A FRESH, NEW BREEZE BLOWS THROUGH HÔTEL LA PONCHE

After eight months of renovation, the legendary Hôtel La Ponche, in the historic heart of Saint-Tropez, will unveil its new attire. Overlooking the small beach of La Ponche, this 21-room hotel (including 5 suites) has been given a makeover under the direction of interior designer Fabrizio Casiraghi. La Ponche belongs to the iconic hotels of the Riviera; it welcomed Françoise Sagan, Brigitte Bardot, Gunter Sachs, Romy Schneider, Michel Piccoli, Boris Vian, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir...

What was once a family affair with Simone Duckstein, will continue in the same dynamic as two discreet families (Hubert and Nicolas Saltiel with Georges Saier — players in the hotel industry) take the helm.

The management of this five-star hotel — from now on open year-round — will be entrusted to Audrey Brémond, a native of Saint-Tropez, with chef Thomas Danigo (Galanga, Monsieur George Hotel, Paris) at her side. On the program: summery rooms, a table in the sun, a bar to reconnect with the past (the Saint Germain des Prés), and a signature spa of Le Tigre Yoga Club...

SAINT-TROPEZ PAGE ONE

14 JUNE 2021, SAINT-TROPEZ: HÔTEL LA PONCHE, THE BREATH OF RENEWAL

"I got up from my bed, I opened the shutters, and the sea and the sky threw in my face the same blue, the same pink, the same happiness." Françoise Sagan, from room 19

With my best memory (1984)

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INTRODUCTION

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The Hôtel La Ponche has been entirely «revisited» but without touching the essential, its spirit. One finds the taste of *la dolce vita* mixed with idleness and the roll of the waves. Better still, a fresh breeze blows in a renewal carried by a new generation. One that does not wish to shake up the codes, but to give back to La Ponche its relaxed chic, its carefree elegance. Moreover, as a testimony to a local institution, La Ponche will be open year-round, in order to prolong a sentimental adventure that has lasted for more than eighty years...

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SIMONE DUCKSTEIN: THE SOUL OF LA PONCHE

Her memories are all the more vivid because there was never a guest book at Hôtel La Ponche. This was the philosophy of what was once her parents' hole-in-the-wall establishment in 1938. It was here that, at the end of the war, all the fishermen of Saint-Tropez gathered to celebrate their newfound liberty. Then, the stars came naturally in the 1950s. They came on the famed *Blue Train* which released them sleepily onto the platforms of Saint-Raphaël train station. These children of the century came to Saint-Tropez because it was a « *little paradise* ». Hot coffee and warm toast were waiting for them. Sometimes they came in a car like Françoise Sagan in her Jaguar X/440. Or on a motorcycle like the superb Jose Luis de Vilallonga, actor and writer. It took all night to get to Jeanne Moreau. Simone was 13 years old when the cast and crew of *And God Created Woman* came to settle in La Ponche. She saw the Bardot-Vadim love story unravel under the burning gaze of Jean-Louis Trintignant.

What follows is a magical cast of stars. Boris Vian slipping willingly behind the bar to serve his friends: Daniel Gélin, Michel Piccoli, Pierre Brasseur, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jack Nicholson, Catherine Deneuve... Simone Duckstein saw it all with eyes wide open; marveled at the men who were "only faithful to their room number." Famous couples met there in rooms created from 1951: Brigitte Bardot and Gunter Sachs (1), Bernard Buffet and the model Annabel (20), Romy Schneider and Daniel Biasini (8)... Simone Duckstein will have averted her beautiful blue eyes with carefree complicity. With the philosophy: "don't pester them" ... "as long as they are not pretentious, don't get carried away, and are polite to the staff." This is how La Ponche proceeded through the years. From 8 rooms (1957) to 21 rooms today. The days were spent in the roll of the waves, breakfast in the sun, walk, lunch, beach, shower, long diner while awaiting the moment to attend the parties. Or one had a bite at the port, a little journey. Simone remembers the smell of clean linen in the cupboards, of the polish on the woodwork. She still sees herself driving her white Mini Moke with a red belt, like a "corsair" leaving for the sea. She especially remembers that unchanging music: that of the "sound of water".

