



Hotel Overview: Dar Les Cigognes

In October 2004, a new hotel fully opened in Marrakech, Morocco - the final realisation of a dream that was born nearly four years ago.

Located in the *Mellah* (the old Jewish quarter in the heart of Marrakech's famous medina), Dar Les Cigognes is named 'House of Storks' after the graceful birds that perch on the ramparts of the Royal Palace of Hassan II directly opposite the hotel.

Offering a total of 11 bedrooms, including one suite, Dar Les Cigognes is an elegant and luxurious retreat that reflects the many facets of the rich cultural and artistic traditions of Moorish art and architecture. Combined with this is a careful attention to privacy: public rooms are numerous enough to allow all guests their own quiet space.

Dar Les Cigognes opened in two phases. The first was completed in December 2001, when the hotel part-opened with just five guest rooms set around an inner courtyard with sitting *bhou's*, a fountain and citrus trees. Here massive columns soar up to the roof beams and open sky, and stucco arches lead to the kitchen, lounge, dining room and library, all with magnificent fireplaces.

The second phase, completed in October, saw the expansion into a second house around a similar open courtyard (this with three magnificent palm trees that reach to the upper floors), which added a further six guest rooms, a hammam, additional outdoor living room, massage and treatment room, and boutique shop. Roof terraces offer unimpeded views towards the snow-capped peaks of the Atlas Mountains

These two 'wings' of the hotel, now dubbed Riad I and Riad II, are linked by a covered bridge that spans an ancient alleyway.

Throughout the hotel, walls are decked in varying hues of *tadelakt*, a time-consuming plastering technique that leaves a marble-like, shiny surface. Flooring materials tend to either be handmade tiles or *das*, a material similar to *tadelakt*. Each of the hotel's bedrooms has its own design theme, inspired by Moorish decorative techniques. Massive carved wooden doors (between connecting archways adorned with hand painted frescoes), allow some of the bedrooms to double as larger 2-bed apartments. (For full details on the individual bedrooms, please see the dedicated press release.)

Food and cuisine are an important part of any trip to Morocco. Dar Les Cigognes recognises this and the kitchen is open for guests to enter as they please. Here they can learn how to prepare some of the many delicacies served throughout the day, from toothsome pastries to traditional Moroccan dishes. Guests can also buy a copy of the Dar Les Cigognes cook book *Tanjia Marrakchia* from the hotel boutique.

The dinner menu changes daily, based on what is best in the market. The dining room has walls of Bordeaux-colour *tadelakt* embellished with a Koranic motif, and impressive chandeliers hanging from the six metre high ceilings. Here there are three large tables made from the original windows of the house, each comfortably seating up to six diners. A large fireplace at one end of the room provides warmth in winter months.

Another essential element of any visit to Morocco is the hammam. At Dar Les Cigognes the hammam can be booked, exclusively, by guests. Here is a changing room with shower, leading into the red marble hammam with Jacuzzi.

In addition there is the Fassi Beauty Spa, a stunning salon with high, arching ceilings bejewelled with coloured glass and adorned with a giant hanging lamp. The room is rich in carved plaster, providing a spectacular setting for the massages and local essential oil treatments on offer.

Above all Marrakech is a place to shop! The famous souks are just a stroll away, but the Dar Les Cigognes offers a Boutique shop for those who wish to purchase mementoes and gifts in calmer surroundings. Situated in the bridge that spans the two wings of the hotel, the shop sells carefully selected and commissioned Moroccan handicrafts such as jewellery, kaftans, textiles, books, and natural beauty products.

Dar Les Cigognes
refined elegance in the medina of Marrakech
www.lescigognes.com

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