

A Life in SPAIN.com

inside...

ISSUE 40
JAN 2020
FREE

South Town

Granada

North Town

Guardamar Del Segura

Top

Skiing In Spain

Wine Article

Let's Talk Wine



Cover picture by Prime Property, see ad on page 11

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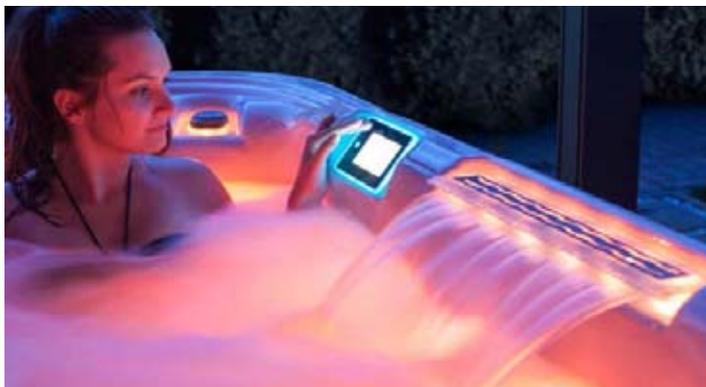
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The End of
Another busy
year 2019



A Life in SPAIN

Welcome to the January edition of ALIS.

Happy New Year everybody. We, at ALIS wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year. Lets hope we all survive the imminent changes that lie ahead.

So what's in this edition....

The blog from Carol Hughes continues. Mapping out their journey and time in Spain. See page 28

Then on pages 19-22 we have the top Skiing resorts in Spain. I have personally skied all of these and can highly recommend them all

Whilst on page 27 we have an article about the History of Olives in Spain. a very informative article tracing how this great fruit became part of the Spanish way of life

Enjoy!

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Places To Visit In A Day

Archena



There are two Spa towns off the motorway to Albacete. The better known, and arguably the best of the two is Archena. The Spa is well marked with brown signs which will take you through the town centre to the thermal baths. It is a complex of more than 200,000 m² of pools and general spa facilities.

There are three hotels (one*** and two****) and a spa where various treatments are available including massage and beauty treatments. There are various tariffs for hotel residents and day visitors too. They are a bit complex so best to look at the website

www.balneariodearchena.com

There are several pools including an indoor and an outdoor pool and a children's pool. There is quite literally something for everyone and if you just want to just sunbathe there is a great area for that as well with ample sunbeds.

Archena is situated under a sheer cliff face where, if you are lucky, you may see mountain goats defying gravity as they traverse the steep hillside on their way to find grass.

It is also recommended to go into the town, if you can get parked, where there is a plethora of good bars and restaurants.

Archena is a fertile region whose history dates from Iberian times. The Archena museum is definitely worth a visit as is the Church of san Juan Batista, a stunning Baroque church.

There is much more to find in the town as you stroll around but check out the tourist website to make sure you see the most important sites.

You can certainly fill a day in Archena with the added benefit of the thermal bathing to ease those aches and pains.



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Pilar de la Horadada

A life in
SPAIN 07

New Year, Healthy Wine

A new year begins, 2020 arrives full of new challenges and always at the beginning of the year we make our new New Year's resolutions. Taking care of our food, losing the extra weight and doing sports are some of those commitments that we seek to acquire with ourselves. Among your resolutions could be drinking better wines, healthier wines, right ?.

In recent years there's been a trend that more and more wineries are committed to making healthier and more respectful wines to our body and the environment. These are natural wines. In this article we're going to show you what these types of wines are and how to recognize them.

Wine makers who produce natural wines seek sustainability in viticulture and wine making. They return to recover traditional methods of work in the field, with manual work in the vineyard and respecting the natural cycles of each variety, its sprouting and maturation. Farmers use non-toxic treatments, only those allowed in organic farming. They avoid chemical fertilizers, and fumigation products.

In Rioja we find, for example, Allende Nature, a red wine made with tempranillo from the strains that Miguel Ángel de Gregorio takes care of in Briones, and reflects that land, that climate and this typical variety of the D.O. Rioja.

Natural wines show their particular nuances. In addition, it is sought that the characters of the earth and the time of the vintage are also shown.

Winemakers often use more rudimentary and traditional techniques that enhance the natural flavor of the grape without the need for any additives. In the production they use native yeasts from the farms avoiding having to treat the wines with selected or artificial aromas.

This is how 'The Maker' from Pedro Escudero winery is made. A white Verdejo grape wine that uses its native yeasts to reinforce the aromas of the plots where the grapes are selected in the D.O. Rueda.

Another important aspect to consider about these natural wines is that they do not contain added sulphites. During fermentation the wine generates the necessary sulphites naturally.

It is true that all these processes of winemaking require to be monitored and that is why making a natural wine its more difficult and more expensive than a normal wine process. These wines have no need for filtering or clarifying, You get these healthy wines that give us the opportunity to faithfully know the work of the winegrower.

If you are interested in knowing some of these natural wines you can visit the online store vinoladiligente.es and find these examples and many more. Or come to visit us in our wine stores.



Wine of the month

EL BICHO RARO

Garnacha Tintorera 70%, Syrah 20% and 10% Monastrell
A good example of respectful and vegan wine

This wine is juicy and intense in the mouth. It shows subtle notes of ageing with some spices on a background of red fruit.

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SPAIN09

Spanish Walks

Spain has some of the most diverse countryside in Europe. With spectacular mountain ranges and vast open spaces. We have discovered some excellent walks and over the next few months we will help you to discover them as well. Good luck and enjoy.

Los Escullos - La Isleta del Moro

The rugged mountain and rocky landscape of Cabo de Gata is isolated and geologically one of Europe's most special. The Sierra de Gata mountain range is the largest volcanic rock formation in Spain, with sharp peaks and ochre-colored steep rocks.

