

Paris, 11 July 2024

Press release

## Prix Versailles 2024: The World's Most Beautiful Restaurants

In parallel to the World's Most Beautiful Hotels List 2024, the Prix Versailles is unveiling the World's Most Beautiful Restaurants List 2024: 16 newly opened or reopened restaurants that have left an extraordinary imprint.

They will all be competing for three 2024 World Titles – Prix Versailles, Interior and Exterior – whose laureates will be announced at UNESCO Headquarters by late November.

Jérôme Gouadain, Secretary General of the Prix Versailles, would like to congratulate these 16 restaurants that represent the best recent openings around the world:

“The World's Most Beautiful Restaurants are a tribute to architecture and its commonality with people. In this regard, conviviality is magnified not only by the culinary experience but also by the singularity of the setting.

The artistry of designers and restaurateurs alike resides in their ability to contribute to the coherence, airiness and harmony of the whole.

In their ongoing pursuit of the good and the beautiful, these fabulous dining venues are also the ones where nature and culture come together in an admirable pairing.”

After the World's Most Beautiful Museums List 2024, which was released on 13 June, the other World Selections – Emporiums, Airports, Campuses, Passenger Stations and Sports – will be announced in September.



## PRIX VERSAILLES

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### WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL RESTAURANTS LIST 2024

**Ariana's Persian Kitchen**

*Dubai, United Arab Emirates*

**Reine & La Rue**

*Melbourne, Australia*

**Tuju**

*São Paulo, Brazil*

**Cristal Room by Anne-Sophie Pic**

*Hong Kong, China*

**Tomacado**

*Hong Kong, China*

**Virador Beach Club**

*Papagayo Peninsula, Costa Rica*

**Blanc**

*Paris, France*

**Ladurée Champs-Élysées**

*Paris, France*

**Riviera Fuga**

*Paris, France*

**Beefbar**

*Milan, Italy*

**The Oreum**

*Goyang, Republic of Korea*

**Auyl**

*Almaty, Kazakhstan*

**Madi Hiya**

*North Malé Atoll, Maldives*

**Harudot**

*Chonburi, Thailand*

**Nusara**

*Bangkok, Thailand*

**Ilis**

*New York, United States*

*The Laureates are listed in the alphabetical order of the countries they represent (based on their two-letter ISO 3166 country codes).*



## **PRIX VERSAILLES**

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PRESENTATION OF THE LAUREATES

## Ariana's Persian Kitchen

*Dubai, United Arab Emirates*

In the deserts of Iran, Kashan is a sumptuous oasis that enjoyed a lengthy golden age thanks to the dexterity of its ceramicists. Chef Ariana Bundy hails from that city, where she renovated her 300-year-old house, before opening this new haven in Dubai. This history was the genuine source of inspiration for Ariana's Persian Kitchen.

The blazing colours – including the famous Kashan turquoise – and natural light play off the stained-glass windows and traditional screens, creating shimmering patterns on the white marble floor.

Herbs and flowers are distilled here, in keeping with the restaurant concept, since rose water, mint, cinnamon and orange blossom in particular are time-honoured components of Iran's pharmacopoeia.

Guests' senses open up to colourful, complex flavours: here, Ariana Bundy celebrates femininity in true splendour.



