

Costa del Golf



Tour gets off to a flying start

Alcaidesa welcomed the first day of the Costa del Golf Tour, which will take in some of the region's best courses in the coming months **[P12]**



EUROPEAN TOUR

Álvaro Quirós recovers his best form

The Cadiz golfer claims the Rocco Forte Open, his first trophy win since 2011 **[P6]**



TOURISM

Torremolinos, a diverse destination

The municipality combines the charm of a seaside village with modern leisure and golf facilities **[P6]**

“Golf is very important for the region’s economy”

We spoke to Juan Pablo Arriaga, manager of Alcaidesa Golf, about the strength of the golf sector in Andalucía **[P4]**

San Roque plays host to the opening day of the Costa del Golf Tour

Salvador Benítez, Antonio Sánchez and Francesca Robert McCormack were the victors among the hundred players competing at Alcaidesa Golf

ALBERTO GÓMEZ

The course at Alcaidesa, in the Cadiz municipality of San Roque, welcomed the first leg of the Costa del Golf tour - one of the biggest amateur tours to take place in Andalucía, organised by SUR and Costa del Golf.

Around a hundred players, described by the tour's director, Francisco Gómez, as having a "very high level", took part in the event held at Alcaidesa Links Golf Resort, which is situated in incomparable surroundings between the Sotogrande and Valderrama clubs, host to a number of top-level international tournaments. The complex has two courses, Alcaidesa Links (the only course in southern Europe in 'links' style, with no trees and an undulating landscape similar to the one at St Andrew's) and Alcaidesa Heathland, with spectacular views over the sea, Gibraltar and Africa, flanked by natural parks.

The competition was won by Salvador Benítez and Antonio Sánchez in the first and second men's categories, respectively. Francesca Robert McCormack topped the women's table.

Juan Manuel Toro, Peter Grutter, Antonio Corral and Antonio Gil made up the rest of the top five in the first category with Raúl López, David Doña, Matías de los Ríos and Manuel Justo doing likewise in the second. Among the female players, Mercedes Espiñeira, María José Vegas, Rosa Risoto and María Victoria Sel made up the rest of the pack.

The day's play went smoothly, with competitors praising the state of the fairways, and both SUR's director of new ventures, Federico Moret, and head of marketing, Pilar Alcalá, concurring that the matchday had been "a great success".

Alcaidesa Golf representative, Mariló Cano, and the director of marketing for Joyería Marcos distributed the prizes.

Also present were, from SUR, Pilar Perea, head of public relations, and Leandro Rodríguez, Marbella commercial consultant, who praised the "great reception" the tour had received.

The Costa del Golf Tour is sponsored by Acosol, Marbella town



Organisers, sponsors and winners pose after the conclusion of the first phase of the competition. :: JOSELE-LANZA



Participants enjoyed the fantastic views on offer at Alcaidesa Golf. :: JOSELE-LANZA

hall, Joyería Marcos, Da Bruno and Línea Directa, and has the collaboration of Andalucía Golf Select, Copyrap, Golfriends and the four participating clubs.

The tour is played as an individual Stableford points competition (one point for a bogey, two for par, three for a birdie and four for an eagle) and access to the grand final

(which takes place at Los Flamingos, in the Hotel Villa Padierna in Marbella) depends on performance across the three matchdays, though it is still possible to progress hav-

1ST MEN'S CATEGORY

1. Salvador Benítez
2. Juan Manuel Toro
3. Peter Grutter
4. Antonio Corral
5. Antonio Gil

WOMEN'S CATEGORY

1. Francesca Robert McCormack
2. Mercedes Espiñeira
3. María José Vegas
4. Rosa Risoto
5. María Victoria Sel

ing only played in one or two.

Players wishing to take part can still sign up via the Oferplan website (oferplan.diariosur.es) for the tour's remaining two stops on 24 June and 8 July.

The first will be at Real Club de Golf Guadalmina, which this year will also host the Women's Open de España, part of the European Tour. The course boasts 45 holes in total and opened in 1959, making it one of the oldest on the Costa del Sol.

The second, and final chance to get to the final, will be at Cabopino, also in Marbella.



