

TRAVEL

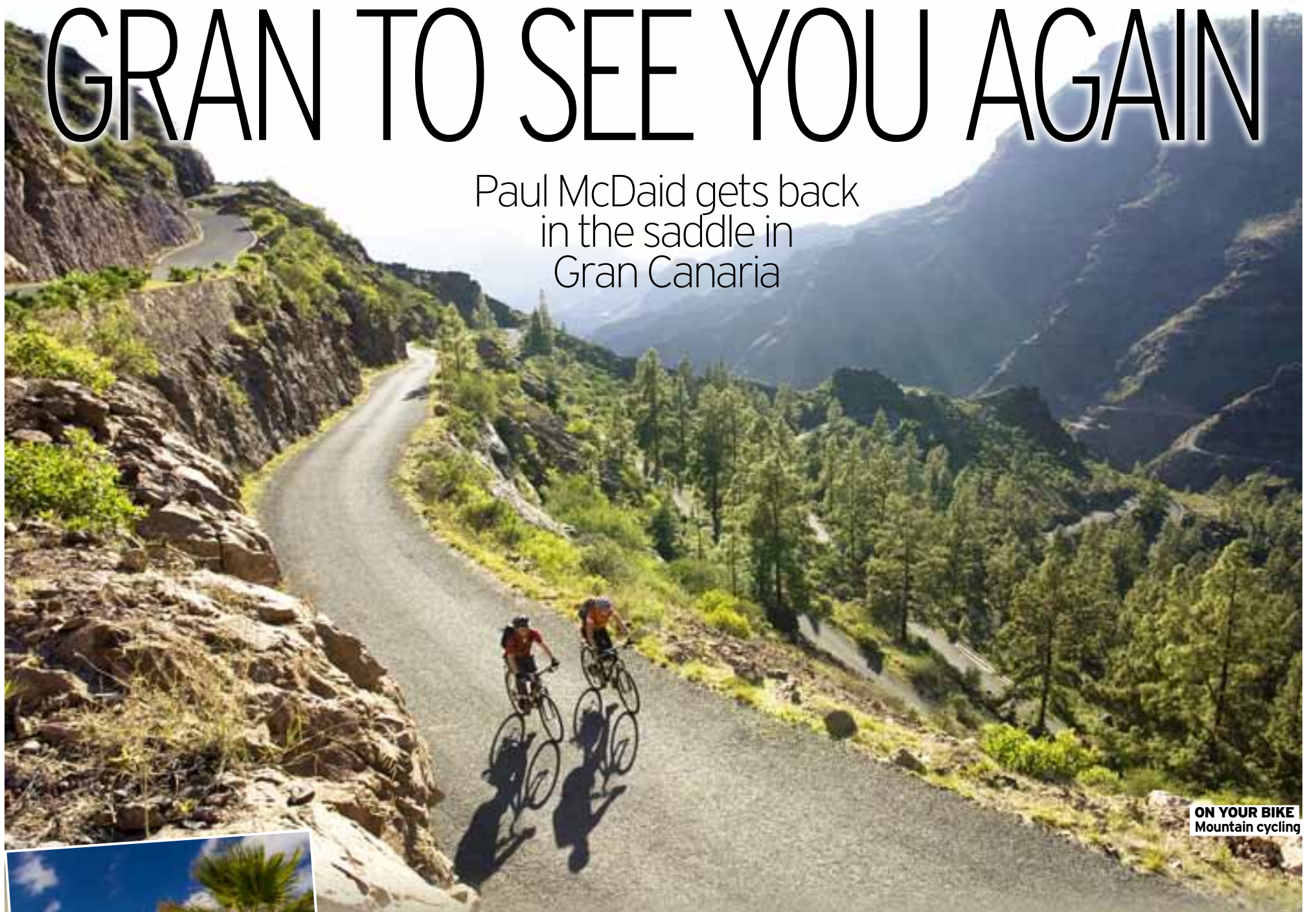


with
PAUL McDAID

email traveldes@reachplc.com
twitter @MirrorTravel @TravelEdNigel @marjorieyue
@JaneMemmler @LissamanVicky
online mirror.co.uk/travel

GRAN TO SEE YOU AGAIN

Paul McDaid gets back in the saddle in Gran Canaria



ON YOUR BIKE
Mountain cycling



DO THE STRAND
Maspalomas beach

ONE of the many things I missed during lockdown and which, alas, isn't coming back, is the daily cycle to work.

The 15-mile round trip from North to East Belfast was an ideal way to shoe horn some much-needed exercise into an otherwise sedentary lifestyle and afforded time to think and process whatever was on my mind.

Yet while cycling was always a pleasure, the same could not always be said of the weather I was pedalling in. So to return to the

saddle in the welcoming sunshine of Gran Canaria was like meeting a dear old friend after a period of enforced separation.

While the biggest of Canary Islands boasts some cycle routes that are strictly for the professional rider – many teams hold winter training camps on the Canaries – or the very keen amateur, the rest of us are more than accommodated with less physically challenging tours.

I finally climbed back in the saddle by joining the 33km



Ayagaures route in Maspalomas in the south coast of the island organised by Free Motion E-Bike Trekking.

And if absence makes the heart grow fonder, warm weather makes the leg pump faster and if

it doesn't, you can always call on the bike's electric motor to give you an extra push if you start to feel the gradient.

While I might have been a sight for sore thighs, I was beginning to lose sight of the real reason why we had come – a healthy dose of R&R.

We based ourselves in Maspalomas, a bustling tourist hotspot that's been welcoming European holidaymakers since the 1950s.

Boasting dozens of bars,

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Hotel news

THERE'S never a bad time to visit the Balearics but when a new property in the Mallorca C Collection announces it's ready to welcome its first guests, it would be rude to say no.

Opening in May, El Vicenç de la Mar and sits on the beautiful bay, Cala Molins on the island's north coast.

Just seven km from Pollença on the west side of Cap Formentor in Calla

Sant Vicen, it's surrounded by azure waters at the foot of the Tramuntana mountains.

Guests can seek and experience nature: catch the Mediterranean breeze, walk steps to the beach, hike, or cycle.

The ultimate sea escape is an immersion in nature exploration, just steps from the front door.

Here you'll find the essential pleasure of Mediterranean life at El Vicen. Sitting on a crystal-clear cove,

the hotel will offer 35 beautifully appointed guest rooms including four suites and one Penthouse suite.

Some rooms and suites offer their own private terraces, a private jacuzzi or their own private swimming pool.

The hotel offers everything from a penthouse suite with a large terrace and private pool, to privilege rooms with a shared swim up pool.

■ For reservations and more details you can email info@elvicenc.com

BIG DEAL

Greek Islands from £389pp: a seven-night getaway on all-inclusive at the five-star seafront Mitsis Grand Hotel Beach Hotel in Rhodes Town, Rhodes, comes with flights from Manchester on April 4. Book at onthebeach.co.uk.

