

MAJESTIC 100

Yvonne Gordon checks into Barcelona's original luxury hotel, the Majestic Hotel & Spa.



There's something about strolling Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia that evokes the spirit of the past – you can almost picture its original 19th-century residents walking along the wide boulevard, which is lined with leafy trees, rows of old street lamps and elegant buildings with tall, shuttered windows and ornate balconies overlooking the street below.

Here too sit some of the city's most striking Modernista constructions – the playful Casa Batlló townhouse, a Gaudí masterpiece with its tiled mosaics and mask-shaped balconies; its Neo-Gothic neighbour, the colourful Casa Amatller by Puig i Cadafalch, and of course Gaudí's Casa Milà – nicknamed “La Pedrera” – with its curvy exterior and playful rooftop chimneys.

The avenue, which takes its name from the Gràcia district and stretches a mile from there to Plaça Catalunya, Barcelona's main square, has become home to modern-day luxury fashion brands and Michelin-starred restaurants. But it's here, on a corner, that a grande dame from the past still sits proudly. The 100-year old Majestic Hotel

& Spa, Barcelona's first luxury hotel, has welcomed all sorts of guests, from royalty to musicians, movie stars and artists, since it opened in 1918 and this year it celebrates its centenary in style.

It's from the rooftop pool and restaurant La Dolce Vitae, that I first appreciate the hotel's location over a leisurely lunch. The city is pleasantly low-rise so vistas stretch to both the sea and mountains as well as the famous spires of the yet unfinished Gaudí creation, Sagrada Família. In my spacious, two-room junior suite on the fourth floor (45 of the hotel's 271 rooms are suites), I have a 40-square-metre space well equipped with everything from a marble bathroom with a rainshower to a Nespresso coffee machine, king-size bed and fancy toiletries from Atelier Cologne (which they even mist in the corridors and leave samples at turn-down). Best of all, I can throw open the balcony doors and take in the sounds of the street: the chat from people sitting outdoors, mixed with birdsong and the hum of cars and scooters, while the buildings across the avenue take on a pink hue in the evening sun.

The Majestic Hotel & Spa has a longstanding connection to the art world and its impressive

*i*Hola gorgeous! Double rooms at the Majestic Hotel & Spa cost from €289 per night. hotelmajestic.es

1,000-piece collection of paintings and sculptures is on display throughout the property. The artist Joan Miró visited regularly to study a painting by Modest Urgell in the lobby, and the hotel now has a partnership with the Miró Foundation (fmirobcn.org), helping to raise funds to restore a Miró tapestry and also offering guided tours of his birthplace, Mont-roig del Camp, and former home, El Mas Miró, to guests.

Catalonian cuisine is honoured at the new first-floor Restaurant Solc, with chefs selecting produce from the hotel's own farm in Maresme just a few kilometres' away from the hotel, and local fish and meat suppliers, to create dishes such as l'Escala anchovies with seaweed bread, or red prawn and rockfish casserole with saffron gnocchi, paired with wine from the Alta Alella Winery. Every Friday, there's a centenary menu with dishes from 100 years ago, such as consommé and filet mignon. It's a nice nod to the past for a stylish hotel that is ready for another 100 years. 🍀

WHAT TO PACK



The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafón (Orion), €12.60 at eason.com



Heeled Suede Strap Sandal, €79 at stories.com

Buttoned Shirt Dress, €39.95 at zara.com



Marni Trunk Leather Shoulder Bag, €1,390 at brownthomas.com



Silk Shirt with Asymmetric Hem, €99 at cosstores.com



Atelier Cologne, Musc Impérial (30ml), €80 including leather case, from Hotel Majestic & Spa



Poppy Visor sunglasses, €20 at topshop.com