

Kasbah du Toubkal

MOROCCO'S PREMIER MOUNTAIN RETREAT

KASBAH SPECIAL EDITION

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The beautiful restoration of Tinmel Mosque, one of only two mosques in Morocco to allow non-muslim visitors

Divine decadence at Dar Doukkala



A family affair - the Hoffrock family take on Jbel Toubkal



Infgane, a High Atlas village devoted to pottery-making

..read on!

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We would like to give a great *big thank you* to everyone who reviewed Kasbah du Toubkal on tripadvisor, rewarding us with the much coveted award of Hall of Fame, 2019



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'Summertime, and the living is easy...' It may soon be getting too hot to conquer the peak of Jbel Toubkal, but there's still plenty to do in and around the more cooler climes of the Kasbah

Kasbah du Toubkal magazine will soon be five years old – doesn't time fly when you're enjoying yourself! Starting at the Kasbah on January, 2015, we've cut a swathe through Morocco, from the artisans of Fez, eternally imperial Rabat and the crumbling glory of Ait Ben Haddou, through personal stories of desert and mountain trekking, distilling orange blossom, meeting a 'Buddhist abbot' who just acts the part and in real life was a professional astrologer, and meandering the streets of Marrakech Medina – the list goes on. In this issue we return to where we started, to Kasbah du Toubkal, where we bring to life some of the new 'Days Out from the Kasbah' we've created and the glorious Dar Doukkala, the latest addition to the Kasbah family of hotels, and much, much more.

Stay tuned as we prepare for a whole lot of new ideas to celebrate our fifth anniversary.

Mike and Chris Mottugo

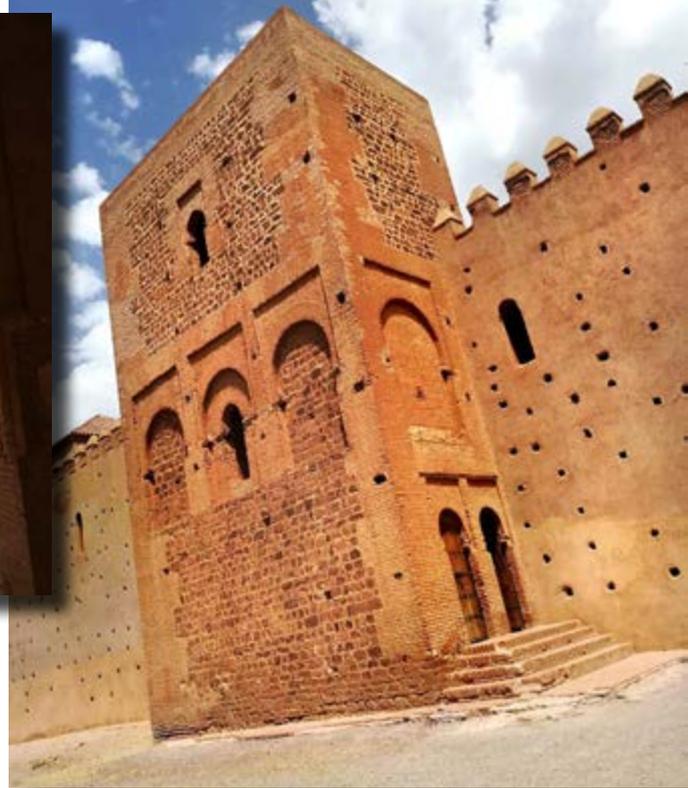
...and everyone at

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TIN-MEL

The turquoise water of Lake Ouirgane, in reality a reservoir feeding the thirsty of Marrakech, sits placidly against the shores of rust-red earth and sparse vegetation of the gently undulating hills that are its perimeter. All the land from the village to the high pass of Tizi n'Test, seventy-two miles away, was once owned by one man, Caid Ssi Taib, the last chieftain of the Lgandafi family, whose father had spent his whole life warring against the sultans of Morocco. Travelling the twisting road that snakes through the mountains in their climb to the pass, following in reverse the course of the River...as it feeds into the reservoir you see the stereotype small villages of the region, flat roofed, mud walls, huddled together around the minaret of the mosque, often the only painted building in the village. On the lower slopes bordering the river, small corrals provide winter sanctuary for shepherds who will pass the worst of the snows caring for their flocks before returning with spring into the High Atlas Mountains.

As you take the road that drops to the right at Talaat n'Yacoub you see sat on a hilltop what appears to be a small castle, but far from being a fortification, the building shows that the caid cared far more for his animals than his human flock.

In 1906 Taib returned from a visit to parlay with the sultan of Fez to find that he had been attacked by the infamous T'hami el-Glaoui. El-Glaoui, son of the caid of Telouet and his Ethiopian concubine, rose to fame when he and his brother saved the sultan during a blizzard in 1893 and were rewarded with a powerful 77-mm Krupp canon, which they immediately put to good use by subduing their rival warlords. By nefarious means Glaoui became Pasha of Marrakech, pocketing plenty of lucre from supporting the French in their encroachment into the kingdom.