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"Golf is very important for tourism and the regional economy"

Juan Pablo Arriaga. Manager of Alcaidesa Golf. "The spectacular views of Africa and Gibraltar are an added attraction for our courses"

by **A. DÍAZ / A. GÓMEZ**

Juan Pablo Arriaga is the manager of Alcaidesa Golf, where he has worked since the early 1990s. This emblematic golf course on the Costa del Sol recently hosted the first of the three trials in the Costa del Golf Tour. All the participants commented on the good course conditions, and enjoyed a unique day. Arriaga "loves" the surroundings and is very knowledgeable about the golf sector in Andalucía.



Juan Pablo Arriaga pictured at Alcaidesa Golf, where he is the manager. **by SUR**

–What are the strengths of the golf sector in Andalucía and on the Costa del Sol, compared with other destinations?
–The variety of courses: they are all different in terms of difficulty, landscapes, retail facilities and competition. Obviously, the climate makes us one of the most important destinations in Europe, and our infrastructure is excellent. It means that people can easily get to the golf courses.
–Do you have any special short or medium term plans for Alcaidesa?
–We aim to keep improving the quality of the two courses, and this summer we are starting several works such as new departure tees to make it easier for people with a high handicap to play; we are also going to reform the buggy tracks because we plan to have a new fleet by the end

of this year.

–All the golfers who took part in the Costa del Golf Tour praised the excellent conditions of the course and the spectacular views. Are they your main attractions?

–Of course, apart from our courses being in good condition the spectacular views are a bonus. I have been working at Alcaidesa since 1992 and have always stressed to people that we have stunning views of Africa, Gibraltar, Sotogrande...

–What skills do you need to be a good course manager?

–A good manager needs a good team and, especially, someone you can trust in every department. With that, it's easy and really nice to be the manager. What is important at Alcaidesa, apart from the views, is the team. They help to ensure that players come back every year.

–How important is golf to tourism and the economy in Andalucía?

–Golf is a very important motor for tourism in Andalucía. The other day, talking to an official in the regional government's Tourism Ministry, I mentioned the importance of golf and said that foreign visitors don't only come to play in the winter now, but also in the summer. It means that seasonal tourism is no longer a problem in the golf sector.

–What sort of people come to play golf at Alcaidesa?

–It varies; we have good players with a low handicap but most come because they know we have good courses with lovely views and that the staff are very friendly.

–How has the crisis affected you?

–The crisis affected everybody. People and companies have had a difficult time for several years. I believe the worst is over now, and we should think positive and start to look towards the future again.

