



A SPARE, MODERN INTERIOR IN COFFEE AND CREAM
HARMONIZES WITH THE ARCHAIC REMAINS.



A 12TH-CENTURY WALL IS TREATED NOT AS A MUSEUM EXHIBIT, BUT AS AN ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE.

HAUTE HAUTE HAUTE!

The once stuffy world of fine dining gets a sleek new look.

WORDS SUZANNE WALES
PHOTOS FERNANDO ALDA

The culture of haute cuisine is becoming increasingly innovative in Spain, thanks to Ferran Adrià and his following of ground-breaking chefs, and local designers are being called upon to create restaurant interiors that match the sophistication of the menus. One such person is Francesc Rifé, a Barcelona-based designer whose latest project is Arrop, a new restaurant in Valencia run by the award-winning chef Ricard Camarena. Situated deep in the city's ancient heart, Arrop is adjacent to a 19th-century townhouse that will become a new boutique hotel (also by Rifé, it is due to open later this year). The main dining room is located on the subterranean level. A glass roof lets in natural light during the day, giving life to Arrop's rich coffee-and-cream colour scheme and its textile and enamel-resin surfaces.

Rifé was obliged to conserve the site's vestiges – a 12th-century wall, a Gothic arch and an Arabic water tank – which he achieved admirably by seamlessly incorporating them into Arrop's elegant and restrained interior. Rather than 'framing' and lighting them as though they were museum pieces, Rifé has covered vertical and horizontal elements in smoky mirrors that reflect the pieces throughout the restaurant. Diners at Arrop may partake in hyper-modern cuisine, but Rifé's intelligent treatment of their surroundings ensures that the distant past is never far away. ■■■■

PROJECT NAME Arrop
LOCATION Valencia
DESIGN Francesc Rifé (francesc-rife.com)
SEATS 40
FOOD New takes on traditional Valencian fare
CONCEPT Contemporary elegance that respects the past
WEBSITE arrop.com