

Majorca stands in for the Goldeneye villa, Jamaica, in Sky TV's Fleming

# SPAIN

The territory boasts locations unavailable elsewhere in Europe. By Melanie Goodfellow



When Sergio Leone arrived in the Tabernas desert in southern Spain to shoot *A Fistful Of Dollars* in 1964, he was drawn by more than the sunny climate and unbroken, ethereal vistas. At the time, Spain was one of the only countries in western Europe where he could keep to his meagre budget. Some 50 years on, Spain remains good value for international film-makers, despite not offering a tax incentive to attract big international film shoots outside of the Canary Islands. "Our crews and services are keenly priced so even without rebates we're competitive," says Piluca Querol, director of Andalusia Film Commission.

"Spanish crews are keen to work and as a result we're able to put some competitive prices together," agrees Trent Walton, executive producer at Majorca-based production services company Palma Pictures. Founded by Swedish commercials producers Ola and Grete Holmgren in 1993, and then acquired by two compatriot entrepreneurs in 2007, Palma has become increasingly involved in long-form shoots in Spain in recent years. As well as assisting productions on the island and at its 4,500 sq m studio complex, it has opened a Barcelona office and co-ordinates shoots in mainland Spain.

In Majorca, Palma serviced Sky Atlantic's TV mini-series *Fleming*, with Majorca standing in for the Caribbean and a seaside cottage doubling for Ian Fleming's Goldeneye villa in Jamaica. Palma has also recently worked with Pascal Chaumeil's feature adaptation of >

