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S A L L A N C E S

Côte d'Azur Magazine

Mode, Palaces, Art & Découvertes

**Un Printemps
nommé Désir**

Fashion, Luxury Hotels Art & discoveries

**A Spring
named Desire**

Les Palaces en

Luxury hotels : always one step ahead !

A priori, on imagine que la vie des palaces de la Côte d'Azur ressemble à celle des gens qui les fréquentent : une existence dorée qui coule tranquille, creusant son lit entre deux rives baptisées « plaisir » et « luxe ». C'est à peine parfois si l'on remarque les efforts consentis, durant l'hiver, pour rénover, rafraîchir, agrandir ou réaménager salles ou chambres tant ces établissements d'exception nous ont habitués depuis toujours à ce qui se fait de mieux. C'est injuste – les palaces azuréens investissant massivement pour rester à la pointe du progrès – mais c'est ainsi !

Mais pour une fois, les projets entrepris ou annoncés cet hiver par le Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat, le Royal Riviera, le Martinez et l'Hermitage ne pouvaient pas passer inaperçus. Et pour cause : il ne s'agit plus là d'améliorer ce qui existe déjà mais de créer purement et simplement de nouveaux espaces avec l'ambition, pour chacun des quatre hôtels, de gagner en capacité sans rien céder de leur luxe légendaire. Un pari qu'ils ont relevé, à en croire les premières annonces, les premières esquisses et les premiers travaux, avec brio !

LE GRAND HÔTEL DU CAP-FERRAT, UN NOUVEL ÉLAN, UN NOUVEL ÉDÉN...

Des quatre projets, celui du Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat est sans aucun doute le plus spectaculaire. D'une part, parce qu'il implique la création de deux nouveaux bâtiments, aussi audacieux et ambitieux dans leurs conceptions l'un que l'autre. D'autre part, parce qu'il bouscule l'imagerie bien établie des palaces azuréens, un mythe nourri de pittoresque médiéval, de Provence éternelle, des fastes de la Belle Époque et des folies des Années 50. Un registre classique dont s'écarte, pour la première fois, le Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat. D'ici peu, c'est promis, il nous jouera la mélodie du bonheur sur des rythmes nouveaux...

Évidemment, il est hors de question de toucher aux grands standards de ce ténor azuréen : la façade Belle Époque, la Rotonde, les cabanas du Club Dauphin, ces grandes tentes immaculées, bordant la piscine et la mer, vestiges d'un autre temps... Non, il s'agit plus raisonnablement d'enrichir encore son répertoire, en

 One might well imagine that life in the luxury hotels of the Côte d'Azur resembles the lives of those who frequent them: a golden existence flowing tranquilly by, carving a course between the two banks of "pleasure" and "luxury". For aeons, these remarkable establishments have so accustomed us to the very best that all their hard work during the winter months – renovating, sprucing up, enlarging and refurbishing their premises – passes practically unnoticed. This is very unjust, for luxury hotels on the Riviera invest an enormous amount to stay at the leading edge of progress – but that's how it is! But for once, the projects undertaken or announced this winter by the Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat, the Royal Riviera, the Martinez and the Hermitage can hardly be ignored. And with good reason, for it does not involve improving what already exists, but purely and simply creating new spaces, the aim of all four being to gain in capacity while changing nothing of their legendary luxury. A challenge that they have all risen to with gusto, to judge by the initial announcements and sketches, and the latest progress reports!

THE GRAND HÔTEL DU CAP-FERRAT, A FRESH START, A NEW EDEN...

Of the four projects, that of the Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat is probably the most spectacular. Firstly because it involves two completely new buildings that outdo each other in bold, ambitious design. Secondly because it turns the established image of the



LE GRAND HÔTEL DU CAP-FERRAT PRÉPARE LA CRÉATION D'UN CENTRE D'AFFAIRES HI-TECH DE 1500 M².

