

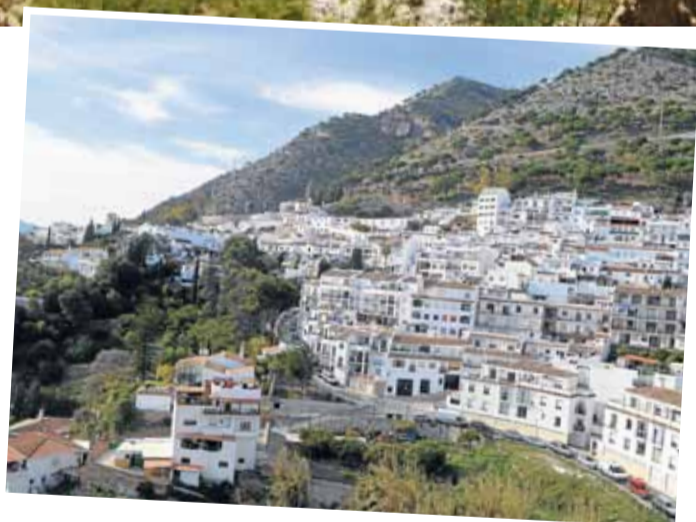


Shine bright like a diamond

A lot can change in 12 months but Mijas is still the most polished jewel in the Costa del Sol crown, writes Iona Napier



Photo by Iona Napier

**PICTURE PERFECT: Photogenic Mijas Pueblo**

ANCIENT: Ermita de la Virgen de la Pena

FEISTY flamenco in the street, lunch in a secluded walled garden, crashing a back-street bistro birthday party and, most embarrassingly, getting trapped in a multi-storey car park at 2am after repeatedly jamming my business card (rather than my ticket) in the machine! These are some of my overriding memories of Mijas. But there's no time to dwell on past visits with the spring weather upon us and an Andalusian treasure trove to rediscover. The classic hilltop town of Mijas, known from Chelsea to China for its chocolate box charm, nails the quaint-small-town vibe at just a stone's throw from the coast. Discovered by the globe's more bohe-

mian artists and writers in the 1950s and '60s, it was immortalised in Ronald Fraser's 1973 book, *The Pueblo*, and continues to cast a spell on visitors today. Mijas is coming on in leaps and bounds – and it's not just about the famous donkey taxis, colourful tuk-tuks and zippy Segway-mounted police. The latest news is the enormous, €4.7 million renovation in the town centre which is seeing the main square transformed beyond recognition, with 70% coming direct from the European kitty. While change unfolds before your eyes in Plaza Virgen de la Pena, it's business as usual for most, and tourists are still guaranteed a fabulous visit. The ways to get around are myriad, from the two dozen burro-taxis (€10

on a saddle, €15 in a carriage) to the white stallions bearing Cinderella-style carriages. Set just up above the square, Tuk-Tuk Spain is coming to the end of its first year and has been a major draw for thrill-seekers and anyone lacking the stamina to scale hilly Mijas. From the burro stables you can see what looks like a massive boulder to most newbies. The Ermita de la Virgen de la Pena is, in fact, an endearingly unpretentious little chapel. Forget the checked tiles of Notre Dame or the Sagrada Familia's spiky, bejewelled interior. The hermitage was hollowed out by a single Carmelite monk in the 17th century. Outside, a stone gargoyle spouts water

Continues Page 20

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From Page 19

into a grand font. Inside, the candle light, bumpy floor, six ornate gold benches, fresh flowers and a small exhibition are a real treat.

Leaving the chapel, I see a pair of pale-skinned Japanese tourists sitting on a bench hollowed out of the rock using an umbrella to shade themselves from the early-April sunshine.

Al fresco dining has been up and running in the hilltop town for several weeks, with not a table free near the Mirador del Compas, where you can dine to the musical swoosh of water - provided by the charming fountain, not Handel!

"It may be busy today but Mijas is popular all year round, like diamonds," confides Francisco, a nut seller who has lived in the town all his life.

Rightly, he is capitalising on the buzz to flog his delicious candied almonds

which give me renewed strength to hit the ground running.

Mijas is designed for its multicultural tourist scene - with around 20,000 foreign residents and many, many more visitors. Signs appear in English and there is even an impressive machine



Hilltop harmony

HILLTOP TOWN: Whitewashed Mijas Pueblo tucked beneath the mountain

vending t-shirts, maps and guides after trading hours. Welcome to the future, I chuckle.

And yet the human reception is second to none. Carmen in the Tourist Office, who hails from Valencia, gives me the inside track on just about everything in immaculate English. In fact she offers maps and info in an incredible 16 languages!

There is a fabulous Picasso, Dali and Miro exhibition running at the Centro de Arte until June 1 and well worth a visit for



ORNATE: Sculptures

a measly €3. Plus free flamenco in the main square every Wednesday and Saturday at noon, weather permitting, rivaling any you'll see at Sevilla's tobacco factory or in Granada's celebrated caves.

Let's not forget the countryside. There are beautiful hiking trails waiting to be explored. Sign up for 'senderismo' at the tourist office for any one (or all) of three weekly routes.

Multilingual guides lead groups of up to 30 around paths of varying difficulty - an energet-



CHARMING: Bilingual shoe-seller Celia

ic and sociable affair. "The biggest reason Mijas draws people in is because we are close to the biggest Costa towns yet a typical Andalucian pueblo blanco which people love, complete with donkeys and mountains," explains Carmen.

