

# SUR

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Women's team add  
to their impressive  
record by beating  
France to take the  
Nations League **P43**



LORENA CÁDIZ



### SEWERAGE SOLUTION FOR FUENGIROLA

A box culvert is being buried in stages the length of Torreblanca promenade, replacing forty-year-old piping and putting an end to bad weather flooding and wastewater ending up in the sea. **P3**

### All systems go for a raft of projects to boost the water supply to drought stricken Costa del Sol

Over 30 projects finished or planned include reopened wells, pumping stations, desalination plants, treated wastewater and pipelines **P8-9**

### Mixed messages over whether community pools can open from Easter cause confusion **P10**

### Malaga is a world leader for the number of organ transplants carried out every year **P37**

## Fewest babies on record are born as birth rate keeps falling in Malaga province

2023 saw 11,823 born in the province, 2.7% down on the previous year; meanwhile 14,557 deaths were recorded, widening the gap between births and deaths

For several years now, not enough children are being born to naturally replace those people passing away. Last year saw the fewest births in Malaga province, including the Costa del Sol, since records began properly in

1941. In the last ten years, the number of annual births has fallen by 24%. And women are having children later in life too. The number of births locally to mothers aged 40 or over has grown by 26% in a decade. **P2**

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# Fewer babies are born than ever before: Malaga birth rate hits new record low

The year 2023 saw 11,823 births in the province, 2.7% down on the previous year; meanwhile 14,557 deaths were recorded

NURIA TRIGUERO



**MALAGA.** The birth rate continues to fall unabated in Malaga province. Since 1941, which is the year in which the statistical register begins, there have never been fewer babies born in Malaga than in 2023: exactly 11,823. That is 325 fewer than the births in 2022, equivalent to a year-on-year percentage drop of 2.67%.

In the last decade, only two years have escaped the downward trend in births in the province: 2014 and 2021. Compared to 2013, fertility has fallen by 24%.

This drop in the birth rate experienced in Malaga in 2023 is sharper than the national (-2.02%) and regional (-1.94%) averages. Within Andalucía, only Almería suffered a greater fall (-3.33%). The other provinces also registered fewer births than the previous year, but the percentages are smaller. Even so, Malaga province, which includes the Costa del Sol, accounted for 19% of the total number of children born in the region last year.

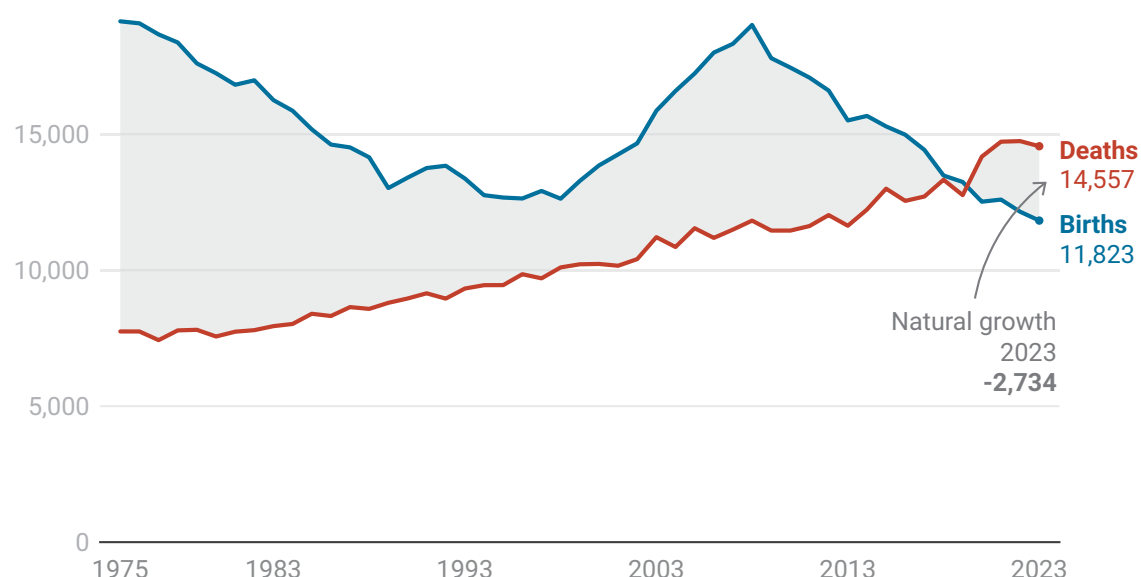
This new fall in births has widened the deficit between births and deaths in the province. What is known in demography as vegetative or natural population growth (which is nothing more than the difference between births and deaths) has been negative since 2020.

In 2023, 14,557 people died in the province of Malaga, which is 2,734 more than the births that same year. It is the arrival of new residents from outside the region (mainly from other countries, but also from within Spain) that is exclusively fuelling the strong population growth that Malaga has been experiencing in recent years.

## Older mothers

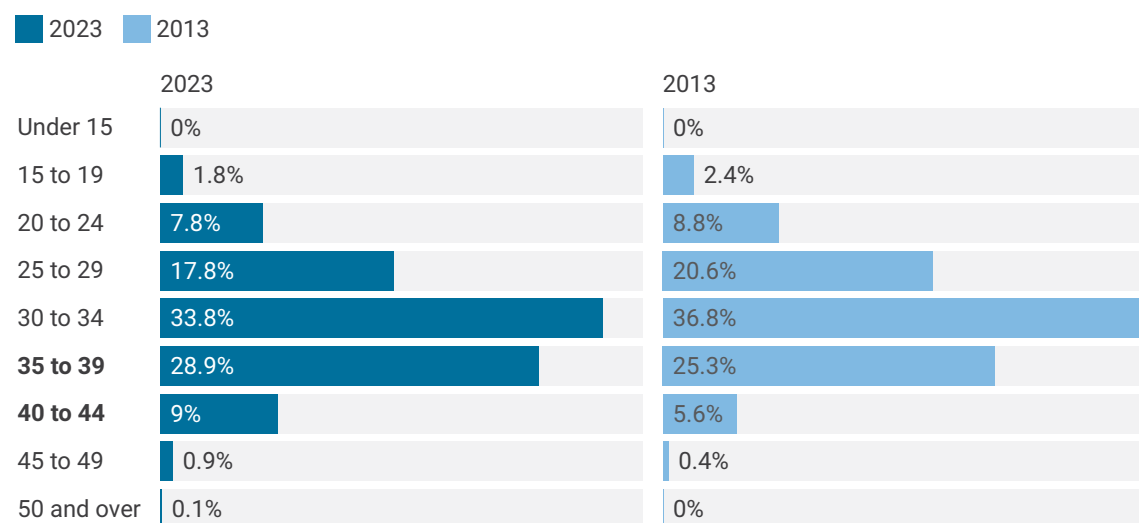
The decrease in the number of births observed in recent years is accompanied by a delay in the age of motherhood. The number of births to mothers aged 40 or over has grown by 26% in Malaga in ten years, in contrast to the fall in the total number of births,

## Births and deaths in Malaga province in 2023



## Age at motherhood

There is a higher percentage of births among mothers in the 30 to 34 age group, but the number of over-35s has increased.



Source: National Statistics Institute

which has been 24% in the same period.

While in 2013 there were 939 babies born to women over 40, in 2023 there were 1,184. The percentage represented by these babies has risen from 6% to 9%. And the opposite is true for the younger age group: ten years ago, 32% of children were born to mothers under 30 years of age and now the proportion is 27%.

## Fewer deaths

The 2023 mortality figure (14,557 deaths) in Malaga province is 1% lower than in 2022. In absolute terms, there were 325 fewer deaths than in the previous year. This makes two consecutive years of a declining number of deaths after the exceptional high reached in 2021, put down to a mixture of direct and indirect ef-



Of all the births in Andalucía in 2023, 19% were in Malaga province. SUR

fects of the pandemic.

The data come from the estimate of births and deaths carried out by the INE national statistics institute based on the registrations in the computerised civil registers, which are highly

provisional and may undergo variations in the coming months.

In Spain, it is estimated that during 2023 there were a total of 322,075 births, a decrease of 2% compared to the previous year (6,629 fewer). The number of

The drop in the birth rate experienced in Malaga in 2023 is sharper than the national average

This new fall in births has widened the deficit between births and deaths in the province

births, therefore, continues the downward trend of the last decade, only interrupted in 2014. Since 2013, the number of births in Spain has fallen by 24.1% (a figure almost identical to that of the province of Malaga).

In terms of deaths in Spain, in 2023 it is estimated that there were 435,331, 5.8% down on the previous year. By age and sex, the greatest decrease in deaths in relative terms was observed in persons between 85 and 89 years of age, both in men (with a decrease of 11.8% with respect to 2022) and in women (-9.9%).

The natural increase in the population (i.e. the difference between births and deaths in Spain) was negative by 113,256 persons according to provisional data for the year 2023.

## Madrid and Extremadura

Comparing the birth rate by region, the number of births only increased in 2023 in Madrid (2.7%) and Extremadura (0.6%). The largest falls were recorded in the cities of Melilla (-19.4%) and Ceuta (-11.8%), and in Castilla-La Mancha (-10.5%).

Looking at the breakdown by province, there are only six provinces that escaped the fall in the birth rate. The best performer was Guipúzcoa, with an increase of 4.4%, followed by Madrid, Badajoz, Salamanca, León and Valencia. At the other end of the ranking is Guadalajara, which has suffered a 21.8% drop from one year to the next.

Deaths fell in all regions with respect to 2022. The largest decreases were in the city of Ceuta (-10.9%), Aragon (-10.6%) and the Basque Country (-8.4%).

The vegetative growth (births minus deaths) was negative in 2023 in all regions, except in Madrid (4,770), Murcia (729) and the Balearics (67), and in the cities of Melilla (250) and Ceuta (94). The largest negative growth figures were recorded in Galicia (-18,701), Castilla y León (-16,270) and Andalucía (-13,544).



# Work to replace main sewer on Torreblanca seafront continues

The regional government says the 7.3-million-euro project will fix the problem of wastewater entering the sea in heavy rain in this area of Fuengirola

L. CÁDIZ / SUR IN ENGLISH

FUENGIROLA. The days are numbered for the leaky main drainage sewer running under the 'paseo marítimo' in Torreblanca, Fuengirola. For years it has had the habit of filling up in heavy rain, flooding the seafront and seeping wastewater into the sea. The 1979 structure is being replaced in stages by a two-metre by four-metre concrete box tube, or culvert, to do the job of moving dirty water for the next generation at least.

Locals and visitors have become used to the coastal road being dug up in recent months, although the good news is there will be a pause over the busy summer months. The section be-

ing replaced in the Torreblanca area runs from the mouth of the Arroyo Pajares dry stream (by Los Boliches) along to Carvajal beach, near the border with Benalmádena. This 7.3-million-euro project is being carried out in stages and workers are on stage three at the moment.

## Poor condition

The poor condition of the current pipeline has resulted in wastewater leaking into the sea and the new installation will prevent this in the future. The work will also provide a solution to another long-term problem - the flooding of the promenade during bad weather.

"The concrete structure that we are installing will allow 5,000 cubic metres of capacity to be stored, which represents a significant additional volume of water storage and water relief," explained the regional authority's general director of hydraulic infrastructure, Álvaro Real,



The promenade is currently dug up. L. CÁDIZ



Officials on their visit to the ongoing work inspect the box culvert. L. CÁDIZ

who visited the work on Monday, along with Andalusian regional minister Carmen Crespo and Fuengirola's mayor, Ana Mula.

"We are working on the third section of a very complex piece of work, which began last September. The two final sections will be carried out once the summer season ends," Crespo said, adding that Fuengirola is a municipality with a high population, which "triples its population in

the summer" and therefore needs to improve these basic services.

The mayor pointed out that the town has been waiting since 1991 for this work to start and she also emphasised the complexity of the project, asking for the patience of the residents of Torreblanca, who will be affected by the work for more than a year.

The Torreblanca project is part of the Junta de Andalucía's commitment to upgrade all the sewerage along the Costa del Sol.

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There is rarely an exception in these cases. Witness statements landing on the desks of officers from the Family and Women Assistance Unit (UFAM) that includes GRUME, the unit for crimes against minors, almost always hit hard like a wrecking ball. Sometimes, it is not even necessary for victims to start talking to realise that they have gone through a terrible ordeal - officers can see it in their eyes.

Firstly, a woman who has endured her umpteenth brutal beating from her husband. A teenager who has been suffering abuse at the hands of her grandfather for years. A mother who is mistreated by her son and who no longer knows where to turn to or to whom to run. Finally, a young woman who had almost reached home, only to be raped in the street by a stranger.

These are just some of the heart-rending cases that, without going into details, fall to this unit of the National Police at their headquarters for Malaga province. To this end, its 40 or so officers, of whom ten are in the Minors Group (GRUME), give their all to be there for the victims of gender-based and domestic violence, sexual assaults or any conduct that seriously harms underage children.

Speaking with SUR, Isabel and Javier (Chief Inspector at UFAM and head of GRUME respectively - they requested no surnames) acknowledged that they investigate crimes that are especially distressing, particularly due to the emotional trauma inflicted on the victims of such crimes. Add to that the fact that these crimes often target the most vulnerable. Consequently, no matter how many years an officer dons that blue uniform, this type of crime takes its toll on them too.

"All too often it's impossible to leave work here without a lump in your throat. We are police officers but we are also human and here we come across accounts of incredible cruelty". In fact, it is not unusual for officers to put in for a transfer to another unit due to the harshness of the cases they encounter, especially those falling to GRUME, as the victims can be so very young and utterly defenceless. "But someone has to do this job," both chiefs pipe up almost in unison.

So, to do this job effectively, officers have work methods that help them watch out for each other's well-being. For example, when investigating an alleged paedophile with a flash drive full of images of a sexual nature involving children, or there are videos showing the abuse of a young baby: "We don't let the viewing fall to just one colleague, because they are hard-hitting files and they must be viewed over and over again to extract useful information," explains Javier.



The police colleagues who head the Women and Family Assistance Unit and the Minors Group. MIGUEL FERNÁNDEZ

## Behind the scenes of the work protecting victims of abuse

**Safety.** The National Police in Malaga has a unit of specialist officers investigating cases of gender-based and domestic violence, crime against minors and sexual assault

IRENE QUIRANTE



That gut-wrenching feeling in the stomach of each officer typically occurs once they reach home. Although empathy is a key factor in letting victims know that they are not alone, in this job it is also essential to keep a cool head when conducting an investigation to shed light on what really happened. "You have to examine each reported crime carefully, there are times when things are pretty straightforward, such as when abuse occurs within a family and the perpetrator has been identified, and then

other times the investigation is more drawn-out or we end up with a very different outcome," says Isabel.

This has a lot to do with the fact that "nowadays there is much more reporting of such crimes because society is more aware". Not only that, but also hospitals, schools and other organisations have protocols in place so the alarm can be raised whenever there are signs of sexual or gender-based violence or bullying. Despite the fact that many crimes can come to the sur-

face in this way, there are also times when it is unclear whether or not a criminal offence has actually been committed.

"For instance, when there are conflicting interests between parents who have split up. Sometimes we receive a parent's complaint that their son has been mistreated by their ex because he's turned up with a bruise; or someone calls us to flag up a case of gender violence because they have heard an argument, but no violence has taken place," says the head of UFAM.

The unit is logging more and more cases of gender-based and sexual violence, largely thanks to the progress made in raising awareness at the society level. Still, officers are very familiar with other problems that are less well-known to the public. "We receive many complaints of abuse of parents; just think how desperate they would have to be to report a son, who they can't even throw out of the house, or don't want to, because he is a teenager, but who is making their lives impossible," says Isabel.

The police go as far as they can. They conduct an investigation and, if there are clues, they proceed to the arrest and the matter is placed in the hands of the relevant judicial authority (in the case of adolescents aged 14-17 that is the Juvenile Public Prosecutor's Office). For juveniles, says Isabel, they lack protocols and resources such as those available to victims of domestic violence. "Gender-based violence is a scourge on society, as is violence within the family, but here we note that the vic-

tims feel much more alone," highlights Isabel.

Unit members have also observed the consequences of a lack of knowledge in wider society when it comes to IT. This has translated into a greater volume of crimes committed via the internet. "There is no education or control led by the parents. There are children who start sending photos after chatting online for a while with someone who has gained their trust, and then they end up being exploited by an older man, a technique known as grooming," says Javier.

### Social media

On the other side of the coin, adds Isabel, is the concept of responsibility when criminals venture into using social media: "We see that there is much more vulnerability for perpetrators of these crimes, but accountability on their part seems to get watered down too, as they believe there will be no repercussions. Then there continues to be crimes that will always be prosecuted, such as bullying when it switches to social media platforms," she says.

The work of UFAM is not usually the kind of policing requiring a large deployment of patrol cars, nor is their presence announced by the sound of sirens. The important thing for them is to ensure that victims are protected and their attackers arrested. Thus, although it is often painful to deal with the drama, it also reminds them daily of why they once decided to join the police force.



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112 REPORTS



FUENGIROLA SE QUEJA

### Earth moves for demolition bulldozer driver

An investigation is under way at the old Mercacentro market site in Fuen-girola after a bulldozer toppled into a hole that opened up in the ground. Fortunately, the driver was not injured and able to make his own way out. Workers are flattening the area to make way for a new modern market and gastrobars, but the site's two underground floors will not be demolished.

### Man crushed to death by palm tree while helping neighbour

The French handyman was removing a fallen tree that was blocking an access track to the home of a British woman

EUGENIO CABEZAS

FRIGILIANA. Frigiliana was in mourning on Wednesday, a public holiday for the region's Andalucía Day. A retired 69-year-old man, originally from France, died after a palm tree rolled onto him at the rural property of a neighbour near his home in Pago del Pendón, in the Barranco Fernández area, close to the municipality of Torrox.

The tragic incident happened at around 11.45am, while the victim was helping a British neighbour remove a fallen tree on her property, which had been damaged by the strong winds that had been blowing in the area in recent days. The palm tree, about four metres long and weighing about 2,000 kilos, was lying on the access road to the house, on a slope, which prevented vehicles from passing.

Early on Wednesday morning, Dominique - who neighbours described as "a handyman who was prepared to help everyone" - offered to help remove the branches and cut it into sections to allow it

to be removed. However, for reasons that are unknown and that are being investigated by the Guardia Civil, after he had cut several branches, the trunk rolled a few metres down the slope, crushing him.

Emergency services were quickly on the scene but the medical professionals were unable to do anything to save the victim's life. His body was removed by the authorities shortly before 2pm and transferred to Malaga where an autopsy will be performed, although initial investigations point to the cause of death being asphyxiation.

The wife of the deceased, also French, had to be treated for a severe anxiety attack. The French couple, who didn't have children, have lived in the rural area for about five years, being well known and loved by all local residents.

MALAGA

### Police probe planning breaches in province

E.P. A total of 46 people, including builders and landowners, are being investigated by the Guardia Civil's environmental protection branch for alleged planning breaches in various municipalities throughout Malaga province. During 179 inspections, officers detected 192 offences and noted the trend of illegal construction on rural land, the erection of pre-fabricated properties and swimming pools built under the guise of water deposits.



One of the properties that was inspected by police. GUARDIA CIVIL

COSTA DEL SOL

### Sea search operation finds body of missing paddle boarder

E. CABEZAS. The search operation activated on Tuesday to try and locate the father of two who disappeared after going paddle boarding on a beach on the eastern strip of the Costa del Sol found a body five nautical miles from Caleta de Vélez on Wednesday morning.

The Salvamento Marítimo maritime rescue service had mobilised several search vessels and aircraft to comb the shoreline from Malaga to Almuñécar in Granada province to try and locate Nicolás Notario Romero who lived in Marbella and worked in the real estate sector. The 53-year-old, a keen swimmer and paddle boarder, was reported missing by his wife, Laura, after he failed to return from a paddle boarding trip while the family were holidaying at an apartment they owned in Benajáraf. She alerted the emergency services just after 5pm on Tuesday after becoming worried when Nicolás to failed return from the beach in time to take their daughter to a medical appointment in Vélez-Málaga.



Nicolás Notario

MALAGA

### More than 30 people investigated after animals found living in 'deplorable' conditions

E.P. A total of 34 people are being investigated in Malaga province for alleged animal cruelty after police found horses dying from starvation, dogs with severed ears and tails and some animals allegedly beaten to death.

As part of Operation Colaphus, officers from the Guardia Civil's nature protection unit (Seprona) found more than 100 ill-treated animals including horses abandoned without food or water in the middle of a heat wave and dogs with docked ears and tails. Animals suffering from leishmaniasis, mange and other diseases were also found. Police inspected 236 private kennels, livestock farms, zoos and animal shelters and found more than 500 breaches of regulations, mainly related to animal welfare, lack of veterinary care or documentary and health records. Many of the animals that were rescued have been placed in the care of various animal welfare associations and shelters.

MARBELLA

### Cops save girl choking on pistachio nut

I.Q. A Marbella Local Police unit patrolling in Puerto Banús has saved the life of a two-year-old girl who was choking on a pistachio nut. The Moroccan parents of the child, who has Down's syndrome, were rushing the youngster to the Hospital Costa del Sol in their car when they chanced upon the patrol. The child wasn't breathing and had already turned blue when the officers sprang into action. One of them managed to remove the object blocking the girl's airways while the other radioed for an ambulance. Once the nut was removed the child began breathing normally but was taken to hospital for a check up.

MALAGA

### Cleaner found dead in Malaga meter room

I.Q. A 51-year-old woman was found dead on Monday morning in the meter room of a building in Malaga city where she apparently worked as a cleaner. According to sources, the woman's body showed no signs of violence, so the autopsy and investigation will focus on clarifying whether she could have been the victim of an accident at work or whether she died of natural causes.



Marbella firefighters. SUR

MARBELLA

### Firefighters rescue lost hiker in mountains

M.A. Last weekend a team of firefighters from Marbella helped rescue a 76-year-old man who became disorientated while hiking at an altitude of 900 metres in the Sierra Blanca mountains. The seven-hour overnight operation was sparked after the hiker called 112 and emergency operators passed the GPS coordinates of his phone to the fire brigade. He was found suffering from slight hypothermia.



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# Drought leads to flow of projects to increase Malaga's water resources

Works already finished or imminent include bringing wells back into service, new pumping stations, treated wastewater, desalination plants and pipeline connections

## Water works in the province

- Initial study
- Planning
- Under construction
- Imminent
- Operative

Source: Own data  
MAP ENCARNI HINOJOSA

CHUS HEREDIA

of note was commissioned: the desalination plant at El Atabal in Malaga, which allows the saline water of the Guadalhorce reservoir, contaminated by the Meliones spring, to produce high quality water. The plant is one of the works completed in the last five years: its treatment capacity has increased by 10 per cent. And that, for example, will now help to process salinised resources from the wells of the lower Guadalhorce.

