

# ABSOLUTE marbella

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## DECOR

Al Fresco Living

## SPAIN'S POWER COUPLE

Aznar and Botella

## EL PULSO DE MARBELLA

Azúcar Moreno  
Gente, Ideas  
y Discos

# Tempting Travel Ideas

Get Away From It All



## Equestrian Heaven Seville's Centro Epona

Just north of Seville, barely two hours drive from the Coast, is a delightful getaway for the horse mad. Based in a proud old *cortijo*, the Centro Ecuestre Epona couldn't be a friendlier place. Run by debonair Columbian riding expert, Fernando García-Carvajal and his animal loving Scottish wife, Jane, the two set about building up their dream of a riding school twelve years ago. One of just two centres in Spain that are recognized by the oh-so-fussy British Horse Society, and the only riding centre in Europe to be recognized also by the ABRS (Association of British Riding Schools), the standards of instruction at the Centro Epona come absolutely guaranteed.

High standards and hard hats aside, as is customary when people who do things well, the

mood generated by Fernando and Jane at Epona is one of relaxation and enjoyment. With their show-jumping daughters and one of Spain's greatest dressage experts on the team, the Epona clan are one big happy family; the type that eat, sleep and breathe the equestrian life.

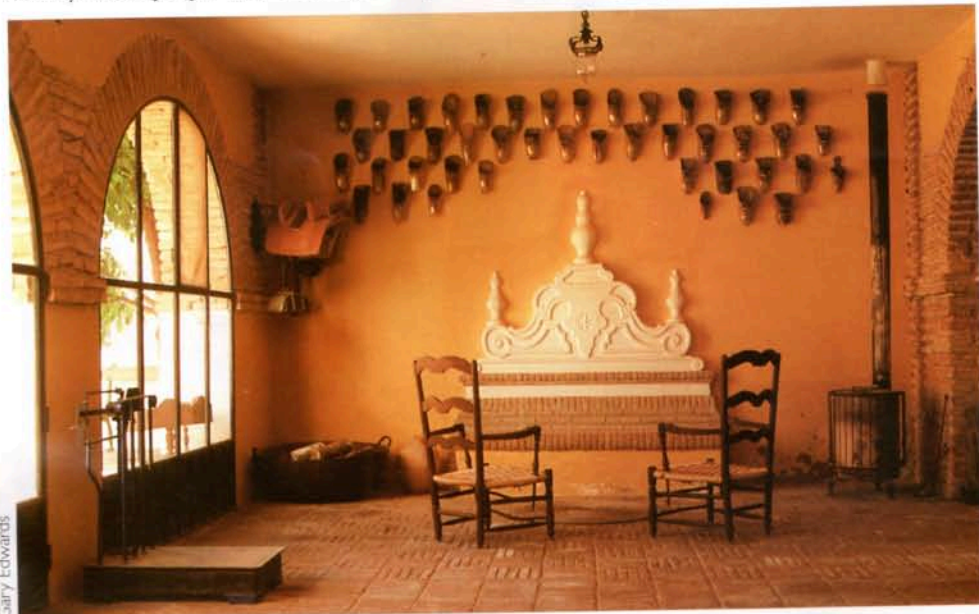
The 45 horses, including five magnificent Spanish stallions are obviously part of the contented clan. As Jane assures, "I can't stand bad-mannered animals. None of our horses bite or kick, it's important to have that confidence in them for the riders' sakes."

It's a typical Sunday morning and several classes are underway. Fernando is giving a private class to a complete beginner, while several ponies trot by carrying the tiniest of tots. Meanwhile, under a covered area, sheltered from the relentless mid-day sun, a group of about a dozen well-behaved

horses hosting the same number of straight-backed children are engrossed in a series of walking exercises. Jane, managing to extricate herself for a conversation with a major horse-blogger, shows us around the splendid *cortijo*, part of which is now being adapted to accommodate up to 18 guests.

"It was only last year that we decided to expand into offering complete riding holidays. Until then we only had children staying for two-week summer camps. Now we are offering full-board, if required, and special riding programmes. You can even bring dogs and cats here, there's no problem."

The accommodation is basic, but the lack of luxuries is more than compensated by the unpretentious environment, the idyllic location among olive groves and the chance to totally immerse oneself in the life of the farm. "We're quite happy for people to muck in and help with the grooming," says Jane. "We teach people how to look after the horses. The same goes for the children on the summer camps. They 'adopt a pony' for the two weeks and apart from riding they have baseball, swimming, football, local crafts, barbecues and they learn all about life in the country." For further information about riding holidays contact the Centro Ecuestre Epona at Apto. de Coarmona 86, 41410 Carmona. Tel: (95) 414 8319.



Left and above:  
Centro Ecuestre Epona,  
heaven for horse-lovers