



The Gallivanter's Guide

100 CLUB

HONEST ADVICE FOR THE WORLD'S TOP TRAVELLERS

Although it is a city, Geneva always feels like an urban resort to me; somewhere I would happily journey to for a summer sojourn, with Lake Geneva sparkling in the sun, as the famous jet d'eau cuts through the blue sky. Over the years, I have switched my hotel allegiances quite often, as this is a city of constant change and movement. The one defining



Geneva on a plate.

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The Woodward in Geneva was built by French architect, François Duret in 1901.

feature, though, is Geneva's extraordinary food scene, epitomised by the long anticipated seasonal catch of Lake Fish and the region's excellent, if rarely recognised, wines. French and Italian influences predominate, although, as with everywhere else, Asian flavours have crept in, and to great effect. There is a raft of good hotels in Geneva; but on this trip, we explore its latest offering, in the form of The Woodward, by Oetker, check out Ritz-Carlton's smallest ever hotel and return to our benchmark property, Four Seasons des Bergues. Right now, this is the high-end Geneva hotel scene on a plate. Bon appétit!

The Woodward.

It is becoming increasingly rare to encounter new city hotels designed on an intimate scale, as most high-end hotel groups appear to favour mid- to large-sized properties, which is great news if you are an investor, but less than thrilling if you are a high-end traveller in search of a one-of-a-kind experience.

I was, therefore, excited when The Oetker Collection opened one of its Masterpiece hotels on the shores of Lake Geneva, with, remarkably, only 26 suites.

Constructed in 1901 as the Hotel Bellevue, the ornate post-Haussmann pile became

a private residence, then a bank, then offices, and since September 2021, it is once again an art-filled property re-imagined by Pierre-Yves Rochon.

Whilst not exactly located in the thick of it, The Woodward has, in my view, the most

picturesque lakeside location in town. It stands, magnificently, on the edge of Quai Wilson, overlooking a Riviera-style marina which, when you sit on your suite's balcony, gives this property an almost resort-like atmosphere.



At The Woodward, the relaxed all-day-dining restaurant, Le Jardinier, focuses on vegetables.



At The Woodward, immaculate dining at Le Jardinier (left) and L'Atelier Robuchon, right.

The hotel's main entrance is easy to miss, as it is not on the lake, but is located instead on a discreet side street, which makes arriving at The Woodward delight-

fully theatrical. Indeed, I felt a real sense of anticipation, as a friendly liveried doorman ushered me past a bijou foyer, embellished with striking murals, to a small crimson lac-

quered elevator that conveyed me to the actual lobby, which is one floor up. Decorated with velvet corner sofas, Ralph Lauren armchairs, rich Nepalese carpets, mid-



The Lobby, at The Woodward, feels like the stylish reception salon of a private residence.



At The Woodward, the bedroom of Royal Suite, #501, which is accessed by a private elevator.

century modernist furniture and glossy Macassar ebony walls, the lobby brims with character, art and texture and feels like the stylish reception salon of a private residence. The only thing that reminds you that this is an hotel is the discreet front desk, which is set against a huge bay window that frames the lake across the road.

My check-in was very professional, although, with such a low room count, I would have expected an in-suite check-in, or maybe a welcome drink in the lobby.

The 26 suites derive much of their charm from the no-expense-spared quality of the materials and the flawless finish. This gives you the sense of living in an ultra-luxurious and supremely comfortable Geneva apartment. Designed with privacy-conscious individuals in mind, many of the suites feature private elevators, and also connect, which means that entire floors can be privatised.

All are sumptuously decorated in shades of ivory, blue and muted gold, with marvellous details, such as the mother of pearl Lalique door handles, Christian Liaigre tables and armchairs, and silk wallpapers by Fromental; some of which are embroidered with hand painted flowers. Room keys come with leather fobs, although I found them awkward to use when it came to operate my suite's private elevator.

Every suite sports a lacquered, eye-level bar experience, stocked with organic Esprit Gourmand goodies, Illy espresso machine and complimentary soft drinks.

Expect generously sized walk-in ward-

robes and decadent white marble bathrooms; many with their own balconies and natural light. All are filled with Guerlain amenities. However, bear in mind that some bathrooms only offer walk-in showers.

Blissfully comfortable beds are adorned with Quagliotti linens and piles of soft pillows, whilst thoughtful housekeeping staff adds ultra-cushy mats and comfy slippers at turndown.

