

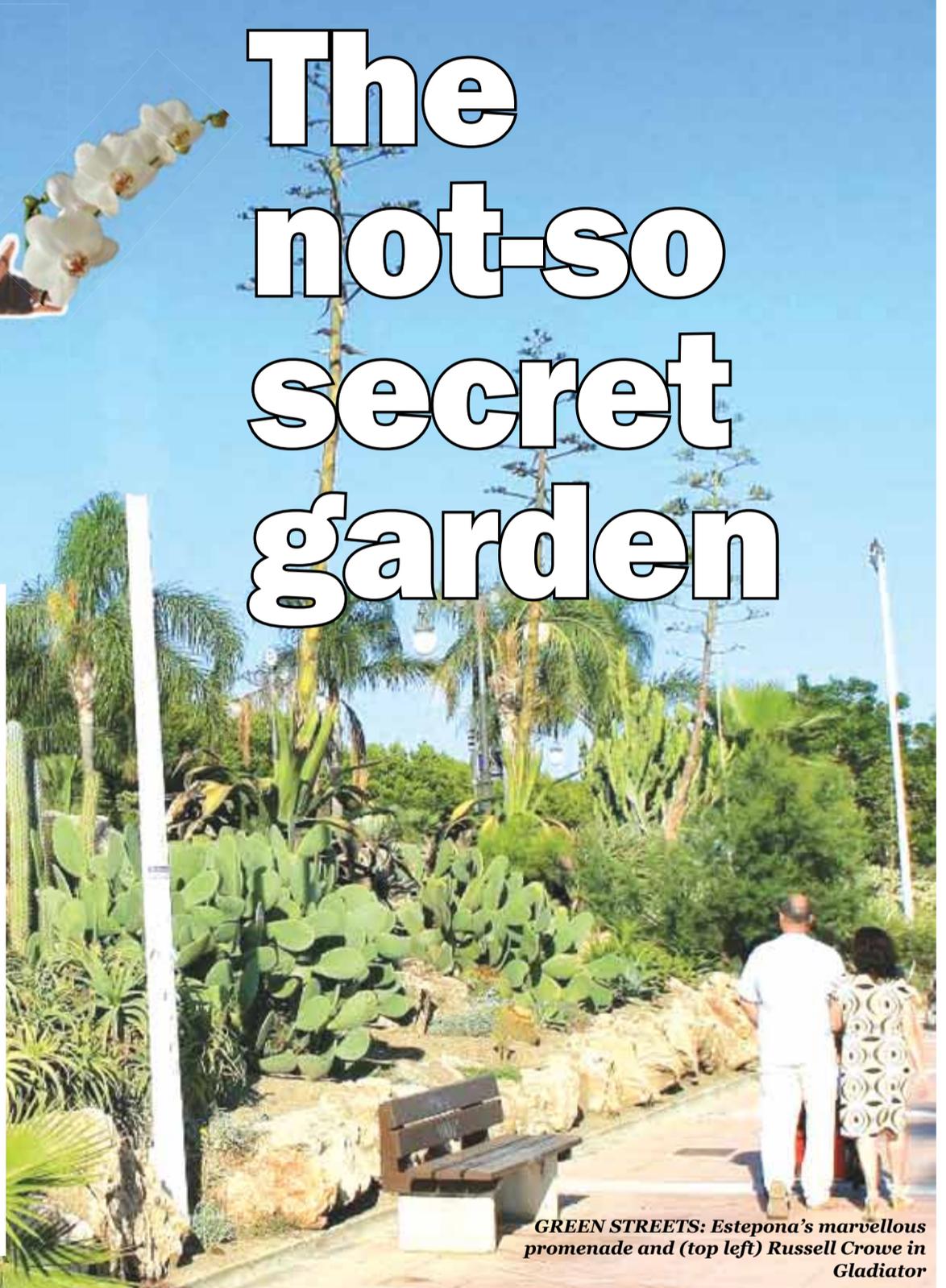


## The not-so secret garden

**It's a beach resort with pots of charm and now with a Gladiator helping its latest horticultural happening take off, Estepona is turning its neighbours green with envy! Rob Horgan reports**

If you've been to Estepona of late, you'll know that half the town's gone quite potty. Potty for plants, that is. There are flower pots all colours of the rainbow decorating every wall of every street, along with hanging baskets, verdant verges and floral borders perfuming the air. Which makes it the smelliest town on the Costa - in a good way! But that was last year's news. This year, Estepona's secret gardeners have really come out of the closet with the opening of the town's new pin-up tourist attraction: The Orchid House, an awesome secret garden growing under glass. A trio of waterfalls nurture over 8,000 species of orchids under three giant glass domes. With water cascading from the ceiling into a pool below, and - somewhat bizarrely - the soundtrack to *Gladiator* playing in the background, it's not so much an attraction as a 'horticultural happening', underscoring the new green direction Estepona is taking. The Orchid House reflects the town's mission to break away from the hackneyed 'sun, sea and sangria' mantra some Costa towns still cling to. And with more than 100,000 visitors expected to generate €2 million a year, it's far more than a futuristic greenhouse. On opening night, a foray of fireworks were sent high into the sky for all of Estepona to see, a symbolic finale to the town's

Continues on Page 18



**GREEN STREETS:** Estepona's marvellous promenade and (top left) Russell Crowe in *Gladiator*

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total transformation. Welcome to the not-so-secret garden of the Costa del Sol.

It only takes a quick up-and-down through the steep, white-washed streets of the Old Town to get a good impression of its charms but a drawn-out stroll is much more pleasurable.

Cute tapas bars sprout from every corner of every flower pot-decked street. Water-features, murals and a multitude of bijou, flower-fringed plazas spring up in the most unexpected places, inviting discovery.

A major rejuvenation over the last two years has seen the pedestrianisation of Estepona's central thoroughfare, giving it the feel of a traditional white Spanish pueblo.

