

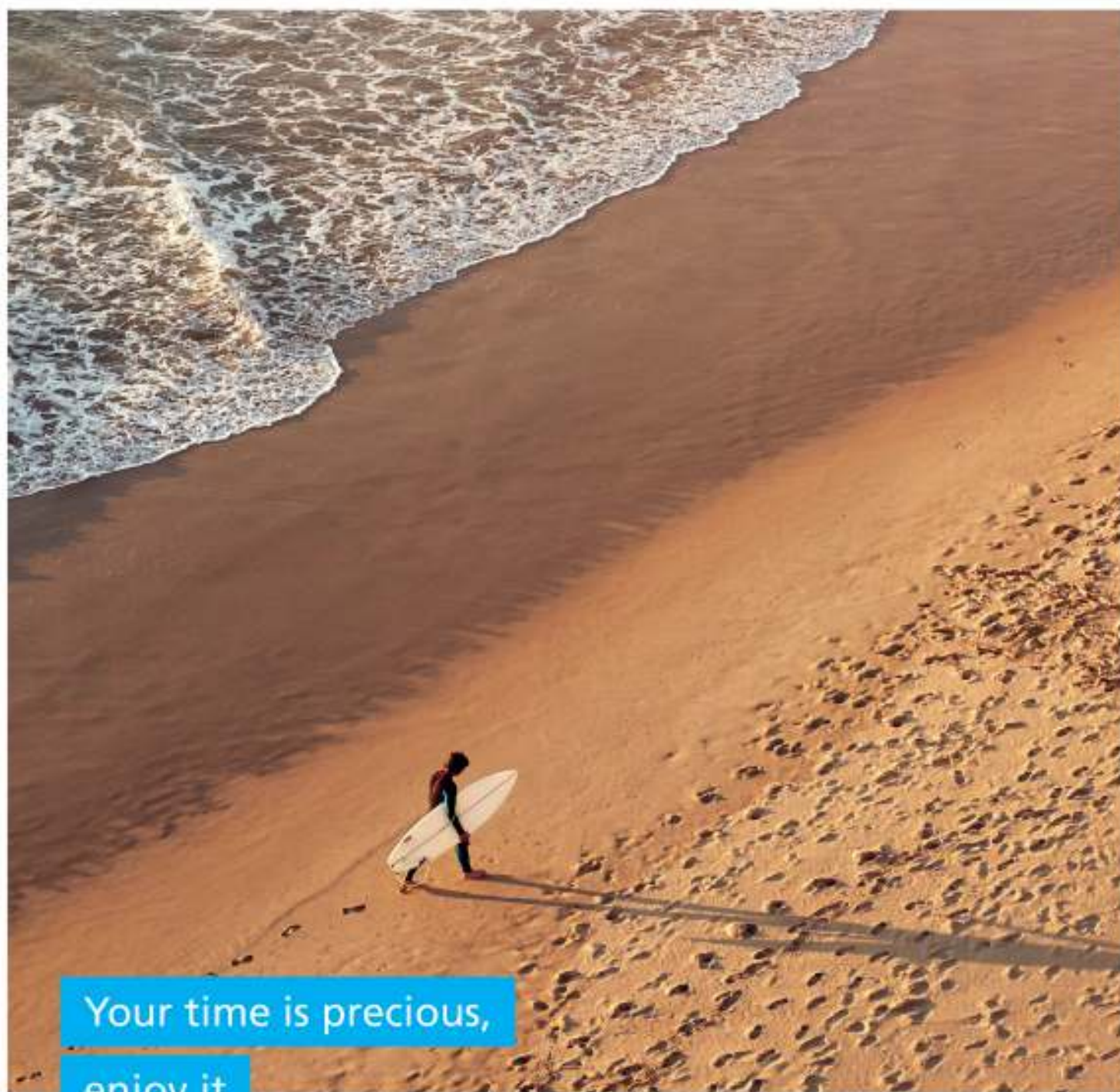
The magazine for the holiday season in southern Spain / July 2021

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Cover photo: Youngsters cool off in the waters of the Costa del Sol.
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Always something to learn

RACHEL HAYNES

Last year we opened our SUR in English Summer's Here magazine with the idea that we had a "different summer" ahead of us. Twelve months ago there was no question of immunity, the possibility of a Covid vaccine was several months away and there was no sight of an end to the pandemic.

Indeed the message this time last year was simply to "stay safe", although it was still possible to get out and explore the region of Andalucía. We did so, however, perfecting the art of holiday social distancing, choosing destinations closer to home and sightseeing in face masks.

This year we approach the summer holidays with more optimism. The vaccination programme has covered a large portion of the adult population in Andalucía and many restrictions have been eased. International travel is still complicated though, and many residents in southern Spain will be looking for summer ideas within this region, putting their more exotic holiday plans off for another year.

Once again then, in this year's Summer's Here magazine we aim to uncover more of the beauty of this region and share its secrets.

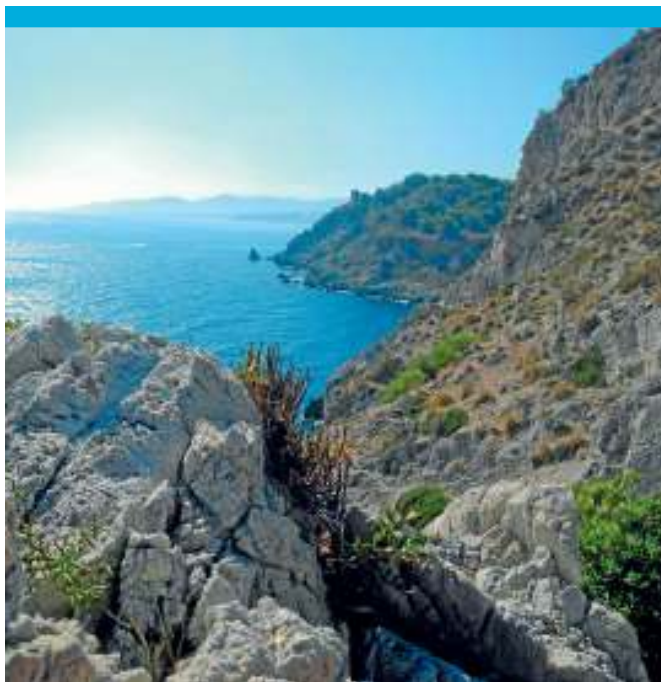
Starting at the seaside, we look at how the Costa del Sol's marinas are faring this season and, if you'd rather sit and look at the sea than sail on it, there's no bigger variety of places from which to contemplate the water: from a quiet beauty spot with a picnic to a fancy beach club with seafood and cocktails.

These pages also hold plenty for lovers of all things green, from stunning mountain scenery to a round on a golf course.

Culture is of course included on all menus for the holidays. As usual there is a wide choice of museums and exhibitions running throughout the summer, the perfect way to escape the heat. And while last year the live music scene never really dried up, this year there's a much fuller programme of events, from the big festivals to concerts in the local park.

And for those interested in buildings and architecture there is plenty of food for thought. From the interesting castles and palaces that aren't what they seem, to cave homes built into the rock, a Gaudí-influenced village museum and brand new luxury properties waiting for owners.

However well we think we know a region - however long we've lived there - there's always something new to discover.



Much more by the sea

The Costa del Sol has become a hugely popular destination over the decades and has provided the seaside facilities to cater for visitors. While this has involved the urbanisation of much of the coastal strip, you don't have to leave the province of Malaga or even head inland to find natural beauty spots along the coastline, from cliffs to dunes.



A summer for culture

With new exhibitions at Malaga's main museums and galleries and a whole season of concerts, there's plenty to do this summer. Covid safety protocol will be in force at all venues to guarantee a full cultural agenda.

A home in the sun

The high-end real estate market on the Costa del Sol is thriving despite the pandemic. Lockdown appears to have awoken a demand for luxury property, say the experts.

Explore Andalucía

Setenil de las Bodegas, Guadix and the Alpujarra, all fine examples of how people in Andalucía have adapted to their rugged natural surroundings.

Ports with positive vibes

After more than a year of pandemic, the Costa del Sol's marinas are confident that this summer will be one of recovery. International tourism is gradually heading back to the region and the nautical sector has gained new customers who have discovered that taking to the sea is the best way to avoid the holiday crowds.



Time for some action

The Vía Verde cycling track near Olvera is one of a network of paths in the region that have turned old railway lines and tunnels into an attraction for tourists and residents in search of a change in scenery. The adventure doesn't stop there though, with active holiday ideas both on the water and underground from pages 54 to 63.

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A bright summer ahead for the Costa's marinas

The opening up to international tourism and growing interest in sailing has inspired confidence that this will be a good summer

The occupancy of berths in 2020 was approximately 75 per cent, and it is expected that this will increase this year

ANDREA JIMÉNEZ

The marinas on the Costa del Sol are feeling optimistic about this summer. The gradual opening up to international tourism and acceleration of the vaccination campaign promises a season with better figures than last year, and interest in sailing and other nautical activities in the different ports in the area has been growing.

In 2020 most tourists came from other parts of Spain and this helped to improve the figures, but the occupancy forecasts for this year are regularly being adjusted upwards, said Manuel Jiménez, the president of Marinas de Andalucía, who runs the port in Benalmádena.

"We are seeing figures that are similar to last year, at least. Our forecasts had been rather negative because of all the uncertainty, but we now hope that this will be the year of recovery," he said at the start of the season.

Marinas de Andalucía runs a group of 16 ports along the Andalusian coastline, eight of which are in Malaga province. Of the 8,000 berths, around 3,700 are on the Costa del Sol.

"That's almost half the total, and that reflects the potential we have in terms of facilities. Covid made many people turn to sailing for the first time because it is a

safe outdoor activity," said Jiménez, and the aim for this year is to retain these new clients.

"They had never tried sailing before but then they gave it a go. Now, we have to get them to keep it up," he said.

Although as a general rule more yachts are based in marinas in Malaga than are in transit, this second option is important. "On average, visiting yachts stay for ten days. We are not as reliant on international tourism as other ports, but we are hoping that British, French, German and Scandinavian visitors will come," said Jiménez.

In 2020 approximately 75 per cent of berths in Andalucía's ports were occupied, and it is hoped that this will increase this year. "At the very least, we want to match that figure. In 2019 we had over 90 per

cent occupancy in some cases, so that was a very good year," he said. He also pointed out that the Law of Andalusian Ports was reformed in November, providing indirect regulation of the marinas and greater "legal certainty" regarding concessionary rights.

The change will also mean a leap forward in quality for the marinas and their services, because it will now be necessary to carry out studies into the viability of concessions and commit to new investment in environmental sustainability. "The Andalusian port system is going to be renewed to improve," Jiménez said.

There is also optimism at the ports of La Duquesa and Estepona, both of which are run by Grupo Marinas del Mediterráneo. "Occupancy in May was good, at about 65 per cent. There is movement and a lot of people want to come; the clientele at Estepona tend to be mostly Spanish, but at La Duquesa it is mainly international," said Manuel Raigón, the managing director of Marinas del Mediterráneo, who predicts a good summer season with positive figures and expects it to last through to October.

Activities

The number of boats coming into Estepona port tripled between February and June this year. "Clients are very keen to enjoy some sailing. The boatyards have received numerous requests for tuning and the demand for medium and long stays is continually increasing," said Raigón.

He also pointed out that interest in nautical activities is growing in general, and so is the tourism based on boat rental.

"That has increased considerably, because there is now a commercial network which everyone can afford," he said. In these marinas, he added, the jet-ski platforms are completely occupied

This interest in nautical activities is re-



Estepona port. :: SUR

flected nationally, and this year the figures are even higher than they were pre-Covid. According to a report by ANEN, the National Association of Nautical Businesses, leisure craft registrations increased by 81 per cent between January and April this year, compared with the same period in 2020, when the market fell by 37 per cent due to the pandemic. In comparison with the same period in 2019, the number of registrations has grown by 13.44 per cent.

Between January and April this year, 1,815 leisure craft were registered in Spain, compared with 1,003 last year and 1,600 in 2019. "Twenty per cent of these are in Andalucía, and it is a region with potential where the sector has grown a great deal. The figures are making us optimistic about the summer," said Manuel Raigón.

Of all the yachts registered during the first quarter of this year, 75 per cent were



General view of La Duquesa port in Manilva. :: SUR

for personal use and the remainder were for charter (rental). This market grew by 110.91 per cent compared with the same period in 2020, and by 20.52 per cent in comparison with 2019.

"A lot of companies are doing this now. We have to make people realise that sailing is not just for the rich any more, there is something to suit all budgets," said Jiménez.

By length, registration of boats under

eight metres grew by an average of 81.7 per cent and these are still very much in demand, accounting for 84 per cent of the market. Registration of those between eight and 12 metres increased by 82.7 per cent, between 12 and 16 metres in length by 97.2 per cent and there was a record increase in yachts more than 16 metres long, with registrations increasing by 187.5 per cent, although they only account for 1.3 of the market.

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A wide choice of berths

Luxury yachts in Puerto Banús, Marbella. :: SUR

Marinas offer an alternative attraction all year round along the Costa del Sol

Their shops, restaurants and leisure activities are a good option for the whole family

SUR

There are numerous marinas and ports along the Costa del Sol. These offer an alternative attraction all year round for visitors, as well as proving boat owners and users a wide choice of places to berth. The various portside restaurants provide everything from traditional fishermen's fare to the most exotic dishes, while some of the marinas are known for their lively nightlife, exclusive shops and nautical activities including boat trips. Here's a run-down of the locations, from west to east.

Alcaidesa (La Línea)

The marina has 624 berths for vessels between eight and 90 metres in length. Located next to the border, the port is just a ten-minute walk from Gibraltar Airport.

Puerto de Sotogrande (San Roque)

This is the biggest privately owned residential development in Andalucía. It has several hundred members and international events are regularly held there.

La Duquesa (Manilva)

La Duquesa has an extensive range of leisure activities and restaurants. It is also a strategic point for yacht owners looking for a berth between Sotogrande and Marbella, and is ideal for family activities.

Estepona

This is the third-largest marina in terms of berths in Malaga province, and a benchmark for watersports on the Costa del Sol and Andalucía. There are also plenty of restaurants.

Puerto Banús (Marbella)

Its glamour and luxury continue to astonish thousands of first-time visitors at every time of year. There are some truly spectacular yachts, designer boutiques and a huge variety of restaurants to tempt people back time and time again.

Puerto Deportivo (Marbella)

Just metres away from the central Parque de la Alameda and Avenida del Mar is this marina with berths for around 400 boats. There is also a sailing club and a sailing school, and there are numerous restaurants on the perimeter of the port.

Puerto de La Bajadilla (Marbella)

This marina shares space with the Marbella fishing port. Not only are catches

of top quality fish and shellfish brought in, but some of the restaurants there specialise in these freshly caught products.

Cabopino (Marbella)

This the smallest of Marbella's four ports and marinas, but despite its size, it has several restaurants with a significant variety of dining options.

Fuengirola

At night this historical port area is ideal for dinner or an evening drink. There are also some spectacular fishing and leisure boats to admire, and watersports and boat rides can be booked here.

Benalmádena

Known locally as Puerto Marina, this port has received several awards for its beauty and unusual architecture. It has numerous shops and other tourist attractions. There are, restaurants, bars, discos, and even Sea Life, an aquarium centre with 2,000 different marine species.

Real Club Mediterráneo (Malaga)

The Real Club Mediterráneo is the headquarters of the sailing club of the same name. This small marina is situated opposite the Cruise Terminal in Malaga city and very close to La Farola lighthouse. Its facilities are designed for its members to enjoy, and there are watersports and other services.

IGY Málaga Marina (expected 2022)

Work has now started on a future quay to accommodate up to 31 superyachts of 20 to 170 metres in length alongside the Muelle Uno commercial and leisure development in the city.

El Candado (Malaga)

This port, with its 280 berths for yachts up to 15 metres in length, belongs to Club Deportivo El Candado. There are some restaurants within the port, including the prestigious Candado Beach.

La Caleta de Vélez

This is a combination of fishing port and marina. Much of the fish and shellfish brought here by the fishing boats are bought and prepared in local restaurants.






