

Spain's new new architectural hotel gems

Spain has long been known for its architectural exuberance. Buildings in Madrid and Barcelona have long stood at the forefront of modern architecture. These days, the hotel business in Spain is a new point of competition for architects with some of the most daring retro and leading edge buildings being built as upscale hotels.

Here is an overview from Spanish Tourism about this emerging trend.

Inspired by the artistry of three of Spain's most-visited cities — Barcelona, Madrid and Malaga — architects have created distinctive hotel properties that represent the forward edge of building design.



In the city where Antoni Gaudí introduced the world to creative modernism, an architectural movement that knew no boundaries beyond his imagination the new Mandarin Oriental stands as another architectural standout. Surrounded by Gaudí masterpieces such as the Casa Batlló with its fabulous façade, La Pedrera, and the astonishing unfinished Sagrada Familia church this new hotel heralds a retro feel with state of the art technology.

The Mandarin Oriental on the Passeig de Gràcia, is situated in an elegant mid-20th century former bank building, with a highly-stylized interior by Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola that reflects the Mandarin's Oriental high-level luxury heritage.

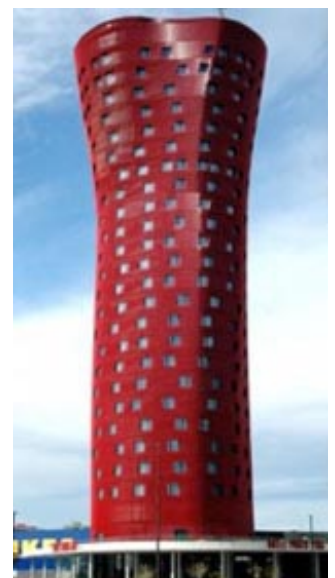
Many of the 98 guest rooms have enviable views either over Passeig de Gràcia or the garden; some guestrooms have balconies from which to admire the surrounding modernist façades. Guestrooms are outfitted with fiber optic technology, laptops and printers on request.

The 34-seat restaurant Moments is under the direction of chef Carme Ruscalleda, one of the few women to be honored with a total of five Michelin stars for her restaurants. Her other establishments are in Sant Pol, Catalonia (three stars) and Tokyo (two stars). With the finest dining the Mandarin Oriental also offers a world-class spa with eight treatment rooms and a rooftop plunge pool and the landscaped garden that provides a sanctuary of relaxation.

Set in one of Barcelona's business district near the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya and not far from the Placa d'Espanya, the 320-room Hotel Porta Fira's curvilinear red, organic tower is placed inside a translucent prism.

Designed by award-winning Toyo Ito, who is also responsible for another Barcelona property, The Suites Avenue, an Epoque Hotel in the Passeig de Gracia neighborhood, in front of Gaudí's La Pedrera.

Chic and enormously stylish Barcelona sets a dramatic stage for the renowned Barcelona-born architect Ricardo Bofill's leading-edge design for the W Barcelona, an icon of stunning architecture that rises high above the Mediterranean in what might well be the most dynamic corner of the city at Nova Bocana where the Barceloneta beach boardwalk begins. This hotel has been referred to as where Miró meets the Mediterranean.



In Madrid, those attracted to a sleek and exclusive urban experience should consider the Eurostars Madrid Tower Hotel that takes up the first 31 floors of the impressive SyV Torre building that forms part of the new commercial center known as the Cuatro Torres Business Area. The area is still under construction but when finished will be the International Conventions Centre of the City of Madrid (CICCM).

Natural lighting affords every bedroom a panoramic view of Spain's capital city. Dine on the 30th floor of the Hotel where Jennifer Cole, an American Chef, recognized as the best female chef in Madrid, presides over the black and white restaurant.

History distinguishes the Hotel Vincci Posada del Patio in Málaga in the midst of Andalusia. This hotel is literally built upon archeological discoveries – including well-preserved remains of the Málaga Arab Wall, vestiges of the former River Gate, an old tannery and several objects displayed throughout the hotel. The hotel is built on a site corresponding to two former buildings — one of the last old inns that existed in Málaga and, an early 19th century building with its facade intact. Enjoy a breathtaking view of the ancient wall through the café's glass floor, while sipping from a select menu of coffees.

