

Beretta Gallery

Pure Italian lifestyle that celebrates the outdoors

 **BERETTA** Gallery

NEW YORK • DALLAS • BUENOS AIRES • PARIS • MILAN • LONDON

[CLICK HERE](#)



[Laurie Kahle](#), Contributor

LIFESTYLE | 5/31/2012 @ 1:28PM | 696 views

Seville's Hotel Alfonso XIII reopens following a \$25 million restoration.

On a sultry late May evening in the heart of Seville, Spain, local officials, bullfighters, and journalists celebrated the grand reopening of the Hotel Alfonso XIII. The landmark property with Arabic-inspired arches, soaring towers, and Renaissance-style windows was originally constructed for the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929 and named for the king. Over the past year, The [Luxury](#) Collection Hotels & Resorts, which is a part of [Starwood Hotels](#) & Resorts Worldwide, has invested \$25 million in rejuvenating Seville's only grande dame hotel. The opening marks the first completion of four major renovations of historic European Luxury Collection properties that include Hotel Maria Cristina in San [Sebastian](#), Spain, which opens in July, and Paris' Prince de Galles and Venice's Gritti Palace, which are both scheduled to open in early 2013.



Hotel Alfonso XIII, Seville



Originally designed by Sevillian architect José Espiau y Muñoz, the hotel was closed for 10 months while it underwent an extensive redesign and restoration under the direction of local architect Demopolis and the English firm HBA/Hirsch Bedner



Associates. The property's 151 rooms and suites have been updated with a contemporary vibe in Moorish, Castilian, and Andalusian styles featuring custom furnishings and distinctive tile work in the baths. The common spaces, however, reclaim their former glory with restored original hand-painted Triana and Mensaque ceramic tiles, authentic wood-carved furnishings, and marble floors. The Salón Real Ballroom, which hosts up to 500 people, underwent an extensive preservation that called upon artisans to painstakingly clean and restore the deteriorated coffered plaster ceiling and hand-painted wall panels.

[Bruce Springsteen](#) recently stayed in the renovated Royal Suite during his May tour through Spain. The 2,150-square-foot, one-bedroom suite with a towering canopy bed is appointed with hand-selected antiques including a Spanish Renaissance cabinet inlaid with mother-of-pearl that was gifted to the hotel by its previous owner, the Aga Khan. Also inspired by the city's vibrant artistic history, the Reales Alcázares suite overlooks picturesque gardens and fountains, while the sprawling Torreón Suite features a private terrace that extends to the hotel's corner tower presenting panoramic views of the city.

Among those celebrating the hotel's reopening was Pepe Torezano, who worked at the hotel for more than 50 years before retiring in 2007. As head concierge for 35 years, Torezano has met his share of rock stars, movie stars, and even heads of state. "The most important people who come to Sevilla stay here—both now and before," he says, listing VIPs that included Jimmy Carter, Henry Kissinger, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Ava Gardner, Grace Kelly, Sophia Loren, Brigitte Bardot, and Orson Welles, who had befriended a famous bullfighter in Seville. The hotel even had a role in the 1962 epic film [Lawrence of Arabia](#), which was filmed on site and at local landmarks. The cast—which included Peter O'Toole, Sir Alec Guinness, Anthony Quinn, and Omar Shariff—stayed at the Alfonso for three months.



Bodega Alfonso restaurant and lounge

Hotel Alfonso XIII has retained the spirit of that glamorous era while adapting to more modern, relaxed lifestyles. "I believe we are seeing a new golden age of travel," says Paul James, global brand leader for St. Regis and The Luxury Collection. "People are dressing up again, and they're looking for elegance and sophistication, which needs a grand setting such as this."

Read more about the art and craft of luxury at [Atelier](#) digital magazine.

This article is available online at:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/lauriekahle/2012/05/31/sevilles-hotel-alfonso-xiii-reopens->