

THE DREAM SCENE

Newsletter

Issue no. 17 1st of July 2008

Bienvenido to all. Well summer has arrived with a vengeance and there are lots of new faces around the urb at the moment. More than 1.2 million Brit's visited the Costa Blanca in the first five months of this year. This is up about 3% on the same period last year, so it is good to see that the weak pound and fuel increases have not severely curtailed peoples holiday plans. Of the 20.9 million tourists who visited Spain in that period, 60% were British, the remainder being made up of mainly German and French tourists. Six out of every ten tourists to Spain now use the internet to tailor-make their holidays rather than buy a package from a tour operator. Many hotels are reporting better-than-expected booking rates and are taking on more staff.

We all love the sun but we often forget just how dangerous it can be. Málaga Hospital is reporting that there are about 5 new skin cancer cases every day, so please take care.

Also, the sea off the Costa Blanca is very dangerous. Almost 20 people drown in it each year. Do not swim if a red flag is flying and stay within your depth and the permitted swimming areas. If you are caught in a current or rip-tide, do not fight against it - you will be exhausted quickly and drown - but go with the current and it will deposit you further along the coast.

Spain has just won the UEFA Cup and there are fireworks going off all over Dream Hills and of course the rest of Spain as well! VIVA ESPAÑA!

Have just heard about one of the Dream Hills 'unsung heroes.' Bob Harris of Dream Hills was dining with wife and friends one night in the WOK by Eroski's in Punta Prima. While at his table Bob noticed a chap walking very casually through the restaurant. The chap then picked up a handbag, which was hanging off the back of a chair, put it on his shoulder, put his jacket over it and walked out of the restaurant. Bob then checked with the handbag owner at the buffet and then ran after the thief but had to fight his way through the crowd at the buffet table. He had to then go downstairs and out onto the car park, on his own, where he found the 'tea-leaf' with three accomplices and confronted him - 'Gimme that bag!!' At first the chap denied it but after some verbal persuasion he then pointed to the couple, who when challenged firmly by Bob, they handed the bag back to him. At this stage, all four villains piled into a car and were about to drive off when the friends of the lady whose handbag was taken, arrived on the scene and proceeded to kick seven shades of **** out of the panels in the thief's car, which then raced off. Well done Bob!

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WHAT'S UP?

Not only have the recent heavy rains, (the wettest Spring in Spain for 37 years) prevented water shortages from reaching crisis point, but, scientists say that the increased volume of fresh water reaching the sea is also likely to keep the plagues of jellyfish that have invaded Spain's beaches in recent years at bay. Maybe wishful thinking. There have been several beach closures in recent years because of masses of stinging jellyfish. Scientists blame the increase on pollution and the shrinking number of their natural predators due to over-fishing.

The Ministry for Industry is putting the final details on the proposal to increase electricity prices in Spain, with an increase which will result in prices between 7.3% and 8.3% higher in some 18 million homes. The average official increase, to be imposed on July 1 is 5.6%. Electricity bills will now be sent out monthly instead of bi-monthly. The new increases come on top of a general 3.3% increase in the price which was introduced at the start of the year as the Government wants to get charges closer to the real costs of generating power. More on this in a later issue.

The Malaga College of Doctors has asked the Prosecutors Office to investigate the case of a man who is working as a plastic surgeon in Marbella despite having no qualifications as a doctor. They say he has a 'high volume' of clients, that he comes from another European country, and somehow managed to get a qualification recognised by a notary here.

The Estepona Socialist Mayor who has in the past often lashed out against corruption has himself been arrested. The Mayor, Antonio Barrientos, was detained without bail, with his councillor for tax and another 23 people who now face charges ranging from misuse of public funds, to bribery, money laundering and influence peddling. Of those arrested two local businessmen were granted bail of 500,000 euro each and a local lawyer was granted bail of 300,000 euro. The arrests came prior to a planned announcement by the Mayor of a new agreement with the Saudi Royal Family for the construction of 4,000 new flats. The latest arrests take the total number of people who have been charged with corruption in the province of Málaga to more than 200 over the past three years.

