



REGULARS: Visitors to Sotogrande have included Princes Harry and William, Nick Knowles, Rod Stewart and Mariah Carey



Inside a secret world

Shhh and say it in sotto voce...

Iona Napier demystifies the enigma of the discreet enclave, where royals rub shoulders with, well, decent down-to-earth folk

PEACEFUL: Soto's quiet marina captures the area's tranquil vibe

6 tennis courts
3 clay • 3 cushion
5 padel courts

659 453 444
677 589 895

SKY SPORTS

TENNIS & PADEL LESSONS ALL YEAR ROUND
SUMMER CAMPS FOR KIDS
MIX-INS FOR ADULTS

f [tenisocogonosotogrande](https://www.facebook.com/tenisocogonosotogrande)
www.tenissotogrande.com
clubdeteniselocogono@hotmail.com
Paseo del Rio, s/n 11310 Sotogrande, Cadiz

THE difference between Marbella and Sotogrande is that people go to Marbella to be seen," says Swiss expat Madeline Gurtner, with a knowing smile. "Sotogrande is for people who don't want to be seen, who want to be private and crave the tranquillity."

An enigmatic place, the leafy residential enclave, often known as 'Soto', is perfectly summed up by the boss of Pedro Antiguedades, a veritable Aladdin's Cave of antiques just up the alluring Guadiaro valley. "You don't have to have a flashy car to come here... although many do," she continues. "It just has a completely different feel to anywhere else on this coastline."

Welcome to Sotogrande: a hidden paradise of palatial villas set back on grand tree-lined avenues clustered around chichi beach clubs and manicured green polo grounds. Sometimes described as Spain's 'millionaire's playground', it was initially purpose-built for a cosmopolitan, moneyed crowd with the added bonuses of 24-hour security, designer boutiques and ritzy restaurants. Even the public toilets are stylish! (Apparently you really can

judge a place on its loos, I am told). Sandwiched like a caviar filling between the Costa del Sol and Costa de la Luz, not to mention Gibraltar and Malaga airports, what sets it apart is its overwhelming sense of discretion. In Sotogrande, one speaks in *sotto voce* - like the old 'Sch-Schweppes' tonic ads, only on this more cosmopolitan stretch of coastline it's more likely to be Nordic Mist. Just take a visit to Chambaio, the hip beach chiringuito, on a Wednesday night, and you will get my meaning.

To be fair, the resort has had an air of exclusivity ever since it was developed in 1962 by Joseph McMicking, after the multi millionaire fell in love with the location on a chance trip to Spain with his wife, gifted with the compliments of Swissair. Since then, a Who's Who of royals and aristocrats have bought homes or holidayed here. And come summer time, you need to keep your spotter goggles on with everyone from princes William and Harry to Andrew and Fergie, the Duchess of York, plus princesses Eugenie and Beatrice, frequently visiting around polo time (more of which later).

Turn to Page 20

www.scandiacars.com
scandia
RENT A CAR

Bangers n' Wrecks
- Used cars for long term rent

Please contact us for special low rates starting at 285 euros per 30 days for long term

info@scandiacars.com

Great expectations

HE describes it as a 'bright new chapter' in the history of the magnificent destination.

Recently, taking over the reigns of Sotogrande SA, CEO Marc Topiol has big plans for the enclave.

One of the season's biggest successes so far has been the thrice-weekly market in the marina, featuring charming stalls selling boho chic beside a parade of sleek white yachts.

The market has spurred an influx of new visitors and an increase in per-capita spending.

With the new improvements, Topiol has kept Sotogrande's youngsters in mind, too, creating children's events, such as clown acts and juggling performances.

For the sporty crowd, Topiol has overseen upgrades and renovations to the tennis, paddle, golf and swimming facilities.

"We will create a place for people of all ages to come together and enjoy great experiences and moments," Topiol promises.

But perhaps his most visionary new project is the area of La Reserva, which he insists is set to become one of the 'most captivating and exclusive communities' in Europe. The enclave will feature a wide range of luxury amenities, chief among them a sand-fringed, three-hectare private lagoon.



VISIONARY: Topiol

From Page 19

Then there are the A-list singers and actors, with Rod Stewart, Mariah Carey, and Genesis' Mike Rutherford, adding a veritable sprinkling of stardust to the mix.

The most recent arrival is BBC TV presenter Nick Knowles, writer wife Jessica and their one-year-old baby Eddie, who moved in on a friend's recommendation when Nick had some health problems and needed to slow down the pace, earlier this year.

The *DIY SOS* host commutes backwards and forwards to the UK, by all accounts loving his

Jam-packed with hunky polo players and paparazzi poking their lenses around

new laid-back lifestyle in the enclave.

Most people hear about Sotogrande through the grapevine - but try and find it in travel guides and you'd think the enclave doesn't exist. Neither *Fodors*, the *Rough Guide* nor *Lonely Planet* list it in their books on Spain and little is written even in guides to Andalucia. However, visit the resort in August when it's jam-packed with hunky polo players and paparazzi poking their telephoto lenses around Santa Maria



HIP: Serving up 'espeto' sardines at Chambao beach club

Heard it on

Polo Club's VIP terraces, and it's not so incognito.

Indeed, you will find articles popping up in national newspapers both here in Spain and abroad, and *Hello* magazine, and the likes, will have at the least a handful of photos most issues.

The polo - with its pop-up shopping village and Grey Goose

vodka bar parties - is certainly the big attraction for 43-year-old Adam Richardson, a car dealer from Leicestershire, who owns an apartment in the port and hasn't missed a chukka in 10 years.

"It's paradise, I love it here, but whatever you do, don't tell everyone!" he laughs - only half joking.

