



A Parisian Family Story

An Interview with
Véronique Beauvais-Valcke,
Director Général, Les Hôtels Baverez



Clockwise from upper left: living area and terrace of the Majestic Suite at the Majestic Villa Hôtel; the Raphael Paris; the Regina Paris

EDITORS' NOTE On June 30, 2010, Françoise Baverez, the third generation of the family that founded the prestigious Les Hôtels Baverez, announced the appointment of her daughter, Véronique Beauvais-Valcke, as CEO. Véronique, who has been involved with the company for over 10 years, has already left her mark by giving the Villa Hôtel Majestic a contemporary look based on a unique concept: a residence hotel, a hotel and a spa with a swimming pool all under one roof.



Véronique Beauvais-Valcke

COMPANY BRIEF When Léonard Taubert created the Hotel Regina, he took great pains to gather the period's greatest artists and cabinetmakers to give his life's work the glorious setting it deserved. The Hotel Majestic followed the Regina in 1907. Taubert continued his career with the 1925 opening of the Raphael, a hotel devoted to a VIP clientele where the number of guest rooms was kept low in order to provide the cozy, home-like atmosphere so dear to its founder. In 2010, the expanded, redesigned, updated Hotel Majestic reopened as the Villa Hotel Majestic to complete the hotel holdings of Les Hôtels Baverez (<http://baverez.fr/>). The granddaughter and great-granddaughter of Taubert's partner, Constant Baverez, now runs the family business. Françoise Baverez carried on the tradition her grandfather started and handed the reins over to her daughter, Véronique Valcke, CEO of the Group Les Hôtels Baverez. The saga of the Baverez family, which still owns these three jewels in the crown of Paris hotels, continues.

What makes each of the three properties so special?

My mother is retired but she's still involved every day, and we know all of our staff by name. It makes a difference because they are part of the family – they have fun together and they are usually quite happy to be here; and our door is always open if they have problems or troubles.

Are there certain consistencies within each property so it's clear they're part of the group or are they looked at independently?

It's unique to have a group spirit, because each hotel is different – they're each their own family. Now that the Regina is partially closed for renovation, we have some members of the staff that have gone to work at the Majestic and the Raphael. One of our valets told me, "I have much

to learn because the way of working there is very professional and very different from what I know."

I was very surprised because he is one of the best valets at the Regina. He's very professional but his style is quite different. I told him not to worry about it. You don't have to take on one style in another hotel – you have to be yourself; it's better for the guest.

How challenging is it to be successful in the food and beverage part of the business?

We have one primary restaurant at the Raphael. At lunch, it is a very popular place for Parisian businessmen. We also have six private meeting rooms, where we can serve lunch and dinner. We have a young and attractive chef who is well-known in France. This is very important, because our guests like to reserve and enjoy at least one dinner at the hotel during their stay.



How important is it to offer a spa at a luxury property?

At the Majestic, we have a real spa with an indoor swimming pool, two hammams, and infrared sauna and treatment rooms. Our "MAJClub" is also accessible to our disabled guests. For the summer of 2015, our goal is to have an indoor swimming pool at the Regina, but only for guests. It will be a nice place to go with your family.

Does the guest profile change a lot?

For the Raphael, it's 80 percent business, but during the summer we also have a lot of families and kids from the U.S., as well as from the Middle East. Normally though, we don't see a lot of kids.

The Majestic gets half business guests, and half families because of the swimming pool, the

big suites, the kitchen in the suites, and the kids' program – we have a playing room.

The Regina is 80 percent leisure. Now with renovations, we want to increase the family's program. We'll have family suites, which will not include kitchens but will have microwaves. During the summer, we will offer a kid's playroom. In 2015, we'll also have the swimming pool.

Is luxury today more about that personalized experience?

It has always been about that. Since the beginning, the most challenging thing for us has been to find what the guest wants. If we find out right away, the guest experience is perfect.

When it comes to hiring, is it more about the personalities or the hotel experience?

We try to recruit on both good education and culture, but this is a big challenge. We have to explain that if they want to be successful in this industry, they have to really enjoy helping our guests. If it feels like a burden for them, then they are not made for the luxury hotel business.

Is it tough to differentiate your properties in a city like Paris?

No, you can differentiate through decoration, feeling, and staff.

We all have the basic offerings, so the difference is what the guest is looking for. When we opened the Majestic just after the Raphael, all the guests went to the Majestic, because it is more modern. Some who tried it came back to the Raphael because of the feeling there, and some of them stayed at the Majestic because they enjoy its style.

Are there opportunities for the group to grow?

Three years ago, we put 26 million Euros into the Majestic. Today, we are putting between 15 and 17 million Euros into the Regina. We have closed two-thirds of the hotel, and we're doing the roof and the façade, and doubling the walls inside to make them soundproof. We're also doing the walls outside to make them temperature proof and to move up on the green level scale.

We're also upgrading the heating, AC, optic fiber, fire detection, and some bathrooms, as well as painting. All of the fabrics have to be redone; most of the curtains will be changed. But we keep on investing, so more than half is very new.

The Regina is an amazing place with rooms that have stunning views overlooking the Louvre, the Tuilleries Garden, and the Eiffel Tower. You are in the center of Paris, with all of the monuments and attractions within a walking distance. We are now impatient to achieve our third Five-Star rating. ●