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Go Wilde in Paris

O SCAR WILDE WAS DYING—AND BROKE. THE declining writer was taken in by the proprietor of the Hôtel d'Alsace in Paris' Saint-Germain-des-Prés neighborhood, who tried to make him comfortable, plied him with Courvoisier and tolerated his snowballing bill. But Wilde still didn't spare his room's decor; he wryly observed that "my wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death. One or the other of us has to go." The wallpaper won that battle—Wilde died a month later of meningitis, on Nov. 30, 1900—but it didn't win the war. After more than a century, a name change and a sea of famous faces, from Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges to Katharine Hepburn and Johnny Depp, the four-star boutique L'Hotel is at the top of its game. Thanks to design guru Jacques Garcia's recent lavish upgrades, a

leopard-print carpet now snakes through the six-story spiral stairwell, pictured. Coupled with chef Philippe Belissent's menu, the intimate Belle Epoque restaurant and bar, all done up in jewel-toned velvet and silk, are now the perfect setting for a seduction. Every room is lush, but each room is unique: the tangerine and cream No. 36 features a mirrored Art Deco bed and dressing table once belonging to the French singer Mistinguett. The mahogany-laden No. 16 witnessed Wilde's demise and now displays a green-and-gold wallpaper duplicate of an engraving in his London dining room. At \$336 to \$974 a night, he wouldn't have been able to afford it, but Wilde would have found L'Hotel—and indeed, the wallpaper—much more to his liking. tel: (33-1) 44 41 99 00; www.l-hotel.com —By Michelle Patient