



All about Sierra Nevada

Going downhill fast

Jon Clarke on the terrors of attempting to teach your children how to ski

If there's one golden rule of skiing it's DON'T teach your children how to do it.

It was a lesson I learnt the hard way when I recently found myself flailing down a green run in the Sierra Nevada with both my youngsters in tow.

Enthusiastic and fearless - like their dad - they had somehow persuaded me to take them up for a couple of runs before their scheduled lesson was set to begin at 11am.

But when we all fell over in the first lift queue I got the hint that I might have been a touch foolhardy.

Pulling them both up again we finally alighted the chair only for Alfie, my five-year-old, to fall off the other side, stopping the lift for him to be scooped up by the lift operator.

Within 30 seconds of moving again came the first cry of cold and then the announcement that he was 'not going to ski down'.

And after falling over again as we got off the lift, I felt pretty certain he was going to have to be carried down.

However, he suddenly got his ski legs and we took off - well tumbled really - down the slope. I had tried to get their skies into the classic snowplough position and told them to head sideways not straight downhill.

But, of course, it doesn't work like that and while Alfie went left, Maia, eight, shot off to the right, screaming blue murder.

A horrible moment having to decide which

of your two children to save, I plumped for the youngest, a daredevil, with no fear, but no sooner had I picked him up, I skidded off after Maia, who was by now on a totally different run 100 metres away and in floods of tears.

We regrouped and I attempted to get them to follow me down in a zig zag with promises of bravery medals and hot chocolate at the bottom.

After five falls each and a shout from an angry teacher, when we bombed straight through his class sending the pupils tumbling, they made it to the bottom with, guess what, huge smiles on their faces.

It was a lesson in damage control and I just about passed, but I vowed to leave the job of training them to the professionals.

The rest of the hour before their lesson was spent on the very, very nursery slope (and its bizarre 'magic carpet' tunnel), luckily with a Dutch friend and her daughter, who was an equal novice.

Up there on the one degree slope practically nothing can go wrong, and it was a huge relief when I handed them over to the very capable teachers at the EIE ski school, whose patience apparently knows no bounds.

So why on Earth am I so keen for my youngsters to learn to ski?

The unselfish reason is I want them to develop

a skill that will keep them fit and that they can enjoy for years to come.

The selfish reason is that I want an excuse to go to the Sierra Nevada as much as possible throughout the season.

For there is nothing as lovely as taking in the mountain air and breathtaking views of the Sierra Nevada. Bright sunshine, a gentle breath of wind and a glass of Veuve Cliquot in the champagne bar on the way down.

Now something of a winter ritual since moving to Andalucia over a decade ago, a day or weekend away in the Granada skiing resort is always great fun.

Heading up with friends, there are usually between 50 and 100kms of runs in a good year and the choice of places to eat in the resort is surprisingly good, not to mention good value compared to the normal skiing resort prices.

Then, of course, you get the health benefits. All that fresh air and movement for hours at a time has got to be good for you. My search engine produces millions of results when the keywords 'health benefit' and 'skiing' are entered.

A random look at one describes it as so 'Pure zingy mountain air contains lower levels of oxygen than we are generally used to... the body becomes more efficient in its circulation and oxygen delivery... which is great for sluggish desk-bound types! Quite.

It goes on to talk about stress-busting, facing fears and overcoming

frustrations.

Without a doubt few things are as exhilarating as heading to the top of the highest ski lift, at 3,300 metres, just below Mulhacen, where the views make the Mediterranean below look like a small pond, with half the coastline of Morocco clearly in view.

It is an amazing place, although it can be a little nippy up there with the wind whistling past, so make sure to bring a coat and jumper.

From here, competent skiers are spoilt with the amazing runs of the Laguna de las Yeguas area, including the celebrated Olympic run, which is full of twists and turns.

Here, you can sometimes find yourself skiing alone midweek and the sheer nature and landscape are spectacular.

While a modern resort, Pradollano itself is a pleasant place to simply take in the air or a spot of lunch, and there is a fair amount for children to do, with entertainers and Disney figures wandering around, particularly at Easter and Christmas.

It has also, rightfully, got a good reputation as being a resort for fun, with the famous *apres ski* being some of the best in Europe.

The resort really started to evolve quickly from 1995 when the World Skiing Championship was

Skiing: Who would have thought it could have become so popular since Norwegian Sondre Norheim invented the modern binding in the 19th century and called the resulting downhill traverse *slå lom* (meaning tricky route)?



