

# The good life



**Marbella is a lot more than a cocktail of buzzy beach clubs and non-stop nightlife lit up by celebrities, writes Tom Powell**



**L**IKE many others, Marbella was my very first taste of Spain. My family and I celebrated my 16th birthday in a charming little restaurant tucked away in the winding streets of the Old Town. Our table was heaped with local Spanish delicacies - prawns *pil pil*, succulent garlic rabbit and cold rice pudding (yes, cold) while my uncle made sure I always had a large, frosted glass of San Miguel beer to hand. Fast forward six years and I'm back. But

there's no San Miguel in sight at the VIP launch of the outrageously extravagant Roberto Cavalli Club. It's €30 for a glass of champagne, half the cast of *The Only Way is Essex (TOWIE)* is on the dance floor, while I'm trying to chat up one of the stars - the extraordinarily beautiful Chloe Lewis - in the courtyard. "I take it you're a big fan of *the Olive Press*," I joke, receiving a suitably vacant

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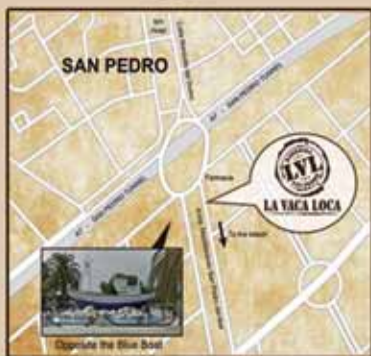


**LIFE'S A BEACH:** Marbella beach yoga class outside Boardwalk cafe, while (inset left) a young Tom Powell sips his first beer and (right) with TOWIE star Chloe Lewis



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**BEATING HEART:** Marbella's Old Town is its real centre

From Page 19

stare. Deciding this is one girl I will never get near, I rejoin the raucous party where a bejewelled fire-eater is wowing the crowds, while a midget dressed as a viking troll walks between my legs.

It feels like a million miles from my first 'pil-pil-tastic' experience of Marbella – but that's what makes the undisputed queen of the Costa del Sol tourism scene so special.

One moment you can be enjoying the peaceful shade of an orange tree or the simple pleasure of licking a pistachio ice cream; the next, you're hobnobbing with a Who's Who of TV celebrities, getting showered with champagne at some soccer supremo's pool party, or turning heads in Puerto Banus in a louche Lamborghini (ED: if you're lucky)!

The resort oozes drama and excitement for every age and inclination.

Even the world's most expensive footballer holidays here, not to mention many of his team mates.

The perfect antidote to a tiring season at Real Madrid, Welsh wizard Gareth Bale rolled up this month in Marbella to enjoy jet skiing, golf and the Puerto Banus party scene.

But it's the guys and girls from Essex who've added the wow factor and put Marbella on the map for the hard-partying Brit set. Every summer the TOWIE stars

## TOURISM QUEEN

descend on 'Marbs' to film shimmering 'specials' of the hit reality TV series, with drama and romance unravelling at a supercharged rate, and sexploits galore set against a Mediterranean backdrop.

Hotel bookings increase when the series is aired, as does the number of sun-seeking Brits on Malaga-bound flights.

However, the Russians, Scandinavians, French, Germans, Dutch and almost every other nationality you can think of who come to Marbella don't get TOWIE on TV. They come for other reasons.

Marbella is also now on the radar for Americans, ever since a certain Michelle Obama holidayed in Marbella in 2010. There really is something for everyone.

The Marbella beach club has almost become an international blueprint, with places like La Sala Beach and Nikki Beach turning a day at the seaside into an all-day dance party fuelled by a heady cocktail of sun, sand and dance music.

The pool parties are also legendary, especially those held at Sisu Boutique Hotel, as well as the Ocean Club.

Meanwhile in the party port of Puerto Banus, an international jetset crowd lets its collective hair down along the infamous 'second line' of the port, way into the early hours.

It's here you will find celebrated Lineker's Bar – with its legions of hens and stags – not to mention a host of strip clubs and more.

But frontline, and the millionaire's playground struts the swankiest shops, the flashiest yachts, the hottest cars and some of the most beautiful people in the world, preened and polished to the max.

However, visitors without pockets as deep as the Med might be left gawping at the eye-watering price tags in the designer shops, including Gucci, Versace and Armani.

But that really is just Marbella's shop window – there's much more to the resort than Banus



**KITE SURFING:** Statue shows how it's done

and the Golden Mile (the ultimate Marbella address), as local residents know.

Geographically and historically, the beating heart of Marbella is the Moorish Old Town, where

its true origins lie.

Here, you will find a maze of leafy squares hemmed in by white-washed houses, trendy boutiques and charming narrow streets which all wind up in Plaza de los Naranjos.

Orange Square, named for the canopy of orange trees that shelter every bar and restaurant is a wonderful place to sit

and watch the world go by, sip sangria or a coffee – all while the renaissance fountain, built in 1604, plays a relaxing background symphony of water music.

Three historic buildings are found in the main square, the Casa Consistorial, housing the town hall; the Renaissance palace Casa del Corregidor; and the Ermita de Santi-

ago, which predates the plaza. Food-wise, the old town is rammed with top quality restaurants, once you know where to find them.

Across the road, leafy Parque Alameda is a cool oasis in the heat of summer, where you can climb aboard a carriage and horses for a tour of the town.

Beyond lies the port, more down to earth, less riotous than Banus, and a 7km promenade, lined with luscious palms, beach showers sculpted in the shape of elephants.

Apart from the ocean lapping the beaches, there's little trace, now, of the fishing village Marbella was before German Prince Alfonso von Hohenlohe triggered the transformation in the 1950s, when he began developing and selling land to wealthy friends.

His crucial move was to convert his house into the Marbella Club, the town's first luxury hotel which has hosted a galaxy of stars, like Audrey Hepburn, Sir Laurence Olivier and – just this year – Lady Gaga.

A lot of different people come to Marbella for a lot of different reasons. And, whether you're table-top dancing at the hippest rave in town, or eating cold rice pudding on your 16th birthday, you'll certainly never be bored!

### Apart from the ocean there's little trace, now, of the fishing village that Marbella was before



**CHARMING:** Old Town streets

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**Marbella resident of three decades Giles Brown on the reasons why the town is set to boom again this summer**

# Staying strong



**TRAPPINGS OF WEALTH: Bentleys in Banus and a big rise in property sales are sure sign the economy is bouncing back**

## Built by Romans



**MARBELLA** began its life as a town in the seventh century BC, when it was a Roman settlement called 'Salduba'.

This is also the name of a well known bar at the entrance to Puerto Banus that has been there for centuries too. Meanwhile an original Roman bridge (above) still stands surreally in the middle of the Puente Romano Hotel and a few kilometres away is the restored Roman villa at Rio Verde with its beautiful mosaics. A sleepy town during the period of Al-Andalus, Marbella was retaken by Christians in 1485. The Plaza de los Naranjos (Orange Square) has been the focal point of the town since then and the town hall is still located there today.

**S** PAIN'S most glamorous resort is set to enjoy another record breaking summer as tourists, celebrities and investors continue arriving in their droves.

The combination of a superb microclimate, a dash of designer brands and a constant stream of celebrities, from Hollywood A-listers to reality show wannabes, means that Marbella can pretty much ignore the political bun fighting that is going on in Spain and get on with the serious business of having a good time and making money.

It's not all tourists and celebs, however. The past 12 months have seen the luxury residential property market show real growth.

Property values have historically been very high, and although the recent economic crisis resulted in a realistic realignment in prices, the past few months have seen values begin to rise as international investors are once more being lured in by the country's low prices, investment opportunities and lifestyle.

International property analysts have highlighted three prime areas for international investment - Madrid, Barcelona and Marbella.

Foreign investors have been attracted to Spain due to the 'Golden Visa' scheme - which grants automatic residency to non-EU citizens who invest



**SCENIC: Golf below La Concha mountain**



**GLAMOUR: Buena Vista Sound Club play at Benavista**

€500,000 or more in Spanish property. This has attracted a growing number of residency investors, mainly from the Far East, Middle East and Russia.

Meanwhile, Marbella Town Hall also has been proactive in marketing the town, attending a variety of trade shows and exhibitions in the mentioned regions.

It is not exactly a hard sell. Internationally renowned as a playground for the rich and famous, Marbella boasts literally miles of stunningly beautiful beaches, is a favourite spot for golf enthusiasts and has an enviable climate.

The increasing number of high profile events is adding a sprinkling of stardust to the already eclectic social calendar. The Marbella Luxury Weekend showcases designer fashions, top-end goods and some seriously impressive yachts and cars, while the month long Starlite Festival this year features Lenny Kravitz, Enrique Iglesias

and Lionel Richie and always attracts media coverage like moths to a flame.

As do the red carpet charity galas held by Antonio Banderas and Eva Longoria, now a regular fixture on every Marbella socialite's calendar.

Even US First Lady Michelle Obama's visited Marbella a few years ago, an event which made front pages around the world and - according to the town hall - brought in €800 million in media coverage. Restaurants such as La Sala and bars including the famous Linekers are 'must do' destinations for the hordes of fans wanting to imitate their TOWIE idols or bump into a Premiership footballer or two and, though they might not be to everyone's taste, they certainly bring a dash of colour to Banus!

Written off several times before as being past its sell by date, Marbella continues to attract a steady stream of the rich and famous, and is set to do it all again and this summer!

**Marbella is internationally renowned as a playground for the rich and famous**

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## PR PLATFORM

SOME seek seclusion in Marbella, others come to get themselves noticed! It's all good for column inches in the British press, as reality TV star singer Gareth Gates discovered when he hit the town.

The stars of top reality TV shows *TOWIE*, *Made in Chelsea* and *Geordie Shore* all make guest appearances for the publicity - actually managing to coincide in 2013, when Marbella also made headline news as the most famous party territory on earth.

