

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski, Beijing, China

[The Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski](#) in Beijing, China offers guests the unique experience of waking up each morning in architectural dream design houses with vistas of the Great Wall.

Some hotels go beyond the imagination, and the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski in Beijing, China is certainly one of them. While hotels will go the extra length for a prestigious location, the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski goes beyond expectation with its unique location of being by the Great Wall, one of the eight scenic wonders of the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Edward F. Nesta and I arrived very late at night at the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski in October 2006, so we were totally unprepared when we woke up in the morning and stepped outside of our Forest House, to be greeted with a magnificent view of the Great Wall bathed in the early morning light. When I read about the hotel I knew that it was near the Great Wall, but little did I expect that I could almost reach out and touch it. Perhaps that is a bit of an exaggeration, but the Great Wall is literally in the backyard of the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski. We marveled at the history of the Great Wall while having breakfast at The View in The Clubhouse with direct views of the Great Wall.



Unlike other hotels where guestrooms are located in one building, the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski is an inspired setting of 32 Villas and 10 Contemporary Chalets for a total of 236 rooms and suites. Ms. Zhang Xin was the mastermind behind the original design project consisting of 11 villas designed by 12 famous Asian Architects. Gary Chang (Hong Kong): Suitcase House, Shigeru Ban (Japan): Furniture House, Cui Kai (China): "See" and "Seen" House, Rocco Yim (Hong Kong): Distorted Courtyard House, Chien Hsueh-Yi (Taiwan): Airport, Antonio Ochoa (China): Cantilever House, Kengo Kuma (Japan): Bamboo Wall, Kanika R-kul (Thailand): The Shared House, Kay Ngee Tan (Singapore): The Twins, Nobuaki Furuya (Japan): Forest House, Yung Ho Chang (China): Split House, and Seung H-Sang (South Korea): The Clubhouse. As the names imply, the private houses have artistic vision, and whimsical appeal.

Based on the original 11 villas that opened in 2002, the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski added 21 villas for its grand opening on September 23, 2006, inspired by the original designs of the Cantilever

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House, The Shared House, Forest House, and The Bamboo House. Inspired contemporary architecture deserves prestigious interior design, and the villas are furnished by acclaimed designers Serge Mouille, Thierry Hoppe, Von Robinson, Philippe Starck, Alex Strub, Claudio Colucci, Ross Menuetz, Kaname Okajima, Jonas Damon, Karim Rashid, Matthew Hilton, Marc Newson and Michael Young.



The Clubhouse is the pulse of the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski, and is the home of the restaurants and a private theatre. Guests can read in the library in the aptly named Peacock Room, where the walls are covered with peacock feathers, relax on a sage green sofa covered with colorful pillows in tamarind, cinnamon and curry, or sit in the curved deep purple velvet chairs. In the evening guests can enjoy a drink in the Pink Bar, or admire the art in the Gallery Lounge furnished with plum and mauve colored chairs, fur beanbag chairs, and large fur cushions. The hotel has an arrangement with a prestigious Beijing art gallery to provide a rotation of art by important artists every three months. While we were at the hotel, there was an exciting collection of paintings and sculptures including two large sculptures by the artist Zhu Wei, entitled China China, made of beaten bronze in 2003.



Other amenities at the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski include The Kid's Club with special programs for children ages 2-11 years, and the Anantara Spa By The Great Wall, with 21 gorgeous spa suites offering pampering Asian-inspired treatments.

Staying in the 3-bedroom Forest House nestled against the mountains, with its soaring glass walls and open design, I felt like I was staying in an architectural design museum and I mean that in a good way. The Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski combines the beauty of contemporary design with lush creature comforts, featuring stimulating colors, innovative interiors, and tactile textures. The Forest House has 2-levels with a shared living space and an open design concept living room with an orange and white poppy design carpet, white chairs, a large square coffee table, 2 tall beige guest chairs, a Philips television, and a potted tree in the corner of the room on the first floor. The kitchen has a 2-burner stove, a coffee/tea maker, a large refrigerator filled with complimentary beverages, and a spacious dining room with a large square table with 8 chairs. There is a powder room and one bedroom also located on the first level.

Our guestroom was on the second level reached by a wide stairway. The king-bed was dressed with an inviting white duvet and fluffy pillows, the room had white walls and an accent wall the color of new green leaves, and wood floors. There was a beige contemporary chair with wood accented armrests where we could watch the flat screen television or use our laptop using the WIFI Internet. There was a safe in the closet, along with fluffy robes and slippers. The large gray tile bathroom featured a walk-in shower and Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski amenities. In addition, there was a second bedroom and a

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conversation area on the second level where guests could relax on large orange pillows.



Edward and I took a tour of the unique collection of houses, which must be seen in order to be truly appreciated. I loved seeing all of the designs, however I must admit that my favorite was The Bamboo House with its inspired design and original photography by the owner, Mr. Pan Shiyi, with the Cantilever House with its bold red color and creative design coming in a close second. The 11 Villas in Phase I have 4-6 bedrooms and are reserved in their entirety, and have the added benefit of a butler. The 21 Villas of Phase II may be reserved by the room or by their entirety.



After an al fresco lunch, we took advantage of the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski location and went for a short walk to see the Great Wall. Surrounded by densely forested green mountains and deep valleys, I felt like I was literally on top of the world. Imagining the Great Wall and reading about it in books is one thing, but actually seeing the Great Wall is almost unfathomable. Built from the 3rd century BC until the beginning of the 17th century, the Great Wall stretches for 6,352 km (3,948 miles), where it winds and weaves at the highest point of the mountain range.

However, after traveling from New York to China the day before, our calf muscles were making themselves heard after our strenuous hike. Not to worry, we had sensibly reserved two days of spa treatments at the **Anantara Spa**, where we emerged renewed from our massage treatments ready to climb the Great Wall again.



We ended our day having a lovely dinner in the pretty Courtyard restaurant. The location alone is perfect, but combined with the award-winning contemporary architecture, gastronomic restaurants, and Anantara Spa you should pack your luggage and immediately book a trip to China to experience the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski. Nestled in the mountains, and located 1 hour from Beijing Capital International Airport and 50 minutes from Beijing city center, the Commune By The Great Wall Kempinski offers the best of both worlds of Beijing, it is close enough to go to Beijing city center, yet the serene and tranquil setting is worlds away from the hustle of Beijing.

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