Beautiful walk from Los Escullos to the small fishing village of La Isleta del Moro. The walk goes along the coast, over the rocks to the small peninsula. Along the way you have beautiful views of the bay and the two extinct volcanoes. From the rock in Isleta del Moro you have a beautiful 360 ° view. The tour is completely unpaved and even for the most part runs over a narrow footpath. The way back goes approximately along the same road, in total 9 km.

Courtesy of www.trailexplorer.eu

Distance: 9 km

Duration: 3 h

Grade: Easy

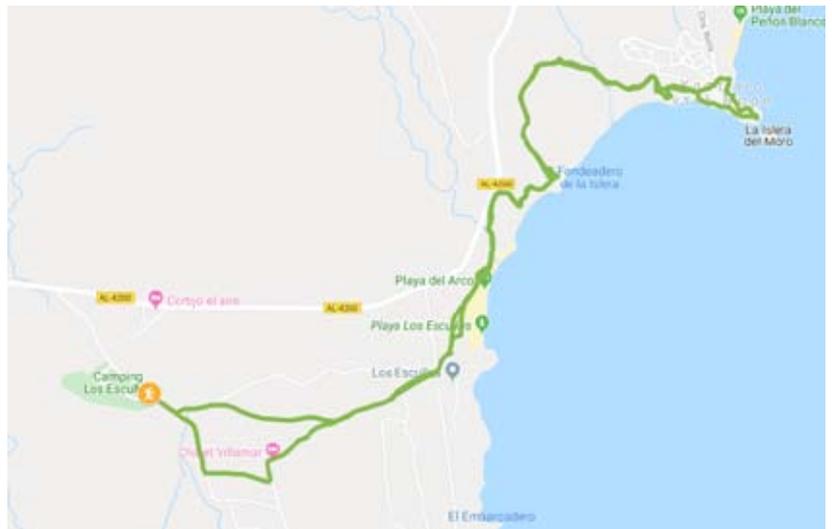
Type: Circular

Height gain: 200 meters

Way mark: None

Wheelchair: Not suitable

Dog: Allowed on a lead



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Shopping - Hardware

Phrases

I'd like to get a haircut.
I'd like to get a trim.
I'd like to get my hair coloured
Would you like side or centre parting?
I'd like to get my hair straightened.
I'd like to get my hair curled.
I'd like to get some highlights.
I'd like to get a fringe.
I'd like to get my hair layered.
Only the roots.
Wash, cut and blow-dry
What product would you recommend?

Me gustaría cortarme el pelo.
Me gustaría cortarme las puntas.
Me gustaría teñirme.
¿Quiere la raya al lado o al medio?
Quiero el pelo liso.
Quiero el pelo rizado.
Me gustaría llevar mechas.
Me gustaría llevar flequillo.
Quiero capas.
Sólo las raíces.
Lavar, cortar y peinar
¿Qué producto me recomienda?

May gus-ta-ree-ahcore-tar-may el pay-loh
May gus-ta-ree-ahcore-tar-may las poon-tas
May gus-ta-ree-ah-tay-nyr-may
Key-er-rey lah-ray-yah al la-doh oh al may-dee-oh?
Key-er-oh el pay-loh lee-soh
Key-er-oh el pay-loh ree-tha-doh
May gus-ta-ree-ahyey-vahmeh-chas
May gus-ta-ree-ah yey-vah fleh-key-yo
Key-er-oh ka-pass
Soh-low las ray-ee-thes
La-var, core-tar e pay-nar
Kay pro-dook-toemeh rey-coh-mee-en-da?

Vocab

Blond	Rubio	Roo-bee-oh
Red-haired	Pelirrojo	Peh-lee-roh-ho
Dark	Moreno	Moh-rey-no
Brown	Castaño	Kas-tan-yo
Dandruff	Caspa	Kas-pa
Split ends	Puntas abiertas	Poon-tas ah-bee-air-tas
Mirror	Espejo	Es-peh-ho
Wash unit	Lava-cabezas	La-va-ka-bea-thas
Towel	Toalla	Toe-eye-ya
Scissors	Tijeras	Tea-hair-ass
Comb	Peine	Pay-nay
Hair dryer	Secador	Seh-kah-door
Flat iron	Plancha	Plan-chah
Shampoo	Champú	Cham-pooh
Hair conditioner	Acondicionador	Ah-con-dee-thee-yon-ah-door



Now try our wordsearch:

U U J A E J P O T I J E R A S P
X U E B P G H D G B J D R P Z E
N A C K T S P R A L D N S Y Z I
O L T F P L A N C H A I C X I N
Q L T C P T H C P E H C H V R E
B A A C O N D I C I O N A D O R
S O T I Y A Q C S D N T M I B K
I T I V I T U O I B U R P C R I
F N O J E P S E P B L S U P N T
Q S E C A D O R N W Y B Y J V T

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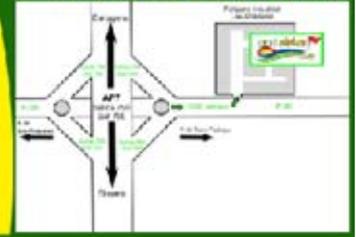
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Granada was first settled by native tribes in the prehistoric period, and was known as Illbyr. When the Romans colonised southern Spain, they built their own city here and called it Illibris. The Arabs, invading the peninsula in the 8th century, gave it its current name of Granada. It was the last Muslim city to fall to the Christians in 1492, at the hands of Queen Isabel of Castile and her husband Ferdinand of Aragon.

