

ASRAR

Costa del Sol

THE COASTLINE

MEDITERRANEAN
HOME, REIMAGINED

THE GOOD LIFE

Sotogrande's Best-Kept Secret,
in Plain Sight

LEGACY

Castles and Baths from Eight
Centuries of Moorish Rule

FAIRWAYS

The Green Heart of Europe

LUXURY ADDRESSES

The Coast's Finest, All in One Place

halo_

FRONT LINE GOLF WITH SEA VIEWS





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A JOURNEY BETWEEN TWO HOMES

For fifteen years, I have lived my life between two coastlines — one Mediterranean, one Gulf — and I have never quite been able to explain to people how similar they feel. Having called Marbella home for nearly two decades and Doha now for fifteen years, I have been fortunate to experience two worlds that, despite the distance between them, share many of the same values. Hospitality, generosity and the pleasure of bringing people together are deeply rooted in both cultures. Whether gathering around a family table, celebrating life’s special moments or welcoming guests with warmth and sincerity, these traditions create a familiar sense of belonging that, as a Lebanese, was always hard to find.

This special edition was created with our readers in Qatar in mind. Beyond its beautiful coastline, the Costa del Sol offers a lifestyle that naturally resonates with the Gulf: exceptional gastronomy, world-renowned hotels, championship golf courses, equestrian traditions, luxury shopping, outstanding healthcare and international education, all within easy reach through excellent air connections with Doha. More than a seasonal destination, it is a place to return to. Some visit for a summer holiday, others discover opportunities for investment, a second home or simply a slower pace of life beside the Mediterranean. Whatever the reason, the Costa del Sol has a remarkable way of making every visit feel both inspiring and familiar.

Throughout these pages, we invite you to discover the people, places and experiences that give this region its unique character. My hope is that this edition becomes more than a guide — it becomes an invitation to discover a destination that has shaped my life, while celebrating the bond between the two places I am proud to call home: Marbella and Qatar.

Marbella & Qatar, Summer 2026

Samar Abou Farah
Founding Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

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COSTA DEL SOL: WHERE MEDITERRANEAN LIVING BECOMES A WAY OF LIFE

Stretching along Southern Spain’s celebrated coastline, the Costa del Sol is a destination defined by contrast, where sea, mountains, culture and lifestyle come together in a uniquely Andalusian setting. Beyond its renowned beaches lies a place of remarkable depth, where historic cities, hidden villages and extraordinary landscapes coexist with exceptional hospitality, wellness and gastronomy. It is a place that rewards curiosity, inviting visitors to discover a different side of Andalusia with every journey. For centuries, this corner of Andalusia has been shaped by the civilizations that passed through it, leaving behind a rich cultural legacy that remains visible today. From the Alcazaba of Málaga and the enduring influence of Al-Andalus to elegant plazas, historic fortresses and traditional architecture, the region tells a story woven through generations. Wandering through its streets is not simply a journey through history, but an opportunity to experience a way of life where heritage remains an integral part of everyday living.

Beyond its cities, some of the Costa del Sol’s most captivating treasures are found inland. Picturesque, whitewashed villages such as Ronda, Frigiliana, Mijas, Gaucín and Antequera offer an authentic glimpse into Andalusian life. Perched on mountainsides or surrounded by breathtaking scenery, these destinations invite visitors to slow their pace, embrace local traditions and experience a side of Spain that has preserved its character and charm through time. While the interior reveals the authentic soul of Andalusia, the coastline embraces a more cosmopolitan character. Prestigious resorts, exclusive beach clubs, elegant marinas and refined hospitality have helped position the region among Europe’s most sought-after lifestyle destinations. Marbella and Puerto Banus, internationally recognised for their sophistication and cosmopolitan atmosphere, offer a distinctive blend of exclusivity, leisure and Mediterranean charm that continues to attract visitors from around the world.



Ronda



Puerto Banus

Food has long been at the heart of life on the Costa del Sol. Deeply rooted in tradition yet constantly evolving, the region’s culinary scene brings together authentic Andalusian flavors with creativity and innovation. Michelin-starred restaurants, bustling local markets, fresh seafood, exceptional olive oils and a new generation of talented chefs have transformed the province into one of Spain’s most exciting gastronomic destinations. Away from the coastline, nature reveals another dimension. Protected natural parks, mountain ranges, scenic trails and dramatic viewpoints create endless opportunities for exploration and discovery. Whether walking through spectacular landscapes, experiencing the iconic Caminito del Rey, enjoying panoramic views from the mountains or simply embracing the tranquility of the outdoors, visitors quickly understand why the region has become a reference for outdoor living and a healthier lifestyle. This connection with nature naturally extends into a culture of wellness. With more than 320 days of sunshine each year, a mild climate and beautiful natural landscapes, it offers the ideal setting to reconnect with body and mind. Luxury spas, wellness retreats, outdoor activities and a relaxed Andalusian lifestyle make well-being feel less like a luxury and more like a way of life. The region is also internationally recognized as the “Costa del Golf,” home to some of Europe’s finest golf courses. Exceptional facilities, year-round playing conditions and spectacular sea and mountain views have positioned the destination among the world’s leading golf tourism hubs, attracting enthusiasts and professionals from across the globe.

Perhaps what makes the Costa del Sol truly special is its ability to offer something different to every visitor. A day may begin exploring the history of an ancient city, continue through mountain landscapes and conclude overlooking the Mediterranean from a marina, a beachside terrace or an exceptional restaurant. It is this diversity of experiences that continues to captivate those who visit. Whether seeking a memorable holiday, a wellness escape, a second residence or new investment opportunities, the Costa del Sol is far more than a destination. It is a way of life shaped by culture, nature, gastronomy and authenticity, where every season brings new experiences and every visit becomes part of a story worth returning to.



Malaga Port



24 HOURS LIKE A LOCAL

Discovering the Soul of Málaga

Málaga is not a city to rush through. Its greatest pleasures are found not in ticking landmarks off a list, but in embracing the rituals that locals have preserved over time. If you have just one day, this is how to experience the city beyond the guidebooks. The morning begins with one of Málaga’s oldest traditions: breakfast. Find a local café, order a plate of freshly made churros or the city’s famous tejeringos, accompanied by a traditional pitufo or mollete drizzled with extra virgin olive oil and fresh tomato, and prepare for one of the most charming customs in Spain. Here, coffee has its own language. Rather than ordering a latte or cappuccino, locals ask for a nube, sombra, mitad or largo, each describing the perfect balance between coffee and milk. It is a tradition unique to Málaga and one that instantly makes every visitor feel like a local.

From there, simply wander. Málaga rewards those who leave the map behind. Elegant Calle Larios leads naturally into hidden squares, flower-filled streets and lively terraces where everyday life unfolds at its own rhythm. Step inside the historic Atarazanas Market, where colorful displays of seasonal fruit, olives, local cheeses, spices and freshly caught seafood capture the flavors and aromas of Andalusia. Around every corner, independent boutiques, gourmet delicatessens and artisan shops reveal another side of the city, inviting visitors to browse as locals do.



Rather than trying to see everything, choose one cultural treasure. Climb through the ancient walls of the Alcazaba, admire the Roman Theatre beneath it, discover the masterpieces of the Picasso Museum, explore the remarkable collection at the Carmen Thyssen Museum or experience contemporary art at the colorful Centre Pompidou overlooking the harbor. Málaga reveals its rich cultural heritage naturally, rewarding curiosity at every turn. By lunchtime, head east towards the traditional seaside neighborhoods of Pedregalejo and El Palo, where life continues at its own pace. Here, lunch is not chosen from a menu but from the dishes carried proudly through the restaurant by waiters as they emerge from the kitchen. Fresh seafood, grilled fish, fried delicacies and local specialties are presented one after another, and when something catches your eye, you simply raise your hand. It is spontaneous, welcoming and wonderfully authentic. Just a few steps away, fishermen prepare the city’s iconic espetos over open fires on the beach, grilling sardines on skewers using a technique passed down for more than a century.

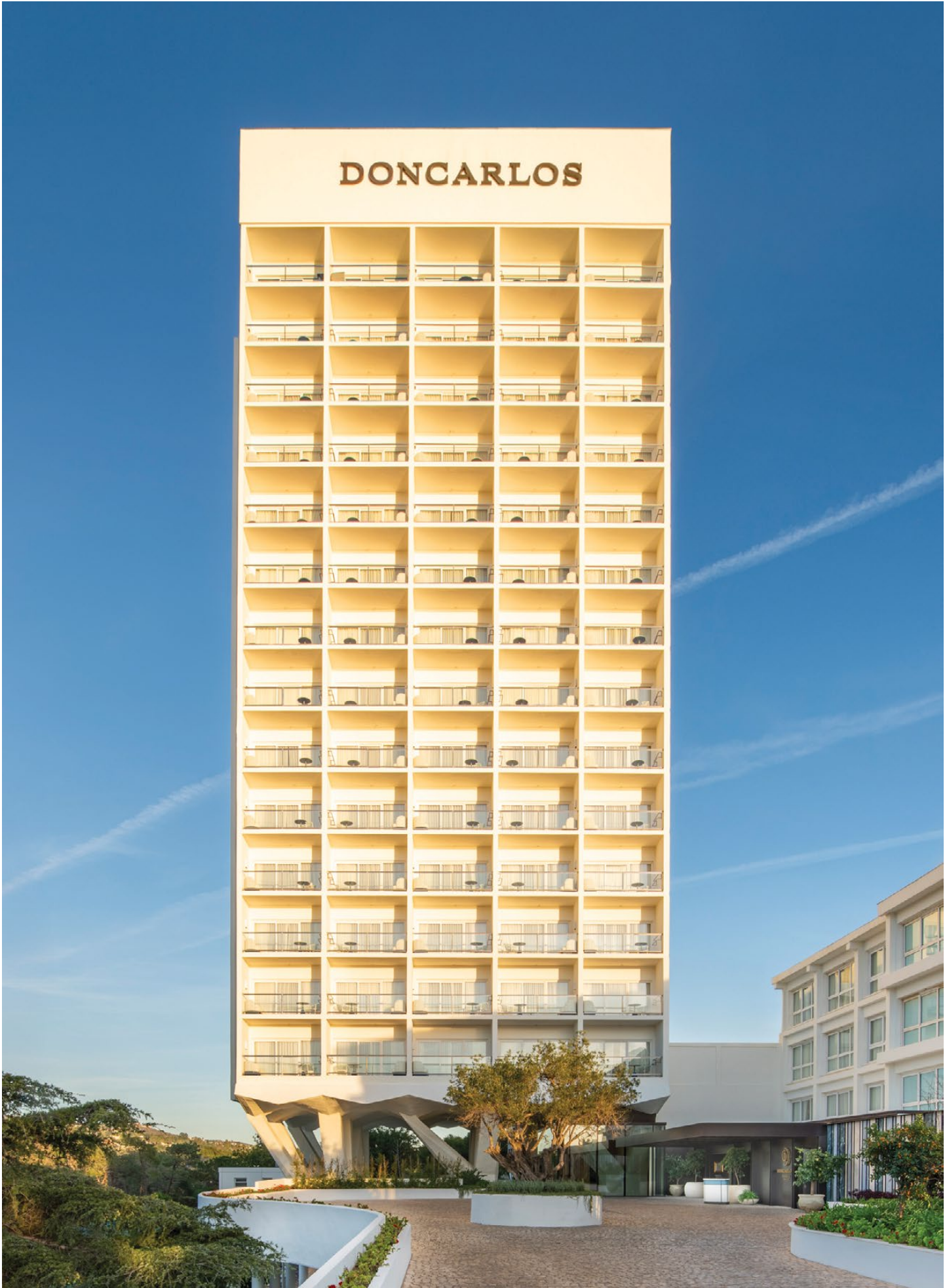
As the day draws to a close, continue toward Muelle Uno, where cafés, restaurants and sailing boats frame the marina, creating the perfect setting to slow down and enjoy the sunset just as many locals do. Whether savoring an artisan ice cream while strolling along the promenade, watching the boats gently return to the harbor or admiring the city from Gibralfaro as the sun dips below the bay, Málaga has a way of inviting you to pause and simply enjoy the moment.

