

ROSE & IVY



Sweet Andalucía *Kim Ficaró* Veronica Beard *Woodland Beauty* Elizabeth Kennedy *Old Westbury Gardens*

A Tale of a Sleeping Beauty

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You quickly realize when walking through the century-old wooden doors of Cortijo del Marqués that you have encountered something magical. Silvia and Eilko Bruggers were living a busy life in Madrid, she in software, he in finance, when they decided to search for a country home. They had two growing boys and they needed a retreat where they could run wild on the weekends and feel the grass on their feet. After looking at place after place, they received a referral from a friend regarding a property located about 400 kilometers from Madrid. While it seemed a bit far at first, they realized that they, in Silvia's words had stumbled across a 'sleeping beauty', nestled in the Pozuelo Mountains. It seems like the perfect plot for a blockbuster movie, but they would soon realize that the stories enclosed behind these walls were even more telling.

The precise history is not exactly known, which makes it all the more fascinating. In 1492, after the conquest of Granada, the last of the Moors were forced to surrender to the Catholics. The property was eventually handed over to the Marquis of Mondejar, Luis Hurtado de Mendoza, of which

right The road leading to the property.

CORTIJO
DEL
MARQUÉS







“The four kilometer winding road up to the property is dotted with wildflower fields, including crimson poppies and an innumerable amount of olive trees, some more than a hundred years old - their gnarled trunks revealing the passage of time.”

left The fields awash in nothing but poppies and wildflowers.



“The grounds quickly deteriorated and remained in the valley - only the locals knew of its storied beauty.”

right An abandoned stone silo that is happily inhabited by two friendly geese.



"We arrived just before sunset, as the sun casted a crimson glow onto the mountains."

the name Marquis is derived. Mendoza was a commander of the Alhambra and captain general of the Kingdom of Granada. In the 19th-century, the Marquis transferred the responsibility of the land to a local family that handled the agriculture, which included wheat and olive trees. In 1879, a chapel was built on the grounds and soon received a papal seal by Pope Leon XIII in 1880. At the end of the 20th-century, it was abandoned by its owners, who moved to nearby Granada. The grounds quickly deteriorated and remained in the valley - only the locals knew of its storied beauty.

It was love at first sight in 2010 for both Silvia and Eilko. They soon found themselves with a country home and then some, Cortijo del Marqués is practically its own tiny village enclosed within four walls. After some time and careful restoration, they revived the property to its former glory, while keeping everything in tack, from the barn that once housed over 1,000 sheep, to the former home of goats that is now the restaurant. The grounds are meticulously maintained and are bursting with life with honeysuckle vines climbing the enclosed walls, to the flowering thyme and lavender that grows by the fountain in the main courtyard.

We arrived just before sunset, as the sun casted a crimson glow onto the mountains. The four kilometer winding road up to the property is dotted with wildflower fields, including crimson poppies and an innumerable amount of olive trees, some more than a hundred years old - their gnarled trunks revealing the passage of time. Silvia, originally from Austria, warmly greeted us and showed us to our room, which overlooked the second courtyard lined with orange trees and a fountain decorated with potted red geraniums. Between Silvia and Eilko, they both speak many languages - Dutch, English, French, German and Spanish to name a few. One thing that

immediately translates is the love and dedication they have cultivated for their corner of the world.

The hotel has 15 rooms, each with their own name and interesting tales. The spaces are decorated with European antiques furnishings, from a wooden armoire with intricate details to brass lamps with dangling

glass, discovered in Madrid. One of the rooms, 'Los Aljibe' has Roman columns that are believed to date back to the 16th-century, while 'El Silo' is a restored silo that boasts a panoramic view overlooking the wheat fields and mountains. The pool, located adjacent to the chapel looks out onto the mountains and is surrounded

by roses. It is an ideal place to relax and enjoy an afternoon siesta.

Each night, outstanding 3-course meals are prepared by Chef Marcos, a local, who incorporates the freshest market finds in inventive and modern ways, like fish and lamb. On one particular night, it was a poached egg served on potato parmentier with a fresh thyme aroma, followed by a tender roasted leg of lamb that sat atop puréed roasted pumpkin and oyster mushrooms. For dessert, it was a knee-buckling good crème brûlée that had a heavenly taste of caramelized vanilla.

Staying at Cortijo del Marqués is like being welcomed into the Bruggers extended family. While the family lives there full-time and it is technically their home, they feel like they cannot take full ownership, rather, they are meer guests at the estate, for the wrinkle in time that they inhabit it. They have taken on the great responsibility of maintaining a place, which has existed through many ages and has the ability to leave all those that enter into its four walls nothing short of enchanted.



“Staying at Cortijo del Marqués is like being welcomed into the Bruggers extended family.”



left The pool serves as an instant refreshment on a warm day.

below A bathtub with a view.

opposite page One of the serene courtyards on the property.

A special thanks to **CORTIJO DEL MARQUÉS**

BOOK YOUR STAY

Cortijo del Marqués is open from mid-March through October and is located 14 miles from Granada. cortijodelmarques.com

