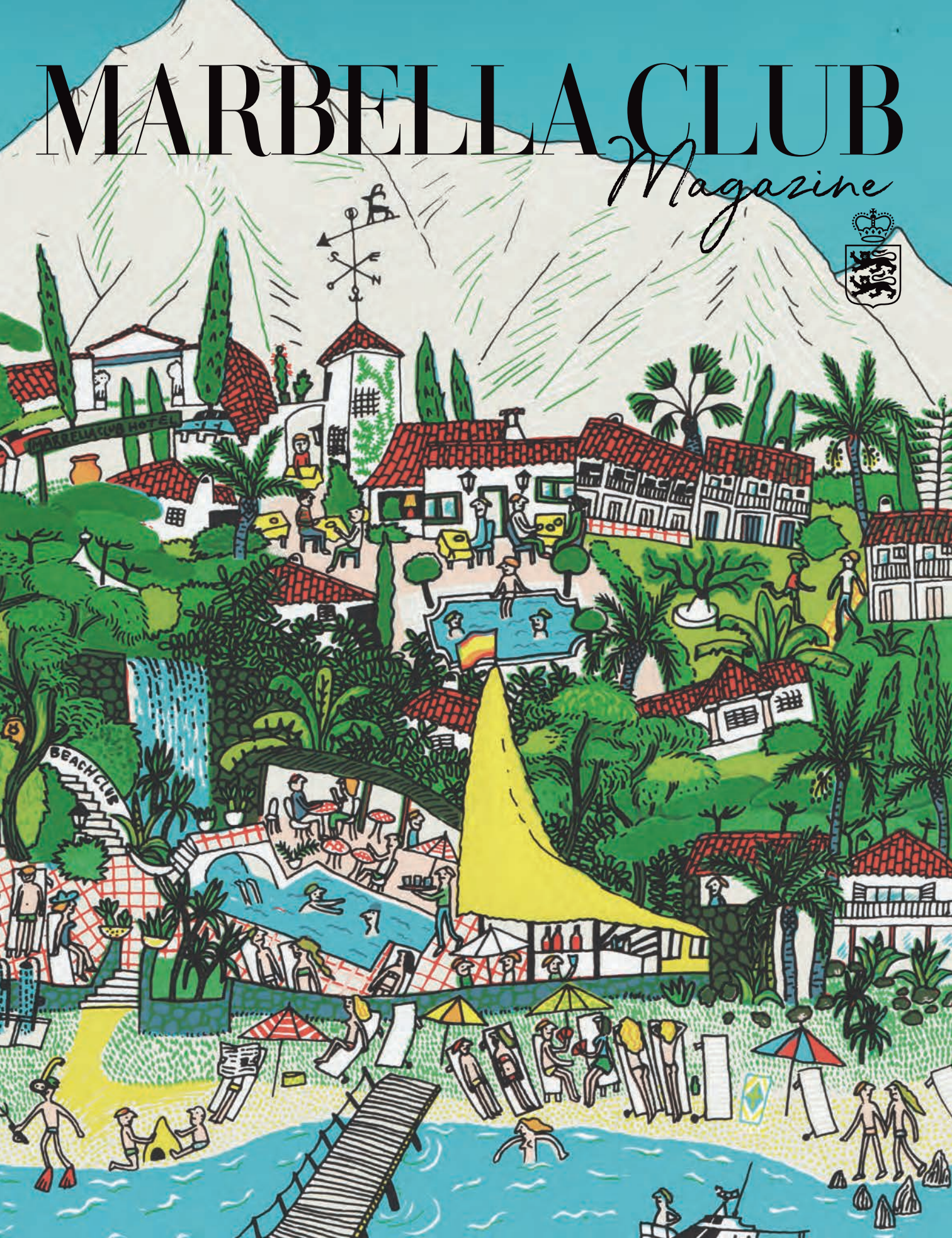


MARBELLA CLUB

Magazine





MARBELLA CLUB

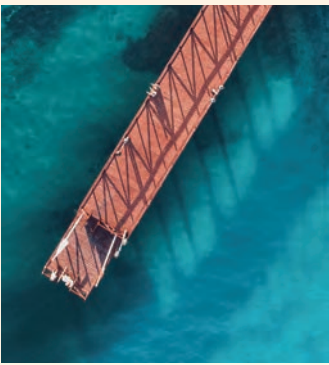
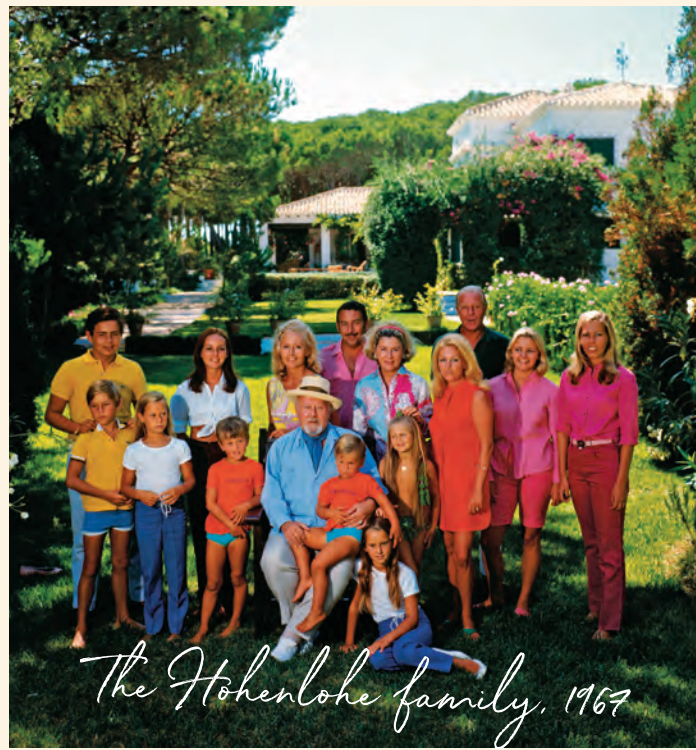
When the Marbella Club was founded by my dear cousin Prince Alfonso von Hohenlohe in 1954, it began its journey as a rustic guest house attracting the bold and the beautiful, from royalty to film stars. Alfonso's inexhaustible 'joie de vivre' created a carefree utopia that has evolved organically from these playful ambitions.





I am proud to have been a tight accomplice on this fairytale journey and am thrilled that our slice of paradise has retained its original magic. As I walk through the gardens that Alfonso so joyously planted, and that I have nurtured, I cannot help but smile. The Marbella Club's enduring success comes down to a constant metamorphosis that sees it evolving while remaining true to its original charm, blending heritage and innovation in perfect harmony. This is what sets the Marbella Club apart, why generations of families have been coming back year after year and why, after you stay, I hope you too will feel as if you have entered into a very special, exclusive club.





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The insider

Plan your year with our guide to what's coming up at the Marbella Club

Andalusia is a place apart from the rest of Spain, with rich traditions and cuisine, and a laid-back pace that nurtures the important things in life: family, community, laughter and togetherness. At the Marbella Club we wholly embrace this Andalusian spirit and are the perfect year-round hosts to help you discover the region's hidden treasures and microclimate. I fell in love with this corner of the world when Prince Alfonso invited me to be General Manager in 1961 and I have been here ever since. The Marbella Club is my home and my family, as I hope it will become yours.

Count Rudi





MARBELLA CLUB

IDA



"Elegant simplicity - it is the Marbella Club philosophy. It is our way of life."

Prince Alfonso von Hohenlohe

*Doña Antonia
Marbella*





*a more
balanced
you*

WELLNESS

Be your best self

Our approach to wellness is simple, and rooted in a philosophy that recognises how reconnecting with nature, spending time with loved ones and delving into a naturally healthy Andalusian lifestyle is as vital to wellbeing as reaching your fitness goals

In the Holistic Studio, surrounded by sun-kissed gardens, the healing hands of our wellness team will help you rebalance body and mind with treatments designed to tackle a range of issues. Whether you suffer from insomnia or fatigue, or are looking to embark on a weight loss or fitness programme, our expert team will create bespoke treatments and workouts, which may include a stress-busting seaweed massage, a soothing session of Tibetan sound healing or an invigorating hike in the hills behind the resort.

In a quiet corner by the Beach Club, our Thalassotherapy Spa is a stylish holistic hideaway, where mineral-rich seawater and botanical wisdom will leave you feeling energised. Enjoy ancient therapies with an Andalusian twist; opt for a massage with algae or Mediterranean oils, or a rejuvenating session under a jet of fresh seawater. Discover more about our experiences over the page or book a consultation to begin your journey.

En nuestro Estudio Holístico, arropado por soleados jardines, las manos expertas de nuestro equipo te ayudarán a equilibrar cuerpo y mente gracias a una variedad de tratamientos que abordan distintos problemas. Tanto si sufres de insomnio o fatiga como si quieres comenzar un programa de pérdida de peso o entrenamiento físico, nuestro equipo te recomendará ejercicios y tratamientos pensados especialmente para ti. Por ejemplo, masajes con algas para combatir el estrés, sanación con cuencos tibetanos o una energizante caminata por las colinas.

Ubicado en un tranquilo rincón del Beach Club, nuestro Thalasso Spa es un elegante retiro holístico, donde el agua marina, rica en minerales, y nuestro conocimiento botánico te energizarán. Disfruta de terapias milenarias con un toque andaluz. Prueba un masaje con algas o aceites mediterráneos, o una renovadora sesión con chorros de agua marina. Descubre nuestras experiencias en la siguiente página o reserva una consulta para emprender tu camino.



WELLNESS

Sip & revitalise

When Prince Alfonso chanced upon this paradise in the 1950s, he began to nurture a garden that draws on species from the Mediterranean to Africa and the Tropics – a task our gardeners are proud to continue to this day. Inspired by our aromatic grounds, *MC Té Botánico* is a blend of ingredients chosen for their uplifting and digestive qualities. Served hot or cold, it's the perfect nightcap after a meal at the Grill. Cuando el príncipe Alfonso se topó con este trocito de paraíso a finales de los años 50, comenzó a cultivar un jardín en el que conviven especies del Mediterráneo, África y los trópicos. Hoy, nuestros jardineros continúan su tarea con orgullo. Inspirado en nuestros jardines aromáticos, nace el *MC Té Botánico*, una mezcla de ingredientes seleccionados por sus cualidades estimulantes y digestivas. Caliente o frío, es la bebida perfecta para concluir una cena en el Grill.



ILLUSTRATION: LOUISE LOGSDON

Tap into your energy

“We all have our own unique resonance,” says Silvia, placing Tibetan bowls on the body’s chakras, before striking them and letting their harmony reverberate. Vibrations from these instruments put our brains into an ‘alpha’ state – a floaty frame of mind that allows for quiet flowing thoughts. Sessions can be transformational. Clients have had visions and revelations; some have fallen asleep. “Physical therapies can iron out your muscles,” adds Silvia, “but vibrational massage can rebalance your emotions, aligning body and mind like a tuning fork.” “Todos tenemos una frecuencia de vibración única”, dice Silvia mientras coloca los cuencos tibetanos sobre

los chacras del cuerpo. Luego, los golpea suavemente para que su armonía resuene por la sala. Las vibraciones de estos instrumentos hacen que el cerebro entre en un estado de relajación “alfa”, donde fluyen los pensamientos. Las sesiones pueden ser transformadoras. Algunos clientes tienen visiones y revelaciones; otros se quedan dormidos. “Las terapias físicas pueden relajar los músculos”, añade Silvia, “pero un masaje vibracional equilibra las emociones y alinea cuerpo y mente”.

Try a floating Tibetan ritual in the pool!

Let it go

Releasing your grip on the silk hammock and arching back into an inverted king pigeon pose, stray thoughts are sure to spring to mind. How incredible the pine trees look from this angle, or whether the parakeets are peering down with the same level of curiosity. “It can take guests a while to surrender to the feeling of being suspended,” says Anna Geisel, who guides sessions on the hotel’s outdoor yoga platform. Later, wrapped snugly in a cocoon and floating into savasana (the sleepy pose) while the scent of pine drifts over you, letting go comes very naturally indeed. Cuando sueltas el columpio de yoga y arqueas la espalda para adoptar la postura de la paloma invertida sobre una pierna, la mente se llena de pensamientos aislados. El aspecto de los pinos desde ese ángulo o si los periquitos que revolotean en sus copas mirarán hacia abajo con la misma curiosidad. “Los invitados pueden tardar un rato en acostumbrarse a la sensación de suspensión”, dice Anna Geisel, que dirige las sesiones de yoga en la plataforma al aire libre del hotel. Una hora más tarde, arropados por el aroma de los pinos y flotando hacia savasana (la postura para dormir), relajarse ya no cuesta tanto.

Surrender to the feeling of being suspended



Wellness breakfast

Hidden in a courtyard garden, our Holistic Studio is a homely space where you can tune into a more balanced you. “Wellbeing begins in the kitchen,” says nutritionist Paloma Ruiz, whose open-hearted manner sets you at ease as she guides you on your path to wellness. Drawing on her expertise, our wellness menus celebrate a naturally delicious Mediterranean diet with a focus on fresh and simple ingredients. Nuestro Estudio Holístico es un espacio donde sintonizarte con una versión más equilibrada de ti mismo. “El bienestar comienza en la cocina”, dice Paloma Ruiz, una nutricionista que te hace sentir cómodo mientras te guía en tu camino al bienestar. De la experiencia de Paloma nacen nuestros menús saludables, basados en la deliciosa dieta mediterránea y en sus ingredientes frescos y sencillos.

Wake up and tuck in

TURMERIC LATTE

Turmeric is a powerful ingredient that’s anti-inflammatory, settles the stomach and detoxifies. Blended with almond milk in a soothing latte, it’s guaranteed to kick-start your day.

ACAI BOWL WITH BANANA & MANGO

Acai bowls are packed with vitro-nutrients, as well as being high in fibre and antioxidants, while banana is a great energy booster.