Firebrand radio talk show host Federico Jiménez Losantos has been ordered to compensate Madrid mayor Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón to the tune of 36,000 euro after a court in the capital found him guilty of publicly insulting the Popular Party politician. Losantos, who is the leading presenter on the conservative Cope radio station owned by Catholic bishops, had been accused by the mayor of making insulting and defamatory comments on air, focusing largely on the mayor's refusal to question - unlike many other PP leaders - the police inquiry into the Madrid train bombings on March 11, 2004. In alleging that Gallardón was a "traitor" and a "liar" and accusing him of not caring about the victims of the attacks. The judge ruled that Losantos exceeded his right to freedom of speech.

Ryanair have announced that this October they will be starting new routes to Alicante and Murcia to Birmingham. The airline had cancelled their Birmingham routes some years previously because of high airport taxes there.

The new market in Campoamor started trading on Thursday morning, 26 June. A total of 80 stalls were granted licences with the possibility of expanding to 180 stalls in the future if required. The market is located along Calle Eduardo Mendoza, behind La Glea's bridge in the area known as El Pinar de Campoamor.

Working with the Guardia Civil, the Lancashire Serious & Organised Crime Unit have discovered 30 caravans which had been stolen in the UK now on a Benidorm campsite. None of the 'new' British owners had the correct legal paperwork or a receipt of payment. As all the stolen caravans have been subject to an insurance claim, ownership automatically passes to the insurance companies who can now re-sell the caravans back to the 'new' owners - usually at a reasonable price - but they will still have paid twice for their caravan!

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Whats Up? continued

The price of land in Spain has fallen by 7.7% in the last year, according to the new numbers from the Ministry for Housing. Most expensive land is in Álava and Barcelona, the cheapest in Jaén and Ourense. Land in Málaga is up approx 2% in 12 months. Over the first quarter there were 8,892 land deals completed. This is 30.6% down on a year ago.

OK! So I have an infatuation with figures - probably as a result of a long career in finance and receiving the benefit of a couple of years gift subscription to Playboy & Mayfair, but I thought that the following figures were also interesting. Latest data from the Ministry for Employment and Immigration in Spain, shows that the average retirement pension in Spain on June 1 was 814.42€ a month, 7.2% more than a year ago. The average Social Security Pension, again in Spain, which also includes incapacity benefit, widowhood and other orphan and family benefits now stands at 719.58 €- up 6.9% on the year.

The newspaper, ABC, has reported that the Foro Nuclear has claimed that the new Minister for Industry, Miguel Sebastián, is in favour of building more nuclear power plants. The industry wants to see 11 new plants open by 2030, but the Prime Minister has often spoken of closing down all the nuclear facilities in Spain, saying that they are too expensive. Nuclear power generates about 25% of Spain's electricity.

Last week a 44 year old Iranian tried to throw acid over a 30 year old Russian waitress in an Alicante cafe. He then shot her in the leg and shot himself in the head. Police say they think it is was a crime of passion, but the waitress denied this. The lawyer representing the man said that his client had been away from Alicante for some time, after he was the object of a kidnap attempt two years ago in Torrevieja. The man died later.

The National Competition Commission (CNC) in Spain is investigating three cases of alleged price fixing in the cosmetic industry. Among the companies under review are Unilever, Colgate and L'Oréal, and if found guilty the fines issued against them could reach 10% of their turnover! One of the investigations is on gels, another on toothpaste, and a third on hair-care products.

Luis Martín, is an artist from Murcia who says he wants to create 'a grand 15 metre wide sphere of cultural brotherhood', which will be filled with 100 litres of donated semen. He says he will hold his first collection this Sunday 29th, on the La Cañada beach in Almería. He hopes that once completed the sphere will be placed in the Reina Sofia or Thyssen Museums in Madrid. Neither of the two venues have as yet made any comment.

Faster than a speeding bullet.....

Superman was flying high over New York one beautiful day when looking down he saw the incredibly beautiful Wonder Woman lying absolutely naked on her back sunbathing.

'Wait a minute,' he thought, 'I'm faster than etc...', so down he streaks and WHAM! BANG! - so fast he breaks the sound barrier, does the deed and is gone. Wonder Woman sits up and says 'What the hell was that?'

