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Starhotels Castille Paris Review - Deluxe Hotel de Charme in the 1st Arrondissement

By Susan di Rende



Silk and velvet swathe guests in the simple, sumptuous ambiance of this 'hotel de charme'

The Starhotels Castille Paris hotel wraps you in its elegant embrace the moment you pass through its doors on the rue Cambon in the 1st arrondissement of Paris. The lobby, the staff, the rooms and the ambiance combine in a perfect blend of refinement and hospitality. I loved staying there for the location, the food, the comfort and the personal touches that make the Castille Paris a hotel like no other.



The Castille Paris is one of the Italian Starhotels chain, which owns and operates 21 luxury hotels. The result is a happy blend of the French cool and collected sense of style and refinement mixed with the Italian knack for intimate hospitality. Though a chain, this is not a hotel that fulfills an impersonal corporate blueprint. It breathes and smiles and engages you with a personality all its own.

This is clearly seen in the design elements. Most chain hotels strive for uniqueness with some designer "concept," an idea worked out on a

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Lollipops, not chocolates, on the bed add a touch of whimsy

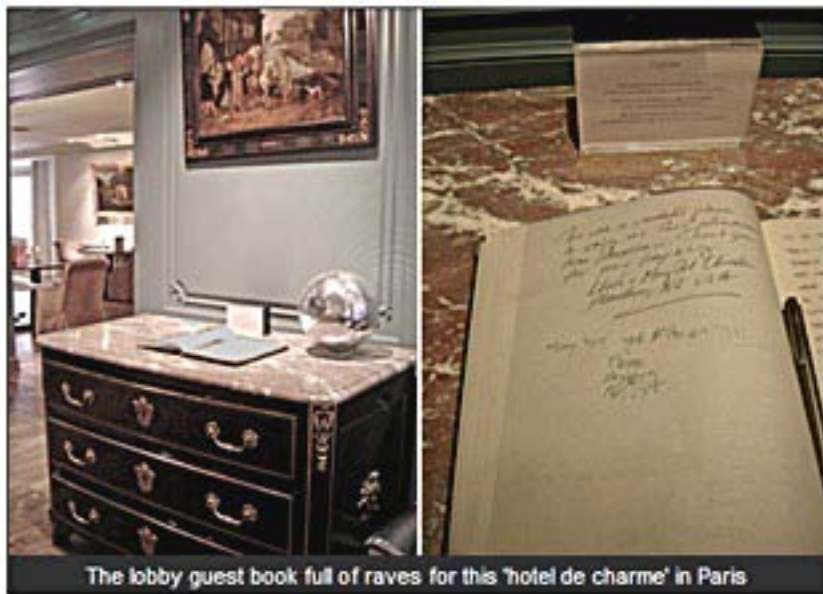
drawing board and filled with ideas of fashion, with theories of guest relations, and the tastes of a committee. The results of such efforts can

indeed be stylish and pleasant, but in a cold, impersonal way. The Castille Paris feels more personal and intimate, perhaps because the proprietor, Elisabetta Fabri, is an actual person who chooses the design and decor according to her own taste. This gives the place an animating spirit, a soul that is palpable.



Every detail of the hotel has been chosen by the proprietor, Elisabetta Fabri

Ms. Fabri has chosen everything with an eye to comfort, beauty and style and the result is a hotel that combines the best of Italian warmth and Parisian culture.



The lobby guest book full of raves for this 'hotel de charme' in Paris

For example, in the the dining room on a winter evening, the blue-white snow scene created in the courtyard outside a glass wall contrasts with the golden glow of candles inside to create a fireside ambiance that cocoons and caresses. Contemporary art photographs of snowscapes in stark black and white bookend the room. The fabrics, the presentation of the food, the relaxed, almost casual parade of exquisite dishes all speak of an animating soul behind the hotel. People are at ease and happy here. You could almost imagine yourself to be a guest visiting in someone's home.



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L'Assaggio Lounge at the Castille

LOBBY

The lobby of the **Castille Paris** is furnished with a combination of fine antiques with rich upholstery, beautiful cushions and exquisite drapery. The effect is both elegant and inviting. The lobby colors are in a classical French-European colors - olive green, bordeaux red that borders on purple and a bright peach. The colors play out in a range of sumptuous fabrics that bring texture and depth to the space, the way classical oil paintings have a layered magnificence. In fact, the decor resonates perfectly with the many fine 18th and 19th Century paintings on the walls as if the world lived in the hotel is a direct descendent from the world portrayed on the canvas. Perhaps this feeling comes in part because the **Castille Paris** was originally an 18th Century residence and has managed to retain its air of once-upon-a-time.



The lobby is decorated with beautiful antiques

ROOMS

The hotel is divided into two separate wings, Opera and Rivoli, each with a different style and feel, though both offer peace and quiet thanks to extensive soundproofing and a lot of light, giving the rooms an airy and peaceful feeling. The Opera wing has 88 rooms in two different styles of decor. The Rivoli wing has 20 rooms in a French classic style.



Blonde wood and mirrors give the contemporary rooms and suites an airy feel

The contemporary-style rooms combine clean modern lines, soothing colors with bright accents and a few classical touches for a restful and serene effect. The Venetian style rooms invoke the feel of baroque Italy. The Rivoli style rooms

The Venetian style rooms invoke the feel of baroque Italy. The Rivoli style rooms are in black-and-white for a very French "Chanel" look. There is a great deal of light in the rooms, and the walls are painted a pale eggshell white with trompe-l'oeil wainscoting artfully done.



