

January 17, 2010

CHECK IN, CHECK OUT

Hotel Review: Hôtel Gabriel Paris Marais, in Paris

By SETH SHERWOOD

THE BASICS

[Paris](#) can be toxic. The secondhand smoke of a thousand Gitane cigarettes. The heart-stopping cholesterol of foie gras. The ear-splitting chainsaw buzz of Vespas at all hours of the night. Bordeaux binges. Champagne hangovers. In calling itself Paris's first "detox hotel," the [Hôtel Gabriel Paris Marais](#) appears to offer a crash pad and cure-all in one. Opened in March in a fetchingly restored 1925 town house, the 40-room hotel declares that its mission is "to purge the physical and emotional toxins accumulated day in day out through stress, absence of physical exercise, bad diet or lack of sleep," according to the guest book placed in its rooms.

THE LOCATION

Sadly, you'd have to be pretty intoxicated to believe that the Gabriel Paris Marais — in a pleasant but nondescript corner of Paris's 11th Arrondissement — is really in the fashionable Marais district, which traditionally includes parts of the Third and Fourth Arrondissements. The hotel's name may sound better than Hôtel Gabriel Paris Backwater, but it's misleading. The Rue des Rosiers, the heart of the Marais, is a 20-minute walk. Much closer are the cool bars and restaurants of the Rue Oberkampf and Rue Jean-Pierre Timbaud.

THE ROOM

My room, 204, was done in a tranquil palette of gray, beige and especially white. Double-paned windows, heavy beige curtains, a plush gray rug and a partly carpeted wall shut out the clamor of Paris. Instead of traditional lamps, the room employed illuminated panels and indirect sources — notably a curved white wall cut with glowing geometric patterns — to conjure a soft, uniform light. The effect was lovely. A wall unit held a copy of the book "Clean: The Revolutionary Program to Restore the Body's Natural Ability to Heal Itself," by Dr. Alejandro Junger, a consultant to the hotel whose clients include [Gwyneth Paltrow](#). The shelves also contained healthy foods, such as a tube of sweet red-bean paste with ginseng (3 euros) and an organic sesame bar (3 euros). The bed, which took up most of the room, was

exceptionally comfortable, thanks to an Epeda mattress and a heavy duvet. Ten rooms also contain NightCove, a bedside electronic sound-and-light device that helps you sleep “by stimulating the secretion of Melatonin,” as the guest guide puts it.

THE BATHROOM

Chrome fixtures and a contemporary Duravit toilet added some flair to the small, white bathroom, equipped with a shower but no bathtub. Anyone boycotting propylene glycol or ethanalamine — whatever those might be — will appreciate the Korres basil-lemon shower gel and aloe shampoo with sawwort, both of which trumpet their lack of said substances.

AMENITIES

The tiny, sleek spa, known as the Bioo Detox Room, offers a short list of treatments, though they don’t come cheap. A 25-minute “massage relaxant” costs a hefty 60 euros, about \$85 at \$1.40 to the euro. When it’s time to re-tox, you can hit the attractive lobby bar. With glowing panels and minimalist white furnishings, it’s a pleasant place to sip a Le Gabriel, a house cocktail of vodka, Champagne and cherry syrup (14 euros).

THE BOTTOM LINE

The detox services aren’t hard-core or obligatory — a blessing or a cop-out depending on your perspective — but the hotel remains a minor gem. The futuristic rooms, all of them nonsmoking, show a careful dedication to soundproofing, lighting and comfort. Cheerful service adds to the cozy vibe.

Hôtel Gabriel Paris Marais, 25, rue du Grand-Prieuré, 75011; (33-1) 47-00-13-38; www.gabrielparismarais.com. Doubles from 159 euros (\$225) when booked online.