

ARAI, part of Barcelona's living history

A new concept in luxury tourism in the heart of the Gothic Quarter from Derby Hotels Collection

31 rooms which revive the essence of the *Casa dels Quatre Rius*

Barcelona, 21 March 2013.- Number 30 Carrer Avinyó has once again opened its doors, but this time as a Derby Hotels Collection establishment, a 4-star Superior Monument aparthotel. Its classification is due to its special location, in the former *Casa dels Quatre Rius*, in the heart of Barcelona's Gothic Quarter. A combination of a high-quality boutique and apartment hotel which offers visitors a new concept in tourism, for those in search of exclusivity without ostentation and comfort without any loss of quality. The new Arai has 31 rooms, each one unique, some of which can accommodate three or four people.

The Derby hallmark is one again visible in this new addition to the collection: luxury and culture intertwine to offer a unique experience for those wishing to discover the authentic Barcelona. The project, led and planned by the company itself, was undertaken following a core principle: respect for the historical building's history. Our guests will therefore discover Barcelona's history in every detail.

An exercise in archaeological restoration

The ties of Derby Hotels Collection's Chairman, Jordi Clos, with the history of art and archaeology are well known. It is for that reason that all the hotels belonging to the chain house exclusive museums containing pieces from other cultures and civilisations from the Clos Foundation private collection. The new Arai is no exception. In this case, the majority of the pieces exhibited form part of the history of the palace which houses it. The building, dating from 1702, became the *Casa dels Quatre Rius* in 1779, in honour of the frescos on its façades on Carrer Avinyó and Carrer Arai. In fact, its façade, which dates from 1770, designed by master builder Jaume Fàbregas, is one of the best Catalan heritage examples of the sgraffito decorative technique.

Over the years, the *Casa dels Quatre Rius* was used as the headquarters of the FAD, later being made into a residence for aristocratic families and, finally, private homes. The restoration of the palace's structure, decorative elements, and even its furniture has been a painstaking archaeological exercise that has taken two years of remodelling, with an investment of €12 million.

The restoration has led to the uncovering of original paintings on some of the walls and ceilings. The building's original wooden beams have been restored and doors, windows, floor tiles and even the stones themselves, hidden in the basement as demolition rubble, saved.



Through the Derby team's historical research, photographs were discovered which helped faithfully restore the original essence of the building. For example, while the original white marble steps of the main staircase have been recovered, the banister is an exact replica of the original which was hand-crafted at the Cuenca School of Art from just a fragment. It is in the communal areas, such as the hallways, where we found hand-painted murals reminiscent of the façade (the most remarkable being the fresco of the angels in heaven surrounded by a cornice of wooden cherubs, carved in the 17th century), 17th-century vaulted niches with gilt columns and sandstone floors from India. The impressive coffered ceiling in the hall is also a reproduction of the original based on recovered fragments; the black and white marble floor is exactly the same as the original, as is the wrought iron arch, made by craftsman Angel Rull in 1900, which has been completely restored and placed in the main entrance. In this quest to mix different artistic styles, there are also three 17th-century tapestries hanging in the entrance lobby from the Royal Manufacturer of Tapestries; a chest from Rajasthan, also from the 17th century; a mirror with wood carvings from the end of the 18th century; and a carved block of Roman marble which greets guests in the reception area.

A truly luxurious aparthotel

All the rooms in the Arai feature a fully equipped kitchen, designed for the enjoyment of a visit beyond that of a simple overnight stay. Aiming to offer a centrally located retreat for visitors, the 31 rooms provide spaces for working and relaxing in comfort. Its *Jewel Suite* offers a terrace with a Jacuzzi and can accommodate four people. No two rooms are the same, however, although they do all share the same degree of quality in their décor: ebony wood, bathrooms tiled in specially imported Indian black slate inlaid with pyrite, and leather sofas which can be converted into an extra bed. High-quality materials are mixed with the palace's original features, such as its restored 17th-century stonework walls, on which 17th- and 18th-century Gothic and Romanesque detailing can be seen. There are beds featuring hydraulic tile headboards from the 19th century, tables made from the building's original wooden beams, wardrobes featuring doors made from the old balconies, wooden shutters restored as decorative elements, and even recovered lintels and engraved stones displayed as works of art. The ceiling paintings and drawings have also been restored, and old wood panelling reused as parquet flooring.



Excellence

At the Arai, guests can experience the city from their own apartment, with the additional benefit of excellent hotel services: reception, breakfast served in the room, gym, sauna, and, opening shortly, a restaurant in the next building. It also benefits from a private terrace with a swimming pool and solarium. A small museum is also due to open shortly, which will house some of the valuable historical pieces found during the building's restoration and other pieces from the Clos Foundation's private collection, such as a table made from a large Roman mosaic from the 5th and 6th century A.D.

General information

Aparthotel Arai 4*

Casa dels Quatre Rius Monument

Derby Hotels Collection

Address:

Avinyó 30

Barcelona

Tel.: +34 93 320 39 50

derbyhotels.com

Opened: March 2013

Project manager: Jordi Clos

COO: Joaquim Clos

Interior design and decoration: DHC team

Hotel manager: Felipe Turell

Services:

- 5 floors, 31 guestrooms: Superior, Executive, Deluxe and Jewel Suite
- Museum and function room with the collection's recovered pieces (opening shortly)
- Restaurant: Opening shortly
- Terrace with outdoor swimming pool and solarium
- Gym and sauna
- Room service for breakfast
- Free Wi-Fi



About Derby Hotels Collection



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#dhc

Founded in 1968, Derby Hotels Collection is one of the most prestigious hotel companies in Spain. The hotels in the chain are unique and original. Each hotel houses a singular collection of antique or contemporary art that has grown from the passion of the Chairman of the chain, Jordi Clos, for culture and luxury. Joaquim Clos is CEO of Derby Hotels Collection, and imbues every nook and cranny of the hotels in the chain with the character and identity of the Clos family.

At present there are 18 luxury hotels in Barcelona, Madrid, London and Paris. Among them are the company's flagship hotels, members of Small Luxury Hotels of the World and Design Hotels. In Barcelona, Hotel Claris 5*GL was selected as "Best City Hotel in Europe" by the prestigious publisher Condé Nast Johansens and, among other accolades, was included in *Travel + Leisure's* "World's Best Hotels 2008" ranking, which lists the 500 best hotels in the world.

The Urban Hotel 5*GL in Madrid is another of the biggest award-winners in the chain. In 2012 it was selected as one of the "Top 25 trendiest hotels in Spain" by TripAdvisor in its "Travelers' Choice Hotel Awards". This is an honour shared by the Banke Hotel 4*S in Paris, named one of the "Top 25 trendiest hotels in France". The Banke Hotel, Paris was also selected in 2011 for the category of best design and decoration by Qualitelis as part of the "Trophées Clients de l'Hôtellerie". In the same year the Urban and Villa Real hotels in Madrid were included on the "gold list" of the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine and Jordi Clos, Chairman of Derby Hotels Collection, received the Grand Jury Prize 2011 at *Gran Hotel* magazine's *Premios a la iniciativa hotelera* (Awards for initiative in the hotel industry) for his career in the industry.

For more press information:

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