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The Hotel On Place Vendome: Life, Death, And Betrayal At The Hotel Ritz In Paris



Synopsis

Set against the backdrop of the Nazi occupation of World War II, *The Hotel on Place Vendôme* is the captivating history of Paris's world-famous Hôtel Ritz—a breathtaking tale of glamour, opulence, and celebrity; dangerous liaisons, espionage, and resistance—from Tilar J. Mazzeo, the New York Times bestselling author of *The Widow Clicquot* and *The Secret of Chanel No. 5*. When France fell to the Germans in June 1940, the legendary Hôtel Ritz on the Place Vendôme—an icon of Paris frequented by film stars and celebrity writers, American heiresses and risqué flappers, playboys, and princesses—was the only luxury hotel of its kind allowed in the occupied city by order of Adolf Hitler. Tilar J. Mazzeo traces the history of this cultural landmark from its opening in fin de siècle Paris. At its center, *The Hotel on Place Vendôme* is an extraordinary chronicle of life at the Ritz during wartime, when the hotel was simultaneously headquarters to the highest-ranking German officers, such as Reichsmarshal Hermann Göring, and home to exclusive patrons, including Coco Chanel. Mazzeo takes us into the grand palace's suites, bars, dining rooms, and wine cellars, revealing a hotbed of illicit affairs and deadly intrigue, as well as stunning acts of defiance and treachery. Rich in detail, illustrated with black-and-white photos, *The Hotel on Place Vendôme* is a remarkable look at this extraordinary crucible where the future of post-war France—and all of post-war Europe—was transformed.

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Customer Reviews

This is the most poorly written and superficial "history" book that I have ever read. It is so full of factual errors that it is almost impossible to absorb them, and the author makes statements throughout the book which have no truth whatsoever. They are far too numerous to mention, but a few of them include her statement that the American Assimilated Colonel Fred Wardenburg was called away from a hotel in Washington late one evening in 1944 and was at the Ritz Hotel in Paris the following morning. If his aircraft had flown by the fastest possible route, stopping only at Gander or Goose Bay, and then at Shannon or Prestwick, he would not have arrived in Paris until the following night. This may seem trivial, but it is an example of the author's complete disinterest in facts. Another is her claim that Ernest Hemingway committed suicide at his home in Key West. He did not. It was at his home in Ketchum, Idaho. The author makes statements as though they were facts, when there is not a shred of truth to them. It is beyond pitiful, and a disgrace to literature. It is sad that anyone would publish such a book. The publisher's proof reader left an unnecessary "t" after the word "only" on page 16. Very sloppy this. I wish I had my money back.

Riveting stories centered around a famous Paris hotel around WWII. The pace is fast with facts bounced along as the stories unfold of famous liaisons and intrigues are laid out. Lots of recognizable names such as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Duke of Windsor, plus notable Nazis are mentioned. Highly recommend this book for history buffs.

I am up to page 33 of this book and already I have found two factual mistakes. 1. P 20 Serge Diaghilev is described as a "lithe ballet star", in fact he was a portly impresario. He is also described as frequenting Coco Chanel's table at the Ritz. She is described as living there since the early 1930s. Diaghilev died in 1929! 2. P 33 Sacha Guitry is described as a "young playwright" attending Parisian literary salons in 1897, which would make him 12 years old, young indeed. Such errors seriously put the book's credibility in question.

The Hotel on Place Vendôme provides a glimpse of the history of Paris through the lives of those who made it their home. I found insights into famous people as well as the infamous ones. The most

interesting time period for me was during the Second World War when the Nazis made it their headquarters. This was also the most disturbing. Celebrities such as Hemingway left before they arrived and returned afterward. People such as Coco Chanel stayed and found ways to survive and avoid retribution after the occupation. Many did not. What made the hotel attractive to those who could afford it was that it truly had luxury accommodations and a staff which took pride in serving regardless of the occupants personal behavior.

This story is amazing. Great way to learn some very interesting pieces of history and the people who made it. Makes me want to hang out at The Ritz. However, while many famous people and events crossed paths at the Ritz, it's an overwrought story line. The Ritz itself was part of Paris, not the entire heart and lungs of Paris. The writing was clear enough to get the point, but the details of events seemed a little murky. Maybe this is because the "data" to back up events doesn't exist and the furthest Mazzeo could go was what appeared on the pages. This makes the book feel a little shallow and read like it's missing the best parts. Given all that, I would still recommend reading it.

The "internal history" of a great French Hotel which had a rather interesting life Pre-WWII. When the Germans arrived in Paris all the other hotels had closed and boarded up, except this one, which kept its doors open, and became the headquarters for high ranking German officers. These people were treated not as the winning warriors, but as "hotel guests" with the hotel providing excellent service, excellent food and wine, and making the officers feel as though they were no longer involved with the war. Don't want to reveal more, but there are several story lines that make this book an interesting read.

This is an interesting book that spans the war years of World War II as well as post-war years up to 1969, but the main character is the Hotel Ritz and all the colorful characters who lived in or passed through its luxurious interiors. The famous people (Hemingway, Coco Chanel, Robert Capa, Goring, Fitzgerald, Marlene Dietrich, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor) who lived full-time in the hotel at different periods of its history or used it as their "watering hole" are well known, but the author gives us detailed accounts of their comings and goings, their loves and hates, their victories, defeats and tragedies which are lesser known and make for a lively and well researched book. The hotel is Swiss owned and run by the owners. Americans, Germans, and French military occupy the hotel's rooms and bars as well as actors, writers, actresses, and politicians. A history of the hotel and its occupants is, therefore, also a history of France and of the occupation and liberation of Paris in

particular. Each chapter describes a different character and chronicles his or her history which makes for a book that is never dull.

It is hard to believe a hotel could be at the center of so much of our history. The Ritz is the Kevin Bacon of hotels. From the roaring twenties to today, the Ritz remains a hub for the rich and famous (infamous).

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