So important has it been for the crew from *TOWIE*, now in its 10th season, that every year they now come for a few weeks to make their summer spin off *The Only Way is Marbs*. Meanwhile, cast member Elliott Wright opens up a restaurant, Olivia's, in nearby La Cala de Mijas next month. Always at the heart of the ac-



tion, reality TV tycoon Simon Cowell also makes regular Marbella appearances. He's rumoured to rent a villa in Marbs for a cool €15,000 a day, so it must have the X-Factor! And finally, Alan Sugar has been visiting the resort, where he had property, for the last few decades.

# Celeb Watch

THE stage is set for another 'Marbellous' long, hot celebrity summer.

Over the last 60 years, Swarovski crystal-studded sandals have tramped up and down the paseo marítimo mostly in impeccably-pedicated feet.

From iconic early trailblazers like Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn to more current celebrities like Posh and Becks, Hugh Grant (right) and George Clooney (below) Marbella's appeal to the filthy rich and famous is timeless. The well-heeled, suited, booted

**From the globally famous to the fabulously rich, major players flock to Marbella like paparazzi to a photo opportunity. But that's no surprise in Spain's answer to the Hamptons, writes Iona Napier**

and beautiful have been building their fabulous villas here since Roman empire days when the town was known as Salduba.

Today, a holiday in Marbella is a rite of passage on the journey to cool, for ordinary folk as well as an A-to-Z list of celebrities. Ironically, however, the glitz and glamour is not what initially reeled in the first pioneering punters...

Quite the contrary, when German aristocrat Prince Alfonso de

Hohenlohe was sent to the coast by his father in 1947, to buy land, he fell in love with a dusty little fishing village.

He was so enamoured with its natural charms, he knew he could entice some of Europe's grandest families to swap their Cannes or San Sebastian vacation for Marbella.

From that day forth, the town was on the map and on the road to becoming the resort it is today, synonymous with refinement, class and a little



touch of bling. Here *the Olive Press* picks out our favourite celebrities to grace Marbella, be it temporarily or for good.



OUT AND ABOUT: Team TOWIE



## PARADISE FOR GLOBAL LEADERS

IT is the luxury and seclusion that entices politicians and others of high profile to buy boltholes in Marbella's foothills.

These include Russian President Vladimir Putin, who - *the Olive Press* revealed exclusively two years ago - snapped up a palatial property in La Zagaleta, with plans for a vineyard.

If he needs to borrow a cup of sugar he can call on neighbours like the former Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, or loveable British actor Hugh Grant. (Although as the villas on this exclusive country estate are set in acres of grounds, he'll have to take the car!)

French president Nicolas Sarkozy and wife Carla Bruni add a touch of *je ne sais quoi* to the Marbella party scene while David Cameron has shown his colours (bronze, not blue) at least three times on the Costa del Sol.

Tony and Cherie Blair were also spotted splashing the cash in Marbella's Old Town last year.

Meanwhile, America's First Lady, Michelle Obama, and her younger daughter Sasha stayed in the town on a five-day trip that cost a mind-boggling €379,000 in 2010.



POWER TRIPS: Putin and Michele Obama



# HANGOVER

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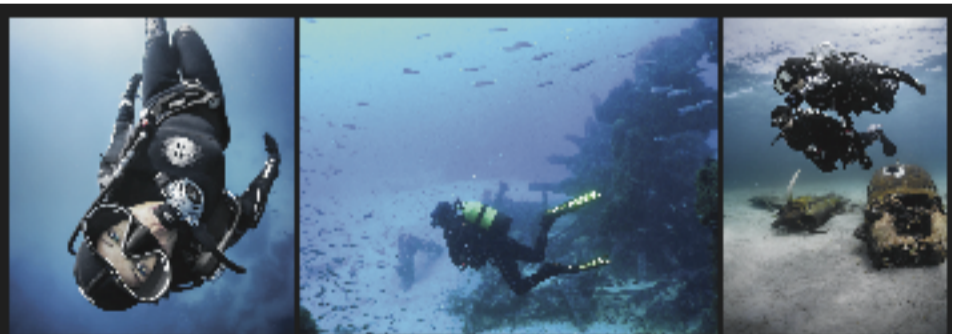
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**JOLIE FAMOUS:** Angelina, Brad and Lady Gaga

## SHOWBIZ STAGE

**EVEN** genuine A-list celebrities are prepared to risk prying paparazzi lenses for a taste of Marbella's highlife.

Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt came to the area on a house-hunting trip in 2013. Too bad they are looking to buy in Alicante but it's their loss! Lady Gaga was also allegedly cruis-

ing the market for a Marbella mansion, last year, as was reportedly George Clooney.

Hollywood glamour hit town, too, in the shapely form of not-so-desperate housewife star Eva Longoria. While pop legends Michael Jackson, Madonna and Elton John have all also visited.

# Less Magaluf, more Ibiza

*The high-spending UK party crowd is a continuous dynamo of income as Marbella raises its game in the quality stakes, writes Jon Clarke*

**T**AKE a stroll around Puerto Banus late at night, or visit one of the many beach clubs nearby and there is only one way to describe it... the place is rocking!

Guzzling champagne, splashing out on sushi, flying in by private plane, it is estimated that the high-spending UK party crowd could bring in as much as 20% of Marbella's income from tourism. Indeed, according to nightclub mogul Neil Acland, the partygoers, that include footballers, soap stars and the huge retinue of hangers on, bring in a steady stream of revenue unaffected by the recession.

The group - found each weekend at Marbella hotspots including La Sala, Aqwa mist, Nikki Beach and Ocean Club - have no concerns about spending vast sums of money.

"They spent a lot of cash whatever is going on with the economy and create a lot of jobs, not to mention social security and money in licenses for the town hall," says Londoner Acland, who runs hotel Sisu, as well as the brand new Cavalli Club restaurant and lounge.

"This is a young group of 20 to 30-somethings with a lot of disposable income. They are stockbrokers, accountants, lawyers and students and they holiday in Dubai, Ibiza and Vegas. They don't



**PACKED:** Cavalli club and (right) Sisu

get affected by the recession."

It certainly seems the case, with Acland, who previously worked in security in Denmark, explaining that groups of professional footballers happily spend between €20,000 and €50,000 in one weekend.

His company organizes for them to fly over for three days and then go to Ibiza for three days with a chartered jet taking them around. "We sort out the cars, the tables, the restaurants... money is no object." It is no surprise then that his Puerto Banus hotel sells over 5,000 bottles of champagne and around 7,000 bottles of vodka a year. And the whole ethos and design of



the new Cavalli club, which is part of the Italian designer Robert Cavalli group, is high end. "Absolutely no expense has been spared in the design," continues Acland. "The wallpaper alone costs €400 a roll."

He continues: "To get in people are having to dress up again, look fantastic. There are no tacky, fancy dress hen groups, this is high end glamour all the way and the best DJs from around the world."

## SPORTS RESORT

MARBELLA scores with the sporty set and it looks like it's game-on for another outbreak of footy fever this summer.

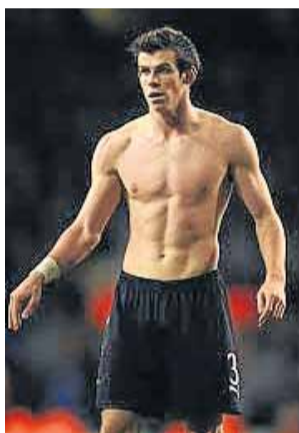
Man-of-the-moment soccer star Gareth Bale - who has two properties on the coast - is a fan, showing his swinging form on the local golf courses last month.

Former England manager Fabio Capello has a property here, as do numerous Premier League footballers, past and present.

Other giants of the beautiful game, like Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos and Chelsea's John Terry, are paid-up members of the Marbella supporters club, visiting regularly.

And let's not forget that Young Player of the Year, Spurs star Harry Kane, opted to bring his childhood sweetheart Katie Goodland here for a romantic break. Eating, where else, but at La Sala, which is owned by practically an entire team of soccer stars!

Finally, last month, the Saracens rugby team flew out for a pre-match bender in Puerto Banus.



**BEACH-BOD:** Bale



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**Snaking high above the town's new boulevard like a section of Scalextric track, San Pedro de Alcántara's sensational new bridge is a symbol of racier things to come, writes Rob Horgan**

If proof was needed that San Pedro has stepped out of the shadow of sassy sister Marbella, it's the town's head-turning pedestrian bridge, a must-see on the Costa del Sol since it opened last autumn.

It's more Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao-meets-Calatrava's City of Arts and Science in Valencia than typically Andaluz. But it has bridged the gap between the former farming community and its glitzier sibling and brought San Pedro screaming into the 21st century.

The €85 million tunnel diverting dangerous high-speed traffic below the town centre, an underground car park and the new state-of-the-art boulevard with its amphitheatre, children's play areas and ample green spaces are other examples of the shiny new



**BUILDING BRIDGES:** The bridge spanning above the brand new boulevard is San Pedro's shiny new crowning jewel

image being heavily promoted by the municipality of Marbella, to which the town still belongs. Although perhaps in name only now, rather than in spirit. Nowadays, Sanpedreños no longer feel the need to cling onto the Swarovski crystal-studded coat tails of Marbella. They have long called for

their own municipality, although as yet to no avail.

Nevertheless, the San Pedro success story continues.

Plans for a massive new commercial centre on the outskirts of town, and a university, are now in motion. The beachfront has moved upmarket too.

Its swanky new promenade, ornamented with sculptures and water features, can easily compete with Marbella's elegant elephant beach showers now! With jogging tracks and extended cycle paths, its waterfront piles on the wow factors.

The town centre conceals other attrac-

tions amidst rows of whitewashed houses, tree-lined roads and shady plazas.