Unsurprisingly, Sotogrande is imagined by outsiders to be a world of privilege, where Russian oligarchs sip Pimms with British debutants.

And yes the Russians do arrive, with one homeowner renting his enormous villa out to a family this summer, describing them as the 'perfect' clients,

LA FINCA

Thai Fusion

Rated #1 restaurant in San Roque on Trip Advisor

La Finca hosts special events every week. From live music to art exhibitions or just special party nights.

The entire La Finca Restaurant can be booked for private parties, weddings and special events.

We are also a full service catering company and can arrange catering for lunch or dinner. We cater for any size function or event from 10 to 300 people.

Ctra. N- 340, km . 126,2.
11360 - SAN ROQUE (Cádiz)
Acceso por E-15, salidas 124 y 127
(next to Camping La Casita)
Phone: +34 665 075 124
Email: info@lafincafusion.com

www.lafincafusion.com





SHOPPING GALORE: Sotogrande's thrice-weekly marina market



ON PAR: One of the nearby luxury golf courses

the grapevine...

'clean, quiet and respectful'. "I'm not really sure what they thought of the place or what they did," added the British banker owner. "Their only major request was proper TV." But in reality it is not Qatari princes or flashy celebs you find treading the immaculately-paved pathways but low-key, northern Europeans and plenty of Madrid families on holiday. And although the big draw, polo, has a reputation as an elitist sport it's free for all (except on Cup Final days). In the marina, a well-heeled British couple with two young teenage girls are on a day-trip from nearby Gaucin. Robert and Becky are drawn by the polo but distracted by the pristine boutiques where sumptuous fabrics adorn windows, daring you to decorate your imaginary dream pad. "It reminds me of Dubai," says Robert as daughter Martha beetles off to salivate over a pair of sequinned espadrilles. "It really couldn't be more different to Gaucin." He's not wrong. The parallels between Sotogrande and the pristine uniformity of Dubai, with a dash of Beverly Hills, are clear to see. Elegant apartments and multicoloured townhouses cluster around the marina while yachts, Audis and quadbikes

pass by in harmonious, photographic scenes reminiscent of a film set. But contrary to stereotypes, many of the people who live here are 'normal' and pretty down to earth. "You don't have to be flashy to enjoy Sotogrande, in fact many of the residents wouldn't be seen dead in Marbella," says Ben Bateman of Holmes Sotogrande. His view is echoed by London-based PR consultant Yasmin Sethna, who divides her time between Sotogrande and London.

There are no obvious signs of 'lads, ladettes and typical Brits abroad' behaviour

"I love the fact that it isn't full of overpriced restaurants. You can eat well and inexpensively in Sotogrande and nearby in Torreguadiaro," she promises. "It's a beautifully-kept resort, surrounded by fantastic countryside and well-placed for access to Gibraltar, Marbella, Estepona and Tarifa... and now you've got the Trocadero beach

club for a touch of glamour." In fact, behind its façade of exclusivity, Sotogrande welcomes its visitors almost indiscriminately, as illustrated by the bustling Mercado de Levante flea market that springs up under candy-striped awnings along the port's quayside on Wednesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings. And, don't miss this year's new food truck dining concept where you can feast on street food out of retro caravans (at the polo as well as the port). Think country chic meets urban style, with hay bales scattered around and geraniums growing haphazardly from the caravan window boxes. And, perhaps best of all, there are no obvious signs of 'lads, ladettes and typical Brits abroad' behaviour. Waiter Mario at the port's La Marina bar speaks highly of the British customers. He says they're 'less pushy, less demanding' than some of their European neighbours and generally very well behaved. De Grutyer shop assistant Belen also comments that British visitors tend to be 'nice, elegant, and friendly'. In fact, you're just as likely to hear Spanish, French, German, Russian and Swedish being spoken (*sotto voce*, of course) in polyglot Sotogrande where it's not all about the British. And is it any wonder, with two polo clubs, racquet and yacht clubs, a swanky equestrian centre, and five championship golf-courses (including the illustrious Valderrama of Ryder Cup fame), all on the doorstep? "There's an amazing mix of people here," says economist Valero, 62, from Barcelona. "So many nationalities, but almost everyone speaks English so people coexist well - and the common love of polo and golf brings people together too." The Californian climate, the sense of space and the ease of a purpose-built complex leave me feeling disorientated in the most delicious way possible, but I take to the road to see just how far you have to go for some authentic Spanish grub. The answer? Not far.


While Torreguadiaro is less glamorous than its big sister Soto, the Transmallo de Agustín restaurant offers delicious seafood, charming service and stunning sea views. And then you have amazing Thai restaurant La Casita in Alcaidesa. Before long I'm on the A2102,

a rural track winding through unspoilt countryside, crossing the handsome bridge at Venta Nueva and checking out Soto's neighbouring villages of Guadiaro and Pueblo Nuevo. I pass through Secadero, where I am sucked in by the time capsule of aforementioned Pedro's

antiques shop before arriving in San Martín del Tesorillo. This quintessential Spanish village is home to some 5,500 residents, including more than a few Romanians, judging by the number clustered around their bar *Terraza*, who invite me in with wide, toothy smiles. There's something ironic about the bar's homely murals, featuring the Eiffel Tower and emblazoned with the slogans 'I could fly to Paris' and 'London - city of dreams'. How many people sweating in offices in either capital wouldn't dream of being here, enjoying a *cana* overlooking the vineyards in this idyllic spot? "If you don't have time for a drink, come back soon. We'd love to see you around and you're always welcome," says Aura, who is standing in for a friend. I drive back through Sotogrande on my way home, admiring its natural beauty and reflecting on the welcome I've met from such a cross-section of society. Sure, some people in Sotogrande are 'grand' in the wealthy, well-connected sense, but no one's too pushy to pass the time of day. Yet it still has the enigmatic quality of privacy and seclusion first referenced by Madeline at her antiques emporium. Maybe its highfalutin reputation is an act of self-preservation, Sotogrande's ingenious way of remaining below the radar. So shhh. Speak *sotto voce* in Sotogrande. And whatever you do, keep it a secret.



