



Thirteenth-Century Farm Unites Traditional and Contemporary Restraint



RURAL PRIDE

Catalonia, Spain
by Francesc Rifé

An escape from the city for a young family with three children, this thirteenth-century farmhouse in a valley in the province of Barcelona is a minimalist blend of rural architecture with contemporary interventions. Restored vaults and original masonry, original farm elements (like a press and a well), adobe floors, arches, and Romanesque lintels are harmoniously blended with contemporary contrasts, including a double-sided fireplace made from iron sheets, a vaulted staircase, and a metal pergola finished in anthracite gray that connects the main three-story farmhouse to a series of lower-level annexes.

Designed by Francesc Rifé, who the family has worked with before, the estate—originally a farm where the owner's family bought produce when they were children—is a holiday home where the family can host large groups of relatives and friends. With generous sofas and a long dining table (painted black and original to the house), the purist furnishings include an inherited wooden bench, a circular flamed stone table designed by Rifé, and contemporary pieces from the likes of HAY, Flos, and Santa & Cole. The adjoining buildings form a courtyard with a circular garden bench at the front. At the back, there is a pool overlooking the forest.



(Above left) In the entrance to the building, the striking black-painted table dining sits on a charcoal carpet in the entrance to the building, beneath a vaulted red-brick ceiling. (Below) Three wire-frame tray-top tables fill the space between the wings of a vast sofa in the living room. (Opposite) Looking through a bedroom on the second floor to a private terrace beyond.



(Opposite) A charming water trough sits within a tiled recess in the kitchen wall; beside it, a run of copper measuring cups hangs on a rail alongside tea towels and kitchen utensils. (Above) Beneath the metal pergola to the front of the house, there is ample room for entertaining outside, sheltered from the elements.

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House and Gallery in the Catalonia Countryside



HOUSE IN L'EMPORDÀ
Catalonia, Spain
by Francesc Rifé Studio in collaboration with Miquel Alzueta

A wavy canopy connects the old stone walls of this country house in Catalonia with its new annexed extension. Inside, whitewashed walls emphasize the traditional elements of the rural architecture—beamed ceilings, arches, and steps—and act as an ideal canvas for contemporary art and the midcentury Jean Prouvé and Charlotte Perriand furniture that the house was designed to display.

Owner Miquel Alzueta, a gallery owner, worked closely with architect Francesc Rifé. The result is an open, gallery-like home that feels monastic and modern, cavernous in

some places, and connected to the outside. Iron and blued steel used as framing for new windows and furniture, including a contemporary bed frame in the master bedroom and a built-in table in the kitchen, create contemporary contrast with the traditional architecture. With beamed vaulted ceilings, a wall of windows, and large sliders that open up to a terrace, the main living room functions as a place to display the owner's treasured art and design. Outside, greenery grows abundantly on the stone exterior, and trees surround a pool.





There is a marked contrast between the intimate internal spaces of the original country house, with their terracotta tile floors and rough plaster walls, and the spaciousness of the living room in the new extension, with its wall of windows below the impressive vaulted ceiling.



Each room is a gallery space in its own right. There are no superfluous ornaments or regular trappings of day-to-day life. Everything is pared back to the bare essentials, allowing the whitewashed walls to let the art speak for itself. (Opposite) Looking into the living room at dusk, across a paved terrace to the rear of the house.