Home to the impressive 19th-century Iglesia de San Pedro, the main plaza is laid out as a square within a square: the inner square, dominated by the church, is bordered by statues, benches and water features; the outer square



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## New art hub

IT is one of the most exciting art gallery openings this year. The brand new Red Penguin Gallery is now open in San Pedro de Alcántara. Located in Edificio Guaneri, the creative centre aims to promote the best art and also organise master classes with top artists and designers from all over the

world. Exhibitions of museum art collections will feature every month, while businesses can also organise conferences in the inspiring environment of the centre. It is open Monday to Friday from 10AM-2PM and from 4PM-8PM, and Saturday between 11AM and 2PM.



of bars and restaurants look inward on the architecture of a bygone era. It's a perfect example of how San Pedro subconsciously reflects the greater regional culture of southern Spain, while consciously attempting to be progressive and different.

Behind the church, the city flaunts its patriotism with a Spanish flag, hoisted 15 metres into the air behind a statue of Don Manuel Gutierrez de la Concha - the man who set the ball rolling for San Pedro in the 19th century.

Gutierrez, an army general, acquired nearly 5,000 acres of agricultural land which extended across Marbella, Benahavis and Estepona in the 1860s and formed the farming colony of San Pedro. As workers arrived from Valencia, Murcia, Granada and Almeria, San Pedro evolved into a sizeable town. Growth came to a standstill during the early 20th century, when Spain was

torn apart by civil war. But the town was back in business during the late 1940s and 50s when street lighting was introduced and the main road was built.

Independent in spirit if not in practice, a stroll around town - do-able in an hour - shows that San Pedro is very much its own place. Growth may have been less dramatic than that of other tourist towns and cities but the slow-and-steady transformation has allowed San

Pedro to cling onto its character. Despite its 21st century additions, it retains the essence of Andalusia other towns lack. It is distinctly Spanish with a friendly feel.

It may even be one the last resorts on the Costa del Sol that can rightfully make that claim. But that won't stop go-ahead San Pedro from planning a racier, rosier future.

### The slow-and-steady transformation has allowed San Pedro to cling onto its character



TRADITION: Statue of Gutierrez and (above) Iglesia de San Pedro



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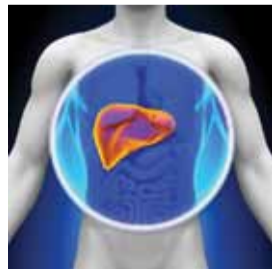
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info@drmpeters.com • Tel. 952 86 85 99 • www.drmpeters.com

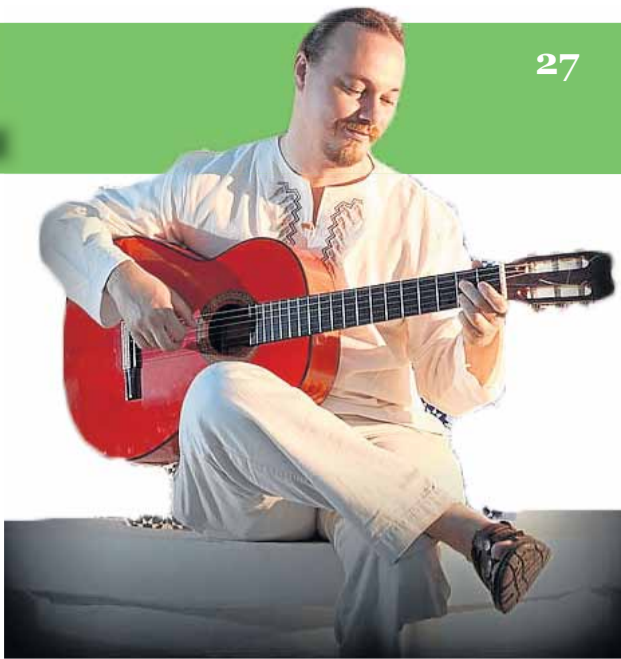


# The sound of medic

**Cracking backs and strumming guitars, osteopath-cum-musician Mark Shurey is a master of many trades**

**M**ARK Shurey is anything but your average osteopath. Indeed, a successful medical career is not the only string to his bow... or should we say guitar. British expat Mark is, in fact, a trained flamenco and clas-

sical guitarist who has travelled the world showcasing his talent. Playing, talking and researching all things guitar, Mark's obsession with music has led him down an arty path. Working with the Prado museum in Madrid, Mark has ex-



**IN TUNE: Osteopath Mark Shurey and his guitar**

amined guitars in Goya masterpieces and has authenticated Aguado guitars stored

in the National Archeological museum.

But back to the day job... Mark graduated in 1994 to become one of the youngest practising registered osteopaths in Great Britain at the age of 22.

In October 1999 he moved to Spain and became the first G.O.S.C. registered osteopath to practise in the province of Malaga.

Mark offers a discreet mobile service and is available for private consultation in the convenience and privacy of your home or hotel in the Marbella area, from San Pedro Alcantara to Mijas.

To contact Mark call 618 994 590

## Award for hair loss expert

MARBELLA hair loss expert Dr Ezequiel Panno is the first ever hair transplant specialist to have received the prestigious 'European citizen of outstanding character award'. The medic, founder of the Panno Hair Transplant Clinic, was given the accolade in recognition of his 10 years of excellence in the field of hair restoration surgery.

It also confirms his high standing among his medical peers for his scientific contribution, by developing the 'Panno technique' and invisible sutures.

It further recognises his contribution to the art of tricomplete, microfue and 'tricrofuss' to pro-

duce high standard natural looking hair transplants.

"I feel very proud that my work has been recognised and the award reaffirms my commitment to helping clients re-establish their sense of security and confidence," says Dr Panno.

"In more than 10 years, thousands of successful treatments and the development of new techniques, I still have 100% passion for my job, and I think that there are still many things that can be done within the fields of trichology and hair restoration surgery."

Visit [www.pannohairtransplant.com](http://www.pannohairtransplant.com)



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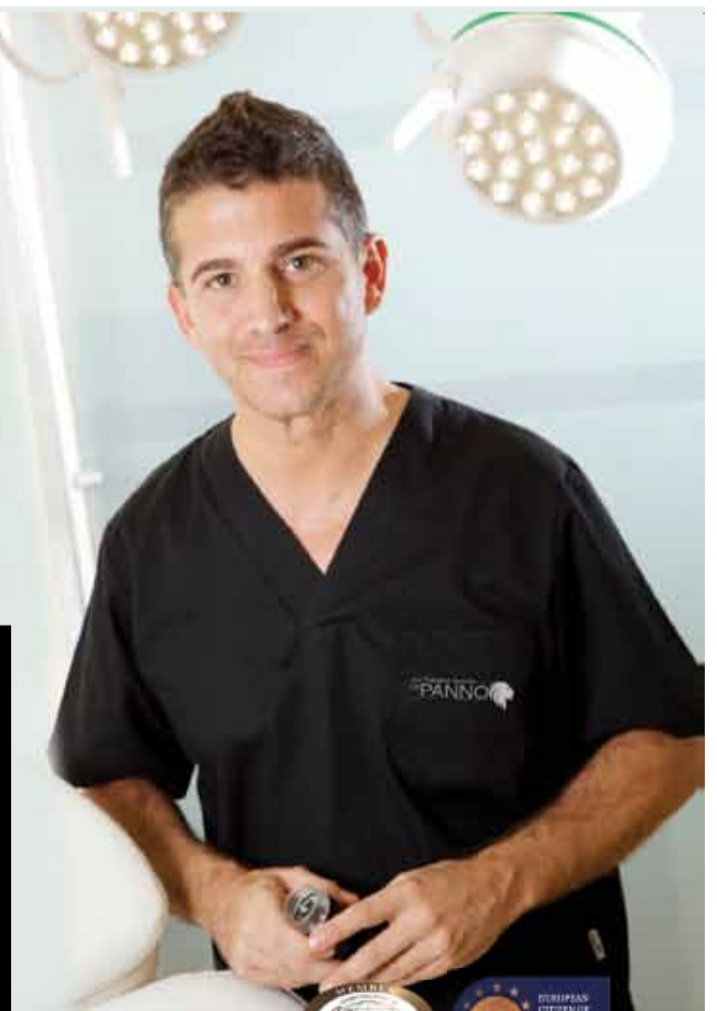


Before

After

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After



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## Number one for health

ALC Health has had a local presence in Marbella for over a decade, as well as providing medical and travel insurance to the expat community around the whole Iberian Peninsula.

The team is always on hand to explain their range of plans which are designed to suit the requirements of people living and working abroad and with the choice to go to any hospital and any doctor in Europe as a minimum.

Having established an office in Marbella 12 years ago, ALC opened a further office in Ocean Village, Gibraltar, last year.

Indeed, with many of the company's staff being expats themselves, they could not be better placed to understand what it's like to be living overseas and the issues involved.

ALC Health recognises that no two individuals or organisations are the same, which is why the staff take great pride in offering a personal approach with clients.

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# Beach battle

**Columnist Giles Brown is the biggest thing to hit the beach since D-Day**



**BEACH YOGIS: Strike a pose**

**L**IVING up in my humble casita, surrounded by nature, visitors often remark that it would be the perfect place to open a yoga centre (they also suggest a residential rehab facility, but that's a different story).

My health and fitness regime, and yes, there is such a thing, consists of mad dashes up and down the mountain track, throwing free weights around and letting most of my aggression out on the punchbag.

It's very high on testosterone and done to the sound of straining, grunting and the Foo Fighters booming out from the stereo. Many of my friends do yoga, and it seemed a more tranquil way of staying in shape, so when the lovely Margaret Buchanan invited me to take part in a beach yoga class just in front of The Boardwalk restaurant in Marbella, I thought I'd



**NEW NOSE BAG: Giles struggles with a pose**

give it a go.

It is actually not the first time I've done a class with Margaret, who also teaches Hot Yoga, where she put me through my paces so thoroughly that I was on the verge of throwing up and passing out.

The appeal of a morning yoga session next to the Mediterranean lured me back, however, and I duly found myself spreading out a mat on the beach.

