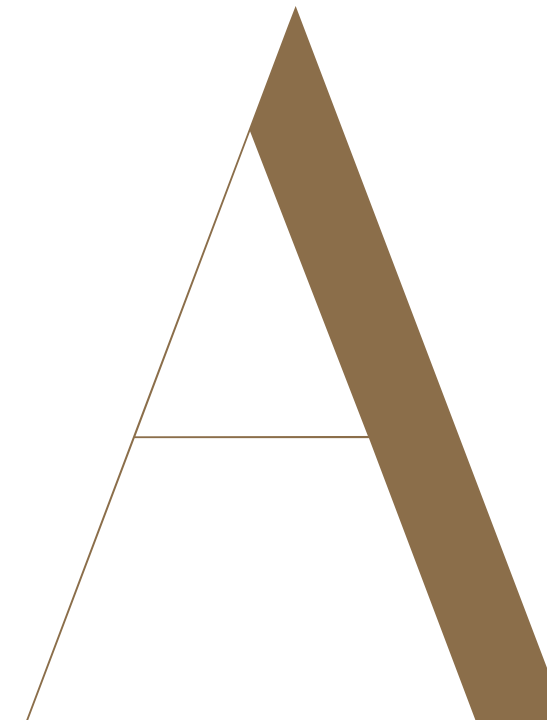




Ritz
PARIS



dieu to the trucks, temporary modular offices and scaffolding that had become so familiar to denizens of the place Vendôme. Gone are the flocks of construction workers, artisans and architects. The majestic wrought iron doors of the Ritz Paris are reopening, the first clients are settling into their apartments and suites. Guests stroll through the lobby and common areas, take a table and converse.

It seems as though almost nothing has changed since the Ritz closed for renovation in August 2012. But countless mysteries linger in the word *almost*. The oak woodwork, Mareuil stone floors, gilding, marble, parquet floors and curtain fabrics are part of a long-treasured framework. The *décor* was, in fact, born yesterday.

Regular guests have returned and are delighted with the new look of “their” Ritz. Recast by the New York-based design firm Thierry W Despont, the Ritz Paris is as dazzling as ever. The newly designed Grand Jardin is sumptuous. Chandeliers draw the light as honey does bees. Decorative objects and paintings charm as irresistibly as the furnishings, now freshly restored to their full splendour. Cutting-edge technology is present everywhere, yet the spirit of the *Grand Siècle* persists. There are three restaurants and as many bars, including one that famously honors the Ritz loyalist, Ernest Hemingway, the new Salon Proust with its fireplace and library, 15 meticulously restored historic suites, the swimming pool and an exclusive area dedicated to the art of CHANEL skin care.