'I dunno' says the Invisible Man 'but my backside hurts like hell!'

Speak Up!

An elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to see the doctor and the doctor was able to help him and fitted him with a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%.

The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, "Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again."

The gentleman replied, "Oh , I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my will three times!"



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Learning to drive in Spain - a brief look.

It is now not necessary to hop on a plane back to the UK to take an extensive driving course and pass your test. There are now driving schools available here who will coach and nurse you through the Spanish driving test in various languages, including English, Chinese, German, French and obviously Spanish.

First you must complete a twenty hour theory course and then sit and pass an exam. This is before you are permitted to even get behind the wheel of a car. The 'theory exam' once passed is valid for two years. But unlike the UK, you are not allowed to practice, I believe, without a qualified instructor with you at all times - no willing friends, dads etc., even though they may have a valid licence.

The good news is that the instructors are allowed to accompany you throughout the driving test and explain what you may not understand. The bad news is that this whole process can cost up to euro 1,200, and that's if you pass it first time! So start saving! If you require more information go to www.trafik.eu or call Amy on 965 437 207 who can assist you. This is an Elche-based company.

Quick Restaurant Review

You will probably have passed the **Lo Monte Hotel** at some stage. It is a one star hotel just outside Pilar de Horadada which is visible from the motorway on the way to San Javier airport or passed on the N332 just outside of Pilar. Now I don't know what merits a 'one star hotel' - maybe a real door to your room or a colour TV in their lounge? But I always noticed that there were always lots of workmen's cars parked outside at lunchtime, so I thought it must be worth checking-out. So euros in hand we popped in there one day.

Walking into the restaurant, the first thing you come across is the ever present 'fruit-machine.' Next to it was a display stand of music cds and next to that a display stand of 'porn' dvds. OK. Not too bad. It would take more than a few pairs of mammary glands to put me off my *gaspacho*. Then next to the porn was a glass display cabinet housing a large selection of knives. Now these were not the Marco Pierre White/Jamie Oliver type of knife. These were of the 'rib-tickling' kind and the 'give me your money or I will cut your nose off' variety, in all shapes, sizes and prices. If you must know prices ranged from about 6 euros upwards and you could buy a decent one capable of seeing off the mother-in-law and gutting several rabbits for about €8.

The restaurant was quite spacious, faced by a long bar, with the usual TV blaring but very few people despite all the cars and vans outside. Then the staff made an appearance and all I could think of was the 'Adams Family'! Unkind I know, as I am no oil-painting myself, but this restaurant was following a 'twilight zone' trend and I had to see the ending. You are usually safe ordering fish in a Spanish restaurant BUT I was caught out yet again. The shellfish soup was bland and the *merluza a la romana* I ordered was raw and inedible. I had visions of stomach pumps in Torry Hospital but I did not send the food back because knowing what some cooks do to returned food in the UK, what they might do here would probably be pure Stephen King. So I choose the coward's route and sought solace in the chilled red wine. By the way, the loo's were spotless and spacious.

I have been back since, but just for a coffee. Even that was what in the 60's we used to call 'a happening.' Someone was threatening to 'injure' somebody else in reception and there was a Spanish chap on the pay-phone in the restaurant carrying a 'Harrods' bag!!! and speaking so loudly he must have been heard in Cartagena, as he was also competing with the noise from the motor-bikes on TV. Surreal is not the word!! I can't wait to get back there!!

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Spanish government to repatriate one million immigrants.

Beginning in July, the government will offer legal immigrants who lose their jobs a chance to collect unemployment benefits quickly if they agree to return to their home countries. Under the deal, returning immigrants will receive their full unemployment benefits in two instalments: one before leaving, and the other once they are back in their own country. To be eligible, migrants must give up their residency and work papers and pledge not to return for at least three years. The move, sparked by the economic crisis, is in stark contrast with the government's immigration policies just a year ago, when foreign workers were being hired at source. Over one million people could be affected by this measure, around half of all non-EU legal residents, said Labour Minister Celestino Corbacho.

The figure is based on the belief that immigrants who accept this offer will take their relatives with them. Corbacho also announced tougher conditions to bring family members into Spain that might prevent workers' parents and in-laws from being eligible. In 2000 the foreign-born share of the population was just 4%. Seven years on, it is 12%, as high as anywhere in Europe.

