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TRAVEL

The most luxurious places to stay in Paris

France's capital is hosting the Olympics and these gorgeous hotels and apartments are all contenders for a gold medal, says Lisa Grainger



[Lisa Grainger](#)

Monday March 11 2024, 12.13am GMT, The Times

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or the past few decades, France has been the most visited country in the world – with 79 million visitors in 2022 – and when the Olympics start in July, those figures are set to soar. For those wanting a taste of the action and glamour in the City of Lights, where to stay? Of the 108 five-star hotels in the city, here Luxx travel experts suggest 12 of their favourites, from gilt-adorned palaces to tiny private spaces for just four.

La Réserve Paris Hotel and Spa



The Eiffel Imperial Suite

That this former Haussmann-era mansion was constructed for the half-brother of Napoleon III, was the home of Pierre Cardin and is a stone's throw from the French president's house says much about the prestige of this 8th-arrondissement hotel. Just off the Champs-Élysées, overlooking the Grand Palais and Place de la Concorde, it's in the heart of power. It was created by the contemporary master of bourgeois decadence, Jacques Garcia, which is immediately evident upon entering the hall. Its atmosphere is that of the sumptuous Parisian villa of an aristocratic family – one that clearly loves velvet and silk, Persian rugs and gilded antiques, and flattering light for discreet tête-à-têtes. Each space is like that of a grand house: its gilded library packed with leather-bound tomes; its restaurant

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Second Empire mouldings and Versailles parquet. Upstairs, the 15 rooms and 25 suites are flooded with sunlight, well soundproofed and full of little touches that make a room extra lovely: walls are covered in silk; flowers are fresh; beds are clad in Quagliotti linen and bathrooms in Carrara marble. Nearly all the suites have views of the Eiffel Tower and each is kitted out with antiques and contemporary art.



The spa includes a 16m pool, hammam, fitness area and therapy rooms

Although the hotel is compact, its spa is remarkably spacious: with a 16m pool, hammam, fitness area and therapy rooms for Nescens Swiss anti-aging treatments. There's even a hairdresser who will do blow-dries in guests' rooms. The chef has two Michelin stars and two restaurants, the formal Le Gabriel and more summery La Pagode de Cos. The warm and ultra-attentive staff welcome children, allowing them to swim before 10am and arranging excursions, from sailing miniature boats in the Jardin des Tuileries to an evening puppet show. That La Réserve is often referred to as one of the best hotels in the world is no surprise. **Lisa Grainger**

Doubles from €950, [lareserve-paris.com](https://www.lareserve-paris.com)

Hotel de Crillon



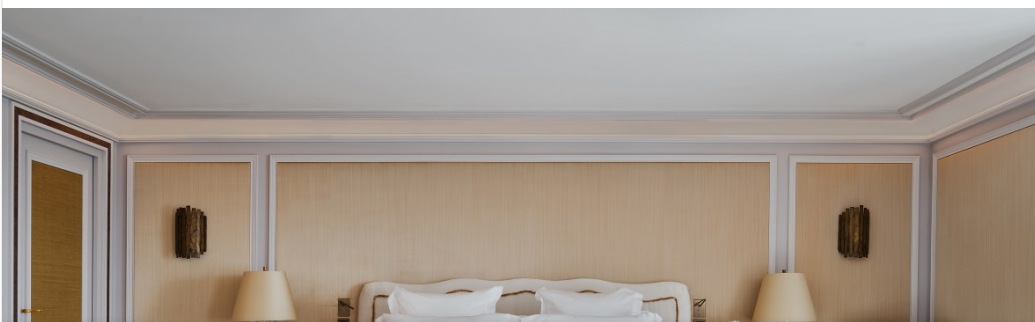
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Bar Les Ambassadeurs

