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The Riads of Morocco as tourist accommodation products: characteristics and potentialities

Los Riads de Marruecos como productos turísticos de alojamiento: características y potencialidades

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Abstract

Riad and dar ‘house’ are frequently confused, but with the following elements, we can tell the difference. Riads are likewise larger and more spacious than dars, although not to the level “ground floor + first floor”, as they are designed for almost four generations of the same family under one roof. Riads feature an exterior façade comprising a blind wall to 8 meters high, completely neutral, with nearly no windows. These Riads were erected to prevent indiscreet eyes from seeing inside. In the middle of the Riad, there is a fountain, richly decorated in zellige ‘tiles’ and carved plaster, surrounded by four separate gardens, containing lemon, fig, mint trees..., giving off a subtle fragrance for the locals. In Morocco, Riads are very common in the old ‘Médinas’. These houses benefit from a very rich history made through its own architecture. They were initially houses of notables, keen to protect the privacy of their families. Nowadays, Riads have been restored for a touristic objective as guest houses where the visitor encounters a comfy area, frozen in another time. Rabat, Meknes, Fez, and Marrakech are the cities that have been nominated for the World Heritage by UNESCO. This list is not complete, but these cities were chosen to expand the Riad phenomenon in the country. In this paper, we will discover the history of the Riads through their architecture giving some examples.

Keywords: Riad, Architecture, Morocco, Médina, Tourist, Morocco

Resumen

A menudo se confunden en la terminología los “riads” y los “dars”, si bien se trata de viviendas tradicionales con sensibles diferencias. Los riads son más grandes y espaciosos que los dars, aunque presentan igualmente una distribución de “planta baja + primer piso”, ya que están diseñados para casi cuatro generaciones de la misma familia bajo un mismo techo. Los Riads presentan una fachada exterior formada por un muro ciego de hasta 8 metros de altura, completamente neutro, sin apenas ventanas. Estos Riads se erigieron para evitar que ojos indiscretos vieran el interior. En el centro del Riad suele disponerse una fuente, ricamente decorada con “azulejos” de zellige y yeso tallado, así como rodeada de cuatro jardines separados que contienen árboles frutales tales como limoneros, higueras, árboles de menta, etc. que desprenden una sutil fragancia para los lugareños. En Marruecos, los Riads son muy comunes en las antiguas “Médinas” y se benefician de una historia muy rica de arquitectura autóctona y

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tradicional. Inicialmente eran casas de notables, deseosos de proteger la intimidad de sus familias. Hoy en día, los Riads han sido restaurados con un objetivo turístico como casas de huéspedes donde el visitante se encuentra con un espacio confortable, a la vez que como sumergido en otra época. Rabat, Meknes, y Fez son las ciudades que han sido nominadas al Patrimonio Mundial por la UNESCO. Esta lista no está completa, pero estas ciudades fueron elegidas para expandir el fenómeno de los Riads en el país. En este artículo descubriremos la historia de los Riads a través de su arquitectura dando algunos ejemplos.

Palabras claves: Riad, Arquitectura, Marruecos, Médina, Turismo, Marruecos

1. Introduction

The Riads had a rebirth under the Saadian rule, as evidenced by the construction of the magnificent Al Badii palace by Ahmed El Mansour's legacy.

In Morocco, in imperial cities, Riad, is a place considered by its own and unique architecture and decoration which have interested the architect before the urban planner, have inspired different artists: poets, writers, and painters with the richness of the designs and heritage that the Riad is adorning till today.

With passing time, these houses have developed into vital components that push the tourist industry forward. This industry is vital to fostering economic and social activities in Morocco, particularly in terms of employment and tourism goals. (Verner, 2005).

Riads are abundant in Morocco's ancient "Médinas". These mansions have a very rich history that has been created via their architecture. Originally, these were residences of notables who wanted to safeguard the secret of their families. Nowadays, Riads have been renovated for a tourism purposes as guest homes where the visitor finds a comfortable environment trapped in time.

Many Moroccan cities, including Marrakesh, Casablanca, Rabat, Essaouira, Tangiers, Tetouan, Chefchaouen, Meknes, and Fez, feature distinctive architectural ensembles and traditional forms of habitat in the Arab-Andalusian style with solid external walls. (Barkouch, 2019).