IDYLLIC: A view across the canal in the port




ASSSA
INSURANCE
since 1935

Health & Funeral insurance

Up to
30%
lifetime
discount on
Health

25%
lifetime
discount on
Funeral



GUADALMINA (San Pedro): M^a Carmen Carrasco
Tel 952 883 519 - guadalmina@asssa.es
Urb. Guadalmina Alta C.C. Guadalmina III, ofic. 2
www.asssa.es



sales
rentals
relocations

soto houses
real estate



Araceli Gavira



Exclusive villa **Altos de Valderrama Sotogrande**
Built: **655** m2. Plot **3.264** m2. 4 4 **1.950.000€**



Corner Townhouse in **Ribera del Emperador Sotogrande**
 4 3 **1.090.000€**



Great mansion **Sotogrande Costa**
Built: **1.205** m2 Plot: **4.913** m2. 7 7 **2.750.000€**



Townhouse in **"Los Cortijos de La Reseva" Sotogrande**
Built: **244** m2. Terrace: **20** m2. Garden **128** m2. 2 3 **590.000€**



Unique duplex penthouse in **La Marina Sotogrande**
with private swimming pool & 4 garages. Berth optional
Built: **330** m2 Terrace: **115** m2 4 4 **585.000€**



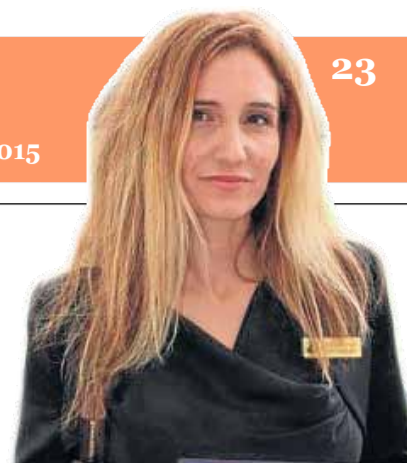
Ground floor apartment in **Valgrande Sotogrande Alto**
Built **364** m2. 3 4 **560.000€**

Galerías Paniagua, Local 12, 11310 Sotogrande
Tel.: **(+34) 956 79 50 10** - (+34) 691 44 78 27 - **hola@sotohouses.com** www.sotohouses.com

ADVERTORIAL

Man's home has always been his castle and estate agents are as old as time itself

From Babylon to Sotogrande



AT YOUR SERVICE: Estate agent Avaceli Gavira

MAN'S pursuit of a roof over his head is a story as ancient as Babylon. In fact, there has never been a time in the history of the world when property has not been important. Much like today, early man's nesting instincts

were ingrained in his activities, domestic life, ambitions and, indeed, in the entire scope of human relations. Incredibly, archeological research in ancient Palestine, Babylon and Persia has unearthed evidence of real estate agents existing at that time.

And, what's more, they were men of considerable importance in the transfer of properties. Amazingly, too, there's also evidence that women were involved in commercial and real estate transactions. It appears that they required specialist training

and tuition by expert teachers, and ended up being major lynchpins in some lucrative deals. Although real estate and the involvement of the agent is part of our history and culture, it is often difficult today to define the basis and norms that rule this ancient business.

Perhaps that's because of the ease which nearly anyone can access this profession, or because its scope is so wide and requires so much knowledge that it becomes difficult to visualize?

You won't have that feeling when you listen to Araceli Gavira, of Soto Houses, at her office in Galerías Paniagua.

Araceli, a building engineer and technical architect by profession, has a very personal vision of the profession.

She also has a profound sense of attention to detail and dedication which she affords to all her buyers, sellers and tenants.

She achieves her objectives using simple facts, basic rules and criteria fundamental to the success of all transactions.

Could she be a descendant of those dedicated Babylonian women who were so expert in commercial and real estate transactions?

It could very easily be the case.

To contact Soto Houses email hola@sotohouses.com



OLD AND NEW: Babylon and Sotogrande both had and have top female agents



Stunning Las Sirenas is a wonderfully sumptuous and original property in a dream location in Sotogrande

WITH its Turkish hammam and spa, ornate colonnades and garden statues it is the very definition of opulence. Sitting in 20 hectares of wooded parkland, stunning Las Sirenas also counts a cinema room, gym, playroom, tennis court and a six-car garage.

Comprising four buildings and an incredible 16 bedrooms, some recently refurbished, this is one palatial home perfect for a large, extended family.

An outdoor and indoor pool are complemented by the spa, with a hot room,

Salute for a siren

warm room and cold room, all guaranteed to make even the most stressed-out executive

relax. The grounds are amazing and the six acres of award-winning formal gardens are inspired by Spain's cultural past, in particular with a distinctly Moorish feel.

The many secrets waiting to be discovered include arches, recesses and giant sculptures, not to mention the myriad of flora and fauna species which add both privacy and beauty to the property.

A walk around the grounds or a trip to the hidden grotto located by the main building is the perfect place to let your imagination run wild.

As is the sleeping alcove and 'Moorish harem' in the largest of the outbuildings. And the fairytale could get

even sweeter, with the town hall already giving outline planning permission for the construction of a 42,000 m2 roof area.

It was built in the 1970s by an American family, who were in retail market in the US.

"There is nothing like it around," explained Bish, of Castles Estate Agents, who has covered the local market since 1986.

