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## The gift guide issue

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from our agents  
Dates for the diary  
Fitzrovia's eclectic  
metropolitan charm

## Pearls of wisdom

In an extract from new book, *Faded Glamour*, Pearl Lowe shares her interior design secrets





Home to historic sites and enviably located beside the glistening Med, Mallorca's cosmopolitan capital makes the perfect base for a fun-filled weekend away



**Y**ou could say that Mallorca offers every type of holiday to every type of person; relaxed beach breaks, high octane cycling adventures, peaceful rural spa retreats and buzzy gastronomic and cultural city stays. With just a weekend to spare, we've opted for the latter, booking two nights away in Palma. And, wanting to make the most of our short break, we've chosen a very special hotel; like the princesses we know we were born to be, my sister and I are staying in an actual palace, Palacio Can Marqués.

Our trip starts with a VIP transfer arranged by the hotel – after enduring a rowdy flight surrounded by hen and stag parties, this is more than welcome. As we squeeze down the narrow, cobbled street on the approach to the hotel, we can see fellow tourists wandering past, staring wide-eyed into its impressive lobby. The elegant reception sits between a grand double staircase, which leads towards a calm and beautifully shaded garden courtyard terrace.

Built in 1760, this is the first time the palace has been open to the public. Lovingly and painstakingly renovated over several years, it features just 13 palatial suites, all individually and eclectically styled. There is design inspiration everywhere we look, and texture is key – think velvet sofas, limestone floors and huge wooden doors. French interior designer Aline Matsika has drawn on existing architectural characteristics and added quirky pieces of art and Murano chandeliers to striking effect. It feels opulent but unpretentious.

## REVIEW

# DISCOVERY OF RICHES

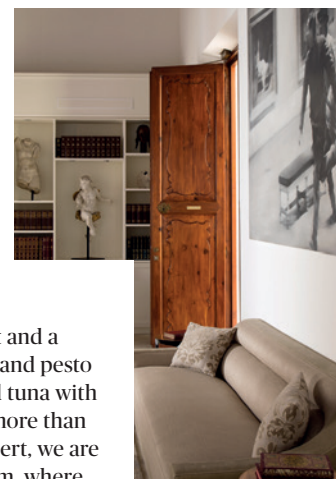
Perched on the shores of the glistening Mediterranean Sea, Mallorca's cosmopolitan capital is richly studded with historic sites and enjoys a vibrant food and shopping scene, making it the perfect spot for a short stay at any time of year

by Becky Pomfret





Built as a palace in the 18th century, Palacio Can Marqués has been painstakingly renovated and now offers opulent but unpretentious accommodation in the heart of Palma



We are welcomed by the very friendly staff, who offer us chilled glasses of Cava and lead us up the huge stone staircase to Renaissance, our suite. The antique double doors lead to an enormous space where traditional and modern sit happily side by side – a contemporary four poster bed and chic designer sofas are offset by an impressive Baroque fireplace. Floor-to-ceiling bookcases are filled with ancient tomes and a series of authentic 17th century sculptures and busts. This hotel is setting the bar very high for our next mini-break (“What do you mean the room doesn’t feature Renaissance art?”). The bathroom is equally impressive, with a double walk-in shower and roll-top bath.

Drinks are on the agenda, so we head to the roof-top terrace, where we toast our good fortune with more chilled bubbly. Looking out over the city, we begin to get our bearings. The central location is fantastic; we are but a moment away from the Marina and close to the main shopping streets. Surrounded, as we are, by tapas bars and tourists, it is amazing to find such an oasis of calm amongst the hubbub.

We enjoy dinner in the magically-lit garden, surrounded by palm trees and climbing plants, there are even a couple of life-size metal lions lurking in the undergrowth. The menu is Mediterranean with a French twist and

we tuck into gooey fried Camembert and a mouth-watering tomato, mozzarella and pesto salad to start, followed by seared red tuna with tagliatelle and beef tenderloin that more than lives up to its name. Too full for dessert, we are quite happy to head back to our room, where we spread out on the four poster and take stock of our magnificent surroundings.

Breakfast the next day is plentiful, fuelling us for a day of shopping and sightseeing in beautiful Palma. We head first to the Es Baluard Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, which is on the hotel’s doorstep and well worth a visit. Afterwards, we head off to hit the shops. We are so well located that it’s oh-so easy to pop back to the hotel to drop off bags and have a siesta before taking in a final bit of culture at La Seu, the magnificent Gothic cathedral. That evening, we explore the city’s buzzing bar scene, all a short stumble from our front door.

Happily exhausted, on our second day we make the most of the Mallorcan sunshine while relaxing on the roof-top terrace. Only open to guests during the day, we have it to ourselves and our princess fantasies are truly unleashed. We return home later that evening to our own non-palatial residences, trying desperately to hold on to the feeling of VIP glamour that staying at Palacio Can Marqués briefly anointed us with.

**Suites at Palacio Can Marqués start from £336 per night on a B&B basis including private airport transfers.**

**Palacio Can Marqués, Carrer dels Apuntadors, 15, Palma (+34 871 520 290; palaciocanmarques.com)**