Good news: Simone Duckstein will remain close to La Ponche, she will be its ambassador...

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THE HOTEL WITH THE TOUCH OF FABRIZIO CASIRAGHI

Nothing is more delicate than wanting to touch up a myth, a legend. Like taking over La Colombe d'Or, the Café de Flore. This is the challenge faced by Fabrizio Casiraghi, a rising star in interior design (Parisian apartments in Venice, the Drouant Restaurant in Paris, a resto-club in Hong Kong...). One might as well say that it took a bit of cold blood and enough perspective to dive into this legendary hotel in Saint-Tropez. Luckily, Fabrizio Casiraghi knew the place. He regularly stayed in Ramatuelle, which allowed him some distance and enough emotion. "In fact," he says, "when I get attached to a place like La Ponche, I think of only one thing: telling a story. Here it is. He is a man in his forties, living in Paris, in the 16th or the 8th district. He inherits his grandmother's house. So, he is going to make it a vacation home for his friends. He will hunt here and there for objects, armchairs, lights, without ulterior motive. Just thinking of the South, lazing about, la dolce vita. A bit of Capri, a little Positano. But above all, Saint-Tropez. The Pompidou years, the 60s, the sea, vacations. Each object I choose is the result of a long and complex reflection, because the house speaks with them. In the bedrooms, there will not be more than one or two paintings and, most importantly, what we like at the end of the day: a good shower, a good soap, a nice towel."

From there, Fabrizio Casiraghi had only to continue in this direction. **Most especially,** not to touch the structures, move forward without breaking too much, respecting the soul of this place. Find a common thread (the paintings and their lighting) and keep the spirit of the 21 rooms (from 17 to 45m2).

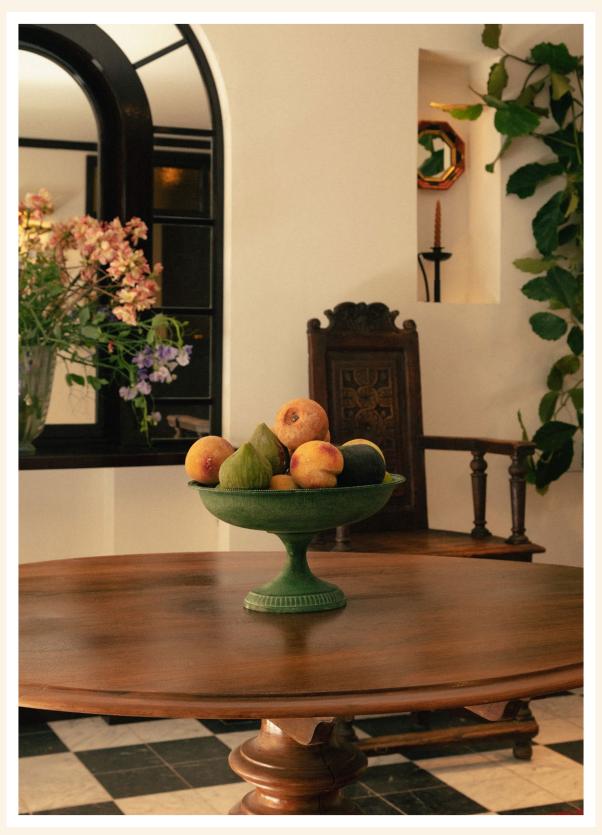
"This does not make it a hotel exactly," Fabrizio says, "but a vacation home by the sea."

From the reception, the tone of the house is set. It will be both Provencal and summery: black-and-white marbled checkerboard floor, ivory walls, concierge, luggage room, and reception with traditional round brass keys. It will showcase the veranda and its zenith-like overhead lighting, inviting people to meet there in the company of the library and the game tables (chess and backgammon).