"There is a lot of land and plenty of things can be done. There are so many possibilities, you could build apartments or luxury villas and make most of your money back."

For more information visit www.castlesestateagency.com



STUNNING: Las Sirenas has a distinct Moorish influence



MAJESTIC: Garden spread over six acres



GRANDEUR: One of Las Sirenas' dining rooms

www.sotograndenursery.es



Top Rated Bilingual Daycare
in Pueblo Nuevo de Guadiaro

**LAST FEW SEPTEMBER 2015
PLACES REMAINING!**

If you are looking for top quality daycare in a stimulating and bilingual environment then your search is over!

Little Brains have only a couple of places remaining for their September 2015 intake.

Our current pre-schoolers will be leaving us to join San Jose, Sotogrande International School and our local partner primary school, Gloria Fuertes.

We offer flexible daycare from 8am until 6pm, choose the days and hours to suit.

We also have part-time options available.

Every child who comes to **Little Brains** is cared for by a fantastic team of professionals and enjoys a fun packed curriculum of activities including soft play gym facility, cookery classes, music theatre classes and a bilingual, educational timetable.

Little Brains daycare offers first class care for children from age 4 months to 4 years. Don't just take our word for it, find out what some of our clients think at 'The Review Centre' www.reviewcentre.com and search for 'Soto daycare'

For more information or to arrange a visit:

angela@sotograndenursery.es

or call 956 794 555



ART Sotogrande Gallery



**Beautiful original paintings
by the renowned artist
Osvaldo Lobalzo**

After 30 years in Malaga and with more than 2,000 works created the versatile artist offers a retrospective entitled "Un cuarto de siglo" (A quarter of a century) with works from recent years and his new collections. Sharing space in Sotogrande Art Gallery with other artists.

**Paseo del Marlin, La Marina
(Paseo del mercadillo)**

Open Mornings 11-2 am

Evenings 7-11 pm

Mondays closed

Tuesday morning closed



STARSTRUCK: England captain James Beim and Iona Napier

It is perhaps the only place on earth where chinos are worn by grown men in every colour of the rainbow, from pistachio green to raspberry pink!

Until my day at Santa Maria Polo Club I was a polo virgin with expectations based loosely on Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, where the real spectacle was the crowd rather than the players. I wasn't far off the mark. Peering up at the VIP box from the public gallery, I spotted hundred-euro dresses, thousand-euro watches and God-



SKILLED: Beim

Luxurious learning

AT up to €45,000 per year, Sotogrande International School is pricier than all but six of the UK's most elite schools, hot on the heels of Hurtwood and Tonbridge.

It is the most expensive school in Spain and the 21st most expensive school in the world, and its sky-high test scores match its costs.

With a strong track record of charity work and a long list of students getting into top universities in the UK and Spain, it can rightfully justify its cost. Interestingly, the world's top 10 most expensive schools are ALL found in Switzerland.

All about Sotogrande

Panama hat? Check. Gladiator sandals? Check. Iona Napier is chukka-ed in at the deep end at Sotogrande's world famous polo club

Horsing



But Bulgari diamonds and Land Rovers aside, the polo is in fact the cheapest attraction here as, except for Finals days, the matches are FREE.

Down among the hoi polloi, Joe and Jose Public sport low-key polo shirts and espadrilles and there's not a Prada bag or Rolex in sight. But admittedly, whether sipping fino at the Tio Pepe stand or getting invited into the VIP box of Spain's polo president (and very nice it was too), elegance reigns.

The fast-action sport leaves golf - Sotogrande's other major pull - languishing in the rough while the teams of perfectly-preened ponies and sizeable entourages of grooms and handlers echo a more glamorous bygone age.

It's no wonder princes Charles, Andrew, William and Harry, Spanish royals, sultans and high society are attracted to this hallowed turf which pulls in a 50,000 strong crowd of spectators for the annual International Summer Tournament - this year's is

the 44th.

"Sotogrande is known as the 'cathedral of European polo' - it's the best club in Europe and ranked third in the world," explains PR manager Pilar de la Puente who escorts me through luxy VIP and backstage areas.

In a poignant, private moment I witness the US team wringing the sweat out of their tops between play as stable hands hose down horses with military precision.

"A team has just four players but around 25 people make up the full entourage and a massive 10 to 15 horses per player," says Pilar. Whole teams book nearby fincas and villas for the duration of the tournament, she adds.

"It's a different world, sure, with connotations of higher socio-economic classes but it is rapidly gaining popularity across the board," she affirms. But even the 'kings of polo' are unpretentious. I am spitting

distance from world number one Adolfo Cambiaso, proudly sporting an Argentinian flag on his helmet, and I stop England captain James Beim as he strolls past with his young daughter.

"I love it here," says friendly, self-professed family man Beim, originally from Gloucestershire.

"We spend about five weeks here in the summer and the kids love it - and the beach, too." The impressive kids club is just one of a huge

range of attractions - shops, boutiques, eateries ... there's even a nail bar for the philistine few who choose to twiddle their fingers during the fast-paced action.

As the match progresses, the thrills build so that retail junkies desert the white-tented shopping village and cigar-chomping businessmen rise up from their cushioned VIP seats, the better to cheer on their fa-

TOP NOTE: Polo player at work with number one Adolfo Cambiaso (far left) blue

I spotted hundred-euro dresses, thousand-euro watches and God-knows-what-price facelifts

ART ATTACK



STANDING GUARD: Picasso



A NEW Sotogrande artist is moving and shaking the hub's creative scene with a brand new gallery.

Argentinian-born Osvaldo Lobalzo, who has sold over 3,000 paintings internationally, moved to Spain 30 years ago and is exhibiting his work in Sotogrande's marina.

