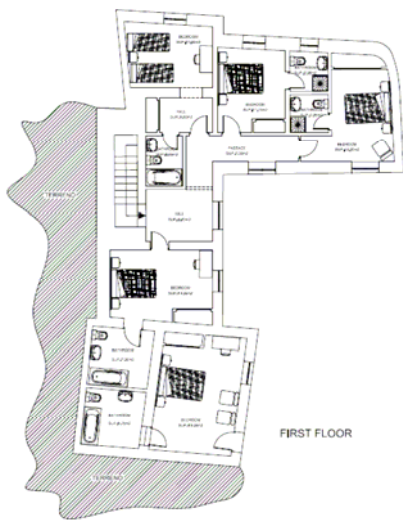


Escape to Learn

Learning and development company **The Pathways Group** are developing a unique location for their activities for the coming year – an 18th Century water Mill in Southern Spain. The company, whose work includes leadership, management and team development, saw an opportunity to offer something different to the market and set about making it happen.

'We're big fans of innovation to make our development programmes more memorable' says Pathways Director Paul Bedwell 'We thought a sun terrace in Spain would be more attractive to clients than a rainy hotel in Wolverhampton.' Fast air travel and good transport links connecting the UK mean groups can be on site in a few hours to make maximum use of their time.



Director Bernard Genge owns the Mill, known as Molino Grande, 'we're developing the Mill as a residential centre so people can escape the pace of life in the UK where they hardly get time to think. Whether they join us for a leadership or management programme, to enjoy outdoor activities, or as a retreat just to relax, we know they'll have an unforgettable experience'

Director Chris Malpass is keen that businesses don't misunderstand the location as a 'corporate jolly'. 'We're serious about helping people develop, but our experience is that UK programmes can be undermined by people cramming their learning in before dashing back to work. Being properly away from work pressures creates the space for people's learning to be much more effective.'

The Mill has flexible space and more activities will be added using the centre as a base, including outdoor and leisure pursuits. The team also hope to see young people, school and youth groups visit the centre and experience the area.



Access

Airlines Easyjet and Ryanair fly daily from the UK into Almeria on the Mediterranean coast from as little as £10 per person. An hour's picturesque drive on new roads from the coast over the Filabres mountain range brings you into the Rio Almanzora valley and white mountain villages like Seron, recently featured in *The Times* as a *Jewel of Spain*.

Weather

The area is the driest region in Spain with some 350 days a year of clear skies and warm sunshine. High mountains are frequently snow clad in winter. Temperatures average 13°C in winter and 25°C in summer. Hottest months are June to August with mountain areas several degrees cooler than the plains.

Geography

The Mill is located in an unspoilt plain of olive groves and orchards of citrus trees, a few minutes from Seron. Seron lies 800m above sea level in the 150,000km Sierra de Los Filabres National Park. The Parks mountain summits, including one site of a national observatory, rise to 2000m. *Las Tabernas*, Europe's only desert region made famous by spaghetti westerns, is also in Almeria province.



Left from top:
Architects first floor plan of The Mill
Location Map
Right from top:
Seron's church overlooks the valley
Mill plaque dated ANO 1722
Local Sunset



Mountain Walking

The wide-open spaces of the Sierra De Los Filabres National Park provide superb opportunities for day walks, longer village backpacking trips and wild camping. Metric maps of Ordnance Survey standard cover the area, making navigation and route finding simple and flexible. Excellent access roads make entry and exit effortless. There are several Ranger maintained facilities and the area is dotted by dependable *refugios* (mountain shelters) comparable to UK bothies. Winter mountain conditions are excellent.



Mountain Biking

The Sierra Los Filabres is criss-crossed with mining tracks, animal trails and historic paths making any mountain biker spoilt for choice. Less experienced riders can try shorter routes on firmer ground, easy inclines or forest routes. Seasoned mountain bikers will enjoy the varied terrain, challenging routes and the opportunity to cut new trails in virgin MTB country. Adventurous downhill and XC riders have an instant playground where forest firebreaks create cleared circuits. Vehicle access for easy entry and exit is good with superb viewpoints to stop and refuel or just admire the 50-mile visibility.

Rock Climbing & Bouldering

The Filabres is largely untouched by climbers, giving superb opportunities to break new routes of varying grades for beginners and experienced climbers alike. The area has small and large crags, roadside faces, ridges and bouldering sections, topped off by year round blue skies and bright warm sunshine.



Winter Sports

The prime ski and snowboard slopes of the Sierra Nevada are just over an hour's drive, and the mountain peaks in the Filabres receive dependable snowfall for several winter months. With blue skies and winter sunshine, conditions are excellent for winter walking and mountaineering.

Cycling

There has been major investment in all the main routes serving the flat plains and the high mountain passes, so road conditions are excellent for cycling. Traffic is light and mountain routes have excellent visibility. Stage 12 of the annual 22 day Grand Tour of Spain takes in 150km of the Filabres National Park, with a tough 20km ascent finishing at the areas highest point at the Calar Alto Observatory (2000m). The variety of terrain gives cyclists great opportunities to train for distance, speed, ascents, descents and endurance. Keen cyclo-tourists can choose between stopping over in picturesque mountain villages or camping in the beautiful National Park.



Running and Fitness

Like mountain biking and cycling, the varied terrain in the National Park gives superb opportunities for distance, road and cross-country runners. Fell and mountain runners can choose mining tracks and historic paths in forested or high mountain sections, coupled with clean air, panoramic landscapes, blue skies and warm sunshine.

Art and Photography

Huge open skies and superb light almost all year round mean keen artists and photographers will be spoilt for choice in capturing subjects. Beautiful landscapes, traditional white villages, flora and fauna, local people or historical buildings – you choose!



Bird watching

The Seron area is a superb base for birders, with coastal, estuary, wetland, desert and high mountain areas all available within an hours drive. Previous visitors have recorded over 100 species identified. New or experienced birders can choose between the recorded bird watching locations, including several reserves, or enjoy walking in the quiet and unspoilt plains or mountains areas. You certainly won't be competing to park the car or jostling with twitchers to point your lens!

For more information on any of the above, please contact The Pathways Group team at:

www.pathwaysgroup.co.uk