

# Alicante

"In my city, from the moment we are born, our eyes fill up with the blue from the sea." *Gabriel Miró.*

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Alicante. 38° 20' N 0° 28' O



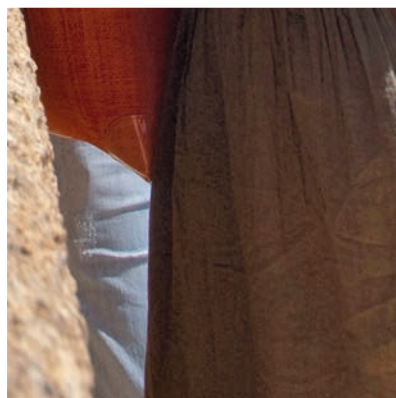
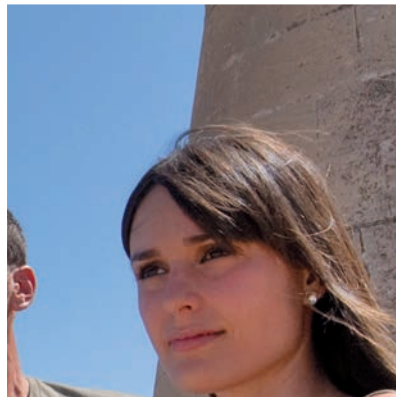
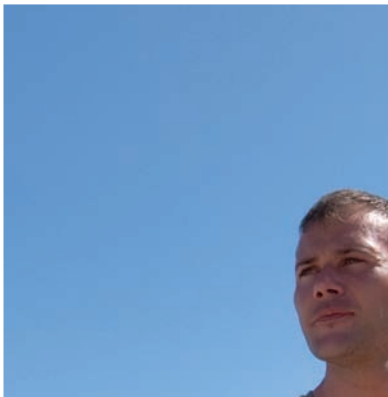
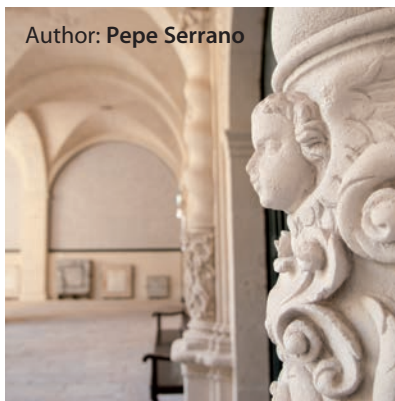
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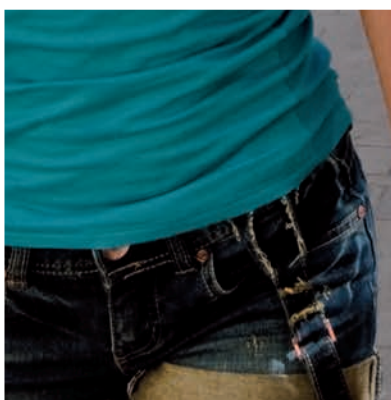
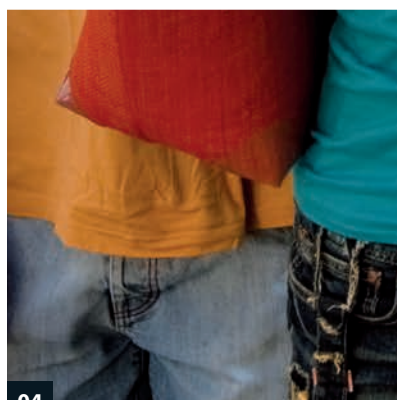
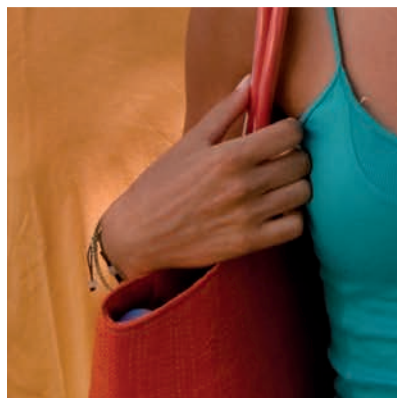
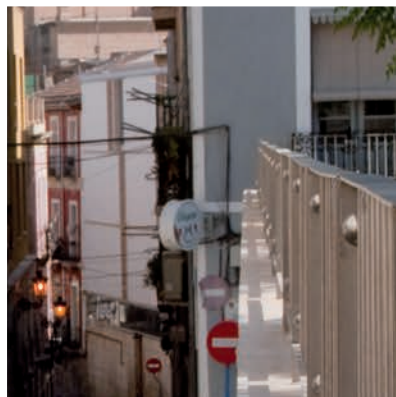
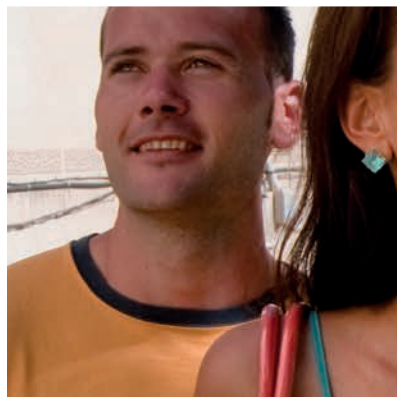
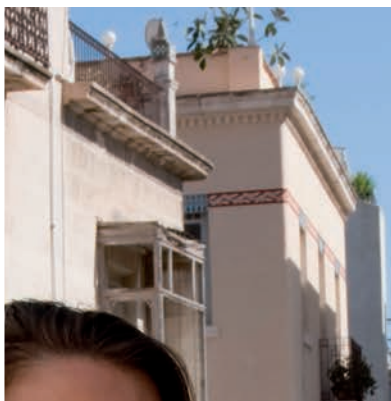
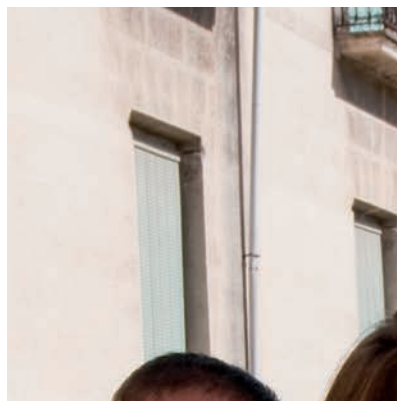




# Let yourself be seduced by a city of human dimensions

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## A shot of light

**A shot of Light... Like something hitting you straight between the eyes. This sensation is what the sailors of old must have felt on board their ships as the White Mountain came into view in the distance.**

Emerging from the sea horizon, intensely blue, what was to become a watchtower and founding reference of the city appeared before the eyes of Greeks, Phoenicians and other peoples who ventured into the unknown west, a flash in the distance, and a reason for respite, a place full of hope.

The coast sure and steadfast...

Sailing, literally, between myth, legend and history, the original - and one might almost say most direct - image of Alicante would end up being identified with its most obvious and nearest geographical feature. And of course the most liked by its people through the ages. And so, from merely being observed as an element of the landscape, **the white hill, the powerful mass of white limestone on which the sunlight returns a blinding impression between the blue of the sky and the sea,** came to represent something more than an unquestionable icon. This ownership of light, as if emerging from within the mountain rather than a mere reflection of the sun, would eventually become refined in the imagination of the city to bequeath nothing less than the name itself.

The mythical *Leukon Teijos* where legend is confused with history, the *Akra Leuka* coveted by the Punics, the quiet Roman *Lucentum* mentioned by Pliny II, the *Lakant* of the crescent



### Did you know?

The present name of Benacantil is no more than the Arabic phonetic adaptation of the Latin word *pinna* (rock) followed by the similarly Arabic form of the place name *Lakant*. *Bin-il-Cant* is none other than the "Alicante Outcrop"



moon, the *Alacant* of Alphonse X and James II, the Alicante that we all know: the unquestionable and definitive City of Light ... Mount Benacantil, as it is now known, is the great visual reference, in this case the natural landmark, from which all scales are drawn and on which all gazes are focused at some time or another.

ownership of both it and its fort, would eventually be given back to the city. During the 1930s, an intense campaign of reforestation began on the Mount, the effects of which are more visible today on the shady side than on the sunny one. The pines planted there, protected from the relentless sun, ended up consolidating a discrete forest both in terms of scope and



**Despite its modest dimensions, it is no more than 166 meters high, the protective sensation it exercises over the city, spread at his feet, is indeed remarkable.**

So not surprisingly, looking out boldly and standing strategically on the coastline at the centre of a wide bay, since ancient times the promontory has had a defensive purpose and a supervising military component. Benacantil, seat of successive strongholds and defensive lines we shall deal with shortly, has been for this reason a privileged witness, a silent protagonist, but not indifferent to what history has written about the city. Sieges, wars, attacks and other conflicts made Benacantil a belligerent mountain for centuries, a condition that it was to lose in 1852 when Alicante shook off the anachronistic category of stronghold, thus beginning the long process (of more than a century), through which

density. Whereas the sunny slope, the face of Benacantil which receives the full midday sun, continues to offer its bare white limestone skin to the sea with a coded image that appears like the DNA of the city's name.

The presence of the mountain has reached such levels that it even features in the city's coat of arms. Benacantil is shown surmounted by a castle and above some waves. The shield with the letters "A", "L", "L" and "A" refer to the



The skyline of Alicante has changed a lot since 1934



Alicante coat of arms



historical names of the city: *Akra-Leuka*, *Lucentum* *Lakant* and *Alicante*. Finally, the diamond shape with bars is a reminder of when it belonged to the Crown of Aragon, while the Golden Fleece that surrounds the entire shield is the recognition that the Emperor Charles V wanted to give the citizens of Alicante for their loyalty shown to the Crown during the revolt of the Brotherhoods. Benacantil, the old stone lion, presides but does not impose, governing without intimidating the city it shelters between its ramparts. **It goes without saying that the mountain offers**

**many interesting views.** All in all the most audacious are those which are contemplated from Jaime II avenue, or from the Pipa plaza, if we go to the shaded part or from the Plaza del Mar itself if we look up to see the south-southeast face.



The views in Alicante are a complex and attractive interplay of proportions, viewing points and light



## Alicante in figures

- Area: **201.27 km<sup>2</sup>**
- Founded: **324 BC.**
- Average temperature: **19.3° C**
- Hours of sun per year: **2,864**
- Rainy days: **20**
- City population: **330,525 inhabitants (INE 2016)**
- Location: **38°20'43"N 0°28'59"O**

### Telephone Numbers of interest:

Tourist Info Alicante: 965 200 000  
City hall: 965 149 100



## A Sea that Sings

**While Benacantil is a defining element of the city, it is no less the meeting point of its seafront and what that represents: the port.**

Standing in the middle of the bay bounded to the northeast by the cape of La Huerta and to the southeast by Santa Pola, Alicante opens out onto the Mediterranean, the quintessential sea of cultures, that which is expressed, felt, recited and sung through many and successive cultural heritages, languages, beliefs and ways of life.

**Alicante's dialogue with the sea is so intense that it is not possible to understand the idiosyncrasy of its people and the interest of its visitors without the eye returning to the blue expanse.**

This continuous dialogue has in short forged

the city, predetermined its economic magnitude and has notably conditioned the evolution of its settlement.

Everything has an origin. But let us leave it to the city itself, and more specifically its urban layout, to recount some of the most decisive chapters of its long journey through the centuries looking out to sea.

Although there has been evidence of a settlement since the Bronze Age, the first Alicante in history which we can consider as such appears on a flat low area situated



La porta Ferrissa. The city of Alicante rejected the Alcaraz pact (1243) and Alphonse the Wise was forced to take up arms and occupy it.



## Did you know?...

Alicante is twinned with the cities of Alexandria (Egypt); Carloforte (Italy), Herzliya (Israel), Leon (Nicaragua); Matanzas (Cuba), Nice (France), Oran (Algeria), Riga (Latvia); Santa Ana (El Salvador), Toyooka (Japan) and Wenzhou (China)

between the San Julián or Grossa mountain ranges and the Cape of La Huerta, that is, what is now known as the Albufereta and more specifically, in the location known as **Tossal de Manises which, according to the experts, is where the mythical Ibero-Roman Lucentum** developed. Similarly in what is today the Benalúa quarter, remains have also been found of these distant stages of our history. Within the Roman world, the municipality of Lucentum was a discreet population that would prolong its peaceful days, despite the occasional skirmish, until the end of the Roman rule and the emergence of the Visigoth kingdom. Soon the Latin Lucentum was to be transformed into the Lakant medina, changing not only the language and spelling of his name but the religion, culture and even the site itself. The turbulent and warlike late mediaeval centuries, would cause Alicante to leave the plains to seek refuge, enclosed by a city wall, between the buttresses of the fatherly Benacantil. The remains of this small Muslim population can be traced going down Villavieja street from the Basilica of Santa Maria, in the plaza where the main mosque would have been and stopping at the intersection of this street with the High Street. There, in bygone times, the ancient Porta Ferrissa [Ferrissa Gate], now no longer there, opened up in the first city wall, the end of the early Alicante which followed the voice of the muezzin. The growth during the period of the Taifa would have reached as far as the present

Rambla. The Main Street, which can just be seen in this widening of the Muslim medina, was already aimed at being the main focus of a population on which the scrutiny of the Christians in the north was beginning to intensify.

Under the agreements signed between Castile and Aragon by which both crowns delimited their respective areas of expansion, the Muslim Alicante, belonging at that time to the Kingdom of Murcia, remained under the scope and focus of the Castilians. This situation went from being a tacit agreement to a real event when, on 4th December 1247, the troops of Prince Alphonse, the future Alphonse X, conquered the fort and occupied the city. Following this conquest, Alicante came to be to Christian and something even more decisive occurred: Castile obtained the best natural outlet from the plateau to the Mediterranean. The privileges, authorities and exemptions granted to the Villa by Alphonse



Vantage point in the Santa Cruz quarter



reflect the extraordinary strategic value of the area. This situation, the consideration of Alicante as a stronghold port and as the "natural" port of Castile, was to emerge during other moments in its history.

The site of the City hall reminds us of the time when Ferdinand II of Aragon, the Catholic king, raised the hitherto town of Alicante to city status, putting it on a par with the most dynamic and populated cities of the Kingdom of Valencia. Dating back to 1490, Alicante had about 3,000 inhabitants. The Modern Age finds Alicante in demographic expansion. The wall that ran along the Rambla has been exceeded and two new suburbs are growing and consolidating on the outskirts: San Anton, to the north, and San Francisco to the west.

nuts, but mostly thousands and thousands of hectolitres of wine, the famous Fondillón and Alogue, were exported massively throughout Europe and increasingly more agents and foreign merchants settled in the city amidst all these comings and goings. Likewise, in 1801, the installation of the Tobacco Factory, the focus since then of industrial activity, was to complement the local economic dynamism. The entry into the nineteenth century in terms of the effects of major and profound changes, with the War of Independence, saw one of its most noteworthy events: Alicante equipped itself with another fortress, San Fernando. On the other hand, a new wall that would follow the avenues of Doctor Gadea and Alfonso el Sabio protected the suburb of San Francisco,



Entrance to the site of Lucentum in Tossal de Manises

The War of Succession, resulting in the change of dynasty to the benefit of the Bourbons, gave new wings to the city's possibilities for trade. Finally, in 1778, the ports of the Crown of Aragon lifted the ban on trade with the Americas. And if this was not enough, in 1785 Alicante obtained its own Sea Consulate to settle its business affairs away from the guardianship of Valencia.

**No wonder Alicante was to become the third largest Spanish port, after Barcelona and Cadiz, in volume of** goods traffic. Saltwort, from which soda was extracted, dried fruit and

but not so that of San Anton nor the Raval Roig historically outside the city walls, guardian of the memory of the old mediaeval Jewish quarter.

During this century and in the heat of the Transformations of the liberal regime, several events took place which had an enormous impact both on the urban fabric itself, and on the future realisation of some ambitious projects. Outstanding among them the construction of the city as the provincial capital in 1822, the expansion of the port, work on which began in 1847, and the demolition and

East view of Alicante city, according to the Atlante Español by Bernardo Espinalt.

final elimination of the retaining wall, a process begun in 1854 and prolonged until 1878. **But certainly the most decisive event was the arrival, in 1858, of the railway.** The time had come for the expansion of a city in which the port trade, apart from prosperity and work, began to bring new trends, ideas and energies. Alicante was already home to some 30,000 people and among its citizens - although this phenomenon already came from a while back - many European names were being registered: Lacy, Fourcade, Shelly, Foglietti, O'Gormann, Bardin, Salvetti, Lamaignère, Maisonnave... More than a few of these new Alicante citizens, dedicated to the lucrative export of wines and the equally profitable import of salted goods, would end up supplanting or at least mixing with the former farming-based local ruling classes, giving rise to what would come to be known, with some sarcasm and a touch of envy, as the *aristocràcia del bacallà* [Cod Aristocracy].



Meanwhile, the throb of the cosmopolitan and liberal port city began to reach other ears. The emergence of tourism came knocking at the door.

The Ten Friends, the name of a philanthropic company of active and enterprising bourgeois led in his time by an aristocrat, José Carlos Aguilera Aguilera (1848-1900), the Marquis of Benalúa, promoted the creation of a spacious and functional new neighbourhood to the west of the San Blas cliff, approximately where the present Oscar Esplá Avenue runs, the street bordering it along with the one to the north named after its founder, Aguilera.

## Did you know?...

Alicante, with more than 330,000 inhabitants (INE: 2008), is the eleventh largest Spanish city in terms of population.

The twentieth century enters with new and significant urban reforms and improvements. The port continues its growth, while the expansion of the city is being consolidated and new neighbourhoods (Carolinas, San Blas, El Pla, Florida) are interwoven to shape a city that already has more than 50,000 inhabitants. Following the tragic hiatus of the Spanish Civil War, the city undergoes a slow but steady process of rehabilitation and recovery.

During the 1960s several things were noted. Little by little, the hitherto dominant role of the







The disappeared Sea Consulate building, the opening of l'Altet airport, Postiguat beach, Monument to the Martyrs of Liberty and prints of the Railway and the Port

port as the economic driving force began to give way to tourism and the associated activities offering the city the chance to become a semi-modern type, cosmopolitan and progressive metropolis.

The provincial capital continued to consolidate its services and administrative role while equipping itself with the latest facilities, whether industrial (National Aluminium Company), infrastructure (the nearby airport of El Altet) or educational (the CEU, Centre for University Studies, the basis for the future University of Alicante). New neighbourhoods (Virgen del Remedio, Las 1.000 Viviendas, Ciudad de Asís) for the population coming to the capital from the rest of the province and even from neighbouring regions in search of a better future, articulate the image of a city growing at the same time as its inhabitants' desires for modernization, which also enabled spaces for civic, social and participatory life to be opened up.

Hence the Transition, the constitution of a democratic council and the establishment of the State of the Autonomies in Spain, were experienced in Alicante with great enthusiasm

and hope. Growth continued. Gran Vía, the Bulevar del Pla, the Vía Parque and the new ring roads contributed to improved communications and accessibility between different areas of the city, while the recent shopping centres created on the urban outskirts determined the current social leisure uses. Over recent years, Alicante has been provided with new facilities and uses which have diversified and amply completed its list of resources. The four-fold crown, achieved by virtue of its **bureaucratic and administrative potential (OAMI) [Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market - EU Trademarks and Designs Registration Office]**, **passion for sports (Starting point for the Volvo Ocean Race)**, **commitment to cinema and art (City of Light)** and **more recently, its recently ratified suitability for the call to intercultural dialogue (House of the Mediterranean)**, further broaden the operational capacity of this basically service-oriented city and close off to the south, completing the seafront, the zoned use of spaces, from the beach of San Juan to that of Saladar.

**Some Facts:**

- Declared a National Historic-Artistic Monument in 1961. Currently a BIC [denoting an item of Cultural Interest].
- Its perimeter of over 2,200 meters makes it one of the largest in Spain in extent.

Its three areas, built at different times and situated at different levels, offer a repertoire of building elements that make its perimeter a fairly well preserved and complete catalogue of defensive architecture.

## Santa Bárbara Castle

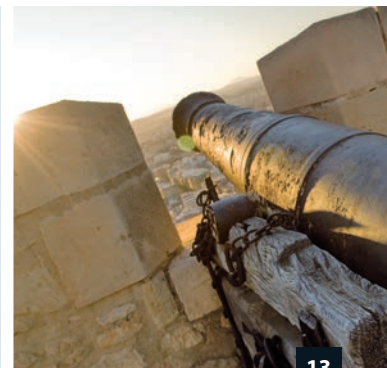


### *Des del matxo del Castell* [From the top of the castle]

### Advances and vicissitudes

If Benacantil, with its constant presence over the city is an inescapable visual landmark, the fort that crowns it, Santa Bárbara castle, brings historical substance. Built over several centuries, Santa Bárbara castle is the repository of the passage through Alicante of Iberians, Carthaginians, Romans, Muslims, Castilians and Aragonese; the siege by the French and English, and encounters - and even disagreements between the Spanish themselves. The castle's history is long and eventful. What would the walls not have seen throughout the centuries?. The constant comings and goings of merchant ships, most of the time. But this was not always so, there were times when ships did not bring such good intentions. This proved the case in 1691, when a warring French fleet bombarded the city, destroying almost ninety percent of it, during yet another episode in which the weak Habsburg monarchy was harassed by Louis XIV. Or when a rebel fleet from Cartagena followed

suit in 1873, amid a regional revolt. The dramatic departure of 30,000 Moors expelled in 1609, or the last chapter of the Spanish Civil War played out precisely from this port, also forming part of the memory embedded in its stones. **Santa Bárbara castle has been owned, as explicitly recorded, "by Alicante and the people of Alicante", since 1929.** But it was not until 50 years later, that is, in 1979, that the Defence Ministry handed over ownership of the mountain housing it, Benacantil, to the City Hall.





Similarly, in 1961 it received the designation of a Historic Artistic Monument, and only a few years later it was opened to public visits. But it is time to go "up there" to get a better idea of "down here". There are three ways of reaching Santa Bárbara castle. The more intrepid can even do it on foot, starting from the Carmen plaza in the heart of the



Courtyard of Santa Bárbara castle

Old Town, and continuing through the streets of San Rafael arriving at the park of La Ereta. From there, all the way uphill, the enthusiastic mountaineer's urge to get to the top more than compensates the efforts of the walk. For those who opt for a more comfortable solution, like that provided by a car no doubt, the road from Jaime II avenue reaches the entrance of the fortress situated on the shaded side of Benacantil. Finally, access is completed through the tunnel and the elevator cut into the very bowels of the rock in the mid-twentieth century. The door to the long hallway leading to this faces Jovellanos street, opposite the Postiguet beach, making this a very convenient and pleasant path. Once in the Plaza de Armas, the feeling that we are in a military setting is complete. The Guards building, the lounge of Philip II and the old kitchens, along with access to the various bastions go back to the best defence techniques carried out under the Habsburgs.

However, the cultural and recreational use currently enjoyed by the installations, some turned into functional exhibition rooms or venues for outdoor concerts, muffles the echoes of ancient warrior fervour. But much remains to be seen of the castle and you must carry on climbing if you want to reach the oldest part of the fortress, the mediaeval citadel, the magnificent and impregnable fortress commented on by, among others, Alphonse X,

## Santa Bárbara Castle

Did you know that the fortress was called Santa Bárbara in homage to and memory of the date of the Muslim conquest, which took place on 4th December - more precisely in 1247 - the date when the Church celebrates the feast of the Christian martyr?

## Did you know...?

Alicante "belongs to" King James? Not the first, but the second. Although the Conqueror was in Alicante and even attended Mass at St. Nicholas, it is in fact his grandson to which the city pays homage. He definitively incorporated it into the Crown of Aragon in 1296, by deed and law, in 1304. The avenue running round the north east face of Benacantil, an impressive contemporary statue of the monarch on the roundabout of the avenue, as well as a high school, well known for being a seedbed for local thespians, all bear his name.

the Wise (1221-1284), the celebrated chronicler Ramon Muntaner (1265-1336) or by local chroniclers Bendicho Vicente (1584-1642) and Rafael Viravens (1836-1908).

**In one corner, a discretely sized monument honours the memory of Nicolas Peris, the last governor who had the fortress under Castilian sovereignty.**

The defence of the castle, as useless as it was closed, against the

harassment of the armies of James II and his own heroic gesture, falling mortally wounded, sword in one hand and the keys to the castle in the other, call to mind the romantic image of a figure reminiscent of the era.