© Ariana's Persian Kitchen



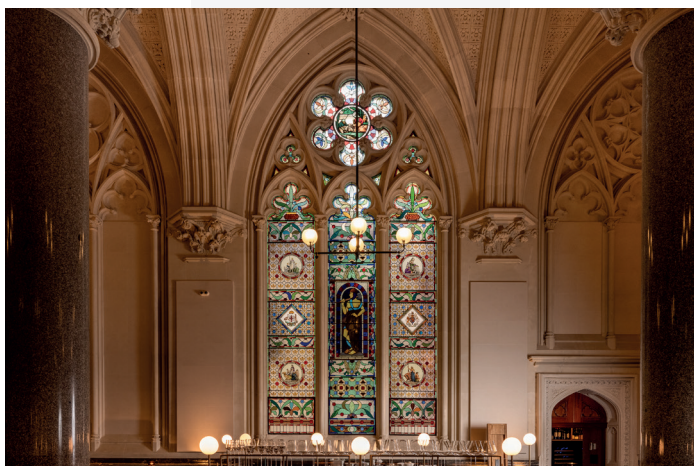
© Ariana's Persian Kitchen



© Ariana's Persian Kitchen

## Reine & La Rue

*Melbourne, Australia*



© Reine & La Rue

Since 1891, the Melbourne Stock Exchange had been an austere symbol of the city's financial and legal district, at the corner of Queen and Collins. That listed heritage building's Cathedral Room – so-called for its Gothic architecture, which once housed the trading floor – was abandoned for decades, up until the arrival of Reine & La Rue.

The firms Akin Atelier and Roger Beeston Architects have fit an elegant restaurant with 130 covers into this monumental space, with its own outdoor courtyard that seats 30 guests and a small, refined wine bar (La Rue) with eight stools. La Rue is a cosy space, in complete opposition to the grandeur of the dining room. The understated, contemporary design connects the symmetry of the columns with the details on the ceiling and the main aisle. All on a human scale, it provides a soothing counterpoint to the solemnity of the architectural details and the staggering height of the space.



© Reine & La Rue



© Reine & La Rue

# Tuju

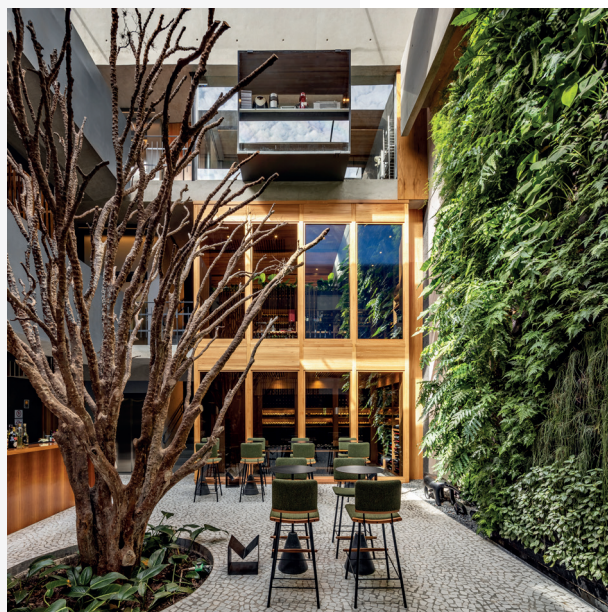
*São Paulo, Brazil*

In São Paulo, Chef Ivan Ralston defines his cuisine according to the weather and the seasons, with expressively named menus like Umidade, Chuva, Ventania and Seca. A bold roadmap was entrusted to Angelo Bucci's and Raul Pereira's architectural firms, to bring this exciting concept to life.

Now, in a quiet street in the city's Jardim Paulista district, an elegant vertical garden rises three storeys into the air and has become a luxuriant parallel universe, wholly dedicated to fine dining.

On the ground floor, a wine bar with glass walls measuring five metres tall and an interior patio provide a cool oasis before guests make their way to the dining room and open kitchen on the first floor.

While weather conditions may determine the contents of the tasting menu, the restaurant's furniture, wood and Brazilian design – with features such as a whalebone box found in Ilhabela, pitu shrimp traps used in Bahia and a bull skull brought back from Goiás – are there all year round to lend character to the spaces for wonderful nights out.



