

TRAVEL

The best new luxury hotels in Paris for a top-class escape

Five of the French capital's latest luxury hotels, from one of its most expensive penthouses to an art-filled home and a private apartment on the Place Vendôme



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As the capital of the world's most visited country, Paris has always had pretty palatial accommodation. But in the past few years, luxury hotels in the City of Lights have polished their acts, upgrading fabulous old palaces with the latest technology, furniture and contemporary art, and transforming grand buildings into slick city pads. Here we review five of the finest newcomers, from a penthouse with one of the finest roof terraces in Paris to a private art-filled apartment on the Place Vendôme.



The dining room at La Fiermontina Vendôme

La Fiermontina Vendôme

By Lisa Grainger

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: the city's bronze "mast" cast with historic French scenes, the windows to the suite in which Coco Chanel died, the cobbled roads over which cashmere-clad Parisiennes walk poodles. 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 Chassac's; in the living room a Modigliani alongside a Francis Bacon.

With the aid of Laboratoire Design, the airy pale-grey and white rooms are furnished with clean-cut 21st-century designs alongside elaborate 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 honesty wine-chiller and a capacious kitchen means this is the dream Paris pad to play out Marie Antoinette fantasies.

From €4,500 a night for four, lafiermontinavendome.com. Business-class tickets from London St Pancras to Paris cost from £490 return on Eurostar, with fast-track check-in, a cocktail lounge and a Raymond Blanc-designed dinner with wine (eurostar.com)

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