Get a free town walking map that encompasses the key sites in a leisurely two hour stroll - providing you don't make too many watering hole stops.

Several museums and plazas are worth a look-in, in particular, the oval-shaped bullring built in 1900 and the main folk museum adorned with speciality esparto products and some fabulous photos.

Here you will also find the room where the 'mole of Mijas' lived (see panel opposite).

On top of this is the

intriguing miniatures museum, squeezed into a conspicuous yellow caravan, as well as the handsome town hall and even the popular Mayan Monkey Mijas chocolate factory.

Rest your weary legs in the tranquil Plaza de los Siete Canos and poke a nose inside

the eighteenth-century Ermita de Nuestra Senora de los Remedios before wending back to central Plaza de la Libertad via Calle Larga del Palmar and Calle San Sebastian.

The latter is 'officially' Mijas' prettiest street and houses much of Canadian businessman Thomas Weller's restaurant empire, including Aroma Café & Secret Garden, Meguinez, and the Mariposa shop (Bana Bana and Latitud 36 are elsewhere).

Softly-spoken Weller can often be seen





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MIJAS MAN:
Antonio while (left) the oval bullring

tearing between his numerous establishments. Bana Bana won Mijas' top tapas award last year for the second year running, thanks to head chef Txelo's daffy duck confit and truffle milhojas with lemon ice cream!

There are tapas haunts and restaurants to suit every taste and budget in Mijas, while the open air auditorium becomes a great concert venue, often hosting tribute acts in the summer. Every local I meet seems to have lived here their whole life: sun-shrivelled Antonio, who cannot remember his own age, clutches my arm enthusiastically to lead me to the art museum while telling me about how the town has changed. We pass boutiques, delis and a baking dynasty that has been going since 1904, with grandson Francisco now in charge. It's easy to fall in love with this enchanting pueblo. At a zapateria, fresh-faced shoe-seller Celia recalls how her Liverpoolian mother met an Andalusian in Ibiza in the 60s, married him, moved to Mijas and never left. Shoe fetishist Nikki who has a pair of *alpargatas* (espadrilles) in more than 30 colours - the sign of a true española - was similarly smitten.

Cosmopolitan

"I went to Liverpool to study languages as my mum did," says the 34-year-old who is a perfect example of the cosmopolitan population in Mijas. "But I came back here to raise my daughter; it is the most wonderful place."

A cool glass of *tinto de verano* later and I feel so welcomed by Mijas' residents that I'm dreading getting back in the driving seat to head for the coast to the municipality's 'other half' - Mijas Costa. But the welcome in La Cala is equally good - restaurateurs, professionals and locals are all desperate to tell me about their slice of paradise by the beach. Be it a Sauvignon Blanc in Olivia's - run by TOWIE star Elliott Wright - or a pint of Guinness at Biddy Mulligan's

THE MOLE OF MIJAS

It is one of the most remarkable stories to emerge from the Franco era.

Now best known as *'The Mole of Mijas'*, Manuel Cortes Quero (right) was the last Republican mayor of the pueblo, from March to November of 1936.



However, when the town fell to dictator Franco's nationalist troops during the Spanish Civil War he was forced to abandon his wife and newborn daughter and flee the town under the cover of darkness.

However he returned in 1939, willing to sacrifice his freedom in exchange for living under the same roof as his family, making himself a prisoner in his own home. For 30 years the Mole stayed hidden, tucked in a cramped space under the stairs behind a false wall.

"I pulled out my own teeth, as soon as I got an ache," Cortes told his biographers Jesus Torbado and Manuel Lequineche, authors of the book *'Los Topos'* (The Moles).

"I would work at the tooth until



it was loose and then I would yank it out with my fingers, without any pliers or tongs. I pulled out nine or ten teeth this way."

In 1960, after 21 years of hiding, Cortes' daughter Maria got married.

"I had to make do watching her come out of church through a little hole above," he said.

"The wedding procession left the house and after the ceremony Maria scurried away to come to my room and kiss me, just as we had planned."

Listening to the radio on March 28, 1969, with his ear pressed to the wall, Cortes heard the news that he had been waiting 30 years to hear.

The government had granted amnesty to those people who had committed crimes from July 18 1936 to April 1 1939.

"I got a lump in my throat because of the emotion of the moment," said Cortes. "I couldn't think straight."

The then mayor of Mijas, Miguel Gonzalez Berral, accompanied Cortes to the headquarters of the Guardia Civil in Malaga, where the world's press waited to hear the confirmation that he was finally free. "Was it worth it?" asked Cortes. "I never lost faith in democracy. The tyranny of the dictatorship could not last forever."

- run by David from Ireland - there is something for everyone in La Cala to sit back and unwind. (see Page 23) But as Francisco the nut

seller put it, multi-faceted Mijas is like diamonds - in demand year-round, and everyone wants a piece of it. Bling it on!



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All about Mijas

THESE days you're hard pushed not to spot a famous face on a wander through star-studded La Cala de Mijas.

Well-known characters such as Elliott Wright from *The Only Way is Essex* and TV chef Steven Saunders run their bustling restaurants with panache while Marbella's 'it' crowd is never far away.

Long gone are the days when the place was merely a haunt for gangland heroes, including 'Mad' Frankie Fraser, Kray minder George Dixon and notorious Ronnie Knight.

These days there is a distinct sense of glamour about the charming village, which has become a genuine foil to the buzz of Marbella.

Alongside a mix of well-heeled international tourists, keep your eyes peeled for British celebrities including Antony Worrall Thompson, Chris Tarrant and Rick Parfitt of Status Quo who have been spotted there.