DON CARLOS MARBELLA

A New Chapter for a Timeless Icon

For more than five decades, Don Carlos Marbella has been part of the story of the Costa del Sol. Since opening its doors in 1969, the hotel has become one of Marbella’s most recognisable landmarks, welcoming generations of guests and helping shape the refined hospitality for which the destination is known today. Following an extensive renovation, this address begins a new chapter, thoughtfully reimagined while remaining faithful to the character that made it an icon. Nestled between more than 20,000 square meters of mature tropical gardens and one of Marbella’s finest beaches lies a setting unlike any other on the coast. Shaded pathways wind through lush greenery, leading naturally from elegant interiors to the water, where the landscape, the sea and architecture exist in quiet harmony. It is this rare sense of openness that has distinguished the property for decades, offering guests a timeless expression of life by the sea.

The transformation has been entrusted to internationally acclaimed interior designer Jaime Beriestain, whose vision pays tribute to the hotel’s remarkable heritage while introducing a contemporary interpretation of Andalusian design. Inspired by the region’s artistic and cultural identity, every space reflects a thoughtful dialogue between tradition and modernity, preserving the spirit that has shaped Don Carlos throughout its history while embracing a renewed vision. Gastronomy has always been at the heart of Don Carlos — and following its transformation, it has become one of the hotel’s most defining signatures. Rather than simply offering a collection of restaurants, the property presents a distinctive culinary offering where each venue brings its own identity, creating a diverse and sophisticated dining scene that extends from refined interiors to the beachfront.





At the heart of the hotel, Los Naranjos pays tribute to Andalusian cuisine through carefully prepared seasonal ingredients and classic regional recipes, while Sol & Sombra embraces a more relaxed poolside atmosphere with fresh local flavours created for long lunches beneath the sun. Following its acclaimed debut in Cannes, Lucia Marbella marks the arrival of Nikki Beach Hospitality Group’s newest dining concept to the Costa del Sol. Conceived as a destination in its own right, Lucia introduces a fresh interpretation of contemporary seaside dining, where its signature Cuisine du Soleil celebrates the flavors of sun-drenched coastal cultures stretching from southern France and Italy to Lebanon and Turkey. Together with the legendary Nikki Beach Marbella, it reinforces Don Carlos’ position as one of the coast’s leading culinary landmarks. Beyond its celebrated gastronomy, wellbeing has always been an essential part of Don Carlos’ philosophy. Filled with natural light, the Don Carlos SPA has been conceived as a contemporary sanctuary where advanced treatments are complemented by renowned wellness brands in an environment designed to restore both body and mind. For those seeking a more active stay, the Rafa Nadal Tennis Center, Spain’s first and the seventh worldwide, offers training facilities inspired by the methodology of the Rafa Nadal Academy, while the Kids Club ensures younger guests have a place entirely their own. Together, these experiences reflect the hotel’s commitment to creating memorable stays for guests of all ages.

After more than half a century, Don Carlos continues to define the art of hospitality in Marbella. Its remarkable ability to honour its heritage while embracing a contemporary vision has preserved the character that established it as one of the Costa del Sol’s most distinguished hotels. More than a place to stay, Don Carlos Marbella reflects the lasting character of the Costa del Sol: timeless, welcoming and unmistakably elegant. It is part of a legacy that continues to inspire Marbella.

AYALA POLO CLUB

The Costa del Sol's Best-Kept Secret

Every destination has places that remain known only to those who truly understand its character. On the western edge of the Costa del Sol, in the exclusive enclave of Sotogrande, Ayala Polo Club is one of them. More than a sporting venue, it has become part of the local identity, a place where time seems to slow down, afternoons stretch effortlessly into evening, and every visit feels like a celebration of Mediterranean summer. Here, elite polo unfolds alongside exceptional hospitality and a welcoming family environment, setting the stage for one of southern Spain's most anticipated social occasions. Long before the first horse enters the field, visitors begin to gather beneath the Andalusian sun. Friends meet for lunch overlooking the grounds, children run freely across the lawns, and guests from around the world settle in to enjoy an atmosphere that is as much about the lifestyle as it is about sport.

The story of Ayala Polo Club is inseparable from the history of Sotogrande itself. In 1964, Joseph McMicking, President of Ayala Corporation, envisioned a destination unlike any other on the Mediterranean. A year later, his nephew Enrique Zóbel created the area's first polo field, laying the foundations for what would become one of Europe's most prestigious polo clubs. Nearly six decades later, that same family legacy continues under the leadership of Paola Zóbel, preserving both the sporting excellence and the welcoming spirit that have defined the club since its earliest days — while welcoming a new generation of visitors. Today, it is recognised not only for its beautifully maintained polo fields and world-class facilities, but for the ambiance it creates. Watching top-level polo, enjoying a leisurely lunch or strolling through the grounds, every visit brings together a sophisticated yet relaxed international crowd whose understated elegance has become one of the defining characteristics of life in Sotogrande.



For many visitors, this is where the true spirit of the club comes to life. One need not follow the game to fall under its spell. Horses, open fields, lively terraces and the relaxed rhythm of Andalusian life transform every match day into a vibrant social gathering, where gastronomy, entertainment and sport come together in a setting unlike any other. Between chukkers, guests browse boutiques featuring local designers and artisans, savor authentic southern cuisine, and enjoy live music as the sun begins to set, while children make the most of dedicated family spaces.

From **27 July to 29 August**, Ayala Polo Club once again hosts the **55th International Polo Tournament ATL**, the highlight of the European polo season. Over five unforgettable weeks, the prestigious **Bronze Cup Gluff** (27 July–1 August), **Silver Cup Terralpa** (3–15 August) and **Gold Cup Ayala Polo Club** (17–29 August) will bring together many of the sport’s most celebrated players, including Camilo and Barto Castagnola, Poroto Cambiaso, Tomás Panelo and Facundo Pieres, alongside Spain’s rising talents Pascual Sáinz de Vicuña and Pelayo Berazadi. Year after year, the tournament remains one of the defining moments of Sotogrande’s summer calendar, celebrating the excellence, tradition and enduring appeal of polo. As the sun sets over the polo fields and the final chukker comes to an end, one thing becomes certain: Ayala Polo Club is not simply where polo is played; it is where Sotogrande celebrates one of the world’s most prestigious equestrian sports and the timeless Mediterranean way of life at its finest.

Photography: Matías Callejo





CURATING EXCEPTIONAL LIVING ON THE COSTA DEL SOL

Finding the right property is about far more than location, architecture or investment potential. It is about discovering a place that reflects personal aspirations and often a long-held dream. Based in Marbella, IQ Concept Marketing specialises in introducing some of the most desirable residences to international buyers. From contemporary beachfront villas and elegant golf-front homes to exceptional penthouses overlooking the Mediterranean, every property is selected with a deep understanding of what today’s discerning buyer seeks. More than ever, the Costa del Sol continues to attract international buyers looking not only for exceptional homes, but for an outstanding quality of life. Combining a privileged climate with excellent infrastructure, international schools, world-class healthcare and direct connections through Málaga International Airport to hundreds of destinations worldwide, the region offers everything needed for both permanent living and holiday homes. Championship golf courses, marinas, beaches, fine dining, luxury shopping, cultural attractions and an endless selection of sports and leisure activities create a remarkable quality of life, making Southern Spain one of Europe’s most sought-after destinations.

With extensive local knowledge and a trusted network developed over many years, the company offers a highly personalised approach, advising clients through every stage of the journey with professionalism, discretion and attention to detail. Whether searching for a permanent residence, a holiday retreat or a strategic investment, IQ Concept Marketing understands that every property purchase is a personal journey, offering expert guidance tailored to each client’s aspirations and objectives. For those looking to experience the very best of Marbella and the region, the company opens the door to distinguished addresses and extraordinary living.



FEATURED PROPERTIES



The List Río Real | Contemporary Family Residences

Set within one of Marbella’s most desirable residential areas, The List Río Real is an exclusive collection of just 27 semi-detached residences designed to embrace the natural beauty of their surroundings. Built across different levels to follow the gentle slope of the land, each home enjoys remarkable privacy and uninterrupted views of the Mediterranean Sea. Offering four and five-bedroom residences, each home has been designed around the way families live today. Bright, open-plan interiors flow naturally towards generous terraces and private gardens, creating spaces equally suited to quiet everyday moments and entertaining on a larger scale.

Life at The List Río Real is defined by comfort, tranquility and relaxed sophistication. Mornings begin under the warm sun, afternoons are spent enjoying nearby golf courses, beaches and Marbella’s vibrant lifestyle, while evenings unfold against a backdrop of spectacular sea views from private terraces and rooftop spaces. Surrounded by mature greenery yet only minutes from Marbella’s beaches, the region’s celebrated courses, fine dining and the area’s most sought-after attractions, The List Río Real offers the rare privilege of enjoying peaceful residential living without ever feeling removed from the energy of the coast.



