

## **THE al-ÁNDALUS PROJECT**

All of us have great concern over our future in the labor market, over the socioeconomic situation in Europe, over the situation in our country or autonomous community.

The al-Ándalus Project is an idea aimed at the development of tourism based on the five pillars of **ecology, charity, culture, sports and health**, a form of tourism that will have the ability to create employment with a long-term future and that can coordinate its needs with other independent business enterprises which, in turn, will feed off of the al-Ándalus Project. We wish to develop an understanding of this market as a place capable of including people with cognitive or learning disabilities, a place concerned with enriching and protecting the environment in all fields within its purview.

The idea for the al-Ándalus Project came to us when we asked ourselves the question:

**What possibilities do we have to be able to carry out something new in La Costa del Sol, something that has not been done up to now in the field of tourism?**

The root answer lies in GENEALOGY TOURISM focused on the senior market, comprised of people between 55-75 years of age. First let us conduct a brief analysis of the senior market.

### **THE CUSTOMERS**

With the first wave of *baby boomers* fast approaching retirement, the *SENIOR* market will continue to be one of the areas of expansion within the tourism sector. This market is divided into three groups.

### **YOUNG SENIORS**

These are people born between the years 1946-1960. Although many of them are not yet retired, they soon will be. Most have paid off their mortgages and their

offspring are self-sufficient. In other words, they have savings, fewer responsibilities and relatively good health, which makes them excellent candidates for travel.

### **MIDDLE AGED SENIORS**

This group comprises people born between the years 1930-1946. Most are *pre baby boomers* who are retired and tend to spend a lot of time visiting family and friends. They also have higher costs for medical expenses but still have the urge to travel. This group's most urgent demand is the guarantee of protection, meaning security and means of enforcement both in matters of health and safety.

### **ADVANCED-AGE SENIORS**

This group, comprising people born before 1930, are the least likely to travel and when they do so, they require safety and customized services.

The **young seniors** is the largest and wealthiest group in the North American and European market. In coming years there will be a 35% increase in 60-year-old travelers, all of whom will inherit money in addition to the money they have earned. In the United States alone estimates put the money they received at US\$ 11 billion in 1990, and in 2015 they will receive 340 billion dollars.

One very important fact to bear in mind is that the people in this group will live longer than their parents, tend to be more active and travel more. By the year 2015 they will control a great percentage of the world's assets and will exhibit a tendency to spend more and demand more than their predecessors.

### **LIST OF IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR THE SENIOR MARKET**

- Seniors are the wealthiest group but also the most demanding. The previous generation parents of these senior citizens tended to spoil them, which means this group has no fear of making demands and complaining until they get what they want. The youngest among them come from a generation steeped in political activism.

In conclusion, enterprises, businesses and other organizations that provide good service to their customers will have the opportunity to triumph. On the other hand, if they don't, they might see their businesses fail and face lawsuits.

- Security.

As we age, we tend to be more psychocentric in our travel habits and demands, particularly in the age of terrorism and in places with high levels of criminal activity. Seniors will demand good security. Many cities have put into place **tourist protection services**. Such cities will have great mid-term and long-term advantages when the time comes for the senior market to make its choices.

Seniors tend to exhibit higher levels of frustration.

This frustration expresses itself in a lack of patience, a refusal to read fine print and zero tolerance for poor service. Local tourism industries that wish to capture the business of the senior group will have to adapt their infrastructure (access-for-all), medical services and even the size of the fonts employed in informative brochures, menus, restrooms and the like.

The tendency of seniors is to move to quieter, less crowded areas

By this I mean that the migration of senior tourism can no longer continue to remain focused on large cities. Tourism agencies should consider this fact and pay close attention to it. It is of basic importance for the city or town to have low levels of criminal activity, present no dangers such as terrorism, and for it to have good services and parking facilities.

Travel agencies and tourist organizations have to realize that the time has come to develop this area and join forces.

We have to grasp the demographic change in the tourism sector. Many professionals, for example, operate under the mistaken assumption that the migration from countries in temperate climates to balmy climates will continue to be a sure bet in the future. Recent information suggests that a major change has taken place. Many seniors want to be close to their offspring, grandchildren and friends. This means cities with adverse climate conditions will have new opportunities, which in turn means that they will take part of the pie. In other words, they will begin to compete with cities located in balmy climates.

Local infrastructure must have a large number of specialists -- meaning experts in marketing, tourism, tourism security, health, food security, healthy food, transportation and representatives of the hotel and restoration industries -- in order to develop this line of business to satisfaction.

The lack of good airport services presents one of the great difficulties for the senior tourism industry

Many airlines have switched to smaller, less comfortable aircraft, in addition to the annoyances we're subject to on account of security issues. Many of these potential travelers seek opportunities close to home.

A study carried out by *Centre for Tourism Research and Development* shows that seniors (people older than 60) represent one third of the population in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and United States.

The Eurostat European survey for 2010 estimated that the adult population demographic between the ages of 55-59 totalled 27,158,823; that those between the ages of 60-64 totalled 26,489,385; those between the ages of 65-69 totalled 23,761,171 and that those comprised of people aged 70-74 totalled 21,029,461, for a total of 98,43,840 senior citizens in Europe. Currently the population 65 years of age and older represents 17.4% of the European population, and by the year 2030 will total 23.6%. The numbers speak for themselves.

## **TRENDS OF BEHAVIOR IN THE SENIOR TOURISM SECTOR**

This large mass of seniors is not homogeneous, although it does have many points in common. A study carried out by TRR (Tourism Recreation Research) provides us with some very interesting data.

365 retirees who travel frequently were asked about their vacation destinations, means of transportation, driving factors, and others. I classify the results of their responses according to the number of responses provided. The first is the one that garnered the most responses, the last is the one that garnered the least amount of responses.

### Reasons for their traveling

- 1) Nostalgia.
- 2) Charm of the local residents.
- 3) Learning, culture.
- 4) Escapism.
- 5) Thinking, meditating, wiping one's slate clean and forgetting problems.
- 6) Status seeking.

The first three points represent 83% of senior tourism. I believe it's very important for us to pay attention to these data for the development of our project.

### Genealogy Tourism

A study carried out by the University of Illinois (*Recreation, Sport and Tourism*) on baby boomers concludes this group of people has changed how it travels. The new direction it has chosen is called GENEALOGY TOURISM. What does that mean?

It means that the tourist prefers authenticity, prefers to have experiences outside the resort, cruiser and hotel bubble and so forth. In other words, genealogy tourism supplies an irreplaceable dimension that has been lost in postmodern society.

According to the University of Illinois, genealogy tourism is one of the fastest-growing markets, as it represents a conscious change from pure relaxation to the personal enrichment of tourists. These people want to bring back real life back, to remove themselves from the media filter and the scarcity of authentic experiences in our humdrum daily lives which we accept almost without realizing it.

Subconsciously, genealogy tourists do not want to spend their retirement, meaning the rest of their lives (particularly at the beginning of this stage) as passive beings. They wish to continue **learning and participating**, and they have the right to try and do so.

Academic analysis from the 1980s and 90's saw tourism as an escape from reality in the working world. Nowadays, tourism has to be analyzed from a much more complex standpoint. To begin with, there is the belief that this turnabout, or

movement, owes something to the sociological conscience of post-industrial society, meaning the world we currently inhabit. The choice of direction leading to the personal enrichment of seniors is a direct consequence of the baby boomers, who began to change their attitude more than 15 years ago.

