

HOTEL INTEL

# TEL AVIV'S JAFFA FUSES OLD, NEW WITH APLOMB

*Makeover of a former hospital and nunnery is luxurious embodiment of ancient history*



ROCHELLE LASH

The Jaffa Hotel is an exquisite fusion of the oldest and the newest in a historic and hallowed sector of Tel Aviv.

New York-based hotelier Aby Rosen of RFR Holding reimagined a 19th-century architectural treasure into a sumptuous establishment. RFR is known for such hospitality hot spots as W South Beach and, in Manhattan, Gramercy Park and 11 Howard Hotels, as well as the Seagram Building.

Part of Marriott's Luxury Collection, The Jaffa is a magnificent makeover of a former French hospital and nunnery, high atop a hill with gorgeous views of the Mediterranean Sea and Old Jaffa's minarets, tiled rooftops and ancient walls. The hotel also is within two blocks of the Jaffa Flea Market and the Jaffa Port, one of the oldest continuously operating ports in the world. You even can kayak or paddleboard in hallowed waters at Kayak4all (kayak4all.com).

**The scene:** The Jaffa fully embodies the Holy Land's rich cultural mosaic and momentous history. But it's also a spacious resort-style hotel and a relaxing sanctuary from the hectic tangle of ancient streets. The swimming pool is an oasis fringed by white umbrellas, sunbeds, lavender shrubs and citrus trees.

Guests are in for culinary treats at Don Camillo and Golda's Delicatessen. The Chapel, once a place of worship and now one of Jaffa's hottest bars, takes its spiritual history lightly: The cocktail menus look like bibles and the servers are dressed in micro-mini nuns' habits and

IF YOU GO

**THE JAFFA HOTEL**

**Contact:** 972-0-3-504-2000, 888-236-2427 (Marriott); thejaffahotel.com; 2 Louis Pasteur St., Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Israel. Member of Virtuoso and Marriott's The Luxury Collection Hotels & Resorts (the-luxury-collection.marriott.com). Marriott Bonvoy rewards apply; best rate available at marriott.com.

**Price:** Nine levels start at US\$600, including swimming pool, saunas, 24-hour fitness, evening turndown, Illy espresso, Wi-Fi.

**Don Camillo Restaurant:** breakfast, dinner daily; 972-3-788-5660, doncamillo.telaviv.com. Golda's Delicatessen: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily.

**L. Raphael Beauty Spa:** 972-3-778-5633, use of two saunas, showers, gym included for all hotel guests and spa clients.

**Tel Aviv tourism:** visit.tel-aviv.gov.il

priests' collars.

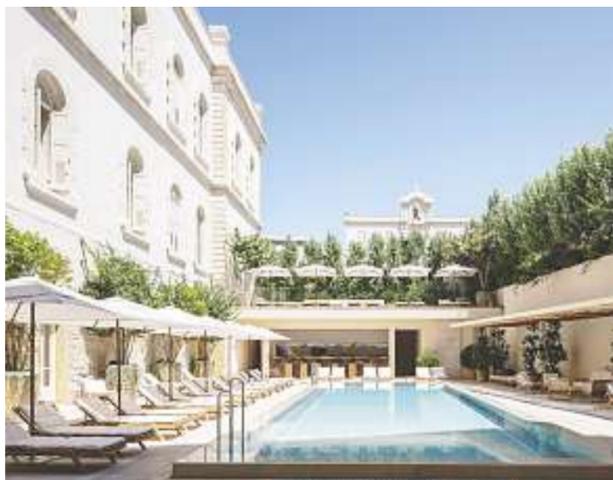
The hotel has an activity calendar that includes a nightly 6 p.m. manager's reception, DJ happenings, historic tours and a daily 7 a.m. run with a hotel staffer.

The Tamarindi Shop sells resort wear and the Spa by L. Raphael, an international brand, specializes in oxygenating and anti-aging treatments.

**Design:** British architectural designer John Pawson and local architect Ramy Gill collaborated



Guest rooms are luxurious, yet with an almost monastic minimalism. PHOTOS: AMIT GERON/THE JAFFA HOTEL



In the new Jaffa Hotel, New York-based hotelier Aby Rosen of RFR Holding has reimagined a 19th-century architectural treasure into a sumptuous establishment.

on a look in which ancient meets modern throughout. They used natural travertine and sandstone to reflect Old Jaffa's centuries of survival. And they maintained a soothing monochrome of pale stone colours to recall the town's sun-bleached patina.

The Sheshbesh (backgammon) lobby lounge mixes avant-garde sofas and archeological artifacts. The Chapel lounge is a precious restoration of faded frescoes, stained-glass windows and a hand-painted ceiling.

The guest rooms are profoundly luxurious, yet with an almost monastic minimalism. The cabi-

etry hides most of the contemporary conveniences and a large TV is integrated into a wall mirror, so there are no distractions. Texture is paramount. Shaker-plain muslin curtains cascade from high ceilings and there is softness in the velvet chairs, nubby area rugs and cotton sheets so fine they're almost silky.

The Jaffa's historic wing has 40 rooms and suites, notable for the towering, arched windows and views of the courtyard, trellises of foliage and splendid arches and stonework.

The 80-room modern building has views of the Mediterranean

Sea and mystical Old Jaffa. All of the accommodations are luxurious, but some of the suites — the King David, for example — are jaw-dropping for their size and wraparound terraces.

Both buildings have similar decor, accented by modern images of trees by Israeli photographer Tal Shochat, as well as spacious marble bathrooms and custom-made toiletries.

**Cuisine:** It's Mediterranean meets Manhattan at the restaurant Don Camillo, an enchanting space in The Jaffa's leafy courtyard.

Chef Roi Antebi dishes up Italian-influenced delicacies like shrimp ravioli with black squid ink; Sicilian beef salad; lamb meatballs; and creamy burrata cheese with seven types of tomatoes. The menu also features delicate crudos such as tuna Calabrese and beef carpaccio; homemade pasta with veal, grouper, shrimp or eggplant; market-fresh fish and seafood such as crab and octopus; and grilled lamb chops or rib-eye steak.

Don Camillo has a 3,000-bottle wine cellar, with an exclusive choice from Israel, Italy and France.

For more casual family fare, Golda's Delicatessen serves the ultimate nosh, including bagels and lox, tuna melts, triple-decker clubs, cheeseburgers and milk shakes. You can eat indoors, outdoors or at the pool.

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