

L A C O (O) R N I C H E
Pyla-sur-Mer

1930

LA CORNICHE



LA CORNICHE IS A HOTEL IN AN EXTRAORDINARY LOCATION. THE KEY LANDMARK IN THE PILAT-PLAGE DISTRICT, THE VANTAGE POINT OVER THE ARCACHON BASIN, BACKING ONTO THE HIGHEST DUNE IN EUROPE, IT IS SUSPENDED BETWEEN SEA AND SKY, NESTLING BETWEEN SAND AND PINES.

IT IS A MYTHICAL PLACE WHICH EVOKES THE GOLDEN AGE AND INVENTION OF THE CÔTE D'ARGENT. A FORMER 1930S HUNTING LODGE IN THE HEART OF A PRESERVED SITE, WHERE ARISTOCRACY AND THE UPPER MIDDLE CLASSES, ATTRACTED BY THE QUALITY OF THE AIR, THE MAGIC OF THE SITE AND THE FASHION FOR BATHING IN THE SEA, CAME TO HAVE LOUIS GAUME CONSTRUCT THEM A NEO-BASQUE HOME SHELTERED AMONG THE PINES.



2010
LA CO(O)RNICHE



THE NEW OWNER OF THE PREMISES, WILLIAM TÉCHOUÉYRES HAS JOINED FORCES WITH THE GAUME FAMILY TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO LA CORNICHE. WITH THE COLLABORATION OF PHILIPPE STARCK, HE HAS AWOKEN A SLEEPING BEAUTY. SO LA CO(O)RNICHE WAS BORN, GIVING AN ADDITIONAL EXCLAMATION TO THIS STUNNING VIEWPOINT.

THE PRESERVED AUTHENTICITY OF THE BASQUE HOUSE IS COMBINED WITH THE ATMOSPHERE OF AN OYSTER SHED GIVING ONTO THE PANORAMA.

THE HOTEL, RESTAURANT, TERRACE AND BAR HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED WITH ESSENTIAL AND INFORMAL LUXURY. LIKE A LIVELY VILLAGE SQUARE, LA CO(O)RNICHE IS DEDICATED TO ALL LOVERS OF THE BASIN. BETWEEN INTIMACY AND DISCRETION, THEY ARE GUESTS AT A CONTINUAL PARTY, WHERE THEY ARE SURE TO FIND THE EXPERIENCE THEY ARE LOOKING FOR.



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A LITTLE HISTORY



LA CORNICHE IS INSEPARABLY LINKED TO THE VISION OF AN EXCEPTIONAL ENTREPRENEUR: LOUIS GAUME.

ORIGINALLY FROM THE AUVERGNE, BUT AN “ARCACHONNAIS” BY ADOPTION, THE APPRENTICE ARRIVED AT THE BASIN IN 1912. THIS WAS THE HEYDAY OF THE RESORT, WHICH HAD BEEN MADE A COMMUNE BY NAPOLEON III IN 1857. HERE THE PEREIRE BROTHERS BUILT A TOWN BASED ON CHÂTEAU-LAFITTE OR ENGHEN WHICH SWARMED WITH PRINCES, GRAND DUKES AND GENTLEMEN, ATTRACTED BY THE CLIMATE AND THE SURROUNDING NATURE OF SEA, DUNES AND PINE TREES.

BACK FROM THE WAR, LOUIS GAUME PROVIDENTIALLY GRASPED THE NEED TO DEVELOP THE TOWN BEYOND ITS 2000-ACRE TERRITORY. IN 1920, HE SET UP HIS OWN GENERAL BUILDING COMPANY. THEN, ENCOURAGED BY THE SUCCESS OF PYLA-SUR-MER, A RESORT FOUNDED BY DANIEL MELLER, HE BECAME THE DEVELOPER OF PILAT-PLAGE, A NEW DISTRICT BACKING ONTO THE LARGE DUNE, THE IDEAL EXTENSION OF THE TOWN INTO NATURE.

PYLA AND PILAT

At the same time as early 19th-century dream, never realized, of a boulevard linking Arcachon to Biarritz, the concept of the Côte d’Argent was born.

