

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MARBELLA & SAN PEDRO

A benchmark for quality

Marbella has always been associated with luxury tourism, but the town, together with its neighbour San Pedro, has so much more to offer residents and visitors

SUR

Culture. Marbella and San Pedro Alcántara boast a thriving art scene, with a range of galleries, museums and street sculptures **P6&7**

Adapting to the times. Developments prepare for younger guests and buyers as the pandemic sparks remote working in the sun **P8**

A place to live. Residents of a wide range of nationalities get together to enjoy the leisure activities Marbella has to offer **P10&11**



Marbella. A benchmark for quality

Living up to its reputation. The town is committed to providing every concept of luxury, from golf courses to five-star hotels, but many are unaware of its fascinating history, ancient and modern

TONY BRYANT



Situated in the foothills of the Sierra Blanca and overshadowed by Mount La Concha, Marbella has long had a reputation for its exclusiveness, much of which is boosted by its distinguished visitors and millionaire residents. The town is committed to providing every concept of luxury and has some of the top golf courses, five-star hotels, designer shops and Michelin starred restaurants in Andalucía. It is one of the most important tourist towns of the Costa del Sol and offers a traditional old town, and a luxury marina and shopping complex offering the world's most fashionable merchandise.

The 27 kilometres of coastline is divided into twenty-four beaches, all of which offer a variety of water sports activity and beachside bars and restaurants.

Although inextricably linked to Marbella, the town of San Pedro Alcántara has emerged as a first-class tourist resort with an identity of its own. Situated ten kilometres west of Marbella on the main N340 coastal road, the town offers all the modern amenities expected in a coastal resort, but at a slightly more relaxed pace than other coastal destinations.

Marbella retains its image as one of the Costa del Sol's major tourist centres thanks to the high quality and range of the facilities and services it provides. For many people, luxury is defined by Marbella's excellent golf courses, and there are now 21 of them. These clubs are among the most beautiful in Europe, enjoying a location of unspoiled beauty with views of the Sierra Blanca, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean.

Popular foreign destination

Marbella's climate and location - less than an hour from two airports (Malaga and Gibraltar) - have made it a favourite destination of numerous foreigner residents.

In 2020, the population of the city was 147,633, making it the second most populous municipality in the province of Malaga and the eighth in Andalucía. The large foreign community makes up around 30 per cent of the town's inhabitants. Moroccan (5,241) and British (4,906) are the two nationalities with the most residents in Marbella. Nueva Andalucía is the district with the

most diversity and it is one of the most desired among the British, although it is also home to Russian, Italian, Swedish, French and German residents.

The Moroccan community resides mainly in the La Puya district, which offers halal butchers, Arabic tea rooms and specialist spice shops.

Marbella has a significant archaeological heritage. Numerous excavations have taken place in the mountains that surround Marbella. These have pointed to human habitation in Neolithic times, although some historians disagree. They believe that the first settlement on what is now Mar-

bella was founded by the Phoenicians in the 7th century BC, even though no remains of a significant settlement has ever been unearthed. The existence of the Roman town, Salduba (Salt City), located in today's Casco Antiguo, is suggested by three Ionic capitals found in the walls of the Muslim castle, while other remains scattered throughout the old town also testify to a Roman occupation.

During Islamic rule, The Caliphate of Cordoba fortified the Marbella coastline and built the Alcazaba fortress and a wall to protect the town. The current name of Marbella is believed to have developed from its Arabic name of Marbal-la.

In 1485, the town passed into the hands of the Crown of Castile. The Fort of San Luis was built in 1554 by Charles V. Today, the ruins of the fortress house a small museum.

Sugar cane was introduced to Marbella in 1644, and this resulted in the construction of numerous sugar mills, such as Trapiche del Prado de Marbella.

The local economy was disrupted following the dismantling of the iron industry, which evolved in the 19th century when Malaga businessman Manuel Agustín Heredia began to mine the magnetite iron ores of the Sierra Blanca. Much of the population had to return to farming or fishing for a livelihood.

The old town

Despite being a benchmark for luxury in Spain, Marbella never forgets its history and traditions, as the old town will demonstrate. This delightful maze of tranquil streets and pretty plazas retains a similar layout to that of the 16th

century. Three remarkable buildings can be found in the Plaza de los Naranjos: the Renaissance style Ayuntamiento building, erected in 1568 by the Catholic Monarchs; the Mayor's house, which combines Mudejar, Gothic and Renaissance elements; and the 15th century Chapel of Santiago, the oldest religious building in the town.

Behind the church is the Museum of Contemporary Spanish Engraving. This unique museum is housed in the old Hospital Bazán, a 16th century building restored by the regional government for its current purpose.

The plaza, known by expats as 'orange square', is a hub of activity at most times and it is a popular place to meet up with friends to enjoy the delights of its many bars and restaurants.

Arrival of tourism

Towards the end of the 19th century, Marbella was a small village composed of three parts: Barrio Principal, Barrio Alto (San Francisco) and the Barrio Nuevo.

During the 1940s, Marbella had only 900 inhabitants. Following the arrival of Ricardo Soriano, Marquis of Ivanrey, in 1943, the town began to expand and became a popular destination for the Marquis' rich and famous friends.