A real cross section of people,

I was glad to see that I wasn't the only guy in attendance that day. Along with some healthy looking Scandinavians of indeterminate age, there was also a pregnant woman, so I didn't think that the class would be overly challenging.

How wrong I was. An hour later I was both physically and mentally exhausted. Margaret had carefully taken us through a series of yoga moves that had subtly worked out seemingly every muscle in the body, including some fiendish balance postures that left me wobbling like a drunken flamingo.

But as I walked back to the car I felt great for several reasons. The cost of the class included a donation to the Positively Pink Breast Cancer Charity, and I could actually feel my core muscles. And now I have yet another excuse to spend even more time on the beach.

## The art of redesigning a smile

A NEW dental clinic has opened in Marbella, located on Avenida del Mar next to El Fuerte hotel.

The newest member of the Crooke and Laguna clinics, the facility of almost 400m2 features state-of-the-art equipment and the latest technology.

The company already has well established clinics in Malaga, Benalmadena and Churriana and Dr Eduardo Crooke and his team share over 30 years experience in full mouth dental rehabilitation.

From the moment you walk through the doors you sense something special.

The interior design and furnishings would not look out of place in a 5-star hotel, while

the atmosphere is calming and designed to make the patient feel fully relaxed.

Ambience-enhancing music and colour-changing lights are the finishing touch.

"We want this to be a calming, relaxing and rewarding experience for the patient. While delivering confidence that they are in the hands of experts who can give them total satisfaction," says Tula Crooke.

Crooke and Laguna Marbella is a refreshing new dawn in dental clinics, a world away from sterile clinics of the past and somewhere that can finally give you the smile of your dreams...

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**STARS: Sinatra and Ava Gardner flew in**

# Stardust memories



**FILLING HIS BOOTS: Sean Connery and Jackie Lane**

**W**HETHER it was Diana Dors or Sean Connery, Ava Gardner or Audrey Hepburn, James Hunt or Rod Stewart, none would have come to Marbella without the influence of Prince Alfonso de Hohenlohe.

For the German aristocrat was the svengali with the necessary capital to turn the dusty village into a *highfalutin* millionaires playground to rival the likes of Cannes and Deauville, in France.

It was in 1947 that the charismatic playboy had been sent to the coast by his father Prince Maximilian to purchase some land. The family already had business interests in southern Spain, particularly in Malaga.

The 23-year-old was told to hook up with his eccentric uncle Ricardo Soriano, who had been eulogising about the merits of the coast for a number of years.

A huge fan of watersports, Soriano especially liked powerboat racing and lived an enviable

bohemian life.

He was soon chaperoning his nephew up and down the coast in his vintage Rolls-Royce looking for land.

The bilingual Alonso - who was a keen painter - was immediately taken by what he saw in Marbella.

Sheltered by the dramatic Sierra Blanca and with crystal-clear waters just a stone's throw away, the savvy prince immediately saw a wealth of opportunities.

He ordered his father to sell off his wine cellars in Malaga and began developing his now seminal Marbella Club hotel, which opened in 1954.

But that was not enough and the well-connected prince soon embarked on a European-wide campaign to convince all his high-flying friends that Marbella, not San Sebastian or Cannes, was the only place to be. And his campaign worked with

**The Olive Press looks back at the lives of the aristocrats and celebrities that turned a small fishing village into a glitzy, star-studded resort for the 'jet set'**



**ON THE BALL: George Best spent time in Marbella**

the grand families of central Europe, including the Bismarcks, Rothschilds and Metternichs, coming to see what the fuss was about.

A string of celebrities followed suit, with actresses including Elizabeth Taylor and Sophia Loren, photographer Patrick Lichfield, footballer George Best, model Brigitte Bardot, and Rolling Stone Bryan Jones joining the in-crowd. Even British aristocracy got in on the act, with the Duke and Duchess

of Windsor (Edward and Mrs Simpson) visiting the hotel.

"The people I met in Hollywood, in New York, and in Europe, they were the roots, the bridge that brought people to Mar-

bella... who made Marbella," explained Alfonso.

Marbella took pride in being cut off from the hectic, stressful and often scary modern world.

Indeed, news of the Cuban Missile Crisis did not reach the resort until it was over.

"Everybody had the most gorgeous parties when the rest of the world was trembling that World War III was starting," explains Count Rudi Schonburg, a former manager of Marbella

**Marbella took pride in being cut off from the hectic, stressful and often scary modern world**

Club.

Coining the nickname the 'King of Clubs', Alfonso's reputation quickly preceded himself and he soon opened up a disco which got the club swinging ev-

ery Tuesday and Friday nights.

Despite revelling in its exclusive status, the Marbella Club was anything but formal.

"At dinner everybody arrived with a dinner jacket, but I said 'Stop! This is not the Marbella way! You only wear a dinner jacket on New Year's Eve," recalled Alfonso.

As the inspired prince's creation boomed, so did Marbella and its surrounding hillsides. New restaurants, bars and sports clubs began sprouting up as the Costa del Sol quickly entered its so-called golden era. Developers included Jose Banus, who built Puerto Banus marina and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, who built a white palace (still there today) that is modelled on both the White House and a mosque.



## Red Penguin Art Gallery design & contemporary art



Red Penguin Gallery of Design & Contemporary Art new location at Guarnieri showroom in San Pedro bringing an exciting new urban concept of Art Design and Cars to Marbella.



More than just a gallery, it is a celebration of modern art and design, with top international artists and a NEW permanent exhibition from influential Dutch Designers and Chinese Artists.

This Creative Centre, the new project of Red Penguin, includes cultural events and art. Red penguin specializes in Art Consultancy and Art Investment.

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# The golden days remembered

**GLAMOROUS:** Diana Dors sunbathing, while (from far left) nuns on a beach, the Romeria near San Pedro and fishing boats

The likes of multi-millionaire arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi (who formerly owned La Zagalata, Spain's most expensive urbanisation) were able to dock their luxury yachts in the port. "Thanks to my initiative, Marbella's Golden Mile alone now provides 60,000 jobs," Alfonso once said. While his friends called him

the 'King of Clubs' or the 'Little Prince', locals came to know him affectionately as Ole-Ole, because of his difficult to pronounce surname. Yet as the Costa del Sol dream began to spiral into uncontrollable development, Alfonso became aware of the monster he had helped stir. Concrete towers were sprouting up as far as the eye could see, from Malaga

all the way down to Estepona, almost 100 kilometres away. Worse still, wanted British criminals began to take advantage of a lack of an extradition treaty between England and Spain. This influx of crooks and subsequent crime left the idealistic Alfonso disillusioned with the vision of rich grandeur he once envisaged for Marbella. After growing weary of the

mass tourism that was lowering the tone of his town, he sold up all his Marbella business interests in 1978 in search of a new vision. Entering his 60s, the prince settled in his last home with his third wife Marilyns Haynes, a Gibraltar divorcee. He plumped for a mountain retreat, in the hills close to Ronda, with a trout lake, partridge

wood and an impressive library. And the ever-inventive Alfonso decided on another successful business pursuit - producing the soon-to-be award-winning wine Principe Alfonso. And it was nestled in the heartland of Andalusia, close to the sleepy village of Arriate, where Alfonso finally found true happiness before passing away, leaving his estate to his children, in 2003.

"I have lived in castles, in Venetian palaces and the world's finest hotels. I have watched the sun rise over the beaches of five continents and I have looked into the eyes of the most beautiful women of the universe," he famously remarked. "Everywhere I sought my dreamed-of city and at last I have found it in Ronda."



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AIM HIGH: First stop for building supplies

One of Andalucia's most rewarding mountain adventures lies in wait among the pine trees just a few miles inland from Marbella, writes Tom Powell



A Concha is to Marbella what Table Mountain is to Cape Town or the statue of Christ the Redeemer is to Rio de Janeiro.

Wherever you are, its 1,215-metre shell-shaped peak rises up before you like a talisman, its colour changing with the angle of the sun.

If you haven't been tempted to climb it yet, you will be.

The mountain is best reached from the north, diverging off the main road up towards the Refugio de Juanar.

Set amid pine trees, the wonderful old hotel and restaurant - once a Parador - could be a perfect overnight base camp for your ascent which, truth be told, is no pushover.

However, anyone used to hiking and not afraid to get their hands dirty should have no problem, and the soaring panoramic views are definitely worth it.

Former cavalry officer James Hewitt, he of Lady Diana fame, once told *the Olive Press* he regularly climbed it (there and back) in 'well under three hours', and not at a forced charge.

But, being realistic you should leave four hours to include a couple of nice breaks and to enjoy the view at the top, which is really something else.

