



# Grace & charm

After a four-year remodelling, Monaco's Hôtel de Paris reveals its crowning glory: a suite dedicated to the late Princess Grace

The view takes in much of the principality from on high. There is the deep-water Hercule Harbour, lined with some of the world's most prestigious yachts and, beyond that, the 'Rock of Monaco' with the old town and the Prince's Palace. Farther beyond is the azure of the Mediterranean.

The challenge with such an exquisite view is working out exactly where to admire it from. The new top suite at Monaco's Hôtel de Paris ([hoteldeparismontecarlo.com](http://hoteldeparismontecarlo.com)), known as the Princess Grace Suite (PGS), is on two levels, both of them with floor-to-ceiling glass, a choice of sitting rooms and extensive balconies.

The total floor space is 900 square metres, larger than many free-standing two-storey houses. The name, of course, refers to the famously smart and beautiful Hollywood star Grace Kelly, who married Prince Rainier III of Monaco in a fairytale wedding in 1956.

If you enter the PGS from the hotel's seventh floor, you are greeted by a feature wall made up of backlit slices of agate. In the first sitting area the walls have been hand-painted over wire mesh to give a leather-like texture. In one of the bedrooms the walls are off-white and corrugated, so when the curtains are closed, the gathered cloth seems merely a continuation of the walls. While you are admiring that, there is the feeling you are sinking knee-deep into one of many luxurious rugs.

When we entered, the screens were showing a film made up of famous clips of Princess Grace, who died in 1982 (she is the mother of the current monarch, Albert II). The film was produced with the co-operation of the palace. The hotel's communications manager, Ayumi Miyamatsu, explained: "You can only see this film here. Some of the books belonged to her and there are also books to her liking, of artists she liked. There is a lot of her influence in the suite and you will also find art pieces that she has done herself."

She points to various collages on the two floors, signed 'GPK'.

The materials and surfaces found throughout the rooms include natural

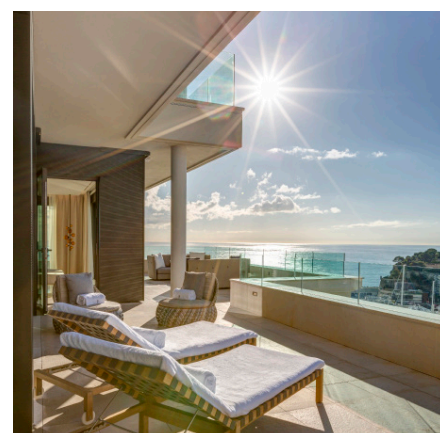
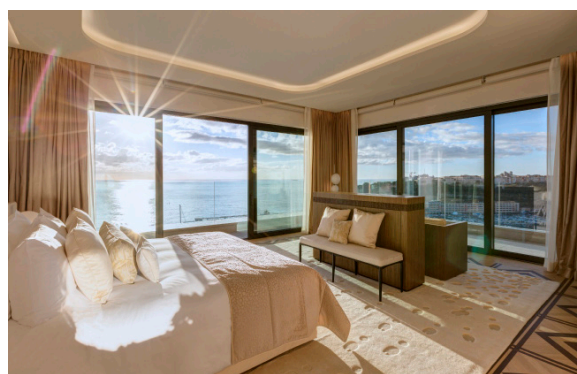
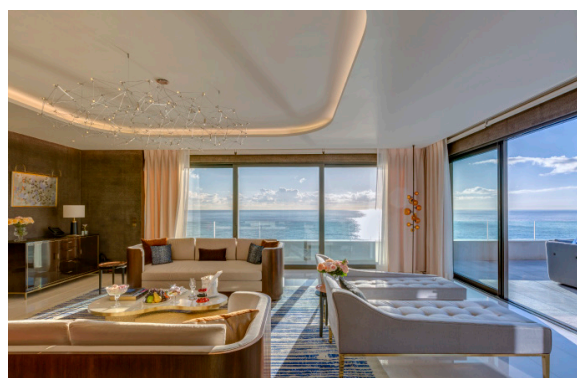


polished wood, parquetry, leather, cloths, silks, polished stones and even intricately woven straw. The colours are generally muted. Touchscreen tablets can be used to control lighting, curtains, temperature and entertainment.

The level seven office and bedroom look out into a private Japanese-style garden, another touch in keeping with the princess's tastes. The walk-in wardrobe has beautiful wooden finishes and an elaborate safe with burr walnut drawers and trays for jewellery, plus a selection of auto watch winders. A makeup table is fashioned from internally lit marble, and looks out to a rose garden on the balcony. The bathroom has a sauna, hammam and shower.

The top floor - accessed by an internal lift or a gently curving staircase - is quite different in style, but just as impressive. Photos and artworks depicting the princess include a 1956 oil portrait by French painter Guy Cambier. The large dining table has eight chairs, but more can be accommodated, and a small kitchen is there for staff or caterers. Outside on the timber deck is a spa, plus a 10-metre infinity pool and outdoor entertaining area.

Miyamatsu says the price is commensurate with the size, exclusivity and location. "We



are at €40,000 a night in the high season." That's just over \$63,000. A butler can be organised. Likewise a delivery and unpacking service is on hand to set you up on arrival, and to ease the pain of your leaving. - TONY DAVIS