

# Serneholt Estate

*Magazine*

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GREEN ENERGY

REVOLUTION

IN COSTA DEL SOL

Villages to visit in  
Costa Blanca

Spain predicts a  
boom in tourism this  
summer

START EACH DAY WITH  
SUNSHINE AND A SMILE

# Content



## Welcome to Serneholt Estate

Whether you're buying or selling a property, it can be good to have a friend to hold your hand through the process. Let us be that friend.

We have offices in Alicante, Fuengirola, Marbella, Estepona and Manilva. You are always welcome to contact us and we will help you to find your dream home.

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# Spain predicts a boom in tourism this summer

Heading towards the first peak season with no restrictions since 2019, Spain is experiencing a positive influx of tourists visiting the Costa Blanca and the Costa del Sol parts of Spain.

Travel companies report a sky-high demand in travel to countries like Greece, Italy and especially Spain which will see the tourist industry flourish. However, many countries face exceptionally long waits to get an appointment to renew passports which may put a spanner in the works for some travellers.

Our offices are open throughout summer and we are here to help you find your dream home.

Fredrik Serneholt  
CEO at Serneholt Estate

Shops and restaurants who during the early phase of the pandemic had to fight for survival experienced a good season in 2021 and are now well-equipped for this year's peak season and very happy to welcome the tourists back.

## What does this mean for those who are looking to buy a home in Spain this summer?

Estate Agents working on the coast of Costa Blanca and Costa del Sol have seen a steady decline in supply of good properties for sale and the properties not sold before the summer are often put up for rent which makes it difficult in some situations to get viewings booked in.

If you are looking for a new build or if you can consider buying a property in need of some renovation, there are still some good opportunities in the market. Some Urbanisations (areas) do not allow renovations during July and August so you will have the opportunity to influence the final design if you find a property in need of some work.



# Start each day with sunshine and a smile

**Graeme and Fia Horncastle relocated to the Nueva Andalucia area in Marbella from similarly fashionable, although very busy, Richmond in south-west London.**

Most days here start with sunshine - after all the south of Spain is renowned for its reliable weather and the sunshine appears each morning for an average of 320 days a year. And even the cloudy days are not so unpleasant Fia explains: "Starting the day on the beach is something I've always dreamt of - waking up, exercising, watching the beautiful sunrise means that every day begins with a smile. And if that is not idyllic enough, there is often the bonus of seeing a pod of dolphins playing out at sea - it does feel like I'm getting to live out that dream each and every day." "The weekday routine is relaxed. Together my husband and I get our daughter ready for school. I have a five- minute commute to the office at Serneholt Estate and my husband heads off to his regular round of golf or a perhaps a game of Padel, which is hugely popular here - think tennis on a smaller, enclosed court!"

"You may have heard of the Spanish concept of 'mañana' ... literally, it means 'in the morning' or 'tomorrow' but it is a phrase used to describe a much more relaxed way of doing things. Everything here is so much less stressful and having been living in the London rat race for more years than I care to remember, this is such a pleasant change and certainly one for the better."

Graeme and Fia both worked for a major global IT company and although their lives were rich and fulfilling, both started to re-think and re-evaluate their present and their future. Their daughter was a joy to regularly see a day of sunshine ahead."

"We were both keen to enjoy a more varied lifestyle. Parenthood and regular commuting in and out of central London meant that neither of us had significant time to enjoy life together. There is a cosmopolitan and international feel to due to move from primary to secondary education so this provided a perfect window to plan a new life.

Fia continues: "We started to think about this a few years ago and decided to build a five-year plan. As we wanted

to move out of Southwest London, we found ourselves starting to put a few places on the 'short list' and investigate whether we would stay in the UK or move abroad."

"This time frame would coincide with Graeme's boys leaving home for University and our daughter starting senior school. Our search went from a new UK base out of the city - we looked closely at properties on the coast of Devon - but we also considered the south of France where we already had friends." explains Fia.



**"We do things more spontaneously here. In London we had to plan to see friends' months in advance but now we find we are able to do things on the spur of a moment"**

"For me, in particular, the weather was a really important factor. I'm Swedish by birth so I've seen very cold winters and wonderful summers, but predictability was the key and Marbella was ticking a lot of boxes. Now, when we look at the weather forecast on our phones, it is such Marbella which was important to us to give to our daughter both the Spanish lifestyle as well as having friends from all over the world who have chosen Marbella to be their home."

"We love that the days are so much longer here. It is normal to head to the beach at seven or eight in the evening. The temperature is perfect, the sea is pleasant and it's not too crowded. There's a fantastic sunset to enjoy and often there's a beach bar to enjoy a drink and tapas - far removed from the commute home from central London."

"In addition, I'm finding we do things more spontaneously here. In London we had to plan to see friends' months in advance but now we find we are able to do things on the spur of a moment."

The couple took time to see many properties and ended up finding the perfect villa close to a highly renowned British International school which their daughter attends.

