

 NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

48 Hours in Lisbon

NEW VIBE IN PORTUGAL

Pg. 28

TRAVELER

Nobody Knows This World Better
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

Return to **VENICE**

UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES
OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST
MASQUERADE

**The Buzz
in Mexico**

SWEET LIFE IN THE
RIVIERA MAYA

Pg. 56

**Island
of Zen**

EXPLORING
JAPAN'S SHIKOKU

Pg. 66

**Adventure
in Africa**

A DAD AND HIS
TEEN IN TANZANIA

Pg. 76

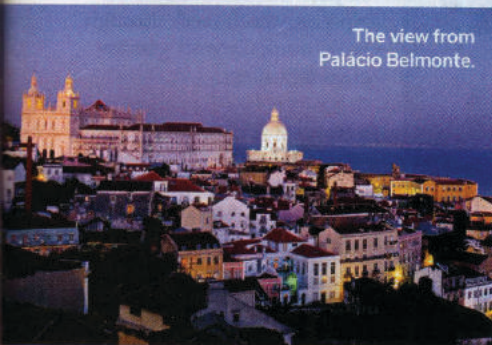
[ABBEY ROAD] IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BEATLES

Pg. 43

\$4.99US \$6.99CAN



with sausage on the alfresco riverside terrace. **Largo Restaurant** has an especially evocative setting in the old cloisters of a convent. The long-running Bairro Alto classic **Pap'Agorda** is famous for its dish of lobster *açorda* topped by bread crumbs. Also reliable in the neighborhood is the recently opened **Sea Me**, where diners select from a fresh-catch display including sea bream or Algarve prawns laid across shaved ice. For globally influenced flavors, **Pedro e o Lobo** blends Mediterranean and Portuguese cuisines, while **Ibo** rouses patrons with its African curries.



The view from
Palácio Belmonte.

WHERE TO STAY Lisbon has seen a recent explosion of small, quirky boutique hotels, but if you want a touch of Old World grandeur, book a room—well, really one of the eight suites—at **Palácio Belmonte** (from \$487). The former home of the earls of Belmonte features photo-ready views of the Alfama district from its organic gardens, a saltwater pool faced in black marble, serious antiques (from rustic wooden armoires to canopied beds and azulejo-tiled walls), and a library bulging with more than 4,000 books.

At the contemporary **Altis Belém Hotel** (from \$209), commissioned wall panels, depicting stories and places from Portugal's era of exploration, accent airy guest rooms that have picture windows overlooking the marina.

Hotel da Estrela (from \$174), one of Lisbon's newest boutique hotels, resides in a former school and offers its own forms of education; some of the staff come from the local School of Hospitality and Tourism, and guest rooms are adorned with vintage maps.

The centrally located **LX Boutique Hotel's** room sizes (and prices) range from Xsential (aka small, from \$111) to Xplendid (a suite with terrace, from \$206). Each floor is devoted to a Lisbon-centric design theme: The fado floor surrounds guests with a sound track of Portuguese ballads and guitar-patterned wallpaper. ■

[ON FOOT]

ALFAMA DISTRICT

Shopping and singing in a classic Lisbon neighborhood

Lisbon's Alfama district reads like a condensed urban history lesson: The Moors helped shape the quarter before it became a Jewish neighborhood and then an enclave of traders, fishermen, and sailors. The Alfama emerged from the 1755 earthquake better than most of Lisbon, and its whitewashed houses and cobbled streets winding down a steep hillside remain largely intact.

It's easiest to tackle the quarter if you start at the craggy top, at **Castelo de São Jorge (1)**, where disarmed cannon line the wide ramparts. Take any of the streets plunging downhill, though make sure you stop for coffee at the kiosk of the **Largo das Portas do Sol (2)**, a terrace offering a stellar view of the Alfama and the waterfront. Then browse the **Rua Augusto Rosa (3)**, with its cluster of shops including Ricardo Hogan's gallery devoted to wood-carved saints and the A Arte da Terra handicraft shop, which stocks the hand-embroidered love handkerchiefs that infatuated girls traditionally gave to their crushes. Below is the **Sé Cathedral (4)**, a Romanesque landmark built to commemorate the Christian defeat of Lisbon's Moors in 1147. Pay a visit to the sacristy, filled with relics of martyred saints. If it's Tuesday or Saturday morning, make a detour to the Feira da Ladra, a sprawling flea market where you can still



Clube de Fado.

find antique azulejo ceramic tiles, many glazed in a crisp blue and white palette (those chips just add to the patina).

At the Alfama's riverfront, the **Museu do Fado (5)** presents exhibits devoted to Portugal's native, bittersweet musical form and the *fadistas* (fado singers) famous for hitting the most mournful notes. "The fado comes from the streets of Lisbon," says Cuca Roseta, one of the country's most acclaimed young fadistas. "It tells the story of the sailors who left port and never returned, and the passion of love. It's really the essence of Portugal, a music that captures the rhythm and cadence of the ocean waves." If you want to hear the real thing, Roseta suggests **Clube de Fado (6)**. "It's where the best fadistas sing, and also the place where new singers can learn from the most experienced ones." —R.K.