The mediaeval fortress occupied the highest part of the castle, the core of what has traditionally been known as the matxo. Turrets and canons are aimed, although peacefully now, serving as support and a photo call for those who want to enjoy spectacular views of both the city and its port spread out at its feet; the nearby Sierra de San Julián, younger sister of Benacantil; the spectacular bay open to the Mediterranean and the circle of mountains (Maigmo, Cabeça d'Or, Aitana and Puig Campana...) and other mountain ranges marking off the visual space of the "terreta" or homeland. On a clear day the panorama is a feast for the eyes: the silhouette of the island of Tabarca offshore from Cape Santa Pola.

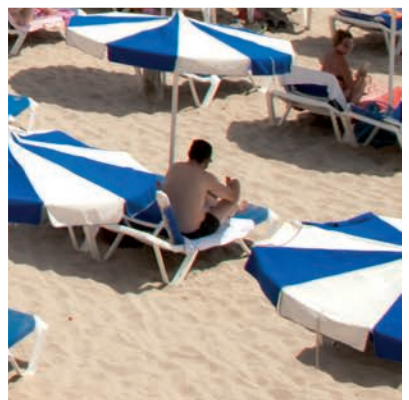
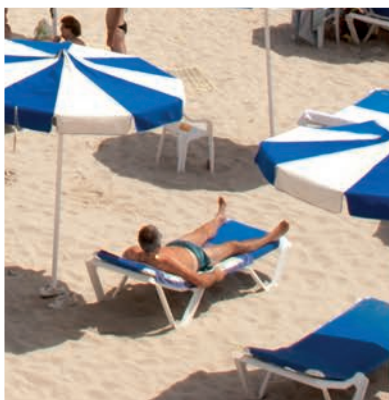
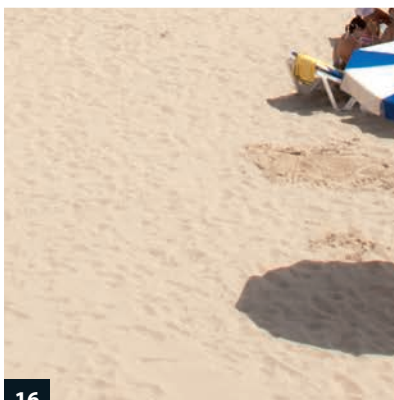
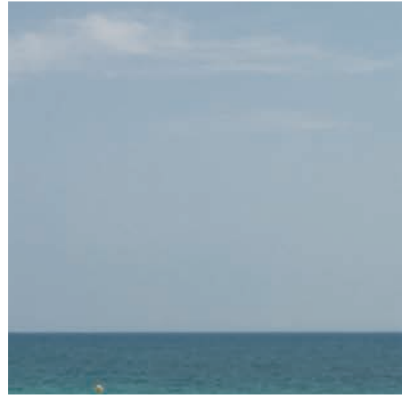
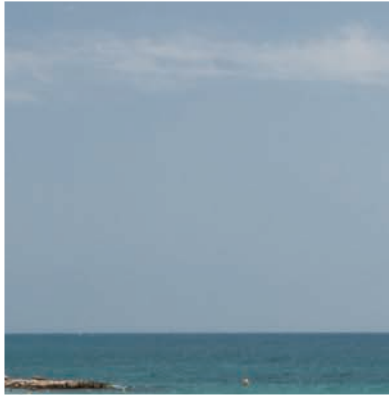


## Did you know...?

During the 1930s, a Portuguese named Antonio Conceirao, an active entrepreneur but rather out of touch with reality, tried to give Benacantil and the castle an amusement park and a funicular similar to those at the Tibidabo in Barcelona. The project was not given approval.



# The call of tourism



## Whispering wind

The tourist orientation, one of the strengths that explain the dynamism of the city, does not actually come from nowadays.. Already Antonio José Cavanilles (1745-1804), in his *Observations*, was making known the modernity and cosmopolitan air of Alicante in the protection of its commercial trade assets, as well as the large number of foreigners entering and leaving the city for this purpose, or who went on to live there permanently. However, to assess this process fairly we would have to come to the nineteenth century and more specifically to a year as crucial as 1858, during which Alicante became the first seaport connecting with the capital of Spain by rail. The efforts of progress, which at that time was carried by the wagons paid for by José de Salamanca (1811-1883), who encouraged the MZA (Madrid-Zaragoza-Alicante) line, were soon accompanied by other symptoms of a modernity that began to



generate interest in some of its most restless sectors.

**The fame of good weather assured for most of the year, along with hygienist theories which regarded as a healthy practice - and therefore recommended - bathing in the sea,**

gradually became part of the mindset of those from Madrid, and later for other Spaniards, as was the idea of travelling to Alicante to enjoy it. And so the idea of the summer break also began to travel on the rails that crossed La Mancha. These were the final years of the century when the trains became popularly known as the botijo (a pitcher with a drinking spout), so called because during the long ride the occupants often held these popular receptacles out of the windows of the wagons to cool their contents. The city and especially some of its most alert inhabitants were not on the fringe of the phenomenon. Thus, a prominent exponent of the local society of the time Mariano Roca de Togores (1812-1889), first Marquis of Molins, proudly admitted to his friend Breton de los Herreros that Alicante was undoubtedly the best place in the world, a popular slogan at the time which was to become a hallmark, perhaps the most widely used and popularised of popular imagery from Alicante. The slow but unstoppable rise of the city as a tourist destination would find in the bathing resorts of Postiguat, delightful wooden constructions built over the sea itself, another of its most characteristic features. Although these





# Climate

Did you know Alicante enjoys a Mediterranean climate characterised by mild winters and warm summers, the average annual temperature is between 11 °C in January and 26 °C in August and rainfall is low (340 mm yearly average) and concentrated in spring and autumn.



disappeared by the middle of the twentieth century, the evocative names of these establishments: Diana, Alianza, Almirante, Las Delicias... offering all kinds of services (restaurants, changing rooms, rest rooms, etc.), offered a special charm to the image of the *Belle Époque* Alicante.

Alicante would receive the twentieth century carving out for itself an image of a cosmopolitan

city derived from the intense activity of its port and its openness to international dynamics. Trends, ideas and attitudes came from other latitudes and, for that reason, particularly inclined towards exchange and progress, supported Alicante's commitment to having its own brand of tourism, its own image. What was soon to be equated with the "Spanish Nice," in part because of the strong traditional French presence (traders and shippers), was to take further steps towards becoming a friendly residential city for both summer and winter too. The City Council did not remain on the fringe. The implementation of the **Alicante Climate Publicity Committee, in 1896; the promotion of the Winter Festivals, the origin of what was eventually to become the Alicante Carnival; the appearance in 1929 of the San Juan Bonfires** or the Prieto residential city project (so named in honour of the Minister of the Republic who pushed it forward) are all examples of this enterprising spirit.

Decades passed as the city continued to evolve in its services and infrastructure and increasingly moved towards an activity that had long since been taking the place of port traffic as the main



View of Alicante from the Ereta park

driving force of the economy. The arrival of thousands of French settlers from Algeria, the famous *pieds-noirs* [black feet], with the independence of the former colony in 1962, would result in the development of new projects and businesses. Today, the consolidation of the extensive offer of hotel, restaurant and commercial establishments together with the creation of a complete network of cultural and leisure facilities, have ended up making Alicante a city visitors can always enjoy and everyone accompanying them enjoys as well.

From the "jug train" of Spain ruled by Alphonse to the "House of Spring", a friendly expression of Wenceslao Fernández Flórez (1885-1964) in his role as a tourism theorist, passing through the latest "Come whenever you like", the journey of



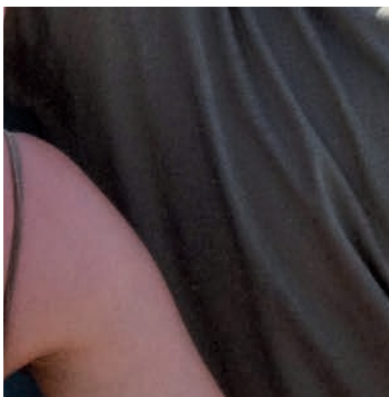
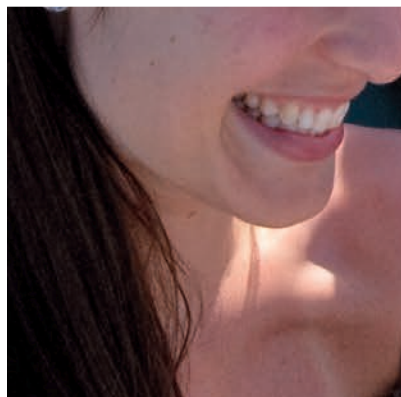
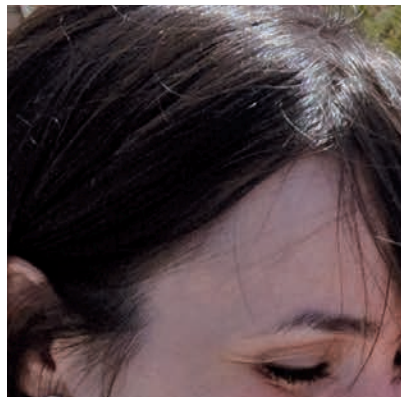
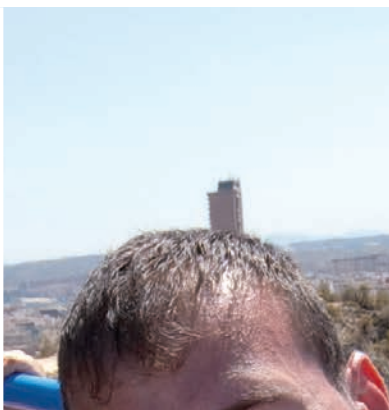
the City of Light, of this pragmatic city in the tourism battle is, as can be seen from what has been said so far, a constant catalyst to embark on the adventure of getting to know it. So, let's do just that. The city and its many vantage points, resources and incentives are waiting for us...



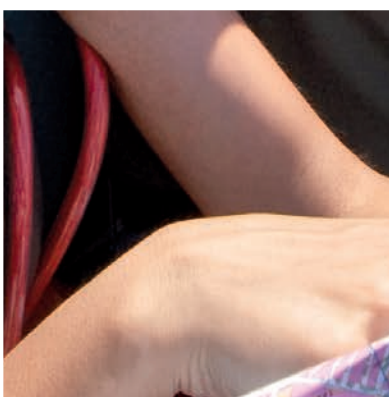
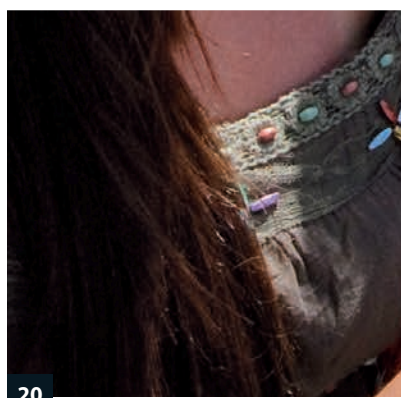
## The first tourist

The first person to behave as a "tourist" in Alicante dates right back to the thirteenth century. A woman and a Queen no less. She was Violant, daughter of James I the Conqueror and wife of King Alphonse X the Wise. Her long stay in Alicante already forms a part of the city's imagery. A whole neighbourhood, the Pla del Bon Repos, recalls the sovereign's constant pleasant retreats fleeing the harsh climate of the plateau.





In  
proportion  
with  
stone



# Itinerary 1

## The Monument Route



**1** City Hall

**2** Church of Santa María

**3** Co-Cathedral of San Nicolás

**4** Maisonnave Palace

**5** Agustina Convent

**6** Main Theatre

**7** Central Market



## Did you know...?

The towers of the City Hall, during the initial stage of the project, were both crowned by wooden spires, which a storm blew down just as building work was about to be finished and rebuilding them has never been considered. However, the towers, discreet but strong, even truncated, rise to a height of 35 metres.

### Some Facts:

- Listed as a National Historic-Artistic Monument since 1961. Currently a BIC [denoting an item of Cultural Interest].
- Built between 1696 and 1780.



## Built heritage

**Alicante's scant but balanced repertoire of monuments includes a very interesting catalogue of buildings and properties, for those searching for emotions conveyed by building in stone.**

Without being excessive in number, the city's architectural heritage is not unbalanced by the possible abundance of religious buildings or civilian ones or vice versa, neither can it be said that a particular style takes precedence over others and eclipses them. Alicante's monuments cover the most diverse types ranging from palaces to churches and from castle to chapel, passing through convent, theatre, market and even port sheds, while the styles cover a chronological spectrum of forms, starting with Gothic, and making interesting stops along the way, in Baroque, Academicism, Eclecticism,

Historicism, Modernism, Rationalism, "Casticism" [the dominance of all things Spanish] to end up in the bold architecture of our day.

**The main attractions are concentrated for the convenience of the visitor only a short distance apart.** Alicante thus offers excellent opportunities for leisurely walks enjoying the heritage. The sustainability of the practice of tourism is all about control and knowing its own strength. We begin, therefore, heading for one of the plazas which, although it has not acquired the relevance of other parts of the city due to their greater commercial use or because they have become a major communication hub, does concentrate all the representativeness and the historical burden of the building which gives it its name. That plaza and the monument it contains form a whole: the Plaza del Ayuntamiento [City Hall].



## City Hall

Alicante's City Hall, one of the most elegant and sober public buildings of the Valencian Baroque period, has indeed the civic and urban poise which speaks of a self-made city. The plaza of today, on which it stands and with which it forms a balanced ensemble, offers the scale and dimensions designed to enhance specifically its visual but above all its symbolic prominence as befits the *Casa de la Ciudad*.

Designed from the pattern of a rectangular block flanked by two towers, rooted in the best tradition of the Mediterranean Gothic style, Alicante's city hall is a prototype which in turn provided the architects with the solutions for the mansions and palaces that the local aristocracy provided themselves with in the eighteenth century and even well into the nineteenth.

**This building, constructed between 1696 and 1780, replaced the original city hall, destroyed during the bombing the city was subjected to by the French in 1691.** The

names of the architects: Borja, Terol, Mingot, Soler and Chápuli, are linked inevitably to this masterpiece of Alicante civil architecture. It is very interesting for visitors to look for the vanishing points of different parts of the monument from the reference point which the imposing and ever-vigilant Benacantil represents. This game of framing a view gives a chance to shine for those who cannot conceive of life without a good camera to hand. Once inside, we come into the hallway, the only area of the building that can be visited. From there we can look at the bold stairwell, giving access to the three floors of the building. The upper closure in the form of a cupola, is a very original yet elegant solution that brings light to the inside while achieving a beautiful and decorative finish to the front façade as seen from the street. An imposing triptych by Gastón Castelló Bravo (1903-1986), a leading Alicante painter of the last century, fills our eyes with images alluding to the construction of the building itself, accompanied by allegorical shots of an Alicante suspended in time and memory.

The City Hall also hosts an essential reference for Spanish geography. At the very beginning of the staircase, namely at the height of the third step, a discreet plaque reminds us that Alicante is the point from which the topographical height of the whole national territory is measured, taking sea level as a reference. This choice, adopted in full during the Enlightenment movement, had much to do with the mathematician and mariner from Alicante, Juan y Santacilia (1713-1773), who has a street named in his honour



starting out from the city hall plaza. Although not open to the public, and therefore only able to be visited in exceptional circumstances, the top floors provide rooms and spaces (Blue Room, Chapel) where valuable works of art are kept, curios and above all endless motifs and mementoes relating to the most outstanding events of local history.

## A place of worship for defence

The Basilica of Santa Maria, while not exceptional in size or architectural composition, is nevertheless one of those monuments that is a surprise when you come across it. Let us focus on the main gateway of the Baroque façade,



Coming out, we return again to the empty and peaceful plaza. An administrative and functional plaza accustomed to people “passing through”. The trend is only reversed, of course, during the large festive events (Bonfires, Santa Faz) and then to a lesser extent and more intimately, every Sunday, when **a lively market takes place under its porches, where you can find anything at an excellent price, from books to stamps, coins, comics, cards or records to the most unexpected piece of junk.**

Let's continue our walk along Jorge Juan Street. A few metres away, a solid stone stairway invites us to go up. Here we gain access to one of the most evocative, beautiful and monumental plazas of old Alicante, which takes its name from its main building and is called Santa Maria.

built by Manuel Violat and Pedro Juan Violat between 1721 and 1728, under the direction of Juan Bautista Borja (1684-1756). Elegantly composed in its form and proportions in terms of total façade volume, it seems to have been made for nothing other than to stand out pleasantly and surprise visitors as they turn the corner.





## Vanishing points

Again, our eyes are invited to leap in scale and go from ground level to the top of the Basilica Tower and from there to the *matxa* of the castle, almost unable to stop ourselves. Alicante is viewed from across the sea but also, let us not forget, from the top of its urban peak.



What was, in its day, the site of the Muslim mosque of Lakant, is today a church which basically maintains its Gothic structure - a structure otherwise common to the Mediterranean Gothic: a single nave with open side chapels between the buttresses - unites without any discord the additions that the Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo periods inserted into its stone flanks.

Except for the decorative nature of the main door, the building exudes a formal sobriety, a decorative rationality and succinctness alien to the excesses that seem to have been exclusive to Alicante architecture throughout the ages.

**Going further, and viewed as a whole, Santa María appears to be more a military construction than a church.**

And it was well for this place of worship and the city itself at many times throughout its history that Santa María maintained that dual role as a place of worship and as an almost supplementary element in the city's defences.

**On the side of the church running along Jorge Juan street and the adjacent Paseo de Ramiro, the wall still shows the noble war wounds,** in the form of shell-blasts, a legacy from the 1709 siege, this time by the English, which took place at the height of the Spanish War of Succession.



But let us go inside. Wider than it is high, Santa María offers a welcome feeling of peace and quiet. The Gothic nave, raised at the end of the fifteenth century, leads the eye towards a presbytery where an elegant rococo decoration gives shelter to a late-Gothic image of the church's namesake. Other works of art worth seeing in this church, which is one of the best-loved by the men and women of Alicante, and also the most-requested when it comes to getting married, are an elegant baptismal font in marble worked in Genoa in the sixteenth century, a testimony to the frequent commercial movement, extended to the realm of art, which Alicante's port experienced; an expressive and daring representation of the Saints John, carved on wood by Rodrigo de Osona (1440-1518) and an impressive yet delicate image of the Immaculate Virgin, carved by the great Valencian sculptor of the seventeen hundreds, José Esteve Bonet (1741-1802). The basilica of Santa María

also boasts the classification of a Historic Artistic National Monument since 1975 and has Cultural Interest status.

## Sisters of the Blood

Continuing on our particular tour following the route around the city's monuments and works of art, we have to go down Villavieja street and continue along Maldonado street. Barely a hundred metres on we will find the Quijano plaza. This little square, evocative of the best of Alicante's essence in market gardening and seafaring, seems to be guarded by the huge mass of the convent of the Augustine Reverend Mothers, also known as the Sisters of the Blood. Built in the eighteenth century as a Jesuit school, this is the only example still standing as a testimony to the network of convents (Carmelite, Dominican, Franciscan, Capuchin...) that the baroque Alicante had. From its stocky compact volume and its constructional purity, it responds to the sober architectural line that defines the city's repertoire of monuments.

Despite not being able to visit its rooms and above all its secluded cloister, due to the convent being subject to absolute cloister, it is worth noting that amongst its treasures is the Virgin of Solitude, the oldest carving that goes out on procession in Alicante's Holy Week

## Did you know...?

Santa María was one of the hosts of the series *The Light of Images*, more specifically the edition held in Alicante in 2006 and indeed it obtained Papal recognition as a basilica, partly thanks to that event.





celebrations. The convent of the Nuns of the Blood has been recognised as a Historic Artistic Monument since 1982 and has Cultural Interest status.

## The city's first place of worship

Continuing along Carmen street as far as the plaza of the same name, and turning left to go down Abad Nájera street, the cupola of the imposing building serves as a guide. It is the co-cathedral of San Nicolás de Bari. So we set about getting to know in greater depth about the city's first place of worship.

**The main façade is a lesson in the best Renaissance architecture to be found in the Region of Valencia.** The rigor of the Doric order on the front and the serene attitude of the image of the Virgin presiding over it, full of memories of the work by Michelangelo, is just a foretaste of what awaits the visitor inside. No sooner has one entered than a sense of spaciousness and calm is conveyed to us by a building which, in spite of its totally Herreran

architecture [a Spanish Renaissance style named after its chief practitioner, Juan de Herrera 1513-1593], is by no means heavy or occlusive. The lightness of the pale sandstone with which it is built, originating, as does nearly all that used in the city's monuments, from the San Julián sierra, provides an unusual sense of tranquillity. As if this were not enough, raising one's eyes to the cupola, with its coffered structure in the style of Rome's Pantheon, creates the sensation of





floating in space, without any more support than the sight of those looking from below. In effect, we find ourselves looking at a work that was worthy of the social dynamic that promoted the creation of a place worthy of worship and devotion, very maritime, as befits a seafaring city, of the Bishop of Mira. **It is no surprise that St Nicholas was soon named as Alicante's patron saint,** as it could not be otherwise, and that the dynamism of his parish church, in parallel with the city's Renaissance expansion, would be to the prejudice of the doyenne among Alicante's churches, the mediaeval Santa María, displaced from the new centre of gravity that was stretching out over the plain and towards the west. Already by 1596, San Nicolás had won hands down over Santa María, snatching from her, not without her putting up a strong resistance, the dignity of being appointed collegiate. Finally, in 1959, the creation of the

Orihuela-Alicante diocese in turn converted the collegiate into a co-cathedral, an honour which the aforementioned has recently celebrated the Jubilee of its 50 years and in whose commemoration the Valencian government collaborated, through the Light of the Images Foundation, in the refurbishment of the building, as well as in the restoration of its valuable artistic heritage. Well may it be said that San Nicolás shines now as never before. We can see for ourselves. Turning left from the main door, the altarpiece Ánimas, an excellent work by Fray Nicolás Borrás (1530-1610) makes an impact on us with its strong use of colours. We look forward to the calm because the adjoining chapel of the Communion immerses the visitor in our best and most genuine baroque. Begun in 1699 and finished in 1738 by Juan Bautista Borja, this true masterpiece represents the culmination of the sensitivity and aesthetic





# San Nicolás

Other points of interest in San Nicolás are the chapel of Christ of the Good Death, with an impressive anonymous carving from the end of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century, the sacristy, the chapterhouse and the secluded cloister where the vegetation, stonework, wrought iron railings, water and the ever-present light of the city provide a setting for calmness and reflexion.

## Some facts:

- Classified since 1961 as a National Historic Monument. Currently enjoys Cultural Interest status.
- Built between 1616 and 1738.



ideology of the Counter-Reformation. The chapel's altarpiece, carried out using rich marbles, goes back to the times of special economic boom experienced by the city during the seventeen hundreds. Continuing the tour of the place of worship going in a clockwise direction, we come across such interesting works as the image of Our Father Jesus, which is especially venerated when it goes out on procession in Holy Week, or the baroque organ, a basic instrument of the church's musical chapel for which a good number of pieces of sacred music have been composed over the centuries. Now in the apse, the main chapel, dedicated to the namesake of the church, presents a rich leafy baroque decoration carried out with a multicoloured tangle of plant motifs and cherubs. Over this chapel, the niche of the Virgin has, since 1921, held the image of the patron saint of Alicante, the Virgin of the Remedy. In the middle of the presbytery, the canopy or tabernacle, carved in Genoa at the end of the seventeenth century, delights the eyes with a

colourful display of rich marbles, jaspers and alabasters. We cannot continue on our way without looking at the side façade with its image of the church's namesake, similarly worked, as are the Virgin of the main door and the chapel of the Communion, by the aforementioned Juan Bautista Borja. The popularly named Black Door, due to the colouring of the marble used in its construction, is a harmonious compendium in stone of the best classical style. The commemorative stone plaque dedicated to the Holy Face which is just at the side of the Black Door, delightful for its touch of popular devotion, as well as the inscriptions of the apse reminding us, taking leave of San Nicolás and all that the church and its saint represent for the city, that the places of worship are a living expression in stone of the community's faith, will and sentiment.



# Main Theatre

Did you know that the intense commercial traffic of the port also participated in the costs of building the Alicante theatre? One *real de vellón* [a historic Spanish unit of money] for every *quintal* [a unit of weight = 46kg] of cod and four *reales* for every box of sugar, amongst other taxes, were levied to defray the costs of creating a space for enjoying the dramatic arts in the Alicante of the eighteen hundreds. The total cost rose to nearly 1,000,000 reales.

