

### Routes in the Buñol Valley

The Buñol Valley marks the ascent from the Valencian coastal lands to the meseta of Castile. The eastern part, around Godelleta, Cheste and Chiva, is a gently sloping winegrowing area connecting the neighbouring districts of L'Horta, La Ribera Alta and El Camp de Túria. At Buñol, a tall geographical mass bars the way to the west. In former days it was the first big obstacle on the road to Castile. Today the traffic flows smoothly up impressive viaducts that rise 500m in just a few minutes. The landscape is more mountainous, but the valleys are still dotted with vineyards whose autumn hues seem to give melancholic chromatics to the district.

The sierras, ascendable via mountain trails and dirt roads, offer good panoramas because of their proximity to the coast. The rivers and streams in the area lend a special touch to the scenery: the Forata reservoir, the banks of the Magro and Mijares rivers, the unique geomorphology of the Buñol

river and the Carcalín ravine, and to the south, the Júcar river, boxed in between tall cliffs, marks the border of the district.

The area contains industrial estates in Buñol with scenery that is fully rural in character. The diversity and quality of the landscape deserves a tranquil tour of the area to enjoy nature at its best and all the admirable improvements to the land worked by generations of inhabitants. The best ways to discover these enchanting lands is to leave your car behind and set out on foot, by bicycle or even on horseback.

The Buñol Valley is ideal for hiking trips, which can be made using the so-called Long and Short-Distance Routes, known in Spain as



### Long and Short Distance Hiking Route Network

The Long-Distance Hiking Route GR-7 (signposted in red and white) cuts through the western part of the district from north to south, offering scenic views of the Tejo and Moratillas peaks, the Sierra de Martés and the Venta Gaeta. The northernmost sector (up to Rebollar) is described in the Topoguía Arteas de Arriba-Rebollar (València, Centre Excursionista de València, 1986). The Short-Distance Hiking Route PRV-115 (signposted in white and yellow) joins Yátova, the Forata reservoir and the GR-7. In addition to these routes, the Buñol Valley offers a wide range of possibilities

“Senderos de Pequeño Recorrido” (PRs) and “Senderos de Gran Recorrido” (GRs). These are traditional trails signposted in colours to facilitate orientation. They can be used by anyone in good physical shape and moderately accustomed to walking in the mountains. Please remember that keeping this landscape beautiful is everyone's responsibility. Do not light fires or leave rubbish behind, take it with you until you can leave it in the appropriate place. Respect crops and rural constructions, and plant and animal life in general.



for enjoying nature, from simple strolls to long excursions.

### Climbing in the Buñol Valley

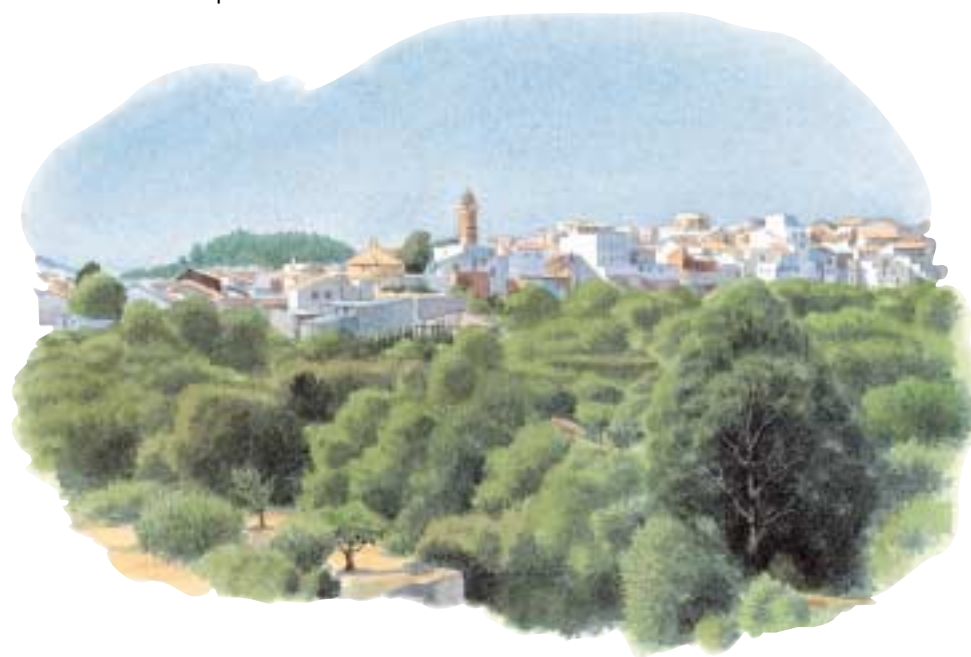
Along the Buñol river or the Carcalín ravine, Valencian climbers have marked out various limestone faces for climbing. The Maneri gorge, an affluent of the Buñol river, has a spot called Aguja Roja (Red Needle) next to the old stagecoach inn called Venta de l'Home. Along the course of the Buñol river are three small climbing schools, known to enthusiasts as the Silla del Papa, Nido de Águilas and Pared AALOS. These are routes marked out in the 70s and are to be climbed with all due care. The heights range from 50 to 70m. Accesses



