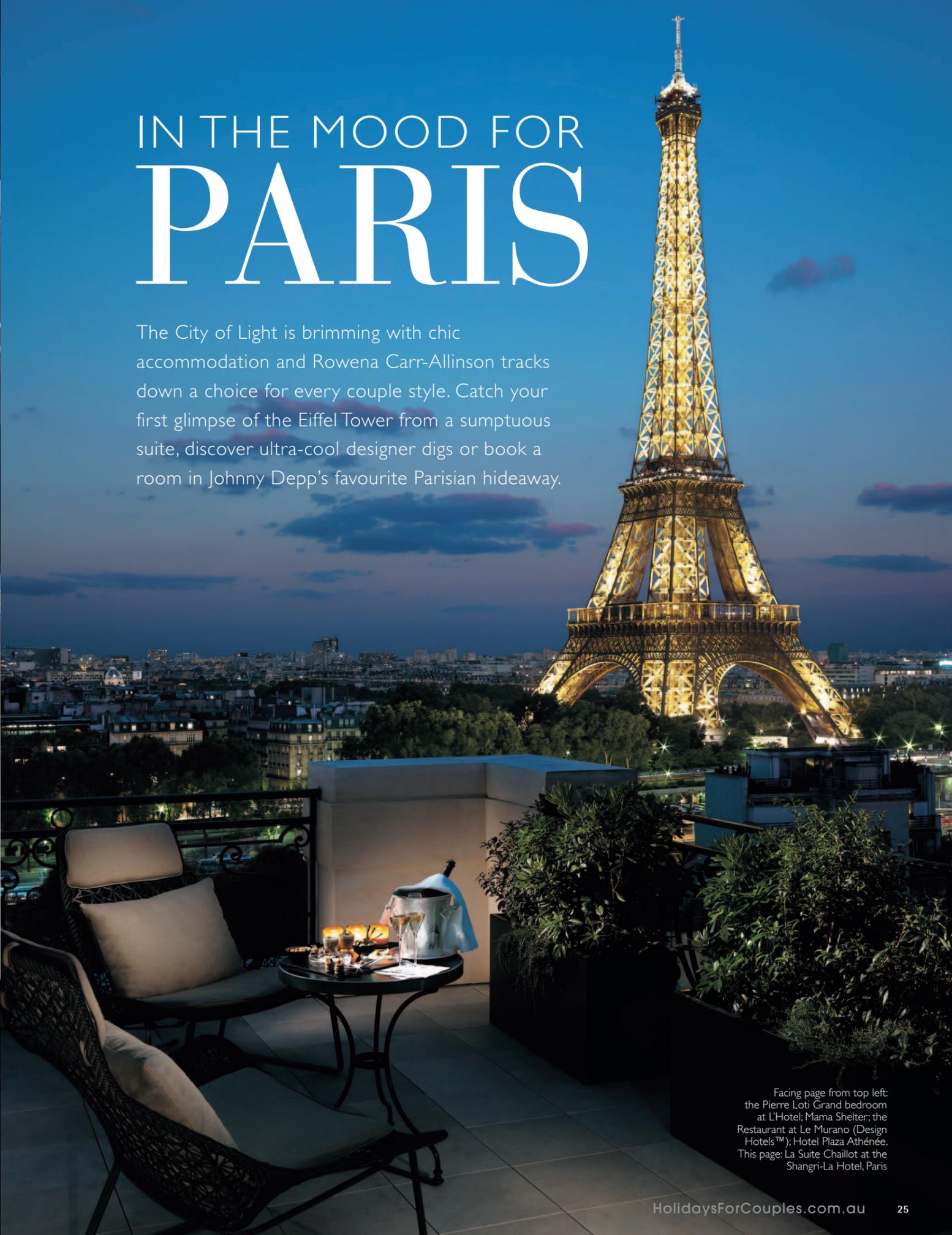


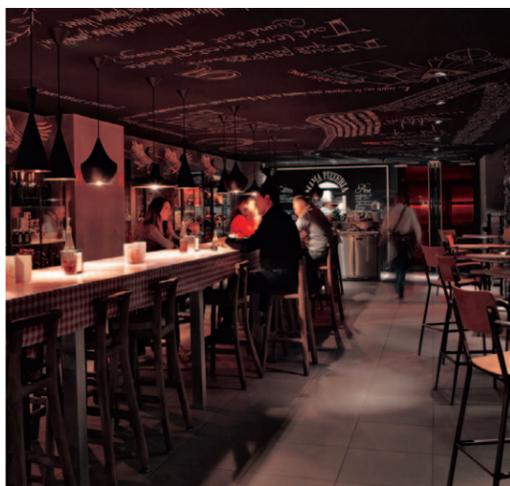


IN THE MOOD FOR PARIS

The City of Light is brimming with chic accommodation and Rowena Carr-Allinson tracks down a choice for every couple style. Catch your first glimpse of the Eiffel Tower from a sumptuous suite, discover ultra-cool designer digs or book a room in Johnny Depp's favourite Parisian hideaway.



Facing page from top left: the Pierre Loti Grand bedroom at L'Hotel; Mama Shelter; the Restaurant at Le Murano (Design Hotels™); Hotel Plaza Athénée. This page: La Suite Chaillot at the Shangri-La Hotel, Paris



This page from top left: La Suite Imperial at the Shangri-La Hotel; part of Le Restaurant at L'Hotel; the island bar at Mama Shelter; drinks at Mama Shelter; the Mata Hari Chic bedroom at L'Hotel. Facing page: The Grand Salon at the Shangri-La Hotel

L'Hotel

Best for... The Culture Vultures

Tucked away in Rue Des Beaux Arts, L'Hotel, in the Left Bank's St Germain district is one of the city's best kept secrets. The cosy, unassuming 20-room hotel is elegant, chic and has plenty of stories to tell. Originally a 'Pavillon d'amour' or love nest, the Palladian-style building's trademark is its six-floor rounded dome.

