

Condé Nast Traveller

SPECIAL
DOUBLE
ISSUE

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THE HOT LIST 2017

THIS YEAR'S BEST NEW HOTELS, BEACH CLUBS, BARS & RESTAURANTS

FREE
NIGHT
AT LONDON'S
SMARTEST
HOTEL

BALI ON THE INSIDE
THE REAL ISLAND STYLE

EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK

THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT
INDIAN OCEAN HIDEAWAY

URBAN FIXES

BERLIN
PALM SPRINGS
TOKYO
MEXICO CITY
ATHENS



DIGS OF THE WEEK

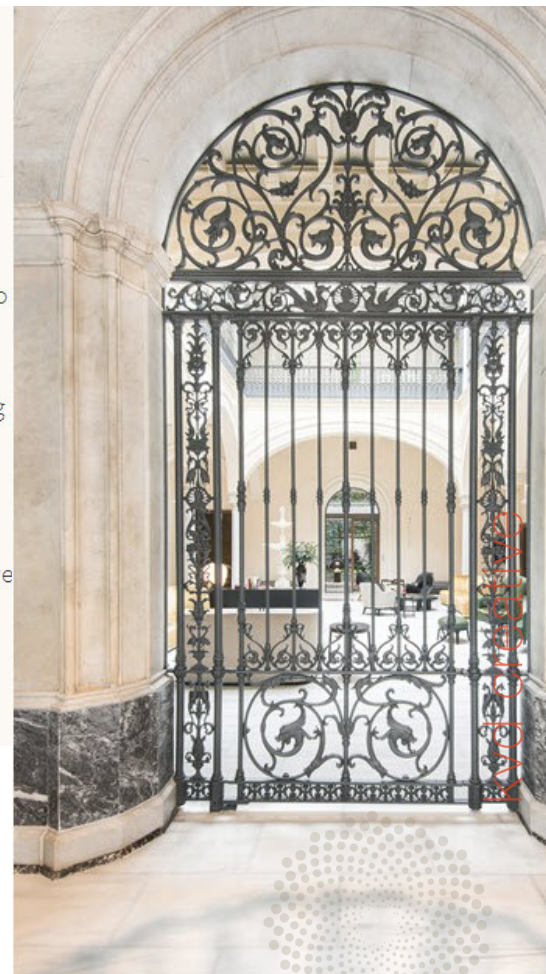
Our pick of the coolest places to stay around the world. This week: a pocket-sized palace hideaway in old Seville

THE MERCER HOTEL SEVILLE. SPAIN

Close enough to Seville's magnificent cathedral to smell the sweet copal burned by the incense sellers in its shadow, the Mercer couldn't be situated more perfectly. Along a narrow cobbled street ending with a quiet square, the hotel is a box-fresh and minutely-renovated historic building. Just beyond its iron doors, an immense, glass-ceilinged atrium is dotted with good books and gorgeous flower arrangements that ape that genius floral sculptor Daniel Ost - high-reaching waterlilies, and roses that seem to be opening before your eyes.

An original broad stone staircase has been so well restored you imagine it draped in flirting gallants and their plumed ladies, and yet the heavy gunmetal-painted balustrades feel unapologetically modern, like the heavenly-white bathrooms. A rooftop infinity pool sprouting with masses of yellow flowers overlooks more ancient roofs, and will be unquantifiably welcome when heat descends on the city in its barrier of fire (sometimes over 50 degrees).

But the jewel of the hotel is the small bar. Its steep wall of glimmering bottles seems to impersonate the city's oldest and quintessentially Sevillian bars such as the cherished El



The iron gates at The Mercer Hotel



Rinconcillo. As a sundowner, chief barman Jose assiduously adds drops of rosemary syrup to sherry wine, endlessly perfecting a mix - although nothing could set you up for the evening better than his gin-tonics with slow-dried grapefruit. Part of the hotel's superb tasting menu is served in the bar (immaculate oysters, liquescent morsels of lamb), the guests moving relaxedly between there and the restaurant and atrium, and back, in a way most hotels only dream of. This really does feel like a place to fully occupy and luxuriate in, both a sanctuary from and proper reflection of the Sevillian streets outside, fantastically alive with their giggling tides of families, and exultant parakeets in the orange trees.

INSIDER TIP The city's best new tapas bar is at the end of the street: 'Palo Cortao', run by a young sommelier and her super-creative chef husband. Order Cantabrian anchovies, honey toast, and anything they might be serving that involves mackerel.

BY ANTONIA QUIRKE

*The Mercer Hotel, 26 Calle Castelar, Seville, Spain (+34 954 22 30 04; mercersevilla.com)
Doubles from £220*

