



La Manga Club

GENERAL COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

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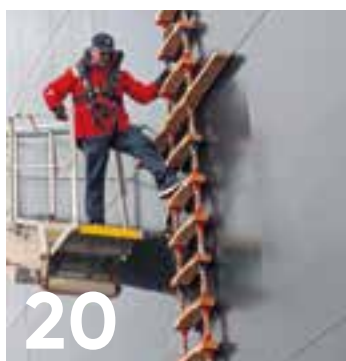
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Welcome

to the Official La Manga Club General Community Magazine

There are places you visit, and there are places that become part of your life. For many of us, the resort of La Manga Club sits firmly in the second category. What may begin as a holiday soon becomes a tradition, a meeting place, a second home.

This year's magazine is built around that sense of connection. It reflects the many ways people experience the resort. From long-standing owners who have watched it grow over decades, to first-time visitors discovering its unique atmosphere for the very first time.

Across these pages you'll find the stories behind the community: the people shaping life here today, the activities and facilities that keep the resort vibrant, and the businesses and initiatives helping La Manga Club resort continue to move forward. We also look beyond the resort itself, exploring the culture, history and landscapes that make this region of Spain such a special place to spend time.

Of course, life here is as much about the simple pleasures as the big developments – early morning walks, evenings with friends, time on the courses and

courts, and the easy rhythm of Mediterranean living that brings so many back year after year.

La Manga Club continues to evolve, but its appeal remains constant: space, sunshine, sport, community and a lifestyle that is increasingly rare to find.

Whether you live here, visit regularly, or are discovering the resort for the first time, I hope this magazine captures the atmosphere that makes the resort of La Manga Club more than just a destination.

So if you are reading this from your terrace, beside the pool, or planning your next visit from afar, I hope these pages reconnect you with the reasons you chose La Manga Club and perhaps inspire you to discover something new.

With best wishes,

Chris Pennock
Editor
The Official La Manga Club
General Community Magazine
cpennock@aol.com



The Official La Manga Club General Community Magazine

Publisher:	Magazine Enterprise LMC, SL
President:	Andrew Millard
Vice Presidents:	Geoff Gahan, Paul Parkin, Malcolm Elam, Martha Attley
Executive Editor:	Andrew Millard
Editor:	Chris Pennock
Design:	Suit Suit Studio
Contributors:	Alain Hendrickx, Andrew Millard, Antonio Lario, Chris Pennock, Carmen Domínguez, Dave Pealing, David Marín Murciano, Dieter Hermann, Dra Ane Miren Gutiérrez, Dra. Ruth Liliana Manrique-Medina, Georgina Hinton, Gillian Schofield, Ginés González, Iain Hanna, Jennie Spence, Joaquin Dias, José Marín García, José Martínez, Julián Muñoz, Liz Gahan, Malcolm Elam, Marc Balan, Margarete Hellings, Rev Helene Öhman, Rolf Krautschneider, Ruth Holloway, Sergio Muñoz, Sonia Rico, Tamara León, William Clarke, Uschi Glas
Office support:	Rocío Manzanares Mari Carmen Sánchez
Front Cover:	Mar Menor at Sunset
Photography:	Albadive, Andrew Millard, BBC, Bridgette Field, Christophe Baton, Geoff Cox, Georgina Hinton, Kayak Cabo de Palos, Margarete Hellings, Securitas, Sergio Muñoz, St Teresa's Church, XploraCieza
Printed by:	Graficas Alamo SL



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President's letter

The General Community of La Manga Country Club is a modern and dynamic organisation that has evolved over the last 30-years to represent the community of our resort. We are committed to providing the best services to ensure standards are maintained and that life here on the resort of La Manga Club runs as seamlessly as possible in a safe, secure, clean and well-maintained environment. We also liaise with a diverse range of third parties to ensure our resort punches above its weight.

The last 12-months has been challenging and we don't always get things right. But when things go wrong, such as along Calle de la Rambla, we strive to rectify matters in as sensitive and effective way as possible. And with a great team working tirelessly all-year round, I think it is fair to say we can be justifiably proud of what we achieve and what we do for each and every resort owner, resident and holidaymaker.

There is no doubt that the world's weather is changing. Extreme weather patterns are now the norm rather than the exception. Understandably, extreme weather brings challenges – how we have to deal with torrential rains and exceptionally high and gusty winds during the winter months and at the other end of the spectrum



arid desert like conditions for months on end during the summer. These test our gardening and maintenance teams. And due to the unpredictability of such weather, the impact on our budget can be quite onerous.

Likewise, world events and the ever-evolving political landscape here in Europe brings human tragedy and migration issues. The number of boats landing along our coastline, often carrying an increasing number of desperate but illegal immigrants from north Africa, is increasing significantly; the arrivals that make their way to our resort bring challenges for our security services. At one time, there were a handful at most. Now 50+ arrive at any one time. And by using our guards, our dogs and our drone we sensitively but efficiently handle matters and liaise with the Cruz Roja and the Guardia Civil.



Security is, of course, our number one issue; it is our biggest expense across the year. In my view, the safety and security of all on resort is a key priority. Sergio Muñoz and his team really are at the top of their game. There is a vast array of issues they deal with on a day-to-day basis. Some serious, others less so. But the team adapts and is also evolving. We now have more female guards, more staff being trained in English, a greater ability and understanding of dealing with issues that have become more apparent over recent years and with our dogs, drone, response vehicles and diverse arsenal of equipment we have an incredibly effective three dimensional security package. We are also introducing a new fire sensor early warning system in the hills around the Club which is part and parcel of the Securitas offering. I do not wish to detail specific security operational aspects for obvious reasons but I can assure every reader that our security is second-to-none; the service works for our community.

Security at work



Our doctors are well and operating efficiently. I think the combination of the 24-hour emergency response service provided by Securitas plus the weekday surgeries of Dr Eduardo and Dra Soraya meet our demanding but necessary community requirements across the year. There is more about local medical services across the region with Dra Ruth Liliana Manrique-Medina on pages 100 and 101.

Over the last year, our rubbish collection service has had some ups and downs due to staff sickness and the increasing unreliability of our ageing trucks. However, few will have noticed any difference with the General Community offices organising stand-ins where necessary, often at short notice. We are, at present, evaluating the possibility of outsourcing this crucial service. Recommendations will be brought to the wider group of presidents for their consideration. However, even if we do outsource, there will be no reduction in the level or frequency of the service whatsoever. This is a vital community service we should be justifiably proud of.

The fire-prevention programme continues with the last remaining areas being dealt with. We are now working with a new company, Natura Constructiva, who is helping to drive this forward for us including an annual maintenance programme to maintain the progress achieved to date.

STV Gestión, our gardening and maintenance company, have now relocated to the new waste and gardening depot near Las Lomas. The new site is also about to house the rubbish trucks, the road sweeper and the Eco Park, the latter which will move from behind the Owners' Clubhouse. This is a logical step which I have been keen to progress and brings all this together as a one-stop-shop for this all-encompassing community service.

STV Gestión team



The General Community is an interesting machine. We operate continually and are the glue to many aspects across our diverse community. Plus we not only co-ordinate and liaise within our resort we deal with a diverse group of third parties elsewhere including the Emergency Services and authorities, Councils, Regional Government and even the Anglican Church of Spain (pages 102 and 103).



This magazine, now in its 43rd edition, is available in both English and Spanish, and is read widely providing a window to the world and promoting all that is good locally. Our thanks go to editor, Chris Pennock, who does a magnificent job. And special thanks are due to our sponsor this time around: Ginés Navarro and the La Manga Rent-a-Car team. This family run business also includes La Manga Bus and Taxis, the onsite petrol station, a car sales and insurance division, the Estanco off-licence and Via Romana restaurant in Los Belones.



Andrew Millard with Ginés Navarro senior and junior

The General Community Manager, Rocío Manzanares, is ably supported by Mari Carmen Sánchez. Ángel Morenilla is our Administrator and Sonia Alonso at MSB works on our finances. They all pull together working continually to keep things moving in the right direction. I am also supported by a strong team of Vice-Presidents: Paul Parkin ensures we are financially on the straight and narrow; Malcolm Elam looks after the estate and the maintenance of the Owners' Clubhouse (which we have now owned for almost three years and is going from strength to strength); Geoff Gahan brings years of business acumen to the table; and Martha Attley is actively involved in co-ordinating new children's activities (pages 35, 36 and 37). We are all supported by our unswerving partners and I would like to pay a special tribute to my wife, Cristina, who is a pillar of strength.



General Community team

Together we are a strong community. The General Community works for the benefit of the whole community of La Manga Country Club.

VIA ROMANA REBORN



Authentic Italian with a Fresh Perspective

A New Chapter Begins

The restaurant of Via Romana in Los Belones has long been known for serving quality Italian dishes at reasonable prices. However, following its closure last winter, the restaurant has undergone an extensive transformation – from significant building works and a decorative upgrade, to a doubling in capacity.

Alongside the physical changes comes a complete menu overhaul, as well as the introduction of a new head chef, kitchen team and front-of-house staff, all helping to usher in a fresh chapter for this well-established favourite.

Part of a Trusted Local Group

Via Romana forms part of the highly successful Ginés Navarro group, which also includes La Manga Rent-a-Car, La Manga Bus and taxi services, car sales and insurance, the on-resort petrol station and the Estanco off-licence.

Design Detail and Atmosphere

Restaurant manager Christophe Baton explains "We have really pushed the boat out. No expense has been spared. From the moment you walk into the establishment you sense refinement and a new genuine restaurant atmosphere. Every detail has been carefully considered – from the tables and linen napkins to the wall decoration, floor tiles, crockery and, of course, the food and wines."

A Menu with Craft at its Core

The menu reflects this attention to detail. Fresh salads and light starters set the tone, including the Carthagonova salad or the new Via Romana salad, a delightful burrata, delicious artichokes with foie, or a tempting beef carpaccio. Pizzas are prepared fresh in-house, with expert dough-making, spinning and traditional techniques ensuring a light, perfectly textured base every time.

Beyond the pizza oven, guests can enjoy a strong selection of meat and pasta dishes, followed by indulgent desserts such as tiramisù, panna cotta and a distinctive homemade Gorgonzola cheesecake.

Quality Without the Premium Price Tag

Prices in the new restaurant are also reasonable especially the drinks. A bottle of Miravel Rosé is just €31, a bottle of Ramón Bilbao Edición Limitada is just €20 and for those celebrating a bottle of Veuve Clicquot champagne is only €59.

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**VIA ROMANA
CALLE MAYOR, 84
LOS BELONES**

Resort News

La Manga Club Owners Named Brittany Ferries' Seven-Millionth Passengers

Bill and Moira Short, homeowners in Las Higueras at La Manga Club, were honoured as Brittany Ferries' symbolic seven-millionth passengers when they arrived in Santander from Plymouth. Welcomed on the Almirante dock by Brittany Ferries representatives Joëlle Croc and Roberto Castilla, together with regional authorities, the couple received a warm reception and a selection of gifts, including a complimentary round-trip between the UK and Spain, a year's membership in the company's travel club, and a basket of local Cantabrian products.

Their milestone arrival not only marked more than 47 years of partnership between Brittany Ferries and the Port of Santander but also highlighted a route well known to many La Manga Club owners. The Plymouth–Santander service remains particularly popular among residents travelling to and from the resort, with its relaxing, seasonal sailings offering a convenient gateway to Spain. The Shorts' recognition shines a spotlight on this valued connection that continues to bring many travellers to the region each year.

Bill and Moira also chose to share their good fortune by generously donating one of their prizes to Buen Samaritano, a charity organisation that supports vulnerable families in the region. Their gesture added a meaningful touch to an already celebratory occasion.

Bill said "We were absolutely delighted to be named Brittany Ferries' seven-millionth passengers – it was a complete surprise and a wonderful way to begin our journey. The welcome we received was incredibly warm, and we're thrilled to share part of our prize with Buen Samaritano to support the fantastic work they do."



Replanting along Calle de la Rambla

Following an unfortunate misunderstanding over the removal of a number of trees along Calle de la Rambla, the General Community has agreed a replanting scheme which will coincide with the long-awaited laying of new pavement slabs.

The pavement work is being funded by an accrual since the scheme's inception back in 2022. This includes the removal of loose stones and shingle and the siting and bedding of new paving slabs. Planted in between will be a display of Oleander and Cercis Siliquastrum trees.

The works, commencing April 2026, are due to be finished before the Summer and, according to the contractor STV, are likely to enhance the road's ambience and ensure the road's outlook remains positive for many years to come.



All in one place ...

The General Community of La Manga Country Club is relocating all of its gardening and waste operations into one new site. The new depot is located on the north side of the resort close to Las Lomas and will include the base for all gardening operations, the former Eco Park which enables owners to recycle wood, metal and plastics, the re-siting of the rubbish trucks and the housing of the community's new road sweeper.

Rocio Manzanares, Manager of the General Community, says "This is a logical move which brings about a coordinated one-stop-shop for all our gardening and waste operations. It has taken us some time to organise but will be fully operational by Summer 2026."



New Operations Director

The Grand Hyatt La Manga Club Golf & Spa has a new Operations Director, Carmen Domínguez. Working directly to General Manager, Ángel Holgado, Carmen brings a wealth of hotel and events experience including working for the Hyatt Secrets brand and also the Hyatt Regency in Barcelona.

"I am really excited to be here" says Carmen. "I look forward to creating new opportunities for resort owners and also hotel guests."

Living locally, Carmen Domínguez brings a fresh perspective to the growing Grand Hyatt presence at the resort of La Manga Club.



New planting schemes at Resort's entrances

Over the last year, new planting schemes have been introduced across the resort's three entrance areas, creating a more striking and welcoming arrival. The designs feature a carefully selected palette of Mediterranean and drought-tolerant species, and a rotation of seasonal flowers. This cohesive planting has also been extended to the resort's roundabouts, ensuring a consistent and high-quality design across all key arrival points to the resort.

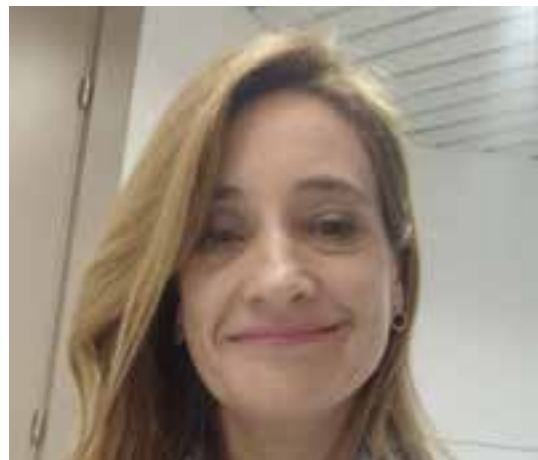
Rocio Manzanares, General Community Manager, says "We want to create an elegant and natural welcome that reflects the character of the Resort."



La Caixa bank in La Manga Club has a new branch director.

Bienve Peñalver has 25-years banking experience having worked on mortgage subrogation, in the recoveries department and more recently managing several La Caixa branches.

"Moving to this branch" says Bienve "has meant a return to my roots, to where I began. It is in a beautiful setting. I feel privileged to work here. It is a branch specialising in providing services to international clients with a high level of service. My colleagues are specialists in their fields, demonstrate a strong commitment to clients, and have an outstanding service-oriented vocation."



Owners Clubhouse events

A lively programme of spring and summer events is underway at the Owners Clubhouse. Events held so far this year have included the 'Thinking about Your Brain' presentation by Ane Miren Gutiérrez (see page 69) and Leonie Parkes led a discussion on The Good Life as part of the popular International Friends Coffee Morning.

Looking ahead, residents can also enjoy a garden paella-making demonstration and tasting, at the end of May. Thai Chi classes are also proving popular. Together, the events reflect a vibrant "spring into summer" calendar, bringing the community together for wellbeing, food and friendship.



Coffee and cakes at Mery O'Clock

Known to many around the resort of La Manga Club, Mery Robles has opened her own coffee shop in the Atamaria shopping centre right opposite the football pitches.

Serving coffee, cakes and artisan ice-creams from La Unión, Mery O'Clock opens Monday to Friday from 9.30hrs to 20.00hrs. In addition, select alcoholic drinks are also being served where patrons can either enjoy drinks onsite or take home. For example, a light Rioja rosado costs just €13 a bottle (take away).

Mery also opens on weekends on a bespoke basis for private groups and parties.



New cocktails at The Last Green

The Last Green Tapas and Cocktail bar at the Grand Hyatt has launched an array of exciting new cocktails. Apart from being absolutely delicious, half the experience is enjoying the theatre of watching them being made.

Expert cocktail maker, Rocio Schwindt Sottovia, says "Our signature cocktail is the *Spanish Mule*. This is a homage to the Cartagena region and is made with Licor 43, Bombay Sapphire gin, ginger beer, fresh mint and lemon. It is clean, fresh and made with love."

Other specials include the *Old Fashioned* which is made with Jim Beam Bourbon, Angostura Bitters, brown sugar syrup and a wedge of orange. The ever popular *Pornstar Martini* includes Grey Goose Vodka, passion fruit, pineapple juice, licor de vanilla passion and lime. And, of course, an obligatory shot of Spanish Cava on the side.

The Last Green is open seven-days a week from 6pm until late.



A Year Ahead

As a new season unfolds, there's a renewed sense of energy across the resort of La Manga Club. It's a place that continues to bring people together, whether for a short escape, a longer stay or to live.

On behalf of the General Community, we extend a warm welcome to all who will spend time here in the year ahead. Whether you're returning to favourite routines or discovering La Manga Country Club for the first time, we wish you a relaxing, enjoyable and truly special stay.

Here's to another wonderful year!



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At the heart of the La Manga Club resort lies more than world-class courses and year-round sunshine – it is a community built on shared passions and lasting friendships.

For owners and long-term residents who love golf, the Residents Golf Association (RGA) has become a cornerstone of resort life, bringing together players of all abilities for competitive golf, relaxed socialising and a strong sense of belonging. As the Association continues to grow under the leadership of 2026 Captains Dave Peeling and Jennie Spence, its appeal has never been stronger.

The RGA was established in the 1990s, with membership originally limited to property owners on the resort or long-term renters holding contracts of six months or more. Since its inception, the Association has grown steadily year-on-year and today boasts a growing membership now in excess 230.

Dave Peeling, Men's Captain for 2026, explains "We are going from

strength-to-strength. When an aspiring member turns up to one of our events, we offer them the opportunity to join and present them with a shirt. The joining fee is just €35 and then there's an annual subscription of just €30 which is fantastic value for money and covers eleven competitions a year including team comps and three individual majors, the latter of which is often generously sponsored by local businesses on La Manga Club, for which we are eternally grateful."

Jennie Spence, the 2026 Ladies Captain, highlights the social ethos behind the Association:

"The whole point of the RGA is to go out and have a good day's golf followed by a lot of fun socialising afterwards which brings people together and encourages the Community spirit of La Manga Club. Our social events vary hugely from relaxing lunches in the sunshine to evening dinners, using many local restaurants within La Manga Club"

Alongside its sociable atmosphere, the RGA offers a strong competitive structure. All Members must be Federated and hold an active handicap.

Good organisation is key to the smooth running of the calendar. Dave explains "We want everyone to enjoy their day's golf and to get to know fellow owners. Nigel Musgrove-Brown, our Competition Secretary organises our events well."

The RGA prides itself on its inclusive approach. Jennie notes "We have a huge and diverse array of players with no restriction on age or handicap. We even have a professional who's a Member. We always ensure we balance the teams when we play. Although the golf is important, the getting together and being a part of this great Association is just as high on our agenda."

The Committee, typically made up of seven to nine members, includes the President, both the



The Captains and senior RGA members



Gents 'and Ladies' Captains, the Vice Captains, a social secretary, a Competitions Secretary, a Treasurer and a Membership Secretary.

The Association is also developing its digital presence within the General Community website, making information more accessible to Owners and prospective Members.

The RGA has changed over recent years with a new breed of younger owners joining. Lower handicappers are also more prevalent, and the competitions even more fiercely contested. There is also a Ladies Section which is ideal for new lady members as well as the established ones. The Ladies play twice a month

"The Owners' Clubhouse here at La Manga Club is our spiritual home and where we meet and make great friends", says Dave. "It's where we enjoy socialising after playing. The food is good, the drinks are fairly priced and the atmosphere is wonderful.

