



## Interview

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Catalonia is home to Europe's only seaside via ferrata - Cala del Molí. Whether you are a rock-climbing expert or a beginner wanting to try your hand, this is the perfect place for an exciting adventure. Stunning views of the Mediterranean Sea are guaranteed! The route is 480 metres long and can be up to 20 metres high, offering impressive panoramic views of the Costa Brava.

The author of this unique project is Albert Gironés. Far from thinking about retirement, Albert takes care of keeping projects going, when he is not devising new ones. He used to work as a pastry chef, mechanic, welder, mountain guide... He participated in motorcycle trials and rallies. He created adventure parks, did climbing, caving, snowshoeing, mountain skiing, canyoning, kayaking...

He is a volunteer for the Red Cross and Civil Protection, builder of climbing walls, zip lines and vies ferrades, lover of ornithology and photography, organizer of races and various tests. In addition, he carries out research work on dolmens, menhirs and caves.

On top of that, he wrote a couple of books, «Vies ferrades, coves i indrets de la Costa Brava» i «32 vies ferrades per Catalunya i Andorra».

We talked to Albert about his most interesting projects and his new ideas.

**-Which of the projects you have implemented do you consider the most successful and exciting?**

-Mountains have always been my passion. I have made climbing routes and gorges, restored lost trails and built new ones, creating a dossier with each location. I built forest adventure Parks and via ferratas (Gorges de Salenys, Agulles Rodones, Cala del Molí etc).

All of them are important to me because I like to do things that other people can enjoy. The importance of the project can be seen in the feedback from people.

**-What can you say about the development of extreme sports? Are a lot of people interested in it?**

-More and more people are looking for that additional rush of adrenaline that extreme sports provide. Being able to push yourself, day in and day out, is a great motivator for active life.

**-Catalonia is home to the only via ferrata in Europe by the sea: via ferrata Cala del Molí. What level of climbing do you need? Is this activity free?**

-Cala del Molí (Sant Feliu de Guíxols, Catalonia, about 230 km from Andorra) has two distinct sections: the first simple section is a K2 and the second complicated section is a K3. The big advantage



## Albert Gironés

Adventure park constructor, writer, mountain guide, mountaineer and speleologist

«If we are talking about via ferrata, I would recommend Cala del Molí»



is that there's an emergency exit in the middle where you can get out if you don't want to do the second part of the course.

**-Which via ferratas would you recommend tourists visit first in Spain and Andorra?**

-Fortunately, we have a wide variety of places of interest: caves, mountains, ferratas and many other activities to enjoy in our country.

Of course, if we're talking about via ferrata, I'd recommend Cala del Molí. People who do it for the first time find it spectacular and unique.

**-Do you have plans to write another book?**

-I have a real story, which happened to me and three mates in a ravine, that I have described in detail and anecdotes. I've also started writing about my life, because I have so many stories about things I've done in the past that are worthy of a whole book. But I don't know if I'll ever finish it.

With your own money, you constructed the longest via ferrata in Spain, the Ferrada d'Agulles Rodones, and the second longest and most suitable for families and children, the Ferrada de les Gorges

de Salenys. They had been closed for a long time. And what about now?

The Ferrada de les Gorges de Salenys is closed. I have tried several times to contact the local town hall for help, but without success.

The town hall closed the Ferrada d'Agulles Rodones, but people still go there. It is already very outdated, and something new is needed, but city hall wants nothing to do with it.

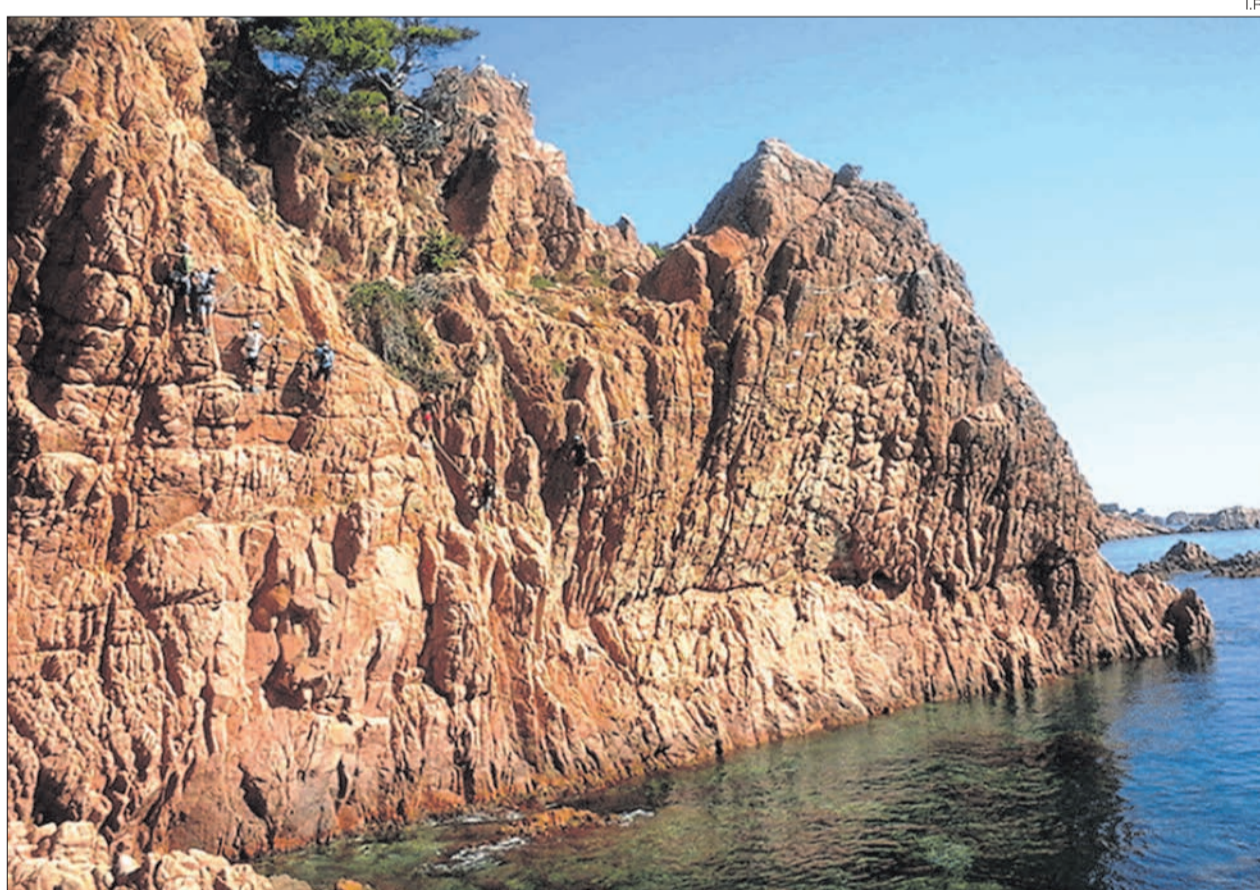
This via ferrata cost me a lot of effort and money, yes. And since it is one of the longest in Spain, it is of great interest.

**-Were you able to realise your dream and build a via ferrata for people with disabilities?**

-After many attempts, research and contacts with people with disabilities, I could not find any support to continue this project. Finding such support is one of my dreams. I would be very happy if people, who in many cases are marginalised due to mobility issues, could enjoy such an activity.

**-What else do you want to build?**

-Plans are made over time depending on the opportunities that sometimes arise in life. I don't have anything concrete for sure, but I don't rule anything out, either!≡



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