### Constant flow of paperwork

Four drought decrees, official gazettes, newspaper archives and the Plus Sequía plan provide an objective measure of how the department led by Carmen Crespo has got its act together. The flow of projects is constant. SUR has compiled 36 (there could be more), although one of them has not yet been processed as such: the Cerro Blanco dam. This project, which will make use of the 25 cubic hectometres a year that the river Grande brings to the Guadalhorce when it joins it near Cártama, is part of the Junta's planning, but in the long term.

The Gibrálmedina reservoir, whose project is being finalised to

dam the Guadiaro river and provide 15 cubic hectometres a year to the Costa del Sol from somewhere between Cadiz and Malaga, is also a distant prospect.

The rest of the initiatives compiled for this report are very much alive. More than a week ago, the large pipeline to carry reclaimed wastewater from the Peñón del Cuervo treatment plant to the Axarquía was inaugurated. Water from the city to irrigate the countryside.

Ministers gave the green light last month to the works to expand the Marbella desalination plant to 20 cubic hectometres per year. The aim is to have it ready by autumn.

The figures involved in these plans are dizzying: 132.9 cubic hectometres extra of drinking water and 40.4 cubic hectometres added of reclaimed water for agriculture and golf and garden irrigation, bringing the province's to-

**Ministers gave the green light last month to the works to expand the Marbella desalination plant**

tal to 101 in the short term.

The drought has made a virtue out of necessity and now 42% of Andalusian public works are going in this direction, according to data from the regional agriculture ministry, which states that the investment mobilised in the province is around 400 million euros since 2019.

### Thirsty Axarquía

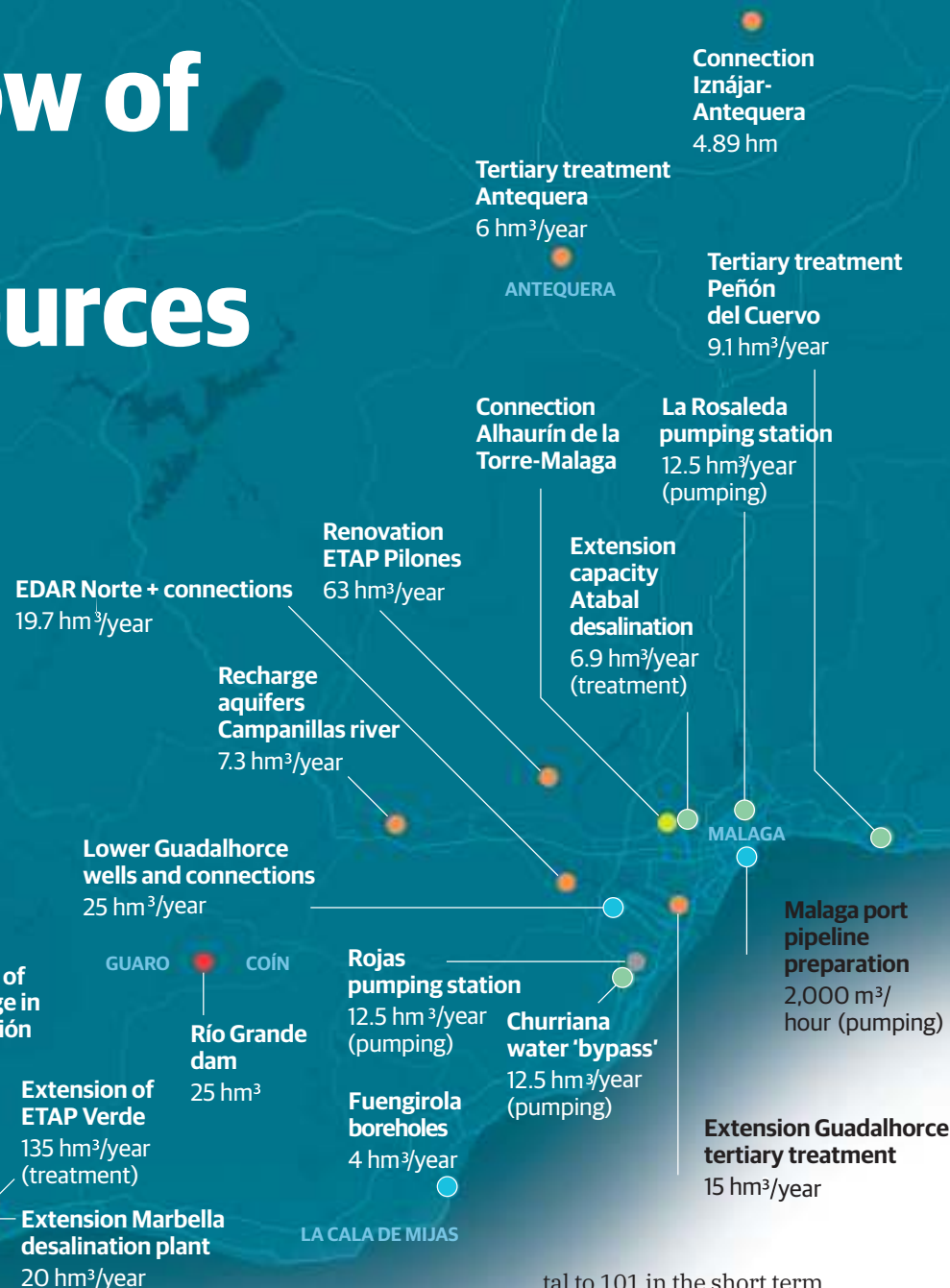
The other major project in the province is located in a district most in need of water: the Axarquía. The desalination plant in Vélez will be built on a plot of land next to the water treatment plant, very close to El Ingenio shopping centre. The money is there, because central government has committed 100 million euros. And the land is available because the Junta and Vélez town hall have reserved it for expropriation. But the national and regional ministries clash over who should be in charge of drawing up the construction project (something that was not included in the signed agreement but which, on paper, as it is a work of general state interest, is Madrid's responsibility). In any case, the minister for the sector, Teresa Ribera, has said that the plant will not be ready before the end of 2027 or 2028.

Desalination is also part of the plans. Small plants will bring old wells with low recharge and high conductivity (sodium) up to stan-

MALAGA. The ground is cracking in the dry reservoirs and warnings have long since been sounded. This is the year in which the least rain has topped up the reservoirs since records began. The measure of the drought can be taken from multiple angles. It is already serious throughout the province, both in areas that are fed by reservoirs and those with other, now depleted, resources. A maximum of 160 litres per person per day - that's the limit.

Reserves are at 16 per cent and have long since fallen below 100 cubic hectometres. But every crisis is an opportunity: the water shortage has led to a flow of 35 projects in just five years, most of them promoted by the ministry of agriculture at the Andalusian regional government.

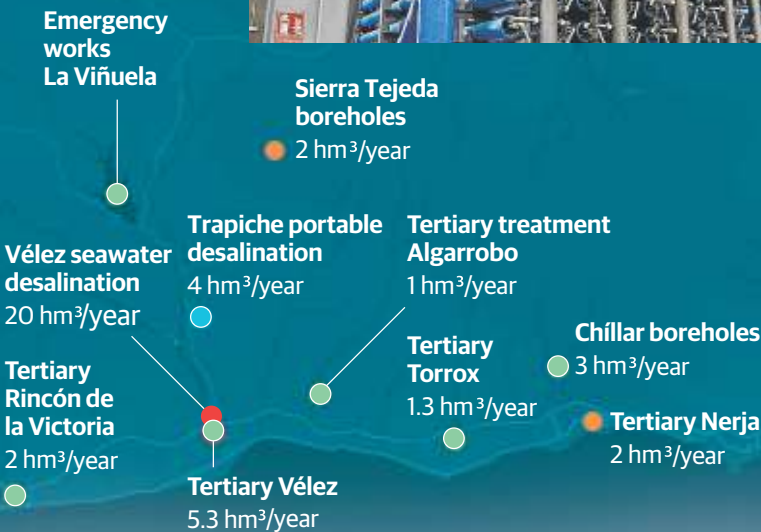
There has never been such an amount of work in a province that has seen hardly any since 2006, when the last major infrastructure







◀ El Atabal desalination plant in Malaga for brackish water is now 10% bigger.  
MIGUE FERNÁNDEZ



Another driving force of the water policies is backed by the most overwhelming logic: to take water from one place to another according to needs. Thanks, for example, to La Rosaleda pumping station, Malaga city sends just under 300 litres per second to the Axarquía. When, in addition, the Rojas (Churriana) pumping facilities come into operation, there will be water between the Campo de Gibraltar and Axarquía in both directions, including Guadalhorce. Another thing is the need for a complete renovation of the main pipeline on the Costa del Sol, with 100 kilometres between Manilva and Torremolinos.

The Gibrámedina reservoir project is based on this idea of the 'water highway', which currently has improved water supply connections to Alhaurín de la Torre and a project is being drafted to bring

dard. These portable installations will operate in Guadalmanza, Fuen-girola and El Trapiche. And the aforementioned Atabal will treat

flows from the lower Guadalhorce, in addition to those already purified and whose recharge is increasing at Fahala and Aljaima.

some five cubic hectometres a year from the Iznájar reservoir in Córdoba to Antequera and the north-eastern district of the province.

Collaboration between different authorities has favoured this dense network of projects. And it is here where the efforts of the main public companies - Acosol, Emasa and Axaragua - multiply in conjunction with town councils.

Among them all, the attitude of Estepona, which decided to embark on its own desalination project in three phases in the municipality, is particularly striking. First, it wants to have the Castor wells operational by this summer; and, in parallel, it is already studying a portable desalination plant next to the mouth of the Castor river, which it wants to start up in two phases and whose energy supply is self-sufficient. Sea and sun, an unbeatable combination.

#### Short, mid and long term

"The really difficult thing at the moment is that we have to work on very short-term, medium-term and long-term actions," sources from the regional ministry of agriculture told this newspaper, adding that the first two drought decrees are practically 100 per cent implemented, the third is well advanced and the fourth is also mak-

**Of the 36 initiatives referred to here, 11 have been completed and 10 are under construction**

ing progress.

Because if we are talking about the very short term, the connections and floating pumps are ready to take advantage of the 'dead reservoir' area of La Viñuela and could soon be ready in La Concepción.

Of the 36 initiatives referred to here, 11 have been completed; 10 are under construction or are imminent; 12 are in the planning stage and the other three are in the preliminary studies phase. All this is possible by investing the extra fee the Junta collects for infrastructure through water bills.

What nobody wants to end up with is having to bring water by boat. Just in case, negotiations are being finalised to bring it from the desalination plant in Escombreras, Cartagena. The unloading will take place at the Port of Malaga. Technicians have already inspected the large pipeline that was built at the mouth of the Guadalmedina for the drought of 1995.



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# Swimming pool confusion on the Costa: will they be allowed to open this summer?

Property administrators in Malaga province are calling for clarity from the authorities ahead of the opening of many shared pools at Easter

IGNACIO LILLO

**MALAGA.** Communities of homeowners on the Costa del Sol are facing a regulatory nightmare when it comes to the opening of their swimming pools amid the drought crisis in the south of Spain, claiming regulations are still unclear.

With Easter week just around the corner at the end of March, which often marks the opening of community swimming pools on the coast, Malaga province property administrators have pointed out they still don't definitely know whether they can refill them or open the pools up for access.

The problem lies in the Junta de Andalucía's drought decree and the town councils' restrictions on water usage, which contradict each other, according to president of Malaga association of property administrators Manuel Jiménez Caro.

"With high temperatures in February, many residential communities are already asking to prepare their pools to open at Easter (24 March) and we don't know what to advise them," he said.

The latest drought decree of the Junta specifies pools can only be filled if they are newly built, and allows for the top up of any losses due to evaporation or use which are estimated to be 2-3% daily. In practice this would mean that they may have to be completely filled two to three times throughout the



There are conflicting regulations at a municipal and regional level. **SUR**

summer season.

## Water tanks

This is where the confusion with the municipal rules come in, which vary from one town hall to another. Many municipalities authorise the use of water tanks for refilling swimming pools, which in practice allows them to open; but at this point the technical sanitary decree of the Junta de Andalucía in 2019 comes into play, which states that this water must be treated beforehand, in a holding tank separate from the pool, or in the pool itself, which means having to close it for two to three days in the middle of summer.

Already, in some areas, public water companies are removing or sealing the supply meters to pools, as is happening in Rincón de la Victoria and Benalmádena. In these cases, in practice, the pool would not be allowed to be used as the regulations state it is

compulsory for there to be running water in toilets and showers.

In Malaga city, topping up is limited to the use of non-potable water (by means of tankers), but the meters have not been removed. In several coastal municipalities there is already a warning that tampering with seals will be reported to Seprona (the environmental branch of the Guardia Civil), while in Malaga city fines range from 6,000 euros.

In addition, supplementary water deposits are expensive and require installation, which takes time and space. Added to this is the price of the tanks: if at the beginning of last summer they cost 100-110 euros, by the end of the season they had already shot up to 600 euros.

Along the coast it is not known how the rules will affect the communities that have their own wells

or if they decide to use sea water, which is another option that is being considered. Asked about this possibility, the property administrators admit that it is on the table, although the chlorination and filtering systems would have to be adapted, in addition to the issues already mentioned regarding on-site treatments or the use of supplementary tanks. "At the moment we do not know if we can use water taken from the sea."

## Call for clear rules

Malaga's Colegio de Administradores de Fincas is calling for "clear regulations" for the use of water in communal areas "coordinated between all municipalities and supervised by the Junta".

President of the association Manuel Jiménez Caro said: "We are aware of how important water is for human consumption and that there is a serious problem of drought, so we ask for clarity because we are responsible for ensuring that the community rules are complied with." He said that, as of now, they do not know what to recommend to their clients. "Easter is the beginning of the season and it is close, so they have to make decisions as soon as possible."

"In the end, we fear that there will be some pools open and others closed and that creates problems between neighbouring communities, as happened last year in the Axarquía area. The lack of water affects the entire province and the basins are interconnected. That is why it does not make sense for there to be different rules in each municipality," Jiménez Caro added.

## HERE AND THERE



Mijas councillor by the lift. **SUR**

## MIJAS

### Lift that trapped 13 tourists back in action

**L.C.** The panoramic view lift popular with tourists in Mijas Pueblo is back working again. Since it was installed eight years ago it has suffered several breakdowns, most recently last June when a group of 13 Chinese tourists became trapped in sweltering temperatures until the fire brigade rescued them by smashing the glass panels. Now it has been repaired, the town hall has asked for users to treat it with "respect".

## BENALMÁDENA

### No dog beach again as legal row rumbles on

**L.C.** Benalmádena faces another year without a dedicated beach for pets and their owners as a legal row continues. The Benalcan facility on Arroyo Hondo beach was in operation in 2021 and 2022, but was closed when a case went to court in 2023 after a local resident reported the town hall. Until the outcome of the ruling is known, the town hall is unable to reopen the facility or find a new location if the current one cannot be used.

## RONDA

### Club declared 'asset of cultural interest'

**V.M.** The regional ministers of Andalucía agreed this Tuesday, on the eve of Andalucía Day (28 February), to grant the historic club building known as the Ronda Casino status as an Asset of Cultural Interest (BIC). In 1918, the Ronda Casino, in the town's central Plaza del Socorro, was the site of the regionalist assembly which approved the flag and arms of Andalucía — a significant milestone — at a meeting presided over by Blas Infante.

## Malaga building 'best in world'

A building in Malaga city has been crowned the best logistics building in the world in 2023. The accolade was awarded by a major online web platform for architects, ArchDaily, which has 1.2 million visits daily. The swish construction, designed by the System Arquitectura studio, allowed the Mayoral children's clothing chain to expand its logistics centre in what used to be the Intelhorce factory. It was refurbished by construction firm Sando in 2018 at a cost of 26 million euros. The building received the award for Best Application of Materials: Industrial Buildings, in a competition in which 4,000 projects from all over the world were assessed.



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# Blanket of snow covers Axarquía mountains for second time this year

EUGENIO CABEZAS

NERJA. Despite the extreme drought affecting Malaga province, nature has left some hope in the form of snow this week. On Tuesday the highest peaks

of the Tejeda, Alhama and Alhama mountain range in the Axarquía were covered in a fine white blanket of snow for the second time this year; the first came as a late Christmas present in early January.

The snow followed a weather front that left 28mm of rain in the village of Alfarnatejo, in the so-called 'Pyrenees of the South', in the upper Axarquía.

On Monday evening there were thunderstorms accompanied by



Snow on Axarquía mountains. E. C.

hail brought by the front which also gave the area some outstanding rainbows along the entire eastern coast from Rincón de la Victoria to Nerja.

From Nerja, snow could be seen on La Navachica, which is 1,813 metres above sea level, on Tuesday morning.

From Vélez-Málaga, snow was still be seen on Wednesday afternoon on the top of Malaga province's highest mountain, La Maroma, which is 2,069 metres above sea level,



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## HERE AND THERE

### TORRE DE BENAGALBÓN

#### Fake 'doctor' arrested after investigation

J. C. / I. G. A fake 'doctor' who treated people for more than 30 years and allegedly swindled two of them out of 300,000 euros has been arrested in Rincón de la Victoria. The 56-year-old who practised from his house in Torre de Benagalbón was arrested by the Guardia Civil after officers discovered he had no qualifications. Investigations started in January when two patients filed complaints after they had been fleeced of 240,000 and 80,000 euros following treatments.

### NERJA

#### German chain to open supermarket in Nerja

E. C. German supermarket group Aldi is set to open its first store in Nerja on 22 March, according to an announcement made by the company on Tuesday. The store will be the chain's first in the town and one hundredth in Andalucía. The supermarket is located on the town's Avenida Alcalde Antonio Villasclaras, next to the Castillo Alto industrial estate, on the road leading into Nerja from the A-7 motorway. It will have an underground car park.

### VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA

#### Town hall issues 84 fines since law imposed

E. C. Local Police in Vélez-Málaga have issued 84 fines since the introduction of a by-law requiring pet owners to clean up after their dogs and imposing stricter controls on fly-tipping. The 'in your house you would clean it up... our streets are your home' campaign to raise awareness of the new byelaw was launched earlier this year and local residents were given a two-week grace period before officers started to issue the fines.



# Irish TV show turns to Nerja in search of property bargains

Presenter Maggie Molloy and a film crew flew to the Costa del Sol to help a couple find their dream home for the RTÉ show Cheap European Homes

ALEKK M. SAANDERS

NERJA. After three successful seasons of Cheap Irish Homes - a television programme produced by Irish national broadcaster (RTÉ) following home-hunters - presenter Maggie Molloy is now on a mission to help people find their dream homes in Europe.

This week she visited the Costa del Sol with an Irish couple, hoping to find them a dream home in Malaga province for the second season of the popular spin-off show, Cheap European Homes.

Some years ago, RTÉ, along with presenter Maggie Molloy and her co-host building engineer Kieran McCarthy, began airing a show about how young couples were seeking out affordable and inspiring houses around Ireland.



Filming for the television show in progress over dinner. SUR

The aim of the project was to enable young people to find homes around the country that were low enough in price that they could move into straight away without major renovations.

In an interview to RTÉ Life-style Maggie Molloy said: "I think with house prices rising and even materials rising, when it comes to renovations, it's really just the value that's more important to us than anything to make sure that we're not pushing people

into tackling large projects if it's something that's outside their comfort zone."

In the new project, Molloy follows a similar format to Cheap Irish Homes, sourcing the best value-for-money homes for potential owners across Europe. In the latest six-part series, the presenter will be trying to find cheap properties for various individuals and couples to set up a life overseas.

Maggie will be travelling

through Portugal, France, and Spain. In each place she will be joined by a local architect who will advise on the condition of the houses, renovation options, local planning and tax laws. This week one of the episodes was filmed on the Costa del Sol.

The aim of the visit to the Costa del Sol was to enlist Maggie Molloy's help to find the prospective Irish couple a low-cost home to move and thereby to make a fresh start in Spain. The TV crew were spotted in Nerja at restaurant El Rincón, where the presenter was having dinner with the young couple looking to buy a house in the sun in their dream country.

## Hidden gems

Over a table filled with typical Andalusian dishes, they discussed the hidden gems they were shown around Nerja and Frigiliana, and the pros and cons of the houses they had seen. According to the television show's format, house-hunters are taken to three separate properties - some of them need extensive work, while others are in walk-in condition.

"This new season of the show will premiere on RTÉ around the start of 2025," Etienne Herblot from the production crew told SUR in English.

"It was a rush; we had a lot of work during our week of filming but we all enjoyed the Costa del Sol very much," he added.

# German company hoping to sell desalination plants to drought-stricken Costa del Sol towns

E. CABEZAS

MALAGA. German multinational Boreal Light is trying to arrange meetings with town halls along the Costa del Sol as it claims that its portable desalination plants can be installed within a month and are more efficient, as they use solar energy.

Malaga-based sales representative Rene von Reth, who is originally from Germany, said that the equipment can produce up to 2,400 cubic metres of desalinated water per day, which is suitable for consumption.

Von Reth has had a meeting with the Junta de Andalucía's representative for agriculture, Fernando Fernández, who showed "great interest" and urged him to contact the town halls directly as they are responsible for drinking water supply.

However, von Reth said: "For the moment I have not been able to arrange any meetings and it is a shame, because it seems that there is no interest."

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# Record hotel prices on the Costa in 2023 with rates 30% higher than bumper year of 2019

The increases have not had an impact on arrivals with 6.2 million foreign tourists booking hotel rooms in Malaga province last year

PILAR MARTÍNEZ

MALAGA. Prices for hotels along the Costa del Sol have hit record highs with visitors now paying a third more for their stay than they did in the bumper year of 2019, new data shows.

The average rate last year stood at 121 euros, some 31.6% more than 2019, according to the most recent figures from Turismo Costa del Sol.

The rate is higher than both the national and Andalusian averages. In 2023 tourists paid an average of 110 euros for a night's stay in a hotel in Spain, and 105 euros in Andalucía. The average rate increase along the Costa del Sol coincides with rising costs for hotels, with businesses forced to pay 25% extra for energy, 29.1% more for supplies and financial

costs (18.9%). Difficulty in finding workers has also caused hotels to spend 17% more in labour costs, the report added.

