



PARIS

THE HISTORIC PLEASURE PALACE
WHERE TWO WORLDS COLLIDE

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SHANGRI-LA PARIS

In many ways, the Shangri-La Paris resists categorisation. As the former home of Napoleon's great nephew, it is a bastion of French history. But a prominent East-meets-West theme, which presents itself in the marriage of Baroque decor and dim sum for breakfast, pulls things in a different direction. It is also the only hotel I know of where you can book 'by view'.

Prince Roland Bonaparte's mansion was built in 1896, featuring an elaborate carved façade, stained glass windows, and a vaulted rotunda emblazoned with zodiac symbols. The tradition of hospitality initiated by the prince – who hosted regular soirées for Paris's academic elite – was revived with the opening of the Shangri-La in 2010. But first it had to undergo a lengthy restoration: hand-gilded panelling, neoclassical friezes and timber salons were returned to their former glory.

For all of its European grandeur, however, the hotel is predicated on an Asian theme. The 100 rooms are decked

out in distinct East-West style: a Rococo colour scheme of cream and gold meets silk-thread wallpaper, marquetry desks, and orchids aplenty. The Imperial suite offers Versailles-worthy interiors in oriental duck-egg.

This cultural confluence also presents itself in the food and drink: La Bauhinia serves Franco-Asian delicacies under an exquisite glass cupola, from rich laksa to the signature tigre qui pleure (marinated Black Angus steak with a kick) and a famed afternoon tea.

Elsewhere, L'Abeille is a temple to French gastronomy, and chef Samuel Lee Sum puts a Cantonese spin on duck foie gras and live red lobster at Shang Palace. Resident watering hole Le Bar Botaniste boasts an array of botanical spirits and an absinthe fountain.

The Shangri-La's spa, meanwhile, leans into European provenance: Romanesque meets Victoriana at CHI, with its glazed columns and mosaics.

Throwing your suite doors open to Haussmann-style boulevards isn't bad, but

there's only one view that really matters in Paris: the Eiffel Tower is 500m from the Shangri-La, and observable from about half the rooms.

The hotel is also minutes from the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris and Avenues Montaigne and George V; its 16th arrondissement location is ever-so-slightly out of the way, so you won't encounter the crêpe-and-keyring-flogging side of Paris. But Iéna metro is moments away should you need to get there.

The Shangri-La is part hotel, part landmark. Its cross-continental fusion is exciting, and the location quintessential Paris without being on the Champs-Élysées. Perhaps, therefore, we should conclude that its biggest draw is that it is a world of perfectly-pitched contradictions: at once grand and intimate, East and West, proud of its interior glory and the environs that surround it.

From approx. £830 per night, shangri-la.com