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Hotel Paradiso

PARIS

Making its world premiere in Paris, MK2 presents its debut hospitality venture, where guestrooms doubling as private screening rooms are a cinephile's dream.

Words: Nicola Leigh Stewart • Photography: © Romain Ricard

French cinema chain MK2 has conjured up its very own plot twist with the launch of Hotel Paradiso, billed as the world's first cinema-hotel. The new Parisian address is the first move into hospitality from Nathanaël and Elisha Karmitz, the two brothers at the helm of MK2 and founders of open-air film festival, Cinéma Paradiso. Whilst the link between cinema and hotel might not at first seem obvious, the hybrid venture was a natural next step – or sequel – for the Karmitzs, who named the property after the 1966 film of the same title. “We already organise cinema events, gaming events, chef events, so we thought why not also create a hotel,” says Nathanaël. “A hotel about the love of movies and the experience of watching a film.”

The idea has been seven years in the making and is not, as Nathanaël is keen to point out, “a Covid project”. When the siblings closed MK2 Nation, the cinema adjoining the hotel, back in 2018 for an extensive refurbishment, they realised that they had the perfect space for their venture. “Downstairs we had this classic, neighbourhood cinema, which historically has always worked amazingly well,” he explains. “There was nothing above it and so we had the opportunity to build something.”

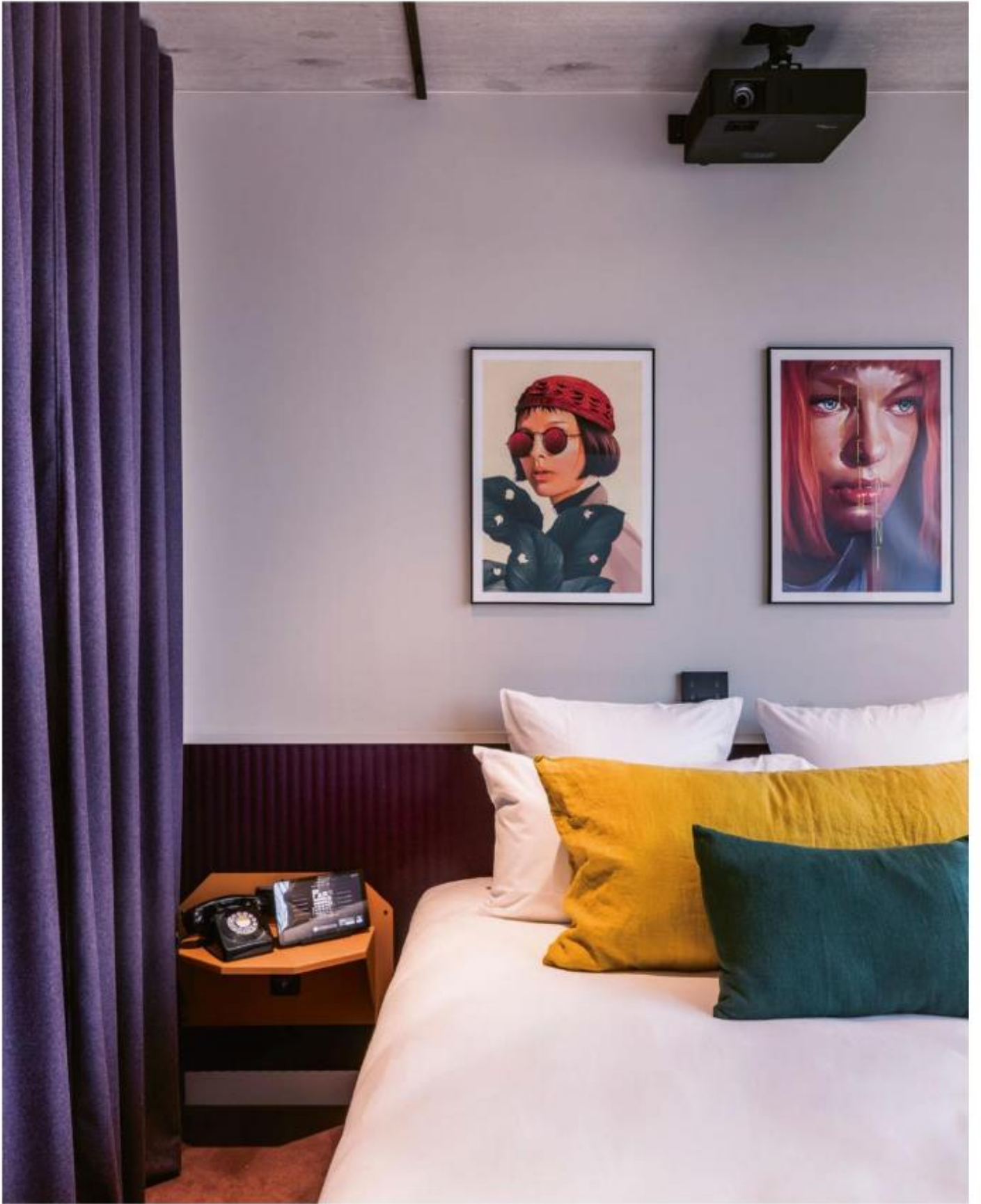
Like other MK2 addresses in and around the city, the property's location in the residential 12th arrondissement looks set to become a local hotspot and introduce guests to a fairly undiscovered part of the French capital. “MK2 has a history of bringing something new to a neighbourhood,”