THE GRAND HÔTEL DU CAP-FERRAT PREPARES FOR THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW HI-TECH 1500 M².BUSINESS CENTRE

font toujours plus !

construisant, à l'orée de ce palais romantique du début du XX^e siècle, deux annexes, ancrées résolument dans le troisième millénaire. « Nous n'avions guère le choix, explique Michel-André Galopin, directeur général. Nous voulions trouver un environnement vraiment exceptionnel. Il fallait pour cela fondre les nouvelles infrastructures dans le milieu naturel en jouant notamment des reliefs pour masquer les nouvelles constructions. Or, seule l'architecture contemporaine s'accorde de telles contraintes. »

Le résultat est remarquable. Situé en surplomb de l'hôtel, le futur centre d'affaires, par exemple, disparaît quasi totalement dans le paysage. « Nous avons jouer avec la déclivité naturelle du terrain pour concevoir un bâtiment enterré ou semi-enterré sur trois de ses côtés, explique Luc Svetchine, l'architecte du projet. En outre, le toit du bâtiment sera entièrement végétalisé et viendra se fondre à la pinède qui le suit. » Cela dit, malgré ce camouflage réussi, ce nouvel espace « affaires » ne devrait pas passer inaperçu avec ses 1500 m² de superficie, sa salle principale modulable et sa façade plein sud, largement vitrée pour profiter pleinement de la lumière du jour.

L'intégration paysagère de la seconde annexe, prévue pour accueillir 17 chambres et 9 suites (dont un triplex), est du même acabit. Elle sera bâtie à quelques dizaines de mètres à peine du bâtiment principal, à la place des logements du personnel et du parking clientèle. Mais là-encore, la discrétion est de mise. « Noyé dans la pinède, le bâtiment viendra s'adosser à la route pour descendre en cascade vers le jardin de l'hôtel, explique Luc Svetchine. Les suites occuperont le rez-de-jardin. Elles profiteront toutes d'une grande terrasse en tek et partageront la piscine lagon. Des éperons rocheux, installés dans le prolongement de chaque terrasse, permettront de privatiser une partie du bassin pour chacune des suites. » « Nous chassons le bitume et les parkings de surface, conclut Michel-André Galopin. Nous privilégions les espaces verts afin d'offrir aux clients une immersion totale dans la nature méditerranéenne. »

region's luxury hotels on its head – a myth based on mediaeval picturesqueness, Eternal Provence, the luxury of the Belle Époque and the dizzy, madcap Thirties. But the Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat is now breaking away from this "traditional" tone for the first time. In a short while from now, its music will be heard with new rhythms – and that's a promise...

Obviously, it's out of the question to change any of the great "standards" of this tenor among luxury hotels: the Belle Époque façade, the Rotunda, the cabanas of the Club Dauphin – those huge, immaculate tents bordering swimming pool and sea, left over from another era... No, the singer will be simply enriching his repertory. This takes the form of two new annexes built beside the romantic early twentieth century palace, with their roots firmly in the third millennium. "This was an obvious approach," says general manager Michel-André Galopin. "We wanted to preserve what we have here: a truly exceptional environment. This meant merging the new infrastructures into the natural setting, and making use of its features to mask the new buildings. Only contemporary architecture can overcome constraints like that."

