

A Very Big House in the Country

Our pick of the islands' best agroturismos and rural retreats.



Can Guillo.



Cases de Son Barbassa.

Many of the most unusual places to stay on both islands are *agroturismos*, a word that's now become something of a catch-all for rural hideaways. These can range from design mag-type properties – with infinity pools, day spas and trendy restaurants in gutted old fincas – to more homely and basic working farms with a few rooms to rent. The former are perfect for splurging on for a romantic break, the latter are better for those on a budget and those with kids. Mallorca has seen an explosion in *agroturismos* in recent years, symptomatic of the country's aim to move its tourist image away from egg-and-chips-splattered resorts and towards rustic relaxation. Menorca, so far, has been less quick to catch on. There are bargains to be had on both islands, particularly off-season, and it's always worth checking the websites for special offers.

On the north-eastern tip of Mallorca, the **Cases de Son Barbassa** (see p199) is modern and close to some of the island's best beaches, set within almond and olive groves. The trendy Ibiza-esque poolside daybeds enclosed in billowing sail-like tents are often featured in the travel supplements of Sunday newspapers. Also in the north-east but just slightly further south you'll find **Can Simoneta** (see p201), which continues the style-conscious theme with eye-popping cliff-top views, a private beach and decor that's slick enough for the pages of *Wallpaper**.

Luxury like this doesn't come cheap, though, so those looking for somewhere more pocket-friendly to chill out in might

like to look south (inland) to **Es Passarell** (see p174), a warm and characterful rural retreat with cats, creaky old donkey carts and blooming meadows surrounding five apartments and five rooms.

In the western interior of the island, in the somnolent valley of Orient, you'll find the **Son Palou Hotel & Restaurant** (see p163), an elegant mountain hideout for hikers that dates back to the 14th century. It's particularly popular in winter when hikers can explore the surrounding 100 hectares (247 acres) of land and then return to a roaring fire in the rooms. In summer, a drink on the terrace takes some beating, with its views of the mountains.

Son Cosmet (see p180), to the south, is a beautiful manor house within extensive grounds. The emphasis here is firmly on character rather than snazzy gadgets – you won't find TVs or minibars in the rooms; what you will find is antique furniture, cool stone interiors and ancient wooden beams, plus a spectacular pool.

Over on the other side of the island near the affluent, boho village of Deià is **Sa Pedrissa** (see p121), one of the most beautifully located places to stay on the island. It's a 17th-century estate with just eight rustic rooms. There are splendid gardens but the real selling point is the pool, which appears to float half a kilometre or so above the Mediterranean.

Further north-east, and at the opposite end of the luxury scale, is **Can Guillo** (see p142), a ramshackle old farmhouse at the end of a long, long track near Pollença. The vibe is utterly informal, with communal