Harnessing this momentum and the craze among the very rich for a paradise destination, Daniel Meller designed a seaside resort which extended Arcachon towards the dune. Playing on the similarity of names and the fashionable references to the Classical, he named the resort Pyla-sur-Mer. “Pyla, port of the Basin” was a strong slogan in attracting buyers from Paris and Bordeaux. The Gaume company went on to build some of the most beautiful villas in this new resort and formed close relationships with powerful investors who fell in love with the spot: the Duke Decazes, Philippe de Rothschild, Henri de Monbrison, among others...

With their support, Louis Gaume could accomplish his dream of a district stamped with his vision: Pilat-Plage. It emerged alongside the dune, beneath the pines and facing the sea, subject to the beneficial limitations of specifications which adopted a precocious sustainable development approach.

To promote and preserve this remarkable location, Louis Gaume came up with a comprehensive concept for the layout of the site. To make it better known, two hotels were opened in 1930: Haïtza and La Corniche, both outside Arcachon, but not too far from the town. Between the two a residential district developed, fitting in perfectly with the landscape.

Long distinguished with a star in the Michelin guide, La Corniche is the principal meeting point before hunting expeditions or an ascent of the dune behind it. Henry Troyat signed the guest book, as did all the well-known figures of the period. One even writes: "Thank you to Gaume for creating Paradise."

From generation to generation, this perfect balance between nature and culture has always been preserved by the Gaume family, which remains the guardian of this exemplary development. In 2010, it is joining forces with William Téchoueyres for him to give a new lease of life to La Corniche along with the dynamism required to keep the hotel's soul alive.

THE HIGHEST DUNE IN EUROPE

105 metres high, 2700 metres long, 500 metres wide, 60 million cubic metres of sand – the statistics of the highest dune in Europe are staggering.

This spectacular dimension is particularly striking when you consider that the dune was only 35 metres high in 1855.

It has constantly grown since the arrival of tourism in the basin, due to a natural phenomenon now explained by specialists. It seems its rise results from the destruction of an enormous sand bank which in the 18th century was located in front of the current coastline and the constant deposit of sand by the winds.







THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN THE WORLD



“ONE OF THE STRONGEST, MOST BEAUTIFUL, MOST POETIC, MOST SURREAL, AND MOST POWERFUL PLACES IN NATURE.” THIS IS HOW PHILIPPE STARCK SUMS UP IN A FEW WORDS THE STUNNING VIEW AFFORDED BY THE LA CO(O)RNICHE SITE.

The landscape, combining several extraordinary phenomena, could not leave anyone unmoved. It reveals the immense Atlantic and the entry to the Arcachon basin, closed in the distance by the point of Cap Ferret.

“Like all places where there are major tide patterns, it is an extremely diverse landscape,” continues the designer, who is a regular visitor to the area and loves the ocean. “It provides incredible walks, even onto the seabed, and in the primal soup which reveals itself, you sense how and why life began.”

The hotel, its rooms, its restaurant and its terrace are the gatehouse of these marine depths, a “natural theatre with gigantic dimensions, where the planet’s forces are in constant interaction.” There we can admire the variable geometry of the Banc d’Arguin, an immense sandy spit which emerges at certain times of the day and, reread in the language of reality the finest pages from Victor Hugo’s “The Man Who Laughs”, whose evocations of the moon, attraction and dangerous and beneficial currents inspired the design of the rugs which Philippe Starck designed for the hotel’s rooms.

This perpetual astonishment is continued in the hotel’s unique location “placed on a sort of magic, a sort of miracle, an impossibility which is the largest dune in Europe”. A mass of Surrealist sand, a “grand site national” over which La Co(o)rniche has a unique vantage point.

Along with this evocation of the sea and the sand, we should add that of the ubiquitous pines. The Pilat-Plage district which borders La Co(o)rniche has developed in perfect harmony with them. The clairvoyance and perseverance of the Gaume family, which managed its development, ensured that the architecture blended in completely with nature. This is how only a few minutes from Arcachon, La Co(o)rniche nestles into surroundings which are preserved and still vibrant with that atmosphere so sought-after by the elite of the last century.



