

The new Parisian cinema-hotel offering an intriguing future for film and hospitality

Hotel Paradiso is built on top of a cinema and has themed rooms featuring top-range projection equipment

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Pass the popcorn: A room at Hotel Paradiso | CREDIT: Roman Ricard

The concept is so good it is a surprise it has not been done before. Rooms kitted out with projectors and state-of-the-art sound systems; a rooftop where films are screened in the summer. A cinema hotel, built on top of an actual cinema.

But [Hotel Paradiso](#), whose name references the 1988 Italian film *Cinema Paradiso*, goes beyond a neat concept. For the past seven years, it's been a labour of love for Nathanaël and Elisha Karmitz, two brothers in charge of the French MK2 cinema chain founded by their father in 1974.

The hotel industry had been working hard against the threat of Airbnb even before the pandemic struck. Guests, no longer satisfied with just a room, need something more. In response, a number of concept hotels have begun to appear, from a Safari hotel in Normandy to a hostel offering guests the chance to experience a city under siege in Sarajevo.



The exterior of Hotel Paradiso, complete with Charlie Chaplin mural | credit: JRM/Instagram

Thus MK2 has opened Hotel Paradiso, in Paris' 12th arrondissement. By combining the hotel and cinema industries, which have both found themselves under threat from the pandemic, Paradiso could well remind guests of the pleasures of both.

With low lighting and room numbers in little luminescent red boxes above each door, interiors, designed by Alex Thomsen, evoke a cinema-going experience. Paradiso is a personal monument to a love of film, with design features including a Charlie Chaplin mural by the French artist JR, commissioned especially by the brothers.

History and the present coexist throughout the building. Nathanaël points to a large black and white photograph of four wooden cinema chairs. "This is the first photograph I bought; it's a world that has disappeared but is preserved. It was in my living room for 20 years," he said during a tour of the hotel, which opened in March, 2021.

The walls are adorned with retro film posters chosen by the Karmitz brothers. Rooms have been specifically designed to allow guests to experience film in an optimal way, with the best projectors and latest audio technology (including speakers that are almost invisible in the ceilings). To watch a film in a room is to be submerged. There is a hushed excitement in the corridors as people collect trays of popcorn to take behind sound-proof doors.



Hotel Paradiso is a personal monument to a love of film | CREDIT: Romain Ricard

A café serves bagels and sharing boards, along with cinema snacks, and food can also be delivered from local restaurants.

Guests select films to watch via a tablet. There are thousands available to stream, with lists curated by MK2. There are also stacks of DVDs on each corridor of the hotel, including the entire Criterion Collection. In larger suites, there are separate areas classified as cinemas, meaning the latest films are projected for private viewing. "This is not just a screening room, this is a real cinema. The projector you have here is exactly the same as the projector you have in the large cinema downstairs. These are real, official cinemas," Nathanaël says of the suites.

At reception, a couple in their sixties are discussing their stay. There was a leak in their flat around the corner from the hotel, they say, so they booked a night here to escape from the stress. They were also testing the hotel out for when their daughter and her partner, who live in LA, visit Paris once lockdown restrictions are lifted. They'd been told about the hotel from across the Atlantic by their daughter, a film buff in California.



One of Hotel Paradiso's larger suites | CREDIT: Romain Ricard

Post-pandemic, the hotel should blossom. Downstairs, at the spiritual heart of the building, is a 1920s theatre with original light fixtures, a sweeping roof and updated seats in scarlet red. It's open to the general public until midnight, but for hardcore guests, films are played throughout the night.

The terrace, on the eighth floor, has a bar ready to serve drinks in the evenings. The hotel will be showing films up there, too, at sunset. Behind the screen are views across Paris: Invalides, the Eiffel Tower, the Pantheon, the Pompidou Centre.

MK2 is renowned throughout the film industry and sits at the pinnacle of French cinema. As an independent company, it's managed to bring art house and blockbuster films to French audiences at affordable prices.

What matters to the Karmitz brothers is film, and this ideal exists in the walls of Hotel Paradiso. "The cinema lives in the hotel, and the hotel lives in the cinema," Nathanaël says. In a world of distractions, Hotel Paradiso has found a way of bringing films back to the centre of our attention. If only for a night.