Thanks to the prime location between Marbella and Fuengirola, visitors are close to urban action while revelling in the provincial charm of a waterfront fisherman's cottage or backstreet bar. The eighteenth-century watchtower, recently restored, stands as a beacon to the town's history, with almost all local trans-



The planks were laid a year ago in La Cala de Mijas helping to bring a slice of celebrity stardust to the area, writes Iona Napier



STAR-STUDED: (From top left) Wright, Saunders and the 18th century watchtower

Fortress of fun

port conducted by donkey up to the 1960s!

The defiantly low-rise La Cala has preserved its Spanish charm while absorbing waves of tourists and smartening up its act in recent years.

And with the boardwalk, completed a year ago, which connects the village with Riviera there is all the more reason to strut your stuff in La Cala.

It is fast becoming a little corner of Marbella in Mijas, with a booming property market, a

splendid promenade and vibrant bar and restaurant scene.

It was here that *TOWIE*'s Elliott Wright chose to sink €3 million in stunning restaurant Olivia's last year, rather than in the perhaps more obvious resort of Marbella. "The only way is La Cala these days," he explains. "Bit by bit it is getting more and more glamorous and more and more up-market."

"Forget Marbs, this is the place to hang out these days."

Fellow restaurateur Steven Saunders, of *Ready Steady Cook* fame, agrees. "It is incredible how much this area has come up in the last year. "It has always been charming

but now there is a real buzz about the place."

The central hub for many an expat in La Cala is Irish bar Biddy Mulligan's meanwhile.

The perfect place to watch sport or grab a Guinness, manager David Reilly explains how La Cala is going from strength-to-strength.

"La Cala de Mijas is the best kept secret on the Costa del Sol," he says. "It really is an amazing village with everything you could wish for - all within a short walk from each other.

"There are fantastic restaurants, a picturesque beach and a family friendly atmosphere."

La Cala's star really is in the ascendent and estate agent Andrew Dodd, at Homefinders, has the numbers to prove it.

"What we were selling for €130,000 two years ago is now easily selling for €170,000 and more," he reveals nonchalantly. "Our big problem is high demand but very low supply: everybody wants to be close

to La Cala, with a sea view and walking distance from the centre, and nobody wants to compromise."

The 48-year-old continues: "Most agents are receiving ten requests every day for long term lets here and there simply isn't the supply."

Dodd adds that as well as Brits, the Scandinavians and the Dutch are coming in their droves.

After a stroll along the beach-



QUAINT: Backstreets and (left) new beach walkway

front I drop into Olivia's, where Elliott treats me to an ice-cold Sauvignon Blanc on the roof terrace.

This is a glamorous spot, soon to be seen regularly in a new TV show on his life in Spain.

"It's going to be a lot of fun to watch," he says with his trademark grin.

Down the road, for a totally different atmosphere, *Olive Press* columnist Saunders and previous Michelin star chef is gearing up for his evening service at The Little Geranium.

Wearing a natty black trilby ('It's from the days where I had to rush between my 15 restaurants and chefs hats got in the way') and a denim chef's top, Saunders personally explains each course of the seven-plate tasting menu to enthralled diners.

His restaurant has been full to bursting every day since he reopened on February 1.

Tourists are flocking to Mijas and it's easy to see why - a melting pot of glitz and glam and down-to-earth family values, La Cala is most certainly moving in the right direction.

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All about Mijas



Steve Berry, 53 and wife Tracey from Yorkshire

This is our third time here, we love the churches and castles and the views are fantastic, it makes a nice change from a lot of the coastal towns. It feels a lot more cultural here. It's actually our 25th Wedding anniversary today, I was looking at a Cartier watches but he was having none of it!



Nick and Jackie Taylor, from Gloucestershire

This is our first time visiting Mijas and we will definitely come back, the stillness and calm of the village makes it such a peaceful experience, and the views that you get here are fantastic.

Perfecto

It's 'authentic' and 'the real Spain'... What makes Mijas top of the pueblos? Laurence Dollimore hit the cobbled streets to find out what its residents and visitors think



Barry, 80 and Shirley Smith, 78 from Derby

We absolutely love it here, we have been coming here for over 13 years. It's the beauty of it, the ambience about the place, the people are so friendly and the food - wherever you go - is wonderful with very reasonable prices, and the shops have really good quality stuff. This is the loveliest village we have found on the Costa del Sol. We are seriously considering moving here out here.

Fiona Campbell, 40, from London

It's so beautiful and the views are lovely! It's so relaxing here compared to other parts of Spain that I've visited, it has a real calm and tranquil air about it. I'm looking around at the medieval church while the rest of family have gone off for a tuk tuk ride.



Tony and Sheila Bailey of London

The food is really good value and we have really enjoyed looking around the more artisan places and shops, it feels like an old Spanish town but there is new life in terms of shops and restaurants.



Expat Sue Townsend, 64, and friend Sue Sheppard, 65 from Mijas

It's so quaint here, it actually reminds me a little bit of Cornwall, there's so much to see hiding in all the nooks and crannies and it feels very authentic, it's what I would call the real Spain. As soon as you arrive you feel as though you have stepped into the real Spain.



SMART TEAM: At Smart Currency Exchange

SMART MOVE

THERE will be plenty to celebrate at Smart Currency Exchange's second anniversary this June. The La Cala-based company offers UK clients buying in Spain superb money-saving services. It is the only currency exchange service recommended by Rightmove Overseas and A Place In The Sun, with even the *Radio Times* recommending the team to its readers.

