

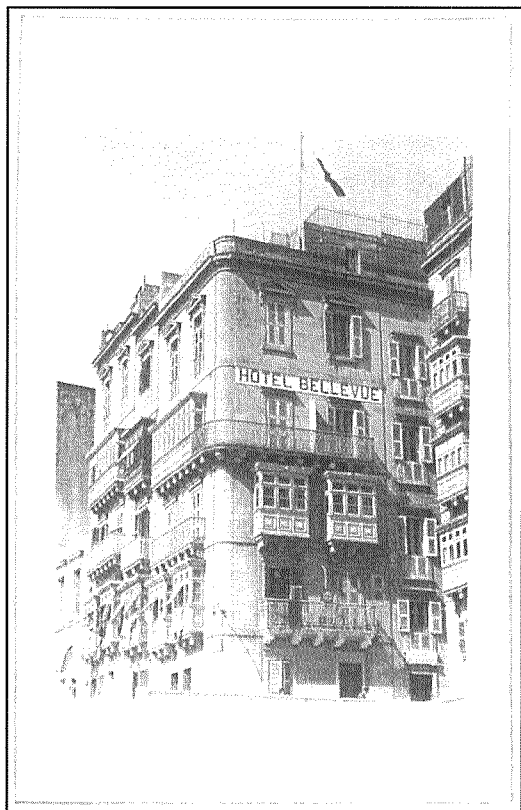
Postcards of Early Malta Hotels from the Giovanni Bonello Collection

Postcards serve a primary purpose of conveying through the post at a convenient rate a message illustrated by a picture. Additionally they can also be made to fulfil the function of advertising goods and services.

Hotel owners in Malta at the end of the Victorian era, through the Edwardian years and later, saw the opportunities latent in the system. Some of them had postcards custom-made for commercial promotion. The Great Britain Hotel of South Street, Valletta invested most in these adverts. It had a whole series of cards printed, some showing features of the hotel, others with *tourist* views of Malta. Most other hotels settled for one or two cards showing the facade or the interior.

These hotel cards range from the scarce to the very rare. I have gone through my collection and chosen a few of the more representative. Some cards only incidentally show hotels, i.e. the publishers did not circulate them as promotion cards, but a general view that happens to include the elevation of some hotel or other. They date from 1900 to the war years.

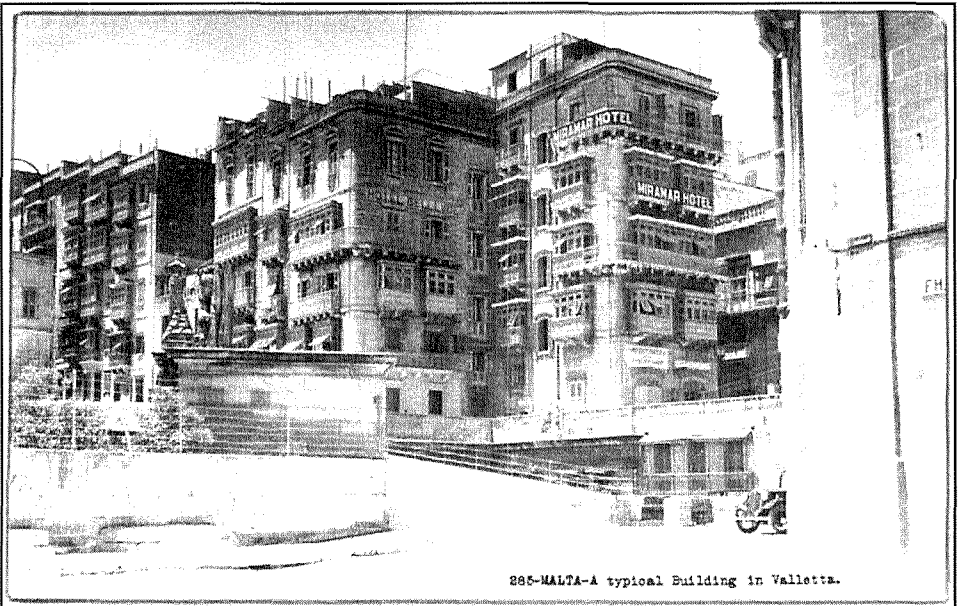
I believe it would be amusing to reproduce, alongside these cards, the adverts of eight hotels which appeared in 1915 in *Malta and Gibraltar Illustrated*, a neglected mine of social information. The language of the adverts sounds quaint and genteel by the standards of today's aggressive and sophisticated promotional messages. They contain plenty of useful factual details, besides the inevitable praise of self-flattery.



