

FORTUNE

TRAVEL • INSIDE LOOK

Inside one of the top celebrity-favorite hotels in Cannes

BY RACHEL KING

When the [Le Majestic](#) in Cannes reopened this summer, the hotel's managers were unsure how quickly travel would make a comeback. But after some of the world's most famous celebrities returned to the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival in July, the hotel has been busy ever since.



With more than 16,000 square feet of space dedicated to meetings and conferences (and a huge choice of catering options available), Le Majestic is one of the busiest hotels in Cannes for business tourism.

Courtesy of Barrière Hotels

Opened in 1926, the Belle Époque-style property has 349 guest rooms, with an average of 700 guests when the hotel is fully booked. And that is quite often—especially during the summer months as well as the festival season. Many film buffs might already be familiar with the hotel; Le Majestic—just across the street from the famous steps of the [Palais des Festivals et des Congrès](#), always covered in the iconic red carpet for the glitzy event—has been an official partner of the Cannes Film Festival since the event's inception in 1946.



The M\u00e9lodie Suite, takes its name from the French film, "M\u00e9lodie en sous-sol" (Any Number Can Win).

Fabrice Rambert

During the twelve days of the festival, which is normally held in May but returned in July 2021 after a hiatus due to the pandemic, Le Majestic is the place to see and be seen. The hotel hosts more than 8,000 festival-goers within its restaurants, bars, conference rooms, and the [Cin\u00e9math\u00e8que Diane](#) for film screenings. The site also plays host to the media with approximately 100 television broadcasts, more than 200 radio broadcasts, and 80 advertising slots, on average per year.

During this timeframe, the hotel staffs up and doubles its workforce from 350 employees to 700. A glance at what the hospitality staff has to handle: more than 500 shirts and pairs of trousers washed and pressed every day and 8,000 roses arranged by the housekeepers in the guest rooms. The hotel often goes through as much as 14,000 bath towels, 15,000 sheets, 8,000 bathrobes, 16,000 bars of soap, and 1,000 liters of bubble bath during the two-week period.

Roughly 15% of the hotel's annual catering revenue is dedicated to accommodating guests during the festival. Approximately 25,000 meals are served in the restaurants or at private functions, including two tons of lobster; three tons of fish; 40 tons of fruit and vegetables; 160,000 eggs; 50 kilograms of caviar; 350 kilograms of foie gras; and 800 kilograms of crayfish. And perhaps most importantly, the hotel opens 18,500 bottles of wine, more than half of which is champagne.



Boasting a dining room with a stone and Hungarian herringbone parquet floor, a rotunda recalling that of the ceiling in the Paris boutique on Avenue Montaigne, a table in Louis XVI style, and grey and silver medallion chairs, the Christian Dior Suite evokes 'haute couture' elegance.

Fabrice Rambert

Naturally, the hotel welcomes high-profile guests all the time, and Le Majestic has a team of concierges ready to greet them—and help them with nearly any and all requests.



For twelve days each year during the Cannes Film Festival, the Dior team moves into one of the eponymous hotel suite, where movie stars can come to choose their evening wear a few hours before walking the red carpet.

Fabrice Rambert

The unwritten golden rule: never directly say "no" to the guests, according to Gilles Bastoni, the chief concierge of Le Majestic. Rather, he explains, it's the job of the concierges and the hotel to accommodate the guests to the best of their abilities—whether that be planning a birthday party on a yacht with only three hours notice or even flying in a couture dress on a commercial or private jet from Paris in the morning for an actress to wear on the red carpet that same afternoon.

"Sky's the limit, as long as it's within the law," says Bastoni, noting that the craziest request for one person might not sound that way to someone else. Cannes is fully-booked during the summer, so even a restaurant reservation or a boat rental can be difficult for a concierge to secure on little notice, but they get it done, regardless. Even though concierges need to react quickly, the key to doing the job right, Bastoni says, is to keep calm and be patient.

"They trust you because they want you to make everything happen for them," Bastoni says of VIP guests. "The tougher it gets, the more you can achieve. That's the passion you need to do your job."



