



## A Majestic Experience

Two decades ago I ran a big conference for my worldwide partnership. Three hundred of us took over one of the best hotels in Cannes, the 5\* Majestic. Over three days we added an obscene amount of money to the hotel's coffers in what can only be described as undiluted hedonism.

In September that same year, my wife Annie and I booked a long week-end there. Seaview rooms were eye-wateringly expensive so I booked what was coyly called a 'cityview' room, which was still €300 a night. We flew to Nice and arrived in a heatwave. On a previous visit we had been badly fleeced for the 33 kilometre taxi trip to Cannes so decided to take the bus. With malfunctioning aircon on the shuttle we had an unpleasantly sweaty journey.

The bus station in Cannes is a kilometre from the Majestic along the Croisette. Continuing with our parsimonious ethos, we decided to walk, lugging our suitcases behind us. We were steaming. We trudged into the opulent foyer of the Majestic looking as though we had been caught in a monsoon. In our saturated state we did not compare favourably with the elegantly clad and coiffured guests around us as we carved our way to the reception desk.

The chic receptionist said she would have to bring the manager out to see us. The thought crossed my mind that we had so comprehensively failed the sartorial style test that we were about to be summarily ejected from this prestigious establishment. But the manager was charm personified and said he would escort us to our room. As the lift ascended to the top floor Annie looked quizzically at me. I smiled at her with the burgeoning certainty that I had twigged what was afoot.

The manager walked us along the top corridor and turned towards a room on the left with key in hand. I then knew we were in for an exceedingly pleasant surprise. Had he turned towards a room on the right we would have entered a 'cityview' room. Instead, he ushered us into the presidential suite which we later discovered cost €2000 a night. He said would we please accept an

upgrade to the best room in the hotel...and do enjoy the complimentary magnum of champagne and fruit basket.

We sat on our colossal balcony, quaffed the whole magnum of Bollinger and ate some exotic fruit. As this was the only food we had consumed since an early breakfast we got totally slaughtered and at around five o'clock had to stagger out to a nearby McDonald's to line our stomachs with giant portions of french fries.

We spent the next few days in a luxurious cocoon. Our unique taste of how the super-rich live. At check-out we were charged for one bottle of Evian.

How did this happen? Unbeknownst to me my conference administrator had alerted the hotel manager that I would be visiting incognito and may be thinking of organising another million dollar jamboree at the Majestic....

500 Words