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**f** Floria Rustico

Turn off the coast road at Lidl, Sabinillas, Km145 N340, we're 3km up on the left

Soak up the spring vibes on a dining terrace near your, writes [www.diningsecretsofandalucia.com](http://www.diningsecretsofandalucia.com) editor Jon Clarke

WE'VE had the floods and snow... now comes the sunshine and warmth. Dining tables are finally emigrating outdoors again, as restaurateurs around the region take advantage of the balmy early spring weather. Whether British, German or Scandinavian, everyone is yearning for a day out in the country - or on the beach - with a slap up meal on the side.

**Alfresco**

As tables in town squares get harder to come by and the beach chiringuitos finally start to open again, it is clear that the alfresco dining season is truly underway. With a tapa in one hand and a chilled drink in the other, you may well ask yourself if there is any place in the world you'd



# Let's go outside!

CHEERS: Diners at The Farm in Marbella and (right) stunning El Jardin in Frigiliana

rather be than Andalusia right now. From the terrace of an old railway hut in Arriate (El Muelle) to the stunning views at El Jardin restaurant in Frigiliana, and from the riverside terrace of Molino del Santo to the

beachside garden of Olivia's in La Cala there is so much to choose from. While Easter normally marks the start of the tourist season proper, things are already cranking up in March. Tens of thousands of tourists are already swapping rainy northern Europe for glowing Andalusia, T-shirt and shorts at the ready. And with record bookings of early flights to Spain already this year, it's going to be a busy one.

"Let's face it where else in Europe can you be sitting outdoors in glorious sunshine at this time of year?" asks restaurateur Mona Crites, in the Olive Press). Even if you're dining in a restaurant (meaning at home), shift the dining table onto your patio or balcony and light those candles in celebration of the new season. Just don't blame us when your green- with- envy Instagram friends decide to book a table chez vous and descend for the whole of the summer! Over the next few pages, the Olive Press's sister website [www.diningsecretsofandalucia.com](http://www.diningsecretsofandalucia.com) offers up some of its favourite spring time chestnuts. Through the next two months we will be doing a special focus on places to eat around Andalusia each issue, so don't forget to pick up your favourite newspaper every other Wednesday.

Here you will find a wealth of great places to eat, but in particular Corredera 55 is amazing, run by a talented young Scottish lass Ellie. And don't forget the cities such as Sevilla and Cordoba, or Malaga, a growing cultural mecca which has been dubbed 'the new Barcelona' (you read it first in the Olive Press). Even if you're dining in a restaurant (meaning at home), shift the dining table onto your patio or balcony and light those candles in celebration of the new season. Just don't blame us when your green- with- envy Instagram friends decide to book a table chez vous and descend for the whole of the summer! Over the next few pages, the Olive Press's sister website [www.diningsecretsofandalucia.com](http://www.diningsecretsofandalucia.com) offers up some of its favourite spring time chestnuts. Through the next two months we will be doing a special focus on places to eat around Andalusia each issue, so don't forget to pick up your favourite newspaper every other Wednesday.



FRESH: Grilled sardines

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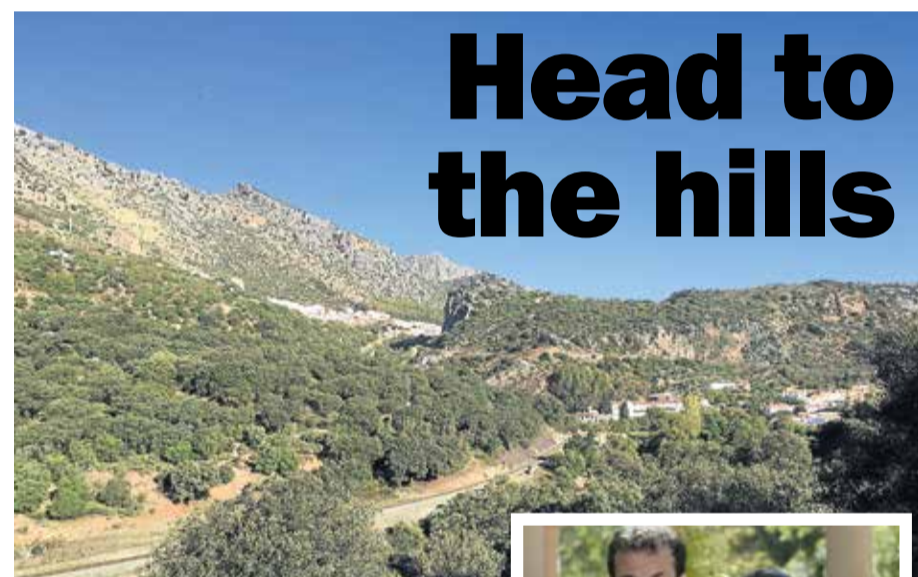
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## Head to the hills

