



ANECDOTES AND HISTORICAL FACTS

ABOUT EVENT AND COMMON SPACES

Salon Rotary

Originally a reading room, the Rotary Room now regularly hosts the Rotary club. The original woodwork and stained glass give this room a peaceful and luxurious atmosphere. In the corridor leading to the Salon, the former Montreux Palace library, now reduced to a few books, allowed customers at the time to keep up with world news through compilations of newspaper clippings mainly in English and French. Still in the library, these books bear witness to the past and the hobbies of the time.

Salles des Congrès

Originally, guests dined in this room where they usually had their own table for the duration of their stay as well as their own server. During dinners, the hotel manager had to ensure that guests were placed at the table d'hôtes while respecting the hierarchy of the hotel's micro company.

All the windows in this room include the badges of the municipalities that are now part of the municipality of Montreux. The chandeliers are all original. In October 2010, the 13th Summit of La Francophonie was held in Montreux where we welcomed more than 30 presidents to the Congress Hall.

Salle des Fêtes

Initially a room where guests came to enjoy a musical, dancing show. The wall decorations are the work of the painter Haberer. The stained glass windows by Drevard & Wavres, the mouldings and sculptures by Uberti & Negri and Alfred Foretay as well as the original mirrors still reflect the Belle-époque style so appreciated at that time. The crystal chandelier weighs nearly a ton and a half and was lowered at the time thanks to an ingenious pulley system. At the back of the Salle des Fêtes on the stage at the time were 3 paintings used as sets for the shows that were highly appreciated by the guests. Of these paintings, only one remains from 1906 created by Otto Haberer and representing several buildings he has chosen throughout Europe so that guests feel at home and see an element that would remind them of a known place.

On July 20, 1936, the important treaty of the Dardanelles (peace pact between Greece, Turkey, England, France and Russia), better known as the Montreux Convention concerning the regime of the Strait, was signed at the Montreux Palace in the Salle des Fêtes. Five hundred diplomats invited by the Turkish Republic arrived at the Palace on 23 June 1936. The conference should have lasted a week but lasted more than a month. The pact was finally signed on July 20 at 10 p.m., and is recalled by a plaque in one of the salons.

In 1964, Peter Ustinov shot part of his film “Lady L”, with Sophia Loren, David Niven and many other celebrities in the Salle des Fêtes.

Salon Bridge

The Bridge lounge, as its name suggests, welcomed the hotel’s guests in a beautiful and bright space to play on bridge tables. There were about twenty tables there.

Salon Club

Near the north entrance was once the smoking room, an English and French billiard table. Adjacent to it is a small room, now used to store equipment, which at the time hosted some customers who were fond of illegal gambling. A back door via the Salon Rouge allowed them to escape the police if necessary.

Salon Musique

Once one of the hotel’s bars, this space elegantly decorated with mouldings and a period crystal chandelier revives the memories of an era where splendour perfectly blended with the luxurious life of its guests. This lounge, which later became a common space, also hosted the meetings of the writer Vladimir Nabokov with journalists and friends when he lived with his wife Vera at the Montreux Palace from 1961 to 1977.

Lobby Stairs

In the 1970s, the hotel decided to close the space of the French restaurant of the time and build an elevator for its guests. In 1997, the elevator was moved a few metres to make way for a majestic

staircase allowing guests to move from the renovated lobby and reception area to the hotel's common areas and restaurants via the Great Hall. This space is decorated with a series of 4 paintings from the beginning of the century illustrating the Grimm brothers' account motifs. The fifth illustrates a scene from Richard Strauss' Abendlieders "The Knight and the Rose".

Grand Hall

At the time, the large hall was dressed and furnished in the Regency or Renaissance style. The painter Chollet signed beautiful paintings representing the four seasons and forming a delicate decoration of the ceiling. The Grand Hall boasts a grand piano on which several artists played during the Montreux Jazz Festival, including Randy Crawford, and Prince who gave a small concert after the one played in the Stravinsky hall of the Montreux Music Convention Centre, late at night for a group of lucky people.