Solenne Apartments | Resort Living Redefined

Designed for those who appreciate generous spaces, privacy and contemporary architecture, this exclusive collection of just 21 residences offers a distinctive residential setting in one of the Costa del Sol's most privileged locations. Comprising elegant two and three-bedroom apartments, each home has been carefully designed to welcome abundant natural light while framing open views of the surrounding landscape.

Expansive terraces, refined interiors and meticulously selected finishes create a quiet sense of sophistication, complemented by private pools and spacious outdoor living areas that encourage life to unfold beyond the walls of the home. A carefully curated collection of amenities enriches everyday life. A fully equipped gym, heated indoor pool, infinity pool, golf simulator, sauna and hammam offer spaces dedicated to wellbeing, recreation and relaxation, bringing the comforts of a private resort into daily living. Located just moments from Marbella's renowned beaches, golf, acclaimed restaurants and exclusive shopping, the development enjoys an outstanding setting where tranquility and convenience exist in perfect balance. More than a collection of residences, Solenne represents a contemporary interpretation of refined living, where thoughtful design, serenity and an extraordinary location define a place to call home.

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WHAT THE LOCALS KNOW



Every place has its people – those who know its hidden corners, its traditions and the moments that give it character. Having called the Costa del Sol home for more than two decades, real estate professional Fabiana Castro shares her personal perspective on the region through a series of questions that reveal her favorite places, habits and recommendations.

Coffee with a sea view or lunch in the mountains?

I love both, but if I had to choose, it would be coffee with a sea view.

Your favorite hidden spot on the Costa del Sol?

Honestly, my favorite place is my own home.

Sunrise or Sunset?

Sunset

The restaurants you always recommend?

Los Marinos José in Fuengirola — without question, the best quality fish and seafood on the coast. For a livelier, more nighttime atmosphere, the restaurants at La Plaza in Puente Romano are also excellent.

The neighborhood everyone should have on their radar?

The Golden Mile

Beach Club or Golf Club?

I prefer a Beach Club — I don’t play golf, though I’m considering learning.

A property feature you could never live without?

Open views and an abundance of natural light.

One word that best defines the Costa del Sol?

Brightness.

Your ideal Sunday on the Costa del Sol?

A good paella with family or friends by the beach, or a long walk along one of the incredible trails nearby — I love reconnecting with nature.

What’s the biggest misconception about southern Spain?

That we’re lazy, idle, and spend all day sleeping (laughs). But once you actually live through our long, hot days, you understand the siesta differently — it’s not laziness, it’s simply what the body asks for in this kind of heat.

The best season to enjoy the Costa del Sol?

Thanks to our exceptional climate and the sheer diversity of beaches, leisure, culture and gastronomy, there is something to enjoy here 365 days a year.

If you could give one piece of advice to someone buying a home here, what would it be?

Start by finding a real estate professional who truly understands your goals and needs.

One place you always take first-time visitors?

Málaga’s impressive, culture-rich historic center.

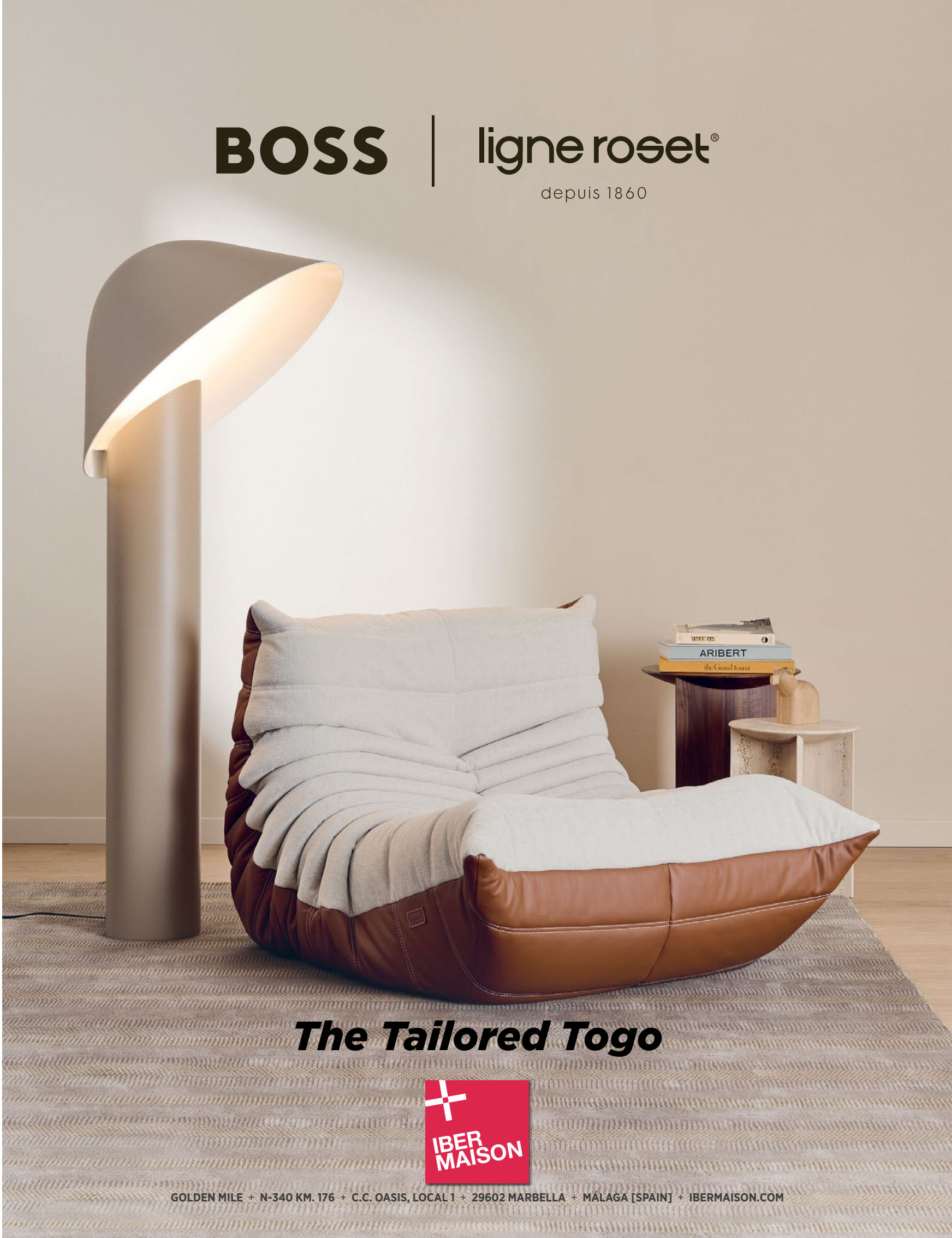
Luxury means...?

A privileged climate, an enviable lifestyle, and remarkable diversity.

Finish this sentence: “The Costa del Sol is...”

The best place to live in Europe.

To connect with Fabiana Castro, WhatsApp: +34 617 58 70 97



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The Tailored Togo



IBERMAISON

Furniture, Art and the Space Between

Marbella has always attracted people who take their surroundings seriously, and for more than 25 years, Ibermaison has been one of the names locals turn to for exactly that. Founded in 1999 by architect Massi Ferrachi and Karin Mehnert, the studio has grown from a single furniture showroom into a full architecture, interior design and decoration practice, working on everything from private homes to hotels, offices and commercial spaces across the Costa del Sol.

What sets Ibermaison apart is its refusal to be boxed into one category. For some clients, it is simply a source of exceptional furniture. For others, it is a full consultancy — guiding a project from first concept through planning, materials and final installation. That flexibility is the point: the studio believes a space only truly works when it reflects the people who live in it, so the process always starts with listening rather than a fixed formula. That flexibility was tested early, and at the highest level. When Madrid's Hotel Puerta América opened, giving twelve floors to twelve different architects — among them Jean Nouvel, Norman Foster, Zaha Hadid and David Chipperfield — Ibermaison was the hand behind seven of them, turning each architect's concept into built reality through custom fabrication and installation. It remains one of the clearest proofs of the studio's range: twelve entirely different visions under one roof, and Ibermaison responsible for bringing more than half of them to life.



The Marbella showroom itself makes the case in physical form. Designed by Ferrachi, it sits in the heart of the Golden Mile, on the stretch of coast between Marbella town and Puerto Banús that first captivated Alfonso de Hohenlohe in the 1950s and set Marbella on its path to becoming a cosmopolitan retreat. Inside, the space carries international design names like Ligne Roset, Vitra and Cassina, alongside iLine, Ibermaison's own line of custom-made furniture and one-off pieces. Among them, Ligne Roset stands out for one detail in particular: Ibermaison is the exclusive Marbella retailer of the house's collaboration with BOSS, a special edition of the Togo, the low, all-foam armchair Michel Ducaroy designed in 1973. Here, its signature folds pair leather with soft textile, finished with BOSS's tailoring-inspired contrast stitching — suiting language translated into upholstery.



Art is where the studio’s name earns its full meaning. Beyond architecture, Ferrachi’s paintings were exhibited from the early 1990s in New York and Los Angeles, before showing at Ibermaison’s own galleries in Madrid, Marbella, Ibiza and Paris. The work favored large, shifting fields of color layered with fragments of script-like text, worked mostly by hand — painted left-handed by choice, despite his being right-handed, in the belief that an untrained hand revealed more. That same instinct for creative direction defined Karin’s role at Ibermaison. The same year the studio was founded, she launched Neomania, its in-house magazine covering design, art, architecture and fashion, with Ferrachi as its original art director. It was never just a catalogue — Neomania followed Paris fashion weeks and international art fairs, giving Ibermaison’s aesthetic a life beyond the showroom floor. That aesthetic is still very much active today. Over a quarter of a century, Neomania continues to publish under Karin’s direction — proof that the vision she and Ferrachi built together never stayed still, and still does not.



BARBILLÓN

M A R B E L L A



Where Friends and Families Gather by the Sea

Summer on the Costa del Sol is measured differently. It begins with breakfast by the sea, stretches into leisurely afternoons beneath the Mediterranean sun and lingers long after sunset, when conversation, music and exceptional food naturally come together. Few places capture this way of life like Barbillon Marbella. More than a beach club or a restaurant, it has become one of Marbella’s most distinctive seaside destinations, where every hour brings a different experience while remaining true to its essence. Now in its fourth season, Barbillon unveils the next evolution of its concept, bringing together gastronomy, wellness, family experiences and relaxed sophistication within a collection of beautifully designed spaces, each created to complement a different moment of the day. Set within the exclusive residential enclave of Guadalmina Baja, just minutes from Puerto Banus, Barbillon enjoys one of the Costa del Sol’s most privileged seaside locations. Surrounded by lush gardens and the Mediterranean shoreline, it offers a peaceful escape where refined hospitality, natural beauty and the easy pace of southern Spain blend seamlessly.

