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Vintners and Collectors
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"I plan to
put people
in jail."

DEC. 15, 2009
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Málaga Modern: City of Art



General Torrijos Square and Alcazaba remind visitors of Málaga's history.

Málaga—the birthplace of Picasso—remains a cradle of creativity on Spain's Costa del Sol. The city's Picasso Museum has been joined by the recently opened Contemporary Art Center. But the art doesn't stop there—it can be found on the plate, on the wine label and in the bottle, in new design-oriented hotels, on the movie screen and in the streets.

Málaga's rich history, from the Phoenician marketplace to the Roman amphitheater to the Moorish Alcazaba, is visible throughout this vibrant seaside city. Its famed tapas bars are now joined by world-class restaurants that serve artfully plated interpretations of traditional Spanish cuisine. Among Málaga's year-round art and cultural offerings are its film festival, jazz festival and inclusion in La Caixa's *Art in the Streets* project.

Long known for their sweet wines, the three Denominaciones de Origen of the area—Málaga, Sierras de Málaga and Pasas de Málaga—now boast many bodegas making dry red wines as well. Art and wine converge in the *Málaga con Arte* project, in which 10 area wineries, including Bodegas F. Schatz and Bodegas Chinchilla, commissioned original paintings for their labels. The first vintage of these distinctive bottlings was released in 2008. They are available at restaurants throughout the city and as a complete collector's set at the new Museo del Vino Málaga, where one can also book tours of area bodegas.

WHERE TO STAY

HOTEL BARCELO MÁLAGA

Estacion VIALIA Maria Zambrano, Heroe de Sostoa 2 Telephone (011) 34-902-101-001 Web site www.barcelomalaga.com Cost \$120-\$277

Just steps from the new high-speed train station, this modern art hotel is home to B Lounge, Málaga's latest see-and-be-seen lobby bar, with a futuristic look by Catalan designer Jordi Torres. Modern art installations grace both the public spaces and guest rooms. Each room has a king-size bed, plasma TV and wireless Internet access. Seasonal specials are available, such as "Dreaming with Picasso," which includes admission to the Picasso Museum.

HOTEL ROOM MATE LARIOS

Calle Marqués de Larios 2 Telephone (011) 34-952-222-200 Web site www.room-matehotels.com Cost \$135-\$208

Málaga's grande dame has gotten a face-lift. Its recent acquisition and renovation by Spain's ultrahip boutique hotel group Room Mate has put the art back in art deco. Black-and-white tile and leather are offset by soft lacquered wood tones in the 41 rooms and junior suites. Located on Málaga's pedestrianized shopping street Calle Marqués de Larios, it's convenient to the cathedral, Alcazaba, central market and Picasso Museum. Current arts events are listed on the Room Mate Web site.

WHERE TO EAT

CAFÉ DE PARIS

Calle Velez Málaga s/n Telephone (011) 34-952-225-043 Web site www.rcafedeparis.com Open Lunch and dinner, Tuesday to Saturday Cost Entrées \$37-\$54; tasting menu \$98

Chef José Carlos García offers high-style French-inspired interpretations of traditional Spanish home cooking in the city's only Michelin-starred restaurant. Muted walls, wood tones and white tablecloths keep the focus on the plate. Locally caught shrimp carpaccio with avocado puree crème is a delicious briny starter. An excellent example of the chef's culinary skill is roast duck with foie gras. The 350-selection wine list offers fine bottlings from across Spain, with many excellent choices from the region. Local labels include a 2006 Cortijo de los Aguilares Pinot Noir for \$38. For a splurge, 2002 Dominio de Pingus Flor de Pingus from Ribera del Duero is available for \$255.



La Reserva 12 offers Andalusian cuisine—and a 175-selection wine list—in style.

LA RESERVA 12

Calle La Bolsa 12 Telephone (011) 34-952-608-218 Web site www.lareserva12.com Open Lunch, daily; dinner, Monday to Saturday Cost Entrées \$22-\$36; tasting menu \$75

Centrally located in the old quarter of Málaga, this restaurant serves *nuevo-traditional* Andalusian cuisine in a high-style setting. Bold black-and-white walls and soft white chairs are set against light wood floors and oversize photos of wine barrels. Starters include perfectly roasted quail and delicately fried red snapper. The roast pork fillet in a Sherry sauce is a regional specialty. The 175-selection wine list offers a few bottlings from the *con Arte* collection, including a sweet 2007 Bodegas Jorge Ordoñez & Co. Victoria Conarte, named after the bodega owner's sister, for \$60. 2004 Remírez de Ganuza Reserva is on offer for \$90, and for a special occasion, 1987 Vega Sicilia Unico is available for \$345.

—Mike DeSimone and Jeff Jensen