



Above and below:
Interior and exterior views of
the exclusive Morbena Club
in Saint-Germain-des-Près



and burnt red Kilim patterns, paired with hardwood floors and beautiful bespoke cocktail bars with ice-makers in each room.

The hotel may be carved out of a similar concept to the Grand Pigeon and Bachmann, but its almost Gothic speak-easy bar and restaurant with handsome outdoor terrace, and its simple but audaciously lived rooms, give it its own merit. "I wanted to create something that pushed our boundaries even further, something that is a sort of conglomeration of our favourite travels and experiences," said Mr. Morozot.

Also dabbling in the restaurant with rooms concept, film producer Jean-Pierre Marois, who overhauled and reopened his father's **Les Bains** last April, demonstrates that you don't have to be under 40 to play the boutique hotel game. Paris's answer to New York's Studio 54 throughout the '80s and '90s, Les Bains was originally built in 1885 as an exclusive bath house with a café frequented by Marcel Proust. It later became an exclusive club where the world's celebrities partied – from Bowie and Warhol to Lagerfeld and De Niro. A soulful hybrid venue, the

"This new generation of hoteliers has succeeded in making hotel dining cool again"

blood-red restaurant is tethered to the legendary basement club where the Rolling Stones and Jay Division once performed. Upstairs, Mr. Morois added 39 smart light-filled rooms designed by Tristan Auer and Denis Montel.

Even the below-the-radar 13th district of Paris has its own new generation boutique hotel. Brainchild of former fashion journalist Vanessa Scoffier, **Hôtel Henriette's** baroque farmhouse haven has bright, homesy Scandinavian-style rooms and an attractive conservatory. One of the city's most charming *piéd-à-terres*, you'd be hard pushed finding a better value hotel.

Following suit is the exclusive **Montana Club** with its six new eclectic apartment style rooms upstairs. Inspired by the life of wild child Serge Gainsbourg, they were designed by Vincent Darré, who was also behind the Petrusian-fueled *Casche Caster* restaurant and rooftop suah bar opening this spring.

POP-SPLASHED ROOMS

Another newcomer on the scene is local favourite **Hôtel Amour's** big sister, the **Grand Amour**. Designed by street artist and club owner André Saadea, it is part of Thierry Costes' *Bourgeoisly* Group. With 42 pop-splashed rooms and an apartment, the boutique hotel comes with a barista-baked coffee shop, a restaurant, cocktail bar, library, artwork by Keith Haring and photography by Man Ray.

While Thierry Costes is busy with the **Grand Amour**, his uncle Jean-Louis, who held on to the swanky **Hôtel Costes** when his brother Gilbert said he split the empire some years back, has snapped up the aging **Hôtel Le Lotti** just a few doors away. It will be completely revamped before reopening later in the year.

These new hotel openings show there really was a gap in the market. These grand hotels with hefty prices and blinged lodgings with close to no guest experience now have serious competition. From quiet and cosy hotels with good beds and views of picture-perfect Parisian surroundings, to lodgings with cool cocktail bars and restaurants spilling with locals, this new generation of hoteliers has succeeded in making hotel dining cool again. And they have given the sidelined segment of three- and four-star establishments a real guest experience, thus catering to a more demanding, informed and fashionable crowd. Gone are the days when the sound of the stirrer hitting the sides of your glass would echo through the empty bar. Now hotel restaurants must be booked weeks in advance, and bars are standing room only. In fact, on most evenings you'd be lucky finding anywhere to rest even the tips of your elbows. **FR**

THE BOUTIQUE HOTELS OF PARIS

A NEW, EXCITING TREND IS SWEEPING ACROSS THE CITY AND REINVENTING THE WAY WE DRINK, EAT AND SLEEP

Words: Rooksana Hossainaty

Previously monopolised by grand luxury hotels, overpriced chainy boutique lodgings and standardised, clinical-looking affairs, Paris's trendy hotel scene has recently needed sprucing up. Enter the new generation of young, well-bred and well-travelled hoteliers with plenty of vision and impeccable taste. Focused on crafting a contemporary guest experience out of a speak-noy aesthetic and novel amenities like in-room cocktail bars, they are reinventing the Parisian boutique hotel.

With the exception of Paris's iconic luxury hotels, three- and four-star hotel restaurants and bars used to be soulless affairs deprived of any atmosphere, or patina, but in the past few years a new boutique hotel scene has been gaining momentum. Since 2013, a dozen smaller, game-changing hotels have opened their doors. Feted by a cool crowd of young, discerning travellers and locals alike, they have become the place to be seen sipping on a bespoke cocktail, dining on fresh Italian burrata, or heading upstairs to bed.

CREATING A STIR

The movement was relatively slow coming, with *Hotel Amour* as early as 2006, *Mama Shelter* in 2008 and *Hotel Edgar* in 2010. Creating a stir, they proved there was a gap in the market. "We realised that no one else was doing hotels with a real bar and restaurant that offered a memorable, fun, almost club-like experience at night, and contemporary well-designed attractive rooms at affordable prices. It was about finding the right balance because we didn't want to fall into the backpacker category either," said former owner Serge Tripiano (of Club Med).

Located in the off-the-beaten-track 20th district, the cosmopolitan *Mama Shelter* (sold to French hotel giant Accor in 2014) is the fruit of Mr Tripiano's collaboration with celebrity designer Philippe Starck. Not only did they give budget hotels a run for their money with a lead-in rate of €100, but they also offered something no other boutique hotel did in terms of facilities and ambience. So successful was the concept that they soon rolled out a *Mama* in every big French city, as well as *Lebanon* and *Los Angeles*.

The restaurant and bar with rooms concept took off, it was 30-something Adrien Gloguen who became a part of the beginning of the movement in 2013 with his



The House of Shalony velvet wallpaper is a theme that runs through the hotel's interiors, but each room is unique.