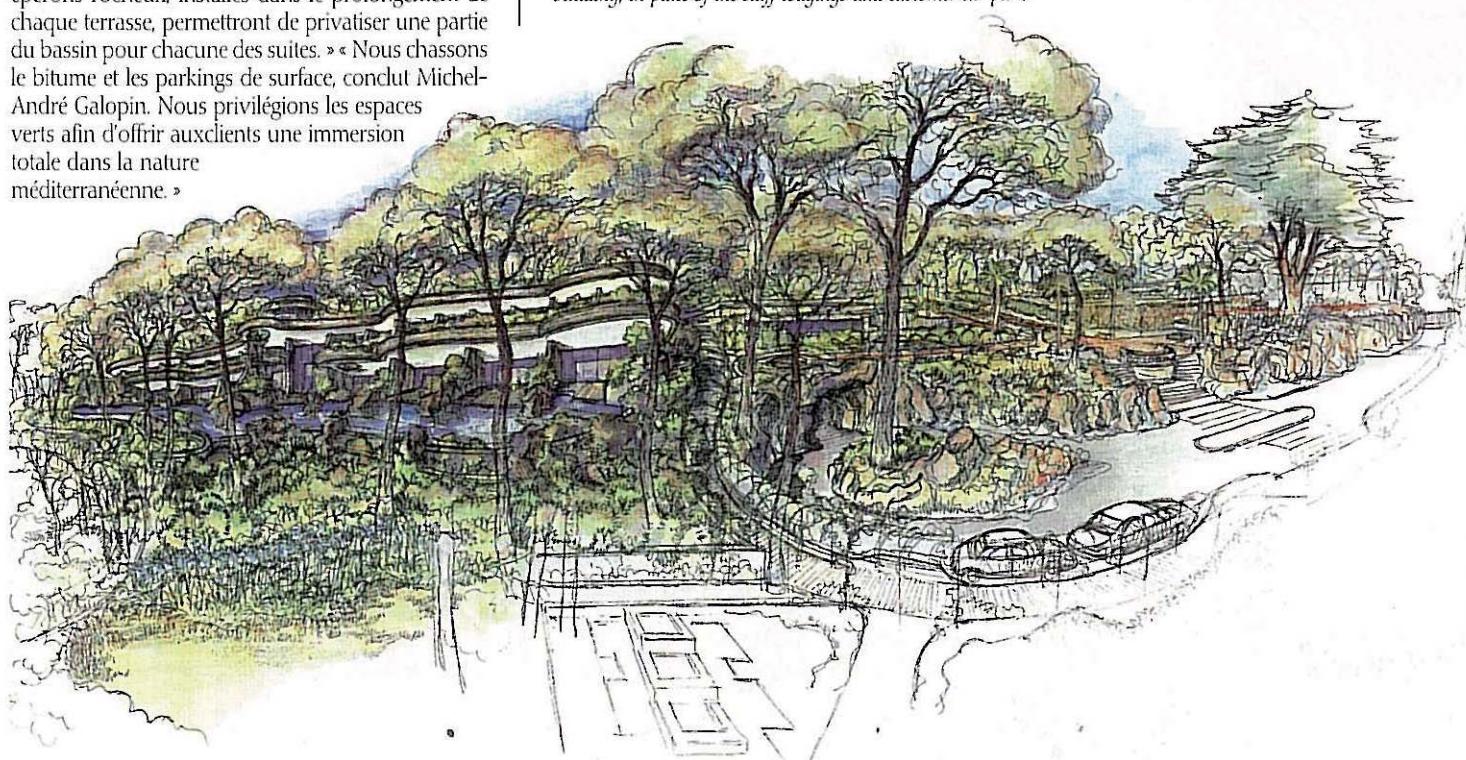
The result is truly striking. Lying just below the hotel, the new business centre blends almost invisibly into the landscape. "We made play on the natural slope of the land to design a building that was buried or half-buried on three sides," says the project architect, Luc Svetchine. "Furthermore, the roof will be entirely covered with vegetation, and blend in completely with the pine-wood that will be planted later." That said, despite this highly successful camouflage, the new 1500 sq. m "business space" will hardly pass unnoticed. It contains a multi-purpose main conference room mostly glazed and facing south, thus benefiting from as much daylight as possible.

The second annex, providing 17 bedrooms and 9 suites (including a triplex), blends into the countryside to the same extent. It will be standing just a few dozen metres away from the main building, in place of the staff lodgings and customer car park.

