

# Mallorca's newest five-star stay that feels like a family home

A historic mansion has been transformed into a stylish retreat near some of the island's best beaches, says **Agnish Ray**

Once you've tried soft, spicy sobrasada sausage spread generously on to sweet, flaky ensaimada pastry for breakfast, toast and marmalade will always seem disappointing. It's just one of Mallorca's many delicacies and it's served at a new five-star hotel that has opened in Santanyi in the southeast of the island.

Thanks to its peaceful lifestyle and picturesque surroundings, Santanyi has been attracting increasing international interest. And the arrival of Can Ferrereta means that the town is now a serious player in the luxury holiday market.

The hotel, which is full of intriguing historical touches, is on the site of a Mallorcan state home thought to have been built in the 17th and 18th centuries. An ornate stone pathway leads you through the entrance; it was originally a passage for horses and other animals. Now it takes me through the lobby, past an iron sculpture by the Catalan artist Josep Riera i Aragó that resembles an aeroplane propeller.

Art is a theme: the hotel is bursting with works. About 100 are dotted throughout, including a quarter-tonne bronze sculpture by Jaume Plensa next to the hotel's 25m outdoor swimming pool, and there's even an original Miró in my bedroom.

The grandeur of the building is complemented by friendly, welcoming touches; the idea was to create the feeling of staying with (rather extravagant) relatives, the general manager, Miguel Garcia, tells me. Can Ferrereta, which is owned by Andrés Soldevila, the president of Majestic Hotel Group, and his wife, Nuria Ferrer, forms part of an independent portfolio (which includes Sant Francesc, a hotel in a 19th-century neoclassical mansion in Palma) run by their eldest son, also called Andrés. I speak to Soldevila Jr in the hotel's cosy library, which has shelves stuffed with books on style, architecture, wine and travel.

Can Ferrereta, Soldevila tells me, was a piece of luck. The plot had remained in the same family for centuries until the Soldevila Ferrers came across it in 2018, by which time its ownership was divided across several family members.

Having fallen into disuse for several decades, a big restoration job was needed and Bastidas Architecture, a Mallorca-based practice, was given the task of preserving the building's characterful features, such as the stone arches and wooden beams.

Even the new parts of the hotel, such as the annexe that houses 12 private suites,

replicate the style of the original manor; the spa imitates the structure and layout of a Mallorcan barn typical of the agriculture of the region, while the pool's showers are in a recreated *barraca de roter*, a traditional stone hut for shepherds.

According to Gerard Bastidas, the architect behind Can Ferrereta, shade is just as important as light in Mallorcan buildings, which are designed to protect you from the sun. Light and shadow influenced the interior design as well.

"The property's natural light has very romantic moments but it is also limited in some spaces," explains Carla Navas from Wit, an interior design studio based in Barcelona.

"We wanted to keep that *chiaroscuro* feeling when you walk around."

They have succeeded. Outside, the stone walls bathe you in warmth. Inside, by contrast, the colour palette is deliberately cool and neutral.

Mallorca's southern towns, such as Santanyi, are known for the ochre colour of the buildings. This earthy, golden hue is thanks to *marès* sandstone, used ubiquitously on the island. The colour lends its name to Can Ferrereta's restaurant, *Ocre*, where the chef Alvar Albaladejo serves dishes incorporating traditional Balearic produce such as *tap de corti* paprika, mahones cheese and purple *safarnaria* carrots.

Wit has furnished the interior with items by international and home-grown brands, from Mogg and Carl Hansen to Blasco and Lo de Manuela. Woven rope contrasts with soft linen upholstery, while rustic wooden tables and seats bring a warm touch against the sandstone, sourced from the local quarry.

Leaving to explore the town, I pass through the *Porta Murada* gate, a remnant of the city walls built in the 16th century to defend against Ottoman and Moorish invaders who coveted this town and its gateway position to the island. Santanyi's location is no less desirable today, although for rather different reasons — it's 45 minutes by car from Palma airport and a short drive from beaches such as Cala Santanyi, Cala Llombar and S'Amarador, as well as the *Mondragó* nature reserve, where you can see wild olive forests and wetlands.

You are likely to hear more German spoken here than Spanish or Mallorqui. Germans have been coming to Santanyi for years and not just on holiday. Many have settled here, drawn by the laid-back Mallorcan way of life. Erik Eckfelder, for example, arrived here in the mid-1990s and has been running his restaurant, *Es Cantonet*, for nearly 20 years, serving



Plan ahead

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## 3 new buzzing hotels in the Balearics

**Casa Pacha, Formentera**  
Laid-back is the word for the style of luxury taking over the Balearics this summer, which means that the nightlife and leisure group Pacha is embracing all things barefoot with this new addition in Formentera. The hotel is located on Mijorn, the sleepy island's longest beach, so expect ravishing sea views from the rooms, all of which have private balconies. The interiors have been decked out by the Ibiza-based designer Patricia Galdón, who has chosen earthy materials, soft fabrics and neutral tones, as well as a few 1960s touches evoking the vintage spirit of Pacha lifestyle. Details B&B doubles from £414 (casapacha.com). Fly to Ibiza

**Cristine Bedfor, Menorca (pictured)**  
The novice hoteliers Cristina Lozano and Daniel Entrecanales have just opened their debut property, a colourful 21-bedroom guesthouse in the heart of Menorca's capital, Mahon. A fictitious persona invented by the owners gives the hotel its name. You're encouraged to think of her as the perfect hostess. You'll be impressed by the garden, in which you can enjoy candlelit dinners and a sparkling pool. The interiors are designed by Lorenzo Castillo, known for his lavish decorative style. Castillo has sourced antiques from Spain, France and Britain, while the sustainable clothing brand Ecoalf has designed uniforms for the staff.