The town hall has also attached thousands of freshly-painted plant pots to the sides of the houses, allowing the



**IN BLOOM:** The streets have been rejuvenated and (left) the orchid house

locals to choose the colour for their street.

The traditional image of boozed-up Brits living it large on the Costa del Sol could not be further from reality in Estepona's picture postcard Old Quarter.

And it is for exactly this reason that expat marketing specialist Barclay Spicer-Jenkins, 21, loves living here, by the sea.

"Unlike many places on the Costa, Estepona more than caters for the demands set out by large quantities of tourists while retaining its own character and individuality," he explains.

"High rise holiday lets don't scar the landscape, nor are there tacky shops, bars or pubs that give a feel of 'England in the sun'.

"The Old Town is so well-maintained that you experience beauty at every turn and the well-managed flora not only brings an abundance of colour to the area but it also makes the back streets smell glorious."

The idea of living the Costa del Sol life, but in a typically Spanish way, is also what attracted Irish expat Seamus Hayes and his wife Alena to the town last May.

"We first came across Estepona when driving through one evening," Seamus explains. "We felt that it had a real buzz and soon visited every week-end."

"The Spanish feel to the town puts it

Port.

A 20-minute walk up the wide, palm tree-studded promenade takes you into a world that moves to an up-tempo beat more typical of a classic Costa del Sol beach resort.

A wholly different beast to the Old Town, the port is the setting for more tales than you'll find in a Hans Christian Andersen tome - although they're not salty sea dog tales. They stem from the port's frenetic nightlife.

From salsa bars to Irish bars and from

### The port is a breath of bracing sea air for locals and tourists

head and shoulders above other resorts along the coast.

"Living the dream is all that can be said about our time here."

If Spanish tapas bars and late night strolls around identical streets gets a bit too repetitive, for a complete contrast there is always Estepona



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IN a community as diverse as the Costa del Sol it's no surprise to find a thriving expat amateur-dramatics group.

The International Theatre Studio (ITS, as its

often known) has staged every type of entertainment in its 30-year history.

Recent productions have sold out and more people are joining, whether to perform on-stage, help back-stage or just offer support.

Look out, in particular, for 'Lark in the Park', an open-air review in Benahavis, a new touring Murder Mystery play, monthly play-readings and two full-length plays.

Visit [www.internationaltheatrestudio.org](http://www.internationaltheatrestudio.org) or call Kate Jackson (952 880 240) for membership details (benefits include concessionary ticket prices).



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The International Theatre Studio supports local schools, charities and other ex-pat associations

Call Kate Jackson on 952 880 240 or visit [www.internationaltheatrestudio.org](http://www.internationaltheatrestudio.org)

**PORT AND DANDY:  
In Estepona**



Thai to Chinese to Indian restaurants, the port is a breath of bracing sea air for locals and tourists by day and a hip hang-out for the younger set after dark.

It may not have the same authentically-Spanish charm as the Old Town, but it makes up for it with its buzzy vibe.

On a Friday and Saturday night the bars are so full that revelers spill out on to the streets in their own version of the Spanish *botellon*.

On Sundays, the weekly flea market draws in hundreds of visitors from along the coast.

And the port is not the only place to party in Estepona, which has not one feria but

**If there's a reason to celebrate, Estepona's up for it big time**

two. The first one in May celebrates San Isidro, the patron saint and there's an even bigger one in

July, lasting a week and coaxing the whole town out to drink, socialise and party in the sun. The four-day July festival, based next to the spanking new football stadium, includes a live-stock fair, a bullfight, concerts and fun-filled family events.

The locals in the centre don traditional costumes and serve up food and drinks from their houses - the highlight!

And the partying is not limited to the ferias. Christmas, New Year and Semana Santa parades, and civic happenings throughout the year, are all red letter days in any Esteponian's

diary. If there's a reason to celebrate, Estepona's up for it big time,

usually closing off Calle Terraza - the main road through the Old Town - in the name of celebra-

tion, happily trapping everyone inside so they're forced to kick back and enjoy!

While the Old Town preens its new green appeal and the port struts its multicultural stuff, Estepona's historic gems are equally worthy of note although they don't make such a song and dance about it.

From the scattering of watch-towers built to ward off the Moorish invaders to the Arab-built clock tower and the 16th century castle ruins, Estepona is a lady with a past. Destroyed by the conquering Christians in the 15th century and rebuilt by Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand almost a century later, King Philip V granted the town a charter for 600 families in 1729.

Compare that to the 60,000-plus residents today, a figure that more-than triples in summer!

**Spectacular**

The locals are also proud of their 18th century Franciscan monastery, now the Church of our Lady of Redemption. The church tower is a spectacular vantage point. Don't miss the sunset, with the Sierra Bermeja mountain range silhouetted in the background!

If Estepona is impressive at ground level, the views from above are even more enlightening.

The white-washed rooftops are stacked higgledy-piggledy-style, with roof terraces and balconies jutting off at odd angles, a sure sign of a town that has gone its own haphazard way, over the centuries, rather than conforming to any straight-laced rules.

Estepona is a town that likes to do its own thing. Currently, that thing is plants.

Potty it may be but that's all part of the charm.

**OFF THE WALL!**

IT'S quite literally the most off-the-wall collection of urban art on the Costa del Sol.

Everyone from top international artists to creative prison inmates have contributed to Estepona's amazing al fresco art gallery of 24 murals glamping up bleak concrete buildings around town.

Every other high rise is bursting with colour and imaginative designs - from dancers and divers to optical illusions which deceive the eye from a distance.



The latest addition to the 'Artistic Murals Route' is a gardener cutting bougainvillea on the side of Victor de la Serna school

by Jaen painter Jose Fernandez Ros.

