

# All about **Manilva, Sabinillas and Duquesa**

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## Take Five

C/ Isaac Peral, 6, Sabinillas  
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# WE GOT HOOKED

**The ports, beaches and hilltop town of Manilva are home to a significant foreign population. Joshua Parfitt finds out what's drawing them in**

**A**T Kinsale restaurant in the heart of Duquesa port you can order a fantastic homemade pie washed down with Guinness, while almost next door is Tim's Fish & Chips. Around the corner buy a copy of your favourite British daily paper, while an English butcher has plied his trade for nearly two decades nearby. Brexit? Sod that. Perhaps that is why the municipality of Manilva has

such a high percentage of foreign, settled residents - 42% according to Dean Tyler Shelton, one of the only British councillors in Spain, and Manilva's councillor for foreign affairs. Officially over 3,000 British expats live in the 17,000-strong municipality, either in the coral-white marina of 'La Duquesa', upon the mile-long beachfront of San Luis de Sabinillas or up on the hilltop lookout of Manilva itself. Though the Brits and the 180-odd

*Continues on Page 16*



**REAL SPAIN:** Authentic scenes from carrying the Virgin del Carmen from the sea in Sabinillas to drying octopus on a line at Punta Chullera



Photos by: Jon Clarke

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## Marvellous Manilva

From Page 15

other nationalities come from all walks of life and occupations (some have even set up a newspaper here, yes Sabinillas is the home of *the Olive Press*!) they all have something in common.

Like Manilva's first health tourist, Julius Caesar, who visited the Roman baths around 60BC, it seems that people come here for a temperate life beneath the jaw-dropping mountains, fed by the fruits of the sea.

Walking around the yacht-dotted marina I meet expat John Jackson, a 73-year-old Scotsman, counting the fish in the shallows, watching them eat crumbs from his pan flauta, or Spanish baguette.

"It's a really well maintained port,



MURAL: Showing famous grape pickers



VARIETY: Take a history tour at Duquesa's Castillo and then enjoy the unspoilt coastlines nearby

friendly and safe too," the former business consultant told *the Olive Press*.

John moved to la Duquesa in 2012, where in the winter months the marina remains virtually untouched by tourism.

Wandering the cozy, pedestrianised streets, it's clear that this place is small enough for everyone to know everyone - and while collecting my chips and curry sauce from a takeaway, a local waiter pops in to practise his English.

Nearby, San Luis de Sabinillas offers another take on coastal living with its collection of 'chiringuitos', where the salt sea air is flavoured with the aroma of 'pescaditos fritos' - fried fish, Spanish style this time.

These informal beach restaurants often open around Easter in preparation for the holiday season, and in the winter lie dormant like a grapevine, waiting for the sun.

February is exactly the right time for British expats Peter and Jackie, who have had a holiday home here for the past 12 years.

They say they come to 'Sabi' - as they affectionately call the town - in winter to escape the biting cold of England and to avoid the bustling crowds of summer.

On Sundays, however, the famous flea market Rastro de Sabinillas proves that the Spanish do not hibernate and there is still much to see and to do.

Held weekly at the fairground off the Camino de los Baños de la Hedionda, the Rastro is a bargain hunter's paradise stretched across 300 stalls piled with jewel-coloured fruit and veg, antiques, local handicrafts and

second-hand designer wear.

Running further west the other side of Duquesa, the coastline gets wilder and less and less developed.

Here, you will find an extensive nature zone and golden beaches edged with wild grasses and flowers.

The Punta Chullera area is a rock-pool potterer's paradise and offers the occasional curious sight, such as fresh octopus hanging on washing lines to dry (see front page).

Here is where I meet Belgian biker Robert Vermeulen, who winds the rocky headland 'to do nothing' but enjoy his retirement.

The 68-year-old makes the journey to the beach from his Casares pueblo apartment by motorbike to take long walks and soak up the sea air.

"I think the coastline is just beautiful," he says, in his leather biker's jacket as the sun pokes out.

The local fisherman still have a place in the community, he tells me, pointing out the numerous vessels parked in front of the promenade.

Next to the gin palaces bobbing at anchor in la Duquesa's pleasure port, he appreciates that Manilva has not lost its authenticity.

If resting on your well-earned retirement laurels is not for you, then you can still head for the rugged hills of Manilva, which unfold like a fan along several walking and off-road trails.

These capillaries are ever more deeply etched into the landscape by the coast's growing number of biking and walking enthusiasts who enjoy the trips into nature.