The restaurant celebrates Mediterranean cuisine through exceptional ingredients and honest flavors. Fresh seafood, premium shellfish, the finest seasonal catch and signature rice dishes honor local traditions while embracing contemporary refinement. The beachfront restaurant offers a more relaxed setting, where leisurely lunches naturally lead to golden sunsets accompanied by live music and the unmistakable atmosphere of Marbella evenings. Around the pool and along the beach, lighter dishes, fresh ceviche, tartares, vibrant salads and gourmet bites accompany slow summer days, while a dedicated family area with its own children’s pool ensures that guests of every generation feel equally at home.

Beyond its daily dining experience, the beach club has established itself as a preferred venue for private celebrations and bespoke events. From elegant weddings and family occasions to corporate gatherings and exclusive brand presentations, its versatile spaces, exceptional service and privileged beachfront setting provide an unforgettable backdrop for every gathering.

Wellness is woven naturally into the Barbillon lifestyle. Seaside massages and quiet, sun-drenched retreats invite guests to pause, recharge and embrace the slower pace of coastal living. More than a place to dine or unwind, it reflects a lifestyle where gastronomy, leisure and relaxation exist in perfect harmony, inviting every guest to stay just a little longer.



THE FLAVORS OF ANDALUSIA

Gazpacho, the Taste of Summer



Every culture has a story. Sometimes it is told through its monuments, sometimes through its landscapes, and often through the dishes that have been shared around family tables for centuries. In this ASRAR editorial series, sponsored by Qatar Gourmet, we explore the recipes, traditions and culinary heritage that define some of the world’s most remarkable gastronomies. The journey begins in Andalusia, where few dishes capture the spirit of summer quite like gazpacho. When the sun settles over the whitewashed villages of southern Spain and the afternoons grow long and warm, gazpacho becomes more than a recipe. It is a ritual. Served cold, bright and full of life, it appears on family tables, in seaside restaurants and in homes across the Costa del Sol as one of the simplest and most beloved expressions of Andalusian cooking.



Its roots stretch back many centuries, when the Romans prepared simple, rustic mixtures of bread, water and vinegar to provide refreshment during the hottest days. It was during the period of Al-Andalus, however, that these humble beginnings were transformed into something far more refined. The Arab influence reshaped Andalusian gastronomy through advanced irrigation, the cultivation of olive groves and almond orchards, and a deep appreciation for fresh, nourishing dishes suited to the southern climate.

One of the finest expressions of this legacy is ajoblanco, Málaga’s celebrated cold almond soup, whose delicate blend of bread, almonds, garlic and olive oil remains one of Andalusia’s oldest and most treasured culinary traditions. Gazpacho changed forever after tomatoes and peppers arrived from the Americas.

Slowly, these new ingredients found their place in local kitchens, adding color, sweetness and freshness to an ancient preparation. What began as a humble mixture of bread, oil and garlic became the vibrant red soup now recognized around the world.

The beauty of gazpacho lies in the quality of its ingredients. In a land where tomatoes ripen slowly under the Mediterranean sun, developing their natural sweetness, crisp cucumbers, green peppers and onions bring freshness, depth and delicate balance. Garlic adds character, but it is the generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, one of Spain’s greatest culinary treasures, that gives gazpacho its unmistakable richness and silky texture. As the world’s leading producer of olive oil, Spain has elevated this humble ingredient into a symbol of its gastronomic identity, transforming the simplest recipes into something truly extraordinary.

Preparing gazpacho is not simply about following a recipe; it is about respecting the ingredients and allowing them to speak for themselves. Once the vegetables have been blended with bread, garlic, vinegar and extra virgin olive oil, the true secret lies in the waiting. Left to rest in the refrigerator for several hours, the flavors gradually come together, creating a deeper, more rounded taste. Served well chilled, gazpacho can be enjoyed in a bowl, topped with finely diced vegetables and a final drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, or simply poured into a glass as a refreshing drink, a tradition embraced across Spain throughout the summer months.

Today, chefs and home cooks continue to reinterpret gazpacho while remaining faithful to its origins. Strawberries bring a delicate sweetness and soft pink color, watermelon makes it lighter and even more refreshing, while beetroot adds depth and intensity. Cherry gazpacho, meanwhile, offers elegance, vibrant acidity and a beautiful seasonal character.



Each interpretation celebrates a different facet of this timeless recipe, yet all remain true to the same philosophy: exceptional ingredients, simplicity and a deep respect for seasonal produce.

Gazpacho reminds us that the most memorable dishes are often the simplest. With just a handful of ingredients, a little patience and centuries of tradition, it reflects the history, culture and generosity of Spanish gastronomy. More than a recipe, it celebrates the simple pleasure of bringing families and friends together around the table, one refreshing spoonful at a time.

BRASS MARBELLA

A New Reason to Visit Elviria



Tucked away in the leafy neighborhood of Elviria, just a short drive east of Marbella, Brass has quickly established itself as one of the area’s most welcoming dining addresses. Away from the bustle of the town center, this elegant contemporary brasserie offers a refined yet relaxed atmosphere where residents and visitors gather to enjoy thoughtfully crafted cuisine, warm hospitality and live music in an inviting setting. Founded by René Schäfer in 2024, Brass was created with a clear vision: to bring together refined cuisine, genuine hospitality and an atmosphere where every detail encourages guests to linger. Rather than simply opening another restaurant, his ambition was to create a place where residents and international visitors alike could gather to celebrate good food, meaningful conversation and memorable evenings.

Bringing that vision to life is French Chef François Marie, whose menu draws inspiration from the traditions of the European brasserie while embracing carefully selected international influences. From fresh seafood and premium meats to seasonal ingredients and elegant desserts, every dish reflects a commitment to quality, flavor and meticulous craftsmanship.



Beyond the cuisine, Brass is defined by an atmosphere that encourages guests to settle in and enjoy the evening at their own pace. Live performances, from smooth jazz and soul to contemporary favorites, create an elegant backdrop that enhances every visit without ever overpowering the conversation. Whether dining indoors or on the welcoming terrace, the setting strikes a natural balance between sophistication and comfort, complemented by a thoughtful selection of signature mocktails and refreshing beverages.

Brass also offers an exceptional setting for private celebrations, corporate gatherings and special occasions, accommodating up to 120 guests. Carefully curated menus, attentive service and the flexibility to tailor each event ensure that every occasion is as memorable as the setting itself. It is this versatility, combined with its distinctive character, that continues to set Brass apart as one of Elviria’s culinary landmarks.





NOURISHING LIFE WITH PURPOSE

An exclusive conversation with Natalia Belaiche on entrepreneurship, functional nutrition and the future of wellbeing.

Long before functional nutrition became part of everyday conversation, Natalia Belaiche had already dedicated her career to understanding the profound connection between food, health and longevity. From pioneering one of Marbella’s first destinations for conscious dining with Organic Market & Food on Marbella’s Golden Mile to leading Maison Santé Clinic in Dubai, an innovative center for longevity and functional medicine, her work has consistently challenged conventional approaches to wellbeing. In this exclusive conversation with ASRAR, Natalia shares the experiences, philosophy and professional vision that continue to shape her mission: helping people live healthier, longer and more fulfilling lives.

Your journey into wellness began long before functional nutrition became widely recognized. What first inspired that path?

Yes, my journey started long before nutrition became mainstream and before we had easy access to health information on the internet. From a very young age, I realized that simply being diagnosed with an illness and receiving a prescription didn’t address the root cause of the problem. I strongly believed in the power of nutrition and in how the food we eat can help prevent disease and support the body’s ability to heal.

When I was 17, I struggled with significant gut issues, and at 19 I became a mother for the first time. That experience motivated me even more. I wanted to understand how I could improve my own health and give my child the healthiest possible start in life. At that time, there were very few resources available, so I collected articles from magazines, kept notebooks filled with research, and studied everything I could find about foods, nutrients, and their combinations. I was fascinated by how nutrition could influence health. Many years later, I decided to turn that passion into a profession. I became a functional nutritionist, completing education and professional training in several countries, and I have continued learning ever since.



Organic Market & Food became one of Marbella’s first destinations for conscious dining. Looking back, what did that experience teach you?

When I took over Organic Market & Food restaurant, healthy eating was still considered a niche concept. Many people thought organic food meant giving up flavour or pleasure. I wanted to prove the opposite - that food could be both incredibly delicious and genuinely nourishing.

Building the restaurant taught me that people don’t change because you tell them to; they change when they have a positive experience. We didn’t just serve meals - we introduced new ingredients, explained why they mattered, and helped people discover that healthy living can be enjoyable rather than restrictive. It also taught me resilience. Introducing new ideas is never easy. You have to believe in your vision long before others do. Looking back, I realize that Organic Market & Food restaurant wasn’t just a restaurant - it became the beginning of a much bigger mission to help people rethink their relationship with food and health. Today, whether I’m working in a longevity clinic or developing new health projects, that lesson stays with me. Lasting change starts by inspiring people, not by forcing them.



Today you lead a longevity and gut health clinic in Dubai. Was that always part of your vision, or did it evolve naturally?

It was a very natural evolution. As more and more clients came to me with different health concerns, I realized that if I wanted to truly understand which foods could help them, I first needed to understand what was happening inside their bodies. That meant looking beyond symptoms and using testing to identify deficiencies, imbalances, and the root causes of their health issues.

At the time, I often felt like I was fighting the system because conventional medicine generally didn’t recognize nutrition as a powerful therapeutic tool. While medication is essential in many situations, I believed there had to be a better way to address the underlying causes rather than simply managing symptoms. Eventually, instead of searching for the occasional doctor who thought outside conventional medical guidelines, I discovered functional medicine. It was exactly what I had been looking for. Functional medicine combines in-depth diagnostics with personalized nutrition, targeted supplementation, and evidence-based treatments. By understanding each person’s unique biochemistry, it becomes much easier to restore health, prevent disease, and help people feel their best.

To me, functional medicine is one of the most powerful tools not only for treating illness but also for extending our healthspan - the number of years we live in good health. That philosophy ultimately led to the creation of Maison Santé in Dubai, a clinic dedicated to preventive and functional medicine, where we help people optimize their health before disease develops and support them in living longer, healthier lives.

