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## 8/10 Location

It's hard to imagine that the trams running down this broad avenue in the centre of Nantes were previously boats, when the street was the River Erdre, a tributary of the Loire. Almost across the street, the 1970's 32-storey Tour de Bretagne is one of Nantes' less-successful modern creations, though happily hidden by trees so you don't see it all the time. The hotel is about 1400 metres (1500 yards) from the train station, past the Château des Ducs de Bretagne fortress and museum, and eight miles (12 km) from Nantes Atlantique Airport. It's a mile-and-a-half to the Victor Schœlcher footbridge leading to the Île de Nantes, where the former shipyards have been replaced by the law courts, a new creative district and Les Machines de l'île's fantastical marine roundabout and giant mechanical walking elephant.

## 10/10 Style & character

Nantes architects Barto-Barto designed the interior as well as exterior down to every last detail from bedroom lamps and tables to the text font used for the hotel's name, often working with local craftsmen for the made-to-measure furniture and fittings. The new owners insist that rather than creating a trendy new place, they wanted above all to preserve its soul and construction methods. Named after 18th-century naval officer and explorer, Jean-François de La Pérouse, the slightly diagonal profile recalls the ships of Nantes' maritime past, the 1990's building had to be the same height as its historic neighbours, yet with long, horizontal windows it's hard to tell how many floors there are, with a roof that flows on from the walls as part of the stone-faced façade.

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**7**<sub>/10</sub>

## Service & facilities

It's impressive how the staff, some of whom have been here for years, know the different districts and have visited the sights, so they can really advise you on where to go, for example the permanent public art installations of the annual summer Voyage à Nantes. Downstairs has a relaxed lounge atmosphere, with colourful chairs and selection of books and magazines.

**9**<sub>/10</sub>

## Rooms

The 46 bedrooms are all about materials – parquet and beech furniture, smooth white stucco walls – and minimalist calm, with comfortable queen-size beds and good lighting, and cult Rietveld Zig-Zag chairs to complement the desks, while the clever double-exit lift with just three or four rooms each side preserves the sense of intimacy. The original furniture from desks and bedside tables made by carpenters at the former Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyards to basins by a local glassmaker have been beautifully restored, while updating with extra plugs and Wi-Fi, a minibar and safe under the TV table, and new white mosaic in the bathroom dotted with the gold HL monogram. The architects also designed the fabric that echoes the pattern of the windows, originally used for bedspreads (since replaced by duvets) and now used for the curtains in most rooms, while the mansarded sixth and seventh floors still have the original system of clip-on blinds. Most rooms have walk-in showers, a few have baths, and some larger corner rooms can sleep three.

**7**<sub>/10</sub>

## Food & drink

A generous mainly organic breakfast is served in the bright, agreeable basement. As well as help-yourself buffet, including local curé nantais cheese, a friendly waitress brings tea and coffee, fresh juice, eggs and fruit salad to order. Part of the ground-floor lounge is now a bar, focusing on wine, rare cognacs and other spirits.

**8**<sub>/10</sub>

## Value for money

Double club rooms range from €73 (£63) for non-exchangeable, non-refundable reservations to €179 (£154) in the busiest periods. Breakfast (€14/£12) excluded. Free Wi-Fi.

### Access for guests with disabilities?

Yes.

### Family-friendly?

Kids can enjoy trying out the different chairs; some of the larger corner rooms are triples.