

CELEBRATING REFINED LUXURY

ALTO



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A 21ST-CENTURY GRAND TOUR / MATTHEW WILLIAMSON, A LIFE IN DESIGN / DIVING IN FARAWAY KOMODO*

Their thriving London restaurants capture the grandiosity of the city's past, and now Corbin & King have turned hoteliers with the opening of The Beaumont in Mayfair, an art deco gem reborn with a few design twists... / By Ella Marshall

A new Beau

London isn't lacking in luxury hotels. Catalysed by the 2012 Olympic Games, the last three years have seen a steady stream of five-star openings, each ready to challenge the capital's grandes dames. As high-end newcomers including the Chiltern Firehouse and the South Bank's years-in-the-making Mondrian continue to lay down roots, another much-publicised property has entered the arena – Chris Corbin and Jeremy King's Beaumont.

Opened in Mayfair in October 2014, The Beaumont is the first hotel from two of London's most acclaimed restaurateurs, and harks back to London's pre-war glory days. In the same way that the duo's restaurants (including The Wolseley and The Delaunay) have aptly captured the spirit of Europe's 19th-century grand cafes, The Beaumont reflects the bespoke grand hotel tradition of yesteryear. Its art deco-inspired interiors directly reference the 1926 Wimperis & Simpson-designed Grade II-listed building in which it is based (it

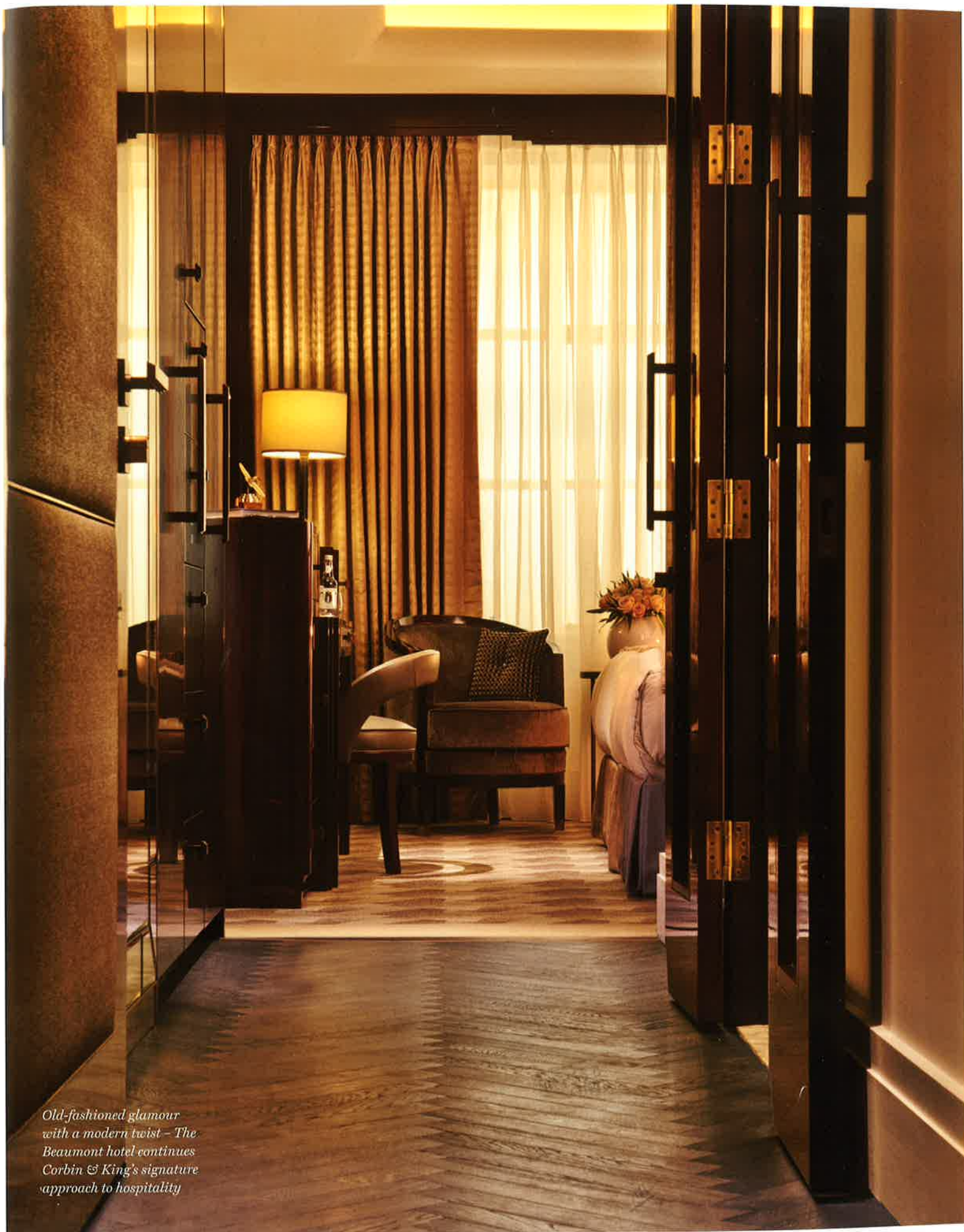
was originally built as a car garage), a design thread that's woven throughout the property. It is, at heart, a grand hotel, but it is simultaneously intimate in feel, mirroring the formula of metropolitan grandiosity that has proved successful at Corbin & King's other London venues.