Jo Kilcourse, who oversees the Spanish operation from the office in the heart of La Cala, is delighted with the location. "It's very central and ideal as most of our business is done between Malaga and Estepona and there are lots of already established businesses here," says Jo, who has lived in Spain for 13 years.

She and her team, including Tracey, Katie and Mark Rickard, put their success down to client care.

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Smart Currency Exchange, which has grown ten-fold in two years, also works with sister company, The Spain Buying Guide. As part of the service, they can help their clients buy safely in Spain by recommending estate agents, solicitors and even mortgage companies.

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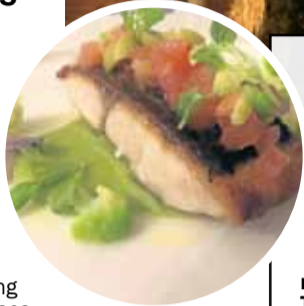
CHEFS: German and Ivan
Dining Secrets of Andalusia editor Jon Clarke returns to try out the flagship Terraza restaurant at La Cala Resort

IT'S 11.30pm on a Monday night and chefs Ivan Alvarez and German Montes are still hard at work. While plating up the final dessert courses of the day, they are also planning for the busy week ahead at busy La Cala Resort.

Cooking for hundreds of covers a day at La Terraza restaurant is a daunting business, which is why the two talented chefs - who have worked around Spain at restaurants including Arzak and EME Fusion - spend hours getting their planning right.

Joined by Catalan maitre d' Francesc, who trained at Can Fabes and Cellar de Can Roca, and they have a more than capable team.

It was certainly an exciting return to try the food of head chef



TASTY: Terraza dish of drum fish

Hidden valley

La Cala Resort and Spa is an incredible spot hidden in a valley a couple of clicks inland from Mijas Costa.

Surrounded by three golf courses, this charming four-star hotel also has an amazing spa, reminiscent of the best in Thailand, and an excellent range of rooms.

A true valley of calm, it is little surprise to learn that its fantastic facilities have been used by England national football teams, not to mention Everton, Steaua Bucharest and Grasshopper Zurich.

There are grass football pitches, a large gym, but most importantly an overriding sense of nature and peace, with stunning views to far-away mountains and Mijas village in the distance.

Alvarez, who I had checked out in his first month at the restaurant two years ago. He has thankfully matured well.

The first thing to notice is the menu, which is distinctly more creative than it was two years ago.

While there is a big meat and fish section the dishes had an added creativity, and the wine list has certainly grown.

I kicked off with the fennel and Bay Prawn bisque with scallops, which had a nice consis-

tency and a decent kick with its handful of 'pipas' seeds, while a cream of asparagus and pea soup with shiitake mushrooms was original and tasty.

Some 'Udon' noodles, served up with langoustines and numerous spices, including basil, ginger and red chilli, was rich and creamy, while the white truffle and mascarpone ravioli with some delicious duck rilette was a surefire winner to cheer up the very worst of Monday evenings.

While I took a shine to the Osso Bucco alla Milanese I went instead for the meatier local fish *corvina*, which is known in English as 'drum fish'. Often used in cerviche, it was a great surprise, being cooked perfectly and served up with a medley of vegetables, among them courgettes, baby cauliflower and avocado.

I left more than happy as did a big group of normally fussy French diners at the table next to me. Oh la la!



STAR APPEAL (from top clockwise): David Beckham at Valparaiso restaurant, Lorraine Kelly, Val Doonican, Freddie Starr, Antony Worrall-Thompson and Ian Anderson have bought Mijas homes



SPOTTED!

Celebrities have been in on the Costa's best kept secret for donkeys' years...

A WHOLE host of celebrities have been won over by the charms of the Mijas area over recent years.

From Stan Boardman to Gerry Marsden and Freddie Starr to Rick Parfitt, they've been visiting the tourist hotspot for years.

One of its biggest celebs to own a property in the town today is TV luvvie Lorraine Kelly, who has a Spanish villa which she insists is 'nothing posh, just a wee bolthole in the sun.'

Late Irish singer Val Doonican meanwhile, had an apartment in Mijas Pueblo, while celebrity chef Antony Worrall Thompson and Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson also own here.



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All about Mijas

April 13th - April 26th 2016

All going swimmingly - three decades on!



SOME three decades and three financial crises have been unable to sink Splash Pools in Mijas. The company has stayed afloat since opening in 1984, when owner Paul Clueit cleaned pools by day and ran a bar in Fuengirola by night. Eventually becoming a full time job, he was joined by his wife and now co-owner Sammi in 1991, and the business has continued to grow and grow by staying at the forefront of the industry's technology. "The last crisis was the worst, but since last October business has increased a lot - and we have happily taken on new staff in the last few weeks," explains Sammi. "We are always trying things out and something that has been very successful is salt water chlorinators - the salt is turned into a softer form



MAKING A SPLASH: Splash Pools creation and (left) owners Sammi and Paul

of chlorine that makes the water much nicer to swim in, it doesn't smell like normal chlorine and is very good for people with skin problems." She adds: "We are also lucky to have great pool main-

tenance and construction teams, some have worked for us for over 15 years and the technician is often mistaken for Paul's son!" Sammi admits running a family business can be fraught, at times, but they

have found their own unique methods to cool down. Paul escapes by playing the piano and saxophone while Sammi works it out in the gym. They also like spending time travelling, particularly in the Cadiz province.



