

Luxury and Value Possible in Paris

By Leah Walker



There are an unbelievable amount of hotels in Paris, but what would you expect from the #1 tourist destination in the world? Couple leisure travelers with those who go to the city for business, and there's rarely a low season.

Paris is one of the most luxurious

places in the world. From high-end designers and jewelers to Michelin-starred restaurants and palace hotels, there are plenty of places to spend your euros. The cost of presidential suites in the most prestigious Paris hotels come with a five-digit price tag per night, but what if you're not a sultan and still want a little extravagance? Just like

sidewalk cafes, there is no shortage of luxury Parisian hotels that also offer excellent values.

The concentration of hotels in Paris' 8th arrondissement is extraordinary. From world-renowned names in luxury to humble hostels, there's something to suit most everyone's budget in this popular district. Home

to Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe, Grand Palais and many other favorites, it's no wonder this area is one of the most popular for visitors.

The words "Hyatt" and "boutique hotel" aren't two words that you'd normally associate together, but that's exactly the case at Hyatt Paris Madeleine. This five-star hotel,

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located in the 8th is housed in a historical Haussmannian-style building with 86 rooms and suites. Renovated in 2007, Madeleine is charming and comfortable, without the pretense often associated with a Parisian five-star hotel.

In the heart of the hotel is La Chinoiserie, a cozy place to enjoy

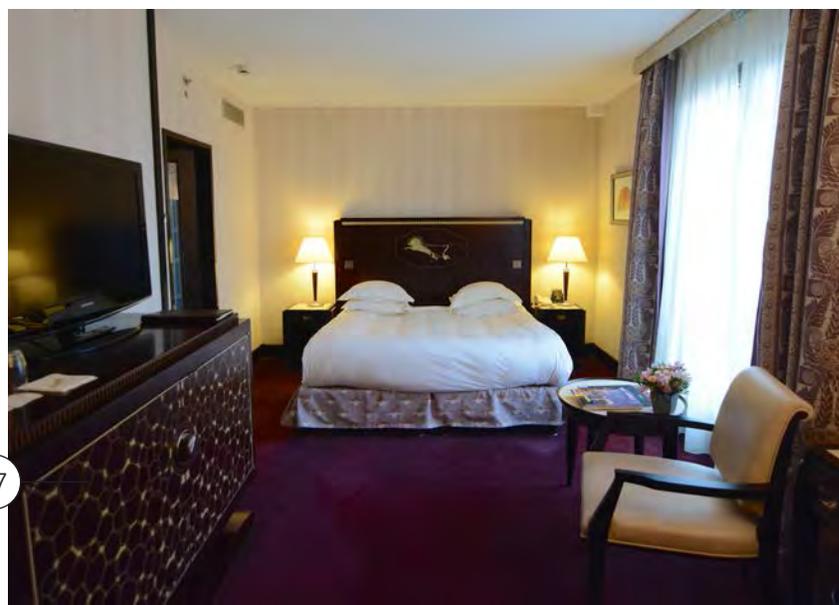
breakfast, lunch, dinner or tea. With excellent food and a glass dome by Gustave Eiffel, the restaurant is worth a visit. If the view outside is just as important as the one inside, then make sure to book a top-floor room. Mine had two terraces that overlooked sights such as Opéra Garnier and Place de la Madeleine, but the best was watching the Eiffel Tower light show twinkle from my bed.