Soriano acquired a country estate located between Marbella and San Pedro, where he developed the Venta y Albergues El Rodeo resort, and this marked the beginning of tourism in Marbella. Prince Alfonso of Hehenlohe-Langerburg, the marquis' nephew and descendant of a high-ranking aristocratic family, soon acquired another estate. In 1954, he opened the Marbella Club, an



Cabopino beach and the Artola dunes. **SUR**



Puerto Banús, with La Concha behind. **SUR**

MARBELLA FACTS AND FIGURES



Total area: 114.3 km2
Height above sea level: 25km
Length of coastline: 27km
Population: 147, 633 (2020)
Foreign population: 35.523 (2020)

Postcode: 29600-29604
Mayor: Ángeles Muñoz, PP
Patron: San Bernabé
Feast day: 11 June

PLACES OF INTEREST

The old town

This delightful maze of tranquil streets and pretty plazas retains a similar layout to that of the 16th century. Three remarkable buildings can be found in the Plaza de los Naranjos: the Renaissance style Ayuntamiento building, erected in 1568 by the Catholic Monarchs; the Mayor's house, which combines Mudejar, Gothic and Renaissance elements; and the 15th-century Chapel of Santiago, the oldest religious building in the town.

Museo Ralli

Situated on Marbella's famous Golden Mile, the Ralli Museum is home to a large collection of artwork by living contemporary Latin American artists. It claims to hold the most important collection of Latino-American art in Europe. It is one of five Ralli Museums; however is the only one in Europe. The Marbella Ralli Museum specialises in surrealist style works although it display other contemporary pieces in both

permanent and temporary exhibitions.

Torre Ladrones

Located on the Puerto de Cabopino beach, the Tower of Thieves is of Moorish origin and was once part of a defense formation. The tower was modified during the 16th century to give it its present appearance. Standing at 14.6 meters high, the tower contains several flights of stairs which lead to the roof. The site is close to a number of shops and restaurants and is free to the public for viewing. .

Puerto Banús

Puerto Banús is one of the main destinations for visiting tourists and is extremely popular with international celebrities. It was built by local property developer José Banús, a personal friend of General Franco. Located in the area of Nueva Andalucía, Puerto Banús has since become one of the largest entertainment centres on the Costa del Sol, attracting an average of five million annual visitors. It houses

an exclusive leisure and shopping area. The port has berths for more than 900 boats, including those of the King of Saudi Arabia and several of the world's wealthiest businessmen. Behind the harbour lie streets filled with bars, nightclubs, and fashionable boutiques.

Castle walls and fortress

A notable reminder of the Marbella's past, the Murallas del Castillo stands in the historic old quarter and was once part of an ancient Arab castle, dating back to the 10th century. Sections of the castle and the walls have been restored and this is a site of extreme local importance. The existence of the Roman occupation of Marbella is suggested by three Ionic capitals found in the walls of the Muslim castle..

Parque de la Alameda

The Alameda Park is one of the most interesting and tourist friendly parks in Marbella. Located in the centre of the town, the park is full of exotic trees and flowering plants and is the ideal place to escape the hubbub of the centre. The park has several ceramic tiled benches, each decorated with paintings depicting life and history of Marbella. During the 1930s, this park was the central hub of Marbella. It has been in existence since the 18th century and once covered an area of more than 20,000 square metres and stretched from the town's walls to the seafront.

La Victoria

This bronze and copper statue sits on top of a 26m (85ft) column of granite. Designed by the renowned Georgian sculptor, Zurab Tsereteli, it was a gift to Puerto Banús in 1994 by the Mayor of Moscow.

international resort aimed at movie stars, business executives and nobility. Both resorts were popular with members of European aristocratic families, including Bismarck, Rothschild and Thyssen-Bornemisza.

In 1966, Prince Alfonso commissioned a Beverly Hills architect to develop the high-class Puerto Banús marina. The marina opened in 1970 and has since become the playground of the rich and famous.

The three other ports of Marbella, La Bajadilla, Cabopino, and El Carmen de Marbella, the oldest of the four, are primarily recreational.

Marbella's jet set image is further endorsed on the renowned Golden Mile at the western edge of the town. The Golden Mile is

the epitome of luxury, extravagance and opulence, and here one will discover the summer palace and sprawling estate of King Fahd.

Marbella may be known for its beautiful beaches and marinas, its glamorous social scene and its diverse cultural sector, but this is not all it has to offer. It also has plenty of gardens, parks and green spaces. The most popular park is the Parque Alameda, which overflows with all kinds of fragrant Mediterranean plants and flowers. This park also boasts a collection of ten Dalí sculptures.

Other interesting parks include Parque Constitución, which has an outdoor auditorium and a small astronomic observatory; and the Angel Gardens, one of the most complete botanical gardens on the Costa del Sol.