For me, the in-room technology required

some serious guesswork in order to connect to the hotel's Wi-fi network. I was encouraged to scan a QR code on the wall panel that controls the air-conditioning, the TV, lights, and drapes. Instead, my smartphone was hell bent on trying to connect to the Geberit electronic toilets. Happily, maintenance sorted it out in record time, providing me with an access code.

From then on, I stuck with the bedside iPad and the good old-fashioned switches



At The Woodward, sitting room of Prestige Suite, #601.



L'Atelier Robuchon, at the Woodward.
that, thankfully, are still present.

Of the 26 suites, 21 have full lake views, and these are obviously the ones you should aim for. I stayed in the lovely 700 sq ft Prestige Suite, #601, on the 6th floor, which is my favourite level, as balconies here are covered and much wider than the ones on the lower floors. This supremely comfortable habitat is accessed via private elevator and has a wonderfully airy living room, replete with fireplace. A compact bedroom, with handmade marquetry wood panelling, leads to a walk-in closet and a modest shower-only bathroom, bathed in natural light. Bizarrely, the loo is not in the bathroom itself, but is located in the corridor that leads from the entrance foyer to the bedroom; a somewhat unpractical design choice, in my view.

If you need more space, larger terraces with picture-perfect views, and a spacious bathroom with tub, then The Woodward Suite, #602, is a wonderful option.

On the top floor, suites tend to be less conventional, with some rather quirky configurations. I was not particularly keen on the Bellevue Suite, #701, with its exposed beams, sloping ceilings, and small dormer windows. Much better is the romantic 861 sq ft Lemman Suite, where a 23-foot high sitting room sits under a domed ceiling, accented by a striking Baccarat crystal chandelier. I also liked the 710 sq ft Collection Suite, #201, which has a particularly good bathroom with tub, and balcony access.

Even though it only features Juliet balconies, my favourite suite is the expansive, 3,261 sq ft Royal Suite, #501, that oozes sophistication and is a triumph of residential style. Accessed via private elevator, it features a dining room, seating up to 10 people, a kitchenette, a splendidly residential living room with fireplace, and a sumptuous corner bedroom with breathtaking lake views.

Geneva's dining scene is buzzing with locals who patronise the city's high-end hotel restaurants, and L'Atelier Robuchon, one of the two on-site dining rooms at The Woodward, is decidedly on their list.

Located in the basement, the restaurant is similar in style to its other siblings across the world, with a long bar, two semi-private dining rooms, a partially-open kitchen, dramatic lighting, and predominantly black and red décor, which works best at night.

Star Executive Chef, Olivier Jean, formerly of Jöel Robuchon in Taipei and Monaco, reigns supreme in the kitchen; his cuisine truly world-class, with current standouts including a Crispy Egg on a Kabocha pumpkin mousseline, with black truffle coulis, and a Dombes duck breast glazed with spices, salsify and herbs, which was, of course,

accompanied by the legendary and impossible to resist Robuchon-style mashed potatoes.

Service, under the delightful Aurélie Duffau, came close to perfection, whilst Sommelier, Hugo Familiar, who is ex-Le Bristol, delighted with unusual suggestions from the exhaustive wine list.

Elsewhere, the relaxed all-day-dining restaurant, Le Jardinier, was originally launched in New York by Michelin-starred Chef, Alain Verzeroli; another disciple of the late Jöel Robuchon. Flanking the length of the lobby, this elegant dining room is split between two splendid light-filled verandas; both decorated in hues of green and botanical motifs, with wondrous views of the lake.

This is a particularly delightful spot for lunch; although it tends to lack atmosphere in the evening; something that could be remedied quite easily with a few candles and background music. Here, vegetables take centre stage, utilising high quality local produce that is sourced no further than 93 miles away; so everything is fresh and flavoursome, with a strong emphasis on vegetarian dishes. For dessert, make sure you try the Yuzu tartelette, with Geneva honey



The Guerlain Spa, at The Woodward.



View of Lake Geneva from Prestige Suite, #601, at The Woodward.

and Hermance verbena, which is impossible to resist.

Equally delicious are the à la carte breakfasts, which are served with an original selection of irresistible pastries, by Titouan Claudet.