Despite being powerful in his own right, said to be able to raise an army of five thousand men in only two days, Ssi Taib, afraid that Glaoui would return, built the 'castle' in 1906 to safeguard his treasured





horses, in other words, a posh stable, which would seem to show his preference for horses over humans. Owing to Taib's early death the building was never finished and was left as a shell until bought by a Marrakshi in 2006 intent on creating a hotel. Restoration had barely begun

ing Merenids, leaving only the mosque, a tribute to the dynasty's founder, that had taken thirty years to complete from its inception in 1153, as a reminder of what was once one of the most thriving community and cultural centres of its time.

Tinnel mosque retained much of its importance as a centre of Islamic studies for at least two centuries, but slowly began to fall into disrepair. Renovation began in 1995 following the original design, and while most of the outer walls and cloister-like first section remained, the roof that covered the middle section and the ranks of interior arches were long gone. The reconstruction is based on the original design and while there is still a long way to go, including a roof and interior decoration, any worshipper time-travelling from its glory days would be convinced the beautiful arcaded arches of the interior were original.

when the buyer followed in Taib's footsteps by premature death, but as his children had no interest in continuing the project it once again sits as an empty shell on a hilltop, with beautiful views over what was once one man's domain. Rumour has it that Sir Richard Branson is considering buying it, but if every rumour of him buying some fancy property were true he would own half the kingdom by now.

A few kilometres on you see a corner of crumbling stones, all that is left of what was once a walled city of more than 17,000

people, apart, that is, from the majestic Tinnel Mosque.

At some time in the 10th century, Mohamed Ibn Tumart undertook *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca that every follower of Islam hopes to undertake. Unlike most muslims, who consider hajj to be one of, if not *the*, most important event of their life, Ibn Tumart came back convinced that the Almoravids, the then most powerful and widespread dynasty, were too decadent and should be overthrown, which led to Ibn Tumart founding the Almohad dynasty. Having declared himself Mahdi (spiritual leader), Ibn Tumart and his followers decamped from Marrakech to the village of Tinnel high in the Atlas Mountains, where they created a religious and scholastic centre that spread their beliefs and doctrine throughout the country, only to have every man, woman and child wiped out and the city destroyed in 1276 by conquer-



One of only two mosques in Morocco that non-Muslims can enter (the other being the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca) it is unlikely that Tinnel Mosque will fulfill any religious function in the future, being far too big for the tiny village that is Tinnel today. One of those curious twists of fate is that centuries after the death of the man who was one of Morocco's greatest Islamic spiritual reformers, who tried to create an ultra-orthodox Islamic community, the small village of Arghen almost in the shadow of the mosque became one of the most important Jewish enclaves in the area, populated by those escaping religious persecution in France and other European countries.

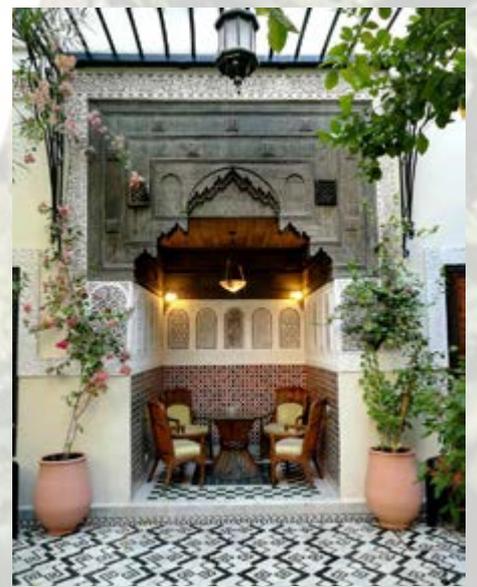
A visit to Tinnel Mosque is one of a selection of days out offered by Kasbah du Toubkal that can be booked directly with the hotel on arrival.

The Art of Decadence *Dar Doukkala*



The arched wooden doorway that leads you into Dar Doukkala from the busy street of the same name is pleasing, but no more so than many of the houses in Marrakech Medina, although the stately sweep of the stairway just inside is pretty spiffy, with its white and red tiled treads and vaguely sensual hooping rise of the chrome banister. The internal garden is delightful, with path-ways separating the quadrants of palm trees and lush floribunda, but other than the size and the pretty alcoves set in the walls to sit and mull the day away in, it's akin to what you would expect to find as the centerpiece of many of the best riads. But it's when you get to the bedrooms that the 'Oh my giddy aunt!' effect kicks in, backed up later when you take yourself down to dinner in the long, chi-chi dining room that's just made for romantic evenings and whispered conversations.