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Natural beauty spots next to the shore



The Maro-Cerro Gordo cliffs at the easternmost point of the Costa del Sol. :: **sur**

Between Nerja and Manilva there are 200 kilometres of coastline; some of them still boast their original natural beauty

Some areas are protected as monuments or beauty spots, while others are recognised for their biological value

JAVIER ALMELLONES

Between Nerja and Manilva there are 200 kilometres of coastline and a wealth of beaches, seafront promenades, marinas and even different places

and buildings of historical and cultural interest. However, despite this being a densely populated area, especially west of Malaga city, there is also a place for nature.

Flora, fauna and geology are some of the attractions of La Axarquía, the Costa del Sol and Malaga city itself. Some areas are protected as monuments or beauty spots, forming part of the Network of Natural Areas of Andalucía, while others are recognised for their biological value, although to a lesser extent. However, they all show the greenest and most sustainable face of the Costa del Sol.

The Manilva beaches

Since 2011 the sands of La Chullera, El Negro and Los Toros have been classified as the Playas de Manilva ecological reserve, a stretch of the western Costa del Sol which is separated from all the seafronts and mass construction around it. In fact, thanks to the lower urban pressure and the conservation of some botanical species, such as the sea lily, this is now one of the most valuable natural enclaves on the Mediterranean coast of Andalucía. It is not easy to access - in many places there are only dirt tracks - but it is worth the effort to enjoy this piece of coastline. You can also see it from the Senda Litoral (the coastal path that will eventually link all of the towns on the Costa del Sol).

The Artola Dunes

Next to Cabopino beach in Marbella is one of the most valuable dune com-

plexes in the Spanish Mediterranean. In fact, thanks to their geological peculiarity, these dunes are now protected as a natural monument of Andalucía. In recent years the area has been improved by the installation of walkways and wooden bridges, so that people can walk there without damaging the dunes or the fauna and flora. As well as this dune system there is also a lovely beach to enjoy, and Cabopino marina is nearby. Next to this dune system you will also see the Torre de los Ladrones, one of the old watchtowers on the Costa del Sol.

3. Guadalhorce river estuary

Between the beaches of Sacaba and Guadalmar in the municipality of Málaga lies a haven for bird lovers. This green area, covering 67 hectares, is considered one of Europe's biological treasures and more than 250 species of birds can be seen there during the year. In fact, du-

A walkway across the Artola dunes near Cabopino beach. :: SUR





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The Guadalhorce river estuary attracts bird lovers from around the world. :: SUR

ring the migratory season, as many as 80 different species have been identified in a single day. Many of them are, however, just passing through, because this is a favourite spot for migrating species such as the pink flamingo. Among the many birds that can be found all during the year are cormorants, common pochards, little vultures and mallards. There are also two short walking routes and wooden hides from which to watch the birds.

El Cantal Bajo

East of Malaga city, this is where La Cala del Moral and Rincón de la Victoria meet, and it is also where you will find some of the most spectacular cliffs in Malaga province. This rugged area is home to the 'siempreviva' plant (*Limonium malacitanum*), a botanical species which is native to rocky areas of the Mediterranean coast. Nowadays this limestone promontory is crossed via a tunnel which was once part of a railway line. You can walk along the top of these cliffs, which link Rincón de la Victoria and La Cala del Moral, thanks to a winding stretch of promenade and the tunnels which were built for the trains to pass through.

Los Rubios

This stretch of coast, also in the municipality of Rincón de la Victoria, borders the area of Torre de Benagalbón, a small village with its own identity which nowadays is mainly residential. There is an ecological route here, which is part of the Senda



The Cantal Bajo cliffs. :: SUR

Litoral coastal path and the Gran Senda (the Great Trail, a walking route around the entire province of Malaga). As well as a particularly quiet beach, especially on weekdays, it is unusual because different species of native flora are found here and because there is no seafront promenade.

Vélez river delta

Although not as important as the Guadalhorce river estuary, this natural enclave between the beaches of Almayate and Torre del Mar is still of great interest to ornithologists, because of the presen-

ce of different types of migratory birds. Today it is one of the best places to see species such as black-headed gulls and Audouin gulls, and others which are not as common, like the Kentish plover, osprey, marsh harrier and marbled teal. There have been several applications for this estuary - it is a delta now but was part of an estuary in Phoenician times - to receive greater protection (or even be classified as a nature reserve).

The Maro cliffs

The most easterly side of Malaga province is now protected as a natural area because of its great ecological value. In this case, we are looking at a narrow strip of coast, 12 kilometres long and covering over 1,800 hectares, with steep cliffs which are actually the foothills of the Sierra de Almijara. This rocky area, which has been eroded by natural elements, has not only taken on some unusual shapes but also has numerous coves bathed by crystal-clear waters, where the seabed can be seen very clearly. Apart from its geological value, the Acantilados de Maro-Cerro Gordo area is famous for marine biodiversity. In total there are ten coves which are strikingly beautiful, whether seen from the road above or when sunbathing on the sand. The sea here is home to a large variety of crustaceans, molluscs and fish, including moray eels and conger eels. There are also some important botanical species on land, such as the mastic tree, juniper, fan palms, wild olives, Balearic boxwood and carob trees.



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Architectural delights that aren't what they seem

Some of the Costa del Sol's most unusual edifices were designed to look as if they have existed for hundreds of years

Tourists and visitors (and even some of the locals) are often confused by spectacular architectural icons that are not as old as they look

TONY BRYANT

Malaga, like all provinces in Andalucía, is full of interesting palaces, castles and temples that combine tradition and modernity. The city has been inhabited by the Phoenicians, Romans and Arabs - all of whom, along with the Christians, have left their identity on the city. However, the province also has several interesting buildings and monuments that are not as old as they may seem. Tourists and visitors (and even some of the locals) are often confused by spectacular palaces and Moorish-looking edifices that blend in with the surroundings giving the impression that they have existed for hundreds of years.

An example of this can be found on the outskirts of Alhaurín el Grande. Often referred to as the 'castle in the sky', this unusual construction has confused visitors for many years, as many believed it was an old Arabic watch tower. This Moorish-looking tower was constructed in the 1980s to provide water for a project that never got off the ground. The town hall approved the water tower so long as it blended in, hence its Arabic design.

Islamic influence

Visitors to Benalmádena might also have been mistaken for believing that El



The fairy tale-like Colomares Castle in Benalmádena Pueblo. :: SUR

Castillo de Bil Bil is a well-preserved relic of Andalucía's Islamic period. This magnificent building, which was originally to be called El Castillo Ben Azahar, is perched on the edge of the Mediterranean and is surrounded by palm trees and water features, a scene that conjures

images of One Thousand and One Nights.

The building's exterior is decorated with typical red plaster with tiles and bas-reliefs that follow the exquisite Nasrid tradition. The surroundings of the building have gardens with various



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The neo-Mudéjar Casa de los Navajas in Torremolinos. :: T. BRYANT

sources of Muslim inspiration, which gives it a special beauty. Giving the appearance of a defensive fortress, the mansion was structurally conceived from a courtyard, around which the architectural space is distributed. Its decoration is similar to that of the Nasrid palaces of Comares and Los Leones. The interior boasts horseshoe arches, ornamental lattices, glazed tiles and intricate stucco plasterwork.

Bil Bil Castle, as English speakers call it, was actually the residence of a Spanish/French family by the name of Hermann. In 1930, they commissioned architect Enrique Atencia to build a summerhouse perched on the cliff's edge. He was assisted by Antonio Santiastaban, an artist renowned for his work on the restorations of the Alhambra Palace in Granada. The Spanish Civil War broke out during the construction of the house and the family returned to France. In 1937, it was sold to an American named William Schestrom, which is how the castle acquired the name Bil Bil. Years later it was brought by a Belgian named Gerard Saintmoux, who left the building to deteriorate considerably. It remained in a state of ruin until it was purchased in the early 1980s by Benalmádena council, who completely renovated the building. Today, especially at sunset, the castle is an icon of Benalmádena and a modern-day image of its Islamic past. Because of its spectacular location, it has become the most

popular venue for civil weddings in the province of Malaga.

Majestic castle

The Castillo de Colomares, which rises majestically from the woodland that separates Benalmádena Pueblo from the coast, is a fairy tale-like castle dedicated to Christopher Columbus and the discovery of the New World.

This eclectic castle is one of the rarest and most unique tourist attractions in the province of Malaga: it is also the biggest monument to the explorer in the world. It was built between 1987 and 1994 and is an architectural fantasy that mixes influences of different styles such as Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic and Mudejar.

The 1,500-square-metre building, which also pays homage to the Catholic Monarchs, was constructed with wood, brick, concrete and stone. The architects and stone masons worked without machinery; instead employing techniques that would have been used in the Middle Ages.

The monument has several symbolic elements of the three cultures present in medieval Spain: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It is also worth noting the presence of a Chinese pagoda that symbolises the original idea of Columbus to reach the coasts of Asia.



The neo-baroque Malaga city hall building. :: SUR

The interior of the building, which boasts several stained-glass windows, houses a small chapel dedicated to Saint Isabel of Hungary. It is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the smallest church in the world.

There is also an empty mausoleum, supposedly installed in the hope that the remains of Columbus would someday rest there.

Palace fit for a sultan

Further along the coast in Torremolinos, the Casa de los Navajas is another grandeur palace that would appear to have been the residence of an important sultan.

Built by Antonio Navajas Ruiz in 1925, this intriguing neo-mudejar style home looks somewhat out-of-place, wedged between residential apartments on the rocky slope overlooking the Bajondillo Beach.

The Luque-Navajas family, who made their fortunes in the sugar cane business, were one of several wealthy families that chose Torremolinos for their second homes during the 1920s and 1930s.

This outstanding palace has intricately decorated facades set with beautiful tiled arches with stucco mouldings that add a sense of mystery to the edifice. The internal rooms are styled with Arab architecture, where the floral ornamentation, mosaics, fountains and internal gardens are reminiscent of the grand rooms of the Alhambra Palace.

Today, the building is managed by the town hall and used for weddings, exhibitions, recitals and ceremonies.

Neo-baroque city hall

The grand palace that houses Malaga city hall gives the impression of a glorious aristocratic past, yet this impressive building was constructed just 100 years ago. The main neo-baroque façade has modernist details and a splendid balcony with white marble columns that enhances its dynamic appearance. The most notable rooms are located on the first floor, which is reached via an imperial-style staircase with marble balustrade. These include the Plenary Hall, where council meetings are held; the Gallery of Mayors, which displays a collection of portraits of the city's former



The Nasrid-style Castillo de Bil Bil has confused many visitors. :: **SUR**

mayors; and the Hall of Mirrors, which is decorated with portraits of different characters of relevance in the history of the city.

The interior boasts a porticoed courtyard with semi-circular arches like those found in typical 16th century Andalusian palaces.

One of the things that many people fail to notice, especially in Malaga province, is that some of the churches, although they may appear to be hundreds of years old, were actually built during the middle of last century. Many of the churches and religious buildings were burnt and sacked during the vicious Civil War. One example of this can be found in Ronda, a town renowned for palaces, religious buildings

and monuments that have several hundred years of history. The Iglesia del Socorro, located in the centre of Ronda, stands on the site of a former church that was burnt to the ground during the civil conflict.

During the 16th century, a small chapel and hospital for the poor (giving rise to the name of Socorro - help), was erected and consecrated by the Bishop of Malaga. A new church was built in 1709, but was destroyed by Nationalist troops in 1936.

The current church was built in the 1950s. The perfectly symmetrical façade is flanked by two bell towers that are crowned by spires of glazed tiles, giving the impression of 17th century Andalusian architecture at its best.



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Past, present and future of outstanding golf

The Costa del Sol is home to more than 60 championship courses, four of which are in Europe's top ten

Sublime greens, a rich history and venue of the 2003 Solheim Cup: the Costa has been a golfing Shangri-La for decades now and will be for many more

LAURENCE CRUMBIE

It is Europe's premier golfing destination, and with good reason. Extending along more than 100km of scenic coastline and backdropped by striking sierras, the Costa del Sol (or Costa del Golf, as it is also known) is home to more than 60 championship courses,

four of which are in Europe's top ten, and hosts some of the most prestigious tournaments on the professional circuit.

Though not peak season, the long summer hours make golfing into the evening not only a possibility but a pleasure, with some clubs offering special twilight deals.

Many of the courses are concentrated around Benahavís, Estepona, Marbella, San Roque and Sotogrande, but the Costa encompasses the whole of Malaga province, meaning a world-class course is never far away.

Golf on the Costa - and in Spain generally - is experiencing an unusual highpoint. As it is a non-contact, open-

air sport, golf courses have been largely permitted to remain open during the pandemic, prompting people to pick up drivers for the first time or brush the rust off their irons and head to the fairways. The announcement in October 2020 that the Solheim Cup would come to Finca Cortesín in Casares - and the 200 million euros it is expected to generate for the region - was another enormous boost during an otherwise testing time for the tourism-dependent Costa. And to top it all off, Jon Rahm recently became the first Spanish golfer to win the US Open - an achievement that may spur a whole generation of Spaniards into taking up the challenging but rewarding sport.

Quality

For former European Tour player David Steele, 65, there is nowhere else on Earth like the Costa del Sol, which he "fell in love with" almost 40 years ago. Now based in Manilva, David explained that it was not only the perks of local life - including the excellent climate and cuisine - but also "the quality of the golf courses" that encouraged him to make the Costa his home in 1983.

"Some of the early memories of golf in Andalucía would be the World Cup in '73 at Las Brisas, when Jack Nicklaus and Johnny Miller won," he told SUR in English. "That was one of my first memories of golf here in Andalucía - playing at Las Brisas, which I think is one of the great golf courses in all of Europe."



Golf on the Costa del Sol is not just a pastime but a culture. :: SUR

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Over the decades, David has seen golf on the Costa change, develop, blossom. Its international flavour, though, has always been there.

“When I started working as a golf director at El Paraiso in the mid to late 80s, there was every nationality - Spanish, French, Scandinavians. There were people from every country and over the years it has just expanded.”

In particular, David is enthusiastic about golf in San Roque, which he says has “five of the best golf courses in the whole of Europe.” Top of the list, of

course, is Valderrama: once called Los Aves because of its abundance of bird-life, the Real Club Valderrama hosts the Andalusian Masters, one of the European Tour’s flagship events, every year in October and has welcomed many of the world’s greatest golfers - including Tiger Woods, who first took to its fairways in 1997, for the Ryder Cup. On that occasion, the Europeans, captained by Spanish icon Seve Ballesteros, retained the cup with a slim victory - 14½ to 13½.

Tiger’s turn to win at Valderrama

would come two years later, in the WGC-American Express Championship, when he beat Malaga-born golfer and two-time Ryder Cup player Miguel Ángel Jiménez in a playoff.

Nicknamed “The Workman” because of his methodical playing style and former employment as a mechanic, Jiménez is a popular homegrown talent, but by no means the only one.

Seasoned golfer Azahara Muñoz, who will represent Spain at the Olympic Games in Tokyo this year, and 22-year-old Ana Peláez, who qualified for the 2021 US Women’s Open, are also points of pride for the Costa and testimony to the quality that its golfing environment fosters.

Golf on the Costa del Sol is not just a pastime but a culture. Its fairways are enriched with history - quite

literally in the case of the 17th hole at Valderrama, where a plaque commemorates Jiménez’s epic albatross in the 1994 Volvo Masters - and golf has been fortunate to remain on the radar during the pandemic, which has caused other sports such difficulties. Some controversy surrounds the construction of

new golf courses, as investors must ensure they are sustainable and involve the input of local communities, but there is no doubt that the future of golf on the Costa del Sol is as glittering as its glorious past.



Young female golf player at Costa del Sol resort. :: SUR

DAVID’S FAVOURITE COURSES

- ▶ Real Club Valderrama. San Roque.
- ▶ Aloha Golf Club. Marbella.
- ▶ Club de Los Naranjos. Marbella.
- ▶ La Reserva de Sotogrande Golf Club. Sotogrande.
- ▶ San Roque Golf Club. San Roque.

