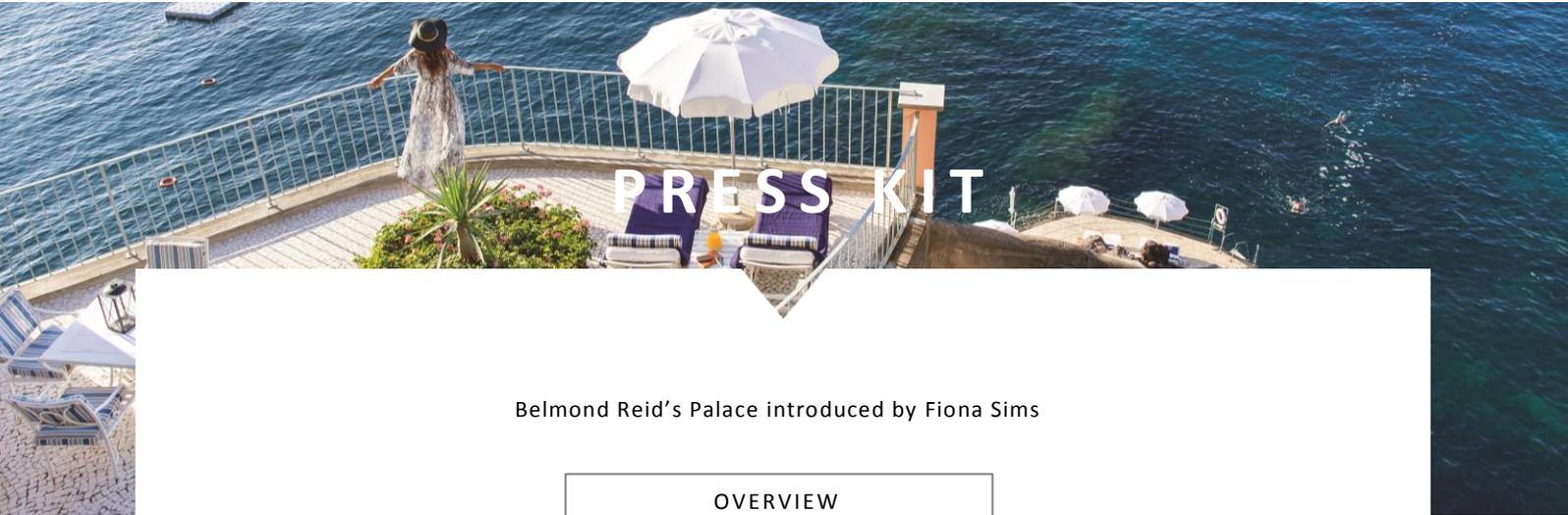




BELMOND
REID'S PALACE
MADEIRA



Belmond Reid's Palace introduced by Fiona Sims

OVERVIEW

The ancients called these venerable offshore volcanoes the Enchanted Isles for a good reason - the scenery is spectacular. The largest of archipelago, Madeira, is one of the prettiest islands in the world. Located 440 miles off the coast of Africa deep in the Atlantic Ocean, this subtropical paradise with mild year round temperatures has been attracting travellers for centuries.

They come for its genteel gardens, and its tidy red-roofed cottages set against a backdrop of steeply rising sea cliffs, pounded dramatically by a frothing ocean. They come for its grand hotels – led by Belmond Reid's Palace at its delightful, dreamy heart.

Regularly voted one of Europe's Top 30 resorts by readers of Condé Nast Traveller magazine, it offers 158 rooms, including 35 suites, with balconies or terraces that boast expansive views of the Atlantic Ocean or Funchal Harbour.

There are several categories of rooms, starting with the Charming Rooms and up to the Presidential, Churchill and Bernard Shaw Suites. Think crisp, embroidered bedspreads and luxurious marble bathrooms, with wicker chairs and tables in which to settle down and enjoy the views.

There are three swimming pools, two of which are heated, plus one tidal, seawater pool. Activities include tennis, snooker and dancing classes. Keen golfers can visit Madeira's two championship golf courses, Palheiro Golf and Santo da Serra, where hotel guests are guaranteed advance tee times and discounted green fees. For nature and garden lovers there are many spectacular walks and visits to estates and grand homes.