It's the perfect time to plan a weekend or day trip into the Ronda area, writes restaurateur Pauline Elkin, of Molino del Santo



SPRING has suddenly arrived in the Sierra de Ronda mountains. While the winters are great up here - log fires, a good book or film and thankfully our hotel and restaurant closed for a few months - it is great to welcome in the new season. Seemingly overnight, the excitement and energy of spring can be felt all around. The locals head out to their huertas (vegetable gardens) busily ploughing, fertilising and sowing their precious potato crops, while garlic and onion shoots are starting to appear. The light is wonderful and the clean, intensely blue skies are full of hundreds of Black Kites soaring and resting on the thermals as they start their migration. Meanwhile, flocks of sheep with baby lambs block the caminos and the shepherds' calls echo across the valley. There is an intense green shimmer as pink blossom confetti turns to shoots and buds, while the

wild flowers literally burst out of the ground and we are surrounded by daisies, celandines and narcissi. It's the time to come up and visit all your favourite mountain watering holes and hotels again. Take a drive along the stunning mountain roads or take the train up into the hills. Allow time for a walk and behold the joy of Spring - either a gentle stroll along the river walk near



to our hotel or try walking from one village to another...we have lots of routes available if you need advice. And of course enjoy lunch with us at Molino del Santo, with the crystalline stream running past the terrace, surrounded by the mountains. Or book a room and truly give yourself time to relax - and why not treat yourself to a massage with Noemi our masseuse? And of course a delicious evening meal will be waiting for you - and probably the log fire will still be burning for a few more weeks. Myself and Andy, plus the Molino del Santo team will be delighted to welcome you.



Visit [www.molinodelsanto.com](http://www.molinodelsanto.com) for more information

# THE MAGIC IS BACK! MOLINO DEL SANTO IS BACK! HUGE RELIEF FOR GOOD LIFE LOVERS



Waves of relief are spreading through Southern Spain as news filters through that Molino del Santo is open for its 31st season from Friday 17th March 2017

The award-winning hotel and restaurant - the one near the railway station in the sleepy village of Benaolán, near Ronda - you know, the one situated by a gushing mountain stream with the really pretty gardens - is back in business for its 31st season under the same management. Same management. 31 years. That's an achievement in itself.

Whether you've visited dozens of times, like many people, or are planning your very first excursion to "this little piece of paradise", you will be welcomed by the friendly and professional staff. Relax? Indulge? Explore? Chill? Walk? Whatever your reason for visiting, find out soon why so many people return to Molino del Santo.

**EXCUSE NUMBER ONE:**  
Need an excuse to visit Molino? Why not tell someone special that they really must visit a place that "The Daily Telegraph" has just listed as one of the best rural hotels in Spain? Come discover the Magic of Molino for yourself.

**EXCUSE NUMBER TWO:**  
Need another excuse? Why not cut out the voucher below and save 10% on your restaurant visit during March? Go on, just do it! Molino is only an hour away from San Pedro - but a world apart.

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CELEBRATE OUR CONTINUING SUCCESS WITH  
**10% DISCOUNT**  
IN OUR RESTAURANT UNTIL THE END OF MARCH 2017.  
Cut out this voucher and present it to your waiter.

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ESTACIÓN DE BENAOLÁN, NEAR RONDA, MÁLAGA



**AL LAGO**  
the hotel restaurant at the lake

Come for the views and the great food, stay for the tranquility and inspiring landscape

Situated half an hour from Ronda en route to Sevilla in the picturesque white village of Zahara de la Sierra. Al Lago is a delightful boutique hotel over looking the lake and mountains, with a renowned restaurant.

