

THE NEW WAVE IN



PARIS

BY MARY WINSTON NICKLIN

No matter how many times you've strolled the streets of Paris, there are always new ways to get your food, fashion and culture fix. This year has seen a lovely assortment of hotel and restaurant openings. And on the horizon: the arrival of The Peninsula Hotels in 2014. Could the Paris hotel scene possibly get any hotter?

Where to Stay

Want to spend the night just a few steps away from the Louvre? The new **Grand Hôtel du Palais Royal** (www.grandhoteldupalaisroyal.com) boasts a city-center location just a stone's throw from the museum. Slated to earn a five-star rating, it will be the only hotel next to the Palais-Royal, the monumental palace garden lined with boutiques and distinguished by artist Daniel Buren's famous black and white-striped columns. *Luxury Travel Advisor* sat down with Director of Sales François Gelly (f.gelly@ghprparis.com; 011-33-0-1-42-96-72-22) to get the inside scoop on the hotel, opening in early 2013.

Behind a classified historic façade, the former three-star hotel is being transformed into a "deluxe boutique hotel" that channels the "Paris of Parisians." Designer Pierre-Yves Rochon, a favorite of luxury hotel brands like Four Seasons, was tapped to

MARCHÉ AUX PUCES DE SAINT-OUEN is the biggest flea market in the world and a Mecca for interior designers.

imagine the interiors. Dressed in tones of chestnut, gold and chocolate, the 68 rooms are elegant without sacrificing comfort. Many come with balconies overlooking Montmartre, and all have free Wi-Fi. Note: There's no limit to the possible combinations of connecting rooms.

Our room picks: Three of the Junior Suites occupy the building's corner, high above street level, and thus have knock-out balcony views. Opening in May, the Signature Suites are privileged retreats on the hotel's top floors (six and seven). These two suites—one a duplex, the other accessed by private elevator and equipped with a sprawling outdoor terrace—will be the crème de la crème of the neighborhood because of their postcard panoramas.

Like Colette—the trendy concept store on nearby Rue Saint-Honoré—the casually chic restaurant will lure the fashion set. An added perk: It will offer nonstop service from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., a rarity in Paris. A small spa and fitness room round out the hotel attractions. For city recommendations, the Clefs d'Or concierge will connect guests with what's hot on the Paris scene.

Another eye-pleasing renovation is the **Hotel Marignan** (www.hotelmарignan.fr), a five-star boutique hotel just off the Champs-Élysées. This is the first hotel project for designer Pierre Yovanovitch, whose decoration of Parisian luxury apartments has



Photo © Paris Tourism Office/Amélie Dupont

GRAND HÔTEL DU PALAIS
ROYAL Junior Suites have
a cozy feel to them.



ADVISOR INSIGHT:

Paris native **Colombe McCarthy**, the director of the European division at **Destinations & Adventures International** in Beverly Hills, always has her finger on the Paris pulse. “**Le Citizen** [lecitizenhotel.com] is not new, but in a really fun area overlooking the Canal St. Martin. It’s small, often full-booked, and geared to utmost customer service. They e-mail guests prior to their stay to find out if they want restaurant reservations, tickets to exhibits, etc. U.S. clients love it!”

For clients flying out of CDG at the end of their trip, McCarthy books a hotel closer to the airport. “The new **L’Auberge du Jeu de Paume** [www.aubergedujeudepaumechantilly.fr] in Chantilly sounds like a great place to stay overnight, especially for the proximity to Chantilly Castle. At the airport, I recommend stopping at Ladurée [Terminal 2 E & F] to buy fresh macarons to take home... great last-minute gifts that are a lovely Paris memory. You’ll also find a Ladurée cart right before luggage check-in at Terminal 2E, and the shopkeeper can pack them in a protective hard case for the trip.

“I continue to be impressed with the restaurant **Itinéraires** [restaurant-itineraires.com]—run by a great husband and wife culinary team. It’s one of the top meals I’ve had in Paris of late. The ‘Menu Découverte’ at \$76 is a real steal. They currently offer a menu at \$63 Tuesday-Thursday—an even more affordable option. Both food and décor are simple but refined at the same time.”

been splashed across the pages of numerous glossy magazines. His styling of the restaurant, bar, and private screening room will also impress design devotees.

