



## Interview



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Tarragona is located on the coast of the Balearic Sea in the north-eastern part of Spain, in the south of Catalonia. The city is associated with the era when Tarraco (the ancient name of Tarragona) was one of the most important cities on the Iberian peninsula. Tarragona shows the real history of mankind, connecting several thousand years of development. The mayor of Tarragona Pau Ricomà told us about the main attractions of the city, its cultural and gastronomic traditions, as well as its investment and tourism development plans.

**–Tarragona is one of the most important historical centers of Spain. What are the main attractions of the city?**

–In addition to the Roman heritage, which makes us the only UNESCO-listed city in Catalonia, we have a medieval and modernist paleo-Christian heritage. This is the most important heritage in the entire Iberian Peninsula.

Tarragona has 15 kilometers of Costa Daurada coastline with 10 beaches in the municipality alone and green paths for walking or cycling.

Tarragona also has very strong and authentic cultural and gastronomic traditions, such as *Castells* (human towers), *Santa Tecla* holidays, Mediterranean cuisine holidays ...

The very mild climate makes Tarragona an ideal holiday destination all year round. The Romans said about us that we are the City of Eternal Spring.

Of the many attractions in Tarragona, you must visit the Amphitheater, the Roman aqueduct, the cathedral, the maritime quarter, and the fishing port called *Serrallo*. You must also «*tocar ferro*» («touch the iron») of the Balcony of the Mediterranean. Apparently, doing this brings good luck).

**–Tell us about the main city holidays and Catalan gastronomic traditions.** Our highlight is romesco sauce,



AJUNTAMENT DE TARRAGONA

## Pau Ricomà

Mayor of Tarragona

«Tarragona has very strong and authentic cultural and gastronomic traditions»

prepared by fishermen in all possible ways from local products. It goes well with all dishes, but especially with fish. In addition, our blue fish and shrimp are local products of high quality and a must-try.

Tarragona is also the capital of the Spanish province with the most wine appellations (five in total). Furthermore, the DO (Denominación de Origen or Designation of Origin) of Tarragona offers an extraordinary moment.

We work to ensure that our cultural and historical heritage, food and wine give visitors an unforgettable experience.

**–Who are your main tourists?**

–This year, tourism has recovered and international tourism has experienced a revival. We have reached a historical record for the number of overnight stays. French, Dutch and English are often heard again on our streets. Recently we have been seeing a rise in tourism in North America. We hope that the appearance of Tarragona in the New York Times list as one of the best destinations in the world to visit in 2023 will eventually reinforce this fact.

In 2022, international tourism accounted for 43%. Accordingly, 57% was local tourism (Catalonia and other regions in Spain).

Any time of the year is perfect for visiting Tarragona. Carnival, Holy Week, Rome's Tàrraco Viva or Santa Tecla festival, jazz festival, early music festival, and first-class theater program highlight our cultural agenda. The city also offers endless gastronomic offerings and the chance to try rice with seafood and the romesco sauce mentioned earlier.

There are two major sporting events planned for this year, which we will announce shortly. They will take place in the Palau d'Esports after many years of inactivity. Regarding sports life, the city hosts top-level competitions, such as last year's final of the Catalan League (Lliga Catalana).

The city also boasts new cycling routes that we will present this year that will put Tarragona on the Spain cycling map.

**What are the main investment projects of the city?**

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ALL PYRENEES

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We have planned many projects related to the city's socioeconomic development, landscaping, mobility, tourism and small and medium-sized business development.

We have received more than 15.5 million EUR from Next Generation funds, allowing us to implement various projects. These projects are the ecotourism sustainable development project «Tarragona Between Blue and Green» (3.5 million EUR), the Tarragona environmental restoration project «Tarragona - GreenBelt '26» (3.3 million EUR) and Tarragona Open

Shopping Center project (1.2 million EUR), Forum of the Tàrraco Colony (3 million EUR). The money will also be used to implement low-emission zones, a digital and sustainable transformation of transport project (3 million EUR), and a project for the separate collection of household waste (500,000 EUR), among others. We await approval for implementing other projects, which total more than 6 million EUR.

Many projects we are working on for future generations are related to infrastructure. They are financed from the municipal budget and the budget of the *Generalitat of Catalonia*

and amount to about 400 million EUR, which come from public and private investments.

