

CASABLANCA CALLING

*Christina Raptis experiences the
Vichy Célestins Spa Hôtel Casablanca*



Of all the hotels in all the towns in all the world, I happened to walk into the Vichy Célestins Spa Hôtel Casablanca. As I walked through the lobby, a glistening white baby grand piano sat centre stage and all I could imagine was Ilsa saying: “Play it once, Sam. For old times’ sake.”

Casablanca in 2019 is a world away from the romantic seaport depicted in the legendary movie starring Humphrey Bogard and Ingrid Bergman. Morocco’s largest city is a thriving metropolis of 31.5 million residents and is as chaotic as it is bewildering.

To escape from the city, in a very different sense than implied in the eponymous movie, there is perhaps no place more tranquil than the idyll that is The Vichy Célestins Spa Hôtel Casablanca. It is located a leisurely 45 minute drive from Casablanca International Airport and also about 45 minutes from the city of Casablanca itself. The exquisitely designed Philippe Starck 5-star hotel offers 130 luxurious rooms and suites with interiors inspired by Vichy water, and each room enjoys glorious views of the Atlantic Ocean or the Bahia Golf Beach.

Owned and operated by the renowned Compagnie de Vichy, the hotel is all about the spa experience which they perfected at the original location in France. The world-class 3,000 m² health spa offers endless treatments, many of which are unique to Vichy, the latest techniques in anti-ageing, fitness and well-being. The spa also boasts a large indoor pool, thalassotherapy care treatments, a well-equipped gym, hydrothermal area, yoga studio, and a Cryotherapy room.

I opted to experience the Trilogy of ‘signature’ treatments: a Hydro massage bath of seawater and minerals, followed by a mud body wrap, topped off with a Vichy shower massage – heaven! At Vichy Célestins you will find state-of-the-art, high-performance care where ground-breaking technologies are used to enhance beauty, combat pain, reduce weight and improve fitness.

For those merely looking to relax and enjoy some sun, sit by one of the two outdoor pools and enjoy a refreshing freshly squeezed juice or smoothie. Activities at the hotel are endless – golf lovers can take a 200 metre buggy ride to the award-winning 18-hole Bahia Golf Resort. This

beautiful and challenging course is due to be expanded in the coming months to add an additional 9 holes. The perfect way to end your round of golf is by indulging in a delicious Italian lunch at the newly-built Club House where the Italian chef takes pride in showcasing his abundant culinary talents.

The Epicurean delights found at the hotel are exceptional – from the morning breakfast buffet to the excellent dinner options served at the elegant Le V Restaurant. We were fortunate to be visiting the hotel whilst two renowned chefs, Sebastien Bontour and Michelin Starred Chef Joel Cesari presented a ‘Diner d’exception’. We sampled their inventive dishes including; langoustine tartare, beef confit with saffron from Talioine and a unique lemon yuzu dessert – a truly epicurean treat!

If you feel like exploring Morocco during your stay the hotel is located equidistant between Casablanca and Rabat making them both ideal day trip destinations. Rabat, Morocco’s capital, is bustling with energy from the labyrinth of souks to the Kasbah of the Udayas and the Mausoleum of Mohammed V. The port city of Casablanca is home to the impressive Hassan II Mosque – designed by French architect Michel Pinseau. This is the largest mosque in North Africa, and the third largest in the world. It accommodates 25,000 worshippers inside and a further 80,000 in the mosque’s courtyard and its minaret is the world’s tallest standing at an impressive 210 metres high. The remarkable monument’s attention to detail and intricate interiors make this a definite must-see whilst visiting Casablanca.

After a magnificent weekend exploring Casablanca and relaxing at the Vichy Célestins Spa Hôtel, I knew I would return in the near future and as I stepped onto the plane, I thought “this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship”.

www.vichy-celestins-spa-hotel.com/casablanca-morocco