What distinguishes this 8th arrondissement hotel are the stand-out room amenities; all rates include continental breakfast for two, minibar soft drinks, and Wi-Fi. Resembling a private Paris apartment, the 50 guest rooms have Eiffel Tower views and marble bathrooms with covetable Ex Voto bath amenities. Top Digs: The two Prestige Suites, with soaring ceilings on the first and second floors; and the Terrace Suite with its hammam shower and 476-square-foot terrace that puts guests eye-to-eye with the great Parisian landmark. For VIP bookings contact Director of Sales and

Marketing **Henri-François Tiberi** (hftiberi@hotelmarignan.fr; 011-33-1-40-76-34-56).

Shopping

Savvy shoppers with an eye for design flock to the Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen, the biggest flea market in the world and a Mecca for interior designers. Situated just outside the city’s northern perimeter, the market is a treasure trove of rare antiques, vintage Goyard and Louis Vuitton trunks, Art Deco masterpieces, and yesteryear’s haute couture. It’s not uncommon to see celebrities (or their interior designers) filling up shipping containers to outfit houses across the pond.

To navigate this sprawling labyrinth, visitors should hire **Riad Kneife** (www.kneife.com), an antiques expert who works as



RIAD KNEIFE (here) at the Puces indoors. Kneife is an antiques expert who works as the personal shopper for clients of the city's five-star hotels.

GRAND HÔTEL DU PALAIS ROYAL (below) has knockout city view.

the personal shopper for clients of the city's five-star hotels (like La Maison Champs Elysées and Hotel Bel-Ami). Not only can he spot one-of-a-kind items (like Ruhlmann furniture and Scarpa lamps), but Kneife also conducts "live sales" on Twitter (www.twitter.com/RiadKneife), where he'll tweet photos of his market finds. (A Birkin bag sold in minutes.)

A market tour with Kneife will also include lunch at any one of his favorite spots. The newest in the market is Ma Cocotte, recently opened by star designer Philippe Starck. Entirely decorated with finds from the Puces, the chic canteen is Starck's homage to the place where he's found so much design inspiration. In an industrial, loft-like space, you can tuck into classic Parisian dishes at mid-range prices. Two terraces open onto the trendy Marché Serpette and Marché Paul Bert, two of the 15 different markets that comprise the Puces.

Bistros and Bars

Philippe Starck's canteen isn't the only buzzed-about restaurant debut this fall. Anne-Sophie Pic, France's only female chef with three Michelin stars, has opened a Paris restaurant on prime real estate in the 1st arrondissement. The concept is innovative; Pic teamed up with Philippe Bousseton, who creates perfumes for

Takasago, to develop a menu based on different fragrances and their subtle defining notes. **La Dame de Pic** (ladamedepic.fr)—which means "the Queen of Spades"—already has a waiting list one month long.

Jean-Paul Gaultier's former personal chef has opened **Cuissons** (www.cuissons.fr), a gourmet canteen that's ideal for those looking for lunch while exploring the trendy Upper Marais. Sample fresh soups, salads and sandwiches on the premises, or take your meal to go.

The ever-popular **Frenchie** (www.frenchie-restaurant.com) wine bar has expanded its operation, meaning (hopefully) shorter lines for this no-reservations favorite. The wine bar is across the street from the acclaimed restaurant. Le Bristol opened a stunning bar in September; an aperitif here is not so much a delicious end-to-the-day, but a decadent Paris experience.

For excellent value, head to Abri in the 10th arrondissement, where Japanese Chef Katsuaki Okiyama, who used to work at top-notch restaurants Taillevent and Robuchon, delights local foodies in a casual bistro. Indeed the hip 10th arrondissement continues to spawn the city's new generation of restaurants, including Le Galopin from *Top Chef* winner Romain Tischenko. ■

