

Costa del Golf



Golf flexes its economic muscles

The industry is worth 700 million euros each year to Malaga province, where there are seventy courses **[P2&3]**



AMATEUR TOUR

A record Costa del Golf Tour draws to a close

The Hotel Villa Padierna hosted the grand final of the tour which attracted more than 500 players **[P4]**



SCOTTISH OPEN

Cabrera Bello returns to the top table

The Canarian has moved into the top 20 after his first title in almost five and a half years **[P7]**

Cadiz, more than just sun and sand

The province is more than ever bringing together golf and nature, making it one of the most diverse destinations in Spain **[P6]**

The golf industry generates over 700 million euros a year in Malaga

Tourists who come here to play golf stay for more than 12 days on average, and they spend more on their trips and per day than other types of visitor



The sector has created 10,500 direct jobs and attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists. :: SUR

ALBERTO GÓMEZ



Golf in Malaga province has a direct and indirect economic impact of 1.4 billion euros, according to figures from a recent study carried out by the Costa del Sol Tourism and Planning organisation. The document highlights Malaga's leading position in this segment, with 60 golf courses of its own plus nine in the nearby municipality of San Roque, in Cadiz province.

The report was officially presented by the president of the Costa del Sol Tourist Board and head of the Malaga provincial government, Elias Bendodo, and the head of the Andalusian Golf Federation /RFGA), Pablo Mansilla. Bendodo described the golf segment as "one of the principal tools in the effort to encourage year-round tourism, which is currently one of our main challenges".

He explained that of the 1.4 billion euros, 760 million were produced directly and 650 million indirectly, and on average people spent over 1,800 euros on their trip. The average length of stay, according to the report, was 12.31 days and the average amount spent daily by golf tourists was 148.46 euros, rising to 205.65 on the days they actually played golf.

"This is a high-quality tourism segment, and that is reflected by its 17,680 jobs (10,580 direct and 7,100 indirect). Golf is a source of income for the Costa del Sol and it also creates employment," he said. At present about 18,000 people hold golf licences.

The average golf tourist on the Costa del Sol tends to stay in four or five star hotels, is about 47 years of age, loyal to the destination and stays for increasing amounts of time. Some visitors come to play golf intensively, and they normally stay for just over a week. While they are here, they play golf 4.6 times on average, and make 4.7 trips a year. It is also interesting to note that 68 per cent of their visits take place in the months of October, February, November and March, which is a positive sign for year-round tourism.

The figures show that 84.1 per

cent of golf tourists are from abroad. Most come with family or friends, say they would recommend the Costa del Sol as a destination and plan to return within the next three years.

The average score given by golf tourists to this destination is 9.23. The main source markets are the United Kingdom -even though it has more courses than anywhere else in Europe- France, Scandinavian countries, followed by the Benelux region, Portugal and Ireland.

Pablo Mansilla expressed his thanks to the Costa del Sol Tourist Board for its commitment to the golf segment, which carries a great deal of weight in the tourism industry. "This is the leading destination in continental Europe in terms of concentration of golf courses," he stressed. He also pointed out that 67 per cent of golf courses in Andalucía are on the Costa del Sol, and the area is also "a benchmark for complementary infrastructure."

Nearly 70 courses

The 69 courses on the so-called Costa del Golf include nine in San Roque (Cadiz), and the rest are in Malaga province: 15 in Marbella, 12 in Mijas, eight in Estepona and Benahavis, three each in Benáldena, Casares and Malaga city, and one in Vélez-Málaga, Alhaurin de la Torre, Rincón de la Victoria, Alhaurin el Grande, Torremolinos, Antequera, Manilva and Ojén.

Pablo Mansilla said that tourists who come to the area to play golf spend twice as much as other visitors, stay longer and express a higher degree of satisfaction than traditional tourists.

"Golf is very influential for tourism and also for employment, and it makes a significant contribution to the economy of the Costa del Sol," he explained. "The figures shown in this study have confirmed that our instincts have been correct: the golf segment is doing very well now, and will continue to do so in the future."

Elias Bendodo also pointed out that figures already issued for the Costa del Sol show that between June and September, seven million tourists will have visited the area, which is 5.2 per cent more than in the same period last year. These visitors will also have an impact of 7.3 billion euros upon the economy.