Nathanaël continues. “This is a spot that is somewhat unknown and underused in Paris. It's a very cool area and a great location for getting around the city.”

To help realise the project, the brothers tapped into their personal network of friends, artists and designers. Daniel Vaniche and Paula Castro of Paris-based architects DVVD reworked the empty space to create 34 guestrooms, including two suites and four connecting rooms for families, while the interiors were entrusted to former fashion designer Alix Thomsen, who has kept things simple with white walls and neutral bathrooms, enlivened by fun pops of yellow, red and purple in the furnishings. With movie nights in mind, accessories have been chosen to offer practical comfort – think deeply cushioned lounge chairs and bedside trays to hold popcorn and drinks – or to reference the world of cinema, from film-themed Do Not Disturb signs to movie artwork selected by French photographer Ruben Brulat.

Some rooms come with the added bonus of balconies, with those overlooking the courtyard facing two large-scale collages of Charlie Chaplin's ‘The Kid’ and Harold Lloyd's famous clockface scene in ‘Safety Last!’, which have been painted on the building opposite by street artist JR. Out in the hallway, shelves are stacked with DVDs and illuminated cinema-style room numbers sit above each door frame. The stairwells reference the exits of MK2 theatres with urban concrete walls, red paintwork and film posters from the personal collection of a projectionist at MK2 Beaubourg.









The real draw for cinephiles however, is that every room can be transformed into a private cinema. Each is kitted out with its own projector, a 2.5m screen and a high-quality sound system installed by MK2. Films are projected to face the bed, and rather decadently in larger rooms also the bathtub, while for ease everything is controlled by a tablet. Guests can choose movies from platforms such as Netflix and Apple TV, connect smartphones to upload their own media, change the language and subtitles, dim the lights, up the volume, and order cocktails and snacks from popular Paris café Bob's Juice Bar, who oversee the room service menu and café downstairs. In total, residents have access to around 10,000 films and for gamers, there's a PlayStation 5 to lose themselves in.

Even more impressive are the hotel's two suites, which come with their own separate movie room and the same projector as the MK2 theatres. The spaces have even been classified as official cinema rooms by La Commission Supérieure Technique (CST), the French

organisation responsible for administering cinema image and sound quality, and are the smallest of their kind in Paris – aside from the 17-seat room downstairs at MK2 Nation.

Those looking to watch the big screen in private can retreat to La Loge, an exclusive glass partitioned space overlooking one of the cinema rooms, which can be rented for private use and offers guests the chance to take over the projector, meaning they can screen their own all-night movie marathon once other film buffs have left for the evening. The fun continues at La La Land, a karaoke bar, that can be hired by the hour to blast out sing-a-longs, while The Studio will serve as an activity room to lay on cinema courses, kids' workshops, yoga classes, and drinks receptions after film premieres.

Up on the rooftop, the property will soon play host to open-air films with a 4.5m screen, barbeque, cocktail bar, and unlike any other cinema in Paris, sweeping views of the city. You could say it offers the best seat in the house.



EXPRESS CHECK-OUT

Owners: Nathanaël and Elisha Karmitz

Operator: MK2 Group

Architecture: DVVD

Interior Design: Alix Thomsen

Lighting Design: Philippe Collet

Graphic Design: Sarah Khan

Art Consultants: Flore Maquin,

Christian Boltanski, JR, Ruben Brulat

www.mk2hotelparadiso.com