

Hg2|Marrakech

The Medina (South)

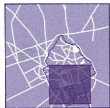
SHOP

38. Bijouterie el Yasmine Abdelghani
39. Centre Artisanal
40. Original Design
41. Jamade

SLEEP

1. Les Borjs de la Kasbah
2. Dar les Cigognes
3. Les Jardins de la Koutoubia
4. Maison Mnabha
5. La Mamounia
6. Le Nid Je Cigognes
7. Riad Houki
8. Riad Kaiss
9. Riad Mabrouka
10. Riad Noir D'Ivoire
11. Riad Si Saïd
12. Riad Siwan
13. Riad W
14. Riyad El Cadi
15. Royai Mansour
16. La Sultana
17. Villa des Orangers

0 250 500m



EAT

18. Jemaa el Fna
19. Kosybar
20. Le Marrakechi
21. La Sultana
22. Le Tanjia

DRINK

23. Churchill's Piano Bar
24. Kosybar
25. The Piano Bar

SNACK

26. Café de France
27. Pâtisserie de Princes

PARTY

28. La Mamounia Casino

CULTURE

29. Agdai Gardens
30. Badi Palace
31. Bahia Palace
32. Dar Si Saïd
33. Jemaa el Fna
34. Koutoubia Mosque
35. Mamounia Gardens
36. Saadian Tombs
37. Dar Tiskwin



the best hotels...

Top Ten:

1. Villa des Orangers (left)
2. Riad Farnatchi
3. Royal Mansour
4. Jnane Tamsna
5. Marnounia
6. Les Deux Tours
7. Palais Rhoul
8. Beldi Country Club
9. Riad Lotus Privilege
10. Dar Les Cigognes

Style:

1. Dar JL
2. Riad Perle Lotus
3. Riad Farnatchi
4. Riad Noir d'Ivoire
5. MURANO

Atmosphere:

1. La Pause
2. Beldi Country Club
3. Kasbah Bab Ourika
4. Les Deux Tours
5. Jnane Tamsna

Location:

1. Villa Des Orangers
2. Riad El Fenn
3. Riad Enija
4. Dar Charkia
5. Les Jardins de la Koutoubia

The Medina (South)

The southern half of the Medina is slightly calmer than the north. While there are still twisting *derbs* and winding alleyways, the workshops and souks are less apparent while the residential areas are more so; seemingly, this area is the more affluent.

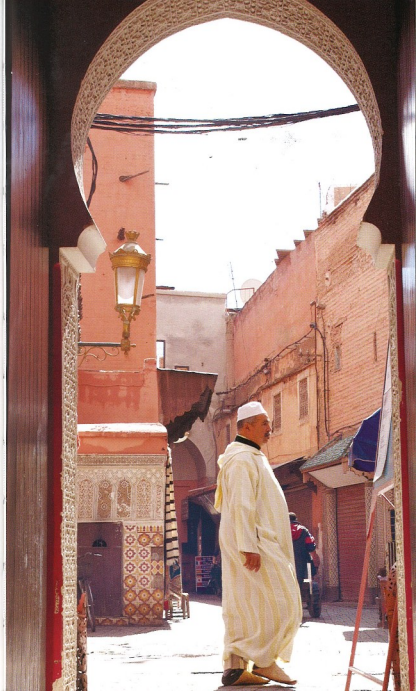
Like the north, however, it is filled with interesting sights and sounds. The Bahia Palace, the Saadian Tombs, the Royal Palace and the Agdal Gardens draw those interested in the history and architecture of the city. Then there's the Koutoubia, visible from virtually all parts of the city, and the convenient meeting-place and non-stop circus that is the Jemaa el Fna.

Some of Marrakech's finest riads and hotels are found here in the south, including the legendary Mamounia hotel, the luxurious Villa des Orangers and the elegant Dar les Cigognes. These places epitomize the style and design with which the city has become synonymous, and are dedicated to contemplation and relaxation.

The contrast between life inside and outside the Medina is palpable. Within the walls of the Old City, time stands still. Donkeys are still as common as motorbikes, butchers and vendors sell their wares on the dusty streets, and artisans busy themselves with traditional crafts.