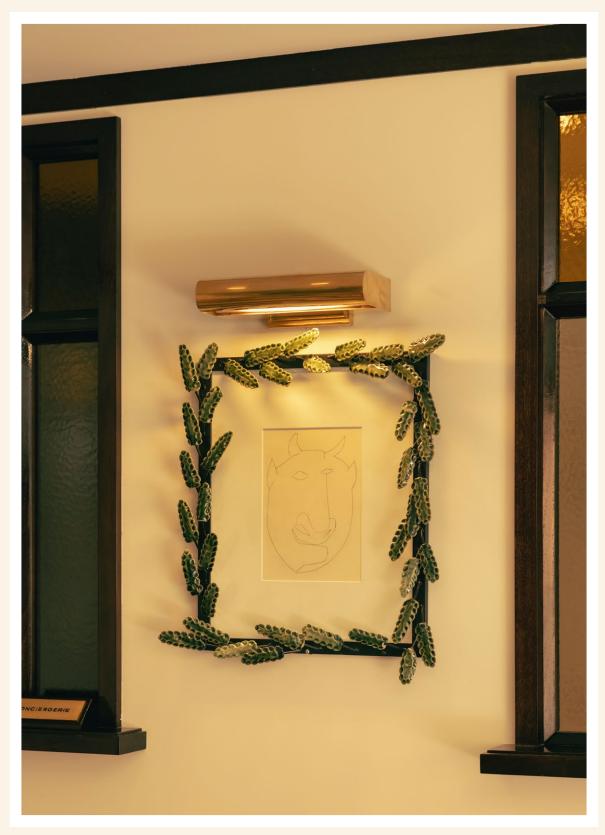
More present than ever, the legendary terrace will have been planted. From breakfast on, it will maintain the myth but also provide lively catering until late in the evening. On the side, a new feature: a dining room overlooking the sea. It can be privatized with prix fixe menus, announcing both the intimate dimension of the hotel (dark walnut parquet) and the artistic (frescoes on the walls and ceiling).

The rooms will be treated with lightness to remain in the spirit of the beginning when the walls were whitewashed and the beds covered with fresh and flowery cretonne. Today, there is an off-white American walnut woodwork, dark-stained, gloss varnish. The tiles are on the floor, the paintings here and there: works by Jacques Cordier, Simone Duckstein's first husband; original lithographs by Picasso. Artistic collaborations by Victor Levai (ceramic frames), Elvira Solana (fresco), fabrics by Loro Piana and Pierre Frey (green, orange, yellow). The ultimate room is room 8, by Romy Schneider and Daniel Biasini. The terrace is as large as the room, overlooking the roofs of Saint-Tropez, the citadel, the bell tower, and the sea. All of the twenty-one 5-star rooms (including 5 suites) are named after illustrious visitors. A new addition, the Simone Duckstein room, to seal the bonds of memory.

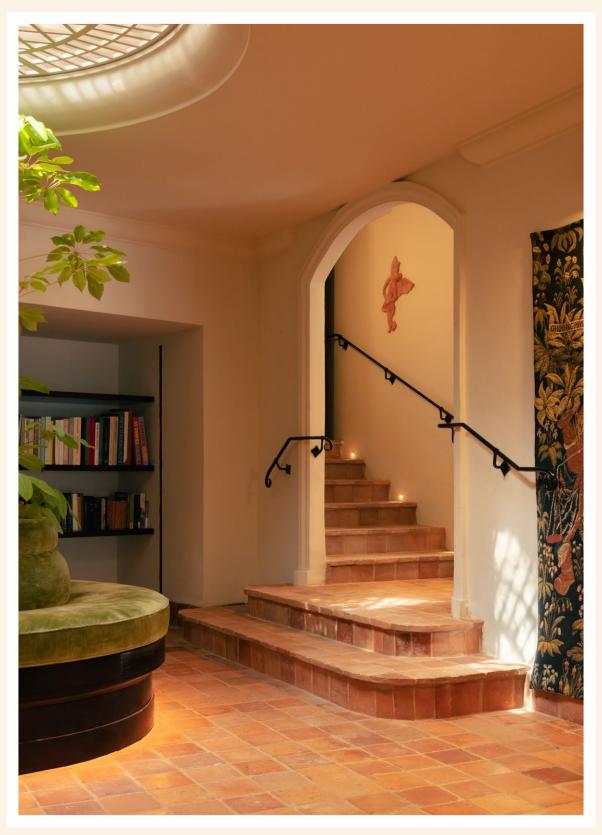
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HÔTEL LA PONCHE - RECEPTION