Adventurers should also make a pilgrimage to Manilva itself, which traces its roots dominance back to 16th century vineyards famed throu-

**The market is a bargain hunter's paradise stretched across 300 stalls**

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**FECUND: Collecting the potatoes in the Rio de Manilva valley**

ghout the world for their sweet wines, known locally as 'vino mosto'. The story of its thriving wine industry is beautifully told at the Nilva Wine Museum where you can also take a vineyard tour. While meandering through the resting vineyards I bump into Dave and Nicki, who say they only make the trip now for old-time's sake.

Having run their own property business for 15 years on the Costa de la Luz, they came to Manilva to open up shop and capitalise on the throngs of holiday-home buyers eyeing up the area.

The 2008 economic crash changed that and their business suffered in the ensuing years.

"People stopped coming, even the Brits," recalls Nicki.

Despite a tainted experience, the couple say that Manilva is back in business and shows no sign of slowing down, with 'more Brits here now than there have been in previous years'.

Indeed, in the town centre I see both Spaniards deftly opening salty 'pipas' - sunflower seeds baked in shells - in one bite, and two mums with thick Yorkshire accents keeping tabs on their skateboarding children.

Nearby, on the border with Casares, you can go back in time to one of Costa del Sol's earliest recorded new arrivals: the Roman baths of Hedionda.

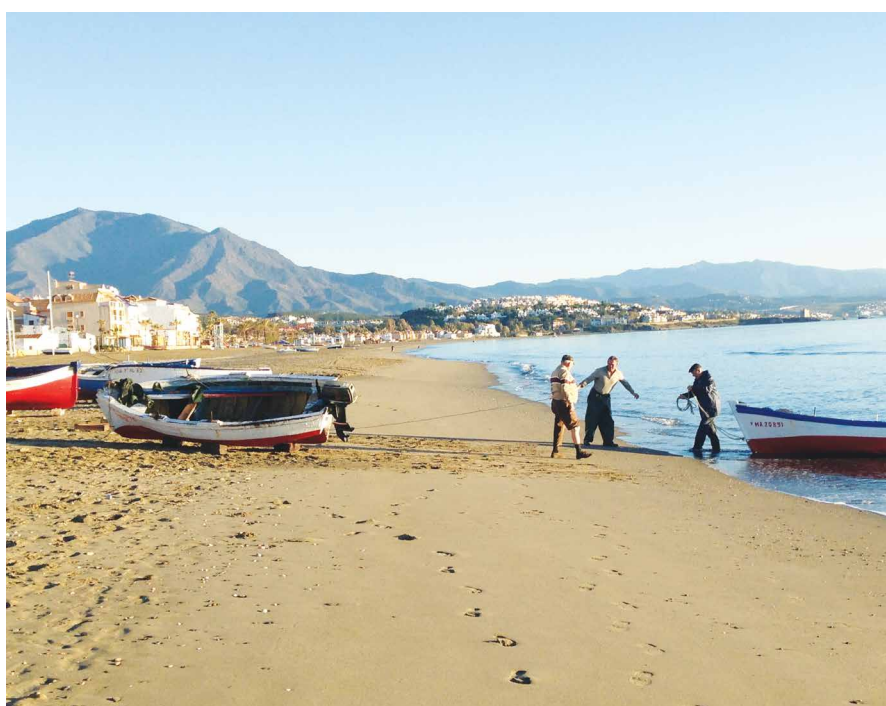
The cloudy blue pools reposing beneath arched brickwork allow you to take in the sublime atmosphere of hundreds of years of history, where medicinal sulphur spring flowing out of from the limestone is said to cure a whole host of ailments, including sunburn.

In fact, that is what brought Julius Caesar to Manilva when he was governor of southern Spain to cure a nasty skin infection.

Apparently, it worked.

Whether here for work or for pleasure, the sun, the sea and the fresh food are never far from people's reasons for residence - Spanish or foreign.

Somewhat it still feels as if a certain spell hangs over these hills, attracting people here from near and far.



**FISHERMEN: Pull up their boat on Sabinillas beach**

# Perfect port

**Duquesa is the true gem of Manilva with dozens of restaurants and an international clientele to match**

**D**UQUESA is a small harbour with a big personality. Any lunchtime, even in winter, the pavements are filled with tourists taking the sun and enjoying the huge range of restaurants on offer.

If the idea of travelling around the world in 80 restaurants floats your boat then this is the perfect spot to drop anchor. A walk around this whitewashed marina takes scarcely longer than five minutes but just count the blackboards promoting cuisine from all over the globe: China, India, Japan, and Singapore, and a plethora of European ports of call too!