and descriptions can be found in the book by R. Cebrián *Montañas Valencianas vol. II* (Valencia, 1983).

### For cyclists

Roads in the Buñol Valley offer a wide choice of routes for cycling fans. Making a trip to Dos Aguas and admiring the deep canyon of the Júcar river is only one of them. The circuit around the Sierra de Martés begins in Macastre or Yátova, following the local road CV-429 to La Portera (Requena). From here one can continue along the N-330 to Los Pedrones, where the CV-425 branches off to border the southern part of the mountains to close the circuit. The strategic location of the Buñol Valley gives cyclists the chance to map out routes that run into the neighbouring districts of La Canal de Navarrés or the Plana de Requena-Utiel,



with railway stations serving as departure and destination points.

Those preferring the mountain bike have a range of trails along which they can mark out their own routes. One example is the climb to the Sierra de Malacara (up to the Nevera peak at 1,118m, reached by a dirt track); or the Sierra de Martés; from Siete Aguas the Tejo peak (1,250m) can be reached; or from Chiva there is a climb to Los Bosques, with excellent panoramic views over the coastal plain.

### Publications and maps

Visitors interested in excursions can consult two works by R. Cebrián: *Montañas Valencianas vol. II* (Valencia, 1983) and *Montañas Valencianas vol. III* (Valencia, Centre Excursionista de València, 1986). In view of its publication date, some itineraries may have changed due to the opening of new routes, or overgrowth or destruction of the natural habitat by forest fires. Before going on an excursion or doing outdoor sports in the

district it is recommendable to consult maps and obtain detailed written information. The Buñol Valley is included in the following 1:50,000 scale maps: *Chulilla* 27-27 (694), *Llíria* 28-27 (695), *Requena* 27-28 (720), *Cheste* 28-28 (721), *Jalance* 27-29 (745) and *Llombai* 28-29 (746).