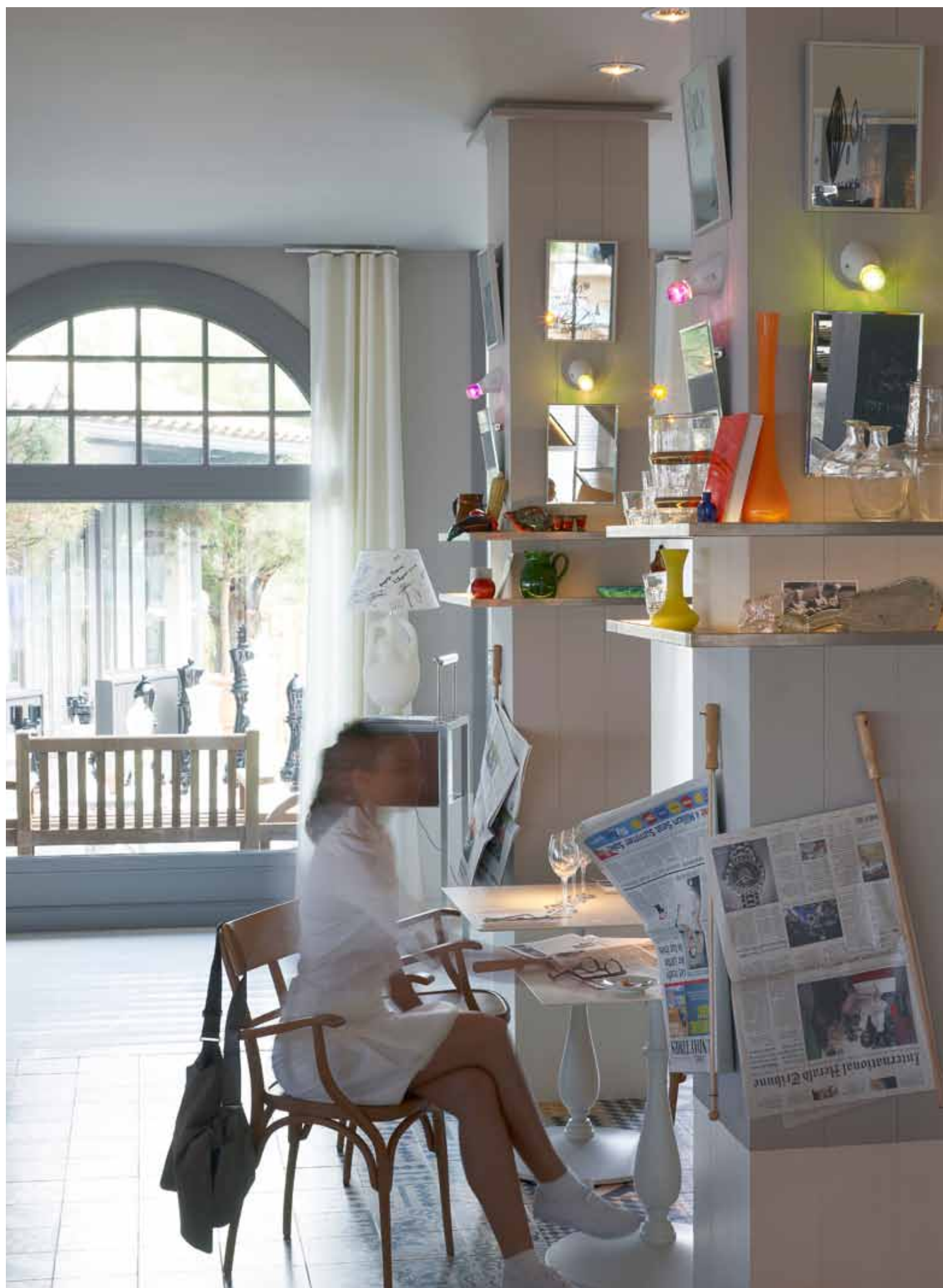


AN EXAMPLE OF PURE FRENCH QUALITY

At La Co(o)rniche, Philippe Starck does not simply celebrate the magic of a place, he also pays tribute to the people who live there. A native of Cap Ferret at heart, he praises the “pure French quality” of the area. “You have good seafood, very good pastries, a very good microclimate, you have the most beautiful oysters in the world! But above all great people, sparkling and full of humour.”

