

# MANDARIN ORIENTAL, MARRAKECH

**M**andarin Oriental, Marrakech marks the debut of Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group in Africa. A modern and elegant resort nestled in the heart of 20 hectares of olive groves and gardens featuring 100,000 fragrant roses, the property celebrates the rich Moroccan heritage through subtle Berber references.

The resort redefines luxury hospitality in the Red City by way of accommodation made up solely of private villas and suites set in lush greenery. A new dining experience comes through three restaurants and bars, led by Chef Meryem Cherkaoui.

The Spa at Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech offers the renowned signature treatments that have made the group's international re-

putation, as well as treatments inspired by Moroccan traditions. The luxury experience is completed by the group's unparalleled service, allied to the best traditions and hospitality of the Moroccan Kingdom. Rustic yet sophisticated, the design of Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech was undertaken by the French duo Patrick Gilles and Dorothée Boissier. With its Berber and Arab-Andalusian influences, the feel is of relaxed luxury for the cosmopolitan traveller. Interior and exterior spaces co-exist and the focus is on essential materials rather than ostentatious affectations, with a particular emphasis placed on light.

Morocco's cultural diversity has been fused with Eastern and Western touches to give a sensation of travelling around the





world as one moves through the main building. The villas, meanwhile, whose architecture recalls that of intimate riads, lend a timeless feel, while the suites, with their scenic views of the Atlas Mountains, immerse guests in the heart of the local landscape. The architecture of the spa, a tribute to the ancient mosques and cathedrals of Andalusia, encourages spiritual contemplation and deployment of the senses.

Boissier wanted to allow guests to get lost in the shades of the desert and its rocks by way of the resort's archetypal motifs, rural materials and white bougainvillea and roses. "The earth and sand were the major influences," says Boissier. "Along with the colours of the street and traditional Berber women's clothing. The sand colour of the stonework combined with the large expanses of dominant green from the lush vegetation makes for a true dialogue and fluidity between the exterior architecture and the surrounding nature, while the pools give the illusion of an oasis in this 'living desert'." "We are great admirers of Madrasa Ben Youssef Islamic college in Marrakech, and we wanted to lend the entrance a similarly perfect symmetry, with columns and dark wood frames, marble tiles, a tranquil pool painted in gold, carved fireplaces, large bronze bells and the distant view of the mountains. The restaurants, one decorated with lemon-coloured Zellige tiles, the other with bamboo panels, recall the traditional colours worn by Berber women." "The villas, meanwhile, are havens of peace, simplicity, privacy and comfort, with tadelakt plastered walls etched with Berber motifs. As for the spa, it is constructed from the signature, ubiquitous red bricks of Marrakech, making for a mystical architecture where light plays around the bronzed glass blocks of the massage cabins, moucharabieh screens, and fan vaults." With accommodation made up exclusively of villas and suites, Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech promises a new luxury experience, combining comfort and space, in total privacy.



## GILLES & BOISSIER

Patrick Gilles and Dorothée Boissier are opposites that attract. Joyfully engaged in constant, creative disagreement, they find inspiration: more, it's precisely this ceaseless game of verbal and mental ping-pong that gives form to their ideas. Partners in life and in design, each one has a specific role and style, but together they form a unified whole. If strict lines and a distinctive taste for fine woods can be attributed to Patrick Gilles, Dorothée, on her end, has a way with spatial fluidity, colours and intuitive elegance. It is this distinctive approach that has paved their road to success, with commissions all over the world. Since 2004, they have designed a variety of projects from residential to hospitality projects, luxury boutiques and lifestyle restaurants. Yet, it is the constant refinement of their clients that has pushed them into designing wild Moncler stores for Remo Ruffini, along with his latest residence on Lake Como, Italy. Blending elegance and creativity, Patrick and Dorothée give, in every project they direct, "carte blanche" to an artist (like François Houtin, Cyprien Chabert or Alix Waline) to create a mural or intricate drawing, and further transform the perception of the space. A timeless approach to style and interiors that has brought them international recognition...