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Whether you choose the coast or the inland areas, the Costa del Sol has unique experiences to offer that improve day-to-day life; such as taking a walk by the sea, popping down to the golf course to work on your swing or looking after yourself with a bike ride or by running a few kilometres. Simply living. Developers in the area have known perfectly well how to interpret this and have developed a wide range of high-quality, residential complexes with spaces opening out on the best locations, such as those offered by Gilmar Real Estate.

One of them is Royal Casares, at the heart of the Costa del Sol, between Marbella and Sotogrande. A newly built development near to top-notch leisure and entertainment areas such as Puerto de la Duquesa or Puerto Banús, just ten minutes from various golf courses, walking paths and marinas and with quick access to the Mediterranean motorway.

Casares Golf is the ideal option for golf lovers. This development of new, front-line golf properties on the prestigious course offers two and three-bedroom apartments and penthouses with large panoramic terraces, communal swimming pools and gardens. In addition, the purchase of one of these homes is associated with a share in the golf course.

Urbanites will enjoy the possibilities of a town like Estepona. The Scenic development, which Gilmar Real Estate is promoting, gives them the chance to choose from ground-floor apartments with private gardens to duplex penthouses with one to five bedrooms and spacious terraces. Luxury and innovation with technology, design and the highest quality materials provide maximum comfort along with the very best panoramic views.

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The Comares zip wire. :: SUR



Grape harvest, Moclinejo. :: Ñ. S.

Building on the back of a bridge

The new El Saltillo attraction has shifted attention eastwards to the Axarquía

Seek shelter from the sun this summer in the forested area of El Alcázar, El Borge's botanical park or in one of the area's museums that pay tribute to local wine or bandits

JENNIE RHODES

Since the opening of El Saltillo - the Axarquía's answer to the Caminito del Rey - in October 2020, the east of Malaga's inland villages have been working together to promote their offer of rural tourism.

Like the Guggenheim effect in Bilbao and the museums of Malaga, the Axarquía hopes that the fame of the new hiking route with its vertiginous suspension bridge will attract people to the rest of the area. Now is the time to promote the inland beauty as an ideal complement to the popular beaches of its coastal resorts such as Nerja, Torrox and Torre del Mar.

El Saltillo, a route which runs along a gorge between the municipalities of Canillas de Aceituno and Sedella, forms part of the Gran Senda (Great Trail) circuit of walking routes around the province.

Somewhat harder than the world-famous Caminito del Rey, which skirts the Los Gaitanes gorge near Ardales, this trail begins in the central square of Canillas de Aceituno and covers eight kilometres (round trip), giving spectacular views of the Almanchaes river.

The highlight of the route is the suspension bridge, made of wood and steel, which at 50 metres is among the three longest in Spain.

El Saltillo is free to do and its promotion has helped draw attention to other, perhaps cooler, ways of enjoying the great outdoors in the Axarquía.

Still in Canillas de Aceituno, the Roman bridge is well worth seeing, as a reminder of the area's history, which dates back to Phoenician times and has seen Roman as well as Islamic rule.

The villages of the Axarquía all pay testament to their varied past, through Roman bridges and aqueducts, Islamic and Mudejar architecture, gastronomy and even vocabulary.

Adventure and adrenaline

If the suspension bridge hasn't satisfied a craving for height, Comares boasts one of the longest, and highest, zip wires in Spain, at 436 metres long and 100 metres above a valley just outside the village. If there are no sun loungers to be found on the beach, the company that runs the zip wire has come up with an alternative - for 50 euros, two people can spend up to 45 minutes suspended from the zip wire on a hammock. For the most daring, there's even the option to spend the night on one.

The same company also organises night climbs of La Maroma, Malaga province's highest mountain. At 2,069 metres above sea level, it looks over the Axarquía area and in summer should really only be tackled at night, with experienced guides.

For those seeking a less adrenaline-

charged experience, La Viñuela reservoir offers pedalos, sailing and paddle surfing, as well as shaded areas among the trees to enjoy an evening stroll.

Still high up, but allowing you to keep your feet firmly on the ground, the villages of Alfarnate and Alfarnatejo, at 886 and 852 metres above sea level respectively, are two of the highest villages in Malaga province and therefore considerably cooler, especially in the evenings, than most of the Axarquía in July and August.

A great option for some summer walking is at El Alcázar, near Alcaucín. This forested area provides plenty of shade and has camping and picnic facilities too. In Alcaucín itself, water from the Fuente de los Cinco Cañas fountain is said never to have stopped flowing from its source in the Sierra Tejeda mountains, providing cool water for locals and visitors alike. It is a common



El Saltillo suspension bridge... **SUR**



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The Alcázar stream runs through the municipality of Alcaucín. :: J. ALMELLONES

sight to see locals filling up their water bottles from the fountain.

Another area that offers outdoor space and shade is La Alcúa botanical park in El Borge. Small but sweet, the gardens boast yuca, palm and banana trees, as well as jasmin, bamboo and much more. It is open from 10am to 8pm every day and is free of charge.

While in El Borge, a visit to the Posada del Bandolero, which is both a museum and quirky tribute to the bandits who roamed nineteenth-century Axarquía, is a must, telling the stories of some of Andalucía's most notorious criminals.

The inn also provides a welcome rest from the heat as well as meals and accommodation.

In Sedella the magnificent Roman bridge in the centre of the village has just undergone restoration work, which includes improved signposting for the various walks that start at that point. It is a magnificent reminder of the Axarquía's Roman past.

In neighbouring Salares, it's the Puente Árabe, or Arabic bridge, built during the Islamic period, that is a focal point, which also houses a visitor centre. This offers a spacious indoor area, out of the sun, to learn about the Axarquía's wildlife and tourism.

Produce and products

The Axarquía is sometimes known as the garden of Malaga, thanks to its microclimate and therefore abundance of crops, which range from traditional figs, almonds, olives and grapes - the Malaga Muscatel variety - to the introduced sub tropical plants such as the mango, papaya, avocado and custard apple.

The humble Moscatel grape was given a huge boost in 2017 when it was officially recognised as belonging to a Globally Important Agricultural Heri-

tage System (GIAHS) by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

Since then, the main grape-growing villages in the Axarquía, namely El Borge, Iznate, Almáchar and Moclinejo, have been promoting the product, which has been an important part of the Axarquía economy since the Islamic era of Al-Andalus.

Paying tribute

One of the best places to find out more about the history and production of the raisins and indeed wine, is the family-run Bodegas Antonio Muñoz Cabrera in Moclinejo.

Tours can be arranged at any time of year of this bodega-cum-museum, which pays tribute to five generations of a family that produces raisins and wine in the village.

While in Moclinejo, the Casa Museo Axarquía, located in the tiny hamlet of El Valdés, is also well worth a visit.

A number of villages celebrate 'La Vendimia' - the grape harvest, which takes place throughout August and September. In fact the village of Cómpeta

has a square named in its honour - Plaza de la Vendimia, where La Noche del Vino - the night of the wine - would normally be celebrated on 15 August.

While the harvest of other produce takes place at different times of year, the end of summer signals the anticipation of the start of the mango harvest, which gets under way in September and is followed by the olive picking months of November to April, approximately the same time as avocado season.

While the beaches of the Axarquía may seem like the obvious places to head to during the hot summer months, there's lots to see and plenty of places to escape the heat in the villages of the Axarquía too.

MORE INFORMATION

► Casa Museo Axarquía in Moclinejo. See page 50.

► Comares zip wire and Moroma night climbs. www.viveaventura.es.



Aerial view of Canillas de Aceituno. :: SUR

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Blissful beach clubs



Marbella Club, once the private estate of Prince Hohenlohe, still retains the old world glamour. :: SUR

Turn up the heat for your summer holiday with a day at one of these cool coastal hangouts

Thanks to the marvels of contemporary architecture and engineering, one can enjoy the summery feel of warm sand between your toes without even venturing to the seaside

ANDREW FORBES

Chiringuitos, the laidback beach restaurants of Andalucía, are a ubiquitous part of holidaying on the Costa del Sol. Sipping a cold 'caña' of beer and snacking on an 'espeto' of local sardines, freshly cooked on

an open wood burning fire remains the quintessential Malaga beach experience.

Yet beach restaurants on Andalucía's most visited coast have come a long way since the 1950s. Now visitors can expect gourmet dining with views of Africa, water sports on Europe's largest artificial lagoon and even a sandy beach inland.

So let Summer's Here take you on a journey along the western Costa del Sol, sharing some favourite coastal hotspots and chilled seashore retreats, from chic, bohemian hideaways to glamorous crowd pleasers with brilliant white daybeds and lively summer soundtracks.

Thanks to the marvels of contemporary architecture and engineering, one can en-

joy the summery feel of warm sand between your toes without even venturing to the seaside.

Ensnared in nature, surrounded by olive and oak trees, and close to some of the finest villas in Europe, one will find The Beach at La Reserva Club Sotogrande. This is an extraordinary and elegant beach club, almost hidden within Sotogrande's exclusive La Reserva Country Club, at the very western edge of the Costa de Sol. The Beach offers an understated, refined, luxury beach experience, synonymous with Sotogrande.

An artificial beach of golden Andalusian sand leads seamlessly into a huge pool. It's a remarkable creation, a resort within a resort, that brings the joy of the beach to a country club where families can enjoy water sports on the adjacent lagoon, as well as play golf on a championship course; or even have a game of padel and tennis. There's even a kids club. The Beach, surrounded by landscaped Mediterranean gardens,

includes a stylish beach bar and restaurant. The summery menu includes local and regional fish and seafood, fun sharing plates like tacos, fresh healthy salads, rice, paella, as well as meats from the grill. Despite the elite location, The Beach is open to the public - a popular choice if you're looking for space, security and tranquillity for your beach club experience.

Crystal lagoon

The concept of bringing the beach inland has also been achieved, near Estepona, where one finds the Alcazaba Lagoon, said to be Europe's largest artificial freshwater lagoon. Complete with its own beach and chiringuito, this inland haven for water sports is ideal for those who prefer their beach without the salty breeze of the sea.

5-star elegance

The western Costa del Sol has long been a favourite for VIPs, and back in 2010 Mi-



The Beach at La Reserva Club, a privileged place to enjoy a good cocktail. :: SUR



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Alcazaba Lagoon, said to be Europe's largest artificial freshwater lagoon. :: SUR

chelle Obama, then the First Lady of the United States, made a private visit to the coast with her daughter Sasha. She stayed at the prestigious Villa Padierna Palace Hotel, in Benahavis, between Estepona and Marbella.

It was during this stay that she inaugurated the hotel's elegant beach club, now known as Anantara By The Sea Beach Club. This is a place for a sophisticated interpretation of classic Andalusian fish and seafood dishes like paella, but with lobster, and carabineros prawns from Cadiz. Look out for unique By The Sea events throughout the year, including live music.

Taste of summer

The beach club experience has evolved well beyond just stretching out by a pool or beach and listening to some cool beats. Gastronomy is a deliciously integral part of any contemporary escapade to the coast. At Spiler Beach Club, near Estepona, visitors enjoy a taste of Andalucía with a hint of Asia, and all while enjoying views of Africa!

Classic beach dining has been elevated with a touch of the exotic. David Fernández, Executive Chef of Kempinski Hotel Bahía, has been seeking out unique artisan food producers as well as high quality local ingredients from the sea and the land

for his fresh, summer dishes.

Mellow hangouts

Despite the popularity of the Costa del Sol with international visitors over the past half century or more, you can still discover little gems along this stretch of the Mediterranean, hidden by pine trees or sand dunes. Estepona's Sonora Beach is one such place with its boho, mismatched chairs and tables, shaded by colourful Balinese parasols. This is the place for a chilled day with a soundtrack of relaxed beats and the gentle sound of the waves.

Barefoot luxury

Tucked away in the quiet residential area of El Rosario is Luuma Beach, a chic, barefoot luxury restaurant, that conveys calm and sophistication thanks to its pastel, organic palette, and use of abundant natural materials like wicker woven lampshades that hang over chunky wooden tables, set with woven grass table mats and linen napkins tied with natural string. It's an effortlessly elegant look that is complemented by tasty, fresh and healthy dishes, many of which are vegetarian and vegan.

Classic vintage

With such diversity, it's little wonder that Marbella is recognised as the epicentre of

the region's beach club scene. Marbella Club, once the private estate of Prince Hohenlohe and the first exclusive hotel on the coast, still retains the old world glamour of its Beach Club. It's been 65 years since this open-air beach resort was founded, yet the iconic thatched palapa remains, as does the ambience of chic elegance that's unique to this lush and privileged corner of classic, timeless Marbella. Enjoy poolside cocktails at your sunbed, or head to the dining tables, shaded by parasols, where waiters, wearing pristine white dinner jacks and bow ties, will tempt you with a menu of Mediterranean seafood.

For more classic Marbella beach experiences, pay a visit to Club La Cabane, part of the Los Monteros Spa & Golf Resort. One of Marbella's best neighbourhoods is home to this flagship beach club. Popular with royalty and VIPs during the Costa del Sol's golden era, La Cabane has stood the test of time and remains an icon.

Party time

Although still home to genuine old world charm, Marbella is renowned for its summer partying. From boutique beach clubs like La Sala by The Sea, to international brands including Nikki Beach, there's a club that suits your taste in music and fashion. Nikki Beach, west of Marbella, is synonymous with luxury partying to a soundtrack of house music from chill, deep afro to Latin. It attracts a well-heeled clientele from across the world who want to eat sushi and seafood and crack open bottles of champagne.

The emblematic Ocean Club Marbella remains one of the most recognised beach clubs of the Costa del Sol. This Puerto Banús holiday favourite sets the standard for sleek, trendy, and glamorous beachside dining and partying. Ocean Club's white day beds and aquamarine cushions capture the essence of the Mediterranean; its 9,000 square metres of summertime indulgence epitomises holiday fun. Expect live DJ sets, dancers, performers, live music, fine-dining and colourful cocktails, all around a huge saltwater swimming pool.

With well over a hundred beaches on the Costa del Sol, many with their own beach club or informal chiringuito restaurant, you're sure to find your perfect place to indulge in Andalucía's 'sol y playa'.

'MORE THAN JUST A BEACH CLUB'

An interview with Stefanie Biguzzi, Ocean Club Marketing Manager

SUR IN ENGLISH



Ocean Club Marbella. :: SUR

Can you tell us a little more about Ocean Club and its history?

The club dates all the way back to 1966, the year "La Siesta" was born. It was part of a new development project called Andalucía La Nueva, led by builder José Banús. It was considered one of the biggest beach clubs in Europe at the time. In 2008, Thierry Jacobs, the current owner, took the club over, carried out major renovations and turned into what Ocean Club Marbella is today.

How have things changed in the

last years?

We are constantly improving our establishment with renovations and innovations. The clientele has remained constant, as returning clients want to continue experiencing the OC lifestyle.

How have you prepared for this summer?

We were closed in 2020 due to the pandemic. We decided to prioritise the health and safety of our clients and staff. We did not wish to put anyone at risk, as it is not always pos-

sible to control the uncontrollable. This year, we have come back in full force, but we are still following strict guidelines with regards to restrictions. Beds have been placed at the required distance; we have enforced the mask-wearing policy, whilst walking around the club etc. At all times health and safety is a priority.

What events do you have planned for this summer?

For our Friday Sessions, we will be offering renowned guest DJs. We have a Timeless event, once a month, with guest DJ Tom Novy. On the 21st of July we celebrate Belgium's national day with our "Fête des Belges" event, and we plan on holding our Champagne Parties on the last Sunday of July and August (always respecting the restrictions and guidelines).

What sort of clients does Ocean Club attract?

Ocean Club attracts a core demographic of successful professionals and entrepreneurs between 40 and 70, as well as a group of high-income, young professionals between 25 and 40 who are drawn to the legendary parties and events. Both, of these two core markets are made up of a profile of affluent, trend-conscious European, Middle Eastern and, indeed, international clients. For many of them, the Ocean Club experience has become an important part in their decision to spend time in Marbella.

What can clients find at Ocean Club?

Clients can find our Amaï restaurant, offering an international and delectable cuisine; a bar in the centre of the club and an immense turquoise pool filled with 40% seawater, surrounded by Balinese beds designed by ourselves. Ocean Club also boasts an OC shop where you can find the latest swimwear trends and a spa where you can relax.