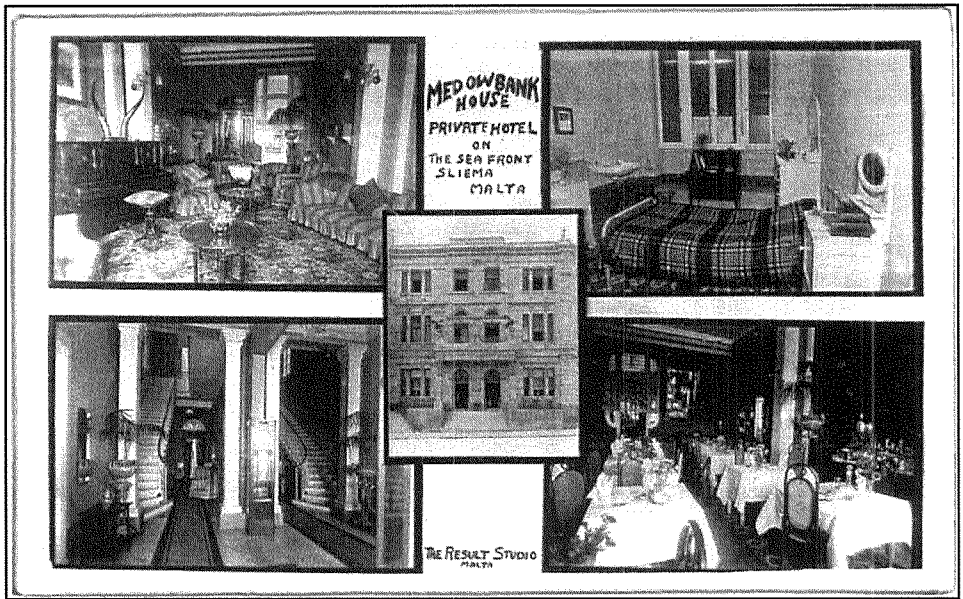
The Hotel Bellevue, overlooking Grand Harbour and East Street, Valletta, c. 1930. Real photograph.



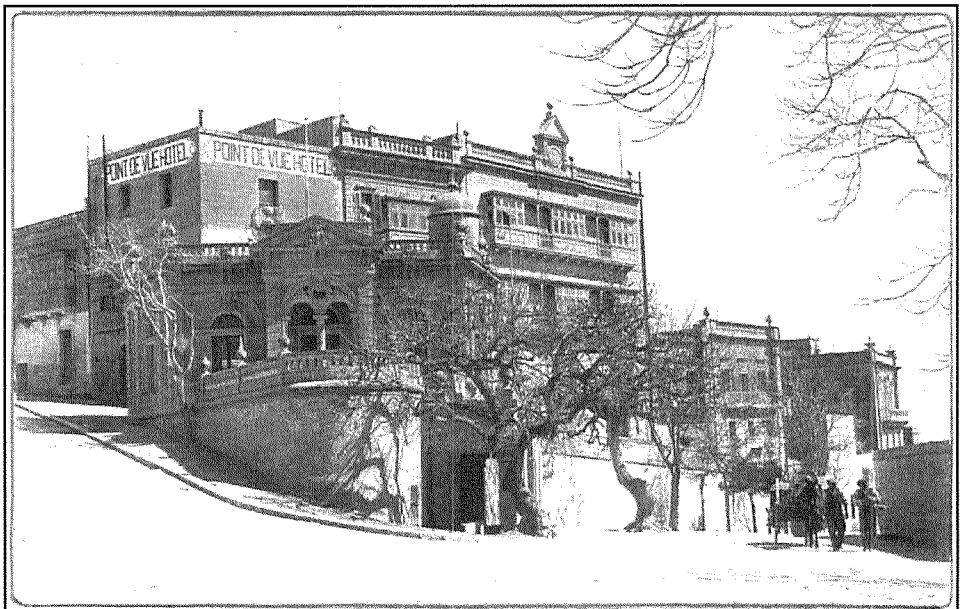
The Great Britain Hotel, South Street, Valletta The only hotel in Malta under British management as the back states. Corner of Dining Room. Part of a large set of advertising cards. c. 1910. Printed in Great Britain by the typographical process.



