

LAMPOON

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DIVERSO / MOVING FORWARD, NOT BACKWARD

CAN BORDOY, PALMA DE MALLORCA

EMBELLISHING DEFECTS THROUGH THE JAPANESE ART OF KINTSUGI

«The restored mansion brings back an integral part of Palma's history, by giving the five hundred centuries-old villa a new life». In conversation with Ludovico Dupré

Tucked away in the quiet lanes of the Old Quarter, Can Bordoy, Palma de Mallorca is a 16th-century villa. The restored mansion has lived many lives before it was established as a hospitality establishment. First as a private noble home, then a nunnery in the Seventies. Fifty years later, the latest avatar of Can Bordoy Palma de Mallorca, a boutique luxury hotel, depicts the reconciliation of the past and the present. «We aimed to bring back an integral part of Palma's history by giving the five-hundred-centuries old villa a new life. The renovations always followed the spirit of trying to maintain the villa's original splendor.

Its reincarnation, explains Ludovico Dupré, is the fruit borne from a partnership between him and Swedish real estate developer, Mikael Hall. Hall visited the property for the first time in 2012 and it was an instant love story. He's the visionary behind Can Bordoy; my friend, business partner, and also a mentor. Dupré initially tried to dissuade Hall from stepping foot into hospitality. «F&B is a particular field, you have to really love it to survive – it takes a lot of your passion and energy. In the end, he made a very good decision by not taking my advice».

Situated in the heart of La Lonja – a district named after a 15th century building, Can Bordoy, Palma de Mallorca is a sanctuary for those seeking respite from the buzzing and vibrant Palma streets. Positioned close to the harbor and yacht moorings, the hotel is a stone's throw from Palma's shopping, gastronomic and cultural attractions. Including; the famous La Seu Cathedral, the animated Paseo del Borne, and the Paseo Maritimo.

Architecture and design of Can Bordoy, Palma de Mallorca

The property was first seen in 2012, acquired in 2014, and launched in 2014. Jamie Oliver and Paloma Hernaiz – founders of the architectural firm OHLAB – were brought on board to spruce up the 16th-century villa. «We wanted architects who could understand not only the property but also the city and the vision. It was very important for us that the architects be local – respecting the existing cultural nuances but also adding a cosmopolitan worldview. Jamie and Paloma were not hotel specialists before Can Bordoy, Palma de Mallorca but we knew they were the right pick», explains Dupré.

Quintessential features of a mallorca building were highlighted through the refurbishment. The architects took inspiration from kintsugi. The Japanese art of repairing broken antique porcelain with precious material, such as gold dust to obtain a repaired piece that does not hide the fracture, rather results in a piece that may have even more value than the original ceramic. At Can Bordoy, Palma de Mallorca defects of the building are not just embellished, but also highlighted. The building's history and its cracks combine with contemporary design.



«The project does not pretend to hide the heterodox eclecticism of the existing building but instead conciliates and celebrates the different layers of history by highlighting the new interventions made to give the house its new life», states Dupré. To maintain the spirit of kintsugi, the brand new windows, through a particular technique, were made to appear slightly defected. «When one of our friends came over they said, you could have spent a little more and fixed the windows as well. But we had actually spent more to make them look old».

A fusion of old and new is depicted through the interiors, with modern lighting brushing shoulders with gothic pillars, baroque gilt mirrors, and antiquated furnishings. The luxury hide-away boasts twenty-four unique suites, one of them with a private terrace. Characterized with frescoed ceilings and chandeliers – the rooms feature bespoke furniture designed by OHLAB specifically for Can Bordoy, Palma de Mallorca as a collection of beds and bars. They also retain elements from the original structure such as the fireplace and the pitted walls. The rooftop terrace enjoys panoramic views over the antique quarter of the city. It also features a glass-bottom plunge pool that acts as an oculus, sending a flood of refracted light down the main stairs of the building.

Sustainability is an imperative facet of Can Bordoy's operations. The hotel maintains a no-plastic policy and is powered by renewable energy. It uses eco-friendly cleaning products and recycled tissues. «We even have our keycards made of wood instead of plastic. We believe in the fact that what we can enjoy today, should be enjoyed by our future generations. Luxury doesn't mean living wastefully», says Dupré.

The heart of the property lies in its garden, which acts as the green lung of Palma. «One of the key interventions, for us, has been opening the doors of the garden, which until now, was unknown by the vast majority of people. We wanted to leave it for the people of palm to enjoy rather than just keeping it only for private use». Replete with assorted vegetation – the garden showcases a melange of local plant and botanical varieties, punctuated with perfumed shrubs and flowers. Jacarandas, olive, orange, lemon, and palm trees, to name a few.





Unwilling to be tamed – the greenery creeps inside the hotel – running wild in the lounge, where the ceilings are crossed with creepers and ferns. The garden also features a heated pool and a wellness pergola. The pool water is treated with salt electrolysis – no extra chlorine needs to be added for the treatment.

Surrounded by original natural stone walls from the XII century, Can Bordoy Grand House & Garden, Palma de Mallorca's subterranean spa is dimly illuminated by dozens of candles. A range of massages and cosmetic treatments are offered using products by Swiss Perfection – a luxury skincare brand.

Botànic – The plant-forward restaurant at Can Bordoy

Tapping into the global green shift, Botànic takes inspiration from the hotel's garden. It looks gastronomy through a conscious eye – the menu focused on plant-forward, planet-positive cuisine.

«A plant-forward cuisine – doesn't mean vegan or only vegetarian cuisine, but rather a cuisine that favors vegetables». All the dishes are named after the main ingredients; carrot, artichoke, tomato, «which is already a declaration of our intentions», explains Dupré.

Curated as a travel-inspired menu, chef Andrés Benítez's creations are influenced by world cuisine; with handpicked flavors from Vietnam, China and Thailand, the Middle East and Mexico, and India. The restaurant gets most of its products, and other ingredients, from local farms and vendors.

Signature dishes from the menu include Pumpkin stuffed with red prawns; Thai bouillabaisse and saffron crust; Candied leek with black truffle hollandaise, botifarrón's duxelles, and garam masala; Roasted sweet potato, stuffed with mushroom, almonds, dried fruits, and curry praliné; Beetroot dim sum, galanga teriyaki, and fresh wasabi; Green curry with fresh herbs, coconut, fish broth, and fried calamari. Grilled octopus with causa limeña, aji mayonnaise, and pickled onion; Matcha tea cake with orange chutney and yuzu; Pineapple carpaccio with creamy coconut rice and green curry ice cream.

Botànic was established in February 2021 and is open for walk-ins as well. «Botànic is not just a restaurant at Can Bordoy, but rather a concept we are looking forward to developing in other locations as well», adds Dupré. The bar is part of Botànic and serves herbal cocktails, Spanish wines, and a range of bite-size snacks adapted from the restaurant menu. Breakfast items are made gluten-free with no added sugar. Energy bowls, honeycomb, oats, chia seeds, healthy milkshakes, and eggs are served each morning.

