

PLUS IS AUSTIN TURNING INTO JUST ANOTHER BIG TEXAS CITY? PG 104

AUSTIN

MONTHLY | JULY 2014

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Travel

AMAZING PLACES TO GO, NEAR AND FAR JULY 2014



ON THE GO

Whiz past windmills and greenery as you jog, hike or cycle across Mallorca, Spain.

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GOING THE DISTANCE

Hike and bike along hilltops in scenic Mallorca

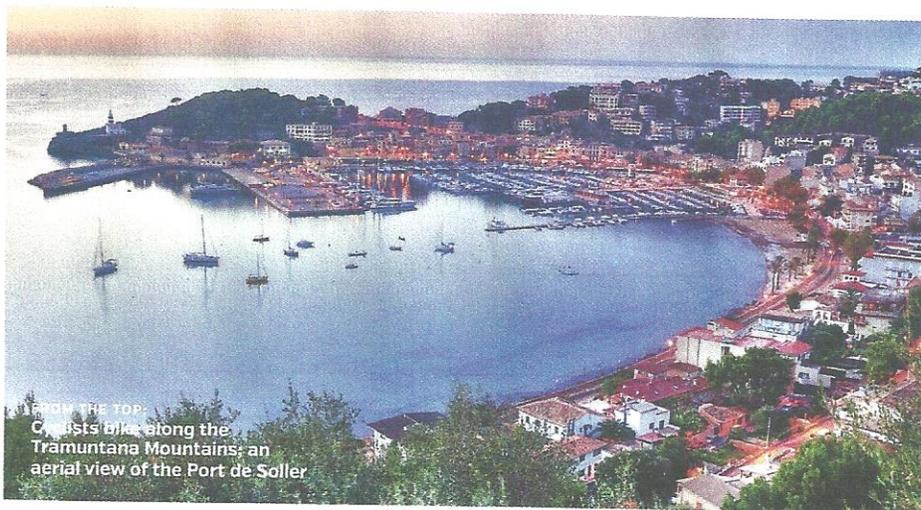
BY BECCA HENSLEY

As I journey slowly up Mallorca, Spain's rocky western coast, *Man of La Mancha* is on my mind. I'm traversing roads that wriggle through olive groves and bump past orange and almond orchards. Villages, their houses stacked in uneven squares, set a timeless tone. And, there, in episodic arrangement, long-abandoned windmills pierce the cloudless sky. It's the windmills, icons of Spain's Golden Age, that awaken the Don Quixote dream in me—either that, or a vision brought on by my thirst. It's been a long hike up the hills of this fertile Mediterranean isle, the largest of Spain's **Balearic Islands** archipelago.

In *Don Quixote*, the 17th-century masterpiece by Miguel de Cervantes, the eccentric protagonist battles windmills that he believes to be monsters on Spain's mainland while atop a horse. Here in Mallorca, just 125 miles from **Barcelona**, the windmills don't seem so ominous. I don't joust with them; I simply count them as I pass by.

Joining the throngs of athletes who train here (including hometown hero and tennis star Rafael Nadal), I pedal and jog along the trails of this mountainous Mediterranean paradise. The sea air leaves a salty powder on my cheeks, and it smells of rosemary, lemons and pungent olive oil. In abundance, cyclists, runners and Nordic walkers access the miles of roads that cross through the island's UNESCO-listed **Tramuntana Mountains**. Challenging inclines and heady downhills are part of the fun. Inevitably, the grand finale means a cooling swim in brisk waters—a reward for a workout well done. Post-hike, I dive in the bay of **Port de Soller**, which is right next to a fishing village on the island's western shore.

Over the last few years, Mallorca has become nearly as well known for its athletic offerings as for its sandy beaches. Not surprisingly, due to idyllic weather and ample rolling terrain, professional bike teams like Team Sky UK and the Russian Katusha Team train here.



FROM THE TOP: Cyclists bike along the Tramuntana Mountains; an aerial view of the Port de Soller

With bike- and runner-friendly denizens and routes that detour from the main highways—cliffside paths carved out by shepherds, sailors and pirates of yore—the island draws professional athletes and amateur aficionados alike.

Frequent triathlons, runs and bike races bring international competitors nearly every week during the season. Not surprisingly, then, fitness buffs looking to hone their skills, weight watchers hankering to start anew and families whose idea of fun translates to active vaca-

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Insider Tips

▼ The highest mountain on Mallorca is Puig Mayor—a favorite for cyclists.

▼ Bite into pa amb oli, a local snack in which crusty bread is rubbed with raw garlic, then covered with sun-ripened tomatoes, sprinkled with sea salt and dotted with olive oil.

▼ Learn to make Mallorca's famous orange marmalade at the Soller Cooperative, where Paqui Bauza teaches jam-making courses for 25 euros a person.

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—Shan Davis, President



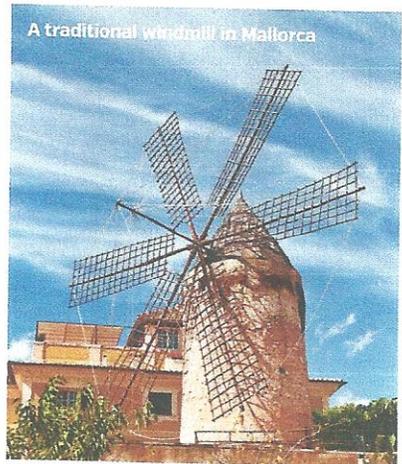
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TRAVEL
FAR



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tions can all be seen in motion around the island. Find them, too, roadside in casual groups picnicking on locally made bread, housemade jamón and nutty farmer’s cheese beneath the shade of windmills or gnarly olive trees, their bikes resting in fields of wildflowers or propped against moldering stone walls. Atop the towering seaside cliffs, these athletes muse over the view, letting the breezes cool them before their descent. Then, done for the day, at last, they gather for sangria at dusk in alfresco cafes.

With recreational athletes in mind, the hilltop **Jumeirah Port Soller Hotel and Spa** features a 120-room haven that offers vacationers the opportunity to focus their free time on fitness. I sign up for the program called Peak Performance, which sets guests up with a bespoke, daily workout meant to supplement rigorous race training or jump-start a new fitness regimen. Like a boot camp tailored to the guest’s personal goal, the package includes spa treatments and daily guided runs in the mountains, bike rides along major routes, Nordic walking workouts, coached swims—even yoga and stand-up paddleboarding. To truly fine-tune the wellness aspect, guests can choose healthy meal options as well. Though a detox and a high-protein diet are offered, I figure I’ve burned enough calories to eat like a local and choose the Mediterranean menu option. During my stay, I sip wine from nearby vineyards, drizzle farm-made olive oil on most everything and nibble subtly saffron-infused paella. I think Don Quixote would approve. **EW**