

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Robb Report

MALAYSIA

Travel In Style

The best new hotels and latest fashion collections for the season



10/2023

robbreport.com.my



Above: Lumi Rooftop Bar and Restaurant offers spectacular views of Lisbon's skyline and the Tagus River.

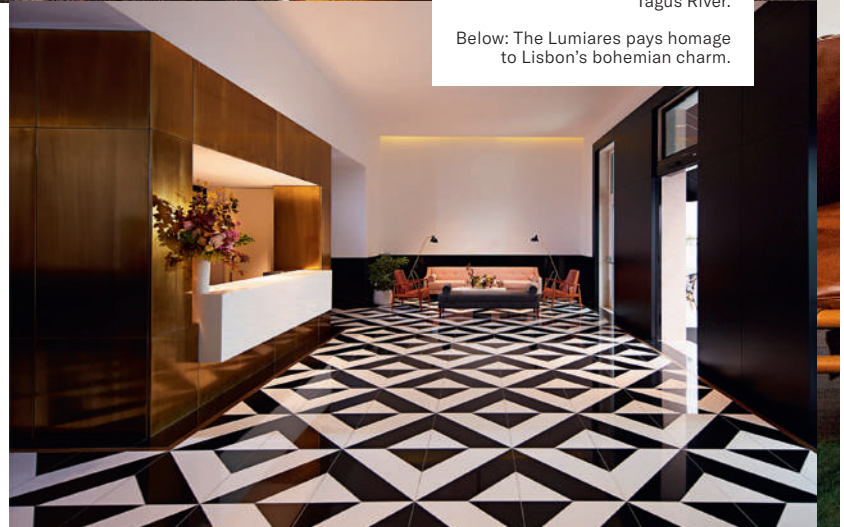
Below: The Lumiarens pays homage to Lisbon's bohemian charm.

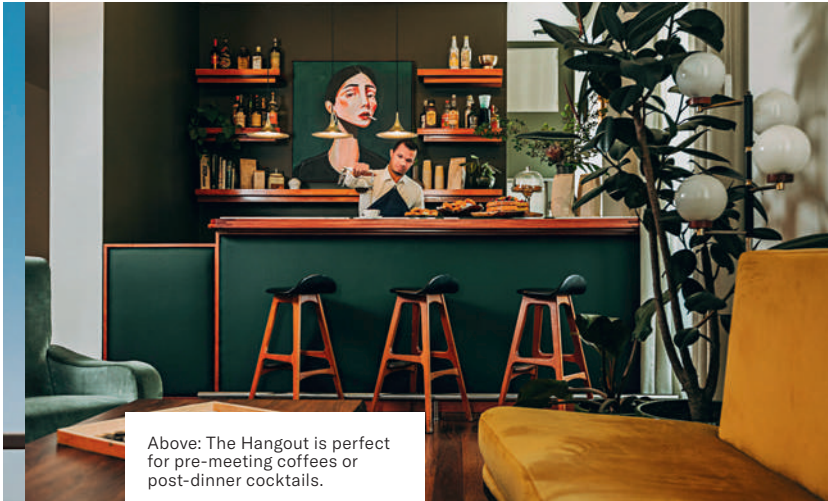
A Tale Of Two Lisbon Hotels

These sister properties in Portugal's capital offer location, design and stunning rooftop spaces.

Words: Terry Lim

Photography: Francisco Nogueira and Luís Ferraz





Above: The Hangout is perfect for pre-meeting coffees or post-dinner cocktails.

Below: thoughtfully curated elements of Portuguese design appear throughout The Vintage.



IN A CITY that is as vibrant as Lisbon, where centuries of culture are represented across architecture, cuisines and art, one would expect the hospitality scene to be just as diverse. Indeed, under The Bomporto Hotels—which was founded to be the antithesis of the global hotel chain—the idea of a hyperlocal boutique hotel is hugely apparent. “It starts with a distinctive philosophy to transform beautiful historic buildings in need of renovation into five-star hotels,” says Catarina Laires, whose Lisbon-based public relations consultancy CL International represents Bomporto Hotels. Both its Lisbon properties—which are members of Small Luxury Hotels of the World—are ideally placed for travellers to discover the charms of the Portuguese capital city and, in the process, discover quite a bit more of the country than they would have thought.



