

# information

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## **MANDARIN ORIENTAL RITZ, MADRID – HISTORY**

2 October 1910 witnessed the grand opening of The Ritz, Madrid. The opening ceremony of what was destined to become one of the Europe's finest hotels was performed by the guests of honour, King Alfonso XIII and his Queen Victoria Eugenia, granddaughter of the English Monarch Queen Victoria.

The young King had been instrumental in this exciting new adventure, the creation of the first luxury hotel in Spain. While travelling widely throughout Europe and experiencing the standards of excellence at numerous new Palace Hotels, he was determined to modernise his own country and ensure that Madrid was a city equal to other European capitals, with a truly luxurious hotel that could accommodate visiting guests and dignitaries.

The introduction of railroads during the last years of the 19th century shortened travel times, and this brought about a change in the profile of traveler. It was not only European aristocracy who travelled the continent, there was now an influx of new wealthy European and American travelers keen to discover the cultural treasures of Europe, and all of them needed a convenient and luxurious place to stay.

As a result, King Alfonso became a major shareholder in the newly created Ritz Development Company and convinced his aristocratic friends and important financiers to take part in this ambitious hotel project.

The Ritz Development Company purchased the grounds of the once lively Tivoli Theatre and Pleasure Gardens, situated in a majestic location in the heart of the city, and construction of the new hotel began.

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Charles Mewes, the architect of The Ritz in Paris, was asked to submit plans and the building started under the watchful eye of two Spanish architects, Luis de Landecho and Lorenzo Gallego, who delivered the imposing classic design of their French colleague to perfection. The elegant structure of The Ritz Hotel was the first steel framed building in Spain.

The Ritz Development Company also invited César Ritz, “hotelier par excellence” and father of The Ritz Paris, to be involved in the creative vision for this new hotel, which was to carry his name. César Ritz was not only an outstanding hotelier but a showman, a brilliant director and producer who set the stage for the star performance of his illustrious clientele. He ensured that the immaculate standard of facilities, decor, service and cuisine associated with his name was maintained.

What distinguished César Ritz’s hotels from other Palace hotels at the time, was the noble proportions of the architecture, the beauty and exquisite taste of the interiors, the unfailing personal attention to detail and that often-elusive commodity, great style.

More than 100 years later, the unequalled style of hotel management and design which César Ritz originally brought to the city, has been restored and perfected for a new generation to experience at Mandarin Oriental Ritz, Madrid.

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