It could be argued that La Duquesa lacks Spanish identity, with more English voices than yachts and more burgers than tapas. But step out either side of the port, where Spanish chiringuitos (and boatfuls of grilling sardines in summer) fringe sandy beaches and you'll be left in no doubt which country you're in.

This social meeting point sings through its restaurants, cafes and bars, the people who work in them and the visitors who sit in the sunshine enjoying them.

This elegant enclave of turrets and towers, pretty plazas and steps leading to different levels juts out from the mainland, encircling its attractions like an oyster encloses a pearl.

Quirky and eclectic, it's like a younger sister to Puerto Banus - less glam perhaps, but less snooty too; more affable and, importantly, very much more affordable.

This sociable spirit is enhanced by the people who work here, who hail from all over the world and are woven into the ethnically diverse fabric of La Duquesa.



## Bases covered

WHEN Charlotte Levy met Sandra Marin, the pair immediately hit it off.

While coming from different walks of life - Sandra, 37, is from the Ronda mountains, Charlotte, 22, from affluent lowland Essex - they share a similar world view and get on like a house on fire.

The pair, who both have degrees in business, have now set up a brand new real estate and accountancy firm in the heart of Sabinillas.

Called Le Vack & Marin, the company typifies the rapid changes taking place in the Costa del Sol's fastest-growing resort.

The business offers everything from property sales and rentals to advice for foreigners, help in dealing with inheritance tax and undertaking annual and quarterly tax returns.

The pair originally met, while Sandra was working for Charlotte's father Robin as an accountant in nearby Estepona.

A long-time property developer in the UK and Spain, he has built dozens of homes on the Costa del Sol and spends much of the year here.

"We are all very excited about the changes in Manilva and how quickly things are picking up," explains Charlotte, who spent five years at school in the town.

"We are already building a series of new properties here, which will be available soon."

Sandra continues: "On top of that we are offering to sell homes at just 4% commission and I have been working as an accountant and advisor since 2005 so we have a lot of experience of helping expats here."

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**HISTORIC:** Roman mosaic art in Spain

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**AULA 47**

**Once upon a time  
Manilva was among  
the richest and best-  
connected places in  
the world**

**R**OMAN roots run deep throughout the Iberian Peninsula but this westerly corner of the Costa del Sol really tickled Roman legion fancies for the climate, the fishing, the farming ... and for its strategic position at the gateway to the Mediterranean ... and home.

Stone Age man and many later invaders liked it too but it was the Roman Empire - to which it once belonged - that really put what we now call Manilva and San Luis de Sabinillas on the map.

What did the Romans do for us? They made the region rich, they brought work, they built roads just like in the Monty Python sketch. The area was as well-connected then as it is today. They left behind fascinating ruins and a working Roman health spa you can still check into. And it's free.

### First, a little history ...

Baetica, the Roman name for Andalucia, became one of the most dynamic and economically developed regions in the far-flung Roman Empire, rich in resources and modern in outlook, even welcoming liberated slaves. Before the legions arrived in

# EMPIRE DAYS

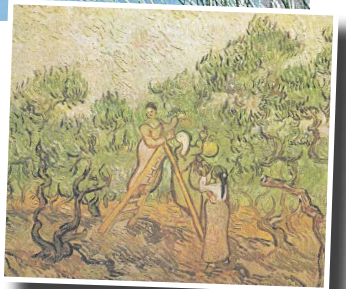


**VIA ROMANA:** Roman bridge at Banos de Hedionda

the second century AD life was hard and simple, the land dotted with small and isolated

agricultural settlements. However the development of a fish salting industry fuelled by increasing Roman presence on the Iberian Peninsula saw most of these segmented populations moving to the coast, settling in the town we now call San Luis de Sabinillas.

At that time, salt curing was the best method for preserving fish for export by sea to Rome and other parts of the Empire. Manilva became known as *Salturnum* and came under the administration of *Conventus Gaditanus* - a vast region stretching from modern-day Cadiz province and along the the



entire Costa del Sol to Almeria.

Casares, under the Roman name of *Lacipo*, was a strategic gateway from the valley to the mountains of Cadiz and Malaga. Manilva and Casares boasted road links as

**Showcases the  
remnants of  
Roman Baths,  
curing factory and  
even a necropolis**

good as EU funding has provided today. They were connected by one of Baetica's main thoroughfares to Carteia (currently San Roque where the Roman ruins of Carteia still partially survive), Corduba (now Cordoba) and the city of Baetica, together with Italica and Hispalis, both in the Sevilla region.