It doesn't take long to realise that this is no ordinary riad, and certainly no ordinary restoration. Many of even the best riads in the ancient quarter have the reputation for bedrooms being a bit



pokey, but Dar Doukkala was obviously designed as a grand residence of someone of substance in the early 19th century because the six bedrooms and two suites are expansive by anyone's standard. And the quality of workmanship... exquisite examples of carved *geps* plasterwork, carved in four and five layers and filled with flowing calligraphy and arabesque patterns, some carvings hand-painted using egg tempera paint tinted with natural ground pigments such as saffron and poppy seeds; intricate wall coverings of geometric *zellij* tiles, each separate piece carefully cut from a glazed clay tile to create intricate patterns; bathrooms of coloured *tadelakt*, a waterproof plaster surface used in Moroccan architecture to make baths, sinks, walls, ceilings, roofs, and floors, labour-intensive to install, but with a soft, warm, undulating character when finished; exquisite *zouak* painted cedar wood ceilings, and it's probably one of the few houses in existence that can boast of a room with wall paneling in leather and another with leather covering the bathroom floor.

Possibly one of the best quotes about Dar Doukkala comes from Hg2, *A Hedonist's Guide*:

It's a huge place with six rooms that unfurl organically around two floors connected by a huge, florid courtyard and a red-and-white tiled stairwell that's like something out of Alice in Wonderland; it's just one of the signature flourishes of designer Jean-Luc Lemée, who has transformed the place into a feast of art-deco curves and madcap orientalism.

It's the delightful use of harlequin-coloured glass panels in some of the bedrooms and bathrooms that creates an ambience of exotic eastern decadence as the afternoon sunlight follows its arc to evening. I'm staying in room number five, where I feel Mr Lemée has given full reign to his outrageous expression of colour – a rich red sofa big enough for a bed (the bed itself is the size of a small island), a pair of bright yellow leather armchairs begging for you to sit in and fall asleep, and as I'm fortunate to have pair of French windows with beautiful coloured panels, I sink into one of the chairs and watch swathes of red, yellow, blue, green, splurge across the multi-coloured hues of Moroccan rugs covering the floor.

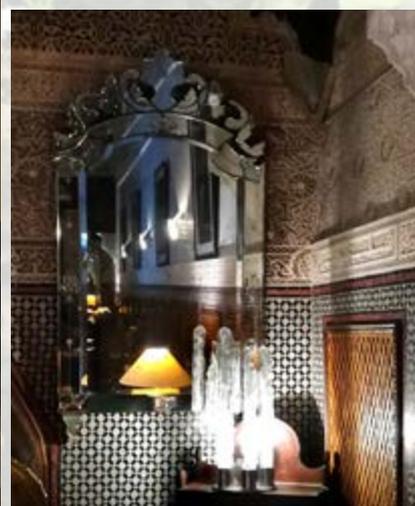
A step outside my room is the swimming pool, its sparkling water casting a pattern on the underside of the balcony of the room above. I splash, then recline on a green lounge, letting the somnambulist ambience wrap itself around me, the high walls of

the riad keeping the hubbub of the Medina streets at bay.

It's been my habit over many years of travelling to dress for dinner. I don't go the full hog of bow tie and cufflinks, but long trousers and a clean shirt are a must. As I settled into my armchair in the dining room, awed by the sumptuousness of my surroundings, I felt that the eloquence and elegance of my surroundings made the effort with my wardrobe all the more worthwhile. I felt as if I was in the Moroccan version of a gentleman's club, one where a gentleman could metaphorically bathe in the calm of the subdued lighting reflecting through the ornate wall mirrors that seemed to send their glow on into infinity, as Alice might as she ventured through the looking-glass.

Dar Doukkala has that sort of effect on you; romantic, decadent and dressing-for-dinner.

Dar Doukkala is one of the family of *Kasbah du Toubkal* hotels and can be booked independently or as part of ***Trekking in Style*** holidays. Visit **[THIS PAGE](#)** for more information.



A family affair

Trekking Jbel Toubkal

Tackling Jbel Toubkal, at 4,167 metres the highest mountain in North Africa, might seem limited to the hardy trekker. The Hoffrock family prove otherwise.

Ticket number 408. Not an exceptional number in the great scheme of things, but one that sticks in Robert Hoffrock's mind as the winning number in a Brecon Beacons Mountain Rescue lottery draw, the prize being a three-night stay at Kasbah du Toubkal for two people.

"It was quite funny, really, because for years I'd been wanting to come to Morocco and trek Jbel Toubkal but never got around to it, and suddenly there it was." No mean walker, Rob has trekked the Himalayas five times, losing two toes on Mera Peak to frostbite in the process. ("When dad is on the beach he winds people up by saying "be careful, there's a shark out there!"" jokes Jake, his thirteen year-old son.)

A walking family, wife Harriet and second son, eleven-year-old Joe, when Robert celebrated his fiftieth birthday he offered his sons a choice – a trip to Disneyland Florida or to Everest base camp. The base camp won.

