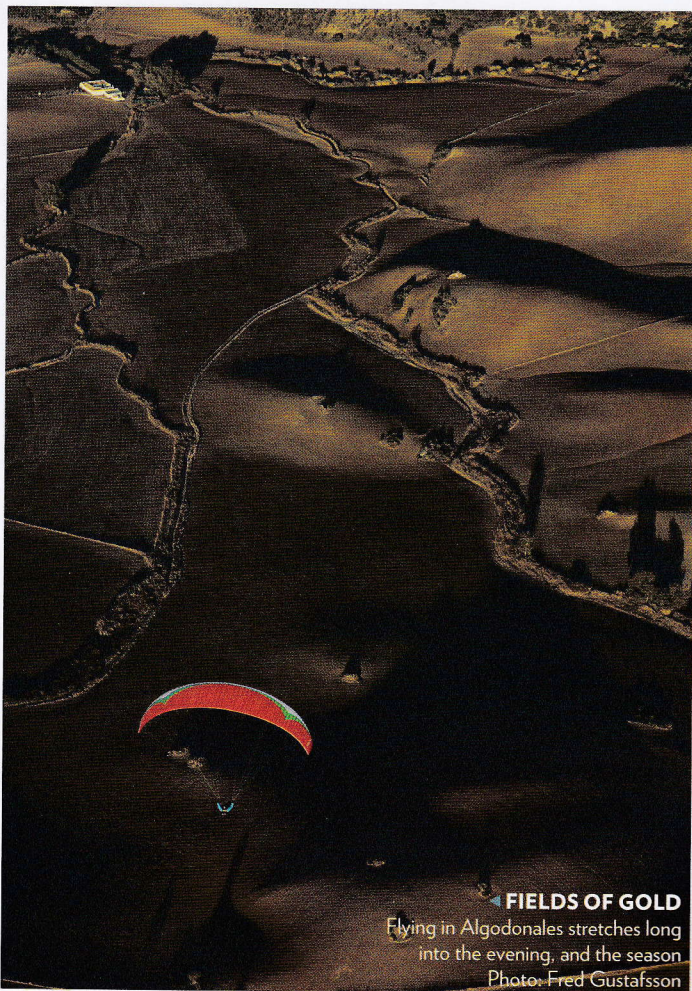


**When to go:** It's flyable all year round, but does get stable in November. In June and July be prepared for the temperature to reach 35C by 11am. For big flights head here for March-May or September-October.

**Take offs:** The spacious Levante take-offs, on the western edge of the hill, take southerlies and easterlies. They are at 1,027m with a bomb-out landing at 405m. When the wind switches from one take-off to the other, the thermal on the peak between them is working and it's time to go. Three kilometres away, on the other side of the plateau, is the Poniente take-off, which takes southwesterlies. It goes from 908m down to the powerline-framed landing at 478m. 'Levante' by the way, derives from the Spanish/Latin for rising, and refers to the direction the sun rises from. 'Poniente' derives from putting down, and refers to where the sun sets. There's also a smaller northerly take-off half way between the two, which doesn't see as much action. It's served by the western landing.

**Cloudbase:** Can lift to 3,000m, some 2,000m above take-off, on the right days, but more typically it's 500m-1,000m above launch.

**Hang gliding access:** Absolutely. All the take-offs are big enough to accommodate hangies, and the eastern LZ is also plenty big enough for landing them. But if you're flying to the west, hang gliders use the riverbed to land in. Look up Tony and Rona Web at Lejair ([lejair.co.uk](http://lejair.co.uk)) for advice and shuttles.



**FIELDS OF GOLD**

Flying in Algodonales stretches long into the evening, and the season  
Photo: Fred Gustafsson



**ROOM TO LAY OUT**

Poniente from the air  
Photo: Fred Gustafsson

**Must be flown:** Heading off in a westerly, the white-washed village of Olivera is just one or two thermals away once you go over the back, and a picturesque joy to fly over. Continue on until you're squeezed under the Malaga airport approach corridor. If there's a bit of north in your westerly, head southeast to Ronda, flying over olive groves as far as the eye can see. On easterly days, the coast is an ambitious but inviting endpoint. You'll need the height to overcome the seabreeze at the end to avoid a premature landing. For a bit of adventure on quieter days take a dawn 90-minute hike up to launch and sled down, landing in town in time for a huevos revueltos y tostadas at the pilots' favourite bar, Canijo.

**Dangers and annoyances:** The site has a tendency to get blown-out for several days at a time, but there are other nearby alternatives. The launch ridge can get crowded, with low airtime pilots innocently barrelling through thermalling gliders, so get up and get away. There are some airspace restrictions to be aware of if you're going more than 30km. Landing options can be limited by the number of olive trees. In an emergency you can try to place it down between the trees, but you'll discover the unique affinity olive branches have for glider lines when you drop your wing on one. Uncultivated fields will likely have livestock in them; you best hope that the bulls reared for fighting don't confuse your red wing for an invitation to joust.