Doors and ceilings of quality woods such as cedar, light and manicured internal courtyards with fountains, walls covered with tiles and stucco embellishments, corridors of columns that provide access to rooms and gardens that rise semi-covered terraces and roof terraces with panoramic views of the city.

In this paper, we will figure out the history of the Riads and the supplies that make the Riad a real delightful place. Several aspects of the Riads, including as the fountain, wrought-iron gates, represent the artistic heritage in different Moroccan styles used to embellish the Moroccan Riad.

2. The origins of Riads

The origin of the Riad is probably as remote as that of the vast parks and would be a Greco-Roman heritage. The Greeks created a habitat concept centered on a central open area to the sky, which was later passed down to the Punic on the Mediterranean coasts (Menjili-de Corny, 1991).

The Riad, maybe an extension of the 'Dar' or internal patio (Figure 1), was adopted by the people of the earliest Maghrebian cities in the 10th and 11th centuries. According to two famous archaeologists, M.Terrasse and Meunié, the "Riad is an Andalusian work that was brought in Morocco during the reign of Ali Ben Youssef, who supported Andalusian art in Morocco throughout his rule. The oldest Riad in Morocco was his palace in Marrakech, which was built in 1126 and was entirely destroyed to make room for the second Koutoubia" (Meunié et al., 1952).

Figure 1. 'Dar' or internal patio of a "Riad" in Morocco



Source: Author.

Although the Riads of the Muslim West is thought to be the oldest in the world, this assumption should be approached with care, especially following the discovery of Marrakech and Chichaoua: the palace of Ben Youssef is Morocco's oldest Riad. The ruins of a Riad dating from before the Riad of the Alhambra (the oldest in Andalusia) were unearthed at Chichaoua (Menjili-de Corny,1991).

These architectural, decorative, and ceramic remnants give indisputable confirmation of the Riad's Moroccan uniqueness and its presence from the early twelfth century. However, it is unknown if the garden house model (Figure 2) was re-imported from the Muslim West or if the growth of the Maghrebian and Andalusian forms was simultaneous and complimentary.

Although the Almohad buildings were distinguished by simplicity and sobriety, following the Sufi mystics' style, we have discovered some wonderful architecture and ornamentation

during the period of Abu Yacoub Youssef or his son Yacoub El Mansour. The Almohads were thirsty for greenery and beauty, thus they were drawn to gardens and big green areas.

Figure 2. Example of an architectural model of a house-garden in Morocco



Source: Author.

In 1190, Yacoub El Mansour, a wonderful architect, particularly in Marrakech, altered the structure of the Almoravid city by constructing a kasbah (Belhaj Soulami, 2008).

A considerable portion of this kasbah was designated for the caliph's residence, which was lauded by certain historians who coined the term "AR Riad" to describe it. According to De Verdun, the royal complex was built around an inner courtyard with a kiosk garden, a basin, a water fountain, and lofty pavilions overlooking the vastness of Marrakech" (Deverdun, 1959).

The Riads had a renaissance during Saadian control, as demonstrated by the gift of Ahmed El Mansour, who built the beautiful Al Badii palace.

3. The origins of Riads

Riads and dars are frequently confused, but with these elements, we can tell the difference. The Riads are likewise larger and more spacious than the dars, however, they do not surpass the level R+1 (ground floor + first floor) because they are designed to house three, even four, generations of the same family.

These houses stretch back many centuries and are distinguished by their typical architectural decoration and openness on the inside, which provides fresh air and a respite from the stresses of everyday life. The external façade of the Riads is a blind wall 6 to 8 meters high, completely neutral and unattractive, with little or virtually no windows. Originally houses of

notables and bourgeois, keen to protect the closeness of their spouses and dissimulate their riches. (Lee, 2008).

First, the Setwan, a lengthy corridor extending from the entry to the patio, adorned with columns and ornamented with arches, where the owner can meet guests without invading the house's privacy. Then there's the wousted - dar (patio), which is a regularly formed inner courtyard that serves as a source of light and sunlight for the Riad. It's usually bordered on three or four sides by a covered gallery with colonnades to shield the apartments from the sun and rain. A water point (fountain, basin, or bowl) in the center is richly decorated with zelliges and sculpted plaster, surrounded by four squares of gardens separated by paths, composed of lemon trees, orange trees, or fig trees, on carpets of mint, geranium, basil, or jasmine, giving off a subtle refreshing scent for the inhabitants. Finally, a flight of stairs leads to the terrace. It's a meeting place for neighbors to talk and exchange secrets, as well as a place to do household tasks (Cimadomo, 2018).