I felt that the slick, 13,000 sq ft subterranean Club Woodward, which features a Guerlain Spa, did not flow too well; its reception area accessed, very strangely, via a long clinical corridor lined with lockers. Treatments begin in the adjacent salon, with its comfy caramel chairs and sofas, which more resembles a Guerlain showroom than a temple of wellbeing.

There are six treatment rooms, including one double; each equipped with a white onyx sink and an Italian marble shower.

Much more successful, however, is the impressive wet area, which includes two steam rooms, two saunas, two Swedish baths and snow ice. The pièce de résistance is the very Zen-like pool, which is the longest indoor swimming pool (69 ft) in Geneva. Fitness enthusiasts will relish the comprehensive, cutting-edge Technogym suite, which is open 24/7. I certainly did.

Other temptations include the Al Capone cigar lounge, set in the building's former bank vault and accessed through a massive steel door which, whimsically, features an original 'No Smoking' sign. On the lobby level, there is also a small yet stylish bar that, for me, lacked soul. Service, as you might expect, is first class, with friendly, responsive staff that is generally as polished

as the décor.

Although it did not affect my stay one iota, I was surprised, given the calibre of this hotel, that management was conspicuous in its absence during my weekend stay. A sign of the times, perhaps?

In summary, this is an outstandingly handsome hotel, with sumptuous interiors and top-notch cuisine, that has real potential to become a masterpiece, such is the quality of everything. Right now, however, no matter how exquisite, I feel that the hotel lacks that personal touch that we crave for in boutique hotels. No doubt this will improve in time. Do go!

oetkercollection.com

Gallivanter's Rating: ★★★★★+

The Ritz-Carlton Hôtel de la Paix.

In a city where almost all high-end hotel interiors seem to have been designed by the ubiquitous Pierre-Yves Rochon, in a mostly Neo Classical style, the owners of Hôtel de la Paix opted for a more contemporary look, conceived by Milan based interior designer Il Prisma and architect Barbara Casati, who, in 2017, reimagined this once fusty property.

The final multimillion result is an intriguing mix of old and new that works relatively well; at least in the shared areas and the hotel's trendy bars and restaurants.

Do not expect anything too extravagant;



The Woodward's 69 foot indoor pool; the longest in Geneva.



View of the lobby, across the strikingly modernised chandelier, at The Ritz-Carlton Hôtel de la Paix.



Beef Tartare in The Living Room, at The Ritz-Carlton. abstract ceramic oyster forms, by British artist, Adam Ross.

More importantly, though, does the cuisine live up to the décor? Well, Fiskebar has seen its fair share of chefs over the course of its short history and right now, it is Italian Chef, Francesca Fucci who presides over a talented brigade.

I am certainly not an expert on Scandinavian fare, but I was very pleasantly surprised by Fucci's imaginative Nordic fusion cuisine, which pairs really well with the outstanding selection of wines, particularly for those of you who enjoy discovering local grapes.

A corner of Fred by FiskeBar, at The Ritz-Carlton Hôtel de la Paix.

but this fresh vibe is certainly a bold departure for such a conservative destination as Geneva.

The soaring atrium, with its black & white marble floors and elegant Italian-style balustrades is adorned with large-scale contemporary tapestries that feature historical peace-makers, from Victor Hugo, to Giuseppe Garibaldi; whilst the striking crystal chandelier was restyled to give it a more modern look. There is also a rotating contemporary art display in the ground floor corridor that links the hotel's two wings.