The aging play a very important role in choosing their vacations, and genealogy tourism for contemporary society offers the opportunity to see our reflection in the past and to be able to approach it. Many seniors have the need to feel connected and independent at the same time; they want to quell their anxieties about growing old, and also have the possibility of turning toward more human-oriented situations, a certain search or encounter with the past. Many have in recent years developed a special sensibility regarding nature and its protection.

All of the above represent, in broad strokes, the group we are interested in for our project. The next step is to verify whether the environment of Costa del Sol is favorable for its development.

### **Factors in our favor.**

- 1) Costa del Sol is full of secure cities, towns and resorts that meet almost all the demands of genealogy tourism. (Marbella, Estepona, Sotogrande, Casares and so forth)
- 2) Good climate.
- 3) Highly qualified professionals in the sector who possess years of experience with this category of tourist.
- 4) Excellent communications. High-speed trains, a high-volume international airport, roadways, freeways and seaports.
- 5) Except for two months out of the year, this is a quiet area with hospitals, stores, movie theaters, parking facilities, and so forth.
- 6) With the current crisis we can find buildings, completed or partially-completed spaces at very good prices.
- 7) There are many golf courses and rental boats, which complement a high-end, high-quality sports infrastructure.

- 8) Vast natural seascapes and landscapes. Parque de los Alcornoques, Estrecho and others.
- 9) The historical cultural offering is very powerful. We are located in the heart of the land of al-Ándalus, which has a first-rate communications system. As an example, we can cite the proximity of Cordova or Seville, thanks to high-speed rail, and the proximity to Morocco by sea vessel thanks to a large-scale maritime tourism industry.
- 10) Labor reform in Spain is a foregone conclusion. Contracts are going to become more flexible, and this can help foreign investment.
- 11) Spain as a country has to recycle a great number of workers, above all in construction, and this means that we can once again find fresh hands willing to work.
- 12) At present, North Africa is under extreme political-social pressure. The much-vaunted Arab Spring means that countries that were by definition tourist destinations have ceased to be.

### **Factors against us**

- 1) The tendency of seniors to stay close to their families.
- 2) Air travel. Airport annoyances.
- 3) There are several months of saturation, above all in August.
- 4) Although English has spread in recent years, there is still a long way to go.

### **THE IDEA BEHIND OUR PROJECT**

Tourism is one of the great sources of wealth that we possess in Spain. This sector is undergoing a metamorphosis through which little by little it moves further away from the sun-beach-and-golf model to approach what we have described as genealogy tourism. This does not imply that these two forms of tourism are mutually exclusive. "On the contrary, this is much better"

The al-Ándalus Project aims to build its foundation on seven major pillars.

- 1) **AGRICULTURE AND ECOLOGY (land, water)**
- 2) **HEALTH AND NATURAL MEDICINE**

- 3) **SPORTS**
- 4) **CUISINE**
- 5) **ARTS AND CRAFTS**
- 6) **JOB CREATION**
- 7) **TOURISM AND DISABILITY**

As we've stated previously, the genealogy tourist seeks to draw close to the past, to undergo personal enrichment, to find a way to be connected and independent at the same time.

These seven pillars have been designed to adapt us to the new needs of the tourism sector using as a springboard the very rich historic period known as al-Ándalus, and we want to take advantage of the infrastructure in Costa del Sol and other areas in Andalusia so that we can develop it.

The interest that the ancient inhabitants of the Iberian peninsula had in science, gastronomy, the arts, agriculture, medicine and culture in general had great impact on all aspects of contemporary life. It's important to recognize these facts, particularly when in our day the West views everything related to the Muslim world with a certain fear or skepticism. This attitude is a direct cause of current international tensions: The Green Spring and its impact on the Muslim world, terrorism, Islamic extremism in addition to immigration problems, the rights of women in the Islamic world and so forth. All of this produces in many Western people a certain reticence in the face of everything the Muslim world represents today.

As a Spaniard, when I travel through Latin America I feel that I am part of that culture, of that continent; I see the imprint of our ancestors everywhere I go. Certain things we did for the better, others we did for the worst, but we are all united by a shared language and culture.

Something similar occurs for many Muslims when it comes to Andalusia. Whether we like it or not, they were part of us for 800 years. Throughout that entire period, they did wonderful things and it's important to acknowledge that. For 8 centuries we, and they, comprised al-Ándalus. Now, thanks to genealogy tourism, we can bring



back to life the most positive aspects of this historic period and learn about what our ancestors did “**for the better**” so as to apply it in our contemporary lives. How?

## **al-ÁNDALUS WORKSHOP CAMPUS**

This campus will be our project’s command center. It will focus on making senior tourists’ vacations compatible with learning things that they can apply in their own countries of residence, things that al-Ándalus taught us and their possible applications, thanks to the new technologies of our day.

## **SPACE**

The glut of construction in Costa del Sol and the current economic situation in Europe, and Spain in particular, have provided truly mouthwatering opportunities in the real estate sector. Two possibilities can be contemplated for the development of the physical campus.

-Workshop campus and apartment hotel in the same space.

-Workshop campus and tourists lodged in pre-existing apartment hotels, located next to the where the workshop center will be located.

### ***Workshop Campus and Apartment Hotel in the Same Space***

This is the ideal option, but the one that requires the heaviest investment. The first thing we must consider is location. Each location offers two aspects, almost always a pro and a con.

For example, if we were to locate it in Marbella, we would have the enormous advantage that once the tourists leave the classroom they can enjoy all the amenities of a small modern city, and the only addition necessary would be the campus because a wide offering of locations already exists. Tourists could stay at hotels or apartments depending on their economic means. On the negative side, tourists would ultimately be stuck in a city that in many ways is similar to or identical

to the cities in which they live, with fast food chains, complicated parking arrangements, noise, traffic, massive tourism, less security and so forth.

If we chose to locate our complex in Sotogrande or nearby, we would be in a much more natural environment which in turn offers a wide array of options in terms of sports and an adequate, though scant urban infrastructure. (Drugstores, supermarkets, primary health care, good roadways, sports port and security). On the down side, you have to use a car for everything because public transportation is quite deficient and everything is scattered, greatly limiting the tourists' freedom of movement.

For example, should the project be located in Marbella, the tourist would not have to drive to go to dinner; on the other hand, should it be located in Sotogrande, the tourist would need the car to move about, for while there are taxis, they're too costly and distances are enormous. We have to take into account that the senior tourist is much less inclined to drive than a young person, particularly after age 60 and much more so at night.

Suppose that after weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each location, we opt for the second choice and situate our complex in Sotogrande or its environs. The layout for this premise would consist of three different blocs or sections.

**- WORKSHOP SCHOOL CENTER**

**-APARTMENT HOTELS**

**-FLOWER AND VEGETABLE**

SCHOOL WORKSHOP CENTER

This bloc may be physically attached or separate from the residential section, although it would be ideal to keep it at a certain distance that could be covered in a few minutes. This space requires a variety of classrooms with all the infrastructure required to teach the subjects slated for the classrooms.

-Cooking workshop (includes wood-burning ovens)

-Arts and crafts workshops (sewing, embroidery, pottery, knitting, jewelry, Visigoth and Arab calligraphy)

-Perfume, cosmetics and natural medicine workshop

-Ecology and Nature workshop.

-Ecology and agriculture workshop (which includes at least one hectare of vegetable gardens so as to supply the hotel with organic food, a good greenhouse which together with the onsite flower and vegetable gardens, could serve as alternative classrooms for cooking and natural medicine. It will require a chicken coop for organic eggs and a location removed from the center in order to produce effective microorganisms and construct the installations necessary for the process of **organic carbonization**. Eggs can be purchased from a center that produces them and which offers all organic guarantees.)