The highly-acclaimed artist has spoken on TV of his extensive work with the blind thanks to 3D art and teaches free art classes to children aged five and over on Thursday nights from 10-12pm.

For information call 670 382 196.

ng around



GOURMET: Trucks with treats

Meals on wheels

FOOD trucks are spicing up the gastronomic scene in Sotogrande this summer. Fast food with a difference, this movable feast is being served up from four-wheel transport parked up at Santa Maria Polo Club. The trendy trucks manned by accomplished chefs offer a range of international fare, from delectable jamon sandwiches to sugar-coated French crepes to spicy Tex-Mex tacos. Look out for the smokey snacks being served up by Jesus Al-margo from his HUMMMo truck, and fried fish from El Senor Martin, the Madrid-based gourmet fish shop. The trucks are up and running from 6pm until 1am on polo match days, and 7pm until 1am on other days throughout the tournament.

The loafer-and-chino uniform is optional but the unparalleled opportunities for people-watching should be compulsory so get down to Santa Maria Polo Club and enjoy the show!

avourite players through the final suspenseful moments. The polo is what you make of it, as is the 'after-polo' (if you make the guest list), with champers and Grey Goose vodka flowing well into the madrugada.

Jilly Cooper famously wrote that 'polo is a drug only curable by poverty or death' in her chick lit novel Polo, which she partially researched in Soto. It's not her finest work but it certainly captures the glamour.

CH:
ers
ork
world
ber
adolfo
biaso
left in
hat)

We will 'make them speak'!

Enjoy Spanish and Michelin-starred restaurant visits with Sotogrande language academy Blah Blah Blah

WHETHER you're learning Spanish on the beach or doing language exchange with the locals, there's never a dull moment at Blah Blah Blah Academy.

The Pueblo Nuevo-based language school with outposts in Gibraltar, Tarifa and Marbella has a team of 10 highly-qualified teachers tutoring small classes in Spanish, English, French, German, Russian, Arabic and Chinese.

Established three years ago by Barbara Moral, the school promises a fun, flexible, communicative approach with exotic extras such as weekend getaways to San Sebastian and a Michelin-restaurant tour.

"The students are the reason why we are here," says charming school director and teacher Barbara, who speaks impeccable English.

"Our slogan is 'We are committed to make them speak' and that's exactly what we do



by adapting to their learning style and making sure they integrate with the local community," she explains.

In a recent collaboration between Blah Blah Blah and the Club Mistral in Tarifa, Spanish on the beach was institutionalised to the delight of students - and continues from May to October.

Welcoming kids and adults and offering learning bolstered with cultural activities such as wine tasting, orange-picking and Spanish cooking lessons, Barbara is creative, inspiring and, above all, passionate.

There is an amazing back-to-school party in the autumn and it is clear that having fun goes hand-in-hand with learning for Moral.

"Learning a language is all about communication and our flexibility is key to getting the best out of every student," she says.

She promises that the school makes learning a language fun, interesting and fast with a focus on what is of interest to the students themselves.

Everyone is welcome so get in touch and make speaking that language you've always dreamed of a reality.

Visit Blah Blah Blah Spanish on Facebook, email info@blahblahblahacademy.com or call 956 796 341



CHATTING AWAY: At Blah Blah Blah



Clare Webster
RGN RN dip ITEC
Health Professional
Therapeutic and
Holistic Massage

Therapeutic Massage: designed to relieve generalised muscular tension for those who work at a strenuous physical job and those who are have a less active, sedentary lifestyle.

Deep Tissue/Sport's Massage: recommended for the remedial treatment of soft tissue damage. This treatment incorporates Soft Tissue Release techniques targeting specific muscle groups

Clinical Massage: designed to help people living with a wide range of medical conditions and as a rehabilitative therapy following surgery or a traumatic event.

Holistic Massage: a slower, lighter style of massage that encourages a state of deep relaxation, which will leave you feeling relieved of previous physical and emotional tension and with renewed energy

"My consultations are holistic in approach and include advice on lifestyle factors aimed to improve general health and well being. These include Nutrition and Supplementation, Routine Exercise and Relaxation Techniques"



Tel: 640 768 649

cwtherapies@gmail.com

located: Pueblo Nuevo de Guadiaro

Facebook:

clarewebsterhealthprofessional&massagepractitioner



Established in 1980, Blue Sky is the largest property management organisation in Sotogrande and offers its clients a wide range of services.

**Tel: (00 34) 956 790 464
(0034) 956 790 464**

**Email: mail@blueskysotogrande.com
Web: www.blueskysotogrande.com**



**Blue Sky Property Management
Edificio E Local 6-A
Puerto Deportivo Sotogrande**



Where to eat



Lombardo's Wines
SOTOGRADE DAL 1989



- Wine Bar
- Lovely Terrace
- Open in Summer until late
- Cocktails pre and after dinner
- Wine to buy
- We specialise in Italian wines imported directly from the best wineries in Italy.
- Also great selection of Spanish wine



Av de Paniagua 18
Sotogrande
Tel: 956795924
info@lombardoswines.com
www.lombardoswines.com



AUTHENTIC: Courtyard at La Finca

Despite a string of new restaurants, it's a trio of stalwarts that take the biscuit in Sotogrande, writes Jon Clarke



FAMILY FRIENDLY: Hairy Lemon and (top) chef Lorenc

Old school winners

THERE has been a quiet revolution in Sotogrande over the last couple of years seeing the opening of a string of new gastro bars and restaurants. The most celebrated is Trocadero in the old Cucurucho beach club, which is high on style, but a little lacking in taste. Many of the other newcomers have latched onto the trend for tapas, artfully presented in an

array of avant garde culinary concoctions. Yet, it is a trio of stalwarts - the Hairy Lemon, La Finca and Lombardos - that are still your best bet if you are looking for genuine quality dining.