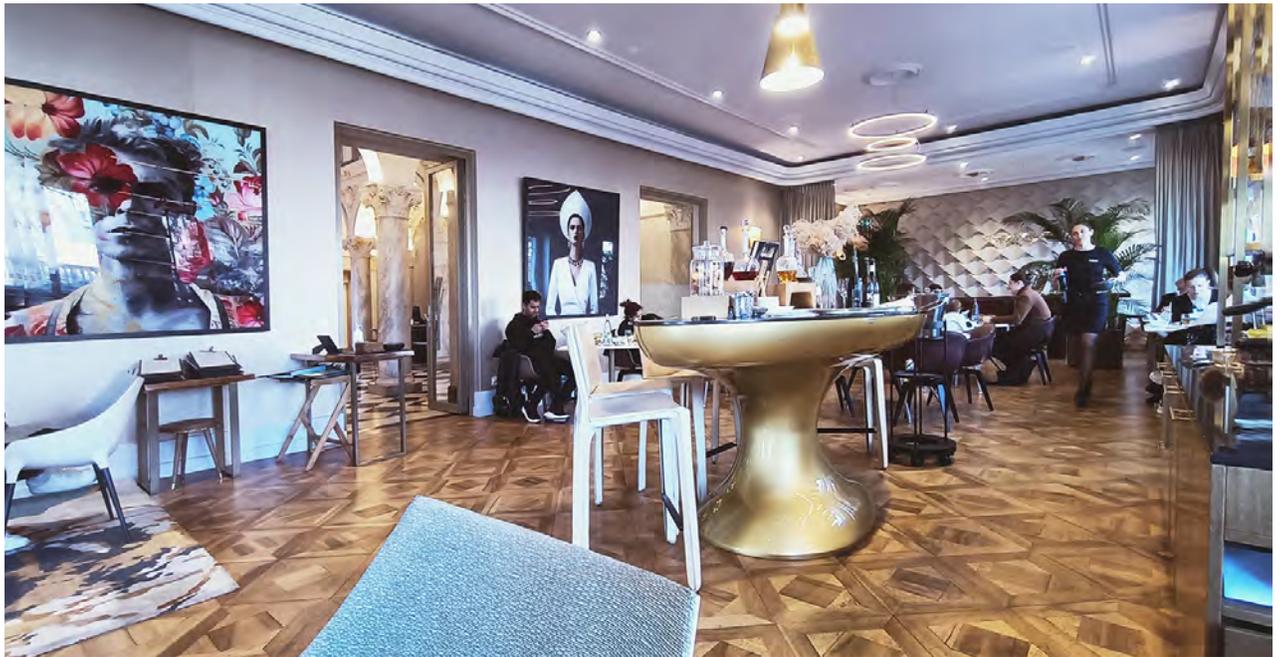
Fred by FiskeBar, which is rumoured to have been used for the drafting of the Geneva Convention, is now the hotspot for Champagne and some expertly mixed signature Aquavit cocktails. Its décor is an eclectic mix of local artwork, posters and photographs. However, a sense of history is still palpable, as the room retains its classic features, such as antique wall panelling, French mouldings and a 150-year-old parquet floor. Here, you can perch at the curved bar on high stools, or sink into one of the plush red or peacock blue velvet banquettes, which are flanked by low-level tables. Drinks can be paired with Nordic small plates and bites that I encourage you to try, as they are simply delicious.

The adjacent Fiskebar is the hotel's Scandinavian fusion fine dining restaurant, which features an open kitchen, a raw food coun-

ter, two communal tables and a few smaller tables, which combine to create a casual fish market vibe. The look is quite industrial, with large distressed beams, futuristic tubular pendant lights and oak flooring, set off by a gorgeous installation of hand-made



Lake Perch, at Fred by FiskeBar, at The Ritz-Carlton Hôtel de la Paix.



The Living Room Bar & Kitchen, at The Ritz-Carlton Hôtel de la Paix; a striking departure in hotel design for Geneva.

My dinner began with a tasty selection of amuse bouches and was followed by an excellent and artfully presented scallop dish which, interestingly, used every part of the mollusc in its preparation. My main course was an equally delightful Lake Perch with Swiss chard, kefir and Kudam Puli, which is a small tropical fruit commonly found in Asia.

To round off my meal, I opted for a refreshing carrot dessert infused with orange juice, which was superb, as was the top-notch service, with attentive, knowledgeable staff.

For a somewhat less formal experience, the all-day-dining Living Room Bar & Kitchen boasts large bay windows overlooking Lake Geneva and stylish retro furniture, and is a great spot for lunch and dinner, or just a Negroni by the Baroque fireplace. Its seasonal menu panders to all tastes; however, I was not enamoured with Chef, Rosario Abramo's cuisine. My less than inspired ceviche lacked subtlety and my beef tartare was overpowered by herbs and too much mustard. Considerably more satisfying was the splendid à la carte breakfast, with a delicious selection of breads, cheeses,

cold cuts and pastries, as well as perfectly executed Eggs Benedict.

Save for the Garden View rooms and suites, which overlook a tranquil leafy square, the accommodations, at the very least, offer partial views of the lake and often come with furnished balconies.

The streamlined, restrained look soothes rather than wows, with a palette of muted masculine colours and mid-modern contemporary furniture. Expect curving custom-made desks, grey leather armchairs, rose gold bedside sconces, and plush carpets designed with abstract illustrations which



Premium Lake Front with balcony, #509, at The Ritz-Carlton Hôtel de la Paix, Geneva.