-Dance workshop.

-Administrative and faculty offices.

-Coordination and technology offices.

-Restrooms.

-Cafeteria.

-Warehouse.

-Stores and supermarket.

-Conference hall.

All spaces must be equipped according to prevailing European Community standards for the senior market.

### APARTMENT-HOTELS

The idea is to draw people who wish to stay for at least a week or two weeks, and who if they wish, can stay and reside for as long as they want. We target an upper middle class customer with disposable income, therefore infrastructure and services must be of high quality and be designed in a manner that is flexible and adaptable to the seasons.

## Outstanding Features of the Hotel

### **Rooms**

Standard Rooms. Two beds and a small living room.

Senior Rooms. Designed for comfort over extended stays. Must include a work table in a small living room and a bathroom.

Two-room Suites Bedroom and a good living room with work tables and a space for a sofa bed and television. A good bathroom and a kitchenette.

Luxury Suites. Living room/dining room and work space. A large bedroom with a separate bathroom and showers, and a nice terrace.

### **Spa**

Saunas and bathrooms (many based on pre-existing models in al-Ándalus like the Hamman, the best known of them all) including modern or Eastern models.

Massage center. *Manual therapies.* The range of manual therapies may include traditional massage, chiromassage, sports massage, osteopathy, manual lymphatic drainage, foot reflexology, metamorphic massage and the like.

### **Health Center – Clinic**

A medical center and clinic with the basics; X-ray machine, dispensary, first aid instruments and the like. This clinic should have at least two rooms set up for inpatients in case of need. There will be a physician and nurse available 24 hours a day, 365 days out of the year.

**Swimming Pool interior- exterior.** Must not use chlorine, with a portion of it (the swimming pool exterior) occupying a space where no one swims and which can be dedicated to aquatic plants. This can be achieved with salt water chlorination by electrolysis.

### **Kitchen-Restaurant.**

Must not concentrate solely on al-Ándalus cuisine. Healthy international food must be present as a matter of logic.

### **Laundry Facility.**

Because of the variety of services that we will provide, it's important to have our own infrastructure in this regard (organic soaps, water management and more). Customers who live at the hotel and apartment residents alike will be able to use these facilities.

### **Outstanding features of the apartments**

The ideal situation would be for them to be separate from the hotel. They would have their own cleaning service, which should be subcontracted out to a company specializing in this line of work and with the capability to adapt to the customers' needs. Apartments could be 2-bedroom or loft apartments. The 2-bedroom apartments would require 2 bathrooms, a good studio/living room, a kitchen and a small ironing room. All apartments must have a balcony. The idea is to make the customers' stay as convenient as possible.

### **FLOWER AND ORGANIC VEGETABLE GARDENS**

One of the greatest legacies the Arabs left us are the gardens, in which they experimented with agricultural techniques and achieved great breakthroughs in botany and medicine. Throughout the lands of al-Ándalus agricultural activity and the artistic transformation of nature went hand in hand. They mixed flower gardens with vegetable gardens in which they planted fruit orchards, vegetables and produce as well as exotic and medicinal plants and trees.

As mentioned previously, these decorative gardens and fruits must serve to beautify our spaces and serve as extensions of the classrooms. Their function will be analyzed in the ecology and environment section. [The complex] should have a large greenhouse on premises to produce food and medicinal plants and serve as a classroom for our customers.

### **al-Ándalus Workshops**

These workshops will bring students closer to a past that the modern world makes more remote and less accessible with each passing day.

Our workshops will promote values connected to an organic lifestyle, health, culture and sports, all sorely lacking in contemporary society. This doesn't mean that modern technologies that can help in water and land conservation, meaning food and health, will be cast aside. Nor will we forget to include those with learning disabilities into the tourist market labor force, which is one of the most important goals we want to achieve.

Some of these workshops will be closely interconnected and designed to interact, for example: cooking, natural medicine, ecology and agriculture. In other areas such as arts and crafts, we will take advantage of two cultures, al-Ándalus and the Visigothic culture (the dominant culture in the Iberian peninsula before the Muslim conquest) because ultimately many of the customers we seek descend from the Germanic peoples who defeated the Roman Empire. Certain of these peoples settled in the Iberian peninsula, including the Visigoths, who ended up settling there. When the Visigoths were invaded by the Muslims, the adaptation to the culture of a flourishing al-Ándalus lasted centuries, and their own culture underwent a permanent change. Both worlds can be united in the arts and crafts workshop because they were entwined and in turn produced a variety of artistic movements with influences from both cultures.

## COOKING WORKSHOP

### al-Ándalus Cuisine

Gastronomically speaking, Visigothic Iberia established a reputation for itself as a territory with a great degree of draw. The Arabs, however, would bring a refinement and enrichment to our cuisine that it had never seen before. The new settlers considered cuisine "AN ART FORM" and as such, nurtured it and took care of it. One of the aspects that stands out is that despite its achievements, sobriety, moderation and intelligent consumption characterized al-Ándalus from its beginnings.

After the Christian Reconquest, the gastronomy of al-Ándalus was forgotten. In the words of Pablo Amante: *"It seemed a matter of embarrassment to prepare and eat*

*dishes invented by the vanquished... Few had any desire to remember a lamb "tagine," preferring instead to call a 'stew' a 'kettle.' Every 'potaje,' 'olla' or 'puchero' is an echo of the Maghrebi couscous, tagine or mechui."*

Spanish Muslims characteristically eat cereals, legumes, fruits, vegetables, bread, meat, oil, butter, honey, milk and, among prepared dishes, couscous. Eggs and dairy products such as cheese or requesón were very well-known, particularly in rural areas. Milk, butter and fermented dairy products are used more and valued more in the Muslim world than in the Christian world. The consumption of fried cheese (*almojábana*) was very common.

In our contemporary cuisine we can see **a variety of ways to prepare the foods that have been handed down to us from al-Ándalus**, including the following:

- Stews encompassing three basic food groups: vegetables, meats and legumes.
- Meat balls and meat patties, used to take advantage of leftover meats.
- "Gachas," made mostly of chickpea flour.
- Crumbs made from pieces of leftover bread.
- "Salazones," or salted meats, part of an established tradition dating from the period of the Tartars, but which were considerably improved.
- Escovitches, made with vinegar and aromatic plants.
- Fried foods, including both fish and meat, as well as the so-called *frutas de sartén*, or "fruits of the frying pan:" *buñuelos*, *churros*, *pestiños*, *roscos de huevo*, *piñones* and so forth.

Other characteristics of Andalusian cuisine that have come down to us today are the use of seasonings containing a multitude of spices and aromatic plants; the use of sweet flavors in salty dishes with dried fruits such as almonds, chestnuts, pignoli and others; and dried fruits like figs and raisins, or honey, in meat and fish stews. Overall, Andalusians had a taste for foods with a rich mix of flavors, which could for example be a dish made of poultry with a garlic and cheese-based sauce seasoned with vinegar and saffron.

The Arabs adopted and assimilated into their culinary practices everything they found in Spain, including foodstuffs and their preparation techniques, while also incorporating their own crops and diet. They found and improved olive groves as well as lettuce and grain crops, and introduced a great number of fruit orchards; they perfected the harvesting of figs and cherries, while planting palm trees and sugarcane. Table olives were prepared much as they are today in Andalusia.

### **Spanish cuisine**

Our country is a model of culinary innovation and development. Traditional Spanish cuisine must be taught (Basque cuisine included) as well as contemporary cuisine, this last always focused on health.

Bread (Arab and Spanish style) may be of great interest to students, according to how it was prepared in days of old, how the wheat was ground, how the flour was produced, how it was prepared before putting it into the oven, how it can be prepared in a modern-day oven.