Today it's Johnny Depp's home away from home in the City of Light, but in the past it was Oscar Wilde's stomping ground. In fact, he never checked out. His room, a vision in shimmering greens, is all stunning peacock frescoes and memorabilia with a gorgeous little terrace. Book the Mistinguett bedroom to sleep in the queen of cabaret's very own Art Deco mirrored bed. Each room has its own identity with antiques galore signed by design guru Jacques Garcia.

It's hard to say what the most amazing thing about L'Hotel is. Could it be its elegant architecture or the gourmet Michelin-starred restaurant, or even its hidden hammam pool for two in the basement? Whichever, this is definitely one of Paris' most charming and romantic hideaways. €285 per night. l-hotel.com

Mama Shelter

Best for... The Budget Bargainistas

On the receiving end of a host of awards from everyone from hip magazine *Wallpaper* to *Travel+ Leisure* and CNBC, Mama Shelter has been a roaring success thanks to its edgy interior design, great value for money and quirky side.

Created by the family behind Club Med and a French philosopher, the hotel's look and feel was devised by French design guru Philippe Starck. Dubbed 'Eclectic and electric', it's friendly, warm and casual yet utterly stylish. The rooms are contemporary and cool, but with a sense of humour. You've got to love the *Star Wars* and comic book inspired masks that double up as bedside lamps!

Although the colours are stark, monochromatic blacks and greys, the rooms still feel cosy despite a slightly 'post industrial' feel. Perhaps the mix of sleek dark wood finish and bare concrete walls? With five star touches like the 100% cotton satiny smooth sheets and the usual minibar, IMAC and even a microwave, it's a nice mix of service and independence. Another perk of staying at Mama Shelter? The free in room movies on demand! Although, chances are you'd rather be exploring Paris. €70 per night. mamashelter.com

Shangri-La Hotel Paris

Best for ... The Luxury Lovers

To stay in utmost Parisian luxury, check into the brand new Shangri-La Hotel in the very chic and brilliantly located 16th arrondissement, right near the Trocadero and across the Seine from the Eiffel Tower. The one-time palace of Roland Bonaparte, Napoleon's nephew, it was originally built in 1896 and comes with fantastic views, a chic East meets West vibe, impeccable staff and totally dreamy rooms. Sumptuous rooms with their antique style décor; all gilt edging and plush furnishings are all part of the VIP experience, as well as the welcome jasmine tea and the beautiful bathrooms with their Bulgari White Tea scented products.

The Duplex Terrace Suites are the perfect place to indulge and relax, or even propose! Not to mention, the best place in Paris to have an intimate





breakfast, complete with silver service, and Eiffel Tower views! The hotel also a gourmet restaurant: La Bauhinia. The circular room at the heart of the hotel sits under a giant glass dome with its own oversized Murano chandelier. The decor is Asian inspired with flattering tones of Vert D'Eau and deep reds, while the menu also mixes Oriental flavours with classic French. The perfect place to indulge before a nightcap in the fabulous cosy, dimly lit bar. €695 per night including American breakfast for two. shangri-la.com

Hotel Plaza Athénée

Best for... The Old School Romantics

It's impossible not to feel a little like Carrie from *Sex & The City* when sweeping through the Plaza Athénée's revolving doors.

The legendary Parisian 'palace' on the very smart Avenue Montaigne, just off the Champs Élysées is a parallel universe where the wealthy and well dressed roam. The rooms are gloriously plush, with elegant furnishings, beautiful period details and Parisian views aplenty. The top floor Suite Eiffel, with its own roof terrace is jaw-droppingly beautiful: a pristine Art Deco apartment complete with Eiffel tower views from the bathtub. Bliss!

The famous Relais Plaza restaurant is one of the city's institutions. In a world where hotels and restaurants are constantly trying to be the next big thing, it's a real breath of fresh air to be transported back in time amidst the authentic Art Deco glamour. Oozing 'Old World Old School' chic, it's no wonder Yves St Laurent lunched here every day in the 80s!

After a continuous stream of power brokers, ladies who lunch and well-heeled families in the Galerie des Gobelins, the hotel's bar turns into one of Paris' hippest nightspots where a young crowd of beautiful

people congregate at night ... just the place to be. €670 per night. plaza-athenee-paris.com

Le Murano Urban Resort

Best for ... The Hip & Happening

To go trendy, stay at the ultra hip Murano Urban Resort. Situated on Boulevard du Temple, in the Marais area, the sleek hotel is all about cutting edge design. More than a hotel, it calls itself an Urban Resort offering super sexy rooms, but also a swanky restaurant, where Isabelle Adjani is a regular, and a glamorous spa.

Make your way past the white leather sofas, to the disco-like lift and past dark passages to the honeymoon suite: a swish room with huge round bed, funky candy colouring and a bathtub swathed in ethereal curtains.

Everything is high tech, from the changeable coloured-lighting for a pink, yellow or blue mood, to the finger-print room entry system – so very James Bond!

If budget isn't a problem, book a suite on the upper floors. Some even have their own pools, and fantastic rooftops views to boot. Romantic and très chic!

After tasting a dish of roasted sea bass or a truffle risotto in the restaurant, you can sample one of the 150 types of vodkas in the bar or venture out for a stroll into the charming Marais neighbourhood. €350 per night. muranoresort.com

From top left: the Hotel Plaza Athénée; Alain Ducasse at Hotel Plaza Athénée; Le Murano Urban Resort; part of the restaurant at Le Murano Urban Resort; La Cour Jardin at Hotel Plaza Athénée