

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

THE RUSTICAE EXPERIENCE

As the tastes of leisure travelers worldwide grow increasingly sophisticated, the trend is away from the anonymous (and even cold!) hotels of yesteryear towards charm hotels that offer that *special* touch. Leading the advance in this movement is **Rusticae**, an affiliated network of 85 Spanish “small hotels with character.”

As **Cognoscenti Magazine** editors learned during a recent tour, the sheer variety of Rusticae properties is breathtaking, reflecting Spain’s eclecticism itself. Some of these hotels are located in the very center of towns and cities, along streets so narrow that cars can scarcely pass, and others are found at the end of winding and remote forest roads. Some Rusticae hotels are housed in unique historic landmarks that are many hundreds of years old; others are nearly minimalist in their modernity.

In evaluating prospective hotels for admission into the association, Rusticae’s managers carefully apply nearly 300 parameters, providing future guests with a reassuring stamp of quality. An attractive, full color guide highlights individual hotel properties and helps visitors make choices that will suit them best.

Ana Minguez, Marketing Manager, explained that

standards for inclusion in the Rusticae group generally include:

- no more than 25 rooms, to allow for personalized service
- historical significance, or a unique natural setting
- private bath for all rooms

For these small and sometimes remote hotel properties, membership in the Rusticae group can be valuable indeed. Rusticae’s contributions go beyond booking rooms and marketing the properties. As Ana Minguez notes, Rusticae helps these establishments “build their identities as well.”

From artsy *ateliers* to spectacular aeries, from golden age landmarks to luxury resorts, Rusticae-affiliated properties run the full gamut. When all is said and done, however, what lingers in the traveler’s mind are not the buildings, but the people who run them: the owners, managers and employees who, through the sheer force of a dream, have painstaking constructed or restored unique properties and lovingly maintain them to this day.

This article was written and researched by contributing editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*.

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Central de Reservas **RUSTICAE**
Gran Via, 31, 8º 21
28013 Madrid
Phone: 902 10 38 92
Fax: 915 23 23 07
Email: rusticae@rusticae.es