© Tuju



© Tuju



© Tuju

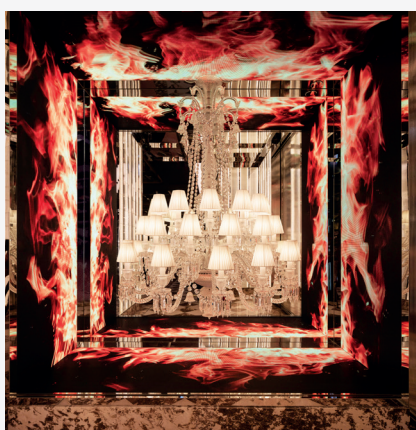
## Cristal Room by Anne-Sophie Pic

*Hong Kong, China*



© Cristal Room by Anne-Sophie Pic

In 1855, Baccarat – the manufacturer of fine crystal – participated in the first Paris Exposition, where it won the Grand Medal of Honour. 170 years later, in the cosmopolitan city of Hong Kong, Cristal Room by Anne-Sophie Pic – the most decorated Michelin-starred female chef in the world – represents a new explosion of French art, engineering and craftsmanship. For this restaurant, with its unbeatable view of Victoria Harbour, the Gilles & Boissier design office delivered a futuristic aesthetic born of the way that crystal plays with light. Upon entering, a fascinating chandelier comes to life with reflections of mirrors seemingly engulfed in flames thanks to an optical illusion. Fire, which is the element at the origin of all Baccarat creations, helps to produce a mysterious and ethereal atmosphere that makes the culinary spectacle truly captivating.



© Cristal Room by Anne-Sophie Pic



© Cristal Room by Anne-Sophie Pic

## Tomacado Hong Kong

*Hong Kong, China*



© Tomacado



© Tomacado

Beijing, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Hangzhou, Shanghai and more... Tomacado's concept revolves around "one city, one flower, one restaurant, one theme".

For this new edition designed by Liang Architecture, the Hong Kong orchid (a local plant) was the source of inspiration for a garden area that is simultaneously grandiose and intimate. There, guests are immersed in a stylised, natural environment.

The carefully arranged bouquets, majestic floral sculptures and larger-than-life paper blossoms in the dining room help contribute to the dreamlike ambiance. In fact, those not in the know would never guess that a restaurant is hidden away behind an artful and abundant florist's window display.

In this natural, fragrant and brazenly romantic atmosphere, the tables are laid out to suit each party's story.



© Tomacado



## Virador Beach Club

*Papagayo Peninsula, Costa Rica*

Unless they've been there before, visitors will undoubtedly think the Virador Beach Club, which literally sits on the sand, has gone unchanged forever. How would they know that the restaurant itself and the raised pool with its private terrace are very recent creations? The delicacy injected into this massive transformational expansion project was achieved thanks to the humility of Mexican architect Jorge Borja, who managed to meld the new space with its surroundings, giving it the appearance of having always been there. Still, the attentive eye can catch the subtle way that contemporary materials like local stone and wood enhance the property and underscore the leafy concept behind the structure. From an experiential point of view, with its Mexican and Costa Rican inspired architecture and its cuisine featuring Eastern Mediterranean flavours, the new Virador's appeal stems in part from its philosophy of immanence.



© Jorge Borja



© Jorge Borja



© Jorge Borja

# Blanc

*Paris, France*

The entrance on Rue de Longchamp would almost go unnoticed if it weren't for the noble materials on its façade, in perfect harmony with the hewn stone above them. The architect Kengo Kuma enjoys immortalising Japanese traditions, know-how and materials, which he reinterprets for the 21st century.

And this is precisely what he has done with Blanc and its Michelin-starred Chef Shinichi Sato. From the discreet threshold opening into a vestibule, a path created by the narrow, deep shape of the location gradually leads guests to a bar made of walnut, that sits plunged in semi-darkness.

And then, at last, a burst of light.

The main dining room, crowned by wooden vaulting and padded with baffles, lends itself well to engaging muted conversations and savouring the fine fare served in the latest tasting menu.

Mystery and transparency? A table set up in a glass bubble in the middle of the kitchen treats guests to a theatre-worthy experience.