The façades facing the garden are adorned with wood and colored glass. In the middle of the house, there is a square courtyard that is typically paved with zelliges or marble and has a marble water basin.

Then there are the first-floor rooms, all of which open into the terrace. These are typically reception rooms, with sturdy walls, shallow but extremely broad, highly adorned, high painted or carved wood ceilings, and defended by magnificent twin carved wood doors. (El Harrouni et al., 2016).

The guests are greeted in the Bahou (alcove), a type of reinforcement constructed into the thickness of the wall next to the room entrance and outfitted with benches on three sides. As a result, the owner can see what is going on inside from the terrace. Because these rooms aren't connected, you'll have to traverse the courtyard to go from one to the other. Service areas (kitchen, bathroom, etc.), are typically in the corners.

There are the bedrooms, which are accessible by small, self-turning stairs. They protect the privacy of its inhabitants and are adorned to reflect the significance of the person who occupies them. (Attou, 2019).

4. Decorative motifs

The decorative elements are the foundation that completes and enhances the architecture of the Riads. The existence measures their interest and importance and finesse when decorating the Riads. They result from ancestral techniques inherited from father to son, the fruit of love and an unequalled passion for art and beauty, born of skillful hands, combining respect for traditions with imagination and creativity.

As a result, many ornamental methods are utilized in historic houses, and their usage has recently expanded to modern buildings.

The Riad is a piece of art created by numerous skilled artisans that need talent, taste, and years of expertise.

4.1. Tadelakt

Tadelakt is an old method that goes back to the eleventh century. Tadelakt is a fairly expensive ornamental coating used for the front of Riads, Mediterranean palaces, but also to cover the walls of hammams exposed to water, as well as fountains, bathtubs, basins, and sinks (Macas, 2017).

The tadelakt is a natural and environmentally friendly product; it is a colorful lime coating that can be put to the ground both inside and outside, protecting the walls from dampness while adding brightness to the inside of the house (El Amrani et al., 2018).

Aside from covering the walls of water rooms, tadelakt may properly replace tiling in a bathroom, it can be colored with natural pigments and used in all areas, from the ground to the ceiling, inside and out. It can be used in all rooms, from the ground to the ceiling, inside and outside (Defraire and Minne, 2003).

4.2. The bejmat

The Bejmat is a Moroccan handicraft floor covering made of rectangular and ceramic tiles arranged in a geometric pattern. It is a type of outdoor flooring that is commonly found in Riad alleyways (De Santis and Innocenzi 2020).

The Bejmat, as part of the Zellige distinctive Moorish style, is regarded as an art form having a considerable effect on western decorating, a method that has remained unchanged for millennia. It was utilized as pavement stone in the 10th century and was rectangular. Initially, in white and terracotta colors alone, it was later enhanced with a colorful palette in the 14th century. The range comprises nine shaded colors, six decors, and two forms to decorate entrances, patios, fireplaces, countertops, backsplashes, pools, and any living area while maintaining the original concept while reimagining the design for a real market (Istassen, 2019).

4.3. The Moroccan stucco

The word stucco refers to an inert substance derived from plaster stone but treated to a higher firing temperature; it does not react when in contact with water and must be employed with a binder or lime mixes (Rubio Domene, 2008).

The contemplative stucco, which has been used since the 13th century, allows for the creation of a wide range of patterns, typically in lace, with some reaching diameters of 200cm. It is important to adopt the posture on adapted furniture for the Moroccan lounge cut to have its significance. This work incorporates architecture, contemplation, and well-being. The abstract nature of the motifs catching the attention of the eye without tying it down, and meditation and inner calm are achieved (Balbas, 1955). The new plaster is molded quickly with a chisel while stencils are used to treat the essential areas.

When we talk about stucco, we are talking to both the natural rock (gypsum) and the substance manufactured industrially. This is the foundation for the majority of Muslim ornamentation, often known as baked plaster. The action of heat causes the diversity of various phases and allotropic states of stucco; gypsum, when heated to temperatures: 120°C loses all or part of the water of crystallization and then becomes suitable for usage (Rubio Domene, 2008).