Le Petit Palais

It was in 1910 that Alexandre Emery imagined the construction of a new building in the gardens of the Montreux Palace between the cantonal road and the lake. At the time, not all of them practiced skiing, so it was important to diversify the tourist offer by creating other types of activities. The Petit Palais was built in 1911 under the name "Pavillon des Sports" (it became Petit Palais in 1994). It will then be decided to create in this sports pavilion a roller skate hall (now the Lemman AB hall), three bowling lanes and a flobert shooting range (now Lemman C), and a tea-room where the La Coupole hall is now located. On September 10, 1911, one day after the inauguration of the Sports Pavilion, the first Swiss rink hockey club was founded and all rink hockey matches were held at the Sports Palace until the 1980s. Later, from 1976 to 1994, the room initially planned for the tea-room was rented by Hazy Osterwald to house Hazyland, a famous German discotheque.

Lemman AB

In 2007, the Montreux Palace had the pleasure of welcoming Prince Albert of Monaco to the famous WWF "Panda Bal" held in the Salle du Léman. In January 2014, the Peace Conference on Syria was held at the Petit Palais in the Salle du Léman of the Fairmont Le Montreux Palace with more than 35 delegations and their foreign ministers such as John Kerry (USA) and Sergei Lawrow (Russia) with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and then Federal President Didier Burkhalter as host.

Lemman C

Originally, Lake Geneva C was a bowling alley and a flobert shooting range.

Some rooms such as the Salon Rouge or the Salon Vert are not listed because no particular events took place there.

ABOUT THE HOTEL AND ITS FAMOUS GUESTS

The Nabokov Suite

The famous Russian novelist Vladimir Nabokov, born in 1899, lived in Montreux-Palace from 1961 until his death in 1977. On the sixth floor, in what is called the Swan's Wing, an entire corridor was dedicated to the Nabokovs. Nabokov arrived here in 1961. He, the eternal exile, who, from Berlin to Paris, via Nice and a few American campuses, will have moved forty times during the first sixty years of his life, will no longer move. The great actor Peter Ustinov advised him to visit the Montreux Palace, in the middle of these vineyards which had already inspired some famous verses in Byron. At the Montreux Palace, Vladimir Nabokov will write an explosion of masterpieces - Pale Fire, Ada or Look, look at the harlequins! Following two consecutive accidents (falls), he died on July 2, 1977. He is buried on the heights of Clarens Cemetery, 2 kilometers from Montreux Palace.

In 1959, Vera and Vladimir Nabokov first stayed at the Montreux Palace during a visit by Nabokov's sister, Elena Sikorski, to Geneva. After the Russian Revolution, Vera and Vladimir Nabokov lived in exile in Germany, France and the United States before moving to Switzerland in 1961. After living in the United States for 20 years, they were looking for a new home in Europe near Milan where their son Dimitri lived. In 1961, the Nabokovs settled in the Montreux Palace, assuming that it was a temporary move. They lived in a suite of rooms on the sixth floor of the "Swan" with a small kitchen, and finally stayed 16 years until his death in 1977. That's almost the longest time we've ever lived in a palace.

Vladimir Nabokov spent his days in Montreux writing, playing chess with Vera and taking long walks in the mountains above Montreux to catch butterflies, his great passion. On July 2, 1977, Vladimir Nabokov died and was buried in Montreux cemetery. Her butterfly collection was then donated by Vera to the Museum of Zoology in Lausanne. Vera Nabokov remained at the Montreux Palace until her death on April 7, 1991. Dimitri Nabokov, who had the archives of his father's work, died on 23 February 2012 and is buried next to his parents in the Montreux cemetery.

In April 1999, the Montreux Palace celebrated Vladimir Nabokov's centenary with a large exhibition on his books, butterflies and an illustrated biography in our Great Hall. On April 23rd (Vladimir Nabokov's birthday), the inauguration of his monument took place in Montreux. A life-size statue created by Alexander and Philipp Rukavishnikov was presented to the Montreux Palace by the artists and the City of Moscow. Present at this event were Dimitri Nabokov, the artists, Mrs. Shvetsova, representing the Mayor of Moscow, Mr. Yusef Kiblitiski, Mr. Dimitri Aleshin and Mr. Gavriel Shapiro, President of Russian literature in Cornell, New York. The Nabokov monument is now located in the "Les Jardins du Palace" garden in front of the hotel's main entrance.

Freddie Mercury

Freddie Mercury resides at the Montreux Palace during the recording of her album “Jazz” then in 1982 for “Hot Space” and in 1985 for “It’s a Kind of Magic”. Suite 721 is dedicated to the artist in memory of his various stays and his work, which will forever mark the spirit of an entire generation. A museum is also dedicated to him within the Montreux casino.