## An urban fabric with a story to tell

We continue our route along Labradores street, one of the essential focal points of the Renaissance and baroque city. There are still some of the mansions and palaces erected in the boom years by those who were the driving force behind the boom, the proud members of the local farming and mercantile aristocracy. Sober and adhering to the aesthetic argument proper to the seventeen hundreds in Alicante, various of these palaces have been restored for public use as cultural or civil facilities. That is the case of the one that houses the Centro 14, a space for youth activities and participation, the one that will house the City's Cultural Department, or the Llorca-Maisonave palace, currently the premises of the Municipal Archive, under whose basement lie, **partly covered by a glazed surface, the perfectly documented remains of bones and materials of a former burial site** from the late Roman era discovered in 1989. In this mansion where Ramón de Campoamor (1817-1901) resided for the summer seasons, another who was in love with this land and above all its climate, documents are kept explaining the city's history covering a chronological span from the eighteenth century to present times. Letters and royal privileges, original records of deeds, codes, laws, decrees, regulations, accounts books, censuses, maps,



prints, photographs and endless documents of the most varied types, make this place, and fundamentally its peaceful study and research room, a paradise for history-lovers. Crossing the Rambla at the corner with Duque de Zaragoza street, we come to the Ruperto Chapí plaza, attracted by the serene image offered by the building of the Teatro Principal and, more particularly, its stocky portico of Etruscan style columns. Fitting in perfectly with the Classical style of the whole group, a contemporary *Agamemnon*, a work by Carlos García Muela (1977), with its dense bronze corporeality, reinforces the echoes of the Mediterranean that are breathed in each and every corner of the city. **Alicante's Teatro Principal, built in just 20 months, between 1846 and 1847, by the architect Emilio Jover (late 18th century to 1854)** was responding to the need for leisure facilities that the nineteenth century Alicante bourgeoisie sought for itself. And one of the main forms of leisure was clearly theatre, along with music and, to a lesser extent, taking into account its condition as a "provincial city", the opera. Since then, Alicante's Coliseum has witnessed with great intensity the city's vicissitudes, reflecting the tastes and interests of a public classed by those in the know as demanding and, in passing, contributing to the

## "Stage lights"

Did you know that the stage of the Teatro Principal has shone the spotlight on performers of the calibre of Julián Romea, Julián Gayarre, Pablo Sarasate, Margarita Xirgu, Arthur Rubinstein, Sergej Diaghilev, Miguel Fleta, Conchita Piquer, María Guerrero, Celia Gámez, Franz Johann, Lola Flores, José Tamayo, Nuria Espert, Andrés Segovia, Teresa Berganza, Adolfo Marsillach, Els Joglars, Dagoll Dagom, Lindsay Kemp and countless others?





## Did you know...?

the 100 numbers of the ONCE [Spanish National Organisation for the Blind] lottery many years ago were "christened" by the Alicante populace with sonorous nicknames in very pure traditional Spanish. It is not unusual in the vicinity of the Market to hear lottery ticket sellers singing out "I still have El galán, el navili, la mala nit, el clavell, les mamelles, el lleó, la torre, la negra, la Alacant, els gallecs..." [roughly equivalent to "handsome, ship, bad night, carnation, breasts, lion, tower, black woman, Alicante, Galicians..."]



fact that not a few enthusiasts – some of whom, in time, having achieved the category of professionals – ended up treading the boards themselves. That explains, for example, the fact that, since 1988, the now consolidated Alicante Amateur Theatre Display has been held onstage. Likewise, since 1993, the Teatro Principal has acted as the headquarters for the Display of Spanish Theatre by Contemporary Authors, a festival which, organised by the Ministry of Culture, in conjunction with the Alicante Provincial Council, the capital's City Council, theatres of the Regional Government, the charitable activities of the health insurance company Caja de Ahorros Mediterráneo (CAM) and the SGAE [General Association of Authors and Publishers], recognises the city's commitment to all creative and avant-garde movements. Alongside the theatre, a small planted area marks **the memory dedicated by Alicante's people in the form of a bust to their fellow citizen, Ruperto Chapí (1851-1909)**, author of very well-known zarzuelas [Spanish operetta] and an exponent *par*

*excellence* of the spirit and essence of the most typically and purely Spanish Madrid. We continue going up Constitución avenue, not without first admiring the interplay of volumes, colours and styles offering us two buildings placed opposite each other: the Casa de Socorro and the former Cine Ideal. The pure traditional Spanishness of the former together with the adaptation of the latter to a local Art Deco, offers a particularly evocative snapshot of the Alicante of the 1920s and '30s. A stone's



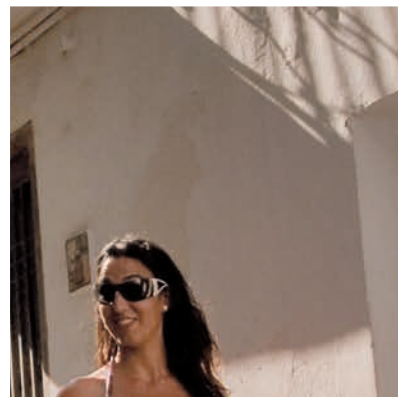
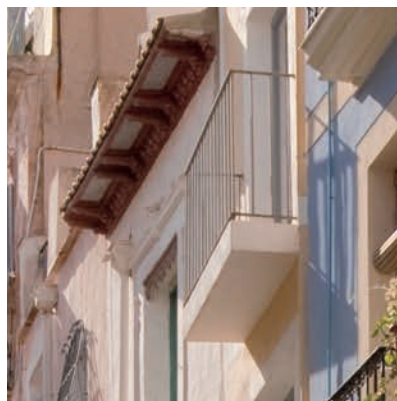




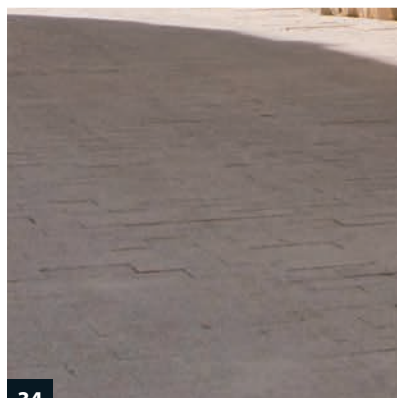
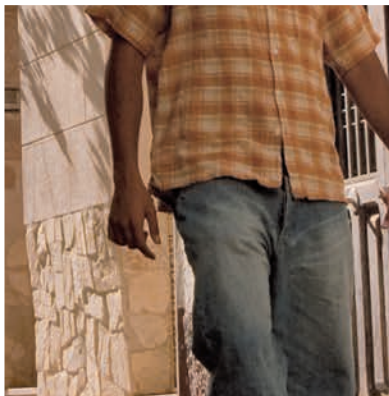
throw away, the outline of an unusual building greets us from its airy ironwork structure and the use of the decorative *trencadís* of a modernist memory. That building is none other than the Central Market, built between 1921 and 1924, and which constitutes one of the most relevant testimonies to Modernism in the city. The Market, also known as "la plaza", by wide sectors of the populace, is surprising from the very moment we recognise in its forms the wide-ranging command of resources and the no less complete knowledge of the history of architecture of its author, Juan Vidal Ramos (1888-1975). Appearances are deceptive. Looking at the spacious basilica-like nave and the adjacent building crowned by a huge cupola, a faithful imitation of an Italian baptistery, anyone would say that we were looking at what could well be termed "Our

Lady of the Fresh Produce Supplies". But no, this is not a church, but a market, and neither is it just any market but rather one that corresponds to the Spanish and still more Mediterranean tradition. That is to say, a complete and multicoloured conglomeration of fresh produce, a sheer delight for all the senses, above all, a hurly-burly of bustling activity and life...The square Plaza 25 de Mayo, behind the market, was so named in memory of the terrible bombardment suffered by the city on the 25th May 1938. Light and lively, with bustling pavement cafés, it provides great views of the colourful flower stalls. **Seated on one of its bronze benches, the figure of the painter Gastón Castelló,** also made in that noble metal bronze, serenely contemplating the light that he so often depicted in his works.





A  
city  
within  
reach





# Itinerary 2

## Charming Corners



**1** Elche Gateway

**2** Esplanade

**3** Plaza Gabriel Miró

**4** Plaza Hernán Cortés

**5** Plaza La Montañeta

**6** Plaza Calvo Sotelo

**7** Av. Doctor Gadea (Witches' House)

**8** Canalejas park

**9** Plaza Canalejas



## ***...s'abaniquen les palmeres* [fanning palm trees]**

**We now take a stroll through the spaces especially designed for that. As happened on the Route of Monuments, the city's "human" dimensions offer excellent opportunities to enjoy a leisurely and carefree stroll, whether on your own, as a couple, with friends or as a family.**



One soon realises that the palm trees seen all over Alicante, are much more than just a tree. More than ornamental or complementary to the more or less traditional landscape, this rather totemic species has become an urban icon, a complete allegory of Mediterranean life. So much so that **there is no great avenue, walkway, or leisure area that is not garlanded with palm trees, these legendary trees whose resistance to aridity constitutes a tribute** to the very instinct for survival and overcoming adversity with which the Alicante people has had to confront life in a difficult terrain. So it is not strange that Alicante should have associated its self-image with this botanical species much-loved for ornamenting and decorating its public spaces. Hence, too, at the height of the Hogueras [bonfire festivities], the men and women of Alicante excitedly chant: *A la llum de les Fogueres, s'abaniquen les palmeres...* [By the light of the bonfires, fanning palm trees sway...]

Any stroll around has to begin somewhere, and the most logical, one might even say the most generally accepted place is the Explanada de España [the seafront promenade], undoubtedly the most representative image of Alicante, an immediate reference point in the subconscious of all who visit for the first time, and of those who have seen it on some occasion and think – and with good reason – of returning to visit it again. The Explanada de España, one of the most famous promenades of the country to which it alludes, points out in its very name the circumstances that gave rise to its appearance and, like nearly everything in this city, have to do with the sea, always so nearby. In the early nineteenth century, the growing port activity required a greater area for berthing, loading and unloading ships than the existing docks offered up to then. The need for a supplementary dock of greater capacity determined the demolishing of the stretch of seawall running along the coastline

## Did you know...?

the former name, Paseo de los Mártires, is a reference to the executions that took place there in 1844. On 8th March that year, Col. Pantaleón Boné, together with a group of loyal followers, were executed for rising up against the government. The title of "Freedom Martyrs" was the recognition with which the liberal Spanish wished to rehabilitate their memory.

### Some facts:

The Explanada de España covers an area of 10,000 square metres made up of over 6,000,000 mosaic cobbles in three different colours of marble: black, cream and "Alicante red".



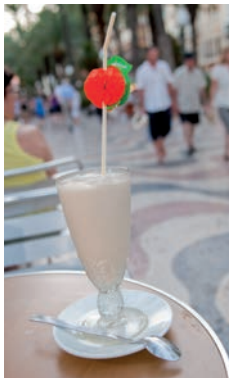
and the consequent levelling of the rubble into a platform which was at first referred to as El Malecón [the seafront promenade].

As the decades passed, part of the Malecón, which from halfway through the century was lined with ornamental borders of trees and shrubs, gradually started to attract the attention of local society to end up becoming, known by then as Paseo de los Mártires, one of the city's most emblematic leisure spaces. However, it was not until 1929 that ownership of the lands was transferred to the City Council by the port, which had hitherto been the owner. The Explanada's appearance as it is known today is the result of

the remodelling undertaken in 1955.

**The paving, carried out in marble mosaic cobbles, and above all its design, a clear allusion to the waves of the sea,**

forms a typical image, the favourite snapshot or picture postcard when it comes to communicating with a far off relative or a friend who has been in Alicante. That image is completed if we include in the background, the fountain of the Puerta del Mar plaza, the former hotel Palas, refurbished to house the Chamber of Commerce, and the first two buildings of the Explanada proper: the Carbonell and Laignere buildings, excellent examples of eclectic architecture and a reflection of the





## Did you know...?



The pompous style of the Carbonell building reflects the idea of its proponent and owner, Enrique Carbonell, of humiliating the neighbouring building, the former Hotel Palas, in revenge for an old affront committed by the hotel's management. Others assure that the offence came from the other neighbours, the Lamaigneres. So much for that. A grudge between rival neighbours has turned into a curious urban legend ...

trading potential achieved by the local bourgeoisie. The Explanada, an urban thoroughfare *par excellence*, completes its leisure offer with plenty of cafés and bars selling the favourite local speciality soft drink “horchata” [tiger-nut milk], ice-cream parlours and teashops, all in convivial neighbourliness with pubs, veteran restaurants of typical Alicante cooking – some of them *tota la vida* [lifelong] – other more functional establishments of international cuisine and the upcoming fast-food franchises. In another sphere, the historic Alicante Casino, situated halfway along the esplanade, retains, despite its many refurbishments, the feel and features of the Alicante of yesteryear. **In short, strolling along the Explanada de España, or just “la Explanada” as it is more commonly called, represents a whole exercise of “being in Alicante”** in the first instance... And, it goes without saying, a must for every tourist. So we continue on our way. Alicante has various plazas and little gardens or squares which, above all in summer, act as real oases of calm and freshness in the midst of the urban melee. All of them have, in their turn, much to tell us about the history of the city, its inhabitants and the characters that have marked out the local *modus vivendi*. Let us take them one by one.

Very close to the Explanada and accessing it by the Rambla, another thoroughfare of reference, the Portal de Elche is reached. A limited but pleasant enough space, occupying the site where the gateway of the city walls stood, through which passed all those who, whether on foot or driving, were heading for the city of Misteri. Its four parterres are planted with a powerful mass of vegetation consisting of palm trees, fig trees and other species, growing around a central kiosk, evoking in its form and setting the most affable Mediterranean lifestyle. That is exactly how the artist Manuel Baeza Gómez (1911-1986) came to portray it in the form of a gigantic mosaic on the surface of the skyscraper in front of us. Continuing along Manero Mollá street, or that of San Francisco with plenty of good restaurants with speedy service, we come to perhaps one of the prettiest plazas in this part of the city, its name plate recalling Alicante's most celebrated writer:



## From gallows to meeting point

Did you know that the Portal de Elche was the area outside the city walls where the condemned were executed? Fortunately, in our times, capital punishment has given way to lively conversation over an aperitif or a refreshing drink.





Gabriel Miró Ferrer (1879-1930). And certainly, **being unanimously regarded as the best interpreter of nature in all of Spanish literature**, what better homage could he have than to see his name accompanied by exuberant vegetation of truly explosive proportions. Just approaching the spectacular hundred-year-old fig trees, araucaria or “monkey-puzzle” trees, elms, plane trees, palm trees and other species, is enough to see for yourself.

## An illustrious man of Alicante

“On that morning, our clear and simple city was all communicated and joyous with the sea.”  
(Gabriel Miró)

In the middle of the plaza, a fountain crowned by a work made in 1918 by Vicente Bañuls Aracil (1866-1934), representative jointly with his son, Daniel Bañuls Martínez (1905-1947), of the best Alicante sculpture between the two centuries, completes the charm of this spot. The figure, representing a graceful maiden pouring water from a pitcher, is a hymn to the sea, air and light,

all evocations of a Mediterranean that in Gabriel Miró’s words acquire a rare quality and depth. To one side of the plaza, and discretely, very much in keeping with the writer’s own nature, a simple bust erected in his honour in 1935, ends by recalling to us the attribution of the birth of the author of “*Años y leguas*”.

Not only the centrepiece of the plaza, with its dense accompaniment of trees and shrubs and decorative complement, reminds us that we are at the centre of the most bourgeois and provincial capital Alicante. Some of its buildings, like that of the Post Office, finished in 1920 in a very typically Spanish style, or the building that currently houses the College of Architects, take us back to the airs and appearances of the era in which the plaza received the name of Isabel II. The hours, after all, no longer pass as slowly as in bygone times. Restaurants, terraces, pubs, shops and other leisure outlets invite passers-by to relax accompanied by such good sensations. On the other hand, and by municipal request, the plaza is being revitalised by the organisation of different cultural and activities for people to take part in.



The first name of this urban space was Plaza de las Barcas because the sea reached as far as here

## Did you know...?

In this plaza, in 1898, the symbolic ceremony was held to inaugurate the pipeline bringing the waters from the rich aquifers of the outlying town of Sax. The city, chronically exposed to aridity, finally had a regular and abundant supply of drinking water.



## Sindicatura de Greuges

Very close to the Gabriel Miró plaza, in Pascual Blasco street, stands the building housing the "Sindicatura de Greuges" [similar to the Public Auditor's Office], the only institution of the Autonomous Government that has its head office in Alicante.

We now continue our walk, leaving behind the San Francisco neighbourhood, entering the Barrio Nuevo along Castaños street, where Gabriel Miró was born. A former and celebrated thoroughfare for traditional commerce, Castaños street has undergone a profound process of transformation in which pedestrianisation and the slow but continual replacement of the traditional shops by specialist stores, restaurants and drinks outlets are its most evident results. At the corner with Teniente Álvarez Soto street we must turn left. Without stopping at any time to pass through pedestrian areas, festooned with terraces and shops of all kinds, we soon come to Hernán Cortés plaza, also known as Plaza Nueva, another haven of peace in the midst of the urban bustle. From any of the terraces set out for the purpose,

there is a motive and perfect excuse for exercising the typically Mediterranean friendliness and leisure. Meanwhile, the fishes in an aquarium installed in the plaza itself, totally self-absorbed, watch the passing hours.

A tall bell-tower with an octagonal base, so frequent in Mediterranean Gothic, indicates to us the next point to which we are heading. However, the bell-tower is not mediaeval. It is part of a church, which in turn accompanies other buildings, all put up post war, when the whole of the hill that had been there and was known as La Montañeta, was cut away and the area proceeded to be urbanised. Now in the plaza of the same name, positioning ourselves with the sea behind us and looking clockwise, we can see the building commonly known as Public Works offices; the Civil Government, the present Subdelegation of the Government; the aforementioned church dedicated to Our Lady of Grace and, finally, the Treasury building. **The homogeneity in volume, use of colour and style of all these buildings, built between 1945-1951 in a textbook "renaissance", provide a certain charm to this plaza,** we could say of stage props, where the administrative air and the feel of a capital city that gave rise to it are still felt.

We will not stop but move on to the adjoining plaza, nowadays named Calvo Sotelo, in whose environs the former Franciscan convent used to





## Did you know...?

In the Canalejas park itself, a simple monument, made in 1947 by Daniel Bañuls, recalls the fact that Carlos Arniches Barrera (1866-1943), celebrated for his *sainetes* and *zarzuelas* set in Madrid, was in fact from Alicante. It never ceases to be a curious fact that the most inspired chroniclers and narrators of the most typically Spanish quarters of Madrid, their night-time open-air street festivals and typical dances, were originally from these lands.

stand. Its romantic air seems to be of an Alicante from another era and it gives way to the avenues and thoroughfares of the expansion where the contemporary shines in all its splendour. Turning left we come onto the Doctor Gadea promenade, where the sea awaits us in the background. Going down the avenue that recalls the medical doctor and mayor, José Gadea Pro (1861-1928), under whose orders important urban improvements were made, we come to one of the boldest and finest testimonies to Modernism in the city. It is the building **traditionally known as “the Witches’ House” due to its Nordic gothic-horror feel. At present it houses the Regional Government’s offices in the city.**

So we reach Canalejas, the doyen of Alicante’s city parks. Situated on former port lands used for the warehousing of merchandise, the city did not find it quick or easy to take on its ownership for the use and enjoyment of its dwellers. Already on its perimeter, the dense vaults of vegetation that mark the centenarian fig trees arranged in perfect formation all along the park, predispose it for enjoying some silence and shade in the midst of the clamours coming from the surroundings of the marina and neighbouring leisure areas. Amongst the buildings of interest that give onto its frontage, the former School of Commerce stands out, now the centre of cultural activities which the University of Alicante has in the city. The point at which the park meets the Explanada is resolved in the form of a clear roundabout. At the centre of this stands a monument to José de



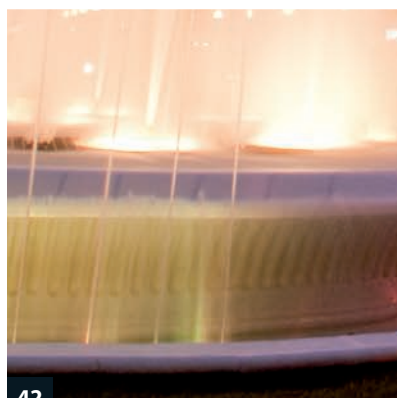
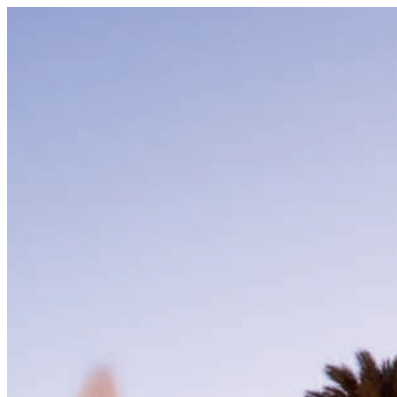
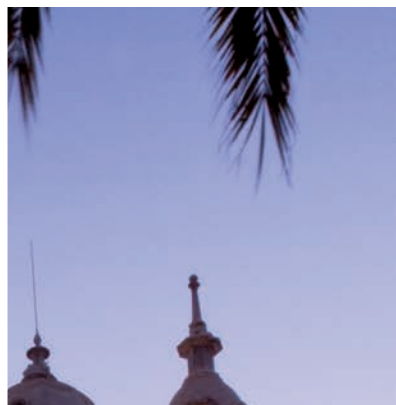
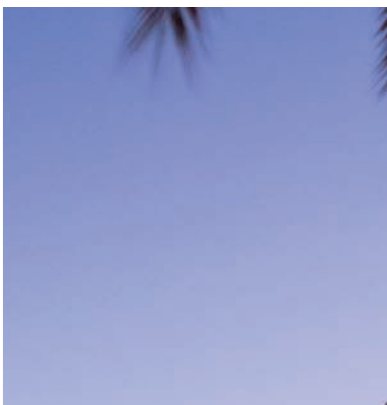
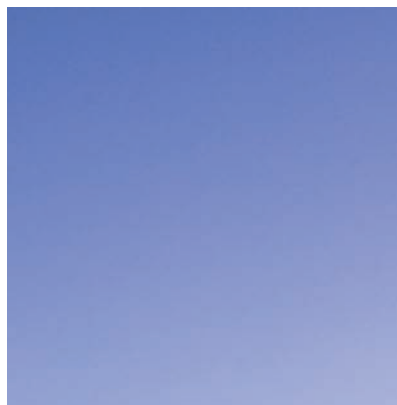
Canalejas (1854-1912), government minister and representative for Alicante, whom the City Council wished to recognise with this memorial, for his dedication to the city and to the province. The work, of some stature and with plenty of allegorical details, shields and slogans, as is common on this type of monument, was undertaken by Vicente Bañuls between 1914 and 1916. Behind him, the Casa Alberola, its lookout crowned with a graceful little cupola, contributes to the bourgeois and relaxed air of the image.

A small plaque nearby recalls that Francisco Javier de Balmis (1753-1819), a world reference in medicine in the age of Illustration, for his work of widespread publicity of the smallpox vaccination in the former Spanish colonies of the Americas.

## Did you know...?







# Itinerary 3

## A stroll looking out to sea



- 1** Panoramis centre
- 2** Club Regatas
- 3** Exhibition hall. Fish Market
- 4** Canalejas
- 5** Tomás y Valiente promenade

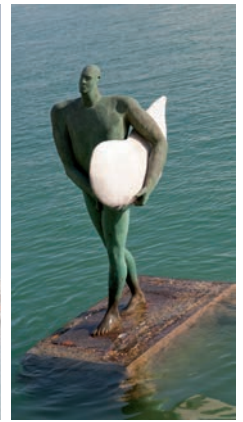
- 6** Plaza Puerta del Mar
- 7** Port leisure area
- 8** Gómiz promenade (Cara del Moro)
- 9** Postiguet beach - El Cocó

Icarus also does watersports at Alicante.