Dining options at the hotel start with breakfast in The Garden Room—known for its bounty of fresh tropical fruits. There's the Pool Restaurant with its generous buffet offering dishes made with locally grown organic produce and the hotel's new William restaurant, named after the hotel's visionary founder, William Reid.

The Dining Room, with its Edwardian-inspired décor, features glamorous Murano Glass chandeliers. Guests dress to impress and are transported back in time. Highlights include the dinner dance on Mondays and the Champagne buffet on Sundays.

The Villa Cipriani restaurant is the hotel's informal Italian restaurant, perched on a cliff top with dramatic views over the ocean from its al fresco terrace, where homemade pasta and other regional Italian dishes rule. Before dinner, head to the Cocktail Bar for signature house drinks, while enjoying more commanding views over the bay.

A stay here is not complete without afternoon tea on the terrace—an iconic occasion dating back to the hotel’s earliest days. Around 60 guests gather daily for delicious cakes and the hotel’s own-blend tea.

Part of Belmond since 1996, the hotel underwent a stunning €8.5 million renovation project in 2006, with interiors overseen by designer Graham Viney. New additions included two suites in the main house with sweeping views over the Bay of Funchal and a beautiful spa with treatment rooms and a deck overlooking the ocean.

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

The home of highly prized Madeira wine and birthplace of one of the world’s most famous footballers, Cristiano Ronaldo, Madeira has wide-ranging lures to its verdant, sub-tropical shores.

Discovered by two Portuguese explorers in 1419, it became an important stopping off point on major trade routes. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Madeira’s balmy climate and exuberant botanical gardens attracted thousands of Europeans. Some came for serious R&R, while others had more entrepreneurial aims. Among the latter was one William Reid.

Born on a farm in Scotland, William was advised for health reasons to seek a warmer climate so at age 14 he arrived in Madeira and secured a job in a bakery. By the time he was 25 he had moved into the wine trade, building a successful import and export business.

He married an Englishwoman, Margaret Dewey, with whom he started a house rental business before going on to open a simple hotel. William wanted to attract the island’s wealthiest visitors, so he purchased land known as Salto do Cavalo (Horse’s Leap) on the rocky cliff on which Belmond Reid’s Palace now stands. First, William ordered tons of rich soil for the lush sub-tropical gardens of bougainvillea, geraniums, orchids and palms that envelop the property today. Building began in 1887, but William died in 1888 before his dream was realised.

The hotel opened its doors on 1 November 1891, managed by William’s two sons, William (Willy) and Alfred Reid. It remained in the hands of the Reid family until 1925 when they sold their interest to an English company, Reid’s Palace Hotel Ltd. In 1937 this became Island Hotels (Madeira), owned by the Madeira wine making Blandy Family, who were to remain as proprietors for nearly 60 years. It was bought by Belmond (previously Orient-Express Hotels) in 1996.

Many illustrious politicians, royalty, and celebrities have stayed at Reid’s throughout its long history. Empress Elizabeth I of Austria was one of the first guests to arrive at the newly opened hotel, as was writer George Bernard Shaw, and several members of the British Royal Family. Winston Churchill visited in the early 1950s, to work on his memoirs and to paint. The Winston Churchill Suite, on the 6th floor of the hotel, remains a favourite place to stay.

FEATURES

Big Game Fishing

Ever wanted to experience the thrill of the rod and the reel in the deep ocean? Belmond Reid’s Palace can organise a day on the water for both experienced anglers and for those wanting an introduction to the sport.

Madeira is one of the world’s most popular destinations for big game fishing. Lying in the Atlantic Ocean nearly 1000 km (621 miles) from Lisbon, this verdant, sub-tropical jewel is lapped by the mild waters of the gulf stream and enjoys warm, comfortable summers and short, mild winters. This enviable climate makes it an enchanting and appealing year-round holiday destination, with ideal conditions for sport fishermen.

The summer months bring with them an abundance of sleek shark, Atlantic blue marlin and other splendid billfish. In winter, the cooler waters draw feisty bluefin and bigeye. Madeira is ideally placed on the migratory route for large game fish and the depths teem with sea life.

