Famous Doors of Hospitality

LA MAMOUNIA

MARRAKECH

MOROCCO
La Mamounia, Marrakech. A Grand Hotel’s Joyous Return to Elegance

by Jerry W. Bird

Muguette Goufrani, our magazine’s Associate Editor, whose father owned a thriving tour operation in Morocco, has fond memories of La Mamounia. “This grand hotel was a favorite meeting place in Marrakech for our family, friends and clients,” she said. Muguette mentioned that the hotel got its name from the beautiful, spacious, and perfumed gardens - a wedding gift to Prince Moulay Mamoun from his father over 200 years ago. Prost and Marchisio architects designed the hotel, featuring the Art Deco style so popular in the 1920s, combined with traditional Moroccan designs that were carried through to the furnishings and decor.

A Magnet for Prestige Events

Marrakech is well known for its conference facilities - as a magnet for prestige events - meetings, international events, trade missions and summits. When the Africa Travel Association held its first Cultural and Ecotourism Symposium here in 1996, our magazine was represented by editors Muguette Goufani and Karen Hoffman, both of whom have participated in ATA events for 15 years. Marrakech captured the hearts of all delegates, includ-
ing African Tourism Ministers and travel-tourism professionals from the USA, Canada and Africa.

**Photo Ops galore!**

Where else are many walls and buildings tinted in a rich pastel peach, with broad boulevards and promenades lined with rows and rows of orange trees, with ripe fruit dangling from their branches like holiday ornaments?

In 2002, following the ATA Conference in Fez, our media team of Muguette Goufrani, Broadcaster Ogo Sow and myself inspected a wide cross-section of hotel facilities in Marrakech to give our readers and listeners a word picture of the choices available. We were not disappointed!

During this summer’s visit for a Bastille Day gala evening hosted by the French Consulate, we were simply amazed at the major development and the sophistication of the city since 2002. More recently we did a complete city tour. Learning that La Mamounia was closed for major renovations at the time, we waited eagerly for its grand reopening. The result is a fitting tribute to well known
La Mamounia: A World Class Dining Experience
and respected designer Jacques Garcia, an architect and decorator for more than three decades.

**A Grand Dining Experience**

According to Mu-guette and her family, La Mamounia has always ranked among the leading hotels in North Africa and the world for the quality and variety of cuisine. Now, with new facilities and world class service, the experience is better than ever, with five bars and four outstanding restaurants - Le Marocain, Le Marocain, Le Français, L’Italien, and Le Pavillon de la piscine.

Author Habeeb Salloum, one of the top contributors to Africa Travel Magazine, speaks highly of traditional Moroccan cuisine of which you will find the finest on the menu at Le Morocain in addition to dishes from around the world in the hotel’s fine dining selection.

When we return to Morocco this winter, we will have an opportunity to interview the management and chefs for an update on the current article, plus comments and additional photos for the Best of Africa Culinary Tourism Edition, to be available for delegates to the World Culinary Summit in our home city of Vancouver, Canada.

One of the world’s great hotels, La Mamounia is located on the walls of the ancient city of Marrakech with the snowcapped Atlas mountains as a panoramic backdrop. What a glorious setting for a first class convention.

**President Washington slept here?**

No, but many well known icons, from Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Ronald Ragan and Nelson Mandela, to Presidents Charles de Gaule, and Winston Churchill - helped make La Mamounia one of the most famous addresses in North Africa and the world. Churchill referred to it as, “the most lovely spot in the whole world.”

Today, the suite this famous man stayed in 1943 during the Casablanca Conference was renamed in his honor. I look forward to the opportunity of staging an event here or participating in a travel, trade or tourism conference or expo at La Mamounia. www.mamounia.com

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