

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Hotel Raphael



The **Hotel Raphael** is a charming 90-room hotel built in 1925, and is located near the Avenue Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe and the Tour Eiffel. This hotel evokes another era with its décor and service.



Edward F. Nesta and I stayed at the hotel in November 2004, and had the opportunity to meet with the new General Manager, Mr. Norbert Henrot, over drinks in the English Bar, where their barman has reigned for over 20 years. To celebrate the hotel's 80th anniversary in 2005, many changes have already been made, as well as many new renovations are in progress to make sure that this small beauty maintains her charm and elegance. In April 2003, a Fitness Center was added to the hotel, which features a hammon, sauna, free weights, exercise mats, and even a ballet barre. The fitness center also has a stained glass window and a beautiful mosaic floor, keeping with the grace of the hotel, while adding modern amenities including a television. Guests can open a window to exercise with fresh air, as well as enjoy an assortment of fruit and keep hydrated with bottled water. On the rooftop terrace, guests can relax and enjoy spectacular views of Paris including views of the Arc de Triomphe and the Tour Eiffel, as well as play a game of chess using the large floor chessboard.



Our large Junior Suite had a foyer with coat tree, a large living room with a fireplace, with two sets of French doors that opened onto a large terrace where we had exhilarating views of the Tour Eiffel, which were especially intriguing at night. There was a beautiful chandelier, and antique furniture with teal blue brocade fabrics set on an oriental carpet. The walls had painted murals and gold sconces. A velvet settee and small tables and chairs gave the room the appeal of a by-gone era of an elegant salon. I must admit that my laptop looked a little out of place on the antique roll-top desk, but with the help of an Internet card available from the hotel, it worked just fine. There was an artful floral arrangement of pink roses, ranunculus, berries and lemon leaves in a square crystal vase on the mantel, which was reflected in the large mirror over the fireplace. Guests could relax on a comfortable chaise in the corner of the room while watching television.

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Our large bedroom was reached through an arched doorway, draped with rich brocade fabrics. There was a ladies dressing table in the middle of the room, and a large wrap-around antique wood armoire with mirrors, which also had a safe. The bathroom had a separate enclosed toilet and bidet, a walk-in shower and a separate tub, as well as robes, slippers, Roger Gallet amenities, a stool, hairdryer, scale, heated towel rack and a window, which could be opened.



Breakfast buffets were delightful with their large assortment of choices including freshly baked breads and pastries. Breakfast, as well as lunch and dinner, is served in their restaurant, La Salle à Manger. Guests could also enjoy a more private breakfast at one of the small tables in the English Bar. La Salle à Manger is an intimate, beautiful room with high ceilings and ornate moldings, floor to ceiling windows draped with elegant fabrics, the graceful tables were draped with white linens and set with Limoges china and had fresh flower arrangements, creamy walls with hand-painted murals, and gold sconces that basked the room in reflected light completed the ambience. We also had a delicious dinner at the hotel, which you can read about in the **Restaurants** section.

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