This material yields mainly two versions that, depending on their components, exhibit the various stucco tones (white, yellow, pink, and black):

- White stucco manufactured from high-purity stones must include at least 66 percent semi-hydrate. This unsifted white stucco is made from plaster stones such as "Alabastro" or "Espejuelo."

- Black stucco, coarser and darker, is made by calcining impure plaster stones. It typically includes around 50 to 60 percent of its weight as semi-hydrated and accompanied by anhydrite, besides the ash and residues of combustion gases owing to preparation in primitive furnaces (Balbas, 1955).

4.4. The zelliges

One of the Moroccan craftsmanship decorations is the Zellige. It is the essence of traditional Moroccan ornamentation. The zellige, which has been used in Morocco since the 10th century, is a clay tile enameled clay tile with a design that replicates the geometric assembly of mosaics laid.

The Zellige decorates the walls and floors of all Moroccan homes, and it is also used in the construction of houses, mosques, Riads, and even hammams (Tazi and Brigui, 2019).

The Zellige features is a square form with changeable dimensions and vivid colors that allow you to multiply the compositions indefinitely. It is also employed in furniture, adding a touch of uniqueness and beauty to tables, mirrors, fountains, and other wrought iron furniture, which the mosaics complement perfectly.

Zellige is a Moroccan architectural feature that has been adapted to many kinds of modern decorating while maintaining handmade production standards. Although many places in Morocco work on Zellige, the image of Fez remains symbolically connected to this art, which has been influenced by the Moors of Andalusia who lived in this city during its growth (Tazi and Brigui, 2019).

4.5. The moucharabieh

The Moucharabieh is an openwork partition that allows for forced natural ventilation and is commonly utilized in Arab traditional architecture (El-Wakil, 2013) (Figure 3).

The decrease in the surface area caused by the mesh of the Moucharabieh speeds up the flow of the wind. The wind comes into contact with moist surfaces, basins, or dishes filled with water, which disperse their freshness throughout the home (El Jaouhari et al., 2015).

The Moucharabieh is frequently seen in palaces beside secret entrances leading to antechambers. Its origins may be traced back to Islamic construction, and they primarily meant it to conceal ladies from public view. The mMucharabieh, which is often constructed of small turned wooden components arranged according to a mathematical pattern that is frequently complicated, forms a tight grid with which the windows, loggias, and balconies are lined. This method, which is also employed in the manufacturing of furniture, is also known (El Jaouhari et al., 2015).

Figure 3. Example of "Moucharabieh" in a Riad with traditional architecture



Source: Author.

5. Between pleasure and functionality

The openings contribute to the thermal balance of the house: - The glass windows, which bring a little heat in winter because of a greenhouse effect, especially when they are oriented south and that the winter days are sunny days (Fédération des Agences Urbaines du Maroc 'MAJAL', 2016):

- The big double doors enable for the preservation of a comfortable thermal environment while closed in winter and open in summer.

- The Chemassiyats, which are built of plaster and are frequently positioned high up, ensure the passage of air and light.

- Openwork panels used as a boundary between rooms, with the rooms, or with the outdoors help to ventilate while filtering light.

Notably, at the roof level, are of decreased size, indicating that they are primarily air intake points, allowing for forcing and speeding the ventilation of the residence (Fédération des Agences Urbaines du Maroc 'MAJAL, 2016)

The holes in the ceiling enable heated air to escape, making a place for fresh air. Incorporating domes in certain rooms allows, on the one hand, to cool rising hot air. The dome incorporates zenithal illumination when a particular number of requirements are met.

The patio home is ideally suited to the temperature of hot and semi-arid countries because of its construction and organization. The patio creates a microclimate within the house by acting as a buffer space between the interior and exterior of the house, especially during the hot season (Madoeuf, 2016).

Because the sun's rays that reach the ground immediately heat the home, it was important to consider ways to moderate the heat inside the structures:

The rooms that flank the patio have a high ceiling, which allows heated air to ascend and be evacuated through vents in the top portion, making room for fresh air that arrives from the patio.

The cold air that collects on the patio at night pushes the warm air up, keeping the house cool for an extended period (Adie, 2020).