Just how Rosewood's signature home-from-billionaire-home gloss was going to fall in effeminate Paris — and within a gaudy, aristocratic abode commissioned by Louis XV — was anyone's guess. But the design arithmetic was right on, subtly taming that *vive la France* excess (gilt galore, antiques, sconces) with low-slung contemporary furniture, smooth lines and sexy, whisky-hued lighting. The Lebanese architect Aline Asmar d'Amman collaborated with four designers. Bar Les Ambassadeurs has been left to stew in its 18th-century resplendence — diplomats and magazine editors drinks cocktails beneath a renaissance cloud ceiling and monster chandeliers — whereas all 78 rooms and 36 suites feel neat and muted — all except the Grand Suites' busy silk walls or the Versailles-style Grands Appartements, designed by Karl Lagerfeld. Even the most compact of the rooms serve up a sliver of high-octane Parisian living with parquet floors, hefty marble bathrooms, a feast of plump pillows and absurdly comfortable beds (which, like their madeleines, are soft and crisp in all the right places).


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The opulent Suite Louis XV

Then there's the detail: objets d'art, piles of books, bath salts in delicate crystal bowls. Beyond the rooms, a modern take on belle époque unfolds in the Jardin d'Hiver, where stylish tribes hobnob over viennoiserie, smoked salmon and acai bowls. Clipped brasserie-style lunches can spill into a courtyard, beneath the parasols and alongside the creamy stone and statues. But true to Rosewood form, there's a brooding, brassy dining spot that feels more Manhattan than Marie Antoinette. The chef Paul Pairet has worked his magic on French brasserie favourites at Nonos, elevating escargot and soufflé without the smoke, froth and mousse malarkey. Really, it's hard to leave this ravishing hotel, with Butterfly Pâtisserie's millefeuilles winking at guests between mealtimes and the spa's scaly gold-leaf pool swallowing afternoons whole. But, with the Tuileries just outside the topiary-framed entrance and most of Paris's landmarks and smart shops a scenic scuttle away, you really should. **Rosalyn Wikeley**

Doubles from €1,890, [rosewoodhotels.com](https://www.rosewoodhotels.com)

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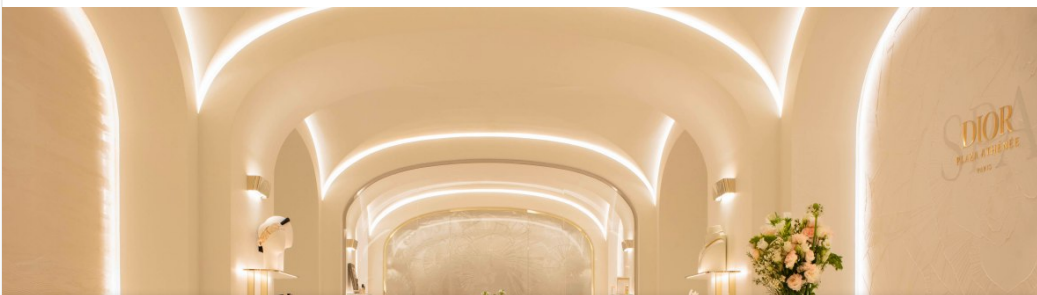
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The Plaza Athénée

MASAHIKO TAKEDA

Fashionable hotels, like fashionable things of all kinds, come and go. Such is fashion. And yet, curiously, for a hotel whose fortunes have been so tightly interwoven with haute couture ever since it opened in 1913, the Plaza Athénée has never gone out of style. Its prime position on Avenue Montaigne surely doesn't hurt; although it's also a matter of fact that the hotel had existed in the same spot for more than 30 years before a certain talented Monsieur Dior moved in across the street. Dior loved the hotel. In fact, the designer's famous Bar jacket was apparently named after its bar. For a long while the chic basement-level establishment was said to contain the highest concentration of beauties in the city, if not on the face of the earth, because it was there that the master and his mannequins would repair for refreshments. (The bar itself relocated to the ground floor some time ago. The old site was recently transformed into the gorgeous Dior Spa.)