Throughout your career, one idea seems constant: that food has the power to heal. How has that philosophy shaped your life?

Food definitely has the power to heal - or, in some cases, to contribute to disease. We are all unique, with different genetics, lifestyles, and nutritional needs, which is why I believe we should all become conscious eaters rather than simply following trends. Our bodies are incredibly sophisticated. They know when it’s time to sleep, when to eat, when to rest, and they constantly send us signals when something isn’t right. The problem is that many of us have stopped listening.

For example, if you have a headache, before reaching for a painkiller, ask yourself why it’s happening. Could you be dehydrated? Could you be iron deficient? Are you under too much stress? Medication can relieve the symptom but understanding and addressing the root cause often leads to a much more lasting solution.

Unfortunately, many people are looking for a magic pill while continuing to eat ultra-processed, nutrient-poor foods that promote inflammation and deprive the body of what it truly needs. Our bodies are designed to thrive when we provide them with the right nutrition, movement, sleep, and environment. When we nourish ourselves properly, we have more energy, a better mood, clearer thinking, and a much greater chance of preventing chronic disease. To me, food isn’t just calories - it’s information. Every meal is an opportunity either to support our health or to work against it.

Wellness has become a global trend, yet many people still feel overwhelmed by conflicting advice. In a world full of information, what do you believe are the timeless principles of good health, and what would be your advice to our readers?

I think one of the biggest challenges today is that people are looking for certainty in a world where health is deeply individual. Every week there is a new diet, a new supplement, or a new trend promising extraordinary results. Instead of chasing every new idea, we should focus on understanding ourselves.

The future of health is personalization. What works beautifully for one person may not work for another because our genetics, microbiome, hormones, stress levels, and lifestyles are all different. That is why I encourage people to become curious about their own bodies rather than blindly following social media or the latest wellness trend.

My advice is to build your health one habit at a time. Small, consistent actions are far more powerful than short periods of perfection. Invest in quality food, spend time outdoors, stay physically active, cultivate meaningful relationships, and don’t underestimate the importance of joy and purpose. These are the things that create resilience and longevity - not the latest miracle product. The greatest luxury today is not living longer; it’s feeling energetic, mentally sharp, and able to enjoy every stage of life. That is what true wellbeing means to me.

When you think about the future of healthcare, what role do you see functional nutrition playing?

I don’t believe functional nutrition is the future of healthcare - I believe it should become one of its foundations. We have spent decades becoming exceptionally good at treating disease, but much less attention has been given to understanding why it develops in the first place.

Functional nutrition shifts the conversation from treating symptoms to creating health. By combining nutrition, lifestyle, advanced diagnostics, and a deeper understanding of each individual, we can often identify imbalances years before they become chronic conditions. Prevention is not only more effective - it is also more compassionate and sustainable.

I don’t see functional nutrition replacing conventional medicine. The two should work hand in hand. Conventional medicine is extraordinary when we need acute care or life-saving interventions.

Functional nutrition helps people optimize their health, improve their quality of life, and reduce the risk of disease before it begins. My hope is that healthcare will become increasingly proactive rather than reactive. Instead of waiting until people become sick, we should help them stay healthy, energetic, and independent for as long as possible. That is the true meaning of longevity.

After building projects in both Marbella and Dubai, what continues to inspire you every day?

What inspires me most is seeing people transform - not just physically, but emotionally. There is something incredibly rewarding about watching someone regain their energy, confidence, and enthusiasm for life. Sometimes all they needed was the right guidance and someone who truly listened. I also love building. Whether it’s creating a restaurant that serves nourishing food, a longevity clinic that changes the way people think about health, or developing new ideas that bring science and lifestyle together, I enjoy creating projects that have a positive impact on people’s lives.

I’m naturally curious, and I believe there is always more to learn. Science evolves, our understanding of the human body evolves, and I want to keep evolving with it. That curiosity keeps me motivated every day. Ultimately, my greatest inspiration is the possibility of making prevention the new standard. If we can help people live longer, healthier, and happier lives - not by adding years to life alone, but by adding life to those years - then I feel I’m doing meaningful work.





ANANTARA SPA

The Luxury of Renewal

Hidden within the elegant grounds of Anantara Villa Padierna Palace Benahavís Marbella Resort, between Marbella, Benahavís and Estepona, lies one of Southern Europe’s most remarkable wellness retreats. Surrounded by manicured gardens, championship golf courses and palace-inspired architecture, the resort has earned international recognition not only for its refined hospitality but also for an exceptional spa experience that invites guests to slow down, restore balance and embrace a deeper sense of well-being. More than simply a place for treatments, Anantara Spa embraces a holistic philosophy where ancient traditions and expert care come together. Spanning more than 2,000 square meters, it is among Europe’s largest spas and an award-winning wellness sanctuary. Inspired by the grandeur of Roman baths, the spa is characterized by abundant natural light, elegant classical sculptures and stained-glass skylights overlooking peaceful gardens. Thermal pools, Turkish baths, the Costa del Sol’s only aromatic circuit of its kind, 13 treatment rooms and dedicated relaxation areas create an atmosphere designed for complete renewal.

At the heart of the experience lies Anantara’s Thai wellness heritage. Signature rituals draw inspiration from centuries-old healing traditions, combining the renowned benefits of traditional Thai massage with herbal therapies designed to restore flexibility, improve circulation and ease muscular tension. Wellness journeys are enhanced through collaborations with prestigious skincare houses including Valmont, Esthederm, Comfort Zone, Oribe and Biologique Recherche, ensuring every guest receives care tailored to their individual needs. The approach extends far beyond the therapy rooms. Expert trainers create personalized fitness programs using state-of-the-art Technogym equipment, complementing the spa experience with a comprehensive approach to health and vitality. From restorative massages and thermal rituals to quiet moments overlooking the surrounding landscape, every element has been thoughtfully designed to inspire balance, restoration and inner calm. At Anantara Spa, wellness is not merely a treatment; it is an experience that encourages guests to spend meaningful time disconnecting from the demands of everyday life through mindfulness. By reconnecting with themselves, they restore both body and mind in a setting of complete serenity.

SENSE BY AMAL AMEEN BEAUTY

Capturing the Golden Hour of Marbella



Marbella has a smell before it has a name — pine resin warmed by the sun, salt lifted off the marina, jasmine spilling over a garden wall at dusk. It’s a town that has spent decades perfecting the art of golden hour, and it was only a matter of time before someone tried to put that hour in a bottle. SENSE is that attempt.

The fragrance opens fast and bright, with rose, violet and grapefruit landing almost immediately — closer to the crisp citrus of a marina morning than the syrupy warmth many resort scents default to. As it settles, musk and vanilla take over, the olfactory equivalent of skin still warm from the beach after the sun has gone down. Vetiver and amber close it out, giving SENSE a grounded, slightly more grown-up finish — not the youthful sparkle Marbella is known for at noon, but the quieter, more exclusive Marbella that emerges once the day-trippers have left. That contrast is really the point. Where sister scents in the same collection lean into smoke and oud for Marrakesh, or bold spice for Mumbai, SENSE stays comparatively restrained — a fresher, more wearable register that suits Marbella’s particular blend of glamour and ease. It’s a daytime fragrance dressed for evening, which feels right for a town that does exactly that.

SENSE is part of Amal Ameen Beauty’s Sun Memories collection, where each fragrance represents a place instead of just a mood. The brand wants every scent to have its own identity and to last well on the skin, and SENSE succeeds on both counts. Under its tagline, “I wear SENSE,” it comes across as personal rather than generic, true to Marbella itself. Whether or not you know the brand, SENSE reads as a fair postcard: bright enough for the coast, warm enough to outlast the flight home.

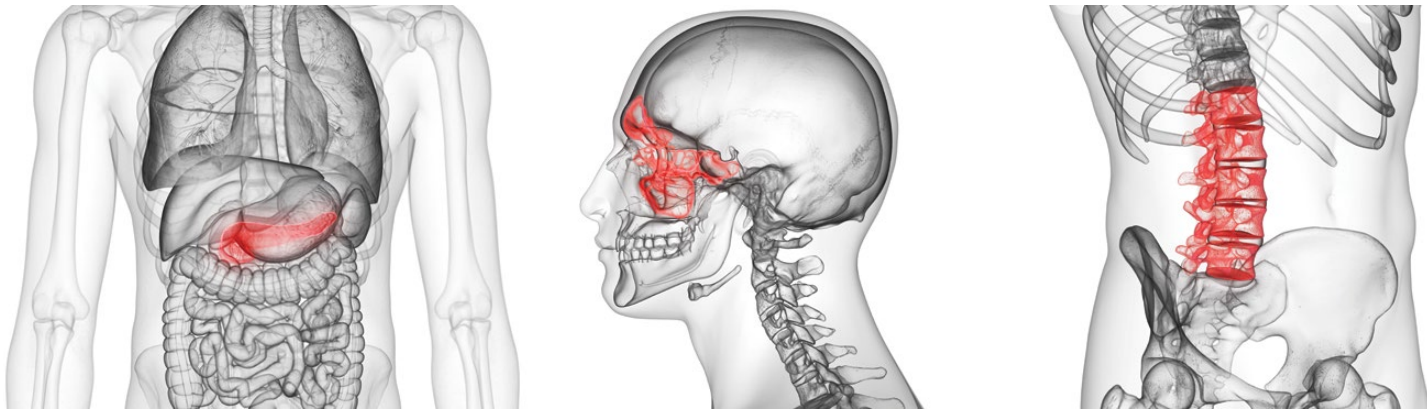




THE ART OF RESTORING BALANCE

An exclusive conversation with David Gutiérrez on the philosophy of osteopathy and modern wellbeing.

Health is increasingly understood as the result of balance rather than simply the absence of pain. This philosophy lies at the heart of osteopathy, a manual healthcare discipline founded in 1874 by the American physician Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, who believed that the body’s structure and function are closely connected and that supporting its natural balance plays an important role in overall wellbeing. Today, osteopathy is practiced around the world, helping people manage musculoskeletal conditions while encouraging movement, posture awareness and a more holistic approach to health. With more than twenty years of professional experience, David Gutiérrez has dedicated his career to understanding these connections, combining extensive clinical experience, continuous education and a personalized approach to every patient.



What first inspired you to pursue osteopathy?

My fascination with the human body and its remarkable ability to adapt naturally led me to study in Barcelona, where I built a strong foundation in manual therapy and osteopathy. From the very beginning, I was drawn not only to treating symptoms but to understanding the body as an interconnected system.