MC GREEN SMOOTHIE

Our bodies need a high dose of antioxidants, and our classic green smoothie – blending banana, avocado, almond milk, dates, raw cacao nibs, mint, vanilla, lemon and spinach – is a meal in itself.

SALMON & AVOCADO TOASTS

These slow releasing dishes are packed with micronutrients, proteins and healthy omega-3s. Sourdough soothes your digestive system and is packed with B vitamins, while a drizzle of Andalusian olive oil adds powerful antioxidants.

Ask our serving team about the wellness menu to start your day right.

It’s a wrap

Thalassotherapy is at the heart of the Spa's healing rituals. The sea-facing thermal pool makes the most of revitalising, magnesium-rich seawater to energise body and mind. For a unique experience, try the seaweed wrap, which uses three powerful algae: *laminaria* for contouring, *lithothamnium* to remineralise and *fucus* to detoxify. Once slathered and wrapped in a warm blanket, you feel serene – and a little like a sushi roll. The ritual finishes with a moisturising massage. | La talasoterapia es el núcleo de los rituales sanadores del Spa. La piscina termal frente al mar aprovecha al máximo la revitalizante agua marina, rica en magnesio, para aliviar el estrés y energizar cuerpo y mente. Si quieres vivir una experiencia sensorial única, no te pierdas el *body wrap* hecho con tres poderosas algas: *laminaria* para reafirmar, *lithothamnium* para remineralizar y *fucus* para eliminar toxinas. Tras aplicar los productos y envolverte con una manta (al estilo rollito de sushi), sientes una relajación total. La experiencia se completa con un masaje hidratante.

SEAWEED: JOSIE ISELIN



Thalassotherapy dates back to Ancient Greece

Are you a reformer?



ILLUSTRATION: ZOE MARMENTINI

“You would be hard pushed to find a more aesthetically pleasing Pilates studio,” says Fleur Britten (*Sunday Times Style*). “Think over-sized wicker baskets, lime-washed walls, oak flooring and un-dyed linens. There’s purpose to such style – the tone is perfectly set for a class that works with natural movement to gently increase strength and flexibility.” The studio is run by Ana Durán, whose one-on-one classes are held on oak reformer machines – ideal for dynamic conditioning for all abilities.

“Sería difícil encontrar un estudio de Pilates más agradable a la vista”, dice Fleur Britten (*Sunday Times Style*). Imagina grandes canastos de mimbre, paredes blancas, suelos de roble y tejidos de lino natural... Este estilo tiene un claro objetivo: acompañar a una clase que trabaja con movimientos naturales que aumentan poco a poco la fuerza y la flexibilidad. El estudio está dirigido por Ana Durán, cuyas clases individuales tienen lugar en máquinas reformer de roble, ideales para el entrenamiento a todos los niveles.

An effortless alchemy

Spa treatments and immaculate facilities aside, the real allure of the Marbella Club's wellness programme lies in an effortless synergy that lets you tune into a naturally healthy lifestyle while spending precious time with your family, says FLEUR BRITTEN

Wellness retreats and family holidays are not usually found sitting comfortably in the same sentence – let alone the same resort. Regular visitors to the Marbella Club, however, will know that such alchemy is entirely possible. Indeed, they will struggle to hold their children back from diving into the Kids Club, built on the grounds of Prince Alfonso von Hohenlohe's original villa, where his own children once played beneath the shady pines.

Those, of course, were the days when European royals and Hollywood icons – among them, Brigitte Bardot, Grace Kelly and Cary Grant – thronged to play in Alfonso's barefoot Arcadia. Sixty-five years on, and the souls of those stars sparkle on at the Marbella Club, while a seamless metamorphosis ensures that the desires of the modern traveller are always catered for. And all the while the focus remains firmly on the family, as it always has.

The Kids Club has a boutique charm that's lost in larger resorts. Its inviting array of delightful toys – the miniature vintage cars, the horse swings, the

Retiro de bienestar y vacaciones familiares no son términos que aparezcan a menudo en una misma frase, ni mucho menos haciendo referencia a un mismo resort. Sin embargo, quienes suelen visitar el Marbella Club saben que es totalmente posible. De hecho, les cuesta contener las ganas de sus niños por ir corriendo al Kids Club, construido donde el príncipe Alfonso von Hohenlohe tenía su casa y donde sus hijos jugaban bajo los pinos.

Aquello fue en la época en la que la realeza europea y las estrellas de Hollywood —Brigitte Bardot, Grace Kelly y Cary Grant— competían por jugar en la Arcadia de Alfonso. Han pasado 65 años, pero el espíritu de aquellas estrellas sigue brillando en el Marbella Club, donde gracias a una sutil metamorfosis se satisfacen también los deseos del viajero moderno. Todo ello mientras se mantiene el foco en la familia, como siempre.

El Kids Club tiene el encanto de los hoteles boutique que se ha perdido en los grandes resorts. Mis hijos, de 7 y 4 años, se enamoraron de inmediato de su adorable variedad de juguetes — cochecitos vintage, columpios de

Given my children's immediate devotion to the Kids Club, no one was going to question my absence if I took an hour or two out for a spa treatment

◀ wooden marketplace – along with a captivating crew of carers, and gardens filled with exotic plants brought back from Prince Alfonso's far-flung travels, ensured the magic worked instantly on my children, aged four and seven. Guilt was far from my mind, then, as I left to attend to my own wellbeing.

TIME TO UNWIND

I began with a stroll through the botanical gardens to the Holistic Studio for an integrative assessment of my body and mind's needs. With my senses gently stimulated and my pace naturally decelerated, it's obvious that the Marbella Club's wellness philosophy is core to resort life. Stress will struggle to linger when immersed in such rich, verdant nature and surrounded with opportunity for simple, healthy pleasures – a seaside stroll, a plate of freshly caught fish, or a hike in the nearby Sierra de las Nieves for instance – and all in the company of loved ones. Of course, the understated luxury of handsomely designed Andalusian villas, your every need and want taken care of, can't fail to help you relax.

The antithesis of a cold, clinical setting, the airy Holistic Studio is filled with organic materials – wicker, linen, jute and stone, as well as fresh herbs and flowers – that lend a soothing ambience. I'm warmly greeted by the nutritional lead, Paloma Ruiz, whose zen-like radiance is testament to a life that honours wellness. Over a botanical tea, Paloma uses some sophisticated equipment – a body composition machine, offering readings of my metabolism, visceral fat, bone density and so on, and a bio-resonance machine, spotlighting any chi energy imbalances – to “build a personalised protocol for wellness.”

We also chat through a lifestyle questionnaire and use the results of all three to devise a highly personalised, goal-orientated prescription of food, fitness and lifestyle recommendations. The focus is not on weight loss, Paloma

explains. “When you tackle your energy levels, inflammation and emotional blockages with nutritional and lifestyle changes, weight optimisation will follow.”

The nutritional team has also been instrumental in designing the hotel's wellness menus, so there's no excuse not to maintain resolve at mealtimes with green heart symbols signifying healthy dishes (watermelon and tomato gazpacho, or seared sea bass). “You just have to resist the chocolate mousse!” Paloma says, laughing. She also runs cooking tutorials, and it's reassuring to know that the team is on hand via Skype to continue guidance once you're home.

The first floor of the Holistic Studio is home to a serene yoga and meditation space, but, of course, it's also possible to break into a sweat at the Marbella Club. As I pound away in the fully-equipped gym my daughter's laughing face flashes past as the Kids Club heads to the beach. My manic waving goes unnoticed. Never mind.

Given my children's immediate devotion to the Kids Club, no one was going to question my absence if I took an hour or two out here or there for a spa treatment. Overlooking the sea, the 800m² sanctuary has an instant calming effect, thanks to its low lighting, blonde stone, soft taupe furnishings and blissful lack of bustle, even when its thalassotherapy treatment rooms are fully booked. A two-hour stress-reducing ritual – a full-body volcanic scrub followed by a body, face and scalp massage – left me positively transported.

Perhaps the best people to ask whether you can do a retreat on a family holiday are the kids themselves. They got the best of both worlds – the joys of the Kids Club (their favourite part of the holiday, they said) and a refreshed mum who'd remembered how to have fun. Even just a few days was a welcome reminder that everyone wins with better balance. ■

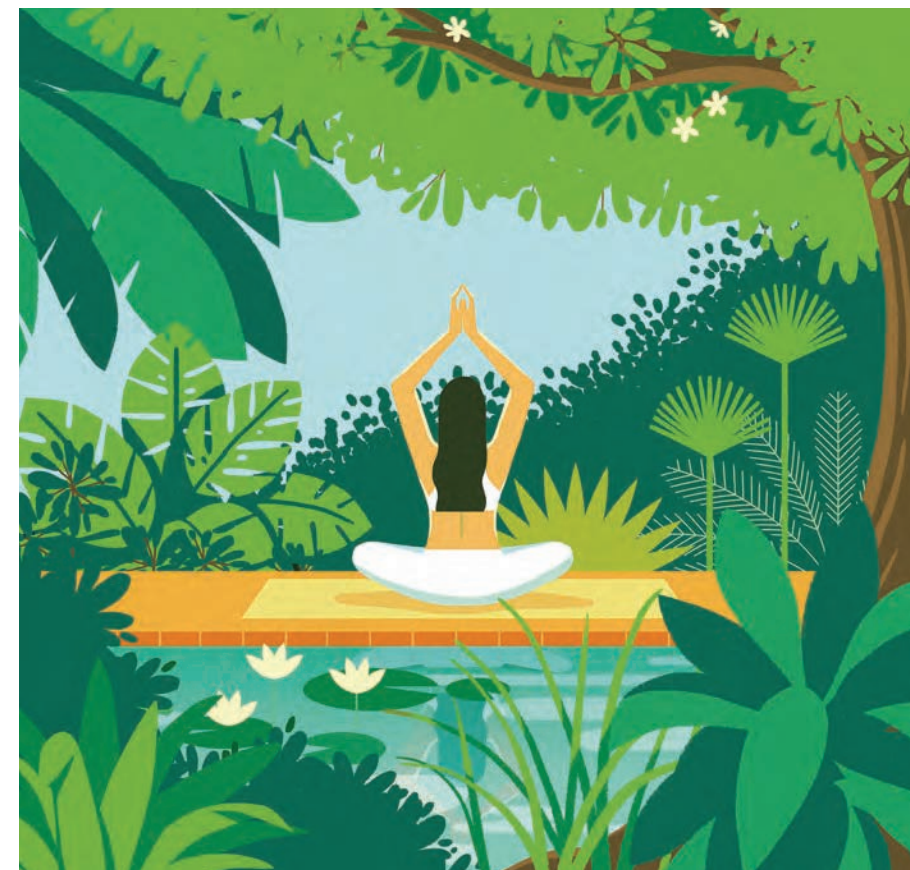
◀ caballo y un mercado de madera—, el equipo de cuidadores y los jardines repletos de plantas exóticas, traídas de los lugares más remotos visitados por el príncipe Alfonso. Por eso no sentí ni un atisbo de culpa al dejarlos allí y dedicarme a mi propio bienestar.

HORA DE RELAJARSE

Comencé paseando por los jardines botánicos. Luego, fui al Estudio Holístico para que evaluaran mis necesidades corporales y mentales, lo cual estimuló mis sentidos y me ayudó a bajar el ritmo de manera natural. Es evidente que el bienestar es el núcleo de la vida en el Marbella Club. Es difícil seguir estresado si estás inmerso en un entorno natural tan rico, rodeado de placeres sencillos y sanos: un paseo por la orilla del mar, un plato de pescado fresco o una caminata en la Sierra de las Nieves. Y todo ello acompañado de tus seres queridos. Además, el lujo sutil de las elegantes villas andaluzas y un entorno dispuesto a satisfacer todas tus necesidades y deseos también ayudan.

El agradable Estudio Holístico está repleto de materiales orgánicos – mimbre, lino, yute, piedra, hierbas y flores frescas— que crean un ambiente relajante. Me recibe Paloma Ruiz, responsable del área de nutrición, cuyo semblante resplandeciente da claro testimonio de una vida basada en el bienestar. Mientras tomamos un té, usa un equipo sofisticado –una máquina de composición corporal, que interpreta mi metabolismo, grasa visceral, densidad ósea, etc., y una de biorresonancia, que detecta desequilibrios en el chi— para “elaborar un protocolo de bienestar personalizado”.

Después, relleno un cuestionario sobre mi estilo de vida y Paloma usa los resultados de los análisis para idear recomendaciones personalizadas, centradas en la alimentación, el ejercicio y el estilo de vida. Lo más



importante no es perder peso, explica Paloma. “Cuando se abordan los niveles de energía, la inflamación y los bloqueos emocionales con cambios en la nutrición y el estilo de vida, el peso se optimiza por sí solo”. El equipo de nutricionistas también ha sido fundamental en la elaboración de los menús saludables del hotel, por lo que no hay excusa para saltarse la dieta. Los platos saludables –gazpacho de tomate y sandía, o lubina asada— llevan como símbolo un corazón verde. “¡Sólo hay que resistirse al mousse de chocolate!”, dice riéndose Paloma, que también da seminarios de cocina.

Además, al volver a casa, puedes contactar al equipo por Skype para que te siga guiando.

El primer piso del Estudio Holístico alberga un tranquilo espacio de yoga y meditación, pero también puedes romper a sudar en el Marbella Club. Mientras entreno duro en el gimnasio, veo pasar a mi hija riendo de camino

a la playa con el Kids Club. Ni se entera de que la saludo con grandes aspavientos. No importa. Dada la devoción de mis hijos al Kids Club, nadie va a cuestionar mi ausencia si me tomo una hora o dos para hacerme un tratamiento en el spa. Este santuario de 800 m² con vistas al mar posee un efecto tranquilizante instantáneo gracias a su luz tenue, piedras blancas, muebles color gris claro y maravillosa calma, incluso con las salas de talasoterapia llenas.