One of the most brilliant jewels of universal architecture is the Alhambra, a series of palaces and gardens built under the Nazari Dynasty in the 14th C. This mighty compound of buildings – including the summer palace called Generalife, with its fountains and gardens - stands at the foot of Spain's highest mountain range, the Sierra Nevada, and overlooks the city below and the fertile plain of Granada.

At the centre of the Alhambra stands the massive Palace of Charles V, an outstanding example of Spanish Renaissance architecture. Other major Christian monuments found in the city are the Cathedral, including the Royal Chapel where Isabel and Ferdinand lie buried, the Monastery of La Cartuja and many churches built by Moorish craftsmen after the Reconquest, in Granada's unique "mudéjar" style.

The hill facing the Alhambra is the old Moorish casbah or "medina", called the Albaicin (main photo), a fascinating labyrinth of narrow streets and whitewashed houses with secluded inner gardens, known as "cármenes". The Plaza de San Nicolas, at the highest point of the Albaicin, is famous for its magnificent view of the Moorish palace.

The Sacromonte hill, which overlooks the city from the North, is famous for its cave dwellings, once the home of Granada's large gypsy community.

The name Granada is ancient and mysterious. It may mean "great castle", for the Roman fortress which once stood on the Albaicin Hill. When the Moors came here, the town was largely inhabited by Jews, for which they called it Garnat-al-Yahud - Granada of the Jews. The Jews are said to have been one of the first peoples to settle in Spain, even before the Romans.

The Alhambra

The name Alhambra comes from an Arabic root which means "red or crimson castle", perhaps due to the hue of the towers and walls that surround the entire hill of La Sabica which by starlight is silver but by sunlight is transformed into gold. But there is another more poetic version, evoked by the Muslim analysts who speak of the construction of the Alhambra

fortress "by the light of torches", the reflections of which gave the walls their particular coloration. Created originally for military purposes, the Alhambra was an "alcázar" (fortress), an "alcázar" (palace) and a small "medina" (city), all in one. This triple character helps to explain many distinctive features of the monument.

Granada Cathedral

The Cathedral is located in the centre of the Muslim area and dates back to 1523. It has a nave and four aisles, a crossing and circular apse. Alonso Cano built the main façade with sculptures by Duque Cornejo, Risueño and Verdiguier while the only tower of the two planned ended up half finished. On the northern side, there is La Puerta del Perdón, a magnificent work of Diego de Siloé who also built La Puerta de San Jerónimo. The chancel is not only stunning, but includes skillful architectural solutions provided by Siloé. Its circular plan and great height contain semi-circular arches upon which a double series of balconies rest.

El Albaicín

El Albaicín is the old Moorish quarter of the city. It's located on a hill facing the Alhambra and there are dramatic views of this area from the palace's famous rose gardens. The Zirid Monarchs first established their court here in the 11th century although little remains from this era today, apart from some crumbling remains of the wall (including the section which used to encircle the Albaicín and the gates of El Arco de las Pesas, Monaita and Elvira).

For more information, travel details and bookings, visit: www.andalucia.com/cities/granada.htm



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Mazarron and the Costa Calida in general are great places to live and work, which is why we chose to call it home. This makes it easy helping families find their dream home here, as we are passionate about the area where we have brought up a young family ourselves for the last 15 years, with extensive knowledge of the education system here.



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We hope to meet you soon! Sue, Chris, Harry & Becky.

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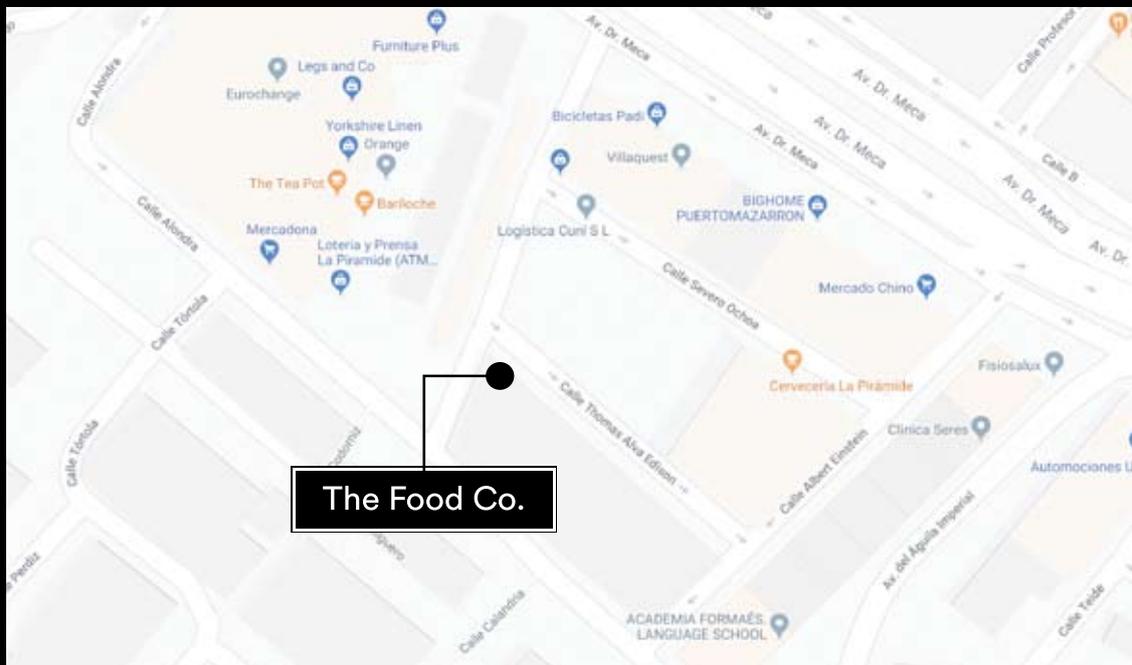
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SKIING IN SPAIN

Although Spain is normally thought of as a summer paradise, known for long, beautiful beaches and azure sea, as the second most mountainous country in Europe, Spain also offers an excellent winter season of skiing. Benefiting from long hours of sunshine in the winter months, Spain's ski resorts offer spectacular mountain views, expertly maintained runs and the perfect balance of snow and sunshine.

