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Marbella

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OUR STAR IS RISING

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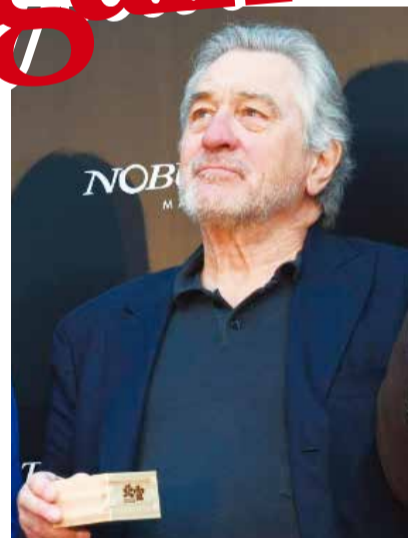
Photos by Jon Clarke

Marbella may be an international brand but some things never change. Olive Press news editor Laurence Dollimore digs beneath the glitz to unearth the character he has known for two decades

THINK Marbella and a glamorous jet-set lifestyle springs to mind. The classiest hotels, the liveliest nightclubs and the most fashionable and well-heeled clientele found anywhere in Andalusia and maybe Spain. But peel back the 'Marbs mask' (you know, all the Arab billionaires, reality TV stars and ex-Premiership footballers) and you'll find its hidden character and history. Before we go any further, I'll admit it. I was lucky enough to grow up with a holiday home here, up in the leafy Guadalmina hills. This pretty much meant sun, sea and sand on tap, along with many a late night staggering along the infamous second

row of Puerto Banus sometimes known as 'hurricane alley'. In other words, during my misspent youth sprawled out on award-winning beaches by day and crawling out of head-spinning bars by night, I never got to know Marbella's deeper persona. Over a decade later, no longer a callow and shallow teenager, I am doubly lucky to have been given a second chance at living here (albeit having to work hard), thanks to 'the boss' at the Olive Press. And while the temptations in this tourist honeypot remain, I am finally appreciating the culture, the history and so much else that has changed for the better.

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A-LIST: Recent visitors include Michele Obama, Robert de Niro and Hugh Grant


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From Page 17

The resort has grown into an international brand, becoming one of Spain's most lucrative tourist destinations.

The stats don't lie. In 2017 Marbella welcomed around four million international tourists and this year is set to be even better.

People come here to see and be seen, whether its a hen-do thirsty for a splash of glamour, rubber-neckers desperate to see a star like Hugh Grant or Robert de Niro or a top politician looking for a cultural break. This chameleon-like jewel of the Costa del Sol can adapt to every visitor.

Let's start with one of the places I know best, more lounge lizard than chameleon; Puerto Banus.

Stroll into the port just to the west of Marbella and you'll witness a scene like no other, depending on the hour.

The glitz and glamour flows in a thick slick out of the port and along the Golden Mile

mega-yachts or Ferraris to shop 'till they drop' at the likes of Gucci and Prada.

Banus has become an unashamed melting pot for the rich, famous and wannabe glamourpusses.

The glitz and glamour flows in a thick slick out of the port and along Marbella's Golden Mile, home to exclusive nightclubs Le Suite and the extravagant Roberto Cavalli – where a round of drinks could probably blow your weekly budget if you haven't already splurged it on a swanky designer outfit – an essential if you want to mingle with the Who's Who of Marbs.

Along this same elitist strip the likes of Lord Alan Sugar, Simon Cowell, Sean Connery and the Saudi Arabian royal family have invested in their own villas. The Assad family are another story.

This could include hen-doers trying their best to pull off ill-fitting fancy dress costumes after celebrating their last night of freedom, or members of the '1% club' disembarking from



BEACH LIFE: A yoga class in the centre

THINKING GLOBALLY

Labelled as 'the new Ibiza', Marbella exploded onto the international party scene thanks in part to reality TV shows *The Only Way Is Marbs* and *Made In Chelsea*, whose drama-packed episodes helped shape the area's image as the place-to-be for the young and famous.

When *TOWIE* aired a two-episode Marbella special in 2015, hotel searches soared by an incredible 72% overnight.

But it's not just reality TV stars who are raising Mar-

bella's profile and putting Malaga airport's second runway into action.

World leaders too, are magnetically attracted to Marbs.

The Olive Press revealed in 2014 that Russian President Vladimir Putin had bought an estate here. And we were the only newspaper to speak to Michelle Obama on her famous visit to the town's 'casco historico' in 2010 (ED: Well we asked her two questions, if that counts).

A couple of Britain's ex-PMs have taken a break from politics here; David and Sam Cameron celebrated their 21st wedding anniversary in the nearby hills of Benahavis last June, staying at the exclusive €270-a-night Alcuzcuz resort, and Tony and Cherie Blair have been spotted here twice in the last four years.

Actor Hugh Grant is now said to own a home up in the Zagaleta hills, as does Mark Thatcher (Maggie's wayward son). Plenty of Premier League foot-



LEAFY: The old town is full of orange trees



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The Sky Lounge, a rooftop terrace situated on the 7th floor of the Benabola Hotel, is the perfect spot for meeting friends over drinks and tapas. Sit back, relax and enjoy the breathtaking views of Puerto Banus and Marbella. Complementary parking with minimum purchase of 2 drinks.