Un ritual de reducción de estrés de dos horas –compuesto de una exfoliación volcánica de cuerpo entero y un masaje completo de cuerpo, rostro y cuero cabelludo— me dejó sumamente relajada. Quizá sea mejor preguntar a los niños si creen que se puede hacer un retiro durante unas vacaciones familiares, ya que ellos se llevaron lo mejor de ambos mundos: la diversión del Kids Club (su parte preferida de las vacaciones, según dijeron) y una mamá renovada que recordó lo que es divertirse. Tan solo unos días bastaron para volver a darme cuenta de que todos ganamos con un mejor equilibrio. ■

A word with COUNT RUDI



An attentive and gracious host, our original General Manager Count Rudi is the very soul of the Marbella Club. A true conversationalist, he hosts royalty, Hollywood stars and honoured guests with the same care and attention to detail, gracefully moving between languages and making you feel like you're the most important person in the room. Now in his 80s, the genial host remains ardently in love with Marbella and is part of the very fabric of the resort, turning up to work every day in his turret office above the Summer Bar and returning each evening to host a table at the Grill with his wife, Princess Marie Louise. If you ask him to share his secret, he will tell you that it's his love of life, and the paradise Marbella that keeps him young. There are lessons to be learnt from our honorary General Manager's boundless optimism, says NICHOLAS FOULKES. Illustration PABLO HOHENLOHE

On keeping a *sunny* disposition

1 DON'T THINK COMMUNICATIONS BREAKDOWN, THINK DIGITAL DETOX
Should you feel anxious about switching off and falling behind on world news, ask Count Rudi about the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the Marbella Club's splendid isolation was particularly apparent. While the rest of the world feared the onset of World War III, guests were rather less well-informed thanks to the absence of newspapers and the difficulty in getting a phone line. Prince Alfonso was away in Mexico and when he finally managed to get through with news that the crisis had been averted, he feared everyone would have returned home. "What's happened?" he asked. "Have all the guests left?" Count Rudi reassured him that all was calm and guests had remained utterly ignorant of the impending end of the world. The Club had neither radio nor television; papers arrived days late, if at all, and there hadn't been a night without a party. Nowadays, of course, the hotel has all you need to stay connected, but it can't hurt to dip back into this feeling of blissful isolation.

2 MY HOTEL IS YOUR CASTLE
When welcoming grand guests – dukes, princes, monarchs and emperors (serving or deposed) – Count Rudi will do his best to make them feel at home, enthusing about the 'castle atmosphere' that prevails at the Marbella Club. It's the mark of a genial host to put everybody at ease, but only Rudi could conjure the comforting image of liveried footmen, battlements and butlers from a 21st-century beach and spa resort.

3 LEARN TO LOOK FORWARD TO THE RAIN
With the greatest politeness, Count Rudi will rein in any conversation about wet weather with an exuberant speech on the hotel's botanical gardens – how Prince Alfonso planted them with seeds brought back from his travels around the world and how it is the miracle of rainfall that enables the Marbella Club to maintain this lush and verdant beachside Eden. So infectious is his botanical enthusiasm that you're guaranteed to experience a tiniest twinge of regret when the sun comes out.

1 NO ES UN FALLO EN LAS COMUNICACIONES, ES UN 'DETOX' DIGITAL
Si te preocupa desconectar y perderte noticias importantes, pregúntale al conde Rudi sobre la crisis de los misiles en Cuba, cuando la sensación de aislamiento en el Marbella Club era evidente. Mientras el resto del mundo temía el estallido de la Tercera Guerra Mundial, los huéspedes seguían disfrutando alegremente de sus vacaciones gracias a la falta de periódicos y el difícil acceso a una línea telefónica. En aquel momento, el príncipe Alfonso estaba en México. Cuando logró informar de que se había evitado la crisis, temía que ya los invitados hubiesen vuelto a casa. "¿Qué pasó?", preguntó. "¿Se fueron todos?"; pero el conde Rudi le aseguró que todo estaba bajo control y que ni siquiera se habían enterado del inminente fin del mundo. El Club no tenía ni radio ni televisión; el periódico llegaba con días de retraso, si es que llegaba, y no pasaba una noche sin que hubiera una fiesta. Hoy, el hotel cuenta con todo lo que necesitas para estar conectado, pero no estaría mal regresar a aquel maravilloso aislamiento.

2 MI HOTEL ES TU CASTILLO
Al recibir a huéspedes destacados —duques, príncipes, monarcas y emperadores (en ejercicio o destituidos)—, el conde Rudi hace todo posible para que se sientan como en casa, contagiando su entusiasmo por el ambiente señorial del Marbella Club. La capacidad de hacer sentir cómodo a todo el mundo es lo que define a un gran anfitrión, pero sólo Rudi podría recrear el lujo del servicio clásico de antaño en un spa resort costero del siglo XXI.

3 APRENDE A ANHELAR LA LLUVIA
Con sus característicos buenos modales, el conde Rudi domina cualquier conversación sobre la lluvia. Entre sus temas preferidos están los jardines botánicos del hotel, cómo el príncipe Alfonso plantó semillas traídas de sus viajes y la manera en que la lluvia permite al Marbella Club mantener su exuberante edén. Tan contagioso es su entusiasmo por la botánica que no puedes evitar sentir algo de pena cuando sale el sol.



Raquele Gandolfi Bertolini, Hubertus von Hohenlohe and Simona Gandolfi



Julian Porras and Olivia de Borbon



Condesa de San Damián with Sandro Gamazo and Count Rudi



The ancient festival of San Juan heralds the start of the summer season



DJ Lola, DJ Kike Supermix and friends



Valeria Mazza and husband, Alejandro Gravier

Party people

Spontaneous gatherings and 'fiestas' have always been the life and soul of the Marbella Club. Today Prince Alfonso's son Hubertus Hohenlohe and his fun-loving wife Simona keep this spirit of improvisation alive with their famous El Patio parties. The festival of San Juan heralds the start of the summer season, with a 'moraga' - a feast of paella and grilled 'espetos' sardines - at MC Beach with a bonfire, fireworks and dancing



Carmen Lomana and Mónica de Tomás



San Juan at MC Beach



Our unique MICRO CLIMATE

High above our technicolour botanical gardens, the 'shell' mountain known as La Concha shelters our little piece of Eden from the worst of the weather, making it one of Europe's sunniest year round destinations. But the effect is more than merely meteorological, it also fosters a unique social microclimate like nowhere else in the world, reveals NICHOLAS FOULKES

Glance up from your lounge at the upper pool, take a stroll to the end of the pier, or just walk up from the beach to the patio and you will see it. The mountain known as La Concha watches over the Marbella Club, cradling that strip of the Mediterranean littoral known as the Golden Mile in its benign embrace and protecting it from the climatic extremes that affect the *sierra* behind and the rest of Europe beyond.

It's thanks to La Concha that Marbella basks in sunlight while the rest of Europe shivers, and why at the height of summer the famously harsh Iberian heat is tempered with gentleness. Thanks to La Concha, the Marbella Club is blessed with a uniquely benevolent microclimate, where enormous acacia trees, more commonly seen in the African savanna, spread their umbrella canopies over Andalusian oranges, purple bougainvillea and crimson hibiscus.

This microclimate is more than merely meteorological. I may be biased and hopelessly romantic, but I like to think of Marbella as a 21st-century version of novelist James Hilton's Shangri-La, an enchanted realm whose inhabitants are protected from the harsher realities of life, where opposites flourish side-by-side and contradictions coexist in harmony.

Perhaps it's because of its extreme southerly location – Marbella is about as far as you can go before Europe becomes Africa, a continent usually visible from the beach – that the place is truly special. It's a destination where rockstars, duchesses and art dealers flourish in almost ►

Si levantas la vista desde una de las tumbonas de la piscina principal, te das un paseo hasta el final del pantalán o caminas desde la playa al patio, la verás. Esta montaña, conocida como La Concha, vela por el Marbella Club y envuelve esa parte de litoral conocida como la Milla de Oro, protegiéndola de los extremos meteorológicos que afectan al otro lado de la sierra y el resto de Europa.

Es gracias a La Concha que Marbella disfruta del sol mientras el resto de Europa tiritita de frío. Y también gracias a ella el famoso verano peninsular, caracterizado por un calor extremo, resulta templado y suave aquí. La Concha brinda al Marbella Club un microclima benevolente y único, donde las enormes mimosas, más típicas de la sabana africana, despliegan sus copas sobre los naranjos andaluces, la buganvilla morada y los hibiscos color carmesí.

Este microclima es más que una condición meramente meteorológica. Puede que yo no sea muy imparcial o que sea un romántico empedernido, pero me gusta pensar en Marbella como la versión del Shangri-La de James Hilton del siglo XXI. Es decir, como un reino encantado cuyos habitantes se encuentran protegidos de las realidades más duras de la vida y donde los opuestos y las contradicciones coexisten en armonía.

Quizás sea por su ubicación tan meridional que Marbella es un lugar tan especial; de hecho, es uno de los puntos más al sur al que puedes ir antes de que Europa se convierta en África, un continente que puedes ver desde la playa. ►

◀ equal abundance; where in the carpark you'll see a humble Mini Moke parked next to this year's Rolls-Royce Phantom. At night in the fabled Grill, black tie is as appropriate as a South American *guayabera*.

The Marbella Club fosters a social microclimate that's unique; just how unique was made clear to me a few years ago when I met the late Otto von Habsburg at the Beach Club. At the time, Otto would have been the emperor of Austria-Hungary, had the Austro-Hungarian Empire not gone out of business in 1918. Before they were running the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Habsburgs

were in charge of the Holy Roman Empire which, depending on your historical inclinations, either began with the coronation of Charlemagne in AD 800 or Otto's namesake Otto I in the 10th century. Either way, you get the picture: Otto's family had once been a seriously big deal, combining family grandeur and imperial power for centuries. And given these credentials it

was natural that he would be a close friend of the Marbella Club's enduring Count Rudi.

It was certainly a long way from Vienna's Hofburg Palace to the Beach Club, but Otto had adjusted well: indeed the place seems to have inspired him. A tireless campaigner for peace, the idea came in a flash of clarity: "I was looking at the map each morning and one day it was clear to me that the future is a community of Mediterranean countries."

It was an idealistic notion for sure, after all the shoreline of the Med is home to three of the world's great monotheistic religions, and they have not always got along. But in Marbella anything seems possible if you can get around to doing it: people of all belief systems hang out in harmony and not just belief systems, but backgrounds and occupations, too.

What really made my meeting with His Royal and Imperial Highness was the fact that I had bumped into Rod Stewart earlier that day. Rod the Mod's background was a little different to Otto's. Whereas Otto had been Crown Prince of Austria, Hungary, Bohemia and Croatia by the age of five, Rod's early professional life had involved a paper round operated out of his father's newsagents on the Archway Road in London.

I'm not sure if either was aware of the other's presence at the Club and I doubt they would have recognised one another – but I recognised them and I acknowledged that this little paradise must be special indeed to appeal to both a Holy Roman Emperor manqué and the throaty-voiced co-writer and singer of 'Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?' ■



IT'S A DESTINATION WHERE ROCKSTARS, DUCHESSES AND ART DEALERS FLOURISH IN EQUAL ABUNDANCE

◀ Sea como sea, Marbella es un destino donde las estrellas del rock, las duquesas y los marchantes de arte afloran casi por igual; donde en el aparcamiento encuentras un humilde Mini Moke junto al último Rolls Royce Phantom. Por la noche, en el legendario Grill, resulta igual de apropiado ir de etiqueta como con una guayabera sudamericana.

El Marbella Club promueve un microclima social sin parangón. Su naturaleza única me quedó clara hace unos años, cuando conocí al difunto Otto von Hapsburg en el Beach Club. Por aquel entonces, Otto debería haber sido el emperador de Austria-Hungría, si el Imperio Austrohúngaro no hubiese caído en 1918. Antes de gobernar el Imperio Austrohúngaro, los Habsburgo estaban a cargo del Sacro Imperio Romano, el cual, dependiendo de la versión histórica,

comenzó o bien con la coronación de Carlomagno en el 800 d. C. o con el tocayo de Otto, Otto I, en el siglo X. De cualquier forma, es fácil hacerse una idea de la situación: la familia de Otto supo combinar durante siglos el esplendor familiar con el poder imperial. Y, dadas sus credenciales, era de esperar que Otto fuera amigo del inimitable

conde Rudi del Marbella Club.

El Palacio imperial de Hofburg quedaba muy lejos del Beach Club, pero Otto se había adaptado bien. De hecho, parecía que el lugar lo había inspirado. Otto fue un incansable defensor de la paz que, en un momento de claridad, tuvo una idea singular: "Cada mañana miraba el mapa y un día me pareció claro que el futuro era una comunidad de los países mediterráneos".

Sin duda, un concepto idealista. Después de todo, la costa del Mediterráneo alberga tres de las grandes religiones monoteístas del mundo, que no siempre se han llevado bien. Sin embargo, en Marbella todo parece posible si encuentras el tiempo para ello. Aquí conviven en armonía gentes de todo tipo de creencias, orígenes y profesiones.

Lo que realmente me alegró del encuentro con Su Alteza Real e Imperial fue el hecho de que ese mismo día me había cruzado con Rod Stewart. Rod, conocido como 'Rod the Mod', provenía de un ambiente bastante distinto. Mientras que Otto había sido coronado Príncipe de Austria, Hungría, Bohemia y Croacia a los cinco años, Rod había pasado sus primeros años de vida profesional repartiendo los periódicos del puesto de su padre en la Archway Road de Londres.

No estoy seguro de si alguno de ellos sabía de la presencia del otro en el Club y dudo de que se hubiesen reconocido, pero yo sí los reconocí. Y entonces me di cuenta de que este pequeño paraíso debe ser realmente especial para atraer tanto a un emperador del Sacro Imperio Romano frustrado como al cantante de voz ronca y coautor de '¿Crees que soy sexi?' ■



CASABEL

INTERIORS

Your ideal home-from-home

Scattered around the hotel's botanical gardens are 15 whitewashed Andalusian villas – and the palatial six-suite Villa del Mar, a contemporary Moorish palace replete with handwoven silk carpets, collectible artwork and sea facing infinity pool. LYDIA GARD delves into the design stories behind one of the most extensive villa collections in Europe

The Hohenlohe's homestead on the Mediterranean once stood alone on a forgotten stretch of coast. Back then, Prince Alfonso hosted esteemed friends and family from around the world in Finca Santa Margarita, converting old farm buildings once used for drying figs and grapes into a clubhouse in 1954. Santa Margarita established a rustic yet stylish taste template, even while the floor was oiled and waxed terracotta and seating was on upturned wine barrels.