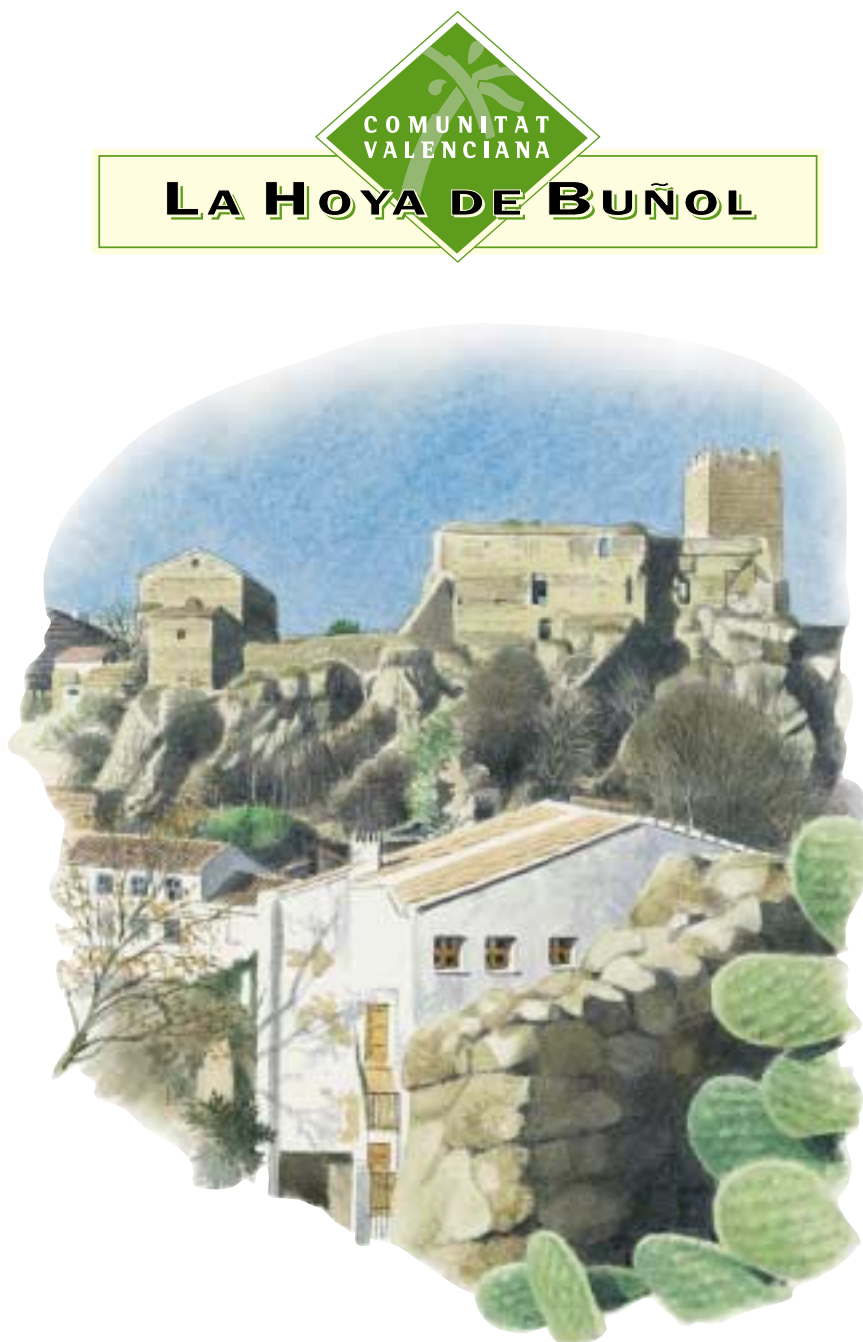
### Useful Tips

The Buñol Valley's main link is the Valencia-Madrid dual carriageway (A-3), on which the towns of Cheste, Chiva, Buñol and Siete Aguas are located. The local road CV-425 is the main route around the rest of the district. From the south, the best access route is via Turís, along the CV-50 and CV-415. There are regular bus routes from Valencia to towns in the Buñol Valley. The Valencia-Cuenca-Madrid railway line has stops in Cheste, Chiva, Buñol and Siete Aguas.



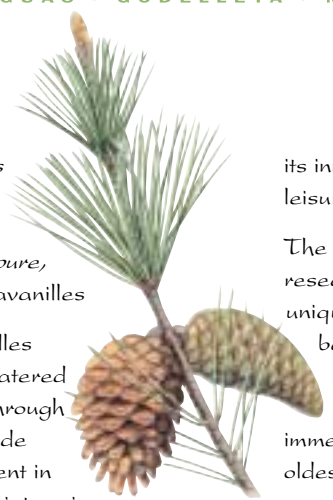
### Tourist Information Offices

Further information can be obtained from local town councils in the district and in the tourist information office of Requena. Tourist Info Requena Calle García Montes s/n 46340 Requena Tel. & Fax: 96 230 38 51 E-mail:touristinfo.requena@turisme.m400.gva.es Tourist Info Valencia-Paz Calle Paz, 48 Tel. 96 398 64 22 Fax 96 398 64 21 E-mail:touristinfo.valencia@turisme.m400.gva.es





