



La Concha Resort Architecture

In 1958, Tropical architecture was beginning to be recognized, thanks to two projects: the construction of the Dorado Beach Hotel and La Concha Hotel in San Juan, with the latter representing a combination of two significant styles. While the Dorado-based hotel was built along more traditional lines and stressed early Spanish design, La Concha's design revolved around a modern innovative look that emphasized lush tropical surroundings. This new hotel, built by architects Osvaldo Toro and Mighel Ferrer, opened up possibilities for a whole new style, with innovative spatial concepts and detail expressing the pure joy of the design process.

Effectively reflecting the relationship between style and tropical context, this design concept had also been considered by other architects such as Henry Klumb, and in Latin America by Brazilian architects Oscar Niemeyer and Affonso Eduardo Reidy. La Concha's architects also added elements that clearly described the island's climatic conditions, such as sun protection on the south side of the hotel and other design features that created a lush tropical ambience.

- Ceiling: The curved ceilings in the lobby, rooms, and cabana area were designed to directly appeal to the senses.
- Undulated Curves: The private club's ceiling was designed as a metaphor of the sea. Constructed in cement, it was considered an engineering and architectural wonder.
- The Desired Image: a shell amidst ocean waves. The ceiling was made up of double-curved parabolic planes, with the spaces in between covered with glass panes to reflect the concaves of the shell. The reflection of the sea in the glass heightened the illusion of being inside a gigantic shell in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. The La Concha Club stands out as an emblematic example of Puerto Rico's national architecture.

The La Concha Hotel also brought a new aspect to San Juan's architectural iconography – the reinvention of a tropical house. Traditional characteristics of Puerto Rico's residential architecture were included in the hotel's structure, but on a new scale. For example, with inner courtyards then a traditional part of Puerto Rican homes, the hotel design featured an open area called *El Batey* (a word used by the Taino Indians in Puerto Rico, which refers to an open recreational area), which contained the hotel pool and 14 apartments with vaulted ceilings.

Also in the tradition of many Puerto Rican homes, the top floor of La Concha was designed as a lookout, whereby guests could enjoy the ocean view on one side and a spectacular view of the city on the other.

During 2007, the architectural richness of La Concha Resort was rejuvenated. Although the original hotel structure continues to serve as a tribute to the Modern Tropical movement, architects Marvel and Marchand have also contributed their unique style in renovating this site as well.