



the newly pedestrianised Seine (both Right and Left banks) is a must, as is a dip at the revamped Art Deco Piscine Molitor.

Rooms

A welcome side effect of the new wave of hotels is space. Vast areas, lobbies and suites, tailor-made for hospitality are a breath of fresh air in a city where space is at a premium. The new generation is also leading the way for a more cosmopolitan feel, killer details and flawless service. Bathtubs with a view are also hot news and, apparently size does matter – well, when it comes to Paris’s Presidential Suites at least.

Let’s not forget spas, now also de rigueur with the Raffles Royal Monceau’s Clarins sanctuary, Plaza Athenee’s Dior Institut and the Mandarin Oriental’s 900 sq m extravaganza.

Designer style is also in demand, with Christian Lacroix adding his stamp on Petit Moulin; Jacques Garcia working his magic at Fouquet’s Barriere; and Brit Bambi Sloan’s surreal makeover at the Saint-James hotel.

Boutique newcomers making noise include Seven in the Latin Quarter with its quirky suspended beds and Jules et Jim, a minimalist arty retro hideaway.

We stayed at...

Mandarin Oriental: A sanctuary of luxury and peace in the heart of Paris, the 138-room Mandarin comes with a huge spa with 14-meter pool, swanky bar, stunning individual suites and exquisite in-room details inspired by the finer French things in life. Plush silks, Diptique goodies and Mariage Frere tea sets luxuriate in the room, while in the kitchens, chef Marx works wonders – he deserves his two Michelin stars for the breakfast served in Kouign-Amman alone.

251 rue St Honore, 75001 Paris
Tel: 00 33 170987888,
mandarinoriental.com

We also like...

L’Hotel: Tucked away in St Germain, this cosy and elegant yet unassuming 20-room hotel was once home to Oscar Wilde. A Palladian “Pavillon d’amour”, its six-floor rounded dome is as beautiful as its Garcia-decorated rooms.

13 rue des Beaux Arts, 75006 Paris
Tel: 00 33 144419900,
l-hotel.com

How to book

Carrier offers three nights’ B&B at Mandarin Oriental from £1,245pp, based on two sharing. Including return travel to Gare du Nord on the Eurostar and transfers.

Tel: 0161 4921357, carrier.co.uk

CONCIERGE

Paris

When to go: Fashion Weeks in January and October equals fully-booked hotels. Spring can be best for wandering, but August is deliciously quiet.

Getting there: Whether flying into Orly or CDG (BA and Air France offer 78 flights weekly) or taking the Eurostar (Business Premier is worth it for the lounges) that whizzes to Gare du Nord in just over two hours (18 times daily) easy access is a big plus.

Getting around: Happily, taxis are now plentiful and it’s worth noting G7 cabs accept credit cards in all cars. For green sightseeing, suggest Velib rent-a-bike (en.velib.paris.fr). Also on two wheels, Vespas (leftbankscooters.com) can be dropped at hotels, or suggest a quirky tour by 2CV (4roues-sous-1para-pluie.com).

Wow factor: To celebrate the new J’aime Chloe store, Mandarin Oriental’s package includes a night in a Couture suite, VIP welcome at the boutique

and a limited edition Alice handbag, £2,826. Available until March 31.

What’s new: Hotel Buddha bar (buddha-bar.com/new/hotels_paris.php) opens in April; the revamped Tour Montparnasse’s Le Ciel de Paris (cieldeparis.com) is as famous for its views as its menu; Muse Galliera, the refurbished Fashion Museum reopens this autumn; while new Cinema Luxour is set for March.

Useful contacts: Atout France, rendezvousenfrance.com, Tel: 020 7061 6620. Paris Tourist Office, parisinfo.com

Time: GMT +1.

In touch: Dialling code: 00 33 1. Many cafes offer free Wi-Fi, as does Ville de Paris, with 400 spots, including parks.

Cashflow: £1 = €1.16