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The Dior Spa

In any case, the hotel has good bones. The approximately Second Empire vibe that prevails in most of its 208 rooms and public spaces sits surprisingly well alongside the handful of art deco exceptions. These contrasting but complementary aesthetics are most strikingly embodied in two of the hotel's restaurants: the rampant, no-tassels-barred opulence of Jean Imbert au Plaza Athénée (the stronghold of Alain Ducasse until 2022) and the crisp, glossy, Lalique-accented chic of Le Relais Plaza (a celebrity magnet since 1936). But the hotel's greatest glory, the thing that makes it unforgettable, is perfectly simple and ordinary: geraniums. About 2,000 of them, neatly arrayed in window boxes, which at the right time of year turn the Plaza Athénée into the most splendid vertical garden in Paris. **Steve King**

Doubles from 2,100, [dorchestercollection.com](https://www.dorchestercollection.com)

The Peninsula Paris



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The Peninsula exterior

During the decades that followed its opening in 1908, Paris's Hotel Majestic reigned all but supreme. If the slightly older Ritz was queen of the first arrondissement, two miles east on the Place Vendôme, the Majestic was the star of the 16th, a matter of metres from the Arc de Triomphe at the top of the avenue Kléber. This was where George Gershwin composed *An American in Paris* and Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Sergei Diaghilev, Igor Stravinsky and the young Pablo Picasso dined — together! At least on one extraordinary occasion. Latterly it fell on hard times and suffered several ignominious changes of use, but it reopened a decade ago as the Peninsula — named after the venerable Hong Kong flagship of the brand that now operates it — and is a splendid hotel once again, a place where truly God is in the details. Take the little screen by the door to your room that alerts you to the air temperature outside along with the wind speed, humidity and UV index, so that you can dress appropriately for the day. Or the nail dryer (and potted money plant) on the dressing table. Or the speed at which the bathtub fills in the splendid monochrome marble bathroom. Or the subtle lactic sourness of the yeast just discernible in the flaking, buttery yet ungreasy, caramelised but still soft pastry of the croissants at breakfast, surely the ne plus ultra of viennoiseries.



The public areas are decked out with marble, mosaic and gilt

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Turn out the bedside lamp at night and the room is both perfectly dark — no annoying little lights on the TV or smoke alarm are visible from the blissful bed — and soundproofed. I tried to find fault, but beyond a moment's hilarity at the presence of a "fax waiting" button on the desk — a heritage detail if ever there were one — I searched in vain. All marble, mosaic and gilt, its public areas are an object lesson in fin-de-siècle grandeur, especially the palm court that is now its chandelier-lit Lobby restaurant. The almost entirely French staff, attentive but not intrusive, have none of the hauteur their counterparts at lesser Parisian palaces can sometimes employ to intimidate guests. And if what you ultimately want from a weekend in Paris is a postcard view of the Eiffel Tower, well there's one from every table of its two rooftop restaurants: one outdoor, the other accorded two Michelin stars. **Claire Wrathall**
Doubles from €1,388, [peninsula.com](https://www.peninsula.com)

Cheval Blanc Paris



Most bedrooms have floor-to-ceiling windows and stunning views

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When a hotel is part of a luxury portfolio that includes super-brands such as Louis Vuitton, Dom Pérignon and Tiffany & Co, it's hardly a surprise to discover that it is a temple to good taste. But this place isn't simply exquisitely styled, it also offers a magical window on to the City of Light. Housed within one of the capital's best-loved landmark buildings, the art-deco La Samaritaine, it sits just along from the Louvre and has classic views of Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower and the Seine. In fact, almost all its 72 glamorous bedrooms have floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the river, and the designer Peter Marino has imbued them with a creamy calmness that contrasts beautifully with the mesmerising 24/7 real-life theatre on the Pont Neuf below. His laser-like focus extends to every detail of the interiors, from the art to the marble-clad bathroom amenities. Guests have a choice of products, one range scented with woody depth, the other with fresh, floral notes, both created by the Dior master perfumer François Demachy.