La Finca is one of those amazing spots that you don't just discover by accident. Hidden away on an enormous finca, hence the name, just outside Alcaidesa, it is a secret, atmospheric escape

that won't let you down. In summer you sit around a charming leafy courtyard, a riot of colours and candles, while in winter you dine inside the authentic Spanish farmhouse with stone floors and fireplaces.

The restaurant is run by New Yorker Chris Cousins and wife Syrie Blanco Walsh, whose family has owned the estate since the 1800s.

Much of its success is down to the chef Benny, an amiable Thai/American, whose Thai fusion menu is adventurous with plenty of specials to add to the mix.

The Thai soups, summer rolls and 'sticky rice' are legendary, while the duck salad starter and the Massaman curry are surefire winners.

Another fantastic spot, now in its fifth year, is the **Hairy Lemon**, and its more formal next door sister **The Lemon**, in the port.

A great place for families, kids can happily run (or bike or scoot) around the square by the fountains and the children's menu is popular and healthy.

Excellent

It is run by chef Lorenc Hunda and his wife Liz May, who worked for years as a waitress while studying business at the University of Greenwich, UK.

There is an excellent all-day menu, but its real strength is the excellent range of tapas, which are freshly-prepared each day.

There are over a dozen, while mains include a fantastic teriyaki duck breast, with a complex meaty flavour enhanced by a delicious Asian glaze and a zingy wasabi coleslaw.

There are plenty of cocktails and you can see most live sports events inside. The last of the trio is **Lombardos** which has been plying its trade for 26 years in the Paniagua centre.

Run by the father-and-son team of Enzo and Stefano, it has a brilliant mix of authentic top-quality Italian dishes and one of the best Italian-heavy wine lists on the coast. That's not to say there aren't plenty of good value Spanish options too (see review, left).



Quarter century of excellence

Jon Clarke reviews Sotogrande's well-established Lombardo's restaurant

WITH its crisp white tablecloths, candles and fresh-cut flowers on every table, there is something a little different about Lombardo's.

Atmospheric in the extreme, the long-established Italian restaurant transforms the Paniagua business centre courtyard every night in summer.

High on customer care and attention to detail it is no surprise that the place has been running for 26 years.

"And it is getting busier every year," explains manager Stefano, who studied languages and business in the UK, before coming back to Spain to take over the helm of the family business. He keeps a keen eye on the quality of ingredients that father Enzo knits together in the kitchen.

As well as personally choosing some of the best Italian cheeses, hams and pasta on his travels to the motherland, he also hand-picks many of the wines.

It means one of the most exciting Italian wine lists around, with over three dozen different references, even including Barolos, Brunellos and an excellent crisp Pinot Grigio.

Foodwise the generous serving of spicy grilled prawns with a rocket salad is a superb starter, as is the Provolone cheese with Parma ham, with oregano and parsley. There are special pasta dishes by the day, including the original Amatriciana, a Tuscan classic, while the veal fillet steak mains, cooked in various ways, mine char-grilled with parmesan and rocket, are extremely succulent. Pudding-wise there is plenty of choice and thankfully a few nice sweet wines to wash them down.

STARTER: Prawns

Av. de Paniagua, 18, 11310 Sotogrande, Cádiz, 956 79 59 24



The Hairy Lemon
SOTOGRADE



International tapas • wraps
cocktails • smoothies • pizzas • salads



LIVE MUSIC EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT

facebook.com/The Hairy Lemon

Puerto Deportivo, 11310 Sotogrande tel: 956 790 124

Russia, rosé and running my business

WHEN Consuelo Silva moved to the Costa del Sol from her native Peru in 1986 there was no main road and practically no development.

Having studied tourism in Lima and worked in marketing for companies including Hilton and TWA, she believed her skills would set her up well for a life in southern Europe.

Landing a job selling land in Marbella's Sierra Blanca area, things initially looked rosy, but that is when the recession struck.

"It was a tough time and I was on the dole for quite a while until I finally got another job," she recalls.

Using her contacts she landed a job working for Sotogrande SA, the company that administers the enclave, learning all about the unique private area. Eventually, she decided to set up her own agency and in 1998 she opened her first office.

Some 16 years later and the well-spoken, elegant mother-of-two is well settled in the exclusive resort and her agency is doing well, growing by 20% last year and this year looking even better.

"We are incredibly busy this summer and it is a lot of hard work," she explains.

"It is vital these days to be up early to deal with enquiries that may have

Consuelo Silva explains why her Sotogrande estate agency is going through an incredible growth spurt, writes Jon Clarke



INTERESTS: India, wine and president Putin

come in during the night," she adds. It means getting up at the crack of dawn to deal with enquiries at home, before she goes off to the gym, arriving at her office in the Paniagua centre around 10am.

But it is a life she clearly enjoys. Talking over lunch at the hip new Trocadero restaurant, she explains: "It is such a privileged place to live, with its wide open spaces and leafy streets.

"People are polite, low key and don't show off and you don't get the massive queues of up the coast in summer."

A keen bon viveur with a love of wines (particularly French rosés), she enjoys travelling, loving visits to European cit-

ies as well as more exotic destinations like India.

Well read, she likes watching Russian TV channels and is quick to defend President Putin, who she describes as being 'much more sensitive than you would imagine' and 'clearly a good son'.

"In particular the *Kaiser Report* on the RT channel is excellent. It gives me a new perspective on the EU and the West and helps me understand the issues Russians face here," she explains.

So, all in all, not your average Costa estate agent, it is perhaps not surprising that Consuelo Silva is doing so well.