"In summary, if you would like to join just speak with one of the Committee and we'll be happy to take it from there."

For residents and long-term visitors, the RGA represents far more than a playing calendar; it offers a ready-made community, lasting friendships and a true sense of belonging at La Manga Club. Whether you are a low-handicap competitor or simply enjoy the social side of the game, the RGA captures the spirit that makes life on the resort so enjoyable.



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Supporting a Fellow Golfer

The Residents Golf Association exists for owners and long-term renters at La Manga Club. Yet, when the Committee learned about a golfer nearby who was gradually losing his sight, the response reflected something deeper than Membership criteria. It showed the true spirit of the RGA.

Kevin Delves, based in the UK, spends as much time as possible at his home on La Manga del Mar Menor. Around ten-years ago, he lost the sight in one eye. Today, the same condition has affected his remaining eye, leaving him with only between 3% and 5% total vision.

After Kevin's wife shared his situation with the RGA, the association stepped forward. Since then, Members have welcomed Kevin whenever possible, meeting him regularly to support his practice. On the driving range, they stand beside him, helping guide his alignment and describing the direction and trajectory of each shot.

The wider La Manga Club golf team has also embraced Kevin's journey. Pedro Sánchez, Director of Golf, has been highly supportive, as has Resident Professional Craig Donnelly. In addition, Kevin is receiving bespoke coaching from Thomas Johansson, a former La Manga professional, ensuring he can continue to develop his game despite the challenges he faces.

For Kevin, golf remains a passion. For the RGA, supporting him is a privilege. It is a powerful reminder that at La Manga Club, the game is about more than scores or handicaps. It is about friendship, encouragement and ensuring that the joy of golf remains accessible to everyone, whatever their circumstance.



Bringing a giant to the quay



How to Berth a Cruise Ship in Cartagena

When visitors stand on the quay side in Cartagena and watch a cruise ship glide slowly into the harbour, the manoeuvre often appears effortless. A vessel more than 300 metres long, carrying several thousand passengers, seems simply to turn, approach the quay, and stop neatly alongside the terminal in its berth.

In reality, what looks like a graceful arrival is the result of careful planning, coordination and seamanship involving dozens of professionals both on shore and at sea. Every cruise ship that visits Cartagena begins its arrival procedure long before the first passenger sees the historic harbour walls. The port team works out every minute detail which includes the windage and the inertia of the boat. Precise manoeuvres within a confined space and such a complex port as Cartagena require meticulous planning: After all, Cartagena is a Naval base, a ship yard, a commercial container port, a private pleasure craft marina and a tourist Mecca and all at the same time!

The Official La Manga Club General Community Magazine sat down with Antonio Lario, Senior Pilot in Cartagena and La Manga Club resort property owner, to gain an insider's perspective on how these remarkable harbour arrivals are successfully managed.

Planning the Arrival

"Work usually begins several days before the ship reaches the coast of Spain. Cruise operators send detailed arrival information about the ship's dimensions, draft (how deep the ship sits in the water), passenger numbers, and the vessels estimated time of arrival" says Antonio.

"Cartagena is fortunate to possess one of the deepest and one of the most naturally sheltered harbours in the Mediterranean, protected by surrounding hills and a narrow entrance channel. Even so, each arrival must be planned carefully because modern cruise ships are, simply, enormous vessels. Some are longer than three football pitches and weigh more than 100,000 tonnes."

The pilot will assess several factors before confirming the berth:

- Weather conditions, particularly wind direction and strength
- Sea state outside the harbour entrance
- Traffic in the port, including cargo vessels or naval ships
- Availability of tugs and pilots
- Berth allocation at the cruise terminal

All of this information is coordinated through the port authority and communicated with the ship's captain.

Entering the Harbour

The entrance to Cartagena harbour is relatively narrow requiring extreme and precise manoeuvres within confined spaces and a complex port geometry.

As the cruise ship approaches, its speed is gradually reduced. While these ships may travel at more than 20 knots at sea, they typically enter harbour at just 6–8 knots or even less.

The pilot acts as the highest technical authority during port manoeuvres, advising the ship's master and directing navigation operations within port limits.

Antonio Lario, Senior Pilot



Local knowledge and realtime decision making allow pilots to anticipate risks, adapt manoeuvres to actual conditions, and prevent incidents such as collisions or groundings. This role is especially critical during days with double, triple or even quadruple cruise ship calls, which are becoming increasingly frequent.

All of this is achieved without interfering with commercial traffic in nearby Escombreras, where large oil tankers, LNG vessels, and bulk carriers operate.

Modern cruise ships are highly manoeuvrable which allows the captain to position the vessel with remarkable accuracy. However, even with modern technology, the size and mass of the ship mean that movements must be planned well in advance. A vessel weighing tens of thousands of tonnes does not stop instantly!



Securing the Ship

With the mooring lines secured, the engines are placed in neutral and the ship becomes part of the port. Within minutes of docking, thousands of passengers may begin disembarking to explore Cartagena's Roman theatre, historic streets, and waterfront cafés.

A privilege to welcome the world

"For those of us working at the Port of Cartagena" says Antonio "each cruise arrival is a moment of pride. These ships bring visitors from across the world to one of Spain's most historic ports. We are honoured and privileged to be a part of it."

But the challenges rise for the port authority when more than one cruise liner is in port at any one time. In 2026, it is expected that 38 times two vessels will be moored, 8 times three vessels will be in port and there will be 2 quadruple visits (14 October and 3 November).

In 2026, the port will also welcome one of the largest cruise ships in the world, Royal Caribbean's HARMONY OF THE SEAS, with a length of 362 meters. This is scheduled to call at Cartagena four times this year on 30 March, 19 and 26 June, and also on 28 October.

Cruise traffic has become one of the main channels for the arrival of international tourists to Cartagena. More than 50% of foreign visitors access the city through the port, making the cruise terminal a strategic infrastructure for local tourism. According to estimates cited by the Chamber of Commerce and reported in the regional press, the direct economic impact of cruise traffic on the city ranges between 10 and 13 million euros each year.

It is not simply parking a ship. It is a carefully choreographed operation involving pilots, tug crews, harbour control, mooring teams and the ship's own officers.

And when the final line is secured and passengers step ashore, Cartagena is ready to welcome each and every visitor.

Cruise visits over recent years

year	cruise visits	passengers
2023	185	175,000
2024	150	210,000
2025	185	257,000
2026	209	285,000

In 2026, at least 13 vessels will make their first ever visit to Cartagena. The months with the highest cruise traffic are:

- **May: 23 visits**
- **October: 42 visits**
- **November: 32 visits**





Pilot's Log: Moments behind the manoeuvres

For Cartagena's harbour pilots, no two arrivals are ever quite the same. Beneath the calm precision of each docking lies a career's worth of extraordinary moments – some awe-inspiring, others deeply human.

One such milestone came with the arrival of Queen Mary 2, when Antonio Lario, working at the port of Barcelona, had the honour of being the first pilot to manoeuvre the legendary liner into a Spanish port. "Moments like that stay with you," he recalls. A reminder that even for seasoned professionals, certain ships carry a special weight.

Not all memories are so ceremonial. There have been emergencies at sea, including onboard fires requiring swift, composed action during approach. "On another occasion," Antonio recalls "as a vessel entered Cartagena, the helmsman suddenly fainted at the wheel. I had to instantly step in to take control, while the Russian captain kicked the helmsman out of the way, without showing any concern for his health."

Some encounters are more sobering. As many livestock carriers arrive with Syrian crew members, during manoeuvres some of them have jumped into the water to escape from the ship and flee their country. "It is a perilous act, with the danger this poses due to the ship's propellers. In the end, they are usually picked up by the pilots' boat," says Antonio.

These stories offer a glimpse into a world rarely seen by passengers on deck – where skill, judgement and humanity must come together, often in a matter of seconds.

"No two manoeuvres are ever the same – and sometimes, neither are the circumstances."

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David Marin
and José Marin



Forty Years of Fine Wines

Inside Bodega La Cabaña de Saura



Located in the town of El Algar, just 10km from the resort of La Manga Club, the vinoteca *Bodega La Cabaña de Saura* has been offering fine wines to the public since 1981. Owned by José (Pepe) Marin Garcia and managed on a day-to-day basis by his son David Marin Murciano, the family-run vinoteca has developed a loyal clientele that includes many of the area's restaurants and bars, as well as businesses and private customers who value its carefully curated selection and expert advice.

"Much has changed since we started trading all those years ago" says Pepe. "We started small, but now stock around 30,000 bottles at any one time. We also have at least 1,000 wine references. Understandably, the vast majority of our wines are from Spain – perhaps 95% or even 97% at times. But we specialise in offering our clientele what they want and they keep coming back for. There are some great wines produced elsewhere in the world, particularly some of the fine Premier Cru French reds. But overall, I strongly believe Spanish wines offer great value-for-money."



The bodega's private client base has changed quite dramatically over recent years. "With Brits now only able to be here in Spain for up to 90-days every six months" says David "our UK client-based volume has reduced. In addition, whilst we export anywhere in the world, following Brexit it is much more complicated exporting to the UK. We have many German, Dutch and Portugese regular buyers, but our Spanish client base is consistent and reliable.



In fact, there is probably not a local restaurant not stocking our wines. And some of the food being offered in the region is now right up there too. For example, PuertoFino in Cabo de Palos, Malvasia on the mainland coast of the Mar Menor and also Venezuela in Lo Pagan serve great dishes. Well that's my view!"

"And don't forget El Pincho de Castillo in Cartagena" adds David. "They offer great steaks grilled over coals. In La Manga Club the Owners' Clubhouse managed by Joaquin consistently serves-up great plates. Paimans is also pretty good. And we often enjoy a glass of something afterwards at The Last Drop."

It is clear both Pepe and David relish their work. Their knowledge of the different grape varieties and regional Spanish wines is unsurpassed. However, they are strong believers in wines from the Rioja region.

"It is unquestionable that the Vega Sicilia offerings from Ribera del Duero are the best. However,

there are so many very good wines from the region of Rioja" says Pepe. "Rioja quality versus price is unbeatable. I have tasted and enjoyed so many over the years there is probably no Rioja bodega wine I have not enjoyed!"

For wine lovers visiting or living at La Manga Club, Bodega La Cabaña de Saura offers more than just a place to buy a bottle. It is a destination where experience, tradition and enthusiasm for Spanish wine come together. Whether you are searching for a special vintage, stocking a cellar or simply looking for a recommendation to accompany a dinner, Pepe and David's family vinoteca continues to bring the best of Spain's vineyards to the tables of the region.

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Wine recommendations

With so many bottles passing through the cellar of Bodega La Cabaña de Saura

each year, choosing favourites is never easy. However, Pepe was happy to highlight a handful of wines that he believes deserve special attention. His selections are divided into three simple categories: **three great wines** that consistently impress for their quality and character, **a superb pick** representing a truly exceptional bottle, and finally a few **bargains** - wines that offer outstanding value while still delivering all the flavour and personality that Spanish vineyards are known for.



Pepe's three great wines

1. Red: Altún Carralaguardia 2021, Rioja.

Only 600-bottles of this great wine were produced in 2021. It is known as the Colección de Parcelas. This is made from a tempranillo grape grown in the Laguardia sub-region on Calcareous clay soils, hence the name. Fermentation lasts for 14-months in 500-litre French Oak barrels. This wine has depth and body, is somewhat fibrous and has a deep fruit bouquet. 14% abv. Be prepared to pay €180 a bottle.

2 White: Remelluri 2022, Rioja Alavesa.

This wine is a blend of Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha Tinta grapes. All the wines from this bodega in Labastida de Alava are barrel aged with the vendimia of this particular one limited to just 5000-bottles. Light, fresh, crisp and clean. 14% abv. At €60 a bottle this quality white is not cheap but pairs extremely well with fish and light meats.

3. Rosé: X-F Sierra Cantabria 2024, Rioja.

A complex blend of red and white grape varieties being 35% Garnacha Tinta, 30% Sauvignon Blanc, 25% Viura and 10% Tempranillo. This delightfully fruity, floral subtlety and aromatic wine pleases every time. The name Sierra Cantabria XF, refers to the Marchioness of Mirabel (Xandra Falcó) to whom this 5000-bottle limited-edition rosado is dedicated. 13% abv. At only €20 it's a steal!

Pepe's superb pick



Established, well bodied and exceptional value:

Pintia 2021 red, Vega Sicilia de origen, Toro.

This year is really quite exceptional with three bouts of heavy rain in September just before the harvest which enhances this wine hugely. It is a really dark red, full bodied and with loads of tannins. But it is equally fresh and pairs well with a solomillo. At 15% abv and at just €70 a bottle it is fabulous.

Pepe's bargains

4 Red: Señorío de Cuzcurrita 2021, Rioja Alta.

A medium bodied red, lightly oaked and from Tempranillo grapes grown on the clay and pebbly soils close to the river Tirón. This wine spends 12-months in new Bordeaux barrels and then the next three years in French oak barrels before being deposited in concrete vats and bottled. Quite a process for just €20 a bottle. 15% abv. This red is ripe for everyday drinking and represents great value-for-money.

5. White: Gaba de Xil Godello 2024, Valdeorras, Galicia.

This white evokes both Atlantic and Continental influences and comes from the small town of Larouco in the Valdeorras area of Galicia. It is just one of several whites from the Telmo Rodríguez bodega and is a blend of Godello and other local grape varieties grown on clay/slate soils. It is well balanced white. 13.5% abv. At just €12 a bottle it's a must.

6. Rosé: Amor Lozano 2024, Rioja.

Based in Cordovín in the Rioja region, this bodega is run by the Lozano brothers and is producing some excellent wines. This fresh rosado is a bright cherry colour, enjoys intense fruit of the forest aromas and has been aged on the lees to ensure a good structure and mellowness. Acidity is well balanced. 14% abv. An absolute bargain at €11 a bottle.

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PADEL POWER:

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Padel is one of the fastest-growing sports in the world and it's easy to see why. Fast-paced, sociable and surprisingly addictive, it blends elements of tennis and squash into a game that rewards teamwork, quick thinking and clever angles over sheer power. At La Manga Club, it has quickly become one of the most popular ways to stay active and connected.

Although widely associated with Spain today, padel actually began life in Mexico. In 1969, businessman Enrique Corcuera adapted a smaller version of tennis on his property in Acapulco, enclosing the court with walls to keep the ball in play. By incorporating rebound shots, much like squash, he created a completely new sport. It wasn't long before padel spread to Spain, where it found the perfect climate and culture to flourish, eventually becoming a national obsession.

Why is padel so appealing?

There are many factors. The court is smaller than a tennis court, the underarm serve is easier to master, and the solid rackets offer more control. Add in the glass walls, which keep points alive and introduce endless tactical possibilities, and you have a game that is as much about placement and anticipation as it is about athleticism.

At the Racquets Club in La Manga Club, padel has found a natural home. Shortly after taking over the then Tennis Centre, Nick and Sally Munns realised the popularity of this new game and went about creating 8-padel courts. The purpose-built courts sit at the heart of the resort, drawing a steady mix of residents, holidaymakers and visiting players. From early morning knock-ups to floodlit evening matches, there's a constant rhythm of play and a welcoming atmosphere that makes it easy to join in.

A variety of informal groups and regular meet-ups have naturally evolved as the sport's popularity has grown. These sessions cater to a wide range of abilities, from confident intermediates to highly competitive players, and provide a structured yet relaxed way to enjoy the game.

But there is no need to be part of an organised group. What truly defines padel is the sheer enjoyment it brings. It's a sport that lends itself perfectly to playing with friends and family, regardless of age or experience. The doubles format naturally encourages interaction, making it an ideal social activity. As rallies tend to last longer and the emphasis is on placement

Carlos Alcaraz meets visitors at The Racquets Club



rather than power, matches tend to be engaging without being overwhelming. There's a tempo to padel that makes it accessible, but never dull.

Equally important is the social dimension that follows play. It is common for players to linger after matches, sharing a drink, exchanging stories from the court and discussing the finer points of the game. This post-match ritual has become an integral part of the experience.

Globally, the sport continues to surge. There are now tens of

thousands of courts worldwide, and professional tours attract growing audiences, with high-profile athletes helping to fuel its rise. Yet at its core, the appeal remains simple: it's fun, fast and fundamentally social.

At La Manga Club, that spirit is evident every day. Whether you're picking up a racket for the first time or returning for a competitive match, padel offers an easy way to get involved, meet people and enjoy the outdoors. It's not just a sport you play - it's one you quickly become part of.



Where La Manga Club meets the Global Game – The Adidas Padel Tour



The Adidas Padel Tour, kicked-off its fifth season in Madrid in March 2026. The amateur padel event which historically has operated only in Spain now includes some 10,000+ entrants and has expanded outside of Spain to include Argentina, Mexico, Portugal and South Africa. The new season brings together more players than ever across more venues than ever.

Last November, the tour reached the padel courts here at La Manga Club, when the tour arrived at the Racquets Club for a three-day regional tournament. Players competed across men's, ladies' and mixed doubles categories, with a high standard of play and a competitive edge that mirrored the sport's growing profile.

Among the standout moments was a strong performance from

local heroes Richard Johansson and Manuel Agüero who progressed confidently through the draw to take the men's title. Richard, youngest son of Patricia Manrique who works for Mar Menor Management, and his partner celebrated victory to round-off what was, arguably, the most successful year of the event.

Behind the tour's success is the growing influence of Adidas within the sport. Long associated with tennis, the brand has firmly established itself as a major force in padel, as well as in emerging racket sports such as pickleball and beach tennis. Its investment in grassroots events like this has helped make competitive padel more accessible, while reinforcing the sense that this is a sport very much on the rise.

For players and spectators alike, events such as the Adidas Padel Tour add another dimension to the padel experience at La Manga Club, offering a glimpse of the sport's competitive future, while staying true to the inclusive, social spirit that makes it so appealing.





Rising Stars

From Card Tables to Fairways at La Manga Club

Top: Liz Gahan with her husband Liam
Bottom: William Clarke

From the wide open fairways of La Manga Club to the quiet intensity of its Bridge tables, a new generation of talent is emerging. On the golf course, 12-year-old William Clarke is making waves with his natural ability and composure under pressure, already competing on the international stage. Meanwhile, Liz Gahan, grand-daughter of Geoff Gahan, has represented England in Bridge, mastering a game where strategy and mental agility reign supreme. Different disciplines, different demands, but both share a common thread: a deep-rooted connection to La Manga Club, where their journeys first took shape.

Liz Gahan: England Honours and a Lifelong Love of the Game

While William's talents play out under open skies, Liz Gahan's arena is one of concentration, calculation and quiet intensity. Her journey began at the age of nine, when she first picked up a deck of cards and discovered a fascination with Bridge that would shape her future.

Drawn in by the game's complexity and endless variation, Liz quickly developed a passion for its unique mental challenges. Every hand presented a new puzzle, every opponent a new test. By the age of 13, she had already reached the remarkable milestone of representing England, an achievement that marked the beginning of her competitive career.

Over the years, Liz has gone on to represent her country in both Under-26 women's and mixed teams, with a European Championship bronze medal among her proudest accomplishments. Yet for her, success has never dulled the appeal of the game itself. Whether competing internationally or playing socially, the balance between strategy and camaraderie remains central to her enjoyment.

Now balancing a full-time career, Liz continues to make time for Bridge, valuing both its intellectual demands and its social connections. As a player, she relishes the challenge of defence, where intuition and foresight are as important as technical skill.

La Manga Club, however, remains a constant in her story. With family ties to the area, it has become one of her favourite places to play. The Bridge Club offers more than competition; it provides a sense of community, where friendships are formed and the game is shared across generations. For Liz, it is a place to unwind, reconnect, and continue her lifelong journey in the game.

William Clarke: A Journey That Began with a First Swing

At just four-years of age, William Clarke first picked up a golf club at La Manga Club – an innocent moment that would quietly spark an extraordinary journey. What began as playful swings soon evolved into a genuine passion, nurtured year after year within the resort's world-class surroundings.

