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## LUXURY HOMES

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### TOUR ODÉON

Monaco's Newest Gem is A  
Tycoon's Ultimate Hide-away





# FINE DESIGN AT THE AUGUSTINE HOTEL IN PRAGUE

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The moment the door swings open, guests are assured they are in for a treat. Beyond the threshold lies a luxurious living room, fashionably furnished with a cream leather sofa, glass-and-steel table, polished oak cabinets and assorted art deco lamps – plus a beautiful iron staircase, spiralling up and through the ceiling.

It is the Tower Suite of The Augustine, Prague's most luxurious hotel; and this is only the first floor. Climbing the steps up to next level reveals a spacious marble bathroom complete with vintage roll-top bath and large walk-in shower, while another ascent takes you to the regal bedroom. The exclusive 360-degree panorama across the

Czech capital is jaw-dropping – hilltop castle to one side, Charles Bridge to the other, a sea of red rooftops between – but it's the room's interior décor that really impresses. The decadently-dressed bed, the carefully-concealed wardrobe, the stylishly-upholstered armchair: the cherry on the top of a stunning suite.

The Augustine's particular dedication to design stretches far beyond its signature suite. The award-winning residence, which first opened in 2007, is set within a once-neglected quarter of the 13th century St. Thomas Monastery; and since its inception property developers have focused on creating a truly memorable design.

"We decided to create a luxury hotel that would not only be an outstanding work of art and become a piece of cultural heritage, but would provide the creature comforts that are essential for contemporary travel," explains Thomas Smit of Waldeck Capital, owner and operator of The Augustine. "The hotel is composed of seven different buildings, which all date to different eras. That makes it, by its very nature, totally original. The challenge was to integrate these structures, built from a range of materials, into one luxury property."

Many of the hotel's historic features were preserved and featured in the hotel design. Besides the beautiful cloistered terraces, wooden ceilings, stone arches and wine vaults found in rooms, the rest of the property abounds with stunning historic settings, including the subterranean Brewery Bar (situated in the stalagmite-laden cellar of the former monastery), and the lavish barrel-vaulted 1887 Bar – both of which serve divine St. Thomas dark beer – plus features varying from centuries-old courtyards to fresco-filled meeting rooms.

This impressive history is enhanced by 21st century additions, designed to complement the property and its surroundings. So room interiors are decorated with hints of heritage, such as fine linens and velvets in rich shades of reds and purples, as well as modern artworks and decorative objets d'art inspired by 1930s Czech cubism. Each of the 101 rooms in the hotel boasts its own unique décor, ensuring that no two are identical.

Other modern hotel amenities include the state-of-the-art spa (comprising a large gym, treatment rooms, hammam and steam room), the sophisticated Elegantes Restaurant (a contemporary glass structure serving the finest European cuisine, including traditional Czech dishes), and the impressive in-room mod-cons. Everything here, old and new, fits into the same unique design aesthetic.

It's little wonder that, since it opened, The Augustine has won more awards than any other luxury hotel in the world. Thomas Smit explains: "When we started this project, we had a single goal; to create a hotel that would be recognised as one of the ten most beautiful properties in the world."

*The Augustine is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World. The Tower Suite is available from 1,600 euros (\$2,100)*

