

Harper's BAZAAR

SEPTEMBER
2021
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Mother Nature

NATALIA
VODIANOVA
goes back
to her roots

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GUCCI'S
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DRAMA & ROMANCE

UNITE IN THE

NEW SEASON COLLECTIONS



BAZAAR

ESCAPE

BY THE SEA

EARTHILY PARADISE

Discover blissful beaches, turquoise waters and delectable epicurean delights in Mallorca. Plus: Malta's mediaeval marvels; the best new European city breaks; and an insider's guide to Tofino

*Cala
Combarca in
Santanyi,
Mallorca*

Below: a Junior Suite at Can Ferrereta. Below left: the Quadrat restaurant at Sant Francesc Hotel Singular



VIVA LA VIDA

On the sunny island of Mallorca, *Lucy Halfhead* enjoys glorious vistas, exquisite artworks and perfect poolside peace



The cathedral of Palma de Mallorca



'I found everything I wanted as a writer: sun, sea, mountains, spring water, shady trees, no politics...' wrote the British poet Robert Graves about Mallorca, the Balearic island he adopted as his home in 1929. Today's visitors – mostly in-the-know Spaniards – also come for the unspoilt countryside with excellent hiking opportunities in the majestic Serra de Tramuntana mountains, bountiful vineyards for wine-tasting, and beautiful beaches that are the ideal launch pad into the brilliant blue Mediterranean Sea. And then, of course, there's Palma, a capital city founded in the Roman period, that blends its beguiling history with a progressive attitude to the arts.

One of the best examples of this is the Sant Francesc Hotel Singular, where we arrived well before noon after a swift flight from the UK. Open to guests since 2015, the refurbished 19th-century manor house in Palma's old quarter takes its name from the square it inhabits. As soon as we walked into the beautiful lobby, with a palm-tree-filled central courtyard and sleek furnishings (think Piero Lissoni sofas and Philippe Starck chairs), it was clear why the hotel has earned a reputation as the chicest spot in Palma. After checking in, we headed straight up to the hotel's rooftop, where we cooled off with watermelon ice lollies and did a few laps of the pool as saintly statues gazed over us from the top of the neighbouring basilica. All the 42 rooms are individually decorated; we were staying in the Sant

Francesc Suite, whose floral-painted ceiling and French balcony above the square only added to the romance. That night we dined at the hotel's *Quadrat* restaurant. The inventive menu offered burrata and spicy sobrasada, a flavourful seafood paella and to finish, a warm Mahon cheesecake with red fruits ice-cream.

Waking early the next day, we prepared for a morning of sightseeing with a hearty breakfast of perfectly cooked eggs on toast, a plate of banana pancakes and the Mallorcan speciality *ensaimada*, an incredibly light and flaky pastry. Our first port of call was the Cathedral of Santa Maria of Palma, more commonly known as *La Seu* – a splendid gothic structure that's one of the tallest in Europe. We took our time to explore, marvelling at the 61 stained-glass windows that flood the building with beams of coloured light, and modern additions including Gaudí's enormous illuminated canopy that hangs over the altar, and a chapel redesigned by the Mallorcan artist Miquel Barcelo. It's also worth paying extra to ascend the 215-step spiral staircase to the top terraces, where the magnificent architecture can be seen up close, and you're rewarded with panoramic views of the city.

That afternoon, we left the bustle of Palma behind us and set the sat-nav for the rural village of Santanyi in the south-east, about 45 minutes away. Launching a new hotel in the middle of a global pandemic is no mean feat, but the Soldevila-Ferrer family, who also own Sant Francesc, have undoubtedly found success with their second Mallorcan property, Can Ferrereta. This 32-room hideaway is set in a meticulously restored 17th-century mansion, surrounded by fragrant gardens filled with jasmine and bougainvillea blossoms. It's glorious from the start – after pulling up outside, we traded our car (which was swiftly valet-parked) for two flutes of chilled cava from the drinks trolley at reception. The interiors are designed in a neutral colour palette with accents of untreated wood and local stone, and headboards woven from hemp rope by local artisans; they're cool in every sense of the word. Many of the suites have private terraces, including ours, which overlooked the 25-metre saltwater pool, shaded by olive- and cypress-trees, and the all-day dining spot and bar, *La Fresca*, our go-to for colourful salads and chilled rosé at lunchtime.

But it's the details that elevate Can Ferrereta from a good hotel to a great one. Throughout history, Santanyi has attracted artists and creative types (you'll find many workshops and galleries as you



Left: a view from Sant Francesc Hotel Singular. Far left: Palma

wander the narrow streets) and today art plays a central role at the hotel, with contemporary works from Guillem Nadal, Jordi Alcaraz and the Barcelona-born artist Jaume Plensa, whose two-metre-tall bronze sculpture sits pride of place by the pool. There's also a well-stocked library, curated by the expert team at Maison Assouline, with a fireplace to curl up in front of with a cocktail in the winter months.

Can Ferrereta's arrival has also opened a door to a lesser-known part of the island for the first time. The area is home to the second-largest nature park in the Balearics, Mondrago Natural Park, great for those who, like us, love a holiday hike. Meanwhile, Santanyi itself has a lively market on Wednesdays and Saturdays, home to stalls selling local handicrafts including woven baskets and linen dresses, delicious delicatessen products and fresh fruit and vegetables, with the biggest lemons and tomatoes I've ever seen. The hotel is also within striking distance of some of Mallorca's most unspoilt beaches such as *Cala Llombards* and *S'Amarador*, which we decamped to one lazy afternoon for a picnic of crunchy baguettes stuffed with jamón ibérico and huge olives. This is where to go if you like super-soft sands that lead out to turquoise, bath-temperature waters.

We returned to the hotel with warm skin and salty hair, just in time to visit its spa, *Sa Calma*. The spacious treatment-rooms set the stage for fabulous massages and facials that use locally grown lavender and citrus fruits, alongside products by Anne Semonin, the French skincare brand beloved by Grace Kelly and Catherine Deneuve. Guests can also unwind in the indoor heated pool, gym, hammam and sauna, or book in for yoga and meditation classes.

While Santanyi already has some good restaurants, by night, Can Ferrereta's main dining spot *Ocre* offers an even higher standard.

It serves simple Mediterranean fare made from seasonal produce, much of which comes from the town's aforementioned food market, such as honey roasted aubergine with a creamy pistachio sauce, and candied cherry sorbet. You can opt for a table inside, under the original wooden beams of the house's former wine cellar, but we preferred dining alfresco on the patio, late into the night, after the sunset had turned the sky countless shades of pink and orange – a golden glow that stayed with us long after we returned home...

Sant Francesc Hotel Singular (www.hotelsantfrancesc.com), from about £280 a room a night. *Can Ferrereta* (www.hotelcanferrereta.com), from about £270 a room a night. *Qured* (www.qured.com) offers Covid-19 testing, from £39. □



The pool at Can Ferrereta. Right: the *Quadrat* restaurant at Sant Francesc. Far right: a Junior Suite bathroom at Can Ferrereta

