

COASTLINE



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U.S. Naval Activities Spain

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Leadership Corner



NAVSTA Rota CO
Captain Charles A. Chmielak

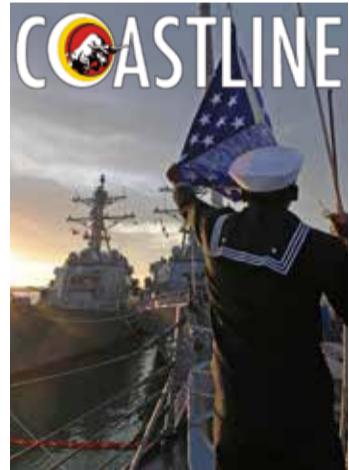
Happy New Year, Team Rota! I hope you enjoyed your holidays and had a chance to recharge with families and friends. This is also a good time to reflect on our time here in Spain, to think about the year ahead. We are fortunate to be stationed at the Navy's premier overseas installation. The amazing

location, travel opportunities, and most importantly, the people make Naval Station Rota special. Since 1953, generations of personnel have built, sustained, and served aboard NAVSTA Rota with pride and excellence. A sense of ownership for our mission—supporting the fleet, fighter, and family—has been central to this installation from the beginning. This commitment shines through in our flawless mission execution, in the way our community pulls together, and in the honest feedback that helps us improve. I am grateful to serve alongside you and thank you for your daily efforts.

Our community is the sum of countless unseen efforts. Every small, positive action enhances our shared quality of life. Simple things like driving the speed limit, picking up litter, or reporting minor maintenance issues before they become major ones contribute to a safer, happier place to live and work. This is what ownership of our home and respect for one another looks like. At work, ownership takes different forms. For a watch stander, it might be reporting a gauge that is within limits, but not running normally. For a supervisor, it means ensuring tasks are done with the goal of improvement, not just to check a box. For department heads, it means identifying obstacles and committing to solutions that create lasting, positive change. Everyone should feel empowered to solve problems at the lowest level and to elevate barriers to success when necessary.

I've seen some great examples of this ownership recently. A NEX customer service representative helped a Sailor check if a furniture item would fit in their car before loading it. During the storms, Sailors at the port reported leaks, which allowed Public Works to prevent further damage. In another case, a maintenance team persisted with a door upgrade project for months until the fix was perfect. Taking ownership of our surroundings and our work is the true mark of a professional. Staying focused on our tasks while remaining alert for improvements will keep NAVSTA Rota mission-ready for years to come. We recently celebrated the Navy's 250th birthday and will soon mark our Nation's 250th. Based on what I see in Rota, I am confident we are ready for 250 more! I appreciate everything you do and look forward to seeing you around the installation.

On The Front Cover



Seaman Apprentice Prince Kouame, assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), conducts morning colors on the forecastle of the ship, Oct. 28, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Indra Beaufort)

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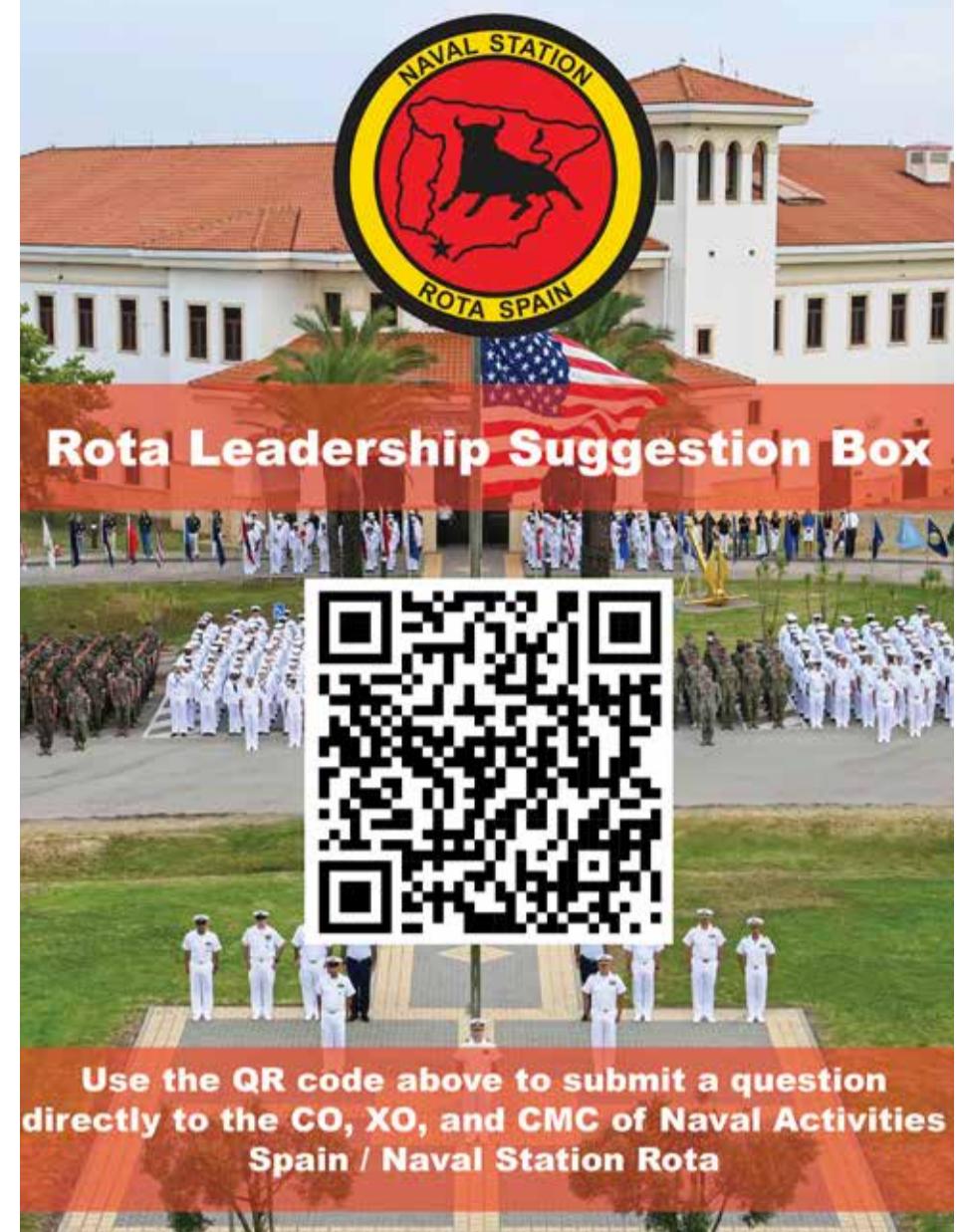
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NAVSTA Rota Unaccompanied Housing Undergoes Renovations

By Alexa Ponce-Matias

NAVSTA Rota Public Affairs

Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota continues to undergo a series of renovations and modernizations, worth more than \$13 million, to its unaccompanied housing that is scheduled to continue through 2026. It is part of a broader infrastructure investment to improve quality of life for unaccompanied U.S. Navy personnel, support operational growth, and continued readiness as the Navy increases forward presence in Europe.

