

# Business Traveler

tried & tested

## Last Month's Issue

### Hilton Helsinki-Vantaa Airport Hotel, Finland



by Jeff Heilman

#### WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Opened in August 2007, this contemporary five-floor property is ideally suited for the long-haul, stop-over business traveler. Clad in blue glass and with smart corporate appeal, the hotel's exterior transitions brightly into the spacious lobby. Arriving as I did in the morning twilight of Finland's dark winter days, after an eight-hour overnighter from New York, the airy lobby's décor, somewhere between space age and Scandinavian, was an instant tonic. Style

points abound, many in white: polished stone floors, birch trees, curving brick walls, overhead lights high-hatted in fabric.

Humanizing it all was the welcoming multilingual staff, with the front desk earning immediate top marks for graciously accommodating my request for a room upgrade from standard to executive. Thereafter settled in a top floor corner room, my initial impression was confirmed: this was a classy, business-savvy operation.

**WHERE IS IT?** Directly facing Helsinki-Vantaa Airport's just-opened Terminal 2 extension, the hotel is a five-minute walk from the international arrivals and departures terminals, via outdoor covered walkway. Follow the overhead signs marked "Hilton" once you exit the arrivals terminal, bearing right, and have your coat ready if arriving in winter. Halfway along, an elevator marked "Hilton" awaits; this takes you up one level to the walkway's last section, with the hotel fully in sight.

**HOW MANY ROOMS?** The hotel has 246 guest rooms, including 180 standard rooms, 42 Executive rooms, 19 Executive Plus rooms, and five junior suites. Four of the standard rooms are also suitable for disabled guests.

**ROOM FACILITIES** Staying at the hotel twice over a four-day period, I was able to experience all three room tiers. My initial standard room, at 301 square feet, was adequate for the traveler seeking a sound night's sleep and to refresh before traveling on, but with work to do and a full schedule of meetings and events at the airport, an executive upgrade was just the ticket.

At work or at rest, you will not be disturbed here; despite its close proximity to the airport terminal and runways, the hotel's superior thermal and acoustic insulation makes for cozy soundproofing, with laminated wood flooring and light Scandinavian décor contributing to the soothing ambiance.

Bathrobe and slippers awaited on the comfortable duvet-covered king bed, along with chocolates. The better surprise was the sauna in the luxurious modern bathroom. Having Finland's greatest export in-room was a major bonus, along with other accoutrements including an ergonomic work space, climate control, free Wi-Fi access (10 euros per 24 hours in the standard rooms), easy chairs, electric kettle, LCD flat-panel TV and alarm radio with MP3 port. Complimentary breakfast and access to the fifth-floor executive lounge were additional advantages, the latter offering a complimentary self-serve buffet and bar service in the evening.

Returning to the hotel after an intervening trip to Lapland, I enjoyed the supreme comfort of a fourth-floor junior suite, with all of the executive room's trimmings and more, including a relaxing living room.

**RESTAURANTS AND BARS** Located on the lobby level, the 250-seat Restaurant Gui features a show kitchen and extensive à la carte menu of healthy Finnish dishes, game and fish. The adjacent Bar Gui offers a selection of wines and cocktails along with light fare, but be prepared for Scandinavia's typical high prices: a single measure of Finlandia vodka, for example, runs 14 euros. Both operate from early morning to 11:30 p.m. and offer meal service all day. Room service is available 24 hours a day, and for early departees, breakfast service begins at 3:30 a.m.

**BUSINESS AND MEETING FACILITIES** With an elegant ballroom (where I observed a black-tie event in full throng), five meeting rooms (the largest just over 4,000 square feet), a 24-hour business center and the dedicated executive floor and lounge, the hotel is made to measure for business and social events. The 24-hour front desk can offer currency exchange, concierge services and tour assistance, and the self-service airline check-in and flight information kiosk in the lobby is a major convenience on the way out.

**LEISURE FACILITIES** The hotel has a signature Hilton Fitness by Precor gym and two Finnish-style saunas. Free to guests, the gym is open 24/7; saunas are open daily between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

**VERDICT** A winner from Hilton and an ideal venue for business travel to and via the Helsinki area, keenly attuned to the needs of the business traveler, and a model of efficiency, convenience and comfort for airport hotels.

**PRICE** Standard rooms start at 102 euros, Executive room rates go from 152 euros, Executive Plus rooms begin at 182 euros, and junior suites start at 302 euros.

**CONTACT** Hilton Helsinki-Vantaa Airport Hotel, Lentajankuja 1, Vantaa, Finland, tel: 358-9-73220, [www.hilton.com](http://www.hilton.com).

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