Graeme picks up the story. "The school run is quick and easy and once I have done that the day is mine. Quite a few of the dads also do the school run and we all then go straight on to one of the dozens of golf courses within just a short drive. I wasn't much of a golfer in England, but I've been able to re-start, and I am really getting into it now. The sport itself



**Dream big and let us make your dream come true!**

is good, but golf is very much a social activity for me and it allows me to get out into the sunshine and spend time with friends.

“The school has also been a springboard to other things. Fia and I both play Padel a couple of times a week. I used to play tennis and be in a squash league so picking up a new racket sport was quite easy. And of course, when Fia or I do the afternoon school run, the planning starts for what we could do that evening or at the weekend. For me the bonus of a great school is that it gives our daughter a first-class education whilst giving us, as parents, a ready-made social life with people of a similar age.

**“With Fia’s Swedish roots, she’s a natural on the ski slopes and both of us ski regularly so it is an extra bonus to be able to head down the motorway to the Sierra Nevada resort. It’s over 3,400 metres high and one of Europe’s most southerly ski resorts – a fantastic place to go with the family for a day or a weekend**

**and then drive back to Marbella to have lunch on the beach in the sun – living the dream.”**

“We both enjoy dining out and Spain has a reputation for excellent food. By the coast, there are some amazing fish restaurants, but it is also great fun trying local delicacies and exploring all sorts of different types of food. You can dine at Nobu or have perfect ‘pinxos’ at a bar – it is the sheer choice that pleases me – variety is the spice of life!’ says Graeme. “Marbella’s nightlife is exceptional too – we’ve been to some great concerts and had some amazing nights out, and for us both, the joy is in being able to be more spontaneous and do what we want to do when we want to do it. I found London commuting and the day-to-day grind quite depressing. Now there’s a quality of life to each day that we just didn’t have in the UK.”



**“Generate our own electricity and reduce our carbon footprints by lowering the amount of carbon dioxide that is pumped into our atmosphere.”**

“We live in the perfect location for solar energy,” Martin Tye explains. “By installing solar panels we can harness this free and plentiful source of energy, generate our own electricity and reduce our carbon footprints by lowering the amount of carbon dioxide that is pumped into our atmosphere.”

The effect that global warming is having on our planet and the need to take action was one of the main factors that prompted Martin to launch Mariposa Energía.

“Climate change is a very real and immediate problem, which we are all facing. Our planet’s temperature is rising at an alarming rate and the effects can already be seen, with an increase in weather-related disasters across the

globe, increased forest fires and flooding and the shrinking of polar ice caps.

“It’s vital that we take whatever action we can and by making the simple move to green energy we can make a big difference to the future of our planet.”

While many homeowners install solar panels to reduce their carbon footprints, there are also many more reasons that are compelling consumers to go solar, as Martin explains:

“Homeowners and businesses alike can make huge savings and with the recent sharp rise in the wholesale cost of electricity, our clients are finding that their solar installation has paid for itself in just two to three years.

# Green energy revolution in Costa del Sol

There is a green energy revolution taking place right in the heart of the seaside town of San Pedro de Alcántara on the Costa de Sol. Born out of CEO Martin Tye’s passion for the environment and his own experiences in Spain, Mariposa Energía is a company on a mission to help protect the future of our planet, while helping homeowners to save money with its green energy mix.

Launched just over two and a half years ago, the company has gone from strength to strength as its reach has spread from the Costa del Sol initially to right across the entire country. Look out at the rooftops in many of Spain’s popular locations and you will see the shiny solar panels installed by Mariposa Energía, taking in the sunlight and converting it to electricity to power consumers’ homes.

Solar panels used to be a rare sight in Spain, which is hard to imagine in a country that can boast more than 300 days of sun per year. This was due to the infamous ‘sun tax’ which was previously levied on those choosing to generate their own solar electricity, but that tax has been abolished and now, thanks to the work of Mariposa Energía, solar-powered homes in Spain are most definitely on the rise.





Let us help you find your dream home!

## “What’s more, a solar panel installation can increase the resale value of a property, which is a big deciding factor for many people.”

“Many also like the freedom that solar power gives them. By generating their own electricity they are no longer at the mercy of fluctuating energy prices and they can use the electricity as they wish throughout the day, without the need to wait until the night time or weekend to run the washing machine, when electricity prices are cheaper.

“What’s more, a solar panel installation can increase the resale value of a property, which is a big deciding factor for many people.”

As well as offering solar panel installations, Mariposa Energía also offers energy switch and, as you would imagine, all their energy tariffs are 100% green. It was Martin’s own personal experiences with electricity companies when moving to Spain that prompted him to set up this side of the business.

“After dealing with the electricity companies when I moved here I decided that I wanted to launch an energy company that not only provided green energy but also provided great customer service and bills that are easy-to-understand.