The budget of the *Generalitat of Catalonia* supports investments in the expansion of the Hospital Joan XXIII de Tarragona (177 million EUR), the Forum of Justice (75.8 million EUR) and the construction of an energy valorization plant in Tarragona (32.6 million EUR). It also provides for investments in the Youth Recreation and Vacation Hostel (13.4 million EUR), the expansion of the fire station of Tarragona (7.7 million EUR), the decarbonization of the chemical

industry and the promotion of the Hydrogen Valley (5 million EUR).

There is also building land in Tarragona, which will be developed in a planned and stable way.

The port of Tarragona is one of the most important on the Mediterranean coast and the critical center of Tarragona's chemical industry, the most powerful in southern Europe. At the same time, it is an «ambassador of the city».

**-Does the city have joint programs in culture, education or other areas with neighboring Andorra and France?**

-Tarragona has been twinned with Avignon since May 2, 1968, and Orléans since September 23, 1978. And we traditionally hold joint celebrations to celebrate twinning.

On the other hand, Tarragona

and the French city of Voiron carry out student exchanges between the Voiron Conservatory and the Tarragona municipal music school. This project started in 2022.

Tarragona also has a prestigious university - the University of Rovira i Virgili.

**-As mayor of Tarragona, which project would you most like to implement?**

-Tarragona needed change. It was necessary to wake up in the city.

We work to ensure social justice and equal opportunity anywhere in Tarragona. During this mandate, we have implemented projects lying in a drawer for decades, such as the Youth Recreation and Vacation Hostel, the Forum of Justice and the new Hospital Joan XXIII. That no one is left behind. ≡

Interview ► We talk to a musical artist with a long career



ZAIDA  
**Borrell López**  
@ZaidaBorrell

Lluís Cartes is a long-established musical artist. He has released solo albums and also with the Hysteriofunk group and he lives resolutely in music, as it is his profession.

**– How many years have you been in the Hysteriofunk group?**

– With Hysteriofunk this past year we celebrated the 25th anniversary with a concert at the National Auditorium of Andorra accompanying Jonca, but with Oriol, Oscar and Roger it's been more years since we started playing together very young in other formations. Maybe since I was fifteen years old that I remember that we set up the first group with Oriol and Roger.

**– How do you feel about the group you have formed with the team?**

– We are a married couple of four who continue to love each other very much. We practice respect for each other above all. We are almost, brothers. Trust and respect have reigned in Hysteriofunk since its inception. We have known each other for so long that we all accept each other, without any judgment. To share music and scenes with them are the best moments I've experienced.

**– Since when did you feel identified with music?**

– I guess from a very young age. Music has always played at home, so since I entered the Conservatory at the age of six, I guess I already started to identify with it and walk together. I remember myself always surrounded by music.

**– Which musical genres are you passionate about?**

– The truth is that there are many that I am passionate about. I think that music, apart from being a universal language that crosses borders, has the great magic that depending on the mood of the moment you can use it to enhance that mood in which you are immersed. There are music and musical styles for every moment. I have always listened to everything from classical music to Funk Metal or electronic music. If you were to ask me some of my favorites, I would probably choose world music, Jazz Rock or the New Age of the eighties.

**– Is music part of your life or is it just a hobby?**

– It is part of life. It started as a hobby and now is my profession.

**– How do you handle fame and failure?**

– Do you mean me? How do I handle fame? Well, well enough, I don't like having to dress up when I go out in the street so that I don't get recognized (ha, ha, ha...) no... now seriously, this thing about failure and fame is something that has come to the fore in recent years. The Talent Shows, the social networks are doing a lot of harm, especially in the younger sectors, who con-



# Lluís Cartes

Music artist

«I remember myself always surrounded by music»



«We are a married couple of 4 who love each other very much and respect each other above all»

fuse the profession of musician with wanting to reach a longed-for fame, wanting to look like these very few people who achieve this fame that many times is often full of exaggerated ostentation. The reality of the profession of musician is another. What we want is to work with dignity, like any other job, but unfortunately here, in the south of Europe, the culture is not well regarded. The people who work in this are very badly treated in terms of wages and basic conditions, which many other trades have covered as something indisputable.