The original bungalows, Romeo and Juliet, evolved to accommodate Prince Alfonso's illustrious guests. Ava Gardner, Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly and Cary Grant all abandoned their French Riviera haunts and fell for its familiarity; here was a place to switch off and indulge in

complete privacy without being 'on show'. Before long, the hotel's founder and his friends had built a clutch of simple and elegant homes amidst rampant bougainvillea and heady night jasmine, designed to be bright and breezy during summer, cosily welcoming on crisp winter nights.

The very same villas still slumber under the towering umbrella pines today, allowing families an intimate retreat in the heart of the Marbella Club – a discreet home-from-home designed with the utmost attention to detail, but with the nothing-is-too-much-trouble service the Club has become known for. Expect thalassotherapy spritz and bespoke botanical teas beside the bed, a mini bar stocked with dark chocolate, kombucha and organic coconut water, and freshly picked lime ready to squeeze into a refreshing drink and ►

NATURAL ELEGANCE

While each of the Marbella Club's villas is distinct, the collective speaks one language: a promise of authentic Andalusia whispered gently through every whitewashed wall and hand painted tile.

Accent colours

Against the whitewashed walls and breezy neutrals of the wood, linen, stone and monochromatic décor, pops of celadon and flashes of emerald and eau de nil add vibrancy and depth. A window frame here, a kitchen cabinet there – these serene greens are typical of Marbella, a reminder of the natural playground that lies in wait just beyond the windows.



BEL AIR



VILLA AÑIL

◀ sip on your own sun-soaked patio.

While the pretty terracotta roofs remain unchanged, a fresh breeze has blown through the interiors. The backdrop of stone, exposed beams, wrought iron and cement fireplaces is accented by rich fabrics from houses such as Pierre Frey and Gastón y Daniela. Black detailing carries through each and every design story, from the hand block printed fabrics to accent wallpaper, large format photography and cushion piping. With the emphasis on pared back elegance, an unhurried air of refinement has been achieved by championing local craftsmanship, natural materials and traditional methods. The effect is chic yet relaxed, and alludes to the eminent history of the Marbella Club in a subtle yet deliberate way. ■

La finca de los Hohenlohe en el Mediterráneo se erigió en un tramo de costa por un tiempo olvidado. Por entonces, el príncipe Alfonso hospedaba a amigos y miembros de la familia provenientes de todo el mundo en su finca Santa Margarita. En 1954, convirtió una antigua granja, donde se secaban higos y uvas, en un *clubhouse*. Santa Margarita marcó un estilo rústico aunque elegante con su suelo de terracota encerado y sus asientos hechos de barriles de vino.

Los bungalós originales, Romeo y Julieta, hospedaron a los ilustres invitados del príncipe Alfonso. Ava Gardner, Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly y Cary Grant dejaron de frecuentar la Riviera francesa y se enamoraron de la familiaridad de este

Natural fabrics

Having gone to great lengths to seek out the best local artisans in Andalusia, the villas are furnished with a textured palette of refined rattan and jute, pure linen and cotton, and rich wool. Huge esparto grass blinds roll down to offer much needed shade, while unexpected interior courtyards are brought to life with hand drawn tile murals. A rattan swing seat here, a deep, woven wool cinema seat there – the villas draw on nature's finest materials.



BEL AIR

The great outdoors

Surrounded by towering palms, Bel Air is a lush tropical hideaway with a lofty terrace in the tree canopy. The stone lined pool and botanical gallery wall nod to what lies beyond its vibrant bougainvillea arches. Casabel's garden is stocked with olive, orange and avocado trees, as well as a grand acacia just a few steps from the sea. The sensuous scent of jasmine and fig carries through the villas on a light sea breeze.



CASABEL

lugar, donde podían desconectarse y disfrutar de una privacidad total. Poco después, el fundador del hotel y sus amigos construyeron unos alojamientos sencillos y elegantes, entre la descontrolada buganvilla y la embriagadora dama de noche, que estaban diseñados para ser luminosos y frescos durante el verano y cálidos y acogedores en las noches de invierno.

Hoy, esas mismas casas siguen ofreciendo un retiro íntimo bajos los pinos en el corazón del Marbella Club: un discreto 'segundo hogar' diseñado con la más alta atención al detalle, donde disfrutar de la actitud siempre servicial por la que el Club es reconocido. Puedes esperar el espray de la talasoterapia y tés botánicos junto a la cama; un mini bar con de chocolate negro, kombucha y agua de coco orgánica; o limas recién cosechadas para

exprimir en una bebida refrescante y tomarla en el soleado patio. Aquí, donde se mantienen los bellos techos de terracota, una suave brisa refresca ha refrescado los interiores.

Piedra, vigas expuestas, hierro forjado y chimeneas se ven acentuadas por ricos tejidos de casas como Pierre Frey y Gastón y Daniela. Detalles en negro hilvanan el diseño: desde los tejidos estampados a mano, el toque del papel de pared y los grandes cuadros hasta los ribetes de los almohadones. Con el énfasis puesto en una elegancia minimalista, se ha logrado un refinamiento que defiende la artesanía local, los materiales naturales y métodos tradicionales. El efecto es un estilo *chic* y relajado, que alude a la ilustre historia del Marbella Club de una forma intencionada pero sutil. ■



EL CORTIJO



the boutique edit

BY FLEUR BRITTEN

From its history as one of the world's chicest resorts to today's pared back elegance, the Marbella Club has always been a beacon of style. In our Boutique, by the steps leading to the Beach Club, globally renowned brands sit alongside off-the-radar finds. Here you can curate your capsule wellness wardrobe with eco-friendly athleisure wear or tailored shorts by Orlebar Brown, browse a thoughtful edit of exquisite cover-ups by Juliet Dunn or stock up on barefoot luxury essentials

ELEVATED BEACHWEAR

If you're looking for classic sophistication, look no further than the beautifully constructed Italian brand Evarae. Subtle detailing – a knot here, a metal trim there – and inbuilt support ensures maximum confidence in the sun.



HERE, KITTY!

Striking the perfect balance between understated elegance and grown-up glamour, with some fun thrown in for good measure, this beautifully crafted range of clutches is made with handwoven raffia. Each one is a little different and, for that, special.

A NATURAL CLASSIC

When it comes to footwear, beach glamour can be tricky. Castañer Carina's luxurious take on the espadrille nails it, with distressed hems and natural colours. Nudge up the volume with metallic finishes and ankle-flattering straps.



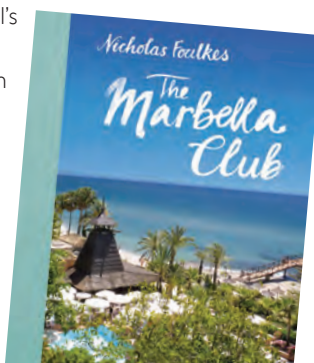
ALL THAT GLITTERS

What Brazilian swimwear designer Lenny Niemeyer doesn't know about looking fabulous poolside frankly isn't worth knowing. Imbuing her glamorous collections with the spirit of Rio, Lenny designs for the chic, independent woman. Expect bold, directional prints, on-trend colourways and beautiful jewels set into its impeccably finished one- and two-pieces, as well as resort wear fit for the Grill. If you want a swimsuit that is going to work hard for you, consider this eggplant, embellished high-neck one-piece featuring a gold-choker style neckline and a flattering double-layered front. It will ensure you stand out for all the right reasons.



A HEDONISTIC HISTORY

What better way to relax into the spirit of the Club than to familiarise yourself with its 65-year, star-studded history through the hotel's very own biography, written by the inimitable British journalist and bon viveur Nicholas Foulkes.



At the water's edge

High-quality, tasteful pool inflatables are hard to come by. That's why we love The Nice Fleet's pool rings from France. No garish motifs here, just stylish pieces with pleasing graphic patterns.

100% recycled (100% cool)

Each purchase of Riz's 100% recycled plastic boardshorts donates a sum to the Marine Conservation Society. And should they ever wear out, you can trade them in for a discount on a new pair.



THE JEWEL FAN

Jewellery isn't usually practical. This chic reinvention of the fan by Spanish brand La Morenita combines both form, as a navel-grazing necklace, and function, as a glamorous cool-down that's always to hand.



El Jefe

Whether you're in the mood for timeless romantic, gastronomic theatre at the Grill or the laid-back elegance of the Beach Club, your experience has been carefully choreographed by one man, says RACHEL WALKER

The stage is set. Piano music drifts above the soft chatter and the scent of flowering jasmine fills the air. Just before service starts, the candles are lit – a nightly ritual that means the olive boughs around the Grill drip with wax built up over decades of deliciously long evenings. Scenes like this are no accident. The polished silver, crisp linen and theatrics of cloche-covered dishes are carefully choreographed by one man: Juan Gálvez, or ‘el jefe’ (the boss), as he is affectionately known. Waiters stiffen a little as he emerges from the kitchen – fully decked out in chef whites and carrying a soufflé, which obligingly stands tall under his critical gaze.

There's no doubt that this is a man who knows the art of a *consommé* and could knock out a dozen perfect *patatas soufflé* with his eyes shut. It's classical cooking – heaven help anyone in the kitchen who dares fiddle with *el jefe's* dishes – but fierceness aside, he puts just as much emphasis on conviviality: a good bottle of wine, flawless service, free flowing conversation. After all, this is a man who grew up in hotel kitchens and has finessed fine dining over a five-decade-long career, which started aged just 14 and saw him win a Michelin star by his late-30s.

Gastronomically, Gálvez's career has spanned from the hard-set gelatine centrepieces popular in the '70s to 21st-century molecular concoctions but, as is often the way with the most stern of chefs, he credits his mother as the person who first sparked his passion for cooking. It was in her kitchen – in Algeciras, on the southernmost tip of Spain – where he first stuffed poultry, prepared anchovies and fried *churros*. This timeless, family cooking is most apparent in the abundant buffet at the Beach Club, where the emphasis is on fresh ingredients: fat stems of asparagus and fish cooked to order. The cured meat platters and crowd-pleasing chocolate mousse see families embrace the Spanish way of dining, eking out lunch late into the afternoon.

It's very different to the dishes being served when Gálvez first arrived at the Marbella Club in 1999. Within 15 days, he had torn up the menu and shifted the focus to fresh local produce, while still preserving a little pomp – Gálvez knows the favourite dishes of diners who have been coming for decades and often surprises them with little treats between courses, capturing an old school hospitality that makes the Grill feel a little like stepping back in time. Twenty years on, Gálvez's winning formula is as popular as ever. Now approaching retirement, the thought of coming back to eat at the Grill raises a smile; when asked what he would order, the response is telling: “Chateaubriand with Béarnaise sauce and a glass of Tadeo from Cortijo Los Aguilares,” he says, without hesitation, “then a slice of lemon pie.” For this is Gálvez's true legacy – the human and homely joy of dining in what he calls ‘*la mejor casa del mundo*’ (the best house in the world). ■



Todo está listo. Las notas del piano sobrevuelan un suave murmullo y el jazmín llena el aire con su aroma. Antes de comenzar el servicio, se encienden las velas, un ritual que lleva décadas acumulando cera en las ramas de los olivos del Grill. Nada es accidental. La plata pulida, los manteles almidonados y la teatralidad de los platos con campanas son coreografía de un hombre: Juan Gálvez o ‘el jefe’, como le llaman cariñosamente. Los camareros se enderezan cuando sale de la cocina, ataviado en blanco de pies a cabeza y con un soufflé en la mano, que se mantiene erguido ante su fija mirada.

No hay duda de que este hombre domina el arte del *consomé* y de que podría hacer soufflé de patatas con los ojos cerrados. Es cocina clásica –Dios ampare a quien ose meterse con los platos del jefe en la cocina–, pero más allá de su carácter pasional, pone el mismo énfasis en la cordialidad: una buena botella de vino, un servicio impecable, una conversación fluida. Después de todo, es un hombre que creció en cocinas de hotel y que ha perfeccionado su arte a lo largo de cinco décadas, comenzando su carrera a los 14 años y obteniendo una estrella Michelin hacia finales de sus 30.

Su carrera ha abarcado desde los platos de gelatina tan populares en los años 70 a la cocina molecular del siglo XXI. Aun así, como suele pasar con los chefs más serios, Gálvez atribuye a su madre el ser la persona que despertó en él la pasión por la cocina. Fue en su casa de Algeciras, la punta más meridional de España, donde por primera vez rellenó aves de corral, preparó anchoas y frío churros. Esta cocina tradicional se hace aún más evidente en el abundante buffet del Beach Club, protagonizado por ingredientes frescos: gruesos espárragos y pescado asado al momento. Los platos de chacinas y el popular mousse de chocolate son testigos de la facilidad con la que las familias se amoldan a las costumbres españolas y no almuerzan hasta tarde.

