



history comes alive

firm: **francesc rifé studio**
site: **valencia, spain**

FERNANDO ALDA

hospitality

Opposite, from top: A watchtower, part of a Moorish city wall, now contains a duplex suite at the Caro Hotel in Valencia, Spain. The reception desk combines marble and metal.

Right: The painted stucco street facade dates to the 19th century.



Excavation is a job that usually falls to archaeologists. But it was Francesc Rifé Studio's namesake director who helmed the dig integral to the renovation of the Caro Hotel in Valencia, Spain. Though the hotel looks at first glance like any respectable 19th-century town mansion, that's literally just a facade—a neoclassical one. Other exterior walls date to the 12th century, when they were built by the Moors as part of the city's fortifications. "History was the axis around which the project revolved," Francesc Rifé says. "Without losing sight of original elements, we designed a space in the vanguard." ➤

FERNANDO ALDA

hospitality

Clockwise from top: Architectural fragments are installed on a wall in the lobby. Structural glass forms the floor of a stair landing. Francesc Rifé's own wool rug lies on a suite's floor of epoxy-finished concrete. The moss garden surrounds glass, allowing light into a stairwell.

His captivating interior scenario, a study in Iberian heritage, begins in the lobby. Along one sidewall, he installed architectural fragments spanning the second to 15th centuries, while the opposite sidewall, whitewashed Moorish brick, is punctuated by a lava-stone archway leading to the bar. The grand staircase at the rear of the lobby leaps all the way up to 1919. Then it's simultaneously backward and forward in the 26 guest suites, where 19th-century coffered ceilings and crown moldings or rough wooden rafters and ceramic firebricks encounter stylishly distilled furnishings, many of them Rifé's production pieces. ➤



From top: Rifé's sofas, tables, and table lamp furnish a suite with a 19th-century ceiling fresco. In another suite, the tub and sink are solid-surfacing. The chair, desk, and sconces in a suite are also his.

"Power," Rifé says, "comes from the contrast of eras and materials." What could be more dramatic, in this setting, than a stair landing's floor of dark gray structural glass? This showpiece tempers the powerful Mediterranean sun, allowing it to bathe a moss garden below. It's a memorable and clever moment, certainly unexpected here. —*C.C. Sullivan*

FROM FRONT KOO INTERNATIONAL: SOFAS (SUITES), BENCH (LOBBY). UNO DESIGN: CHAIRS, FOOTREST, TABLE LAMPS (SUITES). KVADRAT: CURTAIN FABRIC. CRISTALERÍA BONANOVA: GLASS (EXTERIOR). RUCKSTUHL: RUG (LOBBY). NOW CARPETS: RUGS (LANDING, SUITES). FLOS: FLOOR LAMPS (SUITES). HAY: TABLES. PALLUCCO: TRIPOD LAMP. THROUGHOUT RIBAS S2: ELECTRICAL ENGINEER. TECHNOTROL: MECHANICAL ENGINEER. METALISTERÍA DEMETALL: METALWORK. MÁRMOLES MABELLO: STONework. INTERDECO: BRICKWORK. FUSTERIA I EBENISTERIA BRANAS: WOODWORK. REGIA URBANITAS: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.



hospitality