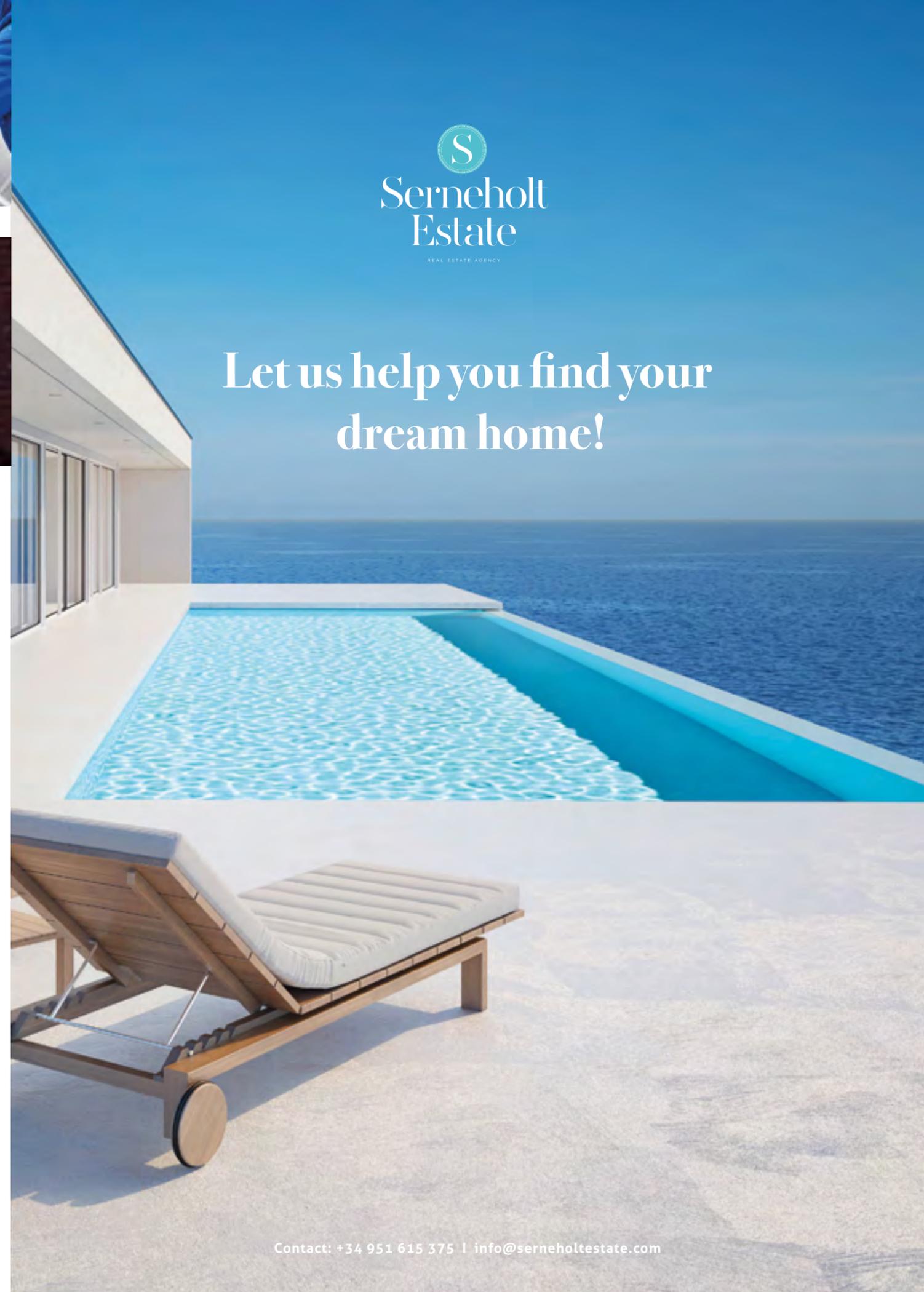
“At Mariposa Energía we have a friendly, multi-lingual team who put the customer first, who answer the phone and who go the extra mile to help our clients.”

Mariposa Energía’s energy switch process is incredibly simple. They analyse a recent energy bill and then show the consumer how much they can save if they switch to their 100% green energy tariffs.

Once a client decides to go ahead the switch is seamless. There is no need for any new cables or equipment or for any work to be done. Infact, as Martin explains, clients only notice the switch has occurred when they start receiving cheaper energy bills. And, of course as a green energy company, all the bills are sent via email to further help to protect our planet.

“We know that prioritising our planet is not always easy, but with our two green energy options, consumers can go green while also saving money,” Martin added. “It really is a win, win situation.”

And thanks to our special collaboration with Mariposa Energía, Serneholt Estate client’s can benefit from our special rates and save even more money. Speak to your agent today to find out more.



# The story of Serneholt Estate



The history of most companies usually start when the company is created but our history started long before then.

# The story of Serneholt Estate – where it all began

The history of most companies usually starts when the company is created but our history started long before then. When they met in the early 2000 Linda had already been with a Swedish Estate Agent for a couple of years and it didn't take long before Fredrik followed in her footsteps.

