



Clockwise from left: There's a well-stocked honor bar in the guest-only living room; the hotel's grand entrance features the City Hall Annex's historic staircase; original artworks from locally based artists, referencing themes of mortality and rebirth, hang in the decadent guest rooms.



there is a house in... *New Orleans*

Luxury guesthouse Maison de la Luz is an aesthetic feast for discerning travelers.

By Mimi Faucett Trahan

Whenever I visit a hotel in New Orleans, even a newcomer, I feel like I've been there before. Maybe it's the 18th century architecture, the faint sound of a jazz instrument or a cocktail shaking, the familiar drawl of its always-happy locals.

So you can imagine my surprise (and delight) when I checked in at Maison de la Luz and it felt completely novel. The brand-new 67-room guesthouse is situated inside the former City Hall Annex, in the buzzing Central Business District right off Lafayette Square. Though it is a project by Atelier Ace (the city's Ace is right across Lafayette Street), the brand's ubiquitous hipster version of luxury (see: minimalism) is nowhere to be found. This is due in large part to design visionary Pamela Shamshiri (studioshamshiri.com), who spearheaded the project. "We dreamed up a woman of the world who has traveled and immersed herself in numerous

cultures, collecting pieces that help define her vision along the way," says Shamshiri of her muse. And it shows: Egyptian art and vintage masks fill the guest-only living room, where you'll also find mushroom lamps by Matthias Vriens-McGrath, a custom ceramic fireplace sculpture by Jackie Rines, and layers and layers of custom rugs and bold colors. The rooms are cozy and residential-feeling, with towering ceilings, local artwork, handembroidered linens and custom furniture pieces. In the morning, we were greeted with a basket of local Congregation coffee and a few mugs—their version of room service—and downstairs, locally made breakfast pastries were waiting. (This is also where wine and cheese awaits at happy hour.) Right next door, standout Bar Marilou beckons. Guests enter speakeasy-style through a secret 12-person lounge. Inside, the ceiling is persimmon; the shelves that line the walls are blood-red; there's wall-to-wall tiger-lightning bolt carpeting; and boozy, inventive cocktails are on offer till the wee hours—it is New Orleans, after all. *Rooms from \$389, maisondelaluz.com*