How will this summer be different?

This summer we will see a change in nationalities, depending on the restrictions of each country. Our clients will be looking for a safe haven to enjoy the OC lifestyle, without putting their health at risk.

The sun shines on the property market

There is a strong demand for high-end properties on the Costa del Sol

The Covid pandemic has hit everyone hard but this particular cloud may have had a silver lining for the real estate sector

DEBBIE BARTLETT

Summer is here and there is generally a feeling of optimism in the air. Some of last year's Covid restrictions have been lifted, people in Spain are able to move around freely again and visitors are able to come from a number of other countries. As the vaccination programme in the EU gathers pace the risk of infection is lessened, and there is a sense of confidence that things

are starting to get back to normal.

But what about the property market in this area? Has it suffered badly from the effects of the pandemic, and how is it looking this summer?

A lot seems to depend on the type of property we are talking about. Gert Cleymans, the CEO of Iddomus Developers SL, says "The Costa del Sol real estate market has always been among the most privileged in the country, being high on the list of preferred destinations in which to own a second home or permanent residence, with a very specific niche for luxury property and lifestyle. Upper-end property is therefore always in relatively high demand. I dare say that it is currently to an important degree responsible for the extraordinary and speedy recovery that the market is experiencing after the initial parenthesis of the pandemic lockdown."

Strong demand

Mar Aguado Martínez, Gilmar Real Estate's Chief Marketing Officer for the Southern Region, agrees that there is a strong demand for high-end properties in this area. She also points out that Marbella is such a popular area that demand tends to be the same all year round, rather than seasonal.

She says that luxury properties such as those in La Zagaleta and the Golden Mile are especially popular, and that because the demand for this type of home has increased, we may see a rise in prices. "The property sector is the solution for reactivating the economy," she stresses.

The buyers appear to be a mixture

A new residential development project behind Estepona. :: GILMAR





There is a very specific niche for luxury property and lifestyle. :: IDDOMUS

of people buying second homes and those relocating to the area. These experts agree that last year's lockdown led many people to rethink their housing requirements.

"The pandemic has resulted in a change of mentality. With so many

people working from home, they began to rethink their needs. Many decided they wanted more space, or to be in nicer surroundings. Marbella is an ideal location, because it has so much to offer and for the type of properties here. That's why it is so

popular," says Mar Aguado.

Gert Cleymans says there is no doubt that the global Covid-19 pandemic triggered the need to outweigh certain priorities on a global scale, in terms of way of life, including the choice of location, quality of life and



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value of investment.

So people have been buying property during the pandemic, but with the difficulties in travel, does that mean they have all been from Spain?

Not at all, says Mar. “The data that is issued can be confusing, sometimes. Last year there were more Spanish buyers, but now it is balancing out and there is a mixture of those who are in this country and international clients. But Covid has changed the way of buying property, and technology came into its own. Those who couldn’t view properties in person were able to tour them online, and we were able to keep in contact with our clients and potential clients virtually even though we couldn’t see them in person.”

She says that some of those buying on the Costa del Sol are doing so as an investment, including some big investors, and that for many people in Spain real estate is seen as a form of savings.

Property market

Pernille Marie Sydnese of Casa Concept in Fuengirola agrees that the property market is surprisingly buoyant. Her company has sold more or less all its low-budget properties to Spanish buyers this year, and there have also been more viewings by French people than usual. “Spring has brought more buyers from northern Europe, as travel restrictions have eased up,” she says.

“Before the Covid pandemic summers were usually a quiet time, but last summer turned out to be a big surprise and I think this one will be the same. Many people we talk to were planning to retire here but have now decided to buy 10 to 15 years earlier than planned because they can work from home in Spain,” she says.

So, this looks like good news for the property sector and the economy of the Costa del Sol in general. There is light at the end of the Covid-19 tunnel, and many people’s lifestyles have taken a turn for the better. The old saying about every cloud having a silver lining may be truer than we think.



A pool is an important feature of any Costa property. :: GILMAR



Many clients look for quiet places. :: GILMAR



Spectacular surroundings. :: IDDOMUS



A home with a view. :: GILMAR



Spacious living areas. :: IDDOMUS

'THE COSTA DEL SOL IS IDENTIFIED INTERNATIONALLY AS A FAVOURITE RESIDENTIAL DESTINATION'

Gert Cleymans,
Civil Engineer
and CEO of
IDDOMUS
developers
SUR IN ENGLISH



Can you tell us more about IDDomus, and how it started?

IDDomus is a pioneering, one-stop, development and construction company with Belgian management. We specialise in the branded design and construction of single-family, contemporary, turn-key, signature villas; built to Northern European quality standards. The company was founded in Marbella nearly a decade ago, responding to a then noteworthy lack of quality options that could offer foreign residents fully comprehensive and hassle-free, high-standard solution for the construction of their dream home.

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ment properties for refurbishment, in addition to a selection of pre-designed ID-domus signature projects with granted permits or in an advanced stage of licensing procedure.

What is your view of the current market situation and what effect has the global pandemic had on your business in particular?

Well, as a developer offering a bespoke service to a luxury property and lifestyle niche, I dare say that we have been spared from detriment. Two factors are directly responsible here, the first, primary and essential is our privileged Mediterranean location. The Costa del Sol is internationally identified as a preferred residential destination, and the global pandemic has reinforced this status in so far that its confining repercussion has triggered the worldwide desire to diversify property investment in natural, luxury, lifestyle-driven environments like ours. The second factor is that we are constructors and our activity - categorised as essential - was not required to stop for any considerable period. With over eight projects under construction, we have been able to stay on track.

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An arty summer in a city full of galleries

The capital of the Costa del Sol offers a thriving and rapidly growing clutch of galleries, museums and cultural spaces

Malaga has found itself a place deep within the cultural sphere over the past ten years and it has become a favourite destination for art lovers

TONY BRYANT

Malaga is a vibrant city crammed with cultural spaces, museums and art galleries, an ideal outing, then, for those looking for cultural activity closer to home again this summer.

The capital of the Costa del Sol offers a thriving and rapidly growing clutch of artistic attractions, especially in areas like Soho, a chic artistic neighbourhood that was once an important bourgeois area with beautiful mansions and palaces. Located behind the CAC (Contemporary Art Centre), just south of the Alameda, this popular neighbourhood boasts some of the best street art in Malaga.

CAC Málaga, located in the old wholesale market building, is the point of reference for lovers of modern art. It offers permanent exhibitions by local artists, plus regular temporary shows, with names such as Louise Bourgeois, Thomas Hirschhorn, Damien Hirst or Julian Opie being among past guest exhibitors.

Sculptures

The main space in the gallery is currently taken up by Franz West. Last Decades, a collection of sculptures by

the Austrian artist who died in 2012. These 35 pieces on loan from private collections can be seen at CAC Málaga until 29 August.

Also at CAC is La Mirada Inconcreta, a collection made up of photographs highlighting elements like architecture, landscapes and the people of Malaga. This show runs until 3 October and features 42 pictures taken by 17 national and international photographers over the last 40 years.

The most recent inauguration is The Silence of Eternity, an exhibition by

Canadian Don Bergland, a surrealist artist who constructs his artwork like theatrical presentations. This is the artist's first European exhibition and it includes 50 works with themes such as time, ageing, nostalgia and the search for eutopia. These can be seen until 12 September.

World renowned museums

Malaga has established itself deep within the cultural sphere over the past ten years and the city has harvested - at a cost of around 100 million euros - a range of world-renowned museums.

A 20-minute stroll from the contemporary art centre will lead to the State Museum of Russian Art of St Petersburg (known locally as the Russian Museum), located in an old cigarette factory (La Tabacalera).

Horror of war

This year's annual exhibition at the Russian Museum is War and Peace in Russian Art, which can be viewed until next April. It is made up of 180 works that together present a vibrant journey through the history of Russia guided by the horror of war. The common thread of the exhibition is the title of the novel by Leo Tolstoy, who also stars in one of the current temporary shows. Leo Tolstoy - The Path of Life is an exhibition made up of 39 pictorial pieces, graphics and sculptures based on one of the most notable literary works of universal culture.

The Russian Museum's second temporary exhibition is Iván Aivazovsky



Malaga port and lighthouse. :: SUR



and the Marinist Painters in Russia, a selection of maritime masterpieces by the painter and sailor, Ivan Konstantinovich Aivazovsky, which offers a journey through the different representations of water, sea and the ocean.

Both temporary exhibitions can be viewed until 12 December.

Fine art and archaeology

The Malaga Museum, housed in the luxurious Palacio de la Aduana, exhib-

its over 2,000 pieces of fine art, and a collection of over 15,000 archaeological artefacts discovered during various excavations that have occurred in the province. The museum is currently hosting a temporary exhibition in trib-



A visitor at the Picasso museum in Malaga. :: S. SALAS

ute to Malaga painter Eugenio Chicano, who died in 2019. Eugenio Chicano, Siempre brings together more than 50 paintings - many of which are from the artist's private collection - along with others on loan from the Picasso Museum and the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts.

Lovers of Picasso will discover Spain's largest collection of his work in the Palacio de Buenavista, the 18th century palace that houses more than 200 drawings, paintings, sculptures and ceramics from the different periods of Picasso's life.

The Picasso Museum is currently exhibiting Metamorphosis, 100 works by artist Miquel Barceló. The exhibition (until 26 September) takes its name from the 1915 novel by Franz Kafka and includes a collection of ceramics, oil paintings and watercolours, small sculptures and travel note books, along with seven bronze statues that have been installed on the central courtyard of the museum.

Birthplace of Picasso

A short walk from the Buenavista Palace will lead to the Picasso Birthplace Museum in Plaza de Merced, which has been an official heritage site since 1983. Along with a collection of works and personal belongings of the artist and his family, this small museum offers an insight into Picasso's connection with his childhood, his origins and his land.



Barceló in Picasso Museum. :: SUR



Exhibition in the Russian Museum. :: B. L.



Chicano in the Museo de Malaga. :: B. L.

Located in the Palacio de Villalón, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum houses a vast art collection of work that pays special attention to 18th and 19th century Andalusian artists. The museum is currently hosting two temporary exhibitions.

Piranesi. A Visionary's Prints presents a collection of prints produced by 18th century Venetian artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi. The artist earned a reputation as the best visual chronicler of Rome with his scenic views combining the baroque city with the urban landscape of ancient monumental ruins. The exhibition can be visited until 25 July.

To celebrate the museum's tenth anniversary, the Thyssen Museum is also offering an exhibition under the title of Pintar la Luz - Catalan Masters of the Carmen Thyssen Collection. Gathered from the baroness's private collection, the exposition includes paintings, drawings and sculptures produced by a group of 19th and 20th century Catalan masters.

Feminist abstract art

However, a cultural trip around the galleries and museums of Malaga would not be complete without a trip to the Centro

Pompidou Malaga. Along with a semi-permanent collection of works by artists such as Picasso, Francis Bacon, Giacometti, Frida Kahlo, and Kandinsky, the centre known as the Cube is currently offering a temporary collection (until 23 August) titled El Arte Abstracto en Femenino. The collection

focuses on the contribution of female abstract artists with more than 500 works produced from 1860 to 1980.

Other interesting museums include the Museo Automovilístico de Malaga, a motor and fashion collection also located in the same building at the Russian Museum; the glass museum (Museo del Vidrio y Cristal); and El Museo Revelló de Toro.

Due to the pandemic all museums, cultural spaces and galleries will have restricted capacity, and Covid protocol will have to be observed, including the wearing of face masks.



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A summer full of music

Concerts and music festivals in southern Spain this season

JULY

2

Suzette, 1213 Reggae Band, Victima o Verdugo: 9pm. Plaza de Toros. Lanzadera Rock Festival. Torremolinos. Free.

3

El José Flamenco fusion: 9.30pm. Museo Carmen Thyssen, Malaga. Música en el Patio.

3

Malaga University Chamber Choir: 1pm. Nuestra Señora de la Asunción church, Cómpeta.

3

Estrella Negra, Los Copiones, Zyryab: 9pm. Plaza de Toros. Lanzadera Rock Festival. Free.

3

Duelos: Recinto Musical Eduardo Ocón, Malaga park. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga flamenco festival.

3

Carlos Rivera: 10pm. Starlite, Marbella.

3

Vicente Amigo: Memoria de los Sentidos. Flamenco. 10pm. Marenostrum Fuengirola.

8

Baroque music concert: 8pm. Museo de Vélez-Málaga. Free. Email: mvvel@velez-malaga.es

9

The Gangberries: 9pm. Parque de la Batería, Torremolinos. Noches de Jazz y Blues. Free.

9

Kiko Veneno: 8.30pm. Teatro Cervantes, Malaga. Terral Festival.

9

Rubio Americano, Chico Quebranto, Ten

Shots and Ko: 9pm. Plaza de Toros. Torremolinos. Lanzadera Rock Festival. Free.

9

Repompeando: 9.30pm. Plaza de Toros, La Malagueta, Malaga. tribute to Rafaela Reyes, La Repompa. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

9

La Leyenda del Canario: 9.30pm. Plaza de la Constitución, Monda. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

9, 10

Manuel Carrasco: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

10

Jarillo Lata: 9.30pm. Museo Carmen Thyssen, Malaga. Música en el Patio. Reggae, ska, rock, flamenco, jazz and rumba.

10

Malaga Baroque Orchestra: 1pm. Nuestra Señora de la Asunción church, Cómpeta.

10

La Calle es Tuya, Mitad Doble, Musikomamos: 9pm. Plaza de Toros. Torremolinos.

Lanzadera Rock Festival. Free.

10

Andrea Motis Quintet: 8.30pm. Teatro Cervantes, Malaga. Terral Festival. Jazz.

10

Sara Baras: 9.30pm. Plaza de Toros, La Malagueta, Malaga. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

12

Pablo Alborán: 10pm. Starlite, Marbella.

13

Melendi: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

13, 14

We Love Queen: 10pm, Municipal auditorium, Benalmádena. Queen tribute act.

15

Flamenco en Andalucía: 8pm. Museo de Vélez-Málaga. Free. Email: mvvel@velez-malaga.es

15

Pepe de Lucía: 9.30pm. Plaza de Toros, La Malagueta, Malaga. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.



Suzette Moncrief. :: SUR


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JULY

15

Camela: Iconic Spanish pop group. Techno-rumba. Marenostrom Fuengirola.

15 & 16

Manuel Carrasco: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

16

Manuel Lombo and Argentina: 9.30pm. Plaza de Toros, La Malagueta, Malaga. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

16

Ainhoa Arteta: 8.30pm. Teatro Cervantes, Malaga. Terral Festival.

16

The Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra: 8pm. Palacio de Ferias y Congresos, Malaga. www.orquestafilarmonicademalaga.com

16

Daniel Amat Cuban Connection: 9pm. Parque de la Batería, Torremolinos. Noches de Jazz y Blues Festival.

17

Antonio El Pipa: 9.30pm. Plaza de Toros, La Malagueta, Malaga. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

17

José Carra and Rita Payés: 9.30pm. Museo Carmen Thyssen, Malaga. Música en el Patio. Piano and trombone, jazz rock and pop.

20 & 21

Abba Live TV: 10pm, Municipal auditorium, Benalmádena. Abba tribute act.

24

Maui de Utrera: 9.30pm. Museo Carmen Thyssen, Malaga. Música en el Patio. Flamenco.

25

Castlepark Electronic Sunset: Nina Kravitz, Héctor Oaks, Paco Guillén. 5pm. Marenostrom Fuengirola.

21

Niña Pastori: 10pm. Marbella Arena.

27, 28 & 29

The Magic of Broadway: 10pm, Municipal auditorium, Benalmádena. Songs from Broadway shows.

28, 29

Metal Paradise Fest: Acts to be confirmed. Marenostrom Fuengirola.

29

Músicas del Mundo: 8pm. Museo de Vélez-Málaga. Free. Email: mvvel@velezmalaga.es

29

Abba Mania: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

30

Belle MC Quartet: 9pm. Parque de la Batería, Torremolinos. Noches de Jazz y Blues.

30

Sister Sledge: 10pm. Marbella Arena.

31

Sidecars: 10pm. Marenostrom Fuengirola.

