

Battel Hall, overlooking Leeds Castle, is available to rent



Peony, one of the beautiful bedrooms



TRAVEL NEWS

A WINNING BATTEL

If you want stylish domesticity mixed with the benefits of a polished hotel, then consider the just-unveiled, five-bedroom Battel Hall that belongs to, and gazes on, Leeds Castle, 'the loveliest castle in the world'. A 14th-century Kentish hall house, it has been renovated with no expense spared, and Francesca Rowan-Plowden has created the gorgeous interiors. Wallpapers and fabrics are all from British designers, notably Lewis & Wood (lewisandwood.co.uk). Waking up in the Peony bedroom, cocooned in their soothing Hanbury wallpaper, and spying the great round towers of Leeds Castle in the distance, is a quiet joy. A private chef is available or you can bring your own staff (there are two further rooms in a barn conversion). *From £6,250 per week.* battelhall.leeds-castle.com

TEN REASONS WHY I LOVE

Casa La Siesta, Andalucía, Spain



1 The privacy (just a handful of rustic chic bedrooms)... and the peace: cock's crow, birdsong and nothing else.

2 The friendliness: first names; kitchen door always open; honesty bar; farewell hugs.

3 The house, built by a stylish English couple to resemble a centuries-old cortijo with exposed beams, terracotta tiles, antique doors.

4 The perfumed air: lavender, hibiscus, jasmine, orange blossom, heady and heavenly, especially in the central courtyard.

5 Breakfast: eggs from the neighbour's hens, avocado and tomatoes marinated in local olive oil.

6 Dinner: a set menu chalked up on the blackboard, cooked by chatty ladies as if at home.

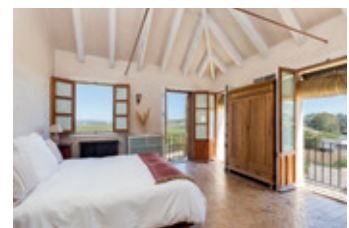
7 Sombra, the omnipresent house cat, most definitely in charge.

8 The pool, long enough for serious lengths, surrounded by pairs of loungers on the lawn.

9 The rolling surrounding hills, smothered in wild flowers...

10 ... And (you will warm to them) the wind turbines that stand sentinel across the hilltops.

Doubles from £299; casalasiesta.com



THE HOTEL WIZARD

Fiona Duncan celebrates unsung Spain

Costa de la Luz



SECRET SPAIN

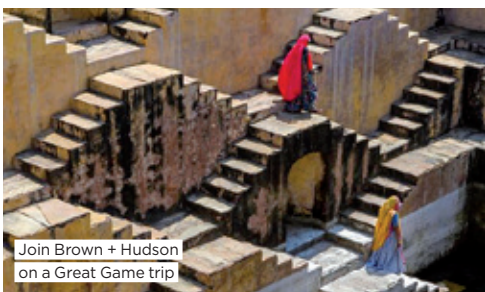
The wind that draws surfers and kite surfers to the Atlantic-facing Costa de la Luz is the same wind that has kept its astonishing beaches free of tourist hotels and full English breakfasts. Add to them the lovely inland countryside, the distinctive Pueblos Blancos, especially delightful Vejer de la Frontera (close to Casa La Siesta) and vibrant, beautiful Cadiz and you have the ideal recipe for a holiday or short break. andalucia.org

ON THE TRAVEL RADAR

» One of the country's most enchanting and eclectic festivals of literature, music and comedy lifts off at Pylewell Park. Glamp in a luxury tent or a vintage camper van and make a New Forest weekend of it. *20-22 July.* curiousartsfestival.com



The Curious Art Festival in the New Forest



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If you love riesling, book a room at one of my favourite trio of inns, the Felin Fach Griffin (Wales), the Gurnard's Head or the Old Coastguard (both Cornwall), which all this month celebrate that most versatile of grapes.