## Let's take a look at the maritime façade

A stroll inviting one to bathe the eyes in light, to let oneself be seduced by the call of the gulls and to breathe in the salt wafting from the sea

Leaving behind the modern and functional leisure complex of the Royal Regatta Club, we will come to the Tomás y Valiente promenade. Meanwhile, we can take a relaxed stroll with the



view of hundreds of yachts bobbing alongside other craft moored at the pontoons of the marina.

**The impressively rounded sculpture of El adivinador or The Diviner (2010) stands near the confluence with La Puerta del Mar, greeting us with all the vitality, joviality and even candour that marked the intense career of its creator, Castellón-born Juan Ripollés.**

Just a few metres away, opposite the steps of honour of the Muelle de la Reina quay, the figure of Icarus (Esperanza d'Ors, 1999) with a surfboard under his arm appears to come gliding over the water, ready to surf a sea of classical and



### First submarine

Before Isaac Peral and Narcís Monturiol, Cosme García Sáiz, a mechanic by profession, carried out in the waters of this very port the first underwater navigating experiment recorded in Spain. The submarine prototype, 3 metres long, 1.5 metres in breadth and nearly 1.6 metres in height, was successfully launched in Alicante on 3rd August 1860, as recorded in the official document conserved in the Naval Historic Archives.

modern-day mythology which has come to form part of our city, its uses and customs. Our stroll might continue through the spectacular leisure area created within the docks. Whether we wish to enjoy an excellent lunch, or opt to take part in its lively nightlife, or even try our luck at the splendid new Casino, there is no doubt that this leisure area boasts a good number of options, any of which is more than tempting. But an outing in Alicante *comme il faut* cannot



## Did you know ...?

The name of Postiguët goes back to the little gateway or wicket that the old city wall had, in its day, alongside the *Portal Nou*, the spot where Vigen del Socorro street starts nowadays.

end without paying homage to the Postiguët, the city's beach *par excellence* and one of Spain's most famous urban beaches. Constructed at the end of the 1960s and dedicated to Manuel Gómiz Orts (1825-1902), another famous and well-loved nineteenth century mayor, the Gómiz promenade snakes its way between sand, artistic sculptures, also made in sand, and the bathers, offering passers-by the possibility of enjoying spacious and peaceful terraces. The excellent and above all relaxing views over the Mediterranean, apart... From the midway zone of the prom, if we raise our eyes above the level of the Paseito de Ramiro, from which part of the basement of the old city wall juts out, we will see, beaming out in all its splendour, the famous smiling Moor's Face, the likeness of the profile of a human face on El Benacantil, which is another of the unquestionable icons of the city. Needless to say this curious natural rock formation has caught the imagination of poets and artists of every era, creed and culture, giving rise to a succession of legends about powerful kalifs,



braves horsemen and enchanted princesses leaping into the abyss for love. A castle without legends is quite simply, not a castle... The Postiguët merges with the neighbouring beach of El Cocó where another allegorical figure greets us, this time made by Vicente Ferrero who, from its title *Mirando* (1999), is perhaps inviting us to do likewise, resting our eyes and relaxing our ears in the face of what we have before us: a vast expanse of white and blue, colours very proper for these parts. Very close by, the old – dating from 1914 – and beloved Marina station, local headquarters of the region's railways, brings us memories of when the *trenet* ran between Alicante and Denia, forbear of the present day modern and comfortable tram, in those days taking nearly a day to cover the distance.

We continue our promenade: **La Ereta park, equipped with a variety of leisure facilities, amongst them terraces, café, exhibition hall, solarium, is one of the most recent and most innovative in design** on the city's constantly

growing list of recreational spaces. It was designed and carried out between 1993 and 2003 by the well-known architects and town planners Marc Bigarnet and Frédéric Bonnet. Acting as a kind of "lock" to negotiate the steep difference in level between the old town centre and Santa Bárbara castle, La Ereta, an ancient spot of which there is no need to burn the midnight oil much to know the origin of its name [it means "erect, straight, vertical"], enables spectacular views of the city and the part of the bay which harbours it to be viewed from different levels. There are other leisure areas but to reach them a vehicle is needed, or public transport, as they are relatively further away from the communications centre of the city. Among the various options, we could start with the nearest: El Tossal. The other great hill on Alicante soil is a spacious green zone which has been given various uses, both historically and

nowadays, of which the most notable are: sports, which we will speak about in due course, educational (various institutes are found on its slopes, among them the doyen of the city, the “Jorge Juan” school, the Professional Music Conservatory and the Tourist Centre of the regional government), along with those that are

active councillor, the medical doctor Antonio Rico Cabot (1866-1927), the City Council acquired the hill so as to turn it into an urban park, providing the city with a second green lung. Other urban recreational spaces that Alicante’s populace has at its disposal, but need the use of a car or public transport to visit them,



La Ereta park and San Fernando castle, two places with unbeatable views of the city

merely for recreation.

But from among all the “dwellers” of the hill there is one that stands out for reasons of its antiquity and class, but above all for its quiet role in the city’s daily goings on. San Fernando castle is, in fact, a more discreet fortress by comparison with its powerful big sister, that of Santa Bárbara. Hurriedly built during the French war to supplement the city’s fortifications, the fact that Napoleon’s forces gave up attacking Alicante, together with the technical deficiencies in its execution which soon showed up, betrayed the uselessness of the effort and resources employed. But, we must be positive: since then **Alicante has had not just one castle, but two...**

Lacking all strategic value, and contrary to what happened with Santa Bárbara, the military class washed its hands of the hill and the castle, both passing into private hands. It was not until the twentieth century that, at the request of an

are: Lo Morant park, a vast complex situated to the northeast of the city; the Palmeral [palm grove], to the southwest, taking the N-332 highway towards Elx, and the Juan Pablo II park, nestled in the rapidly developing westside area of the city. All these spaces have sports equipment, cultural facilities and recreation installations of all kinds, but most especially those aimed at enjoying as a family. At all of them, moreover, different cultural, recreational and participative activities are held throughout the year.

As in many cities, the recent redevelopment and modernisation of the old and degraded dockland areas has meant more parks and public spaces for the city; parks such as the Parque del Mar on the southwest side of the city, which offers residents new recreational facilities as well as sweeping, laid-back views of the sparkling sea.



The Congress Centre of Alicante's Medical School, a pioneer centre in the city's bid for conference tourism

## Cosmopolitan Light

**We continue discovering facets of this city based on its quality of light.**

Alicante, as all know, is a consolidated goal of beach and sun tourism, although throughout recent years and at the request of various instances – basically from the regional government, the Provincial Council and the City Council – **major steps have been taken to expand into other areas and recreational opportunities, to encourage other activities and specialise in other leisure-time pursuits.**

Two important cultural infrastructures are participating in this process, which are further supporting and reinforcing the city's traditional standing as a top tourist destination. The first of these is the grand Auditorio de la

Diputación de Alicante (ADDA) on Paseo de Campoamor. Designed by renowned architect Juan Antonio García Solera, this auditorium features a great symphonic concert hall seating 1,226 people, a chamber concert hall for 282, as well as numerous conference halls, rehearsal rooms, dressing rooms, warehouses and other dependencies.

The second infrastructure is the Royal Tobacco Factory, now renamed Las Cigarreras, forms part of the city's oldest and most cherished monumental heritage. This factory, which was one of the pillars of Alicante's economy during the 1800s and was in operation until recently, is yet another example of the leisure and culture options available in Alicante.

The factory, situated to the north of the very intimate San Antón neighbourhood, was in its turn occupying an already existing building of obligatory reference when it comes to delving into the recesses of the city's history. We are referring to the House of Mercy, built in the middle of the





eighteenth century as a centre for helping the most needy and a residence for the Bishop of Orihuela on his occasional trips to Alicante. Now gracefully retired from its industrial past, this great complex

has been rewarded with an ambitious and recently completed redevelopment plan to provide the people of Alicante with a new fully equipped and multipurpose cultural venue: Las Cigarreras. Named in tribute to the hard-working women at the core of the former cigar and cigarette factory's workforce, Las Cigarreras is now set to become a new and versatile 21st-century factory producing music, theatre and art created locally or further afield and encouraging a flourishing cultural scene and its associated values.

And now to conclude this section, for those who are lovers of the dramatic arts in their widest and most varied types, the Teatre Arniches, situated on Aguilera avenue, offers a correct counterpart to the regular programme of the Teatro Principal, constituting a platform for the more daring and innovative proposals. Some of the performances in the already well-known Alicante Music Festival, held in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Valencian Institute of Music, or the Alicante International Puppet Festival, better known as Festitelles, take place in this modern and functional hall.



# Multicolour souk

**Having arrived at this point, how about going shopping? The proposal is more than tempting and the offer is even more so, coming from a city that is growing in its facet most exposed to foreign contact: commerce.**

As has already been commented in other sections, Alicante's dimensions make everything within easy reach, plus the practical and coherent articulation of **its main streets, all parallel or at rightangles to the sea, making shopping an excellent reason for enjoying the city**, planning your time comfortably, without getting lost but being able to lose, indeed, a few digits on the credit card balance. On the other hand, commerce in Alicante does not suffer the effects of seasonality. In the first place, due to the city's own demand, but above all, the fact that the province as a whole and the capital itself receive tourism all the year round (foreign package tours, bus tours for the elderly), making Alicante a particularly attractive place for shopping.

## La Rambla

So, we start our journey along what was for decades the commercial thoroughfare *par excellence*: La Rambla. Despite nowadays not having the thrust it had in past times - even so its hotel establishments and bank branches give an image of activity and dynamism that has nothing to envy in other parts of the city - the excellent position of La Rambla as a crossroads



of communication between Alfonso X el Sabio avenue and the Explanada, and its condition as the gateway to enter the leisure area of the historic centre, "the Neighbourhood", makes it an interesting yet sound urban value. So sound that the central ceremonies of the Bonfire festivities, Holy Week or the carnivals, cannot be understood without the use of the Rambla as what it has always been and continues being, a huge and lively urban hall. Situated almost at the point where López Torregrosa street branches off, at the foot of a pompously baptized in the 1960s Provincial Tower, the monument *Alicante a la Constitución* (1986), a work by the sculptor and ceramic artist Arcadi Blasco (1928-), appears as a silent but firm testimony to the adherence of the Alicante people to democratic values. We



## Did you know...?

Arcadi Blasco is to Alicante public sculpture of recent decades what the Bañuls were for it up to the middle of the last century. Along with this monument, lovingly nicknamed "El Portal de Belén", other works by Blasco are scattered around different points in the city. The most emblematic of them are *Monument to the Holy Face* (1989), at the entrance to the hamlet of the same name, and *Homage to Miguel Hernández* (1991), a tribute which Alicante, the city where he died, pays to the poet and playwright from Oriheula, but also decidedly universal.

must not leave the Rambla without hopping across to the nearby street that recalls the distinguished Alicante juror Rafael Altamira y Crevea (1866-1951), so distinguished that he went so far as to form part of the International Court of Justice of the Hague at such a delicate moment in history as the period between the wars. The air of traditional commerce in typical produce and antiques coexists nowadays with numerous top class establishments dedicated to the catering trade. We continue our foray into the Alicante most determined to remain with us, that which we wear, in the form of clothing and accessories, or that will remind us of our visit in the form of gifts, souvenirs and typical objects. And we will do so along one of the thoroughfares with most style, self-confidence and personality of all-time Alicante and today. The avenue Alfonso X el Sabio, undoubtedly the most *senyoreta* of Alicante's thoroughfares, supplying products of all types to either the merely curious or the determined buyer. Fashion, footwear, accessories, typical products,

artistic ceramics, delicatessen, objects for home decoration or a variety, amongst other hundreds of incentives, make Alfonso X el Sabio and its adjacent streets, on the left (Constitución, Castaños, Bazán, César Elguezábal, Navas, Ángel Lozano, Pascual Pérez, Teatro, Gerona,...) and on the right (García Morato, Campos Vasallo, Pablo Iglesias, Belando, Segura, Poeta Quintana...), a powerful and irresistible appeal.

So we come to a point in the city's layout that is full of light, light for its spaciousness and light in itself for its established and clearly symbolic nature. **We find ourselves in what is, without a doubt, Alicante's Grand-Place, its open-air meeting place par excellence: the Plaza de los Luceros.** This huge circular plaza, a landmark in Alicante's urban expansion, concentrates all the elements that constitute the expression of this Mediterranean city's character: palm trees, gardens, terraces to sit out and chat with friends over a drink...

**And the fountain, the element that gives this space its leading role, with its slender lines**





**by way of an obelisc, albeit somewhat sinuous, constitutes another of the recognisable symbols of Alicante.**

The fountain, finished in 1930 by Daniel Bañuls, is a homage – in spite of what the title *Levante* might seem to indicate – to all those symbols so universally recognised: water, the fertility that goes with it, fruits, sensuality – treated indeed chastely, in the form of innocent children – the vigor of the horses, stars... Despite certain controversies deriving from the origin of the name of the plaza, which has also become known by popular knowledge as *plaça dels Cavalls* [plaza of the horses] could well be proud of its beautiful and attractive name. All the more so in the City of Light. For now that it is fixed, Luceros [brights stars, as in star of Venus] is like a great star placed at the centre of the city, a star whose greater beams, the four great avenues starting out from it, shed light on the character, significance and historic motives that have made Alicante what it is. We shall see. The axis which is formed by Alfonso X el Sabio avenue, which we have just left behind, points to the northeast, towards Santa Bárbara castle, therefore to the military character of a stronghold that Alicante had for centuries and was the germ of its identity and definitive populating. Continuing to the southeast, Federico Soto avenue stretches as far as the sea, to the port, the first driving force of the economy. Next, looking to the southwest, Estación avenue, with its axis pointing to the terminus of the Renfe railway, evokes the arrival *en masse* of tourism, another of the driving forces that mark out the city. Finally, the avenue that runs northwest, General Marvá, heads straight for the Tossal and the flight of steps up to the Jorge Juan Higher Institute, that is, evoking the condition of administrative and services capital. As we see, a symbolic star, but very informative.



The noisy Maisonnave avenue and the spectacular façade of the Provincial Council building

On a more humdrum note, it is still worth pointing out that as the heart of Alicante, which it is and feels, Luceros hosts some of the civic, festive or cultural events that are most thrilling to the heart of its populace. From the *mascletas* [firecrackers] at the Bonfires festivities or the celebrations when the local sports teams win a match or an important recognition, the horses and their child-riders on the fountain could tell us much... Hopping over to Estación avenue, we will be able to admire the building that houses the Provincial Council. Finished in 1931, it is a work signed by the selfsame Juan Vidal Ramos, author of the Central Market and of so many other buildings in Alicante from the first third of the twentieth century. Its pompous style – but not, for all that, lacking in grace – with its neo-baroque decorative features, provides this almost Versaille-esque structure with the style corresponding to its official and representative vocation. Backing onto the building, the “Garden

of Alicante Celebrities” offers a good informative guide to the local and provincial “glories” of all eras and conditions. There, on a discreet but expressive relief in stone entitled

**Homage to Miguel Hernández (1957), a work by the Alicante sculptor José (“Pepe”) Gutiérrez Carbonell (1924-2002), reminds us once again of the author of *El rayo que no cesa*** [a book of poems, his most important work].

We continue. Going down the Soto promenade, which recalls Federico Soto Mollá (1873-1926) the mayor who, amongst other things, ordered the dismantling of La Montañeta, the array of shops continues with a varied offer. All this serves as a portico to what is, undoubtedly, the great commercial thoroughfare of the city: the avenue dedicated to the memory of Eleuterio Maisonnave Cutayar (1840-1890), outstanding mayor of the city and Government Minister during the first Republic.



## Luceros, the Star...

Did you know that in addition, the streets of a whole neighbourhood are dedicated to stars and constellations? It is the very typically Alicante neighbourhood of La Florida, whose inhabitants have the good fortune of living in streets with such beautiful names as those of Andromeda, Centaurus, Pegassus, Hercules, Cassiopeia, Southern Cross... Lights in the City of Light.

From his pedestal, the statue of the tribune, one of the crowning works of the sculptor Vicente Bañuls, shows us the way, looking down the avenue dedicated to him.

A few steps that will have to be taken more slowly if we are to take in such a welter of shopwindows. Boutiques, shoeshops, cafés, patisseries, franchises, fabric shops, household electrical goods, perfumes and toiletries, and many more outlets of all types of articles, follow in quick succession all along a thoroughfare that

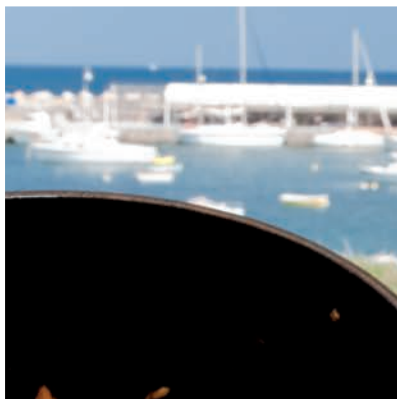
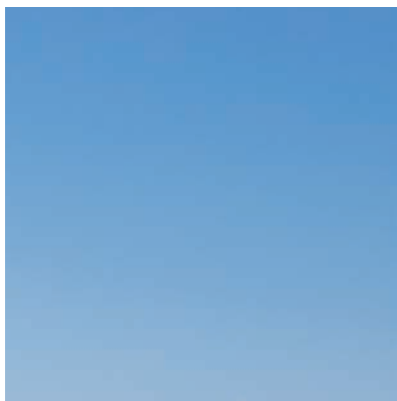
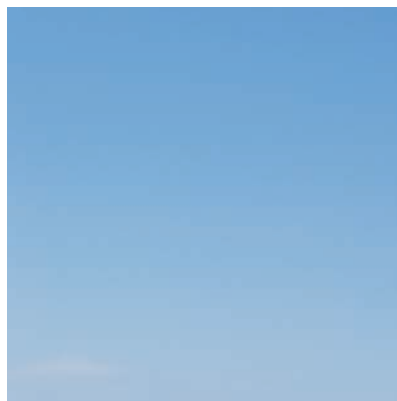
is marked at each of its ends by the triangles of some well-known big stores, inviting us to buy, or at least to browse. The same as happens on Alfonso X el Sabio, Maisonnave avenue's influence stretches to the adjacent streets of the area which constituted the great expansion of the city. Alemania, Portugal, Pintor Aparicio, Churruca, Italia, Pintor Lorenzo Casanova, Reyes Católicos and Arquitecto Morell to the south of the avenue, and General O'Donnell, General Lacy, Serrano, Poeta Vila y Blanco and Pintor Cabrera to the north, more or less complete the dense network of commercial streets. Arriving at the Glorieta de la Estrella, a centrepiece presided over by the group sculpture by Eusebio Sempere *Como una estrella* [Like a star] (1978), turning left we face a spacious avenue recalling the most unrivalled of the composers this land has produced: Óscar Esplá Triay (1886-1976). On both sides, specialist shops of all kinds accompany the tourist on a shopping spree until giving a presentiment of the sea, once again nearby. As is common nowadays, the phenomenon of huge shopping centres where shops and department stores alternate with cinemas, restaurants, amusement arcades, play areas and other facilities, has not passed Alicante by. As also happens, given their size, various of these centres have opened up on the outskirts and along the main access roads into the city. But not all commerce in Alicante obeys the conventional establishment model. There is a smaller, more direct, intimate, and above all traditional model. This is none other than the street market – *de tota la vida*. **The life-long street market has been located on the Campoamor promenade for years, although the installation of the Auditorium there has obliged the vendors to move to Teulada street,** just behind the Tossal sports area. Here we will find “nearly” everything: fruits and vegetables not just a few days but only a few



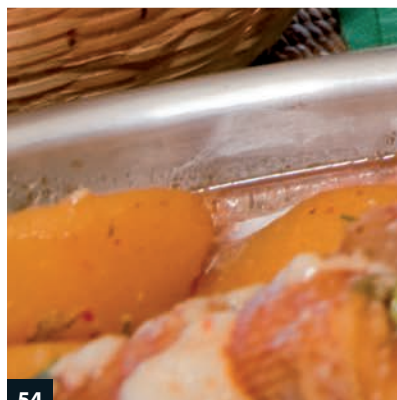
hours old!, shoes, clothes, household linens, kitchenware, decorative objects, tools, animals, plants... It turns out to be very stimulating, as much for the senses as, and very particularly, for the grateful pocket, to attend on market days, especially on a Saturday, and let yourself be seduced by that special way of understanding commercial dealings that we fortunately enjoy in the Mediterranean. A cultural form in itself.







**Much  
more  
than rice**



## Alicantine's cuisine involves a culinary blend, a melting-pot of cultures and their own identities.

With so much walking around, it is normal for the stomach sooner or later to require attention. Alicante also offers itself in this sense more than generously, both in the range of establishments on offer, with hundreds of restaurants, bars, rice-houses, *tascas* [taverns or cheap bars], pizza-houses and grills distributed through the busier parts of the city, and for the extensive and excellent variety offered on their menus. As the top quality tourist place that it is, there are options, never better said, for all tastes. All the variables of Spanish (Basque, Galician, Castilian, Andalucian, etc.) and international (German, French, Italian, Maghrib [North African], Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Argentine, Colombian, etc.) cuisine, as well as the latest trends, chef's signature dishes, vegetarian or the universally known franchises, can all be enjoyed in Alicante. But now, who can resist the varieties and above all the delicious proposals that Alicante's own cooking offers? In the kitchen, Alicante boasts yet another demonstration of her condition as a land of welcome, a melting-pot of cultures, which does not mean that it has not managed to create its own personality. In fact, there is a *cuina alacantina*, a specific way of understanding the fact and the culture of the diet of which rice is not just the staple but the star ingredient, although not the only one. And note the detail: "rice", rather than "paella". In fact, the thousand and one ways of resolving the combination of this grain with proteins, fats and other carbohydrates, is as vast as are the varied cultural influences that have left their stamp on the city. It has even been said that in Alicante a different rice can be enjoyed on each of the 365 days in the year. In an amusing tale, the self-assured Wenceslao Fernández Flórez tells that he made a narrow escape from such an onslaught.

Without reaching such levels of admiration for rice, it may indeed be stated that there are many, many rices. Starting with the fact that there are no "sacred" or monolithic formulas for preparing them, and still less unanimity regarding which ingredients are considered as satisfying the canons or not, a brief sample might begin with the "Alicante-style" paella, in which you will find *ñora* [a small round red hot pepper], capsicums, peas and garlic and whose basic identifying mark is the combination of meats, fundamentally chicken, with fish (tuna, swordfish...), crustaceans (lobster, shrimps...) and molluscs (mussels, cuttlefish, squid...); going on to the seafood paella and reaching solutions equally very tasty and typical of Alicante like the rices with cod, tuna, Moray eel, squid or vegetables. The *caldero* rice [taking its name from the cauldron in which it is prepared], a whole "sea stew", constituting in itself alone a complete meal, for it consists of rice stewed over a substantial base of fish (monkfish, conger eel, flathead mullet, John Dory...), followed by this same fish served as the second course and accompanied usually by a substantial and fragrant *all i oli* [dressing of garlic and olive oil also known as "aioli"]. Other rices also much appreciated and asked for are the *arroz "a banda"*, in which the rice is cooked with the fish but served apart (hence its name, meaning "apart" or "on the side"); *arròs de senyoret*, an "enriched" version of the previous one, as it includes morsels like peeled shrimps, prawns, mussels...; *arròs negre* [black rice], cooked with squid in its ink, of course; rice with spinach and anchovies; rice with red mullet; rice with rabbit; rice with "pata" [trotter], made with veal, deli-sausage and chick peas... With their presence being overwhelming, the culinary offer does not end with rices, but rather they open up the way to other equally tempting fields. Fried fish which, as the canons decree, must be "from the bay" i.e. the bay of Alicante, red mullet, carp, seabass either baked whole in salt or opened and roasted on a bed of onions, bell peppers, aubergines etc., grouper or a dish called *suquet* prepared with



scorpion fish, along with the chapter on seafoods, with the red shrimp as an emblem, define, amongst other specialties, the cuisine of a city allied to the sea. After all, the *puchero* [a hearty stew] cannot be forgotten, sometimes served with *pilota* [balls of maize], or the *potajes* [stews], as dishes from inland.

