

= Hôtel Ritz Paris =

The Hôtel Ritz is a grand palatial hotel in the heart of Paris , in the 1st arrondissement . It overlooks the octagonal border of the Place Vendôme at number 15 . The hotel is ranked highly among the most prestigious and luxurious hotels in the world and is a member of " The Leading Hotels of the World " . The Ritz reopened on 6 June 2016 after a major four @-@ year , multimillion @-@ dollar renovation .

The hotel , which today has 159 rooms , was founded by the Swiss hotelier , César Ritz , in collaboration with the chef Auguste Escoffier in 1898 . The new hotel was constructed behind the façade of an 18th @-@ century town house , overlooking one of Paris 's central squares . It was reportedly the first hotel in Europe to provide a bathroom en suite , a telephone and electricity for each room . It quickly established a reputation for luxury , with clients including royalty , politicians , writers , film stars and singers . Several of its suites are named in honour of famous guests of the hotel , including Coco Chanel and Ernest Hemingway who lived at the hotel for years . One of the bars of the hotel , Bar Hemingway , is devoted to Hemingway and the L 'Espadon is a world @-@ renowned restaurant , attracting aspiring chefs from all over the world who come to learn at the adjacent Ritz @-@ Escoffier School . The grandest suite of the hotel , called the Imperial , has been listed by the French government as a national monument in its own right .

During the Second World War , the hotel was taken over by the occupying Germans as the local headquarters of the Luftwaffe . After the death of Ritz 's son Charles , in 1976 , the last members of the Ritz family to own the hotel sold it in 1979 to the Egyptian businessman Mohamed Al @-@ Fayed . In August 1997 , Diana , Princess of Wales and Al @-@ Fayed 's son , Dodi , dined in the hotel 's Imperial Suite before their fatal car crash .

The hotel is being entirely renovated in order to receive the ' Palace distinction ' which is a title bestowed by the French ministry of economy , industry and employment . It has been closed since 1 August 2012 and is now after four years finally accepting reservations beginning June 2016 . Because of its status as a symbol of high society and luxury , the hotel has featured in many notable works of fiction including novels ( F. Scott Fitzgerald 's *Tender Is The Night* and Hemingway 's *The Sun Also Rises* ) , a play ( Noël Coward 's play *Semi @-@ Monde* ) , and films ( Billy Wilder 's 1957 comedy *Love in the Afternoon* and William Wyler 's 1966 comedy *How to Steal a Million* ) .

= = Background and history = =

The site was purchased in 1705 by Antoine @-@ François Bitaut de Vaillé , and a private residence was constructed , which was occupied by several noble families and later became the Hôtel de Gramont . The façade was designed by the royal architect Jules Hardouin Mansart . In 1854 it was acquired by the Péreire brothers , who made it the head office of their Crédit Mobilier financial institution . In 1888 , the Swiss hotelier César Ritz and the French chef Auguste Escoffier opened a restaurant in Baden @-@ Baden , and the two were then invited to London by Richard D 'Oyly Carte to become the first manager and chef of the Savoy Hotel , positions they held from 1889 until 1897 . The Savoy under Ritz was an immediate success , attracting a distinguished and moneyed clientele , headed by the Prince of Wales . In 1897 , Ritz and Escoffier were both dismissed from the Savoy , when Ritz was implicated in the disappearance of over £ 3400 worth of wine and spirits . Before their dismissal , customers at the Savoy had reportedly urged them to open a hotel in Paris . Aided by Alexandre Marnier @-@ Lapostolle , Ritz purchased the palace and transformed the former Hôtel de Lazun building into a 210 @-@ room hotel . He stated that his purpose for the hotel was to provide his rich clientele with " all the refinement that a prince could desire in his own home . " He engaged the architect Charles Mewès to update the original 1705 structure . Ritz 's innovative standards of hygiene demanded a bathroom for every suite , the maximum possible amount of sunlight , and the minimum of curtains and other hangings . At the same time he furnished the hotel with all the old @-@ fashioned appeal of an English or French gentleman 's house , in order to make clients feel at home .

The hotel opened its doors on 1 June 1898 to a " glittering reception " . Together with the culinary

talents of his junior partner Escoffier , Ritz made the hotel synonymous with opulence , service , and fine dining , as embodied in the term " ritzzy . " It immediately became fashionable with Parisian socialites , hosting many prestigious personalities over the years , such as Marcel Proust , F. Scott Fitzgerald , Ernest Hemingway , King Edward VII , and the couturier Coco Chanel , who made the Ritz her home for more than thirty years . Many of the suites in the hotel are named after their famous patrons . Hemingway once said , " When in Paris the only reason not to stay at the Ritz is if you can 't afford it " . Hemingway , who stayed at the hotel many times after World War II , was there when he learned his wife wanted a divorce . He reacted to the news by throwing her photo into a Ritz toilet and then shooting the photo and the toilet with his pistol .

