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## Luxury Travel Views: Royal Champagne Hotel &amp; Spa, Épernay



The Royal Champagne is built into south-facing vineyards on the Montagne de Reims

In the final part of our luxury travel views series from the Autumn/Winter 2021 issue, LUX's Editor-in-Chief Darius Sanai checks into Champagne's newest and most luxurious hotel: the Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa in Épernay

If the devil is in the detail, the Royal

Champagne is a devil of a place. In the best possible way. What detail to pick on? The barista-style Italian espresso machine in the room? The pale-leather welcome box containing a bottle of boutique **Leclerc Briant** champagne in an ice bucket, two champagne glasses and some fruit slices? The delicate mesh on the light wood occasional table? So many.

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In truth, Champagne has been in need of this hotel forever. I have been visiting the region on business and pleasure for years, and the choice has been between a couple of old-school country luxe hotels with little in the way of contemporary pleasures, and an array of functional places wholly out of keeping with champagne (the drink) and its image of indulgence.

From the very start, it's plain that the Royal Champagne is something else: an indulgent hotel created with extreme love and style (and budget) by deep-pocketed owners wanting the best and hang the cost. (That is my impression, and I challenge them to prove me wrong.)



The pool overlooks the champagne vineyards of Épernay

You approach from Reims by driving up the Montagne de Reims, the forest-topped big hill with vineyards on both sides that demarcates the territory between Reims and Épernay, the two capitals of Champagne. Through the forest at the top of the hill, onto a lane through the vineyards, and the hotel entrance appears out of nowhere.

The Royal is built into the hillside, a contemporary building and a feat of engineering beside the historic building that gives it its name.

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Inside, everything is light, open. The welcome is professional and swift, and our room, like all of them, faced out over the **vineyards**, with a big balcony and vista down to Épernay and to the hills of the Côte des Blancs beyond. The balcony table shaped as a hollow-sided mini-barrel was particularly cute. Inside, everything was generous, light grey, cream, gold: the big bathroom has a sliding wooden screen to the bedroom so you can bathe with a view.

The temptation to hang out in the beautiful bedrooms is extreme but should be resisted. A couple of levels below, an indoor pool stretches the length of the main building of the hotel, all with picture windows out to the vista; there are beds on pedestals at either end to relax on, as well as more conventional loungers all around, and on an expansive terrace outside there are more chill-out spaces and an outdoor pool, warmed to cope with the north European weather, on the edge of the vines.



Then there's the aptly named Le Bellevue restaurant, with a vast terrace with a view, where you can choose from an array of specialist champagnes and – amazing for the region – choose from a light, modern, organic-based menu. Bulgur and coriander tabbouleh, baked monkfish with chard risotto, that sort of thing. And do yourself a favour and allow the sommelier to choose for you from one of the small-grower champagnes: you may never have heard of them, because they only sell locally and make in tiny amounts.

The Royal Champagne is so good that it could be a destination hotel and resort for someone not interested in drinking champagne. It manages the trick of being desirable for couples, friends or families without overwhelming with one. The service is brilliant without being corporate (it's not part of a group) and like another LUX favourite, the **Alpina Gstaad**, it redefines contemporary *hôtellerie*. It really is that good.

Book your stay: [royalchampagne.com](#)

This article was originally published in the Autumn 2021 issue.