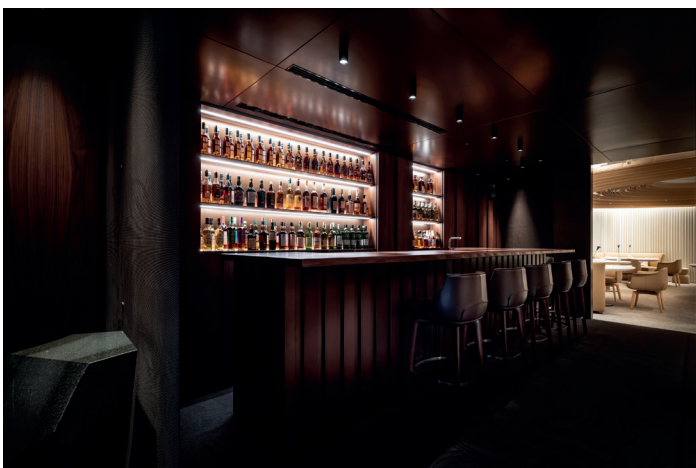
A hallway bedecked in bronze using the yamato-bari technique extends the stage-like atmosphere into the private dining areas and the tasting room.



© Yuji Ono



© Masahiko Takeda



© Masahiko Takeda

# Ladurée Champs-Élysées

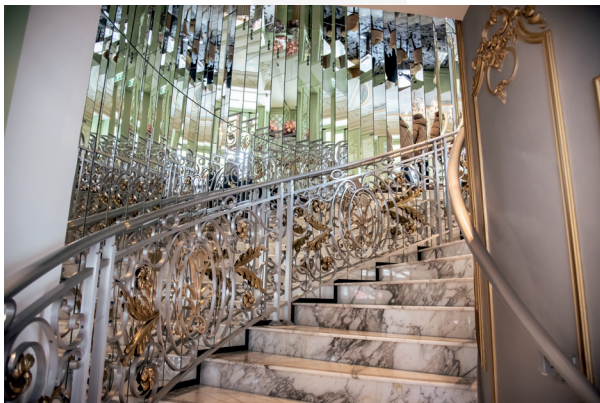
Paris, France



© Ladurée Champs-Élysées

At number 75 on the world's most beautiful avenue, Maison Ladurée, which celebrated its 160th anniversary in 2022, shows us its vision of a distinguished lifestyle. In other words, each renovation of this iconic Parisian institution is comparable to a museum's restoration of a masterpiece.

Under these conditions, the Malherbe Paris design studio could not thumb its nose at a history that it had been tasked with elevating. The desire to create a real flower garden in the heart of the City of Light came to fruition with a floral-inspired living composition from the imagination of Anne Vitchen. A profusion of flowers is like an uninterrupted link to the Impressionists, in a gesture connecting the plant world to the Art Nouveau of the Belle Époque. With its 180-seat restaurant, winter garden, music room, café area and dessert bar, Maison Ladurée – the ambassador of the Parisian macaron and inventor of the French-style tea room – is once again promoting a sensory notion of culture.



© Ladurée Champs-Élysées



© Ladurée Champs-Élysées

# Riviera Fuga

Paris, France

*Fuga* is Latin for “escape”... and what better way to escape than aboard a floating restaurant docked on the Seine?

JP Demeyer & Co brought a piece of the French Riviera to the City of Light – and along with it some glamorous nostalgia – by playing with marled fabrics sporting bright blue or yellow stripes, reminiscent of the 1960s and 1970s awnings found on the Promenade des Anglais esplanade in Nice.

On one deck, columns made of rope, varnished tables and boat chairs and loungers appeal to a yacht club spirit. The restaurant’s Italian-Japanese fusion cuisine also comes across in the immense rug whose burgundy, blue, mustard and dark green colours call to mind a large, stylised garden.

This singular and deliciously out-of-the-ordinary ambiance makes diners feel like they have been transported into a bright, sun-drenched postcard.



© Riviera Fuga



© Riviera Fuga



© Riviera Fuga

# Beefbar

*Milan, Italy*

Corso Venezia is the vibrant, historical heart of Milan. Of course it hosts plenty of boutiques, but above all it is home to impressive private mansions, gorgeous inner courtyards, sculpted façades and small parks and gardens where shoppers and residents alike can rest awhile.