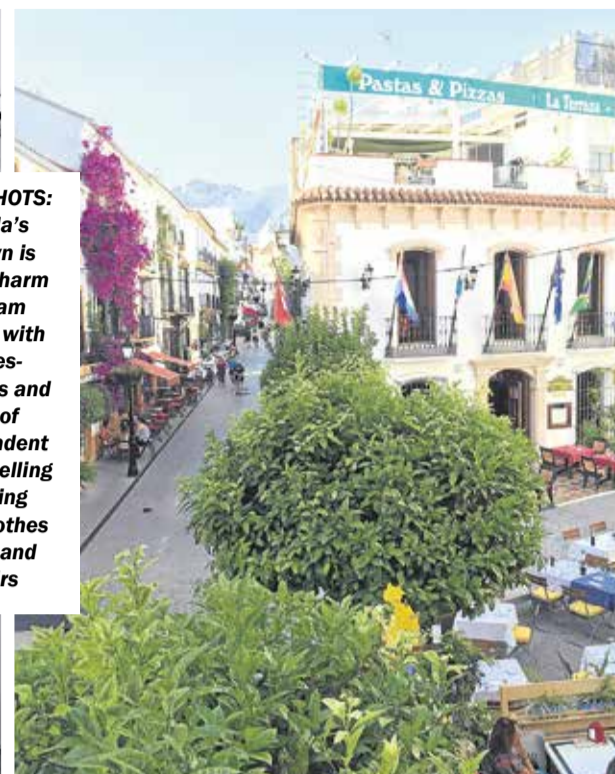
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SNAPSHOTS:
Marbella's Old Town is full of charm and is jam packed with tapas restaurants and dozens of independent shops selling everything from clothes to food and souvenirs

ballers also have homes here. It's quite a list, which could go on and on... and these guys are not here to attend champagne spray parties. So what brings the global elite to Marbella?

Cue the beautiful old town and its orange-scented Plaza de los Naranjos.

The Moorish pueblo is just a five-minute walk from the world-renowned beaches and stunning 17km promenade that runs from Marbella to San Pedro. Orange Square - festooned with citrus trees - is found at the centre of the maze of streets winding through the casco antiguo. Some of its quaint whitewashed houses have been standing since the town was re-conquered from the Moors in 1485. Parts of the original 11th century Arab wall still surround the square, while churches, the town hall and the Old Governor's House go back to the 16th century.

The Church of Saint Mary, dating from 1618, is a point of pilgrimage for its stunning-Baorque red stone entrance and the most impressive organ built in Spain in the last 125 years - consisting of 5,000 pewter, copper and wooden pipes and four manual keyboards.

The old town's mosaic-cobbled streets lead past leafy squares begging you to stop for a tapas and cana in the sunshine. Stylish boutiques, jewellers and delicatessens on every corner implore you to come in and spend, and the most amazing restaurants set out their stalls under designer awnings, seducing you to sit down and enjoy.

For old school romantics, there's the allure of a horse and carriage tour while, across from the old town, cool green Alameda Gardens beckons with its stunning horticultural display and array of quaint fountains.

The town has come a long way since the Romans settled here in 1 AD, but you can still see signs of their lost civilisation, whether it's the 1st century Roman bridge embedded in the gardens of the Hotel Puente Romano or the baths and settlement ruins in Guadalmina. Even 2,000 years ago, the Romans knew that the beach was the place to be, becoming the first civilization to spark a coastal real estate boom.

Fast forward to today and it seems this hasn't been lost on the ruling elite of Marbella. Millions have been invested to bring the beaches up to global standards. Marbella's 27 kilometres of coastline encapsulates 24 playas while San Pedro and Puerto Banus fly the prestigious blue flag, a quality standard awarded by the Foundation for Environmental Education.

As for beach clubs, you won't find anywhere cooler

to flaunt your designer beachwear than the internationally-renowned beach clubs, where all-white parties and party sessions are the flavour du jour all summer long.

From May to October, the beautiful and wealthy splash their cash on Balinese sunbeds, cocktails and long, lazy al fresco lunches, check La Sala by the Sea!

As for gastronomy, Marbs is a foodie's paradise twinkling with over half a dozen Michelin star restaurants. The competitive gastro-scene has ushered in a vast array of top quality dining options that makes it a tough call not to OD on carbs.

High profile events like A Cuatro Manos at the Puente Romano resort, which recently brought together a veritable constellation of chefs with 71 Michelin stars between them for a four-day cookathon, are giving Marbella some serious street food cred.

The fine art scene is also booming, with a spate of galleries like Houses of Art at the Marbella Club Hotel popping up along the Golden Mile.

This month's Marbella International Art Festival will showcase hundreds of works by artists from more than 20 different countries.

The performing arts are also celebrated big-style. Marbella International Film Festival, now in its seventh year, is becoming as well-known as Cannes so you're looking at a future culture capital of Europe.

Marbella has come a long way from its fishing village days, all thanks to a German Prince and a rogue British car engine. Maximilian de Hohenlohe-Langenburg and his son Alfonso had to stop in Marbs when they were having trouble with their Rolls Royce in 1946. Alfonso liked the area so much he decided to buy some land and build himself a house, before selling plots to his Rothschild and Thyssen friends.

He soon turned his home into the Costa del Sol's first luxury hotel in 1954 - The Marbella Club - which to this day remains a mainstay on the Golden Mile. Before long, Ava Gardner, Grace Kelly, Audrey Hepburn and Laurence Olivier were all hanging out there, raising the Costa del Sol's international profile and attracting a wave of jetsetters and investment. From a pure accident of fate the resort has gone from strength to strength, despite the economic and political woes that have plagued Spain since the financial crash of 2008.

Mayor Jose Bernal, now ousted by the PP's

Angeles Muñoz, campaigned on ending the institutionalised corruption that plagued the town for decades. He has introduced new transparency and integrity rules for those in office, including himself, having most recently made his spending figures public.

