

DID
YOU KNOW?
HISTORY
& ANECDOTES



**HOW DID A HOSPITAL FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY
BECOME A FIVE-STAR HOTEL?**

Our hotel opened its doors in 2013, but this majestic, 23,500 m² building has centuries of stories to tell! Its foundations lie on Roman – or perhaps even prehistoric – remains, and it was for many years the city's main general hospital, or Hôtel-Dieu. It went on to become a school of surgery, then of medicine, before its rebirth as a hotel on the world stage. These three incarnations have their roots in care and attention, with all three serving the city and the people of Marseille.



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MARSEILLE – HOTEL DIEU



THE FORECOURT

All sorts of objects were uncovered during archaeological digs in front of the hotel between 2008 and 2011, the oldest of which date back to the Neolithic Age. Under your feet is the crypt of Saint-Esprit church, itself built on a Roman floor from the first century BC. You can in fact see the remains of a mosaic in the Alcyone restaurant. As archaeologist Philippe Mellinard put it, “2,600 years of history overlay one another here.”

THE FAÇADE

Look up at this magnificent façade, which was classed as a Historic Monument in 1963. The dial of the magnificent clock was renovated in 2025!



THE ENTRANCE

Interior designer Jean-Philippe Nuel drew his inspiration from the elegant curves of ancient amphorae to create this walkway flanked by minimalist vases.



THE GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR

Don't miss this inscription: contrary to the date given by the artist (1116) and the language used in the texts, this is not a relic of medieval times, but a medical student's practical joke from the last century! It tells the story of philosopher Peter Abelard, who paid a high price for his liaison with the beautiful Heloise, niece of the Canon Fulbert. Can you spot what poor Abelard is missing?



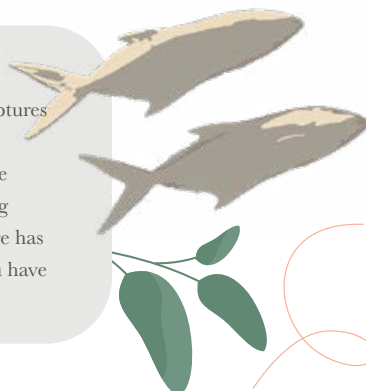
THE CULTURAL ROOM

The location of this room, the ribbed vaults and the sturdy pillars lead us to believe we are in the Hôtel-Dieu's former kitchens.



THE LOBBY

Cast your eye over the enamel fish sculptures and the shimmering works of Bernard Pictet. Take in the rugs brushed like fine sand, their stone and slate tones echoing those of the Calanques. Everything here has been designed to make you feel like you have your toes in the Med.



THE MAIN TERRACE

This is one of the jewels in the crown of the hotel: a vast 750 m² terrace with views over the yachts in the Vieux-Port. It is a one-of-a-kind meeting spot, with intimate views of Notre Dame de La Garde, or La Bonne-Mère, as we affectionately call her.



LES FENÊTRES BRASSERIE

This true classic of Mediterranean dining is a harmonious blend of ancient and modern. Admire the contrast between the rough-hewn stone wall and the elegant contemporary decor.



LE CAPIAN BAR

Take the time to look at the reproductions of Joseph Vernet's works in the centre of the room. They depict the bay of the port of Marseille in the 18th century: look out from the terrace and compare them to today's view.

THE SWEEPING STAIRCASES

Marvel at these majestic staircases paved with white marble. The vaulted construction makes them look almost as if they were floating! They do not serve all the floors as the building quite simply didn't have as many back then.



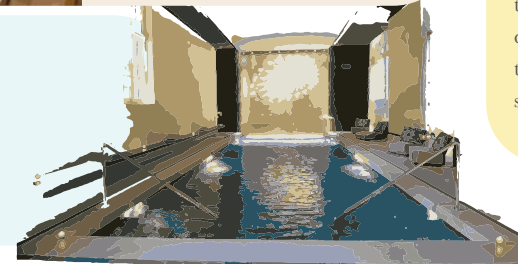
THE MAIN DOORS

Hold your horses! Take the time to look up and admire the ancient solid-wood doors, restored during the renovation work by a specialist woodworker.



THE SPA

Water pours over the stone wall at the far end of the swimming pool, which is designed to look like Roman baths.



THE INTERIOR DECOR

The style here plays on the contrast between black and white, as well as the warm colours of Mediterranean geology. The Presidential suite is graced with a touch of lavender, a fine ode to the Provence region!



DAVIEL SQUARE

The ophthalmologist Jacques Daviel was celebrated across Europe. He worked as a surgeon at the Hôtel-Dieu, and in 1745 in Marseille he performed the first lens extraction cataract operation.



KEY MOMENTS IN THE HOTEL'S HISTORY

1593

Two medieval hospitals – Saint-Jacques de Galice and Saint-Esprit – are merged and the Hôtel-Dieu is founded.

1753

The new Hôtel-Dieu is extended following the plans of Jacques Hardouin-Mansart de Sagonne, grandson of Jules Hardouin-Mansart, architect to King Louis XIV. Construction continues over 100 years.

1785

The two monumental staircases designed by Esprit-Joseph Brun are completed.

1866

The new Hôtel-Dieu is inaugurated by Napoleon III on 15 November.

1963

The facades and their external galleries, the roof and the two staircases are listed as Historic Monuments by decree dated 14 October.

1993

The Hôtel-Dieu stops admitting patients and becomes a training centre for medical workers.

2006

The Hôtel-Dieu closes its doors.

2007

The City of Marseille acquires the buildings. AXA Real Estate obtains a 99-year lease and invests over 100 million euros to completely transform them for the future while respecting the past.

2010

Renovation work begins, reconciling modernity, technology and sustainable development requirements while preserving a venerable protected monument.

2013

The InterContinental Marseille - Hôtel-Dieu, a luxury five-star hotel, officially begins to welcome guests.

2023

The hotel celebrates its 10-year anniversary!



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