People like William Téchoueyres appealed to him and won his heart. Philippe Starck describes him as a “block of life, an immense burst of laughter”. Even the elegance of a burst of laughter. He in himself expresses the essence of the basin and that particular French quality, that balance, that instinct, that finesse, that tenderness, that poetry and vision which make the air vibrate, as can a scent.”

The refurbishment of La Co(o)rniche translates this particular affection and desire not to betray this precious soul. “It is an extremely important place for local people, a place of baptisms and weddings...there is an enormous enthusiasm and an enormous expectation from everyone. And everyone understood that we weren’t changing the place, that we were simply awaking the sleeping beauty.”



LA CO(O)RNICHE



PHILIPPE STARCK MOVES AWAY FROM HIS USUAL LUXURY CODES FOR LA CO(O)RNICHE. IN ITS REFURBISHMENT, HE APPLIES THE ALCHEMY OF A PLACE HE DESCRIBES AS BEING UNIQUE IN THE WORLD “THROUGH THE MEETING OF SCENERY AND NATURE BEYOND THE GRANDIOSE, AN OLD HOUSE WHICH IS THE VERY SYMBOL OF THE REGION AND A BLOCK OF LIFE EMBODIED IN WILLIAM TÉCHOUEYRES.”



AROMATIC PATH

First a large traditional Neo-Basque house appears, characteristic of the regional style introduced by Louis Gaume and popular all around the basin. An old tamarix seems to be the immemorial guardian. You get there via a flight of stone steps, leading up to a surprising patio made up of mismatched cement tiles woven together like a fantastical Persian rug. To the right, vegetable beds with aromatic herbs marked with little labels lead towards the restaurant and of course these are used by its chefs. Opposite, doors open into the hotel's reception area.

THE HOTEL



MEMORY OF TIME

The hotel's entrance leads into the lobby which has been preserved intact. Its dark wood, frescoes and period furniture tells us of the friendly ghosts of times past, gallants and gentlemen, the leading stars of cinema, painters, writers and a crowd of anonymous faces, all of whom shared the rare experience of time spent here.

INTELLIGENCE OF THE OBJECT

In contrast to this preserved authenticity, "randomly placed" sculptures are dotted about, sort of glass and steel display cases as if they contained little treasures. Philippe Starck calls them "intelligent objects, for intelligent people, who come to this intelligent place". Objects which give off an audible murmur, a tangible echo of the hotel's dreams and imaginings, like relics of a demographic paradise.

POETIC COLLAGES

The whole refurbishment is based around poetic ruggedness. The typical lift shaft reveals additional wonder under the light of a large Murano glass chandelier by French artist Aristide Najean. Collages, seemingly left by people who have passed through, stand out from the yellow ochre and black walls. Fragments of photos, postcards and drawings reminiscent of the collages of Max Ernst or Jacques Prévert. Small lessons in things with poetic accents snatched from a collective travel journal.

ROOMS WITH A VIEW

La Co(o)rniche's 11 bedrooms and suite each open onto the postcard panorama which inspired its name.

On the ground floor, Le Moulleau looks onto the pines and the sea, towards Arcachon. On the first floor they all open onto a terrace or a balcony, some facing Cap Ferret, others overlooking the Banc d'Arguin, others the dune or the coast road. In each of them that familiar feeling prevails which people like about holiday homes, along with the hotel's feeling of "exoticism". The beds are often placed in the middle of the room, backing onto the desk. An armchair in the corner is an invitation to read if not being used as a clothes rack. On the floor a rug repeats a few lines of "The Man Who Laughs". Without ostentation, the interior design evokes life's charm and pleasure.