HÔTEL LA PONCHE - RECEPTION



HÔTEL LA PONCHE - PATIO





LA PONCHE RESTAURANT

A SUNNY TABLE UNDER THE VISTA OF THOMAS DANIGO

Today's young chefs already have a long career behind them. At 29, Thomas Danigo has the experience of an old hand. This Parisian, by birth, has already won awards in professional competitions and is especially known for his work at major addresses such as the Grand Monarque in Chartres (one Michelin star) and for his seven years with Alain Pégouret (true disciple of Joël Robuchon) at the Laurent restaurant in Paris (one star). In other words, he has learned from the great classics of the restaurant business. All the better to depart from them and find his own way.

This calm and diligent chef freed himself from these formidable years by discovering a freer style during his tenor at the Sergent Recruteur in Paris, still with Alain Pégouret, before being successfully entrusted with the kitchens of Galanga, at the Monsieur George Hotel in Paris, by Nicolas Saltiel. This young, modern chef has learned from his many travels around the world to deliver a pleasing Mediterranean menu at La Ponche, focused on local vegetables, fish of the day, and the vibrations of the market. "No fuss, no overdone dishes, but a cuisine focused on ingredients and taste." Fresh pea gazpacho, grilled lobster, bouillabaisse; daily specials in the charcoal oven and simple desserts, also worked in the sense of the ingredients (seasonal fruits)...

At lunch, the terrace will serve cult dishes of the house, while in the evening, the tables will be topped with linen and the menu expanded to more personal dishes by Thomas Danigo. Also of note, a refreshing "finger food" menu at the bar as well as all-night room service, true to the hotel's five stars.

THE BAR, ALL TO THE SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS!

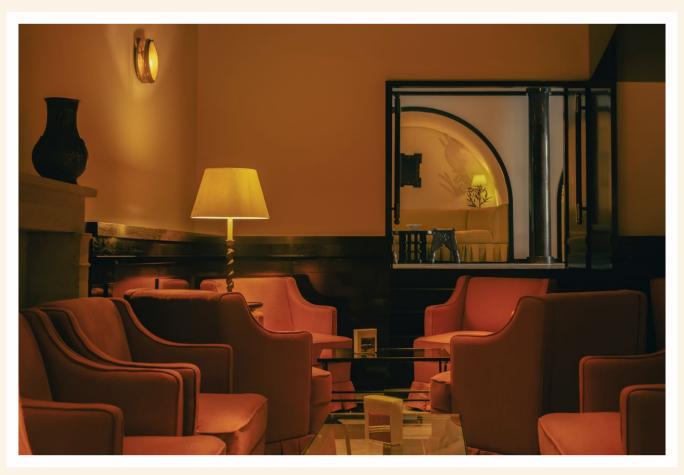
The best way to judge the embodiment of a celebrated, luxury hotel is by its bar. That's why the highlights of Hôtel La Ponche will be played out in this venue, which is now also open to the outside world on a small street behind the hotel. And for good reason, the origin of the hotel's success had a name: The Saint-Germain-des-Prés La Ponche with Boris Vian's band, who between two trumpet blasts, liked to go behind the bar to serve his friends.

The «Saint-Germain-des-Prés» is back with special attention from Fabrizio Casiraghi. He used a wall of mirrors behind the bar, housing shelves and backlighting on the bottles, American walnut wood ceilings, black-and-white checkered tiling, a fireplace, wrought iron coffee tables with glass tops, super comfortable free-standing armchairs, which can be moved around, like the ottomans. All this to be enjoyed at all hours of the day and often late at night, this feeling of beginnings, *la dolce vita*, the grand menu of cocktails with house staples, private concerts, and the famous nightcap for endless nights...

Between restaurant and bar, on the patio and its overhead light, a selection of books dedicated to Saint-Tropez and La Ponche will await fans of the genre. They were specially selected by Lisa Vignoli, journalist, author and child of La Ponche. In a cozy niche, there is also a game table with backgammon and chess, while a playlist specially created by Midi Agency broadcasts the soundtrack of the Ponche spirit...