In 1904 and 1908 , the Ritz garden café was painted by the Swiss artist , Pierre @-@ Georges Jeannot . Proust wrote parts of Remembrance of Things Past here from around 1909 . The building was extended in 1910 , and César Ritz died in 1918 , succeeded by his son , Charles Ritz . Queen Marie of Romania stayed at the Ritz Hotel with her two eldest daughters , Elisabeth ( of Greece ) and Maria ( of Yugoslavia ) in 1919 while campaigning for Greater Romania at the Paris Peace Conference . Many other prominent royal figures and heads of state slept and dined at the hotel over the years . Edward VII reportedly once got stuck in a too @-@ narrow bathtub with his lover at the hotel . August Escoffier died in 1935 . In summer 1940 , the Luftwaffe , the air forces of Nazi Germany during the Second World War , set up their headquarters at the Ritz , with their chief Hermann Göring .

After the death of Charles Ritz in 1976 , the hotel went into a period of slow decline . As it lost its luster , its clientele diminished , and for the first time in its existence it began to lose money . It was rescued , however , in 1979 by an Egyptian businessman , Mohamed Al @-@ Fayed , who purchased the hotel for \$ 20 million and installed a new managing director , Frank Klein . Klein in turn put Guy Legay , the former chef of the three @-@ star Ledoyen , in charge of the kitchen . Al @-@ Fayed renovated it completely over several years without stopping its operation ; this was achieved by annexing two town houses , joined by an arcade with many of Paris 's leading boutiques . The renovation of the hotel was headed by the architect Bernard Gaucherel from 1980 to 1987 . The entire ten @-@ year renovation cost a total of \$ 250 million . The restaurants were given a new look , and a swimming pool , health club , and spas were created in the basement . The Little Bar was renamed the Hemingway Bar . In 1988 the Ritz @-@ Escoffier School of French Gastronomy was established in honour of Auguste Escoffier .

On 31 August 1997 , Diana , Princess of Wales and Al @-@ Fayed 's son Dodi Al @-@ Fayed , and their chauffeur Henri Paul , dined in the Imperial Suite of the hotel before leaving the hotel with bodyguard Trevor Rees @-@ Jones , only to have a fatal car accident in the Pont de l 'Alma underpass .

In the 21st century , the Ritz remains possibly the most prestigious and luxurious hotel in the world and the finest and most expensive in Paris . It is referred to by some as the best hotel in Europe and one of the world 's most famous hotels . It is one of " The Leading Hotels of the World " .

On August 1 , 2012 , the Ritz closed its doors for the first time in its history for an extensive restoration . It was scheduled to reopen in late 2015 , but this date was later changed to March 2016 . At 07 : 00 local time on 19 January 2016 , a major fire broke out in the roof of the building . Fifteen fire engines and 60 firefighters attended . The Ritz reopened on 6 June 2016 after a major four @-@ year , multimillion @-@ dollar renovation .

= = Architecture = =

The palace and the square are masterpieces of classical architecture from the end of the reign of Louis XIV . The façade was designed by the royal architect Mansart in the late 17th century before the plot was bought and construction began in 1705 . The Hôtel Ritz comprises the Vendôme and the Cambon buildings with rooms overlooking the Place Vendôme , and , on the opposite side , the hotel 's garden .

The Ritz was reportedly the first hotel in Europe to provide a bathroom en suite , a telephone and electricity for each room . The Hôtel Ritz Paris is 4 floors high , including the mansard roof , and as

of 2011 offers 159 rooms , a two @-@ Michelin @-@ starred restaurant , two bars and a casual dining restaurant .

= = = Rooms and suites = = =

In the 1970s a travel publication Holiday wrote , " practically every royal head of state has snoozed under down quilts on the finest linen sheets , beneath fifteen @-@ foot @-@ high ( 4 @. @ 6 m ) ceilings in rooms looking out , through huge double windows , on the elegant Place Vendôme . " Frommer 's , which calls the Ritz " Europe 's greatest hotel " , describes the furnishings as follows , " the public salons are furnished with museum @-@ calibre antiques . Each guest room is uniquely decorated , most with Louis XIV or Louis XV reproductions ; all have fine rugs , marble fireplaces , tapestries , brass beds , and more . Ever since Edward VII got stuck in a too @-@ narrow bathtub with his lover , the tubs at the Ritz have been deep and big . " The bathrooms contain unique golden swan taps , and peach @-@ coloured towels and robes , believed to be more flattering than white to a woman 's complexion .