The impressive 'Fishing Day' mural, also by Jose Fernandez, occupies 1,000m2 across six separate buildings - and holds the record for the largest vertical mural in Spain.

Artistic inmates of Alhaurin prison meanwhile created six-metre-long metal sculptures for one mural which recreates the sea floor as part of the Moraga Collective initiative.

Erin Aman whose work is featured in San Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, is another of the famous contributors to the off-beat outdoor expo.



**MURAL MURAL ON THE WALL: Which is the fairest of them all?**

April 2nd  
www.theolivepress.es

**Off the wall**

LIFELINE: The gardener tends to Estepona's bougainvillea

**Self promotion**

MANILVA tourism office is jumping on the selfie bandwagon in a new promotion drive. The tourism office has launched a Twitter contest to find the best selfie taken in the Costa del Sol town. With prizes including a hotel stay, dinner for two and sports equipment, Manilva residents have until April 30 to snap up the goods. To enter, tweet a picture of yourself in Manilva using the hashtag #ConoceManilva.

pona wall. A gardener tending to a bougainvillea is the subject of a new mural which covers 300m2 - spanning all four facades of a school building. It is the first time Estepona has included a mural route covering all four sides of an entire building. Jaen painter Jose Fernandez Ros is completing the work which covers Victor de la Serna nursery and primary school. Once the mural is complete, it will be the 24th piece in Estepona's mural route. Fernandez Ros has already created two town hall-premiered pieces of art, one of a fisherman and another of a girl watering flowers. The first, titled *Dia de Pesca* (fishing day), was the biggest vertical mural in Spain, spanning 1,000m2.

**FLASHBACK: Our mural article in last issue**

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# All about Estepona

Advertorial

## Changing gears for a quarter century

How one Estepona expat family has created one of Spain's leading repair centres for automatic gearboxes

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THEY have been thinking out of the box for quarter of a century... the gear box that is.

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business specialises in the repair and service of automatic and transfer gearboxes for all makes of car.

The company has grown into one of Spain's leading transmission repair and service centers boasting the latest diagnostic equipment.

While brothers Robert and James Sutcliffe run the business, father Paul, who is semi-retired, spends most of his time on classic car repairs.

"We recommend drivers undergo regular servicing of the transmission," insists Robert. "While most drivers understand they need to regularly service their car to keep it on the road few realise the gearbox can suffer from high amounts of wear and tear."

In many cases, he insists, garages and even main dealers will not change the oil and filter of the transmission when servicing your vehicle as they lack the knowledge and tools.

"Performing this service is a specialist job which, if not done correctly, can cause premature transmission failure and in some cases the vehicle will not even function after the service," he adds.

Transmatic has invested in machines such as the ATX PRO2 transmission fluid exchanger and the new coolant contamination tester you can be sure your car's gearbox is in the best possible hands.

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Advertorial

## We're the wheel deal

THE team at Premier Bodyshops is dedicated to getting your wheels back on the road at high speed.

Probably the largest motor vehicle repair shop in Estepona, they operate from a 700m2, fully-equipped workshop on the industrial estate.

They undertake all types of accident repair work for vans and motor homes as well as cars - from vandal scratches to major collision damage and convertible roof replacement to windscreen and glass replacement. You name it, they can do it.

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The company also specialises in classic restorations, from bare metal to fully-trimmed and painted running vehicles. Specialist mechanical work can also be undertaken. No job is too big or too small.

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TOP OF THE TOWN: Rob (right) with pals on his terrace



Estepona may not have the same name recognition as its glitzy neighbours but that's the way we like it, writes resident reporter Rob Horgan



# An ode to Estepona

**E**IGHTEEN years in south London, four in Hull and a year in Estepona. It's fair to say my latest place of residence is slightly more charming than the previous two.

Like a fish out of water, I was plucked from the mean streets of Croydon and transported to the picturesque streets of the 'Garden of the Costa del Sol' last year.

With the sun shining on my back, I wheeled my worldly belongings behind me along the paseo in a suitcase with only three wheels.

As it bumped and scraped along this popular walking thoroughfare I looked out to the Med and, with the sight of a jagged rock to my right and views across the ocean to a faraway land, I thought to myself: 'why the hell haven't I lived here all my life?'

Four days of panic-stricken, house-hunting later and I found the dream flat, replete with massive roof terrace and views across the Old Town as an added bonus.

Since then I have got to know Estepona well, particularly falling for evening strolls around the back streets of the Old Town.

At first I took the beauty of Estepona to be the norm on the Costa del Sol. Since then I have come to understand that I live in the most beautiful town on the coast.

And then I was introduced to 'the Port'. On my first night portside, my new Olive Press colleagues threw me in at the deep end at Irish pub O'Donoghues to sing into a microphone to

the lyrics to Blue's smash hit, 'All Rise'. But all rise, the bar did not.

Starting off well enough, a deadly combination of over-confidence mixed with forgotten rapped verses led to sweating, nervous mumbles and ultimately, a disappointed glare from the karaoke master. But I have lived to tell plenty more tales. Now if Irish bars and karaoke don't cut the mustard with you, despair not.

My personal port highlight is the Sunday market which runs from 9-ish (I've learnt time always runs with an 'ish' in Spain) to midday-ish.

With leather goods, electrical gadgets and hand-painted crockery in abundance, the market is the perfect place to snap up some bargains - and proved a lifesaver shortly before Christmas.

Nothing beats the 20-minute walk along the beach to the port, a leaf through the market stalls, followed by fish and chips on the beach on a Sunday.

An afternoon on the beach, with the occasional visit to one of many chiringuitos, rounds off my perfect day - with one note of caution: watch the frisbee-swallowing sea, which has claimed more than one flying disk in my time here.

Other than that I could not have wished for a better start to life on the Costa del Sol. It may not attract TOWIE stars or have the same glitz and glamour as nearby Marbella, but that is exactly why I love it.