**– What inspires you to continue growing as a musician?**

– By analyzing my environment. Looking with a magnifying glass at what happens around me, both positive and negative things. Trying to remain myself, moving away from the ephemeral trends.

**– Which singers do you like?**

– Nobody. I like many singers and I have a predilection for the art that some of them know how to do, but I am not at all in favor of idolizing the person. It's a shame that people idolize people instead of idolizing their art.

**– How has music changed your life?**

– It hasn't changed my life, since I can remember I've always been with her. Another thing is to think about what my life would be like if I wasn't a musician.

**– Do you transmit any positive messages through your group Hysteriofunk?**

– Of course! Hysteriofunk is the harmonic and rhythmic explosion made into music by a group of individuals who think as one. There is no self-censorship of any kind and we do what we really like, and this shows when you listen to their mu-

sic or see one of their live shows. Everything is positivity, everything is transparency without filters and no ostentation. I am very proud to be his drummer and composer of some of his songs. It's the best rock band I ever dreamed.

**– What made you be who you are right now?**

– The consumption of culture, the death of my mother and the birth of my son.

**– At home, do you listen to the same genre as you play in your music group?**

– I don't usually listen to music at home. I haven't done it in years. When your profession is to be a musician, you are surrounded by it during eight hours, whether it is composing, rehearsing, recording or mixing the deliveries of work that I do on commission or the songs of personal projects. When I get home, with my ears exhausted from so many hours without silence, what I need most is precisely this. It is important to take care of the ear and rest the ears whenever possible, it is our work tool and must be taken care of. Getting used to working as much as possible at low volumes is essential for hearing health. Besides, we are surrounded by too much noise pollution everywhere. I always wear earplugs.

I listened to a lot of music when I was young and of any style. It is true that progressive rock, which is what we do with Hysteriofunk, has been one of the most listened to, especially among young people.

**– Which albums have you released throughout your career?**

VWith Hysteriofunk we have done a few for 25 years. RANDOM, JUANJO, DIRECTE, DECO, ARNES, and the live recording of the celebration of 25 years with ONCA.

With my personal project as Lluís Cartes I have recorded five: Camina Descalç which was the first album subsidized by the ENDERROCK group and Catalunya Ràdio, it was the prize for winning the SONA9 competition in the category of authored and edited song by Picap. After two years I did another one also edited by Picap: Permís de fuga. After traveling around the world for a whole year with a backpack on his back he came alone, the result of that experience Carenant l'absurd with Gat Records. Three years later

El país des nens cabuts came out, an ambitious project that took a lot of work in my own studio because I was the one who played all the instruments apart from a clarinet and a double bass on some of the tracks, I recorded the rest by myself. As is said in Spanish: yo me lo guiso y yo me lo como! Oh my God! What hard work. The fifth album and the one we are currently touring is Poetes, a collection of poetry by poets from all over the world and from many different eras that I have set to music. Bowling is going very well, we have played in Lisbon, Foix, and soon in Madrid. By the way, I would like to take this opportunity to say that on May 13th we will present it at the National Auditorium of An-



«I feel identified with music since childhood, it has always played at home. I remember the day I entered the Conservatory»

dorra at 18:00 p.m.

I am preparing another album that is almost finished, but I want to let it rest for a while to listen to it again and decide with new ears which subjects are the most appropriate for the new work.

