

# Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

HOTEL CONCORDE ST-LAZARE  
PARIS, FRANCE

Stellar location is one of several appealing aspects at the **Hôtel Concorde Saint-Lazare**; in the heart of a great city, it's the perfect launching point for exploration in every direction, with the Madeleine, L'Opéra, and the swanky shopping area of Faubourg St. Honoré all within walking distance.

The hotel was built in 1889 in record time (15 months) to accommodate visitors to the famous Great Exhibition. Originally called the "Grand Hotel Terminus," the entrance and lobby are classified as Historic Monuments. A glass canopy tops the entrance hall flanked by pillars of Scottish pink granite. The lobby itself displays paintings, sculptures and *trompe-l'oeils* by Lameire (including a rather irreverent one of a cherub showing his rear, allegedly expressing the artist's feelings towards the management of the period!). Foyer furniture is by Hierro: curves on armchairs and sofas, gold-

gilded lamps, and rivets in the feet of the armchairs (a signature Eiffel touch) lend a delightful ambience.

The hotel's "Golden Black" bar, decorated by Sonia Rykiel, includes fine African art and offers a wide range of cocktails, champagnes and whiskeys from morning until the wee hours. Thirteen rooms on the mezzanine and ground floor cater to up to 250 people. The "Salon Baccarat" conference room (so named in honor of owner Taittinger Group's crystal business), once a billiard room, is particularly beautiful in its walls of dramatic red and black.



*Spacious, elegant rooms and wonderful bathrooms*



Inside our room—one of 266, including 40 junior suites and a VIP suite—space is well-utilized, spacious and uncluttered, with each piece of furniture nicely placed and useful. The natural curve of the building as it wraps

around our suite creates a half semi-circle, providing an element of visual interest. Thick, lush, floor-to-ceiling drapes in a Florentine pattern cover modern, well-fitted tall double doors that keeps it remarkably quiet for the inner city. This is a restful oasis from the city that bustles just outside the gleaming front doors of the hotel: “We sell sleep!” notes the hotel’s International Sales Manager, André Devillers, “you’ll have a good meal and a good night’s sleep here.”

The bathroom is spacious and well appointed, with a lighted cosmetic mirror and a large, stylish porcelain bathtub with curves in all the right places, supporting the bather’s neck and shoulders in unusual comfort. Lush blue wall-to-wall carpeting, a quiet and efficient climate control system, a minibar and valuables safe round out the amenities. Bathrobes—embroidered with the Concorde Saint-Lazare name—are thick and luxurious, but we found the bath towels themselves too thin for an establishment of this quality.

Downstairs, there’s a full business center with typing and translation services for international business guests, as well as an excellent concierge desk—the chef concierge has been here for 35 years, and there isn’t much he *doesn’t* know about Paris!

At **Café Terminus**, the hotel’s fin de siècle signature restaurant, you feel like you really are at a Paris restaurant, with a lively street experience unfolding just outside the windows. Here, Chef Guy Pommelet turns out some good dishes. *Croustillants au saumon* was a generous, well-spiced dish with salmon, feta cheese, dried lemon, and tomatoes, presented over a bed of watercress with red peppercorns dotting the edge of the plate. A classic *Meunière* sole served with stuffed calamari was well rendered, with parsley and garlic pleasantly adorning the fish. A side dish of scallops and vegetables came as a nice alternative to the steamed potatoes that often accompany sole. Tournedos of pork, served with mashed split

peas and sage juice, were a little dry, but the sauce was concentrated.

Pastries are a highpoint at Café Terminus. We tried an excellent mascarpone cream with anise and a delicate pear with meringue—both were quite successful. A *Louis Moulin* Savigny-Les-Beaunes 1998 was medium bodied and pleasant with plenty of ripe fruit and light Chambertin-style spice.

This article was written by Jeffrey Riggs and Nicole Medvecky-Riggs, Contributing Editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*.

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