Fredrik joined the most inventive Estate Agent in Sweden with ambitious plans to develop the property market in a way that hadn't been done before by looking to change the way a traditional agent worked. Fredrik went on an exciting journey where he helped establish the company and putting their own stamp on the property market.

The couple stayed in Stockholm, Sweden and worked to develop their careers separately until 2015 when the move to Spain became reality.

Once in Spain, the couple soon realised the property market was more than 10 years behind Sweden and completely lacked structure and transparency. They also noticed that companies didn't offer an environment for the employees to feel like they were being looked after which created a very selfish environment and a culture where it's very difficult to build long lasting relationships at any of the Estate Agents in the local market.

At the end of 2015 the idea started to form their own Estate Agency and it wasn't until they came in contact

with one of the most innovative business man in Sweden that they decided to create the brand Serneholt Estate. Their ambition when starting Serneholt Estate was to help family and friends find a home in Spain and ensure they had a smooth experience when buying their property whilst providing a personal service by using their collective property experience.

They started the company early 2016 and the success was almost immediate. It didn't take many months before the company moved into a newly renovated office in Nueva Andalucia in Marbella and employed their first staff.

In 2017 the company outgrew their office in Marbella and decided to setup another office in Fuengirola which was officially opened on 1st April 2017.

During the autumn of 2017, the company focused on updating their branding and they also published the first Serneholt Magazine which has since been a huge success.

After two successful years the company decided to expand via a Franchise model and during the latter part



of 2018 the first two franchise offices in Estepona and Malaga were established.

The couple have worked hard to create a fantastic working environment for their employees and continuously invest in their staff to ensure they have the tools to be successful but also a culture where people want to work. They make sure there are plenty of team social activities throughout the year as well as team building to strengthen the relationship between the staff which is hugely popular. In the early years they travelled to Sevilla, Sierra Nevada, Mallorca and Gran Canaria with the team.

In 2019 we hosted our yearly conference in San Agustin in Gran Canaria where all 17 staff participated

In 2019 the company decided to expand into new markets outside of Costa Del Sol and opened a franchise office in Alicante on the Costa Blanca coast and another in Palma on the idyllic island of Mallorca. They decided to change the office in Fuengirola to a franchise set up and new owners came onboard at the end of 2019.

Serneholt Estate had a fantastic start to 2020 and it looked like a very promising year ahead. They started another franchise office in Manilva in the south part of Costa Del Sol and all statistics showed they were set to have a record year. However, little did they know what was about to happen...Spain closed for a complete lockdown in the middle of March due to Covid 19 and the company faced some difficult months ahead. The offices in Palma and Malaga have not yet been able to establish themselves in the market so it was decided

they would close down. The rest of the offices had to adopt to the current situation and therefore changed to a digital organisation and provided their clients with video viewings to manage their current sales enquiries.

The website was revamped and adapted to the new property market demands including for international clients for which multiple languages were added.



Fighting the Pandemic and facing extremely difficult market conditions with only half of the work force working, the Marbella office made all-time high sales in 2020. The team started to see a glimmer of hope at the end of 2020 with how life would be after Covid-19 in 2021.

The Pandemic definitely changed the mindset of people in general. As many clients are now able to continue working remotely they realise Spain is the ideal place to base themselves. Serneholt Estate saw a huge increase in demand for properties with large terraces and spaces which could be turned into a home office and as a result sales shot to an all time high. The company grew 250% in turnover and employed 14 new members of staff.



Serneholt Estate Office in Centro Plaza 1 Nueva Andalucia

# The company decided to celebrate its success in 2021 with a kick off conference and team building event in Marrakesh in early 2022

The company decided to celebrate its success in 2021 with a kick off conference and team building event in Marrakesh in early 2022 which was attended by 25 of the company's 30 employees. Many memories were made together and we look forward to where the next trip will take us in 2023.

## Serneholt Estate company presentation

Personal, Experienced and Trusted are the company's key words which has been at the forefront of Serneholt Estate since it was first established in 2016. It has formed who the company is today and is part of our DNA – our unique value to our clients.

When the couple moved to Spain in 2015 they noticed Spain lacked a service to show what properties were available and on the market. Digital portals have existed in Sweden for a long time making it easier to search for

available properties for clients and local estate agents have always found new ways to stick out in the market place and develop the digitalisation of property portals. As this was not the case in Spain, the company decided to challenge the market by publishing information about buying costs when purchasing a property as well as to show the exact location of the property on our website. To use a professional photographer to take photos of our properties was something the company took for granted but it's not common in Spain. We have today added a virtual reality solution to our properties which shows you the floor plan and you are also able to 'visit' the property digitally before seeing it live.