[www.al-lago.es](http://www.al-lago.es) / [info@al-lago.es](mailto:info@al-lago.es)  
662 052 553 / 956 123 032  
open every day.

Recommended as one of Andalusia's best "foodie hotels" by the Sunday Times.

Freshly Prepared Food with Uninterrupted Views  
Open: Tuesday to Sunday 12.00 - 22.30  
Kitchen closed 16.00 - 18.00

952 53 31 85 [www.thegardenfrigiliana.com](http://www.thegardenfrigiliana.com)  
Calle del Santa Cristo, 29768, Frigiliana, Nerja, Málaga

# Restaurante Poniente

Reservas / Reservations  
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7,50€  
per  
person

## TANDORI CHICKEN

31st MARCH from 20:00pm



Carretera de Cómpea s/n  
18370 Moraleda de Zafoyona,  
Granada

DINING SECRETS of Andalucía

Continuing our Spring Dining special, here [www.diningsecretsofandalucia.com](http://www.diningsecretsofandalucia.com) picks out a handful of its favourite outdoor dining spots

## Top 5 Terraces

### Arroyo Honda

Ctra. de Casares KM 10 29690 Casares



ONE of the most easily accessible mountain gems near the Costa del Sol, Arroyo Honda manages to combine authentic Andalusian cooking with modern, creative cuisine. Run by Christian Robson-Burrell and his Japanese wife Noriko this decade-old restaurant sits in a stunning location with soaring mountain scenery on each side. It has a great shady outdoor terrace and is the perfect all-round spot for a family lunch or romantic date. A talented chef, Christian honed his skills in London and the Far East. The menu is changed weekly and he uses mostly seasonal produce. There is an emphasis on quality dishes, with a twist.

### The Forge

Carretera de Casares, km 9.8, 29690 Casares



IT is over two decades since Michael Forge and his wife Athene set up this stunning restaurant in the hills near Casares. The terrace, surrounded by trees and with great views, is THE place to be seen around these parts, particularly on Sunday, when in summer you need to book up to three weeks in advance. You will be amazed at the style and colours inside, while the food is a great mix of a la carte and a good value set menu on weekends.

### El Tesoro

Carretera N-340, Km 76.4, 11380 Tarifa, Cádiz  
Tel: 956 23 63 68



UP, up and away, as far as you can climb into the hills above the Straits of Gibraltar - avoiding pot-holes, the trademark brown retinto cows of the region and an army camp - and you finally come to a worn, hand-carved wooden sign saying 'Treasure'. They mean treasure - Tesoro - and this really is the treasure at the end of the rainbow. With a 180-degree view across the straits to Morocco and inland to the rugged peaks of the Alcornocales national park, they could probably get away with serving egg and chips and the punters would be happy.



### Al Lago

Calle de Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente, 11, 11688 Zahara de la Sierra, Cádiz,  
Tel: 956 12 30 32

YOU are in one of the most picturesque spots in all of Andalucía. Perched high in the Ronda mountains, you sit on a shady terrace gazing across the Zahara reservoir to the emblematic town of Olvera shimmering in the far distance. Zahara sits high on a promontory with a Crusader castle at the top it is a lovely place to while away a morning, before lunch at Al Lago, run by Londoner Mona and New Yorker husband chef Stefan Crites. They cleverly manage to combine local Andalusian offerings with up-market cosmopolitan flair and one thing they never scrimp on is quality of ingredients, most organic and locally sourced. Stefan learnt his trade from celebrity US chef Sam de Marco so he knows a trick or two. There are always daily specials depending on what they can pick up from the markets.

### Casanis

Calle Ancha, 8, 29601 Marbella, Málaga  
Tel: 952 90 04 50 casanis@casanis.com



CASANIS is frequently described as one of the best restaurants in Marbella. And quite rightly so. Owned by Belgian Guy Sirre, Casanis is the result of hard work and consistent attention to detail. The menu and restaurant have a distinct French feel, with an impressive array of quality wines. TIP: You can pick up fantastic culinary souvenirs in the Casanis shop next door.