TRIBUTE TO CÉSAR



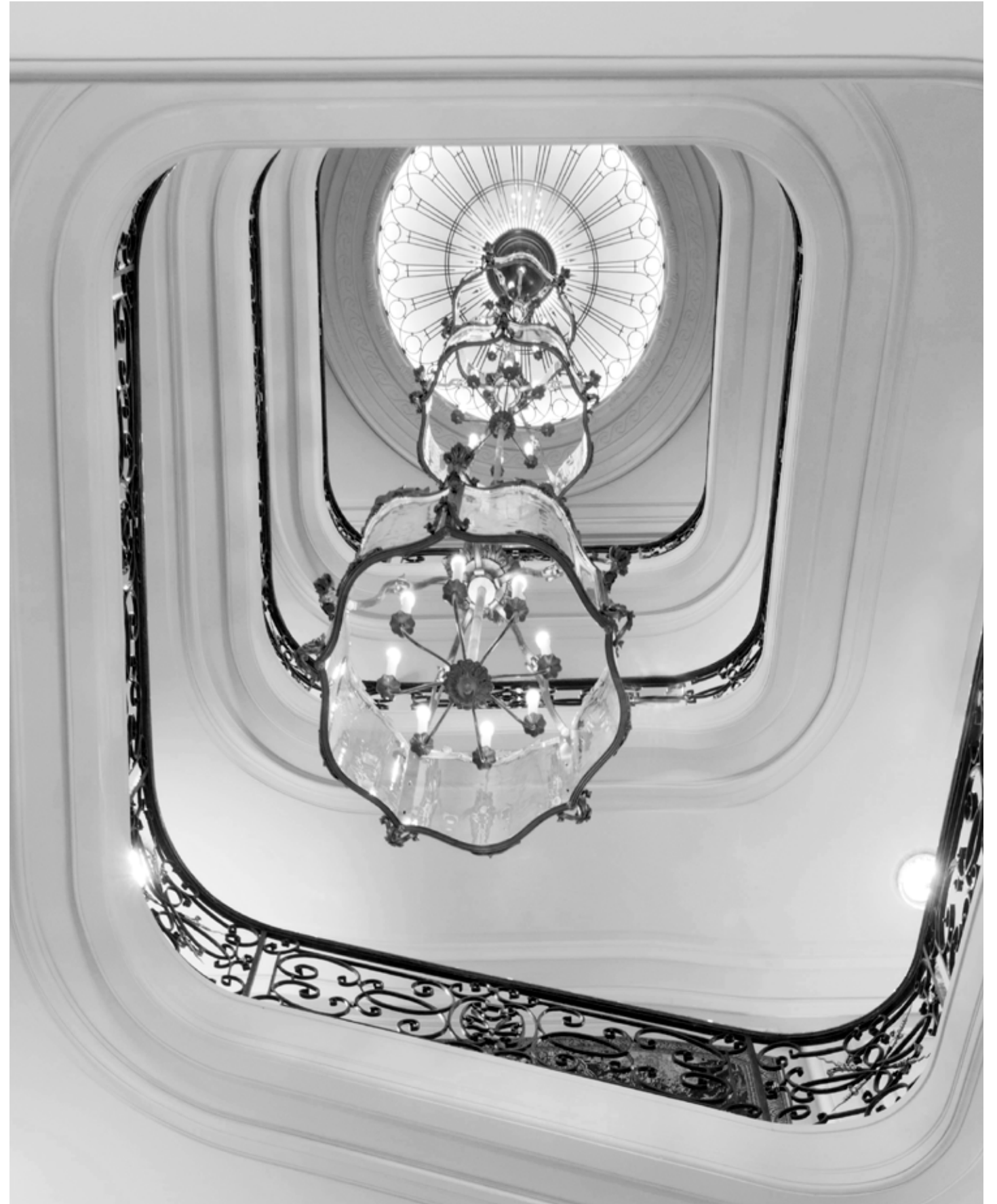


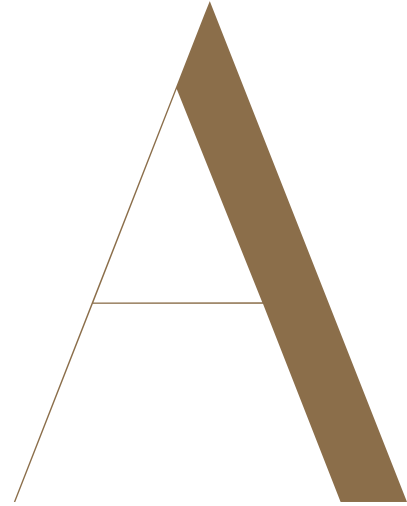
At this long-awaited moment, it is only fitting to pay tribute to the man who created this jewel on the place Vendôme.

A man of modest origins, César Ritz climbed every rung in his profession before opening his first hotel in his own name. A unique address and a marvel at the time, where every room was equipped with electricity, a telephone and a bathtub. With audacity and an inventive spirit, César Ritz marked his era. Obsessed with detail and seconded by the architect Charles Frédéric Mewès, he designed a hotel that was modern, "*hygienic and comfortable*". Romantic and lyrical, he assured that his hotel offered "*all the refinements that a Prince might hope to find in his own private residence*". He invented the alliance of modernity with classicism. "*You have created a chef-d'œuvre*", his admiring investors exclaimed at the opening, adding, "*Kings and Princes will be envious of you, Ritz. You're going to teach the world how one should live*". Many years after, tradition remains. The men and women who participated in the extraordinary renovation of the Ritz Paris have likewise delivered a *chef-d'œuvre*.