Splash Pools Mijas S.L.

(just below the restaurant Valparaiso)

Large shop and office just off the Carretera de Mijas
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April 13th - April 26th 2016

Selling property in Mijas for 31 years, Susanne Teres of Mijas Properties is as excited about the year ahead

Pillar of success

ESTABLISHED agent Susanne Teres has built up an unparalleled reputation on the Mijas property scene. Originally going on holiday and falling in love with the whitewashed village over 30 years ago, Susanne has not looked back since and is still proud to call Mijas her home. In the early '80s she opened up Mijas Properties, a real estate business which offers everything from sales to holiday and long term rentals to property management. With a great experienced staff operating in English, Spanish and French who all share Susanne's enthusiasm and dedication to their clients. "Mijas is really on the map now," she explains. "I have watched the village grow over the last three decades and it is more popular than ever now!

"Although we still have a lot of British clients, we also have many other nationalities who are drawn to this part of Andalusia." She adds: "It's also wonderful to have clients returning to us year after year and I am so grateful for their loyal support." Mijas Properties' bright spacious offices have undergone recent refurbishment, and have fabulous panoramic views overlooking the sea. Situated in the heart of the village, close to the town hall and next to the Zurich Insurance offices. As Susanne explains "It is the unrivalled views from Mijas Pueblo and the traditional charm of this white washed village that captures visitors with its magic." For more information please call 952 48 50 25 or visit www.mijasproperties.com



ARTISAN TOWN



CREATIVITY AND RESOURCEFULNESS: Mijas workers created an industry around the weaving of esparto grass, men picking it in the high mountains and women folk creating a range of baskets, hats and even shoes, with examples at the Mijas folk museum (see right) meanwhile other snapshots of Mijas in days gone by include an underdeveloped La Cala in the 1960s



Mijas Properties was established in 1984 by Susanne Terés

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Ref: V.2236JON
Price: 480,000€

Attractive Villa near Mijas Golf
4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms



Ref: V.2212IAN
Price: 680,000€

Charming Villa close to Mijas Village
4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms



Ref: V2225VAL
Price: 995,000€

Stunning Villa walking distance to Mijas Village
5 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms

Here are just a few of the fantastic properties we have on the market – for more information on these properties and others available – please visit our website or pop in and meet us!

Located on the main street in Mijas Village, close to the Town Hall, next to Zurich

If you are thinking of putting your property on for sale or rent, please do not hesitate to call us!

www.mijasproperties.com

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SPEED DEMON: Peter and (bottom) in action

Spearhead

AFTER a two-year break from the GTI championship racing circuit, Peter Bowerman powered back to winning ways last month.

The two-time GTI champion - known as 'Spear' - bolted to a double triumph at the Andalusian Historic GTI Championships on March 26.

And the Marbella Racing Drivers Club (MRDC) ace was just as quick to identify the secret to a driver's success.

"With driving it is all about mental agility," he says. "You can't be scared of speed.

"The GTI Championship is also designed for the best drivers, not the best car or the person with the most money."

And with race meetings throughout 2016 in Jerez, Ascari, Ronda, Cartagena, Guadix and Almeria, Peter's rivals may have to get used to seeing him claim top spot.

www.MarbellaRacingDriversClub.com



One of the Costa del Sol's leading property experts says **La Cala is the place to do business**

Overseas Dream team

PETER Bowerman's 25 years experience in real estate and investment are the backbone of his successful company Overseas Dreams.

His La Cala-based firm has a multinational clientele taking advantage of the coast's best deals at both ends of the market.

And with hundreds of global partners there is nobody better-placed to sell or locate your dream home in Spain.

Known as a 'Master Agent', it is his team's thorough approach to its clients' needs that puts it above the crowded Costa del Sol market.

"We have a really different way of working than most agents, we list and sell all our own properties," explains Peter, who has lived on the coast for two decades. "All the team know all the deals that we tell clients about, and we check that the paperwork is all correct.

"I like my team to do everything," adds Peter. "We list properties, check licences and talk with potential buyers on the phone before taking them to see properties.

"Clients like to deal with the same person throughout the whole process and for the agent to actually have some in-



LUXURY: Three-bed villa overlooking golf course at a fantastic price

sight into what is being shown, rather than being passed from telesales to agent and then be shown a property they know nothing about."

He adds: "We run our business more like a good UK estate agency. We are also one of the most experienced. I have been in the business for over 25 years and we have always had a strong presence on the Costa del Sol."

When Spain's property market crashed

in 2008, Peter had the foresight to set up Distressed Sales Spain, offering superb deals to homebuyers looking to invest.

And the same eye for detail is Overseas Dreams' stamp, which has plenty of Costa del Sol jewels for sale at cut-down prices.

"We have one three-bed luxury villa in Mijas reduced from €1.2 million to €650,000," says Peter.



LA CALA TEAM: Hard at work

"And for just another €10,000, one of the garages can be converted to a fourth bedroom with an en suite bathroom."

Other bargains include a beautiful two-bedroom property in La Cala Hills for an incredible €135,000 and a unique character townhouse in the heart of Mijas Golf for only €180,000.

And if you move to Mijas, you will be joining one of the most up-and-coming areas in southern Spain.

"The area has really gone up in the last two years and it's a great area to invest in," says Peter.

"La Cala is now attracting many property investors and businesses including Michelin-star chefs, celebrity champagne bars and restaurants.

"We decided a couple of years ago that La Cala was also the perfect location for our business headquarters.