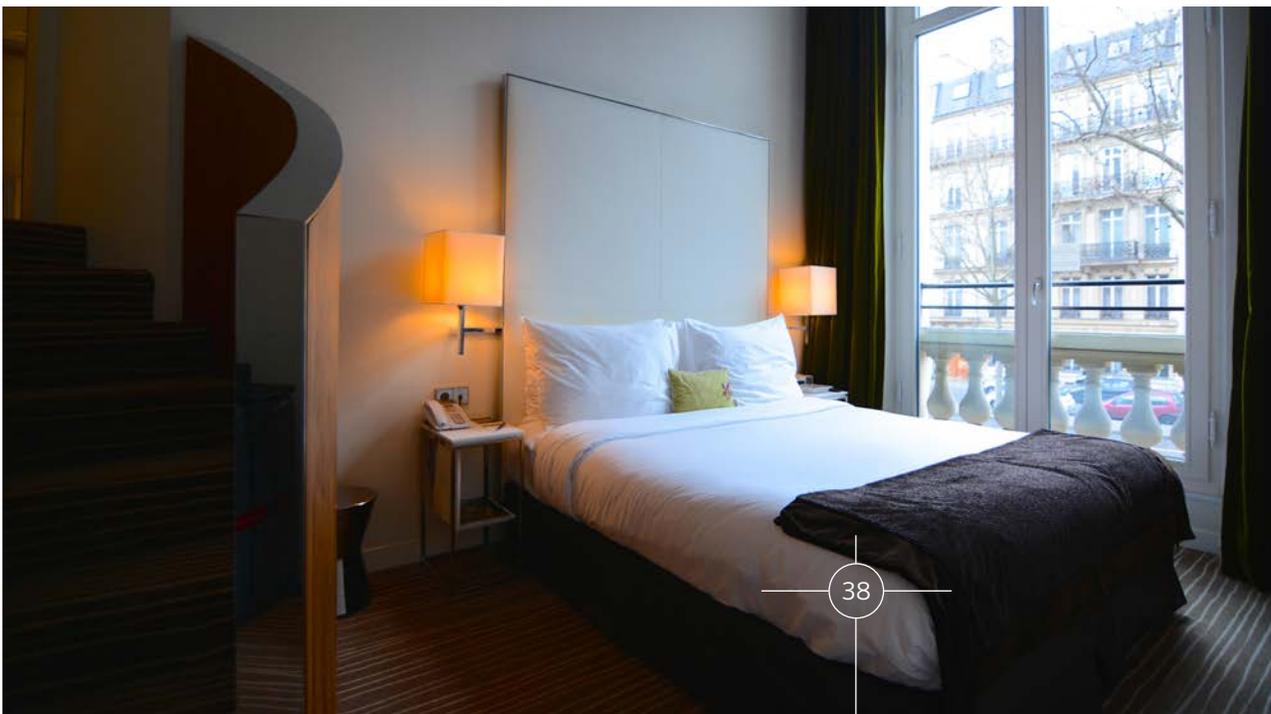
As one of the largest hotels in Paris, L'Hôtel du Collectionneur is also located in the 8th arrondissement in front of Parc Monceau, one of Paris' best parks. Decorated in a 1930s Art Deco style, this five-star hotel has 478 rooms and suites that surround a beautifully landscaped garden and patio. It is a nice place to enjoy an apéritif before dinner at Le Safran, the French gastronomic restaurant in the hotel. Follow up the meal with a digestif at Purple Bar.

One amenity that I love is an executive lounge, and L'Hôtel du Collectionneur has one. When staying in an Executive Room, access to the lounge and its breakfast, snacks and bar is included in the price. It's a terrific added value, especially when traveling with kids. For something extra special, book one of the 41 rooms and suites that have a terrace. Not only does this offer a brilliant view of the garden below, but also an unobstructed view of the Eiffel Tower. The atmosphere is so splendid that I spent a summer Saturday night on my terrace, drinking in the view and a bit of Champagne.

Tucked away just off the prestigious avenue George V in the 8th arrondissement, Hôtel de Sers sits next to some of the finest hotels in the city, yet still holds its own in terms of luxury. Quite frankly, Hotel de Sers is just straight up sexy, yet in a classy French way. A former private mansion, this five-star hotel mixes classic and contemporary design beautifully.

Rooms begin with a light canvas, and then are accessorized with elegant furnishings topped with bright colors and fun prints. Life-sized photos depicting Parisian-themed scenes canvas room walls, which adds an unexpected touch. Request a Deluxe Room with a view of the Eiffel Tower or a Panoramic Suite that offers a look at some of Paris' most well known monuments. And for something even more private and special, book the apartment. It encompasses the entire 7th floor and features a kitchen, dining room,







living room, bedroom and large bath, along with two terraces.

Another boutique hotel from an internationally recognized brand is the InterContinental Paris-Avenue Marceau. Literally a one-minute walk from the Arc de Triomphe, this four-star hotel is also in the 8th arrondissement. What once was the private mansion of Lord de Breteuil is now a beautifully restored hotel, featuring 55 guest rooms and two suites.

Since this was originally a private home, there are no cookie cutter rooms, which also extends to the décor. Each offers a unique design and atmosphere. I thoroughly enjoyed my room overlooking Avenue Marceau. Located on the first floor (that's the second floor for Americans), the room features a soaring ceiling and upstairs bathroom. For a terrace,



book one of the two suites located on the top floor.

Away from the 8th and into the 1st arrondissement is where Hotel du Louvre is located. As its name indicates, this Hyatt hotel is right next to possibly the world's most famous museum. This prime location is also a short distance to the Tuileries, Palais-Royal, Place Vendôme, Place de la Concorde and some of the best shopping in Paris, making it an excellent base for exploring the city.

Dating to 1855 at the request of Napoleon III, Hôtel du Louvre is a five-star hotel with 177 rooms, 43 of which are suites. Classically French, the hotel was redesigned in 2001. Located within the hotel is Brasserie du Louvre, which serves up traditional French food in a relaxed setting, while Le Bar offers a quintessentially Parisian atmosphere to enjoy a cocktail or coffee.

Perhaps one of my most memorable stays in Paris was in the hotel's Corner View Suite. At over 500 square feet with tall ceilings, the suite feels massive. But what is most impressive is the fact that I could see into the Louvre from my bed, couch and wrap-around terrace. That's an experience I will remember for quite some time.

Options abound in terms of Paris hotels, but a posh stay isn't out of reach for the luxury-loving traveler, also looking for a great value. Keep in mind that no matter where you rest your head, Paris is truly a magical place, and true luxury lies in the city itself.