

Rooms feature a small flat screen TV, ginkgo print wallpaper, and a spacious glass bathroom. The Kapok suites are a luxurious 106sq m with an enormous circular soaking tub. Unfortunately the TV doesn't grow with the room size and you may find yourself straining to watch the screen from the modular chaise lounges. A nice setting to be sure but, unfortunately, Kapok suffers from lacklustre, hands-off management that will see you fending for yourself.

Beijing's traditional courtyard residences are well suited to being redeveloped as boutique residences. Several enterprising owners have created small inns – though the results tend to be more homely than hip. **Hotel Cote Cour SL** is a delightful exception among Beijing boutique hotels. This 14-room gem set around a 500-year-old courtyard mixes traditional Chinese charm and contemporary chic. Expect flat screen TVs, free WiFi and a swanky lounge where the chef cooks up whatever is fresh from the market that day. Though not as spacious as the suites, the Deluxe Superior (number 203) is the room to book, with higher ceilings and bustling street views. A second launch hotel by the same folks is in the 798 Art District.

For boutique on a budget, try **Guxiang 20** housed along trendy Nanluoguxiang Hutong. Rooms here start from Rmb480, ranging up to Rmb1,399 for its three spacious suites, all of which come with big wooden patios overlooking the hotel's rooftop tennis court.

Just off Nanluoguxiang, **DuGe Courtyard Boutique Hotel** is a handsome new addition to the courtyard accommodation scene. The Qing dynasty residence has been remodelled to include 10 bedrooms with private en suites, each with its own design theme – such as Silk Road Courtyard and Gold Lotus Room – and featuring original antiques, custom-designed furnishings and contemporary artworks. A small pavilion bar and lime-lacquered Chinese dining room opens onto a sunny courtyard. Beijing's funkier shopping boutiques and several cool diners lie on the doorstep too.



DuGe Boutique Hotel/ photo: hotel