

My Parisienne home

Rhonda Oxnam spends some quality time at the beautiful Le Bristol Hotel in Paris.



Facade Hôtel Le Bristol

Le Bristol has it all – an ideal location in the heart of Paris; exceptional personal service and attention to detail; even a resident Egyptian king ...

Admittedly, Fa-raon is a Burmese Sacre cat, not a reigning monarch, but his regal presence adds just one more welcoming touch to this sumptuous 'home away from home'.

Derek and I were lucky enough to spend a night at Le Bristol during our recent visit to Europe, and I must admit I was entranced.

Every aspect of the hotel – from the stylishly appointed suites to the immaculately presented front-of-house staff – epitomises luxury, however, it is done in such an understated way that even the most humble of journalists feels at home.

Of course, my own home doesn't come with views of the Eiffel Tower, or meals prepared by a three Michelin star chef, but the welcome Derek and I received was both warm and friendly, and our Le Bristol experience one we will always treasure.

view of the hotel gardens surrounded by magnificent magnolia trees.

Le Bristol's other dining establishment, The 114 Faubourg, is equally impressive. Under the helm of Eric Desbordes, a young chef mentored by Eric Frechon, The 114 Faubourg offers a much more contemporary, but no less creative, style of cuisine. In fact, Derek's 'simple' sardine entrée was more reminiscent of a three dimensional sculpture, than a seafood dish.

While the cuisine alone is more than enough reason to visit Le Bristol, the uniquely designed accommodation options – ranging from the superior rooms to prestige suites – are also exceptional.

In addition to the aforementioned view of *La Tour Eiffel*, our suite boasted elegant Louis XV and Louis XVI style furniture, gorgeous floral fabrics in soft tones, and a spacious, well-appointed bathroom.

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The hotel is also within walking distance of the Palais de l' Elysée, the Parisienne residence of the French president. In fact, the hotel is so convenient to the palace that current president Nicolas Sarkozy is regularly seen dining at Le Bristol's Gastronomic Restaurant.

And why wouldn't he be? As Derek and I discovered, the food there is simply *magnifique*. Most accurately described as 'art on a plate', the serving of each dish is a perfectly choreographed routine and the service, once again, exemplary. Little wonder that Chef Eric Frechon was awarded three Michelin stars in 2009 – just one of the many accolades the restaurant team has received over the years.

At the time of our visit the Gastronomic Restaurant was housed in the stunning oval room, a private theatre made from beautiful oak, glorious tapestries and crystal chandeliers. However, it is soon to be relocated to the summer restaurant where guests can enjoy a breathtaking

Another highlight at Le Bristol has to be the swimming pool. Located on the sixth floor – the views are amazing – the area resembles the deck of a magnificent 19th Century yacht. Bordered by stunning murals, and featuring timber and glass paneling, the pool opens on to a vast terrace which is the perfect place to relax, far away from the busy streets below.

Other facilities of the hotel include a world-class Spa (unfortunately my fleeting visit didn't allow time to sample their services); a fully-equipped fitness-centre (no, I didn't trouble them either); meeting rooms; a bar (yes, I did find myself in there for a night-cap) and special children's programmes.

While my stay at Le Bristol was all too brief, this wonderful establishment certainly holds a special place in my heart... quite appropriate given Paris' reputation as the City of Love. ●

LE BRISTOL HOTEL

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Suite Prestige Elysée



Homard bleu



Restaurant 114 Faubourg



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