DREAMS ON A SHELF

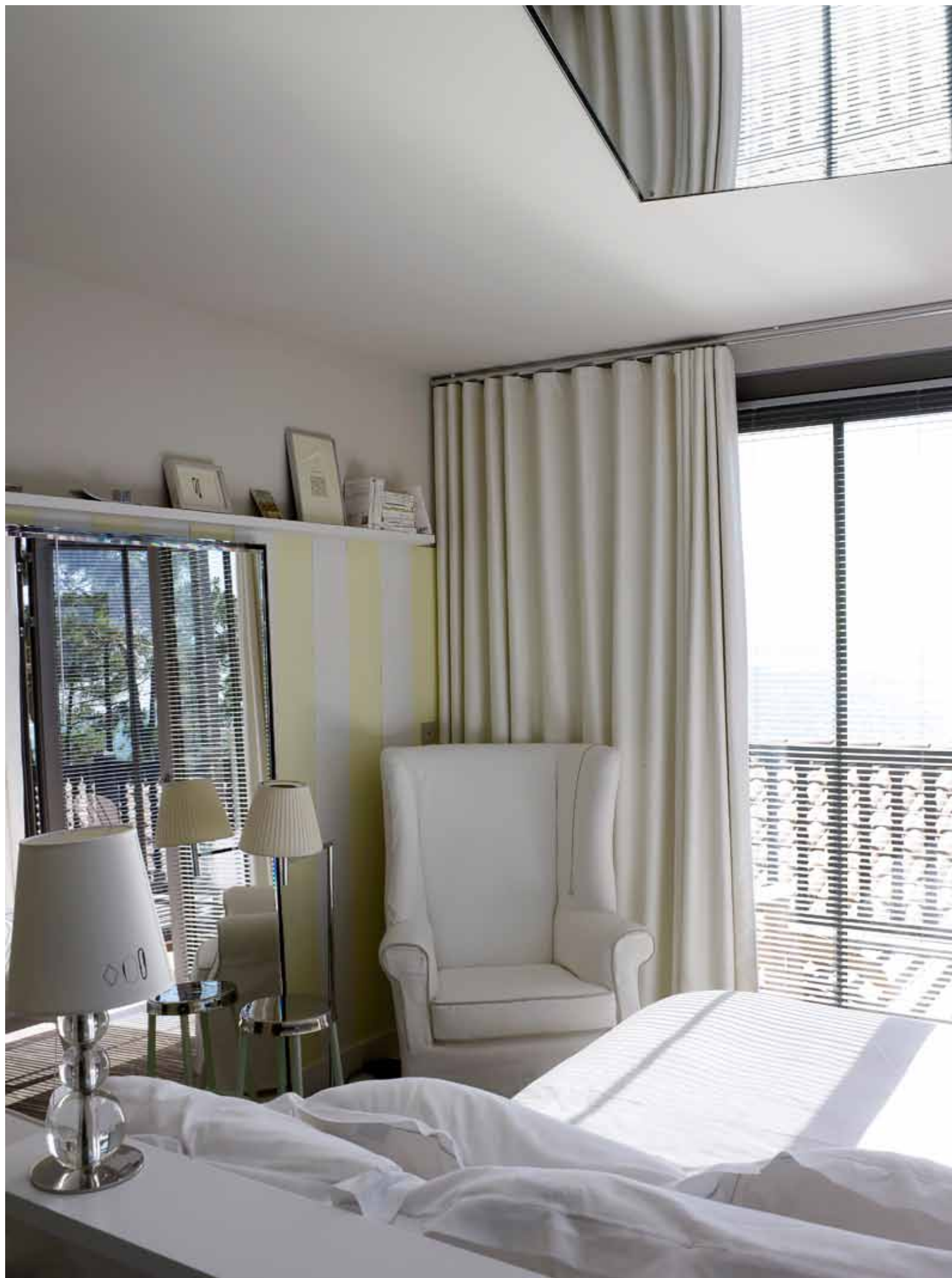
This simple design creates a great freshness, which extends to the large shelves. Shelves set off with “mental games” dreamt up by Philippe Starck. Solid aluminium sculptures, cast and polished, bear, as if in an allusion to Surrealism, the name of the object they represent. Five “totem” objects which all symbolize the Arcachon basin. The oyster, of course, and the “bac” (a flat-bottomed boat used by oyster fishermen), the fishing boat (whose shape is inspired by the gondolas brought back from Venice), the balloon glass integral to the aperitif ritual and finally the dune, the natural feature which guards the entry to the basin. Around them, sweets, three apples and a series of plates which breaks up the panorama offered from La Co(o)rniche, fans, coasters with drawings, old photos, recent works, and a lot of books; all clues placed there, like a testament to life and desires, the results of a fruitful outpouring directed towards the ocean.