Todo ello difiere mucho de los platos que se servían cuando Gálvez llegó al Marbella Club en 1999. En 15 días, desechó aquel menú para centrarse en productos frescos locales, aunque preservando cierta pompa: Gálvez se sabe los platos preferidos de los comensales que llevan décadas visitando el Grill y suele sorprenderlos con degustaciones entre platos, recuperando una antigua hospitalidad que te hace viajar atrás en el tiempo. Veinte años más tarde, la fórmula de Gálvez es más popular que nunca. A poco de jubilarse, la idea de volver aquí a comer le provoca una sonrisa; cuando le preguntamos qué pediría, la respuesta es reveladora: “Chateaubriand a la Béarnaise con una copa de Tadeo del Cortijo Los Aguilares”, dice sin titubear. “Luego, una porción de tarta de limón”. Pues es éste el verdadero legado de Gálvez: el sencillo placer de una comida en lo que él llama ‘*la mejor casa del mundo*’. ■

ILLUSTRATION: HEATHER GATLEY

A TOAST BENEATH THE CANOPY

*Whether lively terrace bar or cosy
Champagne Room, at the Marbella Club
there's always a place to suit your mood.*

*RACHEL WALKER pauses at our bijou
herb garden on the way to the beach,
where mixologist XAVIER ALMEIDA
is crafting a bespoke tippie at the
very heart of our botanical garden*

Mixologist Xavier reaches down to pick iridescent purple basil leaves then gathers white grapefruit windfalls and plucks a sprig of cherry blossom, breathing in the delicate marzipan fragrance. Next, we seek out *calamansi*, a tiny tangerine-like fruit with sharp citric notes – it's native to Asia but thrives in the hotel's botanical gardens.

Back in the Champagne Bar, Xavier spritzes a blend of orange blossom and a bespoke botanical tea infusion – instantly, the air is filled with garden aromas. Then, a flurry of muddling and mixing. There's a smoke gun, and wood chips that have been pre-soaked in sherry. "It's good to use local flavours," Xavier

says, as he serves a drink so well balanced and so reflective of where we are.

I sip my herb-infused cocktail on the patio where orange blossom and lavender float on an evening breeze, and agree – there's no need to look beyond the hotel's garden for inspiration.

Xavier, 'mixólogo' o especialista en cócteles, se agacha para coger unas hojas tornasoladas de albahaca morada. Luego, recoge unos pomelos blancos caídos y arranca una ramita de cerezo que cuelga en lo alto mientras inhala su delicada fragancia. Después, buscamos calamansi, una fruta miniatura similar a la mandarina con un toque cítrico intenso: una planta asiática que crece de maravilla en los jardines botánicos del Marbella Club.

De vuelta en el Champagne Room, Xavier rocía una mezcla de flor de naranjo y una infusión preparada especialmente para la ocasión. De inmediato, el aire se llena de los aromas del jardín. Tras el ajetreo de la mezcla, saca una pistola de humo y agrega unas astillas previamente remojadas en Jerez. "Es bueno usar sabores locales", dice Xavier, mientras sirve una bebida espectacularmente equilibrada que refleja el lugar en el que nos encontramos.

Allí en el patio, donde el aroma del naranjo y la lavanda flotan en la brisa de la tarde, le doy un sorbo a mi cóctel infundido de hierbas y coincido con Xavier: no hay necesidad de salir del jardín del hotel para encontrar inspiración.



THE Scent OF SPAIN



While northern Europe is still shrouded in frost, Andalusia's 'naranjo' trees burst into blossom – their thick, white flowers infusing the air around our winter garden with a heady perfume that's synonymous with southern Spain. While many of the oranges are too bitter to eat straight from the tree – but make ideal props for perfecting your Man from Del Monte impersonation beside the pool – our chefs are busy up-levelling this simplest of Andalusian ingredients in fresh and unexpected ways



ORANGE BLOSSOM WATER SHOT

This heavily scented Arabic ingredient is often associated with rose petal jam and sticky filo pastries. Heavy-handed use can make dishes strongly perfumed – but here it's a fragrant top note, balanced with bitter orange juice to make a refreshing shooter. It cleanses the palate, whets the appetite and is an elegant way to kick-start the meal.

Este ingrediente árabe de gran aroma suele asociarse con la mermelada de pétalos de rosa y los dulces de masa filo cubiertos con almíbar. Un uso exacerbado puede otorgarles a los platos un perfume demasiado intenso; sin embargo, aquí se utiliza para dar sólo una nota aromática, equilibrada con el jugo de naranja amargo para lograr un sorbete refrescante que limpia el paladar y abre el apetito.

ILLUSTRATION: LOUISE LOGSDON



ORANGE SOUFFLÉ

This showstopper dessert has delighted generations, and no wonder. The billowy puff of orange floats above the ramekin as it's whisked out of the kitchen with urgency. While the dessert holds its rise, diners plunge a spoon into the middle and fill the well with a sweet crème anglaise, which pairs perfectly with the gently bitter orange soufflé – a timeless combination. Este espectacular postre ha deleitado a generaciones, y con razón. Una nube de naranja ondulada y recién batida flota sobre el ramequín cuando lo sacan a prisa de la cocina. Mientras el postre sigue levado, los comensales hunden una cucharilla en el centro y se llevan a la boca una dulce crema inglesa que combina a la perfección con la suave amargura del soufflé de naranja: una fusión que nunca pasa de moda.



TANGY ORANGE ICE CREAM

The Marbella Club marmalade couldn't be further from the sweetened, supermarket variety – but a grown up, negroni style marmalade that hits the back of the palate. When coupled with a quenelle of delicate orange ice cream the effect is bitter-sweet – an inspired way of showcasing the complexity of the humble orange. La mermelada del Marbella Club no podría ser más distinta del tipo azucarado que se vende en el súper. Esta es una mermelada artesanal para adultos a base de negroni, cuyo gusto impregna el paladar. Al combinársela con una quenelle, hecha con un delicado helado de naranja, el efecto es agri dulce: una forma acertada de exhibir la complejidad de una sencilla naranja.



MC BEACH

Nothing signals the arrival of summer like the opening of the Marbella Club's legendary beach chiringuito. It's where large round tables buzz with generations of families catching up together and elegant guests and seasoned Marbellís sit down to heavenly afternoon-long lunches of typical Andalusian fare. Langoustine paella, sardinas al espeto and chargrilled sea bass barbecued on our fisherman's boat name but a few specialities and are all happily accompanied by large jugs of tinto de verano and much spirited laughter

MC Beach sets the perfect laid-back vibe to while away a hot summer afternoon, whether soaking up the rays from your sun lounger between dips in the sparkling Mediterranean or indulging in that most tranquil of Spanish pastimes, the siesta, lulled by a gentle breeze and lapping waves. Prince Alfonso's son Hubertus is a regular, along with his glamorous wife Simona, and he can often be found catching up with old pals or playing rounds of backgammon, before heading off to prepare for that evening's El Patio party. Lunch would not be complete without a visit from Count Rudi, whose anticipated arrival ritual involves placing his Panama hat in the rafters, before greeting guests and friends. MC Beach ofrece un ambiente perfecto de relajación para pasar una calurosa tarde de verano tomando el sol en la tumbona entre chapuzones en el Mediterráneo o practicando la más apacible de las costumbres españolas —la siesta— arrullado por la suave brisa y el murmullo de las olas. El hijo del príncipe Alfonso, Hubertus, suele venir con su pareja Simona y pasa el tiempo charlando con viejos amigos o jugando al backgammon, antes de ir a arreglarse para la fiesta de El Patio de esa noche. El almuerzo no estaría completo sin una visita del conde Rudi, cuya llegada se advierte cuando cuelga el sombrero en las vigas antes de saludar a huéspedes y amigos.

Essentials FOR THE CHIRINGUITO



The Panama hat



Tinto de verano



The MC bag

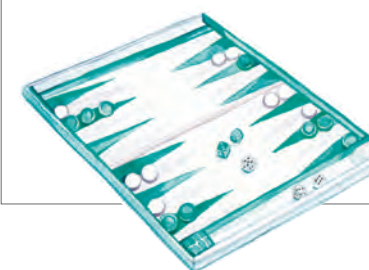


ILLUSTRATION: HOLLY EXLEY

When Sandro Gamazo Hohenlohe cleared the land behind his finca, he didn't expect to find five new varieties of 'wild' olive, let alone go on to produce Marbella's first organic olive oil, writes RACHEL WALKER.

Photographs by ESI SEILERN

The *accidental* olive grower

Sandro's terraced finca in the foothills of the Sierra de las Nieves, a short drive from the hotel

Look, it's Machu Picchu," grins Sandro Gamazo Hohenlohe, pointing at the terraces carved into the Sierra de las Nieves foothills. The sun is burning off a morning mist as we wind up a dust track through his olive plantation in Istán, just north of Marbella.

"On a clear day, you can see Gibraltar from here," he shouts over the engine in the open-sided Land Rover. Khaki-clad, with a deep tan and a Vizsla perched behind the driver's seat, there's something of the old-school explorer about him.

What's more, it's the endless discoveries on his plantation, Belvis de las Navas, which patter his conversation: a new variety of olive, unearthing a new piece of wall, successfully grafting a new tree – but for all the newness and excitement, Sandro has long been rooted in the area.

As the great-nephew of Marbella Club founder, Prince Alfonso de Hohenlohe, and an only child, he grew up at the hotel. "It was my playground," he says, remembering birthdays at the Beach Club, cocktail parties, and Prince Alfonso in a dressing gown sipping a whisky and coke during the siesta. Tucked away down one of the hotel's walkways there's a tile portrait of Doña Piedita, elegantly dressed in tailored riding habit – a subtle way of honouring Sandro's great-grandmother. "My cousins would leave for school at the start of September and I wouldn't see them again until Easter – it was a grown-up world, but I loved it."

These were the boom years on the coast, when the mountain towns emptied out. "Everything in Istán scratches and bites – but people view the coast as having more opportunity," Sandro explains. Families decamped to work in the hotels, and after school Sandro moved to northern Spain to work as a wine merchant. It wasn't until 2011 that a return visit to the family home up in the hills triggered a turn of events.

A forest fire was spreading through Istán. Sandro decided to clear the thickets round the house to create a buffer, but as he did so ancient stone walls started appearing – and then olive trees. "It was like a treasure hunt," he says, "It was addictive, what was I going to find next?"

The scrubland was dense but as he cleared it, an ancient olive plantation emerged. Not recognising the olive leaves or fruit, Sandro ►



Mira, el Machu Picchu", dice con una sonrisa Sandro Gamazo Hohenlohe, apuntando hacia las terrazas esculpidas en las laderas de la Sierra de las Nieves. Con el sol evaporando el rocío del alba, tomamos el camino de tierra que serpentea por su plantación de olivos en Istán, un pueblo situado en la montaña al norte de Marbella.

"En un día claro, desde aquí se ve Gibraltar", comenta alzando la voz sobre el ruido del motor de un todoterreno Land Rover sin puertas. Ataviado en color caquí, bien bronceado y con su compañero canino sentado tras el asiento del conductor, su aspecto recuerda casi al de un antiguo explorador.

De hecho, en su conversación sobresalen un sinfín de descubrimientos realizados en su plantación, Belvis de las Navas: una nueva variedad de olivo, el hallazgo de un muro, el injerto exitoso de un árbol... Pequeños descubrimientos y nuevos retos constantes que forjaron el arraigo de Sandro a la zona.

Sandro, único sobrino nieto del fundador del Marbella Club, el príncipe Alfonso de Hohenlohe, e

Discovering hidden terraces of olive trees on his estate was like a "treasure hunt," says Sandro.

hijo único, pasó su infancia en el hotel. "Era como mi patio de juegos", dice recordando sus cumpleaños en el Beach Club, las fiestas que se organizaban y al príncipe Alfonso, siempre vestido de bata dándole sorbos a un whisky con cola a la hora de la siesta. En los jardines, en la pared encalada y flanqueado por árboles y el mítico pozo de los deseos, se encuentra el retrato en azulejos de Doña Piedita, elegantemente vestida con su traje de equitación, un homenaje sutil a la bisabuela de Sandro. "Mis primos se iban a la escuela a principios de septiembre y ya no los veía hasta Semana Santa... Era un mundo de adultos, pero me encantaba."

Aquellos eran los años del boom en la costa, los

años en que los pueblos de montaña se vaciaron. "En Istán todo araña y muerde... Pero en la costa la gente creía tener más oportunidades", explica Sandro. Familias enteras partieron para trabajar en los hoteles y, al terminar el colegio, Sandro se mudó al norte de España para trabajar como comercial de vinos. No sería hasta 2011 cuando una visita a la casa de la familia en las colinas desencadenó un cambio.

Un incendio arrasaba Istán. Sandro decidió quitar los matorrales que rodeaban la casa para protegerla, pero al hacerlo comenzaron a aparecer antiguos muros de piedra, y luego olivos. "Era como una búsqueda del tesoro", dice. "Una cosa adictiva, ¿qué era lo próximo que iba encontrar?"

La zona de matorrales era tupida pero al despejarla emergió un antiguo olivar. Al no reconocer las hojas y frutos, Sandro envió siete variedades al banco genético de la Universidad de Córdoba para que las identificaran. "Cuando me las enviaron de vuelta, cinco de las siete estaban sin catalogar", sonríe, aún sorprendido.

Aquel hallazgo no podía caer en el olvido, así que Sandro decidió prensar las aceitunas para comprobar sus cualidades. El resultado no decepcionó: era "demasiado bueno para no hacer nada con él". Y así fue como nació Belvis de las Navas. ►



El niño que se escondía bajo las mesas ahora tiene su aceite sobre ellas



The little boy who hid under the tables now has his olive oil proudly sat on top of it

◀ sent seven different varieties to be identified at a genetic bank at the University of Córdoba. “When they came back, five of the seven were uncatalogued,” he grins, still wide-eyed at the discovery.

In the name of research, he tried pressing the olives, concluded that the oil was “too good not to do something with” – and Belvis de las Navas was born.

Back in the dining room, Sandro cracks open one of the stoneware bottles and pours a slug into a sherry glass. He shows how to gently warm the oil by cupping the glass, then nosing it to smell the cut-grass aromas before taking a sip: “Can you

taste that black pepper spiciness that hits the back of your throat? It shows the olive oil is alive.”

He attributes this liveliness to two unique factors: firstly, the *acebuchina* (wild olives) used in the blend. Typically, the large pit, low yield and difficulty to harvest is enough to put off producers, but not Sandro. “I don’t think anyone else is bottling *acebuchina*,” he shrugs, “but wild olives create a complex and stable product,” he explains.

