

# LUXOR



From the seventeenth floor of the pyramid of the *Luxor* Hotel, the view on The Strip was surprising, especially in the evening: the bright lights of the city, sometimes dancing, sometimes flashing, the splashing neon signs, the headlights of the never stopping traffic and tourists' camera flashes on the walkways, leave the occasional visitor in awe in front of this spectacle.

But for people living in Las Vegas, this is a usual sight. This city was definitively built to impress more than one. If there is only one trip you can treat yourself within your lifetime, Las Vegas is definitely a destination of choice; from one street corner to another, you can go from ancient *Egypt* to the *Middle Ages*, from *New York* to *Venice* in just a few steps. In one word, a round-the-world trip for one ticket!

The *Luxor* rooms are inspired by *Egyptian* culture: the furniture looks wrapped in papyrus, the walls bas-relief seems to be sculpted by the same face, all shoulders and long eye artists, who used to paint on the *Nile* shores and a damp atmosphere resides in the building reminding of Cleopatra's time. The bedding, made of *Egyptian* cotton, covers a king-size bed. The comfortable carpet feels amazing under the visitor's tired feet. And to preserve the hotel architecture, inclined windows offer a gorgeous view of the *Sierras*.

Those visitors are just passing through. Most of them stay for a few days and make unforgettable memories of the *Luxor*. They are grateful for its comfort and, more than anything, its confidentiality.

A jacket slumped on a chair, a pair of pumps scattered on both sides of a couch, a tie wrapped up around a bedside lamp, a shawl lying on the carpet, a sock in the North and one in the South, pantyhose crumpled, an open blouse on the bed, a pair of pants on the back of another chair, panties, almost a string, cross the bathroom floor; this is how visitors usually leave the rooms.

It's a good thing the hotel room walls are soundproof because the noise from the shower would outrage the most prude! Through the

noises of water flowing down the shower head, you can easily hear the heavy breaths and moaning of mutually shared pleasures.

A hand, covered in soap, caresses a strong tan back. A neatly manicured hand sensually holds a man's leg as two arms deviously hug a sweaty torso. A fine soap dampens a chest generously lifted by desire. Here is an ending to a sensual moment!

As a brush puts some order back in messy hair, a live theater ticket is slipped into an embroidered pair of black panties suitable for a show of *La Traviata* opera by *Verdi* at the *Artemus W. Ham Theatre* on the local campus grounds.

A man's hand shoves the side of a silk shirt in his pants while a woman's hand sneaks in a bundle of cash in his boxer. With a delicate stroke, delicate fingers close up pearled cufflinks.

The corridor leading up to the rooms isn't really a corridor: on one side, the rooms' side, a straight wall covered in sandstone holds doors engraved with papyrus. But on the other side, a balustrade opens up to an almost staggering space: the seventeenth floor is halfway between the casino floor and the extremity of the pyramid. This large empty space gives a first-look perspective on the grandeur of the hotel.

From the balustrade, a visitor can observe, like a vulture on a cornice, an actual size representation of an old Egyptian district, *Louxour*. Even during the casino's peak hours, no noise filters up to the upper floors. The thick carpet that covers the corridors is mainly to thank for this silence. Towards the top of the pyramid, we can see four inclined columns that are, in fact, elevator ducts, named inclinators. Even if the decking of the device looks straight, those inclinators are meant to go up diagonally instead of vertically.

Whoever looks at the *Luxor* at night cannot miss the giant bright headlight that stands on its roof, which one poet once wrote about: "The eye of the *Luxor* talks to the stars." The fourth-biggest pyramid in the world is, in fact, the only one with people inside; it's the reason why it exists. When the inclinators travel along those angles, a bright path of light marks their journey.

In a hotel room, in front of a mirror with a beveled edge curbed with palm trees, a middle-aged woman is fixing her makeup. Loretta was looking at her eye wrinkles: she had received several Botox

treatments that helped her skin hide a few extra years. A fold at the corner of her lips had formed when her husband, a renowned physicist, passed away. But the support and happiness of her "little woman," as she would nickname her granddaughter, gave her back a zest for living.

And then—it was Las Vegas.

Invited to perform during a ceremony for her late husband, she discovered there is more than slot machines, buffets, and the glitz here: Christian made her feel like she hadn't felt in a while. His youth and enthusiasm revived her crazy and carefree years.

She met Christian at the *Seahorse* bar inside *Ceasar's Palace*. She was amazed by the circular aquarium lined up with the *Colosseum* scene where *Celine Dion* was performing. In the glass tube were swimming seahorses, among many other tropical fishes. On the other side, a classy man in his thirties with a flawless look was sipping on a cocktail. But his deep blue eyes were not on his glass but rather on this intriguing woman, entertained by the seahorses' moves.

"It's the filtration stream that makes them move like this!" He whispers to her with a sexy smile.

After one flirt and two cocktails, they found themselves in the *Luxor* hotel room: the same one they would rent every time after that.

As Christian is leaving the room, he puts on his sunglasses. He doesn't want to be recognized even if they are practically useless in the dark hall. Around the corner, a cleaning cart is rolling down the hall. A woman in her forties, her back curved by the fatigue accumulated through the years, is putting in a cotton bag used towels and sheets, which sometimes make her feel nauseous.

As Christian approaches her, he notices she is Hispanic and she is wearing an employee badge with her name on it: Maria. Christian takes a bill from his tip and sneaks it between the maid's bra straps. He then walks away, whistling, towards the nearest inclinator.