"More tourists are coming and they are spending more money,

Between the months of June and September, over seven million tourists are expected to visit the area

There are 69 golf courses in the area, including nine in San Roque, in the province of Cadiz

about eight per cent more," he explained. He also pointed out that there has been a "very notable" increase in markets such as Scandinavia (up 22 per cent), the Netherlands (up 39 per cent), Germany (up 22 per cent) and Russia (up 13 per cent). These are "promising" figures, he said, and they are reflected by the fact that more jobs are being created in Malaga province.

The only negative statistic in the report is that the number of Spanish tourists has dropped. International source markets have risen by about 10.4 per cent, but the domestic market has reduced by 3.3 per cent.

"The international market is giving us very good figures, but we need to look at why tourists from elsewhere in Spain aren't coming



Golf generates over 700 million euros a year in Malaga. :: SUR



There are 69 courses on the Costa del Sol, 60 of them in Malaga. :: SUR



Mansilla and Bendodo, during the presentation of the report. :: SUR

here as much as they used to," said Elías Bendodo, stressing that the Costa del Sol offers all the ingredients of a quality destination.

During the presentation, he also explained that if, as expected, the

number of tourists exceeds seven million between June and September for the first time, this will be an overall increase of 5.2 per cent compared with the third quarter of 2016.

ANOTHER RECORD SUMMER IN TERMS OF TOURISM

Golf tourists usually demand quality sporting and cultural facilities, but if anything in particular draws them to the Costa del Sol it has to be the fact that there are over 70 golf courses in the area. This is the highest concentration in Europe, and is why it is also known as the Costa del Golf.

Malaga province can not only boast fantastic infrastructure for this sport, but also a privileged climate which makes it possible to play all year round.

That may be why tourism has continued to rise in the area this summer, said the regional government's Minister for Tourism and Sport, Francisco Javier Fernández, recently. He was speaking in Malaga city, where he presented the tourism forecasts for Andalucía for the peak season, which is from June to September.

Growth in the region, in terms of the number of overnight stays

in hotels, is expected to be 2.9 per cent, reaching a total of 25.5 million. This would be a record in absolute terms. The minister pointed out that if these expectations are met, "it will be a major achievement, bearing in mind that the summer of 2016 was also exceptional".

He believes the figures will be positive in every province of Andalucía, and that there will be notable growth in rural tourism. This, he said, "shows that all the work we have been doing to encourage people to visit all year round and not just at certain times, is starting to pay off."



Tourism in Andalucía is expected to rise by two per cent. :: SUR

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Group photograph of competitors, organisers and sponsors of the Costa del Golf Tour on the steps of the Villa Padierna hotel. :: JOSELE-LANZA

A record-breaking Costa del Golf Tour ends on a high at Villa Padierna

Over 500 people took part in the four rounds of Andalucía's leading amateur golf tournament

Rodríguez.

No hole in one this year

Also in attendance was head of marketing for Joyería Marcos, Esther Ruiz. The long-established Malaga jewellery company, as well as sponsoring the final, also offered an Omega watch to the player that managed a hole-in-one - a prize that went unclaimed. Andreas Hagemann, head of golf at Villa Padierna, also attended the awards ceremony.

The tournament was played under Stableford rules, under which each hole is scored in relation to its par strokes. The events were sponsored by Acosol, Marbella town hall, Junta de Andalucía, Joyería Marcos, Da Bruno restaurants and Línea Directa, as well as supported by Andalucía Golf Select, Copyrap, Golfriends and the four host courses.

The tournament had four legs. The six best-placed in each category in each of the first three legs of the competition qualified for the final. The first took place at Alcaidesa, followed by the second round at Real Club de Golf Guadalmina and then Cabopino. Then on 22 July, the Costa del Golf Tour ended on a high note at Villa Padierna, capping off a rewarding and record-breaking year.

ALEJANDRO DÍAZ

Hotel Villa Padierna recently hosted the grand final of the Costa del Golf Tour, the tournament organised by SUR and its specialist Costa del Golf publication. After more than two months of competition in which over 500 amateur golfers took part, the best-ranked players met at Los Flamíngos Golf, part of the luxurious hotel complex.