The skifa (awning) forms a covered area around the patio, protecting it from direct sun exposure (Hameed, 1991).

6. Riad: as a touristic habitat

Many Moroccan cities, including Marrakesh, Casablanca, Rabat, Essaouira, Tangiers, Tetouan, Chefchaouen, Meknes, and Fez, have distinct architectural ensembles and traditional forms of habitat, such as Riads, Arab-Andalusian-style dwellings with solid exterior walls.

Quality cedar doors and ceilings, light and groomed interior courtyards with fountains, walls covered in tiles and stucco embellishments, hallways of columns that offer access to rooms and gardens that rise semi-covered terraces and roof terraces with panoramic views of the city (Abdelaziz, & Mouhsine, 2020) (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Typical “Riad” converted to tourist use.



Source: Author.

By the 1980s, the new generation of families preferred to migrate to contemporary homes, such as colonial-era or new urban development regions. As a result, all of this architectural heritage, which had been depreciated and abandoned by a large portion of Morocco's upper classes, gradually was valued from a very different perspective by small and medium-sized real estate developers, mostly of European origin and, in particular, French, who saw new possibilities for residential and tourist use in the 1990s.

Thus began a process of architectural rehabilitation, not always successful, and of social, economic, and functional transformation of these Riads, which have been converted into restaurants, tourist lodgings, and holiday or permanent residences for foreigners eager to find themselves in exotic and oriental environments yet organized to satisfy with guarantees all the daily needs and desires (Leroux, 2009).

During the last few years, there has been a surge in interest and curiosity about these types of properties, with many being rebuilt and restored as hotels or restaurants, reviving many crafts and artisan industries. The Dar may appear similar to the Riad because of its arrangement, but the major distinction is that they are simpler buildings.

A Riad is a classic Moroccan home or castle with a garden or courtyard on the inside. Riads are completely sealed off from the outer world by towering, austere, and unyielding walls. They often feature as few holes as possible in order to provide maximum protection from heat and noise. The majority are in Moroccan towns' medinas (old quarters).

The recent evolution of inbound tourism in Morocco, from a model, centered on the hotel offer, characterized by a notable abundance of high category and luxury establishments, to a residential type of tourism, with the appearance of new modern residential complexes and the rehabilitation and transformation of traditional habitat: the medinas of several historic cities.

This process, which is embedded in the framework of global capitalism and huge private investments on a worldwide scale, also entails a shift and diversification of Moroccan tourist

demand, both foreign and domestic, with tangible economic, social, and territorial repercussions (Boukherouk et al., 2020).

Similarly, all of these serves as a material foundation for addressing the growth of the imaginaries and socio-spatial representations on which Morocco's contemporary tourist promotion is built, particularly in terms of cultural and urban tourism (López Lara, 2005).

7. Results : Riads Stories

The central patios in Andalusian architecture, which are typically used as living and eating rooms, are the most significant and eye-catching element of the Riads. The Riads were built inwards to provide additional privacy and shelter from the Moroccan environment. In most cases, the inner garden or center courtyard expresses this inward orientation, as do the lack of enormous windows in the external walls, which are often made of mud or brick. The center area is accessible from all rooms. A fountain, adobe, or rammed earth walls, and tadelakt plaster and tiles are common in the center garden of classic Riads (Benjelloun, & Tazi 2020).

Here we will discover the case of five different Riads: One in Meknes, 'Le colier de la colombe : 'Tawq al hamama (in Arabic) ', two in Rabat, 'Riad Kalaa' and 'Riad Dar Zouhour' and then two in Fez, 'Riad Laaroussa' and 'Palais Amani'.

7.1. Meknes : Le collier de la colombe : 'Tawq al hamama'

<http://lecollierdelacolombe.com/>

The Necklace of the Dove (Tawq al-hamma in Arabic) is an eleventh-century literary work composed by Ibn Hazm in Arabic about 1023 while he was living in Xàtiva, Valencia, Spain. It is a book of meditation on the actual nature of love, seeking to understand what it has in common and remains constant across eras and cultures. It is a diwan, or lyrical anthology, about love.

The name "Necklace of the Dove" is given to the place that was just a restaurant before, and it was kept so when the Riad was open.