Madeira produces some of the world’s biggest blue marlin, and has won the annual Blue Marlin World Cup for three consecutive years. Guests can experience the thrill of reeling in a

'large blue' with its slashing bill and pronounced dorsal fin. The marlin season runs from May to October, with a fish average of 700 pounds. In fact, the winning team at this year's Blue Marlin World Cup plucked a 983-pound fish from the water, the fourth largest in the competition's history.

Garden Tour

Madeira's botanical wonders have long attracted visitors. There are famous gardens aplenty across the island, but some of the rarest treasures grow at Belmond Reid's Palace itself.

The hotel's expert guide offers a complimentary tour through the many different kinds of trees, flowers and plants. There are seven gardeners employed full-time, each one looking after a particular area.

The rich volcanic soil means that just about anything can grow in Madeira – not for nothing is it known as the 'Garden Isle'. The abundant formal gardens create a semblance of order in the horticultural chaos that happily pervades the island. In Madeira's capital, Funchal, many tropical plants flourish, with hibiscus and bougainvillea flowering almost all year round, while jacaranda, spathodea, erythrina and bauhinia bloom spectacularly in their respective seasons.

Other green gems include the Palheiro Gardens, at 500m above sea level, and the Madeira Botanical Gardens set just beyond Funchal, which feature some 2,000 different plants. Also look out for the exotic Monte Palace Tropical Garden with its ancient cycads and feathery tree ferns.

Madeira Wine Tasting

Every Tuesday Belmond Reid's Palace invites the Madeira Wine Company to host a fascinating talk about the island's famous wines—together with a tasting accompanied by cheese and cake.

Madeira wine is created by a unique process that involves heating the wines to almost 50 degrees centigrade followed by a long period of aging. The traditional grape varieties are categorised according to four levels of sweetness. The sweetest, and the earliest maturing, is Malmsey or Malvasia - dark, rich and fragrant. Bual Madeira is lighter and less rich than Malmsey, with an appealing smoky note. Verdelho is less sweet and softer still, while Sercial makes the driest, lightest, tangiest Madeira – perfect as an aperitif in the Cocktail Bar at Belmond Reid's Palace.

PEOPLE

Ciriaco Campus, General Manager

Tell us about yourself

I am Italian, originally from Sardinia. I started working with Belmond in September 2008 as sales and marketing director for Belmond Reid's Palace and then, four years later, I was appointed as General Manager. I've always wanted to be General Manager of an important, iconic hotel - so here I am and I love it.

What makes you get up each morning?

The passion for this job, the curiosity about what will unfold each day and the challenges I deal with. Best of all, I have the opportunity to help create a special escape for guests.

Best bit of your day?

I love doing my rounds of the Garden Room, our breakfast restaurant, and then, later, the pool restaurant. It's when I get to greet guests and spend time talking to them.

Favourite spot in the hotel?

Our garden. You get a breathtaking view over the sea and our pool. I'm not surprised that some guests never even go beyond our gates for an entire week.

Most fun in the job?

The General Manager's Cocktail. This is a reception we hold every Monday night when we invite all of our guests for a cocktail before dinner. It is a great occasion that allows our team to meet and mingle with guests in a very relaxed atmosphere.

The hotel's highlights?

The hotel has a great heritage, a unique location and great views over the ocean, a fantastic garden and beautiful rooms. In my opinion, our best attribute is our staff - they deliver top quality service, in a genuine way, making each one of our guests feel at home.

Perfect day out?

Madeira offers an incredible number of experiences, from mountains, to the sea, to the city. There are three things that, in my opinion, should not be missed; watching the sunrise from Pico do Arieiro, Madeira's highest peak, where you'll see a unique show of colours and light, a boat trip to see whales and dolphins, and a walk along the levadas to discover how truly unspoiled Madeira is.

Your insider tip?

Drink poncha. It's a typical local drink combining aguardiente, honey, orange and lemon – try it at the Venda Velha bar in the old part of Funchal.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & ENVIRONMENT

Belmond Reid's Palace supports two local charities: Acreditar helps families take children suffering from cancer to the mainland for treatment; Garouta do Calhau cares for around 600 impoverished children and elderly people. Hotel employees undertake volunteer work and fund-raising activities, while guests are also invited to contribute.

The hotel supports a local farm project, Quinta Pedagógica, a non-profit organisation that provides jobs for disadvantaged and disabled people. Belmond Reid's Palace buys a selection of its products, such as cider, vinegar and jam.