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# PASSPORT

## THE HOLIDAY ISSUE

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Photo: GUELLAUME



La Bourse et La Vie Mackenel

Where did Proust take sulfur baths, Joy Division record an album, Andy Warhol and Jean Michel Basquiat party, Saint Laurent host his after runway bashes, and Philippe Starck get his start? **Les Bains Douches** (Les Bains Paris 7 rue du Bourg l'Abbé, Tel. +33-4277-0707, [www.lesbains-paris.com](http://www.lesbains-paris.com)). This legendary hotspot, a former 19th-century bathhouse, was part disco, club, performance space, and restaurant. Opened in 1978, Les Bains Douches was the Studio 54 of the continent, an international showplace attracting the likes of Jack Nicholson, Naomi Campbell, Catherine Deneuve, Grace Jones, David Bowie, and Kate Moss.

Running its course of disco and hard partying days, Les Bains Douches closed in 2010. Early in 2016 the space was reimagined for the future, but retaining some of its storied past. It now is a club/restaurant/hotel.

The 39 rooms designed by Tristan Auer, a rising talent recently named one of the ten best interior designers of tomorrow by *Architectural Digest*, are a blast from the past with replica sofas of Andy Warhol's Factory, rugs inspired by Serge Gainsbourg, and Joy Division album covers. The five junior and two full-sized suites are equipped with private hammams.

The restaurant, La Salle à Manger pays

homage to the original black-and-white checkered dance floor designed by Philippe Starck by replacing it with two million micro-tiles. Consultant Chef Philippe Labbé and Chef Michael Riss have put together an eclectic menu with locally sourced products.

Other spaces in the complex include the former water tank, Le Reservoir, which has been converted into a private dining space for 12 guests, Le Salon Chinois, a cozy boudoir for afternoon tea, Les Bains Guerbois, the pool and spa, Le Club, a private concert hall and music venue, and Le Salon Secret, a five-room apartment suite with a private elevator.

There's probably no better definition of old world luxury than the **Ritz Paris** (15 Place Vendôme, Tel: +33-1431-63030, [www.ritzparis.com](http://www.ritzparis.com)). Opened in 1898 by Swiss hotelier Cesar Ritz, it was the first hotel in Paris to have en suite bathrooms, electricity, and telephones in each room. It quickly attracted a guest list of royalty, presidents, prime ministers, film stars, fashion designers, and writers (Ernest Hemingway and Coco Chanel were longtime residents).

Unfortunately, the aging grande dame shuttered in 2012 for a four-year-plus head-to-toe makeover to the tune of 450 million

euros. New York-based French architect and interior designer Thierry W. Despont was assigned the tall task of renovating the entire hotel without changing its essence and old world glamour.

Reopened in June 2016, the renovation appeared almost seamless. The hotel has retained most of the furnishings and décor, with either original pieces restored or faithful reproductions.

The Ritz Paris now features 142 rooms and a series of newly themed suites including the Maria Callas, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mozart, Proust, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

The Hemingway Bar is virtually untouched, and world-renowned chef barman Colin Field conjures up smart new cocktails to celebrate the reopening, including a bloody mary where the client chooses their own seasonal tomatoes that go into their drink.

The storied spa and pool where social hostess Pamela Harriman swam her daily laps has been remodeled and is now the first Chanel spa in the world with two stories and seven treatment rooms exclusively using Chanel beauty and skincare products. ■

For a personal tour of the best of Paris, you can book a tour with Richard Nahem at [www.eyepreferparistours.com](http://www.eyepreferparistours.com).