

el Periòdic News

INTERVIEW

Valeriano Pino

MAYOR OF TORREDEMBARRA

«Our investment projects focus on small family hotels»

IRINA
Rybalchenko



Torredembarra is a seaside town and municipality in the Tarragones region of Spanish Catalonia in the heart of Costa Daurada. The town has four beaches: La Paella (with a port for pleasure boats and a sports ground), Baix a Mar (located in an old fishing neighbourhood), Els Muntanyans (the only place of brackish wetlands preserved in the Ebre and the Llobregat deltas areas) and Canyadell, one of the most beautiful beaches of the region, surrounded by cliffs with typical Mediterranean vegetation.

We talked to the Mayor of Torredembarra, Valeriano Pino (who grew up in the town) about tourism, gastronomy, immigration problems, inflation and other current issues.

—How is the summer season going? Are you satisfied with the number of tourists this year?

—It is difficult for us to count the number of tourists visiting, since we count only those who come to our tourist office personally. During the summer season, the population of the municipality triples. At the same time, Torredembarra is a town that currently has 18,225 inhabitants



TOWN HALL OF TORREDEMBARRA



«From July 2013 to the same month in 2024, the inflation rate was 2.5%»

(we should, however, bear in mind that this is 'floating data' that depends on the season).

As for the countries of origin of our tourists, these are: France, Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, Andorra and, nationally, Aragon, Rioja, Navarre, and Madrid.

—What are the main tourist events taking place in your city?

—We hold a number of tourist events. In March, we celebrate la Mostra Rauxets; in August, we celebrate the Roca Foradada music festival; and from 23

August to 8 September there was the Festival of Santa Rosalia, the patron saint of our city.

In addition, we have Fira d'Indians, an event held annually in September that recreates our city of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, when a significant number of its inhabitants returned to the city after migrating to the south of the American continent in search of a better life. Upon their return, the 'Indians' brought with them many overseas items as well as customs that captivated the people of our town.

The beer fair and tapas fair also generate a lot of interest among locals and tourists.

Throughout the year we promote various gastronomic events and try to promote seasonal products. We have recently published a book of local recipes called “Ranxets: la Cuina de Torredembarra,” a collection of dishes made with ingredients that are available in every home: onions, garlic, tomatoes, nuts, oil, wine, seasonal vegetables... and of course fish. We offer a generous variety: from pickles to pickled mussels, cuttlefish and octopus, to cod with tomatoes, green onions, garlic and peppers...

Torredembarra doesn't have much agricultural land, but we find nearby areas such as: Tarragona, Penedès, Priorat, Montsant i Conca de Barberà.

—Why is Torredembarra considered to be more of a 'quiet residence' than a mass tourism destination? Which economic sectors are most developed here?

—Torredembarra is dominated by the service sector, followed by industry and construction. Nowadays we have enquiries for large construction works with a fairly stable demand. Thanks to the activity of the City Council, we can also obtain information on other economic indicators, such as the economic activity records

of hotels (there are only three hotels in the city), camping, and other tourist accommodations.

Indeed, as I said, hotel rooms are very limited here. We have a lot of tourist flats, although a new law now prohibits issuing more licenses for this type of business. So, we have some tension with the rental housing issue.

The annual budget of the city is about 27 million euros. Our personnel costs amount to about 40%, which corresponds to about 11 million euros. In addition, we invest in projects to support culture and tourism.

—The flow of migrants to the European Union from war-torn countries and the illegal entry of refugees into Europe are the problems that continue to be the most pressing. Are there many immigrants in your city and how much does it cost the municipal budget?

—We have about 3,600 people registered from other countries such as Morocco, Colombia, Romania, Italy, Venezuela, China, and Ukraine. These are migratory movements not only of Torredembarra, but of the whole of Spain and the whole of Europe. Our Social Action and Equality Department proposes to monitor the laws promulgated by the Generalitat de Catalunya in order to integrate all these people into our society.



TOWN HALL OF TORREDEMBARRA

—How has the quality of life in the city changed since the pandemic? Have you been able to recover from this worldwide crisis?

—The data we have on the standard of living is taken from the National Institute of Statistics of Catalonia.

This data tells us that from July 2013 to the same month in 2024, the inflation rate was 2.5%. As of July 2024, the city had 875 people registered for unemployment benefits.

—What are the main investment projects of your city?

—We want to reconstruct the theatre, which is now closed. There are many projects to improve the pavement and sections of public roads. We are building a new swimming pool, and we are recently discussing a

project for the construction of a promenade that will connect the whole coast, because it is one of the main attractions of our city.

—Are there any investment projects that could interest foreign investors?


—It could be a new theatre... I think in time some people will want to invest in new hotels and resorts. We hope that one day we will become attractive enough that investing in hotels will become an attractive business, given the type of hotels we want to see here. We are not Salou, it's a very different municipality, so we don't want big hotels. We would like to see more family-owned hotels here. And I would really like to see this important investment for the city to be realised in the next few years. ●

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