

Wake up Here

Château de Gudanes

Château-Verdun, *France*



Words by **VANESSA BOZ**

When signing up to one of the inspiring workshops at Château de Gudanes, located at the foot of the Pyrenees mountains, you'll not only sleep in a fairytale castle, you'll also help to rewrite the story of this magical place by lending a hand in its ongoing restoration.

First built as a fortress in the 13th century, the château became a fully functioning castle in the 18th century, when it was nicknamed “the king of the Pyrenees”. After many decades in a derelict state, an Australian family came to its rescue five years ago.

When Karina and Craig Waters from Perth stumbled upon Château de Gudanes it was love at first sight. They swiftly embarked on the adventure of restoring its 93 rooms – one at a time. Tiles from the 18th century have been sourced for the bathrooms, underfloor heating has been installed in some parts of the building and the castle now counts nine refurbished bedrooms as well as two kitchens. When night falls, guests must find their way by candlelight.

A stay at the château is only possible when you book one of its workshops, which host up to 16 participants for three, five or seven-day retreats. Themes range from flea market hunting to a patisserie course aptly named Château-Gâteau. One local lady gives yoga classes, while another organises horseback riding. Guests help out in the kitchens, working alongside the chefs and using local ingredients to craft communal banquets and countryside picnics. Everybody comes with an open heart, a helping hand and the knowledge that they will go home with a story to cherish.

The continuing Château de Gudanes story is a family affair with a modern twist of collaborative consumption. It is a labour of love in every sense.

chateaugudanes.com

Workshops from £1,550 per person

SUITCASE HOTELS



ACRE BAJA

Baja California Sur, Mexico

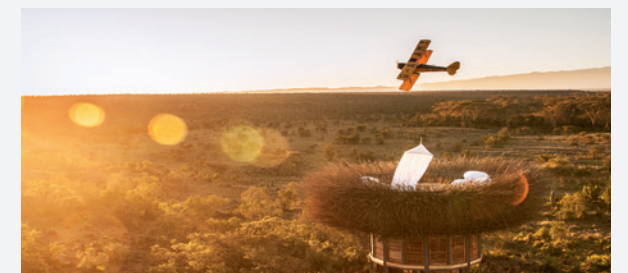
Intrepid souls can now clamber into one of the 12 treehouses hidden among the palms at Acre, a property occupying 25 acres of farmland. The treetop refuges repurpose traditional materials in the same way that Acre's restaurant transforms locally grown ingredients into modern Mexican dishes. In the mornings, guests can wake up with a yoga session in the mango orchard.



THE PILGRIM

London, UK

This 73-room new opening in Paddington transforms a traditional building into a much-needed neighbourhood hotspot while paying homage to its history. Custom designs mingle with original pieces sourced from museums and schools, while the lounge and casual café draw in thirsty travellers and locals alike.



THE NAY PALAD BIRD NEST

Laikipia, Kenya

Guests at Segera Retreat – which is renowned for its art collection and opportunities for spotting elephants and giraffes – can now follow a game drive with a night under the stars at this alien structure made out of tree branches woven together by the community. There's also an open-air deck for adventurous types.