
April 30, 2006**CHECK IN, CHECK OUT**

Paris: Kube

By SETH SHERWOOD

THE BASICS

Operated by the same group that gave [Paris](#) the very white, Stanley Kubrick-esque Murano in 2004, the 41-room Kube, which opened in November, is another playful retro-futuristic package. A large transparent cube in the courtyard of the building, a stony 19th-century edifice, immediately recalls I. M. Pei's pyramids at the Louvre. (It houses the hotel's reception desk.) Just beyond, the building hides a low-lit universe of geometric interiors, faux-fur surfaces, electronic gadgets and furnishings by brand-name designers — as well as [France's](#) first ice bar. Is that Barbarella in the corner?

THE LOCATION

The Kube boldly goes where no Parisian luxury boutique hotel has gone before: a remote, rough-edged section of the 18th arrondissement that's known for cheap Indian and Turkish restaurants. By pioneering this other-side-of-the-tracks location, the Kube effectively throws a litchi martini in the face of its upmarket rivals, which have generally clustered in the environs of the Champs-Élysées.

THE SCENE

Welcome to shag central. Dark and outfitted with furry black sofas, furry black columns, black mirrors and hanging spaghetti-like strands of red light, the multipurpose lobby-restaurant-bar has the pleasingly decadent feel of a sci-fi bordello. A Tuesday evening in February found it surprisingly happening. As a D.J. spun house music and plasma-screen TV's flickered with computer-generated images, a diverse crowd that included many unshaven guys in sport coats and Pumas and their dates sipped Champagne and munched tapas-like "aperifood."

On the mezzanine level, hanging rows of Aarnio Eero's transparent plastic bubble chairs accommodated people waiting for 30-minute shifts in the Ice Cube. Sponsored by Grey Goose vodka, the chamber, constructed of 22 tons of ice, serves colorful vodka drinks in bored-out ice blocks. Arctic wear included. (Admission is 38 euros, or \$47.50 at \$1.25 to the euro, which includes drinks; reservation required.)

THE ROOMS

The very angular, very white interiors are splashed with strawberry-hued desks, mint green side tables, gumdrop purple gelatinous throw pillows and other confectionary colors. Technophiles will enjoy the fingerprint scan that opens the door, as well as the Internet-equipped Sony Vaio computer serving triple duty as a flat-screen TV and CD/DVD player. (The hotel has no CD or DVD library yet.) Even the drinks have designer credibility: the minibar stocks Kronenbourg beer in bottles designed by Philippe Stark (7 euros).

THE BATHROOMS

You should get frequent-flier miles for using the toilets, which are crushed into gray windowless closets like those of an airplane. More accommodating are the deep Starck bathtubs.

AMENITIES

As befits this high-tech property, the exercise machines in the hotel's smallish fitness center have individual TV's, and the two meeting rooms are equipped with lots of audio-visual equipment.

ROOM SERVICE

The offerings, available 24 hours, are surprisingly old-school. Only 10 items were available on a recent visit. They included a cheese plate (15 euros), an assortment of cold meats (15 euros) and a serving of 12 oysters (12 euros).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Already a cult address among the Parisian in-crowd, the Kube is fun, funky and comfortable. Because of its distance from Paris's sightseeing and dining areas (which are accessible by Métro), the hotel is not geared toward first-time visitors wanting to be in the center of the action. Rather, this is a niche property seemingly aimed at those from the fashion-media-creative set who may want to explore a less-seen Paris.

Kube, 1-5, passage Ruelle, 18th Arrondissement, 33-1-42-05-20-00; www.kubehotel.com. Doubles from 250 euros (\$312).

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [XML](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)