



HOTEL INSIDER



Located a few blocks from the Spanish Colonial fortress wall and the water beyond, Casa San Agustin is one of the newest boutique hotels in the center. A three-part masterpiece of lime-washed stucco and terracotta, Casa San Agustin comprises a trio of 16th century Spanish-colonial mansion houses, straddled by a 300-year-old aqueduct within old Cartagena's UNESCO-protected perimeter wall.

3 THINGS WE LOVE



Octopus carpaccio at the Alma Restaurant



Colonial style pool that connects the three mansions



Suites with private wooden balconies with views of the old cathedral

Inside, vintage grandeur is everywhere you look: Renaissance artworks, centuries-old frescoes and stone gargoyles all make this hotel feel incredibly historic – despite its relatively recent opening in 2012.

Situated in the heart of the old city, Casa San Agustin couldn't be better located for exploring Cartagena's cultural and historical highlights. The Castillo de San Felipe is a must-visit, as well as the NH Galleria – the source of the hotel's contemporary art collection and home to seminal works by renowned textile artist Olga de Amaral and painter/muralist Alejandro Obregon. For more far-flung excursions, the hotel also provides a private car service. Closer to home, San Agustin's beautiful courtyard pool offers further historical interest: it's been in situ since the 16th century, and runs alongside the aged, mottled aqueduct wall.

Though there are lots of excellent restaurants just a stroll away – including Michelin-trained Carlos Accinelli's La Perla – don't overlook the opportunity to dine at San Agustin's in-house restaurant, Alma. Head Chef Heberto Elijah's unconventional menu of Asian-influenced Colombian cuisine (a bizarre sounding combination, but trust, it works) has garnered this restaurant a devoted local following – try the roasted salmon filet with orange and hoisin glaze. Alma also offers a special room service menu,

available 24 hours, with private butlers on delivery duty. You can also choose to have an after-dinner drink in the library lounge, where an honor bar is available with spirits and cordials.

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*a 300-year-old aqueduct within old Cartagena's
UNESCO-protected perimeter wall*

The work of interior designer, Kelley McRorie, rooms at Casa San Agustin are stylish and tasteful. Marble floors and original wood beam ceilings perfectly complement rustic, colonial-inspired touches like wicker coffee tables, hand-carved cabinets and decorative mosaic wall hangings. Given the hotel's historical character, rooms come in different sizes and shapes—many have balconies with pretty garden views, while some have gardens themselves. All come with flat-screen TVs, air-conditioning, DVD players, well-stocked mini-bars and Ortigia products in the bathrooms. I recommend the Junior Suite: so spacious it feels like a private residence, this suite has the added distinction of romantic skyline views of the old city.

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*many have balconies with pretty garden views, while
some have gardens themselves overlooking the historic
skyline of Cartagena*

- Charlie Fallman

