

# La Quinta: the essence of Argentinian flavour in Sotogrande

*Restaurante La Quinta in Marina de Sotogrande is, without a doubt, one of the gastronomic benchmarks of the urbanisation. With a successful history behind it and a good reputation built up by Sebastián Gallardo, the grilled meats and numerous specialities are a must for lovers of good food from the whole of the Costa del Sol.*

La Marina de Sotogrande

It should be noted that La Quinta is flavour and so much more. As well as a top quality gastronomic experience in a unique setting (with views of Sotogrande Leisure Port), La Quinta is a place that its customers really enjoy because it is one of the most active establishments in Sotogrande, with numerous concerts, live tango performances, parties and events all through the year.

For this reason Charles Gubbins (of Noll & Partners), talks to Sebastián Gallardo to find out more about the history of this restaurant and its owner. They are good friends because for years Noll & Partners has been one of the main sponsors of the Restaurante La Quinta Polo Tournament, which takes place every year at Santa María Polo Club.

This has to be the most keenly-awaited polo competition in Sotogrande before the start of the summer, and it attracts hundreds of people during a great weekend of polo, good food, ambience and live performances. So let's learn a little more about the history of Restaurante La Quinta.

**What made you come to Sotogrande, how did you know about this place?**

*I used to work as a waiter in a restaurant in Manilva called 'El Rincón de la Paloma', which later moved to Pueblo Nuevo de Guadiaro under the new*



*name of 'El Relingue'. It was an Argentinian grill with local clientele, but people also came from Sotogrande, Alcaidesa and Gibraltar. So I knew about Sotogrande because I was working in the restaurant business on the other side of the dual carriageway (which was an ordinary road in those days) which separated Pueblo Nuevo from the exclusive urbanisation.*

**Did you work in other restaurants before La Quinta?**

*Yes! But they were always Argentinian Grills (they were convenient because of my Argentinian customs and the language). I learned English over the years I worked in the business. The first restaurant I worked for was Pam-pita in San Pedro de Alcántara, then in*

*the famous Tango restaurant in Puerto Banús and after that at El Relingue... and then, after eight years, I opened my very first business: El Menhir restaurant at Punta Europa in Torreguadiaro. And then finally in 2009 we set up La Quinta, an Argentinian Grill and Restaurant, small and friendly, just metres from the beach and five minutes from Sotogrande.*



Torneo de Polo La Quinta, at Santa María Polo Club.



Charles Gubbins and Sebastián Gallardo.

**What inspired you to open La Quinta, and why does it have that name?**

I love the restaurant business and always wanted to have my own place, a space of my own. And the clients with whom I used to work, when I was an employee, encouraged me to open my own restaurant! We Argentinians have our Quintas (country houses) to escape to, to breathe and decontaminate ourselves from everyday life. They smell of roasted meat and fruits. They smell of orchards, and you can hear the voices of the families and the wind in the trees. That's what La Quinta Restaurante is: a little piece of Argentina in Spain, a refuge for friends and family where everything is created by hand, with time, patience and love.

In fact, the logo of La Quinta is half an apple, and that is also related to the historic changes that have marked apples.

- The first apple to produce a change or a discovery was Adam and Eve's.
- The second apple was Newton's.
- The third apple was the Beatles' Apple Corps
- The fourth apple was Apple Macintosh.
- And the fifth apple is La Quinta Restaurante, which is why my business venture is so unique.

**What do you think of the restaurant business in Sotogrande? Which are your favourite restaurants?**

The restaurant business in Sotogrande is very stable, and in terms of the best-known places, I consider it to be high quality but at the same time casual. My favourites are the classics: Midas, the Ke bar and La Verandah, in Torreguadiaro.

**Which are your favourite restaurants outside Sotogrande?**

Muum, the Belgian restaurant in Nueva Andalucía, with its unique flavours and very good food. Venta García in Casares, ideal for Sunday lunch or dinner in the country air, surrounded by mountains.

**Which restaurant owners in Sotogrande inspired you, and why?**

Firstly Nono, the owner of Ke café in Sotogrande Port, and then the Midas group with Luis and Ne Solano. They taught me and guided me. I consider them the true professionals of the area.

**What makes you love this profession so much?**

The constant challenge, watching the restaurant open every day as if it were



Old restaurant terrace, next to the polo.



the first day. I love to give my clients the satisfaction of enjoying a wonderful evening. And what thrills me most is the contact with people, serving them, making them feel at home and seeing them enjoy what I do.

**What do clients at La Quinta enjoy most?**

The grilled meats, of course. In first place, what they like best is the quality of the home-made food, but also the harmonious ambience, the music

and my company. In second place, now that we are in new premises in Marina Sotogrande, our clients are fascinated by the design, which is a fusion of modern and rustic, representing the Argentinian countryside, almost 'Gauchezco' (from Gauchos, who originated in Argentina) combined with the magic of La Marina de Sotogrande. The design of La Quinta has been evolving, but the rustic Argentinian essence is still intact. If you look at photos of the first Quinta, the design is similar!

**What's it like, running a restaurant in Sotogrande?**

Having a restaurant in Sotogrande is great fun, hard work and exciting. You have to really look after your clients and make sure you don't neglect them in peak season, when the tourists arrive and Sotogrande is full of people. The challenge is to maintain the quality and personal service at all times.

**Parrilla La Quinta Restaurante Sotogrande**

**Argentinian Grill/Roast**

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