

IN THE SPOTLIGHT GO WEST

MANILVA - SOTOGRANDE - LA LÍNEA

A unique border territory. From Sotogrande to La Línea find a mixture of luxury marina living and Andalusian tradition **P2-4**

More than beaches and vineyards. Manilva, Sabinillas and neighbouring Casares are the western gems of the Costa del Sol **P6**

Talk of the town. Residents share their favourite places to eat, drink, shop and unwind between Manilva and La Línea **P7**

From the Costa del Sol to the Rock

A closer look at the towns between the westernmost point of Malaga province and Gibraltar





Sotogrande is one of the most luxurious resorts in Europe. **SUR**

A border territory unique in the world

The Campo de Gibraltar is one of the regions with the most identity in Andalucía. And it is also a tourist destination that offers a wide variety of activities, in addition to the traditional “sun and beach”.

Its uniqueness is explained by its striking location, alongside the Strait of Gibraltar. This part of Andalucía borders the Rock and is the closest Spanish territory to the African continent, separated from it by just 14 kilometres. It is also the meeting point of the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Sixty per cent of the territory is made up of protected natural spaces, of high ecological value, and has a special climate characterised by a high number of hours of sunshine per year and strong winds, which favor the practise of nautical sports in its extensive and varied coast.

Sotogrande

It's often referred to as the ‘millionaire's playground’ of Spain - and for good reason.

Apart from royalty and A-list stars who regularly visit or own a property here, Sotogrande is one of the most luxurious resorts in Europe - and the larg-

Campo de Gibraltar.

One of the regions with the most identity of Andalucía

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Tourists walk to enter the Rock at its border with Spain, in La Línea. **REUTERS**

est privately owned residential development in Andalucía.

Known locally as ‘Soto’, first-time visitors may raise their eyebrows and nod in approval at the meticulously manicured lawns and the wide, palm tree-lined avenues of the estate, which give it a somewhat American neighbourhood feel.

And that's due to the resort's multi-millionaire architect Joseph McMicking, a Filipino-American businessman.

In 1962 he decided he wanted to build the ultimate high-end resort, which some say was inspired by the Pebble Beach resort in California.

Now almost 60 years later, this leafy Iberian hideaway is well-known for its international polo tournaments, elite golf clubs and its picture postcard harbour setting - with views of Gibraltar.

Among its claims to fame are the Santa María Polo Club, dubbed the ‘Wimbledon of Polo,’ and the Royal Valderrama, said to be Europe's premier golf course and host of the 1997 Ryder Cup - the first time the event had been held outside the UK or US.

Some would describe Sotogrande as a toned down, quieter version of Marbella's Puerto Banús, 48km further along the Costa del Sol.

And just like its eastern neighbour, Soto has a thriving expat community, who have chosen to make it their home - with youngsters of all ages attending the local Sotogrande International School and or visiting popular foreign owned watering holes such as the Hairy Lemon.

La Línea de la Concepcion

Let's be honest, La Línea hasn't got the best reputation along the coast and is quite the opposite of its upmarket neighbour Sotogrande.

What with the Netflix series “La Línea: Shadow of Narco” and the smuggling across the Strait of Gibraltar frequently making the news - you can understand why people often avoid it.