The Miramar Hotel, overlooking Grand Harbour and East Street, Valletta. In the background, the Hotel Bellevue, c. 1930. Real photograph.



The Meadowbank Hotel, Sliema sea front, late 1920s. A few other postcards exist advertising this hotel. The card is postmarked July 31, 1930. Real photograph.



The Point de Vue Hotel, Rabat, c. 1920. Real photograph.

CECIL HOTEL, Strada Forni, Valletta

The Cecil is one of the best hotels in Malta. The building itself is one of the fine old mansions of Valletta, and since it was taken over in 1993 by Mr. F. Borg, everything possible has been done to make it conformable in all respects to the most fastidious requirements. It is tastefully and comfortably furnished throughout, and its apartments, arranged in a series of self-contained suites, are all that could be desired.

The Cecil Hotel is particularly suited for the accommodation of families, and it has all modern conveniences, such as electric light, hot and cold water baths, etc. The dining-room is large and airy, and the cuisine very good. From the roof is obtainable a magnificent view of the sea and the island. Situated at the corner of Strada Forni and Strada Vescovo, Valletta, the hotel is close to the Governor's Palace, St. Paul's Cathedral, and, in fact, in the centre of the city.

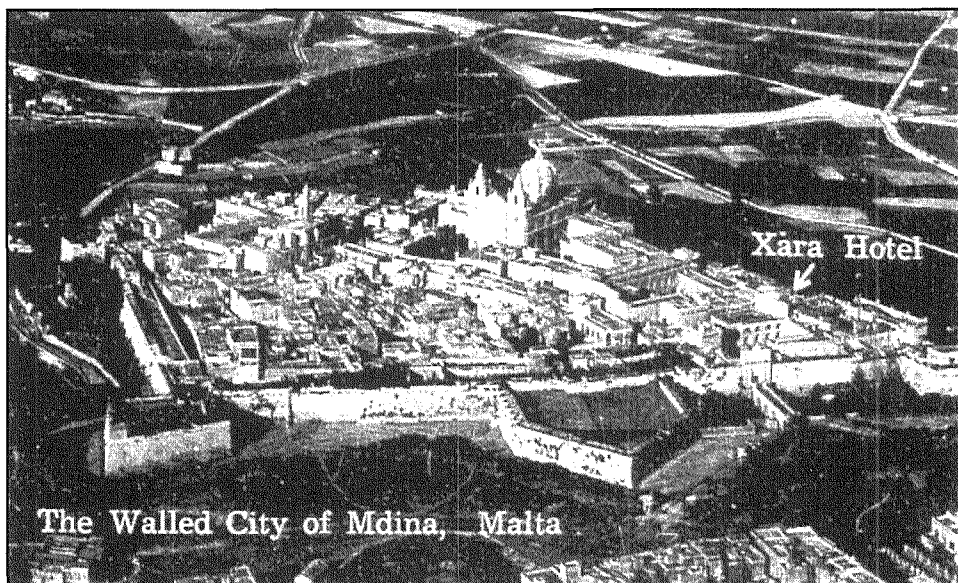
Its popularity is well manifested by the large number of testimonials which the proprietor has received from well-known people who have stayed in it, some of whom patronise it season after season in preference to any other establishment. The inclusive charges range from 8s. a day according to rooms, and are certainly remarkably low in view of the excellence of what is provided.