Fred by FiskeBar, at The Ritz-Carlton Hôtel de la Paix.

are meant to represent the Swiss Alps. Rooms are well equipped, with all the latest facilities, including Illy espresso machines and smart TVs with Apple Airplay, and Bluetooth speakers that hook up with your phone for personalised music and movies, plus plenty of plugs and USB ports.

The beds are ludicrously comfortable, whilst effective double glazing ensures a blissful sleep, despite the busy road that separates you from the lake.

The spacious toffee-toned marble bathrooms are a tad underwhelming, and the finish of some is decidedly more Marriott than Ritz-Carlton; however, towels and robes are fluffy and plentiful.

I stayed in a Premium Lakeview Room with balcony, #509. Mine was particularly luminous, and whilst not overly large, at 429 sq ft, it felt more spacious, thanks to a glass partition that divided the bedroom from the bathroom. The downside, though, is that there are no blinds to privatise the bathroom; so this configuration works better if you are traveling solo.

To get the best out of this hotel, opt for one of its full-size suites, as most other categories struck me as being too stark and small for comfort. A Lakefront Suite, such as #205, with its cosy separate living area, walk-in closet, and furnished balcony, is a pleasant option. However, I suggest you go for one of the two splendid, individually decorated Signature Suites, such as the inviting Mont-Blanc Suite, which features floor to ceiling windows, high ceilings, a striking 19th Century parquet floor, fireplace and two full bathrooms.

The ultimate suite, however, is named for Grace Kelly, who used to be a Hôtel de la Paix regular. This plush abode, bathed in plenty of natural light, is decorated in a

discreet Art Déco style, with gold details and high ceilings. Its bedroom boasts a kingsize, adorned with faux fur throw, a contemporary portrait of the late Princess above the fireplace and a beautiful crystal and brass chandelier; its design inspired by the Empire State building.

The suite's regal marble and mosaic bathroom channels old Hollywood glamour and features a tub, separate shower and twin vanities, whilst the dining room, with its adjoining kitchenette, has a table that can seat up to 6 people.

In-house facilities are surprisingly minimal for such a recently renovated high-end property, with just one decent sized fitness room and no spa or pool. However, in-room

massages can be organised, and everything that Geneva has to offer is on your doorstep, from the hotel's central location. What this hotel lacks in terms of traditional hotel facilities is made up for by its superb service, under the watchful eye of the attentive General Manager, Anton von Planta.

This is the smallest Ritz-Carlton in the world, with only 75 rooms and suites, and the staff do everything they can to make you feel at home. For instance, despite arriving at exactly at the same time as other guests, I did not have to wait in line, thanks to the multi-tasking Chef Concierge, who stepped in immediately and offered me a welcome drink, before promptly escorting me to my room, where an original welcome amenity of Scandinavian inspired savoury snacks awaited.

Very good in certain areas, although not perfect by any means, this is an unstuffy, warm-hearted hotel that dares to be different, and is a pleasant option if you are looking for a design-orientated hotel that is playful rather than formal.

ritzcarlton.com

Gallivanter's Rating: ✓✓✓✓

Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues.

I love the classic feel of the gloriously traditional lobby of Switzerland's oldest pal-



Bedroom of The Grace Kelly Suite, #104, at The Ritz-Carlton Hôtel de la Paix.



Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues is Geneva's oldest palace and oozes old world glamour.

ace. It is small yet opulent, with Tiffany blue walls, gilded paintings, chandeliers, exquisite Ming-style vases, and lavish floral compositions by Serge Marietta, who only uses locally sourced blooms for his creations.

There are strong similarities between this and sister property, Four Seasons George V, Paris, which is not surprising, as Hôtel des Bergues was also designed by celebrated interior designer, Pierre-Yves Rochon.

Equally seductive is the old-world glamour of the adjacent lobby lounge, with its classic white and blue Toile de Jouy, and 19th century furnishings.

There is a total of 115 rooms here, including a hefty 44 suites. I tend to prefer the modern Swiss chalet style rooms that were added in 2013 to complement the original Neo-Classical accommodations, which, despite being immaculately maintained, are gradually showing their age and would benefit from a refurbishment.

