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556

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Suite 401: The Most Beautiful Hotel Room In Galicia, Spain?



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I cover drinks, travel and food, and the intersection of all three. [FULL BIO](#)

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A Quinta da Auga
The antique desk in suite 401.



Thick stone walls framed the corridor leading to suite 401. It was a hallway with gravitas; the kind, lined in wide plank wood floors, seldom built in this era of fast construction. Yet what felt luxurious today was designed with pragmatism at the time, for this hotel of enduring masonry -- A Quinta da Auga just outside of Santiago de Compostela in Spain -- was an 18th century paper mill built when granite was a cheap and readily available resource.

After slipping the key card into the slot, the slender red-haired bellman looking of Celtic decent, popped open the wood door. I felt my eyes widen in that cliché of expressions, to drink in the detail.



A Quinta da Auga
A breakfast table in Suite 401.



The granite from the hallway continued along the exterior of the room. Internal walls were papered in étoile or painted a regal blue. Eight deep-set windows with handsome shutters opened to the sounds of the rushing river and singing birds. Oriental rugs lent warmth to the caramel-hued floors, while an elegant corner writing desk beckoned me to type a few pages of a stalled novel.

What a welcome change from the monotony of 5-star luxury increasingly prevalent in today's corporate hotels. Unlike the bland, mass-produced furniture found in so many properties, the pieces in Suite 401 appeared hand-selected from an antique store or estate sale. In furtherance of the vintage theme, old black-and-white family photos dotted the dresser and side tables, all lit up by a low-hanging crystal chandelier. In the sitting area, gilded religious paintings juxtaposed with contemporary oil images of quiet countryside, delivered a brief lesson in Spanish art history.



A Quinta da Auga
The soaking tub in suite 401.

The bathroom, however, remained firmly in the present. Beige marble sinks, separate stalls for toilet and shower, and the pièce de résistance, a Jacuzzi with a windowed view to the misty woods, provided modern amenities where it counted. A pilgrim finishing her one-month long walk on the Camino could do worse than spoil herself with a long soak in that tub.

While I've not visited every hotel in Galicia, A Quinta da Auga is the only Relais & Chateaux in the region. Family-owned since opening in 2009, the owner María Luisa García, with help from husband José Ramón Lorenzo and their daughter Luisa Lorenzo, turned her profession towards a personal project.



A Quinta da Auga
An aerial view of the hotel.



Long an architect for local commercial developments, María Luisa told me over a languorous lunch of local wines and seafood how she lamented the growing disconnect she had with clients. “Architecture just wasn’t the same business for me anymore. I wanted to be closer to the people I was working with. That’s why running a hotel has turned out to be rather suitable for my personality.” María Luisa, clearly a *bonne vivante* in her tailored cherry-red jacket and blonde blow-out, also spoke of her interest in wine as she beckoned the waiter to pour us another glass. “This bottle is made by the son of our friend. We watched him growing up and waited for the time he would make his own Albariño. It’s quite good, no?”

Unlike Americans, who often view wine as an independent product, the Spanish view it as integral to their heritage, culture, and the pleasure of a meal. This sentiment comes through at the hotel restaurant Filigrana where the wine list encompassed artisan producers from nearby regions. “The Galicians don’t like the big, robust wines of the south” she explained, although they keep a few Riojas and Ribera del Dueros for guests who want them. Local, traditional with a twist defined the food, too. Instead of the classic wooden plate, octopus with paprika came out as individual bites. The chef set one tender slice atop a warm, hollowed out potato stuffed with melted San Simon, a smoked cheese that, like wine, has its own denomination of origin (DO).



A Quinta da Auga
The sitting area in suite 401.

After resting and eating, I wandered the halls of the hotel, discovering charming and quirky touches of décor, from Spanish fans to timeworn books and clocks. Taking a turn in the spa, I enjoyed a deep tissue massage followed by a swim in a series of pools beneath a skylight. The fog of a Galician winter enveloped the glass above, making me thankful for the warmth inside.

While my visit lasted a brief two days, I departed with fondness for A Quinta da Auga cemented. Whether you’re visiting Santiago for religious tourism, a food and wine experience, or completing a pilgrimage, I suggest booking this hotel and requesting suite 401. It’ll be a heavenly highlight of your trip.

When she's not in a vineyard or the ocean, Lauren Mowery covers drinks, food & adventure/luxury travel. Follow her around the world on Instagram and Twitter.

A promotional advertisement for Barceló Hotel Group. The top part shows a woman in a wide-brimmed hat taking a photo with a camera. Below this, there is a green banner that says "MEJOR PRECIO GARANTIZADO". The main text reads "Captura tus mejores momentos en Semana Santa" followed by a large "25% HASTA DTO" offer. At the bottom, there is a logo for "My Barceló" with a "WI-FI GRATIS" icon and a red button that says "RESERVA YA".