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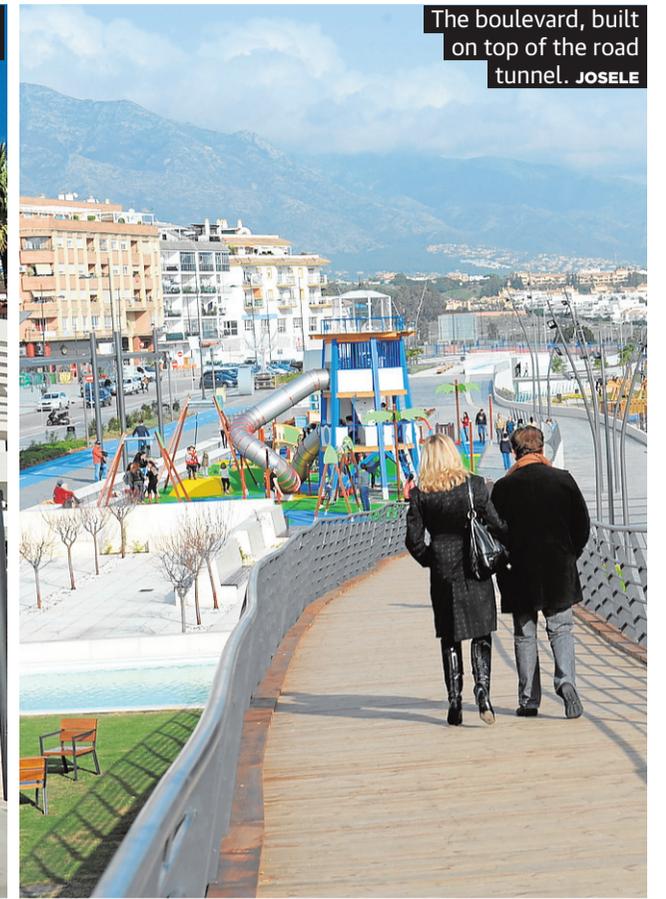


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The parish church of San Pedro. JOSELE



The boulevard, built on top of the road tunnel. JOSELE

San Pedro Alcántara. A modern resort with its own distinct identity

A town with a history. The resort has emerged as a first-class tourist destination offering excellent beaches and attractions, while still retaining features of its colonial past

TONY BRYANT

Inextricably linked to Marbella, San Pedro Alcántara is situated ten kilometres west on the main N340 coastal road, and is just a short drive from the natural beauty of the Ronda mountains. Today San Pedro Alcántara is a first-class tourist resort, home to a number of luxury housing complexes, golf courses and excellent beaches, while still retaining features of its colonial past.

Unlike many of Malaga's bustling coastal towns, San Pedro has managed to preserve much of its ancient culture. The town's origins can be traced back to the second century and evidence of this period include several important Roman sites. Historians believe that the Romans first settled in the area close to the mouth of the Guadalmina River, where remains of the Cilniana Villa and the Las Bóvedas baths are located.

The early Christian Basilica Vega del Mar was built next to a necropolis in the fourth century and was an important focus of attention for Christian settlers.

The archaeological remains of the basilica are located 500 meters from the Roman baths. The

construction of the building dates between the fourth and sixth centuries, coinciding with a period of transition between the fall of the Roman Empire and the arrival of the Visigoths to the Iberian Peninsula.

The necropolis has more than 200 tombs, which were discov-

ered in 1915, when the area was repopulated with eucalyptus trees. Since then, it has been the subject of numerous excavations and studies.

Agricultural colony

The town, which had little importance until the 19th century, is situ-

ated in the fertile plain of the same name, Vega de San Pedro Alcántara. The name dates back to 1860, when a farming colony was founded on the site by the first Marquis of Duero, Manuel Gutiérrez de la Concha y Irigoyen. The marquis named the settlement after his mother, Petra de Alcántara, and his favoured saint, San Pedro.

The parish Church of San Pedro Alcántara was built between 1860 and 1866 to provide the agricultural colony with a place for Catholic worship. The church is one of the few testimonies preserved from the colony. The temple was completely burned down in 1936 as a result of the Spanish Civil War and was restored and reopened in 1943.

During the second half of the 20th century, the tourism industry totally replaced the traditional agricultural and livestock productive sectors.

Own identity

Even though San Pedro Alcántara belongs to Marbella politically, it is a town of its own. Today, the town finally has its own identity and is no longer overshadowed by its glitzy neighbour.

San Pedro offers all the mod-

ern amenities expected in a coastal resort, but at a slightly more relaxed pace than other coastal destinations. These include sandy beaches lined with bars and restaurants, and narrow streets packed with intriguing shops and boutiques. The main street is the pedestrianised Avenida Marqués del Duero.

One of the town's popular attractions is the San Pedro boulevard, especially the eye-catching Mar de Sensaciones (sea of sensations) bridge, which was built in 2014. Constructed over the new tunnel which was built to divert traffic from the A7 motorway, the boulevard has 11,000 square meters of green areas, water features, a bike lane, five playgrounds and an amphitheatre for 500 spectators, which, pandemic permitting, hosts open-air performances and concerts.

Another attractive location is the 95,000-square-metre Los Tres Jardines park, located north of San Pedro Alcántara. The area is separated into three parks: the Arab garden, Mediterranean garden and the subtropical garden. In addition, the park boasts children's playgrounds and picnic and barbecue areas.

SAN PEDRO ALCÁNTARA

PLACES OF INTEREST

Las Bóvedas Roman baths

The Las Bóvedas Roman baths date from the 3rd century AD. They are of a vaulted thermal construction and are thought to have been in use until the 5th century. The archaeological site is spread over 7,000 square metres and includes other features like the remains of a garum factory and fish salting basins.

Iglesia de San Pedro Alcántara

The parish Church of San Pedro Alcántara was built by the Marquis of Duero between 1860 and 1866 to provide the agricultural colony with a place for Catholic worship. The colonial temple, which has a beautiful central altarpiece, was completely burned down in 1936 as a result of the Spanish Civil War and was restored and reopened in 1943.

San Pedro Boulevard

With its spectacular Sea of Sensations Bridge built over the old A7 motorway, the boulevard has 11,000 square meters of green areas, water features, a bike lane, Skate park, five playgrounds and an amphitheatre for 500 spectators that hosts open-air performances and concerts. The stylish boulevard is lined with pavement cafes and tapas bars.



