





THE
GAME CHANGERS
OF 2016

INTRODUCING THIS YEAR'S MOST EXCITING, MOST
RELEVANT HOSPITALITY MOGULS—THE VISIONARIES
WHO ARE PUTTING THE HOT INTO HOTELIER.

BY VICTORIA MATHER

— THE —
CONQUISTADOR

PABLO CARRINGTON

Castles in Spain that become hotels are usually *paradores*—the admirable state-owned operations that are nonetheless stern in style. In terms of smart, only the Marbella Club and The Ritz in Madrid (about to be blessed with a €90million facelift by Mandarin Oriental) formerly sprang readily to the cosmopolitan mind. Pablo Carrington has changed all that with his Marugal hotels. A former banker, he's brought the boutique dynamic to Spain, overturning and updating all preconceived ideas in the capital, the mainland and the Balearics. Cap Rocat in Majorca is a glorious converted fort at the entrance to the Bay of Palma. The rooms are converted out of former storage rooms for ammo and the gun carriages are now tables (though not a shot was ever fired in anger there). The Sea Club, the beach restaurant tucked in the rocks above the water, makes Cinquante Cinq in St Tropez seem like McDonald's. In Menorca, where there was nowhere cool to stay, Torralbenc is dreamy whites; Carrington's Hotel Viura in Rioja is an architectural sensation in an area where Frank Gehry pioneered a masterpiece with the Hotel Marqués de Riscal Elciego. Viura looks like an enticing pile of presents. Every day four retired farmers pitch up with produce, perhaps 10 kilos of blackberries picked from the hedgerows. "Luxury is intangible," says Carrington. "It has nothing to do with the thickness of the carpet or the size of the television but about a sense of place and a sense of being cherished. And also being left alone." Choose the tasting menu, and a little list reminding you what you're eating will be put on your side plate, so there's no waiter's chatter of "Sir is now having mushrooms picked by virgins at dawn." At the Hotel & Spa Urso in Madrid there's a charming homeliness. Choose Miguel's hake cooked in the oven, then cross the street to the market and meet Miguel, the fishmonger, himself. Local is everything now. Pablo Carrington is opening a new trendy, fun hotel in Madrid's shopping district in May. And next year, he's invading France, with hotels in Chambord, on the Loire, and Fontainebleau.

Photographed by Juan Aldabaldetrecu at Cap Rocat, Palma, Mallorca on November 19, 2015