MOVIN' ON UP: Maia and Alfie on the 'magic carpet'



I DO not participate in any sport with ambulances at the bottom of the hill" Erna Bombeck, 1927-1996

scheduled to be held there (it actually took place the following year due to poor snow).

"Since then the infrastructure changes were huge and it is now a big resort," explains Giles Birch, who has run the rapidly-growing British Ski Center for over two decades.

"It has one of the longest seasons in the world, opening at the start of December and often going through to mid May. There have even been snowfalls in June and when the snow and weather are favourable, the openness of the terrain provides some of the most exhilarating off-piste

skiing to be found anywhere."

And so ultimately came as a lovely surprise that after one of the most exhilarating mornings skiing I could remember, I picked up my kids with huge smiles on their faces.

I proposed lunch down in the resort with their mother to which, they screwed up their faces and insisted it should be a *bocadillo* and chips at the top, followed by an afternoon's skiing with dad. I can tell you it got better. And by the end of the second day, these two tornadoes were hooked. It made my year.



IN SAFE HANDS: Jon finally hands kids over to a teacher

**SIERRA NEVADA
TELEMARK**
ESQUI • SNOWBOARD • AVENTURA

SCHOOL RENTAL

FREERIDE EXCURSIONS

MOUNTAIN GUIDES

Alpine
Snowboard
Telemark
Mountain Ski
Crosscountry
Snow Racquets

958 481153
telemark@telemark.es

We speak good english

www.telemark.es

20% DISCOUNT IN RENTAL
WHEN BOOKING LESSONS

LAS GONDOLAS
RENTAL & SCHOOL X SKI & SNOWBOARD

PLAZA PRADOLLANO, EDIFICIO TELECABINA

Information and Reservations:
657 454 448
Email:
lasgondolasrentalschool@gmail.com

All about Sierra Nevada

It used to be a two hour bus ride from Granada and then a donkey up the slope

Route to the top

THE only way to get to the top of the slope was to walk... or take a friendly donkey! Indeed, until the first two ski lifts (Borreguiles and Parador) were built in 1969, this was the preferred route. The resort actually dates back to 1912 when

Spain's oldest ski club, the Sierra Nevada Society was founded. However, it was not until the 1920s - with the modernisation of Granada's roads - that the Sierra Nevada started to become known. By the late 1950s a bus used to chug its way

up to the slopes, while cars would turn up in their dozens at weekends. Visitor numbers slowly grew and then, in 1964, Cetursa, a business dedicated to reserving ski tickets, was founded. It was around then that the resort was at its

most glamorous with the likes of Principe Alfonso Hohenlohe, the owner the Marbella Club hotel, regularly bringing up friends, including Sean Connery to ski. The best selection of old pictures, not just some of the vintage visitors to the resort, can

be found in the charming Tito Luigi restaurant, which has been open for 25 years and counts the King as an occasional visitor. "We have had them all in here," explains owner Javier, who hails from Menorca. "Spain's best footballers, bullfighters and its leading politicians... everyone loves to ski in the Sierra Nevada." One of the longest-established workers in the resort Jose Carlos Villanueva remembers the 1960s well.



CHANGES: Buses used to chug their way to the top, before skiers had to walk or take a donkey to the pistes. Now it takes 30 minutes from Granada and a tiny bit more by skateboard!



Easy does it for the southerly skiers

IT is incredibly easy to have a couple of days skiing in Europe's most southerly skiing resort. Just two hours from the Costa del Sol, you head up to the resort of Pradolano, 20 minutes above Granada, where you can park easily in the underground car park right below the main square for around €20 for the day. Staying longer - or on a budget - take the turning left, marked 'albergues' just before you arrive and head uphill through a pine forest, before taking a right towards the resort. Drive down a long windy road through the resort, keeping your eyes peeled for a free space, but beware tow trucks are out in force and you will be towed away if you park badly. From here, you are a five or ten minute walk down to the centre of the resort, where you will find dozens of places to rent skis and buy your forfait (or ski pass) from a machine using your credit card. It is not cheap at between €37-45 euros for a day's skiing, but you can get a half day for just over €30 kicking off at 1pm and children get decent discounts.

