

Catalan Charm with an Eco Edge

PROJECT
BAIX EMPORDÀ STUDIO
DESIGNER
JOAN LAO
LOCATION
CRUÏLLES, SPAIN
BUILT
1700s

A typical Catalan farmhouse enhanced with subtle additions and interventions, this idyllic mountain retreat in Les Gavarres is now a home, workshop, and creative space. "We decided that it was very important to live and create in a healthy and sustainable way in the middle of nature, surrounded by sea and mountains," says owner-architect Joan Lao. He worked with his daughter Africa on the project, which serves as a studio and exhibition space for Catalan painter Adalina Coromines as well as housing the architect's studio.

The eighteenth-century building provides a textural backdrop forged from stone, lime mortar, clay, wood, and iron, all of which were restored using traditional techniques wherever possible. "At certain points, it was almost a work of archeology," recalls Lao.

As well as a sensitively modernized interior, the home boasts admirable eco credentials. The building is totally self-sufficient, with electricity produced through solar panels, water drawn from an original well, and heating powered by a wood-fired boiler. "Respect for nature was a key factor in the design process," Lao adds. →



← The home's mountainous location
↑ The living area's arched ceiling