Indulging in a *hammam/gommage* is a must for all visitors to Marrakech. A weekly cleansing ritual for locals, many of whom live without showers and baths in their homes, is essential for personal hygiene. The local *hammams* can be daunting for strangers at first, but people are incredibly welcoming and there is always someone to guide you through the process if you are unsure what to do. If you prefer luxury and pampering over local experience, head for Le Bains de Marrakech – an upmarket spa perfect for rejuvenation.

There are plenty of restaurants in this lower half of the Medina, such as the charmingly traditional Dar Zellij, the more classy Le Tanja and the funky Kosy Bar, which has a great wine selection. Alternatively, perhaps you would like to learn how to cook some tasty Moroccan food for yourself? If so, Souk Cuisine offers simple but memorable cooking classes in the heart of the southern Medina.



theme is African-Asian) and all decorated with great attention to detail. There's air conditioning, a functional fireplace in each room and gorgeous bathrooms with wood-and-glass doors and double sinks. A plunge pool dominates the courtyard and a large roof terrace offers separate lounging areas. Meals can be taken either in the courtyard or on the roof terrace and the menu is varied, with a good selection of vegetarian options and a breakfast that changes every day. You'll also find an information sheet full of insider tips on Marrakech in your room, but owners Lisa and Michael are always around to provide further help and guidance, including organising shopping trips (Lisa is something of a specialist on the subject) and cookery classes, which are held in the riad. Within walking distance of some of the best tourist sights, the souks, and plenty of restaurants and bars, Charkia makes for a convenient, laid back and style-savvy option.

Style 7, Atmosphere 7, Location 8

Dar JL

(top)

Arset Sdiguia Talaint Annakhil

Nord, Palmeraie

Tel: 06 61 223 462 / 06 61 21 05 49

www.darjl.com

Rates: 4,000-8,000dh

This new-ish property in the Palmeraie is a truly gorgeous estate, even by Palameraie standards. A series of independent, self-contained luxury villas interconnected across 5.5 hectares of olive groves, cactus gardens and orange, lemon and palm trees, it's a

universe unto itself and a striking place to unwind. Dar Jennat has three suites and a deluxe bedroom and is available for exclusive rent. Dar Limoan has two gorgeous suites, living/dining room, Moroccan-style pool and private garden and terrace, as well as suites decorated thematically (from Mali to Milan); La Tour boasts a rooftop 'bhoo' with two bedrooms, Moroccan salon and outstanding views. And the intriguingly named Hippie Village is an Indian-themed villa that comes with its own kitchen and decorative pool – one for the honeymooners and incurable romantics. The tasteful antiques and magnificent architectural touches like glass-walled bathrooms that look out onto splendid gardens create a real sense of sophistication. Staff are multi-lingual and attentive, available at a quick touch of your personal mobile. Public amenities like a white marble *hammam*, spa, yoga pavilion, running track, tennis court, an organic vegetable garden and attractive pergolas mean you probably won't want leave for a while.

Style 9, Atmosphere 9, Location 7

Dar Les Cigognes

(bottom)

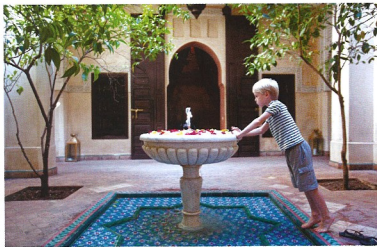
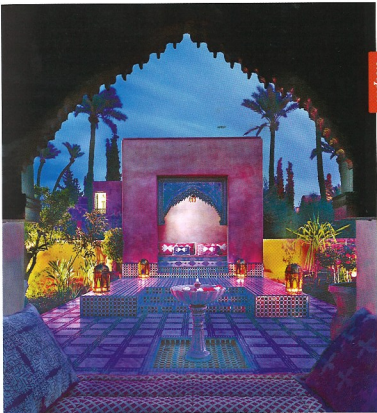
108 rue de Berima, Medina