"It is the perfect location for business and leisure as it offers easy access to all the fabulous towns along the Costa del Sol and is 15 minutes from Malaga airport and Marbella."

**Email: info@OverseasDreams.com
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MANAGER: Christine Trainor

HomeCareontheWeb has been looking after rental homes and all related services for over a decade

Home is where the heart is

WHEN it comes to property management and holiday rentals, there is not much Christine Trainor doesn't know. Overseeing 500 properties along the Costa del Sol, she knows how a broken television, a shortage of sunbeds or no hot water can ruin a holiday. General Manager for HomeCareontheWeb for seven years, she ensures every base is covered for holidaymakers before they arrive to collect the keys. Based out of Mijas Costa since 2003 her multilingual team of 30 staff work with owners to ensure guests enjoy a memorable stay while helping owners to maximise rental income. Covering the coast from Casares to Torremolinos, the HomeCareontheWeb team takes the stress out of renting and owning a property in Spain, helping to ensure that the owners' investment is being professionally looked after. "But we need more quality properties," explains Christine. "We have so much demand right now for long term and holiday rentals... And I can guarantee that after signing up with us we will obtain owners a lot of bookings." Keeping a close eye on all the new laws and trends regarding rental properties, hard-working



HARD AT WORK: Some of the team, while (above) the office in La Cala de Mijas

Christine oversees a regular blog, which is soon to appear in *the Olive Press*. "There are so many conflicting regulations and stories being published, it is important to know which law applies to which area and which properties exactly," explains Christine, who is based at the company's modern office by the main La Cala road junction. "Too many rumours are circulating, claiming you need this or that, when in truth a lot is still to be finalised, but we are on top of this and are in regular contact

with the relevant authorities". And to keep a steady flow of bookings for clients, the company is partnered with Novosol, Europe's leading rental company, which has more than 12,000 agents and has been in the business for 40 years. The HomeCareontheWeb Group has many different aspects, but it is always focused on delivering to owners and rental guests the very best care and service:

- HomeCareontheWeb focuses on the care, maintenance and rental of the

property. Owners can view and update online calendars, monitor maintenance and housekeeping, view online financial statements and inspection reports and manage the property from abroad

- HomeRentalontheWeb services owners who choose to receive rental income from their holiday home through Long-Term rentals
- Meanwhile HolidayRentalontheWeb is a holiday bookings portal managed by a dedicated team. Holidaymakers seeking a self-catering holiday are assisted and cared for from the moment they book their holiday to the time they leave
- Finally GolfBookingontheWeb is perfect for golfers to find quality accommodation near to the numerous courses nearby

For more information contact the team on 952839595 or visit www.HomeCareontheWeb/group.com

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• Mijas Pueblo •



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LA CALA DE MIJAS: Edificio Comercial Urbanoria 1, Urbanización La Noria Golf, Mijas Costa, Málaga



La Cala's property market is going up fast, writes Rob Horgan

EXCITED: Andrew and employee

Boom time

WHILE stubborn La Cala remained largely unscathed by the economic crisis, it is certainly now enjoying the perks of an emerging property boom on the Costa del Sol.

With a new coastal boardwalk connecting the 'recession-proof' resort to nearby Riviera, floods of locals and tourists are paying a visit.

And if the property figures are anything to go by, they like what they see.

"In terms of the number of sales, we have had our best year in the last decade and I know most other estate agents are saying the same thing," explains Andrew Partridge, of La Cala Sales and Rentals. "Having the likes of Elliott Wright and Steven Saunders on your doorstep is a massive pull and just goes to show the growing popularity La Cala has got."

He added: "The town hall must take some credit for driving the market with investment in the boardwalk.

"And with the next section due to connect us with Fuengirola things are only going to get better." Originally from Oxford, Andrew has been selling



SEA VIEWS AND STYLE: At Jardinana

SPACE AND LIGHT

WITH its obvious nods to space and light, it is no surprise that the stylish Jardinana development in La Cala was designed by a Californian architect.

This stunning development of 84 apartments and 10 luxury villas - all with sea views - will be the epitome of cool. Set to be finished in 2017, it is already 90% sold, with a mix of buyers from Scandinavia, Holland and the UK.

The development, which is just 800 metres from the beach, will have 24-hour security and counts on its own communal heated pool, gym and games room.

"Building is set to begin this month and the licences are signed off," explains Pascal van der Woude, of the Start Group, the exclusive agents for the scheme. "There are only a handful of units left and we expect them to

be sold by the end of the Spring."

An 'executive package' offers buyers an individual infinity edge heated plunge pool with integrated sun beds and outdoor kitchen. Prices start from €48,000 with good payment terms and bank guarantees. For more information contact the sales office on 674304634 and visit www.jardinana.com



property in southern Spain for over 20 years. And while he says Brits still make up a large proportion of the market he is seeing a large influx of Scandinavians and expats returning from the Middle East buying up property in La Cala. The market has in fact been so good that Andrew is desperate for more sellers. "Eighteen months ago you would have been happy for a house to be bought up within six months, now properties are selling with weeks of going on the market," he explains. "We are selling up so fast

that we are desperate for more sellers."

And while he is being cautious about the new short-term rental laws that are soon to come into play he believes it is 'changing times not worrying times'.

"The new laws may have an impact on the market and are likely to drive prices up slightly," he explains. "However, we have nothing to worry about as we do everything by the book.

"The laws are more likely to weed out bedroom agents and make the market place fairer in terms of competition."