The Riad was owed by a one of the Moroccan sultans. On the ground floor, there is a Moroccan living room with genuine sofas and colorful curtains. In the way to the first floor, we notice the presence of the Zelliges which is authentic from Meknes, mixing two colors: white and green, and the windows are multicolored (Iraqi glasses) overlooks the natural light that bright inside the Riad with different colors.

The ceiling is done with fresh plaster and decorated traditional motifs and patterns, which measure 8 meters from the ground. The pillars too are very attractive with their shapes and decoration. Most them are white and mixed with other colors or with Moroccan colorful Zelliges.

On the first floor, there is another Moroccan living room; the colors of the sofa are very warm in a traditional model. To bring out the beauty of the fresh stucco plaster, the wall was painted in art deco light brown, and the plaster itself repainted in white to notice it.

The rooms are adorned with the traditional items: chandelier, lampshade, ceiling, carpet. The bronze color presents a little in all the room. In the bathroom, we find some traditional

Zelliges, and tadelakt techniques on the walls. On the patio, we can find some customary puffs, mirrors, jars, and other objects recalling the traditional area where we find ourselves.

In the rooms, we can benefit from a pleasant view to the medina of Meknes city via an exquisite terrace with Moroccan traditional Zelliges on the floor. The windows are done with wrought iron, Stucco work, and “Iraqi glasses” which are window glasses, as well as a hand-painted cedar door. There are some little tables of wood done with tazaoukt mode, which is an old traditional technique to design tables or anything done from wood.

There are some niches on the wall that leave the beauty of the pottery items bright and give a Moroccan touch.

7.2. Rabat : Riad Kalaa

<http://www.riadkalaa.com/>

This former notable residence, which dates from 1815, is a real traditional Riad with 11 rooms and suites. The owners discovered the Riad by coincidence in 2004 and it has since found a second life. It is a treasure of Arab-Andalusian architecture that has been extensively restored and embellished using Moroccan artisan skills. It is well equipped with all the contemporary conveniences necessary for the comfort of its visitors (Figure 5).

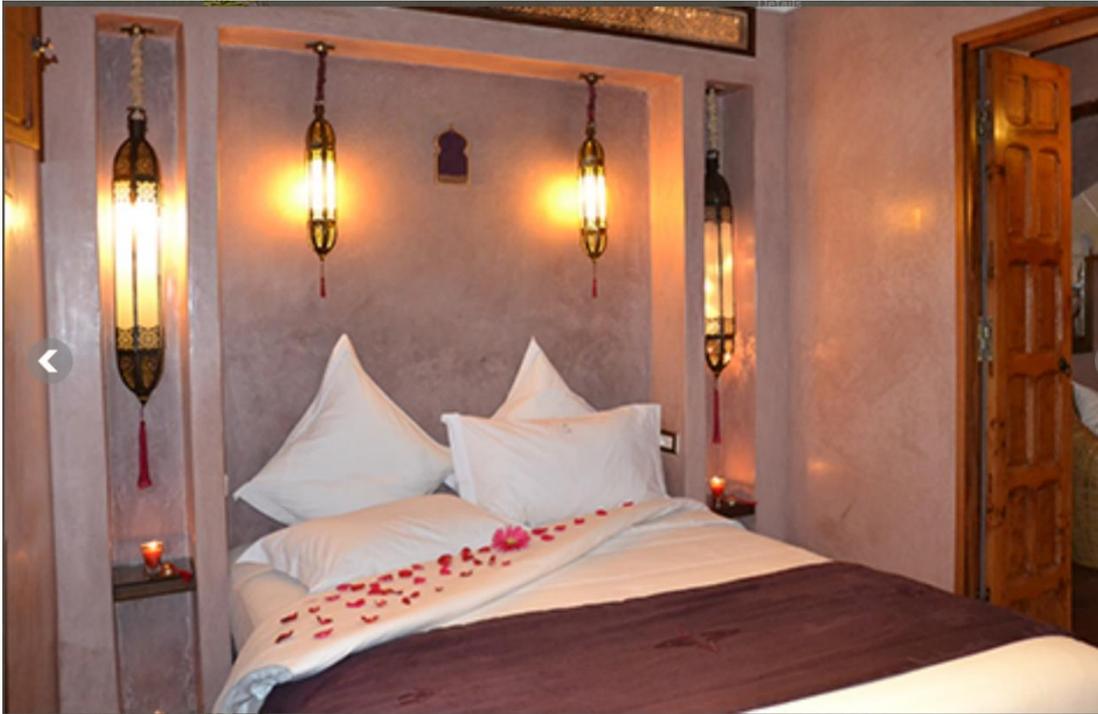
Besides its rooms and suites, this hotel's Andalusian patio, 400m² of terraces with trees and a swimming pool, spa hammam, and restaurant offering authentic Moroccan cuisine set it apart from the rest of Rabat. Decorated with a Moroccan style and some modern items to shine its uniqueness.