The Lumières

Take the group's first property, an 18th-century palace given a new lease of life in 2017 when it was rebirthed as The Lumières. Situated in Lisbon's buzzy and bohemian Bairro Alto district, The Lumières is what Laires describes as "a love letter to Portugal". The clearest instance of this occurs as you enter the hotel and gaze upon a tapestry triptych by the grand staircase recalling a *fado* singer (whom you also find singing in *fado* houses or restaurants around the Bairro Alto neighbourhood). "There is a Portuguese word called '*saudade*', which doesn't exist as a single word in any other language," Laires explains. Loosely translated, *saudade* is the sentiment carried by *fado* singers who have a deep melancholy and longing, which Laires says is a vestige of Portugal's maritime character—that feeling of those on shore as the fishermen are out at sea. "*Fado* is about celebrating life in a very passionate way," she says.

All across The Lumières, its tapestries, paintings and artworks are largely sourced from Portuguese artists, a homage to Lisbon's colours, patterns and light. The hotel's design is a reflection of its Bairro Alto location; the lobby opens into the heart of this party district, which throbs with kinetic nightlife.

Inside the rooms, the Portuguese connection endures with handmade rugs by one of Europe's oldest producers, Ferreira de Sá. Bed throws are 100 per cent wool from Burel Factory and made in the Serra de Estrela mountain ranges, while the hand-woven bed cushions are produced by artisanal weavers in Alentejo. In lieu of a welcome fruit basket, you may find two bottles of local wine picked by the owners, with a side of cheese and nuts.

Its rooms range from studio configurations with approximately 50sqm of space to the highly popular and spacious one- and two-bedroom suites, the latter offering



up to 100sqm of living space. This apartment-styled accommodation—quite the rarity in Lisbon—also includes fully fitted kitchens across all 46 rooms. And, of course, there are the thoughtful touches: assistance on call via a 24/7 Whatsapp number, digital controls for mood lighting, and wi-fi passwords on keycards. Downstairs, the spa offers a sauna and steam room as well as therapists to help you dissolve the urban realities away with a range of massages ranging from shiatsu and aromatherapy as well as signature treatments such as The Lumiares Ritual.

Within the hotel, you'll also find Rebel Café with its terrazzo tables and postcard views of Lisbon. Here, among Nordic-chic aesthetics, you can enjoy a coffee, avocado toast and artisan ice creams while watching the world or, more precisely, Lisbon go by. As the day grows long in the tooth, head up to the fifth floor for Lumi Rooftop Bar and Restaurant, named among Europe's Best Rooftop Restaurants in the 2021 World Culinary Awards.

With star chef João Silva in the kitchen, you are guaranteed a stellar menu of Portuguese *petiscos* (bites) such as the traditional *Pica-pau* (Portuguese beef strips in a pickle sauce); Green Bean Tempura with lime and basil mayonnaise; Tuna Ceviche with carrot, avocado, cherry tomato, red onion pickle and fried cassava; and Spicy Garlic King Prawns sauteed in garlic and herbs. All this to dovetail with the bar's cocktails, cleverly harmonised with home infusions such as Lumi Negroni made with Portuguese vermouth, infused gin, Madeira wine, sugar cane honey and orange zest. These can then be enjoyed as you soak in the unobstructed and sweeping views of Lisbon's old town, and of the Tagus River beyond as it flows into the Atlantic Ocean.



This and facing pages: housed in an 18th-century palace, The Lumiares is a stylish, characterful space in the heart of the Bairro Alto area.



PHOTOGRAPHY: THE LUMIARES, THE VINTAGE HOTEL.

The Vintage

A mere 15-minute stroll from The Lumières and you arrive at its sister hotel, styled to be an uber-cool representation of the 1950s and 1960s. The Vintage was a name that Bomporto Hotels inherited when the group bought it. Bomporto then proceeded to give it all the requisite mid-century riffs for that playful, relaxed vibe that would appeal to the guests they were looking to attract.