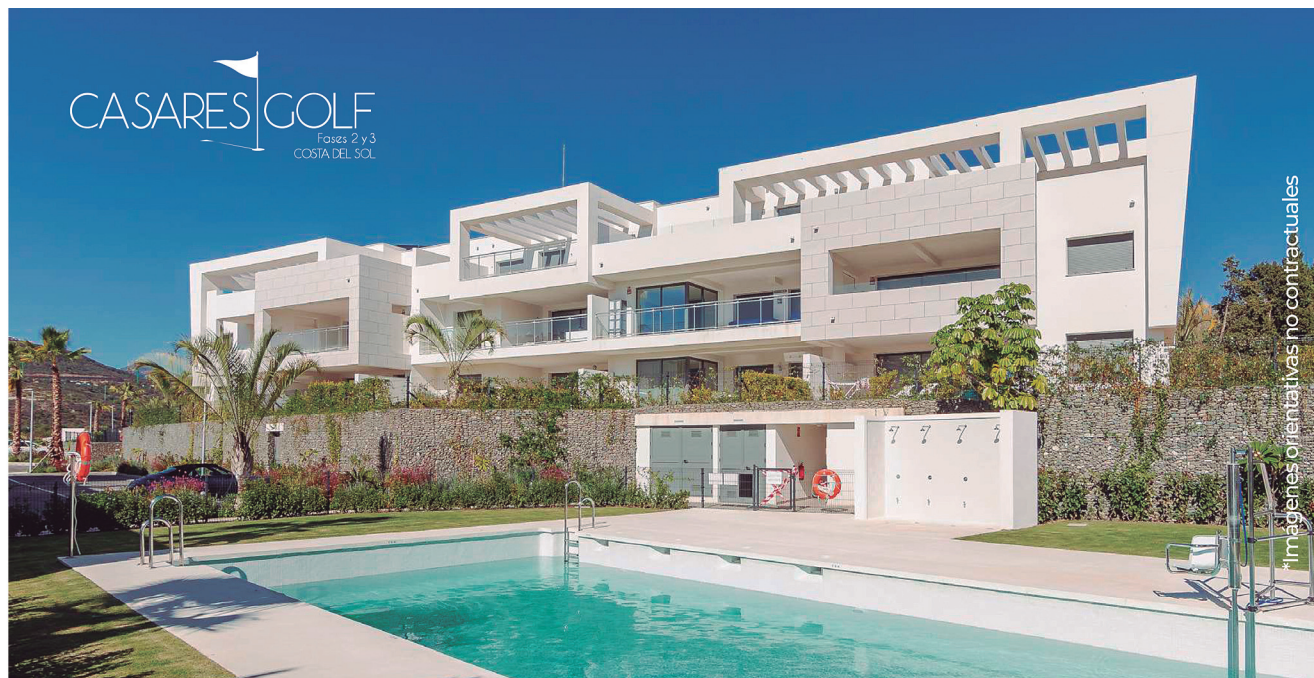
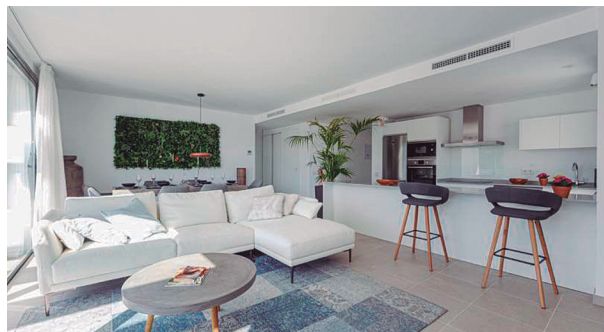
However, those who live in La Línea will tell you it's actually a safe and pleasant town to live in with some lip-smacking tapas bars and a huge foreign community.

To put it into perspective, an estimated 10,000 of the 70,000 residents here are foreign, with the majority working on the Rock.

For this reason you'll notice that the centre always appears busy, which you won't find in neighbouring towns.

Something else to note





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➤ is the large foreign working population doesn't disappear in the winter like other coastal towns, so it has a good year-round selection of tapas bars.

Among the big hitters in the gastronomy department are La Serrana, Casa Puri, La Chacra and Bodeguiya.

But La Línea is not all about the food and drink - there's also a lot of history too.

The old fortification line that crosses the city, which isolated the British territory from the rest of Spain, is still visible - and is where the name La Línea originally comes from.

History buffs can also enjoy tours of more than 152 World War II bunkers sprinkled around the city, but especially visible in the Reina Sofia Park near the border with Gibraltar.

The bunkers were constructed following the invasion of France, when Germany planned to conquer the Rock under the codename of Operation Felix.

There's also a Cathedral, a Bull Ring and The Bull Fighting Museum - the latter housing one of the largest and most important collections of bull-related memorabilia in Spain.

During the year a number of concerts and shows are also staged at the Congress Palace,

where classical performances such as The Nutcracker are often performed at Christmas.

Other than that, a lively indoor market is worth a visit, as is the scenic Alcaidesa Marina - where you can soak up the sunset over Algeciras during an evening stroll.

And you can always join the locals for a football match - most recently the Real Balompédica Linense played visiting side Wolverhampton Wanderers FC against the back drop of the Rock.

San Roque

Sitting on a hill overlooking the Bay of Gibraltar lies the pretty little town of San Roque.