And it is here, at 11 Corso Venezia, in what was once the architect and designer Mario Bellini's studio, that the architectural duo of Humbert & Poyet installed Beefbar Milan as a tribute to Italian cafés, inside a jewel of archiepiscopal architecture. Under the towering, vaulted ceiling of the nave, heritage and history are everywhere, giving the place a truly timeless feel. And still, this new creation by the Monaco-based firm – following Beefbar Paris and Beefbar Athens, amongst other projects – does justice to the chic, relaxed contemporary spirit of Italy today. In this way, it resonates with the creative city all around it, including Milan's perpetual love of opera, fashion, architecture and design.



© Beefbar



© Beefbar



© Beefbar

# The Oreum

*Goyang, Republic of Korea*

For city dwellers in the densely packed city of Seoul who have grown tired of the concrete jungle and the daily grind, the Space Dot agency has created the illusion of an outdoor hike at The Oreum.

Rising up from extensive beds of reeds on the ground floor, the central staircase – in a modern reinterpretation of a birch forest – leads to a space that looks like a mountainside cave, where water and mist shift and merge to soothe the senses.

Farther upstairs, a sea of clouds unfurls in immaculate white. In the adjoining space, some 100,000 cloudlike objects made of mother-of-pearl are kissed by the ambient green light.

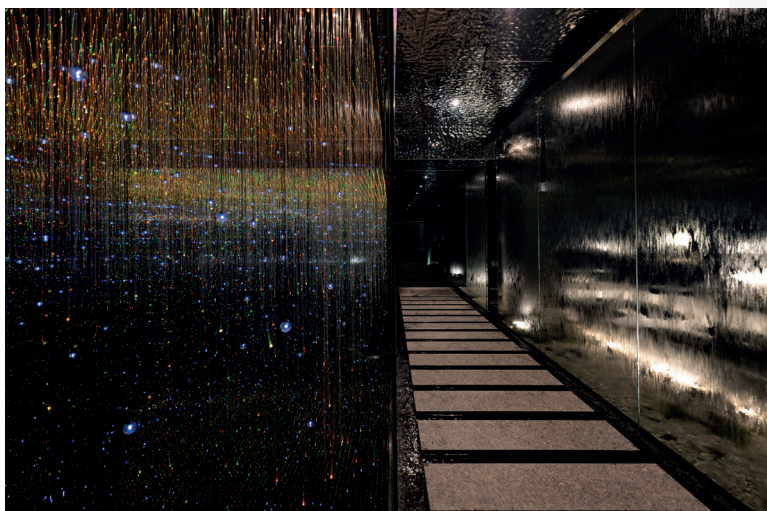
More than just a place to rest and eat, The Oreum makes visitors feel like they are walking on air as a prelude to their culinary adventure.



© Jisoo Park



© Jisoo Park



© Jisoo Park

# Auyl

*Almaty, Kazakhstan*



© Damir Otegen, Zarine Zoman, Yulo Khan

Auyl provides a striking synopsis of Kazakh's recent history and ancient culture, thanks to its location inside a monument inherited from Soviet modernism, a former residence where a dignitary of the socialist republic would receive foreign guests.

Even more unusually, the structure was originally built in Aktau and only later relocated to the Medeu mountain district on the outskirts of Almaty.

On behalf of Chef Ruslan Zakirov, the firms NAAW and Dunie Design have created breathtaking spaces around an open kitchen, with each one plunging visitors into a different immersion in the country's age-old traditions.

This stylised yurt feels almost sacred, as diners disappear like shadows in the soft lighting once they set foot inside.

Serving a modern interpretation of Central Asian cuisine, inspired by nomadic and pagan traditions, Auyl is the perfect change of scene.



© Damir Otegen, Zarine Zoman, Yulo Khan



© Damir Otegen, Zarine Zoman, Yulo Khan

# Madi Hiyaa

*North Malé Atoll, Maldives*

The Ancient Greeks believed that the known world was surrounded by a world-encircling river, the Oceanus, with, at the outer reaches, the place where the human realm became uncertain, where mythical creatures would rise to the surface.