Details B&B doubles from £250 (cristinebedforhotel.com). Fly to Menorca

**Six Senses Ibiza**  
Those seeking something spiritual might be drawn to the northern tip of Ibiza, where this new 20-acre resort opens in July, with direct access to Cala Xarraca bay. Wellness lies at the heart of Six Senses, from a yoga platform with sea views to CrossFit, cryotherapy and even snorkelling meditation. Food is sustainably produced, much of it grown on the hotel's organic farm. Tuck into seasonal island specialities such as tomato entrecôte, roasted giant scampi and fig carpaccio, prepared by Israel's celebrity chef Eyal Shani before heading down to the Live Cave at the waterfront for cocktails, and music from visiting artists. Details B&B doubles from £933 (sixsenses.com). Fly to Ibiza

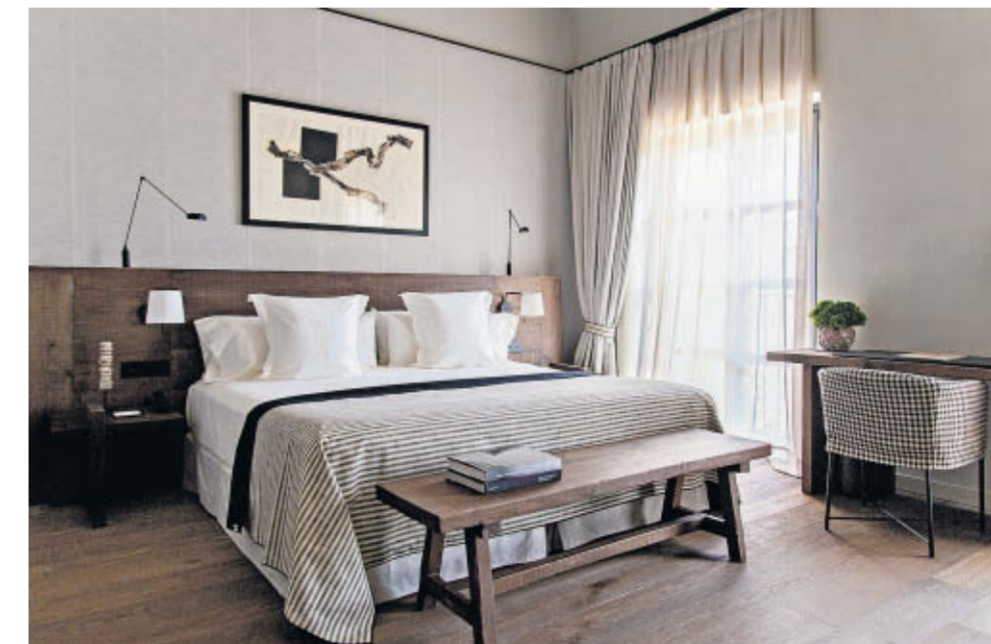
the 18th-century Sant Andreu church, while other stalls offer cheeses, sausages, preserves and olive oils. The bakery Panaderia Lozano tempts with savoury panades stuffed with meat, cheese or vegetables, as well as traditional pastries and cakes such as *lazos* (twists of pastry with cream or chocolate), *xuxos* (fried, custard-filled eclairs) and *ensaimadas* (circular doughy treats).

You'll do well for ceramic and handcraft gifts too. At *Bauc Artesania*, Ramón Canyelles produces contemporary clay homeware and sells more traditional earthenware. Across town I get an early peek at *Terra Origenes*, a new concept store and café spread across three floors, scheduled to open this summer as a place to eat and shop; local artisans will also run workshops on pottery and weaving.

At dusk an enchanting luminosity envelops Santanyi as the sun begins to set and everything glows. It's magical. No wonder so many have been drawn here and so many have stayed. And I have the bonus of that sausage breakfast at Can Ferrereta to look forward to.

Need to know

Agnish Ray was a guest of Can Ferrereta. B&B doubles from £272 (hotelcanferrereta.com). Fly to Palma



Clockwise from above: Can Ferrereta's *Ocre* restaurant; the nearby *Es Pontas* sea arch; the hotel's main swimming pool; Cala Llombar beach; a junior suite

seasonal Mediterranean dishes such as *llengua amb taperes* (beef tongue with capers) and *frit mallorqui* (the island's traditional stew, made with pork or lamb).

Another reputed restaurateur in town, Miguel Laudat, was born in Germany and raised in Mallorca from the age of two. Five years ago he opened his stylish establishment, *Laudat* — a charming spot for

lunch or dinner with a romantic patio filled with lemon trees.

Laudat works with the local winery *Armeroi Adrover* to produce a range of bespoke house wines — I try the white, made with a combination of *prensal blanc* and *giro ros* grapes, which nicely complements my sea bass fillet with caramelised fennel. Over at the *Can Gelat* bar, another local

favourite, Judit and her team serve tapas and decadent deserts.

Santanyi particularly comes to life on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when its street market attracts crowds from neighbouring regions to browse summery dresses, hand-woven baskets, jewellery, artisanal soaps and more. There are fresh fruit and vegetables in the *Plaça Major*, next to