With a booming restaurant scene, an international art and film community, world class beaches nightlife and shopping and a corruption-fighting mayor, what more could you ask for?

Perhaps an airport with international links, do I hear you cry? No need. Malaga's just 45 minutes'

drive away, and Gibraltar the same in the other direction. Stunning mountain views? They're already available from La Concha, Marbella's own mountain, or on a day trip to the hilltop citadel of Ronda, easily doable by car or bus. Surely not a thrilling treetop adventure park? Err, yes, look no further than Aventura Amazonia, in Las Chapas. Suffice to say, whether you're a foodie, an urban junkie looking for a city break crammed with culture, a beach addict after a classic family holiday or an 18-30 reveller thirsty for a party break, Marbella delivers it - in style!



EPICENTRE: Tourists and locals love to walk around Orange Square

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While reports of Marbella's A-list glitz and glamour play on like a stuck record, locally-based Spanish journalist Pablo Balbontin prefers a different side



ORIGINAL: One of the half dozen Dali sculptures

Flip to the

B-SIDE

MARBELLA is well known for its lifestyle of luxury and exclusivity. Almost every report you read singles out the most expensive shops, the most prestigious chefs, the latest Porsche models prowling the streets... They are powerful tourist attractions, no doubt, but this is not one of those reports.

There is another side to Marbella where the middle classes live, where prices are not exorbitant, where people have normal jobs and struggle to get to the end of the month on their wages.

Welcome to the real life on Marbs. The old town of Marbella is probably its best treasure. Among the modern city centre buildings and traffic noise, the Moorish centre is a place from another era, a perfectly preserved and charming small Andalusian village.

Here, hiding between the upscale tapas bars and Michelin starred restaurants you can savour a taste of the past at Casa Eladio, a restaurant that has been serving the populace for over half a century.

Founded in 1965 by Eladio Cabello, it is currently run by his son Carlos who has just overseen its complete renovation. It's still a great place to taste traditional homemade food, but now in a modern way.

Another old-time option is El Altamirano, a 30-year-old veteran of victualling specialising in fish and seafood.

Beyond the casco antiguo, El Asturiano is another local favourite of mine. As its name suggests, the focus is on food from northern Spain. If you're a

fan of *fabada*, *cachopo* or *callos*, this is your oyster.

There's also always a place at the table for the well-known fast food franchises, found around town and at La Cañada, probably the most recognisable shopping mall on the Costa del



DESERTED: The beaches in Elviria are much quieter than Banus

Sol. Here, as elsewhere in Marbella, there are entertainment possibilities for all kinds of budgets, from coffee shops to music stores and a cinema. And don't leave Marbella without eating churros in front of the town hall in Plaza de los Naranjos, an autumn/winter tradition that has continued for decades.

As summer approaches, the beach beckons. But forget about those in the centre of Marbella and around Puerto Banús which are way too crowded in peak season. It's worth travelling 10 km east to the long, sandy stretches of Elviria, El Rosario and Cabopino, distinguished by their tranquility and sense of isolation from the crowds, even in the height of summer.

Another side of Marbella that has been traditionally overshadowed is the cultural offer. If you thought the resort didn't have museums as important as those in big cities like Málaga or Sevilla, you must have missed the

Mirós at the Museo del Grabado, hanging alongside the prints and lithographs of famous contemporary artists like Dalí, Picasso and Tapiès.

The Ralli Museum, meanwhile houses one of the biggest collections of Latin American art in all Europe and the Palacio de Congresos puts on various temporary exhibitions throughout the year.

There's also Marbella's al fresco art gallery of Dali-esque sculptures sweeping down from the Alameda Gardens to the prom. The sculptures are homages to the Catalan artist, based on some of his most famous works. The rhino is fabulous. This surreal outdoor stage is perfect for a sunset stroll. Marbella's glamorous bars and spas, golf courses and beach clubs may be the chart toppers that are always a hit with visitors. But just as in music, for a purer and less commercial experience, the B-side is always worth playing.



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MARBELLA has been my home on and off for over 30 years and, like all long-term relationships, the town continues to baffle, bewilder and bewitch me in equal measure.

I'll deal with the baffling and bewildering bit first. If you mention Marbella to most Brits, they will immediately think of the *TOWIE* wannabe brigade and topless trashed tourists teetering off their heels – and that's just the men – on a booze fuelled hen or stag party.

The town hall's recent warning that those improperly dressed would face fines hit the headlines in the UK, but to think that the town is merely an upmarket version of Magaluf is to miss the point.

Granted Marbella has its fair proportion of late night bars, beach clubs pumping house music during the day and provides ample ammunition for those intent in getting up to no good (trust me. I have the scars to prove it. Mainly on my liver).



VISITOR: *Eva Longoria*

But away from the hundred miles an hour hedonistic histrionics that make tabloid headlines, Marbella continues to grow as a luxury tourist destination.

High-end properties are continuing to sell and the hotels, beach clubs and restaurants are once again expecting record-breaking numbers.

High profile events such as the Marbella Luxury Weekend, Starlight Festival and Global Gift Gala continue to attract media attention to the town and celebrities including Robert de Niro, Eva Longoria, En-



ICONIC: *Prince Alfonso von Hohenlohe and (right) Giles enjoying his youth in 80s Marbella*



My Good, My Bad, My Marbella

Marbella lifer Giles Brown explains why, after four decades, he still loves his adopted town

rique Iglesias and Antonio Banderas have all been spotted over the past 12 months. The opening of de Niro's Nobu Hotel, as well as the €72 million redevelopment of the old Don Miguel Hotel marking Club Med's return to Spain as a luxury holiday provider, as well as the first stages of the W Hotel to the east of the town signal the arrival of serious money and players in Marbella.

