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Boutique hotels: Five tips to beat the big brands

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'Non-standard', 'trendy' and 'unique'. Just three of the words used to describe a boutique hotel at last week's Boutique Hotel Summit in London. But with larger chains beginning to take a grip of the sector with

the emergence of so-called lifestyle brands, how can independent boutiques stand out in an increasingly crowded segment?

During one of the discussions at the Summit, which took place at the five-star Montcalm hotel, a video was played; members of the public were asked to define exactly what they thought a 'boutique hotel' was, and to name the last boutique property they stayed in.

All were pretty consistent about what a boutique hotel was, but when asked to name the last hotel they'd stayed in, not one member of the public could remember.

So it's all very well being an independent boutique hotel operator that provides a 'unique' experience, but clearly something more is needed to ensure your brand is going to be remembered against the big players such as Starwood Hotels & Resorts' W Hotels or the expanding Hotel Indigo brand from IHG.

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