The centripetal force of the capital with regard to the province and in turn the bordering regions, as a result of phenomena like the migration of the 1960s and '70s, or tourism without going further, popularised in the local culinary culture such dishes as the *olleta* [stew], *arròs amb costra* ["rice with a crust", cooked with egg to form a crispy edge], *fideuà* [with noodles] or the *gazpachos* [another kind of stew, not the famous Andalusian cold soup of



## Legendary wines

Did you know that "historic" wines from Alicante like the Fondillón or Alocue were highly regarded by monarchs like Philip II or Luis XIV and they even appear extolled by writers like Shakespeare, Dumas, Defoe and Dostoyevski? However, the vines that produced that legendary Alicante Fondillón were destroyed by the phylloxera in the early twentieth century, so today it is just a glorious memory.

tomatoes and peppers], while being from elsewhere, in Alicante they have been adopted and made their own. The same could be said for a dish inherited from the *pieds-noirs* ["black-foots", immigrants from Algeria] and which is so specific to the *francophonie*: couscous. All of this, it must be understood, washed down with some of the bold and increasingly successful wines of the Alicante *Denominación de Origen* [D.O. – the officially controlled designation of origin]. There are certain "gems" of the local cuisine that





*Coca de molletes, a typical Alicante pastry*



nobody should miss if they wish to claim – and better still to boast about - having eaten in Alicante.

**So you should order coca amb tonyina [tuna pastry], tasted unanimously as the icon of the Bonfires festivities, which it is, although it can be enjoyed all the year round, as also the coca de molletes [pastry with crumbs],** made of a

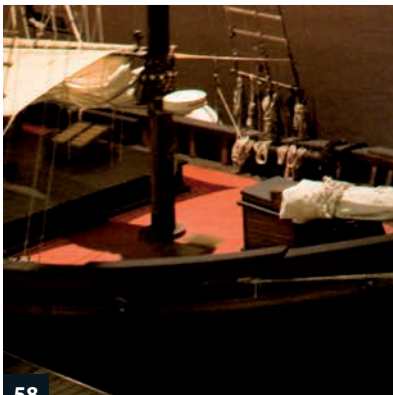
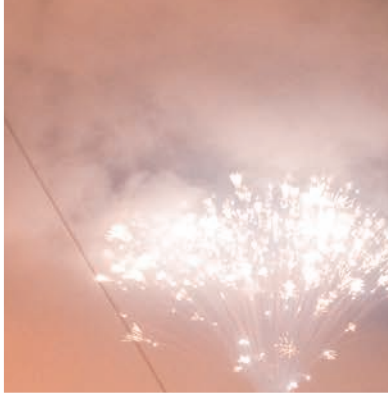
savoury pastry dough baked and covered with tiny delicious crumbs of rubbed-in fat and flour.

Continuing with the cakes, pastries and desserts section, the coca “boba” would have to be pointed out, dates or *rotllets d’anís* [aniseed cookies in a ring shape], along with *toñas* and *monas* for Easter [little

almond cakes]. About the nougats of Alicante and Jijona there is nothing that can be said that has not already been said. However, and although they can be found in numerous establishments, those who have a sixth sense tuned especially in the direction of this mix of honey and almonds, it will certainly lead them straight to Mayor street and the environs of the Central Market. The section on Alicante cuisine cannot be ended without commenting on a variety of foods as specific as varied in their types: savoury titbits, *el salat*, as they are known more generically. But to appreciate the titbits in all their splendour – before sinking your teeth into them, of course – it is very recommendable to go to the best possible site: the Central Market. There, certain stalls display perfectly lined up arrays of *mojama* [dried salted tuna strips], roe, *tonyina de sorra* [cured tuna flank], along with *mújoles* [salted dried mullet], *capellanes* [“poor cod” another kind of fish], *melvas* [frigate and bullet mackerel, in the tuna family], sardines and other specialities whose colouring, aroma and fresh healthy appearance constitute a feast for all the senses. We conclude the section on local food and drink mentioning some of the popular refreshing drinks, like the *horchata* [tiger-nut milk], frappees of lemon or coffee, the much-requested *aigua civà* or barley water, as well as the outcome of mixing them in different combinations, a practice very typical of Alicante. And to top it off, in the form of a liqueur, a *cantueso* [made from Spanish lavender], an *anís de la terreta* [aniseed flavoured] or a *mistela* [fortified wine]. Enjoy!



# A festive city between tradition and renewal





# A la llum de Les Fogueres... [by the light of the Bonfires]

**We start to take a closer look at another Alicante – of the many there are in the same one – more festive and jovial, taking us back to its traditional festivities**

This city, as one might expect, is and is felt to be one that enjoys festivity on all sides. The festive events in Alicante are very varied although all of them, whether religious or secular, have one peculiar characteristic in common: the balance between tradition and modernity, respect for what is passed down from one generation to another without entering into conflict with the dynamism and openness to what is new. Perhaps that is where the success and the strength of the festivities lies. When speaking of Alicante's festive events one must start with the most emblematic, which unites most wills and on the days when it takes place totally transforms the city: *Las Hogueras* [Bonfires], the famous *Fogueres de Sant Joan* [Bonfires of St John], the city's official festivity and, needless to say, an inescapable reference for Alicante identity. Despite the fact that secularly the people of **Alicante followed the popular Mediterranean tradition of lighting bonfires for St John's day, June 24th, it was not until 1928 that the festival began to catch on** and show signs of being the phenomenon that with time it has become. It was a man from Cadiz resident in Alicante, José María Py, who, metaphorically speaking, lit the touchpaper... **Les Fogueres**, ephemeral monuments dedicated to

caricaturing, satirising or portraying personages, situations or contexts, constitute the focal point around which the festivities turn. While they share much in common with the Valencian *Fallas*, the *Hogueras* have, during the course of their by now long trajectory, managed to develop their own personality full of specific nuances. Indeed,



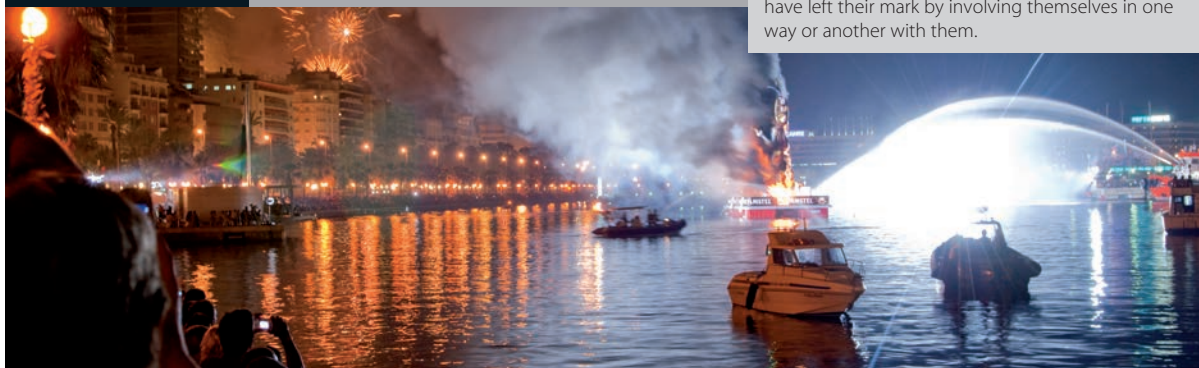


## The hymn

The hymn *Les Fogueres de Sant Joan* was composed in 1929 by Luis Torregrosa, director of the Municipal Band, with words by José Ferrandiz. Every man woman and child of Alicante knows it from the cradle. "By the light of the bonfires ..."

### Some facts:

- Officially recognised as one of the Festivities of International Tourist Interest.
- Performing artists from Alicante, as wellknown as Emilio Varela, Manuel Baeza and, above all, Gastón Castelló, experienced the Fogueres at first hand and have left their mark by involving themselves in one way or another with them.



regarding what both festivities of fire intimately agree on, year after year, is that everyone has a great time. And in Alicante, they do it big-time...! From 21st June when *La Plantà* takes place - the official moment when the celebrations start off - to the night of *la Cremà* [the burning] at midnight on 24th, the city immerses itself in a whirlwind of activities of a very broad spectrum. Open-air dances, informal musical parades through town, other parades, official religious ceremonies, bullfights, musical performances and sonorous firework displays, amongst other events coordinated by the Management Committee, cover the hours of those intense days during which the *món foguerer* [main bonfire-stoker]

invites both locals and strangers to enjoy and let themselves be carried along by their unavoidable and totally leading role. However, ceremonies like the Proclamation, the Cavalcade of the "Ninots" [figures that are paraded and burnt], the Entrance of the Bands, the Floral Offering to the Virgin of the Remedy, the International Folk Parade and the competitions of *masclataes* [firecrackers] and fireworks, are those that are most supported and awaken most interest for their eye-catching displays, levels of participation and the excitement at the cacophony they set off. But the Bonfires would not be what they are without the committees that keep them going, nor would the festivities, of course, be visible without the stalls, their operational centres by day and above all by night, taking over the streets. *Foguerers* and *barraquers*, bonfire-stokers and stall-holders working side-by-side for the festivity and who could better represent them, the *Bellea del Foc* [Fire Beauty], elected from among the winners of



## La Banyà

Along with *La Cremà*, the practice of the *Banyà* has been instituted. In it, the public, and more especially the youngsters, call the attention of the firefighters for them to aim the jets of water from their hoses. A good way of combating the mid-summer heat and the anticipation before the imminent explosion of fire and noise.



During the *Nit de la Plantà*, at the stalls the tradition demands tasting *coca amb tonyina* [savoury pastry with tuna] along with the first of the early figs of summer, the popular *baco*res.

each committee, achieving in this way, year after year, the reiteration of a miracle. A miracle that takes its culminating shape at the stroke of **midnight on the 24th, as it becomes the 25th, when a monumental firework palm tree set off from El Benacantil marks the start** of what will be, according to the rules, the offering in the form of fire and noise made to the Festivity and the life of the City of Light.

## The “Rambladrome”

There are more festivities, of course. And one that has most quickly become established during the course of recent decades is the carnival. Despite its secular tradition, the Alicante carnival, **prohibited during Franco’s regime, was once more restored in the mid 1970s by those who frequented the historic centre as yet another reaction – recreational and peaceful, but at the end of the day nevertheless a reaction – against the regime.** Already, to the rhythm of the Transition and with the democratisation of municipal life, the carnival continued to consolidate itself without abandoning its origins in “el Barrio” [the Neighbourhood], a traditionally Bohemian and open-minded area as a continuum to the airs of modernity. During the carnival, which depends for its date on the phases of the moon, the Rambla, converted by carnival-goers into the “Ramblódromo” [which could be rendered as “Rambladrome” in English], becomes, especially on the Saturday of the carnival, the best possible catwalk on which to show off the most daring and eye-catching disguises, as well as being a

monumental dance hall where the first call of Spring is heard and felt pulsing in the veins. These are not the only forms of diversion. The carnival also provides ceremonies orientated to the little ones, as well as for stimulating new artists who carry out different installations and proposals of urban art, what are now known as “urban archaeologies”, around the most emblematic parts of the city.

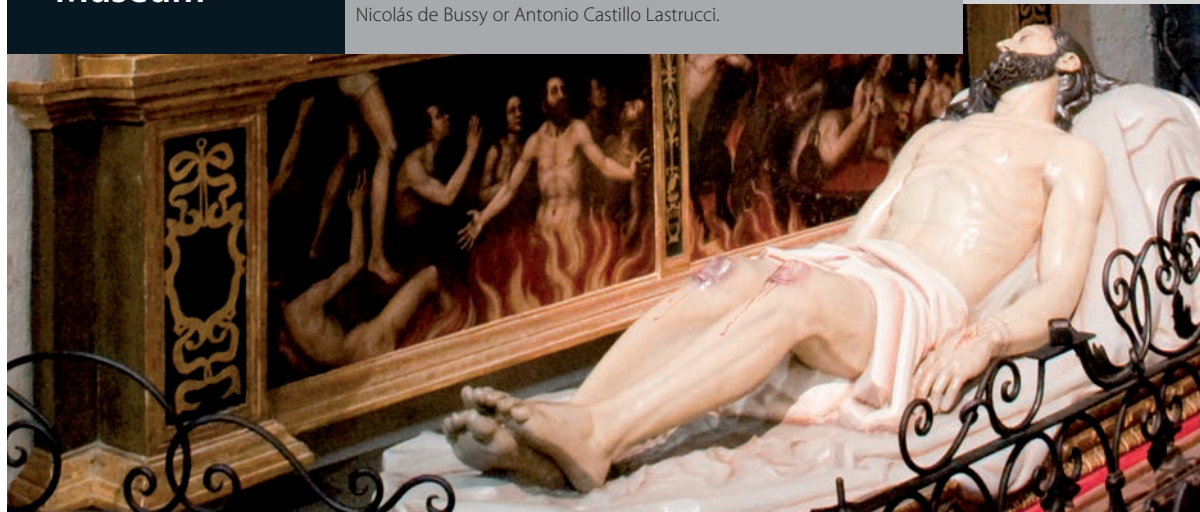
## Mediterranean Holy Week

Moving through the Alicante festival calendar as the months and seasons go by, we come to Holy Week. Although it does not have the packaging or lure of other Spanish celebrations of the Passion, the series of events with which Alicante commemorates and recalls the death and resurrection of Christ enjoys certain characteristics that give it a specific stamp and confer on it an obvious attraction. Amongst these is the participation. Holy Week in Alicante is done with the honour of being one of, or rather the first of, those which contributes the greatest number of participants in Spain, by religious brotherhoods [specially formed in the spirit of penitence and devotion but also with ancient historic traditions and symbolic outfits in the processions], including the anonymous participation [due to the disguise of the costumes] of many women. Devotion and the spirit of experiencing intense emotions is what leads brotherhoods like that of the Last Supper to take out into the procession another national record: the largest “throne” in Spain, clearly representing the moment when Christ instituted the Eucharist. Other processions eagerly followed by the people of Alicante and worth seeing are:

## A Processional Museum

For those whose interest is the purely artistic aspect, it is worth remembering that Holy Week in Alicante brings out in procession valuable carvings by such recognised artists as Francisco Salzillo, Nicolás de Bussy or Antonio Castillo Lastrucci.

Holy Week in Alicante has been declared by the Region of Valencia as being a Festivity of Tourist Interest.



the Christ called *El Morenet*, carried by the “Men of the Sea” on the Monday of Holy Week, the Christ of the Sea, which is held on the Tuesday of Holy Week, or the Silence, which takes place well into the night of Maundy Thursday. But if there is a procession that attracts the interest of thousands of Alicante people and has gained a very well earned hallmark as a tourist attraction, it is the one setting out from the wayside chapel of Santa Cruz on the Wednesday of Holy Week, making its way, crowded and excited, through the backstreets of the neighbourhood that takes its name.

**Seeing the thrones and images carried on shoulders through sometimes very narrow spaces is particularly moving.** If to that we add

the 100% Mediterranean scenery of the setting, the public emotion and fortitude of the brotherhood responsible for the procession, that of the Holy Cross, the circle is completed. And very satisfactorily too.

### Endless festive rivalry

In another order of things, it remains to make reference to the festivities of the Moors and Christians, which in our city particularly have a flavour and smell of the neighbourhood. Although this type of festivity, so closely associated on the other hand with our idiosyncrasy, in various neighbourhoods and outlying villages (Altozano, Villafraqueza, Rebolledo), the Moors and Christians in Alicante go back, by tradition and packaging, to a very fondly esteemed district in the city and very jealous of its firm personality shaped through decades from the memory of its railway activity, on which it was founded. That district is San Blas and certainly its festivities for the patron saint, which are held during July, just before the great gathering of the Bonfires, are a full display of feeling and even pride in being “of the neighbourhood”. The August Festivities, celebrated in honour of the city’s patron saint, the Virgin of the Remedy, with musical performances in the port area as the chief attraction, constitute an added offer of events in the month when the city has its summer break. Finally, and now







## Pilgrim Light

There is one day on Alicante's festive calendar that deserves a chapter apart, given its symbolic relevance, its historic burden and, above all, its strong popular roots. That day, **marked by a solemn religious ceremony preceded by an impressive *romería*** [pilgrimage procession to a wayside chapel], **is the one known in the imagination of the men and women of Alicante as the day of the Holy Face** [also known in English as the Veil of Veronica]. Going on the pilgrimage procession to the wayside chapel of the Holy Face, similarly

on a lesser scale with regard to its ability and scope for gathering crowds, but no less deeply felt by its leading players for all that, we would have to mention the typical May Crosses festivities, in the Santa Cruz neighbourhood, or the festivities of the San Roque neighbourhood in mid-August, which apart from honouring the co-patron saint of Alicante, immerse this typical and peaceful sector of the historic centre in the close microclimate of the most intimate and emotive of Mediterranean festivities. The same could be said of the festivities for San Antonio Abad [St Anthony the Abbot], a date that brings to the neighbourhood of San Antón the magic and age-old flavour of the processions with a long tradition. A flavour which nevertheless ends up being enjoyed with the candies and knickknacks that stalls offer in the popular *Porrata de San Antón* [traditionally bartering pigs for other animals] organised for that purpose and to which, until very recent times, the smell of dried tobacco from the former factory gave it an extra touch of sensory stimulus.





popularly known as “the Pilgrim”, is another of the great landmarks and points of reference for a city that proudly displays its condition as custodian of, according to tradition, **one of the pieces of cloth that Veronica used to wipe the face of Christ on the way to Calvary.**

The relic has been in Alicante since the fifteenth century when, between legend and history, it was entrusted to Mosén Pedro Mena at the hands of an Italian cardinal. Tradition also tells that in a year of atrocious drought, the Holy Face was taken out in the belief that it would act as intercessor on high and thus achieve the coveted water.

Supernatural acts, collected and transmitted since then, like the tears streaming down the divine face, the miraculous levitation of the parish priest carrying it, along with the eventual outburst of the longed-for downpour, almost run in the genes of the Alicante people. The monastery where it is kept, situated some 7 kilometres from the city, is a discreet but elegant architectural complex of good baroque lines designed by José Terol. The most relevant part of it, the niche of the relic, just

behind the high altar of the church, plunges the pious, the pilgrim or the mere visitor into an intense baroque atmosphere in which the leading role is played entirely by the paintings of the Valencian artist Juan Conchillos (1641-1711) relating the prodigies and vicissitudes of the Divine Face. The venerated piece of cloth rests in the vaulted niche presiding over the group, protected by a reliquary-cabinet whose visible part presents Christ’s face depicted according to the rules of the Byzantine style.

That face, reproduced to society and recognisable in the most unexpected places in the city, is what those who congregate, animatedly and punctually at precisely eight in the morning before the main door of San Nicolás on the second Thursday after Easter, have their hopes set on seeing.

The procession, which by then has added hundreds of people, rosemary and walking cane in hand, reaches the City Hall where the municipal authorities join the ecclesiastical ones. From there it continues along Jorge Juan street and then the Paseo de Ramiro until it reaches Virgen del Socorro street, the central axis of Raval Roig, from whose promenade-vantage point some spectacular views can be gained over the Postiguet. A little further on and we come, along Dénia avenue, to the highway N-332 going to



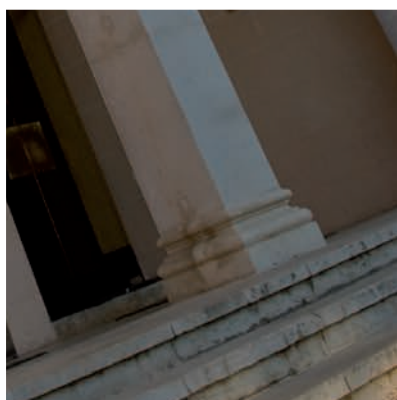
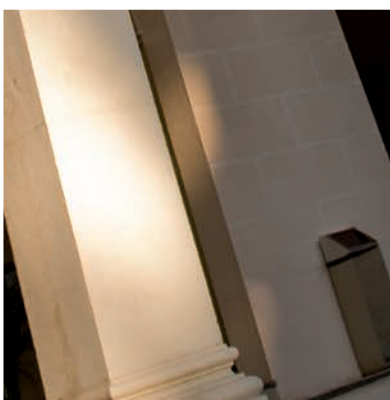
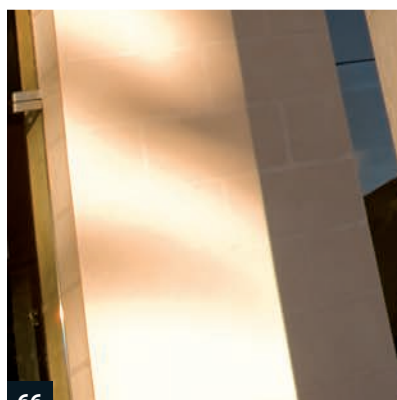
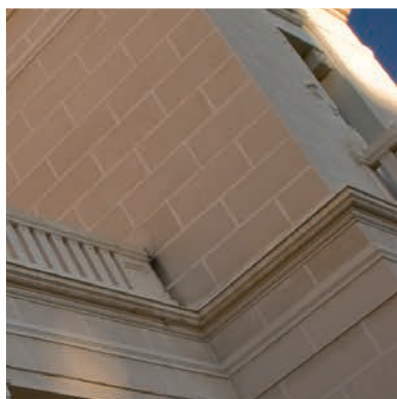
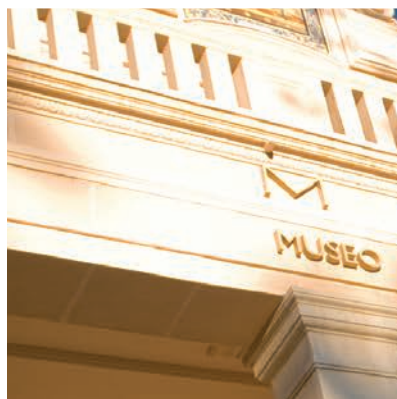
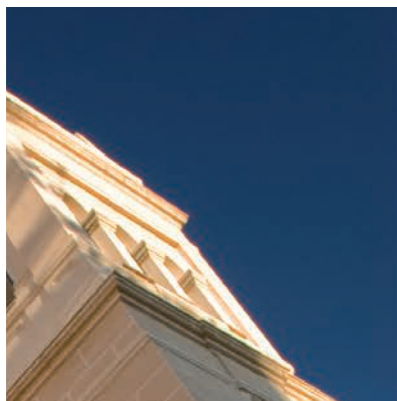
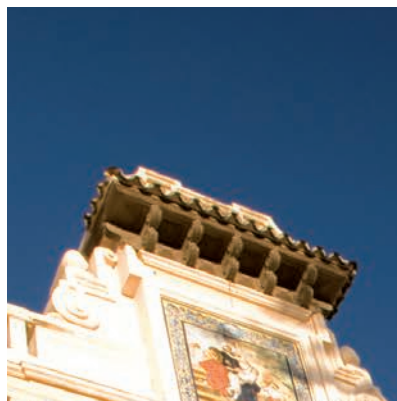
## Did you know...?

Santa Faz is the second most attended pilgrimage to a wayside chapel in Spain, only being exceeded by El Rocío.

Valencia. Half way along it is time to get one's strength back. This is the moment for the popular *paradeta* at which **tons of *rotllets d'aiguardent* [liqueur pastries] and hundreds of litres of *mistela* [fortified wine] are handed out absolutely free to a congregation of thousands and thousands of people.** Some nineteenth century villas and mansions can still be seen from the highway, living testimonies to the former nobility families that lorded it over the Alicante Huerta [the surrounding fertile plain]. Having arrived at the plaza of the hamlet that surrounds the monastery, everyone holds their breath at the very moment when the four keys, two of the Town Council and the other two of the community of Poor Clare nuns who manage it, are introduced all at the same moment into the corresponding locks of the vaulted niche where the relic lies and are opened according to a protocol as ritual as it is consolidated by the tradition. When the relic is raised up before the multitude, it produces that strange but intense combination of feelings that gives way to that blend of faith, tradition, memory and sense of belonging to a certain culture and land. Once the mass is over, the pilgrims, who have been joined by people from the neighbouring villages (San Juan, Mutxamel), scatter through the surrounding fields in search of an appropriate place to prepare the food and make ready, amidst laughter, games, chants and jokes, completing a day of festivity usually accompanied by gentle spring sunshine. There is still time before starting off on the return, to buy some souvenirs at one of the hundreds of stalls that are set up during the days before and after this great day out for the people of Alicante, a special day, a day of festivity that can leave no-one indifferent, regardless of the kind of person they are, their way of thinking or behaving.