No surprise

"I actually had my first communion on the slopes wearing ski boots and a jersey. I was the only one in Spain!" He had arrived there in 1961 when his father got a job running the 'alberge' one of just three buildings in the resort back then. Living there for five years, it was no surprise that he always had a strong urge to return and at the age of 15 he became a ski teacher. Now, appropriately - after 38 years teaching and an incredible 50,000 students - Jose Carlos is running the charming bar Bodega Casablanca.

SURFIN
SIERRA NEVADA

Visit our shop for the latest equipment and clothing collections from the best makes with personal service from dedicated snowboarders and surfers

20 years experience teaching snowboarding on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada - learn now from just 35 euros per person

Edif Mont Blanc, opposite Melia Sol y Nieve Hotel - Tel: 958481190
www.surfin.com.es | info@surfin.com.es

Brits on the pistes

British ski teachers Giles Birch and Jonathan Buzzard still love the Sierra Nevada two decades on

WHEN Jonathan Buzzard walked into Sierra Nevada's seminal Crescendo bar in the early 1990s, Giles Birch knew he had found his man. With a long flasher's mac, 'big hair' and a friendly, outgoing persona, he knew he would make the perfect transport rep. In his first season working as a coordinator for the big travel companies, including First Choice and Thompsons, he needed someone with a bit of knowledge and experience to help him out.

"I had no idea what was going on but had been told that Crescendo was the place to find the Brits and the reps-in-the-know," he recalls. "Next thing in walks Jonathan with just the right attitude and he was soon helping me deal with the three to four flights we regularly dealt with on a Sunday." The pair are still working together some two decades later, collectively running the extremely successful British Ski Center from their base near the resort. Great mates, they both now teach,

TAKING OFF: The British Ski Center is still going strong



GOOD FRIENDS: Giles and Jonathan have worked together for 20 years

as well as sort out holidays with the help of two staff, Kristel and Alastair, for hundreds of clients each year. "Of course things are completely different to what they were back then," explains Jonathan, who lived in Marbella in the golden years before it was ruined by corrupt leader Jesus Gil. "We used to bring in thousands of foreigners every week, but after a couple of dry years in the 1980s the resort's reputation suffered badly and things all began to change.

Hard to beat

"Luckyly the snow came back, but these days it is all independent travelers and the agencies have all but disappeared." Of course there have been some

bad years such as 1995 when Jonathan recalls cycling up Borreguiles run on a mountain bike in shorts on Christmas Day. "But generally it is as good as most other international resort and the range of skiing and schools is hard to beat," explains Giles, who particularly likes the length of the season. "We start in late November and stay open until early May while other resorts don't open until mid December and end their season in March." This is partly due to the resort's altitude and the quality of the snow which is constantly worked on during the night. "That's why you'll never see slush even in the latter part of the season," he adds. Visit www.britishskicenter.co.uk for more info

Into the wilds!

Not certain about skiing? Why not take a mountain adventure with Telemark ski school instead

THERE is off-piste... and then there is off the scale! With Telemark you can have a wilderness trip that literally ends up in another world... the charming cobbled villages of the Genil valley. Specialists on the slopes for over two decades, the company offers one and two-day cross-country adventures into the mountains. Both trips end up taking you through deep off-piste snow onto narrow mountain tracks.

"We try to put an emphasis on ecology and nature and it is impressive to see the typically old farmhouses in the area and how little they have changed," explains boss Luis Casanova, who spends the other half of the year in Africa. "It is a real, fun adventure, something you will not forget. "Best of all, a team of mules ends up helping to bring your stuff back to Pradolano," adds Luis. The day trip costs just € 100 per person and includes trans-

port and lunch. Another popular pastime for those, who don't fancy risking life and limb on the pistes, is to have a day of cross-country skiing on two or three well established paths around the resort. "It is great fitness and you do get to enjoy the fabulous views and nature at the same time," he adds. The company can also help organise hard-core uphill climbing for mountaineers to a half day soft snow walking trip with snow racks. www.telemark.es



DONKEY POWER: Back to basics off piste

ADVENTURE: Telemark offers another option for those seeking the wilds



SPAIN



expert 20days For expert
2 days tickets **59€**

long expert 50days For expert
5 days tickets **143€**

inicia 20days For beginner
2 days tickets (see calendar)
• ski/sb rental • ski/sb school **99€**

SNOW UP
Healtsensation
DO YOU BELONG TO UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY? THEN, COME TO SIERRA NEVADA.

