



Urban Beach

Bournemouth, Dorset, England

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7/10

Telegraph expert rating

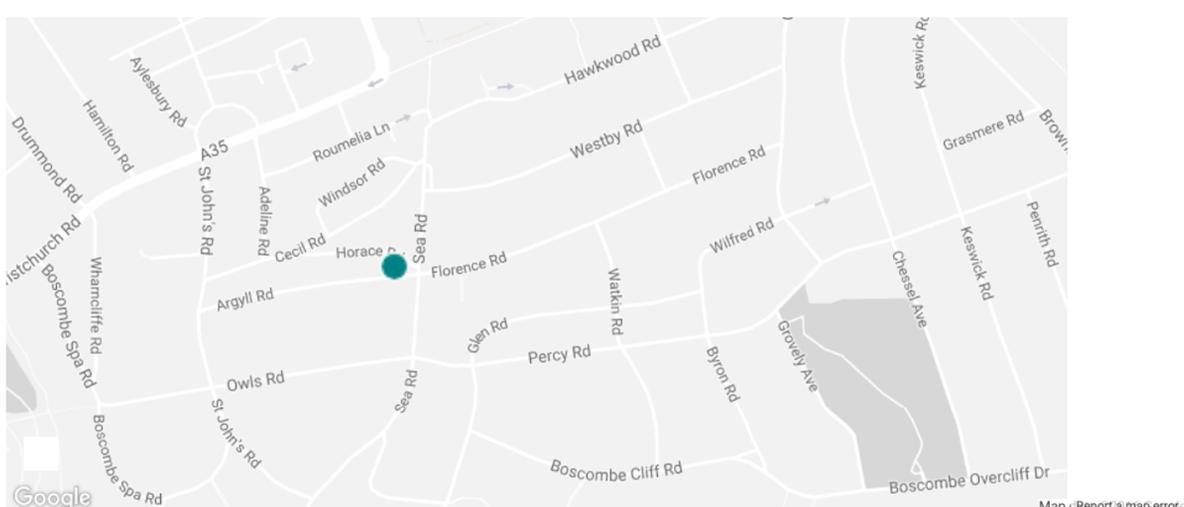
" A boutique-style accommodation on the Dorset coast, Urban Beach is a cool spot less than half a mile from Boscombe's shoreline, offering a relaxed coastal ambience during the day and a bustling bistro as the sun goes down. "

By **Benjamin Parker**,
TRAVEL WRITER

Location

7/10

Urban Beach is among a jumble of residential buildings in Boscombe. A sandy beach is half a mile downhill, passing apartments and the occasional surf shop. An artificial surf reef, opened in 2009, was an expensive flop for Bournemouth Borough Council. The area has now been rebranded as the Coastal Activity Park, with water sports – bodyboarding, stand-up paddleboarding and kayaking – as well as things to do on land (slacklining, rock climbing, and more). The town centre, largely pedestrianised and home to a twice-weekly open air market, is a 10-minute walk north; for something more boutique, Westbourne is three miles (five kilometres) away.



Style & character

7/10

With a throng of punters sipping cocktails or the clatter of cutlery on plates, the hotel doubles as a genuinely popular beachgoer bar and bistro. Much of Urban Beach blends in with the dwellings around it – grey tiled roof, white exterior – but it has been souped-up with a decked area (all-weather, with sides and retractable roof) and vibrant mural across the north face depicting surf, tropical sunshine and a VW camper.

It's relaxed enough to walk in after a day at the beach, with bright yellow seats outside (heated to warm you through) and surfboard on the walls, but upholstered booths, dark wood surfaces and glass candle holders give a more sophisticated bent.



Service & facilities

7/10

Friendly staff guide you through the bar as they check you in without any formality. You'll be offered good insight into the beach scene and Dorset's shopping destinations, and staff possess a surpassingly in-depth knowledge of top shelf spirits.

No additional facilities at this small hotel – though Wellington boots and umbrellas can be borrowed when the weather is wet.

- ✔ Bar
- ✔ Parking
- ✔ Restaurant
- ✔ Wi-Fi

Rooms

7/10

Each room – there are 12 in total – has a backdrop of plain white walls; warmth comes from an array of furnishings, including oak, black chandeliers, chocolate leather and abstract floral patterns. Owner Mark Cribb, who travelled extensively around Asia, has introduced some Far East influences: a hand-painted wooden screen as a headboard, or a Japanese-style bedside table. Room Two, predominantly black with splashes of light, features a bay window facing east – brilliant for catching the the morning sun. Plush beds are draped with Fogarty down duvets and rooms are decent in size (even the two single rooms are a better than some of Dorset's lone traveller options). DVD players available are, with a library of films to browse.

Food & drink

7/10

The ground floor of Urban Beach is a snugger of dining and drinking. Two menus of West Country produce, the 'à la carte' or 'favourites', are available; the former tends towards conventional three-course dining (the trio of coffee- and liquorice-seasoned pork is a highlight), while 'favourites' is a more casual blend of sandwiches, sharing platters and elevated beach café grub.

Breakfast menus change regularly but combine a continental spread with dishes cooked fresh (including a generous full English with thick sausages from nearby Wareham).

Booze is where Urban Beach impresses: add a Bloody Mary to breakfast or end the night with the Dorset Vesper – James Bond's favourite cocktail but made with the county's own Black Cow Vodka and Conker Gin.

Value for money

7/10

Double rooms from £100 year round. Breakfast included. Free Wi-Fi.

Access for guests with disabilities?

There is ramped access and an accessible toilet, but due to the building's age, no lift to rooms.

Family-friendly?

Yes. Children can stay for free during certain half-term breaks, including food. The restaurant offers a children's menu and activity bags.

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