The hotel sits inside the the art-deco La Samaritaine building

The option for over-the-top pampering continues in the hotel's sumptuous Dior spa, where rituals can last up to 150 minutes and the show-stopping pool has strategically placed mirrors that make it look even longer than its impressive 100ft. Dining is

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traditional French brasserie; Plénitude, headed by the chef Arnaud Donckele, has three Michelin stars for its adventurous European cuisine; while Langosteria, Italy's favourite seafood restaurant, has migrated north to open an outpost on the seventh floor (although its tree-lined terrace could only be in Paris). Service regularly stops so that diners can take selfies with an illuminated Eiffel Tower in the background. **Susan d'Arcy**

Doubles from €1,750 b&b, [chevalblanc.com](https://www.chevalblanc.com)

Le Meurice



The Presidential Suite

You can go sightseeing in Paris without leaving your hotel — if you're lucky enough to stay in the newly refurbished four-bedroom, £25,000-a-night Belle Etoile penthouse suite on the seventh floor of the legendary Le Meurice. The truly spectacular view from its enormous roof terrace ticks off no fewer than 18 Paris landmarks, all the way from Sacré-Coeur to the Eiffel Tower, with the Louvre, Jardin des Tuileries, Arc de Triomphe and Musée d'Orsay in between. There's something surreal about being able to see picture-postcard Paris below you — which is apt when you learn that Le Meurice was home to Salvador Dalí for one month every year and that Pablo Picasso celebrated his wedding to the Russian ballet dancer Olga Khokhlova in the Salon Pompadour ballroom (he left a dent from a champagne cork in one of the paintings; it's still there). Le Meurice opened

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true to its artistic heritage. Everywhere you look there are playful details, aided and abetted by Philippe Starck, who was brought in to add some modern twists: sleek Eero Saarinen tulip chairs beneath opulent chandeliers; a contemporary waterfall glass sculpture alongside 100-year-old frescoes; a Dalí eye staring out from a glass cabinet in the wood-panelled Bar 228. Guests can choose between Restaurant le Meurice Alain Ducasse in a dining room inspired by the Salon de la Paix at the Château de Versailles, or the relaxed Restaurant Le Dalí, which serves delicious French cuisine.



The decor in Restaurant le Meurice Alain Ducasse was modelled on the Salon de la Paix at the Château de Versailles

In the basement, the serene, modern spa is the only one in the city to stock the exclusive Swiss skincare brand Valmont. The refurbishment of the penthouse suite was done by the cool design couple Luc Berger and Margaux Lally, who have also overseen the redesign of 29 rooms in the hotel over the past two years. Their vision? What would a modern-day Versailles look like if it were designed now? The apartment is both luxurious and understated, audacious and modern, the perfect space in which to relax and entertain. With a white, grey and gold palette, a dining table that seats ten, a cinema-style sitting room and a stunning marble bathroom, this is apartment living, **Succession-style Louise France**

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Maison Villeroy



The rooms have a chic, calming feel

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Discretion is the watchword at Maison Villeroy. Prepare to be met with puzzled expressions when telling all but the most plugged-in Parisians where you're staying. And that's just the way this ultra-luxe, 11-room hideaway likes it. Visiting shortly after fashion week, I learn that a Hollywood star and big-name fashion designer both made it their base. Good luck finding out who they were, though. The Maison specialises in offering the frequently photographed a home away from home where they

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porcelain magnates from whom it takes its name, but after the First World War housed a series of offices before being snapped up by the Collection group. A ritzy makeover followed: the basement now houses a spa that guests book out for private use, with a Jacuzzi, steam room and sauna, as well as Technogym equipment and personal trainers on request. You may need one — a floor up, the hotel's bijou, 22-cover restaurant Trente-Trois sports a Michelin star and offers a choice of four or six courses for dinner (don't skip the cheese).



The Michelin-starred Restaurant Trente-Trois

Decor is high-octane monochrome with luscious cornicing and huge slabs of astonishingly symmetrical marble and onyx, floors made of oak from central France and chandeliers by Alain Ellouz (who recently provided statement pieces for the Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc's 150th anniversary). Within the chic, calm, self-contained bedrooms, it's easy to forget the world outside — notwithstanding the freshly baked cake left on the coffee table and fleet of butlers available. Since the pandemic, the Maison has been forced to double as a members' club and, come evening, Trente-Trois is full of well-coiffed Parisians decked out in distinctly on-season outfits. The attention-averse, though, may want to follow in the footsteps of the UHNWI who rented out one of the hotel's two private apartments and

