

## Features:

- Pago de Cirsus de Iñaki Nuñez, Bodega, Restaurante y Hotel ([pagodecirsus.com/](http://pagodecirsus.com/))
- Hotel Aire de Bardenas, Nobles del Reyno ([airedebardenas.com/](http://airedebardenas.com/))



## The Tower and the Cube

### The Tower - Pago de Cirsus de Iñaki Nuñez

We recently had the privilege of meeting Chef Javier Luariz-Ayerdi during a visit to this new and exciting Winery/Château Hotel during a scouting trip to Navarra. Javier, a Basque American, born in Miami, is a disciple of Michelin-starred chef Juan Mari Arzak. Chef Luariz honed his skills at the 5-star Gran Hotel Son Net (Relais & Châteaux) in Palma de Mallorca before his appointment as the executive chef at this handsome property in the south of Navarra. The Pago is located in La Ribera, Navarra's "bread and vegetable basket", adjacent to the Bardenas Reales Nature Park. The Bardenas Reales, a semi-desert landscape stretching over 42,000 hectares, might look familiar to James Bond fans, as it doubled for Kazakhstan in the Bond film "The World is Not Enough". An area of extraordinary beauty, the Bardenas Reales landscape, with its rocky formations, takes on a moon-like appearance with its craters, gullies and solitary outcrops formed over millions of years by erosion.

The Château consists of a tower built of old ashlar stones, in the style of a 14th century fortress, sitting above a sea of some 200 hectares of vineyards, along with a state-of-the-art winery supervised by one of Europe's most renowned oenologists. This unique property offers total relaxation, breathtaking views, gorgeous sunsets plus cinematic entertainment. The ambitious project of visionary film producer and wine maker Iñaki Nuñez, this exquisite retreat provides its guests with a 400-volume film library and a cozy 30-seat cinema where they can watch movies of their choice on demand, plus a wine tasting laboratory where wine connoisseurs can sample the estate's several grape varieties-Chardonnay, Muscatel, Tempranillo, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.



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Sunday, November 30, 2008



Each of the Pago's 12 rooms are unique, well appointed and relaxing.

The hotel's dramatic décor is evocative of a lavish movie set—a romantic's fantasy-like spending the night in an enchanted castle. The dozen guest quarters, distributed among the 4 floors of the stone tower, have been lovingly decorated with the finest of fabrics and furnishings. In-room amenities include a 37-inch High Definition Oki TV, Bang and Olufsen phones, DVD players, complimentary Wi-Fi, flasks of aged Scotch and rum, and of course, copies of Wine Spectator.

The equally stunning restaurant, "Senda de los Olivos", which is separated by the winery's barrel cellar by an enormous glass wall, serves the finest regional produce from La Ribera (delectable local asparagus, artichokes, wild mushrooms), delicately prepared and finished off with the estate's own *arbequina* olive and white truffle oils. Chef Luaritz also creates delectable desserts, such as a *fondant* of hot chocolate with passion fruit ice cream. After their repast, diners are invited to enjoy coffee and a *digestif* of the wineries own muscatel on the veranda overlooking the pool and Tuscan style garden. Both the Pago's award-winning wines and artisan oils are available for purchase.

The restaurant has received numerous accolades from Spain's gourmet press and is sure to receive recognition soon in the prestigious Michelin Red Guide. After only two years of production, the estate's wines, overseen by French oenologist Jean Marc Sauboua of Bordeaux's Château Haut-Brion, have garnered six gold medals in international competitions. A Pago de Cirsus label was chosen as one of the 103 best Spanish wines in the UK's New Wave Spanish Wine 2006 Awards.

To our mind the Château Hotel Pago de Cirsus is one of the most spectacular new hotel—restaurants on Spain's burgeoning wine tourism circuit.



The interior dining room is comfortable, spacious and very quiet.

## The Cube - Hotel Aire de Bardenas, Nobles del Reyno

Located only a few kilometers away, with a view of Tudela from the north and Bardenas Reales to the east, the strikingly avant-garde 4-star Hotel Aire de Bardenas takes a totally different approach to providing solitude. One of the select group of distinctive rural hotels belonging to the Nobles del Reino and Rusticae groups, it features only 22 secluded rooms offering guests the opportunity for complete relaxation and contemplation, a chance to be in unity with nature. And the hotel is set amidst the fields of La Ribera that provide Navarra with its abundant harvest of fresh produce.



As described in *Wallpaper* magazine, the Bardenas Reales "looks like the surface of the moon, and Barcelona architects Emiliano López and Mónica Rivera's Hotel Aire de Bardenas like a lunar colony. Named after the wind that rolls in over the Bardenas desert, the hotel is a cluster of eight pale boxes around a main hall. They sit a little eerily, like the relic from 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, in the middle of a wheat field."

This unique construction was the young architects' first hotel project, and they found innovative ways to assemble very simple, completely recyclable materials to create a hotel that blurs seamlessly with its surroundings rather than simply to overlook the vast, open space. Each "cube" holds one or two rooms with ten others in the central building. All are built from prefab panels, and reused produce crates from local farms serve as a boundary walls and windbreakers. Those rooms in the central building not directly facing the dessert enjoy a private patio with fruit tree and open-air oval iron tub, which can be used year round.

All guest quarters have been decorated in simple lines using natural materials so as to blend in with the surrounding nature. The unusually deep baths and showers are separated from the sleeping area only by white cotton curtains. And each guest room centers on what the architects call an 'inhabitable window': large, deep, glassed-in pop-outs with settees where guests can sit to contemplate the desert in silence.

The hotel also offers a seasonal outdoor pool plus restaurant serving the finest in natural cuisine including many vegetarian offerings.



Outdoor activities that can be enjoyed from both lodgings include mountain biking, walking, bird watching or Segway tours of the nature park. Horses, tennis and paddle tennis are available in the vicinity of both hotels as well. The El Cerro 18 hole golf course is due to open shortly, only five minutes away.

Both of the outstanding properties offer a unique glimpse into southern Navarra, its major wine industry and a peek at what Spain considers its main bread basket, producing the finest asparagus, artichokes and piquillo peppers in all of Spain, if not the world.

Please contact us to prepare a custom travel package with accommodations at either one of these highly unique rural lodgings.