Secondly, Sandro has invested in an on-site mill so he can process the olives within 45 minutes of being picked. “As soon as the olive is separated from the tree its acidity starts to rise,” he goes on. “Typically, an olive might spend 12 hours squashed at the bottom of a trailer before being pressed, but we pick in baskets and move quickly, meaning our oil has very low acidity.”

It’s this quality that links the Belvis de las Navas olive oil to Marbella Club – where a slug might be used in the kitchen to dress salads, or by guests to finish *pan con tomate* – but it’s a neat family tie too: the little boy who hid under the tables listening to whispered conversations now has his olive oil proudly sat on top of it, stamped with the family crest and catering to a new generation of guests staying at his late great-uncle’s beloved hotel. ■



Sandro Gamazo, great-nephew of Prince Alfonso de Hohenlohe, sits with his daughter at Belvis de las Navas.

◀ De vuelta en el comedor, Sandro abre una de las botellas de cerámica y sirve poco de aceite en un catavinos. Muestra cómo calentar ligeramente el aceite sosteniendo la copa entre las manos para luego olerlo y sentir los aromas herbales antes de dar un sorbo: “¿Sientes el sabor picante de la pimienta negra en la garganta? Es la prueba de que el aceite está vivo”.

Sandro atribuye esta vivacidad a dos factores únicos. En primer lugar, la *acebuchina* (aceituna silvestre) que se utiliza en la mezcla. Por lo general,

el hueso grande, la escasa cosecha y la dificultad para cosechar suelen ser motivos suficientes para desalentar a los productores, pero no en este caso. “Creo que no hay nadie más envasando *acebuchina*”, comenta encogiéndose de hombros, “pero produce un aceite complejo y estable.”

En segundo lugar, Sandro ha invertido en un molino que ha instalado en su plantación para poder prensar las aceitunas en los 45 minutos siguientes a su recogida. “Tan pronto como se arranca la aceituna del árbol, comienza a aumentar su acidez”, explica. “Por lo general, una aceituna puede llegar a pasar unas 12 horas apretujada en el fondo de un tráiler antes de ser prensada. En cambio, aquí cosechamos en canastas y nos movemos con rapidez, lo que significa que el aceite tiene una acidez muy baja.”

Y es esta calidad lo que vincula el aceite de Belvis de las Navas con el Marbella Club, donde los cocineros alían con él las ensaladas y los huéspedes aderezan su pan con tomate. Pero también hay un vínculo familiar directo: el niño que se escondía bajo las mesas escuchando conversaciones ajenas ahora se enorgullece de tener su aceite de oliva sobre ellas, estampado con el escudo de armas de la familia para servir a una nueva generación de huéspedes en el querido hotel de su difunto tío abuelo. ■





Take your tastebuds on a journey around the world at La Plaza



Keep it simple
Charge your bill to your room at the Marbella Club

NOBU

TRY TAPAS WITH A TWIST AT BIBO
Dani García won three Michelin stars, but his restaurant next door, Bibo, is a more informal option, specialising in ‘tapas with a twist’. The small plates encapsulate García’s multi-sensory dining – expect cocktails served in a billow of smoke, savoury oxtail sharing a plate with soft, sweet brioche and an array of extravagant desserts. Bringing the family? Pick one of the pizzas at this unpretentious but utterly titillating restaurant.

TAPAS ‘CON UN TOQUE’ EN BIBO
Dani García ganó tres estrellas Michelin, pero su restaurante contiguo, Bibo, es una opción más informal que se especializa en ‘tapas con un toque diferente’. Los platos pequeños recogen la gastronomía multisensorial de García: cócteles servidos en una nube de humo, un sabroso rabo de buey junto a un esponjoso brioche, y una gran variedad de postres extravagantes. ¿Cena en familia? Escoge una de las pizzas de este modesto aunque excitante restaurante.



SERAFINA

FEEL THE FUSION AT NOBU
Chef Nobu Matsuhisa’s Japanese-Peruvian fusion is at home in Marbella where sun-ripened tomatoes, padrón peppers and market fresh fish mean that the kitchen is heaving with world-class ingredients. Regulars will recognise classics like the Black Cod Miso and Wagyu beef – though the surroundings are utterly unique. Dine under the stars or find an intimate corner in the lantern-lit dining room.

SIENTE LA FUSION EN NOBU
La fusión de gastronomía japonesa y peruana del Chef Nobu Matsuhisa encaja a la perfección en Marbella, donde los tomates madurados al sol, los pimientos del Padrón y el pescado fresco aseguran ingredientes de primera categoría en la cocina. Los asiduos encontrarán clásicos como el Miso de bacalao negro y la carne de Wagyu, pero en un entorno único. Cena bajo las estrellas o encuentra un rincón íntimo en el comedor alumbrado por farolillos.

AUTHENTIC FLAVOURS AT SERAFINA
The piazza setting, puffed focaccia, fresh pasta, a glass of Chianti – it all transports diners to a pocket of Italy. From the selection of antipasti, through to a sensational tiramisu, Serafina encapsulates the best bits of Italy’s cuisine under a Spanish sky. It’s a romantic setting but in true Italian spirit, with family-friendly service and killer espresso martinis.

SABORES AUTÉNTICOS EN SERAFINA
La ubicación en la plaza, la esponjosa focaccia, la pasta fresca y una copa de Chianti transportan a los comensales a un rincón de Italia. Desde la selección de antipasti al sensational tiramisú, Serafina sintetiza lo mejor de la cocina italiana bajo el cielo español. Es un entorno romántico con un verdadero espíritu italiano, servicio para la familia y un espresso Martini magistral.



PUENTE ROMANO

As dusk falls, the atmosphere at Puente Romano, the Marbella Club’s sister resort just a short stroll along the promenade, begins to sizzle. It’s vibrant epicentre, La Plaza, twinkles with fairy lights as tables start to fill with guests and in-the-know locals – no wonder, thanks to the world-class chefs who have set up around this atmospheric Roman square. Whether you’re in the mood to relax over laid-back tapas at Bibo, indulge in Michelin-starred magic at Dani García, try authentic recipes with adventurous twists at Thai Gallery, or dance the night away at La Suite, a New York loft-style club with Roman roots, La Plaza is your playground, says RACHEL WALKER



BIBO

barely beyond

ANDALUSIA

A place apart

Many of our popular images of Spain originate in Andalusia – from rich traditions of flamenco, matadors and gypsy guitar, to ‘typical’ Spanish dishes such as gazpacho, sangria and churros. But delve deeper into the culture of this distinctive region and you’ll soon discover a place apart from the rest of Spain



Traditional dishes such as *salmorejo*, *pescado frito* and *jamón de Jabugo* are simple but feel-good and unique to this region.



PHOTOGRAPHS: ALEXIA DELPOUVE

Andalusia is a treat for your senses. It’s orange trees bursting into blossom on every street corner and long summer evenings infused with *dama de noche* (night blooming jasmine). It’s *jamón serrano* (mountain-cured ham) suspended from the ceiling of bijou tapas bars and the finest sherry you’ve ever tasted served straight from the barrel.

Romans, Goths and Moors have all left their mark on this intriguing region, and this rich heritage mingles with contemporary life. Just along the coast in Málaga, a Moorish citadel and Roman amphitheatre sit alongside a museum celebrating the city’s most famous son, Pablo Picasso, and a vibrant arts scene to rival Madrid. The city’s Pompidou Centre, a modernist’s dream, is minutes away from simple *chiringuitos* cooking *espetos* (grilled sardines) over olive wood open fires as they have done for centuries. Away from the cobbled streets and sunshine coast, it’s easy to lose the beaten path entirely. In the *sierras* behind the Marbella Club, *pueblos blancos* – white villages – tuck into the folds of the landscape and, beyond these, you can find perfect solitude wandering amongst terraced hills replete with almond and walnut trees.

With over 300 days of sun per year, it’s no wonder that life in Andalusia takes place outdoors, spilling out onto patios and gloriously bewildering narrow streets where generations of families dine together until late into the night. And it’s this laid-back Andalusian way of life – a slower pace that prioritises the important things above all else: family, community, laughter and togetherness – that will cast its spell over you.

Andalucía es un placer para los sentidos. Cada esquina está adornada por naranjos florecidos y las largas noches de verano se impregnan del aroma de la *dama de noche*, un tipo de jazmín nocturno. El *jamón serrano* cuelga del techo de los bares de tapas y el mejor Jerez que hayas probado se sirve directamente del barril.

Romanos, visigodos y árabes han dejado su marca en esta intrigante región, y su rica herencia se mezcla con la vida contemporánea. Basta con visitar la costa de Málaga para encontrar un alcázar musulmán y un anfiteatro romano junto a un museo que celebra al hijo más destacado de la ciudad, Pablo Picasso. La vibrante escena artística local no tiene nada que envidiarle a la de Madrid. El Centro Pompidou, un sueño modernista, se encuentra a sólo unos minutos de los sencillos *chiringuitos* en los que se cocinan *espetos* sobre fogones de madera de olivo, como se ha hecho durante siglos. Lejos de las calles de adoquines y la costa bañada por el sol, es fácil hallar lugares apartados y no tan turísticos. En la sierra que arropa al Marbella Club, los *pueblos blancos* se esconden entre los pliegues del paisaje y, un poco más allá, se puede disfrutar de una perfecta soledad mientras se recorren las colinas repletas de almendros y nogales.

Con más de 300 días de sol al año, no es sorprendente que la vida andaluza se lleve a cabo puertas afuera, en los patios y las callejuelas confusas donde generaciones cenan en familia hasta altas horas de la noche. Es este estilo de vida relajado, este ritmo andaluz más lento, el que prioriza las cosas importantes de la vida: la familia, la comunidad, la risa y la compañía... que te hechizarán.

MARBELLA

Freewheel into the Old Town

Pick up a bicycle and map from our concierge and pedal into Marbella's Casco Antiguo, a maze of inviting narrow streets, flower-filled plazas and gracefully-ageing townhouses where surprises await around each corner

1 CHURROS IN PLAZA DE LOS NARANJOS

The most pleasurable way to explore this historic quarter is to let yourself get lost. Sooner or later, the sweet scent of citrus will lead you back to the Old Town's bustling 'orange square'. Don't miss the enormous wheels of churros with hot chocolate and freshly-squeezed orange juice at Churrería Ramón.

2 LA NIÑA DEL PISTO

Embrace the Spanish tradition of *sobremesa* – unhurried conversations with loved ones following a meal – at this bijou tapas restaurant, squeezed down the narrowest of streets. Count Rudi recommends trying their *salmorejo*.

3 DÉJÀ VU

Pony-skin blazers, haute couture handbags and zebra-skin rugs, oh my! Charismatic vintage-seekers Amanda and Richard have been curating vignettes of rare and irresistible finds in this vintage store on Calle Pedraza for the past two decades.

4 PARQUE DE ALAMEDA

Shaded by exotic trees from Asia and the Tropics, these

lush botanical gardens, linking the Old Town to Avenida del Mar and the promenade, have been a popular meeting point since the 18th century. The marble walkways are an ideal spot for people watching.

5 BAR ANA MARIA TABLAO

Witness the raw passion and energy of flamenco in this

intimate, low-beamed bar that oozes Andalusian charm.

6 ALCAZABA FORTRESS

Wander around remains of this 10th-century Moorish fortress, built on Roman foundations.

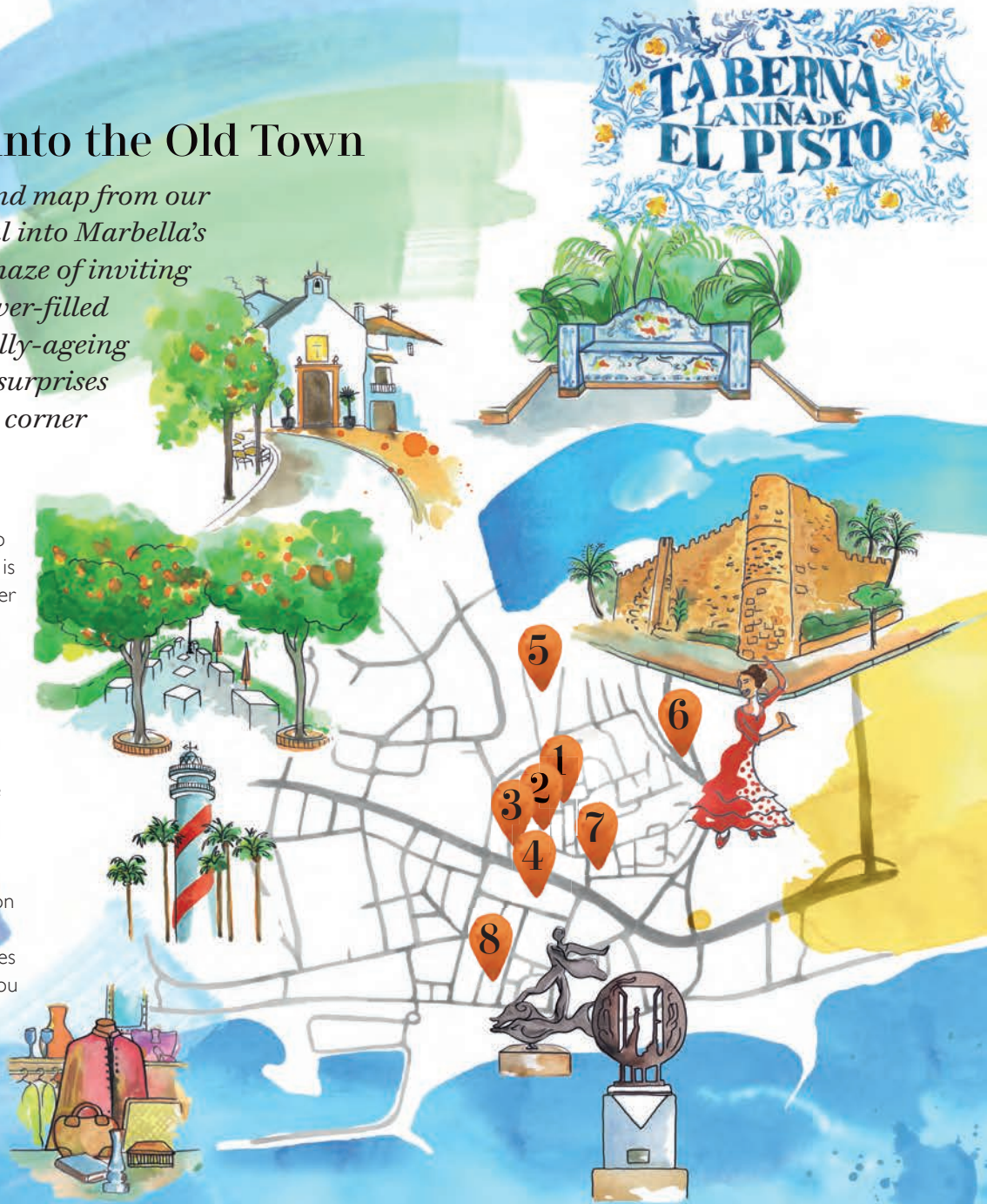
7 LA ENCARNACIÓN

The gleaming white and yellow of Marbella's oldest

church really pops against the vibrant blue of an Andalusian sky. If you think the exterior is spectacular, the ornate interior will leave you speechless.