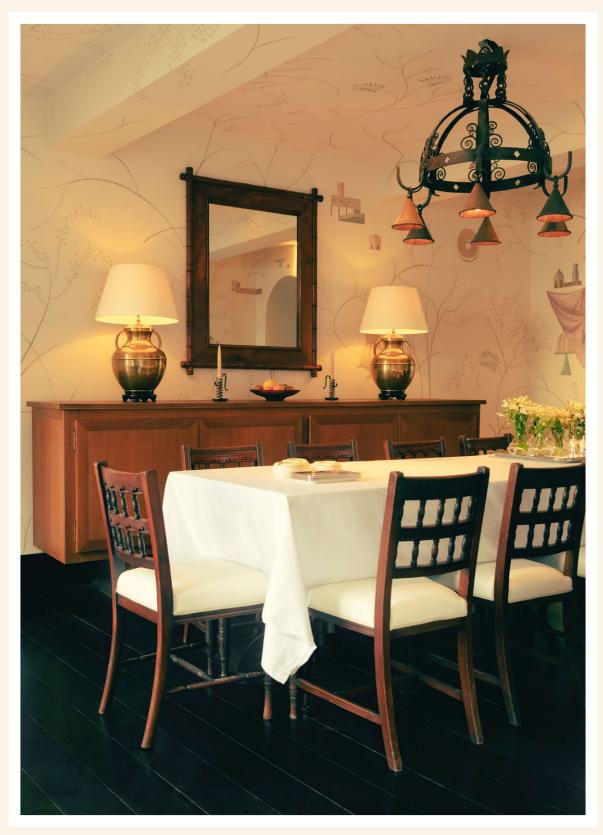
THE SPA BY LE TIGRE YOGA CLUB

With eight years of experience in Paris, Le Tigre Yoga Club (Le Tigre Chaillot, Le Tigre Rive Gauche, Hotel Monsieur George, Le Tigre Hotel Le Normandy, Deauville...) will provide treatments adapted to the spirit of the moment: morning yoga on the deck facing the sea. And afterwards, yoga classes on request, body treatments, massages as an invitation to let go at the end of the day. Good news for Le Tigre Yoga Club regulars: massage therapist, Iris Vola (Iyengar Yoga, Ayurvedic massage, Balinese, Lomi Lomi, Swedish...), will be in residence for the entire summer. In the spa, for the use of customers: fitness bikes, mats, weights...



BAR SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS





DINING ROOM



DINING ROOM

THE EYE OF AUDREY BRÉMOND

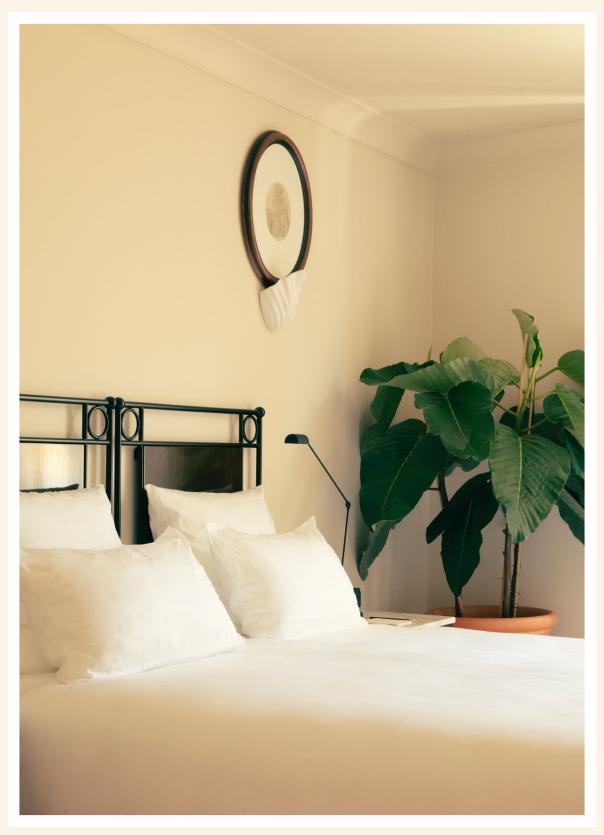
It is a highly symbolic handover that Audrey Brémond, who followed Simone Duckstein, is taking over the management of the hotel. For Audrey Brémond is a true pure-blood Tropezian. Trained at the Vatel Group, she worked for the prestigious Oetker Group (the Apogée in Courchevel and the Chateau Saint-Martin in Vence) before returning to the hotel collection: Les Hôtels Monsieur. Her appointment as director of La Ponche gave her the desire to "reignite" this institution, to rediscover its original effervescence, while remaining faithful to its fundamentals: "the atmosphere of the sixties, the hymn to the sun, to simplicity, to the sea." She shares with Simone Duckstein many points of reference, a professional rigor but also the pleasures of this profession: the smell of clean linen, the polish of the woodwork, the sweetness of an institution slowing down time while life accelerates all around it...