Telegrams, *Cecil, Malta*. Telephone, No. 268.

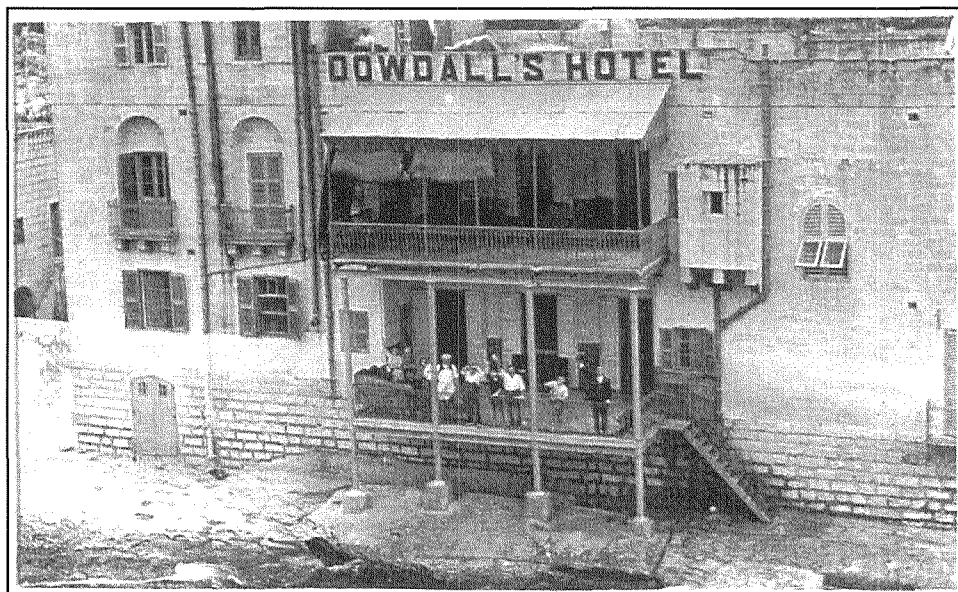
GREAT BRITAIN HOTEL, 67, Strada Mezzodi, Valletta

Amongst the best hotels in Malta is the Great Britain Hotel, which is spoken of very highly, and can be well recommended to those desirous of escaping the features that often make hotel life so tiresome and unattractive in comparison with the privacy and quietude of the private home. Well ventilated, well lighted, and well furnished, the apartments in the Great Britain Hotel are all that could be desired, and are arranged in suites to suit every requirement. The hotel is fitted with hot and cold water baths and modern conveniences. It is particularly popular with Army and Navy people, and is kept open all the year.

Like other hotels in Malta a magnificent view is obtainable from its roof. The Great Britain is situated in one of the best and most central positions in Valletta, and is only a minute's walk from the Opera House and the Union Club. It was started about forty years ago by Mr. C. Lawrence, who died in 1892, and has since been conducted by his son, Mr. F. C. Lawrence, who spares no pains to satisfy his guests. The charges are moderate, according to rooms, and the telegraphic address is - *Britain, Malta*.



The Xara Hotel, Mdina, c. 1930 (possibly later). Real photograph.



Dowdall's Hotel, Birżebbuġa, c. 1920. Real photograph.



The Sea Maid Hotel, Birzebbuga, which also housed a British Military Field Post Office. Soldiers of the 2nd Devon Regiment in the foreground, c. 1910. Real photograph.



The Marfa Palace Hotel, Marfa, c. 1920. Real photograph.

THE MODERN IMPERIAL HOTEL, Sliema

The Modern Imperial Hotel, the largest establishment of the kind in Malta, and within easy distance of Valletta, is situated on the summit of the hill that forms the apex of the extremely bracing and healthy district of Sliema, where dwell most of the English people in the island. The hotel is fitted throughout with electric light, first-class bathrooms, and the latest improvements.