Inside the rooms, some ceilings are done with wood, the walls with tadelakt or with rectangular stone giving it a special beauty. We find also some of the wall lights that gives a delicate touch to the room.

In the bathroom, we find some marble for the washbasin, tadelakt in the wall, and traditional Zelliges on the ground.

In other rooms, we find the walls in Bejmat, the ceiling is very tall in wood. In the window, we can find wrought iron. The luster is typically Moroccan style.

Figure 5. Oriental Suite of the Riad Kalaa (Rabat)



Source: <http://www.riadkalaa.com/>

7.3. Rabat : Riad Dar Zouhour

<http://www.riaddarzouhour.com/>

The Riad is about 150 years old. Before going to the rooms, there is a little corner with a Moroccan style warm colors between green and orange, giving a pleasant touch to the tiny place. Some postcards are shown to recall the old Rabat and a painting helping to remember the old fantasia of Morocco (Figure 6 and 7). The plaster is retouched for a decoration target and the ceiling is done by wood for a more intimate and temperate place.

Here the rooms have special doors, original from the Riad before the restoration. Inside of the room, there is Moroccan traditional zelliges in the walls, the ceiling is done by woods too.

Figure 6. Riad Dar Zouhour in Rabat



Source: Author.

In the bathroom, we can find a bathtub did with tadelakt, and Moroccan Zelliges. In other rooms, the nightstand lamp is decorated with the hand of Fatima's motif and Amazigh pattern. The night table is done with a traditional mode and the headboard with wrought iron.

At the back of the room, we find a painting done with Moroccan Zelliges to differentiate from the tadelakt manner present in all room. We find also wall niches decorated with Moroccan items and light. There are some tiny fountains inside of the Riad done with colorful Zelliges and traditional style to highlight its charm.

Figure 6. Riad Dar Zouhour in Rabat



Source: Author.

7.4. Fez: Riad Laaroussa

<https://riad-laaroussa.com/>

The Riad Laaroussa was most likely built in the 16th century. It has lived many lives, and we are now researching its storied past. It was once held by the Minister of War, Mehdi Mnebbi, during the reign of Sultan Moulay Abdelaziz (1894- 1908).

Mnebbi was the sole person who owned the entire block. The Riad was recently (about 1960) used as a Coranic school. The current owner bought it in 2005 from a local family whose business was to make “khlii”, a beloved local delicacy (dried meat, with salt and spices cooked and stored in a mix of oil and fat).

A team of 50 people worked for 18 months to restore the Riad to its former grandeur and turn it into a boutique hotel with 8 rooms and suites. Riad Laaroussa initially opened its doors in late 2006.

The rooms in this Riad respect the Moroccan style and decoration approach. The walls have some niches where the light is soft and dim. In the bathroom, we find tadelakt and brickwork, and a painted wood ceiling. The floor stayed as it was with Moroccan and traditional Zelliges.

In some rooms, we find a tiny fireplace desk. The terrace gives a delightful view of the courtyard. The Bejmat is used in some cases in the rooms. The plaster is authentic, giving value to the unique place, the Riad. In some beds, we find a recall to the forged iron that gives a special charm to the decoration. Doors are original and classic.