In the film *The Leopard*, Visconti closed the grand ball scene with this remark by the young Prince Tancredi: "*If we want everything to stay the same, we must change everything*". Yes, everything must change so that nothing changes. Applied to the Ritz Paris, it was nonetheless an extraordinary adventure. Flashback.

TO THE NEXT CHAPTER





August 1, 2012, 2pm, the final check-out before closing. With his customary elegance, Georges, the Head Receptionist, accepted the last key from the departing guest. Everyone around him felt a pang of sadness. Since his arrival in 1985, Georges had witnessed many years filled with joy and surprises. The bonds with regular guests are so strong, they're clearly "a story-book attachment", as he puts it; it's difficult to become accustomed to the idea of a long-term closure.

114 years after opening, the "grande dame" was having trouble transitioning into a new century. Everyone was doing what they could to solve logistical problems. The time had come to say goodbye. But you don't leave your "home" just like that. "There was no sense in pretending otherwise", says Georges. "I spent more hours at the Ritz than I did in my own home". So, on the last night at the Bar Hemingway, the nostalgic guests were having their last Serendipity cocktail. What would become of Paris without the Ritz?

Paris is empty in August, which simplifies parking for cargo trucks. For its makeover, the Ritz Paris had to move everything. In accordance with the wishes of its owner, Mohamed Al-Fayed, nothing was sold. Unlike other grand hotels that disperse their furnishings at auction during renovation, the Ritz did not abandon its history. Things were lovingly restored. The past was integrated into the future.

Like a miniature Eiffel Tower encased in snow globes sold to tourists, the furniture

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and equipment were stored. Some 124 containers did the job. Naturally, even the smallest knick-knack was inventoried and tagged. Everything went into storage, right down to the curtains.

The Ritz Paris is composed of two buildings: the former residence of the Duke of Lauzun and the Duke of Gramont, facing the place Vendôme, combined with a building at the back, facing the rue Cambon. Renovations began on the Cambon side — it took four weeks — and then, during six weeks, it was the turn of the Vendôme side and the gardens. One miracle: nothing was broken. At the risk of tempting the devil, the chandelier in the Imperial Suite was too large to get through the door so it was removed through a window with the help of a crane.







ONCE IN A LIFETIME



The keys were handed over to the Bouygues construction company in September 2012. At this stage, the older employees recalled the renovations done during the 1980s. At the time, the hotel didn't close its doors. It was an unimaginable game of strategy, given the scope of the project at hand. The hotel's new owner in 1979, Mohamed Al-Fayed, was determined to breathe life into the legend that had fallen asleep on its Proustian

laurels. The Ritz Health Club and its now-famous swimming pool were created. Two basement levels were dug. The room restoration was completed in 1985 and the common areas followed in 1989. To contemporary eyes, the Ritz Paris appeared modern and up-to-date, with its essential spirit intact. One anecdote among many: when a call for bids was issued for renovating the showcases in the shopping Gallery, one man introduced himself to the decorator. When he was shown the Gallery, he was visibly moved and murmured with a faraway gaze: *"The job interests me. It was my grandfather who made these vitrines"*.

Nearly three decades later, the interior architect Thierry W Despont rose to the challenge. For an aesthete who had built an impressive career in the United States, designing homes for prestigious clients, the Ritz Paris offered the adventure of a lifetime. That the renovation would not alter the soul of the hotel was understood. There was no question of shattering the charm of an atmosphere so cherished by its guests. The hotel is a listed Historic Monument with a landmark façade. No modification could be made that failed to respect its architecture and majesty.