This was a record turnout, up on previous years and helps consolidate the event's position as one of the main dates in the golfing calendar for amateurs in Andalucía.

The final, sponsored by Joyería Marcos, started at 9am and finished at 3pm. After the day's play, there was a cocktail reception to announce the winners.

Javier Pérez was declared Tour champion in the first male category while Julio Alonso came top in the second male category. Mercedes Espeñeira headed the women's leader board. Juan Francisco Márquez took the prize in the special 'Amigos de SUR' category. The prizegiving rounded off eight weeks of superb golf on some of the best courses in Andalucía.

New business director at SUR, Federico Moret, praised "the high numbers taking part" in the tournament that started at Alcaidesa back in May. The tour's technical director, Francisco Gómez, highlighted the "good state" of the courses that have hosted the tournament (Alcaidesa, Guadalmina, Cabopino and Flamíngos) and the high quality of the field. Several members of SUR attended, including commercial director, Jorge Artero; marketing director, David Contreras; external relations head, Pilar Perea; marketing representative, Pilar Alcalá, and sales representative in Marbella, Leandro



Esther Ruiz, head of marketing with sponsors Joyería Marcos, presented the trophy to Javier Pérez Gómez. :: JOSELE-LANZA

FIRST MEN'S CATEGORY

1. Javier Pérez Gómez
2. Alexander Reynders
3. Francisco Martín Ramírez
4. Juan Manuel Toro Martínez
5. Salvador Gil Macías

WOMEN'S CATEGORY

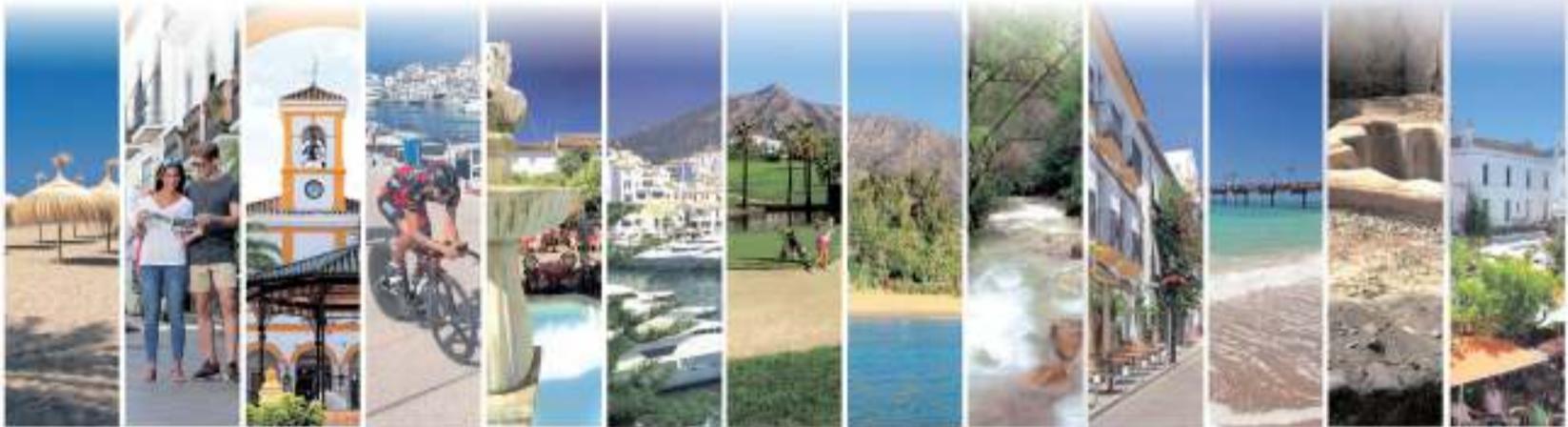
1. Mercedes Espeñeira Bañuelos
2. Rosa María Sánchez Gonzalo
3. Patricia Preece
4. Rosa Vincés de Rodríguez
5. Ana María García Ibáñez



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Cadiz promotes its golf facilities and countryside as tourist attractions

The celebration of a European Circuit tournament at Valderrama shows the importance of the province for the world of golf

ALEJANDRO
DÍAZ

All the forecasts for hotel occupancy this summer suggest that Andalucía is well on the road to further growth in tourism: by the end of this month it is expected that there will have been around 37 million overnight stays in hotels in this region so far this year.