QUOTES

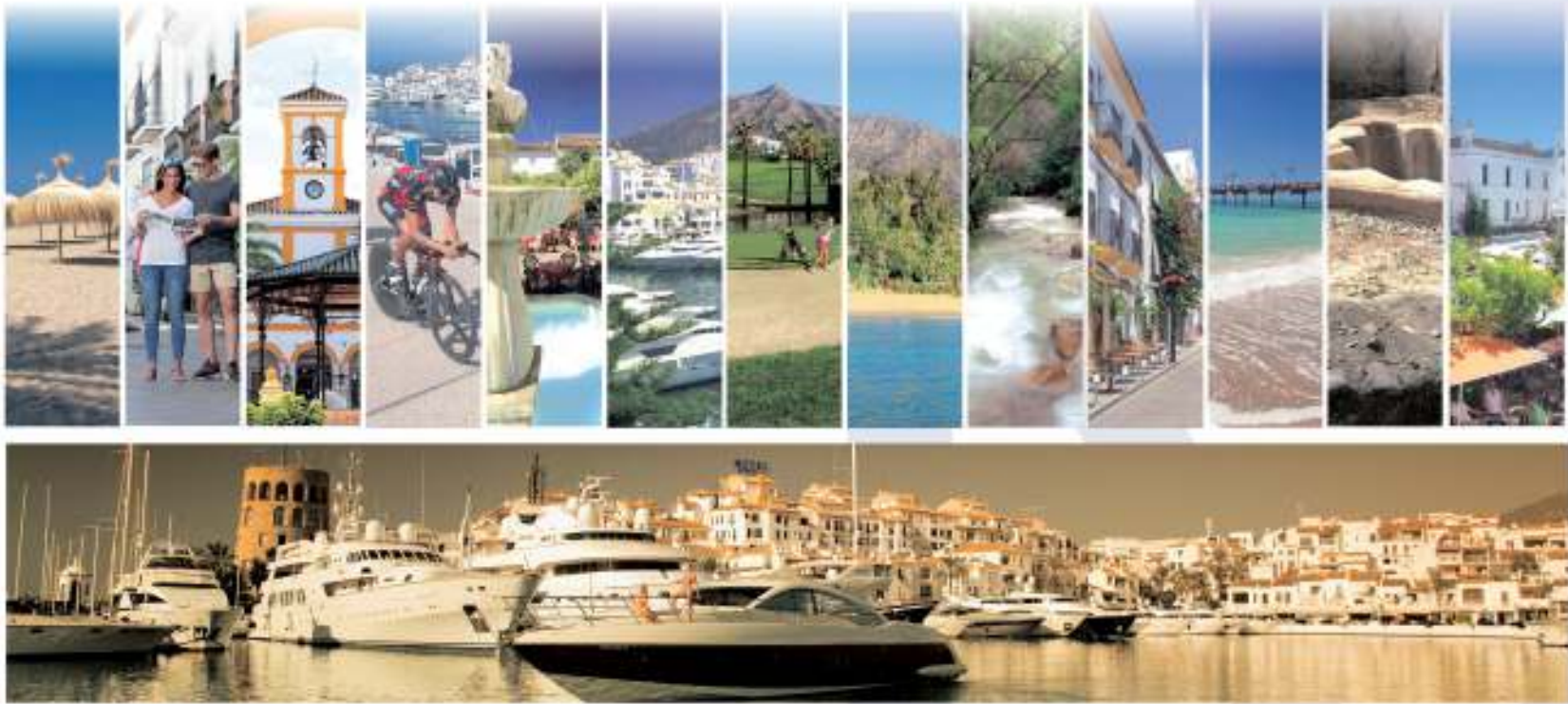
"The variety of golf courses on the Costa del Sol makes us a more competitive destination"

"Our aim is to continue improving the quality of the two courses, such as the tees and the fleet of buggies"



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Torremolinos, a diverse destination with golf and fun for all the family

The municipality combines the charm of an Andalusian seaside village with a cosmopolitan ambience and modern leisure facilities

Torremolinos is the tourism capital of Andalucía. What was for years a small fishing village is now one of the busiest, most forward-looking towns on the Costa del Sol. Celebrities such as Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner, Jean Cocteau and Grace Kelly were attracted by its cosmopolitan atmosphere, its modernity, its climate and kilometres of beaches, and Torremolinos now combines these with a combination of sports and cultural activities which have made it the third most sought-after destination in Spain, according to the TripAdvisor website. Among these facilities is golf, thanks to the course at the Miguel Ángel Jiménez school.

The 'pitch and putt' course is at the entrance to Torremolinos from Malaga. This type of course is necessary to improve one's technique, because the short game represents about 70 per cent of golf. Designed personally by Miguel Ángel Jiménez, it imitates some of the best par threes in the world on which he has played, and the seventh hole of this course is a copy of the legendary 12th at the Augusta National, which has caused so many headaches for some of the best players in history. The school also has a practise course with 40 posts to perfect one's long game, a club house and private parking.

However, Torremolinos is much

more than this. Situated just eight kilometres from Malaga airport, which is one of the most important on the Mediterranean, this town is the chosen destination of hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. The delicious gastronomy, especially the famous 'pescaíto frito' (small fried fish), is one of the major attractions, and the town centre has been reinvented as the venue for live music and recreational events such as the Oktoberfest and the recent LGBTI Pride. The local council plans to make more of the streets and squares in the town centre pedestrian-only, and there are green zones and parks in which to enjoy the average annual temperature of 20°C.

Torremolinos has many faces. The most famous one is that of sea and sunshine, with attractive modern hotels and the best restaurants and beach bars, but there are also water parks and sports facilities, beachside discotheques and impressive seafront promenades. The leisure facilities in Torremolinos are unrivalled in southern Spain.