It is fair to say that Estepona is one of just a few secret gems left on the Costa del Sol.

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# Don't forget your greens!



By Tom Powell

**TEE UP!:** Golfing paradise Andalucia

**Estepona boasts two of the Costa del Golf's founding courses, and a whole lot more**

**T**WO of the genuine *grandes dames* of the Costa del Golf are found in Estepona.

Both El Paraiso and Atalaya rank with the oldest courses on the coast and were established in the days when

you could build a golf course just about anywhere you liked.

As a result, the quality of the courses is fantastic, built on wonderfully flat land with the mountainous backdrop of the Sierra de las Nieves.

It means you don't lose so many balls and the courses are easy to walk around.

El Paraiso caters for every kind of golfer, boasting seven



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different types of membership and up to eight competitions a week for varying abilities.

It also has an active ladies section, with more than 200 members.

Atalaya Golf Club proudly dates back to 1968, when the design of the course was more important than fitting it between apartment blocks.

Eucalyptus trees, cacti and palms line the club's two 18-hole courses - Atalaya Old and Atalaya New - whose wide, easy-walking fairways pass fountains and flower beds.

As a members' club that is open to guests, the course



**PICTURE PERFECT:** A green at El Paraiso

has a lively community feel and there is always a buzz around the clubhouse.

Although a younger course, dating from 1989, Estepona Golf is famous for superb putting surfaces and sea views.

Featuring strong par 3s, it provides an excellent round for players of all standards, with an 18-hole Green Fee costing just €39 per person.

"Estepona has the best golfing temperatures in Europe, with over 320 days of sunshine a year and an average of 22 degrees," explains Jason Callow, of Estepona Golf.

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For Estepona Golf, call 952 937 605, or email [information@estepona-golf.com](mailto:information@estepona-golf.com)

## Game on

FROM football fans chanting in the stands to volleyball enthusiasts battling it out on the beach, sport in Estepona is booming and everyone is getting involved.

Named the European City of Sport in Spain for 2013, a newly revamped 4,500-capacity stadium is the latest jewel in the town's sporting crown.

And despite Union Estepona CF playing in the fifth tier of the Spanish football leagues, loyal fans turn out in their droves to support them each week.

The town is certainly football crazy, with kids kicking balls about on street corners and the beach soccer pitch rarely out of action.

A six-pitch astroturf arena next to the main stadium is also buzzing with budding Cristiano Ronaldos every Saturday and Sunday.

But it's not all about the football.

Seven-foot giants can often be spotted roaming around the town, as the popularity of basketball spreads across the town.

Padel tennis is also a smash hit with the locals, and with a number of courts across the town there are plenty of places to play.

It is also the time of year that volleyball nets are added to their poles and the locals show off their bumps, sets and spikes.

And there is soon to be another sport to get involved with.

A group of Irish expats are setting up a Gaelic football side and hope to be in training by the time summer arrives.

With teams already set up in Marbella, Gibraltar and Sevilla, the Irish contingent of Esteponians are aiming to tap into Andalucia's fastest-growing sport.

Ex-Premier League football David Bentley has even shown an interest in the sport, so it will be interesting to see which team - Marbella's Costa Gaels or Estepona's new outfit - wins the contest to sign him up.

And with the weather turning warmer, expect to see more swimming trunks and cycling shorts being sported around town soon.



## Advertorial New laundry service in Estepona port

REAL estate firm Time in Spain has added a new string to its bow... a laundry service.

It is a year and a half since Sud's Laundry Service closed down in the port and it has been badly missed.

But now there is finally a new laundry service, with an accessible drop-off point in the Time in Spain office, open from 10am to 7pm Monday to Saturday, as well as 11am to 4pm on Sundays. A one-day service is available for urgent items (for a supplement) and you will be notified by text

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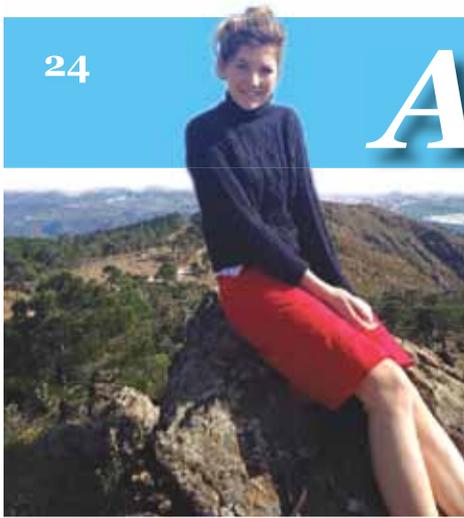
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**ON TOP OF THE WORLD: Reporter Iona Napier atop the peak**

The mighty vermilion mountain looming high above Estepona is a nature reserve like no other, with a wonderful walk around it, writes Guy Hunter Watts

# Bigg Ben

**S**TANDING like a monolith towering over Estepona sits a mountain bigger than Ben Nevis, the UK's highest peak.

The perfect backdrop to the coast's most upmarket resort, this stunning peak, Los Reales, is an amazing place to escape the buzz of the Costa del Sol and get back to nature.

Indeed, this mountain sitting in the Sierra Bermeja nature reserve is about as far removed from the coast as you can get - yet only 8km inland.

The perfect place for a walk, the easy circuit leads to the highest point of the nature reserve, known as the Pico Reales.

Rising to 1,450m - some 106m taller than Ben Nevis - from its antennae-topped summit there's a dizzy, panoramic vista of a huge slice of Andalucía: north to the Sierra de las Nieves, east to the Sierra de Ojen, west to the Alcornocales Natural Park and south to Gibraltar and Africa.

One of its best walks goes through the Pinsapar de los Reales, home to one of the few existing stands of the uniquely beautiful pine, *Abies Pinsapo Boix*, found in less than half a dozen places around the world.

