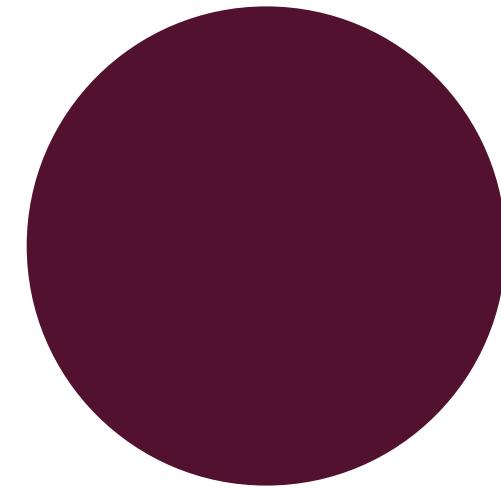




© Sybille de Margerie by Jean-Baptiste Huynh.



Backstage

At the Hôtel de Paris Saint-Tropez

with Sybille de Margerie

Saint-Tropez has always been a by-word for glamour and style, so it was only natural that the Hôtel de Paris, owned by the Dray family, should call on the services of one of the most fashionable interior designers in the luxury hotel world - Sybille de Margerie. The watchword of excellence for this mythical establishment is high-class.

We take a peek into a sphere of interior design which is both welcoming and contemporary with all the instantly recognisable hallmarks of the woman behind the transformation of the Mandarin Oriental in Paris and Cheval Blanc in Courchevel.

What do these places have in common? A level of luxury and comfort which are indistinguishable from one another and a fabulous combination of colours and materials. Take a private tour of the Hôtel de Paris with this stylish woman.

By Laure Delvigo.





Sybillé, what does Saint-Tropez mean to you?

It is typical Provencal village and at the same time it's a fishing port where the old fishing boats sit side-by-side with the pleasure yachts of today. Saint-Tropez conjures up the light and colours of the Mediterranean, the shadows and the blinding sun, yellow, ochre and red stand out against the blue. The whole place is conducive to relaxation and rest.

What was your inspiration for L'Hôtel de Paris St Tropez?

There are five themes: Saint-Tropez and women, Saint-Tropez and the arts, Saint-Tropez

and the Mediterranean, Saint-Tropez and the Sixties and Seventies and Saint-Tropez and Paris. Why Saint-Tropez and women? That must be obvious, with Colette, Françoise Sagan and Brigitte Bardot at her villa, La Madrague, and then with couture and designers like Paul Poiré and Karl Lagerfeld. Why Saint-Tropez and the arts? For all the artists and painters who have stayed or lived there, Signac, Matisse, Bonnard, Albert Marquet, Bernard Buffet, the writers, Guy de Maupassant, Boris Vian, Jean-Paul Sartre, and the French 'Nouvelle Vague' ('New Wave') film movement: Roger Vadim's *And God Created Woman* and Jean-Luc Godard's "Pierrot

le Fou". Why Saint-Tropez and the Mediterranean? I wanted to represent this village in Provence and the traditions of the fishing port and boatyards, the pleasure yachts of today mixing with the old fishing boats. The Sixties and Seventies represent the explosion of tourism, pop music, hippies, nightclubs and fashionable beaches, Pop Art, Serge Gainsbourg's song "Sea, Sex and Sun" and Jacques Deray's film "The Swimming Pool" with Romy Schneider and Alain Delon.

And of course the last one, Saint-Tropez and Paris. The hotel has been called Hôtel de Paris since its inception. Saint-Tropez has always had a link with the capital; Charles Trenet

sings about the Route Nationale 7 - the road to the south - then there are the Parisians who come here, the influence of the capital, the heirs and heiresses of the European elite, the international jet set, the top models, the luxury ("le fric, c'est chic" - is chic) they are all part of the French Riviera. All these things are bound up in the memories of the place, all these emotions exist in the village. I think it's important to share them with the people who come here so they can breathe in this heady scent, this unique alchemy which is so special. Once the concept got the go-ahead, these five themes were rolled out right through the hotel.





What criteria did you use when choosing the furnishings in terms of the materials you used?

For me, luxury and comfort are inseparable. There are "magazine hotels" that look beautiful on the glossy page, but are neither functional nor enjoyable to live in. A hotel is a place to live. Comfort should be a consideration in every little detail, that and trying to anticipate the customer's needs. Everything should be designed to make life easier so that the customer leaves with memories of a wonderful experience. In the same way technology should be easy to use and attractive, it should be at the service of the customer and not the other way round. Discomfort, lack of functionality and elements which are too complicated to use disturb the harmony of the place. Our

best references are the testimonies of guests who have stayed in hotels that we have designed and have experienced this way of living. There is no such thing as a typical room in Hôtel de Paris, but the most common theme is the one which tries to capture the spirit of Saint-Tropez and the Arts. Beige hues, sky blue, teal, turquoise, and chocolate; aquatic shades from the painter's palette and designer furniture and grey sanded wood which sits alongside coloured glass lamps and boho chic pearl chandeliers which create magical patterns on the ceiling in the evening when the lights are on. In the bathrooms mosaics made of distressed glass are reflected in circular mirrors. It is a world which is both casual and sophisticated, designed for Saint-Tropez people and open

all year. The Hôtel de Paris is not a seaside hotel only open for the summer season. The other rooms and other suites are available in three different colour schemes. Every room, every suite, each part of the hotel has been designed creatively and originally within the constraints of the building, which has enabled us to come up with unique and different spaces without making any compromise on comfort.

You travel a lot, what do you do to stay in good health?

Happiness is the best vitamin, doing what you love with the person you love.

What are your favourite addresses around the world?

The Villa d'Este in Como, Casa Angelina in Praiano,

Le Sirenuse in Positano, the Aeolian Islands. I adore Italy. In India it would be the Udaipur Taj Lake Palace hotel. But also, of the hotels I've redesigned, the Mandarin Oriental in Paris, Cheval Blanc in Courchevel and the Old Cataract in Aswan, Egypt.

What are your latest projects?

A private chalet in Courchevel, luxury residences for the Royal Atlantis Resort in Dubai, a hotel in Champagne and another in Oman.

Three things you love?

Family, good wine and cigars.

Three things you hate ?!

Greed, selfishness and lying.