The latest report from the Tourism Analysis and Statistics System for the region (Saeta) suggests that Andalucía will see an increase of 639,000 overnight stays (up 1.8 per cent) between January and August, compared with the same period last year. By province, Cadiz stands out in relative (4.5 per cent) and absolute terms, with 238,000 more overnight stays than in the first eight months of 2016.

In fact, Cadiz province registered a total of 733,265 overnight stays in hotels in the month of May this year, placing it second in Andalucía after Malaga (1,954,817) and ahead of Seville (629,653) and Granada (501,527).

All these figures confirm that Cadiz is having a record year in terms of tourism. The summer of 2017 will be remembered as the period when this province consolidated its position as a destination for Spanish and foreign tourists. Last year's figures were also extremely positive, with occupancy levels exceeding 90 per cent in July and August, and this year's peak season looks as if it could prove unforgettable for a sector which may now, finally, be able to put the economic crisis behind it.

Jaime Armario, the head of the Economic Development and Public Services Department of the Cadiz provincial government, said recently in an interview with a local newspaper that by 31 May this year there had already been over two million overnight stays in hotels. This was especially significant because the last time that figure was exceeded was in 2008, before the recession.

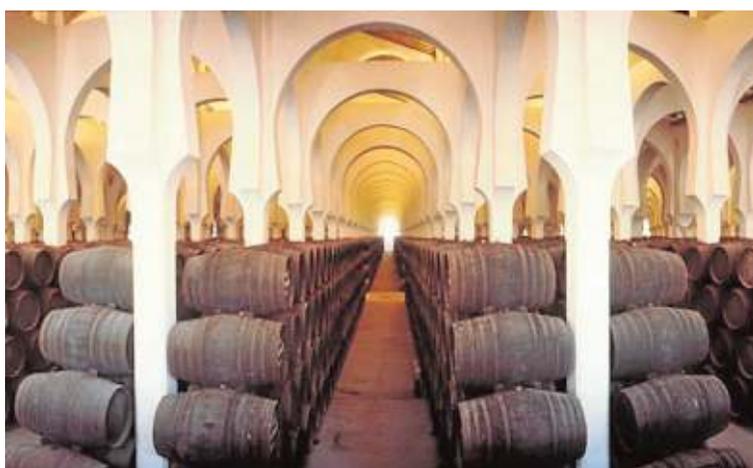
The 'Tacita de Plata', as Cadiz city is nicknamed, is believed to be the oldest city in the west. Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans and Moors all settled on these lands, mainly because of their maritime access. Any visitors who take a stroll through Cadiz will find districts filled with history: the Barrio de la Viña, for example, which is the best place to enjoy the Carnival festivities and fried fish from the Bay; the historic city



The Spanish Open was at Valderrama last year and the Andalucía Masters will take place in October :: SUR



Seagulls and other birds on a beach in Cadiz. :: SUR



One of the famous sherry 'bodegas'. :: SUR

the Atlantic beaches and the mountains. Thanks to its wines, Jerez is now renowned worldwide. This, however, is just one part of what it has to offer: it is also famous for its equestrian skills and bullfighting, its flamenco, the high-speed race track and its historic city centre, which is classified as a Site of Historic-Artistic Interest.

The Sierra de Cádiz, with its abundance of archaeological remains, extends to the north of the province and can be explored via a beautiful, rugged and interesting route called the 'Ruta de los Pueblos Blancos', the Route of the White Villages.

Arcos de la Frontera, which is classified as a Historic-Artistic Monument, is one of the most famous of these villages. Ubrique, El Bosque and Prado del Rey are also well-known, not only for their beautiful scenery but also for their craftsmanship. Algar, Algodonales, El Gastor, Puerto Serrano and Villaluenga del Rosario also form part of this route.