Sierra Nevada, one of Spain's largest ski resorts, is the most southernmost in Europe, giving skiers the opportunity to soak up the sun's rays on a day out on the slopes. Reaching elevations of up to 3,282m, skiing in Spain is not to be scoffed at - the fantastic altitude means that higher resorts are relatively snow-sure and can provide a unique experience for those looking to try something other than the usual European resorts.

Many of Spain's resorts are gentle and cruisy and, with their uncrowded nature, it is the perfect choice for many beginners or intermediates looking to carve up some new terrain.

Much of the skiing is split between the Granada area which features resorts such as Sierra Nevada, Spain's highest resort (3,300m), and the Spanish Pyrenees with Spain's largest resort, Baqueira (160km of slopes). A lot of the skiing in these destinations is above the tree line and on large, wide-open pistes with magnificent views. Easily accessible off-piste is also on offer in many of the Spanish resorts with terrain suitable for every level of skier.

Spain's high altitude makes the resort amongst one of the most snow-sure in the whole of Europe and the winter ski season often goes late into April. State-of-the-art snowmaking systems in many of the resorts mean that even in the low snow seasons the snow is always top-notch.



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Sierra Nevada

Ski Areas

Sierra Nevada is split into four separate areas that are all well-linked and easily accessible. You'll catch one of two gondolas up to the mid-station at Borreguiles where you'll find the nursery slopes. Intermediates and experts should carry on up to 3,300m where the majority of the more challenging and freestyle terrain can be found.

You'll be able to find slopes that catch the afternoon sun, of which there is plenty given the resorts southern location - especially towards the end of the season.

Skiing

You'll find an excellent array of runs in Sierra Nevada, ranging from a nursery slope area ideal for beginners to some challenging black runs and exciting off-piste. The green and blue runs are well-groomed, however, the resort is best suited to intermediate skiers who can take advantage of the long reds that Sierra Nevada is famous for.

At a Glance

Resort Altitude: 2,100m
Resort Skiing: 3,300m
Total Ski Area: 110.40km
Lifts: 21

Green Runs: 19
Blue Runs: 45
Red Runs: 53
Black Runs: 7
Snowpark: 7



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Northern Spain Formigal

Aramón Formigal-Panticosa is one of the few ski resorts in Spain with an elevation difference of more than 1000 metres. In fact, the Panticosa sector, with an elevation difference of 1,075 metres, is one of the best Spanish ski resorts to enjoy skiing in its purest state. Some 5% of slopes are classified as easy; 38% are moderately difficult, and 57% of slopes are designated 'for experts only'.

Because of this, Aramón Formigal-Panticosa is one of the best resorts in Spain for passionate freeriders, with controlled areas of virgin snow where you can experience pure emotion in each of its turns and with designated zones for beginners as well as for expert riders. It is, without doubt, one of the most authentic rider territories for ski lovers.

You'll find zones marked 'freeride' with one or several wedges and mountain routes marked orange especially designed for freeriders. All the elements are natural and are outside of any control or intervention by the resort.

Aramón Formigal-Panticosa is located in the Pyrenees, the largest mountain range in Spain, spanning from the north east of the Peninsular across 440 km. The area where the resort is located is called the Tena Valley, in the district of Alto Aragón, one of the most beautiful areas in Spain.

Formigal also boasts the longest skiable run in Spain. Nine consecutive kilometres that start at an altitude of 2630 metres, at the top of the Cerler resort. Nine kilometres starting at the end of the Gallinero ski lift, and which run along a route ideal for skiers with an intermediate level, and which is great fun for families.

This already legendary route runs through of the most emblematic slopes, black pine forests and snaking paths that end around 1500 mASL, at Cerler's lowest level: 1130m of altitude difference in a single continuous descent that crosses the station from top to bottom. The route is fully signposted with signs every kilometre so that skiers can always know exactly where they are along the route, the 9 km slope, the longest skiable run in Spain, which today is one of Cerler's hallmark features. Route: Perdiz Blanca (blue)-Camino del Sarrau (red)-Robellons (green)-Skity Area de Puentet (green)-Les Pllanes (blue)-Cerler 1500.

At a Glance

Resort Altitude: 1,510m

Resort Skiing: 2,250m

Total Ski Area: 137km

Lifts: 19

Green Runs: 9

Blue Runs: 18

Red Runs: 26

Black Runs: 15

Snowpark: 1



Baqueira

The Baqueira ski resort in the Pyrenees is one of Spain's best ski destinations. Like many of its Alpine counterparts, the season usually runs from early December through mid-April. The 160km of slopes is spread over three areas Beret, Bonaigua and Baqueira itself, most of the runs are suited to beginner and intermediate skiers. However, in the correct conditions there can be some great off-piste and great value heli-skiing for advanced skiers.

Just up the hill is the exclusive area of Tanau where the Spanish monarch has a majestic royal home. King Juan Carlos no longer skis himself but other members of the Spanish royals and their entourage often are spotted visiting at the weekends.

At the top of the main Baqueira gondola is an excellent area for beginners to get started on and progress quickly. Once you've mastered this, there are a number of perfectly suited green runs to push yourself and keep progressing. The majority of the skiing is above the treeline and as a result, the views are simply exquisite. For advanced and expert skiers a new draglift has been built providing access to the off-piste amphitheatre above the Lacs de Baciver.