The renovations are being executed by Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Europe, Africa, Central in coordination with installation leadership. Commander, Navy Installations Command is spearheading this initiative to directly impact quality of life improvement, modernize living spaces, upgrade building systems, improve common areas, and boost morale for the unaccompanied Sailors assigned to the installation.

"The primary purpose of unaccompanied housing at Rota is to offer a home away from home for Sailors and Marines who, due to the nature of their service, find themselves separated from their families," says On-Base Housing Director Marwin Aquino. "We have all the tenant commands, from shipboard to shore, that live in our barracks."

As NAVSTA Rota continues to support an expanding operational mission, the housing renovations and modernization of unaccompanied housing ensures unaccompanied Sailors are supported both on and off duty. These renovations

are taking place across multiple unaccompanied housing buildings within the installation and are set to be completed in phases throughout 2026. The Navy-wide increase in emphasis of Sailor quality-of-life, requires improved living conditions to support mission growth, force readiness, and retention, especially with the base's additional Navy destroyer homeport assignment, larger force presence, and an increase in operational rhythm.

In collaboration with Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM), the barracks will be situated with micro-marts, unmanned convenience stores within building 29 as well as within Camp Mitchell, in order to provide Sailors with easily accessible foods and drinks at all hours of the day and night. In addition to modernizing the barracks, NAVFAC is installing blast-proof windows for increased security. The upgrades are part of the Navy's ongoing efforts to improve living spaces for Sailors stationed overseas, in order to maintain safe, reliable, and comfortable housing. Better facilities equal better morale.

"We are proud to be one of the Navy's premier forward-deployed installation serving our fleet, fighters, and families every day," says Naval Station Rota Commanding Officer Capt. Charles Chmielak. "We sustain that high level of readiness, through these types of quality-of-life enhancements, demonstrating our commitment to our people and their wellbeing."

The unaccompanied barracks accommodate approximately 1,200



military personnel across 19 buildings, including Camp Mitchell. All military service members E-4 and below are eligible to reside in the barracks. Staffing consists of 22 personnel, including civilians and local nationals. The unaccompanied housing is also equipped with an on-site Quick Maintenance Response Team (QMRT) available to promptly assess and address preservation needs. The unaccompanied housing service operates 24/7 and is capable of accommodating all incoming personnel.

NAVSTA Rota continually supports U.S. and allied operations in the region, ongoing housing and infrastructure renovations that support Sailors stationed overseas remain a priority for the installation and assists in mission success within the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations. Naval Station Rota is a complex operational platform designed to maintain maximum readiness, home to units operating across the spectrum of military operations, and the foundation from which these forces operate to deter conflict and win wars.



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A Partnership of Necessity

Courtesy Story

521st Air Mobility Operations Wing

Members from the 496th Air Base Squadron Contracting Flight, stationed at Moron Air Base, Spain, recently visited the 725th Air Mobility Squadron stationed at Naval Station Rota, Spain.

Members of the 496th ABS were shown how the 725th AMS directly supports the U.S. Air Force's Rapid Global Mobility mission. By providing quick-turn maintenance, supply, cyber, command and control, and expeditionary aircrew support, the 725th AMS executes U.S. Transportation Command missions transiting into Europe, Africa, and Southwest Asia. The 496th ABS were also given an opportunity to view some of the

recent acquisitions that 725th AMS has received with the help of the contracting flight and how the Airmen use them to improve mission execution.

Located on a Navy installation, the 725th AMS has a more complicated process to execute their budget than most units as they have to coordinate Spanish contracts with Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, facilities projects with the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center, and Air Force projects through the 496th ABS.

Much of the tracking of the contracts and the proper execution of the budget falls on Patricia Herring, a 725th AMS budget analyst. A member of the squadron since 2015 and the wife of a retired



Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer, her only experiences with Air Force budget execution have been here at NAVSTA Rota and have proved to be instrumental in liaising between the two services.

"It's often difficult to build strong relationships remotely, so this in-person meeting was incredibly valuable," said Herring. "Connecting with our partners face-to-face allowed us to better understand their work and ensure our contract packages align with their needs."

The 725th AMS is one of two geographically separated units the contracting flight supports, providing advice, soliciting bids, and awarding contracts for a portion of the 725th AMS' \$4.5 million annual budget.

"It was a great opportunity for the contracting team to get out of the office and engage directly with our mission

partners," said Capt. Christopher Unger, 496th ABS Acquisitions Flight commander. "As we work to be mission-focused business leaders, it's invaluable for our team to see the challenges and requirements firsthand. This helps us apply sound business judgment to support mission success. The team was all smiles, especially when we had the chance to view the inside of a C-5M [Super Galaxy], an exciting experience for those of us who don't typically work with aircraft."

The 725th AMS and 496th ABS are the only Air Force squadrons on the Iberian Peninsula, making their partnership one of necessity. At the end of the day, members of the 496th ABS left NAVSTA Rota with a better understanding of the 725th AMS mission and a strengthened partnership between the two squadrons.



