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Hacienda de San Rafael



Andalucía indisputably offers a feast for the eyes and a banquet for the mind. Equally impressive is the *tapas* of languages with cadences of Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician. This Moorish region's history of unrelenting poverty is counterpoised by its cultural treasures—Velázquez, Picasso, Lorca, flamenco, fiesta and, surely, bullfighting.

In the beautiful agricultural patchwork between the cities of Seville and Jerez lies a grand, traditional estate. The 300-year-old Hacienda de San Rafael is a former olive farm, with lands quenched by Guadalquivir river. Its serene, whitewashed homestead is adorned with a gorgeous bougainvillea-drenched courtyard, a characterful wrought-iron well, three pools and a panoramic view over palm trees and plains. In this carefully preserved, rustic environment, the dramatic arrival of a liveried messenger on horseback would probably not raise an eyebrow.



In an area renowned for bullfighting, exclusive visits to breeding ranches come highly recommended. Exhilarating private horseback safaris as well as yachting and shooting parties are only a mere suggestion away. Alternatively, a restful afternoon might be spent savouring the storied atmosphere and reserves of a local sherry bodega.

Afterwards, retreat to the sanctuary of the Hacienda de San Rafael, with its tempting infinity-edge pool and private gardens. The main house and three *casitas*—intimate, cosy thatched cottages—are a haven for the dreamy escapist. Antiques and paintings bear silent witness to the personal touch that has lovingly brushed each room, a unique fusion of classical-Spanish style and some Eastern influences. Variegated walls of cream and

¡Es nice (sooooo nice um)!
Behind the whitewashed front lies a faraway enclave in a distant time and old dreamy settings that legends such as Alfred Hayes' Highwayman are made of; three sequestered *casitas* offer privacy and countryside views; sunloungers to revel in the sights.
oases: The stone-clad pool is guests' only reminder that they are really strolling through the garden in the 21st century.



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achre lead the eye first down to the burnt-sienna flagstones, then gradually up to the elaborate beam and thatch-work of the ceilings. Spiral staircases, archways, shaded verandahs and galleried bedrooms with crisp white linen complete the charming, rustic idyll.

The best way to take in the exquisite settings of Andalucía's sultry summer nights is to dine al fresco. Be it the restaurant or the courtyard, or under the *sombrajo* in the east garden, the delicacy and excellence of both cuisine and service will not fail to impress, just

as they did back in the halcyon days, when haciendas were regarded esteemed bastions of self-sufficiency, luxury and status. At the Hacienda de San Rafael, not only does this golden era continue to reign; like a truly fine wine, it improves with age.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF HACIENDA DE SAN RAFAEL

FACTS	ROOMS	11 deluxe + 3 casitas
	FOOD	restaurant: Mediterranean + patio and gardens: al fresco options
	DRINK	Luna Bar + Sunset Bar
	FEATURES	3 pools + private gardens + paddle tennis + massages + yoga + Wi-Fi access + boutique shop + private chauffeur service + private guides
	NEARBY	White Villages + Jerez + Seville + Costa de la Luz + Coto Doñana National Park + golf + sailing + hot air ballooning + horse riding + bird watching
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