"Jbel Toubkal was the first big mountain we could tackle as a family, so I spoke to the people at the Kasbah and asked if we could bring the boys and trek Jbel Toubkal. They set the whole thing up brilliantly."

"As soon as Rob won the prize we went online to do some research," says Harriet, "but I was quite surprised when we first saw Imlil. None of us have ever been to Morocco, but Imlil is beautiful, really picturesque the way the buildings blend into the hillside, how green the valley is because of the irrigation."

Having experienced Everest base camp, what had the family expected with Jbel Toubkal?



“I knew it was going to be hard because it goes up really quick, from 1,800mtr to 4,200mtr in two days which means you can get altitude sickness,” says Jake.

“I was sick on the way up. It was six hours on the first day from the Kasbah to the refuge and then four hours from the refuge to the summit, with a six hour trek back down to the Kasbah on the second day. On the second day I felt fine. I actually felt quite joyful.”

Not so for Joe. “For me it was a different story because as we went up I felt it harder and harder to breathe and harder to walk but when we got to the top I felt better.” So why keep going?

“I wanted to do it not just for me but also for the family. It was a really good trek and I didn't want to let anyone down. Once you get to the summit it's amazing. You're on top of North Africa and can see everything for miles around.”

How did Harriet feel as a mother, watching over her sons? “I was anxious before we came in terms of the altitude and how quickly we had to go up. We've been at that altitude before, but never gone up so quickly. I was concerned about that but we all coped better than I thought we would, although at times I tried not to cry because that's one of the strange things the altitude can do, it can make you quite emotional.”

“It was very exciting on the second day because we were up at 3.30. I was glad it was in the dark. I was worried about the first bit because it was scree and I had no idea how we would get up it, although obviously we did. The early start helped Mohammed, though, because we did the trek during Ramadan and he was able to eat before we started walking.”

“I was impressed by Mohammed,” says Joe. “He was faithful to his religion and when we were going up the mountain he told us to keep going while he

prayed. Observing Ramadan must have been very difficult. We walked almost twelve hours on the second day which must have been really hard because

he couldn't even take a drink of water.”

“Mohammed was really good in describing the area and the flora and fauna,” comments Robert.

“That's everything, really, because what's the point of going somewhere and not learning about the area you are in and the culture.” Harriet chips in, “That's what we love about coming to somewhere different, immersing yourself in the culture of the place, the religion, the people. When we talk about our guide, the muleteer and the cook were amazing. How they put together such wonderful meals while on the move I honestly don't know,” a point Joe stresses. “Everyone is so approachable, they do so much for you. They do so much for you and even though they were in Ramadan they made sure we weren't hungry. I'm really thankful to everyone, especially Muhammed who deserves all the credit for getting us up the mountain.”

Dad, who drew ticket 408 that got them there, has the penultimate word. “We've done many walks together as a family but to reach the summit of a big mountain together as a family was fantastic for me, and to see these

lads and Harriet really push themselves, to struggle but push on, as a father I feel really proud. Our first big mountain.”

And the final word, an interesting observation from the youngest member of the family, eleven-year-old Joe. “When you are doing a hike, if you feel you need to stop, just stop, because you need those little rests to get up the mountain.” “You need to refuel and keep going again,” adds Jake.



Click on the link to read Catherine Mack's story of a trek to the Azzaden Valley

THE IRISH TIMES

A glimpse of Berber life
– trekking in Morocco's
Atlas Mountains

Reader's Write

Robert Benholt loves the High Atlas Mountains but never really got off the beaten track...until he was invited to visit a village devoted to pottery

I'm not much of a walker but on the two previous times I've stayed at the Kasbah I've been a bit jealous of those who do even the short treks, hearing about the small villages they pass through and seeing a different way of life. I was sitting in the foyer chatting to Said Id Ahmed who works in the Kasbah office and sometimes acts as a receptionist, talking about this when he said he was going home for the weekend and if I wished he could show me a village that most people never see. He didn't need to ask twice!

We drove through Asni, and on any other Saturday I'd have been into the souk, probably my favourite because it's the biggest one in the area and totally traditional, but instead we took the road to Ouirgane – and that's about the only directions I can give because the wandering road seemed to take us all over the place!

Infgane has a population of about three hundred, and apart from those who work away, their income is totally dependent on pottery. Generations have made the same three products; simple tajines, the charcoal burners to rest them on and a pot shaped like a miniature of the famous man-size versions that Alibaba and his forty thieves hid themselves in but is in fact a bread oven. Each small pottery is independent, usually not much more than small building of mud and stone with a split bamboo roof, sometimes with plastic sheeting to keep the rain out. It may look a bit ramshackle to our eyes but it does the job. The potter's wheel is a simple structure that has a circular platform at the bottom that the potter pushes with his foot. I couldn't help thinking that if the potter uses the same foot all the time one of legs must be a lot more muscular than the other!