At a Glance

Resort Altitude: 1,500m

Resort Skiing: 2,610m

Total Ski Area: 160km

Lifts: 29

Green Runs: 10km

Blue Runs: 65km

Red Runs: 60km



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The End of Another busy year, 2019

Well that's the end of yet another busy year for all of us here at team Cyclogical and were looking forward to starting all over again in 2020. It started in January when we all decided that we would have a dry January well that went well most of us only lasted 2 x weeks. February Harry and I were up in Elche with Mathew getting his residencia when the phone rang and it was the hospital in Torrievieja to let me know that I was booked in for my hip operation in a week's time.

I was so desperate to have this done as I had been in agony for some time and had been on tramadol for a year, having never been in hospital before for anything major reality hit in and I was crapping it. Two weeks later I'm home with a complete new hip and in recovery mode the rest is history excellent decision and I'm completely pain free and like a new man. March saw Harry sitting and passing his driving test brilliant his Mam and Dad said and it wasn't long before he had bought his first car. Our only Sportif in March The Sierra de Segura Marcha was cancelled due to torrential rain.

April we went on our annual trip to the Cap Negret hotel in Altea with our partners for a great weekend of cycling in the hills and at the end of April Lynn and I fly across to Manchester to see Take That on Tour. It was great at the Airport when I set of the metal detectors as the guy thought I was too young for a new hip so I had to walk through an x-ray machine.

May my parents arrived for a month and I took my Dad to Moratalla to watch his first Sportif he loved it and we both had a great day together drinking coffee and tapas as I was not riding. Harry and I then went to Madrid for 2 x days on our annual Shimano technicians course. Dom TJ also started competing in the Vega Baja road races in Orihuela, Callosal, Catral and Benezucar.

The 1st of June and we were off to Ibi as we had 10 riders in The Tour De Juguette Sportif, then the all new Pinarello F12 was launched. June I took a group of 6 x Danes to Calpe to cycle the Coll de Rates and the Tudons and



it was my first real challenge since my op. End of June and we were off again 8 hour drive to Sabininaigo for 3 x days as Harry, Moth and Martin were participating in one of Europes toughest Sportifs Qubrantahuesos (The Bonecrusher). Martin Gregson and I were the drivers and Domestiques.

July we had another 8 x hour drive this time to Pamplona for 3 x days to the annual Pinarello road Show and to see the new F12 in the flesh. We also took part in the Miguel Indurain sportif before returning home exhausted. August was a very warm month and a quiet one in the shop Harry had a week off and headed to Valencia with his friends for the Medusa concert and it was also the start of La Vuelta in Torrievieja a big honour for the town. September saw the Alberto Contador Sportif in Denia, a new beginners cycling night and we also had Jack Swifts memorial ride Followed by the Abus Sportif which was also cancelled due to all the flooding in the Murcia area and various landslides had closed many of the roads.

October another weekend in the Altea hills and Lynn and I decided to have a well deserved break and went on a Med cruise. November saw the rescheduled Abus Sportif where we had 8 riders and another cancelled Sportif The Albudiete once again due to torrential rain we also had a night at Orihuela go-Karts followed by a great but very windy group ride out in the hills at Geerts house in Mutamaxamel .

December nothing planned only our Christmas dinner in Da Silvas which was a great night with everyone letting their hair down. We also trained every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, went to the Sierra Espuna twice, Xorret de Cati twice, took part in the La Purisima time trials in Murcia had 5 x red days and still managed to fit in 6 days a week in the shop.

Do you know how ? Because we all just get on with it.

Merry Christmas and good health in the New Year to you all, Gary, Lynn and the TEAM.

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History of Olives in Spain

Spanish olive oil is among the best in the world and its production is exported to all continents. Spain has over 30 olive oil D.O. (designation of origin).

Olive trees were not unknown in the Iberian Peninsula, but olives were not greatly cultivated until the Romans invaded Hispania in 212 B.C., led by Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus. The locals accepted the new customs brought by the Romans without great rejection. Infrastructure was built and new technology was imported and put to work, trade grew and prospered and Hispania bloomed

Most of the agriculture was centred in Guadalquivir, Andalusia, in order to supply Rome with wine, oil and cereals and the cultivation of olive trees became widespread throughout the region. The production of Spanish olive oil, taught by the Romans who had more or less strict methods to assure quality.

The olive trees were planted along the left side of the river Beatis' (today Guadalquivir) bank, as it's lands were rockier, which according to Pliny the Elder are great for this kind of tree. It was advised that the distance between each tree should be no less than 17,60 meters, which actually helped the farmer in times of draught, as they had room to plant cereals as well between the trees.

The olive harvest should take place when the olive was ripe, as it was a method of getting a better quality oil, and better to the sight. We must not forget that the oil back in those times was very different from those we know today; their methods would not achieve a clear olive oil, but it was murky and sometimes green, sometimes yellow or golden colour.

The olives had to be milled on the same day as recollection (or so it was advised). The oil would be cleansed pouring the oil from one pitcher to another, and letting it rest for a while in between.

Spanish olive oil became so famous in the Roman empire that the Emperor from Sevilla, Hadrian, adopted the olive branch as a symbol and banner of Hispanic Rome. In 257 Hispania ceased to be a Roman colony and it became part of the Frankish territories instead. From that year Rome's supply of olive oil came from Africa instead, and in 476 a.d. the Roman Empire fell and Europe would enter the middle ages.