AUGUST

2

El Kanka: Cabaret Festival, Marenostrom Fuengirola.

4

Vanessa Martín: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival.

4

God Save The Queen: 10pm Cabaret Festi-



The Elton John Experience. :: SUR

val, Marenostrom Fuengirola. Queen tribute act.

5

God Save The Queen: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Queen tribute act. Concert Music Festival 2021.

5

Romances de Zarzuela: 8pm. Museo de Vélez-Málaga. Free.

5 & 25

Raphael: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

7

Raphael: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

8

Sara Baras: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

12

Bienal de Flamenco: 8pm. Museo de Vélez-Málaga. Free.

12

Pastora Soler: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

12

Chaparro de Málaga: Patio of the Museo de Vélez-Málaga. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

13

Hot Masho y Los Culpables: 9pm. Parque de la Batería, Torremolinos. Noches de Jazz y Blues.

13

Melendi: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

13

Tomatito: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

13

Mónica Naranjo: 10pm. Marenostrom Fuengirola.

14

Pablo Alborán: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

14

Miguel Poveda: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chiclana de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.



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AUGUST

14

Bonnie Tyler: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

16

Tom Jones: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

16

Hombres G: 10pm. Marenostrum Fuengirola.

17&18

Michael's Legacy: 10pm, Municipal auditorium, Benalmádena. Michael Jackson tribute.

18

Ara Malikian: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chicla de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

18

Plácido Domingo and Ainhoa Arteta: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

19

Estopa: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

19

Los Tres Tenores: 8pm. Museo de Vélez-Málaga. Free. Email: mvvel@velezmalaga.es

19

David Bisbal: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chicla de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

20

Rachel Malka & The Jazz Makers: 9pm. Parque de la Batería, Torremolinos. Noches de Jazz y Blues.

20

Juan Perro Sexteto: 10pm. Parque el Majuelo, Almuñécar. Jazz en la Costa.

21

Kenny Barron All Star Quartet: 10pm. Parque el Majuelo, Almuñécar. Jazz en la Costa.

21

The Elton John Experience: 10pm. Marbella Arena. Paul Maxwell's Elton tribute with the Malaga Symphonic Orchestra.

22

Cyrille Aimée: 10pm. Parque el Majuelo, Almuñécar. Jazz en la Costa.



Bonnie Tyler. :: SUR

23

Richard Bona and Alfredo Rodríguez Dúo: 10pm. Parque el Majuelo, Almuñécar. Jazz en la Costa.

23

La Oreja de Van Gogh: 10.30pm. Sancti Petri, Chicla de la Frontera. Concert Music Festival 2021.

23

David Bisbal: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

24

Brad Mehlbau Trío: 10pm. Parque el Majuelo, Almuñécar. Jazz en la Costa.

24

Kutxi Romero: 10pm. Spanish rock. Marenostrum Fuengirola.

24&25

The Magic of Broadway: 10pm, Municipal auditorium, Benalmádena. Songs from Broadway shows.

24

David Murray Trío with Marta Sánchez: 10pm. Parque el Majuelo, Almuñécar. Jazz en la Costa.

26

Paula Coronas: 8pm. Museo de Vélez-Málaga. Piano Recital. Free. Email: mvvel@velezmalaga.es

27

Pana Brothers: 9pm. Parque de la Batería,

Torremolinos. Noches de Jazz y Blues.

28

Ara Malikian: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella.

SEPTEMBER

1

The Bootleg Beatles: 10pm. Starlite Festival, Marbella. Beatles tribute act.

1

IV Cabildo Flamenco En El Olivar: 10pm. Auditorio Municipal, Archidona. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

3

Inoidal González: 9pm. Parque de la Batería, Torremolinos. Jazz Nights Festival.

3

IV Cabildo Flamenco Lo Que Es Cádiz: 10pm. Plaza Ochavada, Archidona. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

3

Juan Requena, Cenachería: Recinto Ferial. Benalmádena. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

4

Ana Almagro: Teatro Villa de Nerja. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

4

Miguel Poveda: 10pm. En Concierto tour. Marenostrum Fuengirola. Seated. Flamenco/copla.

4

Saturday Night Live: From 2pm. Free. Casemates Square, Gibraltar. info@culture.gi

5

Sofía Ellar: Singer-songwriter. 10pm. Marenostrum Fuengirola.

10

Antonia Contreras: Teatro Municipal Antonio Gala, Alhaurín el Grande. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

11

Thomas Helmig: Danish singer-songwriter. 10pm. Marenostrum Fuengirola.

14

La Lupi: Teatro Cervantes. Malaga. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

17

Manuela Carrasco: Plaza de Toros, Malaga. VII Bienal de Arte Flamenco de Málaga.

Violinist Ara
Malikian. :: SUR

MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ **Starlite Festival.** Nagüeles quarry venue. starlitemarbella.com
- ▶ **Marenostrum Fuengirola.** Next to Sohail castle. marenostrumfuengirola.com
- ▶ **Malaga Bienal Flamenco Festival.** Various venues around the province of Malaga. www.malagaenflamenco.com/bienal2021
- ▶ **Concert Music Festival.** Sancti Petri,

Chiclana de la Frontera (Cadiz). concertmusicfestival.com

▶ **Malaga Terral festival.** www.teatro-cervantes.es

▶ **Benalmádena auditorium.** Next to La Paloma park. www.auditoriobenalmadena.com

▶ **Torremolinos events.** www.torremolinosescultura.es

▶ **Jazz en la Costa.** Almuñécar. www.jazzgranada.es





The original tower of San Francisco church, formerly the mosque's minaret. :: J. R.

Step back in time to Islamic Vélez-Málaga

Guided tours of the town's medina and important Al-Andalus sites are available in English and many historic buildings can be visited all year round

Vélez-Málaga was an important stopping place for travellers from Málaga and Granada due to the abundance of produce like figs, almonds and grapes

JENNIE RHODES

In every corner of the Axarquía there are reminders of Spain's Islamic past, from the architecture, to words, gastronomy and even the area's name; Aš-Šarqiyya, meaning 'the eastern [region]'.

In fact this is true of many place names in the east of Málaga area and no less so in the capital, Vélez-Málaga - known as 'Balish' when the Islamic rulers governed the area, from 711 until 27 April 1487.

Miralla Ballix was Torre del Mar, Al-causin hasn't changed much, except for swapping the s for c and Hisnat, meaning the castles, is now Iznate.

Mosques and minarets

'Balish' was an important city during the Al-Andalus period. Its medina was protected by a fortress, standing high on a hill, which can still be visited today, as well as up to 18 mosques. The oldest of these places of worship is today the Santa María church, which houses the Semana Santa (Holy Week) museum. It's located in the oldest part of Vélez-Málaga, nowadays known as 'La Villa', it was once the town's medina.

The main entrance to the medina still exists today and is known as the Puerta Real de Vélez-Málaga. It is situated on the Plaza de la Constitución, which forms part of the newer part of the town. As Balish started to grow, it extended outside the medina walls and into the San Francisco area, when the existing San Francisco monastery was another important mosque.

The original tower, which can still be seen today, would have served as a minaret during the Islamic period and was converted into a bell tower after the Reconquista. Part of it can be seen from beside the entrance to the church and the full tower can be visited by arrangement from inside the church.

The tower is similar to others in the Axarquía, for example that of Salares or Árchez, either built during the Islamic



An actor dressed an Islamic traveller in the old medina of Vélez-Málaga, now known as 'La Villa'. :: J. R.

period, or during the 'Mudejar' period - post Reconquista, when Muslims were either forced to convert to Christianity, or exiled.

Vélez-Málaga's fortress also played an important role and connected with others in the region. The Bentomíz castle near Arenas, Zalia near Alcaucín and La Tahoma in Comares would have all communicated, sending signals to each other to warn of enemy attack.

Malaga to Granada

Vélez-Málaga, or Balish, was an important stopping place for travellers on the way from Malaga to Granada and was rich in produce, such as figs, almonds and grapes, all of which continue to be important today. Other economic sources were livestock, crafts and silk.

Despite its relative proximity to Granada, via Zafaraya and Alhama de Granada, it would take the Catholic mon-

archs almost another five years to reach the city and the last Islamic kingdom to fall, on 2 January 1492.

As in other towns and cities across Andalucía, archaeologists, public authorities and private individuals are constantly discovering settlements, buildings and treasures which have been built over or covered up over the centuries.

In 2003 a builder discovered a copy of the Quran and other manuscripts in a house he was renovating in the village of Cútar and in Vélez-Málaga it is thought that a private house currently sits on the

site of an Arab bath. Many buildings in the area around San Francisco church, as well as the neighbourhoods of San Sebastián and La Gloria store hidden gems, for example an Islamic Mirhab, or niche, was uncovered during restoration work to the Beniel Palace.

The Sharq-Alandalus association, which was created in 2018 to promote Vélez-Málaga's Islamic heritage, conducts theatrical tours in English.

The tour introduces participants to a number of characters, including the last mayor of Balish, a female poet, a traveller and a preacher, all of whom lived in the town during the Al-Andalus period.

The narrow streets of Vélez-Málaga's old medina are ideal for an evening stroll to escape the heat and travel back in time. For further information contact www.sharqandalus.com or Facebook Axarquía Andalusi.

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Osborne - more than six decades of bull stories

Three of the iconic brandy adverts still stand in Malaga province

The Osborne Bull in Almayate, Vélez-Málaga.

■ SUR



In Andalucía they were classified as historical monuments nearly 25 years ago and are recognised for their cultural value

JAVIER ALMELLONES

Of the 92 Osborne Bulls in Spain, only three are in Malaga. That may seem surprisingly few, but actually this province has more than many others in the country. In terms of numbers it is third in Andalucía, after Cadiz, where there are a dozen (it is the origin of the famous brandy) and Seville, which has six. Nationally, Malaga is in ninth place, along with four other provinces: Burgos, Guadalajara, Cuenca and Cáceres.

Nowadays, as well as being a symbol of the history of the past century in Spain, the Osborne Bulls, most of which were erected between 1957 and 1970, are recognised for their cultural value. In Andalucía, they were already classified as historical monuments nearly 25 years ago.

In 1994, all these icons of the famous make of Jerez brandy came under threat from the Highways Law, which stipulated that all publicity hoardings in the country should be removed because they were a distraction for drivers. Finally, popular opposition and legal action in the Supreme Court succeeded in the Osborne Bulls being exempted from the rule.

Every one of the Osborne Bulls has a story of its own, with numerous anecdotes and curiosities. The three that still stand in Malaga province, in Almayate (Vélez-Málaga), Fuengirola and Casabermeja, are no exception. The first two



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Malaga province has more Osborne Bulls than many others in the country. :: SUR

were installed beside the N340 highway, when it was the main road to and from the eastern coast of Andalucía.

Today the new motorways built since then have made them less visible, even though, like nearly all the Osborne Bulls in Spain, they stand in elevated positions. The one in La Axarquía is on the hill known as the Peñón de Almayate (or sometimes the Peñón del Toro), and the one on in Fuengirola is on the hill alongside the Torre Blanca, one of the old watchtowers on the Andalusian coast.

The Osborne Bull in Casabermeja, which is between the motorway and the town, is the most visible because this is one of the busiest access roads to Malaga city from inland.

Part of the chequered history of the Osborne Bull of Almayate was an incident in the autumn of 2015, when very strong winds literally decapitated the hoarding. The head had to be put back on by a maintenance company, but that was a couple of weeks later.

Metallic structure

In mid-March 2006, many people on this part of the coast in the Axarquía became alarmed when they spotted individuals dismantling the metallic structure of the Osborne Bull and thought they were planning to steal it. They rang the police to warn them, but it turned out to be a false alarm because the 'thieves' were employees of Osborne who were taking

the bull to pieces so restoration work could be carried out on it. There was so much confusion at the time that some residents tried to block the road to prevent the lorry carrying the pieces from leaving. The company also had to apply for authorisation to remove the structure, as it was considered a historical and cultural monument of Andalucía.

The Osborne Bull in Fuengirola also suffered the effects of a storm, being almost completely destroyed by gale force winds which affected much of the Malaga coast in mid-October 2008. Only the rear part could be saved.

Curiously, five years later, this duly restored Osborne Bull experienced something that local people who witnessed it say they will never forget. It was painted twice in 24 hours, with the constitutional flag and the republican flag of Spain. Nobody knew who did it, and it happened just after 12 October, Spanish National Day. On the first occasion, the body of the bull was painted with the red and yellow stripes of the Spanish flag, but by the next day the bottom red stripe had turned purple, turning it into the flag of the Second Republic for a few hours. After these acts of vandalism, the Osborne Bull was returned to its original jet black colour by Fuengirola council workers.

In the case of Casabermeja, the incident that people remember most occurred in 2004. In that year the mayor of the time, Andrés Lozano, issued a decree

banning any advertising hoardings that blocked the view of the Osborne Bull and some of the emblematic buildings in the town, such as the cemetery and the church. By doing so, he gave the bull the same status as other landmarks in Casabermeja.

Historic monuments

Paradoxically, two of the three Osborne Bulls in Malaga province stand beside important historic monuments. The one in Fuengirola is just a few metres from the aforementioned Torre Blanca tower (or Torreblanca), which is believed to date back to Moorish times although there is only evidence that it existed in the early 16th century.

And in Almayate, just a few metres from its Osborne Bull lie the Phoenician remains of Los Toscanos and the remnants of an old quarry.

Today, the Osborne Bull of Casabermeja is not only clearly visible from the main road but also by people doing the circular Campo de Cámara walk, which passes just metres away.

In Fuengirola the bull can also be reached relatively easily on foot, from the Torreblanca residential area. You need to take a short path for just over 100 metres from Calle Buganvillas. It is more difficult to reach the one in Almayate because it is on a much steeper hill, but it can be accessed from either Los Toscanos or Almayate Pueblo.



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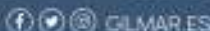
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The Axarquía has its own version of Modernism

Casa Museo
Axarquía. :: SUR



With its Modernist, Gaudí-esque design, this property in the hamlet of El Valdés houses a vast ethnographic collection

JAVIER ALMELLONES

While Gaudí had his hidden gem, or 'Capricho' - his house in the village of Comillas in Cantabria, the Axarquía district east of Málaga has its own version of Modernism in El Valdés, a tiny hamlet belonging to the village of Moclinejo.

Antonio Montañez, a retired businessman, has dedicated the last 15 years of his life to building up a collection of artefacts reflecting life in the Axarquía in the house that he has built in the hamlet. Antonio wanted to pay tribute not only to the Axarquía, but to the art form used by the famous Spanish architect behind Barcelona's Sagrada Família cathedral.

It took Antonio just one year to build the house, which he christened Casa Museo Axarquía.

"I spent 365 days working on it and 365 nights unable to sleep thinking about what I was going to do the following day," he explained. Antonio is retired now, but is the former owner of the well-known Málaga kitchen company, Cocinas Montañez.

Antonio's inspiration comes mainly from his love of colour. "I have always liked using a lot of colour in everything I do," he explained. The house clearly meets his objectives of using Gaudí's modernism, a lot of colour and paying homage to the Axarquía. The windows, walls and the tower can be easily spotted

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All of the rooms display the objects that Antonio has collected over the years. :: SUR



Details of part of what this museum has to offer. :: SUR

as the house is perched on a hill on the highest part of El Valdés. La Casa Museo Axarquía looks as if it's come straight out of a fairy tale.

One of the first things the visitor will notice is a map of the Axarquía on one of the external walls. The Gaudí-esque decor continues inside the house, combined with Axarquía theme reflected through the furniture and ornaments: a chameleon, recreations of boxes of raisins or bottles of wine all blend in with the interior decor of the house.

Covering an area over 200 square metres, the house has five bedrooms and three bathrooms which are distributed between the ground, first and second floors. There's a wine cellar and a further two floors, with access to a roof terrace. In total there are five different levels to the house, which appears to have come from a dream that Antonio once had.

Each one of the bedrooms has its own theme, including the Verdiales - traditional music of Malaga province. Another is decorated with typical products from the Axarquía and another is a collage of the different villages in the area. All of the

rooms display the objects that Antonio has collected over the years, such as postcards, labels and containers from local products or traditional verdiales hats.