### **Cooking and health (Living foods)**

Over the course of a lifetime, each of us will consume about 50 to 90 tons of food. Fruits, fresh vegetables, germinated or sprouted foods, unsalted nuts and raw seeds are five families with a wide variety of offerings. If these were to prevail in our diet, good health would prevail in our lives. Food plays the leading role in our long-term health and longevity, beyond any doubt.

Our body is alive, and in order to build it up we need to provide it with living materials. If most of the foods we eat are processed (or dead), common sense tells us that will have an adverse impact on our health. What makes up our body's cells made? Cells are composed of the foods we consume. In other words, we have some degree of control over the length and quality of our lives. This section is closely tied into the natural medicine workshop, and classes should be scheduled so that students from both workshops can attend them.



## AGRICULTURE AND ECOLOGY

The cultivation of wheat, barley, beans and grains, which were the population's staples, came about in arid climates. This is the period during which rice was introduced into the Peninsula, as well as eggplant, artichoke and sugarcane. Fruit orchards also occupied important tracts of land. There were pears, apples, figs and grapes. There was honey production. Wine was produced and consumed in large quantities (despite the Islamic ban on it) at least until the arrival of the Almohades.

The Islamic legacy is found everywhere, however it is often so assimilated, so camouflaged that it is difficult to recognize. One of the greatest legacies the Arabs left us were the gardens, where they experimented with agricultural techniques and carried out great advances in botany. Not only did they experiment with planting a number of exotic species, but they improved the cultivation of these and other species. This legacy can be clearly observed on a tour of the lands and cities of al-Ándalus.

The tradition of Islamic gardens began in Córdoba and culminated in the Alhambra. Throughout the lands of al-Ándalus agricultural activity and the artistic transformation of nature went hand in hand. In the Alhambra, the landscaping that combined water with vegetation is a manipulation of all the senses; the gaze moves beyond the walls of the premises, a harmonious setting of architecture and nature. The sound of the water is inviting, and it weaves itself into the aroma of the flowers and the trees. The entire scene is less closed-off than traditional Islamic gardens, and is constantly evolving.

Its construction on high land and the tradition of the flower/crop garden, with water as the centerpiece, extended throughout al-Ándalus. Natural medicine and gastronomy were enriched with these experiments. All art forms echoed it; poets and craftsmen reproduced the grandeur of the Islamic garden in their tapestries, rugs and decorations.

We have some idea of what their gardens were like from verses that praise the variety of flowers: roses, daffodils, lilies, anemones, jasmine, wall flowers, violets,

poppies, daisies and other species that *“draw the gaze and entertain the eyes with delicate edifices that resemble spiderwebs.”*

Plants were used not only to beautify gardens, but also played a role in all daily activities. They were basic ingredients for making cosmetics, medications, furniture and textiles.

We can read the following inscription on a coffer embellished with palm frond decorations:

*“I was made of many pieces by a miraculous art by which to preserve the fairest aromas, and I was decorated with plants and flowers.”*

One of the great advances in botanical sciences takes place in the field of gastronomy with preservation industries, preparation of expectorants, balms and sweet syrups... Agriculture was developed for this purpose, and in agricultural treatises we find many references to those plants used most frequently. Wines, oils, condiments, sometimes they were all mixed together in both flower and vegetable gardens.

**The vegetable/flower garden** reached sublime levels of development, boosting advances in botany, medicine, agricultural improvement techniques and many others. Water management (the harnessing of water in the broadest sense, because land had never been used to such a large extent and so efficiently) extended throughout much of the Iberian peninsula.

The transformation of the landscape was thorough. Terraces marked the landscape and nothing was ever the same again. The canals, irrigation ditches and reservoirs were part of the whole. The lands of al-Ándalus turned into an enormous orchard where crops grew along the sides of mountains in areas that no one had ever thought would be productive until then. Plants were brought in from the East and were grown not only in Peninsula gardens but also in the *almunias*, or fruit gardens, in farms located in every peninsula territory.

The products of al-Ándalus -- figs from Málaga, cherries and peaches from Zaragoza, the fruit orchards of Murcia and Valencia -- began to acquire a reputation. Aromas were part of daily life, cultivated plants and essences saturated family gardens and mixed in with the aromas from the kitchen, creating one big inseparable whole.

For the preparation of aromatic and therapeutic substances, people used santalum album (sandalwood), aloe (aloe vera), musky plants, balsamine, saffron, muskroot, qaranful, cloves (*Caryophyllus aromaticus*), nutmeg (*Myristica fragrans*), camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*), cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*), ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) and St. Lucie cherry (*Prunus mahaleb*)

The most frequently used seasonings were pepper (*Piper sp*), saffron (*Crocus sativus*), dried coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*), cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*), ginger and cinnamon. Certain syrups were made of apples, grapes, blackberries, plums and pears, and the most exotic were made of poppy seed or pumpkin.

The preferred fruits of al-Ándalus were nuts, pears and cherries. They also had a taste for pumpkins, chestnuts, eggplants, beans, figs, dates, white peas, peaches, watermelons, melons, white lupin (*Lupinus albus*), celery (*Apium graveolens*) and cabbage.

Numerous species were introduced between the VIII to the XIII centuries:

- Cannabis sativa (hemp)
- Carthamus tinctorius (safflower, or false saffron)
- Chondrilla juncea (gum succory)
- Chrozophora tinctoria (giradol)
- Citrullus lanatus (watermelon)
- Citrus aurantium (bitter orange)
- Citrus grandis (pomelo or pamplemoose)
- Citrus limettia (Mediterranean sweet lemon)
- Citrus limon (lemon)
- Citrus medica (citron)

Coriandrum sativum (cilantro)  
Crocus sativus (saffron)  
Cuminum cyminum (cumin)  
Cydonia oblonga (quince)  
Cynara scolymus (artichoke)  
Cyperus esculentus (yellow nutsedge)  
Daucus carota (carrot)  
Gossypium hirsutum (cotton)  
Glycyrrhiza glabra (licorice)  
Morus alba (white mulberry)  
Musa sp (banana)  
Ocimum basilicum (sweet basil)  
Oryza sativa (rice)  
Peganum harmala (Syrian rue, African rue, wild rue, harmal)  
Phoenix datylifera (date palms)  
Punica granatum (pomegranate)  
Prunus persica (peach)  
Prunus dulcis (almonds)  
Rhus coriaria (sumac)  
Saccharum officinarum (sugarcane)  
Sesamum indicum (sesame)  
Solanum melongena (eggplant)  
Spinacia oleracea (spinach)

One of the essential elements for change in the most farflung fields of endeavor was the introduction of forms of agriculture different from those known until then, their principal characteristic being the distribution of water to irrigate arable lands. This phenomenon embodies the spirit of Andalusian society inserted into a particular culture – the Arab culture -- in which the idea of water is fundamental.

For the Islamic world, water is the origin of life which is created by God. Water is always considered a “Divine Gift” because of its similarities with their refined sense of perfection.

The changes brought about by this new form of agriculture were so numerous and their effects so important that it may justify the use of the often so lamentably misused term agricultural revolution, applied to the so-called “green revolution.”

The deterioration of fields, rivers, oceans, bodies of water and so forth leads us to reflect on what we’ve done to them, how we’ve treated them. We have the ethical obligation to ask ourselves what we can do to improve the situation of our ecosystem.

Unfortunately, the indiscriminate use of pesticides and other chemical substances has brought our vegetable gardens and rivers to a level of pollution unknown until now.