# Itinerary 4

## Museum Route



**1** MUBAG [Gravina Museum of Fine Arts]

**2** MACA [Alicante Museum of Contemporary Art]

**3** Alicante Water Museum [Garrigós water holes]

**4** Crib Museum

**5** Fogueres Museum

**6** Bullfighting Museum

**7** MARQ [Alicante Provincial Archaeological Museum]



**Alicante's museums make up another interesting urban route, particularly attractive for those who take cultural leisure consumption as a basis for their tourist experience. Varied, modern, functional, accessible and, above all, very educational, Alicante's museums are an open invitation. Let us get to know them.**

Very close to the City Hall, the MUBAG, Gravina Museum of Fine Arts, stands in the street from which it takes its name, occupying the former palace where Antonio Valcárcel Pío de Saboya y Moura, Count of Lumiares (1748-1808) probably lived and spent long hours of study, one of the first interested in discovering and tracing our past. The dimensions of the building along with its decorative sobriety give a fairly approximate idea of the dynamism and taste prevailing among the aristocracy of Alicante active in the

eighteen hundreds. The palace was given an in-depth make-over by the Provincial Council, which now owns it, to house the museum now taking advantage of its excellent location between the historic centre and the sea. Also starting out from the Council's artistic collections, **the MUBAG's exhibits are centred on the brilliant results that the practise of the Fine Arts has provided for the city and its provincial scope.**

Throughout its three floors, the interplay of works, which above all includes paintings, but has no lack of sculptures, engravings or displays of different decorative arts, thus offers a coherent and above all pleasing view of Alicante art from the late Middle Ages – with the impressive Crucifixion by Rodrigo de Osona as a landmark – to the final decades of the last century. Alicante painting of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is especially well represented in the Museum. Signatures like those of Antonio Gisbert, Joaquín Agrasot, Lorenzo Casanova, Emilio Sala, Fernando Cabrera or Andrés Bufo, amongst many others of note, figure on various outstanding works that





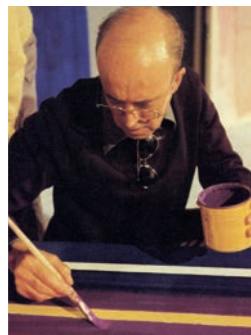
## THE MACA

Did you know that this building, dating from 1685, was one of the few that were saved from the atrocious French bombardment of 1691? Until it was converted into a museum, La Asegurada, so called because it "assured" the provision of grain in times of shortage, had uses as varied as those of a prison, a notarial archive, an institute and a school of commerce.

faithfully reproduce the prevailing styles and the themes most in vogue at the time, from portraits to landscapes and from the historic picture to genre painting. Already well into the twentieth century, esteem for the *terreta* [homeland] and the sense of belonging to it mark the discourse of artists like Emilio Varela, Gastón Castelló, Manuel González Santana, José Perezgil, Manuel Baeza or Xavier Soler, who reflect, above all in their landscapes, full of light and Mediterraneanity, the echo of a timeless and on-going Alicante. The MUBAG is one of the centres which the Region of Valencia's Museum Consortium has available for undertaking interesting temporary exhibitions. In this task another participant is the Fish Market or Exchange building, undertaken between 1917 and 1921 in a graceful neo-Arabic style. Converted by the City Council for exhibition use, the layout of the huge main hall provides a good supplement to the general leisure offer in the most dynamic area of the marina.

Leaving the MUBAG we turn out onto Jorge Juan street and go up to Santa María plaza. On the same plaza, the MACA, Alicante Museum of Contemporary Art, comes into view as an emblem of the perfect dialogue between the traditional architecture represented by La Asegurada, former grain store, and the bolder contemporary architecture expressed in the nextdoor building by the architects Sol Madridejos and Juan Carlos Sancho. **The MACA starts out as a new museum encompassing an illustrious precedent, the Collection of**

**Twentieth Century Art which, donated to the city by Eusebio Sempere Juan (1923-1985) in 1976,** represented the appearance in the State context of one of the first centres dedicated specifically to contemporary art. The "Sempere" museum, as it was popularly known during the years it occupied La Asegurada, has now been integrated into the MACA, providing the ferment and above all the prestige of the list of artists represented in it: Picasso, Dalí, Juan Gris, Julio González, Braque, Kandinsky, Giacometti, Miró, Calder, Delaunay, Chagall, Bacon, Rauschenberg, Tápies, Millares, Canogar, Serrano, Saura, Chillida, Genovés, Alfaro, Equipo Crónica,... The insertion of the Juana Francés legacy into the exhibition, along with the legacy of works by Sempere himself, apart from representing the bringing together of all the municipal collections of contemporary art in the same centre, ratifies what the MACA sets out to be: a centre of reference for the analysis and study of the most up-to-date art, as well as a platform for putting on temporary exhibitions, courses, workshops, conferences, etc. The MACA is also one of the venues used by the Region of Valencia's Consortium of Museums for staging interesting temporary exhibitions, as is the Lonja del Pescado. Built near the port between 1917 and





Alicante Water Museum, established in the restored Garrigós water holes, created from the basis of some gigantic cisterns excavated under Bencantil to alleviate the scarcity in the water supply.

1921, this elegant neo-Arabian construction was converted by the City Council for use as a huge exhibition hall and is a great complement to the many leisure-time pursuits on offer in this, the most dynamic area of the marina. As we continue to wend our way through the Old Quarter, we are greeted by an unexpected and rather evocative change of register. Going up to the Puente plaza, we soon come to the Alicante Water Museum, a recent and modern museum installation set up in the Garrigós water holes, huge underground cisterns excavated in the rock in the mid-sixteenth century. It informs in a very agreeable way about the history of Alicante's use and management of water, an endemically scarce resource in past times. On top of Monte Benacantil, Santa Bárbara Castle hosts the Museum of the City of Alicante (MUSA), whose modern facilities show the city history from the very beginning to nowadays.

Coming out again through Villavieja onto Mayor street, we continue with our route. Before reaching the City Hall plaza, we can pause, for just a moment, at the administrative building nextdoor to the City Hall. In its ground floor, a huge glass platform visible from the street shows the excavations carried out in the subsoil of the property itself. From the certainly very graphic slogan, "the city uncovered", the reading and interpretation offered by the remains discovered here allow us to get a pretty clear idea of what the urban fabric of mediaeval Alicante was like. The plaza of the Santísima Faz,

behind the City Hall, with its houses painted in bright colours and its tall palm trees, once again gives us a lesson on knowing how to live as only the Mediterranean can. A few steps away, going up San Agustín street, the delightful **Crib Museum, a living expression of the esteem for this particular genre held by the active Alicante Asociacion of Crib enthusiasts,** invites us to have a look around their friendly and almost domestic scenes. Hand-crafted cribs of Levantine or Castilian tradition, along with scenes and figures from the most exotic corners of the world plunge the visitor into a setting of intense and emotive memories. Continuing along Mayor street and now on the Rambla there awaits us another museum small in size but gigantic as far as the emotional strings its contents tugged at. That museum is the one dedicated to the Bonfires. Posters, programmes, *llibrets* [leaflets], photographs, sketches, paintings, mentions, awards and *ninots indultats* ["reprieved effigies" selected not to be burned],



Nativity scenes which can be enjoyed at the Crib Museum

amongst many objects of interest, await those who wish to get to know in greater depth about the festivities, above all those who do not have the chance to enjoy it in person.

San Vicente street, typical of Alicante if ever there was one, leads us to España plaza, where we find the next destination on this tour of Alicante's museums: the Bullfighting Museum, housed in the bullring, a building that was eventually finished in 1888. But before that we repair to a little park standing to our right. It is the Pantheon of Quijano, which is its official name, but also by the populace. We are looking at the posthumous tribute the City Council dedicated to the memory of the governor Trino González de Quijano (1807-1854), who died as a victim to cholera when he was coordinating the measures with which to keep in check one of the largest and deadliest waves of the epidemic suffered by the city in the entire nineteenth century. His heartfelt memorial, highlighted by the burial mound in which lie the ashes of the official so untimely cut short and by the planted ornamentation, of clearly romantic inspiration, turn the Pantheon of Quijano into another peaceful haven in the midst of the urban hurly-burly. Nodding a greeting in passing to the optimistic *Monument to the Bonfire-stoker*, a work similarly by Pepe Gutiérrez (1982) set at the very centre of the España plaza, we continue as far as the Bullring not without also previously admiring the more than illustrative *Encierro* [running the bulls through the streets], a group sculpture done by Nacho Martín (2002) in front of the main entrance to the bullring. Now inside the Bullfighting Museum, its halls form a whole sanctuary of memorabilia, trophies, documents and other objects exhibited to the greater glory of the "local glories" of the Alicante bullring. Historic bullfighters like Francisco Carratalá, "El Tino" or "Pacorro", along with other maestros, are added to the display in which Luis Francisco







The sculpture of El Encierro [running the bulls through the streets] is adorned at carnival time, as are many other elements of the city

Esplá and José Mari “Manzanares” perform, never better said, as undisputed “first class swordsmen”. The Alicante Bullfighting Museum confirms the prestige of its own ring where such good work has been offered to enthusiasts, along with the no less relevant role of some maestros who, with a great deal of devotion and above all much artistry, have placed the name of Alicante proudly on their hats and have taken it round most of the rest of the bullfighting world.

## THE MARQ

**We leave until the end what undoubtedly boasts the condition of the “jewel in the crown” within the network of Alicante museums: the MARQ or Alicante Provincial Archaeological Museum.** It may be reached, either on foot or in one’s own vehicle. Or you can choose to use the bus or the modern tram, which has a station named precisely “MARQ”, leaving visitors almost at the doors of the centre. So we go in.

Opened in the year 2000, the MARQ, notary of the intense and on-going history of these lands, occupies some premises that could well be regarded as luxurious. We refer to the former San Juan de Dios Provincial Hospital, a functional and elegant design carried out by Juan Vidal Ramos between 1926 and 1929, the adaptation of which to its present cultural usage has won

nothing but favourable criticism and recognition. In all, the declaration in 2004 of the MARQ as European Museum of the Year, a real “Nobel” of museum-work, is undoubtedly the aspect that has carried most weight in the centre’s being regarded amongst the top ones of its genre in Europe and which has done most to promote its image and contents beyond our frontiers. Functionality, discernment in conveying the message, and the latest in technology, come together in a building whose structure, resolved in herringbone form, also helps to achieve the objectives marked by its promoters: accessibility, convenience and availability of a wide range of supplementary services such as shop, conference hall, library, café, learning centre, workshop, etc. Now, passing through its galleries, the lighting reduced to a minimum for the benefit of the pieces and materials on exhibition, along with the battery of visual aids and technological resources that help to explain them, visitors are captivated within a relaxed and intimate atmosphere, set out so that it is history itself that leads. You just have to let yourself be led. And it as well not to tire yourself, for there are around **2,500 pieces (of the total of 15,000 that the Museum holds) coming in turn from over 300 sites and settlements** – the remains from the Tossal de Manises, former Roman Lucentum, are particularly outstanding – awaiting in some installations occupying no

## Did you know...?

To its many tourist attractions, Santa Bárbara castle will soon add a museum, too. Five rooms of the historic fortress will serve as the basis for the exhibitions of the "Musa" (City Museum), which will be an obligatory visit for those who wish to get to know in more detail the history of the city and that of its inhabitants over time.

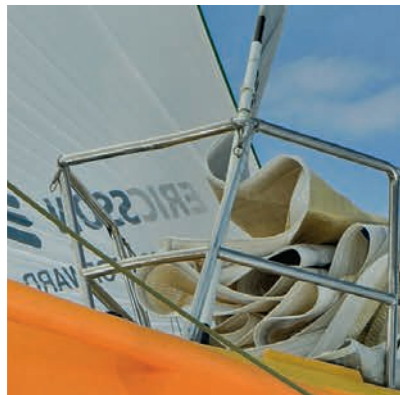
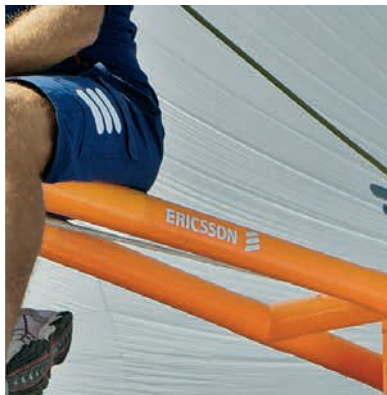
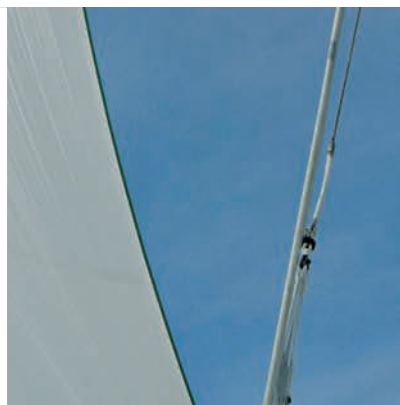
less than 9,000m<sup>2</sup>. No-one will be disappointed, whether an enthusiast or not, touring the galleries dedicated successively to Prehistory, the Iberian culture, the Roman world, the Middle Ages and the Modern and Contemporary Age. Much less so in the themed

of the Iberian Lady of Cabezo Lucero... Having reached this point, so far the Alicante museums are a living and above all attractive expression of the creativity and the cultural legacy of a frank and open city. An expression which, of course, does not cease to increase in the most



galleries dedicated to aspects as interesting as underwater archaeology, urban archaeology, rural archaeology or the collaboration between archaeology and science. Visitors to the MARQ will certainly take away with them some unforgettable memories having seen these collections which illustrate, in all their magnitude and at such close quarters, the healthy blend of concepts, ideas, beliefs, tongues and races that make up the Mediterranean. What will certainly remain etched on their memories is the enigmatic gaze

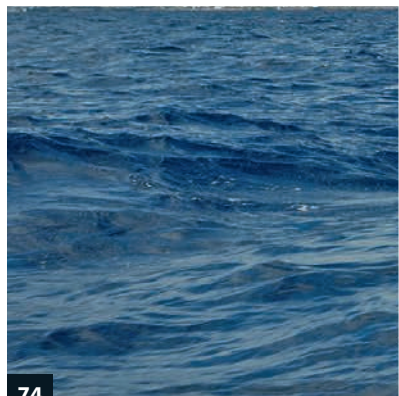
diverse branches: Matilde Asensi (literature); Fele Martínez (cinema and theatre); Hannibal Laguna (fashion); Inma Serrano (music)...



**Dazzled  
by sport**

**VOLVO  
OCEAN  
RACE**

**2008-2009**





## Centre for Technical Development

The Centre for Technical Development, built in 1993 to house the 18th Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championship, is the haven where the many followers of the Alicante Meridian Basketball Club congregate. This same infrastructure, on the other hand, served as the secondary headquarters for the Eurobasket 2007 held in Spain.



### Sporting activity in Alicante enjoys a consolidated tradition, some of whose most noteworthy results form an inseparable part of local history and even legend.

Just the mention of some of the most recently achieved sports successes, both as a team and individual titles, have meant that Alicante, thanks to sportspeople born or brought up here, has also “shone” going up onto the podium more than once in disciplines as disparate as judo (Miriam Blasco, Gold: Barcelona, '92; Isabel Fernández, Gold: Sydney, 2000, and Bronze: Atlanta, '96); sailing (Kiko Sánchez, Gold: Barcelona, '92); rhythmic gymnastics (Carolina Pascual, Silver: Barcelona, '92); football (Francisco Veza, Gold: Barcelona, '92) and hockey (Juan Escarré, Silver: Atlanta, '96). In all, when sports are talked of in Alicante it is almost impossible not to instantly associate the place name with a name that is doubly mythical: in the first place for the character itself to which it alludes, and secondly, and most particularly, because “mythical” is the only way to describe the passage of the team that proudly bears the name in the minds and hearts of its fans. We refer to the Hercules football club, another of the best-known

emblems of the city. Founded back in 1914, the Hercules has ever since then and throughout its career been feeding the many hopes and dreams of those – and they are numbered in thousands – cheer the players onto the pitch in the José Rico Pérez stadium. **Local football fever doesn't stop there, however, thanks to the city's other major home team, Alicante F.C., established in 1918.**

Two groups of fans, Alicante and Hercules, mark out two emotional hemispheres which, obviously, split the city in footballing terms. A divide which deep down is not so great when we stop and think that, followers of one or the other, all are from Alicante and at the end of the day, they sit and share the city's colours, blue and white, common in their turn to both team strips, except for the design and the presence of black on the Hercules shorts. Built in 1974 and refurbished for the 1982 World Cup, which Alicante hosted, the “Rico Pérez”, with a capacity for 30,000 spectators, is situated in the environs of the Tossal de San Fernando in the part that faces northeast, neighbouring with other sports installations as



interesting as the Athletics Stadium; Pitiu Rochel Municipal Pavillion, the seedbed where the legendary handball team Calpisa was trained, direct ancestor of today's Alicante Costa Blanca Handball Club; the municipal swimming pools, the Rafael Pastor Micó Municipal Pavillion and a sports complex that acts as a beacon but this time for the fans, also very numerous and no less passionate, of basketball in Alicante, the Centre for Technical Development, headquarters of the Alicante Meridian Basketball Club. El Centro de Tecnificación, erigido en 1993 para albergar los XVII Campeonatos del Mundo de Gimnasia Rítmica, es, en efecto, el santuario en el que el Meridiano Alicante Basketball Club congrega a sus muchos seguidores. Esta misma infraestructura, por otra parte, sirvió como subselección del Eurobasket 2007 celebrado en nuestro país. A centre no longer publicly but privately owned, but much appreciated for its consolidated track record (it was founded in 1931) and input in local sporting environments, is the Montemar Athletics Club, in whose installations, formerly situated in the Pla district, today in La Albufereta, does no more than encourage the practice of sport to thousands of Alicante people from a very early age. In this chapter on sports facilities reference must also be made to the existence, on the outskirts of the city itself, of two **modern and functional golf courses, namely the Alicante Golf Club, right on the San Juan beach, and El Plantío Golf Course,** situated at kilometre 3 on the former Alicante to Elx highway.

But Alicante, there can be no doubt, lives facing the sea and, therefore, it is logical that it has traditionally been "soaked" in water sports and that the many practitioners it boasts practise them enthusiastically and constantly eager to excell. The modern and functional installations of the Alicante Royal Regatta Club, situated on the West dock of the port, the Alicante Marina, which is on the East dock 8, as well as the Alicante Costa Blanca Nautical Club, standing on the avenue of La Condomina, offer all that is necessary for enthusiasts of such activities as rowing, canoeing, diving or sailing, this last of course in all its forms, to enjoy their sporting stay in the city. All of this might well have been decisive for Alicante to be able to beat its own record regarding the organization and running of sports events of stature and obtain the trust of being chosen as the starting port for a competitive trial of such a level as the Volvo Ocean Race, more commonly known as the Round the World Sailing Race, that has been held since 1973.

Such an honour evidently represented a sum of responsibilities and a firm attitude of commitment among them all. As regards the backing of local institutions and, in general, those of the Region of Valencia, along with that of other bodies even of broad sectors of private initiative and, of course, counting on the enthusiasm of the Alicante populace, all expectations were fulfilled and so, on the 11th October 2008, with the attendance of their Royal

Highnesses, the 8 yachts that took part in the **10th edition of the Volvo Ocean Race set sail from our waters.** Their crews faced no less than 144 days of tension, nerves, excitement, joys, but on top of everything else, hours and hours of unconditional passion for the sea and sails. It goes without saying that the media impact it represented for the city being the start port for the purposes of organisational image, logistical capacity and human potential, as well as commitment to quality and sustainable tourism,

format that has hundreds of thousands of followers all over the world and, evidently, for the organisational and logistic capacity of the city from which the regatta sets out. The Round the World Race set sail on its day offering enthusiasts, tourists and elite sportspeople unforgettable moments, unrepeatable sporting and human emotions, as well as a good number of views that remain in the supporting media, websites and blogs as permanent testimony to what was experienced.



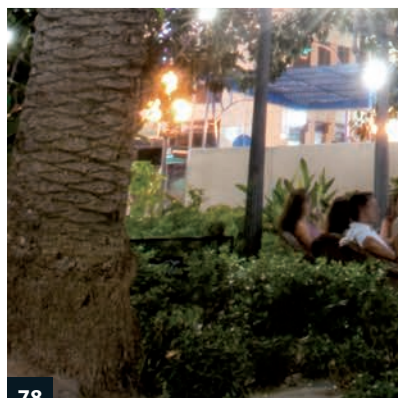
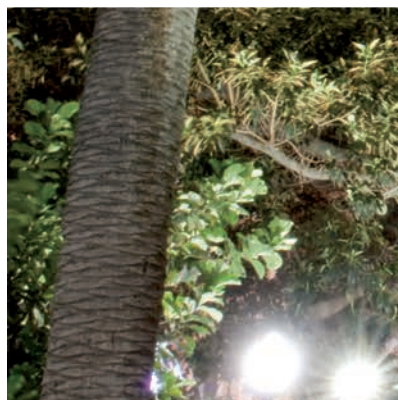
was as enormous as on the other hand hoped for. The on-going appearance through recent years of the logo of the Round the World Race with the consequent visual “bombardment” of the word “Alicante” whether in the form of a “bait” in advertising spots on TV, or printed on thousands of commercial brands, official documents and merchandising on the part of the sponsors has been decisive for more complete international publicity as much for the city, as for its tourist offer and a model for leisure. The company’s success, confirmed with the future departure, also from the port of Alicante, of the subsequent editions, ratifies the commitment of those in charge to a sporting

Alicante is home to the Volvo Ocean Race Museum. **This is the first museum to offer visitors the chance to recreate the extreme challenge faced by the crews aboard the boats** participating in the Volvo Ocean Race, an exceptional round the world yacht race. The Museum also provides visitors with the chance to see the action as it happens from inside the race control room where this epic sailing event is monitored around the clock.





# Night-time light





# The *marcha* of Alicante. “The Neighbourhood”

Leisure has one of its most powerful arguments in the nightlife and arouses most levels of interest in the tourist market. The nocturnal hours, with their burden of seduction, mystery and all types of expectations, occupy in that way a good part of the visitor’s agenda, we could say standard, when launching out to discover what “the night” has in store.

Alicante, in this sense, offers a good selection of proposals whose varied range, well-qualified offer and spontaneity are unanimously recognised.

**The “marcha” [nightlife] of Alicante has become, on its own merits, apart from a basic sector for the local economy, another of the emblems adorning the image of this tourist city.**

The areas of night-time leisure are distributed throughout the city according to, if not a written code, a specialisation of services and a self-distribution and segmentation of its users who, for reasons of taste, age, shared interests, etc., choose their own outlets and the activities to do. So, while the axis defined by the streets San Fernando-Doctor Gadea concentrates a series of establishments which usually serve a younger public, drawn by the most recent pop music hits, the streets adjacent to the Central Market and Alfonso X el Sabio avenue, the historically named



Wood Route, presents an offer based on more specialist music going from the most purist of rock to alternative genres, without forgetting the latest trends.

Needless to say, the leisure area of the port, its offer increased lately thanks to the Volvo area and the splendid Casino, bubbles with activity at night inviting people of all styles, trends, age groups and preferences to participate.

Likewise, the beach areas like La Albufereta or

**Neighbourhood". With this name, encompassing the historic neighbourhoods of Carmen, Santa Cruz and San Roque,** this

part of the historic centre has always been known. Already since the '70s, what in popular imagery was known as "going to inns", for the offer of taverns and establishments of this type that there was (and still remains in part), concentrated the most Bohemian, bizarre and, of course, entertaining offer in the city. They are



San Juan and their environs unfold a healthy selection of outlets where the possibilities for dining, tasting any type of cuisine; playing boules, skating or participating in other types of recreational activities and, of course, having a drink, dancing and finishing off the last traces of the night, remains solely at the mercy of our criteria, pocket and ability to stay the course. But if there is an area that most tenaciously represents the soul and pull of the Alicante night and whose stamp of authenticity, long-standing and assured fun reported by its well-deserved fame, that "area" stretches through the city's historical centre, known simply as "the

now left distant in time, but very fresh still in the collective memory, the times when the Neighbourhood's streets brought to a head not a few of the decisions (clandestine most of the time) taken by the youngsters who played a leading role, in past years, in the Transition. Times and uses change, but not the laid-back profile of the Neighbourhood, which continues to this day and will continue all the while the Moor's Face refuses to sleep, something it never does, neither is it allowed to, whereas... Any day of the week, but particularly on Thursdays, when the universities usually go out, Fridays and Saturdays, as well as during the





“peaks” of tourist influx, **the Rambla at night becomes a gigantic magnet capable of attracting to the streets that climb up the Benacantil** crowds of people of all appearances, types and conditions. Foreigners, nationals, youngsters, the not so young, the modern, traditional, non-conformists, conventionals, students, people who “understand”, workers, pensioners and, in short, any social category that might have a propensity for enjoying the *nit alacantina*, which is like saying almost everyone, we see them doing the round of the animated streets of the Neighbourhood in search of their favourite café, tavern, inn, restaurant, dive, pub, live music venue or disco-pub.