Said introduced me to Mohammed Ben Ali who has sat at a similar wheel in a similar rickety workshop



for over sixty years, while his son Ibrahim, a school friend of Said's, turned his first pot when he was seven, before taking up his place alongside his father when his education ended.

The pots are built in stages, leaving each to dry before continuing with the next. With the tajines the bases are made first and when they are dry the tops are made, each one trimmed to fit perfectly and only allow steam to come out of the opening of the conical top. Each cycle of completing the pot takes around four days and then they are placed into the kiln, not much more than a shallow circular dug-out in the ground where the products are fired. Small pieces of wood are packed around each individual pot, covered over with the broken pieces of pottery from

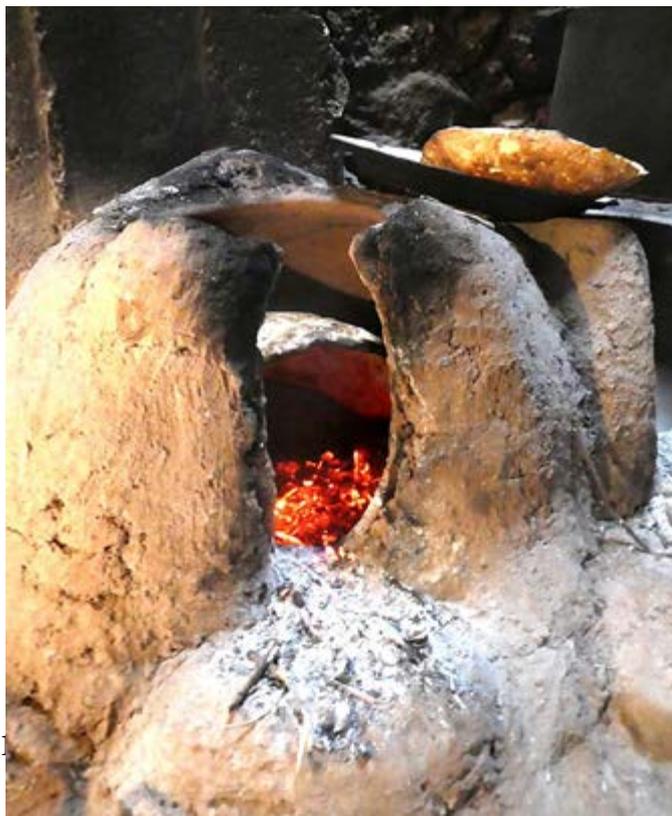




previous firings and set for a slow burn and cooling overnight.

I thought the pots were water jars, but I was as far wrong as it was possible to be. In fact, they are bread ovens, just like the oven Madame Fatima bakes the bread in to accompany the meals at the Kasbah. It may look ancient, but in fact it's regularly replaced. The bread oven is made like a pot then an elongated hole is cut out before firing, with score marks to the rim from the sides of the hole to knock out a section later. The finished oven will last about six months with daily use but the clay that's packed around it dries out and needs to be replaced about every two weeks.

There are two main types of Berber bread cooked with this oven. The top is left open to place a flat dish on to bake *arkhisse*, round loaves of fluffy bread cooked daily. (In some villages, when the bread is cooked, butter and honey are melted in the dish and the bread returned to it to warm and soak up the sweet mixture.) The other style is crisp *tannourte*, an oval flat bread baked by layering the pizza-like dough



on the inner curve of the oven, where you get a more uneven texture because it's closer to the flame, giving it the lovely crispy burnt bits like the crust of a good thin pizza. The oven is also used for making the charcoal that is used in the tagine cooker and boiling water for the inevitable mint tea.

I'd had a really good few hours out, at last seeing something of life in a small mountain village, but Said had another surprise for me. He took me to his home in the village of Outakherri, a few kilometres from Infgane, and introduced me to his aunty Kaf-toum and his mum, Kabira, who had made a lamb tajine with figs and walnuts for me, accompanied by a tagine of vegetable and a loaf of tannourte. I can honestly say that it was the best tajine I've ever eaten and can now understand why any man in Morocco will tell you that the food cooked at home by the women is better than you would find in any restaurant.

As it was Ramadan, Said couldn't join me for lunch, but it was a special treat to be invited into the home of such charming people, one I definitely intend to try again when I'm next in Morocco.



A visit to Infgane Pottery Village with lunch in a village home is one of a selection of days out offered by Kasbah du Toubkal that can be booked directly with the hotel on arrival. It could be combined with a visit to Tinnel Mosque and Asni or Ouirgane weekly souk.

CHANGING WORLDS

The strangest things can happen when you are out for a walk. It helps if you are walking in the grandeur of the High Atlas Mountains and the people you are walking with are the British Ambassador to Morocco and a group of girls from Education For All, a set of people and circumstances that took Juliet Kinsman, luxury travel expert and evangelist for womens' education, onto a whole new path in her illustrious career.