Opt at least for a warm and cosy Loft Junior Suite, such as #311, which comes with its own tranquil terrace overlooking a leafy inner courtyard. If you crave more space, a 603 sq ft Four Seasons Executive Loft Suite, such as #626, is a wonderfully comfortable and luminous habitat.

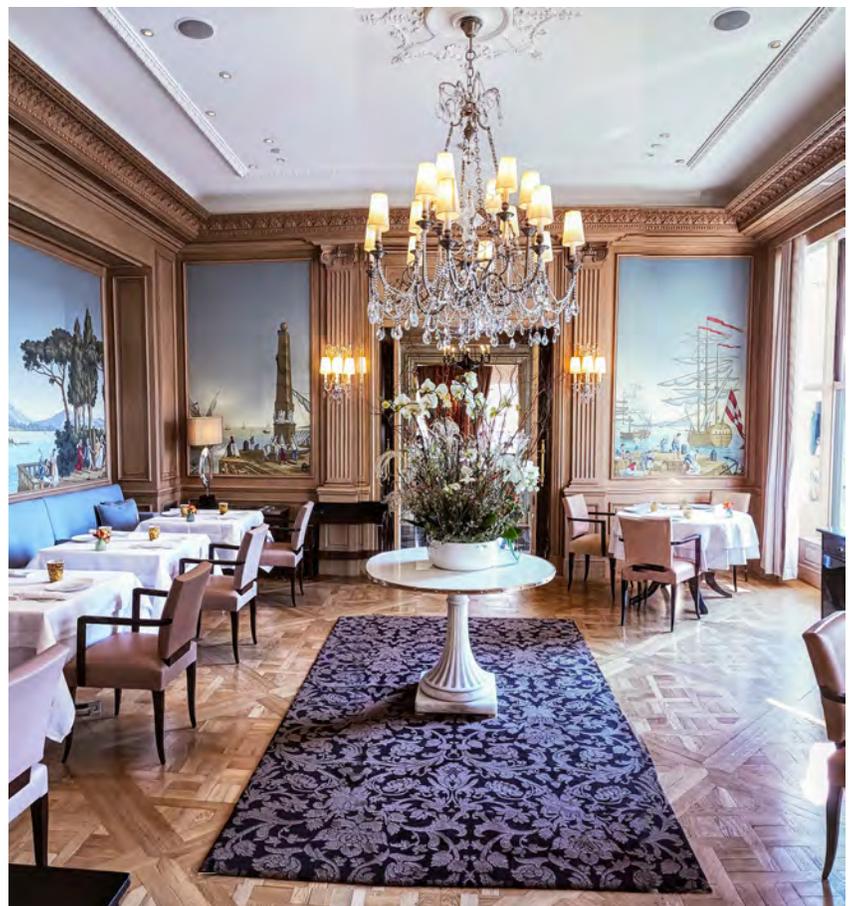
Then there are the six stunning Presidential Suites; all so exceptionally comfortable and well-designed that you cannot go wrong whichever you choose.

I stayed in Presidential Loft, #614, with its opulent hammam-style monsoon shower, and loved it at first sight. Both the bedroom and living room feature working fire-

places and are beautifully accessorised with books and a profusion of small freshly cut floral arrangements that lend a homely feel to this airy suite. The welcome amenities are unparalleled; constantly refreshed by in-room dining, so that there is always something exciting and irresistible waiting for you when you return to your suite.

Thankfully, in-room technology is totally

straightforward, with simple switches controlling the lights and blinds. Apple TV and Bluetooth allow you to easily synchronise your devices to the flat screens via Chromecast. Smart housekeeping knows exactly how guests use their rooms, and even serviced the suite on my day of departure, which I really appreciated, as I checked out late.



Il Lago restaurant, at Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues, Geneva.



fond of the four, corner-set Mont-Blanc Suites, such as #426, with its mood lifting river and mountain views.

At this hotel, you are thoroughly spoiled for choice when it comes to dining and drinking; the outrageously exceptional cuisine an integral part of your Hôtel des Bergues experience.

Your day begins in the sophisticated Il Lago restaurant, with its hand-painted murals; or, when hotel occupancy is lower, at Le Bar des Bergues. There is a superb à la carte breakfast alongside a small buffet, which can also be enjoyed on the leafy terrace, which is flanked with olive trees; a true delight on sunny winter days. It would be a sin not to indulge in the signature organic Eggs Benedict, which are presented with a scampi tartare, Geneva spinach and Oscietre caviar.

