

Hotel review: Hospes Palacio del Bailio

Unwind surrounded by orange trees and roman ruins in a Córdoba hotel that makes the most of its ancient setting.



White walls are offset by velvet sofas and contemporary lighting

Entering Hospes Palacio del Bailio is rather like strolling into an art gallery. A predominance of crisp, cool white offset by deep velvet sofas and immense contemporary light fittings work surprisingly well in the ancient palace.

As we check-in, we're brought chilled glasses of passionfruit juice, and presented with keys attached to heavy swirls of silken metal, demonstrating an attention to detail that's evident throughout.

Even the most basic rooms have double beds, flat screen TVs, and bathrooms boasting an impressive range of luxury toiletries from lip balm to facial cleansing bars. As we walk across the glass floor of the main courtyard to the Senzone Restaurant

and Tapas Bar, we spy the remains of a roman villa, four and a half metres below.

These ruins are dramatically illuminated after nightfall, making this an exquisite setting for a pre-dinner aperitif, reclining across yet more of the richly upholstered sofas that we find throughout the hotel.

Unfortunately a packed schedule prevents us from indulging in the Bodyna Spa facilities, though we glimpse the outdoor pool surrounded by orange trees in one of the four original courtyards.

However, when we return late in the evening, the sheets have been turned down and sachets of bath salts left to ensure we relax as fully as possible. Attention to detail is a wonderful thing.

JUDY DARLEY



Even the most basic rooms have double beds

Palacio del Bailio, once a 16th-century palace, nestles within the narrow streets of Córdoba's ancient heart with the city's treasures within easy walking distance.

Its designer rooms and chic spaces offer a relaxing sanctuary, made even better by secluded courtyards, an Andalusian garden with swimming pool and deck, an intimate tapas bar and a smart restaurant.

With quality linens and wireless internet in the suites, together with rainforest-style showers and classy toiletries in the bathrooms, you feel thoroughly cosseted. However, don't expect a view of the city, as the palace is a typically Moorish design,

with rooms looking towards the courtyards.

The spa is not up to the 5-star quality of the rest of the hotel, but it is still a welcome treat after walking the many sights of the city. There is little to disappoint, except for the lack of a CD music player in the room, though we found front desk lacked the sharp organisation of most 5-star establishments.

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day and at Palacio del Bailio, this is no exception. A flawless selection of Spanish and international flavours are immaculately and exquisitely presented, complemented by fresh espresso coffee, fruit juices and teas.

Heaven doesn't come cheap, of course, and as well as the room prices it's worth being way of room service prices. Our two vodka and tonic aperitifs arrived with a bill of over €35. I was glad for a stiff drink to take the edge of the shock of the price!

ANDREW FORBES



One of the hotel's secluded courtyards