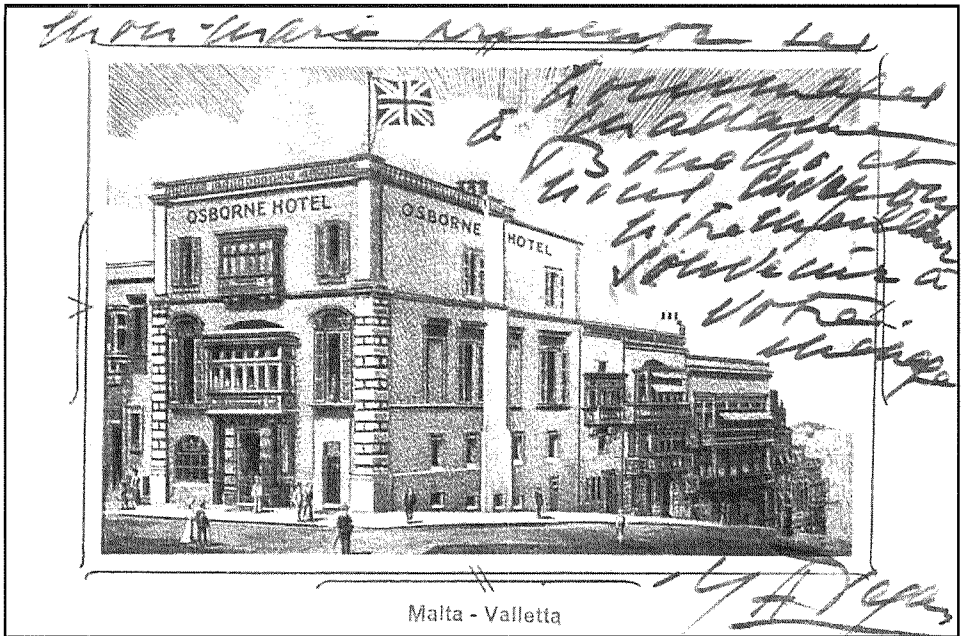
The extensive public lounge room is thoroughly in keeping with hotels ideals; and the many charming bedrooms, ranging from single cosy chambers, to elaborate suites, are well calculated to meet every requirement. Worthy of praise too are the reading and smoking rooms, billiard rooms, suites of rooms for public and private dinners, weddings, receptions, etc., the tennis court, and the beautiful garden more than an acre in extent.

The numerous testimonials which Mr. Charles Galea, proprietor of the hotel during the last fifteen years, has received from members of the British nobility, Army and Navy officers, and well-known persons who have stayed in his establishment, speak in the highest terms not only of the excellence of the accommodation and service but also of the cuisine. The inclusive charges are from six shillings per day according to the position of bedroom; and surrounded as it is by the pure fresh air from the sea, the Modern Imperial Hotel is certainly well worth the consideration of everyone contemplating a long or short residence in Malta. Telegraphic Address: *Modern, Malta*. Telephone: *Modern, Sliema*.

OSBORNE HOTEL, 50, Strada Mezzodi, Valletta

Since the Osborne Hotel was taken over in 1903 by Messrs. L. Schembri and Co. it has undergone considerable enlargement and improvement, and is now one of the most select establishment of the kind in Malta. This is demonstrated by the fact that it has been patronised by H.S.H. Prince Louis Alexander of Battenberg, as well as by the large number of testimonials which the firm have received from naval and military officers and prominent people regarding the highly satisfactory manner in which the hotel is conducted.

Situated in the highest part of Valletta, in Strada Mezzodi, and close to the Opera House, Admiralty House, General Post Office, and Railway Station, its position is certainly very advantageous, and from its windows are obtainable magnificent views of the sea. It has a fine series of comfortably and pleasantly furnished suites, consisting of sitting-rooms, bed and dressing-rooms, and each suite has its own bath-room, with hot and cold water and other conveniences. The dining-room is large and airy, and the establishment is lighted throughout by electricity. The terms are exceedingly moderated, judged by the accommodation provided. Porters from the hotel meet the mail steamers on arrival, and take charge



The Osborne Hotel, South Street, Valletta, c. 1910. Typographical printing.

of passengers' baggage. The telegraphic address is *Osborne, Malta*, and the telephone number 193.