Experience inevitably changes the way we understand the human body. How has your approach evolved over the years?

Experience brings a much deeper understanding of how the body functions. Over the years, I have learned that the source of discomfort is often not found where symptoms appear. My work is based on recognizing these connections and supporting the body’s natural ability to regain balance in the most respectful and effective way possible.

You have been based on the Costa del Sol for almost two decades. What has this region meant to you, both personally and professionally?

It has meant a great deal. Since arriving in Estepona more than eighteen years ago, I have had the privilege of working with people from many different backgrounds and cultures. That diversity has enriched both my professional experience and my understanding of the individual needs of every patient.

Continuous education seems to be a defining part of your career.

Absolutely. I firmly believe that learning never stops. Osteopathy continues to evolve, with new research, techniques and approaches constantly emerging. I regularly attend seminars, advanced training programs and specialized master’s courses to continue refining my knowledge and offering the highest standard of care.

What philosophy guides your daily practice?

Every person is unique. My role is to understand the individual rather than simply focus on a particular symptom. Osteopathy has taught me the importance of observing the whole body, respecting its natural capacity for adaptation and helping restore harmony through a comprehensive approach.

For readers discovering osteopathy for the first time, how would you describe its value?

Osteopathy offers a holistic perspective on wellbeing by recognizing the relationship between body and mind. It is a discipline that requires a deep understanding of human anatomy, movement and function, while helping people better understand how the body works as an integrated whole.

A Lifetime Dedicated to Wellbeing

For David Gutiérrez, osteopathy is more than a profession—it is a lifelong commitment to understanding the remarkable ability of the human body to adapt, recover and find balance. After more than two decades of clinical practice, he continues to combine experience, ongoing education and a personalised approach, helping his patients achieve long-term wellbeing through a deeper understanding of the body as a whole.



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COSTA DEL GOLF: THE GREEN HEART OF EUROPE



Long before the region became synonymous with luxury living, Michelin-starred restaurants and glamorous marinas, its fairways had already earned international recognition. Decades of investment, an exceptional climate and a landscape framed by rolling hills, sea views and mountain backdrops turned this stretch of southern Spain into one of Europe’s most celebrated golfing regions. Today, more than seventy golf courses are spread across the province of Málaga, attracting players of every level throughout the year. Courses such as Los Naranjos, Aloha and La Reserva sit alongside championship venues designed by legendary golfers and renowned architects, while others offer a more relaxed setting where the pleasure of the game is matched only by the scenery. Together, they have earned the region an identity recognised worldwide as the *Costa del Golf*.

Golf ranks among the most powerful forces behind the region’s international appeal, having helped shape residential communities, inspired internationally acclaimed resorts and drawn a global community that returns year after year. Yet golf here is about far more than competition. It has woven together an entire culture around the game, connecting sport with leisure, hospitality, wellness, gastronomy and the pleasure of outdoor living. Many arrive for the golf, only to find themselves drawn into a way of life defined by nature, exceptional food and an enviable Mediterranean climate.

It is this unique balance that continues to draw golfers from across the globe. Every round is played beneath blue skies, surrounded by landscapes that shift with the seasons yet never lose their character. Here, golf is more than a sport — it is stitched into the region’s identity, shaping its international reputation and providing the backdrop for some of the world’s most prestigious tournaments.

WHERE CHAMPIONS COMPETE

The Tournaments That Elevated Costa del Golf to the World Stage

The Costa del Sol’s reputation as Europe’s golfing capital has been built not only through exceptional courses, but also through its ability to welcome many of the sport’s most prestigious tournaments. For decades, the region has hosted competitions that have shaped the modern game, crowned its greatest champions and produced some of golf’s most memorable moments. Beyond the competition itself, these events have projected southern Spain onto television screens worldwide, reinforcing its place among golf’s most respected destinations.

Among the most influential milestones was the 1997 Ryder Cup, when Real Club Valderrama became the first venue outside the British Isles and the United States to host one of golf’s most celebrated competitions. Captained by the legendary Seve Ballesteros, Team Europe secured a memorable victory before an international audience, firmly establishing the Costa del Sol among the world’s leading golfing regions. The tournament marked a turning point, proving that Andalucía possessed not only world-class courses but also the infrastructure and hospitality required to host events of the highest calibre.



This legacy has continued to grow through the arrival of some of the sport’s most significant championships. Valderrama remains home to LIV Golf Andalucía, while Finca Cortesín hosted the 2023 Solheim Cup, one of the greatest competitions in women’s golf. Events such as the Andalucía Masters and numerous DP World Tour tournaments keep bringing together many of the sport’s leading players, reinforcing the Costa del Sol’s standing as one of the world’s premier golfing regions.

These championships generate far more than sporting headlines. Each tournament draws thousands of visitors, along with international media and television audiences reaching millions of viewers worldwide. Hotels, restaurants, local businesses and luxury hospitality providers all benefit from an international audience that increasingly associates the Costa del Sol with excellence, quality and exceptional service — an impact that extends well beyond the final round. Yet perhaps its greatest achievement lies in its consistency. Season after season, the world’s finest golfers continue to return, not only because of the quality of the courses, but because every tournament is supported by exceptional organisation, warm hospitality and an atmosphere unlike any other in Europe. It is this combination of sporting excellence and Mediterranean lifestyle that gives the Costa del Sol its enduring pull on the world of golf.



MORE THAN A GAME

Long after the final trophy has been lifted and the galleries have dispersed, life across the Costa del Sol’s golf clubs continues at its own unhurried pace. Here, the game extends well beyond the fairways, creating places where friendships are formed, business relationships flourish and families come together around a rhythm of living that feels inseparable from the region itself.

The clubhouse, more than the course itself, is the true heart of daily life here. Early mornings begin in the cool freshness of tree-lined greens, where the scent of Mediterranean vegetation and a gentle sea breeze accompany the first tee times. Some players enjoy the walk, others prefer the comfort of a buggy, but all share the same morning ritual before gathering in the clubhouse, where breakfast, conversation and friendships are enjoyed among members and visitors. This international community, bringing together residents from every corner of the world, has made the Costa del Sol one of Europe’s finest cosmopolitan places, enriching life both on and beyond the golf course. Homes overlooking golf courses offer a unique sense of openness, where expansive green landscapes replace the pace of the city and nature becomes part of the daily routine. Whether enjoyed as a permanent residence or a holiday retreat, these surroundings invite residents to spend more time outdoors, embracing a quieter, healthier way of living that begins the moment they step outside.



Golf clubs have also grown into complete lifestyle destinations, offering far more than the sport itself. Restaurants, wellness facilities, fitness centres, tennis and padel courts, swimming pools and year-round social events create spaces enjoyed equally by golfers, families and visitors. For many, the club becomes a place to spend the entire day, enjoying everything that Costa del Golf has to offer, where every visit naturally unfolds from sport to conversation, gastronomy and shared moments. In the end, this is what sets Costa del Golf apart: the scorecard is only the beginning, and the real reward is a way of life that keeps players coming back long after the final putt has dropped.



ECHOES OF AL-ANDALUS

Castles and Baths from Eight Centuries of Moorish Rule

For nearly eight hundred years, this stretch of coastline belonged to Al-Andalus, and long after the last Moorish garrison withdrew, the evidence never really left. It survives in stone — in hilltop silhouettes that still catch the last light of the day, in horseshoe arches built to outlast empires, in water systems engineers still study today. To look for it is to find an older version of the Costa del Sol, one built for defense and ritual rather than leisure. Nowhere is that legacy more intact than in Málaga itself, where the Alcazaba still rises above the port in tiers of fortified walls, courtyards and gardens, much as it did under the Hammudid dynasty a thousand years ago. A single fortified corridor, the Coracha, connects it to Gibralfaro, the hilltop citadel later rebuilt by the Nasrid sultan Yusuf I as a military stronghold — its barracks and battlements built to watch the sea for exactly the kind of arrival that would eventually end Moorish rule altogether.



Antequera, Alcazaba



Málaga, Alcazaba

The same pattern of hilltop vigilance repeats along the coast. In Vélez-Málaga, a tenth-century alcazaba still commands the town below, while further inland, the Alcazaba of Antequera guards one of the oldest continuously fortified sites in the province — its Torre del Homenaje among the largest keeps in Andalusia, a reminder that Antequera once marked the frontier between two civilizations rather than a stop on a road trip. Further west, the fortresses grow more remote, and more dramatic for it. Castillo Sohail in Fuengirola sits on foundations far older than its Moorish walls, rebuilt in the tenth century under Abd-ar-Rahman III and still visible from the beach below. In Gaucín, the Castillo del Águila perches high enough that, on a clear day, the view is said to stretch as far as the coast of Africa — the same sightline that once made it worth defending. Inland, Álora’s Castillo Árabe, raised in the eighth or ninth century near the meeting point of two rivers, ranks among the oldest Muslim fortifications left standing in the region.



But it is Ronda that holds the most intimate trace of daily Moorish life. The Baños Árabes, built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries beside the Puente Árabe, are widely considered the best-preserved Arab bathhouse in the Iberian Peninsula — their horseshoe arches, star-shaped skylights and original water wheel still standing much as they did when Ronda’s residents purified themselves before entering the city. A short walk away, the water mine beneath Casa del Rey Moro tells a harder story: a stairway of more than two hundred steps, cut directly into the gorge, built so the city could reach the river below even under siege. Together, these sites form a different map of the coast — one where a morning could be spent walking fortress walls built to hold back armies, and an afternoon standing in a bathhouse built for nothing more than the simple, universal act of getting clean. Eight centuries on, both still stand as proof of how seriously Al-Andalus took the art of building for the long term.

For more Information: visitcostadelsol.com



Málaga, Alcazaba



GÓMEZ & MOLINA

The House That Welcomed the Gulf to Marbella

For more than half a century, Gómez & Molina has been part of Marbella’s story, earning the trust of local clients, international collectors and visitors accumulated through years of service from across the Gulf. Built on heritage, discretion and highly personalized service, the house has become synonymous with exceptional jewelry and relationships that endure far beyond a single purchase. In this exclusive conversation with ASRAR, Miguel Gómez y Molina reflects on the values that have guided the family through the decades, the close bond they have built with Arab clients and why, in the world of fine jewelry, trust remains the most precious asset of all.