On the subject of hotels, the Marbella Club Hotel, where it all started when Prince Alfonso von Hohenlohe stopped off in Marbella in the 50s, is still going strong.

Needing to make a telephone call he was told that a line would be available after lunch, and so decided to have a picnic under the pines close to Finca Santa Margarita. Alfonso was so enchanted by the location that he decided to buy the land and open a small hotel for his friends, the Marbella Club Hotel.

It's over 60 years since that picnic, the hotel has become a byword for luxury and Prince Alfonso's cousin, Count Rudi von Schönberg, who is a walking encyclopedia of Marbella history, can be found there most days.

I remember interviewing 'Condi Rudi' for a short magazine article. After the best part of morning reminiscing, we broke for sandwiches and when returning, Count Rudy announced, "Now, where was I. Ah yes! It was 1963..."

Serious wealth, unfazed by the shenanigans happening in Puerto Banus, contin-

ues to pour in from traditional investors such as the Kuwaitis and Saudis, as well as the British, Irish, Scandinavian and, most recently the Russians. The Chinese are widely tipped to be the Next Big Thing in property, and on a more substantial scale than just the Bazaar Chinos that can be found everywhere. International

analysts have identified only three cities in Spain for investment - Madrid, Barcelona and Marbella, and while Madrid is a city of six million and Barcelona has four million, Marbella has an official population of 200,000 people, underlining the fantastic investment potential that Marbella has.

While the Town Hall talks of multi million euro projects, and the British Press concentrate on the antics around Puerto Banus, if you scratch the surface, behind the bling you will find an enchanting old town as well as a friendly international community that make Marbella a little slice of paradise all year round. I know that it may sound a little soppy, but, despite my frequent mutterings, I really wouldn't live anywhere else. And that's the bewitching bit...

Marbella has an official population of 200,000, showing its investment potential

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Snaking high above the town's new boulevard like a section of Scalextric track, San Pedro de Alcantara's sensational bridge is a symbol of the town's new traffic-stopping appeal

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, which has become a must-see on the Costa del Sol. It's more Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim-meets-Calatrava's City of Arts and Science in Valencia than typically Andalus. 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 boulev-



Bridging the gap

PICTURESQUE: San Pedro's boulevard bridge snakes over Marbella's popular seaside pueblo

Sanpedreños no longer feel the need to cling onto Marbella's coat tails

vard with its amphitheatre, children's play areas and ample green spaces are other examples of the shiny new 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 Brioni and Armani 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. It's just had large parts of its town semi-pedestrianised, including the bustling Marques del Duero, and several swanky new tapas bars and a museum are reportedly also on the way. Paired with its promenade, ornamented with sculptures and water features, San Pedro can easily compete with Marbella's elegant elephant beach showers now! With jogging tracks and extended cycle paths, its waterfront piles on the wow factor. The town centre conceals other attrac-



HISTORIC: San Pedro's central church

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 of bars and restaurants looks 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 this walking town 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 many other coastal 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, rossier future.



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Mas to come

One of the coast's youngest estate agents is on a roll, writes Laurence Dollimore

SHE'S taken on communist governments and traded millions of euros worth of art as a dealer for Sotheby's, so it's no surprise Margareta Stjernstrom has taken the Costa del Sol property scene by storm. The Polish businesswoman set up MAS Properties four years ago

with her Swedish husband Joakim Stjernstrom, and they've been unstoppable ever since. From just the two of them working out of an office in El Rosario, they have opened another base in exclusive Centro Plaza in Puerto Banus, providing a top of the range service offering villas, apart-



INTERNATIONAL TEAM: The agents at Mas speak many languages

ments, plots of land and more. And what a spot, the corner office the true pride and place of Centro Plaza with some of the best views in Marbella.

Their team has grown to 10 while their client list and sales figures have continued to boom. "We have aimed to double in size each year and we have more than

done that," says CEO Margareta, who was once forced out of Poland for protesting the oppressive communist government while studying to become a doctor. And the key to the company's success? It's all about the property. "The fact is we only list high quality properties and our mission is to find that one property that is right for the client," explains Margareta.

"We are also extremely transparent and honest with our clients, if we don't think a property is right for them we won't waste their time trying to force a sale." And they're guaranteed to speak your language, with English, Russian, French, Spanish, German, Arabic and Swedish all spoken by the staff.

The company is also clear from the get go that clients will probably have to compromise. "There are three things you are unlikely to always get, and that



DES RES: Amazing views from MAS office

Market Trends - summer 2018

Estepona has benefited from Marbella's strict building laws and its mayor's forward thinking policies meaning investment will continue to pour into the town, believes Margareta.

Benalmadena is also popular at the moment, especially the new 800-home Urbana city development, for which MAS Properties is the number one seller.

The Polish are buying a lot more thanks to the country's recovering economy, while Moroccans are buying more in the Marbella area than anyone might think.

Interestingly, Brexit has had a stabilising effect on the rate of price increases, which in the end has proved healthy for the market.

While the company is selling all the way down the coast, Marbella is still the most wanted location.



FROM MADRID TO MARBELLA: The 9 Lions projects are spacious with amazing views

Prestige and privilege

Jon Clarke talks to boss of Marbella's exciting 9 Lions Residences development

"IT'S all about locations, prime locations," explains Fraser Denton, whose company has recently launched its first Andalusia development in the heart of Marbella.