The main living room, the wine cellar and the corridors are packed with shelves displaying hundreds of objects, making the house the feel like an antique dealer's: gramophones, old fashioned cameras (one even once belonged to a private detective), typewriters, ice-cream makers...the list goes on.

There's a large knife, which cost Antonio 100,000 pesetas when he bought it, (approximately 600 euros). It is thought that the knife belonged to one of the infamous bandits who used to roam the Axarquía, like Bizco de El Borge, whose portrait hangs on the wall near to the knife itself. A working juke box, which would have once belonged to a local bar, occupies space in the wine cellar. Back then, for one 'duro' (the colloquial term used for the five peseta coin), customers would have been able to select a song. These are just a few of the fascinating objects that Antonio has been collecting for over 40 years.

It was always Antonio's intention to open La Casa Museo Axarquía to the public. Before the pandemic it was open on the first Saturday of every month. Now visits should be booked via the company Enoxperience, who organise tours to the house and other points of interest in Moclinejo. The tours are available in English (marina@enoxperience.com).

As well as the house Antonio has also left his mark in other parts of El Valdés. The entrance to the hamlet was designed by him, as was a fountain and the children's playground, which is next door to the Casa Museo. Each one is inspired by Gaudí.

The retired businessman still has projects on the go. He's in the process of building another house, similar to the Casa Museo Axarquía, near to Playamar in Torremolinos, which Antonio expects to finish by the end of 2022. This one he explains will be much more personal, paying tribute to his own life and family. It will be, without a doubt, another of Antonio Montañez's 'hidden gems', which like the house in El Valdés will intrigue anyone who visits it.



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Gliding across the water

Explore the coast from a surfboard on the sea - with less surf and more calm

Paddle surfing, or stand-up paddling (SUP), is becoming more popular on the Costa del Sol as it is easy to get the hang of

FABIAN PAKULAT

Paddle surfing is a water sport so easy to learn that it is accessible to everyone. Whoever has stood on a surfboard and paddled through the sea or a river is immediately left wanting more.

For stand-up-paddling, all you need is a slight sense of balance, an (inflatable) surfboard and a paddle, and then you are ready to head for the water.

The origin of paddle surfing is allegedly Polynesian fishermen, who stood on canoes and paddled through the ocean. Surfers in Hawaii in the 20th century similarly stood on their boards and used paddles to cross the reefs more quickly and reach the waves. But for a few years in Europe now, paddling surfing has been increasingly becoming a leisure activity in its own right.

In particular, the relatively new, in-

flatable variants of the SUP board have led more and more people to take up this water sport. All the necessary equipment - board, pump and paddle - fits into a rucksack weighing around only 10kg, making it easy to transport to those secluded beaches, lakesides and riverbanks where paddle surfing is as its best.

The sport essentially consists of gliding through the water on a surfboard. Flippers attached to the underside of the board make propelling oneself through the water simple, while paddlers can make use of any wind or waves for acceleration.

Costa del Sol

Beginners should choose a calm day and placid waters for their maiden surf, and the sea off the Costa del Sol is normally ideal. In particular, small, wind-sheltered bays - such as the one



Paddle surfing comes with a feeling of freedom. :: FOTOLIA



The rocky coastal landscape between Nerja and Maro offers many interesting spots to explore. :: SUR

in Cabopino, Marbella, between the port and the Artola dunes - are ideal venues for novices.

In Malaga city, the numerous small bays in Pedregalejo are also suitable.

Walking on water

Once the board is inflated, begin by walking into knee-deep water with the paddle in your hand. Mount the board with a gentle swing to get an impression of the level of balance required. Fortunately, SUP boards are longer and wider than normal surf boards, making them more stable.

The next step is to get into roughly the middle of the board on your knees and straighten your body - but remain kneeling. As soon as you have your balance, begin paddling on both sides of the board. You're under way!

After covering the first few metres on your knees, you can try standing up. The stable board permits a bit of wobbling, and even if you do fall in - which is almost a given for beginners - it is easy to swing out of the cool wa-

ter and back onto the board.

Once you are standing comfortably and have got the hang of the paddling, you feel as though you can walk on water - an indescribably blissful and simultaneously stimulating sensation.

With time, keeping balance becomes second nature and you begin to enjoy your excursions on the water even more.

Distance yourself a little further from the beach and an inner calm sets in. It is only you, the sea, the wind and your board. Fish tumble and dive through the water beneath you, gentle waves lap against the edges of your board and the views of the coast on the side and the endless ocean on the other are dreamlike. No wonder that paddle surfing is growing in popularity both on the Costa del Sol and elsewhere.

Where, what and how much

SUP boards can be bought on the Costa del Sol, among other places, in large sports shops such as Decathlon.

Discount stores have also noted the demand for them, and Lidl in particular offers a selection at the start of summer from the well-known surf brand Mistral. Numerous models and brands can be found online as well.

Most of the time you can purchase the full package: an inflatable board, a pump, a paddle, flippers, and a suitable rucksack for carrying all the equipment.

Depending on the model, it may include a small seat with which you can transform the paddle board into a canoe, killing two birds with one stone. A waterproof bag is often included too - perfect for storing your wallet, phone or keys - and can be attached easily to the board.

The prices for an SUP set begin at around 300 euros. Beginners should buy as long and wide a board as possible, as this grants extra stability, and pay attention to its weight. Asking an in-store specialist can be helpful. Soon you'll be all set to hit the beach and glide over the water.

From trains to bikes through pretty scenery

La Vía Verde de la Sierra is one of several stunning cycling routes along old railway lines in southern Spain

It was originally built as a railway line linking Olvera with its neighbouring village Puerto Serrano

ASH BOLTON

For those cycling fans out there looking for a ride with a difference, this could be your cup of tea.

The Vía Verde, or Green Route, was originally built as a railway line linking Olvera with its neighbouring village Puerto Serrano. But lucky for us, it was never finished and no trains ever passed along this 36km-long route. What the local authorities did do, however, was turn this tunnel-heavy route, along with several others around the country, into a fascinating cycle path.

So what's so special about the Vía Verde

de la Sierra then? Well, there are dozens of abandoned, illuminated railway tunnels to cycle through - one is almost one kilometre long.

And the scenery is breathtaking; there are viaducts, old railway stations converted into restaurants and plenty of rolling hills and olive groves. So don't forget your camera.

Interestingly, although plenty of Spanish people ride and walk this route, it doesn't seem to be on the radar of international tourists.

Together with a few cycle-loving friends, we drove up from the Costa del Sol on a Friday evening to spend the weekend in Olvera, a journey which takes around two hours.

The first thing you see as you approach this quaint Andalusian town is a soaring cathedral and Moorish Castle, which both dominate the skyline. Accommodation-wise, we rented a cosy apartment in a sleepy square opposite the cathedral through Airbnb.

On a previous occasion (I've done this Vía Verde twice now), we stayed in the family run Pensión Medina, close to the centre of the village, which is managed by a chatty Spanish lady who couldn't have been more helpful.

From the centre, the start of the Vía Verde is approximately a 15 or 20 walk out of town. However, if you're walking it is a very steep hill down to the start, so I'd recommend driving, as there is plenty of parking and you'll be glad you drove when you hand in the bikes exhausted at the end of the day.

Although you can bring your own bikes, if you don't have any, you can hire them very cheaply. Right at the start of the cycle route is a bicycle hire company, where an entry-level mountain bike will cost you 12 euros a day.

It's worth mentioning that the path is not suitable for road bicycles, as it is bumpy and puncture-prone for thinner tyres. We reserved our bikes in advance on the Internet at www.sesca.es

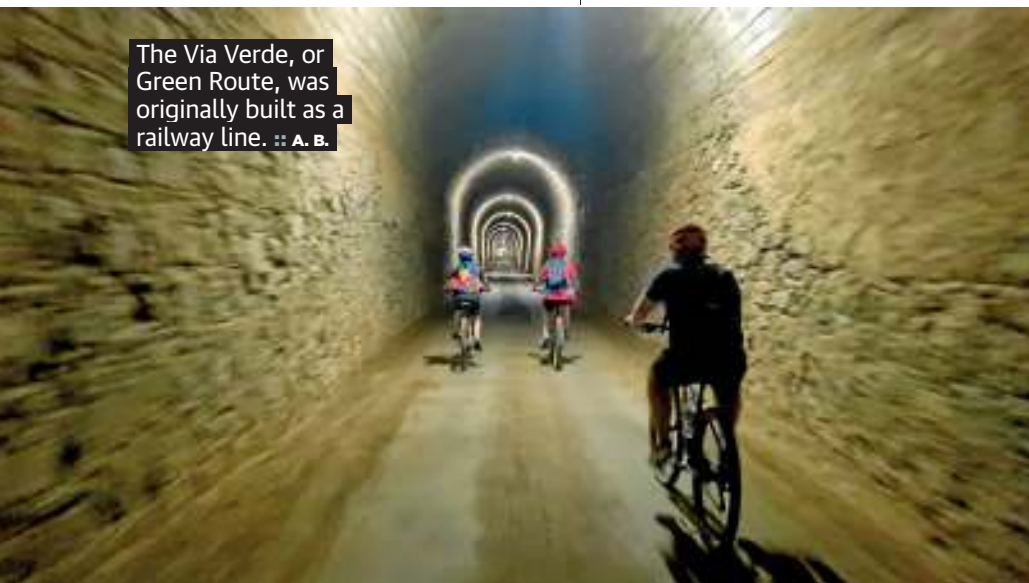
You can hire bikes for kids too or even four-wheeled family bikes, where four people can cycle at once. We saw a few families doing this along the route, but it's fair to say it looked hard work and no one looked particularly happy.

So up early on a Saturday morning, we drove down to pick up our bicycles and then set off with less sun cream than we should have.

We saw rugged plains, sleepy olive groves and cycled through countless tunnels, where the cool breeze was a welcome break from the sun.

The route is also part of the Camino de

The Vía Verde, or Green Route, was originally built as a railway line. :: A. B.



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You can hire bikes for kids too or even a four-wheeled family bike. :: A. BOLTON



A square with a view. :: A. B.



Santiago signs on the road. :: A. B.



The town of Olvera at sunset. :: A. B.

Santiago Vía Serrana, so you'll see a few yellow arrows along the route, pointing you in the direction of Santiago de Compostela.

After about 20 minutes my heart sunk when I noticed that I had a flat tyre. But there is a van that drives along the entire route that comes and repairs punctures or any bicycle grips along the way. It's included in the price of the bicycle hire which is good. However, unless you are lucky enough for them to be passing when you have a puncture, you have to ring them on their mobile. That said, phone coverage is not great, so we ended up walking for about a kilometre before I managed to get a signal. So it's worth bringing a puncture repair kit and pump if you have one at home. Puncture repaired, we stopped for a much needed coffee in Coripe, which is about half way and a very scenic stop.

We cycled on to Puerto Serrano train station just over two hours later, for some generously sized tapas and a refreshing beer (or two). Then there was just the problem of cycling the 36km back to Olvera before the bike hire shop closed at 5pm.

Most of the tunnels had automatic lights that switched on when you cycled into them, but bring your own torches if you can. One 900-metre long tunnel on the way back didn't illuminate until we were two-thirds of the way through, meaning we had to cycle in pitch black using the light from our mobile phone torches to see.

And take cash. We were 15km from Olvera and dying on our feet when we decided to stop for water, coffee and a rest - but the cafe didn't accept cards, so we begrudgingly had to carry on empty handed.

Another point to note, is the route is slightly uphill on the way back, meaning we were exhausted by the time we finished. Although we did the whole route in a day, setting off at 11am and returning at 5pm, it's just as fun to cycle to the half-way point of Coripe, especially if you have children with you.

Interestingly, Olvera was once notorious in the past as a bandit refuge and was made famous by the Andaluz saying: "Kill your man and flee to Olvera!"

Well, murder aside, we agreed it had been a good idea to flee to Olvera for a day's cycling.



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A group of tourists in the cave. :: A.B.

A trip to the heart of Gibraltar

Lower Saint Michael's Cave is one of the most fascinating attractions in The Rock

It is remarkable for three reasons: the size of the main chambers, the variety of calcite formations and a crystal-clear lake

ASH BOLTON

It's a little-known fact that Lower Saint Michael's Cave was only discovered in 1943. And prior to that it's thought that the previously undiscovered cave system was sealed for some 20,000 years.

But nowadays the caves are known

for being one of Gibraltar's most fascinating and somewhat understated tourist attractions.

This extraordinary beautiful cavern is remarkable for three reasons: the size of the main chambers, the profusion and variety of calcite formations, and last but not least - a lake of crystal-clear water, nearly forty yards long estimated to hold 45,000 gallons.

Since the lockdown ended on the Rock, scores of thrill-seekers have slowly been returning to this subterranean experience.

The guided tour typically takes about three hours and involves plenty of climbing, shimmying up and down ropes, squeezing through passages and tip-toeing your way around a small



There are organised tours into Lower St Michael's Cave available to the general public. :: A.B.



Lower Saint Michael's Cave was found entirely by accident during World War II. :: A.B.

ledge to avoid falling into the huge crystal-clear lake.

Not to be confused with Saint Michael's Cave, which was once occupied by Neanderthal Man and now hosts concerts and other cultural events in its large auditorium, Lower St Michael's Cave was found entirely by accident during World War II, when the upper cave was being converted into a military hospital.

Peter Jackson MBE, 60, a Registered Freelance Guide, said: "The Royal Engineers required an operating theatre deep inside the cave and once they had done this, they then realised that they needed another entrance. So, blasting their way into this lower level, the floor collapsed beneath them and Lower Saint Michael's Cave was discovered."

Peter, who grew up in Scarborough and moved to Gibraltar at the age of 28 in 1989, explained that most of the cave was then discovered by a young soldier



The guided tour takes about three hours. :: A.B.

Visitors will find examples of almost all known cave formations. :: A. B.

named O'Braithe.

He continued: "This Sapper realised he could see a bit of a gap and believed there may be a further chamber. So, with no training in conservation, he went down there and drilled through where he saw the gap and discovered the rest of the cave - some 90 per cent of Lower St Michael's."

And it's a good thing he found it, as a visit will leave you breathless, but not from lack of oxygen!

Underground you'll find examples of almost all known cave formations, including stalagmites, stalactites, rim stone, helictites, columns, cave coral, flowstone, straws, curtains and two of only seven known 'painter's palettes' in the world.

So why is this an interesting cave to explore, according to Pete?

"Well, caving is a dangerous sport and Lower Saint Michael's Cave being roped and lit, allows you to visit it with a lot of the dangers already catered for. As long as you are relatively fit and active, you are open-minded to what you are willing to try, then this cave almost spoils people.

"The level of beauty within it, is seldom matched. I've been caving all my life and I can't think of another cave that matches it for beauty."

As for who would enjoy a tour of the cave, Peter, who has taken thousands of people on underground tours in Gibraltar's tunnels and caves, including Princess Anne, football legend John Barnes and the former MP Geoff Hoon, added: "It is a challenge, but the cave is do-able for most people over 10 years old that are physically fit. We don't put an upper age cap on it, but you do have to be sensible about your own abilities. No guide will force you to do anything that you don't want to do on the way in.

"But you do have to get out!" he joked.

MORE INFORMATION

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A pretty town that grew out of the rock

Setenil de las Bodegas looks as though it has been swallowed by the gorge in which it was founded

The centre of the town, which forms part of the pueblo blanco route in Cadiz province, was declared a historic-artistic grouping in 1985

BEATRICE LAVALLE

Every Spaniard knows about the place, even if they have never been there. The picturesque municipality of Setenil de las Bodegas, located in the Sierra de Cádiz, played a starring role in the tele-

vision series Curro Jiménez, which kept Spaniards glued to their screens from 1976 to 1978. Until a few years ago, repeats of the episodes were also a regular fixture on daytime TV, a bit like Last of the Summer Wine in the UK.

This bizarre town has also featured in numerous films, documentaries, Bollywood productions, advertisements and music videos, as the municipality, which was declared a historic-artistic grouping in 1985, boasts some curious geographical features thanks to its domineering rock massif.

