

HOTEL JULES CESAR

ARLES

HÔTEL RESTAURANT



5* HOTEL JULES CESAR: RENAISSANCE BY CHRISTIAN LACROIX

Christian Lacroix has breathed new life into the 5* Hôtel Jules César in Arles.

Who better to manage the project? He has drawn on his extensive talent and his affection for this unique place in the city where he spent his childhood.

The former 17th century Carmelite convent exudes the peaceful haven of the cloister and the magical mystery of a hidden gem in the heart of the “Little Rome of the Gauls”. It sets the stage for a 5* experience where anything is possible and time is precious.

Since it was converted into a hotel in 1928, famous names such as Hemingway, Picasso and the Duke and Duchess of York mingled with society at parties and the anonymous Arles residents to whom its dining table and bar have always belonged.

This full refurbishment is dedicated to them and to visiting guests who shall experience a setting bursting with history yet living in the here and now. “This is a place which intimidates locals a bit. And our duty, our work, what really excites me, is to make it more open. (...) Anything that happens in the city should certainly happen at Jules César,” says Christian Lacroix.

The theatre sets the stage for an exciting, warm and authentic experience to showcase the new owner’s ambition for the Maranatha hotel group to provide ever-more exclusive destinations.

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A DESIGNER'S MOOD BOARD

At the Musée Réattu d'Arles, there is a painting which is among the first to hang in Mr Lacroix's imaginary museum. It is called "L'atelier de couturiers".

Its subject is not only the inimitable light of the Southern France but also the union of fabrics and materials to create a collage.

The 5* Hôtel Jules César's interior design appears to be based on these two themes. On the one hand, there's the way the light plays with the shadows created by the architecture. On the other hand, there's the idea of collage through which the designer unveils the hotel's soul and history.

In the rediscovered frame of the former cloister, he paints a picture of Southern French *art de vivre* imbued with comfort and emotion whose palette is tinged by the memory of the former establishment alongside splashes of traditional bouvine and literature, art and music, baroque and contemporary style, corrida and photographic history.

The Jules César strives to be the icon and the doorway to the land's many facets.

"People who stay at the hotel are not only looking for a second home; they are looking for one that tells a story," says Christian Lacroix. The project has seen Lacroix explore the building's many lives and its place in the local culture which runs through the designer's veins.

JULES CESAR'S RENAISSANCE IN CHRISTIAN LACROIX'S WORDS

The 5* Hôtel Jules César, in a listed area, has found the knowledge of a man who loves heritage and strives to stay true to the building's history in Christian Lacroix. In partnership with architect Olivier Sabran, the designer focused on restoring the 1664 convent's architecture to its former glory.



Showcase the original cloister

“It was a convent in the 17th century,” says Christian Lacroix, “a Carmelite convent, slightly beyond the walls with one of the most beautiful intact baroque chapels in town. It gave me a deep respect for the places and spaces, their powerful soul and the spirit which has always blown no matter the trials and tribulations of certain periods.

This meant keeping the wide and slightly solemn corridors where the relics of a modest yet moving mural were found during construction where nuns and Carmelites came together to attend service behind their wooden screen which is still intact in the chapel.

This meant restoring the bandstand façade to its former glory by reviving period windows; redesigning very simply the green areas, on the sheltered terrace on Boulevard des Lices and the garden leading to the pool; renovating the chapel which will host exhibitions as part of the this summer’s Photo Festival on the theme of “l’Arlésienne.”

Upstairs, the so-called “Mother Superior” room is inspired by Camargue minimalism and convent cells. It is simple and stylish, whitewashed in white and sand colours and slightly Spanish in style as this is also the toreros’ floor.”



Keep the memory of a legendary hotel alive

A modern hotel dedicated to welcoming increasing numbers of increasingly sophisticated tourists opened in 1928 on the road from Paris and Le Havre to the Côte d'Azur and the French Riviera. Fortunately, the building's original Antiquity-inspired structure and even some furniture have been preserved by the previous owners, Mr and Mrs Albagnac, so I wanted to incorporate these roots into my subtle design.

We achieved this by keeping the vast lobby and the wide view from the entrance to the staircase, bringing the bar alone closer to reception and the restaurant, and redesigning the lounge which still has most of the original armchairs upholstered in colourful fabric. Local colour set the tone: the pink of the toreros and old façades, the red of the cloaks, the yellow of the condiments and wild plants, the architectural monochrome graphics particularly in the Tauromachique bar and a more 18th century Provence feel with some walls featuring white rocks on an olive and vanilla background. I decided to keep the original woodwork in the Lou Marquès restaurant which has simply been sandblasted, like some of the period furniture in the rooms, and topped by a fresco which leaps from Arles shadow play to Camargue bulls.

