

The Maison Marcellé Guide to Paris



"I Dream in French"
~Andréa Marcellé

"Paris is always a good idea." ~ Audrey Hepburn



Where to Stay

I have had the privilege of checking into many hotels in Paris, but that was before I discovered **Hôtel Caron de Beaumarchais**. A boutique hotel ideally located in Le Marais, this 18th century inspired gem is my only Parisian home away from home. Authentic Louis XV antiques, opulent chandeliers and petit jugs with daily fresh roses fill every room. Steps away from Rue Rivoli, it's walking distance to Le Metro Hotel de Ville, a host of traditional bistros and cafés and many of the best vintage shops in Paris. A full breakfast can be served either in your room, on your scenic balcony, or you can walk down the spiral staircase into the dining room and sit among the fresh *fleurs* while you chat with other travelers. After a long day of treasure hunting, I look forward to retreating back to my room #22, sinking into the relaxing tub where I sigh... "Ahhhh, Paris!" Combine that with the royal treatment from the always accommodating, English-speaking staff, and I feel like a Baroness on Marie Antoinette's Court at Versailles. Even if you don't book this hotel, do stop in for a friendly visit and tell them that we send our best wishes from Maison Marcellé.

www.hotelcarondebeaumarchais.com

Where to Shop



It's Paris, ma chère... shop everywhere! Ok... I never leave Paris without making a "Mecca pilgrimage" to my beloved Coco Chanel's 31 Rue Cambon, the flagship location where she once lived, created and presented to the world the magic that is Chanel. I indulge in a glass of champagne and splurge on one luxurious thing that reminds me of my

worth. Still, at heart I'm a treasure hunter, so I steer clear of Le Galleries Lafayette and the typical "mall" type venues and head straight toward the boutique experiences. My first stop ... **Sissi's Corner** near Place de Vosges in Le Marais. Take your time! This *depot vente luxe* (upscale resale) is petit, but is packed with classic Parisienne style. Chanel bags at consignment prices, vintage lace gloves and tweed YSL trousers. Paris street style shoes, leather coats straight out of the 80s and tailored Halston suits. Like a moth to a flame, I hover over the bling-filled jewelry cases and *ohhh...* and *ahhh...* (in French, of course) while Sissi and I chat fashion. She's a delight and one of my favorite Parisiennes. Tip: Bring me her business card and *enjoy 10% off* your next purchase.



Didier Ludot in Le Palais Royale houses the undisputed best vintage couture collection in Paris. Take your checkbook and thick skin. Rare Chanel and mid century Dior runway pieces are their specialty... polite conversation, not so much. I like to just stand in front of the window and daydream. **Renaissance** has also curated a superb collection of vintage Paris fashions. This is not a budget boutique experience either, but you're on vacation. Treat yourself to a one of kind statement piece that you'll enjoy for the rest of your life.

Some other worthwhile stops are **Mam'zelle Swing** for 40s and 50s frocks, **Come on Eileen** if you're up to a good two-floor dig and **Vintage Désir** (the sign on top says Coiffeur)... you might find ANYTHING in there. There are literally HUNDREDS of vintage, resale and consignment boutiques in Paris. I try to experience 3 or 4 new ones each time I visit. Tip: *Fripe* is a French term that means resale clothing (vintage and new), so search *friperie* and see what you discover.



Where to Eat

It's Paris... eat everywhere, ma chère! Ok. Here's what ya do... find a yummy boulangerie near your hotel and visit 3 mornings in a row. By day 3, you'll be a regular, they'll likely greet you by name and for the moment, at least, you'll be a Parisian. My favorite is **Au Petit Versailles**. They still use a big, old, beautiful, brass cash register and the ceiling is painted to mirror that of Versailles. Most importantly, they serve a delicious croissant l'orange and café au lait in a quaint little Paris café setting. My favorite dinner spot... *hmmm...* I have a few. **Café Louis Philippe** is gorgeous, steps away from the Seine, stays open late and serves a melt in your mouth boeuf bourguignon. Seasonally, *les huitres* (fresh oysters) are delicious, too. The scruffy barman is a character and usually offers me a complimentary *tisane*. He refuses to tell me what's in it, but his hearty laugh and kind nature encourage me to indulge him, so...

For a more elegant meal, I enjoy **La Rose de France**. It's located on Place Duaphine, one of the most beautiful *places* (or squares) in Paris and if you go during the dinner hour in warmer months, you'll catch spirited Parisians playing an endless match of *pétanque* (similar to bocci ball). The maitre'd will happily make a wine suggestion and I've always found his taste and pairing skills to be... mwah... *superb*! **Le Procope** in St. Germain is one of the oldest restaurants in Paris and serves a traditional French menu amid mirrored walls and tasseled blue velvet drapes. It was recommended to me years ago by a French woman who owns The Foley House, a world class B&B in Savannah, GA, of all places. The food is divine, the desserts are decadent, and so I make a point to enjoy a meal there most times that I visit. **Bouillon Chartier** has also been serving a traditional French "peasant food" menu in a traditional, but more relaxed, French setting for centuries. Don't be intimidated by the line. It moves at a fast pace. But, wait... go to the **Paris Ritz**! The French invented luxury and nowhere on the planet is that more evident than behind the black and gold iron gates of the Ritz! I make a reservation for lunch a la Bar Vendôme, where Chanel ate her lunch every day. I order boeuf tartare, pomme frites and a vanilla milkshake that is served with 2 fragrant Madagascar vanilla beans and a frangiapani flower floating on top. It's the best €45 I spend all week! The lunch reservation grants me access to the entire hotel where I can stroll *les jardins* (in whatever fabulousness I treated myself to at 31 Rue Cambon), admire the décor, view the art galleries and pop into the gift shop for some overpriced but really beautifully gift wrapped souvenirs.



Where to Sip



Paris is full of très elegant Salons de Thé. **Mariage Freres** serves over 700 global varieties of tea in its historic salon. **Laduree**, with its pastel macaron displays, chantilly crème creations, tiny gold tables and fine china settings, is certainly one of the prettiest places in Paris (or NYC) to enjoy a cuppa, and Angelina's, another one of Chanel's haunts, serves the best *chocolat chaud* (hot cocoa) in the world. My favorite, though, is **Nina's Marie Antoinette Salon**. Shocking, I know. It's PINK... and displays a 300 year old Marie Antoinette alabaster bust that once lived at Versailles. Of course, there are chandeliers and a million little white tassels draped on everything that will stand still, but all of that aside, they make a rose infused dark chocolat that you might lose your head over... pun intended. Visit if you can. Bring me a chocolat du rosé and you and I will forever be BFFs!

Looking for something with a little more *je ne sais quoi* than thé? **Le Fumoir** is a nice place to enjoy a cocktail and they share some of our American history. The stately oak bar that greets you at the door originally housed the illegally sold liquor in a prohibition era speakeasy on our very own Broad Street in Philly! Mention to the bartender that you know that... he's a Thomas Jefferson fan and has been known to present Philadelphians with a complimentary *Ricard*.

*****Bon voyage, Madame. If you stumble upon an experience that you think I might enjoy, please do share. Merci!**

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