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Doubles from €860 a night, with a massage for two and one hour's private spa access, maisonvilleroy.com

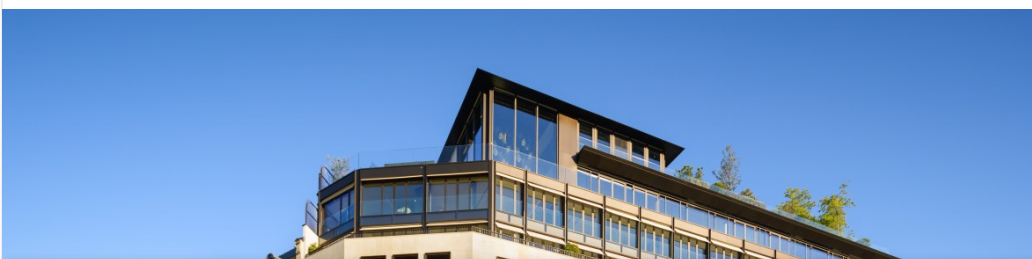
Bulgari Hotel Paris



The penthouse suite

TOMMY-PICONE

Five years ago, 30 Avenue George V was an ungracious 1970s office block, a blot on the glittering landscape of flagship stores and Palace hotels — the so-called Golden Triangle — that extends from the Champs-Élysées to the Seine. Reimagined by the Parisian architects Valode & Pistre, and the Milanese designers Antonio Citterio and Patricia Viel, it has become one of the area's glossiest hotels, dressed in a sultry palette of gold, black, brown and cream, with flashes of ruby and topaz. The 11-storey façade is sleekly contemporary, the entrance thrillingly discreet. Entering through the sliding doors, guests are greeted by a beguiling portrait of Monica Vitti, the 1960s muse of Michelangelo Antonioni, resplendent in a Bulgari necklace, and photographs of Sophia Loren, Claudia Cardinale and other icons of the dolce vita. Life certainly feels very sweet in the double-storey, glass-fronted, €35,000-a-night penthouse with rooftop garden, which overlooks seemingly every iconic building in Paris, not least the nearby Eiffel Tower.



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The site was once an office block

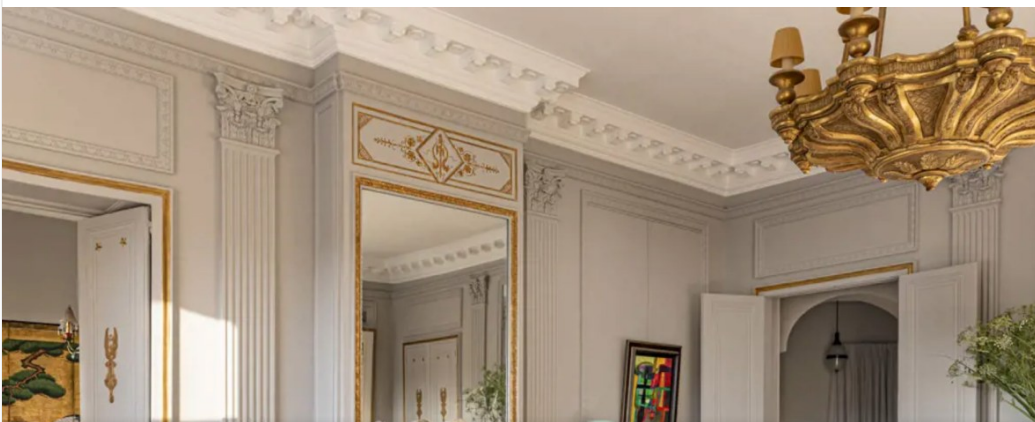
FRANÇOIS GUILLEMIN

Such is the attention to detail in all 76 rooms and suites that every guest is likely to feel like a VIP. Beds are a cloudscape of duvets, pillows and cashmere blankets; marble baths are set with salts, incense and candles; dressing rooms come with Aliseo make-up mirrors and Dyson hairdryers. A cavernous basement spa offers facials by 111Skin and a 25m swimming pool glinting with green and gold mosaics. No wonder the immaculately dressed couples in the bar look so radiant and groomed. Aperitivo hour here, at its ivory counter, glowing seductively against a backdrop of lacquered eucalyptus and black granite, should be a hit. So should the pared-back Italian dishes served on heritage crockery in the intimate but informal restaurant and courtyard garden (executive chef Niko Romito has three Michelin stars at his restaurant in Abruzzo). The Italian staff are youthful and charming, and in some cases even more glamorously attired than the guests. This is a hotel for the fashion crowd, and anyone who wants to bathe in their aura.

