

THE ULTIMATE HOTEL

A Fantasy

by Roy Strickland and James Sanders

This is a hotel as you have always imagined hotels to be. It stands by the sea, at the confluence of great boulevards and canals, and overlooks mountains. Its guest list is long and proud and includes billionaires, great artists and raconteurs, and the tragic heroes of fiction. It has been designed by architects and poets and is at once historic and visionary. Its cuisine is unsurpassed—and stimulates desire.

A Spanish architect, famous for his unfinished cathedral, envisioned its dining room's celestial, star-studded ceiling. A German expressionist director gave its lobby a magical shape that would capture passers-by from the streets of a city about to be plunged into war. F. Scott Fitzgerald described it as being "on the pleasant shore of the French" (continued on page 131)

THE GUESTS (from left to right)

Cary Grant	Alfred Hitchcock
Ernest Hemingway	Luchino Visconti
Mick Jagger	Dorothy Parker
Jean Crawford	Marlene Dietrich
Twiggy	David Hockney
Greta Garbo	Andy Warhol
Muhammad Ali	Noël Coward

THE VIEWS (from left to right)

From the Gritti Palace, Venice
The Cresta Run, St. Moritz
Chrysler Building, New York City

THE FIXTURES

Chairs, tables, and chandeliers from the George V, Paris
Pillar from the Kurhaus, Baden-Baden
Bar from the Observation Lounge, RMS Queen Mary



JULIAN ALLEN

The Ultimate Hotel

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Riviera, about half way between Marseilles and the Italian border... a large, proud, rose-colored hotel. Deferential palms cool its flushed facade, and before it stretches a short dazzling beach." English ship designers curved its observation lounge to complement the red-tipped ocean liners that pass no more.

This hotel is at once democratic and exclusive. Olympians of humble birth are welcome; only one prince has been turned out for not paying his bill. In the evening you descend the stairs to the restaurant, a 300-foot expanse of Lalique—like the old *Normandie*, you think, but of course there is no roll. In the bar an American colonel holds the hand of a young girl—a contessa—whom he calls daughter. They drink "Capri Bianco... secco and really cold"; on a floor above, a room awaits with windows opening "onto the wind-beaten water of the Grand Canal." On the terrace Luchino Visconti speaks to Alfred Hitchcock, as a cat burglar, played by Cary Grant, glides over tile roofs. Skiers arrive, stamping their boots after the Cresta run, and Grace Kelly is just being seated in the casino as a burst of laughter is heard from the Rose Room, where Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, and George Kaufman are gathered, but not Alan Campbell, at whose expense some remark has been made. They grow still when Marlene Dietrich enters, trailing hatboxes and hounds, passing on to the rooms where Queen Victoria and the Empress Eugénie had tea. A dozen other guests play *chemin de fer* while a Japanese banker, a Greek shipping magnate, and an Arab king sit in a dark banquette rearranging the economic alignment of continents.

This hotel is a compendium of great hotels: from Monte Carlo, the Hôtel de Paris; from Venice, the Gritti Palace; from New York, the Plaza and the old Gotham; from London and Paris, Claridge's and the George V; from Cannes, the Carlton; from Acapulco, Las Brisas; and from St. Moritz, the Palace. It is a hotel as you have always wanted one to be. It is the ultimate hotel. □