



Interview



Josep Bofill

Mayor of L'Escala

«The main product of L'Escala is canned anchovy»

IRINA RYBALCHENKO
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY
@PeriodicAND

The name of L'Escala is known around the world because of the excellence of its main industry, anchovy salting. During the visit to L'Escala, you can see its factories, as well as the anchovy and salt museum.

It is an important fishing port and tourist center of the Costa Brava, where many festivals are held.

Impressive sandy beaches encompass L'Escala, which is arranged toward the northeast of Cata-

lonia on the southern edge of the Bay of Roses. Besides enjoying the beaches and coves like Cala Montgó, Platja de Riells or Cala Illa Mateua, also there is the possibility to discover the entrance door to the Península Ibérica of Greek and Roman culture by visiting the Archaeological Deposit of Empúries.

The mayor of L'Escala, Josep Bofill told us about the plans for the development of the city, its gastronomic traditions, as well as sports and cultural events that are most attractive to tourists.

Josep Bofill was the first deputy

mayor, coordinator of the Territory and Sustainability area, and councilor for Urban Planning, Infrastructure, Mobility, Environment and Housing. He is 37 years old and has a diploma in technical industrial engineering in mechanics and a master's degree in materials and structures.

–How would you present your city in a couple of words?

–L'Escala is a coastal town that is mainly based on the provision of services related to tourism and which has a first-class cultural and

natural heritage.

The economy of the population is based on a very high % of services dedicated to tourism. But the fishing industry is still powerful today and includes canning sea products like salted anchovies.

–Do you feel the impact of the global crisis?

–We notice the price crisis that we are experiencing, as elsewhere. But I must say that the effect will probably be more noticeable from the fall. Since the summer season, according to the data, we have

developed very well.

–Which investment projects might interest your city?

–We have the municipal area almost completely urbanized and we will not grow in extension. We are reviewing the urban planning, and looking to the future, I foresee a reform of the existing urban plot, with the improvement of the urban fabric and an update of the housing stock.

–This year, there is a tourist boom in the entire Costa Brava. However,

most tourists are Spaniards and Catalans and sometimes French. What about your city? Who are your main tourists?

–It’s hard to give you exact numbers as we have seasonal tourists, daily tourists and transit tourists. What we can say is that sometimes we multiply the population by 6 or 7 (The population of the city in 2021 was 10,497 inhabitants).

–What important cultural and sporting events have occurred and are still planned for this year? Could you tell us about the Salt Festival, an event held annually on the third Saturday of September?

–Every year we have traditional festivals and celebrations, which this year precisely recover their normality, such as the Mediterranean Triumvirate, the Salt Festival, the activities related to Christmas, and the Portalblau festival. We also have sports events such as the *Empúries marathon*. I should also mention the *Travessa de Festa Major*, the town day celebration.

Surely what defines L’Escala as a town and highlights its origin is

the Salt Festival as well as its traditional trades. Almost all the town turns over this weekend! And the union of the people means that the identity that distinguishes us as a fishing town is not lost.

–Do you have plans to develop the logistics infrastructure to attract more tourists? Is there a boat taxi service with other cities on the Costa Brava?

–There is no such service. The communications we have from the municipality are only from the roads that reach the municipality.

–The Costa Brava is a very popular destination among Andorrans. Do you have any mutual projects with Andorra?

–The tourism development and promotion area work in different areas. We have a good part of French tourism, especially because it is the closest, but we work with other markets such as Andorra, Germany, Belgium and England. We keep our door open to everyone!

–As you have already said, the most characteristic product of L’Escala



«L’Escala is a coastal town that is mainly based on the provision of services related to tourism and which has a first-class cultural and developed very well»

is anchovies. What other traditional products or local dishes could you name?

–The main product, indeed, is canned anchovy. Every year at the beginning of October there is a party dedicated to this product. This party includes a gastronomic tapas route that includes snacks and dishes based on this product.

In addition, seafood, of course, is also the hallmark of the municipality. Seafood includes, for example, sardines and fish filets. Recently, we also have to mention «xuxo» cream, as we have announced the best «xuxo» in the world in the patisserie of L’Escala (“xuxo” is a deep-fried, sugar-coated cylindrical pastry filled with crema catalana. Commonly eaten for breakfast or tea, it is honored as *Producte de la Terra* (English: Product of the home country) by the Department of Agriculture, Farming and Fishing of the Government of Catalonia.

–The Alfolí, a salt warehouse, is a monument and Cultural Asset of National Interest. What is special about this place today?

–Alfolí is a warehouse from which

salt was distributed throughout the peninsula. We are working on the ethnological BCIN statement on the explanation of the salting process since Roman times in the Empúries.

–How is Estany de la Poma lake used today? Is there a tourist infrastructure?

–The Estany de la Poma is a natural lake, included in the Catalog of Areas of Natural and Landscape Interest of the Girona Regions (it measures 230 meters long from north to south, and 55 meters wide from east to west, with an approximate total area of 10,920m²).

The Estany de la Poma is in a private plot where people have camped for many years. If urban development follows the pace we have set, in a year the park will be open for everyone.

As mayor of L’Escala, which project would you like to implement first?

The opening of the apple pond (*l’estany de poma*) is an urban planning priority, and of the more day-to-day projects, I would like to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and public space. ≡

Your leading real estate agency in Andorra.

Our experience guarantees results, realtors since 1988.



(+376) 353 424 / (+376) 379 769

(+376) 747 747

laportella@andorra.ad

Casa Nova Olivet 10 · Ordino

www.laportella.ad

Don't miss any special editions of **El Periòdic!**