

El Bosque de Béjar From Renaissance Villa to Historical Garden

In a wonderful location between the mountains and the city stands El Bosque de Béjar, one of the few Renaissance villas that have been conserved.

In 1567 the Dukes of Béjar, taking advantage of their hunting grounds, ordered the construction of an Italian Renaissance-style suburban recreational estate.

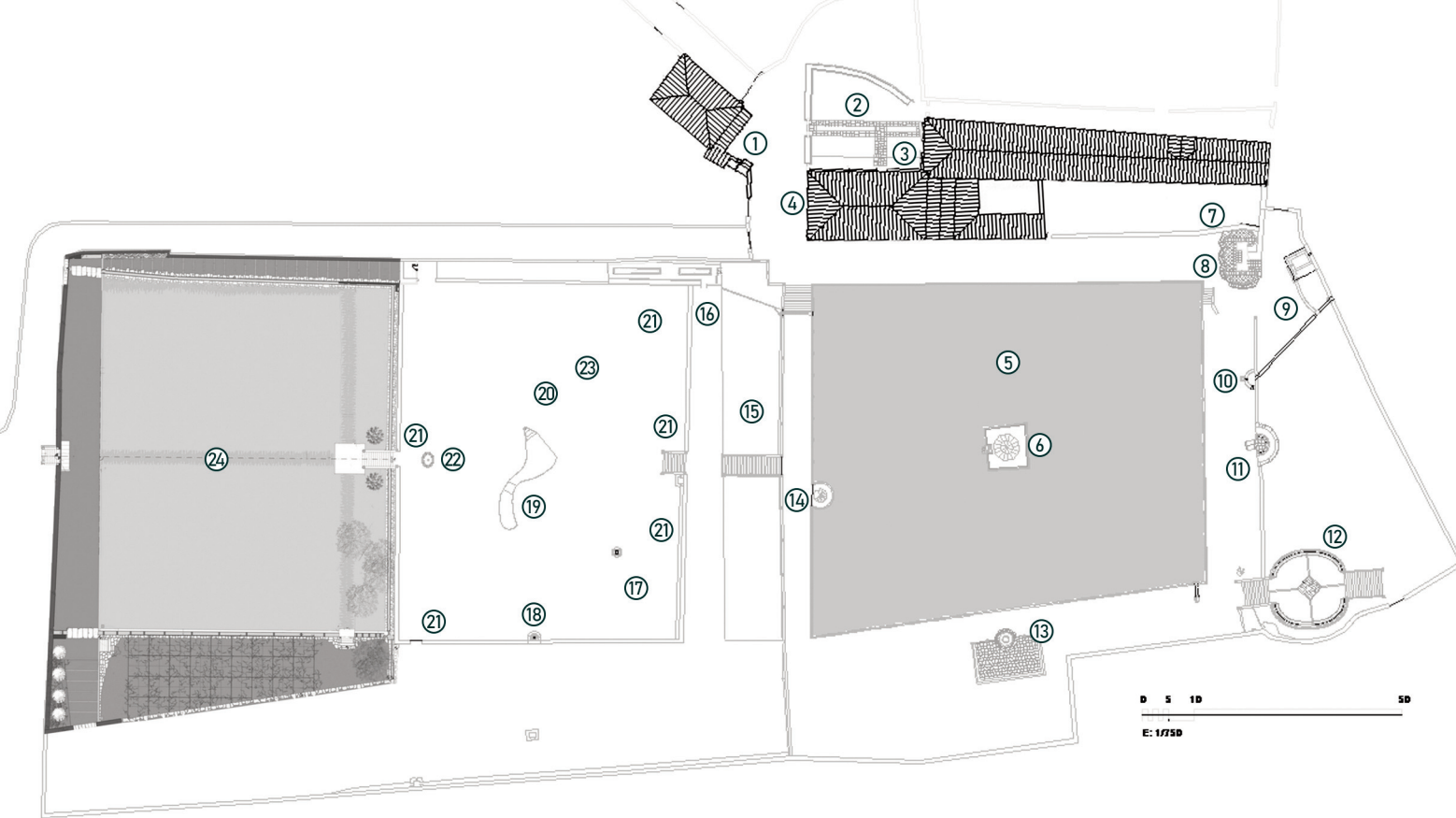
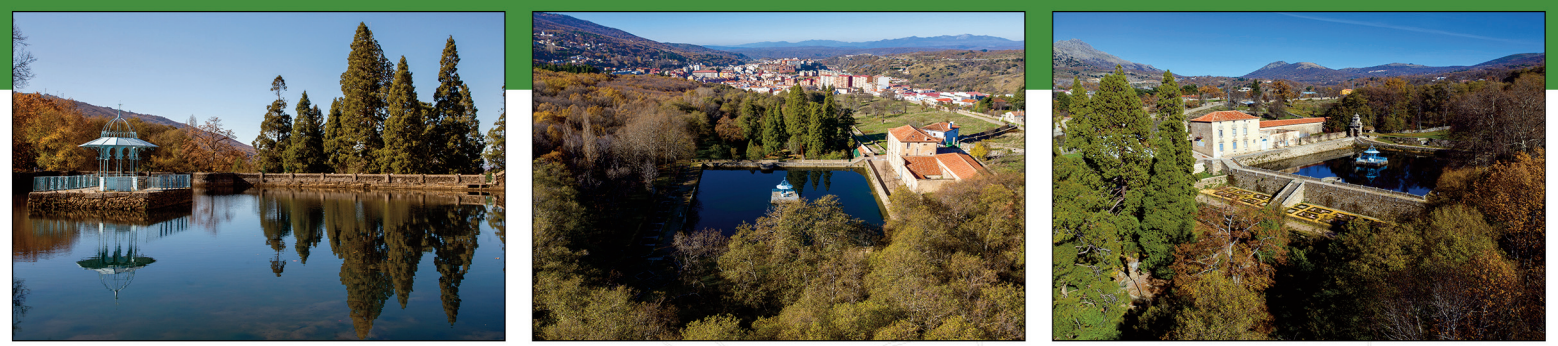
The estate was structured in a system of successive terraces with the residential area constructed next to a pond containing a cupola and monumental fountains, the Renaissance garden and the vegetable gardens, all laid out on a central axis which leads to a long boulevard flanked by meadows that ends at the Puerta de la Justa (the main gates). The whole complex is surrounded by a fence and the chestnut forest.