"Abundant pines, strawberry trees, maples and a prodigious number of shrubs and bushes grow here, which not infrequently upholster the soil completely (...). There are many springs whose waters are copious and of excellent quality. Everywhere the air is pure, fresh and cold in the higher parts and warmer in the valleys." – Cavanilles

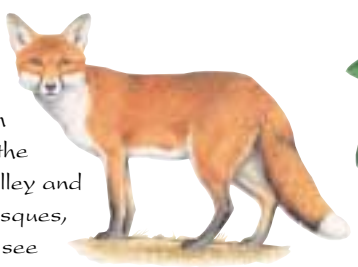


The springs and excellent waters that the 18th-C botanist Cavanilles mentions in his observations are still very apropos in this district watered by the rivers Magro, Juanes, Buñol, Mijares and Júcar. Snaking through the canyons, running through deep gorges, rising up at mountainside springs or plummeting down cascades, water is a ubiquitous element in the Buñol Valley, and local fountains are very much a part of the picture in this scenic district.



The landscape here is varied and rich. Along the eastern side of the district the terrain is gently sloping and undulating, with ochre, golden and reddish soils, alternating with market gardens and hilltops cloaked in vineyards. The more westerly parts present hillier terrain, with peaks rising higher and higher and the scenery getting greener. In addition to the Aleppo pine, the mountainsides are covered in sweet-smelling clumps of thyme, rosemary, penny mountain and gorse, and growing in the shadier spots, hemmed in between rockcliffs, are yews, holm oaks and maples. Standing practically everywhere, often close to the rivers, there are replantations of poplar trees, willows and oleanders.

Soaring over the mountains one can see the short-toed eagle, the sparrowhawk and the buzzard, and to a lesser extent, perhaps the golden eagle, Bonelli's eagle and the booted eagle. There are many ravens, magpies and crows, and mammals such as the common hedgehog, the mountain cat, the wild boar, the weasel, the fox, the genet or the stone marten. In the wilder places the proud deer can sometimes be fleetingly seen.



A tour of the Buñol Valley provides lots of surprises for the visitor. Nature lovers will enjoy walking through the cool shady pine forest near the Nevera peak and the Sierra Malacara, or wandering through the Vallesa valley and the Santa María sierras, visiting sites such as Los Bosques, El Caballón or Las Cabrillas. Archaeology buffs can see important settlements and remains of Iberian and Roman fortress towns. The more adventurous can ascend to the Asno or Ave peaks, descend the course of the river Juanes or climb the walls of its gorges. For everyone, a quiet rest next to the cool waters of the Turche waterfall or at any of

its innumerable springs, or some fishing in the Forata reservoir, offer other leisure alternatives.

The district presents additional attractions for scientists and researchers. Some of the remains found here include a unique species called the "calicoterides" (something between a horse and a gorilla), giant rhinos, bears, wolves and elephants that have surprised the scientific community. In geological terms, Buñol was once an immense savannah, like those in present-day Africa, and is one of the oldest and most southerly European sites for mammalian life from the Miocene period.



In addition to its natural attractions, it also offers interesting alternatives because of its festivities calendar, mainly in the summer months. All towns celebrate their patron saint's day and the religious rites intermingle with dances, heifer baiting and open-air concerts. In Chiva, people run with the steers through the streets on three fiesta days, staging popular dances known as "torras" to the sound of the drum and flagedet. In Buñol, people dress up as souls (*animas*) and mourners (*plañideras*) and carry lanterns and candles in a procession called the "Burial of the Sardine". Among all the fiestas, the "Tomatina" of Buñol is famous. This fiesta started in a casual way in 1945 and has now become an enormous tomato battle involving the whole town and attracting thousands of tourists during the last fortnight of August.



The local cuisine combines vegetables from the market gardens with sturdy, traditional dishes that still use recipes of old, such as *mojete* (a bread dip), *olla podrida* (a meat stew), La Hoya suckling pigs, *chorizos del demonio* (hot chorizo sausages), *pisto* (pepper and tomato hash), *morteruelo* (cured pork), and *rinran* (codfish cooked with garlic and potatoes and sprinkled with virgin olive oil), all washed down with the excellent wines from the area. For dessert, delicious tables grapes – black tempranera, roseti or muscatel – watermelon and honey melons from Godelleta, or dried fruits and nuts from Chiva can be accompanied by a *mistela* or muscatel liqueur, aniseed rolls and sugar-coated almonds.



