

HUELVA  
LA LUZ  
*Andalucía*

# Wharf of the Caravels



## Wharf of the Caravels

Overlooking the confluence of the rivers Tinto and Odiel, in the historic spot of The Rábida, just 4 kilometres from the Port of Palos de la Frontera, in Huelva, is the Wharf of the Caravels.

The historical destiny of this enclave took on universal dimensions with the Discovery of the New World.

No event in history has been able to equal or even supplant this great Columbian event, surpassing them all in quality and quantity. The first voyage of discovery to the Indies, from the historical point of view, was made in 1492, but its real success was not to reach America, something that other predecessors had already done, but to return to Europe, establishing a trade route, a path of colonisation and a cultural frontier that would forever link the New and Old Worlds.

For this reason, after the 500th anniversary of this feat, the Spanish State, through the National Commission of the V Centenary of the Discovery of America, has the aim of building replicas of the ships of Columbus and the Pinzón Brothers.



The objectives were: to repeat the Admiral's first voyage, faithfully following the route followed by the Spanish sailors during the months of August, September and October 1492; to promote research into the dimensions, shapes and construction details of the ships; to advance knowledge of the daily life of these seamen who played a leading role in the great geographical discoveries of the 15th and 16th centuries; and to show the world what these ships were like.

Hence, after a long and arduous voyage through numerous European and American ports, and after their stay at the Universal Exhibition in Seville in 1992, a project was undertaken to anchor these ships definitively in Huelva, not only because it was the place of origin but also because it was the place of such an event and the cradle of the Atlantic adventure.

At the Wharf of the Carabels you will feel yourself going back in time, as the vision of a transcendental historical event is combined with the action, and where you will understand the enormous anxiety and uncertainty that, without doubt, must have presided over the preparations for the voyage of those sailors who took to the mythological sea at a time when life offered them nothing better.



## Medieval Quarter

The Wharf represents the day of departure: a day of weeping and farewells from family and friends, a day of prayers and prayers from all those who were close by, and a day to put into practice a project that nobody, except for the people of Palos, had bet on.

In addition to the ships, in the perimeter surrounding the dock, you can find the Medieval Quarter, which represents the "Real" port of Palos, from where their ancestors departed on the 3rd of August 1492.

## Meeting Island

... and the Meeting Islanda, where you can enjoy, just like the sailors of that time, the first glimpse they had of the land discovered on that 12th October, the island of Guanahani.



## Exhibition Hall s. XV

You complete the visit with the INSIDE of the building: An Exhibition Hall dedicated to the 15th century, where a description of the world at the height of the year 1500 is made, and where you will discover the genesis of the Columbus voyage. You can go back to the geographical conceptions of the time, based on the Aristotelian theories of Eratosthenes, Strabo and Ptolemy, as well as contemplate the readings that Columbus used to set his project in motion: "The Imago Mundi" by Pierre d'Ailly, "The History Rerum Ubique Gestarum" by Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini and "The Book of Wonders" by Marco Polo. You will also be able to see navigational instruments, ship's carpentry tools, the sailors' weapons and clothing, the ships' supplies and much more to satisfy your most refined curiosity.

## Audiovisual Projection

An Audiovisual Projection, about 25 minutes long, where, like any other sailor, you will be able to embark on this voyage, living an imaginary expedition, taking you back to that time. You will be able to feel the fears and difficulties that those men went through during the voyage, learn about the scarce technological means they had, and of course, shout along with Rodrigo from Triana that expected, LAND!



## Dock

Once OUTSIDE, you can finally go to the ships, moving from study to action, to the experience, to the climax of the visit. In a semicircular dock, two pontoons give access to the carabels: on the port side, the Caravel Niña; in the centre, the nao Santa María; and on the starboard side, the caravel Pinta. From the outside, you can already see their marine features and compare current technologies with the lack of resources and knowledge that existed at the time, proving that three "floating shells", just like these ones, were not only capable of crossing the Dark Sea, as they called before the Atlantic Ocean, but also of returning and being able to tell the story as no one had ever done before.

