



**THIS PAGE** the main stairwell from the ground floor of Can Bordoy Grand House & Garden in Palma de Mallorca; the oculus on the floor looks down into the basement spa. **OPPOSITE PAGE** a view from the main dining room into the library.

Palma de Mallorca once had something of a reputation for trashy bars and pizza joints, a cheap and cheerful holiday destination for those looking for a party. It's now a buzzy capital in the midst of regeneration, attracting stars such as Annie Lennox and Joseph Fiennes, who both have houses on the island. As part of the city's change is a welcome wave of new restaurants and galleries, a Calatrava-designed museum and, naturally, great places to stay.

It's within the warren of tiny streets in Old Town that you'll find Can Bordoy Grand House & Garden, a luxurious yet laid-back 24-room hotel. Owned by the Swedish investor Mikael Hall, this delightful place — once a family home, then a school run by nuns — was overhauled by the much-in-demand architect team Jaime Oliver and Paloma Hernaiz of Ohlab. Having opened quietly late last year, the revitalised building is now a gem of a hotel: charming, low-key service, and elegant yet accessible design in the prettiest of settings.

In typical Mallorcan style, the house, which was built mostly in the 16th and 17th centuries, has

four wings set around a street-facing courtyard. Hall wanted the hotel to feel more like a beautiful home than just another slick design hotel. It works.

"Mikael was really clear that he wanted to create something very respectful," explains Oliver. "We went into a lot of historical and archaeological studies to really understand the roots of the building. Aside from a few details, you can see that the building is not that old. The main stairs, for example, are an early-20th-century addition. We were keen to expose the layers of history that were already here." »

## TRAVEL

# Glory days

Palma de Mallorca's revival has led to the restoration of a holiday house that loses none of its original charm.

By Becky Sunshine Photographed by Art Sanchez





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JAIME OLIVER

**LEFT** in the garden room on the ground floor, vintage Chesterfield sofa; Moroso Klara chair by Patricia Urquiola; 19th-century chandelier; painting by Samuel Pritchett, part of owner Mikael Hall's private collection.





**FROM TOP** one of Can Bordoy Grand House & Garden's bedrooms; Mammoth **chairs** from Norr11; **chandelier** from Marie Martin. The pool area in the back garden; Moroso Banjooli **chair** by Sebastian Herkner. *Details, last pages.*

« Those layers are visible everywhere. During the restoration, plasterwork with imperfections and cracks were left untouched. Old tiles, timber floors and handblown glazing were either faithfully restored or replaced only if necessary. The goal, say Oliver and Hernaiz, was not to fully restore the house to a previous state that never was, but to remain authentic, keeping its sense of romanticism and decay.

There are, of course, clever architectural details, such as a contemporary oak and mirrored top floor addition to the existing stone staircase. A glass-bottomed plunge pool on the rooftop deck pours refracted sunlight down the stairwell to an oculus on the floor of the ground level, which allows light into the basement spa.

The decor, too, roots you in Mallorca just enough — a family-style dining room, a living room with trailing vines across its ceiling are of note — but without it ever looking austere and grand.

Each of the 24 bedrooms is individually designed, too. “We started to buy furniture two years ago,” says Hernaiz. “The envelope is Mallorcan, but inside is about a family who travels. There are vintage chairs from Denmark and a painting from the 1700s, but also contemporary pieces from Gebrüder Thonet Vienna, Moroso, Baxter and Tom Dixon.” Real standouts are the rich, sumptuous velvet and walnut beds designed by Ohlab, as well as their freestanding cocktail bars with integrated stereos in each bedroom. They feel properly decadent.

To draw a crowd beyond hotel guests, there’s an informal restaurant, Botànic, headed up by chef Andrés Benitez, who focuses on locally sourced organic ingredients. However it’s the magical, secluded 750-square-metre garden to the back of the property that really makes this place zing. Gardens are a great rarity in the city — especially in this neighbourhood and something that sets this place apart. Cafe-style seating around ornamental citrus trees is precisely the place to try a Sour Eva cocktail made from local gin. There’s a pool, too, and a pergola for outdoor massage. Says Oliver, “We wanted to create something theatrical, for this place to feel cinematic.” **VL**

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