The tour starts in **Cheste**, a town that has been highly regarded by archaeologists since 1864, when, in a place called Partida de Zafa, the so-called "Treasure of Cheste" was found, an important horde of jewels and gold and silver coins dating from the Iberian period. The town makes wines that are well worth tasting, and



a visit can also be made to the chapel dedicated to the Valencian St Vicente Ferrer, in the Plaza del Calvario and to the church of San Lucas, with a svelte baroque bell tower. The old part of town is good for a stroll around the winding streets of Moorish origin.

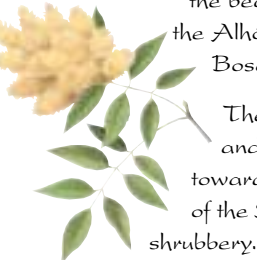
Also of interest in the environs of Cheste is the Valencian Region's "Ricardo Tormo" Racetrack, where exciting automobile and motorcycling events and competitions are held on a regular basis.

Towards the town of **Chiva**, the land becomes more undulating, and the vineyards are set on ochre-coloured and reddish terrain. Built around the foot of a hill topped by the ruins of a castle, the town deserves a stop to visit the parochial church with frescoes



by Vergara and the well-tended, white chapel of the Virgin of the Castle (Virgen del Castillo). The municipal area is mountainous, punctuated by ravines and numerous fountains that cool the air and form shady oases that are highly appreciated by the local residents and visitors. The sierras in the area place a note of colour on the scenery, in which modern residential estates can frequently be seen.

From Chiva or Cheste excursions can be made to the beauty spots of the Hoz and Marjana ravines and to the fountain of the Alhóndiga, or golf enthusiasts can try their swing on the 18-hole El Bosque golf course.



The road to **Godelleta** runs through large vineyards, market gardens and fruit tree orchards. The town sits on a plain that gains in height towards the west, and to the northeast it reaches the last spurs of the Sierra Perenchiza, clothed in pine forests and mountain shrubbery. The old town centre has winding streets that converge in the centre on a medieval tower with Moorish foundations, the remains of the original Arabic town of Godaila. Before continuing the tour one should try the excellent muscatel wine called "mistela" and visit some of the fountains throughout the municipality: Calicanto, Murtal, Carrasca, Fuentecica and Rulla.

In a valley beside a river of the same name lies the town of **Buñol**, surrounded by hills, fountains and springs in a landscape decorated with ash trees and maples alternating with mastic trees and honeysuckle. The town is fairly large, set on the slopes of a mountain capped by a castle, and has harmoniously integrated its old town centre with more modern districts. To get acquainted with its origins, a tour of the town should start with a visit to the fortress castle, whose silhouette stands out at the highest point in town, with a keep



that towers 30m high. This was originally a Roman tower, and was later enlarged by the Moors. There is an elegant Gothic hall where chamber music concerts are often staged.

In the place where the ancient mosque stood, there is now an interesting archaeological museum, and next to the castle walls is the curious open-air Museum of Sculpture.

A stroll around the old part of town will give visitors a view of former noblemen's mansions, picturesque streets such as the Calle de la Sartén (Frying Pan St) or the Church of St Peter the Apostle, with its tiled dome and sturdy bell tower. In the outlying part of town is the chapel dedicated to San Luis Beltrán, next to a spring and fountain of the same name, to which, as the local legend goes, this saint gave eternal life. This is a picturesque spot where a large open-air auditorium has been built, a place where two local music bands, the Armónica and the Artística, rival each other in performing fine concerts.

Buñol is surrounded by streams and rivers on all sides. There are over three hundred fountains in the town centre, and in the environs are fountains, springs, streams and waterfalls scattered around the municipality, creating scenic spots that visitors should see before continuing, such as the Turche cascade, the Cave of the Maravillas, the Jara and Ronquillo fountains and the river area known as Juanes.

