





THE PENINSULA PARIS A GLAMOROUS GRAND OPENING

Steeped in Parisian history, The Peninsula Paris – owned by Katara Hospitality and The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Limited (HSH) – opened its doors quietly with a traditional lion dance on 1 August, 2014.

The Peninsula Group had made its entrance into Europe on avenue Kléber in Paris, setting spectacular new standards in design, luxury and comfort. The century-old classic building re-emerged from its past, meticulously restored and modernised to create a new example of Peninsula excellence.

On a balmy Parisian spring evening on 16 April 2015, The Peninsula Paris celebrated its grand opening in a blaze of colour, music and a guest list comprising international stars, guests from around the world and “le tout Paris”.

Guests arriving at the party were greeted with three large *Montgolfier* balloons floating above a Hollywood-style red carpet, each bearing the golden word of hospitality – “Welcome” – in the three languages – French, Arabic and Chinese – that forge The Peninsula Paris’ culture.

The opening ceremony was hosted by French TV personality Valérie Expert, with speeches by The Honourable Sir Michael Kadoorie, Chairman of HSH, and Mr Christopher R. J. Knable, Chief Operating Officer of Katara Hospitality, on behalf of their Chairman, His Excellency Sheikh Nawaf Bin Jassim Bin Jabor Al-Thani.

“For many years, I had hoped that our first hotel in Europe would be in this magnificent city of Paris. There are two reasons for this: first, because Paris is the quintessential capital of *art de vivre* and elegance. In our business, we strive to uphold these typically French values every day. And then, my family has a long history with France, one that has lasted for three generations. This tradition continues with my three children,” declared Sir Michael.

Katara Hospitality’s Christopher R. J. Knable added: “We are proud to be part of history here today, and on behalf of His Excellency Sheikh Nawaf, Chairman of Katara Hospitality, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to our partners The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels for their support; this is the first step of many in our story together.”



The speeches signalled the start of the festivities, inviting guests to discover the various areas and themes throughout the hotel, together with musical performances by some of France's best-known musicians:

- At the historical staircase in the reception lobby, the Orchestre de Colonne (one of Paris' oldest orchestras, founded in 1873) greeted guests with lively Gershwin-inspired tunes – referencing George Gershwin's stay at the original Hotel Majestic (today The Peninsula) in 1928, where he wrote "An American in Paris"
- Singer and actress Lou Lesage and DJ Cécile Togni appeared in the Lobby restaurant, which was transformed into a dance floor for the night, together with a Josephine Baker-style performance by French model and singer Inna Modja
- "Duelling pianos" were the order of the night at the Salon Etoile, with Matthias Mimoun and Flavien Compagnon playing all evening long as guests enjoyed the live cooking stations dotted around the room

- Cantonese restaurant LiLi hosted DJ Noémi Sunshine First, while the signature rooftop L'Oiseau Blanc restaurant and terrace saw guests partying under the stars to the music of the Something A La Mode band and well-known DJ Gostan

VIPs and celebrities abounded, including Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi and French actor François Cluzet.

While the festivities proceeded, the back-of-house was a hive of activity in a celebration of the art of hospitality and gastronomy. The menu developed by Executive Chef Jean-Edern Hurstel featured copious quantities of caviar, blue lobster, wild salmon and line-caught European sea bass, Kobe beef, milk-fed lamb and veal carpaccio. Sumptuous dessert buffets created by award-winning Pastry Chef Julien Alvarez included literally thousands of cream puffs, verrines of seasonal fruit and dessert tarts with heady scents of tonka, chocolate, raspberry, lemon and nuts, petit-fours, chocolates and vast arrays of sweets, all set off to perfection by a chocolate fountain and over 150 litres of ice cream.



The occasion also called for fine wines, Champagnes and the very best Grands Crus selected by the hotel's Chief Sommelier Xavier Thuizat, including:

- 1800 bottles of champagne and wine
- 300 bottles of spirits for mixing cocktails
- On arrival, partner Dom Pérignon served guests a duo of delicacies – Dom Pérignon Vintage 2005 and Alverta Imperial caviar from Petrossian
- Deutz – The Peninsula Hotels' Champagne partner for over 25 years – filled and refilled glasses through the night

Champagnes on offer included Laurent Perrier and Taittinger which offered two Methuselahs, equivalent to eight bottles, of Comte de Taittinger 2005 to celebrate the event.

Thuizat also paid tribute to his home region of Burgundy, with a Jeroboam, equivalent to four bottles, of the coveted Meursault Premier Cru.

Highlights from the hotel's extensive wine cellar also featured celebrated Bordeaux wines including Chasse-Spleen, Château Talbot, Domaine Duclot – La Vinicole, and great Burgundy vineyards wine growers including Chapoutier and Prieur-Brunet.

The festivities continued late into the night, with dancing until dawn, set against the panoramic skyline of Paris, with the glittering Eiffel Tower as a backdrop. The team then set to clearing up, as it was business as usual the next morning.

It was a glamorous night to remember for guests, employees and Parisians, forming another spectacular chapter in the history and heritage of The Peninsula Hotels.



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