PURE DAYLIGHT

The pale grey ceiling, the linen sheets, the crystal lamps, the boards on the walls, painted alternately white and pale lemon yellow or very soft pink depending on the rooms, capture or disperse the natural daylight. It enshrouds an entirely glazed bathroom.

The metal angles of the oyster sheds accentuate these glass surroundings, translucent when the curtains close on the intimacy of the body.







THE RESTAURANT AND THE TERRACE





OPEN KITCHEN

Towards the land and the pines, the hotel affirms its Basque nature, towards the ocean, the restaurant shows its maritime side, in the form of a large oyster hangar. Interspersed with narrow windows, covered in white pine planks, it is a dual where the serenity of the landscape and kitchen life compete.

Here, the kitchen is a scene of stainless steel where the team work heroically to the backdrop of the rotisserie. This fragrant machine which, between simplicity and invention, enhances the truth of the fine produce and the privilege of a generous “terroir” straddling land and sea.

INTIMATE — “EXTIMATE”

This place, which resembles a large hut, actually does contain several. “This defines various ways of being there,” emphasizes Philippe Starck, whether you come on your own, with friends or for the intimacy of a romantic dinner.

The favourite is perhaps the “captain’s room”, in the heart of the kitchen. A large and splendid white marble table sits there beneath crystal chandeliers. It is the centre of wedding breakfasts and celebrations.

Elsewhere are deep sofas which nest into one another. In summer they are covered in white or pale coloured slipcovers and in winter, they are dressed in leather, which will take on a patina with time, and cashmere plaid, for particularly cosy dinners. People also come here to lose themselves in a book or the depth of an horizon.

There is also a sort of small brasserie, a little more formal, and also large tables with benches as in a country inn. Finally there is a very large bar which continues towards the outside and creates the fun atmosphere of somewhere that combines friendliness and the desire for privacy, in summer as in winter. In winter the four fireplaces give off an enveloping heat and transform the atmosphere into a snug cocoon.



SUSPENDED DELIGHTS

The terrace — a full 360° of pleasure with a 180° field of vision — frames the landscape. Its grey pool, combining a swimming lane and a aquatic living area, draws the gaze down to the sea, which it blends into. And, straight down from the dune, a beach meanwhile seems to be sliding across the sand below.

There, there are deckchairs, tables and the pines. The restaurant menu is available as well as, from noon to 6pm, a swimming pool menu built around the simple pleasure of a plate of pasta, a hamburger, some oysters or a plate of sushi.

And, in the background, towards the dune, another oyster shed, dotted with alternate red and white panes of cathedral glass, houses a bar of casual luxury, an elegant space with crystal chandeliers and sofas in a small lounge.





THE TEAM



WILLIAM TÉCHOUEYRES, THE CAPTAIN

Philippe Starck describes him as a “block of life” and says he has “all the elegance of an enormous burst of laughter”. William Téhoueyres is an imposing presence both due to his former rugby player’s build and his open and complete generosity.

A former French XV international and first division player for Bègles, he juggled playing very high level sport with his career as a restaurateur which he continues today.

He cut his teeth as a 17-year-old in Cap Ferret, before opening his first bar in Bordeaux in 1994. Then came the takeover of Biscarosse Casino in 1996, followed by Mimizan Casino in 1998 and the founding of the Lacanau Casino in 2000. Being an entrepreneur is second nature to him. Having sold his casinos, he opened a new restaurant in Pessac, before finally returning to the Arcachon basin where he straightened up the Café de la Plage, a leading seafront establishment.

