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Exploring Morocco's hidden gems: Attitude's Travel Editor and his boyfriend travel to Tangier and beyond

Gay-owned travel company Inclusive Morocco is blazing a trail in the North African country - where 'lewd acts' remain illegal but a bohemian queer scene burgeons.

By Markus Bidaux



"Before coming to Tangier, one should say goodbye to all friends — one might never see them again. People had come here for a brief holiday, to settle down and let the years go by," wrote **Truman Capote** of how the city on Morocco's northern coast captivated its foreign visitors.

Capote summured in Tangier in 1949. Still in his twink era at 25 years old, he had just published his first novel.

In the province of Larache, hidden down a long dirt road, is La Fiermontina Ocean hotel, which has two sister hotels in Europe, and is owned by a family of Italian-Moroccan descent.



La Fiermontina Ocean reception (image: Markus Bidaux)

As we drive through the gates, there are row upon row of olive trees — 7,500, in fact. At the small reception building, we are enveloped in the scent of rosemary, one of the many herbs generously planted here.

The reception offers us views of the Atlantic Ocean and the surrounding green rolling hills — we are constantly surprised by how green Morocco really is.

Each private villa is like a lone cube with a facade of local stones. Inside, each suite is uniquely decorated with retro 1970s furniture and lighting sourced by French design duo Charles-Philippe and Christophe of Laboratoire Design, who have made Morocco their home.



The advantage of using found pieces is that each villa has its own personality. There are no TVs in the rooms, but with panoramic floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors to our patio, the pool, and views of the ocean, who needs a television?

The hotel's general manager drives us in a 4x4 buggy around the property to the garden, where we try fresh strawberries, then down to the massive expanse of sand and the beach club.



A private pool attached to one of the suites at La Fiermontina Ocean (Image: Markus Bidauk)

We then drive out through the gates to the tiny village, where they have four additional suites, each with Moroccan décor. In the village, there is also a spa where I enjoy one of the two white marble steam rooms.

Next, I have a hammam treatment. I lie on a marble table while my whole body is scrubbed down, leaving my skin feeling smooth and refreshed.

As night falls, we head to the hotel's restaurant, where through the huge glass walls we spot 'stars' on the Atlantic waters — these are in fact fishermen's lanterns.



La Fiermontina Ocean's restaurant (Image: Markus Bidaux)

The menu is Italian-inspired, and the food is a real treat. In the morning, the breakfast buffet is small, but the gorgeous pastries prove that quality beats quantity.

In just six days here, we have discovered a Morocco that most people are not aware of, a land that is lush and green, with cities as colourful as its people.

Morocco may not be queer-friendly, but with the help of El Hammoumy, we have felt safe in the knowledge that we would encounter people and places that would welcome us with open arms.

Contact **Inclusive Morocco** if you are interested in visiting Morocco.