WELL ESTABLISHED: Consuelo has been an agent since 1998

LUXURY LIVING IN SOTOGRANDE

Where Dreams... Become 'Home' **CONSUELO SILVA**
REAL ESTATE SOTOGRANDE



Ref: CSS-30-1009 • Sotogrande Costa
• 5 beds • 4 baths • 1460m² plot
• 400m² built • Price: 950,000€



Ref: CSM-RM-1008 • Marina Sotogrande
• 2 beds • 2 baths • 111.20m² built
• 46.60m² terrace • Price: 385,000€



Ref: CSN-66-1000 • Sotogrande Alto
• 3 beds • 2 baths • 207m² built
• 1118m² plot • Price: 650,000€



Ref: CSS-24-992 • Sotogrande Costa
Villa Project • 4 beds, 4 baths • 392m²
built • 1616m² plot • Price: 1.350.000€



Ref: CSS-27-1005 • Sotogrande Costa
• 6 beds • 6 baths • 450m² built
• 2628m² plot • Price: 1.650.000€



Ref: CSN-VAL-1007 • Valgrande
• 3 beds • 3 baths • 221m² built
• 78m² terraces • Price: 650,000€



Ref: CSN-66-989 • Sotogrande Alto
• 3 beds, 2 baths • 232m² built
• 1064m² plot • Price: 595,000€



Ref: CSN-53-968 • Sotogrande Alto
• 3 beds, 3 baths • 684m² built • 120m²
terraces • 2139m² plot • Price: 1.900.000€

Tel: +34 609 510 257 | +34 629 658 733

Email: info@sotograndeonline.com

Galerías Paniagua, Local 3, 11310 Sotogrande



sotograndeonline.com

Holmes

Sotogrande

PROPERTY SALES



VILLA EN SOTOGRANDE ALTO CON VISTAS A VALDERRAMA



🏠: 4 🛏️: 4

Parcela: 2.984 m²
Constr.: 500 m²

1.200.000 €

Ref.: HSN5-834

POLO GARDENS



🏠: 4 🛏️: 4

Constr.: 198m² Terr.: 46 m²

Ref.: HPG-1483

595.000 €

RIBERA DEL OBISPO



🏠: 3 🛏️: 3

Constr.: 196m² Terr.: 68m²

Ref.: OBI-1464

795.000 €

VILLA DE ESTILO TRADICIONAL CON BONITAS VISTAS EN SOTOGRANDE ALTO



🏠: 4 🛏️: 4

Parcela: 1.618 m²
Constr.: 443 m²
Terr.: 32 m²

1.650.000 €

Ref.: HSN5-492

RIBERA DE LA TENCA



🏠: 3 🛏️: 3

Constr.: 132 m² Terr.: 18 m²

Ref.: TEN-1491

330.000 €

RIBERA DEL RÍO



🏠: 3 🛏️: 3

Constr.: 145m² Terr.: 37m²

Ref.: RIO-967

450.000 €

Holmes Property Sales, S.L.

Tel.: +34 956 79 53 40

Galerías Paniagua | Local 21 | Avenida Paniagua s/n | 11310 Sotogrande | San Roque | Cádiz | España

email: info@holmesotogrande.com

www.holmesotogrande.com



Magical summers

Ben Bateman of Holmes Property Sales, Sotogrande's longest established agency, recalls his Sotogrande upbringing



FREE: Youth in Soto

THERE was a time in Sotogrande, not so long ago, when polo was played by the sandy shores of the Mediterranean with the majestic backdrop of Gibraltar and watched by barefoot spectators in sarongs.

Ben Bateman, of Holmes Property Sales, remembers the resort from its own salad days.

"As young children we would go from the sea to the pool at the 'Cucurucho' beach club and then across the road to the golf club to play nine holes of golf and then back to the beach again.

"As teenagers because of the secure nature of Sotogrande we had the kind of freedom that allowed us our independence and the opportunity to party at night and spend the days playing sport or on the beach."

Ben's parents Ian and Jackie Bateman first arrived here in the late 1970s and Ben attended Sotogrande's highly-reputed international school.

"My dad came out here on a golfing trip in 1977 with three friends to play at Club de Golf Sotogrande and Las Aves - now better known as Valderrama and as the host of the 1997 Ryder Cup.

"He fell in love with the magical enclave



HISTORIC: The polo grounds stand the test of time

and later moved his family out here and that was how Holmes arrived in Sotogrande," says Ben, who has many happy memories of a safe, easy-going childhood with activities galore.

At the time, the two golf courses were blazing a trail as the first clubs on the Costa del Sol. Northern Europeans were also being seduced by the year-round 'Californian climate', as promoted by trend-setting Filipino-born businessman Joseph McMicking and his wife Mercedes, who invited all their wealthy friends to share his secret enclave.

"Back then, the polo field was on the

beach, opposite the golf club," says Ben. "I remember those lazy summer days like they were yesterday, when people came to relax and play in this wonderful estate."

When Franco's border restrictions between Gibraltar and Spain were lifted in 1985, the property market boomed. Brits could finally buy in this part of Spain in their own name and cheap travel and transport links worked in its favour.

Sailing, polo, golf, tennis, water sports and kilometres of beautiful beaches brought families here for the entire summer - and they still do..

"It had and still has a very special atmosphere, and we guarded that zealously - we want to protect Sotogrande and the magic that still exists."

Sotogrande was never a package holiday destination and for many people it was either found by accident or they were invited. It added to the sense of pride to be part of this wonderful, privileged estate, that many of the original owners had.

Sotogrande is famous for its residents, the cocktail parties and chic elegance.

"But not at all in a show-offy way," Ben says. Although visitor numbers have grown, it's still the family-friendly resort its founder envisaged, with golf clubs offering family memberships and children welcome everywhere.