8 AVENIDA DEL MAR

Surely there's nowhere else in the world where can you explore an open-air gallery of Salvador Dalí sculptures just metres from the sea!



GOLF

Raise your game

Situated in the foothills of the Benahavis mountains, washed over by a refreshing sea breeze and the crisp scent of Andalusian herbs, our 18-HOLE GOLF COURSE exceeds even the loftiest of expectations. The world-class course, designed by the late Dave Thomas, offers 6,000m of contoured fairways bursting with eucalyptus, cork and pine



THE VIEW

The par-73 course culminates in one of the most dramatic 18th tees in Europe, Gibraltar's Pillars of Hercules rising from a cobalt sea on the horizon, while clouds hug the Atlas Mountains like rings of Saturn. One of many elevated tees, the view from this par-five will stop even the most focused player mid-swing.

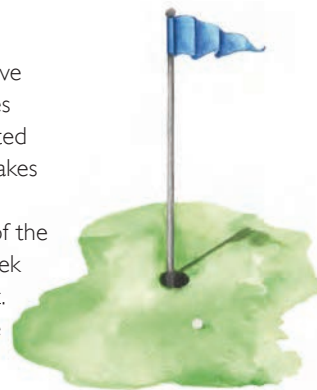
THE GOLFER'S TONIC

With its thatched roof, traditional Spanish dry-stone walls and open log fire, the clubhouse maintains the atmosphere of a hunter's lodge and is a snug spot to unwind after a game. Pull up a comfy chair and let bar tender Juan serve you a 'golfer's tonic' – a rejuvenating mix of grapefruit, soda and Angostura bitters that's just the ticket after a memorable round.



A DESIGN PAR EXCELLENCE

World renowned golf course architect Dave Thomas completed more than 100 courses worldwide including The Belfry, which hosted the 2002 Ryder Cup. Among the elegant lakes and waterfalls and protected greens are strategically placed bunkers, a trademark of the course designer, encouraging players to seek out the most advantageous approach shot. With only 80 plays per day, and 12-minute tees, an unhurried game is guaranteed.



MÁLAGA

Six hours in Málaga

A cultural gateway to Andalusia, this once down-at-heel port has been through an eloquent reinvention. Follow our guide, or book a bespoke tour through our concierge, to seek out exciting gastronomy and a vibrant art scene amongst the city's grand promenades and cobbled streets



10am TREATS IN THE OLD TOWN

Like most of Andalusia, Málaga wakes slowly. Make the most of the quiet streets, heading for tiny Bertani Café, which brews 'the best coffee in Spain', and La Princesa Pastelería, which has been trading since 1937. Their *tortas locas*, which translates as 'crazy woman cake' according to the friendly owner, is a sandwich of puff pastry filled with custard then covered with egg yolk icing.



LA PRINCESA PASTELERIA

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALEXIA DELPOUVE



EL PIMPI

12pm TAPAS AT EL PIMPI

Behind the amphitheatre, *bodega* El Pimpi is a local institution serving Málaga wine from barrels signed by local matadors – and Antonio Banderas. Stop by around noon to avoid the hoards, and try their ridiculously tasty Iberian ham from pigs that gorge on acorns and chestnuts.

1.30pm MUSEU PICASSO

The opening of Museu Picasso in 2003, celebrating Málaga's most famous son, triggered the city's eloquent reinvention



3pm VISIT THE MARKET

Do as the *Malagueños* do and journey around the city sampling a *tapa* here and a *ración* there. Seek out Bar Mercado Atarazanas in the indoor market and feast on plates of anchovies marinated in vinegar (locals love them so much they've been nicknamed *boquerones*), fried fish and lip-smacking *padrón* peppers. Market stalls begin to close around 2pm, but the tapas bars stay open until around 5pm.



MERCADO ATARAZANAS

4pm ANTIGUA CASA DE GUARDIA

A bijou bar where sweet wine is poured straight from the barrel and your bill is chalked up on the bar



ANTIGUA CASA DE GUARDIA



EQUESTRIAN

Take to the trails

Master the basics of horse-riding with our patient instructors, or embark on an exhilarating trail ride

Deep in rural, rugged Benahavís, the Equestrian Centre is a haven for horse lovers, the stables stocked to bursting with thoroughbreds, dressage and show jumping horses. Nervous newcomers are well met with the string of pretty teaching ponies. Tweens (aged 10-14) can enjoy the gentle humour and limitless patience of instructor Kebir, whose recreational riding lessons will furnish them with important horsemanship skills, from tack and mount through to riding basics. An eager rider can expect to master the rhythm of rising trot within an hour or two, while the more experienced can chose to trail ride through nearby hills and valleys, taking in the superlative views across Gibraltar to Morocco, or have a go at jumping in the world-class arena.

El Centro Ecuestre, escondido en la zona rural de Benahavís, es un paraíso para los amantes de los caballos. En sus establos conviven purasangres, caballos de doma y de salto. Los nervios de los novatos se apaciguan al tomar las riendas de un lindo poni de iniciación. Los adolescentes (de 10 a 14 años) pueden disfrutar del humor y la paciencia infinita de Kebir, cuyas clases de equitación recreativa les ayudarán a desarrollar habilidades para la equitación, desde arrear y montar a disfrutar de una cabalgata básica. Un entusiasta de la equitación puede dominar el ritmo de un trote cada vez más ligero en una o dos horas, mientras que los expertos pueden elegir cabalgar por senderos cercanos en las colinas y valles, contemplando las excepcionales vistas de Gibraltar y Marruecos, o hacer salto en la pista de primera categoría.

Other ideas
FORTWEENSBECOME A (PADDLE)
TENNIS PRO

Come along to our tennis academy at Puente Romano, a short walk along the promenade, where pro coaches can train you to take on the fam. You can also have a go at the uniquely Marbella sport of *padel*, which combines the best bits of tennis, squash and badminton.



STAND UP AND PADDLE

Master the art of stand-up paddle boarding – the fastest growing water sport in the world – and explore the calm waters of the Mediterranean without even getting wet!

GET A TASTE
FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

Become an archaeological detective for the day on this guided bike ride to Villa de Rio Verde, a Roman house in the centre of Marbella, where you'll discover ancient mosaics of cooking pots, roasting fish and birds, and other weird and wonderful dishes from the past.

PERSONAL TRAINING

Into the wild

Reconnect with nature, while working on your fitness goals

Deep in the Refugio de Juanar, a 30-minute drive from the resort, you get a sense that not even locals know this secluded nature reserve is on their doorstep. "It's rare to meet another person," says personal trainer Dieter Beckx, who can guide you along pine trails fringed with wildflowers. "It's almost like our little secret."

Dieter's trick is to take guests from sun lounger to screen-saver views on an adventure that finishes high in the hills with views over Gibraltar. "We live in such a fast-paced world, people forget to slow down and appreciate what's on their back door," he says. "For that, the Refugio de Juanar is the perfect tonic."

Si te adentras en el Refugio de Juanar, a menos de 30 minutos en coche del hotel, encontrarás algo que ni los lugareños conocen: una reserva natural recóndita a la vuelta de la esquina. "Es raro encontrar gente aquí", dice el entrenador personal Dieter Beckx, que puede guiarte por los pinares salpicados de flores silvestres. "Es nuestro secreto".

Dieter embarca a los huéspedes en una aventura con impresionantes vistas que termina en las montañas, desde donde se ve Gibraltar: "Vivimos en un mundo tan acelerado que la gente se olvida de bajar el ritmo y apreciar lo que tiene enfrente", dice. "El Refugio de Juanar es perfecto para eso".





Ski-in from the slopes to The Sun Deck, Sierra Nevada's only ski-in/ski-out restaurant



PHOTOGRAPH: PERSZING 1982

The Alhambra, Granada

Sitting pretty around 40km from El Lodge, and overlooking the sugar cube white houses of Granada's gypsy quarter, the spellbinding Alhambra was the envy of kings of Spain, the Roman Empire, Moorish sultans and Napoleon. Since AD 889, the palace's thrillingly exotic architecture and orchard-jammed gardens have been sending visitors into raptures. Even virtuoso Marbella Club guide Pablo Flores, who has toured the fortress thousands of times, is still being surprised in new ways. He's used to the floral scents – orange blossom, jasmine, frangipani and oleander – and the romance of its Versailles-style fountains, lost-in-time courtyards and Quranic inscriptions of the glittering Nasrid Palaces. But he'll never stop discovering its secrets.

"Archaeologists are always at work and every year a new story emerges," he says. "There is detail here like nowhere else in Spain – and only when seeing it firsthand can you begin to believe in the impossible."

Every year a new story emerges

La fascinante Alhambra, ubicada a unos 40 km de El Lodge con vistas a las casas encaladas del barrio gitano de Granada, fue la envidia de los Reyes de España, el Imperio Romano, sultanes árabes y Napoleón. Desde 889 a. C., ha embelesado a sus visitantes con su exótica arquitectura y bellos jardines. Incluso el guía del Marbella Club, Pablo Flores, que ha visitado la fortaleza miles de veces, se sigue sorprendiendo. Está acostumbrado a los aromas florales del naranjo, el jazmín, la plumería y la adelfa; al carácter romántico de sus fuentes; a los patios perdidos en el tiempo y las inscripciones coránicas de los relucientes palacios nazaríes. Pero nunca dejará de descubrir nuevos secretos. "Los arqueólogos continúan trabajando y cada año aflora una nueva historia", dice. "Aquí hay un nivel de detalle sin parangón en España, y sólo al verlo en persona uno puede comenzar a creer en lo imposible".

EL LODGE

Sierra hideaway

Combine time on the slopes with the rich culture of Granada – exploring the Nasrid Palaces and the Alhambra, Spain's Moorish jewel in the crown, says MIKE MACEACHERAN

"Welcome to your private ski resort," says expert instructor Helena De La Gandara, looking out across the powder-packed pistes below Mulhacén, the highest mountain in the Iberian Peninsula. "The Spanish only come at weekends, so it's easy to disappear into your own snow globe here."

A stay at El Lodge, the Marbella Club's 21-room log-style cabin, which was originally built for the King of Spain, is all about go-slow skiing and deserved spa downtime, with cosy evenings beside the fire and hot-tub soaks accompanied by a cradle of snowy peaks and a pinch-yourself sunset.

Inside, there's a warm and inviting vibe, fusing informal alpine décor – cowhide rugs, pony-skin armchairs and antler chandeliers – with Moroccan textiles. Outside, the magical Sun Deck, Sierra Nevada's only ski-in/ski-out restaurant, overlooks the gently steaming pool and serves fresh seafood and hearty raclette with views over the dazzling slopes.

"Bienvenido a tu resort de esquí privado", dice la instructora experta Helena De La Gándara, mirando las pistas cubiertas de nieve al pie del Mulhacén, el pico más alto de la península ibérica. "Los españoles sólo vienen los fines de semana, así que es fácil perderte en tu propia bola de nieve".

El Lodge es una cabaña de madera de 21 habitaciones que pertenece al Marbella Club y fue construida originalmente para el rey de España. Es sinónimo de esquiar tranquilo y merecidos descansos en el spa, con veladas junto al fuego y baños en el jacuzzi arropado por picos nevados y un atardecer de ensueño.

Dentro, el ambiente cálido y acogedor fusiona la decoración alpina informal –alfombras de piel, sillones de cuero y candelabros de astas– con tejidos marroquíes. Fuera, el mágico Sun Deck, el único restaurante con acceso directo a las pistas en Sierra Nevada, además de vistas a la piscina climatizada y las laderas, sirve marisco fresco y una sustanciosa raclette.

never grow up

KIDS CLUB

Keep playing!

One result of Prince Alfonso's inexhaustible joie de vivre was his almost magical ability to bring fanciful ideas to life. "My biggest desire is to CREATE!" the hotel's founder was fond of saying. So it's no surprise that the ethos of the Kids Club – the hotel's heart and soul, built on the grounds of Prince Alfonso's family home – grows out of this lively spirit of imagination



The 5,000-square-metre Kids Club includes a dance studio, music room, library, art and pottery area as well as an enchanted forest, kitchen and vegetable garden.

Just as the Marbella Club continues to evolve organically, while holding true to its original magic – a journey that's seen Prince Alfonso's rustic, carefree utopia grow into one of Europe's most sought-after boutique resorts – so is true of the Kids Club.

Back in the late 1950s, when guests settled in for stays that would last for weeks or even months, entertainment took a naturally spontaneous spin. Each week would bring treasure hunts, lively costume parties and *burradas* – donkey rides into the wooded hills above the hotel where guests would partake in impromptu flamenco lessons beneath the pines.

Of course, the adults couldn't have all the fun, and the Kids Club became a place where younger generations could get a taste for the Marbella Club life – taking donkey cavalcades along the beach, playing dress-up, and learning to beat their parents at the curious Marbella invention of paddle tennis.