Already boasting of two prestige projects in Barcelona and Madrid, 9 Lions Residences in Nueva Andalusia is the logical first dip into the healthy Costa del Sol property market. The stunning collection of apartments, each well-appointed with wonderful views and big terraces, has recently gone on the market, with almost a dozen of the 53 already sold.

"It's all about the finish, the privileged elevated site and all of them have sea views," continues Fraser, 50, who moved to Barcelona from London two decades ago. With a love of architecture and property, the father-of-four has spent the last few years overseeing two prestige properties in Spain's two major cities.

The first in Barcelona's trendy 22@ business district was a converted five-storey textile mill that has now been leased out in its entirety to US giant Hewlett Packard.

The second in the heart of upmarket Chamberi

district of Madrid comprised 41 apartments, all of them selling out in months at an average price of around €1 million.

Designed by architect Sara de la Mata, of Bunch, it has a very contemporary feel with large floor to ceiling windows letting in plenty of natural light.

"We are continuing with this concept now in Marbella," explains Fraser, who studied surveying at Bristol University, before doing an MBA in Manchester.

"It is clear there is very limited new product in the area, particularly of the standard we are building.

"Marbella is a very international and global market and is recovering very well and seeing the return of its cachet from decades ago," he continues.

"We are also seeing a real drive towards quality, with groups like the Starwood group and the W hotel, plus the return of Club Med.

"We continue to look for prime locations along the Costa del Sol, but they have to be the right ones and we are in no rush."

As for the Spanish property market in general, he believes it is in a strong

position.

"The residential market in Spain is very buoyant right now after years of little activity due to the recession.

"There was a lot of pent up demand that was waiting for the economy to pick up and now it certainly has."

The surveyor had originally moved to Madrid in 1999, working for the Australian Investment giant, Lend Lease, developing shopping centres, including the UK's Bluewater.

After a brief return to the UK in 2002, he returned to set up his own company in Barcelona.

"I lasted just six weeks in London before I had to come back. I really love it in Spain and feel I fit in.

"I've lived all around Europe, but Spain is now very much my home," adds Fraser 9 Lions Residences is part of UK & European Investments, which is owned by the LTG group, which owns fashion brands, including River Island.

The group's investment commitments in Spain now total €130 million.

Visit
www.9lionsresidences.com or ukandeuropean.com for more info



NINE LIONS RESIDENCES



BOSS: Margareta

is size, location and price, and we tell that to our clients so they know beforehand that there will be a compromise."

And it works, the company is one of the most time effective on the coast, turning around a sale in an average of two days.

But what is really driving the company forward is the team.

Listings agent Maria Mayol has 25 years' experience at Sotheby's and has been fundamental in bringing in clients.

Meanwhile, the new sales executives are bringing a younger and more dynamic energy to the team. Already with a few years' experience under their belts, all are trained by MAS Properties in customer care, sales, property law and management.

The company, which operates between Malaga and Sotogrande, is already looking to expand and has plans to open offices in Malaga and Tarifa next year.

www.maspropertymarbella.com

ONE of the fastest growing British real estate companies is expanding rapidly along the Costa del Sol.

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The pair are the latest addition to a network of already 330 offices around the world.

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"We take the instruction to sell your home as a privilege, an honour and as a very serious commitment," says Director Karina Karlsen Norris, who first earned her stripes selling property in Mijas 17 years ago.

"The market is growing here so it is logical that the company would expand along the coast?" adds the mother-of-two.

"The weather is beautiful, it's easily accessible and there are a lot of investment opportunities here," continues the personable Dane (right).

And no matter who handles your sale, you'll be in good hands.

Every Fine & Country agent is a highly trained independent estate agent and follows a strict code of conduct.

"We have a great team here and we speak almost any language, including



Award-winning real estate giant couldn't resist the 'booming' Costa del Sol market

Mighty Fine



EXPERIENCED: Karina has sold in Mijas for 17 years

Slovenian and even Indian!" explains Karina, who has lived in Mijas for 31 years. "I have seen the market go up

and down a few times over the years so I have a lot of local knowledge, as do all of our trained agents and staff."



TEAM: At the Mijas office

TOP FOUR TRENDS THIS SPRING

- **Scandinavians are the fastest growing client base**
- **More British are selling up and moving back home - possibly due to the exchange rate**
- **Mijas Costa, Nueva Andalucia and San Pedro are the hot locations**
- **Estepona is good value for money and is expanding fast while strict Marbella planning rules are making it difficult for developers in the town.**

Their hundreds of offices worldwide, meanwhile, offer widespread exposure to the international market. Pair this with national marketing cam-

paigns and local expertise of carefully selected property professionals, and there's no reason to go anywhere else. www.fineandcountry.com



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GUADALMINA MARBELLA
5 Bedroom Villa
€4,750,000
Ref: 0218003_R3136507

Amazing, elegant villa situated in Guadalmina Baja, a beachside tranquil residential area west of Marbella. Walking distance to the beach, 5 star hotel, two 18 holes golf courses and several restaurants.

The entrance hall accesses the double ceiling living room with fireplace, TV room and library, dining room and fully fitted kitchen all with direct access to the terrace overlooking the beautiful garden and pool.

NUEVA ANDALUCIA
7 Bedroom Detached Villa
€4,400,000
Ref: 0218024_R3183925

This is an extraordinary contemporary villa located in the exclusive area of Nueva Andalucía, only a 5-minute drive from Puerto Banus, beautiful beaches and great restaurants. This newly renovated villa is built to the highest standard. You instantly feel at ease while exploring the rest of the beautiful house - divided over three levels, having carefully considered the distribution to maximize the light and magnificent views surrounding the property.