Taking over the reigns of La Corniche was an opportunity he couldn’t refuse. Hand-in-hand with the Gaume family, he has strived to make restore the hotel’s prestige while preserving its legendary hospitality.

The meeting with Philippe Starck fixed the definite outline of the project and the new prospects offered to La Co(o)rniche.

To bring the hotel to life, William Téhoueyres surrounded himself with loyal staff and enhanced his team with new figures embodying the spirit he wanted to bring alive at La Co(o)rniche.

He is now the very soul of the Hotel.

THREE CHEFS IN THE KITCHEN

It took no less than three chefs to fill the stage represented by La Co(o)rniche's kitchen.

Philippe Falières and Christophe Beaupuy have already been part of the team for several years. They are the pillars of the world created by William Téchoueyres, with whom they have worked for a long time.

Eric Prowalski, last to arrive but not least, is none other than the former second-in-command at the prestigious Taillevent, a two-star institution on Paris's Right Bank, who enhances the team with his high level of technical expertise.

Everyday the six hands of these three chefs put together a free menu inspired as closely as possible by the changing seasons. With the superb working tool they have created, equipped with cutting-edge equipment, alongside their crew they aim to produce traditional but inventive cuisine where the truth of the produce stands out.

All three are natives to the region, are completely familiar with the richness of its "terroir" and fully intend to share it. With the help of hand-picked local producers, they sum up the essence of the dishes offered in a simple equation: exceptional products, very tasty side dishes and top quality meats.

A return to pure pleasure, where simplicity always conceals a high degree of technical mastery and a series of perfectly executed actions.

At La Co(o)rniche, they agreed to take on the challenge of a open kitchen and play on the transparency of what is on the plate. Everything is home-made, from ketchup to ice-creams, to the rum-baba, via the foie gras, which is on sale in the hotel's shop.

The bread and spiced bread served at breakfast are the only products made externally, by a baker who uses only organic flour.

These roots in the "terroir" and almost in the landscape of La Co(o)rniche do not prohibit creativity but rather stimulate it. Neither do they rule out the exoticism of cuisine from elsewhere. The exceptional quality of the local fish also makes it possible to serve Japanese specialities such as sushi, maki and sashimi produced by a master of the genre, of Japanese origin and also an ex-chef at Taillevent.

They can be found both on the restaurant menu and the swimming pool menu offered seasonally and focussed on simpler preparations, such as hamburgers, pasta and salads, and echo the temptations offered by the tapas menu.

And as eating is always accompanied by drinking, the La Co(o)rniche's head sommelier has no fewer than 184 wines in his cellar, where the prestigious bottles sit side by side with affordable, painstakingly chosen finds.

IN THE DINING ROOM, AT THE BAR AND IN THE LOBBY

The dining room service is run by restaurant managers Sébastien Ruiz and Sandra Petit. In the image of the hotel, they ensure the benevolent simplicity of the welcome.

The bar is hosted by a local figure, François Chabrières, better known in the basin as Chacha, the very incarnation of conviviality.

Finally, in the hotel lobby, Olivia Mouche's smile is the best guaranty of a successful stay. Behind it lies the face of hospitality and discretion, ensuring the best service without fail.





BIOGRAPHY OF PHILIPPE STARCK



“I LIKE TO OPEN THE DOORS TO THE HUMAN MIND”

PHILIPPE STARCK

To discover an object or a place designed by Philippe Starck is to walk into a world of vivid imagination, fecund surprises and fantasy.

For more than 30 years, this unconventional creator, designer and architect has been present in our everyday, creating objects that are “good” before they are beautiful, and iconic destinations inviting members of his “cultural tribe” on a journey out of themselves and, above all, to a better place.

Philippe Starck’s early desire to create and dream came from his father, who was an aircraft engineer and engineer. Several years and several prototypes later, and Philippe Starck was commissioned to work for French President François Mitterrand. Also at this time he started creating furniture for leading Italian and international retailers.