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"We made a point of listening to our clients", emphasises Nassim Yaghmaei, Design Manager of the Ritz Paris. "We think that luxury no longer has the same meaning that it did in the 1980s. Comfort is essential, naturally, such as effective soundproofing, but dimensions play a new role. From the outset, the idea was to reduce the number of rooms from 159 to 142. Most important of all was to optimise space and light. Three model rooms were considered with nine colors harmonies, various silks and other fabrics. The strength of the design is due to that distinctive approach".

The preservation of many small historic details was also a priority. It was imperative to continue offering the peach-colored bathrobes and bath linens favored by César Ritz, because, he notes, *"the color softens and flatters women's complexions"*. Regular guests will recognize the swans on the bathroom fixtures, the cords to call for the Valet and Maid, the famous old-fashioned key for regulating lighting at the room's entrance, the tulip lamps, the typical dressing table and the *Marthe* porcelain service by Haviland, which is manufactured and hand-painted in Limoges and has been used at the Ritz since its opening in 1898.

Fine woodwork and fabrics in delicate pastel colors create an intimate *décor*. Artwork adorns the walls. The new rooms are also equipped with clever contemporary resources. A television is camouflaged behind mirrors and another is hidden in an easel. The Louis XVI desk is wired with all the necessary cables tucked under a leather desktop. In total, there are some two kilometers of cables in each room.

The 15 Prestige Suites recall certain of the Ritz's most illustrious guests: Gabrielle Chanel, Marcel Proust, F. Scott Fitzgerald, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Charlie Chaplin or Maria Callas.

MARVELS



Celebrated for its French *savoir-vivre*, the Ritz Paris could do nothing less than choose the *savoir-faire à la française*. Once the Historic Paris Commission gave its approval and the Vendôme Committee applauded, the head architect of Historic Monuments, Alain-Charles Perrot, oversaw the work on the façade. The restoration specialists, seconded by artisans representing numerous artistic *métiers*, went into action.

The renovation is much more complicated than it was in the 1980s. Accessibility and security took priority. Inside the hotel, the rumble of machinery replaced the usual quiet atmosphere. Clouds of dust formed mysterious halos around the stonecutters, masons, plasterers, carpenters, roofers, cabinetmakers and other artisans.

The architecture atelier COS, which supervised the work, engaged top experts. The 1,500 square meters of roofing were renovated by Balas, using some 48,000 tiles. Bourneuf worked on exterior woodwork; the Marbreries de la Seine restored the marble floors while Ateliers Gohard tended to the paintings and gildings. No fewer than 78 colors were created exclusively for this project by the painter-decorator Pierre Finkelstein, and a copyright was created: no other entity has the right to use the color chart reserved for the Ritz Paris. Like paintings, colors have names, among them *Noodle*, *Buckwheat*, *New Banana*, *Hail Storm* and *Shitake*. One of the most memorable moments was undoubtedly the painting of the 180 square meters *trompe-l'œil* ceiling over the swimming pool, a work of art signed by Pierre Finkelstein, Pascal Amblard, Stefano Luca and Jean Sablé.

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“We wanted people who were truly committed, passionate experts, *craftmanship* at its best.”

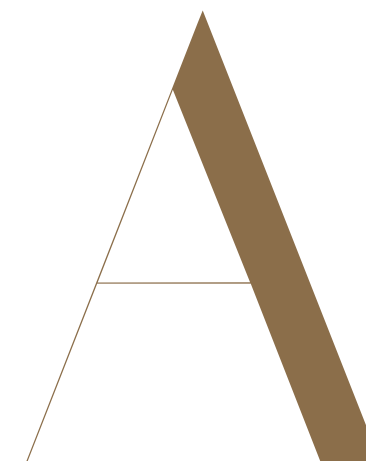


In addition, top ateliers won the bids for furniture restoration. Light fixtures were entirely revamped, from gildings to pendants. Some 95% of the original light fixtures have been returned to their original places as have the furniture and fabrics.