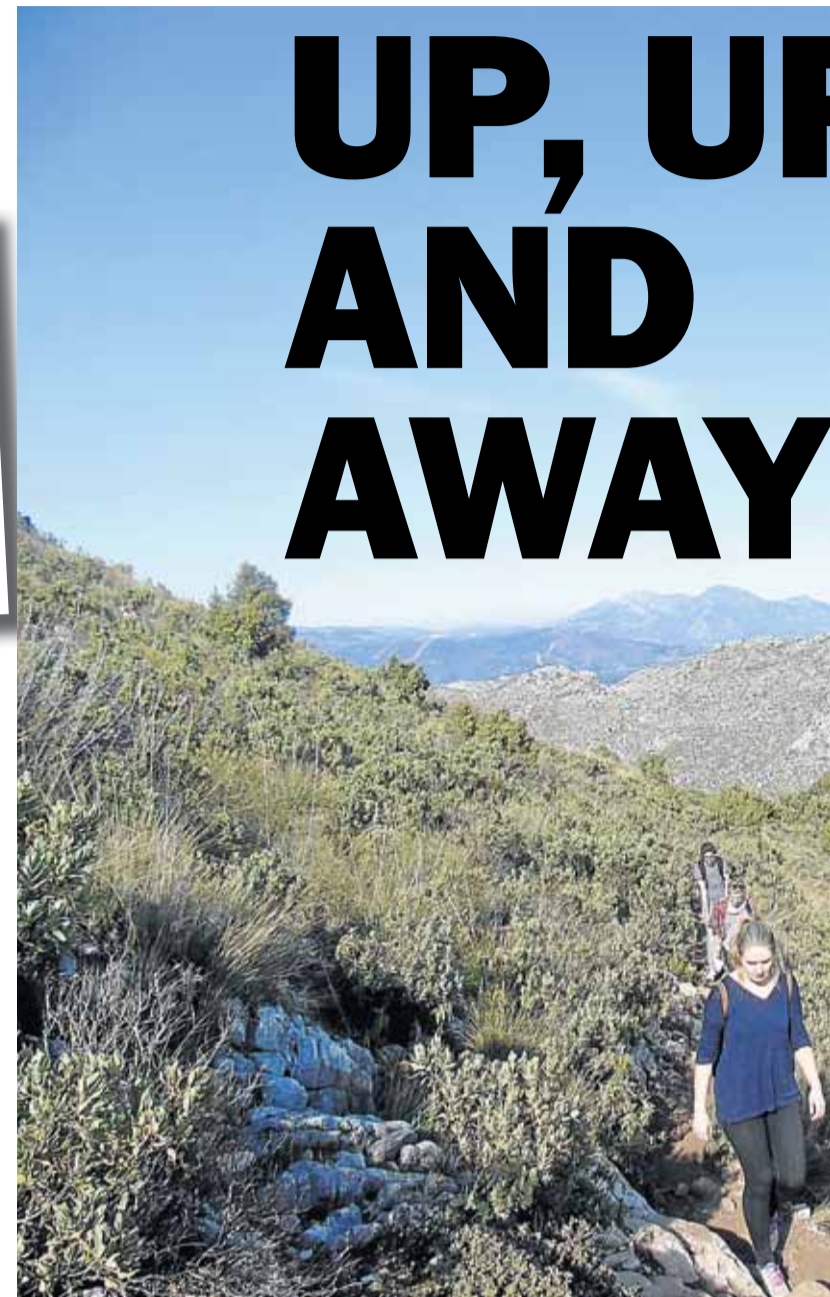
The peaks of Africa's Atlas mountains can be seen in the distance, as can the Rock of Gibraltar down the coast, sticking out into the shimmering sea.

Here, walking guide Guy Hunter Watts, gives a breakdown on the way to the top

### The Walk

From the Refugio de Juanar, descend 100m to a junction, then turn right at the 'Mirador' sign. Looping up through the pines you reach a parking area, then pass a green metal gate and continue along the track following the sign, GR243.1 Istan.

After passing a ruined stone hut you



reach a sign that says PR-A 168 La Concha, pointing right off the track. (20 mins)

Cut right away from the track towards the green mesh fence of Cortijo de Juanar, then angle hard right down through an olive grove for 100m to a four-way junction. Cutting left into a stand of pines you come to a three-way junction. Here, angle left following another sign that says PR-A 168 La Concha.

Reaching the top of the ridge, head straight on for a few metres, then angle right and continue along the ridge, now heading almost due west between low-growing oaks.

Having run just left of the ridge, the path cuts up right to its highest point and passes a large cairn (1 hr 10 mins) before descending for a short distance.

Cairns mark the way from here. Angling slightly left, the path passes beneath a steep cliff face, El Salto del Lobo, where there are steep drops to the right: care should be taken on this section. Zigzagging steeply up left (a hands-on approach at this point will be useful) it then drops steeply back down to a more level path running towards La Concha.

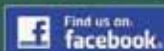
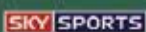
Cairns still mark your path as you head on just south of the ridge, be-

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**BREATHTAKING:** Views from La Concha



## NUTS AND BOLTS

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**For more information and walks see [www.guyhunterwatts.com](http://www.guyhunterwatts.com)**

fore angling back up to the top. A massive panorama opens out to the south as you reach a cairn where you'll see blue and red stripes on a rock. At this point you're actually a few metres higher than the official summit of La Concha. From here, angle down left following cairns and red and blue way-markings, sticking close to the ridgetop. The Istan reservoir comes into view to the west. The path runs a few metres beneath the ridge, on its southern side, before cutting up to a three-way marker post. (1 hr 45 mins)

Here, carry straight on, following a sign saying 'La Concha 15 mins' along the ridge to a large cairn. Here the path angles right, descends, then picks up the continuation of the ridge before climbing steeply once more. (You may feel safer using your hands from time to time, as there are steep drops to your left.) Red and blue flashes still mark the way and lead you up to the summit of La Concha (1,215m). (1 hr 55 mins) After enjoying the amazing panorama, retrace your footsteps back to the Refugio. (3 hrs 45 mins)

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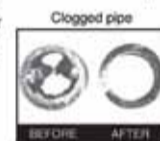
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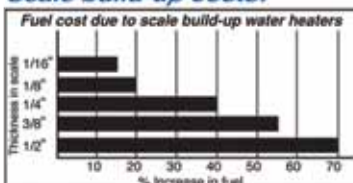
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BEDS: 3 • BATHS: 3 • BUILD SIZE: 241 m<sup>2</sup> • TERRACE: 70 m<sup>2</sup> • PRICE: € 550,000



## MIDDLE FLOOR APARTMENT IN ELVIRIA - R2417402

Two bedroom two bathroom apartment located in a beachside development. Conveniently located within 5 minutes walk from one of the best beaches of the Costa del Sol, and less than 5 minutes from the famous Santa Maria Golf as well as many other excellent golf courses and to Elviria where you can find everything you need including several banks, supermarkets, shops and a vast choice of cafes, bars and restaurants. There is also several taxi ranks and bus stops to take you in either direction along the coast. Furniture is optional.

BEDS: 2 • BATHS: 2 • BUILD SIZE: 98 m<sup>2</sup> • TERRACE: 38 m<sup>2</sup> • PRICE: € 398,000



## MIDDLE FLOOR APARTMENT IN ELVIRIA - R778909

Nicely furnished 2 bedroom 2 bathroom second floor apartment, located in the prestigious and popular complex of Hacienda Playa in Elviria. Large terrace with glass curtains. A/C hot and cold, underground parking space and a storage room. The apartemnt is within walking distance to the beach and near all amenities.

BEDS: 2 • BATHS: 2 • BUILD SIZE: 117m<sup>2</sup> • TERRACE: 40 m<sup>2</sup> • PRICE: € 445,000





# Showing the way

**Marbella's property market is leading the Costa del Sol - and even Spain - on the road to economic recovery**

**E**XPERTS predicted it would be one of Spain's speediest post-crisis recoveries and Marbella has not disappointed. The jewel in the Costa property market's crown is seeing the signs of recovery align and investors and construction companies are back in town. With luxury homes in Marbella and Puerto Banus at around 50% of their original value, it is no surprise the buyers are flooding back. Sales increased by 30% at



the end of 2014 and the latest Eurostat figures show

construction is up by an unexpected 16% in the first few months of this year.

In fact, Marbella's property sales are soaring near pre-crisis levels, up 89% since 2008.

As tourism increases, more people are opting to purchase a holiday pad for regular getaways.

And things are set to get better, particularly with British buyers currently seeing the best exchange rate in a decade, meaning an investment in Spanish property is now great value.

Britons are, once again, the leading purchasers in the Costa del Sol, followed by Scandinavians, Belgians, French, Dutch and Germans. Leading agent Christopher Clover of Panorama Properties, explains: "It is clear that the market touched bottom in 2011 and has been improving unquestionably yearly since then - last year an impressive 28,31% over 2013 sales volume."

"Those who have been waiting for years for the 'right moment' to buy, creating a pent-up demand, have finally realised that the crisis is over and prices are on the move upwards.

This realisation creates a confidence with buyers that we have not seen during the crisis years."

## Fast and efficient

**Fastighetsbyran estate agency is growing rapidly with offices in Marbella and Estepona, not to mention 10 more in Spain**

IT certainly has firm foundations, with its two bosses having run the main branch of Sweden's top bank Swedbank in Marbella for a decade.

Now Olle Westerling, 63, and Kent Schanke, 55, have an even stronger base for growth, as their real estate business straddles both Marbella and Estepona.

To add to their main base in Marbella, the bosses of Fastighetsbyran have added a new office in Estepona.

It is a lovely space with stylish decor, clever use of natural light and, of course, entirely furnished from Ikea.

"We wanted to create a bit of a wow factor, using a mix of the usual Swedish style and a few local Spanish touches," explains Westerling. "It was obvious that Estepona was a good place to expand, but our core clients are in Marbella."

In total, Fastighetsbyran now has 12 offices in Spain and an incredible 250 in Sweden.

As Kent adds: "We have a lot of Scandinavian clients, but the British market, both with sellers and buyers, is growing fast. 'Obviously speaking perfect English and our good affinity to the UK helps.'"

Visit *Fastighetsbyran's* offices in Centro Plaza, Marbella and Avenida Espana, in Estepona or call 952 807 652 for more information



**ON THE UP:** Bosses Kent and Olle at Fastighetsbyran



## Class act

**THEY are the perfect double act** And Zara Gayon (below) and mum Araceli insist that they have set up their business for a lot more than just making money.



"We set up Elviria Estates with one purpose only; to enjoy our work and make as many customers as possible as friends.

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The pair have over 40 years of experience of the Elviria area to draw on and their customers and friends do not hesitate to trust them with their properties whether to sell, rent or manage them.

Best of all they speak fantastic English, with mum Araceli living in Surrey for five years, when her dad worked at Dorking General Hospital.

On returning to Spain she studied tourism, before switching to real estate.

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All about **M**arbella

# Quarter century of business



**Centro Plaza - which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year - is a truly international commercial hub, discovers Iona Napier**

“I’ve seen and heard more business deals done over a drink in Centro Plaza than in any office I’ve ever worked in,” jokes Ed Dzien, who owns the new Office Bar in Marbella’s Centro Plaza.

