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Time to let  
your hair  
down

*Menorca*

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**Preface**

High-minded culture has its place when it comes to better living. However, every now and again you need to pull on some dancing shoes and sup on some strong drinks in short glasses. There are few better places for such high jinks than Cova d'en Xoroi, a laid-back club poking out from the cliffs on the south coast of Menorca.

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Cova d'en Xoroi is a Menorca landmark, a masterpiece of nature, a Gaudí-by-erosion given over to cocktails, good-looking guests and dancing the night away. Somewhere other than Spain, this would be a heritage site or a bat-sanctuary or just be cordoned off completely; here's a toast to busting your moves in a cliff face.

Go at sunset and try standing somewhere out of Canon Sure Shot for a post-beach, pre-prandial mojito (that's their thing, the Cuban cocktail). It's when the tunes are loungey, laid-back Balearic, neat and tidy, and won't scare the breaking waves of courting couples-cum-portrait photographers posing and being composed on the sunset shore. Then return after dinner at around midnight for the club; Cova, as they call it, is easily the best place on this Balearic rock for beats.

"Sure, the sunset is key for Cova but it's the people that make it," says Miguel Mascolo, whose family have owned this cliff-hewn club since 1964. "A night's only a success if the mix is just right." This alchemy in entertaining is important as the daytime of amateur snappers and sun-escapees turns to evening (Menorquin ones start late: in July the sun plunges at about 21.30). And it's Spain, friends, so that means sunrise. Cova's attendees don't get through too many sets of headlights.

At about 01.00 it gets nice and wild. The bar becomes a club and the club becomes a party. Yet the place stays tidy, too. Mascolo's decision not to invite the big-name DJs for Ibiza-style nights of security-guarded hellraising has proved to be a wise one. The party's a bit slicked-back, quite well shod, jacketed rather than tank-topped – generally attractive, happy and international. Cova's never been in, and so won't ever be out of, fashion. — (M)