+34 958 24 91 11

www.snowup.es



Andalucía

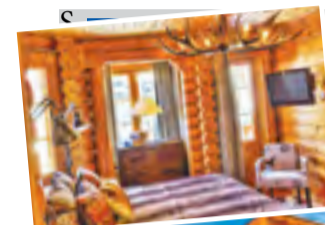


Where to stay

Sleep in the hills

It is hard to describe Pradollano as an authentic mountain village. But, with a metre of snow on the ground and the sun finally out, it certainly has its charms. In terms of places to stay there are plenty of modern hotels, such as the stylish Sol Melia in the heart of the town or the five star Vincci at the top of the hill. But by far the hippest – indeed one of the

coolest in Andalucia – is the recently opened El Lodge, owned by the Marbella Club group (see below). Bought by the group last year, the stunning conversion was undertaken by London interior designer Andrew Martin and it counts numerous stylish touches. Another true stalwart is Hotel Kenia Nevada, which is well located near the centre of town and open all year. Run by the friendly Don Pe-



Skiers can now rest and recuperate in five-star luxury of El Lodge, writes Jon Clarke



Alpine style

It was first earmarked for the King. So El Lodge was always going to be one of the more upmarket places to stay in southern Spain. But it is the quirky feel of the place, original décor and amazing extras, such as 'boot warming' and outdoor slippers - not to mention a lift to the slopes in a Hummer - that makes this such a superb place to stay. There is literally nothing normal about the latest addition to the hotel scene in the Sierra Nevada. With Spain's only outdoor skiing resort swimming pool - heated to 38 degrees - and a Turkish bath, sauna, gym and jacuzzi in the basement, El Lodge was designed with an emphasis on luxury. Expect to be wowed by the dozens of special

touches from the 14-speaker sound system on the terrace to the Space Invader video game in the lounge. There is even a Minimec kids club in the basement and a fantastic lounge, where you can watch vintage films. I was lucky enough to be the very first guest to stay in the hotel, as part of this supplement on the Sierra Nevada last year. I lived like a king and drank vintage champagne with hotel manager Francisco and area general manager Franck Sibille.

The place is a true stylemeisters dream. Nordic-style with a unique ambience, it has the feel of a hunting lodge, but with natural materials that echo its location. Styled by London designer Andrew Martin, its alpine charm has been complemented with faux skin throws, cow hide armchairs and stylish antler-chandeliers. Best of all though is its restaurant, which has a similar menu as the Marbella Club grill and a similar team of top class chefs and waiting staff. The tartare of tuna with avocado was elegant and tasty, as was the wild sea bass with guacamole. With just 18 rooms, El Lodge retains the feel of a private chalet and can be booked by room per night or in its entirety for private parties.



More information and bookings www.ellodge.es

YIPPEE! The snow is back! For the best value to the coolest apartments in the Sierra Nevada

Visit www.apartamentosurnieve.com or call 638340553



dro, it is clean, well run and serves up one of the best breakfasts in Spain. It also has gym and plenty of communal areas. For those looking for a budget option why not stay outside the resort at Hostal Los Puentes, which also has an excellent restaurant with superb home-cooked food. Open now for nearly 40 years, the owners are friendly and make a big effort to make you feel at home. You can park for free and get up early to drive into the resort. Another good option is to rent an apartment in the resort, which can cost from €50 a night. The best specialist for this is to use the excellent company Apartamentos sur y nieve, which has no less than 35-odd properties at their disposal. Run by friendly Rondenans Juan and Rocio, they will find you the best possible deal and can help with any number of other requests. Visit www.apartamentosurnieve.com



