

## TOREL PALACE

Rua Câmara Pestana 23, Jardim do Torel

Bus 723, 760, Desterro

Tel 218 290 810, [www.torelpalace.com](http://www.torelpalace.com)

26 rooms and one villa, €105 to €405

### NEO-PALACE

This is the story of a trio – João, Barbara and Ingrid. In 2013 João bought a large building, originally created in 1900 and located on Torel Hill, right alongside the beautiful gardens of the same name, also known as the Miradouro do Torel.

He modestly baptised the building Torel Palace and painted it pink. That summer Barbara was on holiday when she fell in love with this new little palace. She joined forces with João and together they bought up the adjoining house. This time they painted it indigo blue – an unusual colour in Lisbon, a city more used to pastel blue. The following summer Ingrid was visiting Lisbon, looking to turn her life around, and was considering heading for Alentejo.

Someone in her home village in Austria had given her the name of a certain Barbara at the Torel Palace. Ingrid had just left her job at the UN, where she had been a peacekeeper in the Middle East and Africa, and was hoping to enjoy a quiet life in Lisbon. So she met Barbara – also from Austria – and the two became the best of friends. Ingrid joined the project, and as the granddaughter of innkeepers she quickly found her feet. In 2016 the trio bought a third property, which is remarkable for its lookout tower and glass roof. Ingrid jokes it would be perfect as a champagne bar – but only time will tell. Work began in 2016. Torel Palace has not one but several styles and sometimes it's doubtful whether the combination works. On the one hand there's toile de Jouy worthy of a perfect French country house, and on the other a profusion of smokey nightclub-style mirrors and fake-fur upholstery on the armchairs. In an attic bathroom, you'll find a curious collection of artificial blue hydrangeas in pots. Elsewhere, the style favours classic

and contemporary neutrality, which is both relaxing and welcoming. In any case, beyond this accumulation of styles and tastes, iconic and non-iconic pieces, Torel Palace provides a feeling of wellbeing. Its vertiginous, breathtaking views that take in abandoned gardens at the foot of the hill, the district of Baixa and its Triumphal Arch, the Tagus, and the hills of the Chiado and São Pedro de Alcântara remain fascinating features. The pool stretches out beneath the shade of cypress trees in the terraced garden, creating a feeling of Tuscany in the hills above Florence. It's just a shame that the mansard rooms in the top floor are a bit chilly, and the heating doesn't quite warm up the bathrooms. Nevertheless, the charming terrace in each bedroom is always the perfect place to enjoy the bird's-eye view from this distant hill that seems far away from Lisbon and offers a rare vantage point. Another very interesting vantage point, worth following closely, is that of young chef Ana Moura, who heads up restaurant **CAVE 23**. Most of her training took place in San Sebastián at the three-star Arzak, and her cooking is rooted in a robust Iberian tradition. A stay at the Torel Palace is worth it just for the opportunity of enjoying this young chef's menu.