## Tourist arrivals

However, the increase in prices has not had an impact on tourist arrivals on the Costa del Sol. Instead it has had the opposite effect, with 6.2 million visitors recorded in 2023, some 7% more than in 2019. It also posted historic records in overnight stays, with more than 21.3 million, an increase of almost 5%. However,

this rise in prices is one of the factors that caused a slight decline in the number of nights booked by national tourists. Bookings by Spanish visitors dropped by 1.2% last year compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic, a decrease cushioned by the 7% increase in overnight stays by foreign visitors, which exceeded 15.5 million.

## Top three

Marbella, Estepona and Malaga city are consolidated in the top five of holiday and urban destinations with the highest hotel profitabil-

ity in Spain, according to the Alliance for Excellence in Tourism (Exceltur) in its latest report. This places the Costa del Sol as the leading holiday destination on the Spanish mainland, only preceded by the Balearic and Canary Islands. According to the figures, the highest price per room is led by Ibiza with an average of 177.60 euros, followed by San Josep on the island of Ibiza itself, with 173.80 euros; Santanyi in Mallorca, with 148.20 euros; Marbella, with 146.10; and Estepona, with 136.40.

## Easter forecast

With Easter week just around the corner, at the end of March, Costa del Sol and Malaga province hotels are predicting an occupancy rate of 78.5%, slightly down on last year when Semana Santa fell in April, with its better weather.



Council workers at La Bola roundabout in Benalmádena. L. CÁDIZ

## Drought forces councils to introduce new water-saving landscaping measures

Fuengirola, Mijas Pueblo and Benalmádena are switching to less thirsty plants and other methods in a bid to reduce consumption

LORENA CÁDIZ

MIJAS. Landscaping with reduced or zero amounts of water is gaining ground on the western Costa del Sol. Dubbed 'xeriscaping', this technique is one of the tools being used by local councils to keep streets and public spaces looking attractive without needing as

much water as the season of high temperatures and a ban on irrigation continues.

Less thirsty plants along with decorative materials are replacing grass and other greenery along the Costa. In Benalmádena, some roundabouts - including Tívoli, La Bola and the Flathotel - have been transformed in this way in recent weeks.

In Fuengirola, the town hall is introducing new potting materials to more than a hundred plant containers which reduce water needs by as much as 75% and the aim is to have them finished by Easter. Materials such as stone,

gravel or pine bark are also being used in the planters so the potting material stays damp for longer. A permeable resin will be applied to fix the materials so they cannot be picked up by pets or small children but allow rainwater through.

In Mijas Pueblo, the council is currently revamping roundabouts and traffic islands. "We are suffering a major drought so we have implemented this landscaping technique as a measure of commitment to the environment, without forgetting how important it is to keep our municipality looking at its best," said the mayor, Ana Mata. The xeriscaping work began last November using "plants completely adapted to the climate and ornamental and sustainable materials, such as pine bark and volcanic stones", as well as recycled glass in different colours, an idea imported from the Canary Islands.

## Animal reserve marks 25 years in Estepona with conservation commitment

Selwo Aventura has reopened after a winter break with a continued promise to help species that are in danger of becoming extinct

DAVID LERMA

ESTEPONA. Selwo Aventura is celebrating 25 years of attracting visitors to the popular animal reserve in Estepona on the Costa del Sol.

In its more than two decades of operation the park has become known for prioritising welfare over business interests through its collaboration with the European Endangered Species Programme.

Selwo Aventura reopened its doors this year on 16 February after its usual winter break. This 2024 season will see many improvements to the park's facilities, with special attention to the area where numerous birds

from Africa are housed. Selwo Aventura, as the veterinary centre of the Selwo Marina park in Benalmádena, will also refurbish its necropsy room, where studies of deceased specimens are carried out. There, samples of organs and fluids are taken for the genetic study of the animals.

Eloy Serrano, chief curator of Selwo Aventura, said he has never been fond of the traditional idea of a zoo. "When I started out as a zoologist, my idea of what it involved was not very favourable," said the man who started his career at Madrid Zoo and has been working in Estepona for the past seven years.

"Whether you call it a reserve or a zoo, they are animals that live in captivity. The important thing is that now in these institutions, conservation, recovery and environmental education are the priority, and have been at least since 2003," he added.



Visitors to the Selwo Aventura attraction in Estepona (file photo). SUR



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## List of caps on home rental prices published in attempt to control overheated areas

Restrictions will only apply if a region identifies an area as having inflated prices and affect larger landlords or new rentals

AMPARO ESTRADA

MADRID. The government has published an online list or index of ideal maximum rents for homes across most of Spain in an attempt to control rental prices and stop, what it believes, is an overheated market in many areas.

The index draws on data from landlords' tax returns as a guide and is meant as a tool for tenants to see if the price they are being charged is out of line with the rest of their area - <https://servi.mivau.gob.es/>.

To be compulsorily applied by law, a regional government must first declare it has an area with overheated housing costs and present an action plan to try to solve the situation. Although, for now, few regions look likely to do this. In mid-March the index will

be applied for the first time in parts of Catalonia that have been declared "a stressed area".

Secretary of State for Housing David Lucas called on more regions to declare overheated areas in order to control speculation, adding that in Madrid, for example, the difference between rents being asked on property websites compared to the figures on the new index are up to 60 per cent. He also gave examples in Valencia or Barcelona.

In overheated areas, the rental contracts of large landlords (owners of more than ten dwellings, or five if a region says so) and of homes that are just going on the rental market cannot have a price higher than that set by the reference index. Those restrictions will not apply to smaller landlords.

The FAI federation of real estate associations criticised the capping index, saying it will create "more fear among landlords, which will exacerbate the flight of landlords from the market and further reduce supply".



Booking.com is under fire from the competition watchdog. **SUR**

## Booking.com faces huge 'anti-competitive practices' fine

EDURNE MARTÍNEZ

MADRID. Top hotel booking website Booking.com faces a 486-million-euro fine in Spain for alleged anti-competitive practices, which would be the largest sanction in the tourism giant's history. The Spanish competition regulator - the CNMC - has proposed the fine, the online travel company announced.

The accommodation booking portal has been accused of anti-competitive behaviour such as allegedly preventing domestic hotel groups from offering deals that are cheaper on their own

sites than the price they offer on booking.com.

However, the travel website has denied any wrongdoing, arguing that allowing higher prices on its website would hurt the consumer. Booking.com said it will appeal this "unprecedented decision in Spain" if it becomes final.

The CNMC launched an investigation in October 2022 after two complaints were filed by the Spanish association of hotel managers and the hotel business association of Madrid where they accused the online travel platform of "unfair", anti-competitive practices.

## Shock as Spain's IVA sales tax on electricity bills set to double due to falling prices

JOSÉ MARÍA CAMARERO

MADRID. Some households could be in for a surprise from today (1 March) when the IVA sales tax on electricity bills rises from the current rebate rate of 10 per cent to 21 per cent. Paradoxically, this will be due to the plummeting electricity prices last month, with an excess of solar and wind power generation.

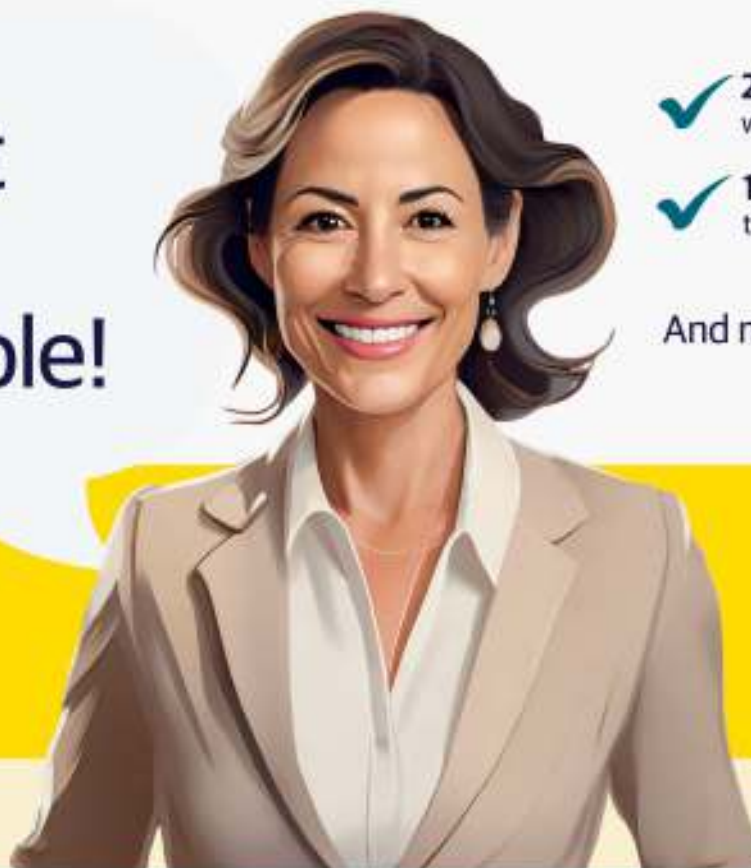
The average price of electricity generation was expected to be 41.20 euros per megawatt hour (MWh) on Thursday, the final day of the month. This figure is below 45 euros/MWh, the key price that determines what IVA should be applied to bills.

The last anti-crisis decree approved by the government at the end of 2023 established that IVA would be 10% as long as this average price did not fall below 45 euros. Now, all indications are that it will no longer exceed this figure, which will trigger the tax increase automatically to 21%.



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# Flat owners told not to worry about safety after Valencia fire

A judge allowed the ten victims to be buried and those affected to collect belongings found by firefighters; the King and Queen visited the scene

**SUR**

MALAGA. Amid fears other residential blocks could have been built the same way as the ones that burned in the spectacular fire last week that claimed ten lives in Valencia, real estate agents have called for public calm.

Spokesperson for COAPIV, the Valencia association for the real estate industry, Vicente Díez, said on Thursday this week that, although there were “nerves” over what happened to the 13-storey and 10-storey blocks in the Nou Campanar area of the Mediterranean city, “we need to stay positive and be confident that people are safe in their buildings”. Díez added, “The buildings that have been built in the Valencia region since time began meet the regulations, and, as a result, we should feel relaxed.”

Many reports of the fire that ripped through the tall, modern buildings at high speed in windy conditions have focused on the type of material used in the cladding. Live television images of molten panels flying through the air were watched across Spain.

Initial reports said the building’s covering may have contained polyurethane, the flammable substance linked to the large Grenfell Tower fire in London in 2017. However, later evidence has pointed to different fillings and the investigation into



The two, adjoining burned-out blocks of flats. **REUTERS**

the fire will need to determine why it spread so quickly.

## Bodies released for burial

A judge has now given permission for the bodies of the ten victims to be returned to families for burial after the forensic investigations ended and residents of the 138 flats affected were allowed to collect the few belongings remaining, except for the flat where the fire is believed to have started.

Throughout the week, work has been going on to rehouse those affected in an empty, new building belonging to the city council and arrangements made to give emergency payouts.

On Monday, the King and Queen paid a visit to Valencia, meeting with victims and visiting the scene of the tragedy. “They went asking us questions one by one,” said the residents after the visit.

# Pressure piles on PSOE after party grandee refuses to step down over face mask scandal

José Luis Ábalos denied that he knew, said he was not accused of anything and decided to stay on as an independent MP

**SUR**

MALAGA. It has been a torrid week for the ruling Socialist PSOE party as the growing scandal over the purchase of face masks from China during the Covid pandemic threatened to take out more senior government figures.

Last week it emerged that a close aide of former top party boss and ex-transport minister José Luis Ábalos was being investigated with others over illegal multi-million commissions for selling face masks to the government at inflated prices. The aide, Koldo García, had enjoyed a meteoric rise from bouncer at a brothel to the total confidence of Ábalos and others in the PSOE.

Questions since the story

emerged have focused on what minister Ábalos, who signed off part of the purchases, knew.

This week, faced with mounting pressure from his colleagues to give up his seat in parliament to avoid the party suffering from accusations of corruption, Ábalos was defiant. Saying in a press conference that he was not accused of anything and resigning would suggest he were guilty, he instead said he was giving up sitting for the Socialists but carrying on as an independent MP. The Socialists immediately suspended him for disobedience.

Meanwhile, pressure is growing on other government figures over the scandal. The former president of the Balearics region and now Speaker in Congreso, Francina Armengol, was being asked why she had not requested a refund when a 3.7-million-euro consignment of masks linked to those being investigated turned out not to be the right type. The masks, paid for in the end with EU funds, are still in a warehouse unused, reports said.



Ábalos telling the media why he will not resign as an MP. **EP**

**THE EURO ZONE**  
**MARK NAYLER**

## Show us the money



Spanish prosecutors aren’t the only ones looking into allegations of bribery against an adviser to the former PSOE member and transport minister José Luis Ábalos.

The EU Commission is also concerned about potential misuse of the emergency Covid funds it gave to Spain, saying in a statement this week that it has a “zero tolerance” policy against corruption and

has passed information relating to the Ábalos-adviser case onto the European Anti-Fraud office.

This scandal has the potential to be ruinous for a government that has made so much of its unprecedentedly generous public spending, large tranches of which have been fuelled by European aid: the enormous budgets created by Pedro Sánchez’s leftist coalition for 2022 and 2023, for ex-

ample, were only possible because of the EU’s Next Generation loans and grants.

But there have long been concerns in Brussels over the opacity with which that money has been managed - concerns that will hardly be assuaged by the allegations against Ábalos’s former advisor/secretary and fellow PSOE member, Koldo García.

Initially, Sánchez’s government claimed that the lack of publicly available information about where the EU’s money was going was due to a delay in the development of software used to log disbursements; but the leader of the bloc’s fiscal watchdog wasn’t convinced.

In fact, Monika Hohlmeier, chairwoman of the EU’s Com-

mittee on Budgetary Control, was so concerned that she went on an investigative mission to Madrid last February. “We will go to Spain because the [Spanish] government doesn’t tell us where the recovery funds are,” said Hohlmeier, adding that she was “very worried” about the lack of transparency with which Sánchez’s government was handling the money.

Two months after her visit, at the end of April 2023, Hohlmeier said that she was “still waiting” for details from the Spanish government on the disbursement of its Next Gen funds.

Eva Poptcheva, a Ciudadanos member of the EU Parliament who was part of the delegation to Madrid, claimed

that then economy minister Nadia Claviño “did not really tell us how much money has flowed into the economy [...] [But] we have had access to independent reports that speak of lower figures than those given by the government”. The IMF also expressed concerns last year that Spain’s EU money was not reaching its intended recipients, whether in the public or private sectors.

Clearly, there have always been doubts about the efficacy with which Sánchez’s government has managed the funds pouring in from Brussels. Was it in this atmosphere of incompetence, confusion and lack of accountability, one wonders, that García saw an opportunity to cash in on the Covid aid bonanza?



# Gibraltar gets clean bill of health over economic crime

The international committee looking into global money laundering and terrorism financing has taken the Rock off its grey list for monitoring

## SUR IN ENGLISH

GIBRALTAR. The government of Gibraltar has hailed the decision to remove the Rock from a list of countries and territories whose financial systems are not considered to be doing enough to counter shady practices such as money laundering, terrorist financing or trade in banned weapons.

Last Friday the top Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which is supported by some 40 countries and international bodies, announced from Paris that Gibraltar was no longer on the organisation's grey list of places that were subject to extra monitoring over so-called economic crime.

A statement from the FATF said, "The FATF plenary congratulated Barbados, Gibraltar,



Gibraltar is on the white list. REUTERS

## The United Kingdom has also taken Gibraltar off its grey list as a result of the FATF decision

Uganda and the United Arab Emirates for their significant progress in addressing the strategic deficiencies previously identified during their mutual

evaluations. These jurisdictions had committed to implement an Action Plan to swiftly resolve the identified strategic deficiencies within agreed timeframes. These countries will no longer be subject to the FATF's increased monitoring process." The decision comes after a successful visit to Gibraltar by FATF inspectors.

Chief Minister of Gibraltar Fabian Picardo said, "This is very welcome news and I am delighted that our continued and ongoing work and political commitment to future development has been recognised."

"I am grateful to all the agencies and authorities that have contributed to this work as well as the private sector that has wholeheartedly joined us in our fight against economic crime."

"Gibraltar's FATF white listing not only enhances our reputation but also strengthens our position as a trusted and compliant international financial centre."

The UK has also taken Gibraltar off its grey list as a result of the FATF decision.

## IN BRIEF

### CRIME

## Police launch special operation on the Rock

SUR IN ENGLISH. On Wednesday this week, Royal Gibraltar Police officers ran a special operation across the Rock to tackle traffic issues, anti-social behaviour and outstanding arrest warrants with a short-sharp blast

Nicknamed Operation Emerald, phase one saw nine individuals arrested for outstanding fines, investigations and other court matters, a police statement said.

Phase two saw officers focus their attention on safer roads. Several drivers were stopped and spoken to regarding different motoring offences. Of the 22 persons stopped, 17 were



An officer at work this week. RGP

dealt with for using their mobile phones whilst driving.

In phase three, officers deployed into the Glacis Estate to engage with members of the community and reassure them about the fight against crime.

### CRIME

## Serving Gib policeman in misconduct charge

SUR IN ENGLISH. A serving Royal Gibraltar Police (RGP) officer was due to appear in court on the Rock on Thursday this week along with a former RGP officer.

Inspector Sean Picton, 35,

was charged on Wednesday this week with misconduct in public office and one count of unauthorised access to computer material.

In connection with the same investigation, a former Royal Gibraltar Police officer, Anthony Bolanos, 36, was charged with aiding and abetting misconduct in public office.

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LETTERS  
TO THE EDITOR

## Water and profit

What is going on in southern Spain at the moment? The area and its population is threatened by extreme drought and the authorities are doing nothing!

On the contrary they are visiting tourist events to attract more and more tourists. They are cheering about ever new records in the number of holidaymakers (from rainy countries!).

And what are the hotel owners saying? There's enough water for their guests, because water trucks are filling their water tanks - how antisocial! This water is needed for the population! You can't drink money!

Mango and avocado farmers should finally be banned from growing these water-intensive fruits (also strawberries). Isn't it enough that they use the most water? No, they are the first to complain when there is no more water! It couldn't be more brazen or impudent!

At the moment, profit comes before the well-being of the residents. But the problem will soon solve itself: if there is no more water and the summers become hotter and more unbearable year after year, the Costa del Sol will become hostile and uninhabitable. Then as many tourists as possible can spend their vacation in ghost towns.

Stand up and fight for your water like they do in Coín! No more waste of water for stupid profit. **RALPH JOHNE**

## Airport capacity

They need to make flights to and from Granada Airport by Ryanair/EasyJet a better option. This airport is easy to get to for travellers from that area. So why aren't the airport options made viable to these budget airlines, thus relieving the pressure on

Malaga Airport?

**TERRY NEWTON**

## Puzzle pleasure

Many, many thanks from all the codeword enthusiasts for including codewords in the puzzles in SUR in English.

**DIANA PORTER**

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## Gone south

In case you are on your holidays and were wondering why all the shops were shut on Wednesday, it was, in fact, a public holiday - el Día de Andalucía, which celebrates all that is great and good about the largest and most highly-populated autonomous region in Spain. To commemorate the occasion, here is a smattering of facts designed to leave the reader agog with wonder, or at least raising an inquisitive eyebrow.

For a kick-off, Andalucía produces more than half of the olive oil consumed globally - one and a half million tonnes of the stuff per year to be precise. I have half a litre of it on my kitchen shelf and always feel slightly guilty about frying bacon in it but not as guilty as when I put butter on my bread, rather than succumb to the much more classy Spanish tradition of using olive oil. Maybe the bread and dripping sandwiches my granddad merrily chomped upon conditioned my expectations at an early age, it's hard to say.

Even more impressively, according to legend, tapas have their origins in Andalucía. The story goes that, in the nineteenth century, King Alfonso XIII was travelling through Cadiz province when he stopped at a tavern in order to take a break. Having ordered a glass of wine, he was surprised to witness the waiter serving it covered with a slice of ham (the wine, not the waiter). Seeing the king's surprise, the waiter explained that the ham was there to stop the wind from blowing dust into his drink (it is a little breezy in Cadiz, so all of this might just be true). Mightily impressed, and very grateful for the snack, the king promptly decreed that all Spanish taverns should, henceforth, provide 'tapas' (lids) when serving their drinks. (In Granada, where you get a free tapa with every drink, I was once served a plate of burger and chips with half a lager. No word of a lie. Thank you, King Alfonso XIII).

Another couple of features for Andalusians to be proud about are the biggest desert in Europe

- the Tabernas desert in the province of Almeria where Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade, Lawrence of Arabia and The Good, The Bad And The Ugly were all filmed - and the only Mediterranean subtropical forest in existence, El Parque Natural Los Alcornocales (cork trees).

Somewhat surprisingly, it rains a lot there, hence the lush, green forestry and wildly diverse range of inhabitants, including wild pigs, deer, mountain goats, mongooses (that is the plural - I checked), badgers, otters and, rumour has it, an ample selection of tourists in cagoules munching on salmon Cheesy Wotsits.

These, then, are just a few of the reasons to celebrate Andalucía - sadly, space doesn't permit any further investigation here. May I suggest to anyone interested in finding out more, that they rent a car and simply potter about for a week or two if time and money permit. It really is well worth it. Cagoules are optional.

## IDÍGORAS



**SUR** in English

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## Water: a luxury not even the mega rich can acquire

Those working in the luxury or high-end property sector of Marbella, Estepona and Benahavis are worried about the effect the drought will have on sales and rentals if it is not resolved. I quote, "If a client pays 6,000 euros for a night in a villa, they want to have access to water whenever they need it." And: "This is a very demanding visitor profile, especially for a basic service

such as water."

Well I'm sorry luxury property sector, but everyone living on the Costa del Sol demands a "basic service such as water". Most of us don't pay 6,000 euros a night, but we do pay water bills and other taxes and expect to have water coming out of the tap. (Reality check: at some point during the day at least.)

The problem is, there is almost no wa-

ter and the situation isn't about to improve, not for you, me, or anyone else. The rich and famous don't deserve water any more than the rest of us. After all, money can't buy rain... but it could buy solutions.

How about, instead of spending six thousand euros a night in luxury accommodation, these people invest some of their wealth in the desalination plants that we're told are going to save us all? That way, for their 6,000 euros a night, they could fill their pools and have water whenever they turn on their taps.

Luxury hotels are also "very worried that the situation will escalate" and "at some point will be banned from filling [their] swimming pools for the summer". Well, guess what? Me too! In fact, we were unable to fill our (communal) swimming pool last year and we won't be able to this

year either. I have no sympathy.

I do understand that the biggest industry on the Costa del Sol is tourism and get the very real concern that tourists may start to look at alternative destinations if the drought continues. However, this would be a disaster everywhere and not just in Marbella, Estepona and Benahavis.

