

BEL/LUX/IT/ESP/PORT CONT 16 € - GR/NL 17 € - DE 21 € - SUISSE (CHF) 22 - UK (£) 15 - CANADA (CAD) 28.95 - USA (\$) 29.95

L 18755 - 1 H - F: 14,00 € - AL



CITY

MAGAZINE INTERNATIONAL

TOKYO _ LAGOS

Mika Schneider by Hanayo.

LONDON

HOTEL

MONET & THE SAVOY

NOT YOUR AVERAGE HOTEL GUEST: WHEN CLAUDE MONET CHECKED INTO A WEST END PALACE WITH AN EASEL.



18

Claude Monet first arrived in the British capital in 1870, seeking refuge from the Franco-Prussian War. On the streets and along the riverbanks, the Industrial Revolution was reshaping the city. Smoke from chimney-tops thickened the fog, and workers were digging tunnels for the new Tube. The short London stay left a lasting impression, and Monet vowed to return “to try to paint some fog effects”.

On 17 September 1899, he settled with his wife Alice and daughter Germaine Hoschedé at The Savoy, not far from Piccadilly. His son Michel was already in the city. Eternally searching for the perfect vantage point, Monet chose the balcony of his hotel room, captivated by the light shimmering on the Thames. The Savoy promised guests “a panorama from Battersea to the Tower Bridge... in all weathers, in sunshine or rain or in the fogs loved by Mr. Whistler”.

Opened a decade earlier, The Savoy was one of the swankiest hotels in town. Designed by architect Thomas Edward Collcutt, it was the first in Britain fully lit by electric lights, and even boasted the first electric elevator. Monet stayed on the sixth floor, perched above the mist, watching the outline of Parliament dissolve into cold blues and fiery sunsets. It was a far cry from his earlier days as a penniless artist.

Now a household name, he had shown *Impression, Sunrise* in 1874 and was enjoying growing success. During his Savoy stay, he focused mainly on two views: Charing Cross Bridge and Waterloo Bridge. When he left on 25 October 1899, he took eleven unfinished canvases back to France. He returned in 1900, alone. This time, he occupied two rooms on the fifth floor – the sixth had been requisitioned for Boer War officers. Room 541 became his studio, and room 542 his bedroom. Dozens of works began to accumulate, but Monet remained haunted by his inability to capture light quickly enough. He kept a strict routine: painting, dinner at The Grill, and a walk. Occasionally, he entertained visitors, like French collector Raymond Koechlin, who dined with him in March 1901 and later purchased one of the London series. Over time, The Savoy became more than a hotel. Alice, writing from Giverny, learned that the director helped Monet scout painting spots, including the Tower of London (never used) and a private club overlooking Leicester Square. He also gained access to the terraces of the newly elevated St Thomas’s Hospital across the river. Monet conducted three campaigns in London and with them, The Savoy became forever linked to some of his most revered works. ■ Maïa Morgensztern

THE SAVOY, Strand, London WC2R 0EZ. thesavoylondon.com

D.R. / Edeline Lee AW25 - Hyunjin Kim.

CITY MAGAZINE INTERNATIONAL - July 2025.