Claude Nobs

Founder in 1967 of the now defunct Montreux Jazz Festival, Claude Nobs was the precursor of this legendary festival which counts hundreds of artists from different musical universes to have performed on the stages of the Montreux Music Convention Centre and on the quays of Montreux. Since then, the Fairmont Le Montreux Palace has had the pleasure of welcoming the majority of the festival’s artists. Suite 701 is dedicated to him in homage to the exceptional man and visionary that he was.

For five years (2000’s), in the spring, a duck would lay eggs on the terrace of Claude Nobs’ suite, giving birth to about ten small ducklings. A barrier prevents them from reaching the lake naturally and the Montreux Palace, every year, took care of transporting their protégés in a large cardboard box to the edge of the lake where they take their first bath. An express request is made to the customers of the suite: “Thank you for not disturbing the duck family who have chosen to live on the terrace”.

Quincy Jones

In addition to being one of the best artists of his generation, Quincy Jones has become the sponsor of the Montreux Jazz Festival. Since then, the Montreux Palace has welcomed him every year for two weeks during the Festival, which takes place every year at the beginning of July. Inaugurated in 1981, Suite 711 is dedicated to it and the following story refers to it.

Carlos Santana played at the Stravinsky during the Jazz Festival. After the concert, Quincy invited a few musician friends to his suite on the 7th floor of the 5-star hotel to end the evening. At 2 a.m. a Montreux resident will complain at the hotel reception because “The music made by some guests on one of the terraces of the Palace prevents him from sleeping”. He was at the Santana concert tonight and wishes he could sleep!

After a short while the janitor informs this person that the music actually comes from the terrace of Quincy Jones’ suite and that Santana is the one who plays “this noise”.

The answer was immediate: “Santana???” “then no problem it doesn’t bother me anymore...”

Michael Jackson

In 1977, Michael Jackson stayed for two weeks in the Tower Suite in January, while recording a new song at Mountain Studios in Montreux.

Other names of famous people who have stayed at the Fairmont Le Montreux Palace can be found on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairmont_Le_Montreux_Palace

Deep Purple

“SMOKE ON THE WATER”, the lyrics of this song tell the story of the recording of the Machine Head album. At the beginning of December 1971, Deep Purple moved to Montreux to record a new album and stayed partly at the Montreux Palace and Eden at the Lake. On December 4, 1971, during a concert by Frank Zappa and Mothers of Invention in the presence of Deep Purple in the “Le Sablier” room of the Montreux Casino, an idiot launched a rocket into the ceiling. The building ignites instantly. In front of a compact crowd, frozen by stupor and cold, looking at the flames coming out of the windows and roof. A few hours later, when the gigantic flames went out and the crowd dispersed, the Montreux Casino was reduced to ashes. After that, the group sat on the balcony of Eden at Lac Hôtel to watch the smoke slide down Lake Geneva and wrote a song about the incident. The world hit “Smoke on the Water” is the exact and true story of what happened that day.”

“Funky Claude” described in the lyrics of the song is none other than Claude Nobs. He is the founder of the Montreux Jazz Festival in Montreux in 1967 and is a very important figure in the musical world. As specified in the lyrics, he helped several spectators out of the Casino during the fire. One of his photos is on the cover of the original disc.

ABOUT THE HOTEL

The Swiss architect Eugene Jost built the Palace in a record time of 18 months and the hotel opened its doors on 19 March 1906.

In 1881, two famous Swiss pioneers from Montreux, Alexandre Emery and Ami Chessex, bought the Hotel du Cygne (built in 1837). In 1895, they founded the company Le Montreux Palace & Cygne.

During the First and Second World Wars, the Montreux Palace was used as a hospital to house wounded Allied soldiers.

Montreux Palace was part of the Leading Hotels of the World from 1928 to 2018. The Montreux Palace was one of the founders of the entity. Fairmont Le Montreux Palace is currently part of the Swiss Deluxe Hotel Association.

The Congress, Festival and Bridge rooms can be opened in a row thanks to the large period wood panelled glass doors that allow light to enter along their entire length.

Why are the corridors leading to the bedrooms so wide? During the Belle Époque, the ladies met in the corridors in their large and wide dresses. The large corridors allow them to move around elegantly while avoiding contact with other ladies and thus preserving their private space.