

**H**OW do you tell the story of an Island? This was the question that Mark Edwards and Steffi Schulz pondered when they decided to embark on writing their photo portrait book, "Faces of Mallorca." The remarkable result has received endorsement from the highest places, including the Majorcan tourist industry.

I was fortunate to meet Mark in the early stages, and to witness first-hand the fascinating metamorphosis from idea to fruition. Finally, with the launch this week, November 11, I asked Mark and Steffi about the book's journey. Their reasons for writing it and their expectations for the book.

#### What gave you the idea of the book?

"As British and German friends who were based on the island, we found that the most common thing for foreigners in Mallorca was to know mainly other expats, and barely have any access to the Majorcans themselves – and we really wanted to change that, for ourselves and for the reader.

We felt that Majorca had a sun, sea and sand stereotype and we wanted to get beyond this. We wanted people to meet with as diverse a group of locals as possible.

Funnily enough, both of us had had the idea to create a photo book about people's stories for a long time. When we became friends, we saw the opportunity to collaborate and bring our skills together to achieve this."

#### Who were you seeking to appeal when writing the book?

"On the surface, it is a beautiful photo book and can be enjoyed as such. People who enjoy looking through beautiful images and having visual glimpses into people's lives will, we hope, love it.

On another level, we also feel that people with a connection to Majorca - or people wishing to know more about Majorca - will enjoy it.

Through the images and short texts, you can find out so much about Majorcan culture. The language, the personality of its people together with their hopes and dreams. We never wanted to write an academic book about history or culture. Yet, as you look into the eyes of the people, and glance over their stories, you will get immersed into the personality of the Majorcans.

#### What did you learn?

We had a number of native islanders telling us again and again what it means to be a Majorcan. Since there were so many consistent

# FACES OF MALLORCA

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Mark Julian Edwards and Stephanie Schulz launching their new book. Photo: Olga Poppius.



Above: Performer and gay rights activist Jordi Maranges by Mark Edwards from *Faces of Mallorca*. Below: Mark Edwards with Andreu Serra, Tourism minister of Mallorca and Catalina Cladera, president of the Council of Mallorca with new book *Faces of Mallorca*.

cies, we decided to write the first two pages from the perspective of a single Majorcan. We really hope we have captured the essence of what it is to be Majorcan through all the interactions we had.

We learnt a great deal about Majorcan history and its impact. Majorca has been invaded over centuries so many times. Its people also been betrayed and exploited so frequently, that over time they often chose to stick to their own family and close friends, with it sometimes taking a while to trust outsiders.

#### What did you love about the process?

Mark: In writing the book we got to have experiences and adventures we would never normally have had the opportunity to enjoy.

Steffi: For me it was especially the encounters with all these different people. Getting to understand what makes them who they are, and what they dream of was amazing. Then, as Mark mentioned, the book took us out on so many adventures. There were so many things you wouldn't normally do. For example, to go out at 5 in the morning on a fishing boat, or climb high up on a lighthouse, where one of its last keepers told us about his life. It was a life changing journey!

Mark: For me, kicking a ball around with



Laura Stadler

the captain of Mallorca FC, playing tennis across the court from Toni Nadal, who had trained Rafa for years, and photographing street artists on a night out in Magalluf were some of the most surreal, craziest experiences I could imagine experiencing.

#### Did you have any favourite people in your travels?

Mark: That's such a difficult question. For some people it was their story. For others, it was the visual tale we could tell. For me, the person who really stays with me is Jordi Maranges. Part of Jordi's story was very moving, since he described his struggle to be openly homosexual within what he perceived as a conservative society. Together we decided that he would "dress up" and so the photos I took of him were alive, different and, I hope, liberating for him.

Steffi: Meeting the nuns for example and having the opportunity to get to understand what moves them, was a very special, almost an enlightening experience. But there were so many others. In some way, each encounter was special and each person's life story ended up teaching us something new.

#### How did you choose who should be in the book?

Well firstly, we wanted to have all of the elements covered, so we made sure we had people connected to the sea, the mountains, and the air.

In calling the book "Faces of Mallorca", we wanted to show a different face of the island – the real local face that we don't always have the opportunity to see; and in that context we wanted to show a diverse range of people who each lead very different lives.

But one of the most important criteria was: the person had to be interesting to us, as we felt that if we didn't feel moved by their story, no one else would be.

We are happy to say that after all the time we have spent writing, creating and editing the book, we can still flip through the pages, and they continue to make us smile. We hope the reader will feel the same.

#### What form of support did you receive?

It was really important to us that we had both local Majorcan and international endorsements. We were delighted that Toni Nadal and Andreu Serra, the Tourism Minister of Majorca supported the book. Internationally, it has been endorsed by Tony Wheeler, the creator of the Lonely Planet along with other leading authors and international journalists.

*Faces of Mallorca* is available to buy on Amazon and at bookstores throughout Mallorca. You can follow *Faces of Mallorca* on Facebook & Instagram at [facesofmallorca](https://www.facebook.com/facesofmallorca)

#### ARTS SOCIETY MAJORCA

Clashing with the launch of *Faces of Mallorca*, November 11 also sees the fascinating Arts Society lecture about Barcelona 1900: Wealth, poverty and violence in society and superb creativity in Art. Details: [mallorca@theartsociety.org](mailto:mallorca@theartsociety.org)