Some of that amazing infrastructure still survives. Roman remains can be found in Sabinillas, Haza del Casareño, Lagunetas, Manilva and Castillo de la Duquesa which showcases the remnants of a Roman Baths, town, curing factory and even a necropolis.

However, undoubtedly the most popular 'asset' is La Hedionda, the Roman baths built around a natural mineral spring where Julius Caesar himself is said to have cured a skin complaint. Still in working order today, the name means 'stinky' in Spanish and comes from the sulphurous waters which smell like rotten eggs.

The good times ended when Baetica was invaded by Visigoths and the Roman's Iberian empire fell around 5AD. People started to abandon the coastal settlements, returning inland in search of other ways to survive, perchance to dream of the glory that was once Rome.



**HEALING:** Taking a swim in the Banos de Hedionda

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## Manilva over millennia

**6,000 BC** - Neolithic farmers arrived in Manilva, leaving stone tools and pots in places like the Sierra de la Utrera caves, just north of Sabinillas.

**1,500 BC** - The Phoenician civilisation spread across the Mediterranean, leading to settlements in Cadiz (meaning 'fort' in Phoenician) and the Castillejos de Alcorrín settlement in Manilva.

**200 BC** - The Romans invaded the Iberian peninsula in 206 BC, establishing a fishing village in Manilva. Julius Caesar became governor of Southern Spain in 61 BC and is believed to have cured a skin disease in the Roman baths at Hedionda.

**711 AD** - The Moors invaded the Iberian peninsula and established the settlement of *Martagina* just south of La Chullera.

**1400-1500 AD** - Barbary pirate raids forced most of the population to flee into the hills for security. However, many still returned daily to fish.

**1515-20** - Following the Reconquista, the Duke of Arcos conceded land in present-day Manilva to the fortified town of Casares for growing grapevines.

**1530** - The hilltop village of Manilva proper began to take shape thanks to its Duke, who parcelled off pieces of land to encourage people to settle there.

**1722** - The Church of Santa Ana in Manilva village was destroyed by an earthquake.

**1796** - Manilva gained independence from Casares, when it was given a 'royal privilege of the town'.

## The Olive Press talks to Manilva mayor Mario Jimenez Rodriguez



### What is the biggest draw to Manilva?

I'm a big fan of the green spaces and the fantastic expanse of coastline, some 8 kms in total. We are working really hard not to over-develop the coast and have actually dropped density levels since I came to power

### What about the history here?

Well there is actually an incredible amount to enjoy, such as the castle, near Duquesa, and the fascinating Roman archaeological site we are currently exploring beside it. The Romans had a key base in Manilva and we understand they made a lot of the celebrated fish paste Garum here, which was exported back to Rome. I am also fascinated by the Fortress of Los Castillejos de Alcorrín, an eighth century castle - and much older settlement - which was only discovered in 1989.

### Why did you run for mayor?

I've now spent 16 years in public office, and have held posts such as councillor of sport, youth and infrastructure, as well as working in the technical office in the Association of Municipalities of the Western Costa del Sol. But as I am from here I wanted to come back and help my village, where I originally ran a plumbing shop.



Everyone welcome in our green paradise

### VINES AND MORE: View from village north-east

### After two years in office, what have you achieved?

I am happy with the changes we have made to the historic centre, as well as the covered pool in Sabinillas and the improvements with the wine museum. I think we have bettered the local quality of life (better cleaning, more green spaces and gardening, etc) while also lowering taxes for three years in a row.

### What steps are being taken to get the type of town you want?

We're very lucky that Manilva has a lot

of potential in terms of tourism, sport and culture. My plan for the future is based on creating new infrastructure projects and aiming to get 5% of the cultural tourism that comes to the Costa del Sol.

### How would you define yourself politically?

While initially from the IU (United Left) party I am much more central in terms of my views today. I live in the heart of town, near the town hall and feel like just another member of the community, leaving my door open to everyone.



### CHANGES: In town centre

### Any future projects you want to highlight?

We're due to further improve the historic centre of Manilva, in particular with four streets and with more works on the church. I want to encourage more people to come up to the old town.

### Any message for the foreigners here, particularly with Brexit looming?

We are very proud that so many foreign residents have chosen Manilva as their home, in particular the British, who number 3,168 out of our official census of 17,500. We know there are many thousands more, perhaps 5000 who come and go and we hope they continue to enjoy our town. And we will certainly make you feel welcome whatever happens with Brexit. We are really hoping for a positive result on March 29.