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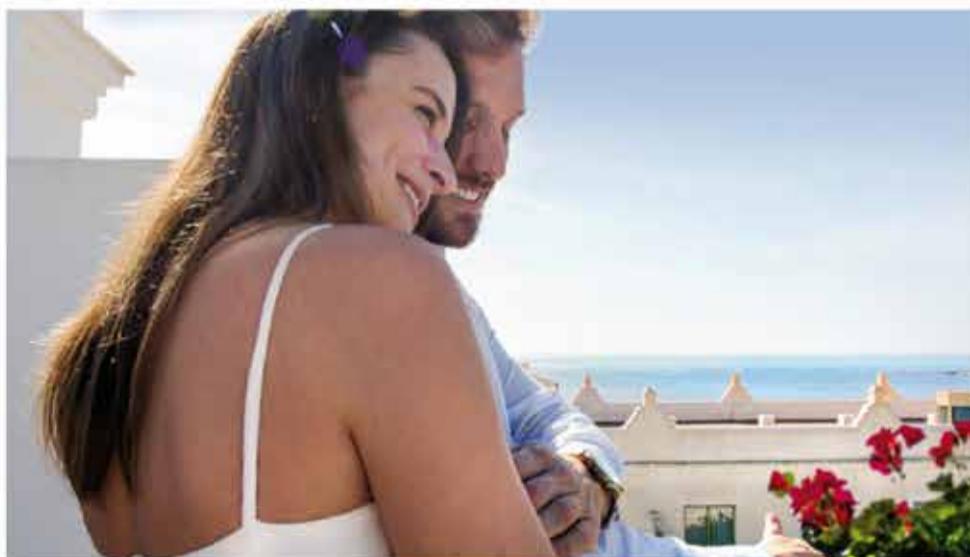
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PUBLISHER'S CORNER

El Puerto de Santa María continues to strengthen its position as one of southern Spain's most appealing destinations, thanks to an offer that blends sea, gastronomy, and culture in truly unique settings. This coastal town in Cádiz invites visitors on a journey full of contrasts, where top-tier nautical facilities, well-established international cuisine, and new venues devoted to local tradition coexist. Three very different yet perfectly complementary businesses capture this diversity, offering experiences that appeal to both locals and travelers seeking memorable moments and unforgettable sights.

One of the great landmarks of the town's coastline is Puerto Sherry, a nautical, tourism, and leisure complex that has become a key reference point in the Bay of Cádiz. Its privileged seaside location makes it a place where the experience goes far beyond accommodation. The marina, together with a wide range of water activities such as sailing, paddleboarding, kayaking, boat trips, and sport fishing, allows visitors to enjoy the marine environment year-round, whether they are seasoned sailors or first-timers. For those looking to learn, the complex also offers sailing schools and expert-guided tours that make the sea accessible to all ages and skill levels, creating memories that last a lifetime.

This offering is rounded out by several accommodation options. Hotel Puerto Sherry and Las Suites provide sea-view stays designed for romantic getaways, family vacations, or longer visits. Dining also plays a central role thanks to La Terraza de Puerto Sherry, a waterfront restaurant open to both guests and the general public. Its versatile concept includes daily buffet breakfasts, weekday lunch menus, and special weekend options, all with the sea as a backdrop. Its size and location also make it an ideal venue for private and corporate events, ensuring that every celebration enjoys spectacular views and exceptional service. The combination of sun, sea breeze, and fine cuisine creates a relaxing yet lively atmosphere.

Within this same exceptional setting is Pizzería Blanca Paloma & El Merendero, a true benchmark for authentic Italian cuisine in the province of Cádiz since 1993. Located right on La Muralla Beach, an area famous for some of the most spectacular sunsets in the bay, these venues offer a dining experience that combines tradition, quality ingredients, and an unbeatable atmosphere. Their thin-crust pizzas and popular panaro—family-style pizzas served on wooden boards—share the spotlight with a wide selection of antipasti, handmade pastas, carefully prepared risottos, and signature dishes that loyal customers keep coming back for. Every dish reflects the passion of owners Luigi and Raúl, who guide guests through the menu and recommend perfect wine pairings from their extensive Italian DOC collection.

The experience extends to a large ocean-view terrace, perfect for everything from breakfast and lunch to relaxed afternoon breaks and dinners. Particularly noteworthy is their brunch menu, featuring oversized house-made croissants, pancakes, eggs Benedict, crêpes, and focaccias, paired with specialty coffees or cocktails. Attention to detail, high-quality ingredients, and a welcoming atmosphere make this spot a favorite gathering place for families, couples, and groups of friends. Whether enjoying a casual meal or celebrating a special occasion, Blanca Paloma &

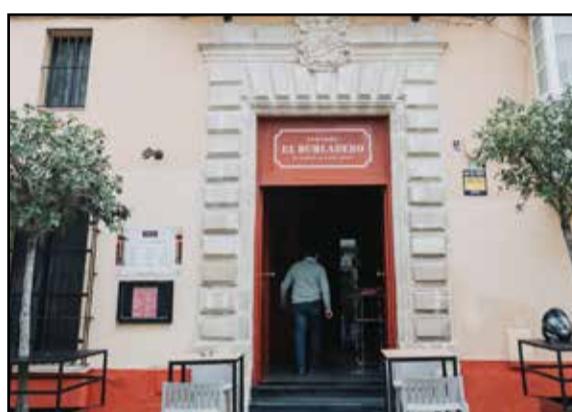


El Merendero captures the charm of seaside dining at its best, with breathtaking views of the water enhancing every bite.

The journey concludes in the heart of the historic center with Tabanco El Burladero, a recent addition to El Puerto's culinary scene that celebrates the most authentic flavors of Andalusia. This restaurant pays tribute to traditional cooking, time-honored recipes, and the tastes that define local identity. Its menu includes cold and hot starters, Iberian cured meats, cheeses from Cádiz, fried fish, classic stews, meats, and rice dishes, all prepared with deep respect for tradition.

El Burladero stands out not only for its food but also for its strong cultural focus. Every Saturday, the venue hosts live flamenco performances featuring guitar, singing, and dance, creating a complete experience that combines dinner and show. Set in a spacious yet cozy venue with classic Andalusian décor, this tabanco has quickly become a new reference point for those seeking to experience the true soul of Cádiz.

Three distinct proposals reflect the richness of El Puerto de Santa María, offering complete experiences where the sea, gastronomy, and tradition come together. From sailing along the bay to tasting Italian specialties on the beach and ending the evening with flamenco in the city center, visitors are invited to immerse themselves fully in the town's unique atmosphere, discovering why it remains one of Spain's most beloved coastal destinations and a hidden gem for those craving culture, flavor, and adventure.



Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Atlantic (NCTAMS LANT), Detachment Rota Command Spotlight

NAVSTA Rota is featuring the Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station (NCTAMS LANT), Detachment Rota for January's Supported Command Spotlight.

Check out the video now! Scan the QR code below to take a look.



U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Drace Wilson



More Than Just a Bar: Decoding Spain's Dining Culture

The contributors are co-founders of a seasoned agency committed to assisting expatriates with navigating Spanish culture and lifestyle. With extensive experience in translation, interpretation, and cultural coaching, they equip expats with the tools and knowledge necessary for a seamless integration into Spanish society.



By Brenda Navarro & Ellie McDonald
Contributing Community Members

If you're new to Spain, one of the first things you'll notice—after figuring out coffee orders—is the sheer number of places to eat and drink. They're everywhere. On every corner. Sometimes three on the same block.

But here's the part that surprises many newcomers: They are not all the same. In Spain, the word bar is only the beginning. The sign outside matters, and it often tells you exactly what kind of experience you're about to have.

Understanding these distinctions isn't just helpful—it's one of the easiest ways to start feeling at home.

The Backbone: The Bar

The bar is the heart of Spanish daily life. It serves coffee in the morning, a quick beer mid-day, and wine well into the evening. It's where neighbors catch up, kids stop by with grandparents, and conversations happen without an agenda.

Bars are informal, social, and flexible. You might sit, stand, or lean on the counter. No one rushes you, and no one minds if you only order a drink.

When Food Takes Center Stage

A *restaurante* signals a more traditional dining experience. Tables are set, menus are extensive, and meals unfold in courses. This is where you plan to eat well—and stay awhile.

A *venta*, common outside town or along rural roads, offers a very different atmosphere. Expect generous portions, simple décor, paper napkins, and hearty, no-nonsense food. These places often serve regional specialties and feel deeply local.

A *taberna* leans toward tradition. Wine, vermouth, and classic tapas dominate the menu. Seating may be limited, and standing at the bar is common. If it smells faintly of garlic and history, you're probably in the right place.

A Very Andalusian Experience

In parts of Andalusia, especially around Jerez, you may encounter a *tabanco*. These are wine-focused establishments where sherry is often poured directly from the barrel. Time moves slowly here. Standing is expected, conversation flows easily, and flamenco may appear without warning.

A *tasca* is about simplicity. No décor to speak of, basic food, affordable drinks, and a loyal local crowd. These places may not look impressive, but they often deliver some of the most authentic experiences.

Coffee, Beer, and Everything in Between

A *cafetería* is the headquarters for breakfast and mid-morning coffee, though it's perfectly acceptable to stop by at any hour. Toast, pastries, and espresso dominate the menu.

A *cervecería* centers on beer—usually loud, lively, and busy. You may arrive for one drink and leave much later than planned.

A *gastrobar* blends the social nature of a bar with modern cuisine. Plates are smaller, presentation matters, and prices are higher, but the atmosphere remains relaxed.

Coastal and After Dark

A *chiringuito* is a beach bar, usually seasonal, where sandy feet are welcome and fried fish is the star. Time has a habit of disappearing here.

A pub appears later in the evening, with music, international drinks, and a mix of languages under one roof.

And yes, rooftop bars exist too—cocktails, views, sunsets, and cameras at the ready.

Why So Many?

Spain has roughly one bar for every 170 to 180 people. That number isn't just trivia—it explains a lot.

Bars here are not simply places to drink. They function as living rooms,



offices, social hubs, and meeting points. They're where people celebrate, vent, catch up, and slow down.

The person behind the bar often knows your order, your schedule, and sometimes your life story. That familiarity is part of the culture.

The Takeaway

For newcomers, the variety can feel overwhelming at first. But learning the language of Spanish bars—what they are, how they work, and what to expect—is one of the quickest ways to understand daily life here.

So next time someone says, "Let's grab a drink," take a look at the sign outside. It's probably telling you more than you think.

And if you find yourself lingering longer than planned, welcome to Spain.



Chaplain Corner: Spiritual Readiness



By Lt. Gregory Johnson
NAVSTA Rota Chapel

The Chapel Staff at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota wishes everyone a Happy New Year. As we begin this new year, there are many opportunities at the Chapel that are available to the community. To begin with, there are two vibrant faith communities at the Chapel: the Catholic and Protestant Community. Each community is served by a Chaplain and a host of volunteers.

The Catholic community has traditional mass each week, along with educational opportunities such as faith formation and weekly studies. The Protestant Faith Community is a pluralistic community. It

is open to all denominations. This adds to the rich and vibrant rhythm of the Chapel. The representation of various denominations allows the communities to practice and fully embrace the teaching of its faith. Here the overarching ethos is love and respect. While there are doctrinal and liturgical differences, the commandment "to love one another" is what connects and grounds us.

To be grounded in one's faith is essential to spiritual development and formation. A key element of the Navy in general, and the chaplain corps, is Spiritual Readiness. January is Spiritual Readiness month. Faith is an aspect of spiritual readiness. The Chaplain Corp defines spiritual readiness as "the strength of spirit that enables the warfighter to accomplish the mission with honor." This definition is rooted in finding meaning and purpose that is connected to one's belief system. A faith practice aids in developing a belief system that undergirds spiritual readiness. While there are other practices that can sustain and support a belief system for Christians, faith is essential. Spiritual readiness is not restricted to one particular practice; the key is that there is a belief system in place. Without this, spiritual readiness, which bolsters resilience, is difficult and nearly impossible.

Spiritual readiness is sustained and supported by practices that are inherent in a belief system. The operative component

is "practice." There is an adage that "practice makes perfect." Practice may or may not make things perfect, however, it does develop habits. Spiritual practices produce habits. These are things done regularly and routinely. The more something is done the more it becomes a part of who we are. This is how habits are formed, by repetition. Habits are not necessarily negative; they can be helpful when there are positive values attached. An example of a positive valued habit, is sustaining a daily gratitude practice.