We all need a cold shower or dip in the pool to cool off in the hot summer months, but those paying 6,000 euros a night for a luxury villa are no more entitled to do so than the rest of us. Solutions must be found quickly and everyone has to do their bit to save water.

We all need to accept that the swimming pool is likely to remain empty (again) this year, regardless of how vast and luxurious our home (bought or rented) is. Water is a luxury that nobody, not even the mega rich, can acquire at the moment.



# Festival of Spanish cinema gets under way in Malaga

The 27th Festival de Malaga will see a record 246 films and other genres shown, with the best ones competing for the Golden Biznagas

## SUR

MALAGA. From today (1 March) and for the next ten days, Malaga city is centre stage once again for the world of Spanish language cinema with the annual Festival de Málaga.

It is the 27th time this prestigious event has been held and SUR is one of the official sponsors.

Writers, producers, directors, actors and many journalists and broadcasters from across Spain and also Latin America have descended on the city, filling hotels and restaurants.

A record number of 246 full-length films, shorts, documentaries and other genres will be shown, both as part of the offi-

cial competition and also on the fringe.

As usual, those hoping to claim the top prize will be competing for the coveted Golden Biznagas, awards styled after the white flower decoration for which the city is well known. There will be two of these awarded as usual; one for films from Spain, of which eleven entries have been shortlisted, and another from Ibero-America, of which eight have been shortlisted.

The main opening event takes place tonight with a gala ceremony at the city's Teatro Cervantes, the flagship venue for the festival. This will also be the venue for the closing event and awards ceremony as usual on Sunday, 11 March.

Many stars who are household names to Spanish audiences will be in the city for the festival and fans will line the red carpets or wait outside the more expensive hotels, trying to catch a glimpse of their idols or sneak a selfie.



Rolling out the red carpet at the city's Teatro Cervantes and setting up in Plaza de la Merced. MIGUE FERNÁNDEZ

Meanwhile, many of the city's landmarks, such as the cathedral or port, will form backdrops to the photo shoots, television interviews and other media launches.

Screenings of the films will also take place at other well-known city venues such as Cine Albeniz and Teatro Echegaray. Tickets for the public screenings are on sale via the official website: [www.festivalde-malaga.com](http://www.festivalde-malaga.com).



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Jo Nesbø, at the Centro Andaluz de las Letras (CAL), an arts centre run by the regional ministry of culture. MIGUE FERNÁNDEZ

# 'I decided to come to Malaga for the winter to climb and write'

## Jo Nesbø Writer

Unafraid of being out of ideas, what worries him is being out of time to tell them. The master of the crime novel returns with *The Night House*

REGINA SOTORRÍO



MALAGA. He gives off that Nordic formality, but in person Jo Nesbø is also friendly and ironic. The master of the modern thriller and king of the Nordic noir acknowledges that his life would be "a bad novel", without plot twists or huge conflicts. And he humorously admits to having forgotten one of the quotes from his latest book, *The Night House*, the horror novel whose Spanish version he presented recently at the Centro Andaluz de las Letras arts centre in Malaga. In this way, he can use it again without feeling bad, he points out.

Norwegian Jo Nesbø (born in Oslo in 1960) spoke to the press before his public appearance in what is now his second home. For the past year he has taken refuge in Malaga for the winter to concen-

trate his two passions: climbing and writing.

**–I understand you know Malaga well.**

–Yes, I've had an apartment in Malaga since last year. I only stay a few months during the winter. I basically came to climb. I'm going to climb in El Chorro, but also many other places around Malaga.

**–Why Malaga?**

–Because I like it. I visited the city and fell in love with it. I met some climbers here and decided to stay. Until last year I would go every winter to southeast Asia to climb and write. So I decided it would be better to come to Malaga during the winter to climb and write here.

**–So some of your next novels will be born here.**

–With a bit of luck, yes.

**–You climb, you're an ex-football player, you have a rock band and you write. Your life would also lend itself to a novel.**

–No. I think that my life would be a very bad novel, a very boring novel. For any story to work, it's necessary to have a huge conflict. All great stories deal with great losses. That is what we look for in stories: suffering and loss. And I'm afraid that there's very little of that in my life.

**–Maybe it wouldn't be a horror novel, but perhaps one of adventure.**

–Yes, that's true. But if you ask Brazilians about the most significant

moment in the history of football, they'll all say it was in 1950 when they lost against Uruguay in the final. The great tragedy; that is what awakens emotions. My story would deal with adventures that would have value to me. And I wouldn't write it. I started to do it because they asked me to, after managing, at the age of 60, to complete my project and reach climb grade 8a. They wanted me to write about how I spent three years working with this goal in mind, taking the same route time and time again. And I started, but I realised it was boring. You're focused on a goal, you make an effort and finally you reach it. There are no twists in this story. So no, I will limit myself to writing about beautiful losers like Harry Hole (the detective and main character in his famous crime series).

**–In *The Night House* the reader is taken into the story through the eyes of a teenager, the marginalised and problematic one of the class. I'm curious to know what your adolescence was like. Did you mostly spend time with the weirdos or the popular kids?**

–I think that I was more of an observer. But for some reason, I attracted bullies and the most eccentric characters in my school. I didn't have many friends, only a few, and they were like these strange characters and bullies. I remember when a classmate

asked me one day "you're a good guy, how can it be that you have such terrible friends?" And I don't know. I answered that when you got to know them, they weren't so bad. And yes, they were. But they were also interesting. I find outsiders interesting. And Richard is probably the type of friend I had at school. There are many stories told from the perspective of the victim who takes revenge on his aggressor, yet this is a story from the point of view of the bully. But there is something deeper. He is a bully because he doesn't feel appreciated, because he feels like a loser.

**–In your novels you portray the darkest side of people. Do you have any hope left in the human condition?**

HIS STORY

**"My life would be a very bad and very boring novel"**

HIS FEARS

**"My biggest fear is losing my sanity"**

HIS ADOLESCENCE

**"For some reason, I attracted bullies and the most eccentric characters in my school"**

–Yes, definitely. There's more good than bad. But we all have the potential for bad inside of us. If I have a mission as a writer it is to force you to see from the point of view of the person you don't want to be, or who you wouldn't normally support. I think the reason is that I grew up with a father who fought with the Germans during the Second World War, being in the West, being a traitor. He wanted to fight with the Germans against the Russians because he was more scared of Stalin occupying Norway than of Hitler. When he told me what he did during the war, I was 15 and it was a shock for me. But it was also the start of a conversation that would last a lifetime, about good and bad, and about why you do what you do, why you make the decisions you make. And this is reflected in my books. I try to put you in the place of those you don't want to be.

**Ever since he was a child**

**–In *The Night House* you reveal your childhood fears, but what scares you today?**

–Going crazy, losing my sanity. That's my biggest fear. It's not something I feel can happen for the time being, but this would be my biggest fear. I've been afraid ever since I was a child. Even today I watch films with my girlfriend and she laughs at me. The other day she took a photo of me because we were watching the last season of *True Detective* and I was covering my eyes. It's always been like that.

**–And you're not afraid of having nothing left to say?**

–I don't think that will happen. What I fear the most is that time comes to an end, that I won't have enough time to write the stories I want to tell. Being realistic, this will happen. I'm worried about losing the ability to tell the stories I want to tell, but I don't see myself running out of ideas.

**–Are you tired of the label 'king of crime'?**

–No, I love it.

**–It's a lot of pressure.**

–Well, I don't think much about that. When I'm writing, the story is all that exists. There aren't readers, there aren't publishers, or agents, or media. It's only the story and me. It's always been like that. I write about things that interest me, I try to write a story that I'd like to read. And when I've done it, I don't care if my book attracts few or many readers. I prefer to have a few readers for whom my stories mean a lot, than many readers who think that my stories are good.

**–In the novel, Mrs Zimmer recommends Richard and his friend to "practise boxing and read poetry". Do you subscribe to this advice?**

–Is that a quote from the novel? (I show it to him on the page and he reads it). It's frightening that I don't remember writing that, but yes it's good advice. And it's also good advice to forget quotes from your own book; then you can use them again later on without feeling bad.



## IBERIAN WINE ACADEMY (IWA)



Jonas Tofterup, director of IWA, winemaker and the only Masters of Wine in the south of Spain. SUR

# Iberian Wine Academy, the only school in Andalucía that offers the WSET international certification

**This specialised wine accreditation is the most important in the world and a recognised standard for those who hold it**

### MÁLAGA

**SIE.** Luis Fernando Olaverri, founder of the Vinoteca de Pamplona, used to say that wine is the only work of art you can drink. Every bottle tells a story in which history, geography, gastronomy and life converge. A complexity that professionals in this field, as well as amateurs who want to enjoy their passion, must be able to decipher.

Iberian Wine Academy (IWA) is the only school in Andalucía that offers the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) certification, the most important international accreditation specialising in wine in the world.

With headquarters in London, recognised by leading drinks companies and organisations and with more than 100,000 students worldwide, the WSET is the industry's foremost standard, a leader in the development and delivery of wine and spirits courses for more than five decades. As with Cambridge Eng-

lish Qualifications in English language, for example, WSET courses are organised into levels. Four progressive courses are offered at selected training centres in more than 70 countries, providing professionals and enthusiasts with a high level of knowledge of these beverages.

In the case of IWA, the Málaga school teaches levels 2 and 3, aimed at sommeliers as well as commercial teams from beverage distributors, head waiters and, of course, wine lovers who want to take a step further in their hobby. "The aim of the courses is to understand wine in a holistic way," explains Jonas Tofterup, head of the project, one of the seven Masters of Wine living in Spain and the only one in the south of the country. It should be noted that the title of Master of Wine is the highest recognition in the world of wine, which is currently only held by 412 people in the world and which implies at least six years of training.

Tofterup, an oenologist by profession, has worked in wineries in the main wine regions of Spain, South Africa, Germany and Denmark and is co-owner of Bodegas Trenza, located in Yecla, where he makes wine with his brother David.



### Specialised, standardised training

Located at number 13, Calle Es-lava, opposite the Mercado del Carmen, IWA welcomes students from all over Spain who come to train at its facilities, one of only two WSET schools in Spain with its own permanent physical space.

The centre's origin stems from the identification of a market niche by Tofterup, who was already collaborating with the certifier as a teacher and publisher. "It is true that there are many courses and qualifications on wine, but WSET is practically the only one that offers this training and professional standard that qualifies and is recognised in all the countries where

it is present, which is something that professionals were demanding," says the Master of Wine. That is why in 2018 he decided to offer WSET courses and in 2022 he opened the IWA centre in Calle Es-lava, a way of keeping his knowledge up to date and being linked to the world of wine in a close and rewarding way. The year it opened, IWA was recognised as the Best Educational Centre by the International Wine Challenge Merchant Awards Spain, a national award that was presented at the Palacio de Neptuno in Madrid.

In terms of the courses they teach, Level 2 is aimed at those seeking a systematic study of world wines for the first time. This

**"WSET is practically the only one that offers this training and professional standard that qualifies and is recognised in all the countries where it is present"**

involves professionals interested in studying world wines from a commercial perspective, seeking an internationally recognised qualification or wine enthusiasts who wish to learn in an orderly fashion and enjoy tasting characteristic examples of international wines.

Level 3, a prerequisite for WSET Level 4, offers a more comprehensive knowledge of wines from all over the world. This course provides a global knowledge of viticulture, production, regions, wine styles, world-renowned systematic tasting and market knowledge. It is also aimed at professionals and amateurs interested in studying wines from around the world in more depth and who wish to gain an internationally recognised qualification.

The training is organised into a theoretical part and a practical part. In the first, the student receives information sheets and a book to study individually. Subsequently, over one or two weekends, depending on the level, a full review of all the theory, resolution of any doubts and the tasting of 50 wines in level 2 and 90 in level 3. In level 3, the exam includes a theoretical part and a blind tasting of two wines which, as in the previous level, is corrected by a WSET panel directly in England.

"We want students to learn to describe a wine accurately, communicating its characteristics in a meaningful and critical way," says Tofterup.

WSET courses are also offered to companies all over Spain, in their own facilities and in both Spanish and English.

The feedback from students who have passed through IWA highlights the great knowledge and communication skills of Tofterup, the technical quality of the studies and the network of professionals that it fosters. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of students take two levels.



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## IN THE FRAME

# A driving obsession for supporting those in need

**Alan Boardman.** The popular Mijas resident has gained an admirable reputation for his selfless efforts to help local charities and worthy causes

TONY BRYANT



There are many expat residents along the Costa del Sol who have gained admirable reputations for coming to the aid of those in need, and many of them give up their time (and in some cases, their money) to support the abundance of local charities and worthy causes. This dedicated community of fundraisers is responsible for organising all sorts of ingenious initiatives to support both Spanish and foreign associations. One British national whose name has become synonymous with fundraising is Alan Boardman, a Mijas resident who has raised thousands of euros with different platforms since 2020.

Arriving in Mijas from the UK with his wife, Jenny, in 2005, the 67-year-old retiree has since gained a reputation for his tireless commitment to helping others, and not just here on the coast.

Born in Chorley, Lancaster, Alan and Jenny were living in Manchester when they made the decision to come to Spain, a move that was prompted by Jenny's dislike of the weather.

Shortly after setting up home in Mijas Pueblo, the couple

opened a souvenir shop in the village, and it was here that Alan gained his passion for helping those in need.

"Having had the shop for all those years in Mijas, I met a lot of people and I heard a lot of bad luck stories. I think because it has always been in my character, it needed a set of circumstances to bring it out. Now, I absolutely love doing it", Alan tells SUR in English.

His first project was helping run the Simply Surviving Facebook group, which he co-founded to support the Costa's entertainment sector at the height of the pandemic. The group organised various initiatives, raising thousands of euros to support artists and venues affected by the lockdown.

It was his passion for the town that instigated his Mijas Walking Tours group, which he also uses to raise money for local causes. Alan formed the group as the world was emerging from coronavirus and it has since raised more than 17,000 euros. He also raises around 1,000 euros each year with fun quiz nights, which he says he "really enjoys doing".

"Once the Covid restrictions were lifted, the reasons for the



Dedicated fundraiser Alan Boardman compering an event in Fuengirola last week. **SUR**

establishment of Simply Surviving faded away. But I realised that many of the local charities and associations had been left with serious financial difficulties. Seeing as my wife and I are both keen hikers, we decided to start the walking group in order to try to offer some assistance," Alan, who describes himself as "a bit of a philanthropist", explains.

Among the many organisations that have benefited from Alan's selfless desire to help others are Debra, Fundación Olivares, Age Concern and Age Care, Adintre and the Red Cross, as well as numerous animal charities like Donkey Dreamland and SEARCH.

"When I am choosing a charity, I always try to strike a balance between Spanish and foreign, and animal and human. Basically, as long as it's regis-

**"Throughout my life I have always loved helping people. It taps into my character"**

tered in the province, then they will be considered," he says.

## Busman's holiday

However, Alan's charitable efforts, or "community work" as he likes to call it, are not confined to the coast. He used a recent holiday in West Africa to deliver four suitcases full of spectacles, pencils and crayons to the needy in Gambia. The items were collected during a campaign last year, and Alan is already planning a similar busman's holiday for next year.

Alan's current campaign, 'Copper-up for Cudeca', is an initiative that calls for people to drop off their "pesky little" one, two and five cent coins to different establishments along the coast.

But why does Alan do all this time-consuming work when he could just sit back and enjoy his retirement in the place he has come to love?

"Throughout my life I have always loved helping people. It taps into my character. I definitely feel a massive sense of satisfaction when we hit a set target. There have been times when I have been known to cry, because I know just how important it is all round," Alan concludes.

Information about Alan's upcoming fundraising initiatives can be found on his Facebook page.





# A shrine looking over El Tajo gorge in Ronda for more than 1,000 years

Anyone walking along the Alameda del Tajo promenade or crossing Puente Nuevo (the bridge linking old and newer halves of the town of Ronda) cannot help but look at the extensive landscape all around with a mountainous backdrop, part of the Sierra de Grazalema natural park. As your gaze moves down El Tajo gorge, in the distance your eyes are drawn to a cavity in the rock. This is easily identified as the Virgen de la Cabeza cave shrine that is, along with the gorge itself and the Real Maestranza bullring, one of the great symbols of Ronda. Rightly so, as it was constructed long before the bullring and the aforementioned Puente Nuevo. Neither can the Arab Baths nor any of the Christian churches in the city boast of being much older than 1,000 years.

It is worth noting that current opinion states that this shrine, also known as Cuevas de San Antón (San Antón caves) was hewn from the rock between the 9th and 10th centuries at the height of the Al-Andalus reign. Today it is one of the most symbolically religious places for the

**Treasures of Malaga.** The Ermita de la Virgen de la Cabeza is another of the icons of the town famous for its bridge and bullring



Much of the shrine was hewn in the rock during the 9th and 10th centuries. J.A.

JAVIER  
ALMELLONES



people of Ronda. The Virgen de la Cabeza statue is carried there every June in a massive pilgrimage, in which 'Rondeños' demonstrate their devotion to their patron saint, also known as the 'Queen of the Serranía'. This cave shrine has three well-defined spaces: one for worship, another for housing the monks who originally lived there and a third that was used to store food and keep livestock.

The area that serves as a place of worship occupies 272 square metres, comprising a central nave leading to an altar embedded in the rock. Beside it is a smaller space used as a sacristy. From the entrance to this primitive church you have a privileged view of Ronda and its famous El Tajo gorge. Below there are fertile lands where vineyards predominate to produce some of Ronda's excellent red wines. The shrine is currently closed to the public, except during the pilgrimage, the image of the patron saint of Ronda is left there until the end of summer. This does not stop you reaching the entrance itself via a path well known to pilgrims and also now approved as a trail.



## Spanish royal reunion at Windsor

The thanksgiving service in memory of King Constantine of the Hellenes at St George's chapel, Windsor, on Tuesday provided a rare opportunity to see Spain's emeritus and current kings, Juan Carlos and Felipe, together. The Spanish monarchs joined other royals from around Europe to celebrate the life of the former Greek king, Queen Sofía of Spain's brother, who died last year.

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## Delving behind closed doors, Freemasons in Malaga

Secret society. 'Lugalo' and 'Diderot' are the code names of two members of the Pitágoras lodge in the city

CRISTINA VALLEJO



**‘W**e use symbolic names to protect our identities,” is Lugalo and Diderot’s justification for not revealing their real names. They are Freemasons and members of the Malaga Pythagoras lodge, which has celebrated its tenth anniversary. Recently they have received news from Madrid that threatening graffiti is appearing on the doors of masonic temples attributed to the hands of the extreme right. Throughout history, they remind us, Freemasonry and its members have been greatly persecuted, especially in Spain, they claim, namely during the absolutist reign of Ferdinand VII and Franco’s dictatorship. But the Freemasons have survived all such persecution and the bad press associating them with diabolical cults, strange rituals or various conspiracies. They define themselves only as “free people of good morals”.

Meeting up with SUR, they explain that their membership is growing. Evidence? The founding of their lodge in Malaga city ten years ago is the result of this increase in their critical mass, first in Andalucía and then specifically in Malaga province.

Both Lugalo and Diderot are past retirement age. Throughout their working lives they were

dedicated to cultural management in business and social services. It was curiosity that later piqued their interest as well as a restless mind that led them to enter Freemasonry. They accepted the invitation to join the movement after making contact via social media, mostly through chat rooms: “Freemasonry is in the 21st century,” they say.

At the point when they wanted to join a lodge, Freemasonry in Malaga and across Andalucía existed only in its English version - the result of most Freemasons at that time coming from that geographical area. They, on the other hand, identified more with the obediences (masonic term) in France, in particular that of the Grand Orient of France which has a federal structure made up of 1,300 lodges and more than 50,000 members around the world. They looked for a temple (the physical place for lodge meetings, but often used as a synonym for a lodge) of the French persuasion and joined one in Alicante.

As the membership grew with Freemasons from Andalucía they set themselves the goal of founding a lodge closer to home. The first phase in this process is the creation of triangles (the minimum grouping of Freemasons, made up of a Master Mason and three brothers). “It’s only natural that, with growth, lodges are set up, that is why this one in Malaga is ten years old; we were previously part of one lodge (Tartessos) in Seville,” they ex-

plain. Right now Pythagoras lodge has around thirty members of all ages, of which five are women. They come from all kinds of professions and can hold any ideology, but one thing they have in common, as Lugano and Diderot put it, they are “restless people”.

### Becoming a mason

When someone starts looking into Freemasonry or gets to know a Freemason they can be invited to enter a lodge, as happened for these two. What is the entry process like? It’s not easy at all. First of all, they say, you have to read a lot: both Masonic and anti-Masonic literature. Additional essential reading, though, is on Pythagoras’ website, where you can see the ‘planchas’, which are their Masonic articles on matters for debate at lodge meetings, often shrouded in architectural terminology (laying foundations, building bridges...). It is about finding out if Freemasonry is right for you, a real connection: “We are not interested in those who come to browse, who join and then leave soon after. You have to know what you’re getting into; you have to be certain about it, and possess a certain level of maturity.

Through their website you can petition to join the lodge by filling out a form with all your personal details and life history, plus an explanation of what motivates you to consider Freemasonry. One of the most important milestones is the moment when three

Master Masons conduct interviews with the candidate following the principle set by an important Masonic symbol, the Plumb, which comes from the plumb line used in construction to test straightness. These interviews deal with personal, philosophical and social matters. The lodge wants to know about the applicant in depth and, above all, to confirm whether they meet the profile of someone with free thought and good morals; if they are, in short, an exemplary citizen.

After all these checks, the blindfolded candidate will undergo the solemn presentation to the lodge, in which any of its members can ask anything and, immediately afterwards, their candidacy is put to a vote with a secret ballot. The candidate will need an absolute majority to join.

### Initiation ceremony

Once the layperson’s application is accepted, the initiation ceremony or rite of passage takes place. Our two Freemasons describe the initiation ceremony as “a sociodrama” with several stages and tests. For example, the earth test, which takes place in the ‘Chamber of Reflection’, a small room with blackened walls, with some pictures on the wall and thought-provoking phrases and with symbolic elements of the most archaic Masonic Rites. There the initiate is locked up where he will have to fill out a document in which he

◀ ‘Lugalo’ and ‘Diderot’ (symbolic code names). **ÑITO SALAS**

will explain his thinking about what he considers to be his obligations towards his country, his family and even towards himself, and to reveal, when it is his time to die, what would be his last will and testament.

Before becoming a Mason the initiate will also have to go through the remaining tests of the elements of fire, air and water. The whole process requires you to progress from one stage to the next. Freemasonry uses progression everywhere, like the ranking system that takes them from being an Apprentice, from there to Journeyman or Fellowcraft and, finally, to Master Mason. They don’t give many more details, but they stress that everything is highly symbolic and staged, even quite theatrical and they do explain that the person in question is blindfolded, with their right trouser leg rolled up, barefoot on one foot, with one shoulder exposed and with a rope or chain binding hands and neck.