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*Fish Restaurant in Sabinillas – Specialising in 'espeto' skewers and fish – Chiringuito Ramos, a place you should visit*





# Manilva Properties



**Duquesa – ref: R3336592** **from €129,800**  
Bedroom: 2 Bathroom: 2 Build: 96m2 Terrace: 28m2

48 Modern residential apartments situated in a privileged location next to La Duquesa golf course. The project offers wide common areas with swimming pool, gym and social lounge in a private urbanization where tranquility prevails. Panoramic sea views.



**Duquesa – ref: R2175053** **€249,000**  
Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2 Build: 120m2 Terrace: 26m2

FRONT LINE GOLF - Large south facing duplex penthouse. The development is very well located, within walking distance of all amenities, including local beaches, the marina of La Duquesa, supermarkets, town of Sabinillas.



**Duquesa – ref: R140245** **€245,000**  
Bedroom: 2 Bathroom: 2 Build: 88m2 Terrace: 16m2

Front line beach modern ground floor apartment – situated in the much sought after development of Marina del Castillo. Only 3 minutes walk to Puerto de la Duquesa. Modern style building with 24 hour security, elevator, communal pool and sauna.



**Duquesa – ref: R3166123** **€395,000**  
Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2 Build: 130m2 Terrace: 32m2

FRONTLINE BEACH – This fantastic 3 bedroom ground floor apartment has been built to a very high standard and is located on one of the most luxurious and popular Urbanisations in La Duquesa with direct access to the beach.



**Duquesa – ref: R3240679** **€495,000**  
Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 3 Build: 178m2 Terrace: 650m2

Off-Plan – 42 Luxury Villas. The villa has been designed to maximize the flow of indoor and outdoor that is so essential to tropical living. All the villas will be built with the best materials and all will have an "A" energy certificate rating.



**Duquesa – ref: R3287701** **€175,000**  
Bedroom: 2 Bathroom: 2 Build: 85m2 Terrace: 15m2

Location, Location – Close to all amenities. South facing corner penthouse with garage + Storeroom. located on a quiet complex with well tended gardens & swimming pools, Excellent Investment property.

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# Manilva Properties



**Duquesa – ref: R3337393** **360,000**  
Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 3 Build: 160m2 Terrace 220m2

Close to all amenities – Private heated pool and sea views. This large corner townhouse has the largest private garden on the development. Very unique property and fantastic opportunity for either living or rental investment.



**Duquesa – ref: R3240643** **from €395,000**  
Bedroom: 4 Bathroom: 3 Build: 190m2 Terrace: 506m2

A unique and contemporary development of 17 luxury villas located just 500 meters from the beach and amenities. Large, high quality homes that will be built on plots of 605 m2 to 650 m2. The villas comprise of a large living room, garden, private pool and parking area for 2 vehicles.



**Duquesa – ref: R3341299** **€150,000**  
Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2 Build: 125m2 Terrace: 40m2

Lovely 3 bedroom 2 bathroom townhouse with private garden and roof terrace on a gated development with large communal swimming pool and children's pool within walking distance to the beach.



**Duquesa – ref: R3347260** **€275,000**  
Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2 Build: 148m2 Terrace: 70m2

Exceptionally spacious 3 bedroom 2 bathroom townhouses with underground private garage, situated in a gated community with 3 swimming pools. The house features a high general standard of fixtures and fittings – Cream marble floors, double glazing, hot and cold air conditioning.



**Casares Costa - ref: R3347260** **€325,000**  
Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 3 Build: 130m2 Terrace: 42 m2

Luxuriously furnished in a secure gated community only 10 minutes from the beach. Air con throughout (hot/cold) and situated in one of the most exclusive developments on the Casares Costa.



**Duquesa - ref: R898018** **€160,000**  
Bedroom: 2 Bathroom: 2 Build: 87 m2 Terrace: 22 m2

Front line Golf South facing spacious apartment, consisting of 5 large community pools, one for children, barbecue area, Padel Tennis, well kept community with low community cost. Garage and storage included, Sold fully Furnished.

## YOUR SEARCH HAS ENDED

**Manilva Properties has been serving the area for a decade, but has never seen so much growth than the last few years**

If you're looking to sell, rent or buy a Manilva home then look no further than Manilva Properties.

The clue's in the name, and after nine years in business, the company is now connected to more than 960 real estate agents along the coast...and Manilva is hotter than ever.

Just ask London-born boss Shaun Parr, who launched the company with Yorkshire pal Chris Hoare almost a decade ago. Both live in the Manilva area. "Over the last three to four years this area has become far more popular due to its exposure to several well known TV programs".

"We mainly cover the Estepona to Sotogrande areas with Manilva still being our biggest market," says Shaun, who has worked in property on the Costa del Sol for 15 years.

