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Behind The New Hotel Brand Disrupting French Hospitality



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Travel

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Kimberly Cohen, co-founder and artistic director of Maisons Pariente. ANDREAS D. KRUEGER

With a boutique collection of five-star family run hotels in Provence, Saint-Tropez and Meribel—with an exciting Paris opening in 2022—Maisons Pariente is quickly becoming a major force in French hospitality. Fashion and property entrepreneur Patrick Pariente, along with his two daughters, Leslie Kouhana and Kimberley Pariente, are the driving force behind the brand. Along with her father and sister, Kimberley has made it her mission to create hotels that offer attentive yet discreet service, the epitome of luxury.

How did you first get interested in the hospitality industry? And in your words, what makes French hospitality unique? I have always been passionate about travel, discovering new places, new hotels, and meeting new people.

My family was initially in the clothing industry; my father was the co-founder of the brand Naf Naf, and when he sold his company he invested in real estate. Hospitality was the logical move for us. What is most fascinating about this industry is all the work that goes on behind each project. This industry allowed us to combine all our skills, we used our understanding of design and fashion, our ability to anticipate customer needs, our passion for travel, our expertise in real estate, and of course our love of hosting.

France is well-known for its good taste, being a land of luxury, elegance, but also for mastering an ancient *savoir faire*. The uniqueness of French hospitality is combining great designs with delicious food and wine, high-end services and creating this unforgettable experience, highlighting “la joie de vivre.”

What was the gap you saw in the market that led you to found Maisons Pariente? Our consumption patterns have greatly evolved, and luxury hospitality hasn't been spared from this change. A couple of years ago the five-star hotel market was dominated by hotel chains that standardized their offers no matter where the hotel was. The approach was institutionalised.

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Customers now are seeking authenticity, real experiences and a true connection. We wanted to create a different kind of hotel, a luxury one with ultra-personalized approach: relaxed but with a high-level of services; designed like big family vacation home where our guests can feel at ease; a familial but never overly familiar atmosphere.

For those who may not be familiar, what is Maisons Pariente? Maisons Pariente is a family owned French luxury hotel collection that was created out of the desire to reevaluate the hotel experience. Maisons Pariente offers a different kind of hospitality, as if you were at home, but with attentive and discreet service, family values, generosity and an anticipation of customer needs.

Our collection has a clear positioning of exclusive five-star hotels, designed as private houses that guarantee privacy. Each address has its own unique identity.

As of today, the collection is comprised of three hotels. **Crillon Le Brave** is a hideaway in Provence, located at the top of a magnificent medieval village facing Mont Ventoux. The hotel is a haven where guests come to seek the quiet, charm and authenticity of Southern France. **Lou Pinet** is located in the most famous French village, Saint Tropez. The hotel style echoes the Saint-Tropez spirit of the '60s and '70s. **Le Coucou** is located in Meribel, directly on the slopes and in the heart of the three Valleys, one of the largest ski areas in Europe. The hotel has panoramic views across the stunning slopes and mixes traditional alpine style, with a contemporary design.

We are also working on our first urban hotel, Le Grand Mazarin, located in Paris in the heart of le Marais, opening in March 2022.



Kimberly Cohen · ANDREAS B. KOSJEGER

What are some of the innovations in technology that are helping you and your business through Covid-19?

Covid-19 forced us to reinvent ourselves and find solutions to replace many hotel services without depriving the client. For example, we introduced our Media Reader, allowing our guest to continue reading the news from a tablet, without using print journals. We stopped using regular cleaning products and prioritized the use of alternative cleaning methods, such as the steam cleaner.

How specifically do you expect the hotel industry to change after Covid-

19?Our vision of the world has changed. A year ago, no one could have imagined that the entire world could be brought to a halt, paralyzed by a virus. More than ever people need to reconnect with each other, with themselves and with nature. Travellers are in search for an experience, not just a hotel room ,and therefore hotels will need to adapt their offerings. People are becoming more mindful and looking to make smarter choices, particularly when it comes to travel. And again, hotels must adapt and become more socially responsible.

I've read that you've “made it your mission” to ensure hotels feel like a “home away from home”—how does that translate during a guest’s stay?

Maisons Pariente is all about personalization and ensuring we do not standardize. We like to work with renowned residential architects, rather than architects known in hospitality, as this ensures that our guest will feel at home away from home. We imagine each hotel as if they were our own private houses and style these with a mix of contemporary designs with vintage and historical pieces. Ambience and atmosphere are really important, and we create this through the tableware, signature aromas and the choice of bedroom amenities. The restaurant menus have been carefully designed so guests can choose something refreshing and light when in the South of France, and some more comforting items when staying up the mountains in Meribel. Everything guests see in the hotels has either been approved by me, my sister or my father. Everything has been personally tried and tested—including the mattresses and pillows —ensuring that we offer our guests the highest-quality experience.

What is the story behind the company name? We thought about the essence of what we wanted to convey: the concept of home. Pariente is my maiden name. When guests book a stay in one of our properties, they don't just book a stay at a hotel, but they allow us to host them in one of our homes.