### Wearing regalia

Besides initiation ceremonies, there are monthly lodge meetings where members present and debate on different issues. In these meetings they wear the expected regalia of all Freemasons: the apron and the white gloves. Malaga, these Freemasons explain, is favourable territory for Freemasonry due to its liberal traditions. For this reason they point out that the Pythagoras lodge is not the only lodge in the city or the province. There are others and in the last two decades, they have grown in number.

We are reminded that Freemasons do not discuss partisan issues, but they tell us that in their ranks there can be supporters from across the political spectrum and, in some lodges, there may also be a priest or two. Freemasonry in general and their lodge draw a clear line between their movement and religion, politics or any other association.

Their debates are kept secret. What happens in the lodge stays in the lodge. They work “undercover”, as they call it, in the protected environment of the lodge because there is more free thinking and free expression when it’s guaranteed that nothing will reach the powers that be”.

So, if Freemasonry is neither a political party, nor a religion, nor an association, what role can it have in the 21st century? “The one it has always had,” they answer. “It has the capacity to help you individually as a person to progress and improve, but then also, together with the rest of the Freemasons, its purpose is the improvement of humanity, bringing fairness and light to all”.



PLAYABELLA



# Restaurante PlayaBella, the best homemade Mediterranean cuisine

**This establishment located in Estepona has been offering a top gastronomic experience for more than fifty years in an elegant and welcoming atmosphere**

## ESTEPONA

**SUR.** Located in Urbanización Granados, just a few minutes from the beach and with easy access, Restaurante PlayaBella stands out on the Malaga-province gastronomy scene. The restaurant, which offers a unique culinary experience, combines the warmth of a family business with attention to detail and traditionally-prepared dishes with international

flair and the best natural products. Thanks to its success and quality, PlayaBella welcomes customers from all over the world, who have become loyal customers over the years and are the restaurant's best recommendation for new clients.

As far as the menu is concerned, the most popular items are the top-quality meats, fresh fish and homemade desserts, accompanied by the spectacular wine cellar.

The restaurant caters to all tastes, from seasonal vegetable creams or its famous onion soup au gratin, to cuts such as sirloin steak, entrecote, lamb shoulder or T-bone steak, which are prepared by the master chef to obtain the best results.

In the seafood section, reflecting its beachside location, don't

**As far as the menu is concerned, the most popular items are the top-quality meats, fresh fish and homemade desserts, accompanied by the spectacular wine cellar**

**A combination of gastronomy and service that makes PlayaBella Restaurant the perfect choice at any time of the year**

miss the prawns thermidor au gratin, the grouper brochette with prawns and Indian curry, the grilled monkfish or the orange salmon, among other dishes.

The menu also includes the chef's suggestions: the aubergines stuffed with beef sirloin and vegetables au gratin with natural tomato sauce, the scrambled eggs with Burgos black pudding and pine nuts, the beef sirloin with fresh foie gras and Pedro Ximénez sauce or the exquisite oxtail are a must.

The finishing touch to an exceptional meal is provided by the mouth-watering desserts, prepared each week with their own delicious interpretation of recipes such as carrot cake or apple tart with dulce de leche.

All of this is washed down with wine from an extensive and care-

fully selected wine cellar that includes a variety of options, from reds to whites, cavas or champagnes from the most important national and international wineries, offered to diners with the expert advice of their trained staff, achieving the perfect pairing.

A combination of gastronomy and service that makes PlayaBella Restaurant the perfect choice at any time of the year, either during the cooler months, in its comfortable dining rooms, or enjoying the pleasant temperatures of Estepona on its terrace as a couple, with friends or family. Guests will automatically feel "at home" with the warm and professional attention.

As its owner Javier, the second generation of this family saga, explains, this excellence has been possible thanks to the dedication of the entire restaurant team and the commitment to always offering the best, embodied in the motto "quality with service and at a good price", which has earned it a place as one of the best restaurants on the Costa del Sol, since it opened its doors in 1972. This recognition is also visible on platforms such as Restaurant Guru or Sluupy, among others, that have placed it as one of the most outstanding establishments in the entire province of Malaga.





## GARDENING

# Plants as beautiful as they are toxic: poinsettia, ivy, yew, oleander...

The sign at the entrance is clear: "These plants can kill." And the skull and crossbones that illustrate it leave no room for doubt. This is the sign that guards the deadliest garden in the world, the 'Poison Garden', located in Alnwick Castle, in the English county of Northumberland.

It houses around 100 poisonous, intoxicating and narcotic plants, and visitors are strictly forbidden to smell, touch or taste them. However, despite the risk, the morbid curiosity aroused by the deadliness of this place has made it one of the most visited tourist attractions in the country.

"Some people occasionally faint from inhaling toxic fumes while walking through the garden," the site's coordinators warn on their website.

## – What makes a plant toxic?

Toxicity is a plant's defence mechanism against predators (as are thorns), the purpose of which is to avoid being eaten. This is the case of the *Mimosa pudica*, which closes its leaves on contact while emitting chemicals through the air to throw giraffes off the scent," explains Enrique Salvo Tierra, lecturer in Botany at the University of Malaga.

Their existence is not as rare as it seems. In fact, "97% of the plants on the planet have toxic chemical substances", says the specialist, although not all of them are as harmful to our health as those in the Poison Garden. Even so, we must be careful, because even if we are not going to make a salad out of poppies or ferns, children and pets are likely to put fruit or leaves in their mouths as they look attractive.

**Oleander** (*Nerium oleander*)

**Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and arrhythmias**

On the central reservations of dual carriageways, in parks, in our own gardens... In Spain the oleander is known for its beauty. It is eye-catching and hardy, but a bite can be deadly.

According to the Spanish In-

ventory of Traditional Knowledge Related to Biodiversity, drawn up by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment, its therapeutic use is negatively judged due to its potential toxicity. "Between 15 and 20 grammes of fresh oleander leaf can kill a horse, 10 to 20 grammes can kill a cow, and 1 to 5 grammes can kill a sheep," the report states.

**Ivy** (*Hedera*)

**Drop in blood pressure and loss of vision**

And what happens if we take a nibble of an ivy leaf? Well, you'd better not: "This creeper that we often use to cover walls or fences is known for the toxicity of its fruits, which are full of alkaloids, metabolites contained in many plants that produce physiological effects," says Alberto Altés, lecturer in Botany at the University of Alcalá de Henares (Madrid).

And what are these effects? "It can cause drastic hypotension (drop in blood pressure) or temporary or permanent loss of vision in humans, while in animals its excessive consumption causes diarrhoea and reduced milk production," warns the government document.

**Poinsettia** (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*)  
**Conjunctivitis and skin sores**

No one would think that this typical Christmas ornamental plant can be a trap for humans and animals. Its toxicity is due to the milky sap that runs through its stems and membranes, which acts as an irritant in contact with the skin

and mucous membranes.

Eye discharge, conjunctivitis, redness and sores on the skin, as well as digestive discomfort (if ingested) are its main symptoms, although in principle they are not serious. Something similar occurs with the ficus, another common decorative plant in the home.

**Hydrangea** (*Hydrangea macrophylla*)

**Halitosis, asphyxia and arrhythmias**

It was at the whim of the French

King Louis XIV, who ordered his henchmen to search for new plant varieties from across the seas to decorate his gardens, that this plant arrived in Spain. It owes its name to a cabin boy on the ship known as Batet. When the king discovered that, in reality, Batet was a woman called Hortensia, he thought it appropriate to give it that name.

It is a lovely story but the effects of ingesting its leaves and flowers are less so. In small doses it causes vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain and, although unlikely due to its bad taste, in large doses it can cause halitosis, asphyxia, arrhythmia and apnoea.

**Yew** (*Taxus baccata*)

**Everything is toxic except the flesh of the berries**

It is one of the most toxic plants there is. The whole plant is highly poisonous, except for the red flesh of its fruits. Between 50 and 100 grammes of its leaves are lethal to an adult, according to the ministry's report, and the toxins it releases are absorbed so quickly that death can occur without the body having time to show any symptoms.



ILLUSTRATION: LAURA RICO



THE STORY BEHIND A PLACE NAME

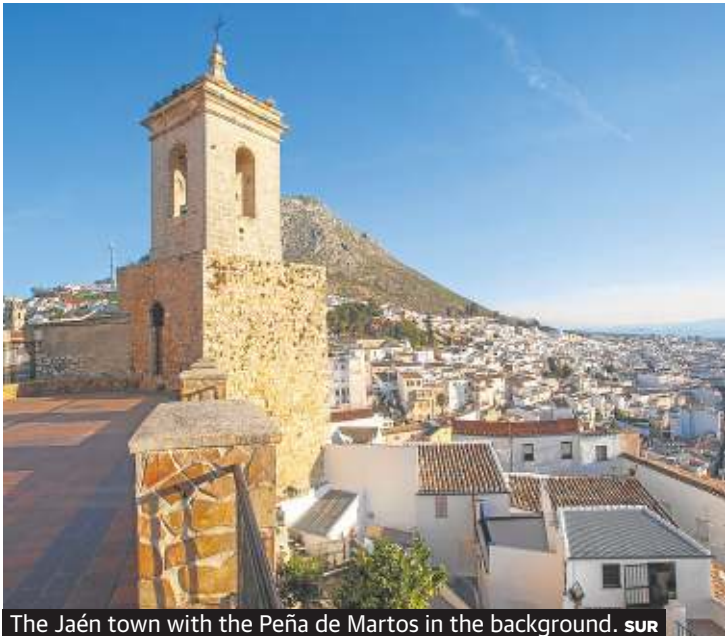
Martos A walled city protected by the rock of Tuš

Known as Tucci by the Iberians, theories abound concerning the meaning of the name Martos, but most favour a Moorish connection

tos (Jaén), has an important history that goes back to the Iberians. Martos is popularly known as Ciudad de la Peña, as it is located at the foot of the Peña de Martos, a large rocky mass on top of which is perched its medieval fortress.

Historians claim the origin of its toponym dates back to ancient history, when the Iberians settled in the area and named the settlement Tucci, although it experienced its greatest era after the Roman conquest of the peninsula.

Plinio, known by the name Pliny the Elder to differentiate him from his nephew (Plinio the younger), first referred to the town as Colonia



The Jaén town with the Peña de Martos in the background. SUR

Augusta Gemella Tuccitana. He is said to have done this to differentiate the town from other populations that shared the name of Tucci.

Most academics agree that there seems to be no evidence which explains the true evolution of the previous names with the etymology of Martos, although most are of the opinion that this name evolved after the Muslim conquest of the peninsula in the 8th century.

The Muslim author Al-Razi was the first person to mention the town as Tuš, which was transformed into Martuš in the 10th century, Martuš is said to refer to the fact that it was a walled city in the mountains, although the passage between these names is uncertain. Some historians declare the town's Muslim name refers to the imposing rock that protected it

LANGUAGE FOOTNOTE

Protegido	Protected
Amurallado	Walled
Ibéricos	Iberians
Conexión	Connection
Producción	Production
Colonia	Colony
Asentamiento	Settlement
Sobrino	Nephew
Diferenciar	To differentiate
Manantial	Spring
Montaña	Mountain
Llanura	Plain
Empinado	Steep
Sinuoso	Winding
Prolongación	Extension
Lavanda	Lavender
Peñón	Rock

**Bilingual crossword inside back page**



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## Time for a spring clean: give your home a once over

Some cultures give great importance to the home as a temple for rest and serenity, so the start of the year or a change in season are perfect times to restore any of that peace and harmony that may have been put out of place. It's traditional in some northern European countries to have two deep cleans a year - in summer and in the new year - and in Japan they have the age-old tradition of Oosouji (great clean), which involves getting rid of anything that is not of use at home and tying up loose ends before 28 December, in order to start the year without unnecessary burdens. So now that spring is approaching, perhaps it's time to have a closer look at our home.

### The key Throw stuff out

We don't need a major renovation to make our home more welcoming and attractive. Moving unwanted or unnecessary items out of the way can make a big difference. A survey carried out in the US in the nineties revealed that people spend 70% of their time at home, so taking care of the scene around us is essential. Since then, according to Dane Meik Wiking, based on the theory of the Happiness Research Institute, we have become even more home-based. Comfort is therefore of ut-

most importance and to achieve this, there's nothing like a good spring clean, which should be approached "as if it were a house move, in the sense that we have to throw out anything of no use to us" says Wiking in his famous book *My Hygge Home*.

Spain's consumers association OCU tells us how to do it: if it's in good condition, donate it, if not, throw it out. Out goes anything we have more than one of (do we need five funnels?), broken or obsolete objects (old mobile phones from the last 20 years, for example) and incomplete items (plastic containers with no lid...) or worn out (full note-books). A

word of advice on how to decide whether something falls into these categories: if it makes us happy, keep it. OCU experts say start with clothes. "We should leave photographs and letters till last, not just because of their sentimental value, but also because they are unique," says the organisation. So sorting out priority should be: clothes, books, papers and other objects and, last, things with sentimental value.

And once we've got rid of all

that useless junk, put what we do keep in its place.

### Tidy up Everything in its place

Should we buy boxes to keep things in? There's no need; shoe boxes are very useful "because of their size and durability," says the OCU. They can be used for first aid kits, sewing boxes, children's crayons, tights, socks... almost everything. And it's more sustainable than buying plastic boxes. What about clothes? "The main recommendation is to throw out anything that doesn't fit in one of these three categories: currently in use; needed for a limited period; and to be kept indefinitely." And a warning: keeping a whole pile of old clothes to wear in the house is a mistake (we only need a few things).

What we do decide to keep we should hang in wardrobes and drawers; clothes folded and stored vertically take up less space.

Papers should be divided according to frequency of use and kept in folders. Bags, which take up a lot of space

and are difficult to store, and suitcases can be stored inside each other. But no more than two together or we're likely to forget where they are.

Another piece of advice: when we have a spring clean, we'll find a lot of small things - earrings, cards, coins, the measuring tape we used three months ago - that have been in the wrong place for months or even years (drawers, key bowls that contain everything...). It's time to round them all up and put them in their right place.

### Now time to clean All shiny

Once we have cleared the house of unwanted junk and tidied away clutter, cleaning is easy. We should start with one room and not go onto the next until that one is finished. And very important: "Mend, or have mended, anything that needs repairing," says the OCU. The light bulb that blew months ago, the picture frame that has come unstuck, the lamp that has been loose for as long as you can remember, the stain on the wall you haven't cleaned off, a mark on the floor... little things that give a bad impression.

As for the spring clean itself, include windows, frames and blinds, doors, the tops of wardrobes and shelves, picture frames, cupboards, the telephone, television and other appliances.

Go through the kitchen cupboards and throw out anything that's out of date, empty bookshelves and turn the mattress, and wash curtains and bedspreads, replacing any old ones if the budget allows.



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EXHIBITIONS

Isthmus Exhibition

**GIBRALTAR.** Until 9 March. The Gustavo Bacarissas Gallery Isthmus: Art From Across The Straits is an exhibition of Moroccan art in collaboration with Gallery Kent Tangier and the JM Memorial Foundation. The artists showing their work are Abdelkrim Ouazzani, Ilias Selfati and Mohamed Benyaich.

Casa de las Tejerinas

**ESTEPONA.** Casa de Las Tejerinas, Plaza de las Flores.  
**Ana Villalobos.** Until 6 March. A selection of 15 large and medium format paintings by Barcelona artist Ana Villalobos.

We Are Made of Stardust, Aaron Johnson

**MALAGA.** Until 1 June. La Térmica. We Are Made of Stardust is an exhibition of 16 paintings by American artist Aaron Johnson, with the collaboration of the Almine Rech Gallery.

Ocean Collection

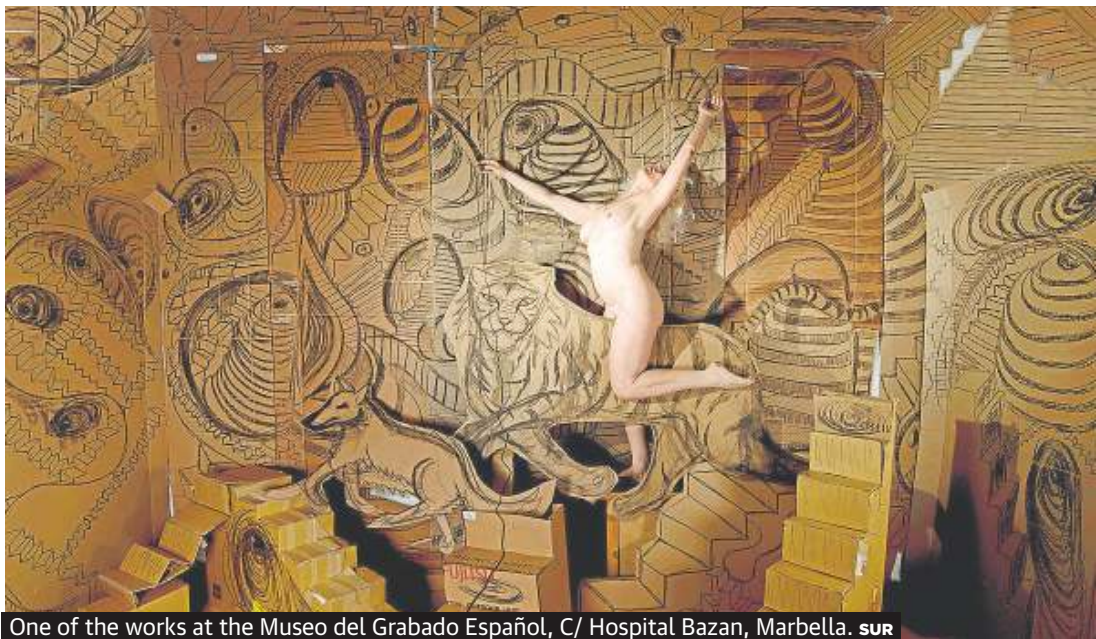
**BENALMÁDENA.** Until 31 March. Centro de Exposiciones de Benalmádena, Avd. Antonio Machado. The Centro de Exposiciones in Benalmádena is holding an exhibition - curated by founder and designer of Fashion Art, Manuel Fernández - which features works by 25 artists use their art to denounce the effects of climate change on the world's oceans. Open Wed-Sat (9.30am-1.30pm/5pm-7pm); Sun (10am-2pm). Free entry.

Castillo El Bil Bil

**BENALMÁDENA.** 1-15 March. Castillo El Bil Bil, Avd. Antonio Machado, 78, 29631. An exhibition entitled 'Three looks, three stories...' ('Tres miradas, tres historias...'), which features the work of three Russian artists who have lived in Spain for over a decade. The collection includes works created using various techniques, such as acrylic, watercolour and oil painting. The exhibition's central theme is Andalucía. Each creation is a window into the personal experiences and perceptions of the artist, as they invite the viewer along a visual journey through Spain.

Art Show Tribute to Berta Gómez

**MARBELLA.** 2 March, 5pm - 8pm. Centro de Arte, El Campanario, Puerto Banús, 501 C/ Juan Belmonte, Nva. Andalucía, 29660. The Centro de Arte Campanario is holding an exhibition to pay homage to Berta Gómez (1936-2024), wife of painter Pepe Morales and mother to Tatiana and Natasha. The exposition serves as a tribute to the couple's significant contributions to Marbella's cultural and artistic scene. With the participation of artists like Julian Raven, Marty Franco, Inés Lamata and Sonia Colón de la Isla, the show promises to be a powerful celebration of creativity and artistic talent. Berta herself was a lover of life, art, and an ambassador for culture, colour, music, and Mexican passion, the organisers say.



One of the works at the Museo del Grabado Español, C/ Hospital Bazan, Marbella. SUR

# The double life of Mónica Vázquez: self-portraits of a visual dreamer

The Marbella artist is showcasing her fascinating photographs at an exhibition at the Museo del Grabado until 8 March

DAVID LERMA

**MALAGA.** Marbella artist Mónica Vázquez Ayala is showcasing her unique photographs at an exhibition until 8 March at the Museo del Grabado, the Spanish print museum. Named 'Beyond Dreams, where good and evil do not

exist, there I will find myself', it provides a snapshot into the dreams of the artist. The exhibition is accompanied by a free downloadable catalogue in which writer Marina Perezagua has collaborated. However Mónica does not only consider herself a photographer, but a visual artist. "I would have loved to be a painter, but I like to record my creations on camera. Dreams are very present in my life. I sleep a lot. Eight, nine, ten hours," she said. "It's like a double life. In my case, I'm able to put myself in the shoes of

people who think completely opposite to me. It's as if I'm getting into their skin. I've felt like I was a Nazi in a submarine surrounded by dead people and a Jew being killed in a concentration camp," she added. Cinema and literature are great sources of inspiration for Mónica when it comes to recording her dream fantasies. She is particularly inspired by German expressionist cinema, and the work of Lotte Reiniger, a German pioneer of animated film. For the colour, the artist said she is inspired by Wes Anderson's films.



Charlotte Gordon tribute, Mijas.

Charlotte Gordon tribute

**MIJAS.** Opening on 2 March at 8pm. Until 12 March. Casa Museo Mijas. Plaza de la Libertad. An exhibition in tribute to Charlotte Gordon (1930-2023), a multidisciplinary artist born in Philadelphia, USA and resident of Mijas Pueblo for over 50 years. The organisers say that of all the places where she exhibited her art, Casa Museo was the closest to her heart, which is why they have chosen it as the location for this tribute to her life and work. The exhibition is described as "mini-retrospective" and will contain showings of her art from all the disciplines in which she worked: graphic design, photography, engraving and sculptures.

Museo Ralli

**MARBELLA.** Urb Coral Beach, Río Verde. The Ralli Museum of Marbella collection contains works of contemporary art of mostly Latin American and European origin. Permanent exhibitions: Surrealisms. From Giorgio de Chirico to Francis Bacon; Contempo-

rary art in Oaxaca. Vanguard, Myth and Tradition; Figurative art in Contemporary Latin America. Temporary exhibition: American Abstraction. Carlos Mérida. Free entry. www.museoralli.es

**On The Rugs, Roman Řehák**  
**MARBELLA.** Opening on 7 March at

5pm. Until 31 March. SIN Studio Gallery, Avda. Ricardo Soriano, 59. On The Rugs is an exhibition of photos of famous personalities created by Czech artist Roman Řehák on his mobile phone. The protagonists of his work have been Czech personalities like Karel Gott, Marta Kubišová, Jan Saudek and Václav Havel, Hollywood actors like Pierce Brosnan and Antonio Banderas, and the vocalist of Deep Purple Ian Gillan, among others. Email: marbella@sinstudiogallery.com.