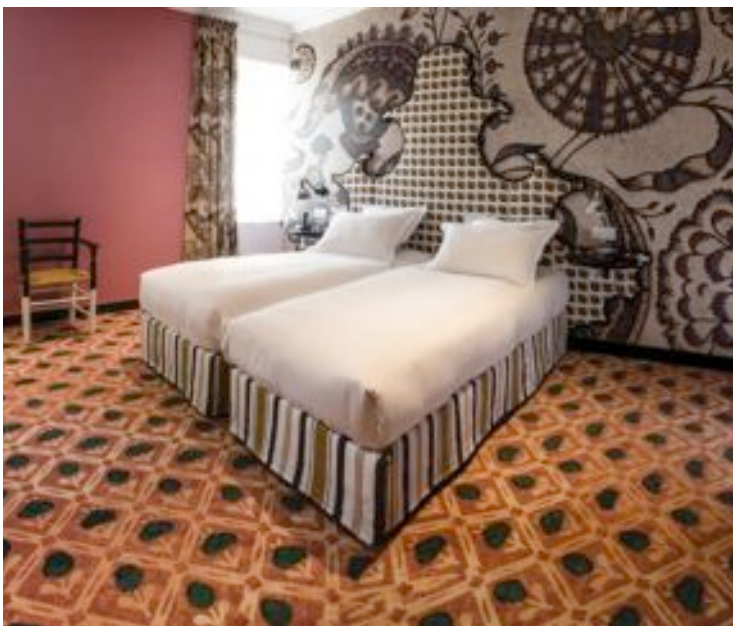
I also wanted to keep the unusual size of the room intact solely punctuated by whitewashed movable partitions so that the seating plan can be changed on a daily basis to suit any formal or informal event. Like the lobby, a black and white trompe l'œil tile carpet welcomes clients to tables whose 60s chairs are all in a different hue; the dining room is a kaleidoscope of colour.

The breakfast room is inspired by farmhouse kitchens in grey-green tones with blue shutters, reed screens over the atrium and enlarged 18th century engravings on the walls alongside a mural.



You'll find the same style in the "Camargue" rooms whilst those on the first floor have the same "18th century" chic as the lobby. The rooms in the cloister are more monochrome and inspired by the period in which Picasso, Cocteau and many more visited the town and left the colours, patterns and drawings which have provided me with an endless source of inspiration, particularly in the design of these interiors.

This was actually a place for society life and holidays with the motto "sta viator" sculpted on the façade next to a bas-relief of Julius Caesar which was already topical in 1928, 80 years before a famous bust of Caesar was found in the Rhône. The sculpture was united with the Vénus d'Arles one summer to stand in the lobby and welcome visitors. Needless to say, I have been inspired by the decorative features of Antiquity as you can see in the lounge's "calade" mosaic trompe l'oeil rug.



© Philippe Pralraud

CREATE A CULTURAL FORUM WHOSE PAST INSPIRES THE FUTURE

Aside from the urge to bring the past, present and even the future together in an uncontrived, consistent and relevant style, my ambition for working on this hotel's renovation is not only to see clients from all over the world flock here but also to give the people of Arles a place to celebrate their special occasions or simply enjoy a meal, a drink or devote themselves to the ritual of the fêria with the mundillo and bouvine...

And of course I want all the musicians, photographers, writers, artists and figures in Arles' rich cultural life to feel at home in this monument in the heart of the city. Despite appearances, here you feel as if you're in a castle, a garden, a traditional house or simply a place where you feel comfortable between the Alpilles and the edge of the Mediterranean."



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NEXT STAGE: SPA TO OPEN IN AUTUMN 2014

There is but one thing missing from the soothingly serene setting created by Christian Lacroix for the Jules César: a spa.

The hotel's haven is incomplete without an area devoted to leisure and beauty within the establishment. The spa will open in autumn 2014 in the internal courtyard in the cloister extension.

It will provide naturally scented treatments inspired by the Mediterranean's expertise in perfect harmony with the Jules César's new environment.

ANNEX

THE JULES CESAR IN DATES

- 1664:** The Carmélites arrived in Arles in 1631 and built their convent in the name of Sainte Thérèse d'Avila near the entrance to the Marché-Neuf.
- 1792:** The nuns were expelled during the Revolution. The town bought the convent and converted it into a hospital for the poor called Maison de la Charité.
- 1903:** The hospital closed down and the building was put up for sale. The company called Des Grands Hôtels Internationaux wanted to convert it into a luxury hotel.
- 1928:** The hotel opened. Construction work was supervised by architect Étienne Bentz who also designed the Pavillon d'Arles for the 1900 Exposition Universelle.
- 11/11/1942:** The Germans invaded Arles. The hotel became the headquarters for the Kommandantur.
- 1952:** Joseph Savini reopened the hotel. In 1953, as the first director, he set up the restaurant and named it Lou Marquès in memory of his friend, the Marquis de Baroncelli.
- 2013:** The Maranatha Group bought the hotel.
- 2014:** Christian Lacroix oversaw the hotel's full renovation with architect Olivier Sabran.

