

# HOTEL DESIGN

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## Lisbon's Latest

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**HOTELS** Memmo Alfama | Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua | Loews Regency New York | Alpina Gstaad  
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The Southern Hotel, Louisiana **PRODUCTS** Indoor Seating & Outdoor Elements

# LISBON'S COZY NEW GEM





THE FIVE WS

**WHAT:** Memmo Alfama  
**WHO:** Owner, Memmo Alfama Hotelaria e Turismo, Lda.; Designer, Samuel Torres de Carvalho; General Contractor, Ramos Catarino S.A.  
**WHERE:** Lisbon, Portugal  
**WHEN:** Fall 2013  
**WAY:** Conversion, re-design of dilapidated city building

**THIS PAST FALL DESIGN HOTELS** welcomed its first hotel in Portugal's capital city of Lisbon, Memmo Alfama—a 42-room property designed to blend the city's old town aesthetic with contemporary design.

Design of the hotel was led by Madrid-based architect Samuel Torres de Carvalho (he also oversaw the restoration of the hotel's sister property, Memmo Baleeira, which overlooks Sagres Bay in Portugal) and is characterized for its vast use of wood and warm tones that mix to create a homey ambience.

The hotel was developed as “a big cozy home,” de Carvalho says, rather than a large, austere hotel.

The biggest constraint of the design also happened to be its biggest strength: location. The building is set among the neighborhood's tight winding passageways, so neighborhood integration was at the forefront of the design. In this case, “the location is particularly a determinant because it requires having to deal with a great number of urban regulations and constraints,” says de Carvalho, who also worked in tandem with João Corrêa Nunes on design and construction.

But location also is the hotel's greatest ally. The hotel benefits from a view over Alfama, the oldest district of Lisbon, and the Tejo Estuary. This, de Carvalho says, is where the hotel stands out. “It takes advantage of this,” he says, by creating a series of exterior platforms associated to the bar, including the pool, “where the guests can enjoy the view.”

In order to achieve this, low-quality existing constructions adjoining the main building were demolished and the new construction, which includes the breakfast and lounge room, the bar and a four-bedroom wing, “assumes the shape of hill-side terraces, thus reducing the construction impact in the urban landscape,” de Carvalho says.

As de Carvalho puts it, the building, before the re-design, was in a “pre-ruin state.” It was very sensitive, he says of the building, which is contiguous to an old part of the city's walls that date to the 14th century. “All the construction work had archaeological monitoring,” de Carvalho says. He and his team even hired and worked with an historian on the project.

The façades of the main existing construction were kept, as well as some particular elements, such as two brick vaulted rooms that used to be fire ovens, and a stone pavement in two bedrooms located in the oldest part of the building. As for the new construction, “it is clearly defined by contemporary language,” de Carvalho says.

The old part of the building houses essentially bedrooms, while new construction comprises the common areas.

Simplicity reigns in guestrooms. Beds are kept uncomplicated with just some oversized Egyptian cotton pillows acting as headrests. Lamps are also a modern re-interpretation of traditional form. On windows, de Carvalho used interior wood shutters, as was traditional in these kinds of buildings, while curtains hide the bathrooms. “We chose to have a big visual connection between bedroom and bathroom, thus giving the sensation of a bigger space,” de Carvalho says.

Upon entering Memmo Alfama, a living room greets guests in lieu of a traditional front desk. Check-in can take place anywhere in the hotel, ▶

## PROFILES



From top to bottom:  
Alfama Superior room bath;  
The terrace;  
Alfama Superior bedroom.



from the bedrooms to the hotel bar, encouraging guests to feel at home. As such, shrewd FF&E choices were needed.

For example, the welcome desk “was designed as to create a particular moment, a bit contrasting with the rest,” de Carvalho says. Meanwhile, in the breakfast room, the big wood dining table also sets the stage.

The solid wood presence is evident throughout the hotel (think benches and end tables). But then there is contrast, noted by the Acapulco chairs on the exterior terraces, which “add an unexpected tropical taste,” de Carvalho says.

“We wanted the decoration not to be too coordinated, with everything matching very predictably, but to have this contrast like a house that you furnish along time,” he says.

One of de Carvalho’s favorite touches are the Dinesen Douglas wood planks that reside in the hotel’s common areas. “They give a sense of classical solidity,” he says.

In addition to furniture and materials, special attention was given to art. Namely, for the two big scale photo prints from Portuguese artist Gabriela Albergaria, which hang in the breakfast room and bar walls. **HD**

### PARTICIPANTS

**Mechanical/Electrical Consultant:** Domoserve

**Carpet:** Tapetes Victoria

**Hardwood:** Wicanders

**Tile/Mosaic:** Bisazza

**Millwork/Casegoods:** Empatias

**In-room Chairs:** RODA

**Drapery:** Mota & David

**Bed linen:** Sampetro

**Chandeliers:** Artemide

**Lighting:** Modular

**Door/Entry locks:** Salto Systems

**Security systems:** Prosonic

**TV/HiFi:** LG, Pioneer

**Sanitary ware:** GSI

**Taps/Faucets:** Bruma