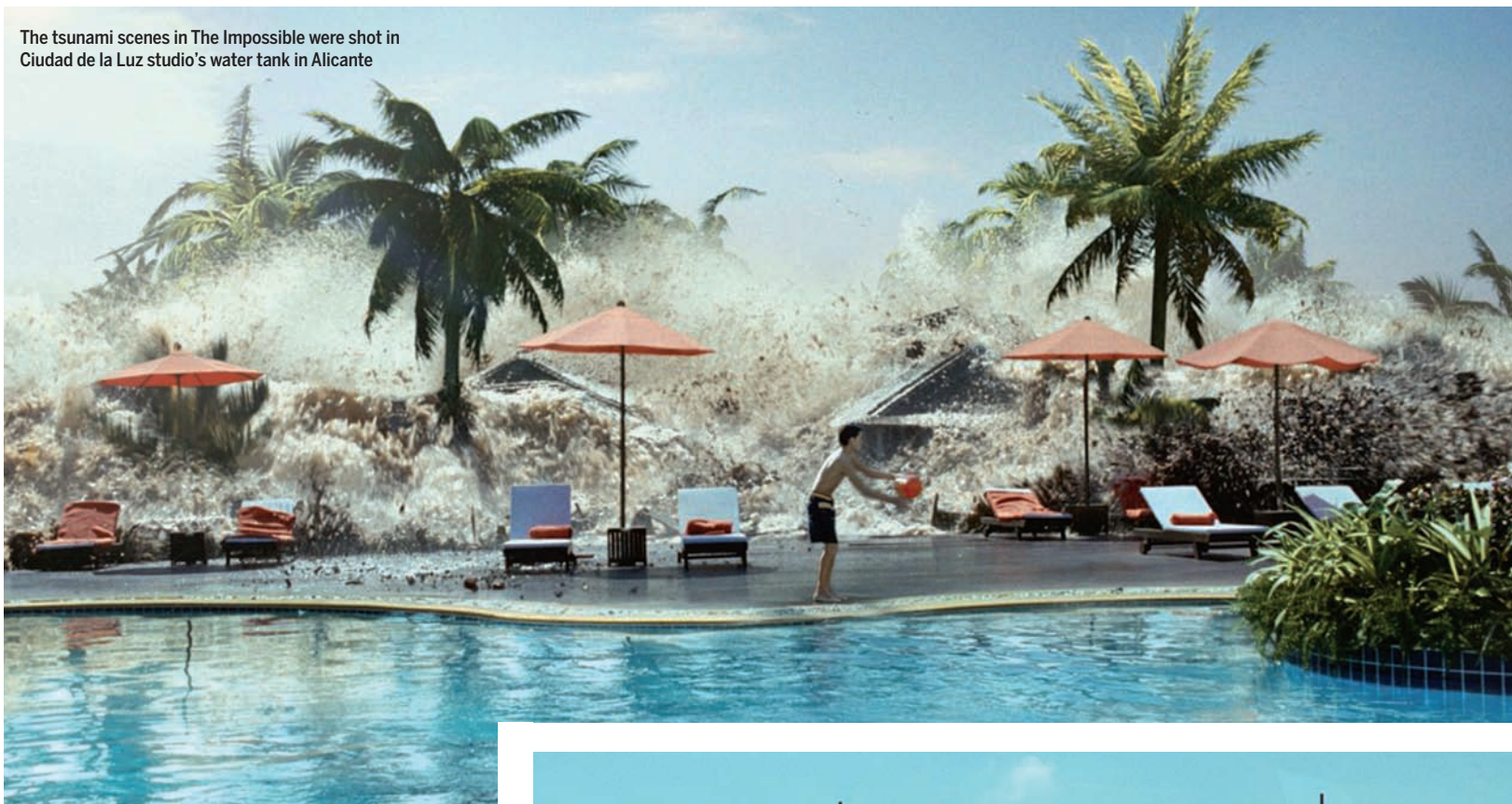
## GOOD TO KNOW

Spain may not offer national incentives but local town hall and tourist boards understand the benefits of hosting productions and can sometimes help out financially or in kind. The UK's Left Bank Pictures received \$208,000 (€150,000) from the Majorca Tourist Board to shoot TV series *Mad Dogs* (pictured) on the island rather than in Malta as originally planned. "It's always worth asking," says Palma Pictures' Trent Walton.



Todd Field's trilogy of Captain Morgan Rum advertisements shot in Majorca

The tsunami scenes in *The Impossible* were shot in Ciudad de la Luz studio's water tank in Alicante



Nick Hornby's *A Long Way Down*, starring Pierce Brosnan and produced by the UK's Wildgaze Films and BBC Films.

Bigger international productions are heading for the Canary Islands, which boast generous rebates and have recently housed Ron Howard's *Heart Of The Sea* for Warner Bros on La Gomera and Lanzarote, and Ridley Scott's epic *Exodus: Gods And Kings* for 20th Century Fox on Fuerteventura. Scott previously shot scenes for 2013's *The Counselor* in a luxury villa in the eastern province of Alicante.

The Spanish industry is lobbying hard for national incentives to attract inward investment. The move has not been a priority for the government in the post-2009 economic crash years, but there are signs it may soon become one.

"Spain Film Commission is negotiating with the minister of finance over the creation of incentives, with the aim of having them available by 2015," says Andalusia and Spain Film Commission chief Carlos Rosado.



## THE LOWDOWN ON SPAIN

### What financial incentives are available?

The Canary Islands offers film tax deductions of up to 38% of the total film budget, including expenses made both in and outside the islands. The 38% credit is accessed by investors with an economic activity on the islands. Companies with their seat of economic activity in mainland Spain are also entitled to the allowance, but only at an 18% rate. In addition to this, companies based on the islands are also eligible for a 4% corporate tax rate.

**Is there a minimum spend?** No but a production must shoot at least two weeks on the island to qualify.

**Are the financial incentives easy to combine with incentives in other territories?** Yes, both *Exodus: Gods And Kings* and *Heart Of The Sea* were based in the UK.

### Can incoming TV productions and commercials access the Canary Islands' incentives?

Yes, TV productions can but commercials cannot.

### What TV productions and commercials have shot recently in Spain?

Todd Field's action-packed commercial trilogy for Captain Morgan Rum shot in Majorca, while the US cable drama *Covert Affairs* filmed on location in central Barcelona.

### What are the key locations?

Varied landscapes including desert terrain and mountain ranges, as well as Atlantic and Mediterranean coastline.

### What are the major film studios?

There are a number of medium-sized studios dotted about

the territory, with the most important facility the Ciudad de la Luz in Alicante. The tsunami scenes in *The Impossible* were shot in its water tank.

### Do incoming productions need to bring their own crew?

Only heads of department. The Spanish audiovisual industry is well developed so international productions can recruit locally.

### Do crews speak English? Yes

### First point of contact

Spain Film Commission [spainfilmcommission.org](http://spainfilmcommission.org)  
The body has been operational for 13 years and has a network of offices across the country that can advise on locations as well as local services.