Now aged 12, William is already carving out a reputation as one of golf's most promising young talents. Luke Donald did it many years ago. So why not William?

Competing across prestigious junior tours including the Faldo Series and the US Kids Golf Tour, William has gained invaluable experience on an international stage. Travel, competition, and the pressure of performance have all contributed to a maturity beyond his years, both technically and mentally.

Despite his growing list of achievements, La Manga Club remains at the heart of his story. A member both here and at Selby Golf Club in Yorkshire in the UK, William balances two golfing homes, yet it is the South Course at La Manga Club that continues to hold a special place. Its championship layout provides the perfect test, pushing him to refine his game while reinforcing the connection to where it all began.

Each year, his return to compete in the Robert Rock Junior Tournament offers a poignant full-circle moment, from a young boy discovering the game to a serious competitor walking the same fairways with purpose and ambition.

Different Disciplines, Shared Foundations

At first glance, golf and Bridge could not be more different. One played across open landscapes, the other across a table. Yet the parallels between William Clarke and Liz Gahan are striking.

Both discovered their passions at a young age. Both have represented their talents at a level beyond their years. And both demonstrate the same qualities: discipline, focus, resilience, and a desire to keep learning.

La Manga Club provides the common ground. Whether through its championship golf courses or its welcoming Bridge community, it offers an environment where talent can be nurtured in all its forms. It is a place where young players can take their first steps, and where those same players return as competitors, carrying with them the imprint of where it all began.

And at the centre of both stories sits La Manga Club, a constant presence, quietly playing its part in the rise of two very different, yet equally inspiring, young talents.



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Creativity Time

Inside the General
Community's
Inspiring Children's
Workshops





When the sessions typically run

Due to their growing popularity, the workshops have now become a year-round offering in the General Community's calendar. Sessions run throughout every half term, with two evening workshops per week, each lasting two hours. This consistent schedule has allowed families to make the workshops a regular part of their activity.

"It's been wonderful to see so many returning faces," says Georgina. "There's a real sense of continuity now - the children of returning owner and holiday families look forward to coming back, and it becomes part of their routine."

For families staying at the resort of La Manga Club, finding activities that genuinely engage children - while also giving parents a chance to relax - can make all the difference particularly since the closure of the former Oasis pool and Par 47. The general Community has launched a range of popular children's workshops, led by Georgina Hinton, that strike that balance perfectly. At the workshops, creativity is not just encouraged - it's nurtured, celebrated and allowed to flourish in the most imaginative ways.

New this year

In addition to our well-established drop-in sessions for younger artists, this year there will be a series of longer, guided workshops tailored for older children and teenagers. These sessions will provide an opportunity to develop more advanced skills and focus on specific techniques, such as felting and sculpting. Details are released via the workshop calendar, making it easy for families to plan ahead and secure places.



"This year, we are excited to continue building on the success of our much-loved children's workshops at the resort, offering a rich and imaginative programme of creative activities. Our sessions will once again explore a wide range of artistic techniques, including experimenting with textiles, working with clay, and using a variety of mixed media" explains Georgina.

But it's not just about the materials. "What truly sets our workshops apart is the way we encourage children to think creatively, explore freely and express themselves in unexpected ways."

This philosophy sits at the heart of every session. Rather than focusing solely on outcomes, the emphasis is on process - giving children the confidence to try, discover and develop their own artistic voice. The workshops cater for children aged five through to early teens.





Craft Garden

For those looking for something more immersive, the **Craft Garden** sessions run year-round in the mornings from 10:00 to 13:00. These reservation-only workshops provide a longer, guided experience, giving children, aged 5 and older, the time and space to properly engage with their projects.

"The Craft Garden has become a special space where children not only develop their artistic skills but also grow in confidence as they learn to express themselves freely," says Georgina.



A Place to Create, Connect and Grow

At its core, the programme is about far more than art. It's about confidence, curiosity and connection – giving children the space to express themselves while building friendships and lasting memories.

As Georgina puts it, "It's incredibly rewarding to see children not just creating, but growing, becoming more confident, more expressive, and truly proud of what they can do and do do."

With its thoughtful approach and ever-evolving programme, the General Community's children's workshops at La Manga Club are somewhere where creativity blooms all year round.

For more information about any of these workshops please contact Georgina Hinton direct via

E-mail: georginahinton@gmail.com
Tel: +34 672 23 82 75

More Than Just Art

Beyond the paints, fabrics and clay, what truly defines the workshops is the atmosphere they create. A warm, welcoming environment has fostered a genuine sense of community among both children and parents alike.

Last year offered countless memorable moments. During the summer, the energy was unmistakable, with children arriving full of excitement, often rushing in eager to begin and reconnect with friends. Parents, meanwhile, appreciated the rare opportunity to relax, knowing their children were happily looked after and engaged in something both creative and enriching.

As the seasons shifted, so too did the tone of the workshops. Autumn brought a quieter, more atmospheric quality, with sessions inspired by the colours, textures and light of the season. Carefully chosen materials and palettes allowed children to create artwork that captured the essence of autumn.





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From humble snack bar to **Local Legends**

The Story of Roberto and Alexandra
of Los Molinos Restaurant



How it all started



Step into the Los Molinos Restaurant on a summer afternoon and you'll hear it before you see it. The hum of conversation, the clink of glasses and the laughter rolling out onto the terrace. For 35-years, Roberto and Alex have been the heartbeat of this beloved restaurant, welcoming generations of families, friends, and first-timers with the same mix of warmth, wit, and just the right amount of Spanish flair.

Guests don't just come for the food, though the tapas alone are worth the trip, they come for the atmosphere, the easy charm of a couple who have built more than a restaurant – they've built a community.

As Roberto and Alex celebrate 35-years at the helm of *Los Molinos Restaurant*, we sat down with them to talk about the early nerves, the unforgettable guests, and the dishes that simply can't leave the menu.



29 years ago

From the moment you meet them, you immediately sense the kind of partnership that only decades of shared laughter, hard work, and long days in hospitality can build. 'It all started with a bit of luck really,' Roberto smiles. 'Back then, I was working at what's now *La Rusticana*. Before that, it was called *Jens Steakhouse*.' It was Jens who first put Roberto forward when the community of *Los Molinos* were looking for someone to run the restaurant. 'They needed someone to take it on,' Roberto recalls. 'Jens said he wasn't interested, but he asked if I might be. I told him I'd speak with Alexandra.'

Alex laughs. 'He came home and said, "What do you think?" And I said, "Well, let's see what we have to do! But it was clear Roberto was very excited.'

They met with Derek Travis, the then President of the *Los Molinos* community. 'We were very nervous,' Roberto admits, 'but many of the owners already knew us. They trusted us. The community helped us a lot in the beginning. They helped us get started and shared our vision for the future!'

When Roberto and Alex took over in 1991, the *Los Molinos Restaurant* was far from the bustling terrace it is today. 'It was tiny,' Alex says. 'Just a small bar with one little grill – about this big.' She holds her hands close together, laughing. 'We only served hamburgers and sandwiches. That was it!'

In those early days, they worked with just one member of staff. 'We couldn't sleep that first week,' Roberto remembers. 'It was exciting, but terrifying. There weren't many people around back then, not like now.'

Over the years, the *Los Molinos Restaurant* has grown steadily. From those humble beginnings, it has become a cornerstone of the community. A place where generations of families have returned summer after summer. 'Just the other week,' Alex smiles, 'we saw the twins who used to come with their father and grandfather when they were little. Now they've got children of their own! Fifteen of them came together for dinner. It was wonderful.'

Roberto and Alex had originally met when they were both working at the hotel on La Manga Club, long before their *Los Molinos* story began. They married in 1990 and took over the *Los Molinos Restaurant* a year later. 'In the end, it was easy to say yes,' Roberto says. 'We believed we could make it work. And we did.'

In the early days, they hosted weekly barbecues before adding the now famous Flamenco nights. 'At first, we had a live band,' Alex recalls, 'but eventually we added



the Flamenco nights, which have now become so popular on a Thursday evening.'

Their teamwork has always been the secret to their success. 'We divide the work,' Alex says. 'I handle the paperwork, the money... Roberto does the talking, the charming, the kissing!' she adds with a grin.

Good memories



Running a business with your spouse is not for the faint-hearted. 'It's very difficult,' Roberto admits. 'When you work together, you can't go home and complain about your day because you've both lived it. But we understand each other and that helps.'

Along with many funny memories, there are touching memories, too. 'Over the years, we've become close to so many people,' Roberto says. 'One of our dearest friends from the early days is very ill now, and we're going to England soon to see him. This place gave us friendships for life.'

When asked about *Los Molinos Restaurant's* signature dishes, Roberto doesn't hesitate. 'The Club Sandwich! It's the most famous thing we serve. People who haven't been for five years still come back and order it.'

Then he adds, 'And our tapas of course! We've won five out of six

local tapas competitions – first prize five times!' he adds proudly.

And the secret of their success? 'Quality,' Roberto says simply. 'You win by showing people what you can do. At the *Los Molinos Restaurant*, we are passionate about using the finest ingredients. We source top-quality, locally-sourced products, ensuring freshness and flavour in every dish.'

Over the decades, the *Los Molinos Restaurant* has changed, but Roberto and Alex's commitment has not. 'We have eleven staff now,' Roberto says, 'but finding good people is harder these days. We're lucky our new chef, Vega, came to us after working in Michelin-starred restaurants. When she joined, we couldn't believe our luck.' Their team is very close. 'They laugh when they arrive, and they're still laughing when they leave,' Alex smiles. 'That's when you know you've got good people.'

Every good restaurant has its little superstitions. For the *Los Molinos Restaurant*, it's a five-dollar bill. 'It's on the counter,' Roberto reveals. 'My son gave it to us, saying it would bring luck. We touch it every morning before opening and, so far, it's worked!'

Do they ever think about retiring? 'Maybe in five years,' Roberto says. 'But it's hard to imagine not being here.' Alex smiles knowingly. 'He's always talking about opening another restaurant, but I tell him no – enough is enough!'

Still, the couple's enthusiasm hasn't faded. 'Every season, when we open the doors and people say, 'Oh, fantastic, we've missed you!' – it feels like the first time again,' Alex says.

After more than three-decades, their energy and affection remain as strong as ever. 'It's been exciting,' Roberto says, pausing for a moment. 'Exciting, non-stop, and full of life.'

Thirty-five years on, Roberto and Alex remain as energetic and passionate about *Los Molinos Restaurant* as they ever were. They've witnessed proposals, birthday serenades, unforgettable parties, and even the occasional kitchen mishap – always with a smile and a story to tell.

As the sun rises over La Manga and another day at the *Los Molinos Restaurant* begins, one thing is clear: Roberto and Alex have given the resort more than just great meals. They've given it memories, laughter, and a place where everyone, newcomers and old friends alike, feel instantly at home.

Here's to 35-years of the *Los Molinos Restaurant*!



Paco (centre) the legend of Los Molinos



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When Champions Came to Play:

BBC Superstars 2003 at La Manga Club

BBC Superstars of 2003



It's not every day that one of Britain's most iconic sporting television shows rolls into town. However, in 2003, La Manga Club, already renowned for its world-class golf and tennis, became the backdrop for one of the most memorable editions of BBC Superstars, reviving a format that had captured the hearts of millions in the 1970s and 1980s.

That spring, the resort transformed into a sporting arena like no other. La Manga Club echoed with the sounds of elite athletes testing themselves, not in their usual disciplines, but in a series of challenges designed to find the ultimate all-round sports person.

BBC Superstars was, and remains, a unique concept. A competition where professional athletes from different sports face off across multiple events, from sprinting and swimming to cycling, shooting, and the dreaded gym tests. It was both light-hearted and fiercely competitive, offering fans a rare glimpse of sporting greats outside their comfort zones.



Hosts Johnny Vaughan and Suzi Perry



Dennis Wise



Everything is going swimmingly for Colin Jackson'

The 2003 revival, filmed right here at La Manga Club, brought the show into the modern era while retaining its retro appeal. The resort's stunning facilities and Mediterranean setting made it the perfect stage for this comeback. For a few glorious weeks, La Manga Club became a sporting village where Olympic champions, football stars, and rugby icons mingled with holidaymakers and owners alike.

Hosted by Johnny Vaughan and Suzi Perry, the show injected new energy and humour into a beloved format.

Among the competitors were some of the UK's most recognisable sporting names of the era. The line-up read like a who's who of early-2000s sporting excellence. Amongst those competing at La Manga Club were Colin Jackson, Dennis Wise, Stuart Pearce, Mark Foster, Darren Campbell, Gavin Hastings, Richard Dunwoody, Paul Hunter, Alain Baxter, Annabel Croft, and Katharine Merry.

For those who were here at the time, memories linger of seeing these household names cycling along the resort roads, training in the fitness centre, or diving into the outdoor pool under the clear blue skies of Murcia.

The BBC crew transformed parts of the resort into broadcast sets, with cameras and commentators perched above the action, narrating every sprint and stumble. The atmosphere was electric: a blend of competitive intensity and Mediterranean leisure.

Local staff and residents recall the buzz that rippled through La Manga Club. 'You'd bump into world-class athletes at breakfast,' one long-time staff member remembers. 'They were relaxed and

laughing, but once the cameras rolled, you could see the fire in their eyes. Everyone wanted to win.'

For the BBC, La Manga Club was a natural choice. By 2003, the resort was already firmly established as one of Europe's premier training destinations, regularly welcoming professional football teams, tennis players, and golfers from across the continent. For the duration of filming, all the contestants were based here, where they lived,



Competitors at La Manga Resort

trained, and competed together, creating a genuine sense of camaraderie that translated beautifully on screen.

Events were staged across some of the resort's most scenic and iconic locations. The gym tests took place on La Cala Beach, the swimming contests at Bellaluz Pool, and the kayaking events unfolded on the glistening waters of the Mar Menor at Mar de Cristal. Cameras captured not only the competition but the resort's natural beauty. None captured the spirit more than the legendary mountain bike race that began on La Cala's shoreline and climbed relentlessly to the summit above.

For many at La Manga Club, Superstars 2003 is remembered not just as a television event but as a cultural moment. A time when the world turned its attention to this corner of Murcia. It showcased the resort's quality facilities to millions of BBC viewers and cemented its reputation as a destination where champions come to play.

Looking back today, that edition of Superstars feels like a perfect blend of nostalgia and renewal. It rekindled a classic British TV tradition and, in doing so, highlighted everything that makes La Manga Club special: the sunshine, the camaraderie, and the shared love of sport.

Even two decades later, the echoes of that event can still be felt on the resort's pitches and gyms, where the next generation of athletes now train, perhaps unaware they're treading the same ground once conquered by champions under the BBC's cameras. It was more than a TV production; it was a celebration of sporting spirit and community, captured forever in the warm glow of the Spanish sun.

If you want to get a flavour of the event yourself, an episode from 2003 can be found on YouTube by searching "BBC Superstars 2003".

John Regis competes in the gruelling gym tests



Kevin Keegan gets on his bike

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FAMILY WATER SPORTS

From calm coastal paddles to exhilarating inland rapids, the Region of Murcia offers family-friendly water experiences that go far beyond the beach.

Family Water Sports in the Region of Murcia

The Region of Murcia offers a wealth of opportunities for memorable family days out on the water – many extending far beyond the familiar shores of the Mar Menor and the Mediterranean. From coastal adventures to inland river experiences, there is something to suit all ages, abilities and appetites for adventure.

The Official La Manga Club General Community Magazine sent our intrepid reporter to experience three distinct water-based activities, each delivered by independent local operators. As always, readers are encouraged to contact providers directly to ensure each activity meets their personal needs and expectations.





River Rafting on the Segura

For families seeking a blend of excitement and natural beauty, river rafting along the Segura River offers a truly memorable experience. Operated by XploraCieza, this adventure takes place approximately 90 minutes' drive from La Manga Club.

The experience is designed to be flexible, catering to a range of abilities. Calm stretches of water allow time to soak in the surrounding scenery, while occasional rapids and small dam drops provide bursts of adrenaline – striking an enjoyable balance between relaxation and adventure.

The day begins with participants equipped with helmets, life jackets and paddles. From there, transport is provided to the starting point in Cieza, marking the beginning of a 10km descent downriver.

Midway through the journey, there is a welcome pause for refreshments, with a simple sandwich lunch provided. The route concludes in Abarán, where showers and changing facilities are available.

Each raft typically accommodates six to eight participants, with all groups accompanied by qualified instructors. Public liability and accident insurance are included, ensuring a safe and well-managed experience throughout.

River rafting on the Segura River is a refreshing addition to the region's water sports offering – perfect for families looking to try something a little different.

Contact: Santiago Morote
Tel: +34 722 555494 / +34 624 370425
Company: XploraCieza
Web: www.xploracieza.com





Kayaking and Paddleboarding in Cabo de Palos

For those drawn to the sea, Kayak Cabo de Palos, a family-run business located on Calle Salero, Cabo de Palos, specialises in guided kayaking and stand-up paddle-boarding excursions along the coastline.

Run by experienced and certified instructors, the company combines a deep knowledge of water sports with a genuine passion for the local area. The team takes pride in sharing the beauty of the coastline, from hidden coves to dramatic cliffs, offering visitors a fresh perspective of the Mediterranean.

During the warmer months, and, of course, subject to sea conditions, two guided excursions are available every day, each lasting approximately two hours and priced at €35 per person. Sessions include all necessary equipment, optional snorkelling gear, expert supervision, and access to showers on return.

The first route, Coves, Cliffs and Beaches of the Cape, explores some of the area's most scenic highlights, including a circuit around the iconic lighthouse. The second, Zeneta to Cala Reona, showcases the rugged beauty of Cala Flores, El Descargador and the much-loved Cala Reona beach.

Whether in the calm of the morning or the golden light of late afternoon, exploring Cabo de Palos by kayak or paddle-board offers a peaceful and immersive way to experience the coastline.

Contact: Daniel Sanmartin
Tel: +34 647 35 35 92
Company: Kayak Cabo de Palos
Web: www.kayakcabodepalos.com

Scuba Diving

Few water sports invigorate the senses quite like scuba diving. Whether it's a gentle descent just a few metres below the surface observing fish and underwater plant life or a deeper dive exploring ship wrecks and encountering turtles, scuba diving brings the senses alive.

Thankfully, along the Costa Cálida, divers do not encounter sharks, although there have been occasional sightings of whales passing surprisingly close to the shores around Cabo de Palos.

Los Belones based PADI specialists Albadive offer introductory sessions for complete beginners, as well as more advanced dives for experienced divers. A full range of PADI training courses is also available, including nitrox certification, which uses an enriched air mixture of oxygen and nitrogen for serious deep-sea diving.

Scuba diving does require a reasonable level of fitness, and all participants must complete a medical questionnaire before taking part. The minimum age for diving is 10-years.

It is also worth noting that scuba diving is not an inexpensive activity. Entry-level experiences in a controlled environment (rather than open water) start from around €40 per person, with prices rising to several hundred euros depending on the type and depth of dive selected.

For more information and to experience this invigorating activity:

Contact: Ismael Serna
Tel: +34 613 057 700
Company: Albadive
Web: www.albadive.es



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The Art of Luxurious Travel and Living Well at La Manga Club

If money were no object, if you could spend as freely as you pleased in pursuit of the exceptional, how would you choose to live? Not in flashes of excess for their own sake, but in the deliberate elevation of every moment: travelling privately, staying extraordinarily, accessing experiences many dream of but few ever touch.

How might life really be?

Here is a blueprint to a week at La Manga Club, from the start right through to the final delicious moments. It's not for everybody, but if you could push the boundaries to their extreme what would you choose to do? Here are just some examples of what your week might look like.





Travel reimagined

The experience of luxury begins well before Spain. Departing from the UK by private jet reframes travel entirely. No queues, no delays, no baggage issues. Take what you want (within legal bounds). No interruptions, no priority boarding hassles, no lost luggage, no long security checks – just a direct, seamless journey.

A La Manga Club owner recently shared their experience of flying privately with Air Partner www.airpartner.com who arranged a Bombardier Challenger 350 private jet from Farnborough in Hampshire direct to Región de Murcia International Airport. With seating up to 8 passengers the whole trip was seamless and hassle free.