The Ritz is reputedly the most expensive hotel in Paris , employing a staff of over 600 , the rooms as of May 2011 started at ? 850 a night . Suites start at ? 3 @, @ 600 and up to ? 13 @, @ 900 a night for the most lavish ones ( Suite Impériale being the most expensive ) . These finest suites are known as the " Prestige suites " , ten in total , which according to the Ritz are " a world for aesthetes where 18th century panelling echoes allegorical ceilings , old masters and priceless antique furniture . Each suite is unique and each seems to still breathe the spirit of the illustrious guests who once stayed there . " The Vendôme Suite is one of the most spacious of the hotel , containing Louis XIV furnishings , with a red and ivory theme and grand windows overlooking the square . The César Ritz Suite overlooks the square and contains Louis XV furniture and a portrait of Ritz himself . The room is decorated in shades of green and light yellow with a canopied bed in one room and silk floral pattern in the second . The doors of the sitting room of the suite are edged in gold leaf . The Elton John Suite , decorated in strawberry pink and cream , contains two bedrooms , a thick pink carpet and attic windows . John reportedly hired the entire floor for his 42nd birthday . The Windsor Suite contains tapestries and gilded mouldings and portraits of the Duke ( Edward VIII ) and Duchess of Windsor . They are decorated with Louis XVI furniture and colours such as almond green , salmon and pearl grey . The master bedroom is decorated in pearl grey in a shade which the Ritz calls " Wallis blue " , a favourite of Wallis , Duchess of Windsor . The 1 @, @ 670 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 155 m2 ) Coco Chanel Suite where Coco Chanel lived for some 35 years consists of two bedrooms and a living room and features Coromandel lacquers , Chinese furniture , baroque mirrors and oversized sofas with quilting created by Grande Mademoiselle . The suite is said to be " equipped with the most sophisticated technology including fax , Jacuzzi , steam @-@ bath shower , and ultra @-@ modern walk @-@ in closets . "

= = = Imperial Suite = = =

The Imperial Suite ( Suite Impériale ) is the finest suite of the hotel , and is listed as a National Monument of France in its own right . The Imperial Suite is located on the first floor and consists of two bedrooms , a grand salon , and a dining room . The suite features 6 @-@ metre @-@ high ( 20 ft ) ceilings , great chandeliers and windows overlooking the Place Vendôme , a massive long gold framed Baroque mirror between the windows , red and gold upholstery and a four @-@ poster bed said to be identical to that in Marie Antoinette 's bedroom in the Palace of Versailles . The other bedroom is in the style of Louis XVI , with a baldachin bed and columns . The suite is lavishly decorated in French art , bas @-@ reliefs and 18th @-@ century panelling which is protected under the suite 's historic monument status . The bathroom is a former boudoir overlooking the Vendôme garden , with 18th @-@ century panelling and a Jacuzzi bath and steam @-@ bath shower and has its own plasma television and cosmetics fridge , juxtaposing old French tradition with the modernity of the 21st century . As well as facilities such as a DVD player , high @-@ speed internet , and fax , the suite features a Porsche Design kitchenette with CHROMA knives near the salon and has its

own small personal wine cellar filled with a variety of French wines . Over the years the suite has hosted some of the world 's most prestigious guests from the Shah of Iran to George H. W. Bush . The suite was Hermann Göring 's choice of residence during the Second World War and was where Diana , Princess of Wales and Dodi Al Fayed ate their last meal . The World Travel Awards of 2007 selected the Imperial Suite as " Europe 's Leading Suite " .

= = = Restaurant and bars = = =

= = = = L 'Espadon = = = =

Although there was necessarily a hotel restaurant from the inception of the Ritz , the current hotel restaurant , L 'Espadon ( The Swordfish ) was established in 1956 by Charles Ritz . He was a keen fishing enthusiast so named the restaurant after a fish . The restaurant is inspired by the legendary first chef of the hotel , Auguste Escoffier , serving " traditional French culinary style with contemporary overtones " . The cuisine is by the award @-@ winning chef Michel Roth , the ninth head chef of the hotel ; the restaurant was awarded a second star by the 2009 edition of the influential Michelin Red Guide . The head chef was formerly Guy Legay , cited as one of Paris 's greatest chefs , who had served from at least 1986 to beyond 1999 . In 1999 , Esquire magazine wrote , " the dining room , L 'Espadon , down the long corridor of mirrors and display cases , has a glittering Regency formality that seems to swirl around you , and it 's easy enough to imagine Hemingway sitting down with Dietrich to a dish of chef Guy Legay 's buttery scrambled eggs ... " The restaurant decor is described as " opulent with trompe l'oeil ceilings , swagged drapes , and views into the garden . " The courtyard garden is rich in greenery and contains several statues and a fountain . The hotel hires five or so florists to provide fresh flowers .