Mirador del Carmen

**ESTEPONA.** Until 10 March. The Mapfre foundation has organised an exhibition of 18 prints of Goya's works entitled Goya. Disasters of the War, demonstrating the effects of war on the civil population. Entry is free for residents in Estepona.

Lotta Leon

**MIJAS COSTA.** From 1 until 18 March. Centro Cultural la Cala. German-born artist Lotta Leon will exhibit her latest collection of abstract and semi-abstract works

that present her impressions of Andalucía - Fantasías Andaluzas.

Aurelio Díaz 'Buly': A Picasso

**MIJAS PUEBLO.** Until 5 March. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo (CAC Mijas). Calle Málaga, 28. An exhibition by artist Aurelio Díaz 'Buly'. This tribute to Picasso includes around 15 works, among them the artist's own interpretation of Les Femmes d'Alger.

Museo Picasso Málaga - MPM

**MALAGA.** Calle San Agustín. Collection. Main collection closed until 19 March. The Echo of Picasso. Until 31 March. Works by over fifty artists, including Willem de Kooning, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Louise Bourgeois and Jeff Koons, that create a direct dialogue with the works of Picasso. www.museopicassomalaga.org.



Light and shadow, in Antequera.

Photography Exhibition

**ANTEQUERA.** Until 31 May. Unicaja Foundation Centre of Antequera. The Unicaja Foundation Centre of Antequera is holding the photography exhibition 'Entre Luces y Sombras' ('Between lights and shadows'), which showcases the work of Alicante photographer, writer, teacher and industrial technical engineer Juan Ferrete. The exhibition reunites over a hundred snapshots of plants from Doñana National Park as well as from other natural attractions in Spain, many of which are in danger of extinction. Ferrete made these photographs using 19th-century techniques in order to raise awareness about the protection of biodiversity.

Museo Picasso Casa Natal

**MALAGA.** Plaza de la Merced. La Imagen de Picasso. Until 28 April. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of Picasso's death, the Casa Natal is holding an exhibition which marks the various stages in his life. It includes paintings, drawings, ceramics and sculpture as well as photography.

Museo Ruso

**MALAGA.** Edificio Tabacalera, Avda Sor Teresa Prat. Más Allá de su Tiempo. Semi-permanent exhibition. An international collection featuring the best of Russian art, along with historical documents and photographs. From Kandinsky to Kiefer, and including works by Diego Rivera. Pensando en Bucle. Until 16 June. An audio-visual exhibition by Boris Gruys which includes clips from films, musi-



cals and documentaries forming a collage of moving images and sounds.

**Centre Pompidou Malaga**

**MALAGA.** *The Cube, Muelle Uno.* <https://centrepompidou-malaga.eu/> **Place-Ness.** *Until March 2025.* The new, semi-permanent, exhibition contains works by David Hockney, Marc Chagall and Tony Cragg among many others.

**Fósiles Futuros.** *Until 9 April.* The new installation at the Pompidou explores virtual environments. The video is the result of a collaboration between artists Ida Kvetny and Diane Velasco.

**CAC Málaga.**

**MALAGA.** *Centro de Arte Contemporáneo. C/ Alemania.* **Eduardo Gruber.** *Until 3 March.* No One Is Anything.

**CAC La Coracha**

**MALAGA.** *CAC Málaga - La Coracha. Viola.* *Until 7 April.* Seville artist Fran Ramirez (Viola), presents a collection of his anime characters in this neo-pop exhibition



Little: Keep it Cute, Malaga.

entitled One Summer's Day. **Little: Keep It Cute.** *Until 7 April.* Cordoba artist Pablo J. Rodríguez (Little) is exhibiting a collection of works reflecting the balance between adult and infancy, between maturity and the ingenuous.

**UMA Student Exhibition**

**MALAGA.** *C. de León Tolstoi, s/n,*

*Puerto de la Torre, 29010. Until 11 March.*

The Galeria Central in the Faculty of Communication Sciences (UMA) is holding a photography exhibition, created by Alba Cantero, Belén López, Judith Castañeda, Jerónimo Leal and Vicente Muñoz, journalism students from the University of Malaga. The exhibition is about the history of Palestine.

**Museo de Málaga**

**MALAGA.** *Palacio de la Aduana.* The museum houses a huge collection of archeological artefacts as well as the city's collection of religious and pictorial art from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The new exhibition La Presencia de Picasso, which is running until December, marks the year of the fiftieth anniversary of Picasso's death and includes two works done as a child as well as many completed throughout his lifetime.

**Magnum. Contact Sheets**

**MALAGA.** *Until 27 March. La Malagueta centre (bullring gate 9).* Renowned photography agency Magnum Photos has made a collection of its most iconic photographs from the last 70 years. Free to attend and open Tuesday to Sunday.

**Presente Continuo**

**MALAGA.** *Until 17 March. La Térmica. Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 2pm and 5pm to 8.30pm* La Térmica is offering a new exhibition, Presente Continuo to celebrate a decade of its Creadorxs programme. It is a collection of work by various artists who have stayed at La Térmica. The exhibition addresses a variety of themes from the climate crisis to popular culture.

**Museo del Patrimonio Municipal**

**MALAGA.** *Paseo de Reding.* **Colección Castillo Torreblanco.** *Until 25 August.* The exhibition of 19th century and early twentieth century works includes paintings by artists Moreno Carbonero, Emilio Ocón, Antonio Reyna Manescau, Guillermo Gómez Gil, Ricardo Verdugo Landi

# Finnish musician brings his 'earthy' blues to Antequera



Finnish blues musician Jo Buddy heads to Antequera. T. JALKANAN

**TONY BRYANT**

**ANTEQUERA.** London-based Finnish blues musician Jo Buddy stops off in Antequera for a performance on Saturday 2 March. This is one of many shows he is offering in Spain as part of his current tour to celebrate more than 40 years in the music business.

The varied repertoire of the 57-year-old singer, guitarist and composer consists of his own compositions and includes numerous genres, such as ragtime, blues, swing, swamp boogie, gospel, soul and hillbilly.

After 41 years of experience on the road with more than 4,000 shows in 16 countries, and countless recordings, Buddy has earned an admirable reputation for his "raw, earthy and spiritual"

music, which has been labelled "rattle and roll gumbo".

He was inducted into the International Blues Hall of Fame (Memphis), an institution inceptioned in 1980 to honour those who have made the blues timeless through performance, documentation and recordings.

As well as numerous dates in the UK and Finland, his tour has seen him perform to sell-out shows in Gipuzkoa (Basque Country), Madrid, Jaén and Granada.

Organisers for his performance at the Le Bistrot bar in Antequera (Calle San Agustín) are advising early arrival, as the show is expected to attract a large audience of blues fanatics.

Tickets for the concert, which starts at 7.30pm, cost ten euros.

and Julio Romero de Torres among others. [Info.mupam@malaga.eu](mailto:Info.mupam@malaga.eu)

**Museo Carmen Thyssen**

**MALAGA.** *Plaza Carmen Thyssen, Calle Compañía.* The museum's main collection covers Spanish art in four sections: Old Masters, Romantic Landscape and Costumbrismo, Précieux style and Naturalist Painting and Fin-de-Siècle. There are also temporary shows: **Man Ray.** *Until 21 April.* Man Ray, 'Fotografías Selectas' features over sixty pieces signed by Man Ray - the pseudonym of Emmanuel Radnitzky (Philadelphia, 1890 - Paris, 1976) - on loan from a private French collection. The exhibition is structured around three themes, nudes, portraits and personal rayographs (rayographs are created without a camera by placing objects on photosensitive paper and exposing them to light for a few seconds).

**Alejandro Montiel**

**MALAGA.** *Ateneo, C/Compañía, 2* **Alejandro Montiel.** *Until 29 March.* Going Back Forward is the title of this exhibition by Alejandro Montiel. The artist has used classic paintings and added surreal elements. An example is the portrait of Felipe IV painted by Velázquez which Montiel has seated riding an inflatable T-Rex dinosaur.

**Vino. Arte y Símbolo**

**MALAGA.** *Until 21 April. Centro Cultural Fundación Unicaja, Plaza del Obispo.* The Museo Vivanco de la Cultura del Vino de Briones (La Rioja) has loaned a selection of its collection for this exhibition which highlights significance and relevance of wine depicted in art since Mesopotamia up to present day. The 80 works on display include art by Picasso, Warhol, Chagall and Sorolla among others.

**Unicaja Art Competition**

**RONDA.** *Until 30 March. Museo Unicaja Joaquín Peinado.* The entries to the competition are on display and consist of 39 works by 38 artists.

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## EXHIBITIONS

## Francisco Martín Molina

**NERJA.** Monday to Saturday 10.30am - 2.30pm. C/ Pintada 27. Collection of paintings and sculptures by local resident Francisco Martín Molina, responsible for several public pieces in the town. [www.escultorfmartin.eu](http://www.escultorfmartin.eu)



Elena Laverón, Casa Gerald Brenan.

## Casa Gerald Brenan

**MÁLAGA.** Until 26 April. C/ Torremolinos, Churriana. The winter exhibition is by sculptor Elena Laverón and includes small, medium and large sculptures as well as some of her drawings.

## CAC Vélez-Málaga

**VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA.** C/ Félix Lomas, 27. **Lúmina.** Until 30 March. A light

installation by Pablo Berenguer in the gardens of the CAC.

**Los Colores de Atardacer Preparan Los del Alba.** Until 31 March. An exhibition by Quique Sarzamora.

**El Pensamiento Pintado.** Until 7 April. A selection of 79 art works by 34 artists from the CAC Málaga collection.

## MUSIC AND DANCE

## La Cochera Cabaret

**MÁLAGA.** Avda de los Guindos. **1 March, 10pm.** Conchita. **2 March, 10pm.** Mundo Divino. Tickets: [www.lacocheraentra-das.com/](http://www.lacocheraentra-das.com/)

## Festival Bach-Marbella

**MARBELLA.** Iglesia de Ntra. Sra de la Encarnación, Pl. de la Iglesia 29601. **10 March.** Ángel Hortas - Organist at the Catedral de Jerez (Spain). **26 April.** Christian Bischof - Organist at the Parish Church of St Margaret in Munich (Germany). **19 May.** Marco D'Avola. International pianist (Italy). **16 June.** Javier Villero - Organist of the Major Sun Organ (Órgano del Sol Mayor) and Constanza Ávila (Mezzo soprano). All concerts begin at 5pm.

## Costa del Rock Fest 2024

**TORREMOLINOS.** 2 March. Peña Flamenca De Torremolinos "Peña Amigos Del Arte", C. Los Romero, 7 - Torremolinos. This year will celebrate the 7th edition of the Costa del Rock Fest and will

feature metal music, as well as the subgenres trash rock, groove and hardcore punk. The event promises to include performances by the Catalan band Legion, as well as Vendetta FM, Whiskería Tucson, AiroS, Dawn of Extinction, Crummy, and Alisoder.

## La Posada

**MÁLAGA.** Vincici Posada del Patio, Pasillo de Sta Isabel. 8.30pm every Friday. Enjoy these acoustic sessions in the lobby. **1 March, 8:30pm.** Fernando Neris. **8 March, 8:30pm.** Flower Power. **15 March, 8:30pm.** Dana & Gianni.



Fernando Neris, La Posada.

**22 March, 8:30pm.** J Aranda & Bea Ross.

## Sala María Cristina

**MÁLAGA.** Sala Unicaja de Conciertos María Cristina. **16 March, 7pm.** The Orquesta de Cámara Promúsica. Easter Concert with music by Eduardo Ocón with the Sta María de la Victoria choir and with Mari Carmen Vicente Téllez (soprano), Iván Villa Domínguez (tenor) and Javier Moreno Ramos (bass). **20 April, 7pm.** The Joven Orquesta Promúsica, Orquesta Escuela Promúsica and the Coral Promúsica (choir). Music from films and TV with some scenes from the films shown on a screen. <https://www.fundacionunicaja.com>

## Salon Varietés concerts

**FUENGIROLA.** 7.30pm daily, 7pm Sunday. The Salon Varietés Theatre, C/Emancipación **2 March.** St David's Day concert with the Welsh Male Voice Choir and Ricky Lavazza. **9, 10 March.** The Abba Experience. [www.salonvarietestheatre.com/](http://www.salonvarietestheatre.com/) or call: 952 47 45 42

## The Untold History of Jazz

**MIJAS.** 1 March, 8pm. Teatro Manuel España, Las Lagunas. An interactive show for all the family which looks at the roots and development of jazz from the rhythms of spiritual and African music from the cotton fields to songs from 20th century New Orleans and the Golden Age of Hollywood.

## Gregorian Mass

**VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA.** 2 March, 7pm. San Antonio de Padua church. The Amigos de la Música choir and the Quilisma group will be singing the Gregorian mass.

## ProceSSIONAL Mass

**VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA.** 2 March, 7.30pm. Teatro del Carmen. A concert for Lent with the Cristo del Mar cornet and trumpet band. Entry: 2kg non-perishable food.

## La Cosa y La Fuerza

**ESTEPONA.** 9 March, 8pm. Centro Cultural Mirador del Carmen. Dance performance with Luz Arcas. Tickets from the box office two days before.

## Britannia Duo

**MARBELLA.** 9 March, 6pm. Villa Las Mariposas, Urb Marbella Hill Club. A concert with Britannia Duo. Monica Forrester-Becko (piano) and Michael Kevin Jones (cello).

## Sacred and Ancient music

**VARIOUS.** 8, 9, 16, 23 March. **8 March, 12pm.** Vélez-Málaga, Centro de Participación Activa. The Spinto Ensemble. Vivaldi's Four Seasons. **9 March, 12.30pm.** Frigiliana, San Antonio de Padua Church. The Spinto Ensemble. **16 March, 12.30pm.** Almáchar. San Mateo Apóstol Church. Sacrum Ministriles. **23 March, 12.30pm.** Cómpeta, Ntra Sra de la Asunción Church. Cuarteto Lígula.

## Concerto Málaga

**MÁLAGA.** Sunday 3 March, 7.30pm. Auditorio del CPM Gonzalo Martín Tenllado. Concerto Málaga will be presenting their CD Homenaje a Falla. The orchestra will be accompanied by renowned pianist Leonel Morales. The concert is in aid of the Spanish cancer association AECC.



Pianist Leonel Morales.

## Noches de Flamenco

**MÁLAGA.** Thursdays and Saturdays, 8.30pm. Colmao de Museo de Arte Flamenco Peña Juan Brea. A flamenco performance in the Museo de Arte Flamenco Peña Juan Brea. Reservations can be made in the museum. Call 952 221 380 for more information.

## Teatro Flamenco

**MÁLAGA.** Every day at 5.30, 7 and 8.30pm. Teatro Club Málaga. C/ Lazcano, 5. The show Esencia, The Roots of Flamenco lasts one hour and is performed three times every evening. [teatroflamencomalaga.com](http://teatroflamencomalaga.com)

## Flamenco Abierto

**VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA.** Every Friday, 10pm. Peña Flamenca Niño de Vélez. Flamenco performances every Friday. Tickets: [www.entradium.com](http://www.entradium.com)



Sala María Cristina, Malaga.

## CHARITY

## ARCH

**ALHAURÍN EL GRANDE.** Sundays, 10am-2pm. Hacienda Moreno, Viña Borrego. The ARCH Rescue Centre for Horses and Donkeys which aims to provide the best care and rehabilitation for abandoned and abused horses is open Sundays. Children can groom the donkeys and ponies, and volunteers are on hand to explain the charity's work. More information on Facebook: Centro Andalusi de Rescate de Caballos or [www.horsescue-spain.org](http://www.horsescue-spain.org)

## Mooch and Munch

**ALMAYATE.** 2 March, 12.30-4pm. Parking El Llano. A pop up shop with second hand goods including clothes, small furniture, bric-a-brac, items for pets etc Food and drinks available including fresh juices, soft drinks, homemade sangria, burritos and cakes. Event to raise money for the cats and dogs of [www.theunderdogspain.com](http://www.theunderdogspain.com)

## Furlentine's Day

**MARBELLA.** 10 March. Triple A Animal Shelter. A-355, Km. 5, 29603. Triple A Marbella Animal Shelter has organised Furlentine's Day, which gives you the opportunity to go on a 'furst' date and enjoy a romantic walk with one of their shelter dogs. The event includes a bar, photo wall, heart-shaped treats for your date, raffle and kids activities. "You can only have one Valentine, so make sure to reserve your date in time before he or she is taken by someone else," say the organisers. Reservation can be made via Instagram DM (@tripleamarbella) or by phoning +491734010503. Dates begin at 10am and the event itself starts at 12pm.

## Walking tours for Alzheimer's

**MIJAS.** 4, 8, 18 and 27 April. Discover the history and secrets of Mijas Pueblo on a three-hour tour led by Alan Boardman. The route is easy with only one flight of steps which can be avoided. A minimum donation of 5€ is required with all the money going to Calahonda-based charity Alzheimer's Dementia Support Group. Almost 14,000 euros has been raised so far for a variety of



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Costa del Sol charities. Book by Whatsapp: 610 522 605

Collectors Fair

**VILLANUEVA DEL TRABUCO.** The last Saturday of every month. Plaza del Prado.

Toy cars, dolls, memorabilia, antiques, whatever you collect will be at this collectors fair in Trabuco.

FIESTAS AND FAIRS

La Hinojá

**ALGATOCÍN.** 2, 3 March.

Tastings of tortilla and stews made with fennel, a wild plant that grows abundantly in the area. Also live music and children's activities.

Día de la Vieja / Partir la Vieja

**ARRIATE.** 10 March.

This festival dates back to at least 1700 and the term 'partir la vieja' refers to dividing Lent into two parts. Nowadays, families take the opportunity to have a picnic in the countryside.

Axarquía foodie events

**TORRE DEL MAR.** 10 March.

The goat's cheese and Axarquía wine market is being held in Torre del Mar on 10 March. Meanwhile the local Ruta de la Tapa runs from now until 17 March in 24 bars and restaurants.

MORE IDEAS

U3A

**FUENGIROLA.** Los Boliches.

The U3A is a non-profit social group welcoming any English-speaking people. Group leaders give their time to pass on their knowledge/share experiences with those members who enrol in their group. Groups include bridge, backgammon, table tennis, ballroom dancing, flower arranging among others. More information: [www.u3acostadelsol.wixsite.com](http://www.u3acostadelsol.wixsite.com) or Facebook: u3acostadelsol.

Welsh Society Costa del Sol

**BENALMÁDENA.** 1 March, 1pm. Plaza Mezquita.

The Welsh Society Costa del Sol will be holding its annual event to mark the Feast of St David, the patron saint of Wales. The event promises entertainment by Mama Cath and the Soul Sisters; a trio fronted by Cath John, known as the Voice from the Valleys; Rock of Ages, a duo that perform classic rock anthems; and by a Welsh choir that will travel from the Rhondda Valleys to give a performance. All funds raised will be



Fennel is the star of the Hinojá fair this weekend. AYTO. ALGATOCÍN



The cheese and wine market is on 10 March in Torre del Mar. J. A.

donated to the Cudeca Foundation.

International Women's Day conference, Costa Women

**COSTA DEL SOL.** 7 and 8 March.

Costa Women is holding its 11th International Women's Day conference, Make it Happen by Being You. The event will be compered by Fiona Catchpole, founder of the Menopause School, and hosted by Ali Meehan, founder of Costa Women.

**7 March, 6pm.** Business networking event at Food Room in Guadalmina Baja.

**8 March, 9:30am.** Full-day conference at Andalucía Lab in Marbella.

The conference promises a diverse line of key speakers from the fields of marketing, coaching and mentoring, among others, including Laura Charles, Mari-Liis Vaher and Raimonda Jankunaite, founder of Women Thrive Media.

Lux Mundi

**TORRE DEL MAR.** Lux Mundi Ecumenical Centre, Avda Moscatel. 952 543 334, email: [luxmundi@lux-mundi.org](mailto:luxmundi@lux-mundi.org).

**Trip to Valencia.** 18- 22 March. See the Fallas Festival.

**Trip to Ronda.** 7-9 June.

O. V. FILMS

SUR in English advises calling cinemas to check for any last-minute time changes. Lunchtime and late night screenings weekends only.

Cinesur Miramar

**FUENGIROLA.** Avda de la Encarnación. Tel: 952198600.

**Dune 2:** 17.30, 19.00, 20.40 (Fri, Weds), 12.15, 16.20, 19.30, 20.30 (Sat and Sun), 18.00, 21.15 (Mon, Tues, Thurs)

**Poor Things:** 17.30 (Fri, Tues, Weds) 16.30 (Sat, Sun), 17.15 (Mon, Thurs) 20.00 (Thurs).

**Madame Web:** 17.30 (Fri, Weds); 12.15, 15.45 (Sat, Sun), 17.20 (Mon, Tues, Thurs).

**Bob Marley: One Love:** 12:15, 15:45 (Sat, Sun).

**Priscilla:** 12.15 (Sat, Sun)

Cinesur Ingenio

**VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA.** Avda Juan Carlos, 1. Tel: 667773187.

**Dune 2:** 11.50, 16.30, 19.45. (19.00 Fri, Mon, Tues, Weds).

Kinepolis La Cañada

**MARBELLA.** Crta Ojén. La Cañada Centro Comercial.

**Bob Marley: One Love:** 12:25 (Sun).

**Demon Slayer: Kimetsu No Yaiba-Rumbo:** 15:50, 20:15 (Fri,Sun); 18:05 (Fri-Sun); 15:55 (Sat); 17:30, 19:45 (Mon-Thurs).

**Dune: Part 2:** 16:00, 19:10, 22:20 (Fri-Sun); 12:00 (Sun); 18:00, 21:15 (Mon); 18:30, 21:40 (Tues, Wed); 17:50, 21:00 (Thurs).

**Ferrari:** 21.15 (Wed); Tues).

**Madame Web:** 19:25 (every day except Mon and Thurs); 19:20 (Mon and Thurs).

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COSTA DEL SOL

Blevins Franks Wealth Management holds seminars each spring to provide an update on the tax, inheritance and financial planning issues affecting UK nationals living in Andalucía. This year the seminars will be small group sessions with an open, friendly and engaging atmosphere, giving guests plenty of opportunity to ask questions.

One of the consequences of Brexit is that UK-based financial advisers can no longer provide regulated advice to EU nationals. Many British expatriates here have therefore lost their financial adviser and are unsure what to do now. The same applies to other UK-based financial services.