"The interest is still majoritively from the British but we have Swedish, Norwegian, Belgian, Dutch and even Middle Eastern clients

interested in this area."

And it's no surprise, says Shaun: "Manilva has a much more relaxed vibe than other expat hotspots and there's a great mix of retirees and families and of course younger workers who cross into Gibraltar each day."

Manilva Properties has an extensive track record in selling homes, with years of experience in showcasing properties to the largest consumer base possible.

"Being exposed at such a high level allows us to reach the highest amount of buyers, helping you sell at the best terms and price,"

Shaun adds.

And if you're a landlord, there are plenty of opportunities for prospective renters - especially thanks to the big employers in nearby Gibraltar.

"With our close ties to several large gaming and financial companies on the Rock, demand is still outstripping supply, so these are some great opportunity for investors" explains Shaun.

**So whether your a landlord or vendor, visit [www.manilvaproperties.com](http://www.manilvaproperties.com) or call 952936106.**



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## Taking care of business

**T**HERE is not much economist Gabi Recio Madrona does not know about Manilva. And when it comes to numbers... his family have been taking care of business here for most of the last century. He and his team at Recio & Madrona have many expat clients, pro-

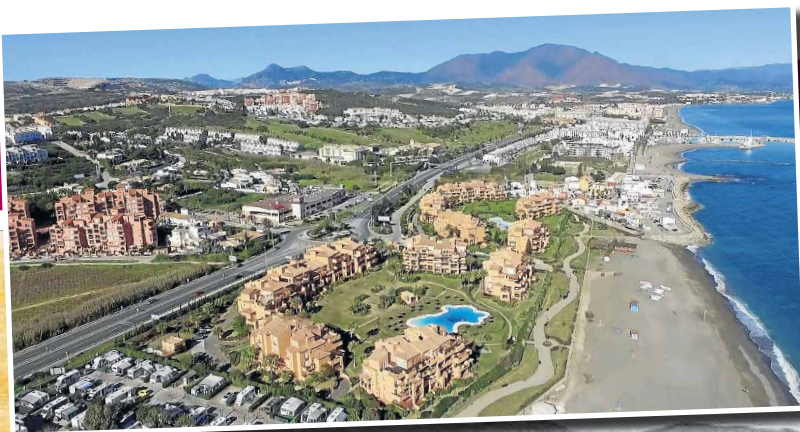
viding everything from tax and accounting advice to vehicle transfers, property registry, wills and inheritance.

After training in Economics at Malaga University, he became a tax consultant in 1995 before expanding into administration management in 2013. He often enlists the services of his cousin, Juana, who has been a lawyer since 1997, as well as other trained accountants and asesores.

"We are known for being trustworthy and professional locally and can more than take care of your business," insists Gabi.



TRUSTWORTHY: Gabi Recio



**NOW YOU DON'T SEE IT:** Now you do... how the popular resort of Sabinillas has expanded in just a few decades



**LEADING THE PACK:** Ex British Prime Minister Ted Heath enjoys a flamenco show on the terrace of Venta Madrono (right)



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## Landmark venta

**Venta Madrono has been a  
stopping off point for centuries**

**F**OR decades it was the stop off for artists, politicians and celebrities.

So, it was something of a tragedy when Venta Madrona was knocked down due to the construction of an underpass through Sabinillas a decades ago. One of the main stop-offs for travellers between Gibraltar and Malaga for centuries, the historic restaurant was always full and served up an excellent range of dishes.

"We had an amazing range of visitors, including Frank Sinatra, Ted Heath and former Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez," recalls the son of the former owner. Now running his own wine and lottery shop, La Mar de Vinos, at the same spot, Jose Antonio Madrona recalls the frequent visits from famous flamenco stars like Valerin and Camaron, Spain's most famous flamenco star.

"He was often here as he was a friend of my uncle. He stayed the night and frequently sang. I remember even dancing for him as a child."

The venta, which was built in 1929, also counted on the founder of Andalusian nationalism Blas Infante as a regular. "He had plenty of meetings here in the run up to the civil war," added Jose, who studied history at Malaga University, before studying viticulture.

The shop - which has almost 1000 references of wines - sits right next to the roundabout and is very much one of the main hubs of the community - like Venta Madrona before it.

It was once a key lunch stop on the coast...now it is a wine and lottery shop

As well as a fantastic selection of Spanish wines, from



**BLASTS FROM THE PASTS: Manilva in the 1960s and 1970s**



around the whole country, there is a good mix of champagnes and sherries.