During Al-Andalus period in Spain (Muslim occupation), the cultivation techniques were improved by the use of ditches and irrigation systems and other olive varieties were introduced. During the 11th and 12th century the olive tree expansion and geographical distribution of Spanish olive oil production was more or less what it is today. The biggest density of olive trees are in Andalusia; mainly Jaen, Cordoba and Sevilla. However not all olives and olive oil was produced in the South of Spain; in the region of Aragon there are also magnificent olive tree plantations.

Until a few years ago, Spanish olive oil was relatively unknown since almost all of it was sold by bulk and packaged outside the country. Today, gradually, oil producers, and especially those of the best quality oil, are packaging and placing their own names on the bottles, just as the producers of California wine are now selling more and more of their wine as their own product instead of selling the grapes. This is increasing considerably the knowledge and admiration for Spanish olive oil as an exceptional product.

Finally, the benefits of olive oil should be mentioned: through its oleic acid, it helps to reduce the level of bad cholesterol and increase the level of good cholesterol, it has a high contribution of Vitamin E, which prevents arteriosclerosis, and helps to reduce blood pressure, thereby helping to prevent thrombosis.



North Town...



GUARDAMAR DEL SEGURA

The town of Guardamar del Segura with a population of just over 11,000 has historically played the role of guardian of the river Segura.

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Guardamar del Segura owes its very existence and livelihood to the dunes that have shaped it. Forests, dunes and beaches make Guardamar del Segura a paradise on the Costa Blanca.

Located between Santa Pola and Torrevieja, Guardamar del Segura is approximately 45 minutes drive from the international airport of Alicante. The resort town has been developed directly on the beach. Inland towns and villages are easily accessible with the excellent local road network.

Beaches and Nature

Guardamar del Segura boasts over 12 kilometres of natural coastline, with sand dune beaches backed by pine trees.

The natural dunes form from sand deposited by both the river Segura and the sea, and are blown inland by the eastern winds. This beautiful natural scene makes Guardamar del Segura so appealing; there are also lots of charming spots where you can observe the local flora and fauna and multitude of bird species that nest in this ecosystem.

Guardamar del Segura is also home to the Reina Sofia and Alfonso XIII parks, ideal for a leisurely stroll or for cycling. Here you will find lots of wildlife – squirrels, swans, birds and fishes, which all make the local park environment a place for nature lovers.

Recreation and Leisure

Activities around the restored mouth of the river include fishing, camel rides and a visit to the Molino de San Antonio (San Antonio Windmill).

Guardamar del Segura offers you every imaginable water sport such as sailing, windsurfing, water-skiing, underwater diving, canoeing, and jet skiing, amongst others. Plus the Marina de las Dunas, at the mouth of the river, accommodates 498 moorings.

Guardamar del Segura also has extensive land based sports facilities. The "Las Rabosas" Sports Centre and the magnificent Municipal Sports Centre, with its Olympic swimming-pool, three football pitches, basketball courts, five-a-side soccer pitches, tennis courts, padel courts and a covered sports hall. Perfect for sports enthusiasts!

Golf

Within one hour's drive of Guardamar del Segura you are spoilt for choice with golf courses.

Eating out

All the local restaurants offer top-quality seafood and shellfish and outstanding rice dishes, the pride of Guardamar cuisine.

Marina

The municipal Marina de las Dunas is a splendid addition for tourism in Guardamar del Segura. It is located at the mouth of the river Segura in a unique natural environment.

It has 494 moorings and all the services and facilities of a top-ranking marina. It also provides two kilometres of the new navigable river course for small boats, a risk-free place for sea sports.

Shopping

There are local shopping facilities in Guardamar del Segura and further shopping facilities in nearby Torrevieja.

Nightlife

Torrevieja offers a comprehensive variety of nightlife, with nightclubs, bars and restaurants and is just a short taxi ride away.

Climate

Guardamar de Segura enjoys a typical Mediterranean climate, like most of the Costa Blanca, with cool sea breezes in summer and protection by surrounding mountains against the cold North winds in winter. The area averages nearly 3,000 hours of sunshine each year and the average temperature easily exceeds 20 degrees.

In 1986 the World Health Organisation recommended the climate of the area as one of the most equitable in the world - neither too hot in the summer nor too cold in the winter. On average it can boast 325 sunny days each year making it an ideal all year round destination



Health Insurance, Residencia and Brexit

Things are changing rapidly as far as British living in Spain, and Spanish citizens living in the UK are concerned especially with the imminent Brexit which should be materialising at the end of this month. The below facts are based on what we know as we write, and this may change over the next few days or weeks so we strongly advise speaking to a specialist interpreter that deals with residencia to get the latest information.

Brexit's main aim was/is to stop freedom of movement. The EU has said it will reciprocate any restrictions the British government place on EU citizens, with similar restrictions being placed on British citizens living in the EU

As things stand after Brexit -

1, Non-residents, will only be able to live in the EU (any country) for a maximum of 3 months in any 6 months. This means Non-residents will have to leave the EU (not just Spain) after 3 months and cannot return to the EU for a further 3 months. You also will not be allowed to work during this time.

2, Residents, in order to live in any EU country full time you MUST apply for residencia. The main criteria to apply at the moment is:

a, be self-sufficient. You must be able to prove you have enough money coming in to support yourself.

b, Have Private Medical Insurance (PMI), OR an S1, OR be employed on a permanent contract. That said it is believed that the S1 will cease to exist after Brexit. Which will mean if you are not working you will need P.M.I.

Basically the British government has said, you must not be a burden on the state.

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Los Urrutias

The Place to eat

Editors Choice

This month we are featuring one of our family favourite restaurants. Yes we all have our own taste and preference, but if you have not yet been to this little gem then you don't know what you are missing.

In the evenings you can enjoy sirloin steak that is melt in the mouth and will satisfy even the fussiest of steak eaters. Whilst the ribs are so good I would challenge any chef to produce a better plate of food.