“We held up to 10 interviews each before choosing a supplier”, adds Nassim Yaghmaei. *“We wanted people who were truly committed, passionate experts, craftsmanship at its best. Above all, we didn’t want factory robots. We wanted artisans who could produce the perfect outcome and we wanted it to be as much an honor for them as it was for us. Some chairs were repainted 15 times, for example, to replicate their original color”.*

BEYOND THE LEGEND





As with any major construction project, the Ritz Paris has seen its share of expansions. Intended to be multi-purpose, used for banquets, Haute Couture fashion shows or grand balls thanks to the floor that can cover it, the splendid swimming pool — 16 meters long, 9 meters wide — now sits within an entirely redesigned space: the Ritz Club Paris. Except for hotel guests, Club members may now enter through 17, place Vendôme, right next to the new Ritz Paris *boutique*. An homage to beauty, relaxation and well-being, the Ritz Club Paris includes an area dedicated to the art of CHANEL skin care as a souvenir of the long friendship between Mademoiselle Chanel and her personal residence. Elsewhere, coaches bring the fitness room to life. There, too, “*Everything changed and nothing changed*”. The frescoes, mosaics and elegant colonnades remain.

A visitor is less astonished — but just as delighted — on the Cambon side. While new lamps illuminate the Bar Hemingway, the furniture is rigorously identical. Guests will happily find with the cocktail menu signed by extraordinary Head Bartender, Colin Field, and the very special atmosphere of a place the great American writer considered home. Opposite, chic and relaxed modernity wafts through the Ritz Bar. Here, *bistronomie* rules with the new Executive Chef, Nicolas Sale. Carrying on the tradition of innovation, Chefs, bartenders or winemakers will be invited as weekly guests.



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A grandiose and intimate décor affirms its reputation.



Beyond the Cambon entrance, the celebrated — and now renovated — Salon César Ritz opens onto a vast terrace, as does the Salon d'Été on the Vendôme side. A grandiose and intimate *décor* affirms its reputation. The brand new Salon Vendôme was created. With its large proportions, it can accommodate up to 200 people for seated receptions. In addition, seven other private *salons* scattered throughout the hotel are now equipped with leading technology and can adapt to all occasions.

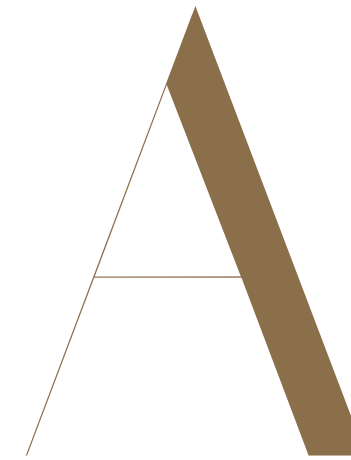
Renaissance, once again, has reshaped the Ritz Paris Gallery. Bathed in natural light, it has become a brand new window for French luxury. This miniature “*rue de la Paix*”, linking the place Vendôme to the rue Cambon, was a final proud accomplishment for César Ritz who, with it, invented the hotel boutique concept. Now, it has come back to life, with 110 meters of marble flooring and new multihued light fixtures that may be adjusted to three levels of intensity.

The 5 shops and 95 showcases — Precious Jewellery, Timepieces, Ready-to-Wear, Haute Couture, Accessories, Home — and the Ritz Paris Concept Store look onto the majestic Grand Jardin, where the trees are home to blackbirds, warblers and finches. The landscape artist, Jean Mus, who is known for several important properties on the French Riviera, has worked in association with Jardins de Gally, to blend elegance of form, a certain purity and inspirations from the South of France. Its curves, undulations and fragrances are irresistible. “*I like to work in places where there is a history to perpetuate*”, he says. Everything is thought out, down to the slightest detail: underneath the lawn, a light grid prevents high heels from sinking in. With its white flowers and panoply of greens, his work is splendid.



REBIRTH





djoining the lobby, the Salon Proust reveals the discreet ambiance that permits guests to “see without being seen”. Underneath its finely carved woodwork, settled into sumptuous banquettes as a fire crackles in the fireplace, guests may savor a timeless afternoon tea.

Facing the grand staircase, the new Bar Vendôme, an elegant *brasserie à la française*, opens at 8am.