In addition, the shop stocks a great array of delicacies, including pates, cheeses and sauces... and, of course, the coast's favourite English newspaper, *the Olive Press*!

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### Rose to the challenge

AN expat favourite is celebrating a successful first year in business with an exciting new menu.

Since opening last February, the Rose & Thistle in Duquesa port has made a name for itself for its superb bar and grill menu and traditional Sunday lunches.

Now it will be the only venue in the port to offer succulent rotisserie-cooked chickens, to eat in or takeaway.

In addition, new dishes being added include slow-cooked chorizo in red wine, roast topside beef with horseradish and roast loin of pork with apple sauce.

And there are plenty of vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options, including a Mexican quinoa stew and garlic mushrooms with lemon and fresh coriander.

"We've had a brilliant first year and want to thank everyone for supporting us," said British owner Simon.

Food is available from 1pm Tuesday to Friday and 1pm on weekends, and starting in March it will be opening for breakfast.

There are also multi-screen TVs for a wide range of live sporting events and there is plenty of live music including favourites such as Rocking Jonny and the UK's number one Michael Buble tribute act Peet Rothwell.

### Winner, winner, chicken dinner!

ONE of the Costa del Sol's most famous chicken restaurants is FINALLY reopening after a huge upgrade.

Restaurante Las Brasas, in Sabinillas, will open the doors to its revamped eatery on February 29, much to the fanfare of locals and experts who have missed tucking into its juicy rotisserie chickens for the past couple of months.

The much-loved joint promises unbeatable prices for large portions of roasted meats, excellent rice dishes and fish.

Serving everything from chickens to BBQ pork ribs and paella, the favourite will also offer a takeaway service, available on 952 893 198 (phones will not be answered on Sundays or bank holidays).

### There is more than just good fish restaurants in the seaside resort of Manilva, writes Jon Clarke

EVER since I took a photo of giant octopus' drying on a line at one of my favourite secret chiringuitos a few years ago (see front page), I have known that Manilva is a little different. But being the definite Wild West of the Costa del Sol, you definitely take your chances when it comes to eating here... Believe me, I've had some shockers! Certainly when it comes to seafood you can hardly go wrong with **Ramos** restaurant, established since 1962 on Sabinillas sea front. Run by local brothers Manuel and Juan Antonio for the last few decades (one front of house, one in the kitchen), it has the perfect location with stunning views up and down the coast. It is famous for its 'espeto' skewered sardines cooked on a boat outside, as well as any other fish you fancy and it's not only good value, but its staff are incredibly friendly. Just around the corner sits another institution, **La Casita**, where Gabriel and his wife in the kitchen have never rested on their



BROTHERS GRIN: Manuel and Jose



HATS OFF: To team at La Casita



# Net gain

laurels.

Indeed, the pair have been serving an excellent mix of international dishes for 17 years, since they arrived in Spain, via Italy, from Argentina.

Expect to eat delicious prawns, tender rabo de toro and succulent steaks, and remember to book, particularly at weekends when it gets incredibly popular.

Another good place nearby is **Miel**, run by friendly Belgian Kaat Buelens,

who also plays a key role at the emblematic **Roman Oasis** in nearby Casares in the summer.

Her beach spot though is very much an institution with high standards for breakfast and lunch and is very often full.

Other nearby spots to eat include legendary long-standing pup **O'Callaghan's**, run by friendly British expat Rob and his dad, as well as **Cafe Není**, where Jose and his team serve breakfasts and pastries from early morning, tapas for lunch and bar snacks into the evening.

And don't forget **Take Five**, an amazing cafe for snacks, while **Pollo Pronto** is an institution for take away roast chicken and chips.

On the subject of chic-

ken, you will be (and I mean this) amazed at how good the poultry is at **Las Brasas**.

While winning no beauty prizes sitting on a roundabout with no views apart from the N-340, it

nonetheless draws in punters - and hundreds of them on busy days - from many miles around for possible the best chicken on the Costa del Sol.

Heading up the coast to the port of Duquesa, I rarely venture past **Kinsale** and it doesn't matter when or at what time, as this institution has been serving good-value food for decades and for an amazing 365 days a year!

"And we stay open late, often very late," explains manager Tom McNeil, 24, from Berwick-on-Tweed. "Put it this way I often bump into the cleaners coming in when I am locking up for the night."

A bar/bistro it has an excellent range of dishes, and always some superb specials including great homemade pies, as well as paella.

With 20 staff, service is fast and efficient and you won't miss a game of football or rugby with nearly a dozen big screens.