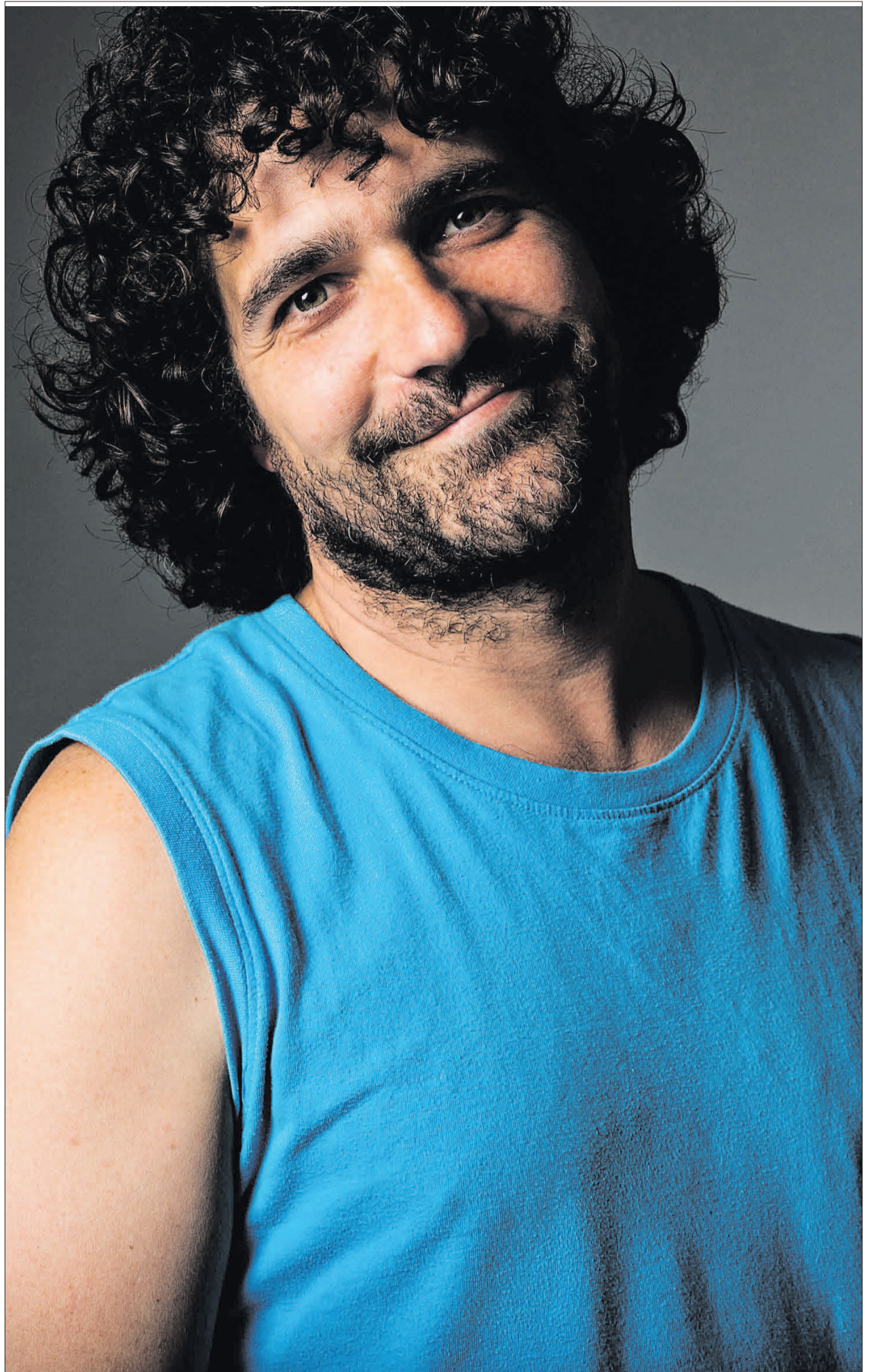
**– What is your reference?**

– I am open to many musical styles that convey emotions and make me feel something. There are many artists and genres of music that have influenced me for precisely that, having made me feel something special.

There are many who have taught me to a greater or lesser extent something special that I'm sure has stayed with me. We wouldn't finish if I had to tell you all of them, but I can tell you that the range is very wide.

**– Do you think all genders are valid?**

– Of course! All but one! I don't understand Reggaeton and I don't think I ever will. I don't want to hear or talk about it! ≡



►► The musician and composer Lluís Cartes.

## POLITICS

# Gallardo in the spotlight for the Caubella heliport

EL PERIÒDIC  
ESCALDES ENGORDANY

A Pyrenean media reported yesterday morning that the Minister of Economy and Finance, Jordi Gallardo, agreed on conditions for the interests of the UTE controlled by Antoni Rebés, awarded the national heliport to be built in Pal, in the parish of La Massana.

This heliport has been wanted to be built in various parts of the co-

untry for years, and in the last bid it was proposed to build it in the middle of a forest in Pal, but not even the acting Minister of the Environment, Sílvia Calvó, has signed the natural environment contract.

In fact, during the campaign, several parties took a position against it, stating that it was not the right place, as there would be a large felling of trees and environmental impact. ≡



►► Gallardo in a press conference.