesney and took over the running of the hotel herself, acquiring further adjacent properties on a revised lease in 1911 providing she spent £5000 on improvements.

Rich and Poor

The hotel quickly became the place to be seen during the early part of the 20th century, welcoming the young Winston Churchill as well as royalty and a host of distinguished English families such as the Asquiths and Saviles, many of whom she had previously worked for. Her improvements included redesigning the interior with her own flair for design and decor and increasing the number of bathrooms from 3 to 46 by 1923. Rosa also played host to artists Augustus John and John Singer Sargent who both subsequently painted her.

With the outbreak of WW1, society entertaining came to an end and Rosa turned her attentions to welcoming impoverished military officers to the Cavendish Hotel. Her kind and understanding nature never allowed them to pay and with her tactics of allowing rich guests to cover the costs of the poor, she managed to continue these charitable efforts until her death.

“

*a welcoming, gracious
survivor from another age*

The Times

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Bedroom, 1920's

A Gentle Decline

With her faithful companion and personal assistant Edith Jeffrey, Rosa, along with her little dog Kippy, continued to run the hotel in true Edwardian style. This continued between the wars and into a gentle decline throughout the 1940's. Rosa died on 28th November 1952 aged 85 with her funeral taking place at St. James Church close to the Cavendish Hotel. The hotel was run for the following 10 years by Edith until she too passed away. In June 1962 the old Cavendish Hotel finally closed its doors.

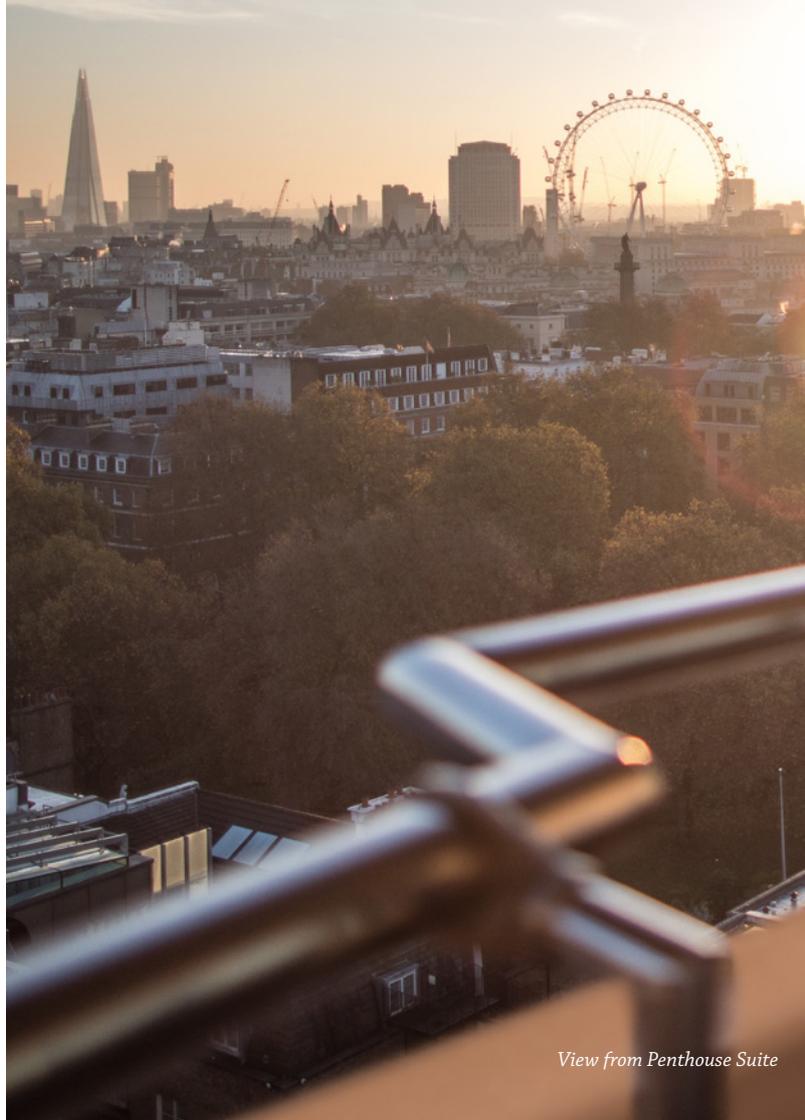
A Bright Future Dawns

In 1964 the site was acquired and the old building demolished. In its place a new building known as The Cavendish London transformed the skyline as the tallest building on Jermyn Street. Opening its doors in July 1966, it now provides a stylish experience in this legendary location with unparalleled views across central London. Several owners have come and gone but the hotel is now in the safe hands of The Ascott Limited which took over in 2012 and is proud to uphold the values that Rosa brought to the Cavendish Hotel.

For almost 200 years, the Cavendish brand has provided a haven of relaxation in the heart of bustling Mayfair and Piccadilly, close to all the world famous sights London is renowned for. We are delighted to welcome both new guests and returning ones and hope this continues for a long time to come...



Penthouse Suite



View from Penthouse Suite



Sitting Room, 1920's

Rosa Lewis – Five Little Known Facts & Phrases...

- Rosa was nearly killed during WWII when a bomb blew off the entire front of the Cavendish Hotel.
- Her famous put down to guests who misbehaved was 'You treat my house just like a hotel!'.
- One of her employer was Lady Randolph Churchill mother of Winston Churchill.
- In 1927 she toured New York teaching her cooking skills to eager apprentices - a real celebrity chef who was ahead of her time.
- She was the first female cook to be employed at White's gentleman's club in St. James's.



Dining Room, 1920's



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