

The town of Los Cristianos changed its looks during the twentieth century- growing from a tiny fishing village of around 80 inhabitants in 1900, to a town of close to 25.000 residents in 2007, starting with the fight to make it the main tourist enclave on the island of Tenerife. As a brief description, we can point out some of the events leading up to the present. Mention must be made of how different industries were started up: La Fábrica in 1902, first for distillation of alcohol, later of resin and in the 50's, pozzolana (volcanic ash); how the precarious fish salting industries were started in the 19th century and the ones begun in the 30's and 40's of last century; and we can't forget the traditional lime or whitewash factories opened in the 16th century and that maintained production until the early 1960's. Starting from the 1950's, several agricultural cooperatives joined the industrial activity of the area: García Jorge Warehouses, the Eloy García fish cannery and many smaller merchants who settled here over the years. The fishing industry stayed resolutely active through the shift from oar and sail to motors and in the 1940's with the construction of a 14 metre fishing boat, the Atlantico and later the Irún, of a similar size.

Dry land agriculture prevailed through the early 20th century alternating with export produce such as tomatoes and bananas after water was brought to the area by means of the Southern Canal at the end of the 1940's. The hotel industry began with the first hotel inaugurated during the summer of 1932, the "Airport Inn", later known as the Reverón Pension, whose proprietor, Antonia Reverón Sierra, chose in this manner to join the push for an airport in the Los Cristianos area, that had been going on since the 1930's. Her son, Juan Reverón Sierra actively participated in maintaining the pension in operation, and is known for his efforts in favour of the enhancement of the municipality and hotel, obvious in the later additions and for the recognition he received in 1958 and 1961 when the Tenerife "Cabildo" (Island government) awarded him prizes in the "For a prettier, cleaner, happier and more optimistic Tenerife" contest that the Tourist board held, in addition to many other awards.

Communications also made life easier as the years passed, and horse paths made way for roads such as the one from Arona to Los Cristianos, built in the second decade of the 20th century, or the Guaza road built at the end of the following decade. Local Route 822, the old main road, was completed in the mid 1940's and in the 60's was transformed into the motorway to the South. Its construction was awarded in 1966 and the stretch from Candelaria to Los Cristianos was awarded to the company Obras y Construcciones Dúmez S.A and in 1970 the stretch from Los Cristianos to El Porís de Abona was opened to traffic and the over one thousand curves on the old road were reduced to 54 on the new route.

Until the new dock was built for La Fábrica at the beginning of the 20th century, and the new quay between 1933 and 34, shipping and transport of passengers and merchandise was carried out by means of dinghies from several points along the coast. The dock was extended one hundred metres in 1971 with a berthing line of 72 metres, but still could not be used for the ferry to La Gomera because it was not the right design for those boats. The port of Los Cristianos came into its own, both as a fishing port and as a connecting hub to La Gomera, in 1974, and although the dock was officially

inaugurated on January 15, 1975, the shipping company Fred Olsen had already started up its route using the Ferry MS Benchijigua in July of 1974. Meanwhile, other events were taking place, such as the dire need for schools for which two solitary classrooms were started up, one for boys and the other for girls, in 1930, until the 1960's when two more classrooms were built and in 1968, when the José Vicente Pérez de Valero public school was opened. In the 1960's, the social and economic situation of the Arona municipality changed suddenly, as construction and tourism boomed in this part of the island of Tenerife, which only a few years before had depended almost exclusively on fishing and agriculture. Slowly and with tremendous effort, basic resources were added to cover demand, although need always lagged behind. Basic services such as garbage collection, street and beach cleaning were being added, health centres, doctors, nurses, pharmacies were being set up, leisure and sports activities began to operate, such as the Marino Cinema or the Marino Sports Club, re-launched at the end of the 1960's. During that decade, in addition to beginning the drafting of urban regulations with the Urbanization Plan of the Los Cristianos town centre, which took over ten years to be approved, several apartment buildings were put up - the Rosamar, the CristianMar and La Estrella Communities and in February of 1969 the Hotel Morque, a four star establishment, was opened.

These are mere snippets in the development of what was a small fishing village and today is a point of reference for the tourism industry in the Canary islands. From the proliferation and improvement of cave dwellings to vibrant tourist enclave, from dirty and dusty pathways to motorways, from doing laundry in the ravine or hauling water from wells to the beginning of a proper water supply, from candlelight and oil lamps to electrical supply by the hour up until a regular supply to public roads and homes. Meanwhile, wages were around three hundred pesetas, sugar had undergone a significant increase, reaching 35 Pesetas a kilo. And the construction of the Reina Sofia Airport (Tenerife South) suffered numerous delays, not being completed until the end of 1978.