Thanks to its new glass roof, the distinctly modern terrace has been transformed into a cozy winter garden. A menu of brasserie classics — veal Viennois, beautiful *sole meunière* and *plats du jour* — offer a counterpoint to the menu at the Ritz Bar. Chef Nicolas Sale is ready for his recital. The successor to Michel Roth — and to the legendary Auguste Escoffier — remains faithful to the hotel’s heritage while offering up a lively cuisine that’s full of surprises and right in step with the spirit of the times.

This new leadership applies equally to the École Ritz Escoffier, which has also been completely renovated. It now boasts three laboratories, including a brand new one that gives onto the hotel’s *grande cuisine*. In all, the cooking school can now accommodate up to 40 people for practical and tasting courses and 30 people for demonstration *ateliers*.

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If, as Auguste Escoffier proclaimed, “good cuisine is the basis of true happiness”, then its kingdom is L’Espadon. Launched by Charles Ritz, César’s son, an avid fisherman, L’Espadon was last renovated in 1982, when owner Mohamed Al-Fayed had the *décor* redone three times before he found it satisfactory. Lined with eight mirrors evoking a miniature Hall of Mirrors, L’Espadon is still arranged with banquettes at its center. Its symbol — the famous wood sculpture representing the swordfish — has been restored in London and is back in place to welcome visitors.

Lunch and brunch at L’Espadon can be served on the terrace — adjacent to the Bar Vendôme — but dinners are always served inside, under a *trompe-l’oeil* painted ceiling, perfectly complemented by ornamental molding, gilding and wall coverings. A grand chandelier illuminates the ballet of service. Attributed to glass and crystal manufacturer F. & C. Osler of Birmingham, England, the 19th-century jewel, measuring 2,80 meters long and 1,30 meters in diameter, was purchased at Christie’s. Featured at several different elite London residences since it left the *atelier* in Birmingham, this five-level chandelier, with its splendid decoration, is unique in Paris.

This monumental chandelier stands as a symbol of a Parisian institution where nothing can be too beautiful and where, everywhere you look, you may contemplate a compendium of precious follies.





Your room is ready.

RENDEZ-VOUS | 5 PLACE VENDÔME

RITZPARIS.COM

The author

Frédéric Couderc

Traveler and writer, Frédéric Couderc lives in Cape Town three months of the year. A seasoned reporter, he is currently devoting his time to writing novels and teaching creative writing.



BEYOND THE LEGEND



Since its opening on June 1, 1898, the Ritz Paris has been a symbol of elegance and the understated luxury of French *art de vivre*. The privacy and glamour of this unique environment immediately made it a gathering place for the greats of this world, royalty, artists and writers, first among them Marcel Proust and Ernest Hemingway. Always loyal to the Ritz Paris, Coco Chanel, Audrey Hepburn and Maria Callas contributed to the mystique of place Vendôme.

ROOMS & SUITES

- 71 large rooms equipped with the latest technology
- 71 suites including 15 historic Prestige Suites, home of the Ritz Paris' most illustrious tenants:

Impériale, Coco Chanel, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Windsor, Vendôme, Appartement Ritz, César Ritz, Maria Callas, Prince de Galles, Opéra, Mansart, Ernest Hemingway, Charlie Chaplin, Chopin and Marcel Proust

- Spacious bathrooms in Italian marble and natural light
- Connecting rooms and suites
- Complimentary Wi-Fi
- "The Ritz Paris follows your schedule"

Check-in and check-out at your convenience

RESTAURANTS & BARS

The Universes of L'Espadon

- Gastronomic French restaurant around four universes:

Les Matins de L'Espadon at breakfast

Les Jardins de L'Espadon at lunch (🍷 **Guide MICHELIN**)

La Table de L'Espadon at dinner for a gastronomic recital and the finest products (🍷🍷 **Guide MICHELIN**)

