

# glass

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JENA MALONE  
LUXURY DESIGN  
STYLISH TRAVEL

autumn 2015  
**FREEDOM**  
Asian edition

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# PARIS FRANCE



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## HOTEL RAFAEL

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What's magical about Paris is not only the inherent wonder of the city, present in the architecture of the Arc de Triomphe, or the characteristic bustle of the Champs-Élysées for example. It's the historical glory of such monumentally Parisian mainstays, entwined with the contemporary culture in which they cannot help but flourish. In line with that richness of history, and that robustness of French culture and *je ne sais quoi*, is the marvellous (in the most literal sense of the word) Hotel Raphael.

The five-star, Les Hôtels Baverez establishment boasts the imprimatur of its founder, hotelier Léonard Tauber, whose emphasis on intimacy of space is reflected in the hotel's relatively modest number of rooms. Coexisting with its privacy, however, is a grandeur that cannot go (and has not gone) unnoticed. Director Wes Anderson's short film *Hotel Chevalier*, for example,



was shot here; Leos Carax's *Holy Motors* featured the hotel. Its irresistibility as a storyteller's character-space is not only due to its indisputable pulchritude.

In its most regal spaces, Hotel Raphael captures perfectly some of the most famous landmarks. The Tour Eiffel Suite, for example, is centred facing its namesake structure; likewise The Arc de Triomphe Suite its own eponymous monument. The Raphael Suite is the most exceptional, composed of three connecting rooms plus a terrace. The furniture and wall art are done à la XVIIIth century (in the case of the suite's 'Triplex' apartments, the panelling is in fact sourced directly from an XVIIIth century castle in the Ardennes) and there are custom ceramic paintings and lighting from the atelier of Jean Perzel. The Raphael Suite's most spectacular feature, though, is its terrace. A pavilion on the hotel's 7th floor rooftop opens to a 360° panoramic view over Paris, featuring a giant, elegant marble chessboard (a tribute to Tauber himself, who was also the founder of the Chess Club of France), décor in the style of the Belle Époque, as well as botanical surroundings of over 100 kinds of flowers, plants, herbs and trees. This summer the Raphael Terrace has undergone redecorations and a formal libations menu redesign, exclusively for

The Terrace, by renowned champagne house Perrier-Jouët.

Acknowledging the allure, luxury and exclusivity of The Terrace, there are of course further options at Hotel Raphael to sate one's appetite and thirst. The 'English Bar' and '17th' lounge are the ideal spots for a languid moment of indulgence, a leisurely light lunch, or a chance encounter over a fine craft cocktail. Formal dining at the hotel is as much a visual treat as it is a culinary one – the damask aubergine curtains of Le Restaurant part to let in the sun or moonlight, shedding a glow on a tranquil and sensory-indulging dining area. Yet right outside exists the momentum and vivacity of Paris's 16th arrondissement – the incomparable, energetic, frisson-inducing, *real* Paris.

The gestalt experience of Hotel Raphael, in all of its old-world glamour and contemporary legacy, can only truly be experienced, like any sensational ornament can, in person. There's a haptic compulsion to touch and sit and sip and nibble and listen and feel and love within the hotel's walls. Is it simply the sensuousness of the city itself? Or could it be that, alive in the Hotel Raphael, is a deliberate, cultivated, and ethereal majesty of Paris incarnate, contained and captive to be tangibly enjoyed?

It is up to its visitors to determine exactly from where the spirit of the hotel is begotten, but we can ensure that this billet-doux to Hotel Raphael is sealed – and delivered – with a kiss presumptuous enough to bet on the latter.

– By Emily Rae Pellerin

[www.rafael-hotel.com](http://www.rafael-hotel.com)