Rooms have an calm, open feel with lots of light

I stayed in a contemporary room in the Opera wing and found it serene and comfortable. The floors and woodwork are a light, blonde tone, giving the room a clean, fresh feeling and an impression of space. The rooms in the **Castille Paris**, as in all of Paris, are smaller than most Americans expect. This is something you need to be prepared for if you want to stay in the center of Paris. But then, staying in the heart of Paris, you don't have to hang out in your room when there are cafes aplenty just up the street or around the corner.



The dressing table doubles as a desk with an American plug

Each item in the room was exquisite: the modern glass lamp, the velvet chair, the leather stool. Details show an intelligence of design that does not constrain your use of the room. For example, the long dressing table that holds the television has an inset writing desk. You open up the leather lid, sit on the fine leather stool and write a letter. Or keep the lid closed and work at your laptop using the American plug tucked away behind a sliding panel. When you are not using it, the stool tucks completely under the table and so takes up no precious floor space.



The rich and elegant decor of a suite at the Castille

In a hotel of this caliber, you can expect an excellent bed and a marble bath. The bed in my Superior Room was covered in white linen with a bright red and peach bed scarf for color and provided a heavenly rest. I also loved the bit of whimsy in the choice of bedtime sweets: lollipops.





A duplex suite with the sleeping area upstairs

The floor-to-ceiling French windows opened onto a small balcony where I had a view over the rooftops of the Place Vendome. And if I turned to the right, I could see the Tuileries gardens at the end of the street.



The view from my balcony of the rooftops of Paris with the Tuileries in the distance

BREAKFAST



Even a simple breakfast in the garden room is superb

The buffet breakfast at the **Castille Paris** was a particular treat. The distinction was not so much in the choice of foods which was standard for a European first-class buffet, but the quality of the food, which was so refined that I had to have something of everything. I took it in stages. First the "salty" dishes: eggs, sausage, cheese, prosciutto, capers and cornichons. then fruit and yogurt. I particularly enjoyed the prunes, which still had something of the plum in the taste. Finally the pastries, which I normally don't eat at breakfast, but found irresistible after trying a bit the first morning. The apple tart had a simple crust and slightly-caramelized apples on a single crust that tasted like every dream of apple pie. The pear tart had a bit of almond floating up under the ephemeral taste of pear. And the superb pineapple coconut custard tart with a crust that was more like a cookie.

The **Castille Paris** served hands down the best coffee of my trip. Perhaps because it is an Italian-owned hotel and Italy does have the best European coffee. For whatever reason, I indulged not only in the brew, but in the pastries that go so well with it.



The breakfast buffet

LOCATION

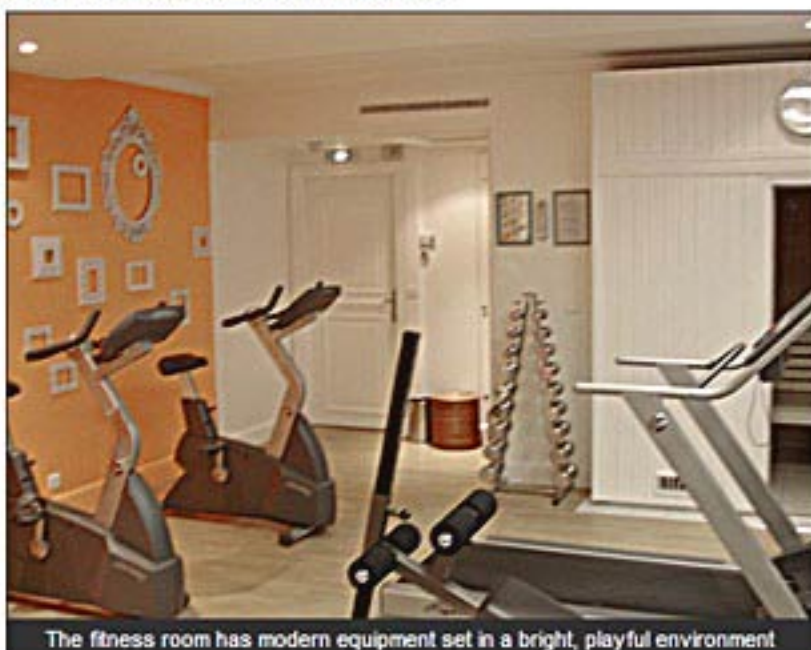
Paris is a big city and is divided into large sections called arrondissements. Each arrondissement has its own flavor and style ranging from sedate to bohemian, from high fashion to artsy. The First Arrondissement is at the very center of Paris and is the most elegant, refined, and has the greatest concentration of historic attractions. If you stay in the First, you can easily walk to almost every sight and shop your heart desires to visit. When staying at the **Castille Paris**, you can enjoy almost every sight and activity that Paris is known for without ever getting on a subway or in a taxi.



The staff aims for more than efficiency, but to also be 'creators of emotions and pleasures' for guests

As the First Arrondissement is at the center of Paris, the **Castille Paris** is at the center of the First. Located on the rue Cambon in the triangle created by three of the most famous squares in the city - the Madeleine, Concorde and Vendome - the hotel is an easy walk to the Opera, the Louvre, the Tuileries, the Champs Elysees. In addition, at the end of the block, you find yourself on the rue St.

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The fitness room has modern equipment set in a bright, playful environment

If you are less interested in haute-couture, you are only a few blocks away from les grands magasins, the great department stores as they are called: Galleries Lafayette, and Au Printemps.

Whatever you want from a stay in Paris, tourism, business, shopping or just a romantic escape, the **Castille Paris** is the perfect luxury hotel for your well-being and enjoyment.

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The courtyard has been painted in a vibrant trompe-foeil