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Cultural activity

Discover the arty side of Marbella

Marbella offers a wide cultural selection that includes museums, theatres, art galleries and festivals

Marbella has emerged as one of the Costa del Sol's most exciting cultural hubs. The town offers a wide cultural selection that includes museums, theatres, art galleries, cinemas that show films in their original versions, and many cultural events organised throughout the whole year. The coronavirus pandemic has derailed many of the town's annual festivals, but the town hall is hoping to kick-start its cultural calendar this summer, providing the restrictions enforced to curb the spread of the virus are relaxed.

However, most of the museums and galleries have reopened, and theatres will hopefully soon be swinging open their doors to present an array of musical extravaganzas and festivals. These will include the Marbella International Opera Festival, the Marbella Reggae Festival and the Marbella International Film Festival.

The Marbella International Film Festival brings together artists and their films from all corners of the globe to display their talents to the commercial world. The festival is the flagship project of New World Trust, an organisation created to provide support for talented artists. The objective of the trust is to provide capital for independent film projects, while offering support and assistance in marketing, pro-

ject and financial management and distribution networking.

Another spectacular gathering is the Festival International de Arte Marbella. Backed by the

town hall, this event has now grown into one of the most important street art festivals in Andalucía. It was founded in 2009 by a dedicated group of Spanish

and international residents. Held in June, the event, which typically attracts around 100 artists, is accompanied by performances of jazz, blues, opera and dance.

artists; the Museum Ralli in the urbanisation Coral Beach, which presents one of the most important collections of Latin American art in Europe; and the Gal-

One of the town's biggest summer events is the Starlite Festival, a live musical extravaganza that presents concerts by national and international artists, which takes place in the old lime quarry throughout July and August.

Galleries

The arts scene in Marbella is very well developed and offers some top galleries and art museums. These include the Municipal Exposition Gallery (Galeria Municipal de Exposiciones) and the ES

Arte gallery, both of which attract a wide range of artists from all over the world.

Along with paintings by renowned Spanish and international artists, the municipal gallery also displays an impressive collection of sculptures, photographs and ceramics.

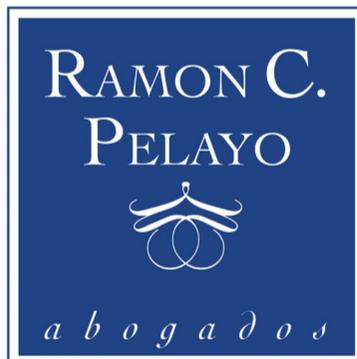
ES Arte is a space dedicated exclusively to contemporary art. Located in San Pedro Alcántara, the gallery has an exhibition space of 150 m² for the regular presentation of individual or group exhibitions.

Other important galleries are the Gallery House of Art, which promotes high quality contemporary art by international and national



TONY BRYANT

A concert at last year's Starlite festival. AFP



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ería de Arte Reja, which promotes contemporary Spanish art.

The Yusto/Giner gallery is another contemporary art exhibition space that has sprung up in recent years. Located on La Ermita industrial estate the gallery has display work by numerous young artists. The current exhibition is Imon Boy, Cute but Cop.

There is also the Magpie International Gallery, a versatile and independent space born out of an altruistic desire to support artists, especially emerging artists.

Marbella can also boast a few unusual museums, one of which is the Museo del Grabado Español Contemporáneo (Spanish contemporary print museum), which presents a permanent exhibition of 3,000 engravings. Housed in the old Hospital Bazán, it is one of Marbella's most important museums and offers elaborate prints and artworks by Picasso, Goya and Miro, among others. Guided tours of the exhibitions are available and there is also a print workshop.

Salvador Dalí

Marbella's cultural wealth is fur-

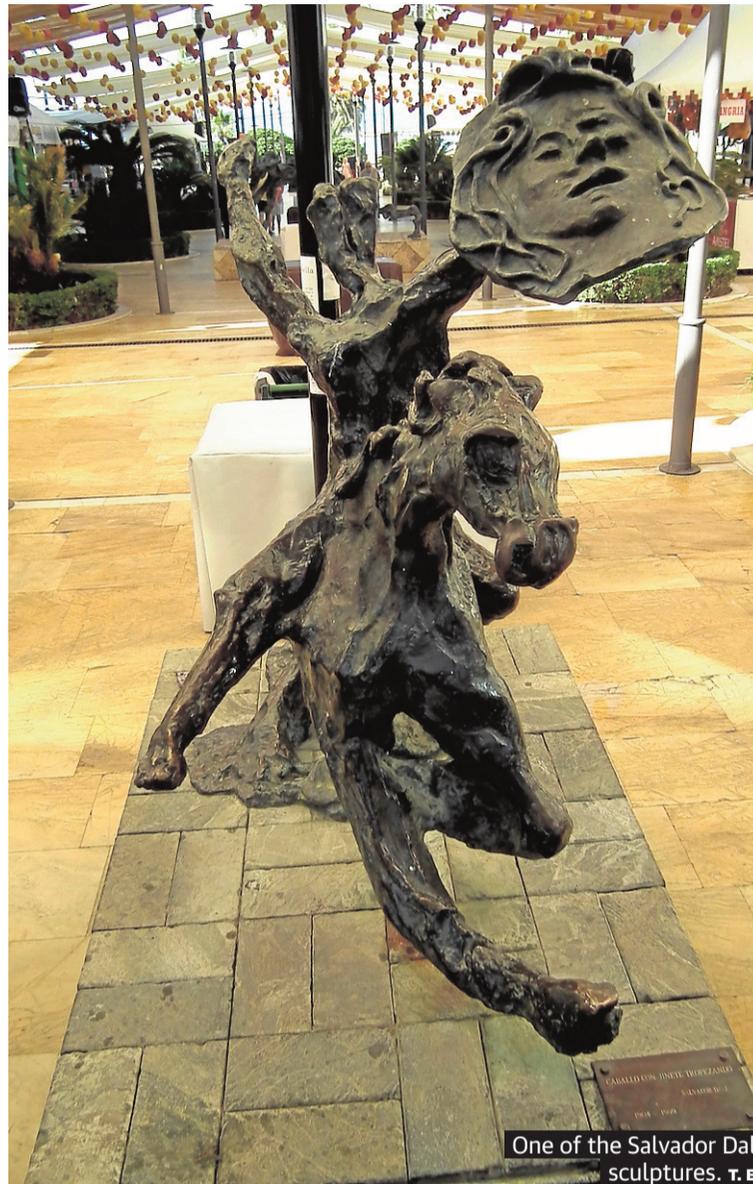
Marbella has emerged as one of the Costa del Sol's most exciting cultural hubs