Why not try the Sunday Carvery. Choice of 3 meats hand carved by Simon. Choose 1 or 2 or even all 3, who cares. Then help yourself to crispy roasties, choice of veg, the best Yorkshire puddings ever and home made gravy.

All food is home made by Chef Simon whilst wife Jo looks after front of house.

The house wine is excellent and affordable. Nothing is left to chance so that your time here is unsurpassed.

The restaurant is tastefully decorated with ample seating. However as with most good restaurants it is always best to book your table

The ALIS challenge - If you own a restaurant and would like to feature in next months Editors Choice, then why not contact us and invite us to your establishment



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Let's Play Golf

La Manga Club Resort

This month we are looking at the La Manga Club Resort. It's a choice of three superb, 18-hole championship courses, each with its own unique style and terrain, a Par 47 course and first-rate practice facilities, there is something to challenge you, whatever your age and whatever your level.

If you want to learn how to play golf or improve your skills, La Manga Club is just the right place as well. The golf academy, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2020, provides group and private tuition of the highest standards for all levels, from complete beginners to the most experienced players, as well as special junior golf academy courses for children and teens.

Over its almost 40 years of history, the resort has hosted many top-level international golf tournaments and tour qualifying schools including five Spanish Opens; the European Ladies Team Championship; Spanish PGA, Seniors', Ladies' and Junior Championships; Ladies European Tour Q-School; and the World Corporate Golf Challenge, as well as countless corporate, celebrity and charity golf events.



LA MANGA CLUB

sport & leisure

Year Built - 1971

Designer/s - Arnold Palmer (South), Dave Thomas (West)

Manager - Pedro Sanchez

Golf Professional - Anthony McCarthy, Kyle Chambers

Layout difficulty - South: 3, North: 2, West: 4
(1 easy to 5 hard)

Approx. tee interval - 9 min.

Buggy recommended - Not necessary

Buggy allowed in fairway - Yes

Maximum Handicaps - Gents: 28 Ladies: 36

Green Fee, from 85€.

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Mar Menor

The Mar Menor, in spite of its name, Europe's biggest salt water lagoon, and it is separated from the Mediterranean Sea by La Manga, a strip of land which is 22km long. This natural setting has an idyllic microclimate and perfect conditions to enjoy nautical sports. Moreover, here you will find a very particular combination of fishing traditions and modernity, impossible to find anywhere else.

Large pond, Small sea, throughout history, the so-called Mar Menor has had different names, all of which coincide in the description of a phenomenon that nature designed as a great coastal lake (originally, an open bay) of 170 km² of warm saltwater.

Since distant times, the wealth of its water, the kindness of the climate and the beauty of the area as a whole attracted many people. The Iberians and Phoenicians and, later, the Arabs have a part in the history of the Mar Menor. In the Moslem period, it was known as the Mar Chico, and the place known today as Los Alcázares (from the Arabic Al-Ksar, literally translated as "place of residence") was chosen for their recreational houses. The continuous skirmishes with pirates from Algeria led to the need to construct watchtowers, some of which are conserved today, such as that of El Ramé or Rami. Until the 18th century, the area was occupied only by inhabitants dedicated to fishing and to the exploitation of the salt flats. From the 19th century, these centres gradually became centres for recreation and relaxation for the inhabitants of La Huerta, who established their summer residence next to the coast, attracted mainly by the curative properties of its brackish water.

Even today, the Mar Menor remains faithful to the concept of "residential area" characterised by rest and tranquillity. The warm waters of the Mar Menor, with a maximum depth of 7 metres, hold the ideal conditions and means for those who enjoy open or group sailing. Furthermore, visitors to this area can enjoy all the advantages of the Sailing Station of the Mar Menor, which in keeping with the ski station concept, offers a set of sailing, sports and tourist infrastructures together with hotels, accommodation and establishments for leisure and learning grouped together in one place: the entire Shore area of the Mar Menor and La Manga. This large saltwater lake has ideal climatic conditions (315 days of sunshine per year and an average annual temperature of 18°C) for the continuous practice of water sports.

JURASSIC NATURE

Las Salinas y Arenales de San Pedro Regional Park is an unblemished paradise of primitive nature, perfect for those escaping from overcrowding and tourist resorts. At this migrating water bird reserve you can watch flamingos, walk along tracks, take a refreshing dip in the Mediterranean and admire one of the most outstanding coastal sunsets.



TASTE OF THE SEA

The Mar Menor dish par excellence is caldero, a truly marine dish made with rice, good fish and a secret ingredient: ñoras. As appetizers, nothing better than salted fish such as hueva -roe- and mojama -salted tuna-, or the exquisite Mar Menor langostines. As a dessert, we suggest pastel de cierva, so that you can try a delicious contrast between the sweet and salted tastes; if you have a sweet tooth, we recommend tocino de cielo. Don't forget that you can enjoy them at restaurants and pastry shops in the area and, in addition, you can buy them as souvenirs. When you're back home, they will make your mouth water and you will definitely miss our region a little bit.

OUTODOOR HEATH

The Mar Menor is a big open-air spa. Its mild temperatures throughout the year, its many hours of sunshine and its high mineral concentration make it the perfect place for treatments against physical and psychological exhaustion. The coastal thalassotherapy centres offer a wide range of personalised treatments based on sea water (hydrotherapy), sea air (airtherapy) and solar radiation (heliotherapy). Europe's biggest open-air mud therapy area is in San Pedro. It is a big mistake to come here and not to cover oneself with the famous mineral medicinal muds. It is your decision to do it by the lagoon or at the hotels or centres that offer specialised treatments. If you wish to take paradise home, don't forget that you can purchase some mud at thalassotherapy centres.

