



Dar l'Oussia Essaouira



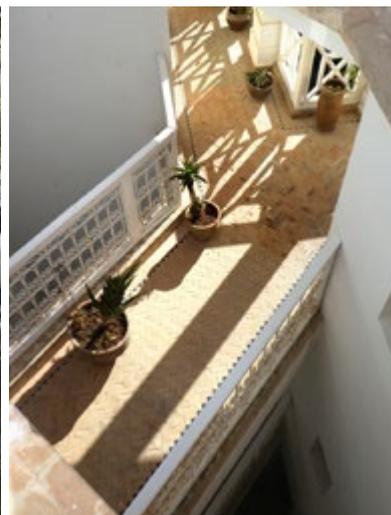
and Portuguese architecture, Hotel

Dar L'Oussia has been a caravanserai, a grain warehouse and a range of commercial premises before it was bought in 1949 by the father of the current owner, Yves Pélissier, to create a family home. After the family's return to France in 1955 the building was occupied until 1977, after which it fell into a bad state of repair, but in 2000 a restoration began under the guidance of Mr Pélissier to create the exquisite hotel you see now.

When I arrived the previous evening the weather had been unseasonably cold for April, but a hot shower and snuggle under a thick duvet in a room of warm reds and low lamps for a short nap set me up for dinner in an arcaded restaurant warmed by an open fireplace. Soft lighting, low conversation, attentive but not overwhelming service, with a small but varied menu settled me in. Had the weather been better I could have dined in the courtyard, but the ambience of the dining room suited my feeling of drowsy relaxation. I could do the walk-around and beach scene tomorrow.

Breakfast on the roof of Dar l'Oussia is delightful, with views to the left across the broad sweep of the beach as it curves into the distance and ahead over the stalwart towers of the 17th century walls that safeguard the port. The roof-top restaurant is glistening white with lots of open spaces to lounge under a vivid blue sky. The view across the beach tempts me to take a stroll. I live in mountain-locked Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand, 500 miles from the nearest beach. I haven't seen sea or sand for three years, the temptation is irresistible.

In a city that is a delicious blend of French, Berber



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