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Mas de la Serra Review

Why go? For a ravishing rural retreat miles from Spain's beaten track...

Mas de la Serra is a 'masia', or 17th-century farmhouse, in the wilds of the Teruel region of Matarrana in eastern Spain. It's a place that's very much of the 'serra' (or sierra) – standing out on one of its terraces, in fact, as you survey the pine forests and craggy peaks of the surrounding landscape, it's hard to spot a sign of human presence.

The building itself is a handsome, vaguely castle-like jumble of masonry and roof tiles, with an interior to match it and the fabulous setting. Grand, but not imposingly so, the whole place is dotted with the owners' things. Which is nice if you're there for the night, but ideal if you're there to celebrate a birthday, wedding or some other special occasion with a group of friends and want to feel at home during your stay.

And Mas de la Serra's suitability for exclusive rental is certainly a major part of its appeal. It's the flexibility that's the key, however: you can rent the entire place out on a catered or self-catering basis, or just drop into a double room for a night or two's bed and breakfast while on a road trip through the region.

The eight bedrooms are divided between five doubles, a couple of twins and a children's dorm, and come with their own smooth, tadelakt-lined bathrooms. At night you lie on huge, soft beds under thick wooden beams and sloping ceilings, before waking up to views of the sun rising on the sierra. A special experience.

Highs:

- The remote rural setting – great to look at, even better to walk through
- The handsome historic premises
- The interiors – comfortable but chic
- Having breakfast out on the terrace
- Taking over the place for a grand week's house party

Lows:

- The only thing you could possibly fault it on is that the isolated setting makes it a little hard to get to (but therein lies the beauty of the place, too)