"I was chatting with Thomas Reilly, the Ambassador, and said to him that EFA is such an extraordinary and unique initiative someone should make a film about it, so he said, why don't you? As a writer and journalist I think of myself as a professional story-teller, but I also like to celebrate how the travel and hospitality industry can be a force for good."

Juliet discussed the idea with Kuba Nowak, a film-maker she has previously worked with, and they jointly decided that they didn't want to make a promotional

film for a charity, they wanted to make an independent short documentary which was really a story of love and support and how that benefitted the girls in terms of getting a secondary education.

"Kuba and I had made small films previously in the UK, but we had never made anything like this. It's a whole different

animal when you open it up do something abroad. I didn't know anything about the Morocracy, (a local blending of the words 'Morocco' and 'bureaucracy' that aptly describes the convolutions of working in the country), which was a whole other process."

Once production began there was a lot of work crammed into a few shooting days.

"It was a real honour and privilege to be allowed to spend time in the girls' dormitories, and we were very sensitive to the fact that these are the girls' homes, and for them to let us be there and to observe life and capture life, they didn't make us feel like we were being intrusive, it was very kind of them to let us be part of their family life, as it were."

For the girls of EFA, now numbering almost two hundred in five boarding houses (a sixth will open in September) and fifty attending university, their fellow students, the house mothers and the board-



ing house staff, have become their extended families. But the true test of family life is much closer to home, in the remote villages of the High Atlas Mountains the girls come from, where the support of the families and villagers themselves has gone from fears of the girls becoming drawn into the decadence of 'big city' life when EFA opened its first boarding house in Asni a decade ago, to celebrating the education, the confidence and the chance of a better future than any of the girls could possibly imagined. Many of those early nervous families and villagers have become EFA's greatest advocates.

"Going to the villages and seeing how remote they are was what motivated us to make the film. During the recording we spent time with different girls at different stages. We visited Ghita Aït Moulid, who lives in a remote village, and when her mum spoke to us Kuba and I didn't understand what she was saying, but suddenly there

was a point where everyone in the room started crying and she was obviously revealing something very personal which she'd not told anyone before. Her story was that she was sent away to work when she was seven years old and was subject to terrible abuse from her hosts in Casablanca. We made it very clear that we were making a film and she was sharing this with us, but she clearly felt strongly that she wanted the next generation of girls not to experience what she had experienced. It was because of situations like this that we felt a huge responsibility to tell their story truthfully."

Hearing a story told in a language you don't understand and then re-telling it to get the full, correct meaning has a thousand pitfalls, especially when dealing with a highly emotive subject such as the interwoven lives of a close knit family.

"I've been a journalist for 25 years and language is



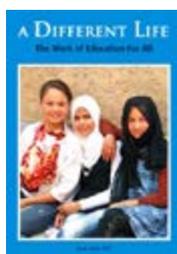
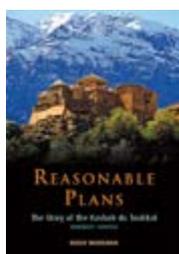
everything to me, it's so nuanced. It's absolutely critical that you represent people's sentiments with exactly the right words. We were faced with interviews in French, Arabic, dialectal Arabic and Berber, plus broken English, and it's really, really crucial that the way we represent the people we interviewed through the edit and through the subtitles is true to their words. Without a doubt that's been the biggest challenge practically speaking, and in terms of making sure the right message for the film comes through.

“One of the benefits of having Zahra Aït Boumesaoud with us, who is a former EFA student, is that she speaks their language in a wider sense, she made people feel at ease. Zahra was translating in a basic sense, but we had a professional interpreter go through the transcripts, which was costly, and when we do the final version we will do that again. We kept the costs down with a crew of three; myself, Kuba and our assistant, Memoona Naushahi, but we paid the girls to support us in making the film, which in itself has a positive economic and social impact. That's the model of how we did this.”
 “What was really important to me is that this was a very human story, about love, about the house-mothers providing good parenting in the simple sense, but it's really about the opposite of this whole idea that we have the right way of living or

our sophisticated living is superior to this rural way of life. I think it's a reminder that while these girls will definitely benefit from education, we in our world could learn how they live as families; there's love, there's support, they live as a community. For me one of the most poignant things I learned about Islam is that the girls would tell us, “In our culture if you learn something you want to share it, if you have a piece of bread and you are with your family you want to share it.” That's why education there is so powerful and valuable because within the families and the girls is the wish to want to share it, whereas we are much more individualistic in our world. It's something we probably won't get into the film but it's absolutely my favourite story. Ghita was saying that when she went at age eleven to work with a wealthy family, she said, “You know I went there and had seen that life on television and the ultimate goal was to have money and a nice house, and when I got to that family there was medicine everywhere, they had a full fridge but they never had meals together, would all just pass each and never spoke to each other. The environment felt poor.” But you go back to her house and it's mud walls and very basic but there's love there in that room and you realise that's the richness humanity should value.’