Emblematic golf courses

Cadiz province has many emblematic golf courses, making it a perfect destination for lovers of this sport. The Real Club de Golf Sotogrande is one of them: founded in 1964, it nestles amid lovely natural surroundings and can be played all year round. Its designer, Robert Trent Jones, is especially proud of the layout of this course, so it is not surprising that everyone who plays there agrees that it is something special.

The course has a variety of trees, including cork oaks, palms, pines and eucalyptus to mark and complicate the fairways, while providing players with magnificent views and the sea as a backdrop. This is a course with no rough, and the water features play an important role in the game.

Another course where the magic and mastery of Robert Trent Jones can be seen is the Club de Golf La Cañada. The creator of the Real Club de Golf Sotogrande and Las Brisas in Marbella was asked to design the course by Jaime Ortiz Patiño, so that the people of Guadiaro would have a course of their own at no additional cost.

La Cañada now covers 5,917 metres, after being expanded for the European Junior Championship. It has some fast greens, perfect fairways and native vegetation provides a harmonious setting with views of the sea, mountains and the Guadiaro river estuary.

In October, the historic Real Club de Valderrama will once again be putting this province, with its 3,000 hours of sunshine a year, on the map as the epicentre of world golf, when it hosts the Andalucía Valderrama Masters. This is one of the biggest tournaments in the world, with the greatest media coverage, and many famous golfers take part in it.

centre, where most of the monuments and interesting buildings are located, and the district of El Pópulo.

Biosphere Reserve

To the extreme south, in the Strait of Gibraltar where two seas and two continents meet, the countryside is beautiful and unusual; two natural parks also end there, Los Alcornocales and El Estrecho: they are part of the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of Mediterranean Andalucía-Morocco.

The Costa de la Luz, meanwhile, has one of the longest stretches of coastline, covering more than 200 kilometres of fantastic beaches of fine golden sand, bathed by the Atlantic Ocean. Its name (meaning Coast of Light) comes from the intense light which highlights the neat streets, the whitewashed walls, the golden dunes and the reflection of the sea. The coast is sprinkled with seaside towns where visitors can enjoy excellent fish and shellfish, such as Sanlúcar de Barrameda, which is also famous for its horse races along the beach, Rota, Chipiona, Conil de la Frontera, El Puerto de Santa María and Chiclana de la Frontera.

Jerez de la Frontera, known as 'Sherry' by the Moors, is the world centre of sherry production and the largest city in Cadiz province, with nearly 200,000 inhabitants. It stands amid the fertile land of the Guadalquivir meadows, just a few minutes from

