

10 Things We Like about L'Hotel

By A/Prof Daniel Fung, Editorial Board Member

Joyce and I have been married for 20 years and our honeymoon in 1992 was at the small, then undiscovered island resort of Koh Samui. Since then, we mostly travel around for international Child Psychiatry conferences and enjoy a holiday on the side. This year is the 20th edition of the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions Congress, which was inaugurated in Paris 75 years ago (check out <http://www.iacapap.org>). As our 20th wedding anniversary falls on 4 July, we felt the timing was right for a second honeymoon. Post congress, we decided to have a quiet getaway to enjoy Paris (this was our fourth visit) in ways we never did in the past. We chose L'Hotel (pronounced as "Lottel") because it stood out as a small boutique hotel, which we are fond of (and because Shirley, my assistant, helped pick it out from some ten choices in Paris). A member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World™, L'Hotel is a theatrically decorated secret hideaway set along a charming street.





Facade of L'Hotel



Bridge along north bank of the river Seine



Cafe life

1 Both Joyce and I love to travel by metro (or subway) whenever we visit mega cities around the world. We love buying one of the many passes available, depending on our length of stay. It was no different in Paris, which has probably one of the most extensive train systems in Europe. The metro network is easy to navigate even without being fluent in French. The L'Hotel is a comfortable walk away, a couple of blocks south of the metro station, St Germain, which is a few stations from Chatelet-Les Halles, where most lines of the metro intersect.

2 We love to stay along a quiet street. The L'Hotel is along Rue Beau Des Arts, also known as "the street of fine arts". It is a hip area with many art galleries on the left bank of the river Seine, but the street feels safe even if you are coming back late in the night. The bustling Rue Bonaparte, where nightlife and clubs are aplenty, is just several streets away.

3 We like to relax after a day out by resting our aching feet as Paris is a city where much of the sights have to be experienced by walking (and walking and walking...). The L'Hotel has a Turkish-style steam bath also known as a Hammam pool. The jacuzzi is spacious, the size of a large bedroom, and guests get to book it for their private use at no extra cost. The jacuzzi also includes a sitting area and sectioned areas for changing and washing up.

4 We love the cafe culture, especially in summer when the sun is out. The unhurried breakfasts and lingering lunches, paired with coffees, wines and fine desserts will whet the most discerning of appetites. There are many cafes and brasseries to choose from just a short walk from the hotel, whether it is early in the morning or late into the night. Being Singaporeans, it felt awkward having dinner until nearly 12 midnight but the Parisians love indulging over meals and drinks.

5 We love old buildings. Don't we all go to Paris because of the beautiful European architecture? From the oldest mall, La Samaritaine, to their newest adolescent mental health facility, Maison De Solenn, style and beauty are enduring traits of buildings in Paris. In fact, the Musee d'Orsay, originally a railway station and presently a museum housing an extensive collection of masterpieces, is just a stone's throw away. You would think you had walked into another museum when you enter the 200-year-old L'Hotel. The quaint elevator in L'Hotel fits two persons very tightly and the stairs spiral all the way up to the sixth storey, where there is a penthouse suite and an open roof terrace.

6 We love opulent European-style decor (as long as we do not live in a house decked out as such). Apparently, all the rooms at L'Hotel are done up in different styles, ranging from European baroque to ancient Chinese, the flair of renowned designer Jacques Garcia. Our assigned room had a huge ornate mirror hanging over our bed, an old bureau, and an antique-style bathroom. Despite its old world charm, the room did not miss out on modern amenities, with a hidden wardrobe containing a modern safe, a small glass refrigerator, a television with a DVD player and an iPod docking station, complete with free Wi-Fi.

7 We love fine dining (and my friends are saying it's beginning to show). There is nothing like fine dining at Michelin-starred restaurants. There is a one-star Michelin restaurant in L'Hotel called (you guessed it) Le Restaurant. We tried the Chef's Surprise, which was a seven-course dinner paired with four glasses of wine from different regions of France. The combination of crab, fish, veal and other exquisite tastes mingling with the delicious wines made us drift off to seventh heaven. Being a little tipsy after indulging in alcohol, it's great to be able to just take the elevator up to your room and collapse on your soft white linen bed.

8 We love art (well, at least Joyce does passionately). For this trip, we visited the Orangerie Museum at Tuileries Gardens, better known as Musee de l'Orangerie, to view one of the largest Monets on display, *Les Nymphéas*. The street where L'Hotel is located and the surrounding blocks are filled with art galleries that can be explored over several days. We were certainly tempted to purchase a piece of art to bring home.



View of the airwell of L'Hotel



A building by the river Seine with Paris night lights



Versailles



View from the train to Versailles

9 Like true blue Singaporeans, **we like shopping.** Shops are near the St Germain metro, and there are also small grocers and chemists in the area. High fashion brands, like Louis Vuitton and Cartier, are also nearby and less crowded than in the city centre, where hordes of tourists queue in seemingly endless lines to purchase high-end luxury items.

10 **We love the romance associated with Paris.** It is a city with a history that reads like a love story. L'Hotel is a small, intimate and private getaway, which leaves you wishing for more. Did you know that Oscar Wilde lived there till his death in 1900, and why not? With impeccable personalised service, delectable cuisines for all, and the comforts of home at your doorstep, Paris is definitely a city for people in love or to fall in love with. This hotel is perfect for many honeymoon trips to come. Don't take my word for it though, try it for yourself. **SMA**



A/Prof and Mrs Fung's stay at the L'Hotel was made possible by Small Luxury Hotels of the World™. SMA has partnered Small Luxury Hotels of the World™ to offer a special rate exclusive to all SMA members.

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