If you've been to any of the White Villages (Pueblos Blancos) in Andalucía, then you'll recognise the sugar cube style houses in the historic old town.

San Roque was founded by the Spanish who decided not to stay under British rule when the Rock fell to the British and Dutch forces in 1704.

In fact, one of the first things visitors notice on arrival is a sign on the outskirts of town stating this is where 'Gibraltar Lives On.'

One of the highlights of the year, when Covid measures aren't in place that is, is the annual Bull Run, where a 500kg

FACTS AND FIGURES



CASARES (MALAGA)

Facts and figures

Total area: 160 km2
Height above sea level: 435m.
Population: 6,883 (2020)
Post code: 29690
Mayor: José Carrasco Martínez (IU)
Patron: Santo Cristo de la Buena Muerte & Nuestra Señora del Rosario del Campo.
Feast day: 16 August

MANILVA (MALAGA)

Facts and figures

Total area: 35.58 km2
Height above sea level: -128m (below sea level).
Population: 16,1439 (2020)
Post code: 29691-29692
Mayor: Mario Jiménez Rodríguez (local political party Compromiso Manilva)
Patron: Santa Ana
Feast day: 26 July

SAN ROQUE (CADIZ)

Facts and figures

Total area: 140 km2
Height above sea level: 109m.
Population: 31,571 (2020)
Post Code: 11360 (centre)
Mayor: Juan Carlos Ruiz Boix (PSOE)
Patrons: San Bernardo.
Feast day: 15 August

LA LÍNEA (CADIZ)

Facts and figures

Total area: 19.24 km2
Height above sea level: 3 m.
Population: 63,630 (2020)
Post code: 11300/11315
Mayor: José Juna Franco Rodríguez (100x100)
Patron: Inmaculada Concepción
Feast day: 8 December

bull chases hundreds of adrenaline junkies through the streets in late summer.

The streets are packed during the event, which marks the end of the town's week-long feria.

And if that isn't your cup of tea, the Noche Blanca, or White Night, normally draws thousands of people to the old quarter.

The free event features concerts, shows, open museums

and guided tours. Designed to showcase the history and heritage of San Roque, visitors are encouraged to dress in white clothing for the event that will also see the town decorated with candles and art.

Other places of interest are the Bull Ring, which is the 9th oldest in Andalucía. Quite worryingly for bullfighters is that you will find no outer corridor as the building plans were designed by a local Maths teacher

who made a mistake in his calculations.

The San Roque Municipal Museum is also worth a visit as it is furnished largely from excavations in the nearby Roman ruins of Carteia. The museum is modern and explains the history of San Roque.

After all that you'll probably be hungry, so make sure you drop into the legendary tapas bar Don Benito in the main square before you leave.



General view of the Bay of Algeciras and Gibraltar. **SUR**



A polo match in Sotogrande. **SUR**

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Manilva.

Much more than beaches and vineyards

For those who have never visited before, the white village of Manilva is found three kilometres inland and lies on the westernmost edge of the province of Malaga.

Surrounded by beautiful vineyards, picturesque valleys and the large limestone ridge just behind it, the town proper is relatively small.

It's most popular event is hands down the Manilva Grape Harvest Festival, held every September.

Thousands attend this three day festival during non-Covid times, which traditionally signals the end of the grape harvest.

Launched in the 1960s, it features live music, old-school grape treading and countless food stalls and pop-up bars.

However, within the municipality of Manilva, you will also find Puerto de la Duquesa, Castillo de la Duquesa and Sabinillas.

There is a huge expat community here and of the 16,000 people registered as living in the municipality of Manilva, 42 per cent are foreign - and of that group of foreigners, almost half are British.

Puerto de la Duquesa

It's fair to say that the port is as British as you'll get on the Costa del Sol and you'll struggle to hear many Spanish accents.

Built in the 1980s, it is the most westerly port of the province of Malaga, close to the edge of Cadiz province.

Looking like a smaller and quieter version of Marbella's Puerto Banús, the stunning promenade is filled with dozens of restaurants, bars and cafes that are popular with expats.

Castillo de la Duquesa

A few minutes' walk west along the promenade from Puerto de la Duquesa, you'll find the 18th century Castillo de la Duquesa.

Standing in what was once a large Roman fishing village, this impressive castle was built in 1767 and is now the focal point for the sleepy village that has grown up around it.