THE MONTH IN PHOTOS



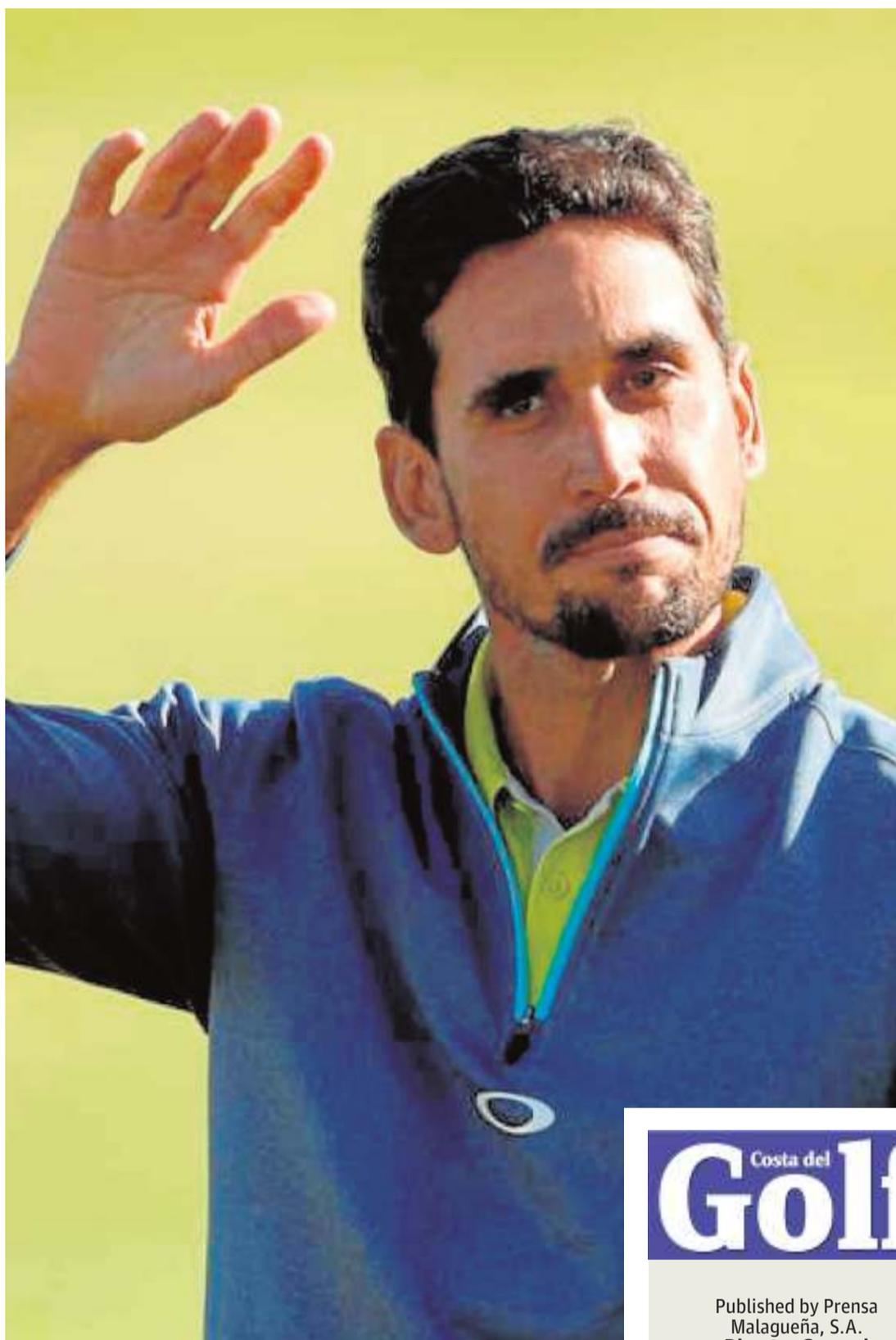
▲ **Wimbledon.** Sergio García, champion at the August Masters, sported his green jacket as he watched compatriot Roberto Bautista at the recent tennis championships at Wimbledon. :: SUR



▲ **US Open.** Carlota Ciganda finished fifth in the recent US Open, sealing her second best performance at a Grand Slam event in her career so far. :: SUR



◀ **GINs.** Some thirty players at Golf International Nerja Society turned out for the Jon Rose Memorial Day on 1 August on what would have been his 80th birthday. Jon died while playing with GINs at Baviera during Christmas week, 2015. :: SUR



▲ **Scottish Open.** Canarian Rafa Cabrera Bello won his first title in almost five and a half years as he claimed the Scottish Open at Dundonald Links, in Troon. The Spaniard pipped Briton Callum Shinkwin after the latter missed a straightforward putt which would have given him victory. Cabrera Bello is now in the top 20 for the first time in his career. :: SUR

Costa del
Golf

Published by Prensa Malagueña, S.A.
Director General
José Luis Romero

Andalucía Costa del Golf is a Diario SUR publication

Editor in chief
Manuel Castillo
Director of publications
Pedro Luis Gómez
Production
Alberto Gómez
Alejandro Díaz

Advertising
Corporación de Medios del Sur, S.L.

Telephone: 952 649 700
Fax: 952 612591

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AGENDA 2017

12 August

Mijas
Sanitubo Grand Prix
Type: Open
Marbella
Marbella International Cup
Type: Open.
Cabopino
Callaway Golf Tournament
Type: Open

18 August

Marbella
Elvis Day(9 holes)
Type: Open

19 August

Mijas
Andalucía Tour Series
Type: Closed

26 August

Mijas
Tamisuel Golf
Type: Closed

30 August

Guadalhorce
Royal Inter-club Championship
Type: Open

2 September

Guadalmina
'Pequecircuito'
Type: Open
Baviera
'Pequecircuito'
Type: Open

3 September

Mijas
Assoc. of clubs without courses
Type: Open
Benalmádena
'Pitch and Putt' with points
Type: Open