= = = = Bars = = = =

The hotel has several bars , namely the Ritz Bar , Bar Vendôme , Bar Hemingway and the Pool Bar . The Ritz Bar , just inside the Rue Cambon entrance on the left , gained a reputation over the years for its glamorous cocktail parties and the extravagant concoctions of Frank Meier , head barman from 1921 until his death in 1947 . One of his best @-@ known cocktails was the potent " Rainbow " , consisting of anisette , mint , yellow chartreuse , cherry brandy , kümmel , green chartreuse and cognac . The Ritz Bar is designed in the Victorian style with red @-@ velvet armchairs and bar furnishings , a marble fireplace and historic portraits . The Ritz Bar may have been the world 's first hotel bar .

Bar Hemingway was the favourite bar of Ernest Hemingway and is said by some to be the birthplace of the Bloody Mary cocktail which was invented for him . However , the fact that it is the actual birthplace is contested , given that Fernand Petiot claimed to have invented the drink in 1921 while working at Harry 's New York Bar , a frequent Paris hangout for Hemingway and other American expatriates , rather than in the bar in the Ritz itself . The bar has been restored to its original appearance , with rich wood panelling and leather upholstery and has 25 original photographs on the walls taken by the author of places and people that inspired him .

Bar Vendôme is very popular with high class Parisians for afternoon tea and contains rich wood furnishings and a grand piano . During the summer months the doors are opened out onto the garden and terrace .

= = = Ritz @-@ Escoffier School = = =

The Ritz @-@ Escoffier School of French Gastronomy was established in 1988 in honour of Georges @-@ Auguste Escoffier . The ethos of the school is based on Escoffier 's words , " Good cuisine is the foundation of true happiness . " This school is accessed through an entrance in the back of the hotel and offers a four @-@ hour themes workshop which includes petit fours , carving

fruit and vegetables , truffles and pairing food and wine . As of 2009 it costs ? 135 for a four @-@ hour course or ? 920 for a two @-@ day introductory course .

= = = Ritz Health Club = = =

The Ritz Health Club contains a grand swimming pool , the largest in all of the Parisian hotel palaces at 1 @, @ 700 square metres ( 18 @, @ 000 sq ft ) and billed by the Ritz as " the finest indoor pool in Paris " . The pool is inspired by the baths of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome and features reliefs on the ceilings and jet streams and underwater sounds in the pool . The health club offers a range of health treatments , from reflexology to Swedish massage and shiatsu .

= = In fiction = =

Because of its status as a symbol of high society and luxury , the hotel has featured in many notable works of fiction .

= = = Novels and plays = = =

Many novels of the Lost Generation feature scenes in the Ritz , such as F. Scott Fitzgerald 's *Tender Is The Night* and Ernest Hemingway 's *The Sun Also Rises* . Noël Coward 's play *Semi @-@ Monde* is perhaps the most notable work covering the hotel in detail , following the escapades of an extravagant , promiscuous fictional Paris elite between 1924 and 1926 . In the Bret Easton Ellis novel *Glamorama* , a group of supermodels turned terrorists plant a home @-@ made bomb in the Ritz , resulting in its destruction . In *The Da Vinci Code* , the protagonist , Robert Langdon , stays at the hotel while in Paris , as do Andrea Sachs and Miranda Priestly in Lauren Weisberger 's *The Devil Wears Prada* . The final chapter of Ian Fleming 's James Bond novel *From Russia , with Love* is set at the hotel . The villain , Rosa Klebb , stays in room 602 and engages in a battle with Bond which results in her death . In Julian Fellowes ' novel *Snobs* ( 2004 ) , those attending Earl Broughton 's pre @-@ marriage bachelor party are accommodated at the Ritz .

= = = Cinema = = =

The hotel has featured in several films , three of which starred Audrey Hepburn . In Stanley Donen 's 1957 film *Funny Face* , Kay Thompson dances in the Ritz 's entry driveway and in front of the hotel , accompanied by a group of dancers dressed as Ritz bellhops during the *Bonjour , Paris !* number . In Billy Wilder 's 1957 comedy *Love in the Afternoon* , Hepburn initiates her romance with Gary Cooper in his suite in the hotel and much of the film is set there . The hotel is again seen in the 1966 movie *How to Steal a Million* , with a romantic scene between Hepburn and Peter O 'Toole in the hotel 's bar in which Hepburn wears an iconic Givenchy black lace eyemask and matching cocktail dress . In the Indian film *Jhoom Barabar Jhoom* , Abhishek Bachchan meets his fictional love ( played by Lara Dutta ) at Hotel Ritz .