Blevins Franks will address these concerns, including whether you can keep your UK investments and bank accounts. Besides the important regulatory issues, they will consider the tax implications of retaining UK assets.

The presentations will then share insights into how you can optimise your financial situation when living in Spain, and how to position your assets correctly for you and your family. They will also provide an update on wealth tax.

Blevins Franks is regulated to provide advice to UK nationals in Spain, and the local Partners have each built up over 20 years' experience and knowledge on all aspects of financial planning in Southern Spain. These small group seminars provide the perfect opportunity for you to meet them and learn more about how they could help you.

These seminars are being held in the Blevins Franks offices in La Cala de Mijas and Marbella on 12, 19 and 20 March, led by Paul Montague and David Bownen.

SEMINARS

**La Cala de Mijas: Tuesday 12 March.** Blevins Franks. Urb. La Noria Golf 11am. Led by Paul Montague.

**Marbella: Tuesday 19 March.** Blevins Franks. Oasis Business Center. 11am. Led by Paul Montague.

**Wednesday 20 March.** Blevins Franks. Oasis Business Center. 11am. Led by David Bownen.

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The Welsh Society celebrates St David's Day this Friday in Benalmádena.

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# Simón Padilla, legendary chef from Puente Romano and Marbella Club dies, aged 77

**MARBELLA**

A teacher of some of the province's top chefs and tourism pioneer, Padilla became known for his innovative cuisine

**DAVID LERMA**

**MARBELLA.** Simón Padilla, celebrated chef from Jaén and director of the Shamoon group, to which the Puente Romano hotel belongs, has died.

The 77-year-old died in Marbella while receiving treatment for cancer. Friends and family said goodbye on Saturday at the old cemetery of San Bernabé after a mass at La Encarnación church.

Padilla became a part of a group of pioneers in Costa del Sol tourism when he took over the kitchen of the prestigious Marbella Club. He became known for his innovative cuisine and as one of the great gastronomic talents of the municipality. Despite never obtaining a single Michelin star, Padilla became a huge name in the industry, introducing the concept of dietetic cuisine. His creations,



Marbella chef Simón Padilla. **JOSELE**

inspired by the simplicity of Cadiz cuisine, were tasted by the likes of Salvador Dalí, King Fahd and Sean Connery, among others.

Padilla, after his time at the Hotel Atlántico in Cadiz, was awarded a scholarship by the Ritz Hotel in Barcelona, where he completed his training as a chef at a time when the city had a more European flavour than the rest of the country. After meeting his wife, Caty, they both decided to move to Marbella in 1972, working at the former Hilton Hotel, now Don

Carlos, Sofico and Incosol, and in 1978 he put on the chef's apron at Puente Romano, a group he would never leave. Padilla taught chefs such as Dani García, Álvaro Arbeloa, Diego del Río, and Juan Gálvez, among others.

Dani García took to social media to say goodbye to the man who was his first head chef outside of catering school when he was just 18 years old. "I will never forget the potato and truffle millefeuille he taught me to make," he recalled.

# Wines in a country at war

**ANDREW J. LINN**



It's stating the obvious to say that the Ukrainian wine industry has been up against it recently. Before the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine was successfully repositioning itself as a producer of quality wine, rather than as a member of the club of ex-Soviet satellites that made cheap wine in bulk, usually too sweet for western tastes. However, the loss of about one third of vineyards due to the invasion, including some of the country's best, has been a significant setback. It has resulted in the destruction of some bodegas and the abandonment of others, and the survivors are currently living under the constant threat of collateral damage. Some wineries have already lost large amounts of their wines due to shelling, while others face logistical challenges and material shortages.

Southern Ukraine has been heavily affected by the Russian occupation, leading to disruptions in supply chains and labour shortages. The destruction of infrastructure, such as glass factories, has further compounded the challenges faced.

Despite these difficulties, there are opportunities for Ukrainian winemakers in the global market. The unprecedented support for Ukraine from the international community has led to increased interest in Ukrainian wines abroad. Local producers have noticed greater consumer loyalty to their products domestically, with a growing trend towards buying local wines.

However, the future of the Ukrainian wine industry remains uncertain. The ability to harvest grapes, especially in the southern regions, is dependent on the outcome of the

conflict. Hopefully Ukrainian wines may emerge as a major discovery in the wine world, showcasing resilience and quality in the face of adversity.

**WINE OF THE WEEK**

**Marco Real 2022**

Ukrainian wines can be found in Spain, but only from specialist suppliers, so to obtain them we need to do some Googling and pay delivery charges. More easily obtainable is this excellent Sauvignon Blanc white from Navarra, which conveys the impression of being long-lasting in the bottle. Around €10.





# Malaga leads the world in organ transplants: more than five a week carried out in 2023

The rate of donations in the province, 52 per million inhabitants, is above the Andalusian and Spanish averages, and almost three times the European average

IVÁN GELIBTER

MALAGA. Malaga province is the world leader in organ transplants, latest data shows.

Not only is the province a global leader, but it has also beaten its own record of transplants performed per week; in 2023 five operations were carried out every week at the Regional Hospital, which specialises in liver, kidney and pancreas transplants.

According to official data, seen by SUR, 281 transplants were carried out last year. The majority were kidney transplants (201), followed by liver transplants (67) and pancreas transplants, which



A transplant procedure in an operating theatre at a Malaga hospital. SUR

totalled 13 operations.

## Three a day in Andalucía

The record figures do not only affect Malaga, with more than 1,000 transplants recorded for the first time throughout the region of Andalucía - that is three a day for a population of just over eight million.

Domingo Daga, regional transplant coordinator, said the fig-

ures are "extraordinary" and that people in Andalucía and Malaga have made organ donation part of their legacy.

"People are increasingly thinking that, at the end of their lives, when they die, donating is a magnificent option because it gives other people the chance to continue living with organs and tissues. This message, which seems simple and easy, has to be taken

## IN FIGURES

# 281

transplants were carried out last year in Malaga, the majority kidney (201), followed by liver (67) and pancreas (13)

# 90%

of families agree to donate their relatives' organs when asked by doctors after a death in hospital

The average age of organ donors in Andalucía is 60; the idea that they are all young accident victims is a thing of the past

on board by society for this to work," he said.

"In Malaga, practically 90 per cent of the families we ask accept; and a large part of them say yes because the person who has died in life expressed their wish. That is the key," Daga added.

For a transplant to take place, there must first be a donation. The rate is measured in the num-

ber of donors per million people. In Europe, this rate is around 20 people per million, while in Spain it is just under 48. In Andalucía it is around 51, while Malaga province recorded 52 in 2023, making it the leading area in the world.

## Donations

"The work that has been done by the health organisations and the media has to be emphasised time and again," Daga said. "On the part of the transplant coordinators, we have tried to explain and inform society of the benefits, how generous, how useful, how particularly necessary it is that at the end of our days we can donate organs or tissues to help other people."

Regarding age and whether an ageing population could affect these figures in the future, Daga said the current average age of donors in Andalucía is 60.

"The idea that donors are young people who die in traffic accidents is a thing of the past; they make up less than 9% of the total," he added.

"If you were to ask me above at what age you cannot donate, I would say there is no age. In fact, we have donors who are sometimes over 90 years old. We evaluate people's organs and tissues more by their function and by their biological situation, than by their age."

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## EUROPEAN CLINIC



Dr Rolande Frank-Fischer at European Clinic, Marbella.

## COUGH, COLD, HOARSENESS: THE FLU AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

### MARBELLA

An acute upper respiratory tract infection, a cold, with pressure on the jawbone, forehead and behind the eyes, blocked nose, mucus in the throat and a cough, is often accompanied by bronchitis and sometimes even pneumonia. In such cases, in which the infection has changed levels, it is advisable to consult an Ear-Nose-Throat specialist.

Weakened symptoms such as persistent mucus in the throat, the need to clear the throat or coughing over a period of months lead to irritation of the vocal cords with hoarseness. Although patients usually become used to these symptoms and no longer perceive them as an illness, but merely as annoying. The necessary visit to the Ear-Nose-Throat specialist is sometimes delayed for years - with fatal consequences. During this time cysts, benign tissue growths, often develop in the sinuses. These complicate and prolong therapy and often even have to be surgically removed.

The diagnosis of sinusitis includes sonography (ultra-

sound) of the paranasal sinuses and assessment of the nasal mucosa using endoscopy. Even children under the age of six can suffer from sinusitis. As the Eustachian tube in children has a different anatomy to that of adults, middle ear infections are just as preprogrammed. In these cases polyps are growing in the nasopharynx (adenoid vegetations).

Failure to treat this disease in children can result in permanent rhinitis, hearing loss and permanent wheezing and chronic sinusitis can even lead to speech development delays in young children. Timely treatment also prevents the need to insert eardrum-tubes (grommets) or surgically remove polyps (adenoids). Anyone who does not recover well from an infection is taking a risk.

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# A surprisingly simple exercise that can lower blood pressure

**Static.** A recent study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* suggests that isometric exercises can be more effective than running or walking to control BP

ÓSCAR B. DE OTÁLORA

**T**he benefits of physical activity do not always have to be restricted to intense exercise. A study carried out by the University of Canterbury has shown that, in order to reduce our blood pressure, doing a wall squat and staying put for a lengthy time can be more effective than aerobic training such as running, walking or doing HIIT sessions. So, yet another fitness tool being added to the box of tricks to improve our health.

The resulting research undertaken by the Canterbury experts has been published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. They acknowledge that hypertension is one of the biggest killers across western nations, mostly due to its links with the risk of some type of cardiovascular damage.

According to a 2021 study by the INE national institute of statistics in Spain, high blood pressure is involved in 26 per cent of all deaths. Hypertension affects around 40 per cent of the plus-18 population of Spain. Moreover, an increase in cases has been noted in under-18s as a result of obesity, poor eating habits and a more sedentary lifestyle.

The key objective of the Canterbury study was to analyse alternative, drug-free treatments for hypertension. Endurance sports have always been a recommended treatment, though never to the extreme of running a marathon.

The researchers carried out a meta-study reviewing 270 completed trials, providing a pooled sample size of 15,287 participants. Their reasoning behind conducting such an extensive review was the belief that some of the studies previously regarded as ground-breaking might now be less so in the light of more recent research.

### Which is more tiring?

They concluded that aerobics, resistance training, high-intensity interval training and isometric exercises are all significantly effective in reducing blood pressure.

**In Spain high blood pressure is a factor in 26 per cent of all deaths, according to the national statistics institute**



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sure. Taking endurance sports first, running or cycling offer better results than walking, although the authors of the report themselves suggest this needs further review as it also depends on the frequency with which the latter is practised.

### Best results

However, what is left in no doubt is that the best results were achieved with isometric exercises. Being the best does not imply that the other types of exercise are no good, as they also showed improvements in hypertension. Still, isometric exercises done without moving showed a greater range of effectiveness than the rest. Strangely enough, this type of exercise can be even more strenuous than longer exercise routines.

The exercise chosen for the meta-analysis was the static wall squat, in which the back presses against a wall with legs bent to a 90-degree angle. The goal is to remain in that posture, which feels like sitting in mid-air, keeping the body in position solely by tensing the legs. Such an exercise can be very demanding

for people not used to this type of activity, especially as participants had to complete four sessions, remaining in position for two minutes with lower limbs activated. Between each round of squats, subjects could rest between one and four minutes and squat sets were carried out three times a week.

In any case, the benefit of isometrics is nothing new to the fitness world. An abdominal plank, in which the body stays in a supine position supported by only elbows and feet, is one of the most widely known zero-movement exercises. The plank is great for activating the core without having to do more dynamic exercises that involve moving the spine - a much better option for anyone with restricted mobility or previous injuries.

While isometrics are a complementary element to include in a training regime, staying active is not the only way to lower blood pressure. Hypertension still requires medical supervision, and a poor diet, sedentary lifestyle, alcohol consumption and smoking are also contributory factors.



High blood pressure requires medical supervision. **sur**

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# European Cricket League action gets under way in Cártama

**CRICKET**

The group stages, to decide who will face off in championship week, started with victory for Jinnah Brescia (Italy)

**DARYL FINCH**

**MALAGA.** The increasingly popular European Cricket League (ECL) Championship returned to the Malaga town of Cártama this week, as the group-stage action got under way on Monday.

For the third year running, the Cártama Oval is playing host to this international T10 Tournament, dubbed the 'Champions League' of cricket.

Some 35 elite European clubs are competing for the coveted trophy, including defending champions Dreux CC from France, 2022 winners Pak I Care Badalona (Spain) and 2019 champions V.O.C. Rotterdam (Netherlands).

For the first three weeks, the seven groups of five teams will face off among themselves before the group winners, decided by a qualifier between the two leaders, compete for the top honours during the championship week from 18 to 22 March.

The group phase kicked off this week with the Group A teams in action. After seeing off competition from Heritage CC (Luxembourg), Cobra CC (Hungary) and Zagreb Assassins (Croatia), Skanderborg (Denmark) and Jinnah



Five teams faced each other in Group A this week. **ECN**



Hornchurch cricket club fans at the Cártama Oval on Thursday. **ECN**

Brescia (Italy) faced off in the qualifier. Despite coming second in the group, it was the Italians who prevailed, winning by five wickets to book their spot in the championship week.

Group B action got under way on Thursday, with English side Hornchurch, backed by their con-

siderable fan base, beating Belgian side Mechelen Eagles by 78 runs.

For those wishing to see the action live, there will be a total of five 90-minute matches (restricted to a maximum of ten overs per side) played every day, between 11am and 9pm. Admission is free.

## Mijas rider Martín Dockx comes second in international dressage competition in Doha

**DRESSAGE**

**PEDRO LUIS ALONSO.** Mijas-based equestrian José Daniel Martín Dockx continues to impress on the international stage, securing a commendable second place at the prestigious CDI5 event in Qatar on Saturday.

The Doha dressage event attracted eighteen horse-rider pairs representing diverse nationalities.

Riding his trusted partner, Malagueño LXXXIII, Martín Dockx achieved a notable score of 72.283%, finishing behind only Norwegian rider Isabel Freese on Total Hope Old. She clinched the top spot with an impressive average score of 73.196%.

Particularly noteworthy were moments where his scores hovered around the impressive 74% mark. A standout moment came when the chestnut stallion re-



Martín Dockx, riding Malagueño LXXXIII. **LUKASZ KOWALSKI**

ceived a perfect ten from judge Henning Lehrmann, acknowledging their flawless final halt.

**Olympics in sight**

As a result of this performance, Martín Dockx, a two-time Olympian, now looks almost certain

to be heading to the upcoming Paris Olympics.

While he played a crucial role in securing qualification for Spain's dressage team, the final selection of three primary riders and a reserve for the event in France this July is still pending.



Maria de Valdés with her gold medal. **SUR**

## Fuengirola swimmer returns from Spanish championships with two medals

**SWIMMING**

**MARINA RIVAS.** Local swimmer Maria de Valdés was a big winner at the Spanish Winter Open Astralpool Championship taking place in Sabadell this week, coming away with a gold and silver medal.

In the 1,500-metre freestyle event, De Valdés, from Fuengirola, claimed gold on Thursday with a time of 16:26.65, outperforming her national teammates Jimena Pérez and Ángela Martínez, who secured silver and bronze, respectively.

Continuing her strong performance, De Valdés secured sil-

ver in the 800-metre freestyle event on Sunday with a time of 8:38.77, narrowly missing out on the top spot to Ángela Martínez.

Despite her success, De Valdés fell short of achieving the Olympic qualifying times, highlighting the continued effort required as she pursues her Olympic aspirations.

Among other notable performances from Malaga athletes, Laura Rodríguez (Kronos Mijas) secured fifth and sixth place finishes in various breaststroke events, while Pablo Ortega (CN Fuengirola) finished seventh in both the 50- and 100-metre backstroke.



## Local combat fighter wins bronze

Torremolinos native Daniel Ladero (right) claimed a bronze medal at the European ADCC Championship in Zagreb, Croatia, showcasing his prowess in grappling, a non-striking combat discipline. Competing against 52 fighters, Ladero, also known as 'White Gorilla,' secured his place among the international elite of the sport, a passion he's pursued since his twenties. He currently resides in Gran Canaria, where he runs his martial arts gym, the Daniel Ladero Academy, while proudly representing Malaga province in global competitions.





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# Goal-hungry Malaga extend recent good run

Strikes from Genaro, Dani Lorenzo and David Ferreiro helped to put Alcoyano to the sword on Saturday afternoon

**ALCOYANO** **0**  
**MALAGA** **3**

**DARYL FINCH**

**MALAGA.** The Malaga CF resurgence continued on Saturday afternoon as Sergio Pellicer's side made it four wins from five with a 3-0 victory on the road against Alcoyano.

It was an action-packed game at El Collao, and the visitors got themselves an early lead after just three minutes when midfielder Genaro burst into the space between two defenders before firing home a half-volley from right-back Jokin Gabi-londo's throw-in.

However, it wasn't all plain sailing. With some more accurate finishing, Alcoyano could, and perhaps should, have levelled the scores just minutes later when Pablo Ganet headed wide from close range.

But it was Malaga who had their shooting boots on and Dani Lorenzo doubled his side's advantage on the quarter-hour mark after cutting inside from



Midfielder Genaro celebrates giving Malaga the lead at El Collao on Saturday afternoon. **AGENCIA LOF**

the left and beating the keeper low at the near post.

## Game-changer

The task then became easier for the visitors just before the break when José Alonso Lara picked up his second yellow card in a scuffle with Genaro, who had

just clipped him from behind.

However, it almost didn't look that way early in the second half when Ganet hit the post when through on goal, and Alcoyano were gifted a chance from the penalty spot after a shirt pull in the area.

Luckily for Pellicer's side, though, Daniel Selma smashed

the ball into Row Z.

The home side were then punished for their profligacy when Dani Lorenzo's cutback was buried into the roof of the net by David Ferreiro, who picked up his first goal since joining Malaga in January.

This goal settled any linger-

**Surge in season ticket sales see the 20,000 mark surpassed**

Despite Malaga currently languishing in the third tier of Spanish football after relegation last season, that hasn't stopped the fans from offering their support. In fact, there are now a record-breaking 20,000 season ticket holders.

This surge in support, reminiscent of their Champions League era, has been fuelled by a realistic hope for promotion and the vibrant atmosphere at La Rosaleda stadium, attracting a diverse range of fans, including a notable increase in younger supporters.

Despite no special promotions, the club's consistent performance and accessible ticket prices have bolstered this surge, positioning Malaga as the leading club in terms of fan base within their league group.

ing nerves, and Malaga almost got a fourth, but Juan Hernández's shot didn't quite curl enough to sneak inside the far post.

With the win, Malaga sit in fourth place, level on 58 points with Cordoba, seven points off second-placed Ibiza.

## Antequera stage impressive comeback in first game under new ownership to move closer to the play-offs

Elsewhere in the lower tiers of Spanish football, several Malaga province teams remain in the fight for promotion

**ADG / JUAN RAMÓN PADILLA**

**MALAGA.** Antequera's first match with British businessman Mike Garlick at the helm produced a win, with the Malaga side staging an impressive comeback to beat Recreativo Granada 2-1 on the road.

Carlos Pérez put the home side in the lead within five minutes with a well-worked set-piece goal, but Antequera were level just two minutes later when Luis Redondo won and then converted a penalty.

However, Antequera had to withstand a lot of pressure from the hosts, who created numerous chances and had several



Antequera players celebrate scoring the winner. **AGENCIA LOF**

penalty shouts of their own turned down.

Eventually, with 20 minutes left on the clock, Destiny stood

up to be counted, beating the keeper to a high ball to head home the winner.

This win marks the team's sec-

ond consecutive victory and, notably, their first away triumph in 2024. The result leaves them five points off the play-off places.

## Draws aplenty

In the division below, Marbella (third) scored late again, but this time it was to salvage a draw against bottom side Cartagena B (1-1). Despite going behind in the 60th minute, the visitors pressed hard until Hugo Rodríguez salvaged a point with a goal in the 87th minute.

Meanwhile, neighbours Estepona (sixth) also salvaged a late point (extending their streak of consecutive draws to four), this time with a 1-1 draw against Racing Cartagena Mar Menor. Nacho Goma found the equaliser in the 88th minute.

At Vivar Téllez, there was another draw as Vélez (tenth) hosted second-placed Yeclano. Vélez took the lead twice through goals from

Andrés Ortega and Sunday, but Yeclano, vying for the top spot, managed to fight back.

The only local side not to draw in Segunda RFEF was El Palo (17th), who suffered another setback in their quest for survival, losing 1-0 at home in the six-pointer against La Unión.

## The chase continues

In the fifth tier, Torre del Mar (second) continued to keep the pressure on leaders Juventud de Torremolinos with a resounding 4-0 victory for the second consecutive week, this time against Rincón (now second bottom).

Meanwhile, despite struggling in attack, Torremolinos (first) maintained their cushion with a 1-0 victory over Torredonjimeno with a header from Fran Gallego.

Elsewhere, Atlético Malagueño (fourth) look set for another shot at promotion after a commanding 5-0 win over Torreperegil put to bed some doubts about their recent home form.

Finally, Málaga City (13th), despite suffering a 2-0 defeat to Huétor-Vega, remain clear of the relegation zone.





A LOOK AT LA LIGA  
ROB PALMER  
Commentator, ESPN

## Winning with kids

Barcelona's best player this season has been a 16-year-old and the leading scorer in La Liga is still only 20 years old



**D**o you remember the "You can't win anything with kids" declaration? It was the infamous Alan Hansen quote back in 1995, just before Fergie's fledglings went on to become the champions of England. Pep Guardiola repeated it back in 2019 to justify a spending spree.

Spin forward to 2024 and the suggestion seems so dated as Klopp's kids beat the Chelsea children in the Carabao Cup Final. The English press is full of the flower of youth in football.

Liverpool introduced three teenage substitutes to take on a Chelsea whose overall average age was 16 years younger than the Merseysiders. It's a revelation in the Premier League, but over here in Spain it's become the norm.

Barcelona's best player this season has been a 16-year-old. Lamine Yamal is one of five teenagers who have started regularly – Hector Fort (17) Pau Cubarsí (17) Gavi (19) Vitor Roque (19) - with three others on the bench every week. The average age of the Barça team this season has been 24.9 years.

Álex Balde (20) and Pedri (21) are fixtures in the Spain national team; Ferran Torres (23) and Ronald Araujo (24) are classed as veterans at a club that has needed to rely on the academy to supply talent dur-



Lamine Yamal. EFE

ing a financial crisis.

The story is similar at Valencia where they've needed to promote players from the B team to make up the numbers. The average age of 23.9 is even lower than Barcelona's and the gamble on youth has paid huge dividends as they've exceeded all expectations. Last season's reserve side is 9th in La Liga.