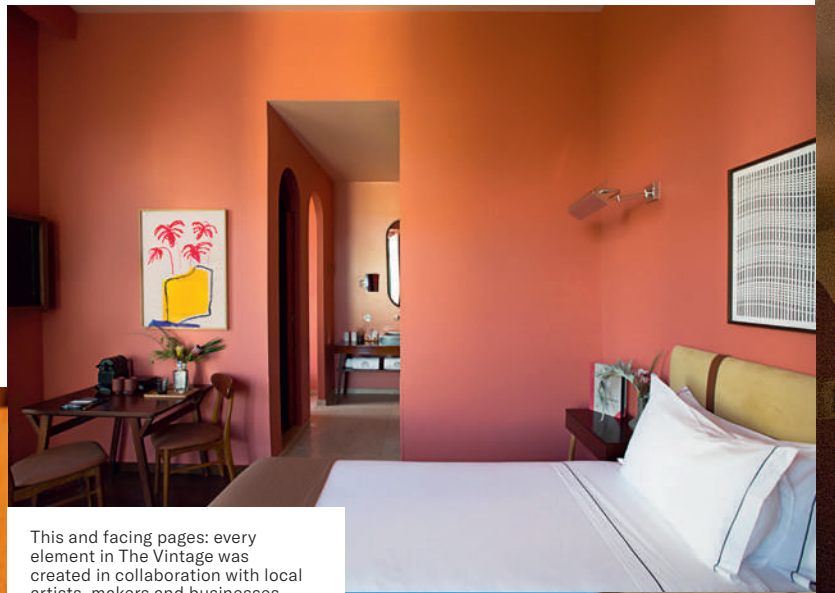
Hence, a modish welcome in the room with local Sharish Gin, distilled in the southern plains of Alentejo, complete with tonic water, dried lemon, cinnamon, ice and a recipe by Portuguese cocktail expert Nino Lopes. In these rooms, the retro influence on aesthetics is clearly in operation via rotary dial phones, bar carts and furniture that transport you back to the 1960s. An old-fashioned bidet adds to the charm, while double balcony doors open out to the streets below, giving you a sense of how the rich might have lived in 1960s Lisbon.

The rooms, ranging from superior to the 50sqm Vintage Castle Suite, emanate with that transcendental effect, anchoring you to a different reality through little and large design details such as graphic artworks by João Rei and re-edition pencils by the Portuguese family-owned Viarco. Amenities also include a lovely, local touch of Claus Porto toiletries, a specialist in soaps, men’s grooming products, colognes and scented candles since 1887.

Those looking for a nearby diversion would do well to head for The Hangout Bar at the hotel, which periodically features in-house musicians, allowing you to further immerse yourself in the sensation of old-school glamour. Upstairs, V

Rooftop Bar—which is the owners’ ode to a vertical garden—does a comparably stellar job as its sister property, offering reasonably priced cocktails as well as a delicious menu: Roasted Tomato Cold Soup; Hummus; Burrata Salad with tomato, fig and roasted almond; Better Than a Burger (pulled pork sandwich); Roasted Codfish À Brás; Tuna Ceviche with red onion pickle; and Roasted Octopus on sweet potato mash.

The Lumières’ Silva also has a hand at The Vintage’s Blue Bar & Restaurant—an all-day offering of locally sourced ingredients transposed into a juicy Sirloin Steak, Cheese Board, Sautéed Spicy Shrimp, and *Orecchiette*, a type of vegetarian pasta with mushrooms, basil pesto, arugula and roasted cashews. And when sated, the luxury attractions of Lisbon are only a five-minute walk away on Avenida de Liberdade, the most expensive real estate in all the country and Lisbon’s grandest boulevard. **RS**



This and facing pages: every element in The Vintage was created in collaboration with local artists, makers and businesses, while its dining establishments serve elevated versions of the local cuisine.