Towards the south, **Alborache** presents a broken landscape crisscrossed by gorges, ravines and streambeds. A road leading through mulberry, olive and carob trees leads to the village of **Macastre**, with houses extending across the flat land to the skirts of a hilltop crowned by a castle, which, like that of Buñol, was once strategically important as a frontier fort between Castile and Valencia. Travellers can stop in this town to buy the delicious biscuits and buns made at various bakers' shops here, try some cool water from the fountain in the main square and visit the small but carefully kept church. On the outskirts of town are the Grande, the Bolot and the Santa Bárbara fountains, in shady scenic spots that are ideal for a short rest along the way.



In the direction of **Yátova**, the horizon presents a series of hilltops and peaks that increase in height as they march out towards the Sierra del Caballón, in the middle of which stands the majestic Montrotón peak. The terrain is dotted with fountains and forests, serving as a habitat for rabbits, partridges and wild boars. The riverbanks are sprinkled with the colours of oleanders, and almost everywhere one can smell the aroma of rosemary and gorse in the air. From Yátova or Macastre excursions can be made to the valley of the river Magro between the sierras of Malacara and Martés, or one can climb to the Asno hilltop or the Pardenilla peak, or try some fishing or canoeing in the Forata reservoir.

Beyond the Sierra del Ave, the town of **Dos Aguas** rises up like a sculpture in the sky. It is hidden among the mountains, like a tiny paradise in the midst of huge stretches of mountain land which have gradually grown back their tree and shrub cover following past bouts with forest fires. A number of fountains feed the thriving plant life, and the river Júcar, bordering the district, snakes through the landscape to form unique beauty spots. As an alternative, hikes can be made to the Ave or the Carcamal peaks. The effort of the ascent will be richly rewarded by the fantastic panoramas to be gained from the top.

On the westernmost tip of the district, on the other side of the Sierra Malacara, the town of **Siete Aguas** – literally "seven waters" – is the mountain outpost that divides the Valencian piedmonts from the high plain of Requena, tucked away in an area cut through and through by defiles, ravines and gorges. This area was once described by the botanist Cavanilles as the refuge of waylayers and highway robbers, but it has now become a quiet, peaceful holiday area, set in beautiful landscape closed in by the sierras of Santa María, Tejo and Malacara, with altitudes that rise above one thousand metres. The Siete Aguas stream flows through here forming deep, narrow valleys, flanked by pine forests in the shadows of the Nevera peak and the Sierra Malacara and Cabrillas, whereas other parts are covered by shrubbery and underbrush.

This town is full of legends, among which is the one about Doña Jimena, the Cid's wife, who stayed here on her return to Castile bearing her husband's body in state. Another more romantic tale has it that 15th-C Alfonso V, in an affair with the wife of one of his footmen, had to cross seven irrigation canals to get here, which gave the name to the town. What is definitely true is that the town has a wealth of fountains, as its name suggests. The large mosaic tile fountain of the Seven Spouts (*Siete Caños*), for example, is highly popular for its curative properties, and, as its inscription reads, "is a source of richness and gives health to the sick".

After tasting its waters, visitors might like to explore the surrounding area, discovering the fountains of La Roca, El Garbanzo, La Gota and La Recija (the source of the Buñol river), or perhaps stop at the uninhabited outlying village of Vallesa and stroll through the valley of the same name, between the Santa María and Los Bosques sierras, a picturesque spot from which one can reach the Buseo reservoir, bordering on the edge of the district, and enjoy some water sports.







- Cima
- Zona de escalada
- Árbol monumental
- Nevera
- Ermita
- Castillo
- Monumento/Museo
- Auditorio
- Moscatel
- Área recreativa
- Área de acampada
- Refugio
- Alojamiento rural
- Albergue
- Hotel/Hostal/Pensión
- Restaurante
- Actividades Aire Libre
- Golf
- Centros de Salud 24 h.
- Gasolinera
- Cueva / Pinturas rupestres
- Poblado ibérico

- Carreteras
  - Cursos de agua
  - Autopista-Autovía
  - Ferrocarril
  - Itinerario excursionista señalizado
  - Pista forestal
- Elevación:
- inferior a 300 m
  - 300 m - 600 m
  - 600 m - 900 m
  - superior a 900 m