Featuring a good selection of restaurants and bars, its nar-

Of the 16,000 people registered as residents, 42 per cent are foreign, and of that group, almost half are British

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Puerto de La Duquesa in Manilva. SUR



General view of Manilva town. SUR

Its most popular event is hands down the Manilva Grape Harvest Festival, held every september

- in what is a smaller version of the International Festival of Cultures in Torremolinos.

Organised by the Foreign Residents Department in Manilva, the popular event has been growing in size every year and is designed to bring the various foreign communities living in the town together.

San Luis de Sabinillas

This fishing village is found within walking distance of Puerto de la Duquesa, on its eastern side, and is known for its long promenade that boasts dozens of tapas bars, chiringuitos, restaurants and cafes.

This is the most built up area of the Manilva area and where you will find all the large supermarkets, banks, sports centres, health centres and businesses.

You'll also find a number of expat associations based here, including various language intercambios and the Duquesa Charitable Society of St George, which is run by a number of local expats.

However, Sabinillas still retains its fishing village roots, and you'll still see fishermen hauling in their catch and fresh fish being cooked at numerous chiringuitos in the evening.

The highlight of the year for many here is the San Juan Festival in June, when the promenade fills with locals and tourists alike to celebrate the shortest night and longest day of the year.

You'll find the usual huge bonfires built on the beaches with large papier mâché figures and faces burned through the night.

Casares - the pretty neighbour

Some say this is one of the most beautiful villages in Malaga province.

Casares is another white village with more sugar cube style houses stacked dramatically on the edge of a cliff.

It's about 7km from the coast and only has around 4,000 residents, but is well worth a visit to take a stroll around the village and some snaps.

Legend has it that Julius Caesar ordered the construction of the village due to the local water, which helped cure a skin condition that had plagued him since childhood.

One of the must visits is the Castle of Casares, which is found at the highest point of the village.

But adrenaline fans may also want to try the scenic zip-line over the village, which lasts around 30 seconds.

row roads and low rise buildings give it a typical Spanish charm, which is very different to its glitzier neighbour Duquesa.

Recently a new project was announced to beautify the area around the historic castle and recover the remains of a Roman villa.

This will include building an elevated walkway to view the site at a cost of around 330,000 euros.

Undoubtedly, the highlight of the year is the International Day celebrations, which sees several thousand people descend on the castle.

The popular event normally sees more than 25 different nationalities put up colourful stands around the historic castle to showcase their country's gastronomy, culture and music

TALK OF THE TOWN

"A walk to the harbour looking at the boats and chilling on the benches is fantastic"



Scott Pitchford - La Línea

Casino Promotion Planning Executive. A fan of the San Juan Festival.

–How long have you lived in La Línea?

–After being a holiday rep for years in numerous places, I settled here 7 years ago.

–What do you like best about the town?

–It's easy to get to work, some nice restaurants and it's also easy access to get to many other great areas locally.

–What do you like least?

–The streets need a good clean and I would love to see the area have a facelift.

–Favourite beauty spot?

–The beach just past the port in La Atunara. There's a great little walk you can do on the rocks.

–A place to eat.

–Revuelo. The food is great and the service is fantastic.

–A place to drink.

–I prefer on my balcony overlooking Playa Poniente.

–Favourite annual cultural event?

–It has to be the San Juan festival. Always great fun.

–A place to relax.

–A walk down to the ever improving harbour (Alcaidesa Marina) looking at the boats and chilling on the benches is fantastic.

–Where do you take visitors?

–Always to my balcony first to watch the sunset.

–How could it be improved?

–La Línea is being improved streets are slowly being modernised. They need to keep on with the new shopping centre.

"I love the San Martín del Tesorillo obstacles course in August"



JoJo Ruby France - Sotogrande

Strength and Conditioning Coach. She has lived in Sotogrande for 16 years.

–How long have you lived in Sotogrande?

–For 16 years now.

–What do you like best about Sotogrande?

–I love the relaxed way of living, and the fulfilled life you can love and feel safe doing so.

–What do you like least about Sotogrande?

–Bloody tourists, inconsiderate people and the lack of parking during the busy months.

–Favourite beauty spot?

–Any beach but especially Bunker Bar down to Alcaidesa, during the winter.