Marbella has changed enormously over the past five decades. How has Gómez & Molina managed to preserve its identity while evolving alongside the city?
Marbella has transformed from a small Mediterranean town into one of the world’s most cosmopolitan luxury destinations. Throughout those changes, our philosophy has remained remarkably simple: treating every client as a guest in our home and every jewel as something that will outlive us all. We have embraced innovation, new technologies and contemporary design, but we have never compromised on the values on which our family business was founded in 1969: trust, expertise, discretion and personal relationships. In many ways, Marbella has evolved around us, but our essence has remained the same.

Your family has accompanied several generations of international clients. What does it mean when today’s parents introduce their children to the same jeweler they have trusted for decades?
There is no greater compliment in our profession. Jewels can be found anywhere in the world. The trust that brings a family back, decade after decade, cannot be bought. It must be earned. When parents bring their children and say, “This is where we bought your mother’s engagement ring,” or “Your grandfather always came here,” we understand that we are not simply selling jewelry; we are becoming part of a family’s history. Those moments carry a responsibility that we value deeply and never take for granted.

Clients from the Gulf have long appreciated exceptional gemstones and statement jewelry. Have you noticed their tastes evolve over the years, and what continues to define their preferences today?
Clients from the Gulf have always possessed an extraordinary understanding of gemstones and craftsmanship. Over the years we have seen tastes evolve toward greater individuality and more contemporary designs, but the appreciation for exceptional quality remains unchanged. Rare colored gemstones, important diamonds and unique creations continue to attract attention, but today’s clients often seek exclusivity above visibility. They appreciate jewels with a story, impeccable provenance and the knowledge that what they acquire is genuinely outstanding.

Beyond craftsmanship, what do you believe transforms a beautiful jewel into a piece that becomes part of a family’s legacy?
Emotion. A jewel becomes an heirloom when it marks an important chapter in someone’s life: a marriage, a birth, an achievement or a memory of someone loved. The true value of a jewel is rarely measured by carats alone. It lies in the stories that become attached to it and the memories it carries from one generation to the next. In the end, a truly extraordinary piece is never just purchased; it is inherited, quietly carrying forward who a family has loved and where they have been.



When sourcing exceptional gemstones or creating bespoke pieces, what qualities do you look for before deciding that a jewel truly belongs in the Gómez & Molina collection?
The first requirement is always beauty, but beauty alone is not enough. We look for rarity, character and authenticity. A gemstone should possess personality as well as technical excellence. Beyond the gem itself, we ask whether the piece has soul, whether it can inspire emotion and whether it represents the standards that our family name has stood for over five decades. If it does not move us, it will not be part of our collection.

Many of your clients seek privacy above all else. How important is discretion in today’s luxury world, and how do you ensure every client enjoys a truly personal experience?
Discretion has become one of the greatest luxuries of all. Many of our clients live highly visible lives and value spaces where they can feel completely at ease. Confidentiality is not a service we provide; it is part of our culture and our responsibility. We strive to create an environment where every client feels understood, respected and protected, allowing relationships to develop naturally over many years.

Is there a particular jewel, gemstone or commission that has remained especially memorable throughout your career—not because of its value, but because of the story behind it?
There have been many extraordinary stones, but the pieces we remember most are rarely the most expensive. Often, they are bespoke commissions connected to important moments in people’s lives: anniversaries, reconciliations, family celebrations or tributes to loved ones who are no longer with us. Those projects remind us that jewelry is ultimately about genuine personal relationships, not material value.

For someone discovering Gómez & Molina for the first time, how would you describe the experience of walking through your doors?
We would like visitors to feel that they are entering a world where time slows down. Luxury should never feel intimidating; it should feel welcoming, inspiring and personal. Whether someone is searching for a rare gemstone, a bespoke creation or simply wishes to learn, our goal is for every visitor to leave feeling they have experienced something authentic and memorable.

Marbella has become an international luxury destination. What do you think continues to attract discerning clients from the Middle East year after year?
Marbella offers a rare balance that very few destinations can replicate. It combines security, privacy, remarkable hospitality, an enviable climate and a relaxed sophistication that appeals greatly to international families. Clients from the Middle East appreciate not only the luxury lifestyle but also the sense of familiarity and welcome they find here. Many families have returned for decades and now consider Marbella a second home.

Looking ahead, what would you like future generations to associate with the Gómez & Molina name?
More than anything, we would like our name to remain synonymous with trust. Trends evolve and tastes change, but integrity never goes out of fashion. If future generations associate Gómez & Molina with honesty, expertise, discretion and genuine human relationships, then we will feel we have honored the legacy entrusted to us by those who founded our family business more than fifty years ago.



THE ART OF SHOPPING



Founded in 1940, El Corte Inglés has grown into Europe's largest department store group while remaining true to the values that have defined it for generations: quality, service and trust. Its Marbella store reflects that same philosophy, offering a carefully curated selection of leading international brands alongside renowned Spanish names, creating an experience that is both authentic and inviting. Designed with international customers in mind, El Corte Inglés Marbella offers a collection of exclusive services that make every visit seamless. A multilingual team, Personal Shopper, concierge service, hands-free shopping and private lounges have been designed to ensure every visit is comfortable and enjoyable.

Spain offers one of the most attractive tax-free shopping experiences in Europe, with refunds of up to 15.7% and no minimum spend required. At El Corte Inglés Department Stores, purchases can be consolidated into a single Tax-Free form to maximize the refund, making the process even more convenient. International guests can also benefit from the exclusive 10% Reward Card, adding further value to every visit. Beyond fashion and accessories, El Corte Inglés Marbella celebrates another essential part of Spanish culture: gastronomy. From gourmet delicacies and local specialties to an inviting collection of cafés and restaurants, the store invites visitors to discover the flavours of Spain in an environment where shopping and exquisite gastronomy naturally complement one another. Today, El Corte Inglés Marbella has become an essential part of the Costa del Sol experience, welcoming residents and visitors alike to discover the best of Spanish and international brands all in one place.

Shopping has long been part of the Costa del Sol lifestyle. From the latest fashion collections and meaningful gifts to Spanish gourmet products and inviting cafés, El Corte Inglés Marbella has become an essential stop for locals and international visitors experience far more than shopping. Here, Spanish hospitality meets convenience, bringing together fashion, beauty, jewellery, home décor and gastronomy under one roof.

PRIAH: A NEW EXPRESSION OF RESORT ELEGANCE ARRIVES ON THE COSTA DEL SOL

Fashion has always reflected place, culture and identity. Few garments capture this spirit better than resort wear, designed for destinations where elegance feels effortless and every moment is lived outdoors. This season, the Costa del Sol welcomes a new name that embodies this philosophy: PRIAH.

Following its successful participation in Fashion Trust Arabia in Qatar in 2021, and the launch of an exclusive capsule collection for the Middle Eastern market, PRIAH now arrives on the Costa del Sol, bringing together two regions united by a shared appreciation for luxury, hospitality and timeless style. At the heart of PRIAH lies a distinctive vision of resort wear. Rather than drawing inspiration from tropical clichés, the brand celebrates its cultural heritage through refined silhouettes, artisanal techniques and timeless craftsmanship. The latest collection pays tribute to the ancestral geometry of the Muisca culture, transforming traditional motifs into sophisticated contemporary pieces that honor both history and innovation.





Every garment is thoughtfully created using natural and sustainable fabrics, with textures that reflect the beauty of handcrafted design. Many of the fibers undergo weeks of careful transformation before becoming part of the final collection, while innovative crochet techniques elevate each piece into something both modern and enduring. In a world increasingly shaped by speed and technology, PRIAH celebrates the value of time, craftsmanship and human touch. Every stitch reflects patience, balance and artistry, reminding us that true luxury is found in authenticity rather than excess.

Against the backdrop of the Mediterranean, the collection finds its perfect setting. Flowing silhouettes, natural textures and understated sophistication complement the relaxed elegance that defines life on the Costa del Sol, effortlessly transitioning from beachside mornings to sunset gatherings and elegant summer evenings.

As PRIAH makes its introduction to Marbella and the Costa del Sol, it brings more than a fashion collection. It introduces a new perspective on resort dressing—one where heritage meets contemporary design and fashion creates a dialogue between cultures.

For discerning travelers and lovers of refined style, PRIAH is one of the season’s most exciting discoveries.





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Beyond the City

Head west along the coast and the museums grow smaller, stranger, and in some cases more personal. In Marbella, the Museo del Grabado Español Contemporáneo takes a narrow, quiet focus: Spanish printmaking, housed inside a sixteenth-century former hospital in Marbella’s Old Town. Its neighbor, the Museo Ralli, goes the opposite direction — a sprawling, free-to-enter collection built around one private foundation’s taste for European and Latin American surrealism, heavy on Dalí and the artists he influenced. Between the two, Marbella’s cultural life runs considerably deeper than its reputation for beach clubs and marinas suggests.

Inland, in Antequera, twenty exhibition rooms trace the town’s story from prehistory to the present day inside the Museo de la Ciudad de Antequera — a scale of ambition unusual for a museum this far from the coast. Its centerpiece, the Efebo de Antequera, is a Roman bronze statue of a young man dating to the



first century, and widely regarded as one of the finest bronzes of its kind ever recovered in Spain. It is a startling thing to find inland, in a town most visitors pass on their way somewhere else. Even Estepona gets in on it. Its bullring quietly doubles as a museum of paleontology, local history and bullfighting lore — four small collections under one roof, tucked into a building most people assume only hosts one kind of spectacle. It is a fitting closing note for this stretch of coast: culture here rarely announces itself. It waits to be found.

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Where the Coast Meets Its Art

For most of the twentieth century, Málaga was known as a gateway — the airport you flew into on the way to somewhere else along the coast. That changed with a deliberate, decades-long bet on culture, and the Museo Picasso Málaga was where it began. Housed in the sixteenth-century Buenavista Palace and built around a collection donated by the painter’s own family, it does something few Picasso exhibitions manage: it traces the full arc of his work, from his earliest academic studies in Málaga to the radical reinventions of his later decades, rather than isolating him at the Cubist moment most visitors already know. A short walk away, the Carmen Thyssen Museum tells a different story about Spanish art — one usually overshadowed by its Madrid counterpart. Set inside the restored Palacio de Villalón, its collection concentrates on nineteenth-century Andalusian painting: sun-bleached courtyards, market scenes, and the everyday romanticism of a region that, at the time, few outside Spain were painting at all. It is less about a single genius than about a whole regional imagination finally being taken seriously.