And he is talking about the legitimate, above-board kind of deal. Because only the most well-established, classiest companies

have offices here, far from the bling bars of Puerto Banus – but close enough to wander down if you crave the buzz of the port.

Based just up from the Nueva Andalucia bull ring, the commercial centre perches in an enviable spot with breathtaking views across to La Concha mountain and Marbella, and all just a stone’s throw from the A7 coast road and 6km from Marbella.

While celebrating its 25th birthday this year (but you’d never know it), the centre still feels modern, buzzing and chic.

## MY DREAM AS A CURRENCY SPECIALIST

THE HiFX team has been based in the most enviable spot in Centro Plaza for three and a half years and has built up a loyal following.

The dynamic team of six staff, from Germany, Spain and the UK – led by Spaniard Jose Ivars-Lopez, who commutes between the UK and Spain – are a great advert for the Marbella lifestyle.

“It’s awesome working here and the only problem I can foresee is never wanting to leave!” said Jack Curd.



**HIFX TEAM: Gregor, Ed and Jack**

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**TOP LOCATION: Centro Plaza looks across to La Concha**

With a great range of bars, restaurants, fashion boutiques and beauty salons, it is an excellent place to spend a morning. You can get your hair done, learn to dance, buy a dress – or a house, if you’re feeling flush – and then sip a cocktail... all in a Centro Plaza-style day’s work. Originally built to provide the zone with facilities it sorely lacked, it caters to over 10,000 households around the nearby area, including a very large percentage of wealthy, demanding clients. It is certainly quickly clear that both the staff and visitors to the centre are an elegant



**YO PROS: Fastighetsbyran**



**CHIC: Lola the dog and (inset) Ed Dzien at The Office**

breed. Think city boys, but better tans and without ties, and well-heeled women minus the harassed London look. As I watch various tables of hotshots doing business under shady white parasols armed with a cold beer – I wonder if London could learn something from this place? At any point on a weekday bars are smattered with a mix of businessmen, tourists and expats and they are a polyglot lot, with many British, Germans and Scandinavians in particular. Estuco Interior’s team of top class interior designers typify this mix, hailing from the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Spain. Furnishing and designing the interiors of houses for well over two decades, employee Ellen Brouwer explained: “It’s a very interesting cosmopolitan mix, but it works well.” Kent Schanke, co-owner of estate agent Fastighetsbyran, a huge household name back in Sweden, now breaking into the British market here, agrees. “It’s a great hub for lots of things – for real estate, for banking, great restaurants and there’s such a friendly feel,” he says. There is also a classy array of

eateries, with Cafe Yanx and Cafe Fredo to name but two. “It’s so family friendly here and you only have to look at the view to realise why we love working here,” says David Fisher, owner of Yanx. The oasis of tranquillity is only shaken up once a week when crowds descend for the Saturday morning flea market bringing the family-friendly holiday vibe to the exclusive enclave.

**Buzz**

“I moved to Spain to get away from the rat race and about as hectic as it can get here is the Saturday buzz when there’s the market and it’s full of people,” says vintage fashion shop B-Chic’s glamorous Swiss owner Michelle Melliger whose adorable sales accomplice, Lola, a King Charles spaniel, is a permanent fixture. The finest views of all are found at the vantage point near HiFX office where uninterrupted sea and mountains stretch as far as the eye can see... and the charming team of currency specialists aren’t bad either! Pop in for a chat and you never know where it might lead... well, certainly for an entertaining coffee or beer at one of the nearby bars. Take it from me.

**Le bon vin**

AS chic as a French winery with a warm welcome impossible to find in Paris, Laura Copetta’s wine shop reeks of class - and she should know, as the daughter of a French architect. Dona Copetta Wine & Delices, just down the road from Centro Plaza, is a refreshing slice of Mediterranean charm in the middle of cosmopolitan, whitewashed Nueva Andalucia. Offering everything from kosher wine to bottles with customised labels to event catering cooked by Laura’s exuberant chef mother Sonia, it’s a personal affair executed with the utmost professionalism. And they deliver wine home for free!



**FINE WINES: Laura outside the shop**

**Home from home at Cafe Fredo**



**WARM WELCOME: From Nelly and Raul**

**Raul Ghermin only took over Café Fredo one month ago but with some regulars already signing up for three meals a day, a busy summer looks to be in store...**



WITH all the charm of a provincial pueblo café, plus a cocktail selection to rival any Marbella beach bar, Café Fredo sits in pole position in Centro Plaza. Maybe it feels local because everyone here knows the owner, Raul Ghermin, who is a familiar Nueva Andalucia face having previously managed nearby La Sala restaurant and Tuk Tuk Asian Fusion. Ghermin, 27, and his charming mum Nelly - who has been shaking up Marbella’s cocktail scene for 12 years (try her coconut show) – make you feel like part of the family serving delicious salads, pizza and pasta.

“Nueva Andalucia may be smart but my café is down to earth but very professional, and kids are always welcome,” says Ghermin, who moved to Spain from Romania at the age of three, initially to the stunning Andalusian province of Jaen. Defying Puerto Banus’ sometimes mind-boggling prices, happy hour from 5-8pm is pocket-friendly and sees the ‘yo pros’ of Centro Plaza let their hair down. A local (and surprisingly trim) businessman intimates to me that he eats all three meals a day here, and gives special mention to delicious breakfasts available from 9am – early for Spain!

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**Once a haunt for tacky souvenirs and pickpockets... now Marbella's 'casco historico' has become one of Andalucia's true references for dining, writes Jon Clarke**

**T**HERE has been a quiet revolution in the heart of the old town of Marbella. Not just in its appearance and shops, but in its incredible range of good places to eat. As well as its very own Michelin-starred restaurant Skina, the centre has one of the finest concentrations of good restaurants in Andalucia. Charming, candle-lit and offering increasing quality, the days when you could get away with serving any old muck are truly over. Indeed, there are easily half a dozen fabulous places to eat in the old town, each offering its own style and flavour.

One of the most exciting recent additions to the dining scene is Italian **Casa Tua** in a charming cobbled street with pretty candle-lit tables.

Opened by Adriano and his wife Catherine two years ago, the Irish-Italian couple, who have two kids Viviana and Massimo, have travelled the world running restaurants in Italy, Ireland and the US.

They certainly have a lovely eye for detail and the restaurant is stylish in the extreme, using some clever ideas, such as the recycled pallet-wood planting boxes.

The menu is a nice mix of Italian classics with some original twists like the buffalo mozzarella, deep fried and in tomato sauce.

A lemon-scented ricotta cheese 'fagottino' was creamy and delicious, while the fresh scallops with chorizo went down a treat. And, as you would expect, the tiramisu pudding was the icing on the cake.

Without a doubt though, the

# Gourmet delight

godfather of the centre has to be **Cassanis**, now over a decade old and consistently reinventing itself. Set up by your perfect host Guy Sirre, who formerly worked for the Sultan of Brunei, it is constantly refining its cuisine and coming up with new recipes. Set in a typical Andalusian townhouse - based around

an evocative patio - there is a very distinct ambience at work.

Its head chef Fabian Cangas has been at the helm since day one, but frequently takes time out to train at different restaurants around the world. He and his brother are firmly behind a brand new restaurant now, the stylish **Cafe Flore**, which is a charming spot to sit and while away a lunchtime or evening.

Billing itself as Italian 'and more', it is actually a splendid place to find fresh, healthy ingredients, simple salads, as well as more traditional heavy dishes such as osso bucco or crayfish risotto.

I enjoyed a 'burrata' of creamy buffalo mozzarella, with raf tomatoes and basil, as a starter and then a spinach and ricotta lasagna,

which was healthy and filling, all part of the €14 set lunch.

**Continues Page 40**



**DELICIOUS: Tuna tataki and vegetable tempura at Madre Tierra**



**AL FRESCO: Candle-lit dining at Madre Tierra**



**EVOCATIVE: And the menu at Casa Tua is a nice mix**



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## 40 All about **M**arbella

June 11th -  
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# Food for thought

From Page 39

To finish off I tried Fabi's intriguing pudding 'Financier', which turned out to be a bakewell tart with strawberries and ice cream.

Another excellent new addition to the old town dining scene is **Madre Tierra**, set up by the long term Italian businessman Genesio, who previously owned a string of restaurants in Marbella, including Mistral Beach. Sitting in an amazing leafy square, this is a wonderful trawl around European cuisine, with stylish flourishes and incredibly fresh ingredients.

No surprise that chef Miguel has cooked around Spain's big cities, including Goizeko Wellington in Madrid and even at the Royal Palace.

I tried a fabulous tuna tataki with a tempura of vegetables and pansies on top. It was lightly seared to perfection, although be careful of the wasabi source.

The burgers come in two guises, with salmon and with

beef. I had the 100% Galician beef number, which had three sources, tartare, mustard and BBQ and came in a great sourdough Italian bap. Maitre D Massimo is very experienced and has a good grasp of the excellent wine list, which has some Italian chestnuts, and at night the place is romantic in the extreme with tablecloths and candles.

Nearby you might want to check out **Yamas**, possibly the only - and certainly the



**TALENTED: Peruvian Aldo at Tempora**

best - Greek restaurant on the coast. Set up by Kulis and Hayley,

the couple have invested heavily in making this a true secret in Marbella.

Set around a stunning courtyard, the menu is a trawl through all the Greek classics you can name.

Last, but anything but least, is the splendid restaurant **Tempora**, which just gets better and better, all thanks to its very capable Peruvian chef Aldo Espinosa, a Cordon Bleu trained whizkid, who understands freshness and spices more than most.

Naturally he served up a tremendous ceviche, with his own unique touches, that changes by the day and the freshness of the fish he finds. Coming with watercress, cod roe and spices it was tangy but not too overbearing.