The offer is very varied and disposed to satisfy all expectations. It is odd to see the neighbourhood without the conflicts that might intervene between an exclusive drinks bar and a “heavy” bar, almost nextdoor to each other, or between a burger outlet where groups of “Erasmus” exchange students practise their Spanish – no coincidence that Alicante University is rated among the tops when it comes to applying for a place on the inter-university programme referred to – and a restaurant of greater pretensions. That is the area’s magic.

A magic that is concentrated mainly on the crossroads formed by the streets of Labradores, San Isidro, San Pascual and the plaza of the San



Nicolás Cloister; at Quijano plaza where the streets Carmen, San Agustín and Padre Maltés meet; or San Cristóbal plaza, the “Gateway to the Neighbourhood” *par excellence*, but also involving the streets of Santo Tomás, San José, San Nicolás, Montengón, Argensola, Virgen de Belén, Cisneros, Cienfuegos, Tarifa, Abad Nájera, Maldonado or Santos Médicos, amongst other goals of the more fun-loving people keen on dancing, along

**To do that it is most recommendable to go to the Neighbourhood, especially to its highest areas,** with houses, many of them of single families, and exclusively accessed on foot, to take in, also by day, their many details: the elegant play of perspectives and vanishing points that form the graceful bell-tower finished in a spire of the chapel and monastery of San Roque (16th – 19th centuries) with the *matxo* of Santa Bárbara;



with Mayor street, plaza de la Santísima Faz, plaza del Abad Penalva and Miguel Soler street, these last characterised by their wide-ranging offer for eating out. And as long as the body can endure... All in all, and despite fulfilling that sleepless function of servitude, in the Neighbourhood not all is booze and binging to the hilt. The invitation to responsible consumption and, above all, the municipal regulations that oblige premises to close at 3a.m operate in this sense. It must not be forgotten that “the Neighbourhood” and the areas that in turn make it up are part of the most traditional Alicante, the pleasant and beloved “great-grandparents” of the city. We take a break...

San Roque street similarly festooned with small pergolas with gardens and veteran fountains; the Carmen plaza, solemn witness of the Burial of the Sardine marking the end of the carnival; the spectacular view that is seen from the Santa Cruz vantage point which certainly offers an almost Grecian snapshot with its 18th century chapel, whitewashed and secluded... But if you wish to enjoy what the Mediterranean lifestyle in the historic quarter of Alicante, in its most popular and laid-back register, can give of itself, it is recommended you climb up the steep alleyways of San Rafael and Santa Lucía and turn right towards San Antonio. Something appears before



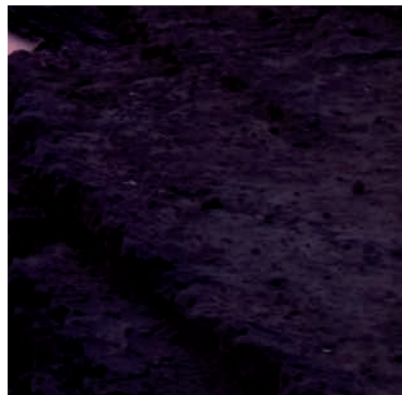
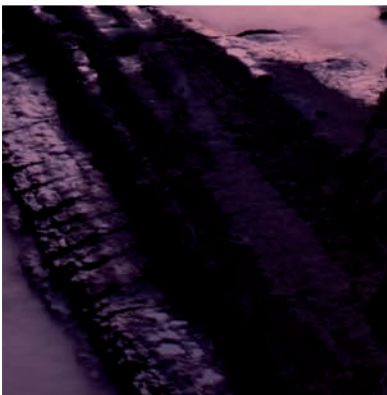
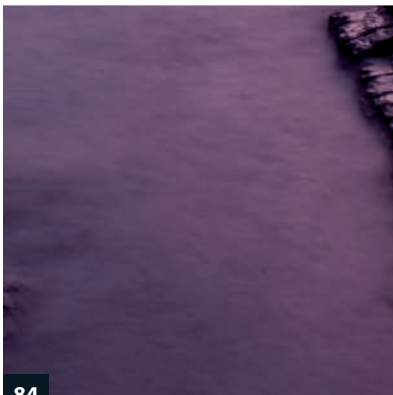
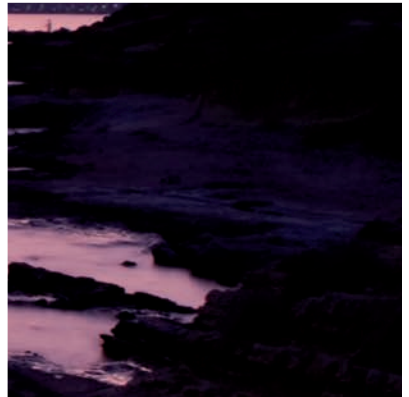
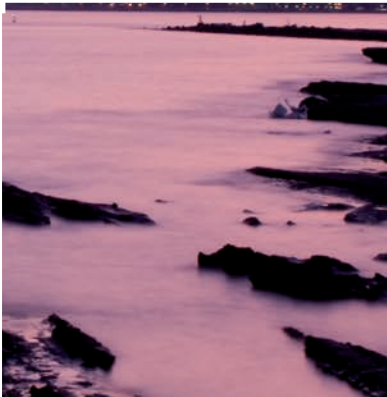
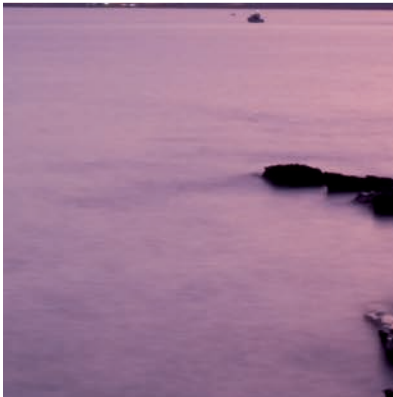
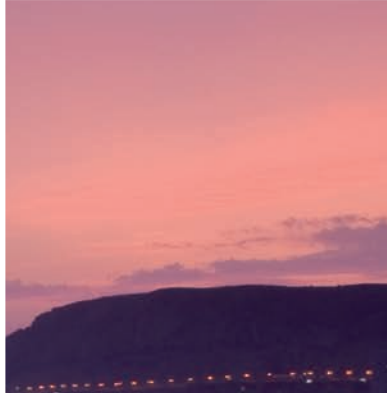
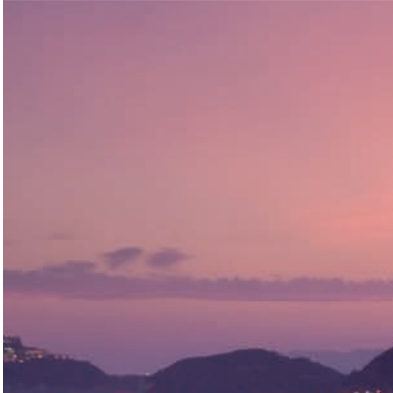
visitors' eyes to make them wonder if they are in a street or on a stage set. On a thoroughfare that measures no more than four scant metres in breadth, by some twenty in length, and between houses painted bright colours, a complete repertoire of streetlamps, railings, decorated plant pots, grilles or screens, ceramic altarpieces of an intensely popular feel, religious images, labels that identify the owners of the houses, climbing plants, tiles with slogans alluding to the procession of Santa Cruz, to the Alicante sun, the Holy Face or the Hercules, among other eye-catching sights, places the visitor in a spot more magical than real, in a world of emotions and memories that could well pick up echoes of Altea, Mojácar, Ibiza or Cadaqués, but also of Casablanca, Santorini or Palermo and, reaching the end, as far as Tegucigalpa, Tijuana or Bahía. What has been said, **an ideal stage-set which would not be at all out of place in a film by Almodóvar or Bigas Luna.**

Now, coming down San Rafael street to go out of the Carmen and San Cristóbal plazas, the visitor thus says farewell to a neighbourhood where, for stretches, the street also forms part of the front room of the house itself. Living Mediterranean essence in its pure state.





# Projecting the light. Opening up frontiers





## Stars of Europe and the Mediterranean

Since 1994, the year when Alicante was officially designated as headquarters of the Office of Harmonization for the Internal Market (OHIM), it moved on to form part of the exclusive club of cities that receive administrative requests from the European Union. With this designation, apart from its dynamism and tourist potential, its condition was recognised as a city traditionally orientated to abroad and provided, therefore, with a markedly cosmopolitan spirit.

Among its chief tasks, the Trademarks Office, as it is known in unofficial terms, has the ability to control, issue and register, in their turn, all the brands, designs and models that European companies have to present in order to access the advantages of the Single Market; it likewise guarantees the legal protection of those of continental scale and has full legal capacity when it comes to resolving conflicts deriving

from the incorrect application of its standards. With this officialdom, it would seem that the OHIM only has to answer to the model of a cold bureaucratic centre for decisions and resources, a bunker where anyone – and above all those on foot – would feel nonplussed in the face of the all-powerful bureaucratic machinery and the no less powerful image of the Union. But no, the OHIM is by no means a dull and inaccessible bunker, since for years it has allowed visits to be made, by prior arrangement, by those who have the interest, or the mere curiosity, to find out what a Community institution is like on the inside and see close up the functioning of this cog – small, but in Alicante – of the European machine.

**The visits aimed at schoolchildren have an added value, as their recipients represent the future.** That the OHIM enables the youngest ones to start to familiarise themselves with the first notions and basic ideas about Europe, the Union or European citizenship, etc., does not cease to be an achievement. When all is said and done, who better to promote the

## History of Spanish film

Did you know that the brilliant Valencian director Luis García Berlanga is the intellectual mentor, the "father", to put it more graphically, of the Ciudad de la Luz film studio?



quality and genuine character of a product, in this case "Europe", than the very agency responsible for taking care of it? The modern concrete and glass building that houses the OHIM, lies on the south side of the city raised up on a hill from where it has a privileged view of the Agua Amarga beach. Taking the N-332 highway towards Cartagena, and shortly after leaving behind the Palmeral park, we soon see the straight lines of its outline.

And returning to the trademarks, in case Alicante had not been sufficiently recognised with this "star" of the Union, the Community agency represents, another recognition, this time jointly between the State, the Region and the City Council, consolidates not only the city's European outreach, but also its role as driving force for dialogue and consensus in the area that is nearest and most akin to it.

The House of the Mediterranean, apart from being this meeting point and permanent forum

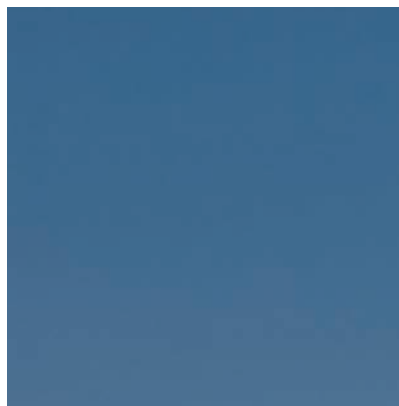
of analysis, will in the future constitute an active focal point of urban, economic and cultural proposals for the area in which it is intended to set it up, to the south of the Benalúa neighbourhood, and more specifically in the building that is going to serve as the headquarters: the former station of Murcia railways, a discreet and eclectic building from the end of the 19th century in which the best tradition of the use of cast iron in architecture persists. Economists, officials and lawyers who travel for bureaucratic reasons. Teachers, analysts and sociologists from both sides in search of a Mediterranean less rhetorical and more practical. And at the meeting point of both streams, a city all of them will also speak about, and certainly in positive terms, returning to their countries of origin. Alicante: brand image...

### Projected light. Our own "dream factory"

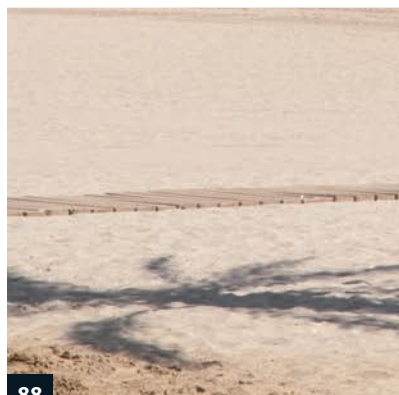
Very near the OHIM offices, the N-333 road leads to the Ciudad de la Luz film studios, which began as a project in the year 2000 and eventually opened in 2005. Since then, many national and international productions have been filmed here, taking advantage of these modern facilities that spread over more than 300,000 m<sup>2</sup> (74.13 acres), with 11,000 m<sup>2</sup> (2.72 acres) of film sets as well as warehouses, production buildings and workshops, in addition to a large back lot for filming outdoor locations and a Film School.







# Beyond Benacantil



# Itinerary 5

## Albufereta - El Cabo - San Juan



**1** Tossal de Manises - Albufereta

**2** El Cabo coves

**3** Lighthouse

**4** Av. Niza – San Juan beach



## *La millor terreta del món* [the best place in the world]

"I do not doubt its grace nor deny its primacy, and I even swear by Talía, which if you were to see what I see from this spot where I am reading, you would change your mind: Alicante is without doubt the

best place in the world. And you know in fine Breton that to the last moment Alicante will be for me the best place in the world." (*Mariano Roca de Togores, Marquis of Molins*)



**There is more Alicante the other side of Benacantil and even beyond the immense and apparently impassable San Julián sierra. The broad area stretching northeast, is another of the objectives to cover.**

We are discovering its charms little by little. If you drive in your own vehicle, the habitual N-332 highway, but this time in the direction of Valencia, will take us to our destination. Another possibility, very recommendable, is to take one of the tram lines which take us over the lump of rock called San Julián – here it is understood very well that it is also called Grossa – to our first destination. Getting off at the station “La isleta” a popular and cheerful beach stretches out before us: **the Albufereta. This name alludes to the small inland lake without a way out to the sea**, which historically used to stretch for quite a few metres inland until it entirely dried up. In present times, the beach has been designated one of the most-loved by the

people of Alicante, as well as the broad residential area that surrounds it. The street names that appear as we pass, all of them with a strongly classical posture like Daphne, Zeus, Appollo, Goddess Tanit or Roman Colony, denote the “flavour” of the spot in which we find ourselves. It is no coincidence that the Tossal de Manises takes in the ruins of the legendary Lucentum. So we dispose ourselves to get to know a very important part of local history,





## Lucentum

Did you know that in 1960 a Swedish archaeologist avoided the destruction of Lucentum by standing up to a construction firm that wanted to put up a hotel on the site of the Tossal? Solveig Nordström's defiant gesture of laying beneath the shovels of the mechanical diggers, the presence of the international press, assembled by her, and her condition of a Swedish citizen, succeeded in dissuading the authorities at the time from arresting her or starting any other type of action. The following year the Ministry protected the site declaring it as a Historic-Artistic Monument... How a "barbarian from the north" saved a chapter in Mediterranean history...

which connects with our most remote past and relates us directly with Iberians, Carthaginians and Romans. Although the spot had already been studied and excavated by Antonio Valcárcel Pío de Saboya y Moura, the lively Count of Lumiares, the professor and director of the Alicante Archaeological Museum, José Lafuente Vidal (1879-1966), and Francisco Figueras Pacheco (1880-1960), outstanding chronicler of the city, amongst others, oblivion and general neglect, but more particularly urban property speculation, ended up seriously endangering the site. **Only the ministerial declaration turning the Tossal de Manises into a Historic-Artistic Monument in 1961, represented the start of the process of its recuperation for the use and enjoyment of all.**

Throughout recent years, the team of archaeologists of the MARQ, the museum of which the Tossal de Manises has become an extension, has provided the complex with a protection plan, set in action and publicising its openly noteworthy contents. Over an area of nearly 25,000m<sup>2</sup>, the fabric of the ancient city, with the outstanding remains of its walls, houses,

hot baths, forum, fortified towers and burial site, is offered to us in all its splendour thanks to the support that the most recent technology places today at the service of the popularisation of archaeology. So it makes it very agreeable, above all to the non-specialist in matters of archaeology and ancient history, getting to know *in situ* the evolution of the most primitive Alicante from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD. The activities intended for schoolchildren likewise form part of the magnificent plan for the popularisation of what is, nowadays, one of the best and most modern archaeological complexes in Spain.

Recent excavations, still underway, and in the phase of putting a value on their cultural use, like those carried out at the Cerro de las Balsas-Chinchorro, or at the Roman villas found at the Casa Ferrer I site and in the Park of the Nations, confirm the extraordinary archaeological wealth that still remains in these unique spots on the Albufereta.

After this parenthesis of immersion in the past, it is advisable to return to the present day, to the hurly-burly of this sleepless city. Our route might

well continue without getting off the tram and comfortably carrying on until we reach San Juan beach, or travelling on the main road, whether in our own vehicle or on the bus, along the long perimeter avenue of the Costa Blanca, an axis that articulates the communication between the Albufereta and its neighbouring residential area:

amidst the mist, on the skyline formed by the skyscrapers of Benidorm and the ridges of sierra Helada. To the west, the friendly plain stretches out and of human dimensions that, not by chance, receive the affectionate and at the same time very identifying name of *la terreta* [homeland]. Coming out again onto Costa



The magic of the light bathes every corner of Alicante, like the Albufereta or El Cabo

El Cabo. Chalets, semi-detached houses and tower blocks of flats – traditional exponents of family summers – accompany our tour as we find ourselves tempted to sit on one of its endless terraces or wander round its shopping areas. All in all, the temptation is stronger to reach the peaceful and empty coves, Judíos, Cantalares or Palmera, right below the lighthouse. For practitioners of nudism, these coves are, of course, “their” coves. From the environs of the lighthouse we are able to look at the entire extension of an incomparable landscape. Looking to the southwest, the city peeps out and the coastline that continues as far as Santa Pola cape, tracing the gigantic arc of Alicante bay. To the north, the view takes in the extremely long beach of San Juan and, skipping over cape Azul, it continues until it gets lost,

Blanca avenue, we leave behind the cape of La Huerta, which gives its name to the whole area and which, in turn, we could name “City of the Cape”, to head along, now on Niza avenue, the long wide sandy barrier of the “star” beach for thousands of Alicante people and visitors: San Juan beach. While Postiguet is the urban beach, the one that is nearer to hand, “nextdoor”, **San Juan is the beach which produces the phenomenon of “going to the beach”. The Postiguet “is”, but San Juan you “go to”.**

The difference of feel, in spite of being subtle, is sufficiently illustrative since if you go there it is because you are thinking of spending all day there. The beach has installations and services for that purpose so as to spend a whole day at the beach. Sun loungers, skates, footbaths, games, access areas for people with restricted



# Alicante

"There is a land in Spain that I love above all lands. It is found situated looking out onto a minute sea, still and glorious; the atmosphere is subtle, mild and innervated; a line of hills of a greyish blue standing out lit up on the horizon."  
(J. Martínez Ruiz "Azorín")



The crystal clear waters of El Cabo are undoubtedly a privileged place for a good bathe



mobility and other facilities populate the strip of sand, while along the edge, old-timers now on the seafront promenade, restaurants of *tota la vida*, with good food – and adjusted price – tempt us with the smells coming from their kitchens. The other pavement of Niza avenue, the thoroughfare leading as far as the edge of the boundary with the neighbouring town of El Campello, is a constant barrage of terraces, more restaurants, cafés, ice-cream parlours and all kinds of shops. San Juan, which in addition in summer organises recreational and sporting activities for everyone, from the littlest ones to the older folks, is a hotbed of constant surprises and an invitation to the *dolce far niente* [sweet idleness]. We could return to the city along any of the avenues that cross the area of the Condomina, where the Monastrell grape used to be grown, which was used for making the legendary Fondillón. Modern infrastructures built recently for channelling the torrential waters – everything to avoid flooding as catastrophic as in 1982 and 1997 – in dialogue with the former fortified towers that are still standing and are the most eloquent testimony of times when Alicante feared the scourge of pirates, back in past centuries.



## The pretty island

Did you know that the perimeter of the marine reserve takes in three areas each provided with different levels of protection and use? In two of them, bathing, anchoring of boats, diving and controlled angling, that is, with the corresponding licence, are allowed under certain conditions, while in the 100 hectares of the third area, a so-called comprehensive reserve, all human activity is totally prohibited.



**“Many years ago, an island populated by pirates...” It could be the start of a good adventure story. Of course, it would be good for a start and for plenty more, taking into account all the myths and old legends of the Mediterranean that literally “surround” it. Because the place to which this section refers is not in the world of the imagination but quite the contrary, it is a tangible physical reality that can be walked on beyond the sea. That reality answers to the name of Tabarca.**

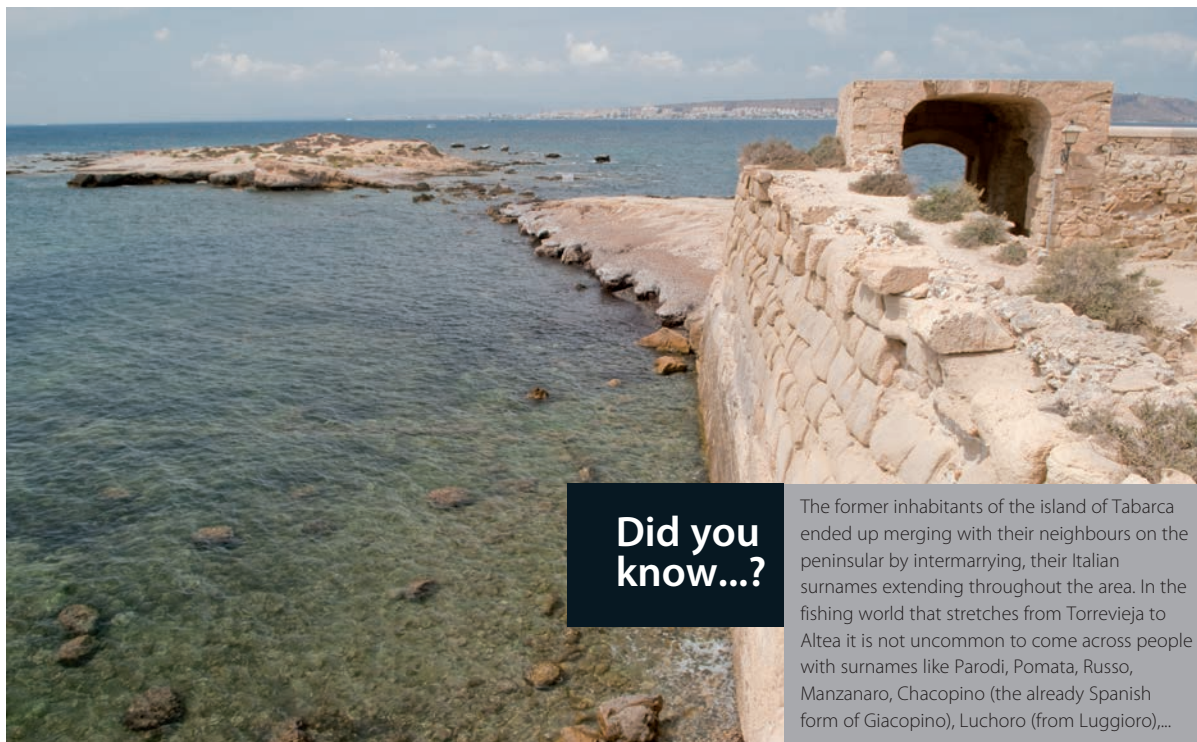
This island fragment of Alicante city, despite its modest size: 1,800 metres long by 300 metres at its widest point, **boasts, for all that, the honour**

**of being the only inhabited island in the Region of Valencia.**

Situated 8 miles south of Alicante and 3 to the southeast of Santa Pola cape lying northwest-southeast, Tabarca, along with the islets that surround it (La Galera, La Nao, La Cantera, etc.) making up a mini-archipelago, stretches over the Mediterranean, its surface flat as the palm of your hand and closed in a form that could well be likened to that of a huge sea-dragon.

In 1986, the island was turned into the first area declared by the State as a Marine Reserve. But as if that were little, it already enjoyed, as from 1964, the condition of a Historic-Artistic Monument. So many attractions, to make one take to the sea and go in search...