Lisa Johnson

Doubles from €1,400 a night, [bulgarihotels.com](https://www.bulgarihotels.com)

La Fiermontina Vendôme



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One of the two lavish apartments

The Place Vendôme isn't a place in which many people live. It's the legendary square to which — if you're the calibre of Ernest Hemingway or Maria Callas or Rudolf Nureyev — your chauffeur whisks you to stay at the Ritz. Or, if your bank balance permits, where you stroll from the nearby Tuileries to choose a diamond from the glittering ring of fine jewellers that encircle a towering statue of Napoleon. That guests can today stay in the private two-bedroom Fiermontina Vendôme is thanks to Fouad Giacomo Filali, grandson of the great French art deco sculptor René Letourneur, who bought the palatial apartment 20 years ago from the Rothschilds, refurbished it and launched it as one of the most beautiful rentals in Paris. Open its five enormous windows above Van Cleef & Arpels and before you lies the Place Vendôme. Click the double-height steel doors shut and between the elaborate 18th-century cornices and Versailles parquet floors stand some of the family's jaw-dropping art collection: in the elegant entrance hall are sculptures by Letourneur and Jacques Zwobada alongside a couple of Chassacs; in the living room a Modigliani alongside a Francis Bacon.



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With the aid of Laboratoire Design, the airy pale-grey and white rooms are furnished with clean-cut 21st-century designs alongside antiques: a Gio Ponti table and Knoll sofa next to giant chinoiserie urns and an Empire desk. A housekeeper is on hand as is a former Ritz concierge, to provide whatever you need, from fresh croissants for breakfast to a helicopter trip to Versailles for dinner. Fine restaurants are within walking distance, but an honest wine-chiller and a capacious kitchen means this is the dream Paris pad to play out Marie Antoinette fantasies. **Lisa Grainger**

From €4,500 a night for four, lafiermontinavendome.com

Le Bristol



The great historic hotels of the world that we lazily refer to as “institutions” and think of as timeless and unchanging are, on the contrary, changing constantly. The point is that, if they are going about it the right way, we notice the changes only when we’re supposed to. In recent years some of the changes at Le Bristol have been impossible to miss. There was, for example, the complete overhaul of its two stupendous terrace suites in 2016 and, about the same time, the rebirth of the bar as one of the coolest watering holes in town, which it remains, partly thanks to its successful BAD (Le Bristol After Dark) programme of late-night DJ sets. In other respects the hotel remains

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infinitely soothing palette of muted greens, pinks and blues. Still chock-full of antiques — a 1,500-year-old bust of Bacchus in the lobby eyes you up as you make your way to the bar (and, being Bacchus, probably wishes he could join you for a cocktail). A table by the window at *Épicure*, *Éric Fréchon*'s three Michelin-starred restaurant overlooking the courtyard garden recently reorganised by *Arabella Lennox-Boyd*, would be a delight even if you ate nothing but a slice of the bread from the boulangerie downstairs, where, uniquely in Paris, the flour itself is milled several times a day.



