

## THE VIEW FROM HERE

The colourful tiled domes and ornate baroque church steeples of Puebla, Mexico, a Spanish colonial town a 90-minute drive from Mexico City, are on full display at La Purificadora. Design-wise, the hotel, which opened in May, is a departure from its surroundings. But throughout, rough-hewn materials from the 19th-century water purifying plant that originally occupied the site are knitted together with modern materials and shapes for a clean aesthetic and cozy interiors.

La Purificadora represents the first time the local father-and-son firm Legorreta + Legorreta has worked within a historic structure. "We constructed around the ruins," says Victor Legorreta, the son. "It was a heavy style of architecture, and the idea was to combine it with modern techniques." Best known for the vibrant Mexico City Hotel Camino Real, the architects employed their trademark cubist shapes, combined with ample glass details: broad windows, free-standing glass closets in the guest rooms, and glazed floors, staircases and walls. They eschewed father Ricardo Legorreta's signature lush hues for a Spartan palette that downplays the visual chaos of the building's urban context. "The surroundings have a lot of information from various time periods," says Victor. "We wanted to do something calmer, more relaxed." Black and white tones dominate the new construction, with stone and recycled wood recovered from the original site providing the main textures, and deep purple accents scattered throughout.

The open-air common areas put the city's skyline in plain view. The rooftop bar is flanked on one side by a slim lap pool with a sculpture by Mexican artist Laureana Toledo, and on the other by a hot tub. In the breezy four-storey lobby, tall-backed purple couches and asymmetrical loungers surround two broad fire pits that burn throughout the night. The plush seating vividly contrasts the stairway, reminiscent of an Aztec pyramid, that descends into the exterior courtyard. Thick wooden columns, crafted out of beams recovered from the site, separate the first floor lobby/lounge from the hotel's intimate family-style restaurant, where the long tables are fashioned from the same worn wood. On the opposite side, a wall of windows remains open all day. The 26 rooms, following the same tranquil colour scheme with minimal adornment, are long, slim and airy.

The entire building is imbued with a subdued, romantic vibe – both by design and circumstance. A few times a day, the bells of the nearby Church of St. Francis echo through the lobby. And sometimes they're even audible over the low pulse of lounge music piped into the hotel.

JULIA COOKE



**Top:** La Purificadora, a hotel in Puebla, Mexico, by Legorreta + Legorreta, basks in its Spanish colonial surroundings. On the third-floor terrace, lush purple couches and a 30-metre swimming pool overlook the Church of St. Francis. **Above:** The ruins of the former water-purifying plant contrast with such modern elements as the hotel rooms' glazed balconies. **Right:** A huge central stairway bisects the lobby and descends into the courtyard.