Tel: 05 24 38 27 40

www.lescigognes.com

Rates: 1,600-3,400dh

Situated a *babouch*-throw away from the Badii Palace, Les Cigognes is a former 17th-century merchant's townhouse that has been renovated (with the help of star architect Charles Boccaro) into a stylish boutique guest-



house. An elegant courtyard, featuring the obligatory citrus trees and gurgling fountain, is the centrepiece, symbolizing a peaceful ambience that's immediately apparent on entering. Around the central courtyard there are subtle public spaces (dining room, library, salon), but the real hipness hangs out in the rooms. There are 11 of them – one suite, seven deluxe rooms and three superior rooms – all with their own take on Moorish architectural and decorative traditions, and all with ensuite bathrooms with bath and shower facilities. Six of the deluxe rooms have been recently added in an adjoining house, together with two more sitting areas, a handicrafts boutique, a *hammam* and spa, and a planted courtyard. On top of all this – literally – there's a wonderful roof terrace overlooked by the eponymous storks, complimentary WiFi throughout and the management recently hired a former chef from Café de la Poste who turns out inspired modern Moroccan-Mediterranean food.

Style 8, Atmosphere 8, Location 8

Dar Saria, (top)
 Derb Ouyaha 46, Quartier Sici
 Abdel Aziz, Medina
 Tel: 06 61 44 43 58
 www.darsaria.com
 Rates: 600–1,000 dh

Run by graphic designer Florence and her photographer boyfriend Vincent (both Belgian), Dar Saria is by far the best option for this price range. It was opened in late 2005, freshly converted from the house of a *caid*, and its sensitive restoration has successfully cre-

ated an aura of low-key elegance. There's no central garden, just a traditional courtyard with a pretty fountain, impressive pillars ('saria' means 'pillar'), whitewashed booths, a cute breakfast area, and a beautiful, sprawling bougainvillea plant that scatters red petals all over the floor like something out of a Gabriel Garcia Marquez novel. The four bedrooms are more contemporary, decorated in chocolates and creams, with Vincent's own arty canvases on the wall. The upstairs suites are big and come with fireplaces and salons, while the downstairs rooms are a little pokier. Close to Dar El Bacha (a section of which is soon to be opened as a museum), the Ben Youssef Medersa and the Musée de Marrakech, this is a great option for young, budget-conscious travellers looking for a romantic, low-key base.

Style 8, Atmosphere 8, Location 8

Dar Zemora (bottom)
 rue El Aandalib, Palmeraie
 Tel: 05 24 32 82 00
 www.darzemora.com
 Rates: 1,850–4,500dh

Owned by a British couple and designed partly by Belgian Valerie Golinvaux, Dar Zemora is an impressive villa hotel located in the Palmeraie. Past the main entrance there is a domed reception area that leads through to a series of eloquent rooms; some have a seasonal theme, such as the breezy summer Casablanca room and the winter lounge with its huge fireplace, and there is also a gorgeous dining room with terrace, library (leather-chairs,



kept Ifouki's atmosphere distinctly traditional. This means that the space, which is made up several royal houses, has a fairly austere quality, but the advantage is, of course, a much greater sense of authenticity, not to mention larger rooms. The main courtyard especially – a grand old place full of jasmine, olive and orange trees – has impressively big dimensions, while the rooms that run around it are correspondingly large. The place carries a sophisticated and discreet air, enhanced by the presence of the Bergmanns (who speak ten languages between them) and by such touches as a well-stocked multilingual library, a marble spa (with male and female massages), musical and cultural evenings, *tadelakt* and calligraphy courses, a broad selection of fine antiques and an atmosphere of refined congeniality, which all make the place part palace, part cultural centre. Its broad appeal extends to holidaying families, celebrities and foreign diplomats alike.

