



woes — it's currently in a fiscally austere league with Greece, Spain and Ireland — have in some sense unleashed a creative spirit among its people, who are taking chances, improvising and, as it happens, trying to boost tourism. Outside money is one answer to inside need.

I sensed this energy during my last two visits, when I repeatedly met or heard about former architects, bankers or lawyers who had started small, idiosyncratic enterprises, and I repeatedly stumbled upon new, clever projects. I stayed in one of them: the [Lisbonaire](#), a hotel masquerading as an apartment complex, or maybe it's the other way around, where each spacious studio or one-bedroom unit has been decorated in a deliberately cheeky fashion by a different Portuguese designer or artist, with all the minimalist furniture made in Portugal. Each unit also has a fully equipped kitchen stocked with glassware, plates, utensils, pots and pans. All of this plus reliable wireless, a communal lounge in the basement and an ideal location sets you back as little as 65 euros (about \$81 at \$1.26 to the euro) a night.

Over the last few years Lisbon has experienced a boom in stylish hotels, including the lilac-colored [Internacional Design Hotel](#) on Rossio Square, the city's majestic nucleus, and the [Altis Belém](#), right on the water in the quieter, palm-lined neighborhood of