The passengers arrived at Farnborough's private terminal just 45 minutes before take-off, where they were met by a dedicated hostess and escorted to a comfortable lounge, while their luggage was taken care of. No weight allowance issues here! Before boarding, they were introduced to the captain, who outlined the flight plan and route, while all travel documentation had been pre-cleared to ensure a swift process.

Security was discreet and efficient, with passengers passing quickly through screening before being escorted directly to the aircraft, conveniently positioned just steps from the terminal. The flight departed on schedule, with food and refreshments served throughout. The interior of the plane was sumptuous with plenty of space and head room. On arrival in Murcia, the aircraft pulled up to the private terminal, and within ten minutes of landing, after a streamlined passport check by a dedicated officer, passengers were on their way, their luggage already transferred to waiting transport. Total cost of this flight was €21,000.

Price: Private jet (South East UK to RMU airport, one-way): circa €20,000/€30,000 (6–8 passengers). Private transfer to the resort of La Manga Club: €100–€200

A Suite above Expectation

At the heart of the resort, Grand Hyatt La Manga Club Golf & Spa sets the tone for an elevated stay.

The Royal Suite, 145 square metres of considered design, offers far more than space. A separate bedroom, expansive living and dining areas, a private terrace with panoramic views, and a marble bathroom complete with freestanding bath and sauna create an environment that feels both indulgent and effortless.

Access to the Grand Club Lounge is included with a privately served breakfast in the morning and alcoholic and snack refreshments included throughout the day. Use of the Alma Spa offers relaxation and tranquility.

Price: From €1,423 per night



Mornings on the Fairway

The resort's championship golf courses are at their most compelling in the early morning light – quiet, measured, unhurried. There is no sense of urgency here, only the rhythm of the game and the surrounding landscape. Hire a caddy and even a coach to guide you round the course, helping to improve your game as you go.

Price: For non-owners, €250 for a 18-hole round, licence, buggy and a set of clubs.

Restorative Rituals

Late morning shifts the focus inward, to recovery and renewal.

At Alma Spa, the experience is designed around restoration. Hydrotherapy circuits, thermal contrasts, steam and sauna are included in your Royal Suite stay. However, indulge in the complementary menu of tailored treatments – from essential oil massages to advanced skin therapies. It is all about recalibration.

Price: A Body and Facial Ritual including an Antioxidant Body Exfoliation lasting 120 minutes and costing €220 or why not have an Inhibit Zero Gravity Lift lasting 75 minutes and costing €145.



Access to the Exceptional

Next day your attention turns to the water.

From Puerto Tomás Maestre located 13km along La Manga del Mar Menor, a private yacht or motor launch awaits, fully provisioned, discreetly crewed, and entirely yours for the day.

The route begins across the calm expanse of the Mar Menor before passing through the narrow canal into the Mediterranean. The transition is immediate: sheltered stillness gives way to open water and a wider horizon.

Along the coastline near Cabo de Palos, the sea takes on remarkable clarity. Anchorages are chosen for privacy. Time slows, whether swimming, snorkelling, or simply drifting.

For those seeking something more dynamic, jet skis offer a different perspective. Fast, exhilarating, and untethered, carving across open water before circling back towards the lighthouse.

Lunch is unstructured. On board, served fresh and without ceremony, or ashore at a quiet harbour where the day's catch dictates the menu.

By late afternoon, the return becomes part of the experience itself, softer light, calmer seas, and a sense of relaxation.

Price: Private yacht or motor launch charter (full day): €1,500–€4,000 subject to vessel. Jet ski hire: €150–€250 per hour



Power and Precision

On land and day three is transformed with a high-performance car offering real engagement, especially in a 6.5 litre v12 Purosangue Ferrari, a 650 horsepower Hurrican Eco Lamborghini or a £4 million Bugatti Chiron Pur Sport. Vela Club www.velaclub.com offers one of only sixty such Bugatti's ever made in the world!

Eat-up the tarmac as you head towards Cartagena, gripping corners like you've never gripped before. Head south on the AP7 towards Almeria until you reach the Circuito de Almeria just before the town of Tabernas. This 4km race track is built for both bikes and cars. Enjoy an exhilarating experience off-road although that is a bit of an understatement.

On the return journey back to the resort of La Manga Club take some of the more minor roads. Not all are suitable for low-slung racers but as roads quieten and surfaces change the experience becomes less about speed and more about connection with your machine, to the environment, to the moment itself.

Price: Supercar hire (Lamborghini/Ferrari): €800–€1,500 per day. Bugatti POA. Use of Circuito de Almeria POA

Evenings Without Urgency

Dinner is not something to be rushed. For those seeking something exceptional, the region delivers.

At *Cabaña Buenavista*, on the outskirts of the City of Murcia, dining becomes a carefully orchestrated journey. This is the only two-starred Michelin restaurant in the area. Chef Pablo González presents highly creative tasting menus rooted in regional identity, where ingredients are as considered as the techniques used to elevate them.

In Cartagena, Michelin-starred *Magoga* offers a different expression – refined, contemporary cuisine that reflects what its creators describe as “an embrace between sea and land.” Under Chef María Gómez, dishes draw on the Mediterranean and Mar Menor, balancing innovation with authenticity. With a cellar offering over 900 different wines chosen by Adrián de Marcos, this really is one of the finest wine selections anywhere in Spain. See page 56 for more details.

Meals extend. Conversations deepen. Time, once again, drifts. Some of the finest dining in the world can be enjoyed right in the heart of Murcia.

Price: *Cabaña Buenavista*, nine course tasting €190 with wine pairing €280, *Magoga*, eight course tasting €120 with premium wines €240

A Different Standard

What is the lesson that can be learned from this experience? The yachts, the drives, the flight, these are the visible markers. But the true measure of luxury is subtler. It is the feeling, carried home, that life can, and perhaps should, be lived with this level of ease. And once that standard is set, it is not easily lowered.



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Joaquín Díaz Valencia and Head Chef José Martínez have run the Owners' Clubhouse Restaurant for over 28 years. Whether you are dining solo, as a couple, or with a group, you will love our diverse, crowd-pleasing menu - crafted to satisfy every palate.

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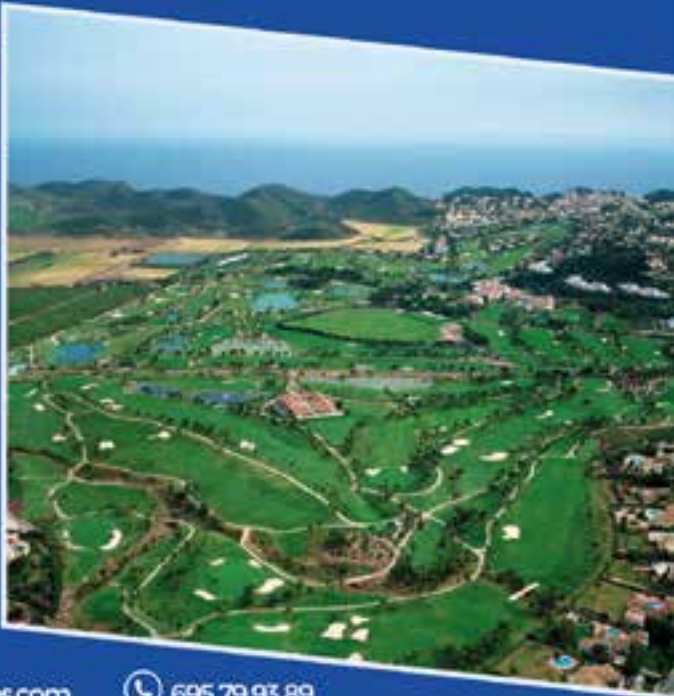
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Iain Hanna

PGA Professional



Renowned for its three-championship courses and home to the Spanish Open on five occasions, La Manga Club's golf tuition is one of the key offerings to owners, residents and holidaymakers. Craig Donnelly, the La Manga Club Director of Golf, has transformed golf tuition which now includes the use of Trackman technology. And in November 2025, Craig recruited long-time friend and PGA Professional Iain Hanna to help golfers of all ages play better, feel confident and love the game more than ever.

"I trained at Arbroath golf course on the east coast of Scotland which is in the same town as Letham Grange where Craig trained," says Iain "So we've known each other for years"

Iain then moved to Hamilton Golf Club in Motherwell which is where he met Michelle Kemp. Michelle, who is a paralegal and is fully fluent in Spanish

Iain explains "I was speaking with Craig on the telephone on a Thursday when he said I should come out here. Both Michelle and I flew out on the Sunday and over the course of the next five-days we got to know the resort. We returned home to Scotland for around 10-days after that and very quickly realised how much we wanted to be at La Manga Club. Craig offered me the position of Head Teaching Professional, we packed our bags and we've been here ever since. We live on resort and are just about to move to Buena Vista."

Iain and Michell relish the lifestyle they now enjoy. Iain also enjoys being a player in the John Roope padel group and Michelle enjoys the social tennis that Alain Hendrikx organises and the Wednesday group that Patrick Field runs.

But while their off-course life is full, it is on the fairways where Iain's expertise and opinions are most important. So what is Iain's favourite golf hole across the resort? "It's got to be the ninth on the south – if I cut the corner and go over the trees with a good drive then I'm on for a birdie. It's where I've got the most birdies, so far anyway! But, technically the fourth on the south is a crucial hole. Being early on it can either make or break the round."

How much do lessons cost? Lessons range from one-hour private one-on-one training costing between €100 and €140 subject to public, hotel guest or resort owner status. A multiple 5-lesson package will cost a hotel guest €550 whereas an owner pays just €450. The bargain 10-lesson package will cost an owner €800.

"Our 5-day immersive experience is extremely popular" says Iain. "At just €350 for an owner and €400 for a hotel guest, we offer 2-hours a day over 5-days which includes putting, grips, chipping, iron play full-swings, driving and then actual course practice. It's a winner!"

My Sporting Fix

In this quick fire Q&A Iain Hanna shares the moments, places and people that have shaped his love of sport, from unforgettable matches and iconic venues to the athletes he most admires and the dream dinner party every fan would want a seat at.

Your favourite sport to watch (apart from Golf)?

Football

The best sporting venue in the world is...? Wimbledon

Your highest-rated sportsperson?

Currently playing it has to be Carlos Alcaraz

Most underrated sportsperson? Joe Calzaghe

I wish I'd been there when... Scotland beat England 3-2 at Wembley in 1967

Your favourite sporting book? Ben Hogan's 5 Lessons

You're having a fantasy dinner party, who would you invite? Tiger Woods, Andy Murray, Magnus Carlsen and Billy Connolly



Cartagena's Culinary Star



María Gómez in Conversation

1 star Michelin chef at *Magoga*

Located in the heart of Cartagena lies *Magoga*, a one-star Michelin restaurant. Holding this prestigious recognition since November 2019, the restaurant is renowned for its local produce and is guided by the philosophy defined as a "gastronomic embrace between the vastness of the Mediterranean and the soul of the Campo de Cartagena". The *Official La Manga Club General Community Magazine* visited and interviewed chef *María Gómez*.

When did you first start cooking and what was your inspiration?

I grew up in *Fuente Alamo* and from a very young age became interested in cooking. My parents used to encourage my sister and I to try lots of different food and to cook at home. I remember calling my grandfather one day to ask him for a recipe and that is when I realised that cooking was becoming a very natural part of who I am. My inspiration has always been preserving the gastronomic traditions of *Cartagena*, from the countryside to the Mediterranean and maintaining a unique culinary identity that is very different from other regions in Spain.

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When did you start *Magoga* and why the name?

We opened *Magoga* in 2014. And the name ... it's simple. My husband's first names are Miguel Adrián (MA), my first surname is Gómez (GO) and my second surname is García (GA). Put together you have *Magoga*.

Holding a Michelin star is a great honour. However, it must also keep you on toes. What signs do you look for to try and identify when a Michelin inspector is around?

We have no idea when an inspector will turn-up. We maintain the same standards and work in exactly the same way at all times. Whether we are cooking for a Michelin inspector or our neighbours, there is no difference. Consistency is what truly matters. We also place great importance on our guests' feedback and recommendations.

A Michelin star brings prestige but also pressure. How has it changed the way you think in the kitchen?

Rather than changing our way of working, it reinforces our commitment. We follow a very clear path: always giving our best, constantly evolving, and maintaining an honest and consistent approach. High standards are simply part of our everyday work.

What ingredient from this region do you think is still under-appreciated and how do you like to use it?

The cuisine of this region is not well known outside the area as that of other parts of Spain, partially due to transport connections. This means much of our produce stays here. However, we have extraordinary ingredients from the market gardens and fish from the Mediterranean with exceptional flavour. For example, carob or sucking lamb from Calblanque are truly remarkable. The wines from this region are also worth highlighting



What is your favourite fish and why?

Salvaje Rodaballo (Wild Turbot). I studied in the *Basque Country* where we used to cook it over charcoal. It was spectacular. The skin is gelatinous and the flesh is incredible. It is my favourite fish and offers many possibilities in the kitchen.

When you're cooking at home, what do you actually make for yourself?

It has to be *Paella*. It is great to get together with my parents and my sister for example on the weekend preparing a traditional Sunday *paella* cooked over *leña* (firewood). And of course one has to have *ali-oli* and salad with it.

To inspire our readers to cook, what dish would you recommend they make at home?

I would recommend making *Caldero* with a lot of care and love! *Caldero* is, of course, very typical from this region. It is relatively simple but it is important to use the right rice and cook it to the perfect point. With good fish and a good stock, it is very authentic.

Without telling anyone else, what is the secret to cooking rice perfectly?

The secret lies in the ingredients: a good stock and, of course, good rice. From there technique is essential.

And finally, your husband Adrián de Marcos is famous for his wine cellar. How many different wines do you have?

We have over 900 references – regional, national and international. Some of them are exceptionally good including some wines from local bodegas. One of my favourites is from *Jumilla* but, overall, my absolute favourite is from *Jerez*.

Chef, congratulations and thank you!

It is clear there is a deep affection for the region and a real passion in all that is produced at *Magoga*. *María Gómez* and *Adrián de Marcos* impress with their offering. Michelin inspectors clearly agree! Readers of the *Official La Manga Club General Community Magazine* will receive a warm welcome.

www.restaurantemagoga.com
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Murcia

Unsung HEROES

OF LA MANGA CLUB



Every community has its familiar faces ... the people you see regularly, the ones who quietly get on with their jobs, often without fanfare but always with dedication. At La Manga Club, many of these individuals have become part of the daily pattern of life on the resort, helping everything run smoothly while providing the friendly, reliable service that owners and guests come to value so highly.

This feature celebrates some of those individuals. From the early morning preparation of the golf courses to the friendly faces who greet owners, guests and staff throughout the day.

In this edition we meet five of the resort's Unsung Heroes. Each has a different role. Each has their own story. But together they represent the quiet professionalism and commitment that help give La Manga Club its unique character and help the resort run so smoothly



JULIÁN MUÑOZ

CADDY MASTER

Few people at La Manga Club know the rhythm of the golf courses quite like Julián Muñoz.

Julián first joined La Manga Club 42-years ago, beginning a career that would place him at the centre of daily life on the golf courses. Over the years he has witnessed enormous change.

"A lot has changed," he says. "The clients used to be mainly English, but now we see many more Europeans and especially more Spanish owners and visitors."

Like many long-established members of staff, Julián has seen the resort through both prosperous and challenging periods.

"We've been through some tough times," he explains. Yet his outlook remains optimistic. "Things are now looking up. The investment being made now is incredible and it will ensure we continue to offer world-class golf."

For Julián, however, the real joy of the job is the people. Every year he welcomes an extraordinary number of golfers arriving to enjoy La Manga Club's famous courses.

"I love my job," he says simply. "And I enjoy meeting the thousands, literally thousands, of players who come here each year."

After 42-years, Julián remains a familiar and reassuring presence for golfers. One of the many people whose dedication helps keep La Manga Club running smoothly.



SONIA RICO

PA TO THE MANAGEMENT TEAM AT THE HOTEL.

Sonia Rico started work at La Manga Club in 1995 as Secretary to the Inmogolf Legal Department under Manuel Sánchez. She has been the Executive Assistant to the resort's directors since 2012.

"I have been Executive Assistant to several of the resort's directors, including: Antonio Ros, José Asenjo, Nick Montgomery, Carlos Erburu, Javier Carazo, Pedro García and most recently Ángel Holgado. I have learnt a great deal from each and I maintain a close relationship with many even to this day.

"Above all, I have particularly fond memories of my early years at La Manga Club, a place I consider my 'second home', which I joined when I was so young and where I have grown and matured both professionally and personally.

"Much has changed during my time including the opening of the Casino, the building of the Central Services Building and the Peninsular Club in Las Lomas, how we were awarded the title of Royal Golf Club and the re-opening of the hotel as the Grand Hyatt La Manga Club Golf & Spa. I like to think I deal with matters quietly and professionally. And behind the scenes I now share my working life with Acha, our dog. She keeps me on my toes!"



GINÉS GONZÁLEZ GROUNDSMAN

Long before the first golfers step onto the fairways each morning, Ginés González is already at work. For 25-years, he has been part of the team responsible for maintaining the golf courses at La Manga Club. His work is largely unseen by those who enjoy the courses each day, yet it is essential. Ginés is one of those behind the scenes who ensures our golf courses are in tip top condition.

"This year marks 25-years since I joined La Manga Club," he says, a milestone that speaks not only of experience, but of commitment.

Living nearby in Los Belones with his wife and two children, Ginés is closely connected to both the resort and the surrounding community.

"I feel very lucky to work here," he says. "I've always loved sport and being outdoors, so this suits me perfectly - it's a wonderful place to be active."

For the thousands of golfers who pass through La Manga Club each year, the quality of the courses is simply expected. For Ginés and his colleagues, it is earned, through early starts, hard work and an unwavering commitment to standards.



JOSÉ MARTINEZ THE OWNERS' CLUBHOUSE CHEF

After well over a decade at the Owners' Clubhouse, José's enthusiasm for the role remains as fresh as ever. "I have worked with Joaquin here... for, I think, 14 years," he says with a smile, quickly adding, "I say I think because time flies when you enjoy what you do and I have lost count!"

That sense of enjoyment is rooted in a genuine passion for the craft. "It is a great pleasure for me to create and make lovely food dishes," he explains, though he is quick to acknowledge the pressures that come with the job. "Sometimes it is a challenge, particularly when we have to serve a lot of diners at a function and all at the same time." Still, he credits the strength of those around him: "The team behind me here is great and we all pull together."

It's a formula that clearly works. "Owners and their guests keep returning," he says, "which means we must be doing something right!"

As for the most popular dish on the menu, he smiles: everything, he insists, is simply delicious.



TAMARA LÉON AT THE REPSOL PETROL STATION

For the thousands who visit the Repsol petrol station on the resort, one of the regular friendly faces that greets them is Tamara León who has worked there for no less than 11-years.

"No day is ever the same" she says. "Sure I regularly help fill-up the fuel tanks of cars, vans and even petrol driven golf buggies. But I also manage the busy shop where we sell bread, milk, newspapers and a range of extras which is ideal for residents when the supermarket is closed.

"Everyone is so friendly which helps make the job more enjoyable. We also seem to be the place the Local Police come to for their coffees!"

Tamara is one of many across the resort that day-in, day-out ensures the wheels of the resort keep moving.

Resorts are often defined by their facilities, but it is the people who truly shape the experience. The individuals featured here are only a small number of the many who are dedicated and work across La Manga Club every day. In celebrating these Unsung Heroes, we celebrate the spirit of service and pride that lies at the heart of the community.



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Festivals and Events in Cartagena

From dazzling parades and theatrical re-enactments. Turn the page for a curated guide to what's on, and when to be part of it.



Celebrations all year round

by Ruth Holloway

Just thirty-minutes from the resort of La Manga Club lies Cartagena, a city where layers of ancient history coexist effortlessly with contemporary Spanish life. Around almost every corner, visitors encounter remarkably preserved Roman buildings, walls, monuments and sculptures, alongside a lively modern city animated by festivals, exhibitions and a rich cultural calendar.

Cartagena offers one of the most varied and exuberant programmes of cultural events in Spain, inviting both residents and visitors to immerse themselves in traditions that have endured for centuries.