One of the terrace suites

VINCENT LEROUX

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The hotel's other restaurant, 114 Faubourg — now run by Fréchon's former *second de cuisine* at Épicure, Vincent Schmit — continues to draw a boisterous crowd of hotel guests and locals for lunch and dinner. The 190 rooms, though all different, remain uniformly charming — restrained and unrepentantly old-fashioned yet radiant with good vibes of a kind that are increasingly hard to come by. There is, however, a new house cat. *Plus ça change.* **Steve King**

Doubles from €2,590, [oetkercollection.com](https://www.oetkercollection.com)

Hôtel Grand Powers



The 50 rooms could scarcely be more Parisian

Minutes from Balmain, Cartier, Celine, Cerrito and Dior, and practically next door to Tom Ford, the Powers, as it used to be known, has stood on rue François Premier for more than a century, a once-unassuming four-star. But in 2019, after a transformation by the modish Parisian architect Arnaud Behzadi and the interiors specialist Cathy Crinon, it acquired the prefix Grand, gained an extra star and reopened, an all but instant fashion-pack favourite. With their herringbone parquet floors, ornate wrought-iron balconies, boiserie, rococo chimney pieces bearing gilded antique clocks and, from about a third of them, Eiffel Tower views, its 50 elegant rooms are exquisitely Parisian. As is the provision of Mariage Frères teas by the kettle

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bespoke furniture — slender oak and walnut desks, lacquered brass-accented bedheads, velvet upholstery — tilts the overall aesthetic to Modern with a capital M, as befits a Parisian hotel that first made its name in the 1920s. It's also all so agreeably pretty. In my room (507), a crimson lacquered lobby opened into a room with walls the pink of unvarnished fingernails that matched the anemones and tulips arranged in a bowl on the pale marble-topped coffee table. (There are more overtly masculine options, in celadon green and a greyish blue, but I can't imagine the light in them is as flattering.)

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For all its style, though, there's nothing stuffy or precious about the Grand Powers — or its young, capable, keen-to-assist staff. Instead of a formal restaurant, there's Café 52, a popular unpretentious neighbourhood bar and eatery with a short menu of not startlingly expensive (at least for the 8th arrondissement) dishes. There may be an emphasis on salads, steamed fish, ramen and dim sum, but there's viennoiserie and eggs Benedict for breakfast too, not to mention an impressive list of cocktails (alcoholic and mock) and what it calls “beauty drinks” (kombucha, coconut water). Indeed, this may be the only hotel in Paris that offers sea collagen and CBD oil (supplied by the French holistic beauty brand Holidermie, which operates its small basement spa) as optional additions to its drinks. **Claire Wrathall**

Doubles from €520, [hotelgrandpowersparis.com](https://www.hotelgrandpowersparis.com)

One Place Vendome



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The redesign of the building above Chopard's Parisian flagship branch took six years

GREGORY COPITET

Officially, Chopard makes some of the world's most exclusive watches and jewellery, but for its owners, the Scheufeles, the company is actually an "artisan of emotions". So when they decided to move into the hotel industry, naturally enough, they wanted to reflect the brand's aspirations. The result is One Place Vendome, a six-year reinvention of the 18th-century building above Chopard's Parisian flagship store. The hotel sits on the city's most famous square, a stone's throw from the Tuileries, and walking through its imposing entrance, identified only by a discreet cursive C, feels more like entering a secret world of stealth wealth than arriving at a conventional hotel. The family collaborated with renowned international designer Pierre-Yves Rochon on the project and were determined to create a genuine residential ambience. So the main salon has a working fireplace, despite the endless bureaucratic box-ticking required. This inviting low-key space now segues into a glamorous glass-roofed internal Winter Garden with a stunning mosaic, inspired by the company's jewellery collection.



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There are 15 rooms, all with hand-embroidered wall coverings

GREGORY COPITET

The 15 individually decorated bedrooms are similarly lavish, with hand-embroidered wall coverings, eye-catching pink crystal parrot lamps and Chagalls and Warhols as adornment. The top suite, the Appartement Chopard, has meticulously restored, Versailles-worthy gilded ceilings and a balcony that looks across to Napoleon atop the square’s centrepiece column. Butlers (who are almost as chic as the rooms, their uniforms finished off with Chopard accessories) can do anything, from fixing the perfect *café allongé* to securing a table at the hottest restaurant, though dining in is also a treat. The chef, Boris Algarra, previously at Mandarin Oriental Paris, operates on “Martini time”, serving exquisite dishes any time, any place, anywhere. **Susan d’Arcy**

Doubles from €1,400, [1-placevendome.com](https://www.1-placevendome.com)

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