

In the Media & Testimonials

Forward Magazine This Old House...

Beit Rumman

The owner of Beit Rumman, another boutique hotel, challenges those who say that investment in the old city is for commercial reasons only. He spoke to Forward saying, "When I bought this house in 2004, I first thought of transforming it into a cultural or artistic saloon, but soon realized that the premises does not satisfy my needs." Beit Rumman is another Damascene home in the heart of the Bab Touma neighborhood, which now has luxury rooms of different identity, dating back to the Islamic, Mamluk, and Ottoman era, each with its distinct decoration. Accompanying the decorations are writings from the Holy Quran and the Holy Bible, along with Islamic calligraphy. The owner explained, "Our customer is from a certain social standing, who pays a hefty amount of money to get to know Damascus. We give the customer a feeling as if he or she is living in their own home. Those who head to a 5-star hotel do so to spend a night, while those to come to a hotel like ours do so in order to discover every corner of this city, its religious, cultural, and historical angles."

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Financial Times

Beit Rumman, a cool hotel in Damascus (Old City)

The FT's travel editor Rahul Jacob says that Beit Rumman is the smallest boutique hotel in Damascus and also the "prettiest." Concerning Syria, he comments, "Syria is in vogue today because it offers citadels that look as if they might be a stage set for yet another film about the Crusades. The competing muezzins' calls to prayer sound as if they were still the voice of Bilal, picked by the Prophet Muhammad for his mellifluous voice." Read more about touring Syria in the attached Financial Times articles.

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Syria Comment Old Damascus – Restored or ...? Beit Rumman as an Example

The boutique

hotel in old Damascus pictured above, gets wonderful write ups, and typifies the handful of new hotels that have opened in the old city last year. The renovation process took years to complete. A crew of skilled artisans from Maaloula polished every stone and chiseled new ones to replace those that had been lost. The central fountain and mosaics were restored with great care, new plumbing, electricity and carved woodwork was put in. The owners spent every weekend trolling the souq for old antiques to adorn the six luxurious rooms and piano bar and sauna in the basement. They oversaw every aspect of the restoration. hiring an art historian and a super architect to return the house to its 19th century glory. Newly carved wood ceilings were installed in each room and elaborately painted according to original Ottoman styles and patterns.

It is hard to imagine the amount of work and love that goes into

restoring one of these hotels. Read more... The National The Old City goes boutique---Kelvin Chan It used to be that travellers to Damascus, who after spending a rewarding day in the ancient and atmospheric quarters of the Old City, had little choice but to leave at night to find a comfortable bed. All that is changing; boutique hotels are springing up all over the Old City, run by entrepreneurial Syrians who are rediscovering its romantic, faded charm. They're rescuing dilapidated Ottoman-era houses and turning them into luxurious guesthouses showcasing the best of Syrian craftsmanship and artistry. It's a change that's only hinted at in some of the newest guidebooks. The most recent Lonely Planet guide only lists three boutique hotels within the Old City, for example, and all were fully booked when I was planning a recent trip. However, one Sunday afternoon spent scouring the internet introduced me to the Beit Rumman, a newly-renovated guesthouse in the Old City's Christian Quarter that had one room still available. After a long journey by car from Amman, my wife and I were warmly greeted by the Beit Rumman's staff who handed us glasses of pomegranate juice as we flopped onto a couch in the hotel's quiet inner courtyard. The hotel's name translates into English as pomegranate house. Read more... Syria Today The House of Pomegranates---Beit Rumman, an intimate and discrete six-bedroom boutique hotel in the Old City of Damascus, is the latest Beit Arabi to be brought back to life. This 17th-century Bab Touma home has been lovingly coaxed back to its former glory over a four-and-a-half-year period. The result is an exquisite showcase of traditional Damascene craftsmanship and architecture, giving visitors an insight into the Syrian life of old. Beit Rumman's owners, who asked to remain anonymous, said their goal was to restore, rather than renovate, the property, preserving the historical importance of the house as an example of Damascus' heritage. It didn't take craftsmen working on the project long to discover a number of hidden treasures. Under layers of cement and paint lay riches such as delicate stone mosaics and ablaq masonry, a technique traditional to Syria in which alternating bands of light and dark stone (in this case white, black and yellow) are used. Each of Beit Rumman's (Pomegranate House) traditionally decorated bedrooms feature the original arches, hand-made ceramics (kishani), intricate hand-painted ceilings, shell-designed doors and moucharabieh (carved wooden latticework) designs. Read more... Lara Dunston, A self-confessed "perpetual globetrotter" has written more than 40 travel books and hundreds of articles. She says: "In Damascus, Beit

Rumman is my 'beit' of choice: sensitive restoration, tranquil courtyard, trickling fountain, friendly staff, fab location.”
Egypt Today Sweet Dreams in Syria

Boutique hotels in Damascus and Aleppo offer tourists a more historic experience

By Lesley Lababidi

Boutique hotels in the Middle East are a fairly new concept. Tired of the homogenized franchise hotels, travelers look for authentic cultural accommodation in the countries they visit. Syria is a leader in offering such unique, personalized accommodations. Of course, there are the brand names — Sheraton, Four Seasons, etc. — but tucked within ancient city walls are restored traditional houses and palaces that will delight travelers' desire for the exotic. Syria is jeweled with ancient and classical architecture, and as in much of the Arab world, hospitality is a keystone of life. So it is not surprising that Syrians have channeled their natural tendencies in business and hospitality by restoring rather than destroying centuries-old homes and protect their cultural heritage. Today, visitors to Damascus and Aleppo — two of the oldest inhabited cities in the world — looking to stay in a boutique hotel have a variety of sixteenth- through eighteenth-century courtyard houses and palaces to choose from.

Read more...**Obelisque** The Damascene House has many meanings and multiple dimensions. It is the Arab's architectural idea of residential paradise. The courtyard is an illuminated space open to the lofty sky; its internal recesses reach into our innermost psyche. Elaborate symbolism governs this geometrically inspired structure. The courtyard serves as the center of tranquility around which the rooms orbit much like planets revolve around the sun. The architect uses arches, rectangles, squares, and geometric lines as means of demarcation and materials such as stone, marble, and wood to convey the cool and warm qualities of such spaces. The most important principle of Arab architectural design is the unity of its different elements: the central courtyard and the other spaces around it, together, create an oasis inside the house.

The architectural features of a traditional house afford its inhabitants optimum protection from heat and cold. The house is divided in ways that make it compatible with the climate; the upper floors are used during the winter season while the lower floor consists of large halls that are pleasantly cool in the summer. Ceilings are high; walls are thick and are made of mud and straw bricks supported by wooden beams or stone masonry.

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