From the Tomás y Valiente promenade itself, approximately at the meeting point of the Explanada and Canalejas plaza, the pleasure boats called “tabarqueras” set sail, depending on the tourist season when the island is being visited. The crossing, lasting barely an hour, is very pleasant given the large number of reasons for using the camera: leaving the mouth of the harbour, flocks



## Did you know...?

The former inhabitants of the island of Tabarca ended up merging with their neighbours on the peninsular by intermarrying, their Italian surnames extending throughout the area. In the fishing world that stretches from Torrevieja to Altea it is not uncommon to come across people with surnames like Parodi, Pomata, Russo, Manzanaro, Chacopino (the already Spanish form of Giacopino), Luchoro (from Luggioro),...

of seagulls, the odd yacht that greets us as we pass, a plane getting ready to land on the runway of El Altet, a merchant ship disappearing on the horizon... To starboard and with the constant accompaniment of the coastline stretching out spectacularly as far as Santa Pola cape, the crossing might turn out to be even more agreeable if one could hear the voice of history. Known by the geographers of the Ancient World from Pliny to Ptolemy, and Strabo, who baptised it very accurately with the name of Planesia, the island known historically as L'illa Plana, illa de Santa Pola, or simply l'illa, was always a wild and uninhabited spot whose fate seemed destined only to be a temporary refuge and operational base for pirates. It was not until the 18th century that its destiny changed, and even its name. Specifically, in 1741, **the inhabitants of the genuine island of Tabarka, situated off the coast of Tunis,** peaceful coral gatherers of Genoese origin, were expelled by the Tunisians, giving rise to a voyage of various years in which they vascilated between prison and being constantly on the run.

Charles III's illustrious programmes coincided with the need to settle a population on the island to dissuade pirates from using it for their raids, thus determining the rescue of the wandering Genoese colony and its definitive installation, in 1770, on the island which then went on to be called New Tabarca. The fortification of the town with defensive walls and bullwarks, and the installation of a fixed military garrison gave peace and tranquillity to the recently installed tenants of the island. Fishing activity, especially of tuna, was the main basis of the economy for decades, and even today, despite tourism currently being the driving force of the island, its memory is kept intact. Listening to history, one hardly realises that the shape of Tabarca, presided over by the mass of stone that is its solid baroque church, stretches out ahead. Leaping ashore at the tiny harbour and heading for the little town is a whole ceremony in which the gulls, the island's inhabitants of honour, participate giving their particular welcome. After passing through the San Rafael gateway, one of the three entrances opened in the defensive wall, along with those of San Gabriel and San Miguel,



the visitor enters the minute and friendly universe, whose 100% human scale is only slightly broken at the Plaza de Armas [military parade ground], open and solitary. The houses, tiny and whitewashed, offer a totally Mediterranean snapshot full of charm.



Arriving at Tabarca transports us to past eras



The Governor's House, converted into a tiny cute hotel; the shops where all the merchandise imaginable is offered with the slogan: "souvenir of Tabarca", and obviously the walk along the raised part of the wall, which along some stretches drops straight down into the sea, make up a basic itinerary to follow. Beyond the walls, the Cova del Llop Marí, an open cavity in one of the coves where the waters penetrate and seem to be engulfed, offers all the mystery of sea legends. The beach, nearby, offers its mantle of sand and some crystal clear water. Beside the all-purpose building that houses the services of the Red Cross, Local Police and first aid, stands the former tuna fishery converted nowadays into the Tabarca Museum. Archaeological remains, traditional fishing tackle, memorabilia and documents invite visitors to get to know the local history. In another section of the museum various informative screens and an audiovisual display illustrate the rich marine ecosystem surrounding the island. If there are a thousand and one ways for children to enjoy Tabarca, here they are going to be more evident.

**It is possible to stay on the island overnight, in fact there are various small hotel establishments, very family-orientated and family-run, and of course, one can eat out** at any of the many restaurants there are both within



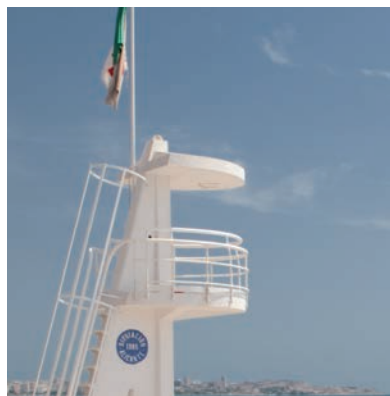
the town and outside the walls. Needless to say that the specialities offered are made starting from the products of the sea, sometimes caught only the previous night. The Tabarca style *caldero* [fish stew, taking its name from the cauldron in which it is prepared], the *gazpacho de mero* [a hearty stew of grouper, not to be confused with the cold tomato soup of Andalucia], or squid “de potera”, so named for the fishing tackle used to catch it, with a line rather than a net, will certainly not disappoint the visitor.

But to understand Tabarca in all its wild dimensions and beauty, you have to head for what has always been called *el camp* [open country] taking as landmarks the fort of San José, built at the same time as the walls, and the lighthouse. Walking towards the southeast end of the island, where we come across the secluded cemetery with a Greek feel to it, the solitude of the ever-present sea completely enveloping a desolate, arid and rocky landscape, only suitable for those seeking peace and relaxation. Alongside the noisy family-style Tabarca, the one which, especially in summer, just a few hours are enough for the visit, is the Tabarca for spending a peaceful, quiet weekend getting away from it all. The best trick of Tabarca is precisely in the fact that it is so tiny and in its relative – and here the term could not be more appropriate - isolation.

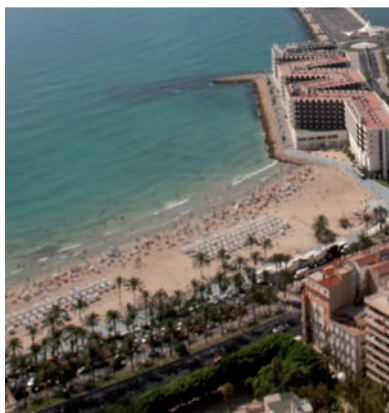
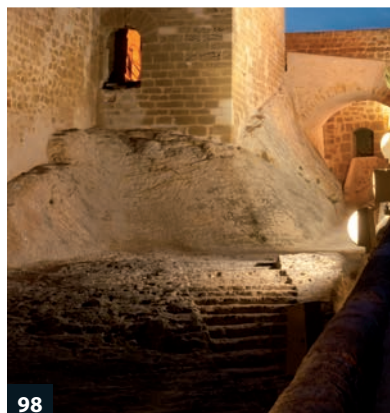
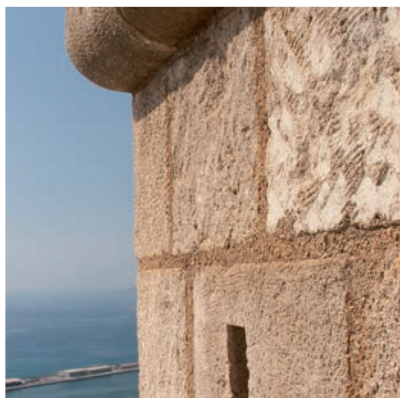
The boat sets sail. Tabarca, “the pretty island” lies behind. It remains there playing with the waves like a tiny child while in the distance the city, like a mother, watches over it that it does not get separated too far from the coast. This guidebook ends as it began, returning to the destination that, in turn, was also the starting off point. Between the sea and the sky, Alicante, in the background, sketches its outline sheltered by El Benacantil....

## Epilogue





**Museums, monuments  
and all that Alicante  
offers the visitor**





## MUSEUMS

### MACA, (MUSEO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO DE ALICANTE)

Pl. de Santa María, 3  
Tel. 965 140 959 / 965 140 768

### MARQ MUSEO ARQUEOLÓGICO PROVINCIAL

Pl. Dr. Gómez Ulla, s/n.  
Tel. 965 14 90 00 / 965 149 006  
www.marqalicante.com

### MUBAG, MUSEO DE BELLAS ARTES GRAVINA

C/ Gravina, 13-15  
Tel. 965 146 780  
www.mubag.com

### MUSA, MUSEO DE LA CIUDAD DE ALICANTE

Castillo de Santa Bárbara  
Monte Benacantil, s/n  
Tel. 965 152 969

### CENTRO CULTURAL LAS CIGARRERAS

C/ San Carlos, 78  
Tel. 965 206 674

### Auditorio de la Diputación de Alicante (ADDA)

Paseo Campoamor, s/n  
Tel. 965 919 100  
www.addalicante.com

### MUSEO DE BELENES

C/ San Agustín, 3  
Tel. 965 202 232

### MUSEO DE FOGUERES

Rambla de Méndez Núñez, 29  
Tel. 965 146 828  
www.alicante.ayto.es

### CENTRO MUNICIPAL DE LAS ARTES

Pl. de Quijano, 2  
Tel. 965 147 160  
www.alicante-ayto.es/cultura

### SALA DE EXPOSICIONES LONJA DE PESCADO

Paseo Almirante Julio Guillén Tato, s/n  
Tel. 965 922 018 / 965 922 308  
www.alicante-ayto.es/cultura

### M2A. MUSEO DEL AGUA DE ALICANTE

Pl. Arquitecto Miguel López, s/n  
Tel. 965 143 787

### MUSEO TAURINO

Pl. de España, s/n  
Tel. 965 219 930

### MUSEO NUEVA TABARCA

Edificio del almacén de la Almadra. Isla de Tabarca  
Tel. 965 960 175

### MUSEO VOLVO OCEAN RACE

Muelle de Levante, nº 10  
Tel. 965 104 917  
www.volvooceanrace.com

## MONUMENTS

### Civil buildings

#### Ayuntamiento

Pl. del Ayuntamiento, 1. 03002 Alicante.  
Tel. 965 14 91 00

#### Castillo de San Fernando

C/ Monte Tossal, s/n. 03005 Alicante

#### Castillo de Santa Bárbara

C/ Monte Benacantil. 03002 Alicante  
Tel. 965 152 969. Abierto todos los días.

#### La Ciudad Descubierta

C/ Jorge Juan, 1. 03002 Alicante.  
Tel. 965 145 222. De lunes a viernes.

#### Mercado Central

Av. Alfonso X El Sabio, 14. 03004 Alicante.  
Tel. 965 140 841

#### "Casa de las brujas"

#### sede de la Presidencia de la Generalitat

Av. Doctor Gadea, 16. 03003 Alicante.  
Tel. 965 935 415

#### Teatro Principal

Pl. de Ruperto Chapí, s/n. 03001 Alicante.  
Tel. 965 203 100

#### Casa Carbonell

Explanada de España, 1. 03002 Alicante

#### Diputación Provincial

Av. De la Estación, 6. 03008 Alicante.  
Tel. 965 988 900

#### Archivo Histórico Municipal (Palacio Maisonnave)

C/ Labradores, 11. 03002 Alicante.

#### Palacio Labradores 14

C/ Labradores, 14. 03002 Alicante.  
Tel. 965 149 666

#### Palacio del Marqués de Bosch

C/ Mayor. 03002 Alicante

#### Palacio Gravina(MUBAG)

C/ Gravina, 13-15,  
Tel. 965 146 780

## Religious monuments

### **Basílica Santa María**

Pl. Santa María, s/n. 03002 Alicante.

Tel. 965 216 026

### **Ermita de San Roque**

C/ San Roque, s/n. Alicante

### **Ermita de Santa Cruz**

Barrio de Santa Cruz. Alicante

### **Iglesia Concatedral San Nicolás de Bari**

Pl. del Abad Canónigo Penalva, s/n. 03002 Alicante

Tel. 965 212 662.

### **Monasterio de la Preciosísima Sangre**

C/ Monjas, s/n. 03002 Alicante.

Tel. 965 217 396

### **Monasterio de la Santa Faz**

Ctra. Alicante-Valencia, km. 8. 03559 Alicante.

Tel. 965 264 912

### **Convento de las Capuchinas**

C/ Teniente Álvarez Soto, s/n. 03002 Alicante.

Tel. 965 216 040

### **Nuestra Señora de Gracia**

Pl. de la Montanyeta, 7, E. 03001 Alicante.

Tel. 965 214 761

## THEATRES

### **Teatro Principal de Alicante**

Pl. Ruperto Chapí, s/n. 03001 Alicante.

Tel. 965 203 100

[www.teatroprincipalalicante.com](http://www.teatroprincipalalicante.com)

### **Teatro Arniches**

Av. de Aguilera, 1. 03007 Alicante.

Tel. 965 93 68 38

[arniches\\_tgv@gva.es](mailto:arniches_tgv@gva.es) • [www.teatres.gva.es](http://www.teatres.gva.es)

## PARKS AND GARDENS

### **Parque Canalejas**

Frente al Club de Regatas.

### **Monte Benacantil y la Ereta**

#### **Monte Tossal**

Ladera este del Castillo de San Fernando

#### **Panteon de Quijano**

Frente a la Plaza de España, al final de la C/ San Vicente

#### **Parque Lo Morant**

C/ Vicente Alexandre, s/n. Horario de 08:00 a 22:00 h.

#### **Parque El Palmeral**

Av. de Elche, s/n. Horario de 09:00 a 23:00 h.

#### **Parque La Marjal**

Av. de las Naciones (Playa de San Juan)

## BEACHES

### **Playa El Postiguet**

### **Playa de la Albufereta**

### **Playa de la Almadraba**

### **Cala de los Judíos**

### **Cala Cantalares**

### **Cala Palmera**

### **Playa de San Juan**

### **Playa del Saladar**

## LEISURE AREAS

### **El Barrio [The Neighbourhood]**

(Situated in the historic centre)

### **Ruta de la Madera [Route of Wood]**

(in the streets surrounding the central market)

### **Port**

### **Golf area** (at Alicante Golf)

### **San Juan beach**

## SPORTS FACILITIES

### **Concejalía de Deportes**

C/ Foguerer José Romeo Zarandieta, 2. 03005 Alicante

Tel. 965 916 012.

[www.alicante-ayto.es/deportes](http://www.alicante-ayto.es/deportes)

### **Alicante Golf**

Av. Locutor Vicente Hipólito, 37

Playa de San Juan de Alicante.

Tel. 965 15 20 43

[www.alicantegolf.com](http://www.alicantegolf.com)

### **El Plantío Club de Golf**

Ctra. A-79, km. 3 Partida Bacarot (Alicante)

Tel. 965 189 115.

[www.elplantio.com](http://www.elplantio.com)

### **Alenda Golf**

Autovía Alicante –Madrid, km 15

Monforte del Cid (Alicante). Tel. 965 620 521

[www.alendagolf.com](http://www.alendagolf.com)

### **Golf Resort & Spa Bonalba**

Partida Bonalba, s/n. Mutxamel (Alicante)

Tel. 965 955 955

[www.golfbonalba.com](http://www.golfbonalba.com)

### **Real Club de Regatas de Alicante**

Muelle de Poniente, 3

Tel. 965 921 250

[www.rcra.es](http://www.rcra.es)

## Piscina Municipal Vía Parque

Av. Unicef, s/n  
Tel. 965 172 397

## Marina Deportiva del Puerto de Alicante

Muelle 8, zona de Levante, s/n  
Tel. 965 213 600  
www.marinaalicante.com

## Club Náutico Alicante Costa Blanca

Av. Condomina, 20. (Edif. Akra). Playa Albufereta  
Tel. 965 154 491

## Complejo de Piscinas Monte Tossal

C/ Foguerer Romeu Zarandieta, 2.  
Tel. 965 242 162

## Piscina Cubierta Antigua Cochera de Tranvías - Babel

C/ Fernando Madroñal.  
Tel. 965 114 946

## Estadio de Atletismo

C/ Hondón de las Nieves.  
Tel. 965 254 261

## Estadio José Rico Pérez

C/ Foguerer Romeu Zarandieta, 4.  
Tel. 902 760 202

## Campo de Fútbol Municipal

C/ Barítano Paco la Torre.  
Tel. 965 179 504

## Ciudad Deportiva

C/ Hondón de las Nieves.  
Tel. 965 241 296

## Polideportivo Monte Tossal

(Antiguo Hipódromo).  
Monte Tossal.  
Tel. 965 246 178

## Pabellón Municipal Central Pitiu Rochel

C/ Foguerer Romeu Zarandieta, 4.  
Tel. 965 252 024

## Polideportivo Parque Lo Morant

C/ Escritor Ferrándiz Torremocha, s/n.  
Tel. 965 176 517

## LANGUAGE

The two official languages are Spanish and Valencian, this last being the language proper to the Region of Valencia.

## OPENING HOURS

**Shops** generally open from 10a.m to 9p.m, although some establishments close at midday.

**Public offices** from 8a.m to 2p.m.

**Restaurants** from noon to 3p.m and 7p.m to 11p.m.

**Drinks bars** from 11p.m to 3:30a.m.

## POSTAL SERVICES

Main Post Offices:

Pl. Gabriel Miró, 7.  
Tel. 965 131 887

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday from 8:30a.m. to 8:30p.m. Saturday from 9:30a.m. to 1p.m.

For further information: [www.correos.es](http://www.correos.es)

## BANK HOLIDAYS

**1 January** (New Year)

**6 January** (Epiphany)

**19 March** (St Joseph)

**Good Friday and Easter Monday**

**2nd Thursday after Maundy Thursday** (Holy Face).

**1 May** (Workers' Day)

**24 June** (St John)

**15 August** (Assumption of the Virgin)

**9 October** (Day of the Region of Valencia)

**12 October** (Hispanic Day / Discovery of the Americas)

**1 November** (All Saints Day)

**6 December** (Day of the Spanish Constitution)

**8 December** (Immaculate Virgin)

**25 December** (Christmas Day)

## BANKS AND CREDIT CARDS

**Banks** are open Mondays to Fridays 8:30a.m to 2:15p.m.

**Credit and debit cards** generally accepted are Mastercard, Visa, American Express (not in all businesses), 4B, Maestro, Visa Electron, Access and Diners Club.

## TIPS / GRATUITIES

These are included in prices and on bills, so they are not regarded as obligatory. They are usually left if the service received is particularly satisfactory (especially in bars and restaurants)

## EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Emergencies** 112

**National Police** 091

**Local Police** 965 107 200

**Fire Service** 080

**Regional Government** 012

**Alicante City Council** 965 149 100

**Emergencies Alicante Province** 965 144 000

**General Hospital** 965 933 000

**San Juan Hospital** 965 938 700



### TOURIST INFO OFFICES

#### **Tourist Info Alicante**

Av. Rambla Méndez Núñez, 41.

Tel. 965 200 000 alicante@touristinfo.net

#### **Tourist Info Alicante Ayuntamiento**

Pl. Ayuntamiento, 1. 03002 Alicante.

Tel. 965149 219

alicanteexplainada@touristinfo.net

#### **Tourist Info Alicante RENFE**

Av. Salamanca, s/n.

Tel. 965 125 633

alicante@touristinfo.net

#### **Tourist Info Alicante-Playa de San Juan**

Junto a la Cruz Roja (sólo en verano).

### CONSULATES

#### **Consulate of Germany**

Pl. Calvo Sotelo, 1. 5º.

Tel. 965 217 060

#### **Consulate of Algeria**

C/ Pintor Velásquez, 32.

Tel. 966 591 532

#### **Consulate of Belgium**

Explanada de España, 1-5º.

Tel. 965 929 147

#### **Honorary Consulate of Brasil**

C/ Reyes Católicos, 31. 2ºB.

Tel. 965 928 852

#### **British Consulate**

Rambla Méndez Núñez, 25-30, 6º

Tel. 965 216 022

#### **Consulate of Denmark**

Pl. Calvo Sotelo 3. 5º B.

Tel. 965 207 938

#### **Consulate of Ecuador**

Av. Oscar Esplà, 4cbajo 3

Tel. 965 135 205

#### **Consular Agency of France**

Rambla Méndez Núñez, 44-5ºD. Tel. 965 680 042

#### **Consulate de Ireland**

Ctra. Madrid Km. 4. Mercalicante, pabellón multiusos.

Tel. 965 107 485

#### **Honorary Consulate of Italia**

Av. Benito Pérez Galdós, 9-11, 1ºD.

Tel. 965 141 133

#### **Honorary Consulate of Luxemburgo**

C/ Juan Bautista Labora, 3-4º lzq.

Tel. 965 205 333

#### **Honorary Consulate of Marocco**

C/ Duque de Zaragoza 4-5º B.

Tel. 965 213 533

#### **Consulate of Dominican Republic**

C/ Virgen del Socorro, 50-bajo 3

Tel. 965 151 897

### METEOROLOGY

The climate in Alicante is arid Mediterranean, with mild temperatures throughout the year and scant rains, concentrated in the equinoxial periods. The temperatures vary between 16.8°C and 6.2°C in January and 30.6°C and 20.4°C in August, the annual mean temperature being 17.8°C. Moreover, the maritime influence means that the temperature variation during the day is fairly mild, although on days of strong wind from the west it may reach as much as 15°C so that the thermal sensation both of heat and cold may be more intense than the habitual. On those days it is recommendable to go out well prepared to bear the cold or the heat. With regard to rains, the annual precipitations are of 336mm, most of them occurring during the months of September and October when the phenomenon of the "Gota Fria" [literally "Cold Drop"] may occur. At that time the torrential rains may give rise to flash floods, although it does not occur every year with the same intensity. Alicante is found situated on the Costa Blanca so the city enjoys some 2,800 hours of light.

### HOSPITALS

#### **Hospital General de Alicante**

C/ Pintor Baeza, s/n. 03010 Alicante.

Tel. 965 933 000

#### **Hospital de San Juan**

Carretera de Alicante-Valencia, s/n

03550 San Juan de Alicante.

Tel. 965 938 700

## HOW TO GET THERE

### AIRPORT

#### Alicante-Elche Airport

Tel. 966 919 400 / 966 919 100

03071 L'Altet (Elx) [www.aena.es](http://www.aena.es).

Domestic and international flights. The airport is reached on the A-7 and N-332. The distance from Alicante city centre to the turn-off that leads to the entrance into the airport complex is 8km in both cases, with the average time taken to travel the distance being some fifteen minutes, thirty in the rush hour.

### TRAIN

#### Alicante train station

Av. Salamanca s/n. Tel. 902 320 320

It is possible to travel from Alicante by train on the National Railway Network to other destinations in Spain.

**Ferrocarriles de la Generalitat Valenciana (FGV)**

### TRAM

Tel. 900 720 472

Alicante-Denia line. There is a tram line L1 from Alicante (Luceros) to Benidorm. From there you change to continue as far as Dénia.

The line 2 goes to University and San Vicente del Raspeig.

The line L3 goes from the Market to Venta Lanuza.

The line L4 goes from Luceros to Playa de San Juan.

The Tramnochador runs during the summer months and links the city of Alicante with Benidorm (and intermediate stops).

### PORT

Alicante port receives and sends out passenger traffic, both from tourist cruises and regular lines that connect with the Island of Tabarca and the North of Africa. Alicante

Port: 965 13 00 95

Alicante-Tabarca (Kontiki): Tel. 965 216 396 /686 994 538

Alicante-Orán (Romeo y Cía) Tel. 965 141 509

### HIGHWAYS

Alicante may be reached on the AP-7 motorway, which connects to the north with Valencia and to the south with Murcia and Andalucía. It may also be reached on the A-31 which links with Madrid.

### COACHES

#### Coach Station.

Puerto de Alicante. Muelle de Poniente, s/n.

Tel. 965 130 700

**TAM (local and district bus services)**

Tel. 965 140 936

### SUBUS

[www.subus.es](http://www.subus.es)

## HOW TO GET ABOUT

### TAXIS

**Radio Tele Taxi** 965 252 511/ 965 101 611

**AREA – Taxi** 965 910 591

### TURIBUS

Turibús stops:

1. Pl. Puerta del Mar
2. Marq. Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Alicante
3. Castillo de Santa Bárbara
4. Mercado Central
5. Pl. de los Luceros
6. Av. Federico Soto. El Corte Inglés
7. Av. Maisonnave. El Corte Inglés
8. Estación de autobuses
9. Av. Conde Vallengano
10. Zona Volvo

Frequency: every 60 minutes

## SPANISH SCHOOLS

There are centres that offer courses specialising in teaching Spanish, accredited by the Cervantes Institute. Full information [www.ameele.net](http://www.ameele.net)

[www.comunitatvalenciana.com](http://www.comunitatvalenciana.com)