The villa was conceived as a place of leisure and enjoyment of nature. In addition, both the vegetable gardens and the forest were economic concerns, as were the nearby fulling mill and dyeworks that used the surplus from the villa's hydraulic system.

In 1869, the industrialist Cipriano Rodríguez Arias acquired the villa, providing it with its current layout, transforming the Renaissance garden into a Romantic style one with the plantation of large conifers (sequoia). He also renovated the cupola and built the stables and the chapel.

Since 1999 the Béjar Forest has been jointly managed by Béjar Town Council and the Government of Castile and Leon. Restoration and renovation works have been continuously ongoing until today, with the aim of conserving the villa for public enjoyment. In 1946, El Bosque de Béjar was declared an Historic Artistic Garden (*Jardín Histórico Artístico* in Spanish) and in 1982 as a Site of Cultural Interest (*Bien de Interés Cultural*) of Spain's Historic Heritage.

To continue discovering historical gardens we recommend visiting Buçaco Forest (Mata do Buçaco) in Portugal.



Legend

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|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1 Groundsman's House | 10 Settling pond | 19 Pond/Ría | 28 Boulevard |
| 2 Secret Garden | 11 Exedra | 20 Sequoia | 29 Alminares |
| 3 Chapel and Stables | 12 Rotonda | 21 Centenary Boxwood | 30 Meadows |
| 4 Mansion | 13 Ocho Caños Fountain | 22 El Cisne Fountain | 31 Chestnut forest |
| 5 Pond | 14 Drainage Tank | 23 Conifers | 32 Formal Romantic Garden |
| 6 Neo-moorish Cupola | 15 Boxwood Terrace | 24 Vegetable garden | 33 Intermediate Terrace |
| 7 Yew Tree | 16 Greenhouse | 25 Puerta de la Justa (Main gates) | 34 Pond, Residential Area and fountains |
| 8 La Sábana Fountain | 17 Fountain | 26 Fence | |
| 9 Laundry | 18 El Escudo Fountain | 27 Lower Pond | |