5 September

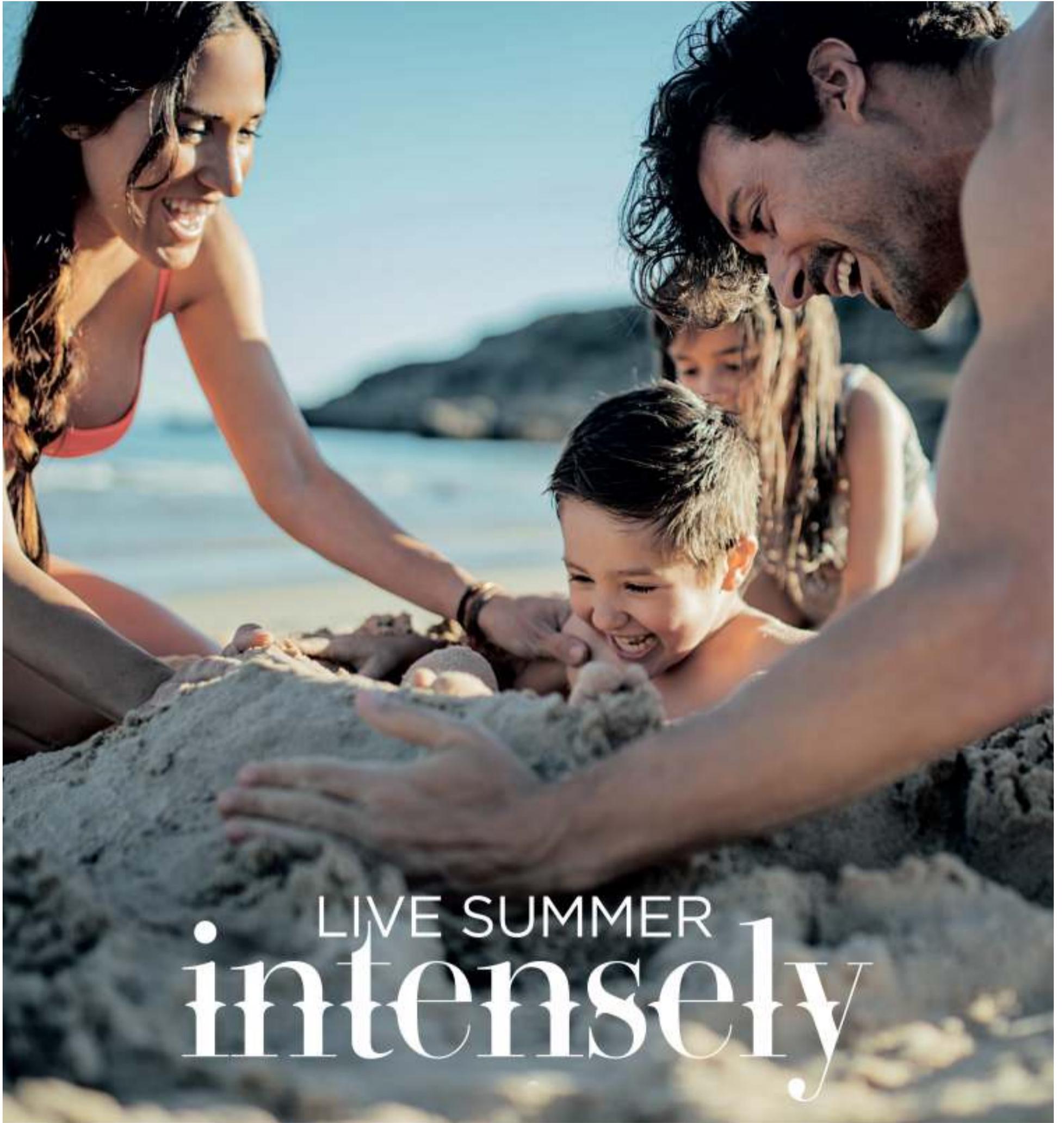
Lauro
Spain - Italy under-18 match
Type: Open

7 September

Lauro
Spanish International under-18
Type: Open

9 September

Marbella
Marbella International Cup
Type: Open



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