



Local ◉ Goddesses

Bespoke BCN

◉ As guided tours become increasingly generic, there's a growing desire for a type of tour guide who allows visitors to check out a city based on their individual tastes and interests. Barcelona, always at the forefront of the freshest fads, is now home to a new breed of guide. Forget socks and sandals, yellow flags and megaphones, these are trendy young locals with insider knowledge on the hottest places to eat, shop and drink. They'll find out what you're hoping to discover and take you on a tailor-made tour—cava stops guaranteed.

Niki and **Laura** are two entrepreneurial Brits with a background in fashion. Taking note of a gaping hole in the tourist trade, they decided to step in and shake up the staid world of city tours. Having both lived in the city for over three years, they found themselves constantly handing out advice to friends on how to make the most of a weekend in Barcelona. With impeccable taste and engaging personalities, they realized they'd found a niche in a city whose bread and butter is tourism.

Antiques and Boutiques, through its 1940s-styled website, offers tours that fall into different categories: epicurean, antique, fashion or barrio. However, Niki and Laura stress that these are loose concepts that can be molded to fit the tastes of their clients. They are enthused and amused by the variety of curious voyagers who they've whisked around the city. Everybody from hung-over stags to energetic Americans has been given the Antiques and Boutiques treatment. And they explain that this is what gives them their energy—no two tours are ever the same.

Despite the current gloomy economy, the original Antiques and Boutiques concept and a solid word-of-mouth client base have seen Niki and Laura keeping their burgeoning business afloat. Ask them for help sourcing a rare vintage Chanel bag and they'll relish the challenge. Tell them you hate shopping and they'll meet you in an edgy locale, where chilled vermouth awaits. ■ CC

www.antiquesandboutiques.com