BFire, the hotel's beach-side restaurant, specializes in Mediterranean cuisine.

Courtesy of Barrière Hotels

But movie stars aren't the only frequent guests at Le Majestic. Historically, the hotel has been a family-friendly destination. Bastoni, whose father was previously the chief concierge of Le Majestic, notes that many families come back year-after-year, and often times, kids who grew up visiting the hotel during their childhood summers come back now with their own children.

"It's a second home for a lot of guests," Bastoni says, adding that when the hotel reopened this past summer after closing due to the pandemic in 2020, many guests from not only Europe but also the United States and the Middle East immediately returned. "It's beautiful when you've missed them for two years, and they're still happy to come back."

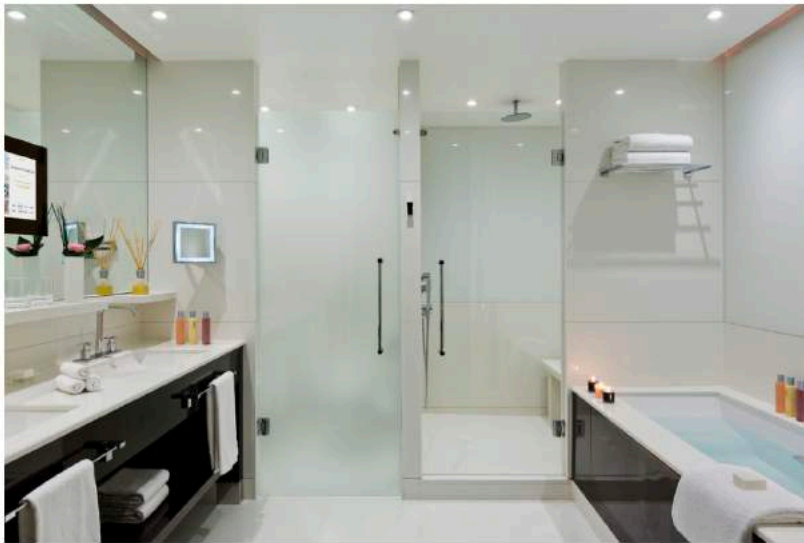


With its panoramic views of the sea and its nautical theme, the Riviera suite is an ode to the Mediterranean.

Courtesy of Barrière Hotels

While all of the rooms at Le Majestic are spacious and luxurious, befitting of a five-star hotel, many of the suites have walls that can be easily removed to expand the common area spaces between bedrooms, better accommodating families or couples and groups of friends traveling together. There is also a kids club, Kid's Barrière, with activities that particularly reflect and celebrate the arts and cinema; children between the ages of four and 12 can learn how to make their own movies, music videos, and soundtracks.

To maintain the level of luxury and opulence expected of a world-class destination, Le Majestic is refurbished on a regular basis. A second wing was opened in 2010 after construction work that lasted for more than four years. The Cannes property hosts five restaurants and four bars, including the pool terrace. Le Fouquet's Cannes, an outpost of the original Parisian brasserie, had a facelift in 2017.



Inside one of the guest suite marble bathrooms.

Fabrice Rambert

Guests can also treat themselves to wellness services as the Spa Diane Barrière, featuring Biologique Recherche skin care products, and take some time out on the private beach in association with Le Majestic's sister property across the street, [Hôtel Barrière Le Gray d'Albion](#), which is reopening this winter after a brief renovation.

And while the Cinémathèque Diane is one of the most exclusive screening rooms in town during the Cannes Film Festival, it is regularly available throughout the year to individual hotel guests, and it is utilized frequently for other events for preview screenings.



This two-bedroom suite—measuring 2,153 square feet—was designed to create a tranquil and soothing ambience with a palette of azure blue and shades of beige.

Courtesy of Barrière Hotels

Hotel rates fluctuate wildly throughout the year, depending on the season (summer is the peak season, and the winter holidays are also busy). Rates start at 183 euros (\$209) per night for a superior room, ranging as high as 3,759 euros (\$4,291) per night for a double deluxe sea view suite.