Changing Worlds in the Atlas Mountains will be premiered during Pure Experiences in Marrakech in September



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The Kasbah in the Archives

The House on the Hill

Who could have guessed that an agonisingly painful silly accident would have taken the McHugo brothers, Chris and Mike, off on a tangent that would lead to them buying a hilltop ruin, which would eventually become the glorious Kasbah du Toubkal? But such are life's little quirks – and you never know when they will happen. *Issue 2, Page 6*



People as well as profits

From the very outset of construction of Kasbah du Toukal the intention was that as much as was feasibly possible would be sourced locally; the labour to construct the building and the materials needed in the construction; the staff that look after the guests and the food that appears on their plates – if it was available locally it would be bought locally.

Issue 6, Page 13

A Day at the Kasbah

As the Barbara Streisand song goes, 'On a clear day you can see forever,' and that's how it feels from the roof of Kasbah du Toubkal; in one direction the magnificent Jbel Toubkal, the highest mountain in north Africa, set against a warm blue sky; in the other the lush green of the Imlil Valley as it disappears into the distance on its meandering way to Marrakech. And you don't have to be staying at the Kasbah to enjoy the superb views. *Issue 4, Page 10*

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DISCOVER

The Kasbah in the Media

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THE IRISH TIMES

A glimpse of Berber life
– trekking in Morocco's
Atlas Mountains



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Restaurant Guru

KASBAH DU TOUBKAL RATED THE BEST RESTAURANT IN IMLIL ACCORDING TO VISITORS' REVIEWS ON RESTAURANT GURU!

And these are some of the chefs who create it....



Omar Ait Idar

Omar has been with the Kasbah as chef and occasional mountain guide for a decade, probably helped by the fact that his home is right next to the Kasbah's entrance, making his commute from home to work all of about three minutes. Has 'only' five children, three boys and two girls, and reckons his wife's cooking is much better than his.



Hassan Chajaa

The longest serving chef at the Kasbah, Hassan has been there since 2001. He claims his walk from home in Aremdt, the village way above the Kasbah takes him 20 minutes – a good 40-minute slog for anyone with lesser legs. Fast as fast with the curved parsley cutter, his hands a blur.



Hassan Ait Chah

After seven years a chef in Oukaimaden ski resort Hassan arrived at the Kasbah three years ago both to gain further experience and because it's 'only' 16kms motorbike ride over rough mountain roads to his home in Tammgist. Loves working at the Kasbah and being close to his family.



'My wife and I have various eating specifics that require a divergence from the norm: vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free etc. The Kasbah handled all of those with flair and distinction during our three nights there. The service also was tremendous with smiles, professionalism, and care. This is a cool place!'

The two things that garner more compliments than any others about Kasbah du Toubkal are the stunning views and the excellent local food. Add in the cheerfulness and friendliness of the staff and you have the makings of not only a wonderful day out but the rare opportunity to sample local gastronomy at its best at the Restaurant at the Top of North Africa.

You can't take the views or the glorious location home with you, but over the next few months we will be creating a recipe book of some of the favourite dishes served at the Kasbah for you to prepare in your own home using easy-to-find ingredients and no special equipment. So don your *gelaba* and *babouches* to bring back wonderful memories of your visit to Kasbah du Toubkal!

'The food was fantastic, as were the accompanying views. We finished the meal with a basket of fresh citrus fruits and mint tea.'

Schulyer, New York City

'Incredible food with a view, dining areas very cosy, lashings of mint tea made perfectly.'

Michah, Norwich

'We had an absolutely marvellous time.'