In the faith community, spiritual practices are also known as disciplines. A "discipline" is a structured way of doing something that adds value to one's life. The discipline of prayer and sacred readings are both forms of spiritual practice. They are components of a faith community. These disciplines along with instructions help develop a belief system that supports and sustains a person's spirituality. While "disciplines" can be easily attributed to faith communities. There are also other practices that lend themselves to bolstering spirituality. A strong spiritual life undergirds spiritual readiness. When we can link our spirituality to the life we live, that provides direction and purpose, which enhances spiritual readiness.

Discipline develops spirituality which is inherent in the community of faith. In the community of faith, there is also a support system that can assist in providing existential comfort. When there



is a system of support and we receive existential comfort during difficulties, our resiliency is fortified and spiritual readiness is bolstered. It is the inner life that causes the external life to rally or whither. The inner life is strengthened by spiritual practices whether sacred or secular. And inner life speaks for us when we need help. This is where the spiritual community unites and fortifies one another. I leave you with the words of Evelyn Underhill, "After all it is those who have a deep and real inner life who are best able to deal with the irritating details of the outer life."



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Homeschool Students Learn About Photography with Public Affairs Office

Photos by Randy Lambert

School Liaison

Homeschool students gathered to learn about photography at the School Age Care (SAC) building onboard Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain Jan. 14th and Jan. 21st, 2026. The teenagers learned about photography basics from Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Drace Wilson, assigned to the Public Affairs Office.

"I really enjoyed having the opportunity to get out of the office and do something a bit different than what I'm used to," said Wilson. "It was a lot of fun teaching the kids as well as sharing photos and stories between one another."

The first session saw the students learn about the essentials of photography as well as getting a hands-on look at the some of the equipment used by the Public Affairs team to capture imagery of the installation's events. In addition, the students were able to learn more about their own personal cameras that they brought to the training. The students were able to put what they learned to use during the second session. The teens were able to move freely about SAC, taking photos on the playground and setting up blocks and toys to shoot on a smaller scale. Some of the students even used a light panel to take portrait photos of one another.



Photo taken by Josephine, grade 11. It's of her younger brother with a cow they saw on an early morning walk through the Bavarian Alps.



Photographed by Maya, Grade 12, of coneflowers and other flora at the gardens of Alhambra (Granada, Spain).



Maya, Grade 12, captured an image of brown bears at the zoo aquarium in Madrid, Spain.



Bull fight in El Puerto de Santa Maria, Spain captured by Ambrose, grade 9.

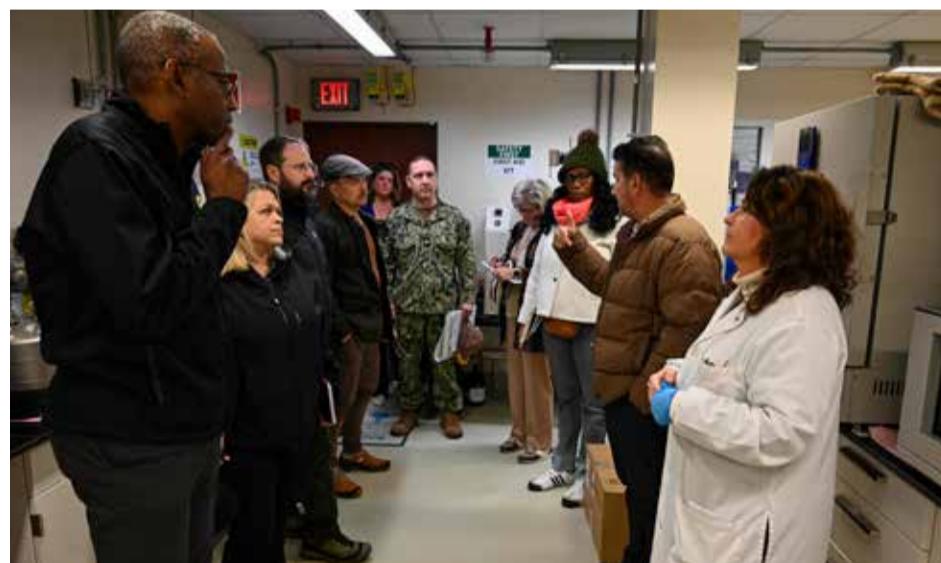


Photo taken by Anthony, grade 12, features the Castillo de Santa Barbara in Alicante, Spain.

Executive Director of CNIC Visit NAVSTA Rota

Mr. Timothy Bridges, executive director, Commander, Navy Installations Command, center, meets with Capt. Charles Chmielak, Commander, Naval

Station (NAVSTA) Rota, command leadership, and base personnel during a tour of the base on Jan. 22, 2026.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jett Morgan



Let's Eat!
By Pilar Ruiz

Spanish Omelet Recipe (Tortilla de Patatas)

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 1/4 lbs (1 kg) of potatoes (approx. 4 cups, peeled and diced)
- 1 large onion
- 6 large eggs
- Extra virgin olive oil (for frying)
- Salt and black pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

Prepare the vegetables: Peel the



The Tortilla de Patatas is a cornerstone of Spanish cuisine. While the classic version is made simply with eggs and potatoes, it is incredibly versatile. This recipe includes onions for extra sweetness, but you can also find variations with green peppers, tuna, or chorizo. No matter the ingredients, it is always delicious! ¡Buen provecho!



Have any comments or questions? We'd love to hear from you! You can email us as pilaraprendiendoacocinar@gmail.com.

potatoes and onion, then cut them into small, even cubes (roughly half an inch).

Fry: Season potatoes with a pinch of salt. In a large non-stick skillet, heat enough olive oil to cover the potatoes. Then, fry over medium heat until they are tender and starting to turn golden brown. Drain the excess oil and reserve a small amount on the side.

Whisk: In a large bowl, beat the eggs with a pinch of salt and black pepper.

Mix: Add the fried potatoes and onions to the beaten eggs. Let the mixture sit for about 5 minutes so the potatoes can absorb the egg mixture.

Cook: Heat a tablespoon of the reserved oil in the same non-stick skillet over low-medium heat. Pour in the mixture and spread it evenly. Cook for about 8–10 minutes. It is important not to overcook it so the center can remain

juicy.

The Flip: Once the bottom is set and golden, place a large flat plate over the skillet. Quickly and firmly flip the skillet so the omelet lands on the plate. Gently slide it back into the pan to cook the other side for another 5 minutes.