ROYAL HOTEL, 30, Strada Mercanti, Valletta

No hotel in Malta is better known or more patronised than the Royal, which is centrally situated in Strada Mercanti, close to St. John's Church. In the season its resources are often taxed to the utmost, and it is kept open all the year round. It has accommodation for about fifty persons, and its bedrooms are furnished with every comfort and convenience. Many of them are *en suite* and command a magnificent view of the harbour. A still finer panorama is seen from the flat roof, which is equipped with tables and seats.

The Royal Hotel has many commendable features, but none more worthy of praise than its cuisine. The food is always well varied, excellently cooked, and calculated to please the most exacting tastes. The dining-room is large and lofty, and furnished with numerous tables for one or more persons as required. Bath rooms with hot and cold water are on each floor, and the building is lighted throughout by electricity.

The Royal Hotel has been for nearly thirty years under the direction of Mr. M. Cini, who is very fastidious indeed regarding the cleanliness of every detail and

the good management of the establishment. He is also most obliging and ready at all times to meet the wishes of his guests in everything within his power. The writer had been recommended to the Royal Hotel by well-known English people who had themselves stayed in it; and during the four months he lived in it, while compiling the present volume, he found that the praise he had heard concerning this excellent establishment was thoroughly well merited. Its telegraphic address *Royal, Malta*, and its telephone number 200.

ST. JAMES HOTEL, 226, Strada San Paolo, Valletta

Although there are no great hotels in Malta it has several excellent establishments where every comfort and convenience may be found. One of these is the St. James Hotel, which is particularly popular with military and naval officers; and amongst the many distinguished people who have stayed in it are the Earl and Countess of Londesborough and Field-Marshal Sir John French, from whom, as well as from many other notable persons, testimonials have been received by the proprietor, Mr. Raphael Gabarretta, regarding the highly satisfactory accommodation, cuisine, and the attention which they received during their sojourn there.

The St. James Hotel, like most of the mansions of Valletta, is deceptive so far as its external appearance is concerned, and even its entrance hall gives little or no indication of the excellent character of the establishment. This, however, is manifested when one ascends to the upper floors, where every detail is made subservient to comfort and convenience. The various suites, each with its own private entrance, and charmingly furnished, and the airy and sunny bedrooms facing the south are well calculated to please the most exacting tastes. Many of them command a magnificent view of the Grand Harbour, and from the roof a still finer sight is obtainable.

The hotel is provided with hot and cold water baths on each floor. Its sanitary arrangements are perfect, and the scrupulous cleanliness manifested throughout the establishment is not the least commendable of its merits. Unlike most of its contemporaries, the St. James Hotel was specially built for its present purpose, and was opened in 1894. The charges are from 8 s. per day inclusive, according to rooms. The hotel is connected by telephone, and its telegraphic address is *Saintjames, Malta*.

SAVOY HOTEL, 6, Strada Imrabat, Sliema

Position is an important matter to consider when choosing a hotel. The position of the Savoy Hotel, in quiet and select surroundings on one of the heights of the bracing district of Sliema, is a great asset to the establishment, and from its windows a magnificent view is obtainable. The Savoy is admirably suited for the

accommodation of families, and many of the well-known people who have resided in it have testified in the highest terms regarding its amenities.

Its apartments are nicely and comfortably furnished, and it has hot and cold water baths and modern conveniences, with perfect sanitation, as certified by the Public Health Department. One of the attractions of the hotel is its excellent tennis court, which is identical with those of the Marsa. The tariff of the establishment is remarkably low – from five shillings per day, everything inclusive, and no better value in this direction can be obtained in Malta. The hotel is under the personal supervision of the proprietor, Mr. Joseph Galea, who is extremely obliging in every way and unsparing in his efforts to please his guests. The telegraphic address is *Savoy, Malta*, and the hotel has telephonic connection.