Les Week-ends de L'Espadon with à la carte brunch

- Private dining room which can accommodate up to ten guests
- A retractable roof to transform the winter garden into a leafy year-round patio
- Open daily from 7AM to 10.30AM for breakfast, from 12.30PM to 2PM for lunch and from 7.30PM to 10PM for dinner ; brunch served on Saturday and Sunday only, from 12.30PM to 2PM

Bar Vendôme

- Brasserie à la française of the Ritz Paris
- Cozy atmosphere
- Terrace service on the patio which turns into a spacious winter garden
- Open from 8AM and throughout the day for dining or enjoying a drink

Salon Proust

- Historic salon that embodies luxury and Parisian refinement
- Fireplace and elegant library
- À la française afternoon tea along with French gourmet creations of Pastry Chef François Perret
- Open daily from 2.30PM to 6PM

Ritz Bar

- Elegant Parisian bistro
- Possibility of selecting one of the 50,000 wine bottles from the cellar accompanied by small plates to share in the evening
- Signature cocktails in the evening
- Open daily from 11AM to 2AM

Bar Hemingway

- Hemingway's favorite hideaway where Colin Field, the famous Head Barman, practices his art of mixology
- A large selection of aged spirits and signature cocktails
- Open daily from 6PM to 2AM

RITZ CLUB PARIS

- 1 560 square meters on two floors dedicated to beauty and wellness
- Heated indoor swimming-pool (17m x 8m)
- Hammam, sauna, experience shower
- A fitness room with state-of-the-art equipment
- Two fitness rooms for personal coaching
- Massages (also in-room)
- Signature manicure and beauty feet & nails
- David Mallett hair salon
- Open daily from 6.30AM to 10PM

CHANEL AU RITZ PARIS

- CHANEL blends the art of skin care at the Ritz Paris
- A unique and customized sensory experience
- 5 elegant alcoves, each featuring a private bathroom
- CHANEL *boutique* around 3 universes: fragrance, makeup and skin care

THE GALLERY & THE CONCEPT STORE

- A bright shopping gallery in the spirit of Paris' covered passages
- 5 exclusive *boutiques*: Tasaki, Reza, Maison Ullens, Colombo Via della Spiga, Heroes
- 95 showcases displaying the best of Precious Jewelry, Timepieces, Ready-to-Wear, Haute Couture, Accessories, Home and high-end products of the Ritz Paris brand
- The Ritz Paris Concept Store dedicated to the essentials of travel and Parisian keepsakes
- A premium personal shopping service available for guests
- Open from 9AM to 8PM Monday to Saturday and from 10AM to 6PM on Sunday

ÉCOLE RITZ ESCOFFIER

- Courses in cooking, pastry and wine pairing for all levels
- Intensive courses in cooking and pastry for professionals
- Kitchens can be privatized for groups or special events
- Simultaneous English translation
- Open Monday to Sunday

RECEPTIONS & CONFERENCES

- 8 beautifully appointed banquet rooms for every occasion: meetings, conferences or private receptions
- Custom-designed events: weddings, fashion shows, garden parties or private dinners in a Prestige Suite
- Every room offers Wi-Fi and the latest technology
- Private access to the Grand Jardin (1 600 square meters) for exclusive moments

RITZ KIDS

- Personalized welcome for children up to 13 years old
- Special classes at the École Ritz Escoffier for children from 6 to 11 years old
- Initiation to a taste for delicious cuisine and art of travel

WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

- Jewelry and fashion *boutiques* on place Vendôme and rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré
- The Louvre Museum, the Jardin des Tuileries and the Opéra Garnier
- The Champs-Élysées and the Arc de Triomphe (10 minutes)
- The Eiffel Tower (15 minutes)

ACCESS TO THE RITZ PARIS

- Airports:
Orly Airport in 30/45 minutes
Charles de Gaulle Airport in 45/60 minutes
- Train stations: Eurostar and TGV in 20 minutes
- Metro: Opéra, Concorde

SERVICES

- Two-way private airport transfer with VIP meet & greet at the aircraft door, on demand
- Courtesy car Bentley

Your room is ready.



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