ther endorsed by its impressive collection of sculptures, especially those by Salvador Dalí.

Apart from his problematic relationship with Pablo Ruiz Picasso, Dalí doesn't appear to have any obvious links to Malaga, which is why some might find it strange that Marbella pays homage to his work and his memory with a permanent outdoor exhibition of ten of his sculptures.

These momentous bronze figures, from the Clot Collection (1971 - 81), are situated south of Marbella's old town in the Avenida del Mar, between the Parque de la Alameda and the Paseo Marítimo.

The statues, which stand more than two metres high and weigh between 200 and 400 kilograms,



depict Dalí's surrealistic visions of Roman and Greek mythology, his wife, and strange alien-looking creatures.

Unless one is the kind of person who habitually reads the plaques that adorn public monuments, one could easily pass by this impressive collection without realising they are the work of one of the most eccentric characters in the history of modern art.

Theatres

The municipal theatre in Marbella was opened in July 2001 and has since become a space par excellence for the scenic arts. The 450-seat theatre presents a continual cycle of theatre, music, ballet and flamenco. It is also used for Marbella's annual carnival and hosts other important events like the International Opera Festival.

Another space for creative freedom and artistic commitment is the Black Box Theatre, a vital platform for theatre, music, dance, art and literature. This is an interactive learning space that educates, challenges and inspires artists of the future.

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📍 Puerto Banús

Technology: Digital entrepreneurs working remotely from Marbella

Developments such as Sierra Blanca Estates' EPIC complex on the Golden Mile show the growing interest among this type of client for a luxury home on the Costa del Sol

JOSÉ MARÍA MARTÍN



An image of the exclusive EPIC development . SUR

A year after Covid-19 erupted into our lives, it is clear that the pandemic has made many of us reconsider the way we live, and some entrepreneurs with plenty of money, who used to spend holidays on the Costa del Sol, have now decided to move here permanently and make use of technology in order to run their companies remotely.

It is a trend which Marbella detected quite early on, and for several months now it has been searching for ways to become a hub for the digital and technological world in its own right, and consequently attract more of these entrepreneurs to live here.

Actually, some have already arrived, as a look at the property market and new developments under construction shows. One of the most exclusive is EPIC Marbella, on the Golden Mile.

"The average age of purchasers has dropped by about 15 years. We are now seeing people aged between 35 and 45, and it was unusual for them to buy these types of properties before" says Carlos Rodríguez, CEO of Sierra Blanca Estates.

The company, which is behind this development, has more than 30 years of experience in the luxury sector on the Costa del Sol.

"A high percentage of clients are in the technology sector, and that explains their age. They own digital companies. Videogames, casinos and online gaming, developing apps or virtual platforms are the most common," he says.

They are younger, they have a lot of money to spend, and they are also very clear about what they want from Marbella.

"Quality of life, above all. They know that they can have that by working here remotely. Scandina-

vian clients were already doing this but now we are seeing people from all over the world and that is very interesting for Marbella. Attracting them here means more investment in the town in the long term," says Rodríguez.

This type of client wants a large and spacious home, and the agency

says this development provides that. The complex will have 77 properties, including apartments measuring between 400 and 1,000 m². The biggest ones have sold first. Prices range from three to six million euros.

"These buyers also want to live in complexes which have good se-

curity and facilities, as EPIC does. Because they are younger they are very aware of trends, so they are attracted by the fact that our properties are in the most exclusive area and also that we work with top level names in the world of design, such as FENDI," explains Rodríguez.

Plans for Marbella to become a benchmark for digital technology

J. M. M. / J. DUEÑAS

MARBELLA. The Costa del Sol's attraction for entrepreneurs in the technological sector, mainly from northern Europe, has not gone unnoticed by the institutions.

For example, the Innovation department of Marbella council is continuing with its plan to install 5G throughout the municipality. "This technology enables connection speeds which are 250 times faster than fibre optic and brings us closer to being one of the biggest technological communities in the world," councillor Cristóbal Garre said a few months ago. "It will attract digital companies to Marbella and help to make us a benchmark in Europe as far as working from home is concerned."

