

A Desert-Inspired Hotel that Feels Worlds Away from the Strip

THE DELANO, LAS VEGAS

BACKSTORY Vegas regulars will recognize Mandalay Bay's gleaming, 43-story gold tower from its previous (unGoogleable) incarnation as THEhotel. But since a major rebranding and renovation, completed last September, this all-suite hotel-within-a-hotel has been the western outpost of South Beach's sleek Delano hotel.

DESIGN NOTES Located at the southernmost end of the Strip, the sophisticated styling here feels much more inspired by the minimalism of the nearby desert than the tacky glitz of neighboring resorts. Upon entering the foyer, you'll pass between the two halves of a 126,000-pound metaquartzite boulder found in the Mojave Desert, and then you'll walk along a carpet inspired by an aerial photograph of the winding Colorado River. Enormous columns made from perfectly draped sheer white fabric and a soundtrack of dance beats will remind you that you are still in Vegas.

BEST PLACE TO HANG OUT The lobby craft-cocktail lounge, Franklin

(get it?), is designed to evoke fireflies in the night sky, with hundreds of tiny twinkling lights dangling overhead. Cocktail names pay homage to either the hotel's presidential namesake (such as the D'Ussé cognac-based New Deal and the Mr. Hyde, which takes its name from FDR's hometown of Hyde Park, New York) or the Delano's Miami origins (such as the Mojito Cubano and the South Beach Sunrise).

HOT DISH Like any Vegas resort worth its salt, the Delano boasts a celebrity chef: multiple-Michelin-starred Monegasque maestro Alain Ducasse is set to open a brand new spot on the 43rd floor this fall. But the hotel's biggest culinary surprise is Della's Kitchen, a homey farm-to-table bistro that sources ingredients from area hydroponic farms and the hotel's own greenhouse. A menu highlight, and one that stands in stark contrast to the over-the-top offerings you'll find up and down the rest of the Strip, is the simply prepared toasted cheese sandwich with tomato soup—as the menu notes, FDR's favorite dish.



A Diva Returns to the Parisian Stage

HILTON PARIS OPERA, PARIS

BACKSTORY Once the glamorous leading lady of 19th-century society, this 1889 Haussmann-era landmark was designed to house the throngs of tourists pouring in to visit the Exposition Universelle—the world's fair for which the Eiffel Tower was famously (and, at the time, controversially) constructed. Now, thanks to a \$50 million renovation and grand reopening in January, the 268-room classic is getting the encore it deserves, complete with a host of era-appropriate trappings like granite columns, bronze statues and crystal chandeliers by Baccarat.

BEST PLACE TO HANG OUT The Belle Époque Grand Salon space buzzes with Parisians sipping espressos and craft cocktails beneath a stunning ceiling of original hand-painted frescoes atop a Corinthian colonnade. Legend has it that the ceiling's painter went unpaid for a day and showed his displeasure by leaving his infelicitous mark on the mural: Try to find the one cherub showing off his backside to the crowd below.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND JUST OUTSIDE Located in the dynamic Opéra district, the hotel is an ideal jumping-off point for the Champs-Élysées and iconic department stores such as the Galeries Lafayette and Printemps Haussmann. More important, it's less than a 10-minute stroll from the neighborhood's namesake Opéra Garnier, home to Gaston Leroux's (and later Andrew Lloyd Webber's) tragic Phantom.