Serve: When ready, slide it onto a clean plate and serve warm or at room temperature. We recommend pairing it with a fresh green salad!

Cooking Tip: Always use a high-quality non-stick pan to ensure the tortilla slides out perfectly, and use the best olive oil you can find for an authentic flavor.

Thank you all so much, and we'll see you very soon with our next recipe.

If there's a particular dish you'd like us to share, don't hesitate to contact us at info@aprendiendoacocinar.es we'd love to hear your suggestions!

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Social Media for Better Resilience and Mental Health

By Mr. Devin Evans
Health Promotions Coordinator

Setting aside our personal thoughts on social media, good or bad, it is here to stay. In the United States the average person with access to a social media account spends two or more hours a day participating in said activity.

With the emergence of social media, we have found a new pathway in staying connected with others or creating new relationships. This can be an invaluable tool particularly with the military population in maintaining or creating a sense of community, while managing the stressors of frequent moves and separations that occur with deployments and permanent change of duty station.

Social media has become a powerful tool in regard to an individual's professional world too. Networking has never been

easier, as physical boundaries and distance are no longer an impeding factor.

However, let us not forget the last benefit of social media; entertainment and receiving information. Having an accessible source that can provide entertainment and obtain information is vital to our resiliency and supports mental health.

The question is though; how do I optimize social media?

Be intentional. When accessing social media ask yourself, why am I going onto a social media website and what is my goal? Try to avoid overusing notifications that prompt you to go online. You are in control of the device and service. Identify any behaviors that signal there is a problem, like overuse or long periods of time being dedicated to the device. Use

a strong filtering option. Create a world that supports you and your interests and well-being.

Be mindful of echo chambers. Algorithms rely on your user activity to customize content and ads to keep you engaged, which can lead to inaccurate perceptions about the world and certain communities. Diversify your media content, check multiple sources for information before forming an opinion, and beware of your posts. Make sure your posts are accurate and authentic because it could impact others who may be viewing your words.

Remember that online behavior, viewing history, and posts could cost you. Your online behavior can negatively impact your military career and put you at risk for disciplinary action. Always conduct



yourself with honor and respect. Military families can protect service members by not sharing information that can impact OPSEC and mission success.

Set rules for yourself. You can set an alarm to limit the amount of time that you are spending on social media. Remove the phone when eating, physically training, and when spending time with others. Keep your focus and increase the quality of activities that you are doing without the device.

Remember to take a break. Try and resist the urge to go on your device and instead socially interact with others in person. Set up time away from the phone and suggest that others do the same when they are with you. It improves relationships and emphasizes that your time and theirs is valuable.

Continue to use technology and enjoy the multitude of possibilities that it presents while being mindful of human interaction, respect, and when it is necessary, to take a break and increase your mental resilience and overall health.



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MARÍA FERNÁNDEZ (BAILE)

MARCH 28
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SANTIAGO MORENO (TOQUE)
IRENE OLIVARES (BAILE)



This week's Team Rota superstar is Jessamine Quitiquit, or better known as Jessa! She is the Work and Family Life Program Supervisor over at the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC). She is a Navy Veteran and has been a Federal Civilian Employee with over 15 years of combined service working with the military community. Her day-to-day duties have her overseeing all of the programs within the Work and Family Life Department, as well as daily administrative tasks.

"A key part of my role is to empower my team to successfully manage their programs by ensuring they are well trained, equipped, and fully supported." says Jessa. "This position allows for valuable collaboration with other departments and organizations on base."

Jessa, who is originally from San Antonio, Texas, has lived in Rota once before, from 2017 to 2021 where she also

worked at FFSC, but as the Ombudsman Coordinator and Relocation/Deployment Program Manager. She loved Rota so much that she found her way back in July of 2024! Her favorite thing about her job you ask? She loves the combination of the incredible team she works with and the mission of serving the community.

When Jessa isn't killing it at work, her main interest revolves around travel! She loves to see the world and make memories with her family.

"In fact, my passion for travel greatly influenced my decision to return to Rota." expresses Jessa. "It is a genuine pleasure for me to be here serving the community and I look forward to the continued collaborations in 2026 within the Rota community."

Thank you for being a rockstar Jessa, NAVSTA Rota is lucky to have you!



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USS Roosevelt Conducts DCTT Drill in the Red Sea

U.S. Sailors, assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), participate in a Damage Control Training Team Drill (DCTT) in the Red Sea on Jan. 15, 2026.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Indra Beaufort

The Die is Cast: Board Game Group Proving a Winner

By Lt. Daniel Ehrlich
Naval Station Rota Public Affairs

What's behind that strange red curtain right by the register in La Plaza? It isn't Narnia. Most days, it's simply a decorated lounge for special events; rarely touched, rarely inhabited. That is, until recently.

Now, on a random weekday night or a Saturday afternoon, you can find anything from a small group of people playing Dungeons and Dragons, to multiple tables of different board games one could only dream of. This isn't just a fad or a small group from the same command passing the time together, it is Rota's hottest new community group born from a single Facebook post.

"When we moved to Spain, I made an infographic about me to try and make

some friends," said Maggie McNabb, the founder of Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Community Board Game Group and spouse to a chief who served at Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMUE) Eight. "I had a picture of all the board games loaded in the back of my car. There was such a big response on my post from other people that were wanting to find people to have game nights with."

McNabb, who is a board game collector and enthusiast since childhood, had received many responses on the post, that there was a need for a community board game group, but no one had ever put it into motion. McNabb was about to change that.

"I was just hanging out in the Lodge and I figured 'what better time to make it,'"



McNabb reflects. "I just remember being really excited when I had 25 people who joined my Facebook group."

One could be mistaken that the group is simply about traditional board games. Now, the group manages entire WhatsApp communities with devoted channels to multiple gaming genres: board games, Dungeons and Dragons, video games, trading card games, puzzles, and large-scale strategy games like Warhammer. This has only increased interest amongst the community and has drawn in gaming aficionados to lead gaming events, as well as help new players learn more about different games.

Damien Bruniany, a civilian working at Forward Deployed Regional Maintenance

Center (FDRMC) Detachment Rota, has played Dungeons and Dragons since he was 11 years old. He has used his expertise to serve as the "dungeon master" for the community's Dungeons and Dragons group.