The city's identity has always been influenced by the sea. Shaped over time by Phoenician, Carthaginian and Roman civilisations Cartagena's landscape reflects an extraordinary fusion of cultures. These influences brought with them artefacts, architecture, art and folklore, much of which has been carefully preserved and passed down to the present day.

Unlike some more heavily touristed destinations, Cartagena retains a strong sense of everyday Spanish life. Its distinctive dialect, relaxed pace and celebrated gastronomy offer a more authentic experience, making it easy for expatriates and visitors to integrate or at least dip a toe into local culture.

Throughout the year there is always something to look forward to and experience.



JANUARY

The year begins with the much-loved **Three Kings Parade (Cabalgata de Reyes)**. On the evening of 5 January, elaborate floats, music, stilt walkers and mythical creatures fill the streets, marking Epiphany and the arrival of the Three Wise Men. Sweets and small gifts are thrown to the crowds.

The giving of gifts takes place on January 6th. The children believe their gifts were delivered by the three Kings and write letters to them. The letters may be delivered from late December to January 4th to the "Royal Postman" (*Cartero Real*) in the Plaza del Icue. If children receive a lump of coal as their gift, it symbolises they have been naughty!

17 January honours **St Anthony the Great (San Antón)**, patron saint of animals. Born in the year 251 AD in Egypt, he is known as the father of Monks as he organised his followers into a Christian community. One of the most distinctive traditions is the blessing of donkeys, often colourfully dressed, symbolising good fortune. The celebrations are accompanied by music, dancing and street food.



FEBRUARY

The Carnival of Cartagena fills the city with colour and energy in the days leading up to Ash Wednesday. Costume parades, lively street parties, masked balls. The satirical performances of *chirigotas*, singing groups who humorously critique politics and everyday life, create a festive atmosphere. Carnival Queens are chosen for both adults and children.



MARCH / APRIL

Holy Week (Semana Santa) is one of Cartagena's most important and moving celebrations. Spanning ten days and recognised as an event of international tourist interest, the processions are a powerful and unforgettable experience. Brotherhoods (*cofradías*) carry richly decorated religious thrones through the streets, many weighing several tonnes.

Each brotherhood is identified by its distinctive robes and pointed hoods. The *Marrajos*, formed in the 16th century and traditionally associated with fishermen, wear purple, while the *Californios* wear red. Most processions take place at night, with many beginning and ending at the Church of Santa María de Gracia.

Highlights include the first procession on the Friday before Palm Sunday, accompanied by muffled drums; the Military Marines escort on Holy Tuesday; the dramatic arrest of Christ on Holy Wednesday night; the solemn silence of Maundy Thursday; and the joyful Resurrection Procession on Easter Sunday.

For up-to-date schedules, visit turismo.cartagena.es or semanasantacartagena.info

The Cartagena Magic Festival also takes place in spring, offering open-air performances across city plazas, using magic as a tool for cultural education. Details are available at festivalcartagenaesmagia.es



MAY

MUCHO MAS MAYO runs for the whole of May with artistic interventions in public spaces and many creative works from an assortment of artists. It is a month of music and dancing.

Around May 3rd, flower crosses may be seen in the streets and flamenco dancing and concerts take place in open air spaces.

Until 24 May 2026, the National Museum of Underwater Archaeology (ARQVA) hosts **Phoenicians: Merchants of the Sea**, an exhibition centred on the discovery of a Phoenician shipwreck. More details are available at museoarqua.es

The El Batel Auditorium is hosting a new theatre season, featuring acclaimed performers and offering an excellent opportunity to engage with Spanish arts and language.

Another highlight is **La Noche de los Museos**, an evening when many of the historical buildings and museums are open free to the public. Cartagena comes alive with local people and tourists filling the historical areas of the city for an evening of culture and fun. The event is popular and some queues for venues can be expected. Full details may be found via lanochedelosmuseos.cartagena.es



JUNE / JULY

The **Rock Imperium Festival** takes place from 3–5 July 2026 in El Batel Park. This is a major event. The headline act this year is **IRON MAIDEN**. They will perform on Saturday 4th July. A full line up and daily schedule may be found at rockimperiumfestival.es

The National Folklore Festival brings traditional music and dance to Cartagena and surrounding areas, including the Fiesta de La Palma.

From 17–25 July 2026, **La Mar de Músicas (The sea of music)** fills the city with international and Spanish music. This is another major event with multiple stages and top Spanish music acts. Current and past events have hosted "guest countries" to promote cultural exchange. This year showcases Ecuador and features their culture, music, art, film and food. Visit lamardemusicas.com for more information.



AUGUST

August is traditionally a holiday month in Spain. Local families head to the beaches, but it is a great time for tourists to seek out shady museums and cooler venues. It is good time to explore the Casa de la Fortuna, the Punic Wall, The Augusteum, Conception Castle and the Roman Amphitheatre.

Just a few steps away, in the Plaza del Hospital, stands the disused Bullring. Built in 1854 over the remains of an earlier Roman amphitheatre, it used construction techniques strikingly similar to those of the original structure. While the Bullring's façade still survives, the main interest today lies in the 1st-century BC Roman amphitheatre discovered beneath it.

Café culture thrives along the quayside and along the Calle Mayor, while boat tours of the historic harbour, with an optional stop at Fuerte de Navidad, offer a refreshing perspective on the city.



SEPTEMBER

The **Carthaginians and Romans Festival** is a spectacular ten-day event re-enacting episodes from the Second Punic War. Gladiator battles, Roman themed markets, lavish parades and the wedding of Hannibal and Himilce transform the city into a living stage. You can expect to see people wandering the streets in Carthaginian and Roman costumes at all hours of the day and evening. This city brings new meaning to the famous William Shakespeare phrase from *As You Like It*: *All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players*.



OCTOBER / NOVEMBER

The **Cartagena Jazz Festival**, now in its 45th year, runs from 28 October to 15 November 2026. An essential date for jazz enthusiasts, with performance details available closer to the event.

More information on jazz.cartagena.es

The **International Film Festival of Cartagena (FICC)** showcases feature films, shorts, animation and regional productions at venues across the city. The event is usually held in November, but at the time of going to print dates were not available. Further updates can be found at ficc.es



DECEMBER

Pop-up Christmas markets appear in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento, offering festive food and artisan crafts. Seasonal concerts, sometimes held in the Roman Theatre, add a magical atmosphere.

Check the tourist website turismo.cartagena.es for more details

Culture Beyond the Calendar



CULTURE THROUGH CERAMICS

Ceramic production in the region dates back to around 5000 BC, with significant influence from Arab artisans between the 8th and 15th centuries. There are many shops in the area that sell very traditional ceramic articles whether it's the colourful olive dishes, oil and vinegar sets or tiles for the floor.

Walking around the La Manga Club resort modern planters in the style of the original Roman ones can be found. Around the quayside in Cartagena there is a monument with reproduction Roman wine vessels leaning against the base.

CULTURE THROUGH GASTRONOMY

Food, perhaps more than anything, reveals Cartagena's everyday culture. This is a place where meals are social rituals and recipes tell stories of land and sea. Local specialities such as *caldero*, a rich rice dish cooked in fish stock, reflect the traditions of the nearby fishing communities. Tapas bars serve regional favourites like *marinera* (a crisp bread base topped with Russian salad and anchovy) and fresh seafood brought in that morning. Markets such as Mercado de Santa Florentina offer a glimpse of the ingredients that define Murcian cooking: tomatoes, peppers, olive oil, almonds and citrus.

And don't forget *Paparajotes* a local dessert made from the leaves of the lemon tree. The many citrus orchards surrounding Cartagena supply the leaves for this dessert. It's not a surprise that *Paparajotes* were created using what is prevalent in the area. It is a tasty local invention where lemon leaves are coated in a batter made from flour, eggs, milk and lemon zest, quickly deep fried and coated in cinnamon and sugar. (To eat, suck off the batter and discard the leaves).

To experience Cartagena's culture beyond the calendar, the key is simple: slow down. Browse a neighbourhood ceramics stall. Step into an independent bookshop. Linger over a long lunch. Walk the harbour at sunset as locals do. The city's true character isn't something that happens occasionally, it unfolds every day. In Cartagena, culture isn't an event. It's a way of life.



From Bodybuilding to Brainwaves:

The Remarkable Journey of Dra. Ane Miren Gutiérrez



When you first meet Dr. Ane Miren Gutiérrez, it's easy to be struck by her calm, grounded presence. A serenity that seems to radiate from someone who has learned to find balance in both body and mind. But behind that quiet confidence lies an extraordinary story: from bodybuilding champion to neuroscientist and wellness pioneer, Ane's journey is as inspiring as it is unexpected.

'I actually started bodybuilding while studying for my master's degree in biomedical physics in Madrid,' she recalls with a smile. 'It began as a way to deal with the stress and anxiety of my PhD, which I was doing in a hospital. I just needed an outlet.'

What started as a hobby quickly became a passion. In 2021, Ane entered, and excelled in, several bodybuilding competitions, including one in Cádiz where she took first place. 'It was just after *Covid-19*, so there weren't many competitors, but it was such an incredible experience,' she says. 'That's really when my interest in sports, nutrition, and human performance took off.'

But her fascination with health began long before Madrid. 'When I was about 14 or 15, I was diagnosed with several autoimmune conditions,' she explains. 'That pushed me to start researching how to improve my own health by reading, learning, and experimenting. It planted the seed for everything I do now.'

After years of intense study and city life, Ane decided to leave Madrid for a slower pace. 'I met my boyfriend David in Cabo de Palos while diving. He was actually one of my brother's friends!' she laughs. 'After a while, we started dating, and we moved to La Manga Club. Honestly, it's been the best decision of my life. The last two-years here have been incredible.'

Amid the sunshine and sea air, Ane found space not only to breathe but also to build. This January, after six years of rigorous work, she finally completed her PhD in neuroscience, a milestone that marked a new chapter in her already multifaceted career. Though her background is rooted in physics and electronic engineering, Ane's curiosity led her into the field of

neuroscience, specifically, neuromodulation, a cutting-edge technique that uses electrical or magnetic fields to help the brain's neurons function more effectively.

'Think of it like tuning a radio,' she explains. 'Our neurons operate at specific frequencies. When everything is working well, they're perfectly tuned. But when something goes wrong, with conditions like Parkinson's, depression, or anxiety, those frequencies shift. Neuromodulation helps bring them back to balance.'

It sounds futuristic, but the results are remarkably real. 'Some conditions, like depression or anxiety, can even be reversed,' Ane says. 'There are studies showing recovery rates of up to 95% using magnetic-field-based neuromodulation, and sometimes in just five days.'

'The beauty of these treatments' she adds, 'is that they're non-invasive. For electrical neuromodulation, we place two small patches on the scalp. You don't feel anything, the current is incredibly mild. With magnetic stimulation, we use a small coil that emits gentle pulses. You just hear some clicks, but it's completely safe and painless.'

Sessions can last anywhere from 40 seconds to half an hour, depending on the method, and are usually done daily over several weeks. Costs vary, but an intensive five-day course can range from €3,000 to €5,000, while longer treatments for conditions like Parkinson's are priced similarly over a six-week period.

In Spain, insurance coverage is still limited, though Ane notes that 'in the U.S., where neuromodulation first took off, many medical insurance companies already include it.'

"These days, Ane operates primarily from her base at La Manga Club, where she offers online consultations focused on personalised assessment, lifestyle guidance, and neuronutritional support, while also serving as the Technical Director of lonclinics, a company dedicated to developing neuromodulation technologies and carrying out clinical trials with cutting-edge therapeutic



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devices. Although this technology is only just becoming available in the region, her dual clinical and technical roles allow her to stay at the forefront of innovation and guide clients with solid, up-to-date scientific criteria.



For clients living abroad, Ane offers expert support in navigating treatment options, helping them understand protocols, evidence, and what to expect in clinics across Europe. 'My father-in-law has Parkinson's and lives in England, so I know how difficult it can be to access these treatments.' Ane also collaborates with MHS Clinic in Bilbao, where she works as a neuro-nutritionist, integrating dietary science into neurological care. 'There's a huge connection between the brain and the gut', she explains. 'In many neurological conditions, the gut microbiome looks very different

from that of healthy individuals. We don't yet know whether the imbalance starts in the gut or the brain, but we know they affect each other deeply.'

Ane's vision for the future is as ambitious as it is compassionate. 'I want to change the way we think about health,' she says. 'People are used to going to the doctor only when something's broken, a bone, a joint, a symptom. But I want to create a space where people come to improve their overall wellbeing - body, mind, and lifestyle, in a way that's grounded in science, not magic.'



She believes stress is one of today's biggest health challenges. 'Most people don't even realise how stressed they are until they slow

down,' she says. 'When you finally stop and breathe, you see how much your body's been trying to tell you.'

For Ane, La Manga Club has become more than just a place to live, it's a hub for transformation. 'My goal here is to help people feel better, live better, and understand themselves better, through neuroscience, nutrition, and solid scientific evidence. No shortcuts, no gimmicks, just real, proven methods that work.'



And as she speaks, it's clear she's living proof of her own philosophy a rare combination of intellect, discipline, and heart.

Ane Miren Gutiérrez:
anemirengm@gmail.com

Securing the Future

Investing in the Owners' Clubhouse

In July 2023, under the direction of Andrew Millard and with the support of all Presidents and Elected Representatives, the General Community took an important and forward-thinking step: the purchase of the Owners' Clubhouse (OCH).

The decision was simple in principle but significant in impact. The idea was to secure a permanent home for owners, safeguarding both the building itself and the long-term benefit of having a dedicated space at the heart of the community.



Malcolm Elam – Vice President



Andrew invited Vice President Malcolm Elam to take responsibility for the fabric of the building, its maintenance and ensuring it is fully fit for purpose. Over the past three years, that remit has translated into a comprehensive programme of practical improvements – some visible, others less so, but all essential.

When the building was acquired, it appeared in good order. Cosmetic upgrades had been completed with new flooring, tables, chairs and lighting and everything seemed in place. However, a closer inspection revealed that several core systems had not been modernised for many years.

One of the first priorities was the central heating system. The boiler, responsible for warmth during the cooler months, was found to be non-functional and was subsequently condemned by the gas engineer. It was immediately replaced with a sleeker, more energy-efficient model, which not only improved reliability but also freed up valuable storage space.

Attention then turned to climate control during the summer months. The air-conditioning units in both the main bar and the activity room were underperforming. These have now been replaced and optimised, ensuring a more comfortable environment year-round. In a practical and resourceful move, previously stored units were repurposed to provide air-conditioning in the restaurant, which had not been air-conditioned in the past.

Safety and usability have also been major priorities. The windows between the restaurant and terrace presented ongoing challenges, with around 30% unable to open and others no

longer functioning safely. These have now been replaced with larger sliding windows, offering improved views, enhanced safety and far better functionality.

Accessibility has been carefully addressed. The restaurant and terrace doors have been automated, improving flow for guests and making life easier for Joaquín and his serving staff whilst carrying food. Radar-activated disabled access is also being installed at the main entrance, ensuring the building is welcoming and accessible to everyone including wheelchair users and families with prams.



Behind the scenes, one of the most significant projects was the full replacement of the kitchen floor. Long overdue, the upgrade ensures the kitchen is fully compliant with health and safety standards and provides a safer, more efficient working environment for the team. Although it required a temporary closure of the Clubhouse, the project was completed smoothly by a specialist team who removed and reinstalled all equipment with impressive efficiency.

Further support has been given to Joaquín and his team, including assistance with the installation of a new €12,000 oven equipping the kitchen with the tools needed to maintain and enhance its culinary offering.

Owners' Clubhouse team



Internally, facilities have been modernised with the replacement of WC pans in the ladies', gents' and disabled toilets, providing a more contemporary and streamlined finish.

Outside, the gardens and grounds have been refreshed and replanted with appropriate seasonal shrubs and flowering plants. Handrails at the entrance steps have also been upgraded to ensure compliance and enhance safety for all users.

Importantly, all of these improvements have been funded through rental income generated by the Clubhouse. The operation remains self-financing, with funds in reserve and repayments already underway on the interest-free loan provided by the General Community for the original purchase.

Looking ahead, plans are in place to further enhance the interior over the coming years: refining lighting, improving the ambience and creating a warmer, more inviting club atmosphere. Discussions are underway with a local design company, as well as with an experienced restaurant operator who has managed a major restaurant chain across the UK, bringing valuable insight into shaping the next chapter.

The progress achieved so far reflects careful stewardship by Malcolm Elam and a clear long-term vision. The Owners' Clubhouse is not simply being maintained. It is being strengthened, modernised and thoughtfully developed to ensure it remains a special gathering place for today's owners and for generations to come.



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Competition Time:

Dine Out on Your Local Knowledge

Win a meal for two at the Grand Hyatt La Manga Club Golf and Spa Sunday Brunch.

Hidden in Plain Sight

For this year's competition, we're inviting you to slow down, look closer, and test just how observant you really are.

Below you'll find **six close-up photographs**, each taken somewhere in the local area. Some may feel instantly familiar; others are deliberately more elusive. Your challenge is to **identify the exact location of all six images**. Get them right and you stand a chance of winning a wonderful meal for two at the Grand Hyatt La Manga Club Golf and Spa Sunday Brunch (worth €190).

How to enter

1. Study each of the six photographs below carefully.
2. Identify where each one was taken - accuracy matters.
3. Send your answers via email to competition43@gclmc.com or by post to: Competition 43, The General Community, Las Sabinas local 3, La Manga Club, Cartagena, 30389, Murcia, Spain.
4. Remember to include your name, address, email address and your telephone number.



All entries that correctly identify all six locations will be entered into a prize draw. The closing date for entries is September 30th 2026. The winner will receive a voucher entitling them to a meal for two at the Grand Hyatt La Manga Club Golf & Spa Sunday Brunch (when operating).

Good luck - and enjoy looking again.

Terms of Entry:

Entrants must be 18 years of age or older. The value of the prize is up to €190 and must be used by 31 April 2027. No cash alternative. The competition is for personal entertainment purposes only and neither the official La Manga Club General Community Magazine nor Magazine Enterprise LMC SL accept any responsibility for any inability of the Grand Hyatt in fulfilling the prize or entries not being received. No correspondence will be entered into and the Judges' decision is final and binding in all matters. All entrants accept the Terms of Entry when submitting their entries, the copyright of which will vest with Magazine Enterprise LMC SL once submitted. Promoter: Magazine Enterprise LMC SL.

Winner Announcement!

In the last issue of the *La Manga Club General Community Magazine*, we invited readers to take part in a competition in partnership with **The Beauty Chambers** - a chance to win a collection of luxury beauty treatments.

Congratulations to Our Winner: Rani Hesketh of El Rancho

We extend a warm thank-you to everyone who entered.





Cartagena Sets Sail for a Better Future

Port Authority president Pedro Pablo Hernández outlines a bold vision, where sustainable growth and a reimagined waterfront helps to position the city as one of the Mediterranean's most compelling destinations

In November 2024, Pedro Pablo Hernández became the President of the Cartagena Port Authority. Here the *Official La Manga Club General Community Magazine* asks him what his vision is for the City and how the resort of La Manga Club and the Authority can work together to grow the region.

Mr. President, the Port Authority plays a key role in the city's economic development. In your view, what are the main challenges facing the City in the coming years?

Cartagena is at a particularly important juncture with enormous potential. The main challenge is to consolidate economic development, environmental sustainability, and the quality of life for citizens. The Port of Cartagena is the Region's primary economic engine, generating around 6% of GDP and handling most of the foreign trade.

We are working on several initiatives including strengthening our logistical competitiveness plus we are leading the energy transition, evolving from a traditional model towards a clean green hydrogen, biofuels, and natural gas energy hub.

Also, the growth of tourism, especially cruise tourism, presents another significant opportunity. Cartagena is experiencing record passenger numbers compelling us to continue improving the infrastructure and services – our goal is not just growth but better growth.

One of the most interesting waterfront projects we have heard about is "From Lighthouse to Lighthouse" – a port to city integration model worth €7.2m. What does this project mean for the city and its future?

This is a strategic commitment to redefine the relationship between the port and the city. Our goal, in collaboration with Cartagena City Council, is to open the port to the public, reclaim historic spaces, and transform the waterfront into a major hub for community life, economic activity and tourism.

