



# The Interior

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## Why Go?

Mallorca's interior is a place of quiet charm, the alter ego to the island's more famous coastal attractions of sun, surf and seafood. Although the beaches are rarely more than hour away, the interior feels like it's a world away, a land of appealing wineries, hilltop monasteries, attractive stone villages, and rural homes converted into intimate retreats where you'll sleep in perfect tranquillity and eat dishes whose secrets have been passed down from one Mallorcan generation to the next. And therein lies one of Mallorca's most heartwarming tales: whereas tourism's impact upon the coast has too often been heavy-handed, here in the interior it has saved many traditions from disappearing altogether. As such, in places such as Sineu, Petra and Binibona you'll encounter a reassuringly time-stood-still view of Mallorca that survives nowhere else.

## When to Go

Unlike the coast, inland Mallorca tends to remain open for business year-round: Palma folk like nothing better than escaping from city life in the depths of winter (such as it is) and finding a rural retreat for a heartwarming meal or a quiet night's sleep. The interior's festivals also rank among the most traditional on the island, from the Easter Sunday S'Encuentro of Montuiri to the 700-year-old livestock markets of Sineu in May or the yearly grape harvest in Binissalem in September.

Most travellers race quickly through the geographical heart of the island along the Ma13 motorway, although the older route (Ma13a) takes you through some interesting country. Sophisticated rural retreats and some of Mallorca's best vineyards are the main attractions, but charming villages such as Binibona in the Serra de Tramuntana foothills and Sineu further south are also compelling reasons to forsake the rush to the coast.

If you're heading west from here, the Ma2130 road north of Caimari is a spectacular route leading to the **Monestir de Lluc** (p102) and the Ma10 coast road heading south.

## Santa Maria del Camí & Around

Just beyond Palma's expanding commuter belt, Santa Maria del Camí is a gateway to Mallorca's wine country and is home to one of the most celebrated hotel-restaurants on the island as well as a respected winery. The village itself doesn't really catch the eye, but it does have a couple of pretty squares.

### Sights

If you're coming from Palma, the Ma13a widens to become the bar-lined Plaça dels Hostals as you roll into town. On its southern flank at No 30 rises the 17th-century **Antic Monestir de Nostra Senyora de Soledad**, aka Can Conrado. If the main doors happen to be swung open, you can peer into the magnificent front courtyard, while a glimpse of the rear gardens can be had around the corner from Carrer Llarg. That street leads to the original heart of the town, Plaça de la Vila, a quiet medieval square presided over by the 17th-century **Casa de la Vila** (Town Hall).

**Bodegas Macià Batle** WINERY  
(☎971 140 014; www.maciabatle.com; Camí Coanegra; ☉9am-7pm Mon-Fri) One of the island's biggest names in wine, Bodegas Macià Batle is based just outside of central Santa Maria. In addition to winery visits and tastings, you can admire their labels, all designed by renowned contemporary artists.

### Festivals & Events

**Festes de Santa Margalida** TOWN FESTIVAL  
(Jul) Held over three weeks in July, this festival involves concerts, traditional dances and communal meals. The key day is the 20th.

**Bacchus** SPANISH, INTERNATIONAL €€€  
(Read's Hotel; ☎971 140 262; www.readshotel.com; mains €25-27) With one Michelin star and a celebrated reputation as one of the best places to eat on the island, Bacchus, in Read's Hotel, does fusion cooking at its best, served up in an elegant 16th-century dining hall. The restaurant is part of Marc Fosh's empire and, as such, one for a special occasion.

### Getting There & Away

Santa Maria is around halfway along the Palma-Inca train line. Fares in either direction cost €1, and journey times range between 18 and 23 minutes.

## Binissalem

POP 6200 / ELEV 131M

Binissalem stands in the heart of Mallorca's wine country, which is the main reason to visit. Like many towns in inland Mallorca, Binissalem has retained its Arabic name.

### Sights

Most of Binissalem's buildings are made of a local white stone, and the central bulk of the striking **Església de Nostra Senyora de les Robines** is no exception.

A weekly **market** is staged on Fridays.

**José Luis Ferrer** WINERY  
(☎971 511 050; www.vinosferrer.com; Carrer del Conquistador 103; guided tours €6; ☉tours 11am & 4.30pm Mon-Fri, shop 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) One of Mallorca's largest wineries, José Luis Ferrer; at the west end of the town, was launched in 1931. Ring ahead for guided tours.

**Celler Tianna Negre** WINERY  
(☎971 886 826; www.tiannanegre.com; Camí d'es Mitjans; ☉9am-4pm Mon-Fri, guided tours 10am & 2pm) This 20-hectare winery has architect-designed buildings (we love the cork fence) and an aim for sustainability in its wine-production processes. It produces a range of whites, reds and rosés.

**FREE Casa-Museu Llorenç Villalonga** MUSEUM  
(☎971 886 014; www.cmvillalonga.org; Carrer de Bonaire 25; ☉10am-2pm Mon & Fri, 10am-2pm & 4-8pm Tue & Thu, 10am-1pm Sat) From the mid-18th to the early 19th century, Binissalem's prosperity as a winemaking town was reflected in the construction of several notable