

# BOUTIQUE design

HOSPITALITY REINVENTED

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## HIT MAKERS

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# SHOW YOUR WORK

Solving the equation for the X of bankable lifestyle properties requires expert knowledge of the process, not just the answer. From the sweet smell of success to experiential research rooms to thoughtfully "extreme" design choices, here's your cheat sheet.

BY ORIANA LERNER



1 A reception desk that looks like a massive gold jewelry piece reads as decadent, not tacky, when both it and its marble backdrop go easy on ornamentation.

GILLES TRILLARD



## SCENTS-ORY DELIGHTS

### LOBBY AT LA CLEF CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES PARIS

Nothing's one-note about the design or the experience inside the long, narrow public space here. In this new, upscale blueprint for interactive, multisensory hotspots, every touchpoint is deliberately layered to appeal to the discerning guest. "The lobby of the hotel is a dialogue between classical architecture and contemporary features such as the suspended mirror ceiling. The idea for the space, as for clothing, is to create harmony, consistency and unique and original balance," says Jean-Philippe Nuel, founder of his eponymous studio.

The scale for the interior design tips heavily toward a very 21st-century spin on opulence. Take the communal table. Don't plopp your laptop down on it before you stop to smell the flowers. It's the central element anchoring a fragrance lounge. "Guests can discover the signature perfume of the hotel and all the components that are necessary to produce it," says Nuel. The front desk is equally inventive. It's a golden piece that's conceptualized to look like a jewel, framed by a sweep of floor-to-ceiling marble meant to echo a jewel case.

The seemingly controversial inclusion of a formal check-in space wasn't Nuel's concept. As it turns out, not all clients are ready to embrace the trend for stripped-down multivalent pieces. The desk is there at the owner's request. One could argue that this—a return, not to the look of traditional luxury, but to the

sophisticated vibe generated by rich materials and FF&E with dedicated single functions—might be the next iteration to take the world by storm.

"Some people still like the 'palatial' kind of hotel experience, which has a more formal atmosphere," says Nuel. That was a challenging squeeze for the lobby at La Clef (the hotel shares its name with several other properties in Paris also under The Ascott Limited's ownership). "This type of concept usually needs quite a lot of space. To activate the public area, typically you would need to integrate the lobby with F&B," he says. "The proportions of La Clef meant that didn't fit." So, the restaurant and bar, run by Singaporean chain Imperial Treasure, will open in a couple of months and have a separate entrance—another example of the decision not to require guests to work, eat and play in a single space.

That added a level of complexity. Without the draw of F&B, Nuel had to work harder to find ways to change the entry experience from transactional to unforgettable. It's the look-and-look-again draw of the surfacing and FF&E (think wire mesh chairs, delicate ceiling art installations and supertall sculptural elements that resemble candlesticks) that spell luxe for the modern consumer. Single-tasking has become one of modern life's most sought-after experiences, and savvy designers need to mirror that in their work.

#### PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

- CLIENT**  
The Ascott Limited
- DESIGN FIRM**  
Studio Jean-Philippe Nuel;  
Jean-Philippe Nuel, founder;  
Valérie Binder, managing  
director; Marine Lafon,  
project manager
- DESIGN CONSULTANTS**  
Sevensence (perfume)  
Distyght (lighting)
- ART AND ACCESSORIES**  
Anthropologie  
Bloomingville
- AUDIOVISUAL**  
Mues-Tec
- CARPETS/RUGS**  
Ulster
- FABRICS**  
Casamance  
Creations Metaphores  
Delius  
Designers Guild  
Febrik  
Maison Pierre Frey
- FLOORING**  
Living Parquet  
Vicalvi Contract
- FURNITURE**  
Eurofermes  
Gallotti & Radice  
Lammhult  
Lazer Agencement  
Knoll  
Moroso  
Stellar Works  
Tabasso  
Taccchini  
Tino Sana
- LIGHTING**  
Flas  
Lee Broom  
Marzais Créations  
Michael Anastassiades  
Parachina  
Tom Dixon

- 2 Sniff out the the lobby, where perfumes and their ingredients become a quirky centerpiece. Design alchemy, here we come.
- 3 Wire mesh chairs and hard surfaces add an elegant restraint to the space.



JEAN-PHILIPPE NUEL  
STUDIO JEAN-PHILIPPE  
NUEL

GILLES TRILLARD (LA CLEF CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES); JF. JAUSSAUD (NUELI); GEORGES BIARD (SIDEBAR)



THE GUEST: Lou Doillon,  
singer, model and actress

THE TAG CLOUD:  
#elegance  
#YvesSaintLaurent  
#frenchartdevivre

THE BIO: She's an elegant, open-minded and smart woman, who appreciates art, works and travels a lot and also likes non-conventional luxury. She can be a little impertinent. She eats organic and well-balanced meals and she cares about her health, but she also is someone who will pause her healthy lifestyle sometimes to drink a glass of "Château Pavie" with a chocolate bonbon made by Patrick Roger.

This woman creates her own looks through a mix and match of casual pieces, such as jeans with a sophisticated Yves Saint Laurent jacket.