In Duquesa you have a warren of other good places to eat including the decent **La Taberna 2**, as well as **Capitanos** and **Parapiros**, two of the longest-running Italian restaurants on the coast.

You will also find an excellent Moroccan, called appropriately **Casablanca** and its neighbouring joint, the **Mexican Grill**

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**PORT VIEW: From the terrace at Kinsale**

**and Bar**, which is authentic in the extreme.

For Manilva's best fish and chips you need to head up the road a little to track down **Marlows**, on the main road, which first plied its trade in Gibraltar in the 1960s.

A true institution, owner Steve Marlow, has run restaurants around the world and is a classically trained chef, with a good knowledge of the business, having learnt everything from his father.

Punters often drive for over an hour - from Ronda, for example - to sample the amazing cod and chips. Last, but not least, if you are looking for something amazing in the hills, head inland past Manilva to the neighbouring village of Casares.

You cannot fail to be blown away with **Sarmiento**, which sits above the most photographed white town in Andalusia, with views AND food to match.

Already winning plaudits from food websites including El Tenedor, which ranks it as the 34th



**MOUNTAIN ESCAPE: Sarmiento**

best restaurant in Spain, it is run by capable brothers Juan and Miguel.

Their head chef is Victor Carracedo, who has also worked around the world for leading chains, including Ritz-Carlton and Hilton, and is currently head chef at Marbella's five-star Don Pepe hotel. Their new restaurant is 'based on the essential pillars of the Andalusian lifestyle: authenticity, spontaneity and the enjoyment of friends and family'.

## Pluck of the Irish

**E**XPAT couple Danielle Carroll and Michael McGuinness haven't looked back since opening a pub on the Costa del Sol just over two years ago.

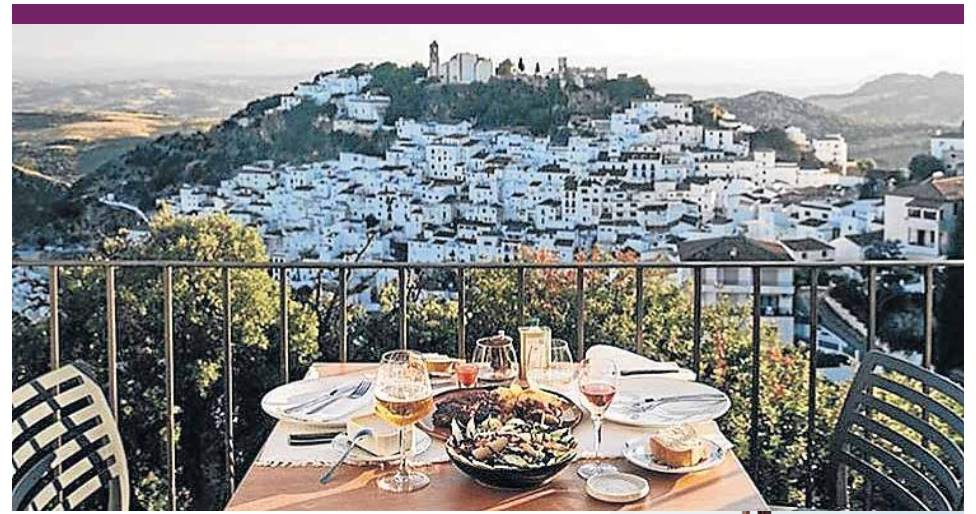
Despite not having pulled a pint in her life, Danielle, 26, from near Belfast, has successfully launched the friendly pub with partner and ex-barman Michael, 27, in the heart of Sabinillas' expat community.

And if you recognise the bubbly couple, you probably saw them on your screens last year when they appeared on Channel 4's *A New Life in the Sun*.

The hit show documented the young pair's stressful renovation project and the ups and downs of launching a new venture abroad.

Well its been up and up for the popular pub, which attracts expats and locals with its competitive prices and unique cultural offerings.

An Irish music trio (featuring one Scot) brings the crowds each Saturday night with their fiddles, guitars and traditional singing, while fun game show nights see hundreds of euros up for grabs for lucky punters.



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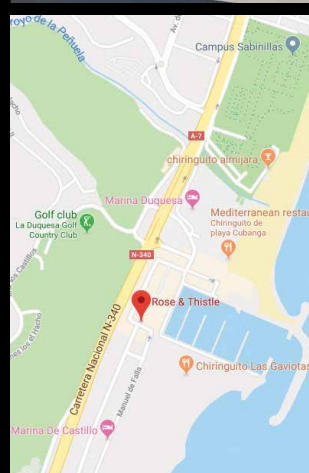
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