An arable field that has been treated with pesticides needs two years to regenerate. One of the causes of river pollution is the pesticides that we use in the soil. When it rains or when we irrigate, the plains along the river edge spill into the river. Fish and plant species fundamental to sustaining the ecosystems die off.

Old-timer Spanish farmers say that fifty years ago there was a plague every X number of years brought about by drought. “There were rarely plagues.” Now everything has changed; pesticides kill insects, the birds that feed off of them eat them with the poison inside their systems and they die or they do not find food. This has brought about the extinction of the species that prey on these plagues. The populations of bats, lizards, insectivore birds and others has noticeably diminished. These animals were the natural pesticides of vegetable gardens in al-Ándalus.

What can we do to change this situation?

What does science offer us to help solve this problem?

How can we regenerate the land that we plant on and what we eat?

The answers to these questions revolve around common sense, education and the opportunities that science provides us.

This workshop will teach the mechanisms and notions required for the development and understanding of sustainable agriculture, the application of techniques that help purify land and water.

- Organic carbonization, or terra preta (“black soil” in Portuguese).
- EM Technology (Efficient Microorganisms).
- Incorporation of organic matter and nutrients.
- Action of microorganisms and animals in soil.
- Water use, management and care.
- Working the land (planting, harvesting, conservation and others).
- Greenhouse and indoor planting techniques.

The garden in our project will be designed according to the al-Ándalus model, and will serve as a learning space like the vegetable gardens to be distributed throughout the space we will have at our disposition. These, in turn, will be distributed according to their function.

*EDIBLE PLANTS:* These vegetable gardens will be set aside to supply the needs of the hotel, apartments, restaurant and cooking classes.

*DECORATIVE AND AROMATIC PLANTS:* The harvest of these vegetable gardens will be channeled destined to supply our organization’s needs. Classes in soapmaking and perfumes (in arts and crafts), health, cooking, spa-hotel and others.

*MEDICINAL PLANTS.* The harvest of these vegetable gardens will be used for the natural medicine and spa workshops.

*ECOCYSTEM PLANTS.* Those plants that help preserve the natural environment and protect the various species of the animal kingdom, or which benefit the land or the rivers.

*AQUATIC PLANTS.* The garden will have a reservoir for the cultivation of aquatic plants that are decorative, regenerative or medicinal, in addition to those that the

pool has already.

THE GREENHOUSE is an essential part of our project. It must be designed to carry out the functions described previously and at the same time allow students to study there.

## PRODUCTION ZONE

EM (Effective Microorganisms) and the necessary installations for ORGANIC CARBONIZATION. (special ovens)

This space should be located away from the al-Ándalus center, although not so far away that it requires driving more than 20 minutes.

This facility will receive all the ecological waste that the hotel produces (rotten fruit, rinds, leftover foodstuffs that can be turned into fertilizer, and so forth)

All products from the fields or from our production facility will be sold and put on the market by us or by independent companies that partner with us, whether to produce what we need or to distribute our products.

It's important to take into account that in Sotogrande and environs there are many vegetable gardens, as well as polo fields and golf courses. At present, most of them use pesticides and chemical products for their care, which in turn pollutes rivers, wells, water tables, fauna, soil and others.

There are diverging opinions regarding the issue, but the cost of maintaining these places can be noticeably reduced through the application of such methods, which have the great virtue of vastly improving the quality of the product that comes from them and of the soil that maintains them.

## **WATER**

### Rivers

We have great opportunities in this region. We have two rivers, the Genal and the Guadiaro, which cut through the municipal boundaries of Casares.

The county government is willing to cooperate with all aspects of river preservation and care. The natural life in them is immense, including fish, birds and plants.

With the required permissions, our students would have the opportunity to see how a river is nourished and protected.

- DMA (Water Framework Directive) 2000/60/CE, dated October 23rd, 2000, establishes that the most cherished value to be protected as a guarantee for the future is the good state of the water ecosystems.

- DMA, then, presupposes a **holistic, comprehensive** view of waterways, drawing together environmental elements, economic and social interests in a centralized space for their management and husbandry, granting them a uniform and specific weight.

-The DMA has an underlying element of **humility** in its acknowledgment of the primacy of natural cycles and processes over the capacities of human technology.

One of the objectives for the preservation of water and rivers is to encourage citizen participation and involve social groups in the management of waterways.

Genealogy tourism should and must subscribe to this new collective consciousness and be able to contribute its grain of sand.

The river would be a marvelous experience for our tourist-students, and would be a powerful lure capable of catching the attention of this market segment. Their participation could open up a stream of revenue that extends beyond our project. Many other enterprises interested in this type of tourism (genealogy and senior tourism) could participate in it.

We have to become aware of the fact that we baby boomers are a generation that has reacted late to the damage done to our planet. It is our obligation to try to bequeath our children and grandchildren an acceptable ecosystem.

The management of these two rivers has yet to be defined, but the opportunity is there and we must take advantage of it.



## The Ocean

Once again, we find ourselves in a privileged circumstance. From almost any vantage point on the coastline you can see two continents (Africa, Europe), a sea (the Mediterranean), an ocean (Atlantic) and three regions, each with their own government (Spain, Morocco, Gibraltar).

The Strait is a great tradeway for merchandise, people and fauna. Both migratory birds and fish cross it. There are tuna, dolphins, cetaceans and two coastlines that separate the Islamic world from the Western world.

The economic situation has brought about a grave crisis in the maritime sports market. Hundreds of vessels that can't leave port because they can't pay for the gasoil.

All that is needed is for someone to coordinate a group of these merchant marines (who are unemployed) in order to make use of their infrastructure when required, and for them likewise to adapt to ours.

The possibilities are enormous, as long as we take into account the various seasons of the year (weather allowing). I inquired of a friend, a ship captain with great expertise dealing with this type of customer, who told me that he doesn't know of any type of project targeting high-end genealogy tourism such as what we are proposing.

We can offer the following experiences unique to our coastline:

Barbate (*almadraba* tuna fishing)

Caños de Meca (Roman ruins)

Tarifa

Doñana (Watch animals approach to drink in the sunset)

Sanlúcar (Delta of the Guadalquivir River)

Add to this everything sports-related. This is a clear example of how to use existing

infrastructure and make it generate money again. These aspects will be analyzed further ahead, in the Job Creation section.

## **The Forest**

Luckily we have a marvelous forest that we can rely on and for which we can employ the same philosophy as in the river or the ocean.

**Los Alcornocales** Nature Reserve is a nature reserve created by the Andalusian Parliament in 1989. It comprises a large swath of land along a north-south spine between the Tarifa coastal zone, including the Strait of Gibraltar itself and reaching all the way inland to Cortes de la Frontera, Ubrique and El Bosque counties. Its territorial extension of 167.767 hectares makes it one of the largest Nature Reserve parks in Spain.

The greater part of the Nature Reserve belongs to Cádiz Province, with only a portion belonging to Málaga Province and with territory reaching into 17 different counties: Alcalá de los Gazules, Algar, Algeciras, Arcos de la Frontera, Benalup-Casas Viejas, Benaocaz, Castellar de la Frontera, El Bosque, Jerez de la Frontera, Jimena de la Frontera, Los Barrios, Medina-Sidonia, Prado del Rey, San José del Valle, Tarifa, Ubrique and Cortes de la Frontera, all with a total population of some 380.000 people.

Its territory is almost entirely occupied by forested landmasses containing native Mediterranean forest used for a variety of purposes, including forestry, livestock, hunting, mushroom and heather, although its salient activity is its cork production.