LAS BRISAS NUEVA ANDALUCIA
4 Bedroom Villa
€2,100,000
Ref: 0218026

It's construction is in minimalistic style though the interior decorating skills and creativity of the owners have made this home very inviting. When entering the villa a 400 year old Olive tree is left in peace inside the construction. All 4 bedrooms are positioned well apart for total privacy. One bedroom and en suite bathroom is located directly to the right from the entrance. As you continue through the hallway another bedroom with en suite bathroom is located left of the entrance.



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Protec Group offers its customers all trades around the house. For all activities we provide a guarantee, especially on the windows and doors area, where we grant usually a 10-year guarantee on the high-quality materials used and on to the professional installation with our own highly qualified staff.

Our three pillars:

CONSTRUCTION We build new villas and houses of all kinds and styles.

REFURBISHMENT We offer complete or partial renovation on buildings with the best and newest materials on the market.

WINDOWS & DOORS Manufacturing, distribution and installation of windows and doors of the highest quality on the Costa del Sol.

Our history

The Protec Group was first launched in 1996 as a windows company under the name of Protec Ventanas SL. In the year 2000 the founder, owner and CEO André Jensen created a second company, in the



construction sector, which immediately reflected the ethos of the group, following the need to differentiate between the two sectors. These building works were and continue to be undertaken by Protec Construcciones SL. In the year 2002 Velisa Negocios S.L. was formed as an autonomous Real Estate company but still operating under the umbrella of the Protec group. This enabled us to cover a new sector with additional services for our clients who are always our main priority.

Our aim

We see ourselves as a team, in which individuals are connected to each other as an efficient group of professionals. We offer, with commitment and passion, an exceptional and complete service to all our



clients. We are a thriving company within the building sector because we consistently produce outstanding results which will last for generations. Our priority is to always provide our clients with the highest quality products and services available. Please contact us or visit us at the Polígono Industrial Los Perales in Mijas. On our

website www.grupo-protec.com you will find more information about us, our services and galleries of some of our works as well as testimonials of our clients. As we hope to hear from you soon, we offer you a 5% discount on a quote when you mention this newspaper to us.



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Exterior designs

Leading Costa del Sol interior company opens yet another shop

THIS is one design and paint company that keeps on rolling. The talented team of designers from Marbella's Estuco Interiors

The company, run entirely by women, stocks the best paints and wallpapers

iors have opened yet another shop in the heart of Centro Plaza. The prestige corner location facing the main road is the third in the popular centre, in Nueva Andalucia. The company, run entirely by women, stocks the best paints and wallpa-



LADIES WHO: Design team and (top right) new shop

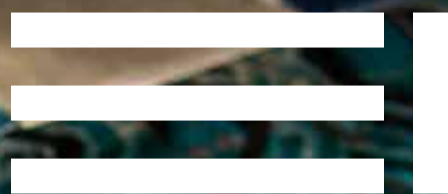


pers on the market, with everything from Farrow & Ball to Designers Guild.

"It's great to be expanding again," explains owner Christel Jurgensen. "When such a good prime location came available we decided to jump." With an incredible vision and passion for creativity, it is little surprise that Estuco have grown consistently for the last two decades. The team offer bespoke designs perfectly tailored to meet your needs - from conception to completion. And they have built up a trusted network of craftsmen, builders, painters, electricians and suppliers who are always on time, on spec and on budget.

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"Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets with planning."

- Thomas Edison

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

WEALTH DIVISION

WOODBROOK GROUP EXPANDS MARBELLA OPERATION

ANDREW HEATH APPOINTED COUNTRY MANAGER FOR SPAIN

- Brings 16 years' offshore market experience to this major new initiative.
- Heath heads up expanded Spanish team to meet this fast-growing client base.
- 'Seeing how forward-thinking Woodbrook are, I knew this was the match for me.'



Woodbrook Group, a leading independent financial advisory and corporate services company with offices across Europe, Asia and the Middle-East, has signalled major plans for expansion in 2018.

Two appointments in Europe in as many weeks have seen the continued emergence of a year plan featuring strong growth. Signified by the appointment of Mark Slevin in Cyprus now, hot on the heels of that initiative, Andrew Heath is to head up a greatly expanded operation in Spain. Centred in Marbella, its focus will be on expatriate business and personal needs which are considerable and rapidly expanding.

Andrew, who has 16 years experience in the offshore market and a wealth of experience in helping clients to manage their wealth, said of his appointment: "Seeing how compliant, customer focused and forward thinking Woodbrook is, I knew this was the match for me." He added: "Europe has a fast-growing expat population, and Spain and Portugal are very popular locations for expats. Expatriates go for the sun, the way of life and to set up businesses. But it can be so easy for them to forget about protecting their financial futures, and that's where our experience will help."

Coupled with this are the needs to be met of new businesses opening daily along the Costas as the economic upturn leads to an invigorated tourism, commercial and property market. Andrew will head up the expanding Marbella office and build on Woodbrook's strong reputation for advising on many financial and business matters and helping clients to make the right decisions.

Woodbrook Group CEO Michael Doherty said: "We have been very calculated in our growth in 2017. Now with our acquisitions and the outstanding new members who have joined our team, the future is extremely positive. We will continue our strong growth through 2018."

Woodbrook Group, regulated by CySEC also has expertise in Investment and Wealth Planning, QROPS, SIPPS, Trust and Trustee Services, Taxation, Accounting, Audit and Legal services, Company Formation and Administration, Cross-Border Structuring, Domiciliation and Corporate Services among many others.