We're talking about the revitalisation of more than ten kilometres of waterfront including projects such as the renovation of Santa Lucía, the improvement of the cruise terminal area and the enhancement of heritage

and natural spaces in El Espalmador. All of this will create new, more accessible, sustainable public spaces.

This project reinforces Cartagena's position as a high-quality tourist destination. The port then becomes a shared space where visitors arrive directly into the heart of the city. This will boost commerce, hospitality and services as well as the quality of life for residents.

In short, this is a transformation designed for better growth in an orderly, sustainable way.

These improvements are expected to attract more visitors. How are you addressing the challenges of parking and transport overall in the area?

Mobility is one of the major challenges which we are tackling in coordination with the Council. It's not just about creating more parking spaces, but about better managing traffic flows, improving access and committing to a more sustainable and efficient model.

We are reorganising access points, especially around the cruise terminal. In addition, we are developing new pedestrian and cycling routes, such as the bike path that will connect Cala Cortina with El Espalmador. We are also going to strengthen public transport using park-and-ride facilities.

The goal is to facilitate convenient, orderly, and sustainable access to the port and to the centre of the city, improving the experience for both residents and visitors.

As we read on page 20, Cartagena has established itself as a cruise destination. Do you think the city could evolve into a home port in the future?

Cartagena has experienced remarkable growth in cruise traffic in recent years. We are one of the most attractive destinations in the Mediterranean.

Becoming a home port is undoubtedly a goal we are pursuing, but it is also important to be realistic because it doesn't depend solely on the port itself. To make that leap, other key infrastructure aspects such as air connectivity and hotel capacity also need to grow. The



main challenge lies not so much in the port as in the overall infrastructure of the region.

Can this be achieved? Well, I am confident given Cartagena's established position and tourist prestige. We have all the necessary ingredients to work with the City Council and the Regional Government.

The resort of La Manga Club is an international tourist destination close to Cartagena. How do you think the city can contribute to its development?

Cartagena offers a unique value that naturally complements the excellence of the resort of La Manga Club. We're talking about a city with over 3,000 years of history, a unique cultural heritage and a constantly growing gastronomic and leisure scene, all of which enriches the experience of those who visit the destination.

Today, tourism is no longer an isolated product but a range of comprehensive experiences. Cruise passengers seek unique experiences that can only be enjoyed at the destination. The combination of a world-class resort like La Manga Club, focused on sports, relaxation, and international tourism, with a dynamic, culturally rich city like Cartagena creates a very powerful and attractive partnership.

Furthermore, the growth of international tourism is attracting new types of visitors, many of them high-spending, who may find La Manga Club a perfect complement to extend their stay or return again at a later date.

From the Port of Cartagena Authority's perspective, we are: positioning Cartagena as a quality destination, capable of adding value to its surroundings and integrating with top-tier tourist offerings like the resort of La Manga Club, generating synergies that benefit the entire region.

And what about the other way around? What does our resort bring to Cartagena?

The resort of La Manga Club is one of the major tourist assets in the Cartagena area and is a driver of

international popularity with the only true five-star hotel in the region. It brings a high-value, international, and year-round visitor profile, which fits perfectly with Cartagena's strategy as a quality destination. Its ability to attract sports, residential, and conference tourism year-round helps balance demand beyond the peak season, generating economic stability and employment throughout the region. Furthermore, it projects an image of excellence, sustainability, and service that strengthens the Cartagena brand across international markets.

But above all, the resort expands the city's tourist reach. Many visitors who come for leisure, sports, or business end up discovering Cartagena as a cultural, gastronomic, and heritage place, creating a constant flow between the two destinations. This relationship is not accidental; it is a strategic opportunity. The stronger La Manga Club resort becomes, the greater the positive impact on Cartagena and the surrounding area.

And finally, if you had to identify a strategic priority for Cartagena, what would it be?

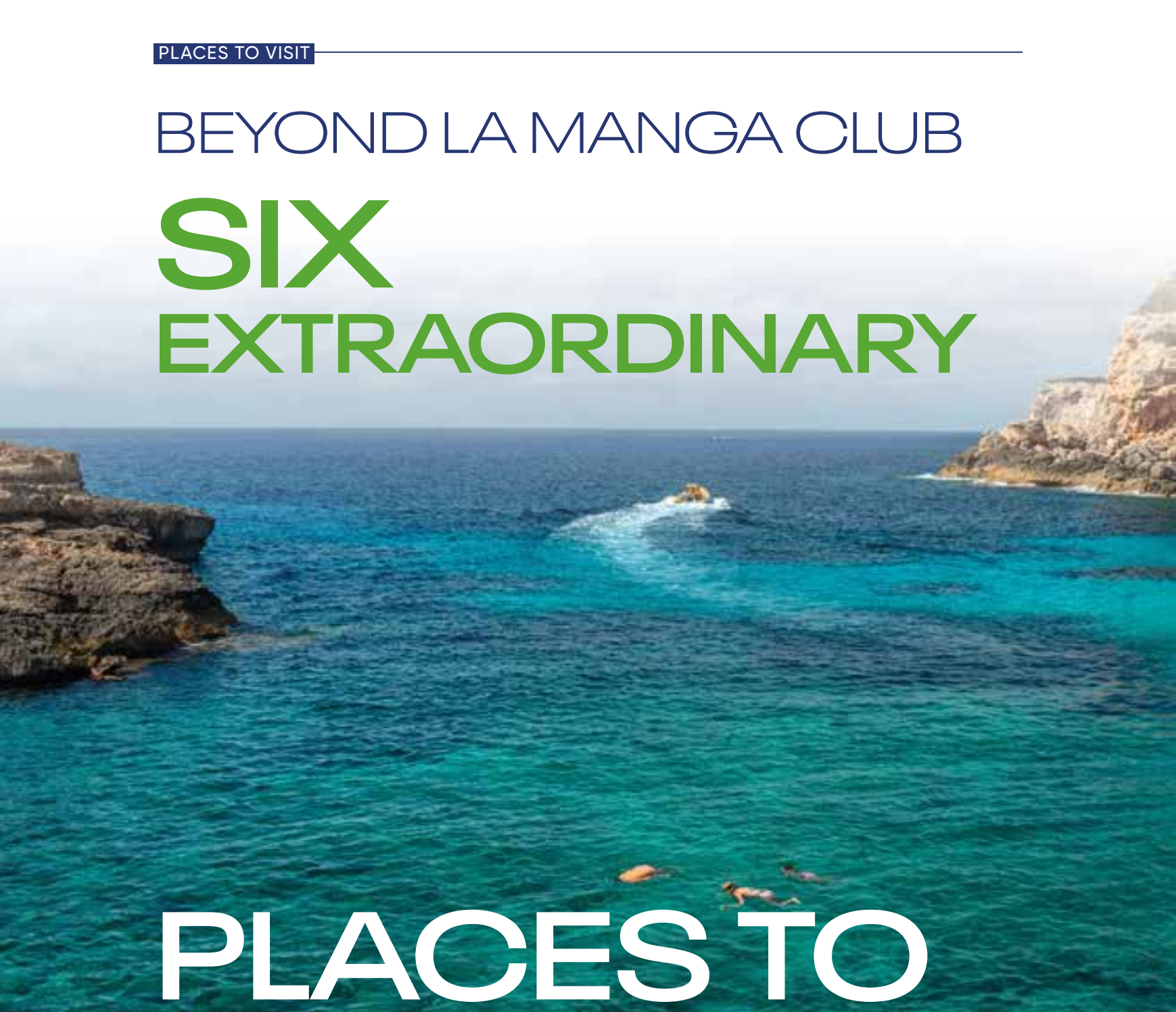
The top priority is growth but growth that is done right. And that undoubtedly involves consolidating a city model based on sustainability, innovation, and the creation of opportunities.

Cartagena has all the ingredients to lead its own future. It boasts a port that is a strategic Mediterranean location plus an economic and industrial engine. It has a dynamic business sector and growing international tourism. The challenge now is to align all these elements into a model that generates wealth, employment and a high quality of life.

At the Port Authority, we work with this vision: an open, competitive, and sustainable port that not only boosts the economy but also contributes to building a more modern, connected and vibrant city, proud of its relationship with the sea. Because, ultimately, Cartagena's future cannot be understood without its port, nor the port without Cartagena.

BEYOND LA MANGA CLUB

SIX EXTRAORDINARY



PLACES TO DISCOVER

Life on the resort of La Manga Club has a wonderful rhythm of its own. Sunlit mornings, breakfast on the terrace, championship golf courses, long lunches, tennis and padel afternoons and then evenings that drift effortlessly into the night. Yet just beyond lies a region rich in stories, landscapes and unusual experiences that many never quite get around to discovering. The region has a plethora of interesting escapes which for those willing to venture a little further are often surprised by just how much variety awaits.

From surreal sandstone formations shaped by the elements to tranquil salt flats where flamingos gather; from volcanic islands rising from the Mediterranean to industrial heritage carved deep into the earth; this corner of Murcia offers far far more than beaches alone. Even the journey itself can become part of the adventure, whether gliding into Cartagena by historic rail or stepping into nature's own open-air spa along the shores of the Mar Menor.

In the next few pages, we explore some lesser-known yet unforgettable experiences. All within easy reach of La Manga Club and designed to inspire both first-time visitors and long-term residents to see the region through fresh eyes. Sometimes, the most memorable moments are found just off the well-trodden path.



THE MAR MENOR MUD FLATS

NATURE'S SPA

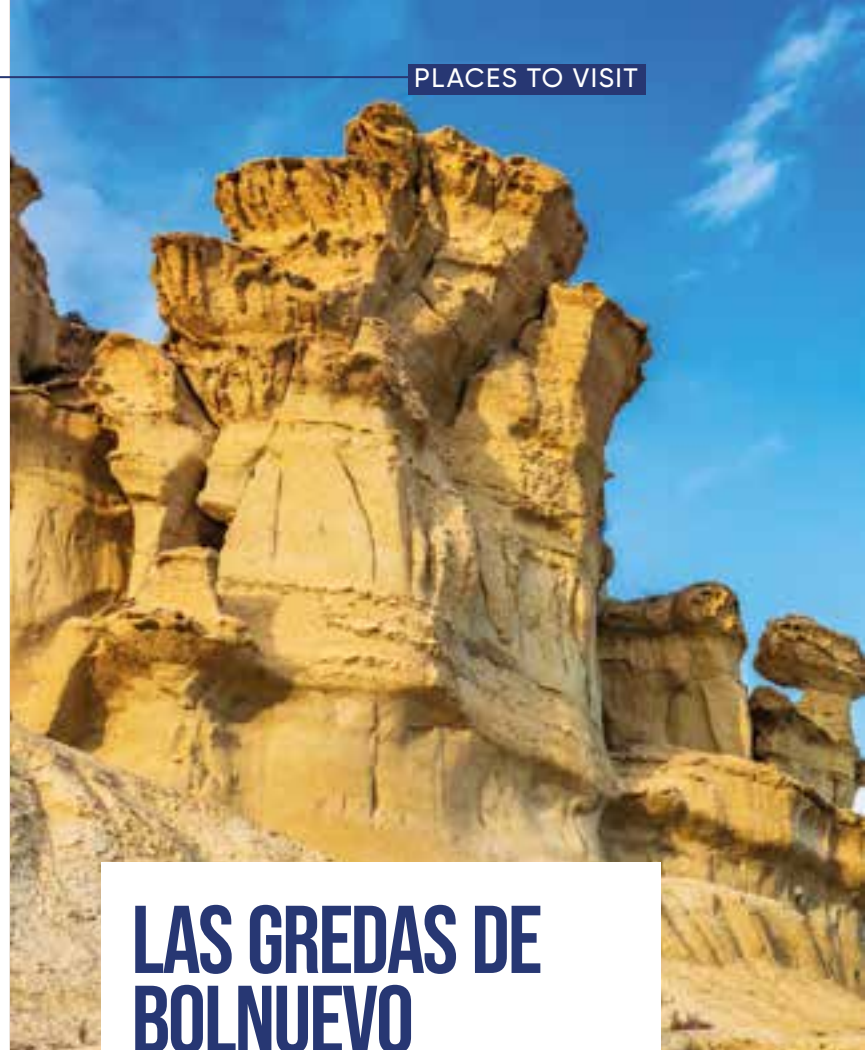
A short journey from La Manga Club lies one of the region's most unusual and delightfully experiences: the Mar Menor mud flats. These natural mud baths at San Pedro del Pinetar offer visitors a chance to embrace the elements, and enjoy a wellness ritual that feels deeply grounding.

The experience is simple. Visitors coat themselves in warm, mineral-rich black mud drawn from the salt lagoons, allow it to dry under the Mediterranean sun, and then gently wash it away in the shallow waters of the Mar Menor. Rich in magnesium, calcium and sulphates, the mud has traditionally been used to soothe skin conditions, ease joint pain and leave the skin feeling remarkably soft.

The mud flats are a reminder that some of the most memorable experiences in the region are rooted in nature itself.

Location & how to get there

-  Las Charcas Mud Baths, San Pedro del Pinetar (Mar Menor)
-  Approximately 40 minutes by car from La Manga Club
-  Free parking available near the salt flats; a short walk to the mud bathing area



LAS GREDAS DE BOLNUEVO

THE ENCHANTED CITY OF SANDSTONE

Less than an hour south by car from La Manga Club, the coastline near Bolnuevo reveals one of Murcia's most striking natural wonders. Las Gredas de Bolnuevo, often referred to as the *Enchanted City of Sandstone*, is a surreal landscape.

Rising directly from the shoreline, these soft sandstone formations resemble giant mushrooms, towers and arches, creating a setting that feels more like a film location than a beach walk. Photographers, walkers and curious explorers alike will find plenty to admire here.

Combine the visit with a stroll along Bolnuevo Beach or a leisurely lunch nearby, and you have a perfect half-day escape that showcases the raw beauty of the region.

Location & how to get there

-  Las Gredas de Bolnuevo, Bolnuevo (Mazarrón), Murcia
-  Approximately 55 minutes by car from La Manga Club
-  Free parking available close to the formations; easy access on foot

PUENTE DE LA RISA

THE LAUGHING BRIDGE

Tucked away at the northern end of La Manga del Mar Menor lies one of the area's most unexpected landmarks: the Puente de la Risa, or the "Laughing Bridge." At first glance it looks like a simple road bridge, but anyone who has driven over it understands instantly how it earned its name. A hoot of the car horn is almost obligatory to warn oncomers and ensure safe passage over this wonderful structure.

Built to span the canals of the Veneziola area, the bridge has become a minor local legend. It's a perfect example of the region's quirky charm. Sometimes, the best discoveries are the ones you weren't looking for at all.

Location & how to get there

-  Puente de la Risa, Veneziola, La Manga del Mar Menor
-  Approximately 40 minutes by car from La Manga Club, slightly longer in Summer
-  Easily accessible by car, bike or on foot when exploring northern La Manga del Mar Menor

SALINAS Y ARENALES DE SAN PEDRO DEL PINATAR

FLAMINGOS & SALT FLATS

Just north of the Mar Menor lies one of the most visually striking landscapes in the Region of Murcia. The Salinas y Arenales de San Pedro del Pinatar is a protected natural park where centuries-old salt production coexists with thriving wildlife.

The star attraction here is the flamingos. Drawn by the shallow, saline waters, these elegant birds can often be seen wading gracefully through the pink-tinged lagoons, offering unforgettable photo opportunities throughout the year.

A visit to the Salinas provides a refreshing change of rhythm. A chance to reconnect with nature, enjoy wide open skies and experience a quieter side of the region. Whether you come for birdwatching, walking, cycling or simply the sense of calm, this natural park is a reminder of the region's remarkable biodiversity.

Location & how to get there

-  Salinas y Arenales Regional Park, San Pedro del Pinatar, Murcia
-  Approximately 40 minutes by car from La Manga Club
-  Several free parking areas around the park; flat, accessible walking routes

LA UNIÓN MINING MUSEUM & UNDERGROUND MINE VISIT

MURCIA'S INDUSTRIAL HEART

A short drive inland and down the more minor roads from La Manga Club brings you to La Unión, a town shaped by centuries of mining history. The Mining Museum of La Unión (*Museo Minero*) offers visitors a fascinating journey into the lives of the men and women who worked these hills, extracting lead, steel, silver and zinc and leaving an indelible mark on the landscape.

The highlight is the opportunity to descend into a real mine. Equipped with a helmet and guided by experts, visitors walk through restored underground galleries that recreate the conditions miners once endured.

A visit to La Unión provides a powerful contrast to the coast. Pair it with a stroll through the town or a coffee in the central plaza, and you'll gain an appreciation of the region beyond its sun-soaked shores.

Location & how to get there



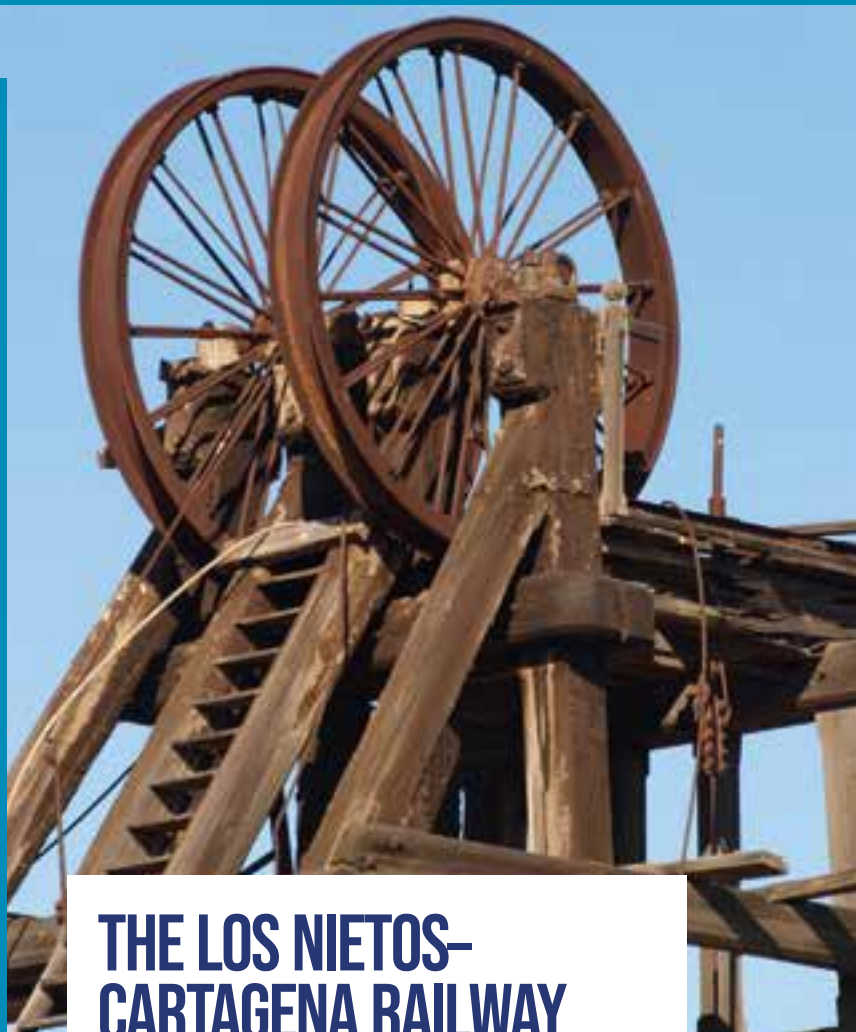
Museo Minero de La Unión, La Unión, Murcia



Approximately 25 minutes by car from La Manga Club



Public parking available nearby; mine visit accessed as part of the museum experience



THE LOS NIETOS-CARTAGENA RAILWAY

A SCENIC, STRESS-FREE ROUTE INTO THE CITY

For visitors looking to experience Cartagena without the hassle of traffic or finding a parking space, the single-track railway from Los Nietos offers a charming, relaxed alternative journey. This historic line runs along the edge of the Mar Menor before heading inland to and then seaward again to Cartagena.

The single-track train trundles through salt flats, lagoons and small mainland coastal communities, offering views that you simply don't get from the road. Arriving on the outskirts of the City of Cartagena, the station offers visitors the opportunity to walk into the centre via the old arabic quarter or down to the increasingly active port.