Nowadays, the Kids Club's wildly creative activities are still rooted firmly in imaginative play and spontaneity. Here, in this 5,000-square-metre care-free kingdom, budding artists, chefs and scientists can spin pots, cook up gazpacho from scratch, invent a perfume or simply lie back on a beanbag in an open air cinema that sits beneath the same trees where Prince Alfonso first dreamt up his playful schemes.



*A horse and a falcon
once lived in this house!*

Al igual que el Marbella Club continúa evolucionando de forma orgánica, reteniendo su magia original –desde la utopía rústica y desenfadada del príncipe Alfonso hasta ser uno de los hoteles boutique más solicitados de Europa– también lo hace el Kids Club.

En los años 50, cuando los huéspedes se alojaban durante semanas o meses, el entretenimiento tenía un carácter más natural y espontáneo. Cada semana se organizaban búsquedas del tesoro, fiestas de disfraces y burradas, en las que se montaban burros hasta los bosques de la colina, donde los invitados participaban de en clases de flamenco improvisadas bajo los pinos.

Está claro que los adultos no podían ser los únicos que se divirtieran, por lo que el Kids Club se convirtió en un lugar donde los jóvenes podían disfrutar de su propia versión del Marbella Club, montando en burro por la playa, disfrazándose y aprendiendo a vencer a sus padres en la curiosa invención marbellí llamada pádel.

Hoy, las creativas actividades del Kids Club siguen basándose en juegos imaginativos y espontáneos. Aquí, en este reino desenfadado de 5000 m², artistas, chefs y científicos manipulan cacerolas, hacen gazpacho desde cero, inventan un perfume o sencillamente se relajan en un puf en el cine al aire libre que se esconde bajo los mismos árboles que vieron al príncipe Alfonso soñar con sus primeros juegos y proyectos.



Ready, steady, chop!

Set on the grounds of our founder's original villa, the Kids Club is where the magic of the Marbella Club began more than 65 years ago.

Today its lively spirit continues, while focusing on a naturally healthy Mediterranean lifestyle that cherishes the importance of family time away from the pressures of everyday life. LYDIA GARD introduces her boys to the kitchen – formerly Prince Alfonso's garage – where our resident nutritionist has their aprons at the ready



It's true that if you take the time to get your kids involved in preparing and cooking their own food, they're far more likely to eat the resulting dish. I explain this theory to my boys as we walk into the Garage Kitchen – built on the grounds of Prince Alfonso's former home – for our family cooking course. I have already primed them by hinting that we might be making pizza and they seem game enough. So when we arrive and it is announced that *salmorejo* is on the menu – a heartier version of gazpacho, typically from Córdoba – naturally I expect some fallout.

Here's how the afternoon would have gone at home: "Kids, lunchtime!" "Is it pasta?"

"No, actually we're going to make cold vegetable soup together!"

Cue hilarity, then scorn and finally a full-blown argument. My two older boys, now seven and ten, are actually pretty adventurous eaters to give them their due, but they have their limits and usually soup is it.

So I can't decide whether it is resident nutritionist Paloma's sloe-eyed, honey-voiced wholesomeness, or the fact that the boys have access to sharp knives, but they take the news pretty well, tie on their aprons and don their chef's hats without complaint.

First up are cacao and raspberry

muffins. The boys work on their own bowls of mixture, smashing bananas with a fork, while Paloma probes them for their thoughts: on healthy eating and what they cook at home.

THE JOY OF TIME TOGETHER

The buckwheat flour and cacao powder are measured out. I look on smiling while inwardly fighting the urge to wipe up the puffs of flour that escape their bowls, to grab and smush the ingredients into a lump-free paste myself, MORE EFFICIENTLY. But hang on, they are flashing smiles, giddy with the simple, visceral pleasure of performing a messy task and being encouraged instead of micromanaged. There are rules in the Garage Kitchen, of course, but the onus is on fun, experimentation and creativity.

My approach to everyday cooking has become functional, efficient and downright boring. The idea of cooking together or experimenting with new recipes on a school night seems illicit or, frankly, unachievable. This is as important a lesson for me. After all, I want to foster confidence in my three boys so that one day they'll happily prepare their own meals and snacks, preferably healthy ones, and then clear up – ideally without too much input.

This wild thought gains momentum

as I watch the boys spoon chocolate goo into the muffin cases really very accurately without any helicopter parenting. They then thumb a couple of juicy, voluptuous raspberries into the top of each one (to keep them moist, says Paloma). We're all getting into the spirit of it. I'm enjoying seeing them take command and impressed with how responsible they are being. The giggling has abated and their brows are furrowed in concentration.

Paloma pops the muffins in the oven, and hands out the vegetables. The boys prod the tomatoes, sniff the oranges, then get stuck in – chopping the vegetables into rough chunks and scraping each ingredient into the NutriBullet as they go. The result is a layered rainbow, which blends into a thick orange sauce. A hunk of bread and some olives, and there's an easy, healthy – and crucially, quick – ►

◀ family supper. It's a revelation to see them slurp it down.

Do you like the *salmorejo* boys? I ask. "It's great! But Mummy, that's not actually how you pronounce it." ■

Es cierto que si te tomas el tiempo de involucrar a tus hijos en la cocina, hay muchas más posibilidades de que coman de todo. Se lo explico a mis hijos mientras nos dirigimos a la cocina garaje —construida en lo que fue la casa del príncipe Alfonso— para nuestro curso de cocina familiar.

Ya los he preparado insinuando que cocinaremos pizza y parecen entusiasmados. Así que cuando llegamos y se anuncia que el menú incluye salmorejo —una versión más sustanciosa del gazpacho, típica de Córdoba— naturalmente espero quejas.

Así es como habría ocurrido esto en casa: "¡Niños, el almuerzo!"

"¿Pasta?"

"No, vamos a hacer sopa de verduras fría..."

Entonces, se oirían unas carcajadas, seguidas de desprecio y, por último, una gran discusión. Mis dos hijos mayores, ahora de 7 y 10, son bastante atrevidos cuando se trata de comer, pero tienen sus límites y ese límite suele ser la sopa.

Así que no puedo decidir si se debe a los ojos negros y la voz dulce de Paloma, la nutricionista, o al hecho de que tienen acceso a cuchillos afilados, pero los niños se toman las noticias bastante bien, se atan los delantales y se ponen los gorros de chef sin rechistar.

EL PLACER DE COMPARTIR

De primero, muffins de chocolate y frambuesa. Los niños trabajan con esmero en su mezcla, aplastando bananas con un tenedor, mientras Paloma los tantea con preguntas sobre alimentación sana y lo que comen en casa.

Miden la harina de trigo sarraceno y el cacao en polvo. Yo los observo sonriendo



mientras lucho contra el impulso de limpiar las manchas de harina y mezclar los ingredientes CON MÁS EFICIENCIA para que no queden grumos. Pero veo que tienen una sonrisa de oreja a oreja y están encantados con el sencillo placer de poder ensuciarlo todo y que los incentiven en vez de controlarlos. Por supuesto hay reglas en la cocina garaje, pero el foco está en la diversión, la experimentación y la creatividad.

Mi enfoque diario a la cocina ha pasado a ser funcional, eficiente y sencillamente aburrido. La idea de cocinar juntos o experimentar con nuevas recetas un día entre semana parece ilícita o incluso inalcanzable. Ésta también es una lección importante para mí. Después de todo, quiero fomentar la confianza en mis tres hijos para que el día de mañana sepan cocinar —preferiblemente sano— y

limpiar lo que han ensuciado, idealmente sin que haya que repetírselo.

Esta loca idea cobra más fuerza al ver cómo los niños colocan la masa de chocolate en los moldes con gran precisión y sin que los estén controlando. Luego, ponen jugosas frambuesas en cada uno (para mantener la humedad, dice Paloma). Todo nos metemos en el papel. Disfruto de verlos tomar el mando y me asombra lo responsables que son. Las risitas han disminuido; los ceños fruncidos evidencian su concentración.

Paloma mete los muffins en el horno y reparte las verduras. Los niños pinchan los tomates, huelen las naranjas y luego se ponen manos a la obra: cortan las verduras en trozos grandes y van metiéndolas en la NutriBullet. El resultado es un arcoíris de colores que se combinan para formar una espesa salsa naranja. Un trozo de pan y unas aceitunas, y voilá: una comida familiar fácil, sana y, sobre todo, ¡rápida! Verlos tomársela es toda una revelación.

"¿Les gusta el salmorejo, chicos?," pregunto. "¡Está buenísimo! Pero, mamá, así no se pronuncia." ■



OUR NEW CONCEPT STORE!

In its early years, the Marbella Club was characterised by its happy spirit of improvisation and delight in simple pleasures. The costume parties were legendary, and dressing up and imaginary play has been at the core of the Kids Club ever since. Our new Concept Store continues the story, fostering creativity through its curated selection of hand-crafted masks by Meri Meri, crocheted toys and artisan homewares by Sew Heart Felt. MARTA ARRESE selects three items that beautifully illustrate the Kids Club's playful intentions

WORDS BY LYDIA GARD

1 DRESS UP

Nothing gives kids the freedom to explore their imagination like dressing up. By simply putting on a cape or mask, even the most reserved child will open up to the possibilities of play. Meri Meri has a costume for everyone, from wise owls to emerald dragons.



2 SCRUNCH MOULDS

These nifty silicone sand moulds are super supple, rolling or folding up to nothing in your luggage, and then popping back into the shape of shells, dolphins and crabs. The scrunchy bucket and spade are a game changer, too: simple to travel with and store.



3 CRAYON ROCKS

These pebble shaped, soy wax crayons are not only beautiful, they are non-toxic and uniquely designed to fit between little fingers, encouraging a tripod grip. In an array of rich hues, they blend easily and can produce fine lines and wide swathes of colour.





*A candlelit dinner
at the Grill is a delight
all the year round!*



•the insider

With over 325 days of sun per year, Marbella is a truly year-round destination. Our carefree hideaway by the sea has something for every season and every mood – from legendary El Patio parties to the Three Kings procession ringing in the New Year – all the while maintaining the happy spirit of improvisation that makes your experience at the Marbella Club so memorable

•june

SAN JUAN

Celebrate the summer solstice in traditional style with this annual fisherman's festival at MC Beach, featuring live music, fireworks and a bonfire.

SAN BERNABÉ FAIR

Marbella's town fair takes over the city with live flamenco, dancing and traditional food.

AGAPANTHUS IN BLOOM

Enjoy these statuesque African lilies coming into bloom around El Patio.

•july

EL PATIO PARTIES

Nine unforgettable parties, inspired by Prince Alfonso's soirées and hosted by Hubertus Hohenlohe. Fridays from 5 July.

STARLITE FESTIVAL

Music from Sting, John Legend and Jamie Cullum in a spectacular outdoor venue.

•august

ENERGY HEALING WITH COCO IN RESIDENCE

Increase your positive vibrations and harness inner peace.

CONCERTS

Our sister hotel, Puente Romano, is playing host to a series of spectacular concerts over the summer. The legendary Jacksons will celebrate their 50th anniversary with a show-stopping performance on the 8th, while the 10th sees Tony Hadley sing the classics.

•september

GROUP HIKE

Join our resident personal trainer on an invigorating hike into a local nature reserve.

•october

HALLOWEEN PARTIES

The Champagne Room is transformed into a haunted house, the spookiest place to dance the night away among ghouls and ghosts. At the Kids Club, there's pumpkin carving and a moon-lit party

•november

PRIVATE WINE CELLAR

The newest addition to the

Grill allows our frequent guests to store their own wines by the bottle.

AUTUMN BOOST WITH AMANDA HAMILTON

A group retreat with Amanda Hamilton – nutritionist, detox and gut health expert.

•december

XUAN LANYOGA MASTERCLASS

Join Spanish yoga guru Xuan Lan for a day of wellness, with guided meditation and yoga.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR

Christmas is one of the most charming times to visit, when families gather for a heart-warming and elegant celebration. Highlights include a Christmas Eve Gala Dinner at the Grill, an exquisite five-course Christmas Day lunch and a New Year's Day lunch buffet at the Beach Club, while the Kids Club transforms into a magical, festive paradise.



•january

THREE KINGS

The Three Wise Men arrive at Marbella Club on 6 January. According to Spanish tradition, families celebrate *Día de los Reyes* with a downtown street parade the evening before, and in Marbella their arrival is marked with a procession along Avenida Ricardo Soriano, with elaborate floats.

•february

COOKERY CLASSES

Let resident nutritionist Paloma guide you to naturally delicious, wholesome Mediterranean recipes with the freshest local, seasonal produce.

CHAMPAGNE TASTING

Join the hotel's Head Sommelier in tasting the various intricacies of Champagnes, from the classics to small producers.

VALENTINE'S DAY AT THE GRILL

Nothing is more romantic than celebrating by candlelight with the one you love.

•march

WINE PAIRING DINNERS

Discover lesser-known wines from Málaga and Ronda along with a four-course dinner to match at the Grill.

SEMANA BLANCA

Combine the Marbella Club with a trip to Granada where the majestic Alhambra Palace awaits. Spend the night at sister property El Lodge for skiing under the Sierra Nevada sun.

•april

EASTER BY THE SEA

A full pastel-themed calendar of activities await at the Kids Club ending with an egg hunt. The Beach Club hosts its annual luncheon by the sea.

ORANGE BLOSSOM

Come April our orange trees burst into blossom, filling the gardens with a glorious scent.

ASPARAGUS SEASON

The Grill goes all out for asparagus season with a special à la carte menu. If you're feeling particularly adventurous, go for the tasting menu.

•may

OUR TERRACES OPEN

Enjoy breakfast on the terrace, a *Sau Sau* at the Summer Bar and *espeto sardines* at our seaside *chiringuito*, MC Beach.

TENNIS CAMP

Our year-round intensive tennis camps for adults, teens and kids. Each week ends with friendly matches and a trophy ceremony.





MARBELLA
CLUB



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