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Escape

HIGH-OCTANE HOLIDAYS

Who **doesn't** want to zipwire over a volcano?

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Andalusia's Málaga is often overlooked but with several major galleries and an exciting food scene, now is the time to go – before everyone else does, says **Chloe Scott**

ALTHOUGH it's midwinter, I'm sitting outside Málaga's Plaza de la Constitución enjoying the day's balmy 20-degree temperature. Among the palm trees and 18th-century streets, I devour Café Central's churros con chocolate dunked into hot chocolate – much needed after our saunter around the Alcazaba, the orange and jasmine tree-lined Moorish ruin.

Thankfully, there aren't many Brits here – yet. Although 13million pass through Málaga's airport each year, the main thoroughfare to the Costa del Sol, few head to its centre.

But with more sophisticated sherry and tapas scenes, a burgeoning street-food one, and a wealth of cool café and art gallery openings, 2015 could see Málaga rivalling counterparts such as Barcelona and San Sebastian.

I walk five minutes from the pedestrianised old town and through

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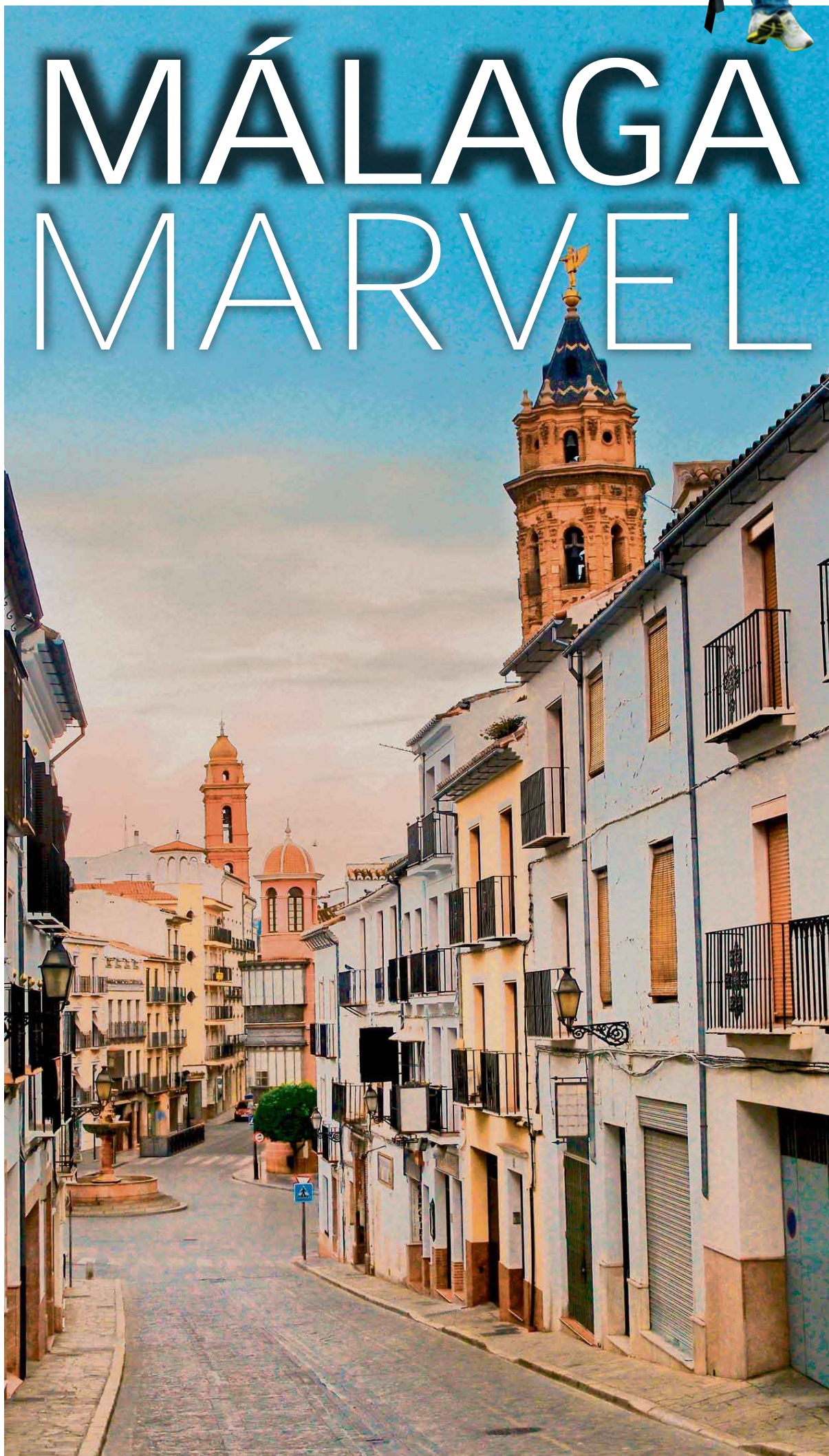
the cooler graffitied quarter just south to reach the marina, which almost resembles Miami's main drag.

My guide Antonio Montejo Romero points to a giant glass cube looming above the Segway riders and proudly announces: 'In March, this will be the first Pompidou centre outside of France,' he says.

How did Málaga wangle this? 'Picasso was born here, we have 31 museums already, and there are big investments,' he adds.

Two more major openings include the Russian Museum of St Petersburg and Malaga's fine arts and archaeological museum.

The next day, embracing this city's new arty vibe, we visit the Picasso



MÁLAGA MARVEL

MUST-SEE MALAGA

La Concepción



This botanical garden, 4km north of the city, is one of the best in Europe.

Deriva



The latest café/bar to open in Soho (it's at Alameda de Colón 7) is filled with modernist pockmarked metal chairs and miniature timber blocks covering the ceiling.

Soho Hotel



An outpost of this classy hotel opened last year on Calle Cordoba in the edgy Soho barrio.

Martiricos flea market



No trip to Málaga is complete without a trip to a flea market: try the Sunday one on Paseo de los Martiricos, next to the Rosaleda Football Stadium.