It's a similar story at the club in 8th. Las Palmas could easily name a balanced starting XI of players under the age of 25. Their USP is the fact that almost all of them are from the Canary Islands.

Remember the leading scorer in La Liga is still only 20 years old. Jude Bellingham belies his years and is proving to be value for money. Real Madrid are criticised for not promoting academy players, despite having eight teenage players in the matchday squads this season.

The blueprint has been to recruit potential from all corners of the globe and nurture them into top class players. The backbone of the team - Eduardo Camavinga (21) Vinicius Junior, Rodrygo (both 23), Aurelien Tchouameni, Fede Valverde, Andriy Lunin (all 25) arrived as uncut diamonds, but are now polished jewels in the crown.

Next season they break the mould by signing Kylian Mbappé. The superstar Frenchman is still aged only 25 despite all his accomplishments.

Mbappé may not be the most significant signing. Endrick Felipe Moreira de Sousa – stage name Endrick – is the boy to look out for. He's been a YouTube sensation since he was four, trained at a Real Madrid's academy when he was eight, became a regular in the Palmeiras side at 16 and made his Brazil senior debut at 17.

Once he turns 18 in the summer, he can finally join Real Madrid. Just a few years ago, you'd have expected him to be sent to do the hard yards with the development team - but given the current trend he's set to skip straight into the first team squad as it has been clearly proven that you can win things with kids!

## Spain add Nations League title to already impressive haul

The current world champions saw off France in Seville thanks to a goal in each half from Aitana Bonmatí and Mariona Caldentey

ISAAC ASENJO

SEVILLE. Spain's domination of women's football continues. Just 192 days after becoming world champions, Montse Tomé's side

are now UEFA Nations League winners after beating France 2-0 on Wednesday night.

The match, held at La Cartuja stadium in Seville amid the Andalucía Day festivities, was witnessed by a record-breaking crowd of 32,657, a testament to the growing popularity of women's football in Spain.

These passionate, mostly local fans helped their side to dominate against an opponent they had never previously beaten.

The breakthrough came after 32 minutes when Aitana Bonmatí added the finishing touch from inside the six-yard box to a neat bit of play initiated by Olga Carmona and assisted by Jenni Hermoso from the left.

Just eight minutes after the restart, Mariona Caldentey helped to seal Spain's victory with a brilliant goal, peeling away from the defender before sweeping the ball into the corner of the net.



Spain's Irene Paredes lifts the Nations League trophy, surrounded by her teammates. REUTERS

## Free-scoring Lionesses make the most of trip to southern Spain

D. FINCH

MALAGA. Following their warm-weather training camp in Marbella last week, the England women's football team warmed up for their Euro 2025 qualifiers in the best way possible with two friendly wins in Algeciras.

In the first, last Friday, the Lionesses completely dominated Austria from start to finish, running out 7-2 winners.

Sarina Wiegman's team then followed this up with yet another high-scoring game on Tuesday, this time against Italy.

Despite having 26 shots on goal, they weren't as clinical on this occasion, only managing to get on the scoresheet five times (compared to Italy's one).

For England, Euro qualifying begins in April.

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THE STARS



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January 21st - February 19th  
If you haven't set financial goals for the year ahead, then it may be time to do so. The more you define what you want, the greater clarity you'll have.



**Pisces**  
February 20th - March 20th  
You can be anyone you want to be. Your sensitivity and empathy mean you often identify with strong characters. Like a chameleon, you're good at blending in.



**Aries**  
March 21st - April 20th  
You may be busy making plans, but stay alert for any intuitive nudges. The New Moon in Pisces next week suggests this is a good time for a fresh start.



**Taurus**  
April 21st - May 21st  
Friends can be supportive with their caring ways, but listen to your instincts. The New Moon in your social zone may coincide with a new start.



**Gemini**  
May 22nd - June 21st  
You may have a grand vision of what you hope to accomplish, and if it helps others, even better. It's wise to avoid impulsive or ill-thought out moves though.



**Cancer**  
June 22nd - July 23rd  
Key aspects encourage you to step out in faith and follow your heart. With Mercury aligning with Neptune though, it may be wise to ask a few questions before you get too involved.



**Leo**  
July 24th - August 23rd  
Some things are destined to remain a mystery unless you have the clarity of mind to pierce the fog and see what's really going on. The coming week can be a turning point.



**Virgo**  
August 24th - September 23rd  
An ethereal line-up can highlight all that's perfect about a budding romance or any new relationship. Be sure you understand what you're letting yourself in for.



**Libra**  
September 24th - October 23rd  
Next week's New Moon can be a call to be honest with yourself in relation to your job, current lifestyle or certain habits that you may be in denial about. Anew beginning could be yours.



**Scorpio**  
October 24th - November 22nd  
A long-running issue could turn into an all-out war of words. You may feel like cutting ties with this person once and for all. Make your position clear, then drop it.

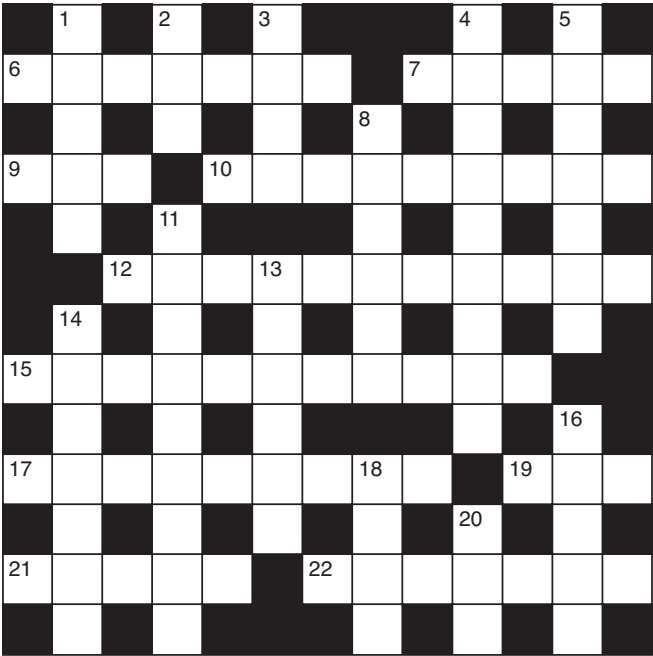


**Sagittarius**  
November 23rd - December 21st  
Energy levels may fluctuate. It might help to simplify your schedule and focus on down time. If restless, try to channel feelings into a sport or hobby.



**Capricorn**  
December 22nd - January 20th  
Does somebody you know need a helping hand? You may not hesitate to get involved. Your efforts could help rebuild someone's trust in human nature. Read small print carefully.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11613



**Across**  
6. Describing an Italian from Minorca (7)  
7. In the Vale they find the stream of oblivion (5)  
9. See 20 Down  
10. See 16 Down  
12. Wrong entry is made for this kind of deposit (11)  
15. Watch the people at the library - they know what you're thinking! (4-7)  
17. Acquire a place to eat that's quite accessible (3-2-4)  
19. 'urt one of the members! (3)  
21. Lean forward and don't move round the ring (5)  
22. Suggest a little work in plain English (7)

**Down**  
1. See 20 Down  
2. To make a bet is unprofessional (3)  
3. Paddy caught in the electric eye (4)  
4. What is not divulged by a railway office worker (9)  
5. Where stallholders go at playtime (7)  
8. Contest a charge, as backs do (6)  
11. Arthurian chieftain to imprison the fiery monster (9)  
13. Being in charge, stride up to the polar region (3,3)  
14. Allspice in the cracked pot could be mine (7)  
16 & 10Ac. Practice for the Mannequin Parade? (5,9)  
18. It's played in an early recording (4)  
20, 9Ac & 1Dn. Vicissitudes experienced by lift operators (3,3,5)

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



SUDOKU

**Instructions**  
Complete the square making sure that every row of nine numbers includes all digits from 1 to 9, every column includes all digits from 1 to 9 and every 3 by 3 subsection includes all digits from 1 to 9

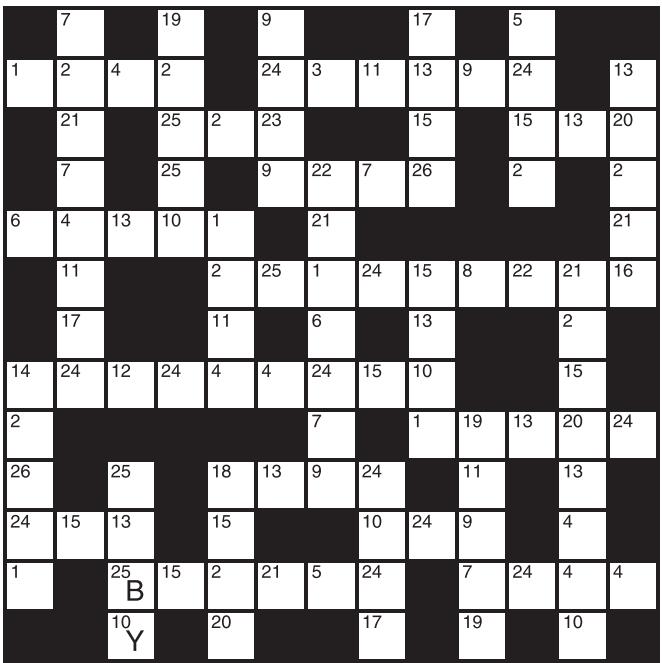
	4				5	1		
	1		6	3				4
	9					7		
	8	9				2		
				2				9
	5		7		6		1	
		1	5		4		8	
		4			7			2
		3						

THE WORDPUZZLER

S	L	I	S	P	I	N	S	T	R
T	O	G	A	N	G	I	C	E	D
U	G	L	R	O	L	E	L	X	R
R	O	K	I	M	O	N	O	T	O
B	R	U	M	P	V	U	G	A	P
A	M	B	E	R	E	T	H	L	O
N	O	U	N	T	R	U	E	R	N
D	U	N	T	O	O	T	T	I	C
S	C	A	R	F	R	U	M	P	H
Y	A	T	O	F	D	N	E	T	O

The clues listed below refer to an item of clothing. Can you find the garments in our grid?  
1. Japanese robe  
2. Wooden shoe  
3. Indian headdress  
4. Neck-warmer  
5. South American cloak  
6. Hand-warmer  
7. Brimless cap  
8. Indian dress  
9. Ballet skirt  
10. Roman robe

CODEWORD

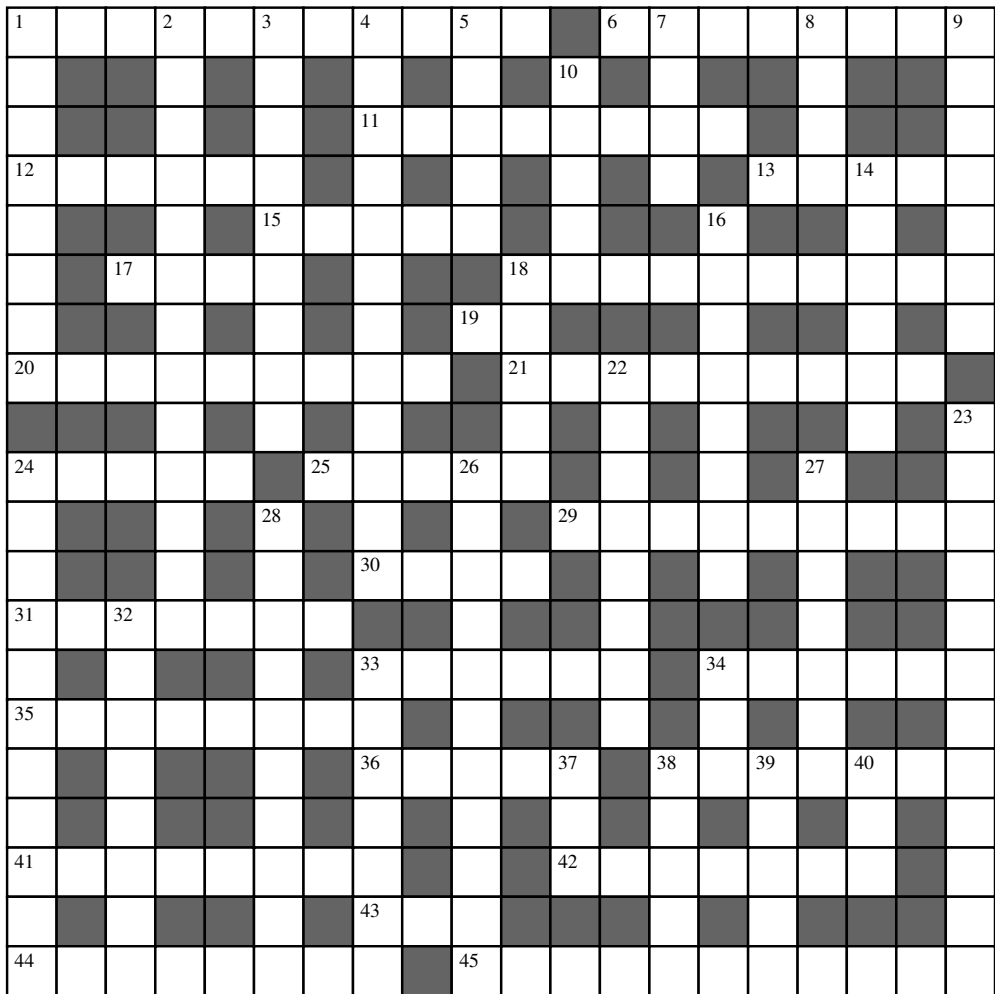


1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

**Instructions**  
Each number in the codeword grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have two letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares. As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.



LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD



- Across
- Down
- 1) Springs (11)

6) Colonies (8)

11) Steep (m) (8)

12) Shy (m) (6)

13) To be born (5)

15) Letter (5)

17) I requested (4)

18) Production (10)

19) To go (2)

20) Sovereignty (9)

21) Unlimited (m) (9)

24) Pearl (5)

25) Mood (5)

29) Protected (m) (9)

30) UFO (4)

31) Lavender (7)

33) Team (6)

34) They swallow (6)

35) Connection (8)

36) Value (5)

38) Back (7)

41) Northerners (m) (8)

42) Southerners (m) (7)

43) That (f) (3)

44) Winding (m.pl) (8)

45) They differentiate (11)
- 1) Mountains (8)

2) Olive oil (6,2,5) (13)

3) Zip-lines (9)

4) Settlement (12)

5) Spy (5)

7) Wave (4)

8) Nothing (4)

9) Nephew (7)

10) To walk (5)

14) Maid (f) (6)

16) Covered (m) (8)

18) Cousin (m) (5)

22) Iberians (m) (8)

23) Extension (12)

24) Populations (11)

26) Monthly payment (11)

27) Exhausted / Sold-out (f) (10)

28) From Madrid (m.pl) (10)

32) They came (8)

33) Containers (7)

34) Cough (3)

37) Farm animal (3)

38) Mistake (5)

39) Rock (5)

40) The (f.pl) (3)

QUIZ

Where are Nato's headquarters?

- 1.Paris 2. Washington  
3. Brussels 4. Rome



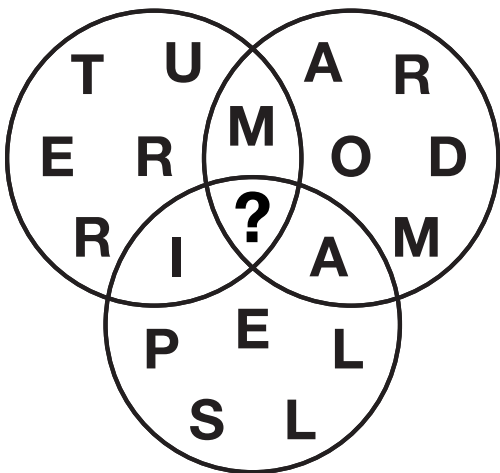
Which country withdrew from military command structure of Nato in 1966?

1. France 2. Poland  
3. Italy 4. Portugal

Which countries below joined Nato in 2004?

1. Poland 2. Moldova  
3. Serbia 4. Slovenia

CIRCLEGRAM



Instructions  
Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters in each circle can be arranged to form words, names or terms on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

THE SUR IN ENGLISH COLUMN

Tell them you saw it in SUR in English

It's no secret that a free newspaper survives off its advertising revenue and at SUR in English we are proud that our advertisers choose us as the best vehicle to take their message out to potential customers. Early every Friday morning their name, their brand, their logo, their services and their products leave the printers inside each one of 30,000 copies and head out

across Andalucía and Gibraltar. Later, at our hundreds of distribution points, the newspaper complete with our advertisers' message inside is picked up by readers, many as part of their Friday morning routine they haven't changed in years. We know our advertisers are already aware just how far their name travels inside these pages, but when you call them to make an appointment or book a table, when you walk through their showroom doors or buy a ticket, don't forget to tell them that you saw their ad in SUR in English. Contact us at [surinenglish.su@diariosur.es](mailto:surinenglish.su@diariosur.es)

ANSWERS

Quiz answers

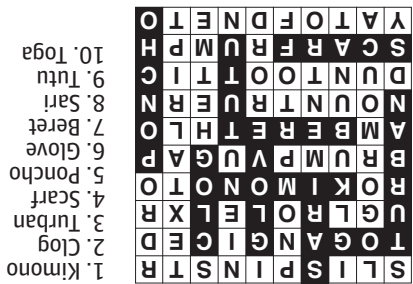
Answer: France  
Of interest: In 1966, De Gaulle instructed French armed forces to be removed from Nato's integrated military command, and all non-French Nato troops were asked to leave France. It returned to full participation in 2009.  
Answer: Slovenia  
Of interest: On 29 March 2004, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia formally became members of Nato.  
Answer: Brussels  
Of interest: Nato headquarters is the political and administrative centre of the Alliance. It is located at Boulevard Leopold III in Brussels, Belgium

Circlegram

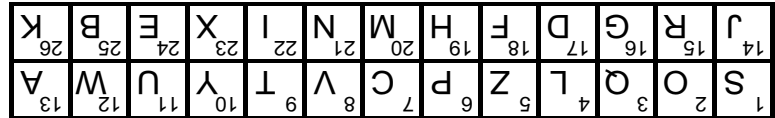
Cryptic Crossword

The letter represented by the question mark is C. Turmeric, Cardamom, allspice, all spices.  
Across: 6 Romanic; 7 Lethe; 9 And; 10 Rehearsal; 12 Seditary; 15 Mind-readers; 17 Get-at-able; 19 Arm; 21 Stoop; 22 Propose; Down: 1 Downs; 2 Lay; 3 Rice; 4 Secretary; 5 Theatre; 8 Defend; 11 Pendragon; 13 Ice cap; 14 Pimento; 16 Dress; 18 Lyre; 20 Ups.

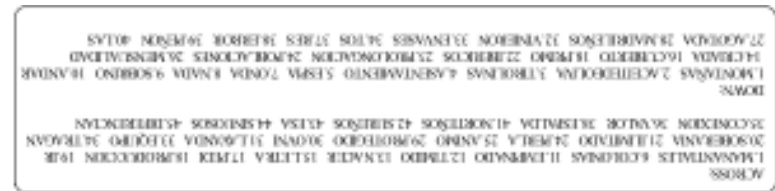
Wordpuzzler solution



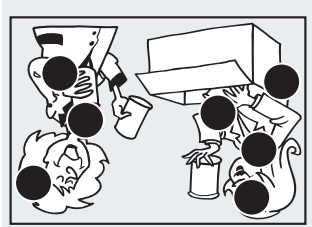
Codeword



Language Crossword



The seven differences







The land on which the animal shelter once stood, ready for construction. **JCR**

# Sally's will: dogs before development

**Torremolinos.** An American millionaire left her estate, La Pacaraima, to her employees, but they could only sell it after the last of the 77 dogs she cared for died, eleven years after her death

IGNACIO LILLO



Computer-generated image of the future development. **SUR**

**T**he former property of one of Torremolinos' most popular expat residents, who died in 2011, is to be converted into a residential development consisting of nearly 40 luxury homes.

The project was only made possible 11 years after the death of the owner of the large estate, Sara Ángela de Alzaga Robinson, as her instructions concerning the property have now been fulfilled.

Known in Torremolinos as Sally, the childless millionaire had spent a good part of her life

on her estate, La Pacaraima, in Montemar, where she created a shelter for abandoned animals.

Sally's fortune was inherited from her father, Martín de Alzaga Unzué, an Argentine racing driver and 'playboy'. He was also the owner of the El Morocco club in New York, one of the most famous and exclusive of its time, and which attracted celebrities such as Humphrey Bogart, Marilyn Monroe and Truman Capote.

Sally's last wish, signed before a notary, was that the dogs (77 at the time) that survived her would spend the rest of their days

on her property enjoying the same luxuries to which they were accustomed. To do this, she appointed a group of executors (several of them her employees) for a maximum period of 20 years from the date of her death.

The last of her beloved dogs died in 2022, allowing the sale of the estate, a sought-after plot designated for development in one of the best residential areas of Torremolinos.

That is where Málaga developers and builders Guamar come on the scene.

"The owner bequeathed her

assets to the executors with the condition that they look after the dogs until they died, although they could not take in new ones," the company's CEO, Antolín Martín, said during a visit to the estate.

The will went to such lengths

**A vet had to certify that the last dog, a 12-year-old mastiff, died of natural causes before the land of could be sold**

as to include a mandatory autopsy on the last of the dogs to die. This was a 12-year-old mastiff named Shadow. Once a veterinary surgeon confirmed that death had occurred naturally, the inheritance was released and the executors were able to sell the land. "The death certificate was included in the deed of sale," said Martín.

Although the price of the property has not been made public, it is estimated to have been "millions of euros". In September 2022 Guamar acquired the land and started the plans for the new development.

The residential complex will retain the name of La Pacaraima, and efforts have been made to preserve the vegetation as much as possible, especially the largest of the trees, which are over 80 years old.

An agreement has been signed with Torremolinos town hall to allow the trees that are transplantable to be moved to public parks in the town. Others have been replanted within the plot, in the area where the gardens and communal areas will be located.

The Málaga architect's studio HCP has designed the development's leisure area to be just below the location of the oldest trees "to provide natural shade".

The new luxury development will consist of 37 apartments, and two semi-detached homes in the lower part of the property, with prices ranging from 395,000 (two bedrooms) to one million euros.

The complex will have a children's playground, a sports area, and a swimming pool with a beach entrance.

So far, around 30 per cent of the properties have already been sold: the majority have been purchased by foreigners, mostly Polish (due to the effect of the war in Ukraine, close to their borders), along with Swiss, Dutch, German, Norwegians and Finnish.

The new homes are due to be ready by the beginning of 2026.

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