–A place to eat?

–My favourite restaurant for a special sea food dinner is Rio Seco in Torreguadiaro. But for a casual lunch, it has to be The Hairy Lemon.

–A place to drink?

–At my pool bar during August!

–Favourite annual cultural event?

–I love the San Martín del Tesorillo obstacles course in August, an amazing day, building friendships, trying to survive and doing it again year after year.

–A place to relax?

–A sun lounge at Chambo at 6pm for a cocktail.

–Where do you take visitors?

–I love the Sunday market in Estepona, the Tarifa coast line, a shopping trip and people watching in Puerto Banús.

–How could it be improved?

–I think the public transport from village to village and town to town is non-existent.

"A beautiful spot is Charca del Infierno, which is a river walk with little waterfalls"



Debbie Flood - Puerto de La Duquesa

Hairdresser. She likes the traditional little Spanish places.

–How long have you lived in La Duquesa?

–My partner, my daughter and I moved here over 5 years ago.

–What do you like best about the town?

–I like that there are some very traditional little Spanish places within Manilva, like Sabinillas and Castillo.

–What do you like least?

–The pavements here are not the best, there are some places that are impossible to go onto with the pram.

–Favourite beauty spot?

–A beautiful spot is Charca del Infierno, which is a river walk with little waterfalls.

–A place to eat.

–One of my favourite places to eat is La Casita in Sabinillas, always tasty tapas and very good prices.

–A place to drink.

–One of my favourite bars to go to is McGuinness Irish bar in Sabinillas.

–Favourite annual cultural event?

–The Manilva Wine Festival. Been going for years, music, grape squashing and tasting.

–A place to relax.

–I love to go down to the beach in Sabinillas to relax.

–Where do you take visitors?

–Again with the wine... but the Manilva wine tour is great, good to learn a bit about it, and then to sit in the vineyard.

–How could it be improved?

–A lot of bars and restaurants in the area do not have changing facilities for babies.

"It's a multi-cultural environment, you can see people from all over the world"



Tamara Tsiklauri - Pueblo Nuevo de Guadiaro

Commercial Licensing Paralegal. 'People here are very friendly,' she says.

–How long have you lived in Pueblo Nuevo?

–I have lived in the area for six years, including Torreguadiaro, Sotogrande centre and Pueblo Nuevo de Guadiaro.

–What do you like best about the town?

–It's a multi-cultural environment. You can see people from all over the world. People here are very friendly.

–What do you like least?

–The overcrowded beaches and the empty supermarkets in the summer.

–Favourite beauty spot?

–The Marina.

–A place to eat.

–Pura Tapas in Torreguadiaro, which is delicious and not expensive and in Soto, Foodisac which is good for breakfast.

–A place to drink.

–Well now we are in the summer time I would highly recommend Bahia Limon.

–Favourite annual cultural event?

–I would highlight the international polo tournaments.

–A place to relax.

–Personally it's Bunker Beach. It's super peaceful.

–Where do you take visitors?

–I take my family to the Marina in Sotogrande as every Sunday they have a market.

–How could it be improved?

–Some more shopping places would be great and more places for kids.

"It's a tranquil little town, up until the summer months when it gets very busy"



Simon Gibbs - Sabinillas

Gaming Host. Simon says he likes to relax surrounded by history, in the Roman Baños de Hedionda.

–How long have you lived in Sabinillas?

–I've lived here for eight years.

–What do you like best about the town?

–It's a tranquil little town, up until the summer months when it gets very busy.

–What do you like least?

–How busy it gets in the summer, but that's the price you live for living on the south coast of Spain!

–Favourite beauty spot?

–El Castillo Beach.

–A place to eat.

–La Casita as it has a very varied menu and the prices are very reasonable.

–A place to drink.

–Dooleys in Duquesa Port, I don't go out to drink often, but it's a quaint little place.

–Favourite annual cultural event?

–Fiesta de la Luna Llena, is one of my favourites traditional events, everyone gets dressed up in white and there are fires on the beach.

–A place to relax.

–Baños de la Hedionda, it's a historic place.

–Where do you take visitors?

–Although Sabinillas is lovely, it's a good place to go to Estepona, Marbella or Ronda, among others.

–How could it be improved?

–To beautify it, improve the roads and summer time parking facilities.



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