NICOLAS SALTIEL

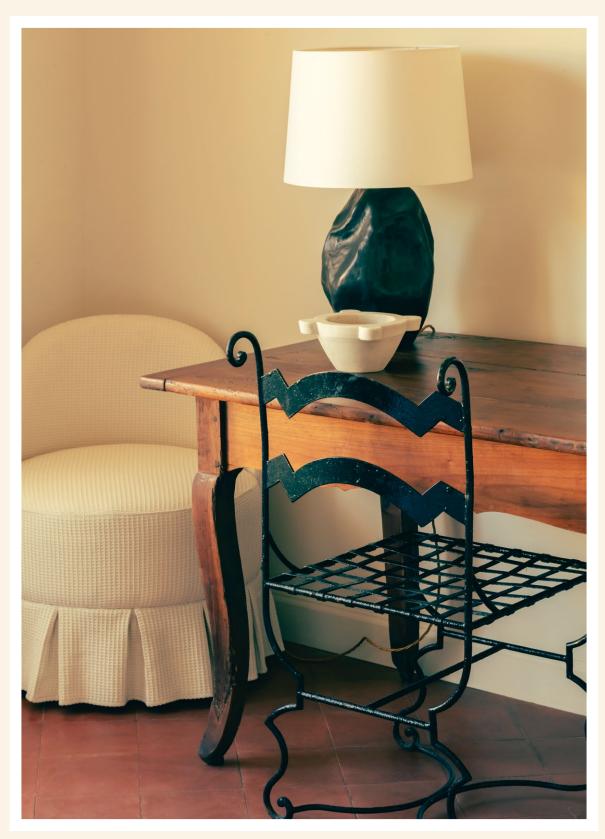
A graduate of a classic business school, Nicolas Saltiel, 34, belongs to that generation who found in travel the philosophy of what he does. Immersed very early in the world of the hotel industry, his many travels have enabled him to confirm his vision of this field by exploring the impact of living spaces. A bowling alley, a large library, the imagination of a lobby, a sensory décor telling a story... This is how we find his Monsieur Hôtel Collection. This contemporary inspiration, this reverberation perceived in the hotels of André Balazs (notably the Mercer); the spirit of Soho House, that of the Aman Group. Or even the collection of Ian Schrager (Public Hotel), who, with an idea from Andrée Putman, launched boutique hotels in the 1980s.

The Hôtel La Ponche will be of the same spirit. Nicolas Saltiel also wanted to bring in the spirit of the Riviera, the same feeling that exudes from Pellicano (Porto Ercole), Le Sirenuse (Positano); that summer elegance that is both relaxed and rigorous. Strengthened by these impressions and experiences, he is now reopening the iconic Hôtel La Ponche, as if soothed by a long journey, to deliver a house that has always been there, with its life, its soul.

"The Hôtel La Ponche," according to Nicolas Saltiel, "is above all the story of an encounter with Simone. There is no story without emotion."



ROOM N.22 - ROGER VADIM



ROOM N.9 - MICHEL GUY





HÔTEL LA PONCHE — PIAGGIO



LA PONCHE RESTAURANT

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