A joint property portal for the entire market in Spain has been a hard nut to crack but we are today able to offer over 10,000 properties on our own website, where our own properties feature together with other Estate Agents properties across Spain. We hope that one day we will be



When you first get in touch with Serneholt Estate we align an Agent straight away and this is the person who will work with you throughout the buying or selling process. We have also made sure that an Agent is associated with every property we have advertised on our website which makes it easy for our clients to know who they should contact. We encourage our Agents to build lifelong relationships with their clients and not only help them with the buying or selling of a property and many clients become friends.

With the ambition to build longstanding relationships with our clients the company has created an employee culture to reflect this. We believe in continuing to invest in our employees by having social activities, enablement and trips which together with a good compensation package means the employees are extremely loyal and love working for the company. An employee at Serneholt Estate is a person who has the ambition but also the belief that their client will make their best life investment when they buy or sell their property with the company.



able to offer a more extended property portfolio platform together with other Agents that the market is missing.

Being successful both as a buying and selling Agent is a difficult task to master, but the company realised early on that the reward is similar if you help clients buying or selling their property. It's important for the client when buying or selling that they have a trusted advisor to help them along the process. Let us be your trusted advisor. We want our clients to feel they are in a safe pair of hands, and we are there for them along the journey until the purchase or sale is completed.

When you buy a property with us, we ensure we are part of your journey from start to finish and will also focus on your priorities. We strongly believe in personalised service and we will do our utmost to find you a new home.

When you sell your property with us we make sure we present your property in the best possible way showing professional photos and advertising it in several portals online including an extended network as well as sharing the information directly with a few selected Agents we collaborate with. To sell a property usually takes around 7-8 months in Spain but with a newly developed process Serneholt Estate can cut down the selling process to 2-3 months. We are continuously working to improve this process.





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**We have offices in Alicante, Fuengirola, Marbella, Estepona and Manilva. You are always welcome to contact us and we will help you to find your dream home.**

**Contact: +34 951 615 375 | info@serneholtestate.com**



**Pilar de la Horadada, Alicante** (361-04102P)  
Apartment | Beds: 2 Baths: 2 | Size: 81 sqm | Price: 166.900 €



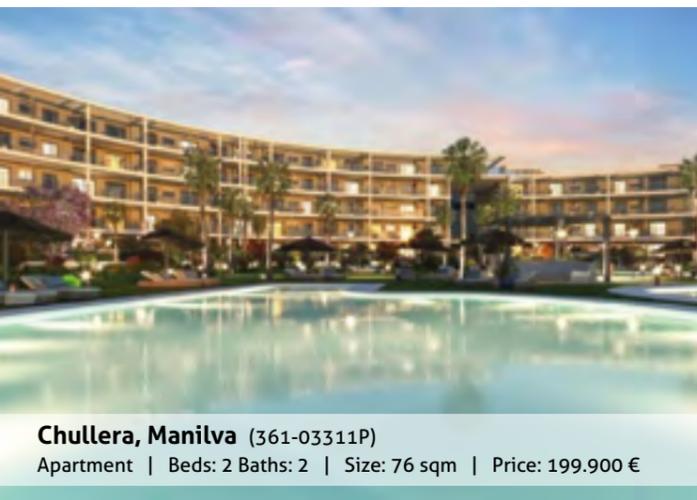
**Villamartín, Orihuela Costa, Alicante** (361-03805p)  
Town House | Beds: 3 Baths: 2 | Size: 91 sqm | Price: 155.000 €



