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CASA SAN AGUSTIN

Modern history.

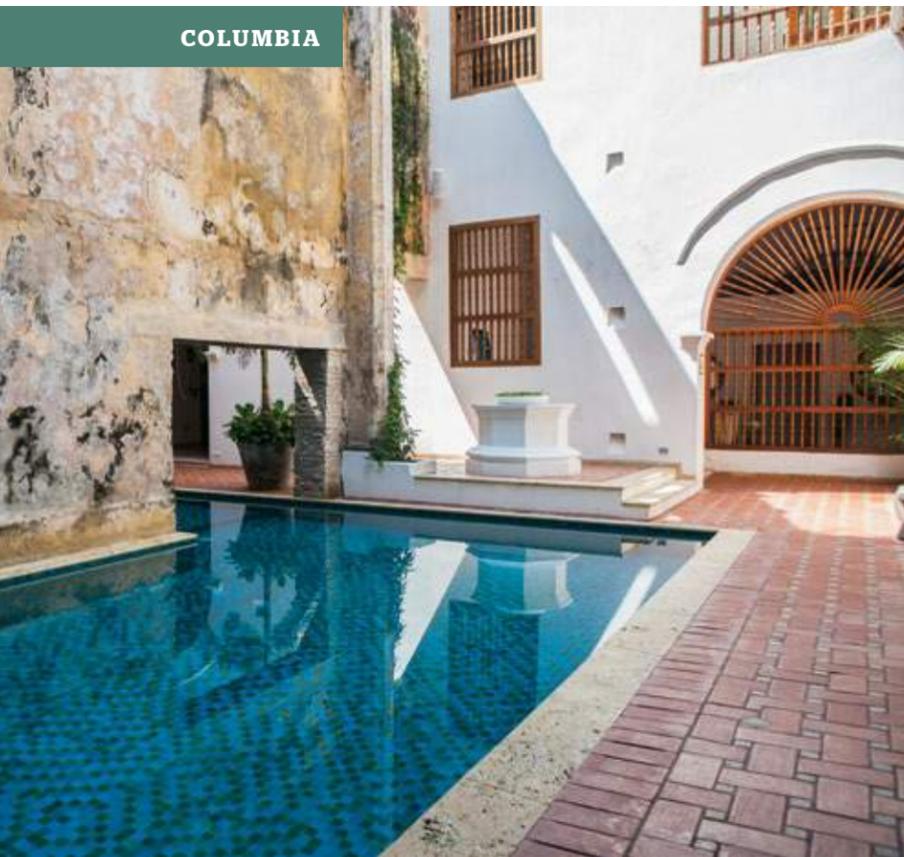
TO COMBINE three-centuries-old buildings and refurbish them into a destination worthy five-star hotel is no small task. The process requires historical knowledge, and sensitivity in tempering conservation of the building's original identity with upgrades to accommodate a modern sense of luxury. Casa San Agustín is a prime example of a historical revamp done right.

Casa San Agustín is located in the center of Cartagena's Old Town. We arrived on foot, and the bellman stationed out front spotted us as soon as we saw the hotel signage affixed upon the 17th-century mansion. He hurried toward us to take our things into care, and pointed out the reception desk just inside the gate. The registration process was professional, expeditious, and

above else, welcoming. Our room wasn't quite ready, but it was well before, noon let alone check-in time, so of course we understood. It took only the time for a quick stroll around the block and a coffee next door, and everything was ready to go.

The 24 rooms and six suites at Casa San Agustín reflect an impressive balance between the property's original details and the present day. Frescoes and wood-beamed ceilings are ever present throughout the building. Each of the hotel's accommodations is furnished with ironwork four-poster beds and marble floors, with spacious baths and amenities by Ortigia, one of our favorite brands. Complimentary minibars are replenished daily. Premium Rooms feature a large outdoor patio with a plunge pool. Suite del Virrey, the largest in the house, has two separate bedrooms and two large terraces with incredible views of the his-





The unique L-shaped swimming pool runs through an ancient aqueduct.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CASA SAN AGUSTIN

toric surroundings and an outdoor jacuzzi.

Alma is the all-day culinary concept at Casa San Agustin. Helmed by Executive Chef Heberto Eljach, Alma serves Colombian cuisine with eclectic influences from Eljach's travels. The alfresco restaurant offers a wide range of favorites including Colombian-style bouillabaisse, slow-cooked lamb, and dry-aged beef cured onsite, with live music Wednesday through Sunday evenings. Breakfast is included in the rate at Casa San Agustin, and is an absolute delight with a menu representing international standards and local traditions alike, including our favorite arepa con huevo, a corn cake deep fried with an egg inside. We may have

ordered two arepas on our second morning—unless our trainer asks, in which case we had some papaya with yogurt and half a cup of coffee.

Casa San Agustin's focal point is its courtyard swimming pool. The unique L-shaped swimming pool runs through an ancient aqueduct. In peak season, cocktails are available poolside as well as on the hotel rooftop. There is no spa or gym onsite, but massages are available in-room on request, and the front desk will be happy to provide you with a complimentary temporary membership to Cartagena's best fitness facility.

Casa San Agustin is the ideal Cartagena hotel experience, combining the city's rich colonial history, luxu-

rious amenities, and professional, genuinely personal service. We ventured out until later hours during both of our nights in residence, finding the iron gates locked upon our return. On both occasions, we were welcomed with smile and by name, and felt a sense of rejuvenation as we settled back into our room. Isn't that what coming home should always feel like? ●●●●

Casa San Agustin

Cartagena, Colombia
General Manager: Carolina Bernal
hotelcasasanagustin.com

DOS & DON'TS

DO choose Casa San Agustin for an ideally luxurious, personal experience in a beautifully revamped historic property.

DO have dinner at Alma one night of your stay. It's one of the best restaurants in town.

DO give particular consideration to the Premium Room category if you need only one bedroom, and Suite del Virrey if you have a larger party. Both have expansive outdoor space with private plunge pools or jacuzzis.

DON'T be dissuaded by San Agustin's lack of spa and gym. Massages are available in-room and the front desk can provide you with a temporary membership to the city's best gym.