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CHECK IN, CHECK OUT

The Murano in Paris

By SETH SHERWOOD

The Basics It's about mood and attitude at this 43-room, 9-suite hotel, which opened in July near the Place de la République in Paris. Behind a 19th-century facade, the retro-futuristic boutique property suggests Stanley Kubrick with a splash of Marimekko. The lobby, immaculately white and outfitted with eggshell chairs and a fireplace, is a cozier Milk Bar from "A Clockwork Orange." Fashion-conscious 30-somethings lounge about, chatting and reading *Le Figaro*. D.J.'s spin most nights, and subdued bands play on Sunday afternoons. In a rare deployment of bright color, the adjacent cocktail lounge features tulip chairs and a polka-dot ceiling made from suspended blue-and-red disks. The restaurant, though plush, serves a surprisingly unadventurous menu. Roasted sea bass (\$44; prices at \$1.37 to the euro) and risotto with truffles (\$32) are characteristic of the main courses. After some delays, an Anne Simonin spa has been rescheduled to open in mid-2005. Information about the hotel, which is at 13, boulevard du Temple: (33-1) 42.71.20.00; www.muranoresort.com.

The Location Though the Boulevard du Temple is itself a nondescript thoroughfare, the hotel is less than a 10-minute walk from both the trendy boutiques of the Marais district and the happening bar scene along the Rue Oberkampf. The Métro is barely a block away.

The Room Getting in is half the fun. The dark hallways, illuminated with black lights, suggest an exclusive after-hours nightclub, and the door is unlocked by a fingerprint scan. Inside, the vibe goes sci-fi. Though small, the white and gray Classic room - the décor evokes "2001: A Space Odyssey" - offers a firm bed, oversize pillows, luminous light cubes, high-speed Internet access, CD and DVD players and a slick Bang & Olufsen television. A multibutton panel at the bedside allows guests to change the color of the lighting scheme, should they care to see *la vie en rose* (or lilac, or sky blue, or any of the other roughly half-dozen hues). The minibar is stocked with energy drinks (\$8) and tiny bottles of Absolut Vodka (\$14) and Glenfiddich Scotch (\$16).

The Bathroom Minimalist and angular, the black slate bathroom sparkles with shapely chrome fixtures and white geometric facilities. The sink is an upright ivory cone, while the toilet, when closed, becomes a smooth white egg. The rectangular Philippe Starck bathtub is deep but lacks a true shower - there's just a hand-held sprayer. In addition to free Anne Simonin beauty products, the bathrooms hold curious, seductive paraphernalia that guests can purchase. "No rest for the Wicked" reads the packaging for a pink-hued "sensual eye mask for lovers" (\$25) that rests above the tub.

The Crowd On a recent night, the bar and lobby buzzed with unshaven 30-something guys in contemporary tieless suits and with black-clad fashionistas sporting the high-heeled boots of the moment. In a corner, somebody's wealthy, louche uncle chatted up a group of media mademoiselles in designer glasses and thrift-store blouses.

Room Service The 24-hour room service menu has about a dozen items, from pumpkin soup (\$10) to grilled duck foie gras (\$30). The breakfast menu (\$14 to \$38) offers cereal, yogurt, omelets, juices, tea and coffee.

The Bottom Line Stylish and hip - befitting a hotel that bills itself as an "urban resort" - but expensive and still finding its

legs. The Classic room, the smallest, starts at \$480 for one person and \$548 for two. The deluxe suite, with a private terrace, is now \$2,740 a night; when its small swimming pool is operational, probably in the summer, the rate will be \$3,425.

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