

Painting wild Spain

11 – 18 May 2013

Master the art of painting wild places and colourful birds in Extremadura with two of Europe's leading nature artists.



In May, Extremadura's wild flower meadows will be in full bloom – their dazzling colours having you reaching for your paints.

BBC
**Wildlife
READER
HOLIDAY**

Dave Kilbey

MEET OUR ARTISTS



DARREN REES

is one of the UK's most highly respected nature

artists, as well as an experienced naturalist. He is on the council of the Society of Wildlife Artists and has been leading wildlife tours for Speyside Wildlife for 20 years. He writes a regular blog for the *BBC Wildlife* website www.discoverwildlife.com



JUAN VARELA

champions wildlife art in Spain. He is a biologist, a keen

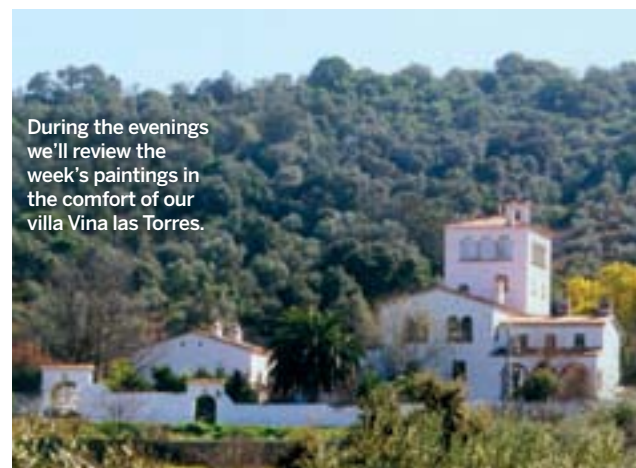
conservationist and a passionate artist who has been painting wildlife since 1976. Juan's art has been exhibited around the world, he often works with the Artist for Nature Foundation and leads art courses in the field and studio.

Improve your painting under the warmth of the Spanish sun on our seven-day painting course to Extremadura. May is a wonderful time to visit this beautiful region – wildflower meadows are in full bloom, the air is alive with the calls of hoopoes and woodlarks, and rainbow hued bee-eaters and rollers will have you reaching for your palette.

Join Juan Varela and Darren Rees, from the prestigious Society of Wildlife Artists, to learn new skills and master familiar ones in the field and in the studio.

Staying in a charming rural guest house (below), you will make day trips to Monfrague National Park to watch birds of prey, including eagles and griffon vultures, to the steppes to see great bustards and Montagu's harriers, and to the charming medieval town of Trujillo, where every church tower is topped with a white stork nest.

With a group of only 12 participants, everyone will enjoy one-to-one tuition – so whether you're a beginner or an experienced artist, you're guaranteed to learn something new.



During the evenings we'll review the week's paintings in the comfort of our villa Vina las Torres.



Every participant will receive a free painting kit worth £120, containing the materials you will need for the course, courtesy of Great Art (www.greatart.co.uk).

GreatArt
Price & Choice 



Juan captures the 'jizz' of the beautiful black-winged kite.



Darren paints a griffon vulture looming on a crag against a dusky sky.



Darren paints in the field using a telescope.

THE ITINERARY

Day 1

Fly from London to Madrid and transfer to our delightful country hotel Viña Las Torres, near Trujillo, Extremadura (about three hours drive).

Day 2

Our introduction to sketching in the field begins in the hotel grounds, where we will find hoopoes, woodchat shrikes and azure-winged magpies, while red kites and booted eagles soar above the olive groves, and serins and red-rumped swallows fill the air. Even the starlings have no spots!

Days 3–7

Further afield, daily excursions will take in a variety of beautiful Extremaduran landscapes. In May, the holm oak woodlands are often carpeted with blue French lavender and host to woodlarks and great spotted cuckoos, and the surrounding fields are ablaze with spring flowers. We look for little and

great bustards on the relic steppe land of the Caceres and Belen plains, as well as hunting Montagu's harriers and little owls – bee-eaters and rollers will add colour to the palette.

For a change of pace, we can sharpen our architectural drawing in the charming streets and squares of medieval Trujillo, where lesser kestrels and pallid swifts fill the air and every church tower has its own pair of white storks.

For lovers of birds of prey, Monfrague National Park is home to five species of eagle, rare black vultures and countless kites. We'll visit the rugged cliff faces that host large colonies of griffon vultures, which are always fun to draw, and look for a supporting cast of Egyptian vultures, vivid blue rock thrushes and iridescent black storks. We may even find an eagle owl at its daytime roost.

Day 8

Today we shall have to tear ourselves away for our drive back to Madrid and return flight to the UK.

NEW ART SKILLS FOR EVERYONE

Practical techniques for painting in the field

- Keeping your art kit light, portable and handy
- Working within a time frame

Fundamentals of portraying landscapes

- Underpinning painting with drawing
- Composition and planning
- Developing a visual shorthand
- Achieving recession and depth
- Colour, tonal and linear perspective
- How to mix colour
- How to give a landscape identity

- How to capture light and mood

Wildlife in the field

- Introducing field sketching
- The principle of looking and understanding through observation
- Drawing as a tool for learning
- Getting closer – how to use binoculars and a telescope for intimate viewing

Wildlife in action... and at rest

- How to use gesture drawings
- Thumbnail size sketches for a subject in motion

Wildlife in its environment

- How to avoid problems of perspective, scale, light and colour

Understanding bird anatomy

- Notes on basic anatomy
- Looking at detail – understanding feathers

In the studio (evenings and during bad weather)

- How to turn raw materials into paintings
- Pooling sketches from the field
- Using other reference material, for example, photos and videos

PAINTING WILD SPAIN READER HOLIDAY

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Where Near Trujillo Extremadura

Cost From £1,695 per person (includes flights, full board, transport and tuition)

Deposit £300 per person

Single supplement £150 per person

Flights Easyjet Gatwick to Madrid (rtn)

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