When Philippe Starck designs a hotel or restaurant, he works more like a film director, creating scenarios which invite people into a higher mental, imaginative and creative world. His hotels have all become timeless icons and have brought a new dimension to the international landscape

Through his concept of “democratic design”, which is to increase the quality of objects and lower the price in order to give the best to as many people as possible, Starck appeared to be a pioneer at a time when design was focussed exclusively on an elite.

There is little that he has not set his hand to: from furniture for individuals to houses sold by mail order, from motorbikes to mega yachts, and even art direction for space projects... among other things.

Starck’s green credentials were evident way before it became popular to think about the future of the planet. Very early on, he created the Good Foods catalogue, a catalogue of non-products for non-consumers of the future moral market, set up a company producing organic food, and recently launched the revolutionary concept of “democratic ecology” by creating affordable mini personal wind turbines, which will be followed by solar boats and hydrogen vehicles...

This indefatigable and rebellious citizen of the world considers it his duty to share his ethical and subversive vision of a fairer world and continues to be tuned in to our dreams, desires and needs by making his work a political and civic act, but always with love, poetry and humour.

HOTEL	RATES	RESTAURANT/BAR	LA CO(O)RNICHE
12 rooms (with surface area of between 28m ² and 30m ²)	From €130 to €350 per night low season – from 10/10 to 21/03 (excl. weekends)	Inside dining room: around 200 covers	46 bld. Louis Gaume 33115 Pyla-sur-Mer t. +33 5 56 22 72 11 f. +33 5 56 22 70 21 contact@lacoorniche-pyla.com www.lacoorniche-pyla.com
1 Moulleau room (ground floor) Room for those with reduced mobility on the ground floor Separate shower/WC	From €190 to €450 per night mid season – from 22/03 to 24/06, from 13/09 to 09/10 and weekends from 10/10 to 21/03	Several atmospheres: bistro, lounge, fine dining, seminars	PRESS CONTACT: agence 14 septembre 2, Rue de la Lune – 75002 Paris T/F: +33(0)1 55 28 38 28/29 Thomas Frébourg – thomasfrebourg@14septembre.fr Emmanuelle Gillardo – emmanuellegillardo@14septembre.fr
3 Ferret rooms (1st floor) Rooms with balcony and a sea view Separate shower/WC	From €250 to €550 per night high season – from 25/06 to 12/09	Several wood burners in the inside dining room and two outside Open kitchen onto the dining room, with rotisserie and fireplace	
4 Pyla rooms/1 Corniche room (1st floor) Rooms with terrace, view of the Pyla Dune and the Arcachon Basin Separate shower/WC	Breakfast: €12 or €19/person	Outside terrace: around 300 covers, with vegetation (shady pine trees)	
2 Banc d'Arguin rooms (1st floor) Rooms with terrace, fully glazed, panoramic view Separate shower/WC	ACCESS By car From Bordeaux: follow signs for Arcachon via the A63 then join the A660 Bassin d'Arcachon/Biscarosse, take the N250 following signs for Pyla sur Mer. From Paris: take the A10 motorway, follow signs for Arcachon via the A660 then continue on the N250 following signs for Pyla sur Mer	Inside and outside bar Heated pool (for clients of the Hotel only) Wooden terrace with around 70 deckchairs Outside seminar room with fireplace with around 35 people	
1 Junior Suite (1st floor) Room with balcony and terrace, corner lounge Separate shower and bath/WC	By plane Bordeaux Mérignac airport: 65km	Impressive view over the Dune, the Banc d'Arguin and Cap Ferret	
Flat screen, iPod/iPhone station in all rooms	By train Arcachon SNCF station: 6km La Teste de Buch SNCF station: 11km Gujan Mestras SNCF station: 16km Par le train : Gare SNCF Arcachon : 6 km ; Gare SNCF La Teste de Buch : 11 km Gare SNCF Gujan Mestras : 16 km	SERVICES Massages on the terrace (summer only). Bicycles available	

HOTEL RESTAURANT

46 bld. Louis Gaume, 33115 Pyla-sur-Mer

t. +33 5 56 22 72 11 * f. +33 5 56 22 70 21

contact@lacoorniche-pyla.com * www.lacoorniche-pyla.com