

BACK TO VALENCIA!

Located on the Spanish coast with an all-year-round mild, favourable climate. The city teems with projects and initiatives, and benefits from a constantly-developing tourism infrastructure. Named Design Capital and Intelligent Tourism Capital this year, the city has also been selected as a nautical hub to take stock of a Spanish market that is displaying some very positive signs

by Désirée Sormani





Veles e Vents, the building in minimalist style by David Chipperfield, with 10,000 square metres of horizontal platforms and shaded terraces, built for the 2007 America's Cup

[HARBOUR LIFE]

Mention Valencia among yachting aficionados and talk will immediately turn to the America's Cup. In 2007 Valencia was chosen as host city for the 32nd edition of the competition, the world's oldest sporting trophy and the most fiercely-contested international sail event. The port of Valencia was redeveloped to create a more suitable setting for the race, and with its public and entertainment spaces the Marina Real Juan Carlos I became a popular hub for cultural, sports and recreational activities. It lies in the heart of Valencia, north of the commercial port and along the Malvarossa beach, home to a number of interesting restaurants, bars and clubs. It's also the location of Veles e Vents, a minimalist building designed by David Chipperfield, 10,000 square metres of floor space comprising horizontal platforms and shaded terraces from which spectators and guests could watch the America's Cup races unfold. The buildings constructed to support the organisation of the event and provide the best possible hospitality for the yacht crews still evoke those days of competition and hard-fought sea battles. The Real Club Nautico De València sailing school holds sail races and runs successful sailing courses for all ages. Its members can also enjoy a well-organised club house with swimming pool and tennis courts. With its Mediterranean climate, topography and seaside location Valencia is an ideal setting for open-air sports. But that's not

all – we were invited for a three-day visit and were surprised to discover a city with a thousand faces, a rewarding stop for anyone cruising the Mediterranean, especially if you're in search of hospitality, courtesy, culture and fine food. The year 2022 is a special time for the city, which has been named the World's Best City to Live In by expats of more than a hundred nationalities. Mediterranean, authentic and rich in history, it's one of Europe's most sought-after destinations. With three hundred days of sunshine a year (although it was unexpectedly rainy while we were there) and an average temperature of 17° C, it's a city to enjoy in the open air, whatever the time of year. Over 160 km of cycle trails make it possible to disembark from a yacht, saddle up and discover the city by bike, riding through the park that stretches through it, following the old course of the river to arrive at the city's beaches and its two nature parks. Natural resources like the market gardens surrounding the city, the sea and the rice fields of Albufera mean that zero-kilometre food can be brought direct to the tables of Valencia's restaurants, which serve dishes that will delight the most demanding palates and please guests seeking an emphasis on sustainability. This year Valencia was also named European Capital of Intelligent Tourism – it's the first city in the world to measure and certify tourism's carbon footprint and water use. Tourists and citizens are strongly encouraged to limit their use of plastic, with





Valencia is a city of a thousand faces. Its 300 days of sunshine every year make it a city to enjoy in the open air. Over 160 kilometres of cycle trails make it possible to discover the city's history, culture and fine food on two wheels



CONGRESO NÁUTICO DI ANEN: OPTIMISM ON ALL FRONTS

Our visit to Valencia this year also coincided with the Congreso Náutico di ANEN, a convention organised by the Asociación Nacional de Empresas Nauticas, which represents the nautical sector in Spain and includes around 90% of its companies and operators, including yards like Astondoa. It was held in the Oceanografic, Valencia's marine park. Various sector operators took the stage to speak about the Spanish and world markets and the country's position in the nautical sector. This is an extremely positive moment for Spain's yacht industry, a position made clear by the 95,000 patents taken out in 2021. Carlos Sanlorenzo, general secretary of the Association, told us that it is predicted that this will become a trend in 2022. But there are other signals that augur well for the future – the year 2021 was a good one for the entire industry. Registrations of craft over 8 metres long once again reached the number achieved in 2008, a rise of 17% over the figure achieved in 2019. "Last January, which is theoretically in the low season, the charter sector saw an incredible 87% increase", said José Luis Fayos, technical and export manager of ANEN. "We tried to extend the season and improve the offer of popular holiday destinations like our islands and Spain's Mediterranean coast, and to support the development of nautical tourism on spectacular but less-frequented routes like Spain's north coast", Favos went on. "It's a destination I'd advise all yachtspeople who love the Med to explore".



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Valencia possesses Roman remains and gothic, baroque and modernist buildings in stark contrast to the avant-garde architecture of buildings like the City of Arts and Sciences. Top, the Café de las Horas, a wonderful spot for tasting a glass of Agua Brava



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refill points for personal water bottles all around the city. Visitors to the city centre can relax in Valencia's green oasis. The city centre is compact and easy to explore on foot. Culture vultures will be pleased to discover that Valencia's history stretches back 2,000 years, creating a cultural heritage of music, buildings and monuments from various periods – an art lovers' paradise, as Valencia possesses Roman remains and gothic, baroque and modernist edifices, standing in stark contrast to the avant-garde architecture of buildings like the City of Arts and Sciences. The architect Santiago Calatrava's genius is best expressed in his native city, where he has created structures in the form of huge whale skeletons, evoking the natural shapes of the sea. One obligatory destination is the Oceanogràfic, a complex of scientific buildings on different themes –

Europe's largest aquarium, with seven marine zones hosting 45,000 examples drawn from 500 species, with dolphins, belugas, sea lions, seals, walruses, penguins and sharks, the Hemisfèric, a 3D digital cinema with an enormous 900-metre concave screen that seems to wrap around the viewers, the Science Museum and the Umbracle, a huge garden of over 17,000 square metres with typical Mediterranean plants and contemporary sculptures. On summer evenings the Mya terrace opens its doors, enabling guests to enjoy a drink under the moonlight. And speaking of life's pleasures, remember that this is the year of the Paella World Cup, held to celebrate World Paella Day. This is a special year for the event, as it will see the participation of European chefs and the exclusive use of zero-kilometre ingredients. Save the date!