



BEIRUT

[LEBANON]



Phoenix of the Middle East

The Lebanese capital is rebuilding itself, feeding modern aspirations while protecting its millennium-old heritage.

“**S**even times destroyed and seven times rebuilt,” goes the saying about the Lebanese capital. Beirut’s rebirth over the past 30 years stokes the passions of its inhabitants. “For a while, architects were obsessed with glass towers, obviously a bit out of context in a Mediterranean country,” says Candice Naim, co-founder of the design and architecture studio *Burau*. “But now many projects take into account the city’s history.”

1 — A case in point is the *Stone Garden residential complex*, built by Lina Ghotmeh in the *Al Marfa’a* district. “The building’s envelope was built in layers of concrete, alluding to archaeology, while its façade is spattered with openings to evoke the scars of war. But they are also used as balconies spilling over with plants and bringing light into apartments.”

Another example of this trend is the *Beit Beirut Museum*, located on Damascus Road, which separated Muslim and Christian neighbourhoods during the civil war. The yellow ochre Ottoman-style building, originally built in 1924, was revisited by architect Youssef Haidar in 2009. “The outer façade, badly scraped by bullets and shelling, has been left intact, but a contemporary hand came to heal it and give it new life by incorporating small steel elements,” explains Naim.

A collection of contrasts, where luxury residential complexes mix with traditional homes, Beirut also keeps its promise with a vibrant nightlife that can be experienced on rooftops, in sleekly designed restaurants or posh nightclubs. “Some of the iconic places include two projects by architect Bernard Khoury: *La Centrale*, a stylish bar and restaurant, and the *BOIS*, literally, an underground nightclub with a roof that opens to turn the place into an open-air entertainment venue.”

Places



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Places — Beirut



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LONGINES BOUTIQUE

— Down Town Beirut
136 Allenby Street
Beirut

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURES WITHIN
YOUR REACH**

To get away from the city, head to Byblos or Baalbek, both *UNESCO World Heritage Sites*. Byblos is an ancient seaside Phoenician city where the Lebanese love to escape for the weekend. Located in the Beqaa Valley, **Baalbek** is one of the main archaeological attractions with superbly preserved Roman temples. “Wine tourism is also developing in the region,” says Naim. “And lots of guest houses promoting ecotourism are cropping up.”

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