

information

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MANDARIN ORIENTAL, MARRAKECH – DESIGN

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 the Eastern and Western charm to give a sensation of travelling around the world as one moves through the main building. The villas, meanwhile, of which the 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 Zelliges tiles, the other with bamboo panels, recall the traditional colours worn by Berber women."



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“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.”

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For further information, please contact:

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