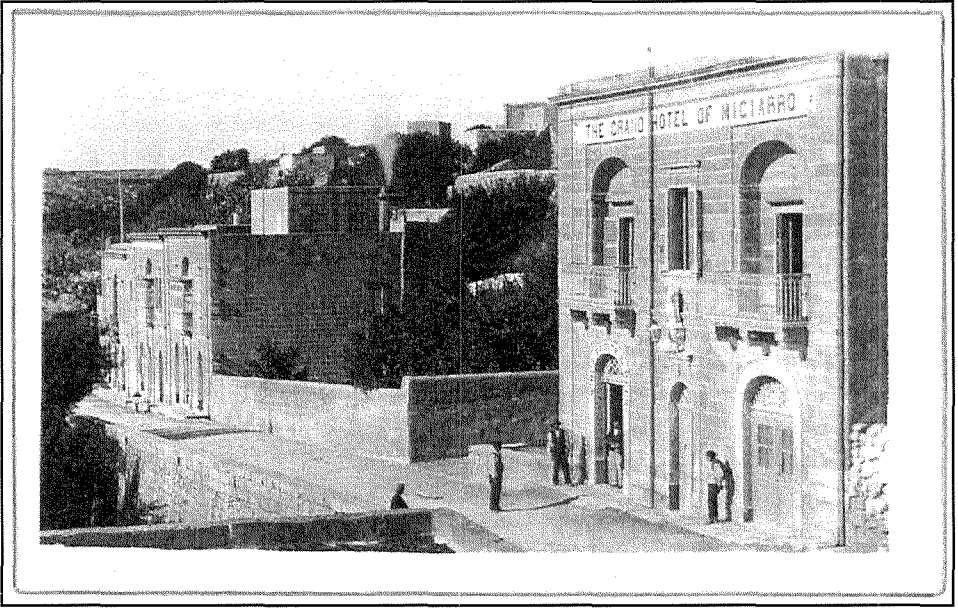
WESTMINSTER HOTEL, 11, Strada Reale, Valletta

The choice of a hotel is an important matter to those who would enjoy a long or a short residence in Malta, and, judging by the numerous testimonials of many of the people who have stayed in the Westminster Hotel, this establishment can be well recommended for comfort and convenience. Situated in Strada Reale, the chief shopping thoroughfare of Valletta, it is in the immediate neighbourhood of the Opera House, the Union Club, the General Post Office, close to the electric lift leading to the Grand Harbour, and is a short distance from the ferry boats that run to the popular seaside resort of Sliema.

The Westminster Hotel is, therefore, extremely suitable to those desirous of wasting no time in getting to and from the various local centres of attraction. Like all the other principal hotels in Malta, its apartments are arranged in a series of suites, and the object aimed at in their tasteful furnishing and general arrangements is to fulfil the ideals of a home from home. The balconies command a splendid view of Strada Reale; and if the visitor is particular as to absolute quiet, there are in the Westminster Hotel apartments that afford the utmost satisfaction in that respect.

It is lighted throughout by electricity, and provided with hot and cold water baths and every modern convenience. The dining-room is large and airy, and its appointments and service are thoroughly up-to-date. The excellence of the cuisine is an outstanding feature of the hotel, and the fact that the culinary departments are in charge of a chef who was formerly in the employ of H.S.H. Prince Louis of Battenberg and other notable persons is sufficient to indicate his ability in that direction.

The proprietress of the hotel is Mrs. Borg, who is assisted in its management by her son, Mr. L. Borg, and nothing is left undone by them to enhance the satisfaction of everyone staying in their establishment. Telegrams, *Westminster, Malta*. Telephone, 283 Central.



The Grand Hotel, Mgarr, Gozo, c. 1920. Real photograph.



The Victoria Hotel, Piazza Reale, Victoria, Gozo, proprietor George Said, c. 1910. Real photograph.