7.5. Fez: Palais Amani

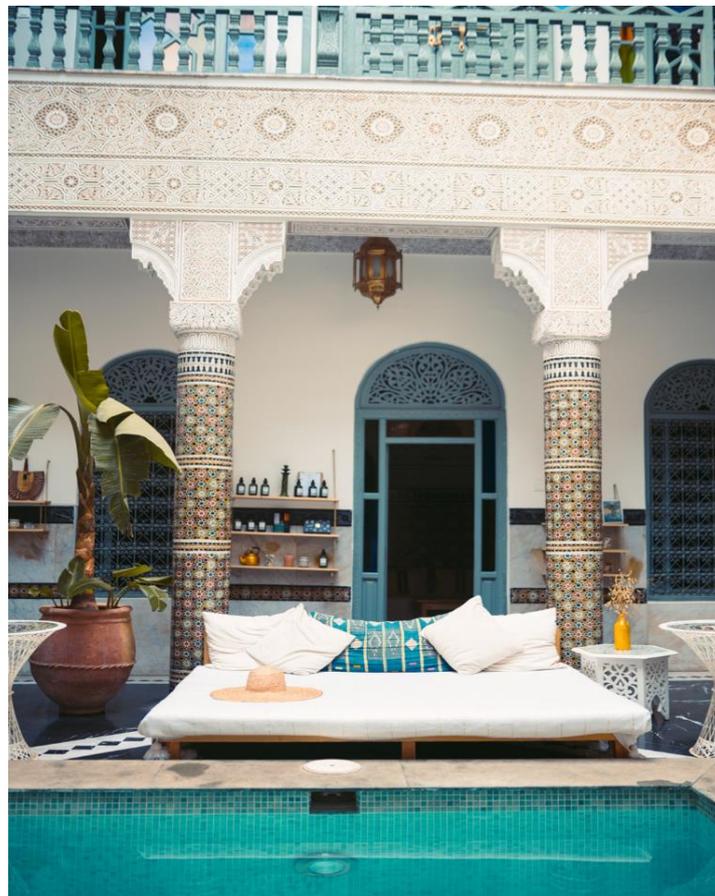
<https://www.palaisamani.com/about-palais-amani-hotel-fez-morocco/>

From the Iraqi stained glass windows to the Moroccan tiling, the architecture of Palais Amani shows its diverse heritage. With eighteen rooms and suites situated around beautiful gardens, a culinary restaurant, a complete luxury hammam and massage facilities, and home to the famed Fez Cooking School, Palais Amani is a Riad that merges the traditional modes of Moroccan living and the modernity to facilitate the journey to the visitors and tourists.

The Palais Amani proprietors stated, "We bought the historic mansion of one of Fez's most known families fourteen years ago, which had been abandoned and rotting in the heart of the Medina for over a quarter-century." The property was restored to its former grandeur after four years of work, exposing countless stories of family, history, and heritage.

The rooms in Palais Amani are colorful. The modernity and the traditional items are very linked. From the ground, where the traditional Zellige is visible till the ceiling is done from wood and the windows with wrought iron or the Iraqi glasses style. The night light is recalling the old Arab style. The vases are present in some rooms, the blue Zellige is decorating the walls too.

Figure 7. Palais Amani in Fez.



Source: Author.

8. Conclusions

One of the major characteristics of the Riads is their layout, which is reminiscent of old Berber buildings. All the rooms of the house are built around a patio that houses a garden, a fountain. The rooms all have single access from the inner courtyard.

Among Morocco's riches are stunning walled Riad buildings. The Riads, which are modeled after traditional Arab-Muslim homes, includes a fountain, are closed on the exterior, and are structured around a central patio.

The facades overlooking the garden are adorned with wood and tinted glass to provide a nice transition between the reception rooms and the garden.

Nowadays, the Riads are more considered as touristic houses and hotels for their charm. Riads could maintain their original soul, paved with zelliges or marble, which contains a marble water basin. An orange or lemon tree is frequently planted in this courtyard to provide a touch of greenery.

When the French traveler Jean Moquet visited Marrakech in 1606, he was astounded by the very large size of this "city," noting the low, small, and poorly built mud houses, the large houses with their terraces and towers, and the sultan's palace made of small stones with its numerous marble columns and fountains. He particularly loved the Mechouer of the Sultan's Palace, and he saw very magnificent Moorish-style structures with fountains, water jets shooting from marble basins, and orange and lemon trees.

At the heart of this transformation of the old Médina, many newly constructed Riads, as attractive as any of the médina's architecture. The rooms are quite wide, but not deep, and get their light and ventilation by the courtyard. The rooms, kitchens, and bathrooms are systematically placed in the corners of the plan, keeping them at a distance from the primary space. Usually, the constructions do not exceed the level R+1.

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