

Harper's BAZAAR

MARCH 2024
£5.99

Maisie
Williams'
NEW
LOOK

Screen
QUEENS
to watch

FRESH
spring
fashion

Playful
POWER
dressing



ESCAPE

*Clockwise from left: Bar
Joséphine at Lutetia Paris.
One of the chic bathrooms.
The hotel's patisserie in 1911*



French renaissance

*Avril Mair checks into Hôtel Lutetia, a Parisian
établissement with a long and glittering history*

NESTLED AMONG THE BIJOU BOUTIQUES OF THE LEFT BANK, ACROSS a leafy square from Le Bon Marché, Lutetia Paris is the epitome of elegance. A fusion of art nouveau and art deco – a true landmark in Saint-Germain-des-Prés – the hotel has played host to fashionable society since 1910, when it was built to house clients of the famous department store. It came to capture the artistic zeitgeist of its time, counting Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Josephine Baker among its guests, as well as more recent names, including Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin. The Lutetia is now a destination in its own right, favoured both by international couture clients and editors looking for a chic haven during the ready-to-wear shows. It remains the only palace hotel on this side of the Seine.

Though the building breathes history, a modern €200 million renovation has restored and revived this Grande Dame, retaining her period charm and artistic decor

while adding a new interior courtyard, which now floods the hotel with that unparalleled Parisian light. Seven floors of luxurious rooms unfurl around a grand lobby; though the Lutetia has 47 suites, each of the guest rooms possesses its own charm, containing unique pieces such as hand-blown Murano-glass lamps and baths carved from slabs of Carrara marble, plus gilt balconies and some spectacular skyline views.

The public spaces are equally fabulous, attracting a crowd who come to see and be seen. Le Saint-Germain, the hotel's all-day dining-room, is a sprawling salon topped with a canopy of beautifully painted glass by the artist Fabrice Hyber, serving very stylish salads as well as decadent pastries – its afternoon teas are particularly renowned. For the nightbirds, Bar Joséphine is lined with floor-to-ceiling frescoes and plays host to both DJs and mixologists, while the wood-paneled Bar Aristide evokes the ambience of an after-hours jazz club and makes the best cocktails in the city. Set over two floors and an alfresco terrace, the famous Brasserie Lutetia excels in fine dining under the direction of the executive chef Patrick Chavet. Celebrating a century of culinary innovation, the restaurant offers a contemporary menu inspired by neighbourhood classics, from beef tartare to buttered snails and the most perfect steak frites, plus an impressive seafood bar laden with lobsters, oysters and sea urchins. The service is exceptional, but the atmosphere alone makes it a must-visit if you happen to be passing by (or are fortunate enough to have a room of your own).

As if these weren't temptation enough, the Lutetia has yet more to offer the fashionable visitor in the form of its spa, Akasha, which is large by Parisian standards, with an emphasis on holistic wellness (nutrition, meditation and ayurvedic massage). Awarded

French hotel spa of the year at the 2023 World Spa Awards, Akasha has a 17-metre pool you can actually swim in, as well as a sauna and private hammam.

This is a hotel with a storied past, but it feels forward-looking: steeped in history, yet somehow also with real contemporary relevance – much like the other great Parisian luxury brands, in fact.

*Lutetia Paris (hotellutetia.com), from
about £1,820 a room a night.* □