SLEEPY TOWN: but plenty of beds



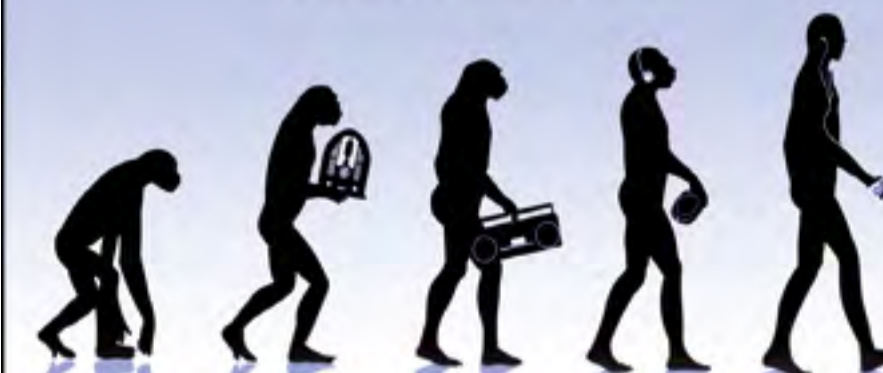
Music • Food & Après Ski

Plaza Pradollano
Edif. Genciana
Frente Telesilla Parador



ENGLISH SPEAKING RADIO HAS FINALLY EVOLVED

talk radio europe
Your voice in Spain
and around the world on the internet



COSTA DEL SOL
Costa del Sol East 88.9fm
Costa del Sol West 91.9fm

COSTA BLANCA
Valencia - Denia 104.6fm
Denia - Cullera 8.9fm
Ibiza, Benidorm, Alicante 88.2fm
Elche, Torrevieja, Orihuela 105.1fm

COSTA CALIDA
La Manga, Murcia, Mazarrón 92.7fm

ALGECIRAS / GIBRALTAR
Algeciras, Los Barrios Gibraltar, San Roque, Sotogrande, Casares, Sabinillas 98.7fm

MALLORCA 103.9fm
IBIZA 104.6fm



Tel. +34 952 799 953
www.talkradioeurope.com



la Muralla
Restaurante

Specialists in top quality meat on the grill



Edificio Mont Blanc, Local 26, Sierra Nevada
T: 958 481 162 / 677 413 331

6



Where to eat

From piste to plate

Jon Clarke runs a rule over the incredible range of dishes on offer in the Sierra Nevada



MASTERCHEF: Stevie at Ci Vediamo

ON the walls of restaurant **Tito Luigi** lies the evidence that he has provided good food and ambience for the past 25 years in Sierra Nevada. Alongside photos of the King with its owners Javier and Luis (see page 21) are snaps of politicians, flamenco stars and bullfighters who have all come up to enjoy its unique brand of hospitality. As well as organising parties in the 'secret' cave at the back, diners are treated to a great range of pizzas, salads and pasta dishes in the wooden beam restaurant. My pick: most definitely the spaghetti with salmon and caviar. But every year the quality of

food improves in the Sierra Nevada. While you might expect stale canteens and raclette, the truth is you are rather well served in the gourmet stakes. There are some excellent tapas bars, including the amazing **La Muralla**, rarely empty and with some delicious foods and wines by the glass. Its owner Gonzalo is a particular foodie with a good knowledge of Spain's best products. I particularly enjoyed the selection of tostas, one with Iberian pork and Badajoz cheese, as well as the superb *milhoja* of foie gras with goats cheese, caramel and apple, which exploded in the mouth.

All about Sierra Nevada



Another great place to tapear is **La Lonja**, which rightly calls itself the best place to eat seafood in the mountains. Buzzing at lunchtimes, the selection of marisco is impressive and there are always fresh lobsters waiting to be cooked. On the slopes for 28 years, boss Antonio began life as a waiter in Granada, but now counts the King as a four-times visitor. He has another restaurant in Sanlucar de Barrameda and unsurprisingly stocks its famous langoustines, as well as knocking up a fine tuna tartare

The bar has a great range of photos and memorabilia and is well worth a look in

and some great shrimp *frittatas*. Next door, try not to miss **Bodega Casablanca**, run by Jose Carlos Villanueva, who grew up on the slopes, with his father opening one of the first hostals in the 1960s.

He, of course, knows a fair bit about catering, and the bar has a great range of photos and memorabilia and is a great place for tapas or simply to hang out. His chef Mari Fe, from Pais Vasco, knows a bit about food too and you will love the prawns wrapped in potato with a lovely mayonnaise, as well as lovely lamb chops with whisker thin wild asparagus. Another great tapas bar, with a real slant on top quality meats, is **La Carreta**. It has a superb selection of hams and chorizos and its owner Paco is a real whizz on the grill. Without a doubt, the most consistent restaurant is the brilliant Italian **Ci Vediamo**, where chef/owner Stevie Silva produces a great range of food. Silva, a professional snowboarder, has a great range of light bites, a splendid pizza oven and some chestnuts such as a superb duck roll with ginger, guacamole, tuna and soy sauce. There are fabulous mini 'gam-

bas pil pil' hamburgers and a lot of the classics such as *raclette* and *provolone* with tomato. That said the mozzarella and caviar pizza takes some beating and the wine list has an excellent and good value range. For a great place to eat overlooking the slopes make your way to **Tia Maria**, which has a good mix of dishes and is a great place for breakfast. Sister restaurant of the charming Tito Luigi, it is also very much an institution - open for 16 years - and with a decent selection of Tex Mex dishes including guacamole, quesadillas and ribs.



