

Luxury Hotels Offer Best of

Past and Present

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Top hotels are often located within historic properties in the heart of major cities, combining functionality and modernity with pieces of the past. They might be city landmarks, municipal buildings, old banks, town halls or private dwellings. Architects and designers love experimenting with historic buildings, combining past and present. Below we list some of the top hotels that represent a link between the architectural desires of the wealthy elite of the past and the needs of modern-day travelers.



Conservatorium Hotel

Conservatorium Hotel sits in the heart of Amsterdam's Museum Quarter and has all the characterful charm of a contemporary luxury hotel transformed from a magnificent neo-Gothic building.

Originally constructed in 1897, it was designed by Dutch architect Daniel Knuttel as the Rijkspostspaarbank, or Dutch Savings Bank, sparked the regeneration of the Museum Quarter at the end of the 19th century.

Attracted by its glorious past, The Set Hotels purchased the heritage building in 2008 and invited award-winning Milan-based designer Piero Lissoni to guide the creation of the hotel by restoring its former beauty with a

modern touch.

Lissoni said: "Conservatorium Hotel juxtaposes contemporary design with the historic architecture of a building rich with heritage. I have created a succession of luminous spaces based around a soaring glass atrium, into which I have interposed striking modern architectural elements to create a structure that is both visually stunning and sensitive to the building's history."

Working with strict preservation regulations, the Italian designer devised a dramatic lobby that inhabits a courtyard lined in a pale-green Italian Lithoverde stone and is capped by a glass-and-steel roof. The light-filled atrium reimagines the classic English garden, while

tapping into the double life of indoor-outdoor spaces.

A sleek steel staircase links the lobby with the rest of the hotel, creating a catwalk-like transition. Outstanding furnishings from leading manufactures such as Cassina, Living Divani and Vitra, with custom-made furniture and lighting designed by Lissoni combine harmoniously in all communal spaces, while vintage pieces and antique Asian rugs provide a sense of familiar comfort.

Central to the hotel's vision of elegance, good living and cultural distinction has also been the creation of restaurants and bars. Tunes Bar is an intimate space where Lissoni arranges a mix of vintage Italian Art Deco pieces and

mid-century Knoll Bertoia chairs. The most compelling aspect is the transparent bar feature that illuminates the entire space with a warm glow.

With eight floors housing 129 guest rooms and suites, choices of accommodation range from spacious superior rooms to penthouse suites. Brushed-oak flooring, beige furniture and luxury linens define the interior style and color scheme that is both modern and classic.

Lissoni conceived the Conservatorium Hotel in the belief that a hotel should be judged on its convenient location, functional design and exceptional service, which he described as "intrinsically Dutch values".





Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam

Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam was already a truly majestic setting, but Paris-based designer Sybille de Margerie has breathed new life into this landmark building so inextricably linked with the city of Amsterdam.

A large-scale renovation got underway in 2008 under the inspiring guidance of French interior architect De Margerie, who is highly acclaimed for her visionary, holistic approach and the creation of environments that combine luxury and comfort.

“The Grand has always been a reference point in terms of modernity and design, linked through art and history,” De Margerie said.

The designer enjoys striking a balance between tradition and modernity, describing the hotel as a blend of French elegance and Dutch stylistic elements.

The lobby is an open, welcoming space, where contemporary, elegant

and comfortable interior design features blend beautifully with the listed marble floor and original arches. A butterfly chandelier hangs above the center of the lobby, which reflects the natural light and evokes the atmosphere of a courtyard garden. In fact, tulips and butterflies are recurring themes throughout the hotel.

The building’s rich heritage is incorporated in architectural details and original artworks such as the wedding chamber’s fresco from the 1930s, stained glass in the main staircase and an old hand rail in the Princehoff building.

The designer opted for natural, luxury materials such as wood, bricks, alabaster, marble, mosaic, biscuit and steel, using the language of North European textures and colors, and attaching a great importance to the fluidity of spaces, light and comfort.

This Library “Or”, graced by a beautiful, eye-catching lamp with precious gold leaf inlay, is the ideal place to become acquainted with art and culture, or to relax in peaceful surroundings.



AlmaLusa Baixa/Chiado

One of Lisbon’s treasured buildings lies in one of the most emblematic squares of the city and has been reborn as a unique boutique hotel: AlmaLusa Baixa/Chiado.

Every corner of the property tells a story of Lisbon, from the Age of Discovery to modern day, and provides guests with a special charm.

“Aiming to create the perfect balance between a chic, urban atmosphere while paying homage to the ancient history of the building in which the hotel is set, AlmaLusa Baixa/Chiado is the result of a concerted effort to make sure this building’s rich past has been respected and incorporated into the hotel’s design,” hotel CEO Miguel Simoes de Almeida said.

The ground floor is a genuine restoration of the oldest part of the building, with a small retail area, the lobby and the Delfina restaurant.