## La Niña

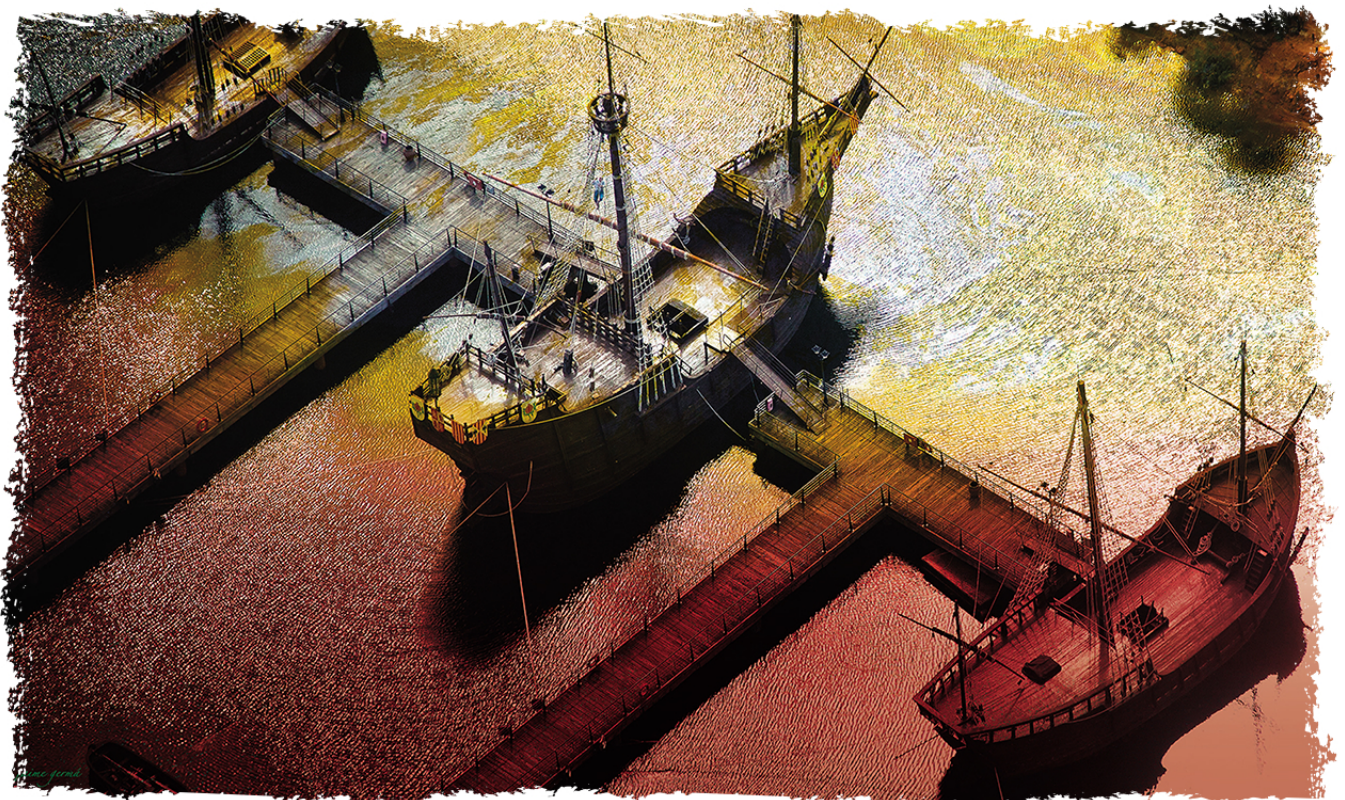
Named Santa Clara, it was built on the banks of the town of Moguer and was owned by the Niño Brothers. Its captain was Vicente Yáñez Pinzón, although on returning from the voyage it was commanded by the Admiral after the disappearance of the Santa María, as she was his favourite due to its good sailing. It was the smallest of the fleet and had a capacity of about 20 sailors.



# La Pinta

Built on the river banks of Palos, although it was owned by Cristóbal Quintero and Gómez Rascón, it was named after its previous owner, the Pinto family.

Its captain was Martín Alonso Pinzón, perhaps the most important figure in the history of the Discovery, as he not only made the recruitment of the crew possible, being the main promoter of the chartering, but also kept the sailors hopeful throughout the voyage and overcame some mutinies on board. It had a crew of around 30 men, but perhaps the best known in history was Rodrigo de Triana (Juan Rodríguez Bermejo), the sailor who in the early hours of the morning of 12 October shouted: LAND! This boat would also be the first to return to the Spanish lands on the return voyage, doing that the 1st of March of 1493 arriving to the coasts of Bayona la Real (Galicia), and on the 15th of the same month, together with the Niña, to the land of Palos, as tradition dictated.



## The Nao Santa María

Called the Gallega. This boat was rented to its owner, Juan de la Cosa, in Puerto de Santa María and was captained by Admiral Christopher Columbus. Due to its poor seaworthiness and draught, on 25 December it ran aground on the shallows of Caracol Bay (North Coast of Haiti-La Española), and its remains were used to build the first settlement of European man on American soil, Fort Navidad. Due to its large size, which conditioned the sailing of the expeditionary flotilla throughout the entire voyage, it housed most of the load and the largest number of sailors, with around 40 men.

The boats are decorated inside to make the visit more complete and comprehensive, and thus to be able to imagine better the importance of the achievement.

However, in order to do so, you must, if only for a moment, transport yourself back in time and think with the mentality of the time. Imagine the living conditions in which these men sailed with the constant uncertainty of not knowing where they were going and how long the voyage would take, driven by the "crazy" idea of a foreigner who was supposed to find the Asian cities on the other side of the Tenebrous Sea, about which there were many legends about fantastic animals. But if the storms were bad, imagine the calms.





In fact, this and many other uncertainties led to several mutinies on board that could have scuppered the whole project. However, thanks to the stubbornness of the Admiral, the firmness of the Pinzón family and, of course, the experience and skill of the sailors, the Great Discovery became possible.

That voyage of 1492 was a voyage in the history of mankind, to which Huelva contributed with its experience and the generous efforts of its people. The Tenebrous Sea of the ancients began to be known and dominated by all, and would become the way of expansion and the axis of the great exchanges that would unite the Old and New Worlds forever. For this reason, Palos de la Frontera, and in general the totality of Huelva, will forever be the historical homeland of Columbus, the birthplace of his sailors and, in brief, the land of the whole Enterprise of Discovery.



# Information of Interest

## **Wharf of the Caravels**

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## **Celestino Mutis Botanical Park**

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e-mail: celestinomutis@diphuelva.org

## **Juan Ramón Jiménez House Museum**

C/ Juan Ramón Jiménez, nº 10  
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e-mail: zenobia@fundacion-jrj.es

## **Condado de Huelva Wine Centre**

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## **Monastery of Sta. María de La Rábida**

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