The town hall's Foreigners Department is also planning a campaign to attract remote workers from abroad. The municipal population register shows that between the lockdown in March and the end of last year, the number of foreigners living in the town increased by 2,800, from 40,700 to 43,500, despite the pandemic and restrictions on mobility. Foreigners now account for 30 per cent of all residents. "I have no doubt at all that working from home is the reason," says Remedios Bocanegra, who heads the department. "If people can choose to work in Marbella, they do, and people who have a second home here are spending more time in it."



Fernando Moreno

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READERS' VIEWS

The old port of Marbella

Reader Isabel van Zuilen sent in these two photographs (left and below) taken in Marbella. Left is the old port of the town, taken from the boardwalk. Isabel also wanted to share the photo below of the Río Verde Brisge with La Concha in the background.



Fair memories

Marion Platt wanted to share part of the culture of Marbella, a celebration we hope will soon return in all its glory. Meanwhile we can enjoy her photo of the San Bernabé fairground.



YORKSHIRE LINEN



YORKSHIRE LINEN BEDS AND MORE CELEBRATES 12 YEARS

MARBELLA

It's been a year like no other, but we are happy to say that Yorkshire Linen Beds and More celebrates 12 years, this April, in the original Mijas store and has just gone over the 5-year anniversary at the lovely Prestige store on the Golden Mile.

The two stores are full of everything beautiful, as well as practical, catering for both home furnishing and rental and investment properties. The staff, at both stores, have been extensively trained to help and advise on all aspects of soft furnishings and furniture. They can help you to choose a mattress that will suit your sleeping style or guide you through the mindfield of choosing curtains and even put together a whole home, room by room, blending colours, textures and decoration.

The shops hold an extensive range of designer bedding imported from the UK and all that goes with it, such as toppers, pillows, duvets and mattress protectors. To sit along with this is the biggest collection of ready-made curtains and cushions in the Malaga area; as well as a made-to-measure service which includes both measuring and fitting if required

It's taken many years to build up the product range and the shops are the only supplier of the prestigious BELLEDORM brand who supply luxurious bed linen, up to a 1200 thread count.

If you are looking for quality on a budget, the essentials ranges, produced exclusively for Yorkshire Linen Beds and More, have been designed to be hard-wearing, washable at 60 degrees and are ideal for both home and rental properties, as the prices are very competitive. There are many great offers on beds, headboards and mattresses offering 21 % off the premium range.

Find the Marbella shop on the Golden Mile opposite Da- Brunos restaurant. The large warehouse-style store, in Mijas Costa, is near to the Myramar Shopping Area, behind Decathlon. The website www.yorkshirerlinen.es is a fully functioning webstore and deliveries are free, over 60 euros, to all of mainland Spain. You can find our wide range of beds on www.bedsandmore.es

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MuseoRalliMarbella

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TALK OF THE TOWN

"San Pedro actually has a great selection of shops"



Hannah Murray

Radio presenter. Hannah presents 'Daybreak' on Talk Radio Europe, and co-runs The San Pedro Guide.

How long have you lived in Marbella?

I moved here in April 2003.

What do you like best about Marbella?

The weather, beach, mountains and the outdoor life.

What do you like least?

A downside to living in this part of the coast is that it's more expensive than other areas.

Favourite beach?

I live walking distance to San Pedro beach, so that's the beach I see the most of.

A place to eat.

My husband and I are real foodies and love going out to dinner, so to pick one restaurant is hard. San Pedro has a few gems like Savor, Benisty, and Tanino's.

A place to drink.

Our local pub, The Hogan Stand, is the best.

A place to shop.

San Pedro actually has a great selection of shops.

A place to relax.

The paseo walk from San Pedro to Marbella is so beautiful. Each time I do it, I appreciate how lucky I am to live here.

Where do you take visitors?

Kala Kalua on San Pedro beach is a must. Eating lunch with that view is magical.

How could Marbella be improved?

They have got rid of various green areas in favour of concrete. I know many people are not happy with this.

"We need more car parks on the outskirts and a shuttle bus service"



Gabi Berner

Journalist. Gabi enjoys taking long walks in the mountains behind Marbella.

How long have you lived in Marbella?

For almost 26 years now.

What do you like best about Marbella?

The lush, varied vegetation in the city and the contrasting landscape surroundings.

What do you like least?

The low esteem in which the government holds its natural, historical and cultural treasures.

Favourite beach?

The dune beaches in the east of the municipality

A place to eat.

If I'm in the mood for fine cuisine, I visit Boho Club on the Golden Mile.

A place to drink.

Almost any terrace near the beach.

A place to shop

The old town with its huge variety of charming boutiques.

A place to relax.

Either in the hilly campo just behind my house or walking on the Senda Litoral.

Where do you take visitors in Marbella?

To the same places I already mentioned, especially the mountain region at the back of the town. If not, to fine art hotspots such as the Museo de Grabado, the Cortijo Miraflores.

How could Marbella be improved?

The town hall needs to create more car parking areas on the outskirts, and also a shuttle bus service.

"More foreign residents need to register on the padrón"



Nicole King

Television presenter. Nicole founded the English-language Marbella Now TV in 2014.

How long have you lived in Marbella?

I first moved out in the early 1980s, but had been coming on holiday every year with my parents since 1965.

What do you like best about Marbella?

The light! However even on rainy or cloudy days the ocean, open expanses and palm trees also inspire.

What do you like least?

That many foreigners come to live in the sun and forget they're guests in Spain.

Favourite beach?

There are many but I usually combine lunch, so for my price range, La Red Chiringuito in Marbella.

A place to eat.