Lucycullen88, London

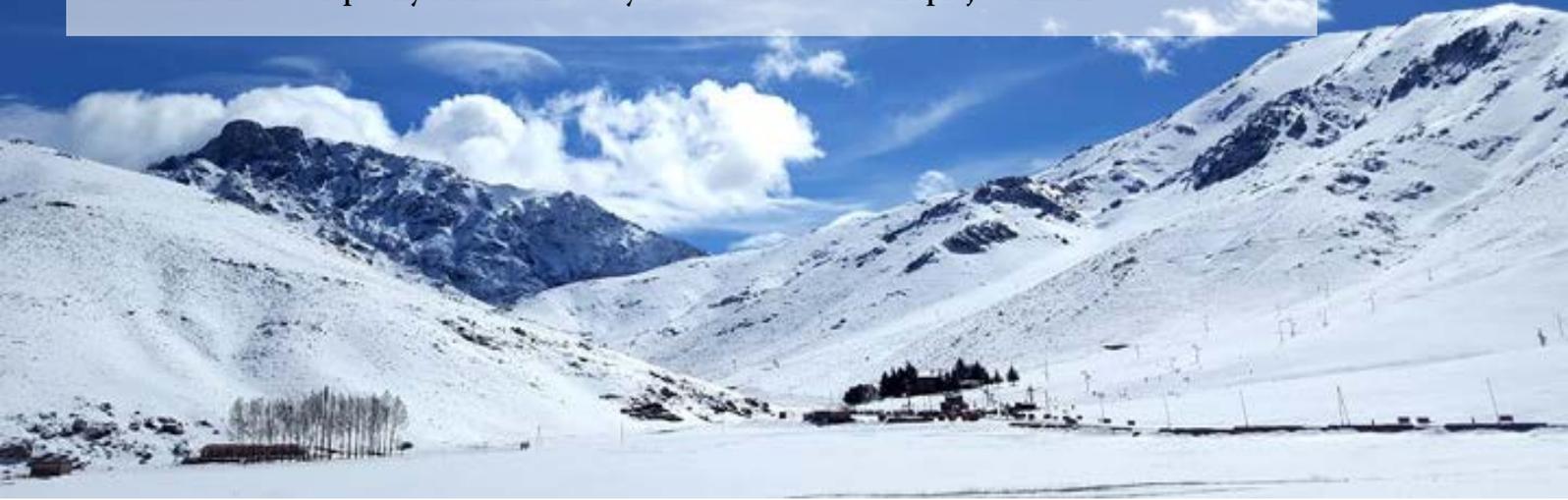
'A highlight was the great picnic lunches we had on our walk each day. Undoubtedly the best picnics we have ever had.'

Senderwood, Sydney

CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE HIGH ATLAS MOUNTAINS

An article by Dr Benjamin Bell and the Leverhulme Trust Research Team, The University of Manchester

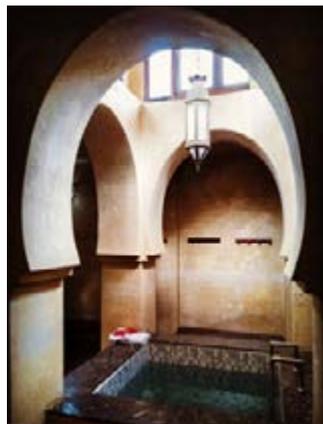
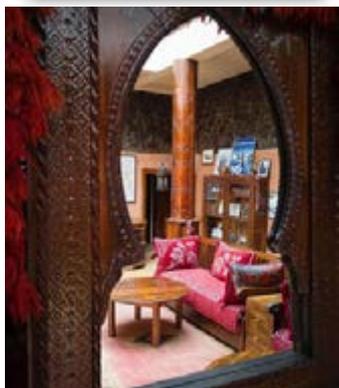
As the summer sun melts the winter snow across the High Atlas, look high enough and you'll still see patches of the white stuff high up in the peaks. These snow patches are just one of a series of clues that indicate that the climate of the High Atlas might have been very different in the past. A research team based at The University Manchester, UK, are investigating how climate in the region has changed, and how this may have shaped the landscape and the people that live within it. Their aim is to investigate the role of glaciers and snow fields in the High Atlas – and how these may have acted as 'water towers' to sustain and develop early Moroccan society. You can read about the project [HERE](#).

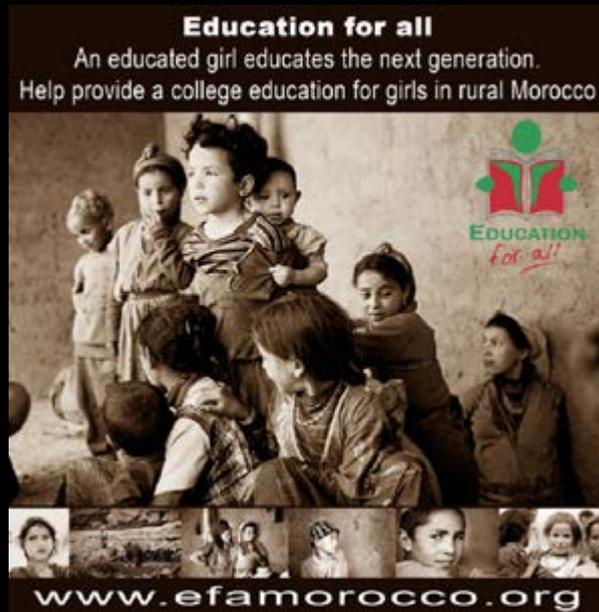


A few  and  images from followers of **Kasbah du Toubkal**



Enter our 2019 competition





MARRAKECH ATLAS ETAPE

MARRAKECH TO OUKAÏMEDEN

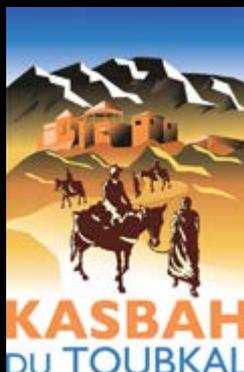
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