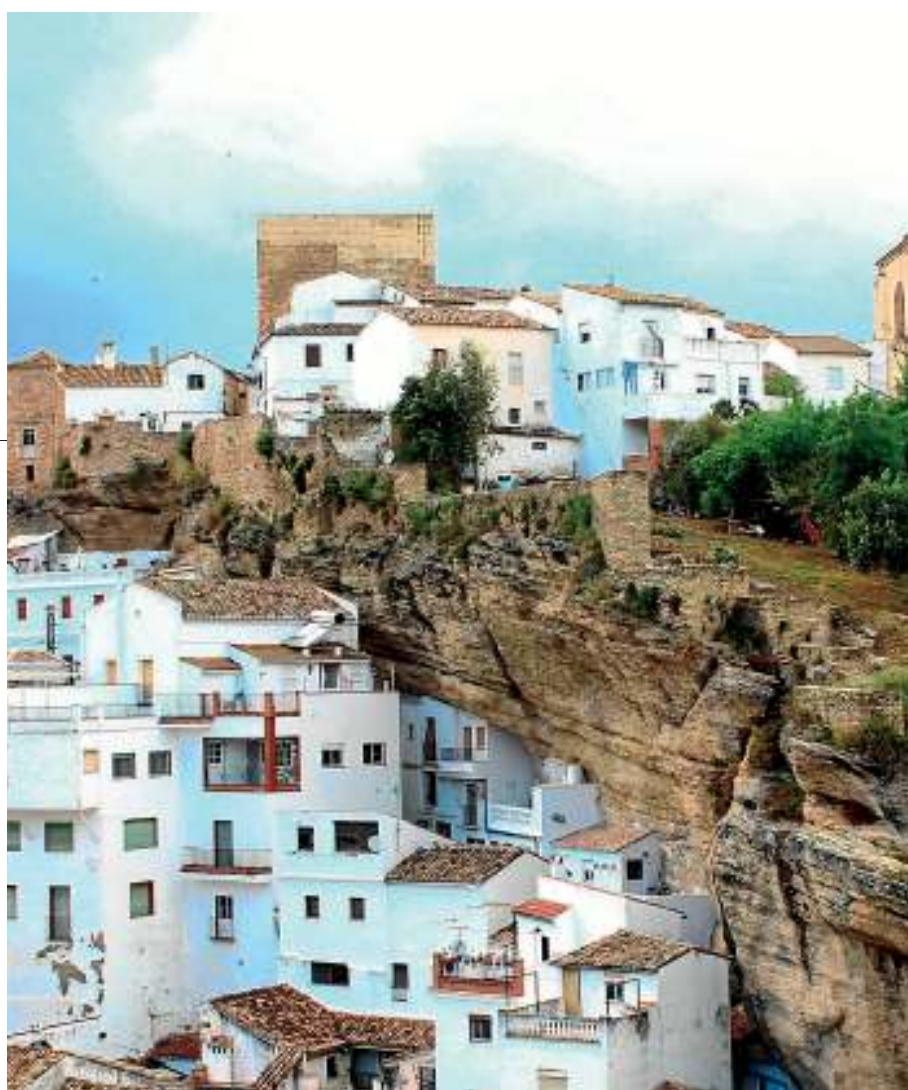
Although there is plenty of evidence

to suggest that Setenil was populated in prehistoric times, the area acquired new significance during the Middle Ages when the Almohad Caliphate commenced urban development of the settlement known in those days as La Villa.

During the Reconquista in the 15th century, numerous attempts were made to take the town because of its important strategic position. But it was only in 1484, after it had been besieged seven times, that the Catholic forces finally brought the town under their control and christened it Setenil - a name derived from the Latin 'septem nihil'

Many of the buildings are built directly into the rock. :: B. L.





View of the Torre de Homenaje and the church. :: BEATRICE LAVALLE

(seven times nothing), which alludes to failed siege attempts. The region's proximity to the Serranía de Ronda and its geographical composition also made Setenil a popular hideout for Bandoleros (bandits) in the 19th century.

Carved out of the rock

Setenil is one of the most beautiful and distinctive municipalities in Spain today. Over the centuries, the Guadalporcún river has carved out a gorge with numerous hollows in which locals have built their homes, meaning the entire historical centre is essentially hewn out of rock. The living spaces are likewise adapted to the geographical conditions and the profile of the cliff, and it is not uncommon for cliff ledges inside of pubs or shops to serve as shelves or to be integrated into the architecture of the room. Setenil's main attraction is undoubtedly the rock massif which em-

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The Río Trejo forms an idyllic river landscape. :: B. L.

braces the town, but this pueblo has plenty more to offer than just impressive stone. The Trejo river, as the Guadaporcún in Setenil is also known, and other rivers that run through the municipality form an idyllic riparian landscape of small waterfalls and bridges fringed by lush vegetation.

Another must-see is Calle Herrería, a breathtaking, steep and narrow street that branches off Plaza de Andalucía and is roofed by rock, and there are many viewpoints that allow visitors to appreciate the scale of Setenil, such as the Mirador del Lizón at the foot of Torre del Homenaje, which is one of the few remains of the Nasrid fortress, or the square beside the municipality's main church, Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación, which was built between the 15th and 17th century over a former mosque.

Visitors can also enjoy a spectacular panorama view of the town from the square Ermita Nuestra Señora del Carmen.

Not far from Setenil are the escarpments of the Trejo River, enormous rock massifs with intriguing formations that can be explored via a five-kilometre hiking trail starting in Setenil and ending in Cortijo del Trejo.

The Ruta de los Bandoleros, which follows the footsteps of legendary bandits such as El Tempranillo through thick forests, also impresses with its diverse landscapes, while the idyllic Ruta de los Molinos along the Arroyo de Alcalá grants walkers the chance to see



A typical corner of Setenil. :: B.L.

two cornmills, an oil mill and waterfalls such as the Salto de la Molinilla.

Some of the best local gastronomy in Setenil includes the traditional sausage products as well as baked goods like Cortadillos, Empanadillas and Pestiños.



The street Cuevas de la Sombra. :: B.L.

Typical delicacies during the cold winter months are hearty, warming dishes such as Sopa Cortijera, a green asparagus soup, the breadcrumb dish migas, sweet potatoes with honey, and various stews.

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Diving into the history of humankind

The world really seems here to be over - the 'Mirador del Fin del Mundo' . :: G. BERNER

The spectacular high plateau in Guadix is home to thousands of inhabited caves, which also serve as tourist accommodation

Palaeontologists believe they have found traces of our forbearers in the breathtaking countryside between Guadix and Baza

GABRIELA BERNER

It was to be our last hiking trip for a long time. One week before the whole of Spain fell into a state of corona-induced shock, we set off on a two-day excursion to the Purullena

basin. This 1000m high altiplano in Granada province has a rich geological history and its countryside is unique in Europe and possibly elsewhere too.

The grand geological formations of this otherwise seemingly isolated region impress even from the motorway that connects Murcia and Granada. Rows of bizarre, craggy hills with distinctly different sedimentary layers ranging in colour from beige to glowing red-brown drew into view as we drove towards our hotel, passing poplar reserves, blossoming peach plantations and the partially snow-capped Sierra Nevada on the way. One

building showed no signs of life, but then a few young people stepped out of one of the doors crafted directly into the mountainside, at which point we also noticed a curiously shaped, whitewashed chimney jutting out of the hilltop.

In the Earth's lap

The doors led to accommodation with two or three bedrooms, a bath and a kitchen. In the best-case scenario, sunshine spills through the upper part of the door, which can be opened separately, as there are no windows. Gradually, your eyes take in the metre-thick walls and arched ceiling, followed by the simple but practical decoration.

Thanks to an all-year-round temperature of between 18 and 20 degrees, 50 per cent humidity and airing regulated by the chimney, the room's

climate is much more pleasant than in typical Spanish flats. No wonder that this housing model, adapted to suit its surroundings, is so popular in Granada province. Around half of the population of Guadix lives in over 2000 'casas trogloditas', which 'picadores', as the traditional builders here are known, still carve out of the soil using pickaxes and spades. These houses come into being without building plans or extensive governmental guidelines, but through pure intuition and consideration of the geological conditions.

Today's cave flats are not uncomfortable, as proven by the 335 official cave hotels between Granada and Guadix, and they are contributing to the development of a form of tourism in the region that is more conscientious, sustainable and connected to nature.



We set off after inspecting our accommodation, equipped with hiking shoes, poles and light rucksacks. Shortly after Purullena's cave museum, which is worth visiting itself, we followed a narrow pass through a some ten-metre high barranco, whose walls, deeply furrowed by erosion, were made of a fairly soft but compact material. At many points there were cavities in the ground where new caves were clearly being dug. The barranco was hardly 100 metres long, and after it the now wider sand path wound gently beneath young pines that offered ample shade, until it reached the enormous high plateau bedecked mostly in scrub. The Sierra Nevada loomed up in front of us, as if within touching distance, while to the left basked the immense German solar park Andasol. Our path, however, took us to the right, towards the Purullena Badlands.

Eroded over millions of years, this landscape consisting of loam, clay and marl falls in bizarre formations over 500m straight down to the fertile-green lowlands of the Río Fardes. This river is thought to have supported settlers in the Hoya de Guadix since at least the Middle Stone Age; some leading Spanish anthropologists even claim that the first Europeans lived here. A viewpoint furnished with three information boards serves as a prime spot for appreciating this surreal landscape. And it can be reached via a two-kilometre-long path that

maintains a safe distance from the precipice, but the non-vertiginous may prefer the adrenaline hit of skirting the edge. After a stop at the Mirador del Fin de Mundo (Viewpoint at the End of the World), we took the path back and decided to visit our hotel's hammam.

Acequia de Toril

Our destination the following day lay 30 kilometres away in the municipality of Villanueva de las Torres, which is known for its unique natural wonder: the Acequia de Toril, undoubtedly the craziest water channel of all time.

Every day, thousands of litres of 35-degree water with an extremely high chalk and sediment content flow through narrow, ground-height trenches that were originally laid by settlers in the early Stone Age.

Over the millennia, the substances carried and deposited by the water have caused the sidewalls of the channel to expand by some 15 metres. Grass and other plants hang in thick bunches from the chalk wall beside the path, and at one place small tunnels and recesses lead to the hand-made terraces and steps on the other side.

Wonderful, panoramic vistas of the partly desert-like, partly green and fertile countryside unveil themselves, while in the foreground, some 20 metres below, sit the popular and family-friendly Alicún thermal baths along with their spacious outside area.

After more than a kilometre, the wondrous water channel flattens and crystal-clear, warm water pours into small rivulets and cascades over smoothened stones, through fields, and into a sparse verdant forest, where we suddenly find ourselves standing before a 5000-year-old dolomite, of which there are hundreds in the region. There is plenty still to explore here. We'll be back for sure.



Cave houses. :: G. B.

The constantly growing gully.

:: TURGRANADA





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Follow in the footsteps of writers and poets

Nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, the villages of the Alpujarra have long attracted creative minds

With cooler temperatures even in summer in an area that boasts Europe's highest village, this part of Granada makes the ideal getaway to escape the heat of the city and crowded beaches

JENNIE RHODES

The Alpujarra is a collection of dozens of whitewashed villages scattered among the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, in the Sierra de Lújar and the Sierra de Gádor, Granada province.

The area acts as the gateway between the Spanish peninsula's highest mountain range and the Mediterranean; an abrupt, rugged yet colourful landscape of deep valleys, forests and gorges, which has attracted foreigners

as well as Spanish writers, artists and travellers for thousands of years.

Still popular with visitors attracted to the peace, beauty and a way of life that has remained relatively unchanged over the years, there is now an active community of artists who live in the different villages, many of whom form part of the Artists Network Alpujarra, with the recently opened La Fábrica exhibition and event space in a former olive mill in the spa town of Lanjarón.

Following in literary footsteps

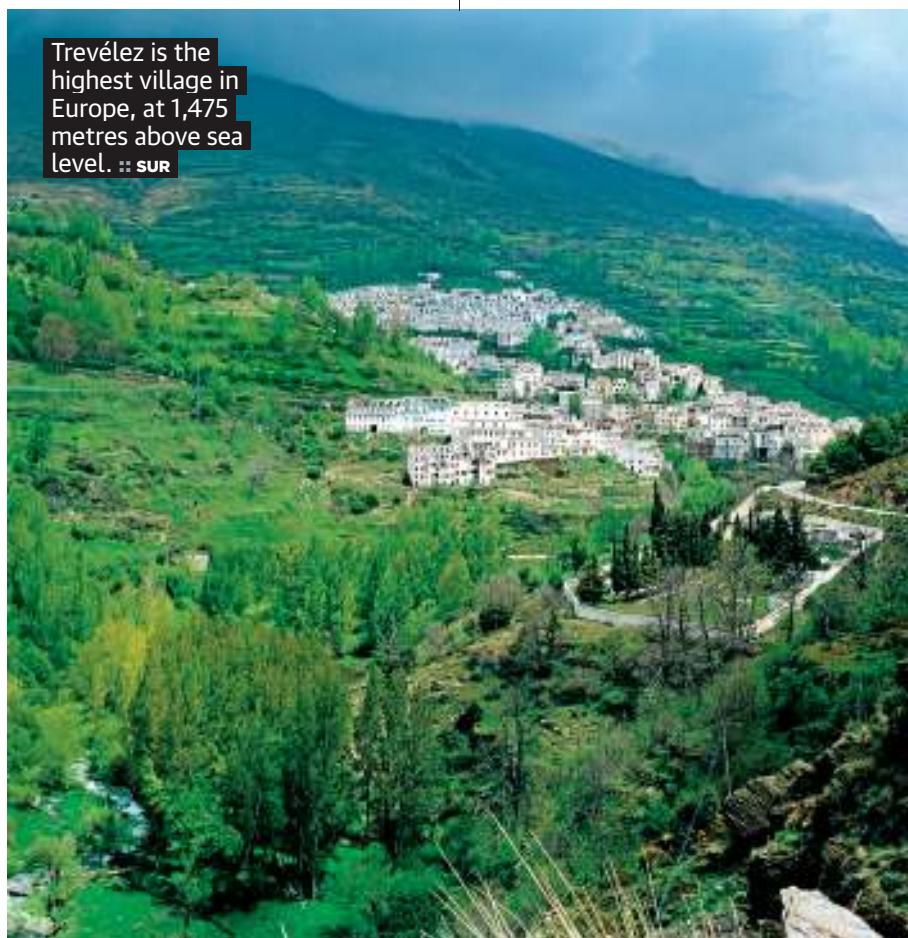
The Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, who was from Granada, described the Alpujarra as "the country of nowhere" and Chris Stewart, the author of *Driving Over Lemons* and former Genesis drummer, was inspired to visit by the British author and hispanist Gerald Brenan, who had spent many years living in one of its villages. Stewart would come to fall in love with the Alpujarra, buy a house near Órgiva and go on to write a series of books about his life there.

Both Brenan and Stewart talk of their attraction "to a simple, humble lifestyle" and in his book, *South from Granada*, Brenan explains that when in 1920, at the age of 25, he arrived in the village of Yegen he was "rebellious against the English middle class life."

Maybe this is what has led fellow Brits and other foreigners to follow in the author's footsteps over the years, or maybe it's simply the sheer beauty and the "simple, humble lifestyle" they both allude to.

Although once inhabited by Phoenicians and Romans, it was the eight centuries of Islamic rule that gave the Alpujarra its traditional architecture, gastronomy and even its name.

Trevélez is the highest village in Europe, at 1,475 metres above sea level. :: SUR





The villages of Bubión and Capileira with the Sierra Nevada behind them. :: SUR

Órgiva is the main town, or the 'capital' of the Alpujarra and Lanjarón is famous for its mineral water.

Trevélez, at over 1,475 metres above sea level, is the highest village in Europe and is particularly famous for its hams.

Another popular destination is the Poqueira valley, where the villages of Pampaneira, Bubión and Capileira are located; legend has it that goblin and witches live there, lured by the smell of olive trees, trout and ham.

The Guadalfeo River splits the Alpujarra in two; Alpujarra Alta and Alpujarra Baja. The villages of the high Alpujarra are Bérchules, Busquístar, Bubión, while Juviles and Brenan's Yegen are nestled to the south of the Sierra Nevada. The low Alpujarra is known as La Contraviesa; home to the villages such as Lújar, Sorvilán and Albondón.