Stop at the great viewing point, the Mirador de Salvador Guerrerero, which entails a short diversion but which is well worth the extra effort. Finding the starting point for the walk is all part of the adventure. To reach the trailhead, you'll need to follow a snaking mountain road inland from the town for about 20 minutes. Here is a breakdown of how to do it:

### Reaching the start

From Estepona take the MA8301 towards Jubrique (it begins next to the Mercadona supermarket on the north of the town) for 15km to the top of the pass, Puerto de Peñas Blancas. Here turn left past a sign for Los Reales, pass a green barrier then continue for 2.75km to a signboard to the right of the road marking the beginning of the Pinsapo walk, Paseo de los Pinsapos.

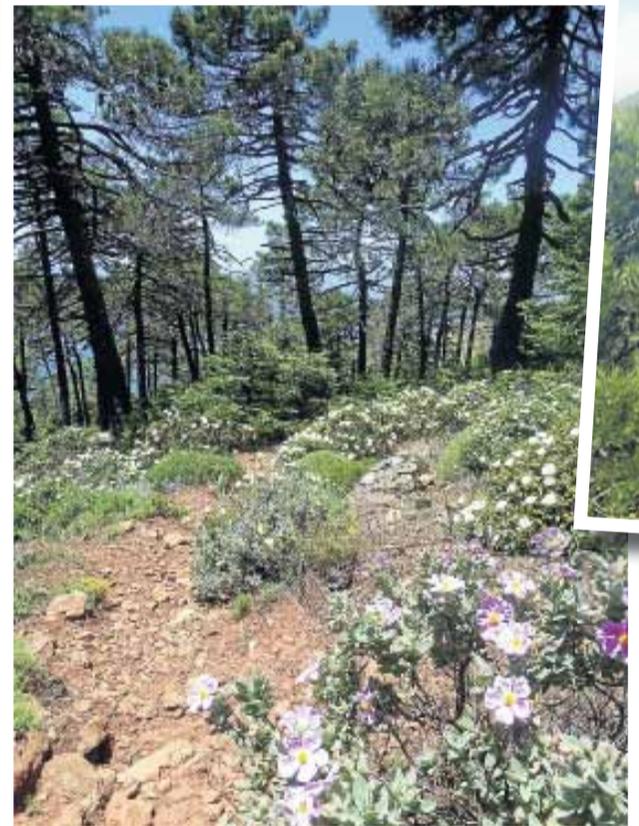
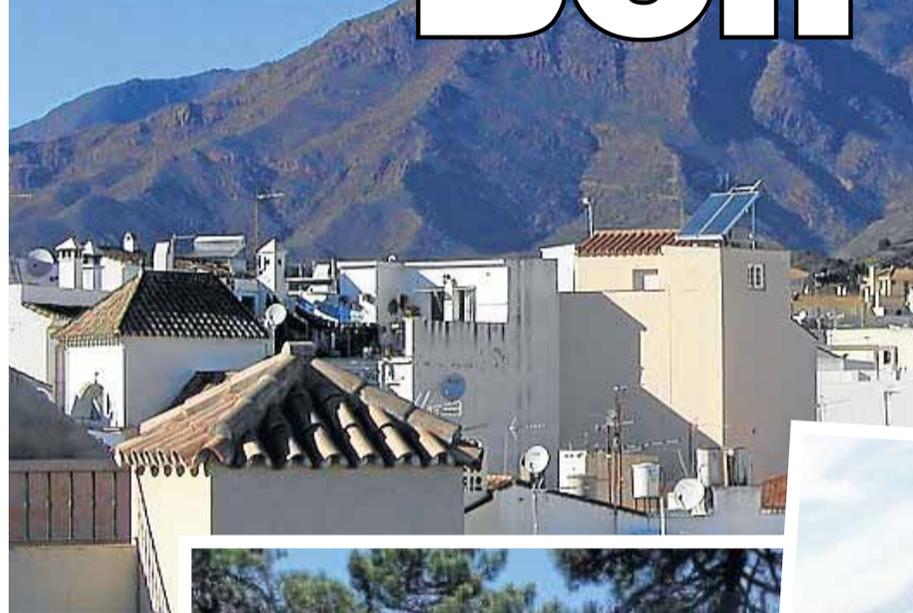
### The walk

From the signboard Paseo de los Pinsapos head down a narrow, rocky path which drops away from the road into the pinsapo forest. Just 75m after crossing a small concrete bridge you reach a junction. Cut left following the sign Los Reales/Los Reales for 2.2km. The path leads past a signboard about pinsapo pines then on past a ceramic sign of a poem by

### Circuit to the Pico Reales and the top of the Sierra Bermeja

#### THE NITTY-GRITTY

**Distance:** 8 km (up and down)  
**Time required:** About 2.5 hours (inc. breaks)  
**Rating:** Easy/Medium  
**Total height gain:** 5,300m  
**Map(s):** IGN 1:50000 Jimena de la Frontera 1071 (14-46) & Estepona 1072 (15-46)  
**Water:** Tap with unchlorinated water @ 1 hr 15 mins



**ROCKY reserve Pinsapo Olive P**

ing a wh follow a the top This is a ible par peak re first wh Five me path wh the tran board f right do eastern another a group tion wit to Edm unique Here, c area, An bles an del Sol. There's warns th the bett Continu ing circ ro. Fro reach o lar view After vis to the E for appr of depa