## HQ FOR RICE AND CURRY

IT couldn't be in a better location for inland Andalucía. Half way along the motorway to Granada, Hotel Poniente, in Moraleda de Zafayona, ticks numerous boxes. Not only is it a great place to stay to explore the surrounding region - it sits equidistant from Granada, Loja, Montefrio and Alhama de Granada - its new owners Pilar and husband Jose Maria are ambitious in the extreme. Thanks to its many expat clients, the hotel is now focussing on special events, such as quiz and curry nights, care of local English chef Terry Davies. The restaurant however, is about



to relaunch as an 'arroceria' - specialising in rice dishes - thanks to its chef Herminia Bohorquez, who comes from Alicante and has been a master of paella and other such rice dishes for 25 years. There is also fresh fish, plenty of steaks and other dishes on offer. "We are planning plenty of things this year," explains Pilar, a friendly lady from the nearby village. "As well as the regular curry nights, we are launching a monthly car boot sale, with the



first kicking off on April 2. Everyone is welcome." Even better, come and stay a night and enjoy one of the 12 ensuite rooms at this well located three star hotel.



DINING SECRETS of Andalucía

March 15th - March 28th 2017

SPECIAL FOCUS ON: VEJER DE LA FRONTERA

# Chow capital of Cadiz

Vejer has an amazing abundance of fabulous restaurants on offer, writes Jon Clarke



IT'S one of Andalucía's most wonderful drives... along the Costa de la Luz past Tarifa or inland through the Alcornocales Natural Park. And in Vejer de la Frontera there is a true pot of gold full of culinary delights awaiting your arrival. Few places in Spain have such a concentration of good places to eat than this wonderful white gem of a town, that clings to an escarpment with views for miles around. Crammed with history, it is also these days a Mecca for foodies seeking out the celebrated produce that has made Cadiz province one of Spain's leading places to eat. In Vejer, it all comes together perfectly. Its mix of organic homegrown produce fusing with the region's fabulous tuna and retinto beef, all care of an international set of restaurant owners who all add their own unique dash of creativity, be they from Scotland, France or Denmark. One of the best established restaurants is award-winning El Jardin del Califa, reached through the labyrinthine corridors of the 16th century Califa hotel. Its exquisite palm courtyard is enclosed by ancient walls and is lit with Moroccan lamps after

dark radiating a 1001 Nights buzz. If you aren't hypnotised by the scent of frangipani, jasmine and incense, wait until you try the menu, a heavenly harem of authentic flavours from north Africa and the Middle East: delights such as babaganoush, shish taouk, pastela filled with chicken, almonds and cinnamon and tempting tagines. Another equally fabulous spot is Corredera 55, which has a fantastic outdoor dining terrace overlooking a landscape of rolling hills, quixotic windmills and spectacular sunsets. The menu, created by charming restaurateur Ellie, from Scotland, is a fusion of world flavours with bouillabaisse soup or the carrillada (pigs cheeks) braised for five hours in vino de Jerez and served with cinnamon-scented cauliflower puree.



EVOCATIVE: Terrace at Califa

Other amazing places worth sniffing out are Danish-run Patria in the nearby hills, stunning Castillera, specialising in the best quality meat Spain has to offer, and Garimba, a charming spot on the main square. But, while here, you will be bound to find many other gems and exciting spots. Just follow your nose.



TIMELESS AND TASTY: Dish at 55 and Vejer arch

## SOMEWHERE TO STAY:

YOU can stay right in the heart of Vejer in charming Califa Hotel, which is a historic spot, with charming, stylish rooms. This 16th century warren has lots of corridors, historic corners and a wonderful courtyard where you take breakfast... and, if you can get a table, eat one of the best meals in Spain. Another nice spot to stay is Madreselva, nearby on the coast in Canos de Meca. Sitting on a fantastic beach with its own pool and atmospheric courtyard, this small boutique hotel takes some beating. Comfortable rooms each with their own quiet back patios, are complemented with a cool reception where you take your breakfast. Best of all, you are just a short walk to two of Andalucía's most emblematic beaches and the famous Trafalgar Lighthouse.

Visit [www.califavejer.com](http://www.califavejer.com) for more information

Unforgettable Gastronomy  
Flavours that feed your dreams



Calle Sevilla, 17, 11201 Algeciras, Cádiz - T: 856 12 72 90



LA CASA DEL  
**Califa**



· Plaza de España, 16 · Vejer de la Frontera ·  
Tel. 34 956 447 730

[www.califavejer.com](http://www.califavejer.com)