VARIETY: (From top left) Paco at Carreta, Antonio at La Lonja, Gonzalo at Muralla and inset his fabulous 'milhoja'. While (right) Jose from Bodega Casablanca beside a photograph of him as a child

Ci Vediamo

THE SIERRA NEVADA'S MOST ELEGANT RESTAURANT



MICHELIN TRAINED CHEF ESTEBAN SILVA PRODUCES CLASSIC ITALIAN STYLE DISHES WITH A MODERN TWIST

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

DINNER ONLY ON MONDAY TO THURSDAY - 20.00 - 24.00

LUNCH & DINNER - FRI. TO SUN. - 13.00 - 16.00 & 20.00 - 24.00

IT IS IMPORTANT TO BOOK FOR WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS

Plaza Andalucia, Edf. Salvia s/n, Pradollano
Telephone: 958 480 856 - civediamosn@gmail.com



"25 YEARS IN THE SIERRA NEVADA"

EDIFICIO MONT BLANC, Local 31

Tel: 958 480 882

TITO LUIGI 2

EDIFICIO AMÉRICA. Zona Intermedia

Junto Parada Telesilla Paradot

Tel: 958 481 215



Pizzas y comidas para llevar

La Lonja Restaurante

The best seafood in the Sierra



Open every day 1-6 and 8-12

Edif Impala, Sierra Nevada

Tel: 958 480 662

Email: libertadafrica@yahoo.es

RESTAURANTE



La Carreta

Edificio Mont Blanc, local 30
Sierra Nevada
To book telephone 646 137 963

Sierra Nevada snow, sun and much



Much
more
family entertainment



A great deal
more
sport

Sierra Nevada will once again host twenty-odd official competitions of all disciplines and categories of winter sports during the 2013-14 season. For their commitment to the basic sport and their effects on the skiing talents, the most noteworthy of these is the ISF-World Schools Championship Ski, which will bring the best schools with a ski team in the world to the resort pistes.

The Spanish National Alpine Ski Championship will be particularly relevant and used to open the Universiade piste in an official competition, the new speed race setting in Sierra Nevada, which is currently operating as a commercial piste.

Much
more
than a mountain

Does a leading ski resort exist at only 30 minutes by car from a monumental city famous for its cultural and leisure facilities, at only 90 minutes away from the resplendent Mediterranean beaches, and with half a dozen golf clubs on the way? Sierra Nevada, Granada and the Costa Tropical have all these and a great deal more in an environment difficult to find in any other part of the world.



The family grows up in Sierra Nevada at the same time as entertainment facilities increase; because the size of the family and beginners' area has extended with the start up of a new conveyor ski lift service in Borreguiles to a new skiing area ideal for the little ones to take their first turns on the snow. With the new Maitena carpet there will now be three in operation in the Beginners' area where there is a daycare centre and the Dream Land, an ideal centre where the little ones can put on their skis hardly before they can walk.



A great deal
more
than a skiing resort



With more than 105 kilometres of trails contained in 118 ski runs, Sierra Nevada provides one of the largest and most attractive skiing domains in southern Europe. This most southernmost winter resort in Europe stands out as having the greatest skiable vertical drop in Spain (1,200 metres), for the size of its trails, and for the daily ski slope grooming (382 snowcat-groomed hectares), with clean, wide, obstacle-free slopes for all levels.

A great deal
more
fun for young people



For a couple of seasons now, on the Sierra Nevada pistes it has been rumoured that "something is happening at Loma Dilar". And what is happening is in fact that ever since the Sulayr Terrain Park was set up the Loma de Dilar area is now a worldwide point of reference for freestyle: tricks, impossible somersaults, extravagant manoeuvres, pro riders and gliding in an explosion of colour with juvenile audacity. The biggest permanent half pipe in Spain and one of the biggest in Europe puts the final finishing touch to installations that have absolutely everything.



Follow us on:



/sierranevada2.0



/@websierranevada



/SierraNevadaTV

sierranevada.es

+34 958 249 111

Andalucía ESPAÑA