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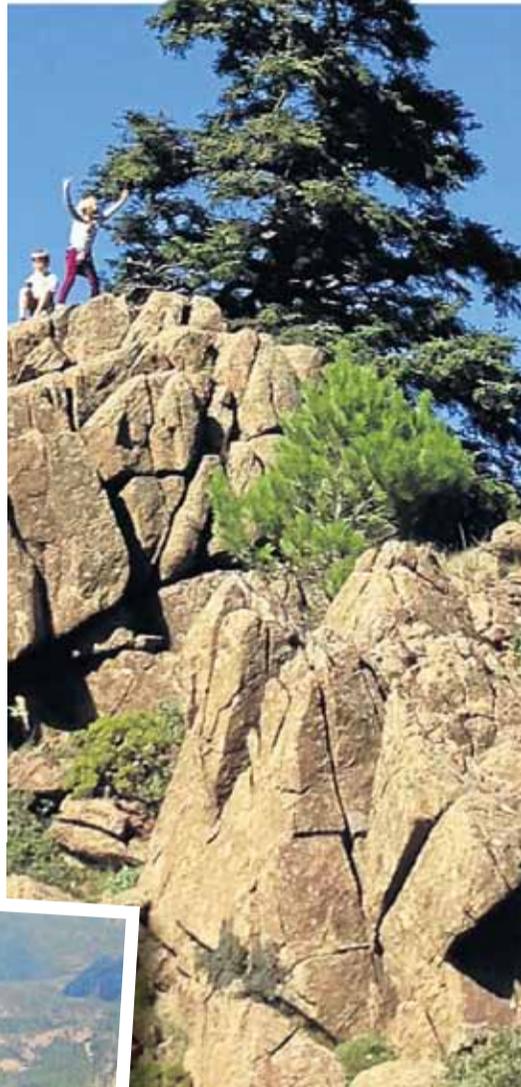
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# er than Nevis!

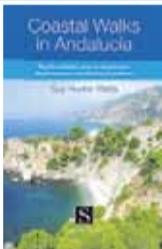


**MOUNTAIN WAY:** The nature is home to extremely rare pines (left) and (above) the press walking team

White hut, cut right, pass a second hut then a narrow path up to the trig point marking the summit of Los Reales (1,450m). (50 mins) is a great spot for a break with the incredible panorama that lies before you. Leaving the summit trace your footsteps back towards the white hut which you passed earlier. 100 metres before the hut cut right on a narrow path which drops down to the track leading to the transmitter masts where you'll see a sign for Sendero de los Realillos. Here angle down a stony track which loops down the left flank of Los Reales, shortly passing by the transmitter mast. Looping on down past a row of forestry buildings you reach a junction with another track and a plaque dedicated to the first Boissier who first catalogued the Pinesapo pine. (1 hr 10 mins) Cutting right for 100m you reach a picnic area Recreativa, where there are picnic tables, just beneath, the Mirador de la Costa

Tap with water to the right: a sign that it isn't chlorinated but the taste is all right for that. Continuing on along the track you reach a turn-off and a sign Mirador de Salvador Guerrero here continue along a narrow path to the top of the Costa del Sol's most spectacular viewpoints. Following the mirador trace your steps back to the Boissier plaque then follow the track on for approximately 1.6 kms to return to your point of departure. (1 hr 55 mins)

This walk can be found in Guy Hunter Watt's book *Coastal Walks in Andalusia*, which contains a selection of 50 stunning walks close to southern Spain's coastline. The walks vary in length and difficulty.



It is available at most bookshops as well as from [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk). Visit [www.guy-hunterwatts.com](http://www.guy-hunterwatts.com)

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# How does your garden grow

Property sales are growing healthily again in Estepona after a few years in the doldrums

WITH the Costa del Sol property market starting to grow again, buyers are flocking to Estepona for their slice of the property pie. Second only to Marbella in terms of demand, the new golden mile, as it is sometimes called, is seeing decent growth this year.

"Things are definitely picking up," explains Adam Neale, from Terra Meridiana, who definitely noticed the trend, particularly with property in the rejuvenated Old Town.

"Now, there's a steady trickle of British, French, German, and Scandinavian clients looking to live in the historic centre," adds the father-of-three, from London, who settled in Estepona a decade ago.

"Many of our Spanish friends who were born here and now live in the suburbs are planning to return too."

"Everyone says the same thing: 'it's so nice to live in a town where almost everything you need is walking distance.'"

And while property in the centre booms, houses in the surrounding urbanisations and at the Port are also set to see an increased interest as a result of the Costa del Sol's property resurgence.



ON THE UP: The garden of the Costa del Sol is in demand, claims agent Adam Neale (inset with wife)

Advertorial

## HOME HELP

A talented photographer and filmmaker has taken over the running of property management business Home and Away

WITH over 20 years experience in property management Home and Away is expanding its horizons with a new manager at the helm. Established in 1993, the company prides itself on taking care of property owners on the Costa del Sol, in particular Estepona.

Now under the management of Mark Hemsley since he took over in August 2014, a range of new services are on offer. In particular to help promote and market their homes for rental or sale.

"Our aim is to build on what was already taking place here," Mark explains. "We want to build on the property management and maintenance side of the business while offering our clients new and exciting ventures."

A trained photographer and filmmaker, originally from England, Mark, who has a Swedish wife, is now offering clients the opportunity to take advantage of his expertise.

Offering two minute short films aimed at property sales/rentals and promotional business video Mark, who has lived around the world in places including Tenerife and Sweden, believes his slick



THE BOSS: Mark Hemsley

video production will give clients the edge.

Home and Away also offer an airport transport service as well as the option to hire equipment, with wheelchairs,

travel cots, z-beds, games consoles, high chairs and much more available to rent. For more information visit [www.homeandaway.es](http://www.homeandaway.es) or call 952 886 492



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**TERRA MERIDIANA** Celebrating 10 years in Estepona



Apartment in Estepona Centro 223.000 €  
Ref: 501-07984P

This 1st floor new apartment has a fantastic position on a lovely square, just around the corner from the beach, with a west facing terrace which enjoys afternoon sun. It comprises an entrance hall, fully equipped kitchen with utility area, a large living and dining room with large sliding doors leading to an 8m<sup>2</sup> covered terrace facing a beautiful square, 2 bedrooms with a shared bathroom featuring a bath and marble tiles, the master bedroom with en suite bathroom featuring marble tiles and walk-in shower. All the bedrooms have fitted wardrobes and there are marble floors throughout and air conditioning. The property is being sold with a parking space included in the price. Must be seen!