With lower average temperatures in summer than in other parts of Andalucía (21.7°C in Trevélez in July and 25.2°C in Órgiva in August), the Alpujarra provides some relief from the heat of the inland towns in Malaga province and the city of Granada, especially in the evenings when the temperature cools, thanks to its high altitude.

There are plenty of places to visit, either to escape the heat of the sun



Traditional Alpujarra rugs on sale. :: SUR



Lanjarón is famous for its spring water. :: SUR



The plaque outside Gerald Brenan's house in Yegen. :: SUR



A traditional courtyard in Bubión. :: SUR

during the day, or as part of an evening stroll when the temperature cools off in the later in the day.

The museum house Alpujarra in Bubión (Museo Casa Alpujarra) recreates a traditional local home and gives the visitor an insight in to life there. It is open from 11am to 2pm every day except Tuesday and on Friday and Saturday from 5 to 7pm as well.

Follow in Lorca's footsteps to the Hotel España in Lanjarón, where his family would spend their summers during the 1920s, so that his mother could take the waters to alleviate health problems. There's also a water museum, honey museum and spa which can all be visited in the town.

Seek out much cooler climes in the highest village in Europe, Trevélez,

and while there, see its famous hams being cured at local ham curing companies including Vallejo which is also a museum.

Trace Gerald Brenan's journey to Yegen by finding his house - ask anyone

WHAT TO DO

- ▶ **Lanjarón.** Spa town, water museum
- ▶ **Órgiva.** Capital of the Alpujarra
- ▶ **Trevélez.** The highest village in Europe
- ▶ **Albuñuelas.** Tío Bayo watch tower
- ▶ **Yegen.** Gerald Brenan's house
- ▶ **Bubión.** Museo Casa Alpujarra
- ▶ **La Fábrica.** Artists Network Alpujarra
- ▶ **Padul.** Go birdwatching at the lagoon

for 'La Casa del Inglés', which has a plaque in Spanish on the wall outside. Visit the Yegen photography museum to see an exhibition of photographs taken by the Danish photographer Van Hannsen, taken of the village and its people between 1959 and 1989.

As well as museums, the striking Arabic architecture of the area and the breathtaking scenery, there are castles, watch towers, Islamic and Roman ruins dotted throughout the villages, all reminders of this remote area's past.

With plenty of choices of accommodation, from hotels to private houses and apartments, a visit to Granada's Alpujarra during the hot summer months makes a refreshing change from the Andalusian heat.

PROINSERMANT CELEBRATES ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

For forty years, PROINSERMANT is the company that has created the technical installations for 90% of the most prestigious urbanisations in Marbella and the surrounding area

SUR IN ENGLISH



The PROINSERMANT management team poses outside the facilities. :: SUR

Water, energy and their integration in Smart Home and traditional homes. This phrase could sum up the engineering service that the Marbella company PROINSERMANT has been providing since it was founded in 1981 by the businessman Brígido Sepúlveda and which this year celebrates its 40th anniversary.

During these forty years of suc-

cessful business, PROINSERMANT has managed to establish itself as one of the leading companies in Marbella and the Costa del Sol, and even at national level, in a complete spectrum of technical installations during the whole construction project.

PROINSERMANT identifies and implements the systems required for each project: supply, energy and wa-



Teams. :: SUR

ter management, air conditioning, Smart Home, swimming pools and spas, for architect's studios, developers, and private individuals.

With its own team of 180 people, including engineers in various specialties, assembly technicians and after-sales service, it is PROINSERMANT's own personnel who carry out the installations, designed in the on-site engineering department.

A comprehensive service for high-end villas

The company's founder, Brígido Sepúlveda, emphasises that from the very beginning he was clear about what the right approach should be: to design, install and maintain comfortable installations in luxury villas, based on quality and service.

To this end, Brígido Sepúlveda created his own Research and Development division to put into practice the numerous equipment developed and conceived by the company, which would later become the Smart Home department, focused on improving the quality of life, safety and enjoyment of the home, providing users with the peace of mind of knowing that they can produce and accumulate their own renewable energy, as well as using energy-efficient systems for home lighting and air-conditioning, swimming pool maintenance.

Nowadays, in addition to this, it is possible to integrate the control of all the installations carried out by PROINSERMANT, optimising their operation; and thus achieving significant energy savings, minimising the impact of domestic and leisure activities, and collaborating in developing a sustainable lifestyle for users.

A science park that makes a cool day out

The Parque de las Ciencias is the main attraction in Granada after the Alhambra and is enjoyably interactive

Visitors can spend the whole day at the spacious site not far from the city centre and learn about the world while having fun

DIETMAR FÖRSTER

It is not only the Alhambra that is worth visiting in Granada city. In addition to the Moorish fortress and the vibrant old town, this Andalusian city offers visitors the opportunity to experience science in a special way. The Parque de las Ciencias, a 70,000-square-metre interactive museum that opened in May 1995 and is located only 15 minutes by foot from the famous tourist attractions, holds various exhibitions in different buildings and includes a large open-air area.

Prospective visitors to the science park in Avenida de las Ciencias, which is open Tuesday-Saturday from 10am to 7pm and Sunday from 10am to 3pm, should plan to spend the entire day there and purchase the tickets to the biodome and the planetarium.

Opened just under five years ago, the biodome is a zoological facility that makes the visitor feel like part of the various habitats it houses. Visitors are only allowed to enter in small groups and at the time printed on their ticket so as not to disturb the animals, which are largely allowed to move freely within the enclosed tropical complex. The circular path first passes by the aquarium with panoramic windows, be-



Lemurs: the stars of Biodomo. :: D. F.

hind which sharks and fish species from the Indian ocean glide through the water. The tasteful lighting turns the tour through the underwater world into a true experience. Surgeonfish glowing with colour and Thompson's butterflyfish with extraordinary patterns also play their part in keeping visitors awestruck.

A large section of the biodome is dedicated to the island Madagascar, which has developed a unique, distinctive eco-

system with incredible biodiversity since its separation from the African mainland some 160 million years ago. The lemurs are the stars here. Named after its striped tail, the ring-tailed specimen lets itself be photographed and seldom awakes from its slumber. The gigantic Madagascar cockroaches are also an impressive, albeit unnerving sight.

Amazon area

The protagonists of the Amazon area are the small toucans, the axolotl, the six-legged armadillo and the cardinal, a medium-sized bird that lives in forests and swamps. Visitors should plan about 40 to 50 minutes for the circular path through the bioserve. As everywhere in the science park, there are explanations in Spanish and English, and visitors can also scan the QR code at the entrance to download the guides, videos and other interesting information.

Whoever still wishes to see more animals can pass by the falconry area, where eagles, owls and Eurasian eagle-owls (*Bubo bubo*) can be viewed at close proximity. A bird of prey demonstration, which takes place twice daily in the auditorium and lasts around 30 minutes, grants spectators not only the opportunity to learn about the specimens but also to see them in full flight. Witnessing how a raptor catches its prey in the air is a true spectacle.

Granada's Science Park also has plenty to offer outside. Above all, children can exercise their desire to experiment, for example, by creating an artificial whirlpool or by playing with other water phenomena. Interactive stations,

such as the Chaotic Pendulum, mini diggers, sundials and a flower maze ensure that kids remain entertained for hours. The cafeteria also has a wide selection of snacks and drinks for those who get hungry over the course of the day, and there are numerous picnic benches in the shade where visitors can eat food brought from home.

Everything turns upon perception in one of the side buildings on the park's large grounds, as a Foucault's Pendulum proves the rotation of the Earth without any observations of the sky. Here, visitors can learn about light effects, the qualities of lenses and mirrors as well as reflection and refraction. Touching and pressing buttons is expressly allowed and, as everywhere at the park, disinfectant gel is available at the entrance of every showroom. 'The never-ending tunnel', the mobile 'kaleidoscope' and the 'deceptive wall' are just a few of the experiments that visitors can play with to their hearts' content.

Theory of Relativity

The displays in the neighbouring rooms on the top floor of the 'pendulum' building mostly concern the Theory of Relativity and their inventor, Albert Einstein, as well as technological development. Printing presses, clocks and the 19th-century tools used to make them, measurement devices, the first telegraphs and telephones, computers from the early days of the electronic age, and calculating machines are some of the intriguing items on show. Go up one floor and visitors reach the planetarium with its semi-spherical projection dome. Here, much to the delight of children, a half-hour presentation on the significance of light for life and the Earth takes places on Saturdays, though the programme changes regularly. In any case, it is worth paying the few extra euros for the experience.

A different show explores movements in the animal kingdom, displaying hunting scenes between predators and their prey, for example. Right next



Robot technology is clearly explained in a separate exhibition. :: D. F.



The animal kingdom. :: D. F.

to this is the temporary exhibition Touch the Sky, Explore Space, which invites spectators to uncover secrets of the cosmos through extraordinary exhibits. The original spacesuit of the first Spanish astronaut, Pedro Duque, can be seen here in addition to helmets, gloves and meteorites.

Visitors should not leave the park without going for a walk through the human body or learning something about robotics through exhibition pieces from various periods. It is worth planning a trip to the science park well and choosing the activities one wants to visit in advance.



Mirror illusions. :: D. F.

More ideas for the warm summer days on the Costa

THE ANIMAL WORLD

Selwo Marina

Dolphinarium Animal Park with five zones: Las Antillas, La Hondonada, Ice Island, Amazonia and Los Trópicos; shows with dolphins, exotic birds, penguin feeding. Parque de la Paloma. 29630 Benalmádena, Telephone 952 577 773, www.selwomarina.es. Opening times: 1 July - 31 October 10am - 6pm. Admission: 11-65 Years 21 euros, under 3 Years free, concessions 15.50 euros. Reductions, season tickets, combination and online tickets.

Sea Life

Interactive aquarium with marine animals to visit, touch and feed. Puerto Marina. 29630 Benalmádena. Telephone 952 560 150. www.visitsealife.com/Benalmadena. Opening times: 11am - 7pm. Admission: 12 euros, season tickets, online saver tickets.

Selwo Aventura

Selwo Aventura. Wildlife Adventure Park. Different routes for visitors to see animals and plants from around the world and in some cases to handle. 29680 Estepona, A-7, km 162.5. Telephone 952 577 773. Web: www.selwo.es. Opening times: 1 July - 31 October 10am - 6pm. Admission: 10-65 years 25.90 euros, Concessions 18 euros; Combined tickets and season tickets available. Online discounts available.

Bioparc Fuengirola

Animal park with exotic animals and trees such as the baobab tree. Avda. Camilo José Cela, 6. 29640 Fuengirola. Web: www.bioparcfuengirola.es. Opening times: July and August: 10am - 11pm. In September, 10am - 7/8pm (see dates), October 10am - 6/6.30pm (see dates). Admission: 21.10 euros, Concessions 17.10/16.10 euros; family tickets and season tickets available.

Butterfly house

Benalmádena: Largest Butterfly House in Europe. Calle Muerdago, 29639 Benalmádena. Opening times: daily from 10.30am - 7.30pm, weekends from 10am / 8.30pm. Tel. 951 211 196 <https://www.mariposariodebenalmadena.com/> Admission: Adult 10 euros, Concessions 8.50 euros.

Lobo Park

Wolf Park with wolves in natural habitat, semi-

nars on wolves and dog training, guided tours. Carretera Antequera-Álora, km 16, Antequera. Telephone 952 301 107. www.lobopark.com. Opening times from Thurs - Sunday and bank holidays, 10am - 6pm. Admission adult 11.50 euros, children 7.50 euros. Guided tours at 11am, 1pm, 3pm, 4.30pm.

Crocodile Park

Theme park with crocodiles, turtles and exotic birds. Tours and demonstrations. C/ Cuba, 14. 29620 Torremolinos. Telephone 952 051 782. www.cocodrilospark.com. Opening times: July and August: 11am - 6pm. September to June: 11am - 5pm. Admission: adult 16 euros, Concessions and online savings.

WATER PARKS

Aqua Tropic Almuñécar

Fun-packed water park with large slides and a wave pool. Paseo Reina Sofía, S/N, 18690 Almuñécar (Granada) Telephone > 958 632 081 www.aquatropic.com. Opening times: daily 11am-7pm. Admission: 23 euros, concessions 15/17 euros, children under 3 free. Discounts available online and for groups.

Aquamijas

Waterpark for the whole family with various slides and attractions. A-7, km 209, 29651 Las lagunas de Mijas, Tel. 952 460 404. www.aquamijas.com. Opening times: July and August: 10.30am - 7pm. 1-13 September: 10.30am - 6pm. Admission: adult 26.50 euros. Family discounts and multi-day tickets, discounts available online.

Aqualand Torremolinos

Waterpark for the whole family with different slides, wave pool, whirlpools. C/ Cuba, 10. 29620 Torremolinos www.aqualand.es/torremolinos. Opening times: July and August: 11am-7pm, 1 / 5 September: 11am - 6pm. Admission: 30 euros,

concessions 22 euros, discounts available online.

Aquavelis

Waterpark with various giant slides and wave pool. Ruta del Pomelo, Urb. El Tomillar, 29740 Torre del Mar. Telephone 952 542 758, www.aquavelis.es. Opening times: June and September: 11am - 6pm, July and August: 11am - 7pm. Admission: 25.50 euros, concessions: 19.50. Discounts for groups, season tickets, online tickets.

OTHER

Aventura Amazonia Climbing Park

Treetop climbing and adventure park with rope bridges and zipwires. C/ Valeriano Rodríguez, Elviria. 29604 Marbella, 952 835 505. www.aventura-amazonia.com/parques-amazonia/marbella. Opening times: July and August: 9.30/10am - 9pm. Admission: 21/24 euros, Discount for children and groups.

Funny Hill

Karting Marbella, Go-karts for children and adults, amusement arcade, trampolines, bumper cars. Crta Antigua de Ojén, Marbella, N-340, km 184. Tel. 952 823 359. Web: www.funnyhill.es Opening times: Every day 4pm - midnight. Price according to Go-kart duration.

Cable Car Benalmádena

Takes visitors to the top of Mount Calamorro, for spectacular views and hiking routes. Explanada Tivoli, s/n. 29630, Benalmádena. Tel. 951 560 324. www.telefericobenalmadena.com. Opening times: Weekends only: 10am-6pm. 16 August 10am-6pm. 6-12 December 10am-6pm. Admission: 18.90 euros, concessions 14.90 euros (return). One way tickets and discounts for groups and online ticket purchases.

Orchid house

Over 1,300 species of orchid are housed in the two storey orchidarium in Estepona. A lake and waterfalls recreate the natural habitat of these exotic flowers and are also the perfect setting for a diverse range of plants. Calle Terraza, 86. Estepona, 29680. Adults 3 euros, children 1 euro. Opening times: Tues - Sat 10am-1.30pm and 3-6pm. Sun 10am-4pm. Telephone: 951 517 074 www.orchidariumestepona.com/

Due to the changing Covid situation, opening details could alter as the season progresses.



Water park :: SUR



Selwo Estepona. :: SUR

7th Edition

BIENAL ARTE FLAMENCO MALAGA

From July 9th to
September 17th, 2021



Flamenco in the bullring



OPENING GALA REPOMPEANDO

Friday July 9th, 9.30 pm
La Malagueta Bullring | Málaga



SARA BARAS MOMENTOS

Saturday July 10th, 9.30 pm
La Malagueta Bullring | Málaga



Pepe de Lucía
Juan José Téllez
Jorge Pardo
José María Bandera
Carlos Benavent
Rubem Dantas
Juan Ramírez

Masterclass by great flamenco masters

LA COCINA DEL FLAMENCO

July 12th, 13th and 14th, 9.30 pm
La Malagueta Bullring | Málaga



PEPE DE LUCÍA UN NUEVO UNIVERSO

Thursday July 15th, 9.30 pm
La Malagueta Bullring | Málaga



MANUEL LOMBO CANTE Y PUNTA

Friday July 16th, 9.30 pm
La Malagueta Bullring | Málaga



ANTONIO EL PIPA ESTIRPE

Saturday July 17th, 9.30 pm
La Malagueta Bullring | Málaga



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