« NOUS PRIVILÉGIONS LES ESPACES VERTS ET TRAVAILLONS À LA FUSION ENTRE L'HÔTEL ET SON ENVIRONNEMENT. NOUS VOULONS AINSI OFFRIR À NOTRE CLIENTÈLE UNE IMMERSION TOTALE DANS LA NATURE MÉDITERRANÉENNE. »

« WE'RE CREATING A LOT OF GARDEN SPACE AND ARE WORKING ON BLENDING THE HOTEL WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS. WE WANT TO OFFER OUR GUESTS TOTAL IMMERSION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRYSIDE. »

Michel-André Galopin,
directeur général du Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat
general manager of the Grand Hôtel du Cap Ferrat





**AVEC SES TONS CHAUDS, SON
ARCHITECTURE PROVENÇALE
ET SA GRANDE DOUCEUR,
L'ORANGERIE APporte AU
ROYAL RIVIERA UNE TOUCHE
TRÈS MÉDITERRANÉENNE.**

**WITH ITS WARM COLOURS,
PROVENÇAL ARCHITECTURE AND
WELCOMING CHARM, THE
ORANGERIE BRINGS A THOUGHTFULLY
MEDITERRANEAN
TOUCH TO THE ROYAL RIVIERA.**

But here again, discretion is the order of the day. "The building will submerge in the pine wood, and follow the road, descending in different levels down to the hotel gardens," explains Luc Svetchine. The suites, on the ground floor, will all have large teakwood terraces and share the lagoon swimming pool. Rocky spurs set up along the extension of each terrace will enable part of the pool to be privatised for each suite. "We are banning tarmac and open air car parks," Michel-André Galopin. "We'll be creating a lot of garden space, making customers feel totally immersed in the Mediterranean countryside."

THE ROYAL RIVIERA: THE SOUL OF PROVENCE

The Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat and the Royal Riviera both have the same desire: to offer their guests a new atmosphere, and a new soul. But the way the two hotels in Saint-Jean Cap-Ferrat are approaching the question couldn't be more different. While the former is thinking "big", the latter is playing the card of charm and intimacy by refurbishing an old building, languishing abandoned at the bottom of the garden.

The result is a marvel of freshness and subtlety. The big villa, now christened the "Orangerie", has a multitude of picturesque details, including ochre walls, a pink-tiled roof, a mural fresco and a wrought iron lamp-post. It, too, breaks with the Belle Époque style of the Royal Riviera. Only a few metres separate them but they are worlds apart. On one side, the Riviera, elegant and festive; on the other, Provence itself, in all its tranquil simplicity. "The scent of the South is so strong that we have asked Jean Mus, the top Mediterranean garden specialist, to redesign the entire park," says general manager Michel Potier.

The Orangerie project is headed by Michel Jouannet, interior architect of the Lancaster in Paris, the Cipriani in Venice, and the Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro. Putting all his previous work behind him, he has plunged into the heart of Provençal culture in order to express its most subtle nuance. He does full justice to the region's remarkable natural light by making play with materials such as glass, providing plenty of wide openings, and using pale orange and lavender tones. The result is a total success: the villa, now nearing completion, seems to be living up to all its promises. It already glows in the depths of the garden, shining out with imaginative splendour in its ochre livery highlighted with a few touches of green.

One glance, and you immediately start dreaming of your next stay in this place. You can imagine the decoration of the 14 bedrooms and 2 suites: cheerful, warm and thoroughly Mediterranean. You think with bliss of the view over the swimming pool, the park and the sea. A picture postcard just for you in your imaginary holiday album... You feel the first rays of sunshine bathing the terrace and garden in the early morning. And now all you feel is impatience, as you wait for the inauguration scheduled for this summer...

THE HERMITAGE RISES TO THE OCCASION

The luxury hotel in Monaco is also preparing its moult for the coming autumn. Developments that promise huge changes, here, as witness its budget: 28 million euros. At that price, it'll obviously be treating itself to more than a face-lift. And indeed, after eighteen months, it will be emerging in "born-again" form.

The operation involves the whole establishment. The kitchens are to be completely overhauled. The Beaumarchais reception hall, which currently receives most of the customers on arrival, will also be redesigned. The entrance, for example, will be covered by a metal porch inspired by the Eiffel glass house in the winter garden. The hall will contain a lobby bar, serious proof of a friendly welcome, and a well of light will add to the general feeling of warmth. "We don't want to sweep everything away, lock, stock and barrel," says general manager Jean-Pierre Siri. "Especially as the hotel is a listed building. But we want our guests to be aware of the hotel's soul and wonderful life-style as soon as they set foot in it."