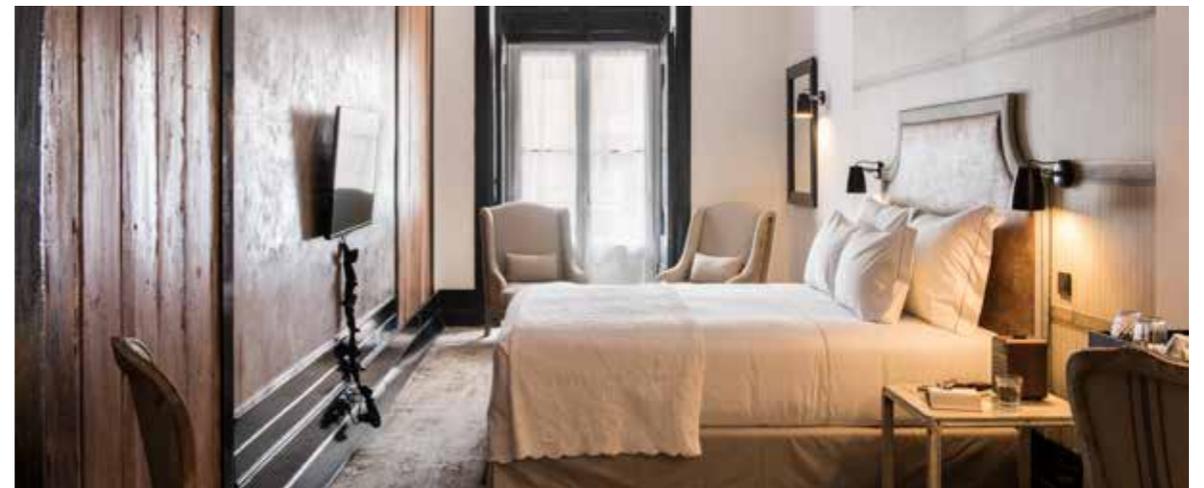
Older elements are harmoniously

mixed with locally-produced modern furniture and fabrics such as bed sheets, luxurious carpets and even bath towels. You can immerse yourself in Portuguese culture through the hotel’s aroma, local gastronomy, amenities and souvenirs.

It boasts 28 chic rooms, including 12 suites, with each one differing in its layout and elements. All the rooms feature a contemporary stamp on Portuguese aristocratic style and are all individually designed to boast a wide range of natural colors as well as more earthy tones.

“We wanted to give a timeless feel to the hotel — an informal and comfortable setting where guests can relax and forget about what is happening outside,” De Almedia said.

AlmaLusa Baixa/Chiado is centrally located in a historic neighborhood close to Lisbon’s stunning attractions, including historical monuments, extraordinary museums, and world-class restaurants and bars.



G-Rough

Unlike the typical made-in-Italy opulence of most upscale hotels in Rome, G-Rough offers an unconventional vibe: an atmosphere of contemporary nostalgia.

“The building in Piazza di Pasquino 69/70, owned by my family for generations, was built in the 1600s and renovated in the late 1800s. We chose to preserve the fascinating allure of this historic building by keeping some of the original architectural structures and decor, while adding modern elements to create a fascinating synergy, both visually and conceptually,” said Gabriele Salini, the man responsible for creating this unconventional luxury.

Ancient features remain, including intricately tiled or parquet wood floors, wooden beams and time-worn walls. The building’s architecture perfectly showcases the typical Roman bourgeois style of the 17th century, with an inscription on the stone facade reading: *Satis Ampla Qvae Securitate Rideat*, which is Latin for “big enough to give a feeling of security”.

Salini said the idea behind G-Rough comes from the concept of hospitality and the Palazzina lifestyle — the same innovative and visionary idea that gave birth, several years ago, to the PalazzinaG in Venice.

“In G-Rough, we tried to tailor the key elements of this concept to a more Roman inspiration, while remaining true to the Palazzina lifestyle,” he said.

The suites are named after famous Italian designers, such as Gio (Ponti), Guglielmo (Ulrich), Silvio (Cavatorta), Ico (Parisi) and Joe (Colombo), with Salini saying: “There are also several elements of Italian design that can be seen in every detail. For example, some of



the paintings and art installations are by Italian artists such as Jacopo Ceccarelli, Davide D’Elia and Emiliano Maggi.”

More than 20 contemporary artists were commissioned to create works that sit alongside furniture designed by iconic Italian designers from the 1930s to the 1970s, such as Ico Parisi, Gio Ponti, Guglielmo Ulrich and Archimede Seguso.

G-Rough offers a selection of 10 exclusive suites, each of them uniquely designed to provide guests with a different experience of a broader kind of “rough luxury”, which prevails everywhere. Imperfections, including unrestored frescoes and sanded-down walls, only make the space even more charming.

“G-Rough was born from the idea of creating an original space in which artists, writers, musicians and intellectuals worldwide can find the perfect grounds to meet, talk and create in the way of the Romans,” Salini said.



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