Where the Thyssen looks backward, the Centre Pompidou Málaga looks resolutely forward. Opened in 2015 as the first Pompidou outpost outside France, it sits inside a glass cube on the harborfront — locals call it simply El Cubo — and rotates its collection regularly, drawing on the Paris institution’s vast twentieth- and twenty-first-century holdings. It is the clearest sign yet that Málaga no longer sees itself as a satellite of Spain’s larger art capitals, but as a destination for contemporary work in its own right. Together, these three museums — one historical, one regional, one contemporary — form a fairly complete education in Spanish art within walking distance of each other. But Málaga was never going to keep all of the coast’s culture to itself.



SHARED TOGETHER

Made by hand



Some of the coast’s best family experiences aren’t sights to see at all, but skills worth picking up for an afternoon. A meal rarely starts in a kitchen — it starts in a pasture, on a boat, in a grove — and a few places across the province let families trace that whole path themselves before anything reaches a plate.

Casares is a good place to start. A small, family-run dairy there, Quesos Sierra Crestellina, lets visitors follow the entire

cheesemaking calendar in miniature: watching the goats milked, seeing the curds set and pressed, then sitting down to taste the results still warm from the room next door. A short drive further inland, Cabrama runs something quieter and slower — an actual day spent alongside a working shepherd and his herd, moving at whatever pace the animals set rather than a tour schedule.

Closer to the water, Málaga’s old fishing quarter of Pedregalejo tells a different version of the same story. Mornings there still begin with jábegas, the traditional wooden fishing boats, pulled in and unloaded before the catch is auctioned off at a small daily market. Several local guides now build a short class around exactly that rhythm, ending with everyone at a grill learning to thread and cook espetos — the sardine skewers that count as one of the city’s oldest street foods. Families who’d rather stay indoors have options too. A handful of cooking schools around Málaga run beginner paella classes that start with a quick shop for ingredients and end with a shared meal, and most are used to having children in the kitchen — supervised, but genuinely stirring the pan rather than just watching from a stool.

For something slower still, several family-owned oil mills inland keep their presses open to visitors during the season, walking guests through the groves before pouring tastings of oil pressed from whichever variety came in that week — a good introduction to what locals have long called their “liquid gold.”



Into the Open



For families chasing animals rather than rock formations, two parks anchor that side of things. Bioparc Fuengirola is built around habitat rather than enclosure — visitors walk through recreated stretches of jungle and wetland with the animals close by and no obvious fencing in sight, part of a park invested in breeding and conservation work rather than simple display. Selwo Aventura, out past Estepona, plays on a larger scale: open reserve-style grounds where animals roam more freely, explored by safari vehicle, rope bridge, or — for those staying longer — a themed cabin inside the park itself.

What ties all of this together isn’t a single headline attraction, but the number of quiet afternoons on offer — a shepherd’s hillside, a fishing dock, a cave shaped by the sea. Most of it stays overlooked, even by those who return to this coast year after year. But it’s exactly this side of the Costa del Sol — the side built for spending a whole day together as a family — that rewards anyone willing to look for it.



Away from the kitchen table, the province’s terrain gives families just as many options, and no single trail or peak tells the whole story. El Torcal de Antequera is one of the easier wins: a plateau of wind-shaped limestone dense enough that walking through it feels closer to touring an open-air gallery than hiking a mountain, with paths gentle enough for most ages. The Caminito del Rey asks more of its visitors — a narrow boardwalk bolted to a cliff face above a river gorge — and suits older children more than toddlers. Somewhere between the two sits El Saltillo, a suspension bridge strung across a smaller ravine near Canillas de Aceituno, part of a much longer network of marked trails that thread through the province for those who’d rather walk than climb. Underground, two very different caves are worth knowing about. Nerja’s cave system is the famous one — vast chambers, a scattering of genuinely ancient rock art, and a central column tall enough to have earned a place in the record books. Less well known, but arguably more curious for children, is the Cueva del Tesoro near Rincón de la Victoria, shaped over time by seawater rather than the slow drip of rain, and still tangled up in a centuries-old rumor that treasure was hidden somewhere inside it and never found.

AMOUR SAUVAGE

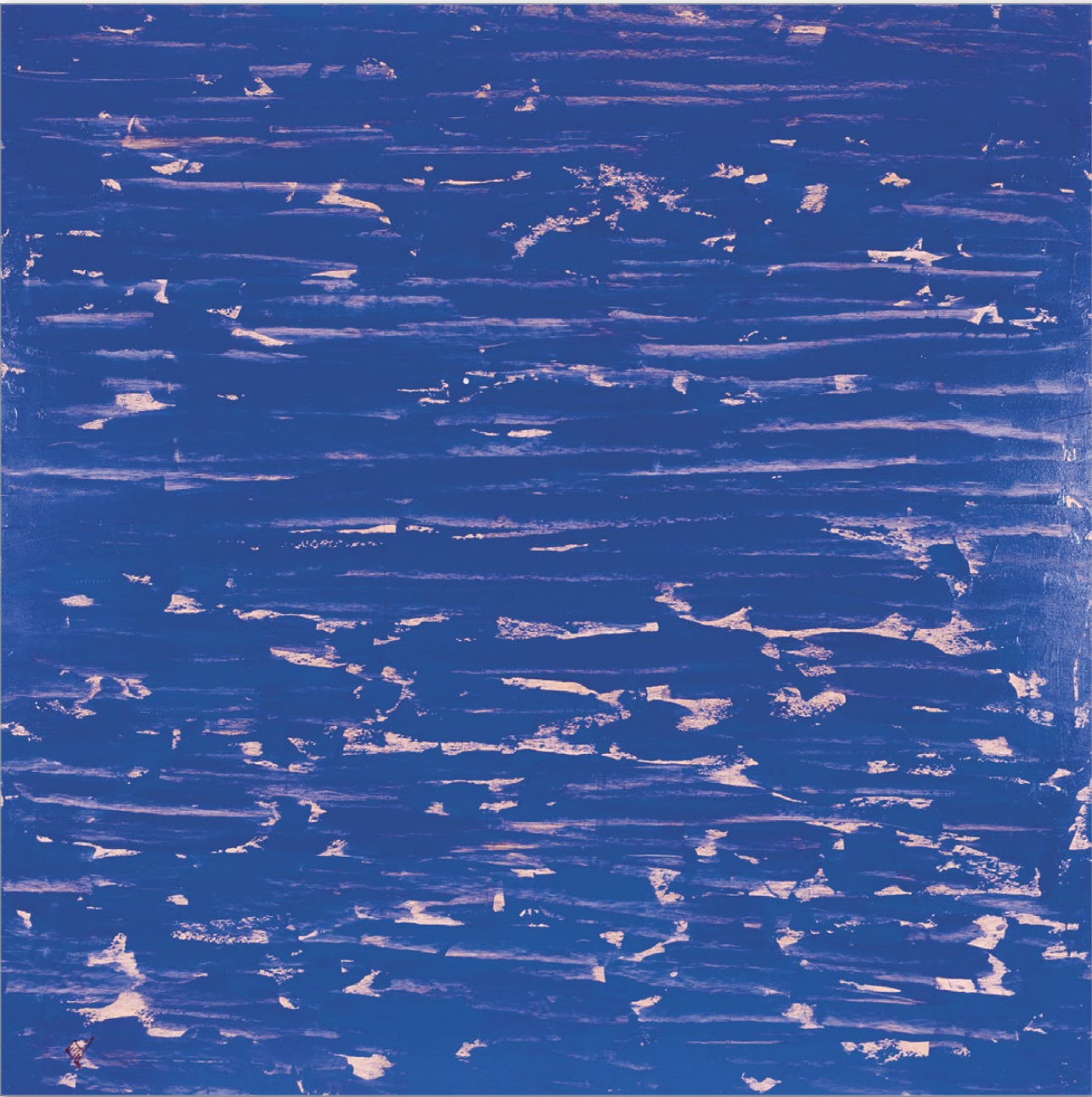
Excellence Art Gallery Presents: Art, Icons and Italian Design
at Rosso Corsa Marbella



On 16 July, Excellence Art Gallery brings its latest exhibition, *Amour Sauvage*, to the showroom of Rosso Corsa Marbella — a setting that pairs contemporary art with the world of Italian automotive design. Curated by Artistic Director Giuseppe Carnevale and welcomed by Rosso Corsa’s CEO, Francesco Sena, the exhibition brings together two artists working in very different mediums around a single idea: how a name or a machine can outgrow its own history and become something closer to myth — myth as a form of cultural immortality. Here, neither Brigitte Bardot nor Ferrari is presented simply as a woman or a brand — both have grown beyond their original identities to become enduring symbols in their own right. Bardot, the actress and beauty icon who helped define an era of French cinema, represents elegance, independence and the courage to set her own image apart from convention. Ferrari, in turn, stands for speed, engineering raised to the level of art, and an unrelenting pursuit of perfection. Two very different worlds, joined by the same underlying idea: the making of a modern myth.

Franco-Italian artist SACO builds his Bardot series by drawing on cinema, analogue photography, Pop Art and urban art influences, treating her image the way those movements once treated their own icons — as a starting point for reinvention rather than a fixed portrait. Other faces from the same golden era of cinema, including Sophia Loren, Claudia Cardinale and Marilyn Monroe, appear alongside her, though the series keeps its center of gravity on Bardot herself. Across the room, Massimo Cedrini’s paintings take Ferrari through its own history in the same spirit, each canvas built around a specific chapter of motorsport — a victory, a machine, an era — rendered in expressive, contemporary brushwork rather than straightforward tribute. Founded in 2015 by Giuseppe Carnevale and artist Massimo Cedrini — the same painter behind *Amour Sauvage*’s Ferrari series — Excellence Art Gallery has grown from a single space in Marbella’s historic Old Town into one of the coast’s most active platforms for contemporary art.

Over the past decade, the gallery has staged more than 200 exhibitions and taken part in over 30 international art fairs, from Paris and Monte Carlo to Zurich and Miami, while maintaining a permanent exhibition space inside the Meliá Marbella Banús Hotel since 2019. Now marking its tenth anniversary under Carnevale’s sole direction, the gallery continues to position Marbella not just as a backdrop for exhibitions, but as a genuine stop on the wider European art circuit. Held inside a working Ferrari showroom rather than a conventional gallery space, *Amour Sauvage* sets two very different Italian and French traditions of craftsmanship side by side for one evening. It’s a fitting way to make the point at the heart of the exhibition: that some names never really stop being retold.



Art is the community’s medicine
for the worst disease of the mind.
El arte es la medicina de la comunidad
contra la peor enfermedad de la mente.
R. G. Collingwood



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