It's hard to say. I've eaten in so many places in Marbella.

A place to drink.

Portside in Puerto Banús.

A place to shop.

I buy 90 per cent of my clothes in the second hand shops, and as local as possible for the rest.

A place to relax.

At home.

Where do you take visitors in Marbella?

The old town, and to walk as much of the promenade as possible.

How could Marbella be improved?

By the foreign residents signing on the padrón so that the town has more funds to provide extra staff to attend to the needs of the foreign residents.

"I think it's beautiful to see Marbella from the sea"



Marion Renard

Restaurateur. Marion loves the location of Marbella, especially for the views of Africa.

How long have you lived in Marbella?

I moved to Marbella in May 2017 after completing my Masters Degree in Paris.

What do you like best about Marbella?

The location. Being able to enjoy mountain views from the beach.

What do you like least?

The post office.

Favourite beach?

My favourite beach would be around the Elviria area. The sunsets behind that mountainy curve and clear view of Africa are just magical.

A place to eat.

Has to be Cascada Marbella. A perfect getaway from the busy beach places.

A place to drink.

El Corto Maltes. Super cool vibes and amazing staff.

A place to shop.

I like to go to Estepona.

A place to relax.

I don't really have time to relax. When I do, I just stay home.

Where do you take visitors in Marbella?

I like to take my visitors to the Puerto Deportivo and take them for a boat charter with Marbella Yacht Charters. I think it's beautiful to see Marbella from the sea.

How could Marbella be improved?

The logistic behind the transport is a mystery for me. The public transport options are too limited and taxis are super expensive.

"The old town is charming, authentic and has some great boutiques"



Nicola Lloyd

Oenologist. Nicola loves Marbella but is worried about urban planning projects.

How long have you lived in Marbella?

I have lived in Marbella for ten years.

What do you like best about Marbella?

The people, they are very warm and welcoming.

What do you like least?

It's grown at such a fast pace that the charm of the Andalusian towns of San Pedro and Marbella is sometimes threatened by the modern buildings.

Favourite beach?

This would have to be Los Monteros.

A place to eat.

I like to dine at Macao Beach Club. They serve delicious food and have a great, relaxing atmosphere and really friendly staff.

A place to drink.

My favourite bar is El Marqués in San Pedro.

A place to shop.

I enjoy shopping at the Soho Market.

A place to relax.

On a hammock on Guadalmina Beach.

Where do you take visitors in Marbella?

The old town. It's charming, authentic and has some great boutique shops and restaurants.

How could Marbella be improved?

Perhaps the town hall should control planning permission and only allow certain styles of architecture in certain urbanisations.

Expats life. A thriving fellowship

Marbella and San Pedro offer a wide range of English-language amenities for their large international communities

TONY BRYANT

Plenty of sun hours and pleasant temperatures all year round makes Marbella one of the most popular resorts on the Costa del Sol and a magnet for expats seeking a place in the sun to call home. While Marbella is a sought-after place for retirement, the town also attracts families looking to start a new life. Marbella offers a wide range of international schools and colleges from nursery to higher education, along with several language schools.

However, it is not only the youngsters who benefit from Marbella's international education, because The University of the Third Age (U3A) is also registered in Marbella.

U3A International is a worldwide non-profit-making movement for mature people which focuses on the promotion of activities for enjoyment and personal fulfilment. The Marbella-based group serves the interests and requirements of English-speaking members and offers a broad range of courses, activity groups and lectures that take place predominantly in the Marbella area of the coast.

The administrators, activity leaders and lecturers are all volunteers who share their particular interests or expertise with other members. Although the group's activities have largely been online throughout the pandemic, the courses and lessons are mainly held from September May.

Courses include photography, art, language and guitar lessons to name a few. There are also bridge clubs, ballroom dance lessons and sporting and adventure activities.



Guests at a Rotary Club event last year. SUR

Marbella's large foreign community makes up around 30 per cent of the inhabitants, and the town boasts several social media groups designed for the local English-speaking community, offering information concerning all aspects of living in Marbella.

English-language platforms

The San Pedro Guide (www.sanpedromarbella.eu), co-run by local radio presenter Hannah Murray, is officially recognised

by the town hall as a source of information for the English-speaking community of San Pedro Alcántara. The platform gives information concerning the town's cultural agenda and tourist activity, children's events and summer camps, and a directory of important amenities.

My Guide Marbella (www.myguidemarbella.com/marbella-expat-guide) is another useful online sight offering a range of English-language information, from obtaining residencia or a na-

tional identity card and registering on the municipal census, (padrón) to financial advisors, schools, home services and local markets.

United Nations of Marbella

Another useful platform is the United Nations of Marbella, an association created in January 2017 to unite all the nationalities living in the area and to give residents a voice to identify issues in Marbella. These initiatives include recycling projects and plastic-free living; interaction between businesses and charities, and the Zero Hero initiative, a campaign to ensure the positive reinforcement for safer alcohol use among the younger generation. This project is supported by Linea Directa, and numerous bars and restaurants in Marbella that offer free soft drinks to designated drivers in an attempt to ensure that youngsters do not drink and drive.

Marbella also has its own English-language television channel, Marbella Now, founded in 2014. Hosted by Nicole King, an established market researcher who has an undying passion to make a difference in Marbella, the show serves as a portal between Marbella Town Hall and the 140 different nationalities that reside in the town.

The daily show, aired from Monday to Friday on RTV Marbella, promotes the expat community, local charities, associations and organisations, while also addressing the legal and administrative challenges of living abroad.