Apartment in Estepona Puerto 225.000 €  
Ref: 501-07950P

This bright fourth floor apartment is situated at the front of one of the Puerto Paraiso buildings, directly facing Estepona marina and the sea. It comprises an entrance hall, a large living room with sunny covered terrace and recently fitted modern kitchen (with dishwasher and granite work top) facing the sea, the master bedroom with a large enclosed terrace and bathroom, and a further bedroom and bathroom. Both bathrooms have also been recently refitted. There are 2 outdoor swimming pools part of the complex and a gated parking area for residents. There is direct access to the Marina and all its facilities including restaurants, cafes, supermarkets, etc.



Villa in El Velerin 430.000 €  
Ref: 501-07946P

This rustic-style property is located about 2km from the beach in the countryside, El Velerin, only a 10 minute drive from Estepona town centre and 5 minutes away from amenities. In the main house there is a good size fully equipped kitchen, a guest toilet and utility room, a very large double height living room with dining area facing the main terrace and up a flight of stairs there is the master bedroom en suite, 2 small bedrooms with a shared bathroom and further en suite bedroom with access to a private terrace and connecting to the 5th bedroom. There is a large covered terrace, a beautiful patio area, a large storage room off the patio, a closed garage, a sauna, swimming pool, large orchard and parking area for about 6 cars. The whole property is gated and enjoys some sea views from the swimming pool area. The house has gas central heating throughout and air conditioning. A lovely property sold fully furnished, at a very good price.

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**From young offenders in Leeds to dive instructing in the Caribbean - now Jemma Clements is looking after villas in Estepona**

## Keeping it in the family

**F**OR a 38-year-old, Jemma Clements has had a varied and colourful career.

From teaching young offenders and children with behavioural problems in the UK to working as a dive instructor in the Caribbean, she has certainly had quite a bit of variety.

Her latest career is running Estepona Villas, which offers a personal service to the owners of 42 beautiful villas in



the town.

Alongside her husband James and UK-based lawyer sister Tara, the company is incredibly busy keeping the thriving business in check.

"We work with the villa owners - we do a lot of the maintenance free of charge just to keep the properties ticking over and help the owners out," says Jemma.

"And we offer owners as much or as little as they need - whether you've had the same cleaner for 20 years or whether you've just bought a house and need us to sort out any trusted staff."

Jemma's father, Ian Fishwick, fell into the property business 30 years ago when his mother asked him to rent out her Costa del Sol home.

The favour mushroomed into thriving Mijas Villas which now boasts 85 homes and together with sister company, Estepona Villas, the family business hosts a staggering 10,000 guests from 60 differ-

**IN CONTROL: One of Estepona Villa's homes and (left) Jemma Clements**



ent countries each year and is a real family affair.

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# Benavista

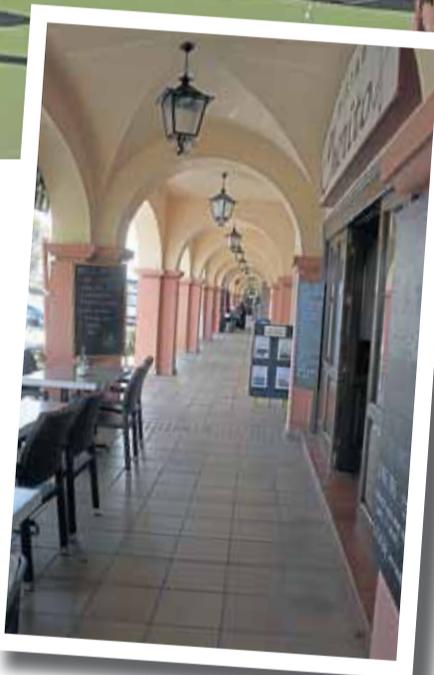
**SOCIAL HUB:** The bowls club and (below) shopping mall



roads.” The bowls club is a real magnet for the area, added entrepreneur father-of-four. “We have many members who play in leagues up and down the Costa del Sol,” he says. “And non-members have their own green.” Down from here a necklace of well set-up urbanisations – Diana Park, Benavista and El Pilar – offer every variety of shop and service, all with an expat twist. They include a range of excellent butchers and cake shops, as well as English supermarkets, curry houses and British bars. It is also the Spanish headquarters of British construction company Roger Bullivant. One of the best shops is Cath’s

Cards, which stocks a fabulous range of greetings cards, balloons and party accessories. “There is pretty much everything you could need around here,” says Pauline Kavenagh, who runs Grumbles Restaurant, which has been open since the late 1980s. And don’t forget, cross the footbridge and you are in Benamara, which has some of the best restaurants in all of Estepona, including Robin Hood, Chilis and Co-

como... and you are just two minutes walk to the beach!



## Man up!

**How Man Friday became one of the celebrated little gems of Estepona**

IT is one of Estepona’s distinctly different eastern districts. But how many people know how Man Friday got its name? The area of shops between Estepona and San Pedro was actually named after a Spaniard Jose Maria, who moved and married a Scottish woman in the 1970s. The all round handyman and engineer returned to the Benamarra area of the coast with his new wife Maria Weldon 30 years ago. “He was a real handyman and we called him Robinson Crusoe, Man Friday and the name just stuck,” explains friendly Maria, who runs the Aliprox supermarket, which is now for sale. Her son Stefan is also running the popular Amara bar and restaurant, which is usually packed at lunch time, particularly if the sun is out. “It’s a great mix of Spanish and English businesses and clients,” he explains. “There has always been a nice atmosphere here and we even have a couple of upmarket French clients.” It is not hard to see why this small parade of shops is a popular stopping off place. Not only can you always park your car, but you have a good range of shops and even a hairdresser David, a keen Spurs fan.