**Fuengirola Centro, Fuengirola** (361-04100P)  
Apartment | Beds: 2 Baths: 1 | Size: 73 sqm | Price: 269.000€



**Calanova Golf, Mijas Costa, Fuengirola** (361-04091P)  
Apartment | Beds: 2 Baths: 2 | Size: 78 sqm | Price: 195.000 €



**Chullera, Manilva** (361-03311P)  
Apartment | Beds: 2 Baths: 2 | Size: 76 sqm | Price: 199.900 €



**Estepona Golf, Estepona** (361-03668P-dup)  
Penthouse | Beds: 2 Baths: 2 | Size: 152 sqm | Price: 271.000 €



**Locrimar, Nueva Andalucía, Marbella** (361-03973P)  
Apartment | Beds: 1 Baths: 1 | Size: 64 sqm | Price: 229.000 €



**New Golden Mile, Estepona** (361-04045P)  
Penthouse | Beds: 2 Baths: 2 | Size: 100 sqm | Price: 375.000 €



**Manilva** (361-03890P)  
Apartment | Beds: 2 Baths: 2 | Size: 86 sqm | Price: 199.900 €



**Los Capanes del Golf, Marbella** (361-03457P)  
Duplex Penthouse | Beds: 3 Baths: 3 | Size: 300 sqm | Price: 710.000 €



**Nueva Andalucía, Marbella** (361-03919P)  
Penthouse | Beds: 3 Baths: 3 | Size: 122 sqm | Price: 799.000 €



**Casares Playa, Manilva** (361-03837P)  
Apartment | Beds: 3 Baths: 2 | Size: 118 sqm | Price: 355.000 €



**Vilajoyosa, Alicante** (361-04018P)  
Apartment | Beds: 2 Baths: 2 | Size: 78 sqm | Price: 352.000 €



**New Golden Mile, Estepona** (361-03927P)  
Penthouse | Beds: 3 Baths: 2 | Size: 128 sqm | Price: 449.000 €



**Bahía de las Rocas, Manilva** (361-03798P-dup)  
Town House | Beds: 3 Baths: 2 | Size: 110 sqm | Price: 311.000 €



**La Resina Golf, Estepona** (361-04090P)  
Penthouse Duplex | Beds: 2 Baths: 2 | Size: 100 sqm | Price: 349.000 €



**Riviera del Sol, Mijas Costa, Fuengirola** (361-04097P)  
Apartment | Beds: 2 Baths: 2 | Size: 105 sqm | Price: 325.000 €



**Fuengirola Centro, Fuengirola** (361-04031P)  
Apartment | Beds: 3 Baths: 1 | Size: 82 sqm | Price: 269.000 €



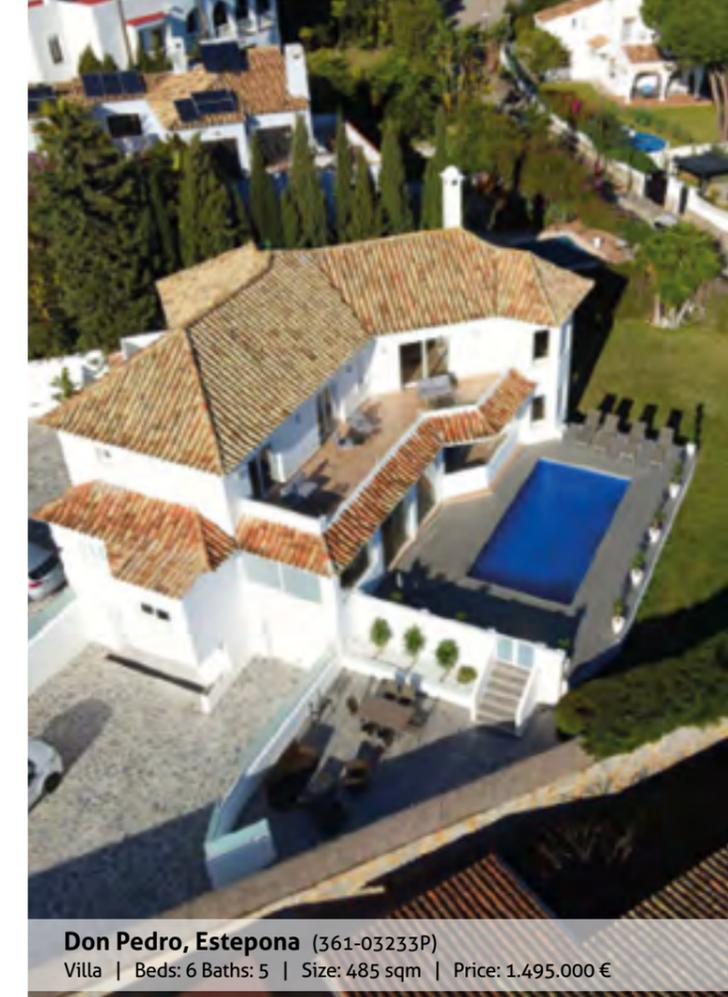
**Mijas Costa, Fuengirola** (361-04063P)  
Villa | Beds: 12 Baths: 12 | Size: 1110 sqm | Price: 1.200.000 €



**Finestrat, Alicante** (361-00746P)  
Villa | Beds: 3 Baths: 3 | Size: 194 sqm | Price: 725.500 €



**La Paloma, Manilva** (361-03921P)  
Apartment | Beds: 4 Baths: 3 | Size: 231 sqm | Price: 1.296.066 €



**Don Pedro, Estepona** (361-03233P)  
Villa | Beds: 6 Baths: 5 | Size: 485 sqm | Price: 1.495.000 €



**New Golden Mile, Estepona** (361-04083P)  
Town House | Beds: 4 Baths: 4 | Size: 309 sqm | Price: 1.575.000 €



**La Reserva de Alcuzcuz, Benahavís, Marbella** (361-03786P)  
Villa | Beds: 4 Baths: 4 | Size: 394 sqm | Price: 1.565.000 €



**Nueva Andalucía, Marbella** (361-03733P)  
Villa | Beds: 4 Baths: 3 | Size: 252 sqm | Price: 1.650.000 €



**La Perla, Benalmádena, Fuengirola** (361-03313P)  
Villa | Beds: 5 Baths: 7 | Plot: 1695 sqm | Price: 2.590.000 €



**Benidorm, Alicante** (361-01220P)  
Penthouse | Beds: 3 Baths: 2 | Size: 146 sqm | Price: 825.000 €

# Exploring Costa Blanca – a place to make memories



The Costa Blanca, known as the 'white coast', is mainland Spain's most popular year-round destination boasting stunning sandy beaches, charming villages and plenty of vibrant holiday resorts sitting alongside the clear Mediterranean sea. We have picked out a few towns which is worth exploring.



