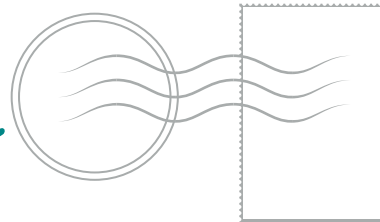


DESTINATIONS

SPAIN & PORTUGAL | RONDA

POSTCARD

Ronda, Spain



An excursion to this historic town makes a charming addition to an all-inclusive break, says **Qin Xie**

Gazing out from mansion-turned-museum Casa Don Bosco, with the view of Puente Nuevo (New Bridge) and El Tajo gorge, those classic photographs of Ronda come to mind – the harmony of nature and architecture lending the ancient Spanish mountaintop city a unique magic.

I've left the all-inclusive creature comforts of Club Med Magna Marbella, which opened last year, to discover this area's history. And its story is certainly worth hauling myself away from the pool for.

Situated 40 miles and just over an hour's car journey from Marbella, and 90 minutes from Malaga, Ronda was a Moorish stronghold for almost 800 years before Christians reclaimed it in 1485. In the periods of peace that followed, the city sprawled across the 120-metre-deep chasm at its heart, with its show-stopping bridge completed in 1793.

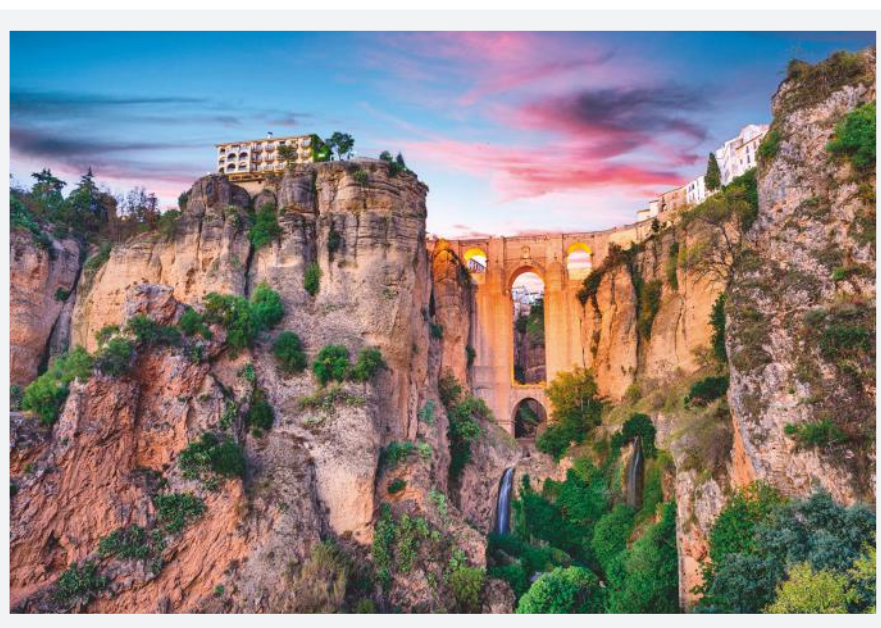
Since then, it has inspired many including Ernest Hemingway and Orson Welles, who spent summers there, and is a perfect recommendation for customers keen to explore one of Spain's oldest cities and marvel at the crossing that springs nearly 100 metres up from the base of the gorge.

In addition to the Puente Nuevo, those on a day tour or longer visit can explore attractions including one of Spain's grandest bullrings, the Moorish King's Palace and the ancient Arab Medina.

Alternatively, the more adventurous can venture along the winding footpaths linking the top of the gorge with the two bridges, Puente Romano and Puente Arabe, which provide crossings at its base.

Regardless of visitors' energy levels, all roads are likely to lead back to the 66-metre-long bridge and the buildings that cling to the canyon around it.

Its elongated arches show off the rugged terrain beyond and in a room above the centre arch is the bridge museum. Whether the architects meant it to or not, Ronda melds perfectly into its unique setting, and that's what makes this view and this city so spectacular. **TW**



BOOK IT

A seven-night all-inclusive stay at Club Med Magna Marbella starts from £1,275 per person in November (based on double occupancy in a Superior Room). Price includes all food and drink, activities, transfers and return flights from Gatwick. A half-day excursion to Ronda costs from £92. clubmed.co.uk



TOP: The Puente Nuevo bridge connects the old and new towns
ABOVE: Ronda is home to one of Spain's oldest bullrings

PICTURE: Shutterstock/Sean Pavone