Style 7, Atmosphere 8, Location 8

Riad Kaiss (top)
65 Derb Jdid
(off Riad Zitoune El Kedim), Medina
Tel: 05 24 44 01 41
www.riadkaiss.com
Rates: 1,600–3,300dh

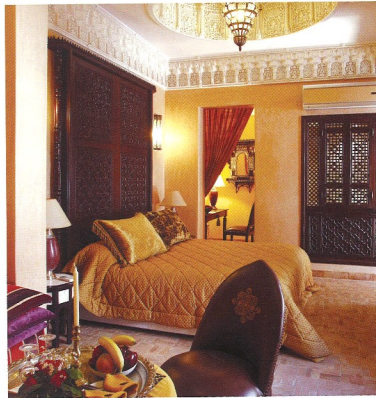
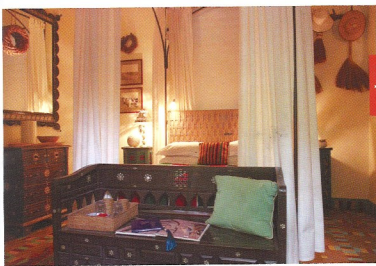
Centuries ago Riad Kaiss was a wing of the harem of the Vizir of Sultan Moulay Abderrahmane, connected to the Bahia Palace via underground tunnels. It took three years to transform it from a ruin into the refined boutique hotel it is now. Previously owned and

constructed by late architect and hotel designer Christian Ferre (who was responsible for a number of hotels in Asia and France), it is now part of the Sanssouci Collection (see Nid Les Cigognes and Dar Les Cigognes). It's a sizeable place, centred around two large courtyards that, along with the rooms, are enhanced with a tasteful selection of antiques, Art Deco furnishings, objects from Thailand and a plethora of neatly arranged artistic bits and bobs. The nine rooms and suites all differ décor-wise but are unerring in their romantic aura. The roof is really something to behold: a handsome, florid network of stairways and relaxation areas with a natty plunge pool tucked away discreetly in one corner. New facilities include a *hammam*, spa, a boutique selling local handicrafts, free Wi-Fi – and a new chef who conducts cooking classes and prepares meals cooked to order on the premises.

Style 8, Atmosphere 7, Location 8

Riad Kniza (bottom)
34 Derb l'Hotel,
Bab Doukkala, Medina
Tel: 05 24 37 69 42
www.riadkniza.com
Rates: 1,760–4,500 dh

Riad Kniza, marketed as an upscale luxury Hotel de Charme, is a traditional building restored by one Mr Bouskri, a man whose impressive 35 years working as a tour guide (see Play) has included giving personal tours to the likes of Richard Nixon, Kofi Annan and Brad Pitt. Given Bouskri's slick interpersonal skills, it's no wonder that





shop...

Le Nid des Cigognes



Rates: 6,700–22,500dh

The Mamounia, one of the oldest and grandest hotels in Marrakech, has welcomed everyone from the Queen of England to Winston Churchill through its doors. In 2009 this grandest of grande dames underwent a controversial (and, at \$176 million, fairly expensive) reinvention courtesy of famed French designer Jacques Garcia. Out with the art deco and in with the nouveau Moroccan – complete with colonnaded courtyards, perfectly conceived Andalusian passages, tiled reflection pools and an immense 2,500m² spa. It's a fairly startling renovation for a venue so steeped in tradition (it opened in 1923), but Garcia has been smart enough to maintain enough grandeur and style to reassure its high profile guests. The 209 rooms now include a trio of ultra-secluded riads (with private pools) and the four restaurants include two by Michelin-starred chefs Alfonso Iaccarino and Jean-Pierre Vigato (the Moroccan is now housed in its own riad with a smoking room and roof terrace). The gardens remain unchanged and are still a highlight of the hotel. You can enjoy an expensive Mediterranean buffet at weekends (650dh through the week, 1,200ch for Sunday brunch – that's without use of the pool). There are also clay tennis courts, the Churchill bar and shops like Gucci and Chopar to browse.