## Calpe

Located between Alicante and Valencia, coastal Calpe seems straight from a postcard with a dramatic rock 'Peñón de Ifach' known as Calpe Rock and palm-dotted beaches surrounded by Mediterranean waters. Once an ancient fishing village, the Costa Blanca town mixes Roman ruins and scenic nature parks with plenty of modern urban comforts.

Did you know that in 1987, the Peñón de Ifach (Penyal d'Ifac in Valencian) was considered a nature reserve by the Generalitat Valenciana (Valencian government)?

Rising 322 metres above the Mediterranean sea, and with incredible views of the surrounding area, Peñón d'Ifach - also known as Calpe Rock - is one of the most famous sights along the Costa Blanca coastline. If you are looking to climb Calpe Rock make sure you pick the right route! One route is more family friendly which is perfect for children and dogs and the other is a more challenging route for more experienced hikers. Once at the top you'll experience the most spectacular views of the Mediterranean – enjoy your hike and remember you need to pre-book your hike prior to going, appointments can be made online.

We also recommend you visit 'los baños de la reina' on the Calpe coast which was used as a fish farm in the past and where you can go for a swim or practicing some snorkeling in natural pools. The name of Baños de la Reina goes back a long way. Legend has it that these baths were used by an ancient Moorish queen to enjoy swimming in the sea. In the case of the Baños de la Reina in Calpe, the legend took shape after discovering the existence of drainage galleries in the pools, which is why some believed that they were actually blocked by tunnels that would lead to the

queen's residence and from which she could secretly reach her coastal bath. Nowadays it is known that this is only a legend; as the origin of Baños de la Reina is much more plausible. These pools located on the rocks were actually fish farms that were carried out during the Roman settlements 2,000 years ago. They were factories for salting fish, also used to make a sauce called garum, reserved for the most exquisite palates (and with more purchasing power).

And don't forget to walk around the narrow streets of Calpe's Old Town which is a must for any visitor. You may experience the history whilst walking around imagining the old town being part of a walled area built around the church to defend the residents against frequent attacks by pirates from North Africa. And make sure you take your phone or camera with you! Puchalt Street in the center of Calpe is one of the most photographed places in the town. You may ask why, but when you see the colorful stairs that climb the length of the street, you'll know why. They are painted with the colors of the Spanish flag, so that when you view Puchalt Street straight on, it looks like one long flag. The stairs were built to protect from falls on this steep street back in the 1970s. However, the painting took place during a beauty contest in 1982, held as part of the 300th anniversary of Cristo del Sudor which was an idea that was initiated by all the neighbors.



## Villa Joyosa

Also known as La Vila Joiosa or as the locals say, just 'La Vila'. The town is famous for many things especially the brightly colorful houses, its wonderful beaches and for its delicious chocolate – made by the Spanish chocolate manufacturer Valor.

At the entrance of Villajoyosa you can find one of the most beautiful and calmest beaches of the coast, very easily accessible by car and easy to park. El Torres, is a gravel beach and as it's a little way out of the town centre, is not overcrowded and you can have a restful day and also enjoy the local beach bar for some refreshments and bit to eat.

The Moros y Cristianos Festival is something really special in southern Valencia and very popular event in this town from 24th to 31st July. According to a popular tradition the festivals commemorate the battles, combats and fights between Moors (i.e. Muslims) and Christians during the period known as Reconquista (from the 8th century through the 15th century). You will find the locals celebrating with a food festival, fire works and music concerts.

### Tasting La Vila Gastronómica

La Vila Joyosa is famous for its gastronomic food inspired by their fishing tradition and because of this the municipality developed the brand 'La Vila Gastronómica'. Several annual events are hosted and the locals makes a show of their culinary skills.

These events are:

- La Mostra de la Cuina Marinera
- Xocolatíssima
- Concurso de Pebrereta
- Con G de Tapas
- La Setmana de l'Arròs



Why not go for a walk by the hanging houses? The hanging houses are a very symbolic part of La Vila Joiosa and these can be found at the centre of the town. Just below them, you will find a path next to the Amadorio river that takes you to the coast of the village. It's a highly recommended walk through one of the nicest areas of the village.

One of the places you don't want to miss is the Chocolate Museum. The Chocolate Valor Museum, created in 1998, was recognised by the Generalitat Valenciana in 2008 as the Valencian Chocolate Museum. At the time it was a small family factory, and there you can learn about the chocolate-making process and the whole history of Chocolates Valor from its birth to the present day, through the 5 generations of master chocolatiers who have run it. It also has one of the best collections of chocolate industry machinery from different periods, from the times when cocoa was ground on stone to the present day.