"None of us knew each other at first, but everyone committed to the game right away, and that created an immediate sense of camaraderie," says Bruniany. "That bond has only grown over time. New players who've joined since then have integrated quickly and naturally, which says a lot about the group dynamic."

throughout this burgeoning gaming



Continuation on Page 20

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Spouse Talk: Rota 911

By Ashley Leigh
Contributing Community Member

My phone rang at 7:06am. I saw the caller was one of my friends and fellow mom. Little did I know what answering that call was going to do to change my day. In her distress she called crying, only being able to say a few words. I raced over to her house and found my friend in rough shape. Along with her two children, we raced to the E.R. While she received medical attention, I toured her kids all over the hospital. We ate, read books, checked on mom, and eventually came back to my home where they played with my daughter.

In all the chaos, what came to my mind was something Hilary Keatts (chaplain's spouse of the USS Bulkeley (DDG-84) and ultimate tomato farmer) consistently brings up in the morning, and at church announcements, is the importance of community. The saying "It takes a village," could be the motto of our lives as military spouses. There is more that took place behind the scenes of that day.

The original plan was to babysit for another friend, so she could go to her appointment sans children. But when I filled her in on what was going on, she immediately understood. She was concerned for my friend even though she didn't know her, and offered to help by changing her appointment. My daughter, who I homeschool, rearranged her school schedule, while my husband called a friend to take him to work, since I unexpectedly needed to take our car. And no one complained.

This is what we do. We help our community. It's part of who we are as military/civilian spouses. I think a big part of our willingness to "love thy neighbor" is that there is a good chance we've either been in their shoes or know we could be. In a forward deployed base such as Rota, many of us rely on friends and neighbors for emotional and everyday support.

That's the one thing I'll miss whenever it's time to move on and go into the "unfamiliar" civilian world. We have an



understanding that we share amongst each other. The connection that we all have is our need for community. As we move from base to base, we take what each community has taught us and pass it on to the next group of spouses that we become a part of. It's a gift if you think about it. Maybe it doesn't seem like it when your spouse is gone, when your kids are driving you crazy, or when you haven't had a full night of sleep and still need to fold a mound of laundry. The help we give to one another is invaluable. It's the heartbeat that keeps our community going.



"Spouse Talk" is written by Ashley Leigh, a military spouse of 16+ years and a homeschool parent to one "spunky" redhead. She hopes her frank conversations on military life will inspire others to embrace the challenge and find the good at each duty station.

The Die is Cast *Continued from page 18*

That situation is a shared experience throughout this burgeoning gaming community. Make no mistake, this isn't a squad that has known or played with each other for years like in Netflix's "Stranger Things."

Arriving overseas can be daunting and a mentally taxing experience. Like McNabb, many service members, along with potential family members, arrive with no friends prior to coming to Rota, while the remainder of their families are halfway across the world. Escaping from the pressures of daily life; the challenges of making new friends, the grueling workday, finances, and learning a new culture. It can all become overwhelming, unless they are transformed into something positive.

"Games offer a healthy form of escapism where you get to step into a role, collaborate, and meaningfully influence a shared world; something that can be harder to feel in everyday life," mentions Brunianny. "Sitting around a

table, using your imagination, and talking face-to-face with other people fulfills a very basic human need for storytelling and connection—something humans have done for thousands of years."

Through this basic human need for interaction and friendship, the gaming community's bonds are growing into an ever-stronger link. Many members host regular board game nights within their homes and attend gaming tournaments with friends they made through the group. The NAVSTA Rota community has even extended its reach past the base gates, increasingly gaining steam through its partnership with the Rota gaming group, Club Kraken. It only takes one to start the chain reaction, and there's much more on the horizon.

McNabb launched the group in October 2024, and since then, the group has grown to almost 200 members. By mid-2025, the community had outgrown its humble beginnings of game nights hosted at one's house or a venue in Rota, and

needed to find more space. The room behind the red curtain was the solution to this conundrum. This room now regularly hosts large-scale gaming meet-ups, now featuring the snazzy MWR logo and advertisement in the Vamos magazine to boot.

"To see it having grown to this relationship with MWR, I feel like it's just giving us such a broader channel to create an even better community where people feel supported and have people to turn to that have similar interests as them," said McNabb.

While McNabb and her husband may have left Rota, the NAVSTA Rota Community Board Game group remains strong with new leaders with a similar vision for the future.

"We will strive to always put out a good vibe to come enjoy some new and different board games for everyone," says new co-group leader and U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Justin Fraissinet, who works at the 725th Air Mobility Squadron.

McNabb does continue to drop in from time to time to check in on the group and all the friends she had made in Rota. The decision to start the group was a dice roll, but it brought a fortune of friends and fun for many on NAVSTA Rota.

"I think at the heart of why I made the group was because I didn't have a community around me and I was somewhere new," said McNabb. "It's become something way bigger than I ever could have imagined."

Where do you imagine your story taking you? Roll the dice. It might take you to a room behind a red curtain in La Plaza.



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NAVAL STATION ROTA COMMUNITY RESOURCES

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS

AA on base: "Rota 213" meets Tuesday and Thursday, 1800-1900 (6-7pm) in person in the NAVSTA Rota Chapel (in the back). For meeting information, please contact Cynthia at +34 661 47 95 20 or Dean at +34 674 38 77 55.

AA off base on Zoom: "Rota Drydockers." Every Saturday, 1600 (4 pm) on Zoom only. For information on how to join the Zoom session, contact Cynthia at +34 661 47 95 20 or Joe G. via WhatsApp at: +34 603 84 15 59.

AA in Rota in English: "Rota to Recovery." Every Saturday, 1900-2000 (7-8pm) in person, Calle Bachiller, 11, Rota; parking is available near the marina. For information, please contact Cynthia at +34 661 47 95 20 or Dean at +34 674 38 77 55.