For lunch and dinner, Il Lago's Chef extraordinaire, Massimiliano Sena, prepares a sublime menu of light, fresh Italian fare, with bold imaginative flair. The restaurant concept changed recently, and you are now encour-

Tuna Tartare in Le Bar des Bergues, at Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues, Geneva.

The other splendid Presidentials, Lake View, #314 and #414, are decorated in grey, chocolate and light purple, and are furnished with 20th Century modern classics. On the 5th floor, the 1,162 sq ft Presidential Suite des Bergues, #514, is decorated in a palette of soft beige, white and platinum, boasting a glamorous onyx bathroom.

However, if you are more into classically styled accommodations, a Four Seasons Executive Suite, such as #422, with its generously proportioned marble-decked bathrooms, works really well. I am also quite



Perfect selection of Nigriris, and Tuna Tartare with Gochujang sauce, at the bugely popular, Izumi, at Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues, Geneva.



The intimate lobby, with its locally-sourced floral compositions, at Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues, Geneva.

aged to share a series of small plates, served on striking Pordamsa and Jacques Pergay Limoges, which makes for a very convivial experience. Try the well-balanced tasting menu that can be personalised to reflect any food intolerances, and includes signature dishes, such as a superb vitello tonnato that simply melts in the mouth, or fresh scampi with assorted vegetables, sea asparagus and bisque. There are also more traditional offerings, such as the moreish pasta e patate, inspired by Chef Sena's childhood, or the perfect Swiss rack of lamb with onion tarte tatin, that is served with a highly original parmesan ice cream.

Desserts should not be missed, especially the reimaged Il Lago Tiramisu, or the decadent After Eight Chocolate.

Given the quality of the cuisine here, I highly recommend a private, behind-the-scenes food and wine tasting session in the Chef's fully redesigned kitchen. It is a real privilege to watch him prepare his sensational pasta dishes, utilising the exceptional Piennolo organic tomatoes, which go so well with the original wines curated by charming Chef Sommelier, Salvatore Salerno.

Another excellent dining option is Izumi; its discreet entrance rather awkwardly located at the top of a steep staircase within

the Spa reception. This is a relatively intimate affair, with just a few indoor tables; so reserve early, as the restaurant is invariably booked solid. In the cooler months, choose a table under the sky dome within the former fireplaced Spa library. In the summer, however, it is impossible to resist the chic rooftop terrace, which affords spectacular 360° views of Geneva.

Trained by Nobu Matsuhisa, Chef Mitsuru Tsukada combines Nikkei cuisine with the spicy flavours of Peru; the result sensational. His signature dishes include Tuna tartar, Gochujang sauce on crispy rice, the splendid Shrimp and coriander rice, or the Sal-



The tranquil Lobby Lounge, at Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues, Geneva.



Bedroom of Presidential Loft, #614, at Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues, Geneva.

mon tataki with spicy mustard miso sauce.

Make sure to leave some space for the desserts, such as Cheesecake, crème brûlée style, and pear sorbet; or the Mochis ice-cream selection, which officially reconciled me with Matcha, which I found downright bland until now. My only regret is that none of this is available through room-service!

I love a great hotel bar, and the exceptionally cosy, wood-panelled Le Bar des Bergues is, justifiably, a long-standing hotspot for locals and guests alike. It is a re-

so bring your own oil, as the spa products used are by Dr Burgener, Swiss Perfection and Biologique Recherche.

The therapists here are excellent, and my massage was very relaxing; all treatments commencing with a welcome foot massage. There are seven treatment rooms, including a fireplaced Couple's Suite, a uniquely authentic Turkish hammam, marble steam room, Hair Studio, and a delightful stainless steel saline-treated heated lap pool.

There is also a 24-hour fitness centre,

turn, and super-efficient Concierges are always on hand to answer questions over the phone or via the Four Seasons App.

There is not one iota of pomp or stuffiness here, which is due, to a large extent, to the very visible and approachable General Manager & Regional VP, Martin Rhomberg, alongside talented Hotel Manager, Benjamin Moury, who is ex-Beverly Wilshire and Four Seasons George V.

The attention to detail here is noteworthy, from the delicate Narumi China cups which are warmed up when you order room service, to the stylish leather boxes by the bed containing USB ports, and the ultra-attentive staff remembering the peculiar way I take my espresso, even though I barely mentioned it once.

