

# Experiencing the baccarat hotel: a crystal palace

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With over 250 years of experience catering to royalty, the Baccarat Hotel in New York City is the pinnacle of French craftsmanship and excellence that embodies Baccarat. The hotel offers its residents the royal experience of French quality and hospitality, simply by stepping inside. We can thank King Louis XV of France for such an experience, who issued a royal warrant to found a glassworks facility in the small French village of Baccarat in 1764. At first, the production consisted solely of glass window panes, mirrors, and stemware until 1816 when the first crystal oven was introduced to the facility. Producing crystal requires a specific “know-how”, as crystal is the purest and most transparent form of glass. The crystal is heated, twisted, and molded by expert glass-makers and can require up to 15 years to master such techniques. It didn’t take long though, for the first royal commission to roll in. In 1823, Louis XVIII commissioned a complete set of crystal glasses, initiating a tradition for the designated water glass, white wine glass, red wine glass, and champagne glass. By the end of the Imperial Era, Baccarat crystal had a coveted reputation worldwide stretching as far as Japan, Istanbul, Portugal.

It became the must-have item in royal houses for anything from chandeliers, tableware, to perfume bottles. Today, you’ll find Baccarat crystal in the homes of royalty, musicians, and celebrities spanning the globe, and of course, at the Élysée Palace, the official residence of the President of France. Baccarat remains a synonym of perfection, excellence in quality, French culture, French entertainment. Though they have expanded in size and depth, not much has changed in terms of their designs. The craftsmen, are not simply workers, they are award-winning masters of their crafts, using

fine-tuned production methods that haven't changed for decades. In 1948, Baccarat formed a new home in New York City. In the official "home-away-from-home", the American subsidiary continued to produce pieces with the same level of excellence and quality as the original Maison. Fast forward to 2005, Starwood Capital Group acquired the American subsidiary of Baccarat and eventually announced it would use the name for a luxury hotel chain "Baccarat Hotels and Resorts". Provided that New York is a second home to the brand, it was only natural to open its first hotel in New York City on the cusp of its 250th anniversary. CEO Daniela Riccardi says, "The hotel was a way to show that the spirit of a maison particuliere can be transferred to the heart of Manhattan without losing any of its elegance, glamour and modernity.' Standing out amongst a concrete jungle, the Baccarat Hotel glistens like a crystal oasis just off the bustling fifth avenue of New York City. In contrast to the sparkling, translucent, crystal panels, are the black, bold, entrances, like that of a castle drawbridge, inviting you inside to either; the hotel, restaurant, or residences. Layers upon layers of crystal windows light up fifth avenue, enticing the curious mind to explore, hinting to the opulence within. Boasting 50-stories, 114 rooms, a spa, signature restaurant, ballroom sized pool, and two bars, it will take more than one trip to absorb all the grandiose details. If you choose to enter the restaurant, the ambiance is set by a display of 2, 000 crystal baccarat glasses, placed on their side, with a moving light behind them.

A modern crystal objet d'art. Tall ceilings, marble floors, and dim lighting to highlight the legendary Baccarat logo stamped into the floor. Inside the restaurant, expect the best of interior design and cuisine with executive chef

Shea Gallante and restaurant director Charles Masson. Immediately upon entering the hotel, it's hard to miss the captivating signature Baccarat perfume, blending notes of jasmine, saffron, and a woodsy cedar base. The Grand Salon carries the traditional flare of French glamour, chic lavishness with plush seating, silk covered walls, and hovering Baccarat chandeliers. One of the signature design elements of a Baccarat Chandelier is a single red crystal placed amongst all the others. The red crystal has 14k gold in it and is inscribed with a B for Baccarat. This theme is carried throughout the design of the hotel with the focus on a clean white canvas, with occasional red accents. This mimics the iconic red crystal embedded in each of their chandeliers. For a treat, Le Bar is an eccentric getaway where businessmen, socialites, and locals can be found conversing over craft cocktails, served in Baccarat glassware, of course. The contrast of the checkered floor, eclectic art on the walls, and lush Baccarat chandeliers looming above gives a funky but sophisticated aura. For authentic Parisian savoir-faire, the 60-foot ceiling resembles the royal stables at Versailles and the walls are decked art curated by Frédéric Chambre of the Paris auction house Pias. Sit down to relax with a Cheese and Charcuterie plate paired with a glass of burgundy, or perhaps "The Grilled Hanger Steak" to wind down after a long day. Should you opt to spend upwards of \$800/night to reside in the Baccarat hotel, you will certainly not be disappointed. Scaling over the Manhattan skyline, the floor to ceiling windows allow light to reflect and bounce throughout the room. Tall, wooden bed frames dominate the space, featuring Mascioni jacquard linens, and a cashmere throw branded with the Baccarat logo.

For those who appreciate options, there is even a pillow menu which you can access using a one-touch device to communicate directly with housekeeping staff and the concierge. One of the best surprises, is a couple Baccarat crystal glasses in the bathroom for your own use, along with Francis Kurkdjian amenities, or La Mer skincare products. For longer stays, consider the purchasing one of the 60 residential units for sale. The \$60 million 7, 381-square-foot penthouse residence designed by Tony Ingrao is the culmination of; traditional decor meets modern appliances. Even if you don't end up buying a million dollar residence, a stay at the Baccarat Hotel is a must for any modern-day sophisticated businessman. You never know who you might run into while clinking your crystal in the Gran Salon. With so much to see, experience, feel, and taste, the Baccarat hotel is a swanky, luxurious, oasis from the hustle and bustle surrounding it. Take a chance to step in, relax, and appreciate the 250-year-old French style hospitality.