"Everything has grown - the Cucurucho beach club is now the Trocadero, polo on the beach became the Santa Maria Polo Club with fantastic installations at The Los Pinos grounds and we have one of the most fantastic marinas in Europe," continues Ben.

Ben's school - where his children now go - was set up out of cattle sheds in the old Cortijo de Paniagua with 68 students in 1978. It is now located at La Reserva with over 680 students.

He later attended Stowe school in the UK and at the University of Bristol but he couldn't stay away for long. Likewise, many of his old childhood friends are returning.

"There's something about this place that gets under your skin," says Ben, whose passion and depth of knowledge about Sotogrande and the property market is obvious.

His long history and passion for Sotogrande makes him the ideal agent.

"I get so much pleasure from helping people find their homes and then watching them and their families enjoying Sotogrande for five, 10 or 15 years," he adds, with a smile.

"It is always sad when families leave, but on the bright side they have loved this place and are now entrusting us to help open the door for a new family to move to Sotogrande."

To contact Ben and the team, visit www.holmesotogrande.com or call 956 795 340

Building up nicely!

THE Sotogrande crowd are a diverse lot, combining Madrid chic, nautical nonchalance and a dash of bling... and they're back in town and buying big.

It is great news for the enclave's property experts who are celebrating the recovery of the market from a crisis that shook Spain to its core. They are unanimous that the bargain buys of last year - when prices were at 60% of pre-crisis levels - are now few and far between.

"We are seeing a new era for Sotogrande," says Pueblo Nuevo-based BM Sotogrande director Bradley Falconer. "It's very exciting, there are new owners, a new vision for the place which is actually in line with the original, historic Sotogrande." He continues: "The market is on the

Sotogrande is 'back on the map' as experts confirm property market is going from strength to strength

move while properties here continue to be much better value than in Marbella or Puerto Banus."

Well established agent Kristina Szekely has offices in both Banus and Sotogrande, and agrees: "There is amazing value to be had in Sotogrande, the properties are mostly very well-constructed and the climate and space here is second to

none."

The agent, who has another office in nearby Gibraltar, adds: "It is the perfect place for families to look for a safe environment to bring up kids." It appears that Sotogrande's near-perfect climate, highly-regarded international school and wealth of sporting activities will always be a big draw for families wishing to relocate here.

"It's a relaxed, easy life here and still quite unknown which adds to the charm," explains Monique Westdorp of Sotogrande Exclusive.

"I am seeing a real increase in sales and because an American investment group is now in charge, I can see people are more willing to buy in the area."

The Dutch expat finishes: "Prices are

going up - and I expect them to go up further next year - and we are already seeing that with the rental market." Ben Bateman, at Holmes, says prices are the same as they were between 2000 and 2002 but appear cheaper as, generally, wages have increased 20 to 30% since then.

"Sotogrande has really stepped up this summer, the atmosphere is buzzing with loads of interest and the exchange rate is helping for Brits," adds Bateman.

"People are buying - and buying on a long term basis."

Spanish yacht workers in the marina meanwhile confirmed the hub is seeing year-round interest and that, if anything, winter is the busiest time for mooring up while boaters head to Ibiza for the summer months.

Settling in Soto

Jessica Knowles, the wife of DIY SOS presenter Nick Knowles, has been writing a blog about moving to the enclave. Here's an excerpt

FIRSTLY, sunshine makes everything wonderful.

I know England has working traffic lights, shops that don't close during the day, decent television and afternoon tea but here in Spain, we have sunshine.

Eddie is nearly a year old now and it is rare for five minutes to go by where he isn't attempting something potentially suicidal in the house; so it's great to open the garden doors and play outside.



GLOWING: Nick, Jessica and baby Eddie

We go to the beach most days and when we aren't stopping Eddie consuming vast quantities of sand, we take him in the sea.

Unlike Nick, he loves the cold water!

Being able to live such an outdoors lifestyle with Eddie confirms that it was the right decision for us to move here.

Follow Jessica on twitter @morejessicarose



SOTOGRADE PROPERTY SPECIALISTS

LUXURY BUYING, SELLING & RENTING

BM SOTOGRADE:

VISIT OUR OFFICE IN PLAZA MAYOR 5, PUEBLO NUEVO 11311
info@bmsotogrande.com T: +34 956 785 092 or +34 650 736 623

www.bmsotogrande.com



Kristina
Szekely

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

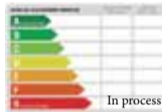


SOTOGRADE COSTA - FRONT LINE GOLF

VILLA

- *Built: 551m²
- *Baths: 5
- *Petanque court
- *Plot: 3.814m²
- *Separate dining room
- *Heated pool
- *Beds: 5
- *Spanish style patio
- *Gated community

Price: 4.800.000€



A splendid property ideal to enjoy the exclusive life style that Sotogrande offers with its unique climate, the polo, the exquisite restaurants and boutiques.

REF: 23034P

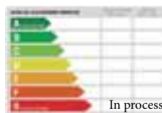


SOTOGRADE COSTA - BEACHSIDE

VILLA

- *Built: 2.020m²
- *Baths: 10
- *Separate dining room
- *Plot: 3.974m²
- *Separate apartment
- *Amenities near
- *Beds: 16
- *Cinema & game room
- *Gated community

Price on request



Superb mansion ideal for a big family and friends in the best resort of Southern Europe.

REF: 22707P

We still have last minute availability of villas and apartments for summer lettings!!

El consumidor tiene derecho a que se le entregue una copia del correspondiente Documento Informativo Abreviado de la vivienda

Each Office Is Independently Owned And Operated

Tel: (+34) 952 81 01 02 · www.KSsir.com · Email: info@KSsir.com