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**DOGGY DREAM:** Kennel hotel

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## 30 All about Estepona

**Y**OU have to head to the four corners of Estepona to really find out what is going on in the culinary stakes.

The best place to start is in Benamara where a group of excellent restaurants battle hard to pack in the punters.

Leading the charge is **Cocomo**, where former Savoy chef Simon Taylor-Lane, gets busier as the years go on.

Having trained with Marco Pierre White at the Criterion in London, he has the classic knack of creating culinary classics and, best of all, at amazing value with a set lunch for just €5 during the week.

He and wife Sally run a tight ship and the pair even come up with their own marketing to boot.

Nearby you have also got the excellent **Tanino**, run by talented Dutch businesswoman Trudy, who has a lovely eye for interior décor and a menu to match.

Meanwhile the brand new **Chillis**, an Indian/Mexican fusion, no less, has just been opened by Raj and Sunny.

Throwing away the rule book, the contemporary decor offers an oasis of calm to ready you for an assault of the spices, both mild and sweet!

### Fusion

Authentic dishes are complemented by fusion tapas served in the bar and there is a wide range of beers, wines and spirits and a takeaway and home delivery service for those in a 10km radius.

For those looking out for something different you must try out Lebanese restaurant **L'Oriental**, recently completely refurbished by an expat couple, who have lived around the world (see article below).

The pair also own the excellent pub, the **Robin Hood**, which has been an institution for years and now has an incredibly fresh, exciting menu, all washed down by a decent range of beers.

Another original spot, well worth hunting down is the country gem **Eden Bar**, located in a stunning location five minutes inland from Laguna Village.

This great rural spot, which dubs itself the 'pub in the campo' has a great kids play park and a legendary Sunday BBQ.

Up in the heart of Estepona you must look out for **Lola's**, run by a French couple from Paris, who also own the superb **Burg Bar** restaurant on Calle Real. They have come up with a great range of tapas, including the fantastic spring rolls (nems)



**CHILL OUT:** But spice is nice at Chilli

## Spice up your life

**Estepona has a splendid mix of good places to eat, writes Dining Secrets of Andalusia editor Jon Clarke**



**STYLISH:** Recently opened 11 y 11 in the port

and snails, and even their very own invention, 'rajaos', which means 'something broken' and is effectively a bread roll with a filling.

If it is fish you are after check out **El Pescador** around the

corner right on the beach and famous for its fantastic sea bass served in a salt crust, or its classic fried fish starters.

One of the town's mostly-highly recommended restaurants, **Sur** is definitely the place to

## From belly dancing to an excellent pint!

THERE is a not so quiet revolution happening in Benamara, where an expat couple have transformed a British pub and brought a spectacular Lebanese to the area, with more to come. The Robin Hood, a fixture for years, has been refurbished into a classy take on a British ale house. A great meeting spot, there is top live entertainment and good, affordable British fusion food. Not forgetting the wonderful Sunday lunch, with booking recommended.

L' Oriental meanwhile is a dining experience you don't want to miss.

One of very few restaurants serving Lebanese cuisine in southern Spain, it is perhaps not surprising that some customers even drive all the way from Sevilla for lunch.

The atmosphere is wonderful, while the surroundings are luxurious and portions generous.

Fun awaits in the evening with live belly dancing, on the beautiful terrace on warm evenings.



**MEETING SPOT:** The Robin Hood



**BEST CHEESECAKE IN TOWN: At Tolone**



eat a steak. Run by an Argentinian dynasty, this is a classic family affair where you will often find father, wife, son and daughter, not to mention son-in-law, helping out. In summer you sit in the charming square with its fountains and views across the sea.

Juicy *empanadas* arrive followed by delicious spinach and pine nuts wrapped in filo pastry and a fresh tropical salad next. There is a good mix of lamb tagines and fish dishes, but it being an Argentinian joint you really need to try the steaks, which are fabulous.

Just across the square is easily one of the best hang outs, or meeting points, in the town.

**Tolone**, run by cultured American Kristi, is now an institution and famous for its breakfasts, juices, cakes and snacks. And it is always busy. A real sun trap, my top tip is definitely the amazing cakes and, in particular, cheesecake created by Kristi.

If it is a good Italian you are after few places come as good as **Rincon Toscano**.

This stalwart sitting in the heart of Estepona old town has fantastic pasta and

pizzas of the most authentic type.

Up in the port meanwhile, a fantastic new spot, also run by Argentinians is **11 y 11**.

A genuine family affair, father Oscar is an accountant, wife Silvia keeps an eye on the kitchen, while daughters Candela and Anabel does are in charge of design and paperwork.

A son Sebastian meanwhile is a famous actor in Mexico so is not so often on hand.

Either way, it is an incredibly stylish place with a fabulous interior and a brilliant sunspot terrace.

It also has the freshest food in the port, with, in particular, some excellent steaks and delicious grilled octopus. If it is a beer you are after then your best bet is the **Irish Fiddler**, opposite the sailing club, which serves up a good range of beers and tapas.

Finally there is **Rick's Cafe**, which specialises in great G&Ts and live music at the weekends.



**GALLIC FLAIR: David at Lola's and (top) Rincon Toscano**

**TALENTS: Chef at Robin Hood and (below) Simon at Cocomo**



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**GOan Try It!**

SPECIALISING in Goan gastronomy, Plan B is a great new place to try out in Estepona Port.

Run by Oscar and Veronika, the food is an A to Z of the flavours of modern fusion cuisine.

The décor is quirky, the atmosphere welcoming and all the dishes are homemade, from authentic curries to a full English breakfast and expect to find some great fresh juices and smoothies.

Open from 10am there are plenty of tapas with an Indian twist and the hosts treat you like family. Plan B, really should be your Plan A.



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