Source: n°178 Arles Info January 2014

CHRISTIAN LACROIX BIOGRAPHY

Christian Lacroix, designer.

Born in Trinquetaille, Arles (in 1951). After studying the classics and art history at the Lycée Mistral d'Arles, Université Paul Valéry in Montpellier, the Sorbonne and École du Louvre, he never saw himself as a painter, teacher or museum curator. As fate would have it, he was drawn to the world of fashion and stage costume.



© Patrick Swirck

After learning the ropes at Hermès, Guy Paulin and in Japan, he became artistic director of Jean Patou in 1982 until Bernard Arnault enabled him to launch his own fashion brand in 1987.

During this time (from the 80s) he also designed costumes for numerous theatre, opera and ballet productions at the Opéra Garnier (Les Anges Ternis, Joyaux, Shéhérazade, La Source, Le Palais de Cristal), and Monnaie de Bruxelles (Il Re Pastore, Eliogabalo, La Femme sans Ombre, Così Fan Tutte), the Comédie- Française (Phèdre, Cyrano de Bergerac, Fantasio, Peer Gynt, Lucrece Borgia), the Metropolitan in New York (La Gaité Parisienne), Festival d'Aix (Les Noces de Figaro), the Opéra-Comique (Roméo et Juliette, Fortunio), Capitole de Toulouse (La Favorite, Le Bal Masqué), the Rhine Opera (Les Pêcheurs de Perles, L'Amico Fritz), the TCE (Don Pasquale), the Vienna Opera House (Radamisto), Saint Gallen (Salomé), Graz (Lohengrin), Cologne (Aïda), Hamburg (Butterfly), Frankfurt (Adrienne Lecouvreur), Munich (Capuletti e Montechi) and Berlin (Agrippina, Candide, Mahagonny).

Since 2000, he has also been exploring an industrial design avenue (TGV, Montpellier tramways, hotels, Gaumont cinemas) and stage design for his own work (Centre National du Costume de Scène in Moulins in 2006, Musée de la Mode et Musée des Arts Décoratifs in 2007, Musée Réattu and Rencontres d'Arles in 2008, Abbaye de Montmajour in 2013), which has been his main focus since leaving the world of fashion design in 2009.

In July 2013 he designed a collection of 18 couture pieces in tribute to Elsa Schiaparelli for the fashion house of the same name.

He also still works in collaboration with the Monnaie de Paris, is designing the interior of his fifth hotel in Paris and has been given free rein to design a stage at the Musée Cognacq-Jay for next autumn among other projects.

ABOUT THE MARANATHA GROUP

The Maranatha Group is now the 14th largest hotel group in France and has significantly grown since acquiring hotels in Paris, Brussels, the mountains and South of France.

The Group has over 40 establishments which can be divided into two categories: “Prestige” hotels where each setting is unique and tells a story and “Etape” branded hotels for enjoyable stays with the guarantee of high quality hospitality.

Hotels which joined the Group in 2013 include: the 4* Seven Hotel, a sophisticated and modern hotel in the heart of Paris, the 5* Sofitel Le Louise in Brussels, a luxury hotel exuding French charm and *art de vivre* and the 4* Le Grand Aigle Hôtel & Spa in Serre- Chevalier, a cosy and comfortable mountain hotel nestled at the foot of the slopes.

The Group is continuing its growth in 2014 with several ambitious renovation projects and new destinations all over Europe.

Information and best rates guaranteed at **www.maranathahotels.com**.

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KEY INFORMATION



52 rooms:

Standard/Superior/Deluxe/ Lacroix Junior Suite

11 themed Suites and Junior Suites: Provençal, Monastic, Lacroix 3pm check-in/12pm check-out

Housekeeping service

24 hour reception

Concierge

Cloakroom

Child minding service

Laundry, dry cleaning, ironing service

Restaurant

1 Lou Marquès restaurant serving Provençal cuisine

Seats 100 in dining room and 40 on the terrace

Breakfast: 7am to 10.30am in dining room/room service

Lunch: 12pm to 1.30pm

Dinner: 7.30pm to 9.30pm

24 hour room service

1 bar

1 pool and snack bar open from July to mid-September

Leisure

Outdoor heated pool

1 spa (open in autumn 2014) with Jacuzzi, Turkish bath, sauna, gym, tea room

Gardens

Valet parking

Public car park available on site at 20 EUR

Meeting/banquet rooms



HÔTEL JULES CESAR CONTACT

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