Charitable organisations

Several charitable organisations offer services to the foreign com-

munity in San Pedro and Marbella.

The Rotary Club of Marbella/Guadalmina offers meetings, fundraising events, fellowship and service projects to the local and international community, although, as with most charities and associations, the club's activities have been affected by the restrictions to control the pandemic. However, the club was quick to face the challenges of the coronavirus by moving almost its entire activities to a virtual platform. During the lockdown the club provided food to more 1000 families and helped to buy a van for Collective Calling, an organisation that continues to distribute food to families in need.

A new English-speaking Rotary Club, the Marbella-East branch, was founded last year. This club has the same Rotary goals as its neighbour and has been busy working on numerous charity and fundraising projects since it started.

The Lions Club has several branches in Marbella, including English, German, Spanish and French-speaking branches. The Lions empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding. The association is best known for the fight against blindness, but it also involved many kinds of initiatives in the community, including donations of provisions to the needy and assistance for the elderly and disabled.

The Cudeca Cancer Foundation also has charity shops in San Pedro Alcántara (Calle Lagasca 18) and in Marbella (Avda. del Mar 7).

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Nautical life

The four docks of Marbella

As well as the glitzy Puerto Banús, Marbella has three other ports that all have their own charm

T. BRYANT



Puerto Banús. SUR

Marbella has a reputation for extravagance and excessiveness, and this can be reinforced by its four distinctive marinas, especially the world-renowned Puerto Banús. The most popular are Puerto Banús and Puerto de Cabopino, but La Bajadilla, and El Carmen de Marbella (the oldest of the four) - although they do not tend to attract the jet set - have a character and charm of their own.

Puerto Banús

Puerto Banús is one of the main destinations for visiting tourists and is extremely popular with international celebrities. It was built by local property developer José Banús, a personal friend of General Franco. Banús, known as the 'regime's builder', proposed a sophisticated village and marina, which would become the playground of the rich and famous. The port opened in 1970 and its inauguration, during which the guests were served 22 kilos of beluga caviar, was attended by royalty, politicians, socialites and celebrities. These included Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco, film director Roman Polanski and Playboy founder Hugh Hefner. The guests were entertained by an up-and-coming Julio Iglesias, who is reported to have been paid 125,000 pesetas for his performance.

Located in the area of Nueva Andalucía, Puerto Banús has since become one of the largest entertainment centres on the Costa del Sol, attracting an average of five million annual visitors. It houses an exclusive leisure and shopping area, while the port is full of luxurious yachts, speed

boats and sailing vessels that belong to its millionaire sector. The port has berths for more than 900 boats, including those of the King of Saudi Arabia and several of the world's wealthiest businessmen. Behind the harbour lie streets filled with bars, nightclubs, and

fashionable boutiques like Christian Dior, Gucci, Bulgari, Versace and Dolce and Gabbana. It also boasts one of the largest El Corte Inglés department stores in Spain, and a three-ton sculpture of a rhinoceros by Salvador Dali known as the Rhinoceros Dressed in

Lace.

Today Puerto Banús continues to attract the rich and famous, as demonstrated by the Boulevard de la Fama, a walkway created to pay tribute to individuals who have promoted Marbella.

Puerto Cabopino

Situated on the N340 coastal road just ten kilometres from Marbella centre, Puerto Cabopino is a quiet marina that has its own truly Mediterranean style, although its charm goes beyond the sailing vessels and boats bobbing on the moorings.

Visitors will not find the glitzy life style of Puerto Banús, but a more relaxed harbour lined with several highly regarded restaurants and bars offering a variety of cuisine. This quaint little port is the ideal place to escape the hubbub of Marbella's jet set.

Due to its excellent location, Cabopino is popular with both expats and holiday makers alike. Located among a natural park of sand dunes and pine trees, Cabopino has quiet beaches on either side, one of which is popular with naturalists. These are considered among the best beaches on the Costa del Sol.

Although relatively small (250 births for boats with a maximum length of 15 metres) in comparison to Puerto Banús, Cabopino port offers extensive marine services.

Here, one can also enjoy boat rental, fishing and dolphin trips and water sport facilities like wakeboarding, flyfish buoys and water skiing.

Marbella Port

The Puerto Deportivo Virgen del

Carmen, known as the Marbella port, is situated on the seafront and is just a few minutes' walk from the old town. Constructed in 1957, this is one of the busiest areas for visiting tourists and locals, as it offers a selection of excellent fish and seafood restaurants. The pleasant atmosphere of its bars, the proximity of the beaches and its wide range of nautical services, including sailing lessons for children, make this a popular destination all year round.

Marbella's port offers all the services required by a seaport, such as fuel top-up, a dry port for repairs and maintenance of boats, and a fish market where the freshly caught haul can be purchased. Constructed on two levels, this small fishing port has a street market with handicraft stalls offering goods from different parts of the world. One will also find an array of sporting activity, along with fishing trips and scuba diving.

Puerto La Bajadilla

Located next to the old fishing port, the La Bajadilla marina is the most modern in its construction of the four that are located in the municipality of Marbella. Popular for its pescaditos restaurants, which offer some of the best fish in Marbella, it also has plenty of waterside bars that look out over the moored boats.

This port was due to be redeveloped by the Sheikh Al-Thani, the owner of Malaga Football Club. After years of delays, the project failed to materialise, but Marbella town hall is still planning to go ahead with the dramatic expansion project.

Rootz
by Nicky Lloyd

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