Its varied landscapes, fauna, and Mediterranean-type and riverbank vegetation are unequalled in the entire Iberian peninsula, as well as its cultural heritage.”

The towns established located within the reserve hold great genealogical interest, with Castellar de la Frontera or Casares just two examples among many.

Once again, controlled tourism, (as the United States does with its natural

parks) can become a revenue stream and provide protection for the park, in addition to creating employment positions designed to train the tourist (i.e. guides, experts in birds, plants, history and other subjects.)

## HEALTH AND NATURAL MEDICINE

The desire of certain rulers of al-Ándalus to turn their courts into centers of knowledge to rival the cities of the East developed in al-Ándalus in such a fashion as to give birth to forms of science that offered aspects of great originality. Thus, while the rest of Europe stagnated in the Dark Ages, al-Ándalus flourished. The city of Córdoba was one of the leading cultural centers of the Classical Islamic Empire (and of all Europe). Baghdad was the other.

In the fields of botany and pharmacology, Málaga native Ibn al-Baitar (born at the end of the XIII century) studied the plants of the Iberian peninsula, North Africa and the Orient in his travels throughout these regions. He wrote books in which he listed 1400 plants with their respective medicinal applications. Although he based his writings on ancient Greek botany treatises, Ibn Baitar also introduced the medicinal applications for close to 200 plants that had been unknown up until then.

We believe that knowledge and use of the plants of al-Ándalus will be of great benefit for our tourists. On the one hand, in recent years the debate between "*official medicine*" and "*alternative medicine*" has heated up, encompassing natural medicine, homeopathy, Bach flower remedies, filters and acupuncture (all recognized by the W.H.O), and including traditional remedies, oftentimes scoffed at by detractors who call it quacksterism and even sorcery, to Eastern practices with clear spiritual content.

While official medicine admits in ever greater measures the use of medicinal plants -- or at least does not openly reject them -- no doubt exists that this practice remains on the sidelines of institutional medicine with its body of specialists.

On the other hand, the continued existence, principally in rural areas, of a body of unwritten knowledge on these medicinal plants reminds us of a connection and

continuity, taking place underground to some degree, between certain behaviors and knowledge connecting periods remote from each other in time. The continued existence of the plants themselves makes it easy for us to apply today certain techniques that are quite similar to those used in al-Ándalus.

As the popular saying goes, “a bad plant is that plant for which no properties have yet been discovered.” This today new plants (basically those that come from the New World) have been studied for their useful properties while other plants, thanks to research conducted on them, have seen new applications for them arise.

**Therapeutic plants from al-Ándalus still used today:** *cinnamon, cinnamon tree, sorrel, chicory, basil, watercress, borage, carob, cumin, fennel, ginger, plantain, myrrh, oregano, alfalfa, wormwood.*

One conclusion we can reach is that al-Ándalus was renowned for its knowledge of the medicinal plants of its age. They learned much from the works of the Greeks Galen and Dioscrides, which constitute the foundation of this knowledge up to the present day. A long time had to elapse before the Christian West showed any interest in this knowledge.

On the other hand, we can see the continued use of the same species up to our present day, while there have been variations in the manner of preparing and applying the plants. We have gone from using powder and pills with gum arabic to the use of solutions (homeopathy, filters and Bach flowers). We also owe much to Andalusian scholars for the basics on preservation of prepared solutions. Those plants that have no admitted therapeutic use today in official medicine continue to be used in other areas based on popular traditions.

**Naturopathy** (Bach flowers, aromatherapy, and others)

A naturopathic physician is a person trained in anatomy, physiology, biochemistry and nutrition, meaning a person with firm knowledge on the functions of the human body whose mission is to prevent and treat the ailments of each human being through observation and by following the laws of Nature and the use of the resources with which it provides us. This course could be divided into two and offered at certain

intervals, cosmetics and natural perfume course.

### **New cuisine. Living foods are...**

Fruits, fresh vegetables, germinated food or sprouts, raw unsalted nuts and seeds are five extensive families that exhibit great variety. If these prevailed in our diet, good health would prevail in our lives. This doesn't mean that in order to be healthy and live for many years it would be necessary to eat only foods in their raw state. However, the less processed foods we eat, the better for our health. Certain specific recommendations include:

1. Eat more high-water-content foods.
2. Combine foods appropriately.
3. Eat fruits as they should be eaten.
4. Refrain from eating heavy foods during certain times of day (during assimilation and elimination cycles).
5. Take into account your biological adaptation and increase the amount of live foods in your diet (fruits, vegetables, germinated foods, nuts and seeds).

*"Let your food be your medicine, and your medicine be your food."* Hippocrates.

As we move forward on the way to healthy eating, we learn more every day about the best way to ingest our foods.

What is live food? It is food that hasn't been cooked and which therefore has all of its nutrients intact. Cooking food destroys its original nutrients and their enzymes. Proteins are also destroyed in certain cases, and in others they acquire new, less digestible forms, while the vitamins lose their vitality entirely.

That's why it's a shame for us to purchase organic foods or the best and most nutritional vegetables, and then take hours to cook a dish, which destroys all its precious nutritional content in minutes! Live food cuisine teaches us to cook without destroying the original nutrients and enzymes contained in the food.

There are many ways to prepare different dishes.

Certain examples of live foods.

- Mushroom lasagna
- Several types of breads
- Raw falafel
- Cold blackberry cream
- Montaditos*
- Nut and celery paté
- Live cabbage pie
- Fresh cashew cheese with baby onion
- Marinated eggplant
- Onion squid parmesan
- Sesame salt
- Activated seed bars
- Live *alfajores* (no flour and uncooked)
- Raw cold bar.
- Green spinach smoothie.
- Spirulina and carob truffles.
- Chard pie: vegetarian, organic and uncooked.
- Cremes.

Add to this... an endless list.

Clearly, this workshop is closely linked to others and the classes could be applicable to both courses. (Cooking-Health)

ARTS AND CRAFTS

In this workshop we can't ignore the art that existed on the Peninsula before the invasion, Visigothic Art. Regarding this historic era, we will repeat what someone else has stated previously.

*-“The arresting arts of the pre-Roman era came into existence in an age of changes*

*and uncertainties, thanks to an intense religious spirit. In Spain, the Hispanic-Visigothic Kingdom left its stamp on architecture devoted to God. After the Muslim invasion, the miraculous Asturian art came into existence in the silent, green valleys of Asturias. Later came the Oriental charm of Mozarabic art, or the Art of Repopulation. As for this last one, it's worth giving special mention to the brilliance of its goldsmithing and the intense colors and shapes of the codices."*

Visigothic goldsmithing and its codices should be explored. Students can learn to make a codex of their own, a book of their own using the techniques of the people who would be conquered by the Muslims. This subject would be compatible with Visigothic and Muslim calligraphy.

The extremely quick progression of Islam in Arabia and Siria during the VII century made it necessary to use arts and aesthetics that already existed among the occupied peoples.

It has been accepted that its earliest artistic manifestations, palaces and mosques, are simply and clearly the result of using Byzantine and Persian artists. The Islamic world took from Persia its elegance and harmony, and from the Byzantine world its sumptuous qualities. This continuity, however, should not be mistaken for parasitism.

The refinement that prevailed in the Caliphate court facilitated the creation of all manner of decorative objects which, under royal patronage, translated into the most varied of artistic expressions. Works in ivory deserve a special mention, among which we can find all kinds of intricately carved objects for daily use: bottles and coffers for storing jewelry, balms and perfumes; mortar and pestle sets, incensaries, soup bowls, pitchers and washbowls made of vitrified pottery and more.