Where to eat

Marbella is the true foodie capital of Andalusia, writes Dining Secrets of Andalusia editor Jon Clarke



STAR: Jon meets Joan Roca

FOR the last three years I have met more famous Michelin-starred chefs in Marbella than I have in the rest of my life put together.

From Joan Roca to Juan Mari Arzak and Joel Robuchon to Ferran Adria, they have all taken trips down to the definitive culinary food capital of Andalusia.

All attending the A Cuatro Manos event, which is now a regular fixture organised by the town's very own two Michelin star wonderkind Dani Garcia, they add a very appropriate sprinkling of foodie glamour each Spring.

For Marbella has really come into its own as a global dining magnet over the last decade, counting six of its own Michelin-starred joints.

No less than half of the Michelin starred restaurants in Andalusia can be found in the town, including **El Lago**, **Messina** and **Skina**, which all have their own unique style and flavours.

DINING CENTRAL



CHEF CITY: Arzak and Adria join Dani Garcia



CONSISTENTLY GOOD: La Sala flagship restaurant

"We keep getting better and better here and pushing the boundaries," Garcia told me. "And I expect it to continue."

And that is very much the story, as the town has one of the largest variety of

top eateries in Spain. There are over 100 different nationalities cooking in Marbella, from leading Japanese places like **Takumi** to hidden gems like **Cascada** and to exciting new Italian **A Casa Mia**.

And then you have some excellent beach restaurants, such as **Bono Beach**, **La Sala by the Sea** and **Casanis Plage**.

Super Sala

Another restaurateur who shows no signs of slowing down is Ian Radford, boss of the La Sala group, whose recent openings include the **Oak restaurant** and hip **Mahiki** beach, in the heart of town.

The original **La Sala** on the way up to the Nueva Andalusia bullring is, without a doubt, the most famous Marbella restaurant abroad.

This is a must-visit for any holiday to Marbs and a huge hit for 'ladies who lunch', not to mention movers and shakers, celebrities, footballers and the wealthy empresarios who make Mar-

bella what it is. An emporium of glass and seductive lighting, its real strength though, lies in its wood-decked terrace, that is serves as the ideal tourist sun-deck.

But, let's not forget the food, which has so far never let me down. Whether you are after meaty fare (ribs, burgers, etc) or fish dishes and seafood, you are always well catered for and there is always a contemporary twist.

But if you are looking for some romance, you need to head into the heart of Marbella old town, where you are literally spoilt for choice for excellent places to eat.

Marbella old town, where you are literally spoilt for choice for places to eat

Take a wonder around and take your pick from dozens of interesting places, with the better ones including Casanis, Tempora and Cafe Flore.

Another continually improving restaurant is **Cibo**, on the Golden Mile, which is beautifully decorated and has

Continues on Page 36

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TASTY: One of the dishes at A Casa Mia



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Reservations Recommended

From Page 34

a great menu. Owned by the capable Metro Group (**Jacks, Mumtaz, Metro**, etc), it is excellent value and a romantic spot for dining out. In the heart of Marbella, take a visit to the superb **Harbour** (see review on page 38), which has recently been taken over by the team from **Becketts** and the **Playwright**, both with highly rated kitchens. It's a fabulous spot to watch the world go by from your bird's nest position high above the boats, and with an excellent kitchen to boot.

A Casa Mia

In contrast, high in the hills above the town (it's technically in Benahavis) make sure to visit **A Casa Mia**, which has just opened in the exclusive address of La Heredia on the road to Ronda.

The creation of talented Italian couple Bepi and Roberta, its wisteria-clad terraza is one of the most charmed dining terraces on the coast.

And when it comes to the food, you will be blown away, unsurprisingly with the pair having cut the mustard for decades in central London, with no less than SIX cafe/delis under the **La Bottega** brand.

This is Italian food of the highest quality, pulled together by chef Emiliano, from Bergamo, under the watchful eye of Beppe.

I was particularly impressed with the haddock and vegetable tempura with mayonnaise and slices of ginger, which was original as it was tasty.

I also loved the handmade tagliolini of porcini mushrooms with shavings of black truffle. What joy.

Another exciting new place is **Funky Tapas Gastro Bar**, which sits just behind the H10 hotel in Nueva Andalucia.

Set up by capable Mancunian restaurateur Debbie it has got better and better not just with its food but with its entertainment offering.

Promising 'mouth-watering flavours from around the world', its dishes don't just look delicious, but they are. Come and find out for yourself.

You sit on a fantastic terrace and service is second to none, while the cocktails are also su-



JOYOUS: Owner Roberta at A Casa Mia



NEW ADDITION: Funky Tapas (above)



Foodie feast



JAPANESE WINNER: Dishes at Takumi

perb. Up in San Pedro you will be spoilt for choice, but really look out for **Macaao**, which really stands out as a special place to visit.

Set up by Belgian Michel Dhondt, who heralds from a long line of restaurant owners and trained with Alain Ducasse on the Cote d'Azur.

Open all year, it concentrates on fresh, seasonal ingredients and there are always loads of specials, including, no surprises, mussels, as well as oysters, shrimp croquettes and ceviche. Also in San Pedro is the very elegant **L'Impronta**, an upmarket Italian joint, run by capable Francisco Vacas, who actually heralds from Cordoba.