Unlock your home's potential

ARE you hoping to sell your traditional style Spanish home? Current trends show that modern-style houses are the quickest to sell and also command the best prices.

But if your home is traditionally styled it can still be adapted to realise its potential.

Individual Homes in La Cala offers a professional bespoke reform service, with a personal guiding hand touch through each step of the simple process.

Individual Homes offers a complete service to unlock the full value of older properties, which often have a distinct appeal over new builds, including some of the best views, attractive locations and mature, well-established gardens.

The plan is simple: spend a little, gain a lot, with cost versus reward resulting in a more attractive property with greater selling potential.

Turnaround is much quicker than a new build, in most cases within three months, and work licenses are much easier to obtain. Application, design, and building works are all undertaken with a fixed-price guarantee and the company can help with financing and get the best agent to handle your sale!

You can even sell your home off-plan without undertaking the works, with 3D drawings and models supplied at a surprisingly small cost. This option enables new owners to tweak the design to their personal taste...making your existing home their very own dream home.

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La Cala Sales and Rentals

We offer a personal and professional service for those clients looking to purchase a property in the area. Please feel free to call into our office located next to the tower in La Cala de Mijas if you are considering buying here on the Costa del Sol. We also offer free valuations for anybody looking to sell. If you have a property for sale at the moment or are thinking of selling we will be happy to speak to you.

La Cala de Mijas – Ref: R 258 7958

Price: 179.000€



2 BEDROOM, 2 BATHROOM APARTMENT
Modern ground-floor apartment located within easy walking distance of La Cala de Mijas. The property has a large south west facing terrace and comes complete with private parking.
Ideal holiday home, an excellent entry level apartment.

Riviera del Sol – Ref R 259 4714

Price: 199.000€



3 BEDROOM, 2 BATHROOM TOWNHOUSE
Spacious townhouse situated close to all amenities and only a couple of minutes' walk to the beach. Recently reformed to a high standard. Set within well maintained community with the added bonus of community pool.

La Cala de Mijas – Ref R 244 7072

Price: 399.000€



2 BEDROOM, 2 BATHROOM PENT-HOUSE, FRONT-LINE BEACH
Extremely rare opportunity to purchase absolute frontline beach property. Stunning views and soon to benefit from the proposed extension to the coastal footpath.

La Cala de Mijas – Ref: R 263 9678

Price: 499.000€



3 BEDROOM, 2 BATHROOM DETACHED VILLA
This private but perfectly located villa boasts fantastic sea views and is only a short walk into the village. Private parking, pool and recently updated kitchen are just a few of the many features.
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WHERE TO EAT

FOODIE REVOLUTION

Mijas and, in particular, La Cala is developing an exciting restaurant scene, writes Dining Secrets of Andalucia editor Jon Clarke

YOU blink and you'll miss a new restaurant opening in La Cala these days. In the coast's most exciting culinary development for years, the village is developing a distinct food culture. Spearheaded by British restaurateurs Elliott Wright and Steven Saunders, at least half a dozen new restaurants have appeared this year. Former Michelin-starred Saunders, an *Olive Press* columnist, sums it up succinctly: "It is a very exciting change and well overdue to create a foil to the dining scene in Marbella." The former *Ready Steady Cook* star's restaurant **Little Geranium** has been winning consistently good reviews since opening last Spring.

Charming

Saunders, who has served up celebrities including David Beckham, Rihanna and even the Queen, is a huge purveyor of organic produce and a firm believer in seasonal menus. His charming



LEADING LIGHTS: Little Geranium and Olivia's (above)

joint sits on a pedestrianised street and is the epitome of warmth and charm. Expect to find Steven in the kitchen with his trademark trilby hat, while his stunning wife Michele bosses the restaurant with aplomb. For a totally different experience head to **Olivia's**, on the beach. Here, *TOWIE* star Elliott Wright has invested €3 million creating the ultimate dining experience.

With fantastic sea views, stunning decor and a menu to match, this is an excellent addition to the Mijas dining scene and, contrary to popular belief, Elliott is actually a very experienced restaurateur and knows how to deliver. The first thing to note is the large Asian influence on the menu, inspired by Elliott's love of the Far East and his favourite restaurant in London, Nobu. Dishes include Maplewood smoked tuna, with Japanese tea noodles, and pork spring rolls with

shredded Asian vegetables. My favourite pick is Miso cod, with pickled ginger imported from Japan, which was succulent and has a great mix of flavours and vegetables. For yet another completely different style, head 400 metres inland to find the fantastic family-style **Ole** restaurant, where Juan Gomez has been on the go for 22 years. Juan is a charming host – speaking perfect English – and puts a great emphasis on fresh ingredients, much

MIJAS PUEBLO ANDALUCIA



Gastropreneurs Hugo & Thomas

Located on San Sebastián (arguably the most photographed street in Spain) you'll discover the Costa Del Sol's most unique dining experience. **The Secret Garden** is nestled amongst an ancient olive and orange orchard where Argentine BBQ is prepared in front of your eyes. Not to be outdone, located on the same idyllic street, we have **Meguiñez & Grapevine Patio**, specializing in Spanish wines and modern day Iberian cuisine set in a traditional Andaluz ambience. Then again, if seafood is your forte why not give our newly opened **Latitude 36° Seafood Grill** a try? We're proud to have opened Mijas Pueblo's first truly dedicated seafood restaurant and the reviews have been very positive. Lastly, if tapas are your thing, you must put **Bana Bana** on your list! Enjoy our original and award winning tapas while savouring the cityscape views. Our Basque chef will delight your tastebuds with her miniature gastronomic creations! See you soon in Mijas!