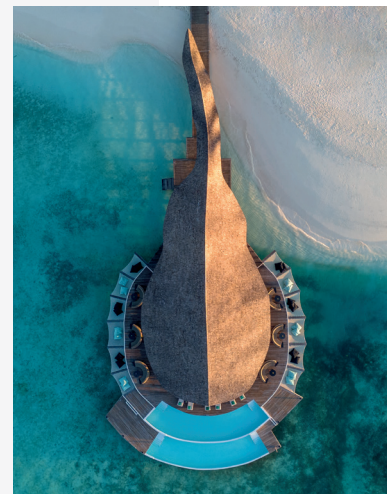
Madi Hiyaa, at the edge of the world in the Maldives, offers a complete relationship with the scenery and universal mythologies, with a stylised structure endowed with amazing, contextual biomimicry inspired by the slinky silhouette of the pink whiprays (*Pateobatis fai*) gliding around the surrounding lagoon.

Made of a series of paraboloid, hyperbolic columns and roof trusses, the bioclimatic bamboo frame is a reflection of the endoskeleton of those peaceful animals, with a looping, shingled tail running along the pier and connecting the building to the atoll to welcome visitors.

With this restaurant in symbiosis with its natural environment, Nomadic Resorts has truly captured the spirit of the place.



© Joe Chua Agdeppa



© Joe Chua Agdeppa



© Joe Chua Agdeppa



# Harudot

*Chonburi, Thailand*



© DOF Sky | Ground

Blending architecture, culture and nature is the pinnacle of any architect's expertise, a skill that is all the more impressive when it involves a dining area, which is undoubtedly one of the most prototyped kinds of spaces in the world. Idin Architects took this challenge and ran with it, transcending conventional constraints to create Harudot, a coffee shop in the seaside city of Chonburi.

The structure is the fruit of an amazing collaboration between the owner of the Nana Coffee Roasters chain and the owner of the plot of land on which it sits, who is a connoisseur of rare plants.

Coffee shops can be places where lonely hearts may go to lose themselves. The elegance here is undogmatically spiritual, and Harudot is one of the spots in the world where everyone instinctively lowers their voice.

Haru means "spring" in Japanese, while dot symbolises a starting point. The name itself is an invitation to dive into the sensual imaginary world of this unique location.



© DOF Sky | Ground



© DOF Sky | Ground

# Nusara

*Bangkok, Thailand*

Architects often explain their desire to “frame exterior views”, the idea being to present the scenery outside like a painting for the visitors or occupants to admire. At Nusara, the firm TasteSpace transformed each window into a widescreen film of Bangkok’s temples and other architectural wonders.

The paradox of this restaurant that focuses the eye on the outside world is that each of its indoor spaces – spread out over four storeys – is a sensory journey which celebrates Thai culture and craftsmanship. A “fabric library” in the reception area pay tribute to Chef Thitid Tassanakajohn’s seamstress grandmother.

Everywhere guests look, textiles float gracefully and gold leaf patterns gleam discreetly, in a nod to the artistic traditions of Buddhism, imbuing the place with a sense of sacred art and a gentle glow.

On each floor, customers are invited to explore a tapestry of flavours and design that celebrates the restaurant’s heritage and creativity.



© Jinnawat Borihankijanan



© Jinnawat Borihankijanan



© Jinnawat Borihankijanan

# Ilis

*New York, United States*

When the Danish chef Mads Refslund came up with the idea of converting an old 420 m<sup>2</sup> industrial hangar in Brooklyn into a restaurant, he reached out to the Californian architect Grant Blakeslee with the challenge of disrupting all the usual conventions.

Designing “a show kitchen, a working machine” as the conceptual and physical nucleus of Ilis was an extraordinary exploit, providing a glimpse into a performance where chefs and servers become workers and artists, all of them starring in a dance between fire and ice (since Ilis takes its name from the Danish words for those elements).

With no clear-cut distinction between back and front of house, conical sconces made of blackened brass and leather float from the high ceilings, illuminating each dining table like a spotlight for a meal surrounded by a scene of delightful, controlled chaos.



© ILIS



© ILIS



© ILIS



## PRIX VERSAILLES

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