Finally, there is the ultra-comfortable Maybach for your short airport transfers, which come with a choice of still or sparkling water and complimentary Wi-fi.

With an unbeatable lakeside location, coupled with the designer shops of Rue du Rhône and the old town just a short stroll away, Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues is easily one of Four Seasons most celebrated properties, and remains Geneva's high-end benchmark.

fourseasons.com

Gallivanter's Rating: ✓✓✓✓✓+



Sitting room of Suite Mont Blanc, #426, at Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues.

laxing venue for lunch or dinner, with an inviting menu overseen by Chef Sena.

During the summer months, you can also dine al fresco on the leafy Ile Rousseau, that sits on an island opposite the hotel, in the midst of the lake. Here, the hotel sets up a pop-up restaurant and bar, which is open for lunch and dinner.

Spanning two serene floors, the Spa Mont Blanc, designed by architect, Onur Ozgul, is a world unto itself. Unfortunately, there are no chemical-free treatments on offer,

with Technogym and Matrix cardiovascular equipment, serviced by a team of knowledgeable personal trainers.

The Spa's latest offering is a Japanese Iyashi Dôme; its Far Infrared technology creating a distinct increase in body temperature, rather like a sauna, which helps detoxify the body and aid in muscle recovery and relaxation.

Throughout the hotel, impeccable, ultra-personalised service reigns supreme. Exemplary staff greets you by name at every



Suite amenity, at Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues.



Gallivanter's

Gossip

FAMED LONDON RESTAURANTEURS, Corbin & King, went into receivership last year and we all hoped that someone who cared about cuisine would come to the rescue, other than yet another capital management firm. Happily, Bill Heinecke's **Minor International** (Anantara Hotels etc) won the day; a group that is firmly wedded to great cuisine in its vast portfolio of hotels. Such a pity, though, that Minor, who already had a 74% share in Corbin & King, did not acquire their only hotel, The Beaumont, which showed London just how good high-end hospitality could be.

IN CAIRO, EGYPT, The Shepherd Hotel was one of those sights that you viewed alongside the pyramids; a rambling 1841 hotel (see right) that reeked of Agatha Christie intrigue. Finally, someone has come to its rescue, and after a massive redesign by Sybille de Margerie (strange choice?), the hotel will become **Mandarin Oriental Shepherd, Cairo**, with 188 rooms and 88 suites; scheduled to reopen in 2024.



IF YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN TO CORSICA, then escape this summer to **La Villa Calvi**; not a new hotel, by any means, as it opened 30 years ago. However, after its massive refurbishment in 2018, it has become something of a rising star, with some marvellous suites and villas, such as the Villa Prestige, with its own viewsome private pool, and room for 10 guests (see right). The Mediterranean cuisine, by French-American Chef, Mylo Levin, is another lure. New this year is the Pilates Villa, with all the latest equipment. A serious Spa, four swimming pools (one in the Spa and one bordered by a beach), scattered across the 7.5 acre site, are complemented by a tennis court, Petanque court, Spa, Billiards Room and, five minutes from the resort, a private beach club on Calvi Beach, which includes its own restaurant. A perfect place to take the family or a group of friends. lavilla.fr



I WAS PLEASED TO HEAR that London boutique hotel, **L'Oscar**, which I stayed at when it first opened, has been acquired by **Michel Reybier Hospitality** (creator of La Réserve hotels). This is a charming, theatrical abode, on the edge of Covent Garden, in the literary heart of Bloomsbury. loscarlondon.com

AFTER TWO YEARS OF BORDER CLOSURES The Datai, Langkawi, Malaysia, has reopened, after implementing numerous improvements and enhancements. In particular, the resort has introduced two new room categories; Canopy Garden Rooms for families, and more relevant to you, **The Rainforest Premium Villa**, which now has more privacy, with its twin views of the Anak and Sungai Datai rivers. Also back is the resort's popular Chef Series, whereby visiting chefs take up a period of residency to showcase their talents. thedatai.com

WHEN MANY HOTELS ARE THINKING SMALL Four Seasons Resort Sharm El Sheikh, on Egypt's Red Sea, has doubled in size. However, I must say that the 89 new rooms and suites (some with private pools) are truly gorgeous, especially the three-bedroom villa, The Palace. The excellent Sam Ioannidis is GM.

Published monthly since 1991 by The Gallivanter's Guide, Hill Crest, Malmesbury Road, Minety, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 9QX, UK.

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