The monarchs, just as in Baghdad and El Cairo, created their own factories for textiles or sashes, which gives rise to the first chapter in the history of embroidered silk textile production in al-Ándalus. There were also workshops that specialized in bronze objects carved with figures representing lions and deer, their bodies covered with tangential circles evoking textiles and which were used as fountain spigots. Pottery production includes styles such as the "green and manganese" style. Its

decoration, based on epigraphic and geometric motifs with a marked presence of figurative motifs, was achieved through the application of copper oxide (*green*) and manganese oxide (*purple*).

Over the ensuing years all of these arts forms began to adapt to a variety of styles that can be classified as follows:

-Taifa art– *The Aljafería Palace of Zaragoza*

-Almoravid art – *Architectural sobriety. It is worth mentioning Almería textiles in the peninsula, which reached their highest level of development during this period.*

-Almohade art– *The Golden Tower*

-Nazari art– *The Alhambra of Granada and the Generalife.*

As we see, the possibilities for course offerings are enormous: calligraphy, sewing, embroidery, pottery, knitting, jewelry and more. There are choices.

The important thing to consider is that these courses should be designed for people who live elsewhere and that what they learn should be useful to them so that they can apply it when they get back home. I have included knitting or crochet because of how useful it is for elderly people. We have to take into consideration that the mothers of baby boomers know how to knit, but their daughters DO NOT. The benefits for elderly people are enormous. They have a great companion during their hours of solitude and an excuse to socialize and linger with friends. They can most definitely break free of the social networks that we are all getting squeezed into little by little.

Except for pottery, all other options can be taught in conventional classrooms or in the same classroom – if it exists – designed for said purpose.

Pottery, calligraphy and codex classes will be held wherever any form of paint is applied.

## **DANCE**



A dance gymnasium.

Flamenco- Eastern dance- Andalusian dance.

## **COORDINATION AND TECHNOLOGY OFFICES.**

This is the nerve center of the campus, which serves two important functions: Coordination and technology.

### Coordination

This department is the one that coordinates everything customers require in terms of their courses, needs and campus functions, always in conjunction with the recreational and sporting offerings. The easiest way to explain is through an example.

Suppose we have a married Swedish couple approximately 60 years old. The man participates in nature courses and the woman in art workshops. It is very cold in their city or town in the winter and they want to spend 6 weeks in our campus-apartment, although they also want to get acquainted with other places such as Córdoba or Seville. It's their anniversary and to celebrate it, they would love to do something special for five or six days. They come to the coordination center in order to plan it.

Cristina Ortega, who works at the center, pitches them a series of ideas depending on how much they want to spend. Because it will be their anniversary, the Swedish couple want something intimate and private. Cristina gets to work and pitches the following proposal to them.

A morning visit to Castellar and Tarifa (driving), with a guide should they so desire. At 2 in the afternoon, a motorboat awaits them with a prepared meal. As they eat, they motor along the coastline. They spend the night anchored off Doñana watching the sea creatures come to drink. The following day they will navigate the Guadalquivir River all the way to Seville. The Swedish couple want to spend 2 nights at the Alfonso XIII. Cristina has their fares ready for them from Ave to Córdoba the following day, where they will spend another two nights and then from Córdoba, Ave

to Málaga, where they will be able to get a taxi to return to the campus or, if they prefer, have a chauffeur waiting for them.

Naturally, Cristina and her team have been able to organize it all thanks to the fact that Tato, an experienced sea man, started up his own business by coordinating four sea captains with vessels anchored at port because of the crisis. Tato, a formerly unemployed freelancer, now has his own business with customers from this market. He doesn't only work with us, he also works with other hotels and resorts that provide services to this sort of customer.

Another case that might come up: two couples that have become friendly, or two couples from any of the workshops whose students want to take a trip to Granada with their partners or to Marbella to play golf. The important thing is to have freedom to maneuver. Obviously the price for the Swedish couple in their private vessel will be different from the price for an entire class.

Cristina will make an effort at all times to avail herself of the serious, professional infrastructure available locally, consisting of qualified personnel interested in lending this type of services. Examples include house cleaning agencies (apartments), boat charter agencies, guides, transportation organizations, entities such as Nature Reserves, county governments, hotels and others.

One of the great tools that Cristina will have available to her is the facility to cooperate with other hotels and tourism infrastructure thanks to the inclusion of the L.D. (Learning Disabled). I'm sure that the manager of the Alfonso XIII would love to say that his hotel is in solidarity with the al-Ándalus Project because it promotes the inclusion of LD in the tourism sector. I could name other examples like this, from public government to private bodies. Everyone wants to show solidarity, particularly if they have the possibility of us sending them customers without them having to hire LD people.

Cristina and her colleagues at work know that LD people are an important pillar for the al-Ándalus Project. They know that when there are golf tournaments, the trophy will be made in a specialized trade workshop. In other words, Cristina and her team

will take charge of organizing and coordinating with the LD world.

The coordinating team will operate entirely on the basis of flexibility focused on protecting and taking care of the customer in everything related to organizing programs (cultural as well as sporting or recreational). In other words, they will pitch proposals and solve problems.

### Technology

We must have an informative, easy-to-find and user-friendly website.

One of the sad parts about old age is solitude. What we offer in fact at al-Ándalus is a sensation of intellectual youthfulness and the company of other people with your same interests.

Those of us who have had the opportunity to attend a university in the United States had an extremely intense, fun experience. The friendships forged in a learning environment tend to be positive and often last for the rest of one's life. Our customers will be far from their families and friends; in other words, they're going to be alone. We have to be capable of providing them the opportunity to feel young socially, as they were during their student years. Many of them, as the years go by, will stop traveling. Our pages must be a bridge so that connection, both personal and information-based, stays alive; a place where they can submit problems to discussion or contribute ideas in relation to any subject in harmony with the spirit of al-Ándalus.

The information aspect is so obvious that I won't go into any detail about it.

- Workshop-related texts.
- Cooking: recipes, suggestions, new ideas.
- Nature: A wide array of possibilities. Photos, information of all kinds and more.
- Arts and Crafts: local and international exhibits, photos and the like.
- Recommended places with which we have contact all over the world.
- Our customers' social network.

-Information about advances in the world of the Learning Disabled and follow-up on what our LD people are doing.

This website must be constantly maintained and updated.

### **Conference Hall**

A hall that will basically be open and that local people who fulfill certain basic requirements of behavior and courtesy can attend.

For example, if there will be a discussion of something related to effective microorganisms, it's good for farmers to come so that they understand and are encouraged to use non-polluting substances in their planted plots. This would promote the health food market, which in turn would save a lot of money in social security as well as creating possibilities for new forms of entrepreneurship.

Everything discussed, explained and debated in this hall must carry the spirit of al-Ándalus, meaning positive, socially oriented, ecological and educational thinking, a way of thinking that doesn't engage in political or religious debates of an international or local character.

### **STORES AND SUPERMARKETS**

In the absence of conventional stores at the hotel, the campus must have its own stores and a supermarket. This gives us the opportunity to sell our products to apartment customers.

The supermarket. It only makes sense in Sotogrande, because our customers wouldn't have to drive to go shopping. Any goods sold aside from the organic products we produce (from foodstuffs to microorganisms) must meet a housewife's needs.

The stores. These will be built to supply all products related to the workshops, meaning a sales center for local crafts and for work done by LD people. This store

will also sell materials required for the workshops (paint, ink, paper, sewing, wool, knitting or crochet needles and so forth.)

It's always good to have a store that specializes in clothing, galoshes (for nature workshops), raincoats, umbrellas, T-shirts, vests, caps, socks and the like, all stamped with our logo.