Style 9, Atmosphere 8, Location 9

Mandarin Oriental (top)
Jnan Rahma
 Bab Atlas, Palmeraie

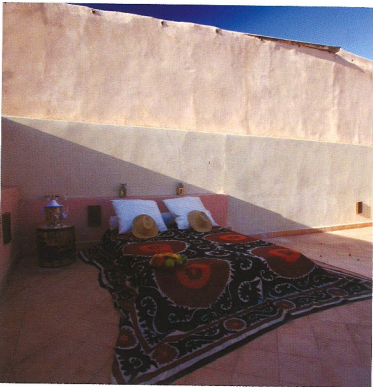
Tel: 05 24 32 77 77
 www.mandarinoriental.com
 Rates: 5,000–8,000dh

Mandarin Oriental Jnan Rahma is the latest luxe resort from the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group. This striking palace is set in the exclusive Palmeraie area, 20 minutes from the Medina. It boasts 161 rooms and suites (sizes range from 80m² to a whopping 950m²) dotted around 53 hectares of meticulously landscaped gardens dominated by an immense Mughal marble pool. Individual riads are set around fountained courtyards and come with their own outdoor living rooms, featuring daybeds and cracking views of the Atlas Mountains, gardens and the Palmeraie region. Naturally you're not going to want for much here: there's a 3,800m² spa (with two hammams), yoga temple, indoor heated pool, 13 treatment rooms), several restaurants serving up everything from traditional and contemporary Moroccan to international cuisine, plus a billiard bar, outdoor heated pool and more. It's an especially great place for kids too – the Younger Fan Club offers creative, educational activities. A safe but comprehensive option.

Style 8, Atmosphere 7, Location 7

Le Nid des Cigognes (bottom)
 108, rue de Berlima, Medina
 Tel: 05 24 38 27 40/47 67
 www.lescigognes.com
 Rates: 1,800–3,900dh

Even by Medina standards, Nid des Cigognes is a hidden gem. Located on a quiet narrow street just near the busy



Mellah (Jewish Quarter), and just a few minutes from the sister property Dar Les Cigognes, this private, four-room house is perfect for those wanting a Marrakech stay with total privacy. In true riad style, the rooms (two larger suites and two smaller ones) are arranged around a gorgeous courtyard. The décor is tasteful and contemporary with modcons like TVs, designer desks and rain showers merging nicely with black marble bathrooms, interesting sculptures, rustic rugs, designer desks and antiques in the rooms. There's also a large roof terrace and a cinema to keep you occupied. Nid officially sleeps eight (additional guests can pay extra), which make it intimate enough yet large big enough to maintain privacy. It's set up to rent in its entirety and comes with a butler/concierge, daily maid service and the option of a chef for breakfast, lunch and/or dinner. Guests can also dine at Nid's sister properties, Riad Kaiss and Dar Les Cigognes if they wish; similarly, you get to use the spa at Dar Les Cigognes (just around the corner) free of charge too.

Style 8, Atmosphere 7, Location 8

MURANO (top)
Urban Resort
 Douar Abiad, La Palmeraie
 Tel: 05 24 32 70 00
 www.muranoresort.com
 Rates: 2,900–8,500dh

One of the latest additions to the Palmeraie is the brainchild of star designer Christiane Derory, the lady behind the flamboyant Parisian MURANO Resort. Located directly adjacent to Les Deux

Tours (see page 44), it is arguably one of the region's most audacious properties – a splash of flamboyant Parisian chic set within three hectares of traditional palm, olive and tangerine trees. The reception area encompasses a lobby, restaurant, bar and meeting room – and a 200m² terrace that offers views over the grounds. It's here that the style really stands out, in the shape of a 32-metre red enamel pool surrounded by red and white sun loungers and four villas that contain the MURANO's 30 suites. Each building has its own pool and each room is big and sexy, incorporating four poster beds, marble bathrooms and oodles of modcons like coffee machines, flatscreen TVs, iPod dock. All the rooms have great vistas over the gardens and the Atlas, and also come with open fireplaces and large private terraces. The restaurant serves delicious French-Moroccan food and DJs play tasteful music by the pool at the weekends. There's a spa in the pipeline too, which will make the MURANO an even more hedonistic option.

Style 8, Atmosphere 8, Location 7

Pacha Hotel (bottom)
 Nouvelle zone hôtelière de l'Aguedal
 Tel: 05 24 38 84 00
 www.pachamarrakech.com
 Rates: 3,400–4,500dh

Pacha (see Party) is one of Marrakech's leading nightclubs. In fact it's more a complex than a club, with an acclaimed restaurant, Crystal (see Eat), chill out bar and large pool – and the owners have now added a hotel