Drive a short distance to Los Nietos, leave the car behind, and enjoy a scenic ride straight into history.

Location & how to get there



Los Nietos Railway Station – Cartagena Railway Station



Around 20 minutes by car from La Manga Club to Los Nietos



Direct regional train service to Cartagena; journey time approx. 45 minutes



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Uschi Glas

SIX DECADES OF STARDOM AND STILL RIDING HIGH

Few actresses enjoy a career that spans nearly six decades. Fewer still remain as energetic, candid and socially engaged as German screen legend Uschi Glas.

From her breakthrough in the 1960s to her latest television success and her extraordinary charity work feeding thousands of children every day, Glas remains as passionate as ever.

We sat down with Uschi and her husband Dieter at their La Manga Club home and talked about acting, ageing, courage and why breakfast can change a child's life.





In 1972 with Curd Jürgens

It All Began in 1966

Glas became a household name almost overnight when she landed her first leading role in 1966 in *Winnetou and the Half-Blood Apache*, one of Germany's most beloved cinematic series.

"It was my first big role and it was a huge success," she recalls. After that, things moved quickly – more films, theatre, and later television.

"In the beginning, television wasn't considered 'serious' for actors – cinema and theatre were the goal. But times changed. By the mid-1970s I began mixing theatre, film, television and even singing. And I've been doing that ever since."

Nearly 60-years later, she is still at the top of her game.

You would imagine that someone with such a long career has mastered the art of memorising scripts.

"I never sit at a table," she laughs. "If I sit, I get bored. I walk. I go outside, sometimes into nature, and I speak the lines out loud. Movement is very healthy for the brain."

"Sometimes I think, 'That's it, nothing is staying in my head.' Then I sleep, wake up the next morning and suddenly it's all there. It feels like a miracle."

Despite decades of applause, the nerves remain.

"Always," she says without hesitation. "Before going on stage, there is always fear. Then you step out and suddenly you are alive."

That spark, that electricity, is what keeps her returning to the camera.

"I love it. That's why I still work."



Uschi with Omar Sharif and Lorne Greene

Reinventing the Heroine

Her latest television film, *Enkeltrick* has become one of Germany's recent rating successes. In it, Glas plays an elderly woman tricked by the infamous "fake grandson" scam. A criminal scheme in which fraudsters pose as relatives in distress to extract huge sums of money.

"It happens every day in Germany," she explains. "Millions are lost."

But this is no tragic drama. After falling victim, her character moves into a retirement home only to form an unlikely alliance with three formidable women. Together, they decide to hunt down the criminals themselves.

"Ultimately, it's a comedy," she smiles. "Four older women chasing criminals and causing chaos."

The film was such a success that discussions of a sequel are already underway. Glas beams at the thought.

Beauty, Age and the Industry

Few actresses speak as frankly about ageing in entertainment.

"When you are young, everything is easier. After 40, 50 – it becomes harder. Especially for women."

Yet she navigated those transitions with precision.

"I moved from young girl to young lady, to mother, to businesswoman, and now to grandmother. You must move forward with your age, not fight it."

She recalls early pressure in her career to conform, even to disrobe onscreen in the name of liberation.

"I said no. Emancipation does not mean you must take off your clothes. You must stand by yourself."

Then she adds something striking:

"My biggest friend is me. If something doesn't feel right, you must say no."

It is perhaps that steel beneath the glamour that has carried her so far.



Uschi with Pierre Brice

A Star With a Cause

While her acting career made her famous, it is her charity work that clearly moves her most.

In 2009, Glas and her husband founded brotZeit ("Bread Time"), a nationwide breakfast initiative providing meals to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"We discovered that thousands of children in Munich were coming to school hungry - unable to concentrate, often aggressive, struggling to learn."

Despite early resistance (officials initially denied there was a problem) the initiative grew.

Today, brotZeit provides breakfast for more than 21,000 children every school day across Germany - that's roughly 4.2 million breakfasts per year.

"It runs like clockwork," she says proudly. "Not one single day without service."

The programme is supported by around 3,000 senior volunteers.

"And the biggest side effect? It brings generations together, it gives them time to talk together. Socialising them enormously," Dieter says. "The aggression in schools drops dramatically. One headteacher told us, 'I don't need plasters anymore.'"

The annual budget is close to €10 million. Glas and Dieter have invested not just financially, but personally travelling constantly, fundraising, speaking, persuading.

"This is our baby," she says. "We don't give up. We have a really supportive team of fellow directors and organisers. The authorities now approve of us. In fact, they welcome what we do."

La Manga Club: A Second Home

Despite a life lived under lights, Glas cherishes her privacy.

She first discovered La Manga Club through a German promotional initiative decades ago and immediately felt something rare: security.

"We felt safe here immediately. That was very important to me, especially when I was travelling alone with my children. I felt safe here. Safety is everything."

Today she and her husband visit around ten times a year and enjoy every minute of it.

"We fly in and arrive with only a small suitcase," she laughs. "Everything is already here."

Glas and her husband play golf and padel, which they took up enthusiastically when it arrived at the resort. They walk regularly through the surrounding countryside and along the coastline.

One improvement she would love to see?

"A large children's playground," she says instantly. "I have four grandchildren, soon to be five, and I would love a proper place for them to gather and play. I remember the old Oasis pool and what that offered."

She loves the balance the resort provides.

"In my profession, there are big dinners, big events. It is all a show. Here, I can just be myself."



Uschi and husband Dieter

Still Curious. Still Passionate.

After six decades in the spotlight, Uschi Glas shows no sign of dimming. She remains elegant, engaged and unmistakably driven, not by fame, but by purpose. She is genuine and ensures our chat is at ease throughout.

"It's not interesting to say I was successful," she says. "It is more important what you do with your life."

From cinematic legend to social campaigner, from leading lady to formidable grandmother on screen and off, she continues to reinvent what stardom looks like. And if she has one piece of advice for young actors?

"Stand by yourself. Say no when you must. Your biggest friend should always be you."



Uschi provides breakfast for school children

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Making La Manga Club HOME

For many, La Manga Club begins as a holiday destination – a place to escape to for a few weeks each year. But for some, those short stays gradually give way to a bigger decision: to make the resort not just a retreat, but a permanent home.

Choosing to relocate is never a small step. It means leaving behind familiar routines, communities and, often, countries, in favour of a new way of life. The decision is shaped by different motivations, it could be lifestyle, climate, a sense of community, or simply the desire for change, but it always requires a degree of courage and conviction.

In this feature, we hear from two individuals who have taken that step. Rolf Krautschneider and Alan Hendricks each followed their own path to making La Manga Club their full-time home.

Rolf Krautschneider

Finding Home at La Manga Club

Rolf and his wife Isa first visited the resort in 1996, invited to stay in an El Rancho property owned by their local butcher back in Germany. What began as a one-week break quickly became a tradition. They returned in 1997 and again in 1998, drawn back not only by the setting but by a growing circle of friends, including several fellow Germans with homes on the resort and nearby along the coast.

It was during that third visit that everything changed.

"I was in Mulligan's one night in 1998," Rolf recalls, "when Simon from Resort Properties came up to me and said he had a villa for sale that would suit us perfectly. I joked that it was too expensive, but if he could knock €100,000 off, I'd buy it."

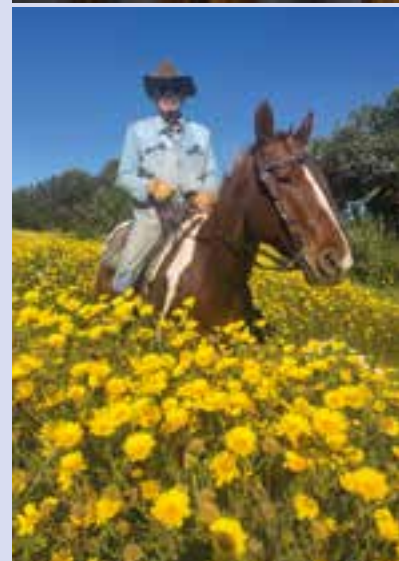
Two days later, while driving to visit friends in Moraira, the phone rang.

"He said, 'Congratulations, you've just bought yourself a villa.'"

The property, a detached villa on the north side of the resort, was very run-down and required extensive renovation. Undeterred, Rolf and Isa committed themselves fully to the project, travelling out roughly once a month to oversee the work, often staying with friends on the resort during the process.

Within two years, the transformation was complete. On 1 January 2000, they moved into their newly refurbished home and began a new chapter of full-time life at La Manga Club. While they still maintain a small base in Germany, a welcome escape during the height of the summer, the resort has long since become their primary home.

Rolf and Isa are full of life. Their household includes three dogs, a cat, and a number of feral



cats they have gradually taken under their wing. Rolf also keeps three horses, stabled in nearby Las Barracas, a passion that shapes much of his daily routine.

"I enjoy riding hugely and have done for 60-years including pushing cattle in Wyoming and herding sheep with Gauchos in Argentina" says Rolf. "I have never taken part in a competition. My riding is always for pleasure – around the hills, across fields and even down to the beaches always accompanied by one of my dogs. Isa stopped riding a few years ago but I still enjoy it. It helps me unwind even although I have suffered a number of injuries over the years!"

Rolf rises at 7.15 every morning, drives to the horses with the dogs running behind the four-wheel drive, he feeds the horses and then drives back again with the dogs following once more.

"It's a discipline. And the best thing is when I get back Isa has my breakfast ready! I do this six days a week. Sunday is my rest day. I have a paid helper, Juan, who assists me to muck-out the horses, feed them and look after them whenever I am not around. I am very lucky to have his support and help."

Rolf and Isa Krautschneider also enjoy their sport. "Golf is our game" Rolf states. "We're both members of the Residents Golf Association which is a lot of fun." Previously, both served as Captains and Rolf as President. "I also play as often as I can on Tuesdays with the Teenagers, on Thursdays with the Goats and on Saturdays with the Fiddlers. And then Isa runs the ladies "Nine and Wine" – nine holes of golf followed by a few glasses of wine or cava at the Owners' Clubhouse!

"Our special is the "Turkey Shoot" which we organise every November. This November will be our 24th. It's by invitation only, consists of 60 ladies and gents and everyone receives a prize – those who play the best win a turkey, those who've shot a higher round receive a duck or similar, and those who've not had a good day receive a chicken. The last team only receives a box of eggs! It's a lot of fun with the day being rounded off by a great dinner and entertainment in Canela restaurant."

After recounting his story, Rolf pauses, smiles, and reflects on the life they have built.

"We're happy in this bubble where we live," he says. "We love the culture of Cartagena and Murcia, and as we get older, we really appreciate the quality of the medical services here. So, all in all, we are very happy."

It is a sentiment shared by many who make the leap from visitor to resident, but few embody it with quite as much energy and enthusiasm as Rolf and Isa.

Alain & Carine's *from holiday home to their best life*



For Alain Hendrickx and his partner Carine, what started as a cautious search for a holiday home became something far more decisive.

When Alain Hendrickx and his partner Carine first began talking about buying a property overseas, the plan was simple: a holiday home for now, perhaps a place to retire to later.

Both originally from Belgium and fluent French speakers, Tunisia initially appealed. It felt culturally accessible and comfortably familiar. But then came a suggestion from a close friend and a first visit that changed everything.

"It must have been something in the water on our very first visit," says Alain with a smile. "A good friend of ours said we should come over. We love tennis and had been playing with him for many years. He told us about the great tennis facilities here. So in 2012 we flew down from Belgium for a one-week stay."

At the time, they knew very little about La Manga Club, the surrounding region, or Spanish culture. They stayed at the Principe Felipe hotel and spent their days enjoying tennis and exploring the Resort.

"We rather liked the place," Alain recalls. "So we started looking at properties we might buy, not to live in, but as a holiday home. If we bought, it would have been our very first time buying a property outside Belgium. So we were wary."

They viewed numerous apartments and smaller homes with various agents. Nothing quite felt right. Then the day before they left they unexpectedly met with the then estate agent Robert Holland who suggested he

might have the right property for them.

"Carine and I saw the property and just before we left we did a second viewing," says Alain. "And we fell in love with it. We then realised La Manga Club in Southern Spain was not a holiday place for us, but the place where we wanted to retire. So that was it. We agreed to buy a more substantial property in El Coto del Golf."

Despite their initial caution, the purchase process proved refreshingly straightforward.

"It was easy, in fact very easy," says Alain. "We bought knowing we would come and retire here."

Between 2012 and 2016, they gradually transitioned into their new life, travelling back and forth between Belgium and Spain.

"Initially we came for six months. Then we went back to Belgium. Then back here again for another long stretch and so on, backwards and forwards."

They appointed a lawyer to handle the practicalities – the utilities, bank accounts and formalities, especially as both were still working at the time.

"From the beginning to the end it took, I think from recollection, just ten days! In Belgium it takes months to buy a property."

At that stage they did not speak Spanish.

"Now we do, so it would be easier to do things ourselves these days. But back then it was easier to use a lawyer."

When the time came to relocate permanently, the move itself was remarkably simple.

"We literally drove down in our car. We didn't bring furniture or anything like that, only personal possessions. The property was already fully furnished. We also had two dogs and, again, there were no issues bringing them."

Within Europe, the logistics were manageable. Emotionally, the move felt even easier.



"Our lives have changed hugely since we came here," Alain reflects.

In November 2018 the couple married. They have fully embraced their new surroundings socially, culturally and personally."

We have really immersed ourselves into the local lifestyle. We enjoy going out to small, typical Spanish restaurants. Carine has been doing voluntary work in the charity shop in Los Belones. I do a lot of walking and, of course, tennis."

Then he pauses and corrects himself.

"We have a nice life. No, that's wrong – we have a great life!"

He points to the quality of the community and the careful stewardship of the Resort.

"The community and communal facilities are well looked after. Despite La Manga Club being 50-plus years old it's in great shape, being kept to the same standards, level and quality by the General Community. That makes a big difference when you compare our Resort to others. In addition, there is great diversity here. Our multi-diverse community improves everything."

There is, of course, still Belgium and family ties.

"We have a grandson in Belgium and miss him. He is about the only thing that takes us away from here."

But Spain has become home.

"We love Spain and the way of life. The climate is great. The pace of life is much better. And the region is just wonderful to visit. We also love Cartagena and its military heritage."

Then comes perhaps the most telling observation.

"As someone said to me the other day, everybody here sits and they eat and they drink, and they laugh and they chill. And that's how it is. It is about enjoying life and that is what we do here."

For Alain and Carine, what began as a cautious exploration of a holiday home has evolved into something far more meaningful.

For those considering taking a similar step, their experience offers reassurance. The process can be straightforward, the transition surprisingly smooth and the reward, as Alain so simply puts it, is "a great life."

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Beers Galore

Few pleasures capture the spirit of Spain quite like a cold beer shared in the sunshine. Whether it's a crisp caña enjoyed with some tapas or a long, refreshing pint after a thirsty round of golf, beer is woven into the fabric of Spanish life.

While Spain may be globally associated with wine (which is also considered to be a part of the staple Spanish diet), beer is in fact the country's most popular alcoholic drink. In recent years, Spain has ranked among the top beer producers in Europe.



Murcia might not be the first place that comes to mind when thinking about beer but it has developed into one of Spain's most interesting, up-and-coming brewing regions. The area is home to around a dozen craft breweries, placing it among the top regions in Spain for independent beer production. Alongside these smaller producers sits a major industrial presence: the brewery behind *Estrella de Levante*, which has been producing beer in Murcia since 1963 and now turns out around 110 million litres annually.

To help make sense of Spain's brewing industry and highlight some of the best beers to sample around La Manga Club we turned to an expert. Marc Balan is the

"The most in demand beer tends to be *San Miguel Especial* which we serve on tap. We also offer *San Miguel Selecta* which is a tostada beer – both are extremely popular but the latter mainly with our Spanish customers. Almost everyone who enjoys either of these has them in a pint glass. We serve very few *cañas* (small beers). I know the President of the General Community likes his beer served in a "*copa de balón*". Every day the bar staff pour hundreds of beers. I would guesstimate the Grand Hyatt serves around 46,500 pints in total each year!"

Marc, standing behind the newly rebranded "*Tapas and Cocktail Bar*" at the hotel, opens cooler

"There is also something very important when savouring a beer" adds the experienced manager "and that's enjoying it with a *gilda*. This is a small spicy snack which helps bring out the flavour of the beer. It is generally a snack on a small cocktail stick made with an olive, a spicy green pepper and then either some *jamon* and cheese or a slither of *pulpo* (octopus)."

Whilst it is clear there is not much Marc Balan doesn't know about beer, the *Official La Manga Club General Community Magazine*, being thorough in its investigations, also talked with our very own Joaquín Díaz who runs the restaurant at the *Owners' Clubhouse*.

"For me" says Joaquín "*Estrella Galicia* is by far and away the best Spanish beer. It is part of the Estrella group and is fermented using two different malts – *Pilsner* and also *Nugget & Perle*. It is less prevalent in this region of Spain which is why we do not serve it. But for me it's heaven in a beer glass.

"Other good beers are *Estrella de Levante*, from this region, and also *Mahou Reserva*. And then" says Joaquín mirroring Marc's earlier comment "there's *Alhambra 1925* in it's tall green bottle. That is a very good beer but a little pricey.

"Our house beers here are *Águila Dorada* which is a wonderful thirst-quenching beer and for those who like more body and flavour we have *Amstel Oro* on tap."

And the real dilemma? Whether to order a *caña* to ensure the beer is always refreshingly cool or whether to order a pint which warms up before one reaches the bottom of the glass – that's if the quaffing is slow!



Joaquín Díaz Valencia

Grand Hyatt's Deputy Food & Beverage Manager. He started working at the resort of La Manga Club some 17-years ago, initially at Luigi's restaurant based in Las Lomas. Since then he has worked across most of the resort owned outlets including Asia, La Cala, Amapola and, at one time, he ran Mulligans when it was part of the resorts chain and subsequently the former Piano Bar. So there is not much Marc does not know about food and, of course, great beverages!

"Whilst we have a host of great bars and restaurants on the resort" says Marc "it is clear that the most popular drink is beer. And we have a plentiful array on offer. In fact at the Grand Hyatt we now offer 11 different beers alone – and although most are, understandably, Spanish, we like to think we cater for all tastes.

drawers galore and starts to bring out a range of different labelled bottled beers. Popular bottled beers include *Mahou* (red 5-stars), *Mahou Maestra* (a double toasted beer at a whopping 7.5%), *Mahou Reserva* and even a *Mahou Zero* for the designated driver.

"*Mahou Reserva* has only being going one year but has really taken off. One of my favourite beers" says Marc "is *Alhambra 1925* which originates from Sevilla. It is quite strong at 6.4% but it has been through a slow fermentation process so it is very, very smooth. We also have *Corona* beer from Mexico – this is popular in the summer months. And then at *Hatsune* restaurant we have introduced two Asian beers – *Asahi*, which a lot of English customers like, and also *Kirin Ichiban* which is a first press beer. The Belgium beer *Stella Artois* is served in bottles in the hotel and on tap in Bar 37.

Six Beers to try in the Region

Murcia offers a wide variety of beers to suit every taste, from classic Spanish lagers to innovative local craft brews. These six picks can be found in bars across the region, giving you plenty of opportunities to sample the flavours that make the region's beer scene so diverse and enjoyable.

1. San Miguel Especial

A true staple of Spanish bars, easy-drinking lager that's perfectly suited to Murcia's warm climate, with light malt notes and a clean, refreshing finish. Often enjoyed ice-cold and by the pint, it's a reliable choice that pairs effortlessly with everything from tapas to seafood, making it a firm favourite among both locals and visitors alike.

2. Mahou (red 5-stars)

One of Spain's most recognisable beers, Mahou offers a slightly fuller-bodied lager with a touch more bitterness than its Mediterranean counterparts. It's a staple in bars across the country and a reliable choice for those who want to offer a more distinct beer to their barbecue guests.

3. Estrella de Levante

No visit to Murcia would be complete without trying its signature beer. Crisp and brewed locally since 1963, *Estrella de Levante* is perfectly suited to the region's climate. It's the quintessential "easy drinking" full-bodied lager.