## **JOB CREATION**

The first thing I have to say about this section is the obvious, that a campus dotted with workshops and a hotel only creates jobs for the employees hired by the company.

**Our real contribution would be to place one of the first cornerstones so other businesspeople are encouraged to bring senior genealogy tourism to Andalusia, thus communities, county governments, work and employment centers do their jobs so that this can become a reality, facilitating and coordinating its expansion throughout the lands governed by the Andalusian government.**

As I said before, genealogy tourism has great advantages over conventional tourism, because the types of people it serves would be willing to travel during the low season in Costa del Sol. It would, after a fashion, break with the seasonal tourism mold. This would support the creation of associations such as the one described previously involving seamen and their vessels. Another good example would be guides for the reserve, rivers and other such places. Ornithologists and botanists could make a living year-round or seasonally off our nature, taking care of it and sharing it through tourism that is highly sensitive to these issues.

Let's return to the example of the Swedish couple who come to Seville to celebrate their anniversary. Should they desire, they could hire a guide to show them around the city. This person could be a student with a few hours available during the week to make some money. The student will have attended certain courses so that he or she is prepared to do his job, and will always know how to treat this type of customer. The same goes for transportation, restaurants, organic stores and the like.

It goes beyond saying that everyone who works with this type of tourism would have to speak English fluently, and above all will have to possess mastery of the vocabulary related to their specialty. A botanist guide must know the names of all plants in English, and the seaman or seamstress must know the names of fish and must study in order to possess knowledge that can be transmitted to the customers. (The waters of the Strait, their fauna and a bit of history).

Guides who do not speak English would have to limit themselves to the domestic and Latin American market. In other words, they would not be apt for working with the al-Ándalus Project. English, English, English. Everything else comes afterward.

## **TOURISM AND DISABILITIES**

*“Society as a whole faces ever greater changes and challenges. New family structures, the rise in single people supporting households, increased life expectancy, financial restrictions, employment and added-time factors, as well as an ever-increasing population of the aged. These factors are exerting a noticeable influence on the European tourism sector. The tendency from some time back has been to make vacations universally accessible and meaningful.*

*In response to these trends, the European Parliament in December 2008 voted in favor of passing a preparatory mechanism for the development of social tourism in Europe. This mechanism, named **CALYPSO**, was launched in 2009 by the European Commission Tourism Unit.*

*Calypso’s objective is to encourage social tourism among European Union member countries to bring about “increased employment (more and better jobs), to reduce seasonality in tourism, to strengthen ties between European citizens, to generate European economic activity and growth and to activate regional/local economies through the development of social tourism.”*

*The initiative was launched because at present many citizens are still excluded from tourism and traveling. Calypso aims to correct this social disparity and ensure*

*universal access to vacations.*

My questions for Calypso are: Would it empower the UE to integrate LD people into the framework of the tourism labor force? Do they have the right to participate in this industry? Would it be good for tourism? Would it be good for residents of the region? Are we complying with the ethical values that the EU champions? Would this be a good example to follow by other countries outside the EU, such as Morocco?

We, the group of individuals who are developing the foundations for this project, believe that including LD people as potential employees of al-Ándalus would be very positive for everyone. We firmly believe in their capacities and dedication to work, in their undisputable nobility of spirit and in the positive environment they cultivate among their colleagues. Senior tourists are very impatient and demanding. They have to be treated calmly and patiently. There can be no better teacher than a LD person to convey these attitudes to the rest of his or her colleagues.

For a variety of reasons we believe that it would not be advisable for them to have direct contact with customers at the outset, except for on special occasions. However, they would have their space in many other areas. For example, at the bakery, or assisting instructors in the classroom (cleaning brushes, organizing everything so it's ready before students arrive, pickup up afterwards and so on.) Instructors who teach at al-Ándalus would have to have knowledge of how to work with the learning disabled.

Any time there is a recently employed LD person on our project, there will be present an assistant specialized in learning disabilities to solve any problem that comes up. These assistants will be provided by communities, volunteer organizations, a variety of foundations and government organisms. The flower garden, the greenhouse and the vegetable gardens are ideal places to employ these people with their distinct sensibilities.

Another way to include them on the labor force is through special centers and workshops. In Madrid and other Spanish cities, many companies (Banco de Santander, Repsol, Vodafone, Puleva, Cofares pharmaceutical laboratories and so

forth) are using designs and drawings done by LD people as company gifts, merchandising and the like. Foundations like Repsol collect their paintings and sculptures.

All informational products, brochures, and cafeteria/restaurant/room menus will have their contribution, which will generate money for these special centers. There are companies in the business of recycling the work of LD people and incorporating it into the business world. Gold tournament trophies, best student awards for pottery, calligraphy or cooking class, these prizes are all designed by them.

The information contained herein is of benefit not only to LD people, but also to their families and to all participants in al-Ándalus. The great similarity between LD persons and senior genealogical tourists is that both have the right and the capacity to feel useful and to be useful, to keep from becoming passive individuals or addicts to a plasma screen.

At al-Ándalus we will work hard to make this a reality.

It's a contradiction that million of euros have been employed in the EU for advances in education, medical care and inclusion of the LD. Milestones have been reached in the world of disabilities, achievements unthinkable just a few years ago. However, one form of learning disability, Down Syndrome, will disappear or become a rarity in the not too distant future and unfortunately, this fact is not a consequence of any scientific breakthrough that makes it possible to counteract the effects of trisomes. The reason for the dip in births with Down Syndrome is due to the elevated percentage of couples who abort during the gestation period once they find out that their offspring have the 21 trisome.

It's not my intention to debate whether this is right or wrong. What I am saying is that a lot of effort and work has been required of our children or our siblings with this type of disability, as a generation, in order for them to be able to achieve across-the-board social integration. We have to give these people the opportunity to apply their knowledge as we do with ourselves.



## **Workshop campus with students lodged in already existing apartments and hotels**

Should we not have the possibility of having our own hotel and apartments, the campus would avail itself of local people, foreign residents and people sent by travel agencies and hotels with interested customers.

The workshops would be the same as the first-tier workshops and the coordination center would serve the same purpose. Clearly, were this to become the scenario, Sotogrande would be discarded and Marbella would take the position as the best site.

The most important changes would be in the flower and vegetable garden, the greenhouse, the production of efficient microorganisms and organic carbon.

A small vegetable garden would suffice to teach other students. Organic carbon and microorganisms would be purchased from companies involved in selling and marketing them.

My insistence on attempting to create a first-tier luxury space at al-Ándalus is because high-end tourism always draws tourism with less financial possibilities, which is managed by businesspeople with a different sort of profile.

The ideal situation would be for some investor to create the first option: the campus with its hotel and apartments. This would encourage the local government in some Andalusian city which meets the requirements for senior tourism to use or recycle some facility that they might have at their disposal; this in turn would spur independent businesspeople to take advantage of this initiative, start their own businesses and make our natural wealth and history profitable.

Any subjects taught in these workshops would bring great benefits to the senior community. Everything would be useful and applicable both at home and by each individual senior who participates in this project. These persons in a few years will become the elderly. They will no longer travel as they have done up until that point.

To knit, to oven-bake natural bread, to tend the organic vegetable garden you have in your yard or simply to know how to eat and take care of yourself is something of great benefit for this entire generation.

Solitude in old age tends to be much more agreeable if we have an occupation to nurture. It's true that technology is changing how we relate to other people and to ourselves. Returning to the past, however, entertaining ourselves as our parents and grandparents did, is a solution that allows us to escape the world of technology and the plasma screens that constantly have our eyes glued to, even if only for a few hours.