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HOSTS: At La Reja and Valparaiso and (left) prawns at Aroma

Top tip(ple)

IF credentials were needed to run a wine bar, owning your own vineyard would certainly help. But, where Bernardo Diego Pullido, 30, is concerned, his 2.5-hectare estate in Riax Baixas, where he produces his fine albarino Estrada Vello, is irrelevant. After all, he spent five years studying winemaking in Galicia (not to mention working in restaurants in London) before making the plunge and opening his distribution business La Pura Cepa in Mijas, half a decade ago.



What began as a wine shop is now one of La Cala's finest places to taprear and, of course, drink wine. There are always more than 40 wines by the glass and around a dozen fabulous tapas to dip into. There is also an amazing list of gin and tonics, should you decide for something stronger.

from his finca near Ronda. Expect to eat fantastic stuffed red peppers, delicious lettuce hearts with anchovies, and great salmon cooked in a spicy dill sauce.

Nearby make sure to look out for **Captain's Bar**, which is excellent for a tapa, full sit down meal or a game of pool. Run by Claire, Gary and Lesley, there are daily specials and some excellent tapas, including chorizo in tomato and delicious meatballs (see picture right). The fish and chips are also said to be legendary.

Bought in 2001, it still. Also, look out for **El Oceano** restaurant, which has just reopened after a stunning refit. Sitting literally on the rocks at one end of La Cala, the dining room is inspirational in the extreme and the Sunday lunches, with their classic entertainment, famous around these parts.



AUTHENTIC: El Jinete

Varied

The menu is rich and varied and the wine list also detailed and complex. (see pullout, right)

Heading inland from La Cala you can opt for a formal meal up at **La Terraza** at La Cala Resort, where you will be taken care of by an experienced team of chefs, who have worked at Spain's leading restaurants (see Page 27).

Nearby one of the true dining secrets of Mijas, the classic rural venta, **El Jinete**, can be found. This authentic farmhouse has been nicely converted keeping its old beams and painted an atmospheric plum red, while its terrace outside on warm days and evenings is difficult to beat.



FRESH: Salad at Ole

Paradise is closer than you think!

THE coast's number one beachfront venue, the stunning El Oceano, has re-opened its doors for another wonderful season! Having undergone further renovations throughout winter the entire waterfront terrace and bar have had a total transformation. Actually more of a metamorphosis into the pinnacle of elegance and exclusivity.

The breathtaking view is one of the most iconic the world has to offer.

You could be looking out on Miami Beach, except there is no road to spoil your view, just the boardwalk, blue skies and the wide open ocean.

An oasis of laid back luxury where comfort and satisfaction is paramount, pamper yourself with exquisite cuisine, top class live entertainment almost every evening and during 'famous' Sunday lunch! Mixologists offer hand shaken classic martinis and contemporary cocktails, and you don't need to drive home if you book into one of the 58 bedrooms, most of which offer mesmerising sea views.

Why not relax and top up your tan by spending the day relaxing around the Polynesian pool area? El Oceano Beach Hotel, in Miraflores Playa, is open everyday for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Call 952 587 550, email info@oceanohotel.com or visit www.oceanohotel.com.

Run by Karen Wilson and Argentinian husband Roque Martinez, it specialises in meat on the barbecue, but the menu also yields up some splendid chestnuts, such as an avocado tartare with prawns, not to mention an excellent braised rabbit, which came with a very generous serving of potatoes and vegetables. Heading up to the village look out for celebrated **Valparaiso** restaurant, where just about every famous person has come to eat for the last three decades. Everyone from Liam Gallagher to David Beckham and from Ronnie Corbett to Bruce Forsyth have graced the tables at this legendary spot. Their mugshots are plastered all over the walls, and it is not hard to see why when you see the menu and experience the fantastic friendly service. Up in the pueblo look out for the oasis that is known

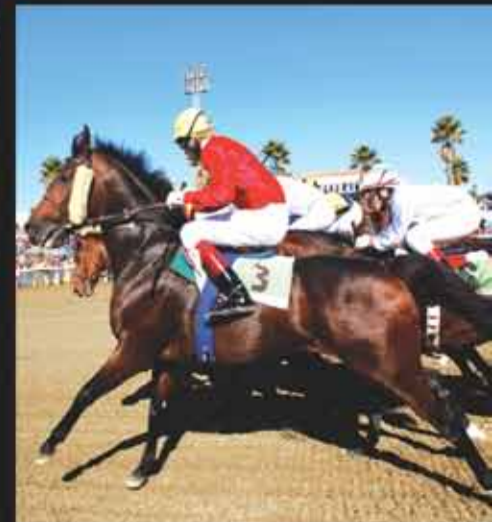
as the **Secret Garden**, which sits behind its more typical white-walled sister restaurant **Aroma**. This amazing garden is a delight to kick back and dine in good weather and the menu is a nice mix of authentic Iberian dishes alongside Argentinian fare - particularly steaks. Part of a group of restaurants, make sure to look out for **Taberna Meguinez** which has an excellent menu, as well as **Latitude 36**, a new fish restaurant. Another authentic restaurant in the pueblo is **Restaurante La Reja**, which is charm personified and has an amazing dining terrace looking over Mijas and the faraway hills. Run by Manolo and his wife, it has a simple good value menu, described as 'traditional Andalusian kitchen', and expect to eat delicious aubergines in honey, perfect steaks and the freshest fish.

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