



Cuisine from the heart of Mallorca

TALENTED SISTERS WITH A PASSION FOR TRADITIONAL MALLORCAN FARE USING QUALITY LOCAL AND ECOLOGICAL PRODUCTS ARE SERVING UP A GASTRONOMICAL TREAT IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRYSIDE. **Text** Sarah farrell



Caimari is a small village containing a smattering of shops and bars with an historic square where children can play and veterans meet under the shade of the trees to put the world to rights. A short drive from the wine-making heartland of Binissalem and close to the mountains, it is a place where traditions play centre stage. Once a year, it bursts into life for a special fiesta to celebrate harvesting olives into the fine golden liquid at the heart of the Mediterranean diet - olive oil. In the middle of Caimari, Ca Na Toneta restaurant serves traditional Mallorcan dishes using local produce plus rare types of fruit and vegetables from the Balearics. > page 36



< page 35 **Fine family cooking**

Can Na Toneta is just off the main Caimari road in a traditional family home. You step through the large glass front doors into a cosy dining room, leading to a second dining room and an exterior terrace with vines providing welcome shade, with fine views overlooking the lush green countryside.

The restaurant has been run by sisters Teresa, the chef, and Maria, front-of-house, for the past six years. Teresa is very passionate about the food she prepares for her diners. Her mother taught her to cook and she is now sharing her love of Mallorcan food and produce with a wider audience.

Everything is ecological and Teresa knows where all her ingredients come from and how they are produced. Much of the fruit and vegetables come from her own small holding, where she is keen to nurture many of the old - and sadly now rare - varieties which grew in abundance on the island many years ago. For instance, once there were 1,000 types of tomatoes here. Nowadays in the markets you may find half a dozen, all hybrids. Teresa grows her own from seeds from the *Sóller Botanical Gardens* to serve sweet-tasting fare while keeping the traditional species alive.

And you can definitely taste the difference. The food served at Ca Na Toneta is full of colour and bursting with flavours.

We enjoyed a leisurely Saturday afternoon on the terrace sampling the degustacion or tasting menu of five courses. While presenting each dish, Maria explained about the food and where it came from.

To start with Maria brought out some bread hand-made by a baker in Inca, Caimari olives, Solivellas extra virgin olive oil and Es Trenc natural salt. Simple food but very tasty, especially the bread which was rich without being heavy and the olives were a class above the shop-bought ones.

The aperitif was a warm soup made with chopped fresh tomato, pepper, parsley and garlic with fig. This was served with a fried quail's egg on a bed of aubergine and fresh tomato in its own tiny frying pan. A colourful dish, bursting with flavour and the egg was an unusual, but nice, touch.

"Mallorcan pizza," laughed Maria, as she brought a coca (thin and crunchy bread) topped with very thinly sliced courgette, crumbled goats cheese and tapenade. The sweet courgette drizzled with olive oil was offset nicely by the stronger cheese.

This was followed by llampuga, a fish from the north of the island, which is widely appreciated in the Balearics, *Comunidad Valenciana* and a few other Mediterranean islands. Again, plenty of taste and a more meaty texture than the bland white fish typically served in English restaurants.

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◀ page 37 Maria explained that all the fish they serve is from the sea, they would not dream of buying in farmed fish.

As the afternoon stretched out before us, with the October sun gently beating down, we agreed that this was the perfect way to spend a few hours -enjoying good food in a countryside haven at a nice, leisurely pace. The only interruptions were the occasional chatter of chickens hidden in the wilderness below and a pure white cat slowly making its way across an old barn roof, stopping to scratch its neck on a loose tile.

Next came the meat course. Dark, tender chunks of ecological leg of lamb, cooked in the oven, served with carrots, sweet onion and couscous with sweet fresh mint. So much meat served these days is bland and has to be smothered in spices or sauces. The opposite is true of the lamb served at Ca Na Toneta, any adornment would have been to the detriment of the meat, which was the tenderest and tastiest I have tried. (This is from a self-confessed foodie who used to drive miles to an organic butcher in Wiltshire to buy meat which actually tasted of something and didn't shrink to half its size when it was roasted). The lamb was melt-in-the-mouth and succulent with the minty couscous providing the perfect accompaniment with which to soak up the meat juices.

The finale was a luscious ice-cream (*helado de leche preparada*) typical of Mallorca served with ginger cake. Sublime.

The wine list is a select choice of the best of Mallorca and the peninsula, including some Tramuntana wines, Ribeiro de Duero, Rioja, Catalunya or Castilla y Leon, plus water from Lluc on the island (just a stone's throw from Caimari). If you have time, after lunch at the Ca Na Toneta, take a right and drive up through the mountains to Lluc if you've never done so before, it's spectacular.

Warm welcome

From the exterior, the restaurant looks like a typical family home in Caimari village. The welcome you receive is also more friendly than the average restaurant, say, more akin to being invited to a dinner party or family meal. The décor reflects the food - traditional, family-orientated, warm and relaxing. On a fine day, the terrace is a lovely, quiet spot with just a few tables for you to enjoy your meal. ■

CA NA TONETA

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Open: Fridays from 20.30h, Saturdays
and Sundays at 13.30h and 20.30h