CULTURE BY THE SEA

Mar Menor destinations have various museums from which culture, history and creativity spread in all directions. Among them, for instance, Los Alcázares Aeronautical Museum stands out: it was Spain's first seaplane base and one of the pillars of

Spanish Military Aeronautics during the first half of the 20thC; it houses one of the most comprehensive collections related to military aviation, including weapons, military clothing, airplane propellers, anti-aircraft guns and hundreds of pictures. In San Javier, the Local History Museum shows objects related to people's family, social and cultural aspects, to the agricultural and fishing traditions and, of course, to the development of aviation. Last but not least, the Barón de Benifayó Palace in San Pedro del Pinatar, housing San Pedro Municipal Museum, is a must. It has exhibitions concerning terrestrial and underwater archaeology, fossils and ethnography. Nevertheless, the most touching elements which are shown belong to the old toy collection and the film material.

SEA FESTIVITIES

Very popular festivities such as the Semana Internacional de la Huerta y el Mar -International Week of the Orchard and the Sea- are celebrated at Mar Menor: this festivity takes place on the second fortnight of August in Los Alcázares, paying homage to the connection that has always existed between the huertanos and the sea. In the same locality, now with a secular character, the Berber Incursions are celebrated in April, and the Day of Caldero -typical rice dish- is celebrated October 12th. In San Pedro del Pinatar, the Holy Week and the Virgen del Carmen Festivities stand out. The second ones are celebrated on August 15th, revealing the connection between the people from this town and the sea, as well as their worship of this virgin that protects fishermen and seamen. The virgin is taken on a procession on the Mar Menor waters; carnations are thrown to pay homage to seamen who never arrived in port. On February 3rd every year, San Blas pilgrimage takes place in San Javier, including a carriage parade and a typical rice contest.



The Journey - Vintage Pilgrim

By Carol Hughes

Arrived

2nd Feb 2019

Whoop, Whoop! Great news, we are picking up the keys for our new home today. The lady we are meeting works for the seller's solicitors, good old Google Maps to the rescue again. I really do not understand how we used to manage with paper maps. I know when I needed to go somewhere new, I used to print off directions and memorise them before I left the house. Although I also remember being sat next to my Hubby when we were first married, reading a map and getting us lost! A Lot.

Ok! So, I have the keys now we need to find the house! Yeah, it's in the middle of nowhere and doesn't show on google maps, well we have never had the address as such. This will be an adventure; we are setting off in the direction we think the house is from memory. Heading towards the nearest town. Ooh, we found it, without too much hassle. For once in his life my dearest hubby has actually retained a memory! Once we had found the restaurant where we met the estate agent, when we originally viewed the property, we had a rough idea where to go.

Oh dear! It looks like we need to stay in Bolnuevo for time being. Good job we are booked in for tonight, reason you ask? Well number one the house is freezing. We have no hot water, and wait till you hear the best bit, No Bed! Duh, yeah didn't think of that. Furniture is all in transit, we will have to buy a bed. I have Googled furniture shops near us in Google maps and we are off to Mazarron to find a bed.

Phew we have bought a bed it is being delivered Monday; they were really helpful in the shop. I have been into the Chinese shop bought some bedding. (The Chinese shops sell everything) So we are setting off back to Bolnuevo for food and sleep we are both shattered. Think poor Charlie is wondering what is going on he is so good; he just sits looking out of the window taking it all in.

3rd Feb 2019

Urgh! Cleaning all day today the house is damp, Freezing and filthy. It has been empty for 2 years, so certainly needs airing out. I really need to get someone out to look at this boiler it looks ancient, and its gas along with cooker. Not gas like in the UK, oh no! gas like you have with your BBQ, they all run off gas bottles! Don't like that idea, Gas Bottle in my house! It might blow up!

The people who bought our house in the UK called us this evening! Too see if we had forgotten something? well probably, I forgot a lot of things including my Make-Up. But that's not what they are talking about. They think we have forgotten our Cat! I can be dim but not that dim. The cat belongs to next door, but it's been sitting on their windowsill trying to get in, so they thought it was ours. lol

4th Feb 2019

Big day we are moving into the house eek! The bed is being delivered this afternoon and we need heaters the house is so cold. I advertised on local Social media pages yesterday to find an electrician. I need someone to have a look at a few of these sockets and need a new electric boiler. The electrician is coming tomorrow and is bringing a plumber with him. They will have a look see if they can get the boiler going, so we can at least have some hot water. He will also give us a price for doing the work that needs doing around the house.

Charlie has just looked at me as much as to say, "I preferred last night accommodation not thinking much to this mum!" poor soul is shivering good job he has a basket and blanket.

Oh my god it is so cold.

5th Feb 2019

What a night think I have hypothermia! so cold all night could see my breath even with the heater on all night. This is Spain it's not supposed to be cold, obviously Murcia did not get the memo, advising that temperatures cannot go below 24deg! I blame the weatherman.

The plumber and electrician have been. The house needs rewiring which I suspected it would, and we need a new boiler.

Wull the plumber has come back with an electric boiler and plumbed it in, he is a superstar we have hot water, well so long as nothing else is on while water heater is! The House definitely needs rewiring, if you put kettle on with boiler on everything trips.

The plumber Wull is starting the bathroom (which is Green at the moment) on the 11th (Monday) and the electrician Paul is starting on the 13th (Wednesday) both of them are English but qualified in Spain so Spanish spec and UK safety! Win win. You cannot get into loft space, so I have no idea how they will rewire it. Good job they know what they are doing, the plumber has explained to us the ceilings are moulded and suspended! I had no idea I thought they were polystyrene like the ones you used to get in the 70's / 80's but no ceilings are old, they feel like ceramic. I learn something about this house every day.





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