**TEAMWORK: The Cafe Flore crew and (right) restaurant**



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## An eye for style

IN the heart of Marbella old town sits a dazzling treasure trove of Louis Vuitton holdalls, Chanel handbags and nostalgic Frank Sinatra LPs - not to mention retro rags from Gucci and Dior.

Coining 'vintage' long before it was cool, Richard and Amanda Zizzi-Knight opened Déjà Vu Marbella Vintage in 1997 and have been riding the classic wave ever since.

Bath-born Amanda's mother was a model in the 1940s and an eye for style runs in her blood.

The timelessly elegant shop boasts over 3,000 regular clients and has charmed everyone from Eva Longoria and Russian royalty to *TOWIE* stars on a shopping mission.

"The beauty of being in Marbella is that iconic fashion models from the 1960s and 1970s bring in clothes to sell - and you just never know what you are going to get," says Richard. "Vintage to us is anything good quality, great design and perfectly preserved."

The Aladdin's cave of 100% guaranteed clothes, elegant accessories and antiques is on Calle Pedraza 8.



**ALADDIN'S CAVE: Deja Vu Vintage**



FAMOUS VISITOR: Michelle Obama in Orange Square

# Lady luck

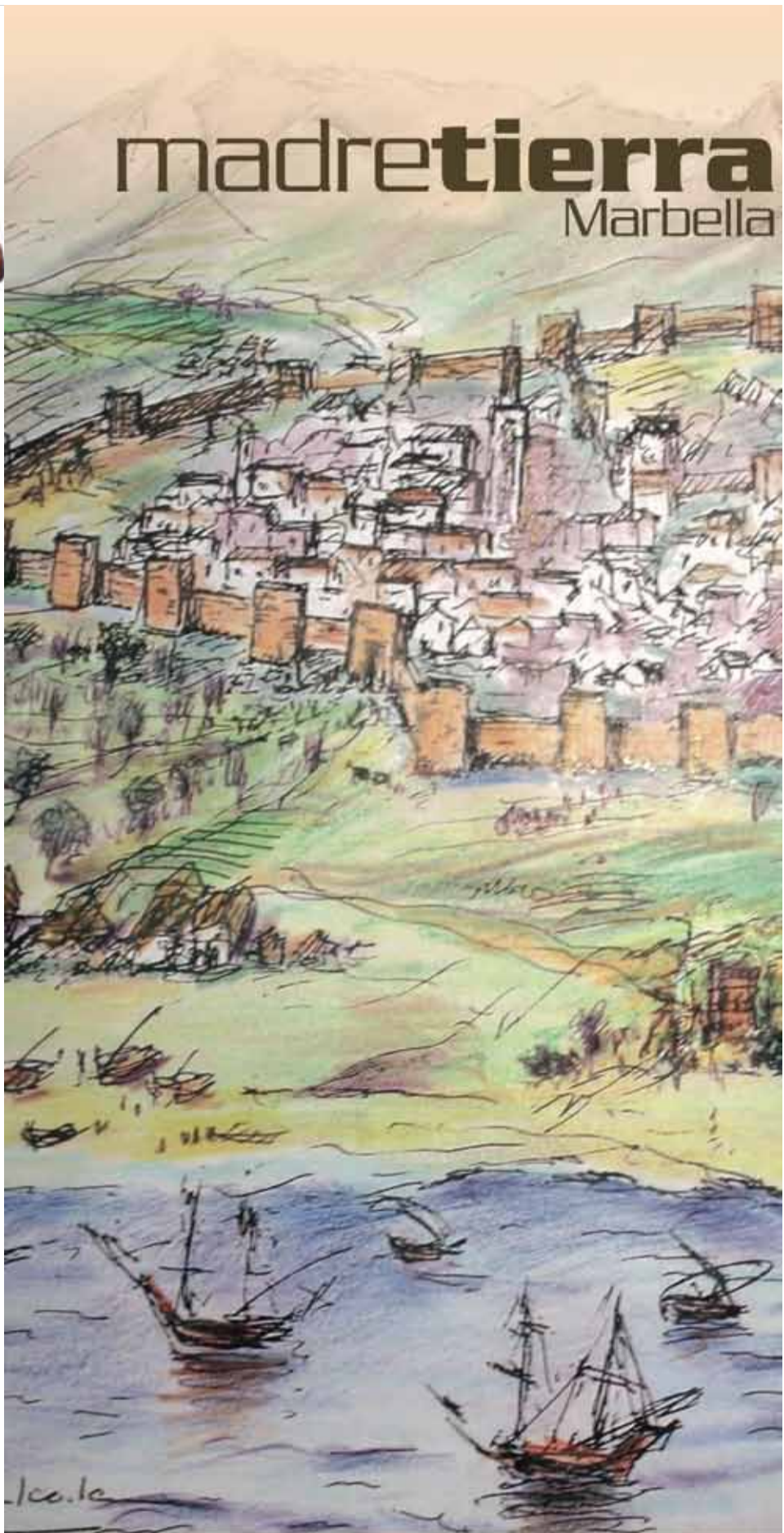
Since the visit of US First Lady Michelle Obama, the old town of Marbella has become a must-visit on the tourist circuit, writes Jon Clarke

THE morning had started early - at 5am - with dozens of Spanish police joining over 100 American special agents, sent to Marbella to guard the President's wife. No-one was taking chances and every manhole cover in the old town had been lifted to carefully check for bombs in advance of the arrival of Michelle Obama in August 2010. Bristling with nerves, the area's narrow cobbled streets were combed by a phalanx of plain-clothed policemen, while shopkeepers and waiters waited for Marbella's most famous visitor for years. Considering the number of places in Spain that President Obama's wife could have visited, it was a genuine honour that she chose the centre of Marbella. But, it was entirely justified - along with further visits to Ronda and Sevilla - and it was to

become the start of a total rejuvenation of easily the Costa del Sol's prettiest historic centres. Surrounded by the bright lights and modern buildings of most of Marbella, the old town comes as a real shock to the system. In fact, driving into Marbella it is actually quite easy to miss the old town entirely. But miss it at your peril, for its winding white-washed streets and pots bursting with colourful geraniums make it feel like the most traditional of Andalusian pueblos. And like most Spanish historic centres, wandering aimlessly is the most rewarding way to explore. Ultimately, all roads lead to the Plaza de los Naranjos - or Orange Square - the beating heart of Marbella's old town. It is a lovely spot to while away an hour with its renaissance fountain - built in 1604 - still running and the orange blossom delightful when in bloom.



You could spend hours wandering the little backstreets - and the superb range of sweet independent shops have great browsing appeal, including stylish My Dreamy Shoes and Deja Vu.



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**ORIENTAL GREATS:** The team at Takumi and (below) an invention

## WHERE TO EAT

**Marbella is Andalucia's true dining capital, writes Dining Secrets of Andalucia editor Jon Clarke**

# Culinary masterclass



If Michelin stars were the only measure, Marbella would be the definitive dining capital of Andalucia. Aside from the trio of Michelin-honoured establishments - El Lago, Skina and Dani Garcia - there are at least half a dozen more that come close to deserving the

plaudit. As internationally celebrated chef Garcia, who has two stars alone, confirms: "Marbella just keeps getting better and better. "The real tragedy is that it is not being properly rewarded for its great cooking and variety." Well it certainly is from the *Olive Press*.

Aside from the massive variety - there are over 100 different nationalities cooking in Marbella - there is amazing quality.

"You have just about every style you can think of," explains Japanese restaurant owner Alvaro Arbeloa at **Takumi**.

"But most of all, whatever restaurant you open, if the quality is not good enough you will not survive." This boils down to the fact that Marbella locals - and

tourist alike - expect quality and are not scared to pay for it.

"There is nowhere else around, where the clientele is so well off and so demanding for quality," continues Arbeloa, who previously ran a restaurant in Mallorca with his Japanese partner Toshio, before opening in 2011 just off the Golden Mile.

One place that certainly epitomises quality and of an oriental touch is **Ban Thai**.

Set up just two years ago, owner Fendi has experience of running Thai restaurants in the UK and runs a tight ship. His menu is fun and buzzy, and the best judgement of how good it is should be the number of Thai visitors who eat in night after night.

## Landmark

Without a doubt, one of the businessmen making the biggest waves in the food stakes these days is Ian Radford.

The former professional squash player has been constantly adding to his **La Sala** brand over the last six years. With a series of famous backers, including footballers David Bentley, Stephen Carr and Shay Given, he has been able to create two of the town's landmark restaurants; La Sala in Puerto Banus and Rincon de la Sala in San Pedro.

And now the group has a third La Sala by the Sea (see review, right), a fantastic Thai restaurant in the old Buddha Beach site by the beach, near Puerto Banus.

The original La Sala on the way up to the Nueva Andalucia bull ring is probably the most talked about eatery in Marbella. Certainly abroad.

This is the place to find the 'ladies who lunch', the movers and shakers, celebrities, footballers and the wealthy empresarios who make Marbella what it is.



**NEW BROOM:** Team at Madre Tierra

## Beach life

IT is the perfect Marbella hangout with an all-American twist and ideal for families.

Always coming up with great events, it is the amazing secret location of South Beach though, that is part of its charm.

Sitting on a hidden beach in El Rosario, this trendy wooden-built chiringuito, offers a great range of fresh dishes, but there is a lot, lot more. You can use a paddle board, play in the sand and even have a kitesurfing lesson if



**HAPPY:** At South Beach

the wind is right. South Beach is open every day on Avenida del Limonar 124, Marbella (exit El Rosario). Call 952 113 005, or email [info@southbeachmarbella.com](mailto:info@southbeachmarbella.com)



June 11th - June 24th 2015



**AUTHENTIC: At hip new Cibo**

An emporium of glass and seductive lighting, its real strength though, lies in its wood-decked terrace, that serves as the ideal tourist sun-deck. Oh, and the food, is surprisingly good too, with a superb range of classic dishes with a contemporary twist. And then there is more, with one of Andalucia's leading beach restaurants just up the road in Elviria. Called appropriately

**Beach House**, owners Guy and Lucy McCrow have built this place up over a decade to make it not just one of the most fun places to eat... but with great quality food guaranteed. Attention to detail is paramount and the team of chefs, led by Jeff Mynott, is always hard working and constantly improving the quality of food. Indeed, you will be hard pressed to find anywhere better for lunch or supper. Back in central Marbella on the Golden Mile look out for the exciting new restaurant **Cibo**.

