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LAS BREÑAS

between tradition and modernism



This little mountain village between Playa Blanca and Femés is not somewhere you would come across normally. People who go there make a special trip. Originally Las Breñas was built as a residential area for workers from the salt pans of Janubio, nowadays both locals and some foreign residents enjoy the quietude and spectacular views of this place. At the same time the tourist centre of Playa Blanca and the capital of the municipality, Yaiza, are only 10 minutes away - a perfect place for people who are looking for somewhere special.

In this peaceful place you will notice that a visit to Las Breñas gives you a mixture of traditional Lanzarote architecture and modern houses. Some of the inhabitants are still living in the typical cubist houses of the island, with their white walls and green doors, while others have bought the old houses of the salt pan

workers, which they have lovingly restored in every detail from floor to roof. You will also find new buildings with modern architecture, in exposed positions taking advantage of the slopes so that they have wonderful views. Many of the houses, whether new or old, have small patches of garden or field where vegetables, including onions and potatoes, grow. Others have transformed the land around their houses into magnificent gardens. Las Breñas has managed to maintain the flair and atmosphere of a typical Lanzarote village, where you do not notice tourism. Here neighbours know each other, doors are open not closed and in their gardens their laundry is hanging up to dry, just like bygone days.

Las Breñas is a widespread village with a little church in the middle, in front of which is a small park and the village square dedicated to Victor Fernández Gopar, the well known poet and writer of traditional Island songs. Every year the municipality organizes a big festival to honour him, with local groups singing and dancing in the old style. Las Breñas is also the home of the popular folklore group La Par-randa Janubio which meets in the social centre to study songs and dances. This little centre next to the church is for the locals, and apart from the only restaurant in the village, one of the most important meeting places. Here you will find free computer and internet facilities, a small library, courses for manual workers which are free of charge and a place to hold village celebrations. On June 21st, the first day of summer, the village patron saint San Luis Gonzaga is honoured, when artists and villagers decorate this social centre, and for over a week many different events take place.



For some years Las Breñas has been home to a few internationally well known people and has become an artists' enclave. For example the musician Stefan Remmler (who doesn't remember the hit "Da da da?") often when interviewed talks enthusiastically of the wonderful atmosphere of his new home town. "These days I love it when I go into bars where the whole family can spend their Sundays, the men playing cards, the women gossiping, the children running around, television playing, a really nice environment." Other artists, sportsmen and media people share the same experiences and have found in Las Breñas a place of inspiration with freedom from urban and city stress ■