The design, by London-based Richmond International, led by Fiona Thompson, channels a Continental art deco aesthetic, with added nods to the vibrant restaurants and jazz bars of the period in New York. As guests enter via the lobby's revolving glass door and on to the checked black granite and gold travertine floor, the idea is that they will be transported to that period, explains Thompson. "In order for this to be achieved, we visited many art deco buildings, and lots of research was carried out into the materials, patterns and textures of the era," she says.

Original art, posters and photographs have been sourced over the years by Corbin and King and hotel manager Paul Brackley,

and are showcased throughout, while Richmond worked with a number of independent, UK-based furniture makers to create bespoke pieces reminiscent of the era. The firm also collaborated with design and manufacturing company Manborne on the restoration of antique pieces, such as the sofas and chairs in the lobby. The theme continues in the hammam and spa, where a marble plunge pool, treatment rooms and a relaxation area are enveloped by curved walls, chrome and glass screens; the black-and-white marble mosaic flooring was inspired in part by the Turkish Bath at Pall Mall's Royal Automobile Club.

Given that Corbin and King – who previously owned Caprice Holdings – made their name on some of London's best-known restaurants, it's no surprise that The Beaumont's interconnecting restaurant and watering hole – The Colony Grill Room and American Bar – are its nucleus. The timber-panelled American Bar, filled with furniture in shades of dark chocolate and >



*Old-fashioned glamour
with a modern twist - The
Beaumont hotel continues
Corbin & King's signature
approach to hospitality*




blood red, is separated from The Colony Grill Room by a sheath of Thirties reeded glass, and emits that familiar sense of theatre and atmosphere central to all of the duo's venues. On the other side, the clubby, two-level Colony Grill Room, serving classic transatlantic dishes, has stained glass, leather banquettes and murals by American illustrator John Mattos, whose graphic style pays homage to the noir posters of the deco age.

The hype has understandably focused on the in-house dining, but the accommodation is equally ambitious. Featuring 73 rooms and suites, Thompson's touch in these areas follows the same refined aesthetic as the rest of the hotel. "The guest rooms are strongly referenced to the original period, affording a level of luxury and opulence typical of the Thirties," she explains. Of-the-period rosewoods, timber headboards and bronze mirroring abound, while mohair velvet chairs and bronze art deco door handles pepper each space. Spacious bathrooms are framed by chrome and glass lighting, coffered ceilings and monochrome mosaic flooring.

Unusually, the jewel in the crown is not the hotel's Presidential Suite (although

it is special, a visual manifestation of the great transatlantic liners of the Twenties and Thirties). Instead, the room garnering the most attention is Room, a suite-cum-sculpture by British artist Antony Gormley, described by the long-time friend of King as "[contrasting] a visible exterior of a body formed from large rectangular masses with an inner experience". From the outside, the three-storey sculpture appears as a giant pixellated figure, crouching atop the south side of the facade. From within, this architectural extension plays with proportions on an extreme level; with a footprint of 4 sq m but a height of 10m, the oak-clad suite has been equally described as "claustrophobic" and "cosy".

With its part-accommodation, part-art-piece signature suite, standout spa and reassuringly crowd-pleasing restaurant, The Beaumont is clearly hoping to take out the competition in one swift blow. Its owners call it "an evocation of the elegance and personalised hospitality of pre-war Mayfair". We call it a contender. 

Rooms start at £395 including The Beaumont breakfast and VAT
(www.thebeaumont.com)

ABOVE: A glamorous art-deco style bathroom
BELOW: Where else can you sleep in an Antony Gormley sculpture?