In the old location of the Polo House, it is beautifully deco-



**TALENT: Francisco Vacas at L'impronta**

rated and has a great menu. Owned by the capable Metro Group (Joys, Jacks, Mumtaz, Metro, etc), it is excellent value and a romantic spot for dining out.

Another great Italian is **La Trattoria**, in Nueva Andalucia. The brainchild of capable restaurateur Paolo, who spent ten years working in Tarifa before switching to Marbella. Claiming to be the 'best and most authentic' Italian in Marbella, it is an elegant place, in a great location for parking.

There is no doubt his fresh pastas and salads are among the best on the coast. A great place to drink wines with fine food is at the long-time rated **Albert & Simon** restaurant in San Pedro. The brothers Albert and Simon, appropriately, took over the baton from their father, who had one of Marbella's first Michelin-starred restaurants.

**Turn to Page 44**



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**STALWARTS: Chef Albert at Albert & Simon and (right) Beach House**



**A little Thai paradise: La Sala by the Sea**

WITH zingy Thai food, cool, fruity cocktails and a luxurious beach vibe, it's clear La Sala by the Sea won't be suffering from second season syndrome this year.

Owned by a string of former footballers, the La Sala chain's Thai offshoot in Puerto Banus is back for a second summer after a successful debut in 2014.

Sitting by the beach, under shady palms and with a series of tranquil water features-cum-pools, the setting could easily be Koh Samui. It was little surprise to learn that the restaurant is the brainchild of Claire Strutton, who spends considerable time on the Thai island with fiance Ian Radford, La Sala group's chairman.

The word 'sala' actually means a wooden pavilion in Thai and everything about the place has a flavour of the Orient.

Our meal began with a bang with the Thai tapas selection, which oozed authenticity. The platters overflowed with colour and flavour, including sticky satay skewers, crunchy samosas and sumptuous prawn toasts. All complemented by four sublime sauces, including a smoky semi-spicy and a sweet chili. Thick, juicy criss-cross squid, flavoured delicately with chili and smothered in generous



**CHILL OUT: By the pool**

dollops of aioli, also went down a treat. The mains were stylishly presented, with big helpings of sticky rice to offset the heat. While my Kaprow - stir-fried beef with chili and basil - was tender and tasty, it certainly packed a kick, demanding serious amounts of liquid to keep my cool! The future certainly looks bright for this little Thai paradise.



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San Pedro de Alcántara

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## The true taste of Italian cuisine

Come and see what all the fuss is about at La Trattoria in Marbella



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# All about Marbella

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In terms of quality it is very hard to beat and the French culinary talent is all too obvious. There is an excellent wine list to boot, with some chestnuts from all over France. Also in San Pedro is the very elegant **L'Impronta**, an up-market Italian joint, run by capable Francisco Vacas,

who actually heralds from Cordoba. A passionate chap, who left school and began cooking at the age of 13, he has created a seductive spot, with parquet wood floors, hydraulic tiles and evocative paintings. Insisting on sourcing only the best line-caught wild fish, in-

**GREAT TERRACE: At Vaca Loca**



cluding sea bass and turbot, he also offers a great range of tasty and seasonal dishes. Best of all, his €25 set lunch had a great mix of dishes including chopped veal liver in onions, gravy and mashed potato,

and topped off with a lovely vanilla panna cotta. Another exciting spot in San Pedro is **Vaca Loca**, also just around the corner by the stylish new bridge. This terrace restaurant is the brainchild of local expat businessman Andrew Levene, who saw an opportunity with this excellent location.

Hiring one of the coast's well-established chefs Darren, who trained at La Sala, the menu has a great mix of steaks, burgers and ribs, all cooked on the grill. Friendly, efficient service, you will not be disappointed, particularly with the brand new summer menu, which has a good variety of tapas. Finally, in the heart of the old town of Marbella you have a huge range of places to eat and the choice keeps getting better. The best include Cafe Flore, Casa Tua and Madre Sierra.

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**GOURMET: La Trattoria**

## Macao: The perfect cod

**T**HE black cod came out glistening as brightly as the sea in front of me. Imported from Iceland, it was served up with a medley of vegetables and sat on a bed of mash and cep mushrooms, with tiny cherry tomatoes as a garnish. And, as cod goes, it really gets no better, being as succulent as it was meaty and flavoursome. It should have come as no surprise, the restaurateur behind Macao having heralded from a long line of Belgium restaurant owners, not to mention training on the Cote d'Azur, with the likes of legend Alain Ducasse.

Open, friendly and bristling with enthusiasm, Michael Dhondt and his wife Christine are your perfect hosts.

"We ran two restaurants back in the St Tropez of Belgium, Knokke le Zoute, before deciding to up sticks and make a go of it here two years ago," he explains.

Having employed a fabulous chef Peter Cernac, he knew he had a chance.

Concentrating on fresh, seasonal produce, the restaurant - which is open all year and serving dinner from May to September - has a decent menu with plenty of meat and fish dishes.

There are many specials of the day - including no surprises, mussels - as well as oysters,

shrimp croquettes and a ceviche, thanks to the sous chef from Peru.

My starter of Vietnamese 'nems' was stunning, rolled up in lettuce and with mint, while my raspberry creme brulee pudding was as fresh and light as could be.

"All thanks to my training with Ducasse," explains Michael. "But I really don't want to push that side to know about our simple, easy beach restaurant. And we can build up slowly."

**OH MY COD: Tasty dish**



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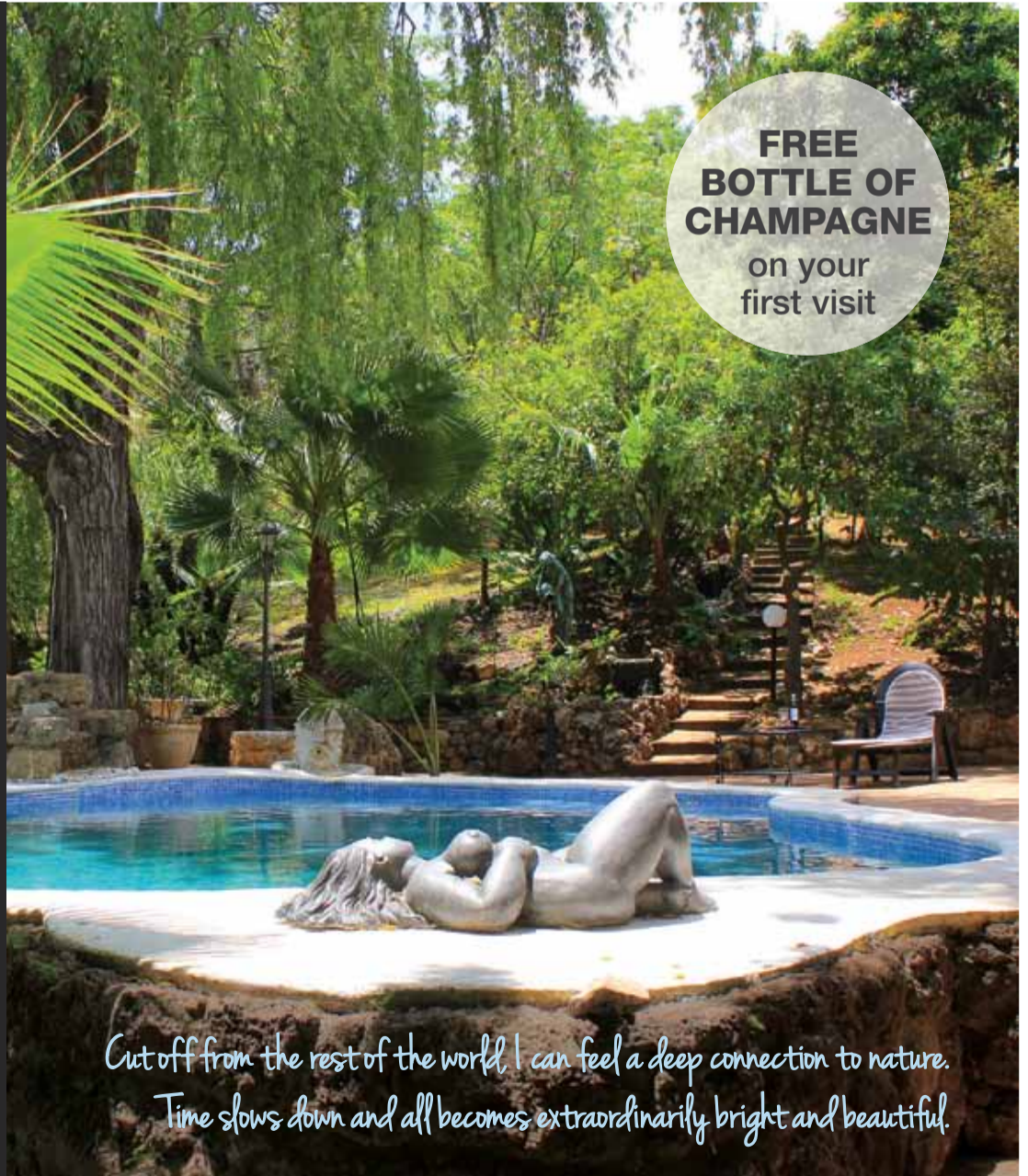
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**FREE BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE**  
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Cut off from the rest of the world, I can feel a deep connection to nature.  
Time slows down and all becomes extraordinarily bright and beautiful.