Finally another man helping to change the face of San Pedro is Malcolm Spendlove, who has been at the helm of the ever popular **Passion Cafe** (www.passioncafe.eu) for the last 18 years and now heads up one of the coast's best hamburger joints, **Mr Gourmet Burger** (www.mrgourmetburger.com) on the boulevard. Finally, up the coast in the charming little known port



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FRONTLINE:
Bono Beach and Alberts are two excellent spots to eat

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FOOD MADE GOOD

Map showing locations: Nueva Andalucía, Centro Plaza, Puerto Banus, Marbella, Casares, La Compañía.

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Dining Secrets of Andalucía editor Jon Clarke makes a bowline to The Harbour



In one direction I'm looking up to the Sierra Bermeja and Gibraltar, and the other to the Sierra de Mijas.

But the real fun is the beach and port below, where you watch a flotilla of wetbikes and boats, not to mention the sunbathers and looky, looky men, as you graze on some of Marbella's finest tucker.

I'm testing out the recently renovated Harbour restaurant in the royal Marbella yacht

The Harbour
BAR & RESTAURANT MARBELLA



CLASSICAL: Decor has been modelled on the Titanic dining room



VIEWS: Across Marbella port are superb

portions for at least three days in a row it was so darn healthy.

Next up was the Raw Bar section, including the usuals such as steak tartare and tuna tartare, and an excellent sea bass ceviche.

I then dived into two main courses, firstly a fabulous grilled wild sea bass in an original parmesan crust with asparagus, which was cooked by chef Andy Dagnell to a tee.

Then I had the genuinely excellent pork 'presa' which was tender and well garnished and as good as the best presa I have eaten in the Sierra Morena of Huelva, where the country's best wild Iberian pigs come from.

While the wine list was short, I was steered to an excellent white by the glass from Castilla y León, Finca la Caraballas, a verdejo, but with real aromatic apricot notes, quite unlike most supermarket verdejos.

All in all, congratulations to Mark and Penny for taking over this previously tired old place, which, given time, is bound to come up trumps for them. And then it will be Plain Sailing all the way!

SHIPSHAPE

club.

Almost unique to the coast, you are perched literally above the boats in a classical setting, well out of the way of prying eyes, perfect for captains of industry and celebrities looking for a private meal.

This is not Puerto Banus, but Marbella's older, more authentic port, with a much more discerning those-in-the-know clientele.

This is the brainchild of long-time restaurateurs Mark and Penny, who already own two popular restaurants, Becketts and the Playwright, in Marbella.

Here, they have branched out into something way more ambitious, but the gamble seems to be paying off.



Designed in the style of the Titanic, the interior is sumptuous, classic - almost Caribbean - and with a fabulous terrace out at the back.

The menu matches up to the style, broken into six broad sections, starting with the Sharing Platters, such as anchovies and red peppers and the ham croquettes, a real winner, made with Cinco Jotas jamon and served on a

bed of Boletus mushrooms. The Organic and Healthy Bowls section was most intriguing and included such delights as the 'Zen bowl', which came with sunflower and pomegranate seeds, warm quinoa and wilted greens, sweet potato and chilli flakes. I felt like I'd had my five



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BRAND NEW DELI FOR CALAHONDA

THE Jammy Olive in Calahonda has opened its newest venture, The Jammy Deli, right next door to the already successful and busy cafe. The Jammy Deli is a dream for those who don't have the time and just need to grab a quick breakfast, lunch or dinner for take away. Whether it be a slice of freshly made quiche, a salad from the self service salad bar or a ready made sandwich. The salad bar offers the traditional basic, alongside the more adventurous options. Whether it be the Edamame and broccoli salad with soy, orange and sesame or the butternut squash, Parmesan pesto pasta. For the gym lovers, protein lunch boxes of turkey, eggs and chilli, cumin and beetroot hummus are available. Offering ready made meals such as a sweet potato and goats cheese moussaka, a chilli lime and coconut chicken curry, or a feta, pea and courgette quiche, the problem is what to choose! With a wide selection of home made cakes, sliced roasted meats such as beef, turkey and Coca Cola ham, marinated olives and her soon to be famous hand made pork pies and sausage rolls! She focuses on providing food that is healthy, always home made and tasty. The BBQ meat counter offers a selection pack of Thai chicken skewers, beef koftas or mini Indian burgers to take the hassle out of BBQ's!

However, don't panic you can still grab a Jammy classic for on the go. An avocado, spinach, pear and apple smoothie, an Oreo milkshake, a slice of carrot cake with pineapple frosting, a coffee or even the Thai coconut and banana porridge.

Outside catering is also available, for those who want cold or hot buffets, BBQ's, breakfast buffets or even a 3 course meal. Every detail and menu is individually prepared and planned to suit your needs.





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SWEDISH DELIGHT

IT is no surprise that the fruit and vegetables at Miadel cafe and deli is possibly the best quality in Marbella.

It's owners have been exporting Andalucia's best produce to Sweden for nearly three decades.

Sourcing their wares from all around the region, nobody has a better grasp on where to find the best avocados and mangoes, not to mention chirimoyas and starfruit.

But their wonderful supermarket and cafe, just off the A-7 near Puerto Banus, is a genuine Aladdin's Cave of goodies. While mostly catering to the Scandinavian market, this is THE place to pick up excellent fresh bread, as well as pastries, cheeses and cold meats and plenty of organic produce, including free range eggs.

There are also over 100 different wines from all around the region and abroad and a lovely back garden to eat sandwiches, quiches and salads made on the premises.

It can be found at Calle Rio Volga, 3, in Nueva Andalucia



SCANDINAVIAN
Deli & Café



Monday - Friday - 10.00 - 19.00

Saturday - 10.00 - 17.00 Sunday CLOSED

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Calle Rio Volga 3 29660 Nueva Andalucia, Marbella



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