4. Alhambra 1925

For those looking for something a little more refined, *Alhambra 1925* offers a very smooth drink. Its distinctive green bottle is a familiar sight in the south of Spain particularly in its home town of Sevilla. Its caramel notes make it perfect for slow enjoyment.

5. Cátedra Beer (Murcia Craft)

Murcia's craft scene is thriving, and *Cátedra Beer* is one of its newer, standout names. Developed as a university project and now award-winning, it showcases the innovation coming from the region. Expect character, creativity and a real sense of local identity in every sip.

6. Yakka (Murcia Craft)

Another local favourite, *Yakka* represents the new wave of Murcian brewing. Producing a range of styles from wheat beers to Kölsch-inspired brews it highlights the diversity now emerging in the region's beer culture.





Rhidian and Jane Davies



The making of
Los Molinos:

The Jervois Story



David and Pam Jervois

Few families can trace their connection to La Manga Club back to its formative years. For David and Pam Jervois and now their daughter Jane Davies, what began as a visit in the early 1980's grew into a lifelong relationship with the resort and, today, a remarkable archive that captures its evolution over more than four decades.

For prospective owners today, their story offers a powerful reminder of what draws people here—and why so many never leave.

First Impressions: Discovering a Vision (1984)

David and Pam first arrived at La Manga Club in February 1984, invited by P&O Ferries after the company had taken ownership of the resort. As a shareholder, David was attending what was essentially a sales presentation, but what they encountered was far more compelling than a commercial proposition.

At that time, La Manga Club was a very different place. The landscape included the original hotel, the golf bungalows, Los Miradores, a handful of individual villas, and the newly completed Bellaluz complex. Development was still in its early stages, but the potential was unmistakable.

Inspired by what they saw, David and Pam purchased a two-bedroom apartment in Block 14 of Bellaluz. It proved to be the beginning of a long and affectionate association with the Club.

Investing in the Future: Los Molinos (1988)

Their enthusiasm only deepened as the resort expanded. When plans were announced for the next phase of development, David and Pam visited the site to view the early footprints being laid for what would become Los Molinos.

In April 1988, they completed the purchase of No. 76 Los Molinos, a property that remains in the family today and is now owned by their daughter, Jane Davies and husband Rhidian.

The decision reflected what many buyers still recognise: purchasing at La Manga Club is not simply about a property, but about becoming part of a long-term lifestyle and community.

A Life of Detail – and a Treasure Trove

David Jervois brought to La Manga Club the same meticulous approach that defined much of his life. A law graduate of Peterhouse at Cambridge University, he was also a dedicated committee man and devoted more than 50 years to South Devon Cricket Club as its secretary.

His reputation for careful record-keeping was legendary – rarely was a bill, receipt or publication ever discarded.

La Manga Club was no exception.

Following David's passing in February 2015, the family discovered an extraordinary collection among his papers: decades of La Manga Club magazines and brochures, including original sales prospectuses for Bellaluz apartments, individual villas with floor plans, and early Los Molinos development material. Among the highlights was a beautifully illustrated concept of the planned Los Molinos pool and waterfalls – features that were later scaled back before construction.

The archive also provides a fascinating snapshot of property prices from the era, all listed in pesetas. In July 1986, for example, a three-bedroom villa in Los Molinos was priced at 17,932,200 pesetas, while a four-bedroom property in El Rancho cost 23,650,000 pesetas – figures that many owners today might look back on with a degree of envy.

(*The exchange rate in 1988 was around 210 pesetas to the pound.)

Bringing History Home

Last year, Jane and Rhidian, transported this historical collection from their home in Wales back to La Manga Club. During Los Molinos Owners Week, they opened the doors of their property, inviting fellow owners to step back in time and explore the archive.

The response reflected a shared appreciation for the Club's heritage – and how far it has come.

Then and Now

Over the decades, the landscape of La Manga Club has transformed dramatically. Jane remembers riding horses in El Rancho when it was still a working ranch rather than a residential community. When Rhidian first visited in 1990, the original hotel overlooked cricket pitches – another feature that has since disappeared.

Yet not everything has changed. If memory serves, Brian Chapman was playing the piano in the hotel bar during that early visit – so maybe some things are eternal.

A Family Legacy

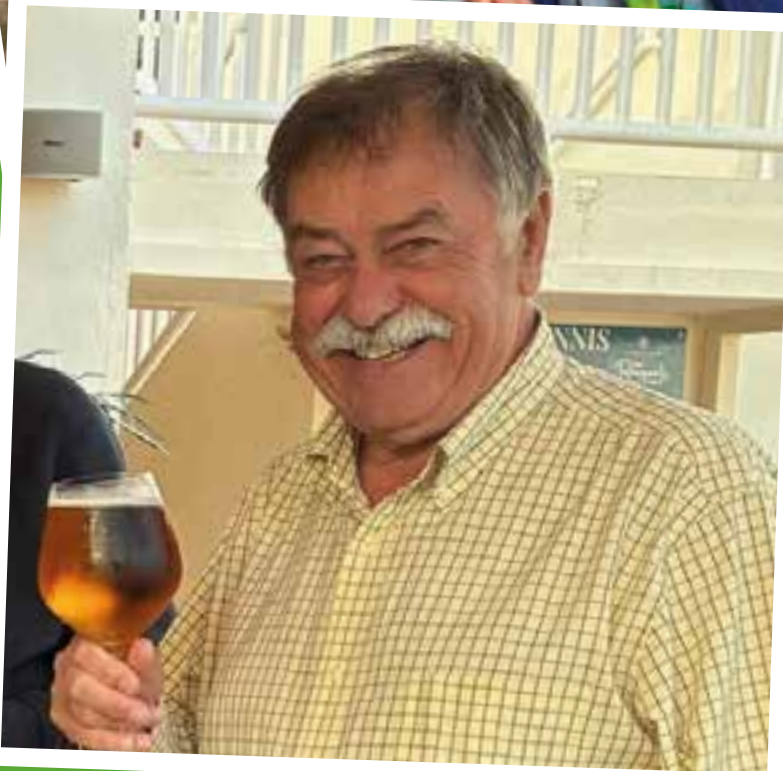
Today, No. 76 Los Molinos stands not only as a family home but also as a living link to the resort's past. Through David's careful preservation and Jane and Rhidian's efforts to share the archive, a piece of La Manga Club's history has been kept alive for future generations.

It is a story not just of property ownership, but of continuity – of a family growing alongside a resort that has, for more than four decades, been a place people come to and never quite leave.

In pictures

General shots from around the club to illustrate life on the resort over the last 12 months.











Dra Manrique-Medina

Healthcare in southern Murcia and at La Manga Club

A practical guide to local support

It's not something anyone wants to think about while on holiday, but knowing what happens if you do need medical care can make all the difference. Whether you're visiting for a week or staying for longer, peace of mind matters and at La Manga Club, access to high-quality healthcare is closer and more comprehensive than many people realise.

"People are often surprised," says Dra Ruth Liliana Manrique-Medina, Family Programme Co-ordinator for Murcia Salud in Cartagena and the Mar Menor, "by just how extensive and modern the healthcare system is here."

Across southern Murcia, the public healthcare network has grown rapidly in recent years. Today, two major hospitals, Santa Lucía and Santa María del Rosell in Cartagena, sit at the heart of the system, supported by

a wide network of local health centres. For La Manga Club residents the nearby centre in Los Belones can be the first point of contact.

"In Los Belones, we can manage a wide range of cases," she explains. "From everyday medical concerns to more serious conditions like thrombosis, respiratory problems or stroke-related symptoms. We also have diagnostic tools available, so patients can often be assessed very quickly."

For more complex care, the hospitals in Cartagena offer advanced facilities that rival those found in major European cities. From specialist cardiac units to transplant services, patients can expect a high standard of treatment within a modern, well-equipped environment.

Santa Lucia Hospital, Cartagena



Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC)

And what is the most important thing for anyone to do if medical help is required?

If you are within La Manga Club itself, the simplest first step in an emergency is to contact the resort Security team on +34 697 560 211, who will coordinate assistance quickly and efficiently. Outside the resort, dialling 112 connects you to a multilingual response team who will assess your situation and send the most appropriate support. Depending on the circumstances, this could range from a standard ambulance transfer to a fully staffed emergency medical unit, including a doctor and nurse, dispatched from the nearest available location.

And don't forget for non-medical emergencies there are two onsite doctors, Dr Eduardo Borgoños and Dra Soraya López, who run regular surgeries.

For UK visitors, it's important to travel with a valid Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), which entitles you to access state healthcare in Spain on the same basis as a local resident. This covers emergency and

necessary treatment, with costs handled through the NHS. However, it's worth remembering that this is not a substitute for travel or private health insurance, which can provide additional cover and support.

There are also small cultural differences that visitors may not expect. "In Spain, family plays an important role in patient care," Dra Manrique-Medina says. "If someone is admitted to hospital, it's usual for a partner or relative to stay with them during their hospital stay, helping with basic comfort and companionship."

It's a detail that reflects a more personal side of the healthcare experience and one that complements the clinical expertise on offer.

Ultimately, the message is simple: whether it's a minor concern or something more serious, the resort of La Manga Club and the surrounding area are well served by a modern, responsive healthcare system, allowing you to relax and enjoy your time here with confidence.



If you need to see a doctor, please visit one of the following surgeries:

Dr Eduardo Borgoños Martínez
Monday to Friday 09.30 to 13.30

Dra Soraya López Zacarez
Monday to Friday 17.00 to 20.00



A Place for the Soul

AT LA MANGA CLUB



La Manga Club has long been known for its championship golf courses, world-class tennis and breathtaking surroundings. Yet tucked quietly within the resort is a space dedicated not to sport or leisure, but to reflection, faith and community. St Teresa's Worship Room has been part of the resort for nearly three decades. Today, under the guidance of Reverend Helene Öhman, it is experiencing something of a revival.

Helene and her husband bought their home in Los Altos II in 2020. At the time, she was already serving as a parish priest in Sweden. After completing on their property in June that year, she contacted Maggie Dew, who was helping coordinate services locally.

"I wanted to attend church while we were here," Helene recalls. "Maggie said, 'That's wonderful because we don't have a minister.'"

By September, Helene had been formally ordained by the Bishop and began supporting St Teresa's whenever she was in Spain. Although she continues to lead her parish in Sweden, she now visits La Manga Club six or seven times a year, celebrating Holy Communion during her stays.

"When I'm here, we can hold Communion services. When I'm not, Maggie and James lead prayer services. It's very much a shared effort."

The Origins of the Worship Room

La Manga Club was founded in 1972, but the worship space came later. A small group of expatriates, including one of the early residents, Jimmy James, requested a room for worship. It was granted on the understanding that it would remain open to all denominations, hence its official title: a worship room rather than a church. Since 1995, it has been associated with St Teresa's and has operated as part of the Anglican tradition.

Today, St Teresa's is aligned with the Spanish Anglican Church, one of around 44 Anglican parishes in Spain, four of which are English-speaking.

A Room Transformed

When Helene first saw the worship room in 2020, it was desperately in need of attention. "It was very run down," she says honestly. "Old furniture, damaged flooring – it felt unwelcoming and somewhat neglected."

The turning point came just before Christmas 2024, when a concert was organised at the Grand Hyatt. The Bishop happened to be visiting and attended the event. He asked to see the worship room. "He stood here and said, 'This isn't possible. We must do something about it.'"

Support came through a fund provided by the Spanish Anglican Church. Renovation began around Easter 2025. The result is a bright, flexible and welcoming space. Simple, calm and adaptable for different uses.

More Than Monthly Services

Services are typically held once a month, often on the last Sunday, depending on Helene's availability and seasonal residency at the resort.

Yet Helene sees the worship room as offering far more than traditional services. "It doesn't have to be only about Sunday worship," she explains. "We could host discussion groups – conversations about faith, about

peace, about the future. Many people are thinking about deeper questions."

With easily movable furniture, the room can transform into a space for small gatherings, study groups or informal discussions. "La Manga Club offers wonderful facilities – golf, tennis, beautiful walks. But we also need something for the soul."

Looking Ahead

As Helene approaches retirement in Sweden, she hopes to spend more time in Spain and expand what St Teresa's can offer. One particularly exciting idea comes from her home country: confirmation camps. These three-week summer programmes combine faith teaching with sport culminating in a confirmation service.

"They're extremely popular," Helene says. "Young people spend mornings doing sport and afternoons studying and reflecting. It builds both community and confidence."

La Manga Club, with its facilities and international community, could provide an ideal setting for such a programme in the future.

Embracing the Digital World

Some Anglican congregations in Spain already broadcast services, and St Teresa's may follow suit, using social media to reach residents who cannot attend in person.

Helene added "We also have a Facebook group (St Teresa's Church at La Manga Resort), which is quite big. We put information on there. We could also broadcast through that."

A Community Effort

The recent refurbishment was made possible through church funding, support from the Club and individual donations, including residents who sponsored new chairs.

Helene is currently exploring whether a more formal donation structure might be established to support future projects.

St Teresa's may not be the most visible part of La Manga Club life, but for many, it represents something essential: a place of stillness within a vibrant resort.

"I hope it continues to grow," Helene says. "A place of welcome, reflection and community for residents, visitors, young people, families. A place that remains alive."

St Teresa's first baptism



LA MANGA CLUB RESORT BY NUMBERS

The resort of La Manga Club is many things to many people: a golfing paradise, a sporting mecca, a foodie destination and a place where friends and families gather year after year. But behind the sunshine, palm trees and pristine fairways lies a world of fascinating numbers.

Some are official, some are estimated, and some are simply the sort of statistics you only discover after years of life at the resort. Together they paint a fun, revealing and somewhat tongue-in-cheek portrait of daily life here.

THE RESORT

6 sqkm

Spread across almost six square kilometres, the resort is roughly about three times the size of the country of Monaco.

2,600+

Properties located across the resort, from bedsit apartments to multi-bedroomed luxury villas.

8

FIFA professional football pitches used by football teams from across the globe.

7000

The average number of vehicles that pass through the petrol station automated car wash each year.

3

The resort boasts three 18-hole championship golf courses – the North, South and West.

41

The total number of tennis, padel and pickleball courts at the Racquets Club.

700

The capacity of the main La Manga Club football stadium.

15+

Restaurants across the resort, ranging from relaxed tapas spots to fine dining experiences. That's before counting the bars, cafés and poolside spots that keep the drinks flowing all year long.

LIFE ON THE RESORT

54

The years since La Manga Club began welcoming visitors in the early 1970s.

Generations

Families who now own second- and third-generation properties.

1 week

How long many visitors originally planned to stay.

98 years of age

The oldest resident on the resort. The second oldest is not far behind, aged 96.



Average number of sunny days each year along the Costa Calida.

Millions

Steps walked along fairways, pathways and terraces every year.

50+ years

How long some owners have now been coming.

Endless

Sunsets enjoyed from balconies and terraces across the resort.

GOLF BY NUMBERS

16.6 km

Total length across the three-courses between tees and holes for men playing 18-holes.

14.7 km

Total length across the three-courses between tees and holes for women playing 18-holes.

50,000+

Estimated number of golf balls lost each year in lakes, bunkers and Mediterranean shrubbery.

7

Golf clubs handed into the pro shop every single day after being left somewhere on the course.

18th hole

The most photographed green on the South Course.

19th hole

Still the most popular hole on every course!

1 in 4

Golfers who shout "Fore" and then insist they meant to play out-of-bounds!

FORE!

FOOD & DRINK

1,000+

Cocktails and shorts made every week during the summer season.



Hundreds

Coffees served daily across the resort cafés.



3

Bars typically visited before dinner on a warm August evening!

20 minutes

Average time spent deciding where to eat.

2

People in every group who say: "I don't mind... you choose."

SPORTING LIFE

Hundreds

Spa treatments carried out at Alma Spa every week during peak season.

Thousands

Tennis balls hit every day at the Racquets Club.

3 minutes

Average time before someone says:

"Let's just play for fun."

Dozens

Professional football teams that have trained here over the years.



THE NUMBERS THAT MATTER MOST

THOUSANDS OF FRIENDSHIPS FORMED HERE. MILLIONS OF MEMORIES MADE.

Because while the statistics are fun, the real story of the resort can't be counted in numbers – only in friendships, sunshine and memories made year after year.

1 THERE IS ONLY ONE LA MANGA CLUB.



THE LAST WORD

Margarete Hellings

Margarete Hellings is the founder and driving force behind La Manga Quality Homes, a respected on-site estate agency that has been operating at La Manga Club for more than 34 years. German-born and living in Belgium at the time, she first arrived at the resort on 1 May 1986 with her then partner, who was a French speaking Belgian. In the *Last Word*, Margarete reflects on her early impressions of La Manga Club and her long-standing connection to the resort.

How did you first hear about La Manga Club?

'I first read about La Manga Club in my partner's American Express Gold Card magazine. The resort was being promoted heavily at the time. We registered our interest and were contacted by an agent who sent us a video explaining the benefits of buying.

'We decided to drive down with our Irish Wolfhound, travelling through France and along the Spanish coast past Barcelona, Valencia, Alicante and San Javier, then down to Cabo de Palos and back again towards Portman. To be honest, we weren't impressed at all – until we arrived at La Manga Club. That changed everything. Wow!'

What convinced you to buy?

'The sales operation was very slick. When we arrived, a property had already been prepared for us to stay in. There were about 15 couples on the inspection visit and each had their own dedicated agent who never left their side.

'We were entertained constantly: dinner on the first evening, the beach club the next day, then back for a siesta, only to be woken at 4pm for another welcome party, a tour of the resort and finally a presentation dinner. It was relentless. The experience was so persuasive that, by the end of the four-day visit, all but one of the couples signed on the spot.'

Where did your property journey at La Manga Club begin?

'Our first purchase was an off-plan El Rancho property – number 9 – followed shortly afterwards by number 5. But what we bought was a stick with a number on it stuck in

the ground. So we knew where our properties would be but literally we were buying a stick in the ground!'

Why did you decide to make the move?

'My partner was 18-years older than me and keen to retire early. I was 32 at the time. We moved to La Manga Club in September 1988 and, just one week later, attended the AGM of the El Rancho community, where he was elected President.

'At that time, the General Community of La Manga Club, as we know it today, didn't really exist. There was a loose collective of owners across the growing resort, led by an American called Cyril Blakey, who – if I remember correctly – disappeared suddenly after signing a rubbish collection contract for several years'

When did the General Community come about?

'Soon after, around 1989. Up until then, Inmogolf SA ran everything. They were the developer, administrator and handled all legal and operational matters. As the resort expanded, owners formed a true group and the General Community was established.

'The first real President was Mike Skerritt, who led it for four years. Things were evolving so quickly that meetings were held almost weekly, initially in Mike's Golf Bungalow and later at Villa 32 with me taking the minutes and typing these up on my own type-writer. We, the team around Mike, were strong and obtained benefits for the owners like the OCH building at a peppercorn rent in compensation for some reduced owners' facilities as the resort evolved and Inmogolf SA did less.

'Today the General Community is now a huge machine and thankfully because of it we have a great resort. It pulls everything together and ensures we have a safe, well-run, clean and prestigious environment. It also ensures there is a better balance amongst owners and not one owner running everything as it was in the early days.'

When did you become involved in selling property?

'In 1992, when my partner stepped down as President of El Rancho, I founded Margarete Hellings & Partner, which is known under the commercial name La Manga Quality Homes. At the time, it was considered inappropriate to combine community leadership with running a business, so I waited until he stood down.

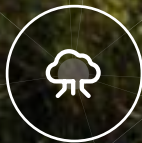
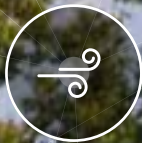
'The company has been trading ever since. I own the freehold of our offices in Bellaluz. My partner sadly passed away in 2003, and not long after I met Pedro Polo, with whom I got married and I've shared my life with ever since.

'The business now ticks over comfortably. I deal mostly with clients and families I've known for many years. It gives us the freedom to take time off, especially during the hot summer months, while still keeping the grey matter ticking.'

And finally, how do you like to spend your time?

'Reading. I love nothing more than sitting on the sofa at home with a good book, particularly anything about English history as I still try to understand and read the language.'

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