AL-ANON MEETINGS

Have you been affected by another person's drinking? If so, please join us every Wednesday at 1600 (4 p.m.) at the base chapel nursery for an Al-Anon meeting. The only requirement for Al-Anon membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend. For info on meetings, please contact Naydene at +34 669 09 7149.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Volunteers are welcome and encouraged to stop by the office and CPR courses are now being offered. Days and times of the courses will be posted on our FB page. For more information, call us during business hours at DSN 727-2333 or commercial, +34 956-82-2333, or visit our Facebook page, @RedCrossRota.

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Red Cross Emergency Messages services operate 24/7. If you have a family emergency during business hours, call us immediately at DSN (314) 727-2333 or +34 956-82-2333. After hours or on weekends, our national call center can be reached at +1 (877) 272-7337. Messages can also be initiated online, at <https://www.redcross.org/military-emergency-communication.html>

ROTA EDUCATION CENTER

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Command Classes: We offer financial classes for groups and commands. Our caseworkers can come to you, or we can hold the classes in our classroom. Call or email our office to schedule one of these classes.

UPCOMING NMCRS AND HOSPITAL MATERNAL PROGRAMS AND CLASSES:

The Visiting Nurse program includes home and virtual visits, classes, and community support groups for active duty, retirees, and their families. The Visiting Nurse provides health education, resource referral, and support for prenatal and postpartum, newborn care, breastfeeding, pediatric, adult, and geriatric health concerns.

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Are you interested in volunteering in the NMCRS office or Thrift Shop? We have several opportunities to grow your resume while contributing to our community! We also reimburse for childcare and mileage. Apply to volunteer online at <http://linktr.ee/nmcrsrota> and join

us for a monthly volunteer orientation. NMCRS Rota is looking for blanket makers and Thrift Shop volunteers.

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Child Find for children three to five years of age is an ongoing outreach program that locates and identifies children who may have developmental delays or educational disabilities and need special services. If you have concerns regarding your child's development, please contact DSN 727-4185/4435 or commercial, +34 956-82-4185/4435.

RETIRED ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO)

Fleet and Family Support Center, Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., by appointment only, +34 956 82 3232.

RAO serves as a link between the military retired community and other government agencies, such as Federal benefits Unit for Social Security and Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Veterans Administration (VA), and Office of Personnel Management (OPM). RAO provides assistance to survivors regarding pensions and benefits and is a source for information about retiring and living in Spain.

USO ROTA

The mission of the USO is to strengthen the well-being of America's military service members and their families. At USO Rota, we are dedicated to this mission by offering a variety of events and services—all free for active duty service members and their families.

Our center is conveniently located inside the Air Terminal and is open Monday through Friday, from 0830 to 1630. We invite you to join us for any of our events or stop by for a visit!

Interested in giving back? The USO is a fantastic organization for volunteering. To get started, fill out your volunteer profile at VOLUNTEERS.USO.ORG.

For all USO Rota events and more, follow "USO Rota" on Facebook at www.facebook.com/USORota.

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QR CODE

Local National Legends: NAVFAC Custodial Staff

We love highlighting our amazing team, so we have created a new monthly series to brag about our Local National (LN) personnel who work at the installation. Within these reels, you will be able to follow them through their daily tasks and learn more about how they support the fleet and how they make their job special to them.

Check out our first reel in the series featuring the NAVFAC Custodial Staff by scanning the QR code!



U.S. Navy Photo taken by Alejandra Tirapu Lucero



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HELLO BABY!

NAVSTA Rota
Birth Announcements

Oliver D. Spray
7 lbs 6 oz
Born on January 18th, 2026
Congrats to Allison & Logan Spray!

Knox M. Phillips
6 lbs 15 oz
Born on January 20th, 2026
Congrats to Laia & Jonathan Phillips!

Shiloh R. Forster
8 lbs 7 oz
Born on January 24th, 2026
Congrats to Abigail & Steven Forster!

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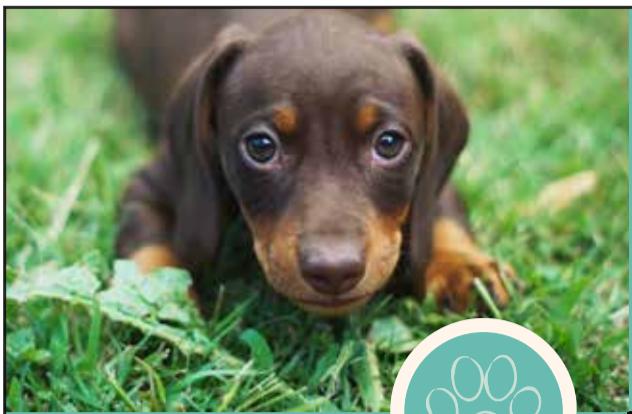
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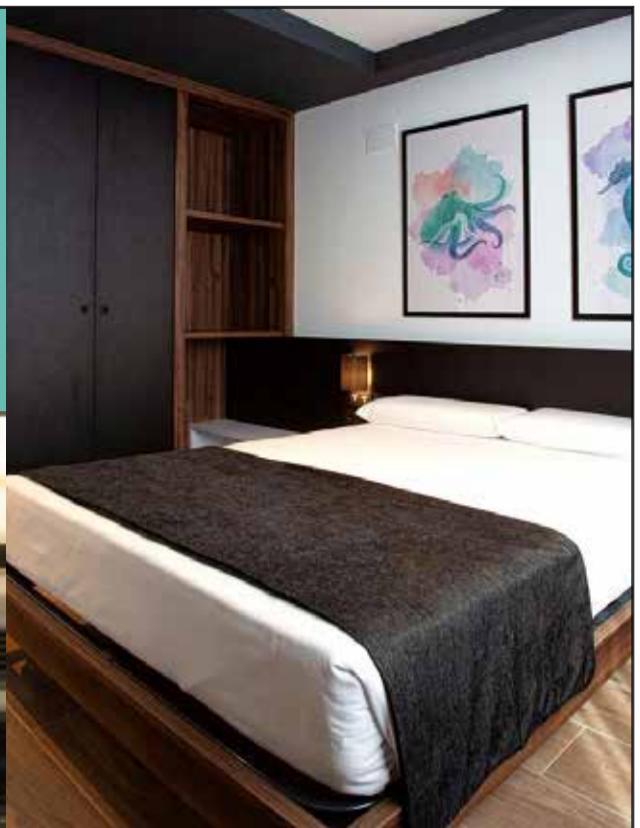
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