



BLOOMIN' MARVELOUS

OCTOBER LAST YEAR SAW THE OPENING OF STEVEN SAUNDERS NEW VENTURE, THE GERANIUM IN LA CALA DE MIJAS. THE VILLAGE ALWAYS LOVED STEVEN'S LITTLE GERANIUM AND THE GREAT FOOD HE USED TO SERVE THERE. THOSE WHO HAVE PATIENTLY WAITED FOR HIS RETURN DID NOT NEED TO WAIT THAT LONG.



The TV Celebrity Chef and long-time Mijas Costa resident, returned to his 'pueblo' La Cala de Mijas to open his new Geranium restaurant in October 2023. I caught up with him in a bar for a glass of wine, a couple of weeks ago.

I asked him why he decided to stay with the name Geranium having had the Little Geranium in Spain and the famous Pink Geranium in Cambridgeshire, reputedly Prince Charles' (now King of course) favourite restaurant.

"Some friends suggested that we adapt the name to reflect the new operation, but My Name and Geranium are synonymous and both mean good, creative innovative food; and that's what we will serve. Why change something that was never broken? Little Geranium and Pink Geranium both won accolades and so did I, so that's the track on which we will travel," said Steven.

"Your last restaurant in La Cala was in the centre, are you concerned that this site is a bit out-of-the-way?" I asked

"Not at all; as we all know La Cala is bursting at the seams and is growing North and it is already getting busier. This venue has ample parking all around. It is perfect."

"You were back in the UK for a while, what made you come back?"

"Apart from the weather, the people that I missed and my friends of course. I also got divorced and that made me pine more for what is now my real home. I've been looking for months after I came back and asked a well-known restaurateur friend of mine, to help me find the right place. During that time, I was helping my friend Elliot at Olivia's. Although it's a fabulous restaurant and we did a good job together, the numbers we did in the restaurant were not conducive to my style of food. This new venue is, however, right up my street, or just down yours," he smiled; "Since opening in October, I have to say we have been virtually full every night."

"I suppose it's the same sort of food as before?"

"The menu has some of my well-known dishes and there of course some new



ones. We have a bespoke wine list, compiled by my colleague who has a great knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject — as do I. It's a great wine list. Apart from good quality House Wines we have a selection of house recommended wines and a selection of my personal choices as well — and a mixologist who provides traditional and creative cocktails. I am very happy to say that the front of house is in the hands of Youseff Edib who I have worked with before, and I have got a great Chef to work with me. He has been working in some great restaurants as head chef for many years and I'm so happy he joined us. Maurice Curtin is well known in Marbella West, but is now in Marbella East. He's a young talented Irishman and I am so happy that we managed to persuade him to come with us. I have really enjoyed working with him and creating some unbelievable dishes. We have a strong team, all of whom will help put this Geranium on the map. We have been so happy to welcome old clients — and of course new — and if the comments and support I have had on social media are anything to go by, we are in for a great ride. After all, within three months we were number one on TripAdvisor."

"Right" he said, "time waits for no man....especially me," he donned his signature trilby hat and made his way down to his now very successful venue.



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