



The lowdown

The Real Club de Marítimo de Sotogrande is less than 6.5km away, can host yachts up to 70 metres and has a busy regatta schedule during the summer. Gibraltar International Airport is less than 25km away and has private jet facilities. Annual golf tournaments at the La Reserva Club include the Couple's Tournament (4 August) and Parent and Child Tournament (12 August). This year also saw some of the top ladies in Europe play the inaugural La Reserva de Sotogrande Invitational.

Villa with a view

With 90 golf holes to play and 25 polo tournaments a season, Sotogrande is a summer sports Mecca. *Sophia Wilson* discovers a palatial villa in progress that's ideal for active sophisticates

The private Andalusian estate of Sotogrande has been a sun-soaked haven for the wealthy since the 1960s. Now a new six-house gated community, El Mirador offers privacy with modern flair. The first of its pavilion-style properties is nearing completion, while the neighbouring Villa Vela is still on the market and will be ready to move into for the 2020 Med season.

Designed by Andalusian architect Manuel Ruiz of ARK architects, the curving five-bedroom home is split over three floors with a contemporary style featuring clean lines, floor-to-ceiling windows and extensive outdoor living spaces. It's built around a tiered circular central terrace with an infinity pool and superb views out to sea. A bright, 1,494-square-metre interior will house a grand master suite, four en suite guest bedrooms, indoor swimming pool and a gym. It also has an additional bedroom for staff and undercover parking.

The owner will have access to the La Reserva Club's facilities, including its 18-hole Championship Golf Course, a tennis and padel club and The Beach, southern Europe's first freshwater swimming lagoon. Despite being

five kilometres from the Med, The Beach still has sandy shores, a boho Beach Club that serves up killer cocktails and modern Spanish fare, and a watersports centre.

Created by American industrialist Colonel Joseph McMicking in 1962, Sotogrande has maintained its real-estate prowess. "Its allure lies in its position, abundance of space and spectacular views," says Marc Topiol, CEO of Sotogrande SA. "This, coupled with the fact that La Reserva Club is still within easy reach of busier towns such as Marbella, and Andalucía's cultural centres such as Seville, Córdoba and Cádiz, makes for a winning formula."

Villa Vela, El Mirador, La Reserva Sotogrande, is slated for completion in April 2020 and is for sale for €9.2 million, lareservaclubsotogrande.com



Villa Vela's breathtaking views from the infinity pool span the La Reserva Club golf course below and the Rock of Gibraltar to the south



The modern but muted styling and floor-to-ceiling windows increase the feeling of space and allow for light to flood the indoor pool and gym





Lavanta Market, at the Sotogrande Marina, offers food, shopping and live entertainment

Horse power

Four legs good, four ponies wielded by athletic Argentinians better. *Sophia Wilson* gives the lowdown on the finest spots to watch the Sport of Kings via your superyacht

SOTOGRADE Andalucia, Spain

Credentials: The Sotogrande community was created in 1962 by Filipino Industrialist Col Joseph McMicking and its gated villas soon hosted summer soirées packed with the Med elite (think Mustique overlooking the Rock of Gibraltar). Polo followed thanks to McMicking's nephew, Enrique Zobel, who created the Beach ground in 1965. Fast forward 50 years and there are now 16 fields in this sun-drenched corner of Andalucia. The high-goal action centres on the manicured lawns of the Santa Maria Polo Club, dubbed the Wimbledon of polo grounds. Situated on the banks of the Guadlaro estuary, its fields are divided by palm trees and white canvas parasols to protect visitors from the Spanish sun.

What to watch: The International Polo Tournament (part of the Grand Slam), is held annually at Santa Maria, this year from 24 July to 31 August. **Dress to (casually) Impress:** Men can't go far wrong copying the look of polo-playing Ralph Lauren model Nacho Figueras (polo shirt and chinos). Ladies, think chic summer dresses and comfy wedges (It isn't Ascot). **Steaks are high:** Homesick Argentinian polo players get their protein fix at Cancha II, which serves up steaks flown in from South America and flamed on a traditional wood-burning grill. The rustic restaurant sits above the Ayala Club's polo grounds, perfect for sundowners while watching the evening chukkas.

Start from scratch: Christian Byrne, from the family that started luxury ski company Powder Byrne, has turned his expertise to summer activities with Polo Valley. With more than 50 ponies, including a free-roaming Shetland, it offers lessons for all abilities.

Buy your own stable: La Reserva Club Sotogrande's latest development, El Mirador, still has palatial modern mansions for sale (see page 206).

Best by boat: Sotogrande's marina is near the Santa Maria Polo Club and can host yachts up to 70m. santomariapoloclub.com



Nacho Figueras (left) is a big hit among spectators and shoppers at Santa Maria

POLO PARLANCE

Chukka: The period of play, lasting seven minutes.