Villajoyosa port is a really nice place to go out for a walk and for breathing the real fishing tradition, which is very typical in the villages of the Costa Blanca, apart from finding here the best restaurants around. Next to the port, you will find the promenade that takes you to the centre of Villajoyosa while crossing the beach. At the centre, we'll see the fishers neighbourhood and the famous houses with its

colour walls; it's really a nice place to take a walk and embrace the village charms. According to a legend, the bright colors on the houses were made to help the fishermen to find their way back home in the evening.



## Altea

Altea has a charming atmosphere that breathes the magic of the Mediterranean, with all its white facades and pavements made of stone.

The promenade starts at the port and runs along part of the Altea's coast. On the promenade you will find a lot of restaurants where you can taste the Mediterranean fish and rice cuisine (great quality by the way), there are also ice cream shops and bars to have a drink. The views are incredible and a take a walk along the promenade is very relaxing.

The port has around 500 moorings for boats. It is amazing to see the fishing boats returning to port with their nets full of the day's catch (around 5-6pm) so why not stop by and watch all the activities?

The streets lead up to the highest area where you can find the Church of Señora del Consuelo, which is one of the buildings that define Altea and is known as the dome of the Mediterranean. Right next to the square of this church you can find the viewpoint to see Altea from above – a beautiful view so don't miss it!

The old town of Altea is very pretty with stone streets, craft shops and the architecture of the houses with their blue tiles. It's like a maze, easy to get lost but if you do, just stop in one of the beautiful squares like Plaça de L'Aigua, or the Plaza de la Cruz for some refreshment and enjoy the atmosphere.

This beach is a mix of sand, gravel and stones and located in the Olla area of Altea, which has two small islands; L'illot and L'Illeta. Here you can find some lovely beach bars and it is also the place where the famous Castell de l'Olla is celebrated on the 10th of August, which is the celebration of the festivity of San Lorenzo, where we can see the most spectacular fireworks of the whole region.

The next stop is "Jardín de los Sentidos" or garden of the senses which is a small oasis immersed in nature. Well, actually it is a tea shop that has been given a natural and cosy atmosphere, with a garden full of plants from all the continents of the world. It's a perfect place to disconnect from everyday life – and just 'be'.

Another brilliant attraction in Altea is the beautiful Sierra Helada Natural Park. The more than 400 meters high cliffs are the highest on the Spanish east coast and therefore a highlight of spectacular coastal walks. A must-do for all hikers and nature lovers!

### Altea Beaches

Altea is well known for its many wonderful beaches. Especially the town's large beaches are popular here, such as the beaches Playa la Roda, Nueva Playa De Altea and Platja de l'Espigó – all of them picturesque pebble beaches with top water quality. But also in the vicinity there are beautiful bays and swimming spots, such as the Mascarat Bay or the beautiful beach Albir.

### Here are the most beautiful beaches of Altea:

- Beach Playa la Roda
- Beach Nueva Playa de Altea
- Beach Platja de l'Espigó
- Beach Platja del Cap Negret
- Beach Platja Mascarat & Cala El Collao
- Beach Playa Albir



## Guadalest

Guadalest is a small village sitting on top of a mountain on the Costa Blanca and it has become a very well known and much visited tourist destination only 30min drive from the coast. The village appears perched on a tiny peak rising into the sky which makes it look absolutely amazing. This gives beautiful views of the green valley with many other mountains in the background.

Guadalest is a very pretty and historic small town and you will see the spectacular images of Guadalest on many postcards. Make sure you visit Guadalest castle (Castell de Guadalest) which can only be accessed by walking through a 4.5 meter tunnel carved out of the rock. This is known as the Portal de San Jose. No wonder the castle was so secure!

When you get through the tunnel you'll see the old village houses and it feels like you've entered an ancient time. You can visit the restored house of the Orduna family to get an idea of what it used to be like living in ancient times in Guadalest.

The streets of Guadalest are cobbled, there are little squares, a school and an old jailhouse.

Make sure you look to the right of Guadalest and you will see beautiful views of the valley which contains a dam and reservoir – the Embalse de Guadalest, built between 1953 and 1963. The other famous building that you will often see photographed or on postcards is the white bell tower of Penon de la Alcala which rises up seemingly precariously perched on the mountainside. The castle was built by the Moors over 1,300 years ago. In 1609 King Felipe the third ordered all the Moors to be expelled leading to an uprising after which the Moors were defeated and left Spain.

The village of Guadalest only has about 200 inhabitants and most of the locals work in tourist related jobs. You will find many shops selling souvenirs, crafts and local produce such as honey, wine, handbags etc.

Guadalest also has a number of small museums many of them converted from little caves in the mountainside.

You can visit Guadalest for half a day and then be back on the Costa Blanca's beaches or by your pool but do make the effort because it is a worthwhile sightseeing trip and adds another dimension to your Costa Blanca visit.



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Something to do with the children is a visit to the Museo de Saleros y Pimenteros (Salt and Pepper Shaker Museum) which has more than 20.000 salt and pepper shakers from all over the world! It is entertaining, educational, and apt for the whole family. The children love it!



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