Iconic places

There are numerous emblematic places of interest in Torremolinos, which combines the charm of an Andalusian seaside village with the cosmopolitan atmosphere of a modern town. The Torre de Pimentel is the



The Miguel Ángel Jiménez golf school. :: SUR

main landmark. Built in the 14th century, this tower is also known as the Torre de los Molinos, which is how the town obtained its name. Calle San Miguel, the main shopping street, is one of the busiest in Europe. The Neo-mudejar style Casa de los Navajas was built in the 1930s in the Bajondillo district, and is classified as a Building of Historical Interest. Visitors can also see the statue of Picasso and the churches of San Miguel and the Virgen del Carmen, the Pez Espada hotel and the old Railway Orphans School, which is now a major cultural centre.



The Casa de los Navajas is interesting to visit. :: SUR



La Carihuela beach in Torremolinos.:: SUR

The district of El Calvario is authentically Andalusian in style, while a stroll through La Carihuela, the 'pescaíto frito' paradise, is simply delicious. The promenade links this district with Bajondillo and Playamar. Tourists will find that the beaches and food live up to their reputations, but there is also time to enjoy the Molino de Inca botanic gardens, in the area of the springs. The garden extends around a restored 15th century flour mill and has hundreds of different species of plants as well as four viewing points.

The Parque de la Batería, in Mon-

temar, has pathways and a children's playground, statues, fountains, a lake and a tower. It takes its name from the old coastal defence system. Torremolinos is also home to the biggest water park on the Costa del Sol, with 14 different attractions and a mini-golf. Next door is the Crocodile Park, where 260 of these reptiles reside.

The nightlife in Torremolinos is renowned, and the 'lounge' beach bars in Los Álamos and Playamar are a good option, as are the bars and discotheques at La Nogalera. By day or by night, Torremolinos has become the ultimate tourism destination.

Quirós wins first tournament since 2011

The Cadiz-born golfer won the Rocco Forte Open at the Verdura de Agrigento in Sicily after beating South Africa's Zander Lombard

:: ALEJANDRO DÍAZ

MALAGA. Andalucía's Álvaro Quirós won the Rocco Forte Open, a tournament on the European Tour, at the Verdura de Agrigento club in Sicily, Italy, in May.

The 34-year-old beat Zander Lombard from South Africa after

a tie-break.

Both players finished level on 14 under par after 270 holes each, forcing the match to go to two extra holes where the Cadiz player won his seventh title on the tour and his first since 2011.

Quirós began the final day as the

leader, five strokes above his South African counterpart.

However, the final round saw Lombard equal Quirós after the South African was three under par and the Andalusian two over par from the final hole.

In the first tiebreak, played at

the 18th hole, both players hit pars. It went to a second tiebreak, where again Quirós was par for the course but Lombard could only manage a bogey, gifting the Spaniard victory.

Quirós said that the victory "meant a lot to him" and stated that "the tournament should not have to end like it did but eventually the victory came and that was the most important thing".

"In the final few holes it began to go a bit wrong for me with the wind going from left to right, and he [Lombardo] was playing really well," he added.

The win puts Quirós into the top 250 players in the world and means he will take part in next year's tour. It also gave him the chance to play in the PGA Championship in Wentworth the following week, where he came 67th.



Álvaro Quirós. :: SUR

THE MONTH IN PHOTOS



▲ **Tourism.** Andalucía now has a new slogan - 'Intensely'. The promotional campaign was recently launched at the Museo de Málaga and will see the region's golf courses promoted around the world. :: S. SALAS



▲ **Marbella All Stars.** Around 20 famous chefs came together for the second edition of the Marbella Alls Stars tournament, held at Santa María Club. After competing on the course, the chefs moved to the Restaurante Hoyo 19 where they prepared a number of hot and cold tapas. :: SUR



▲ **Challenge Tour.** Englishman Aaron Rai was the winner at the recent Costa del Sol Match Play 9 which took place at La Cala Resort. In the final he beat Ireland's Gavin Moynihan 2-1 to claim his second victory on the tour. :: SUR

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