From January 2005 to April 2008, Spain granted residency papers to over 252,000 relatives of migrant workers. Corbacho said that there are currently around 165,000 unemployed foreigners, and expected that figure to grow over the next three years, when the economy "will then enter a phase of job creation."

Economy in 'Free-Fall'?

It has been an illuminating exercise to dip into back issues of the financial press searching for items on the Spanish economy. Last year, April 07, everything was 'rosy in the garden.' Spanish PM Zapatero boasted that it was the eight largest economy in the world, that 2006 had been the best year for the economy in three decades of democracy with a growth rate of 3.9%, that the boom would continue for at least another two years. Indeed, PM Zapatero said his 'state of the economy' speeches would become an annual highlight.

However then the Financial Times saw the 'writing on the wall.' In April '07 it reported '... his administration has done little to take the country's economic development forward. Keeping a lid on spending is a necessary but insufficient policy; in reality, the Socialists appear to see virtue in doing nothing. The three main elements underpinning Spain's economic expansion are: low eurozone interest rates; putting a huge stock of unemployed labour (including immigrants) to work; and an unbridled construction boom. That is a very vulnerable mix, especially when coupled with: very low productivity growth; a weak technology base and ossified (fossilised) education system; and the second biggest current account deficit in the world after the US, at \$107bn last year, or 8.8 per cent of gross domestic product.' The F. T. concluded - 'Mr Zapatero had little of substance to say about how to reduce these imbalances, how to foster competitiveness and innovation, or how to identify sectors and push through reforms that will help sustain growth in the future. That is not a sustainable policy as monetary conditions tighten in a recovering eurozone and as competition from east and central Europe and Asia stiffens. Spain needs to re-engineer its economy as well as celebrate it.'

Well 14 months on, 'the chickens have come home to roost' with a vengeance. Annual GDP growth is expected to be less than 2% this year. Rising interest rates, mortgage defaulters doubled to 2% of the total, over-supply and tougher lending conditions mean new home starts this year are forecast at less than a quarter of their 2006 peak of 800,000. Unemployment now stands at 9.6% but is expected to reach 11% next year. Income from IVA (VAT) and corporate taxation are each down by almost 20% and the surplus in the state budgets have dropped from euro 13.5 billion for the period Jan to May last year to euro 2.7 billion for the same period this year. The Governor of the Bank of Spain has said that the measures announced to date are not sufficient to combat the crisis. He has called for reform of the labour market, wage increases not to be linked to inflation and greater austerity from the regional governments.

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PETANCA

Petanca is a game enjoyed by thousands of people across the world. From its origins in France it has spread across the globe. The game has a wonderful simplicity about it. You can start playing as soon as you buy a set of boules and a jack. It can be played almost anywhere where there is enough space and on almost any terrain. I have seen them play in the car parks in San Luis. Equally, like most beautiful games, the simplicity of it masks a complexity that soon becomes addictive.

Petanca is played as a singles game or doubles with each player using three boules. Triples is played with each player using only two boules. The object is simple: make sure your team's boule is nearest the jack at the finish of each end; score one point for each of your team's boule nearer than the opposition and be the first team to score thirteen points.

The game can be enjoyed at any level, from beach games between friends right up to national and international level including world championships. But at whatever level you play the enjoyment is the same.

The rules of the game are straightforward and the governing body for the rules is the 'International Federation of Petanque and Jeu Provençal'. Rules can be downloaded from the internet by just searching for the word 'petanque'.

The equipment required is very cheap and boules can be bought from most sports shops and large supermarkets in Spain. Prices range from around 10 euros for a set of three to well over 150 euros for competition boules. There are many 'fun' sets available but I would recommend purchasing a set of three boules rather than a box with only pairs of boules; you will need three to play in most games. A set of jacks, a cloth and a measure, all you need to play, can cost as little as 5-10 euros. The fun starts from the moment the jack is thrown. The jack needs to land between 6 and 10 metres away from the circle drawn in the ground in which each player must stand to throw. Very soon players will work out that they prefer a 'long', 'medium' or 'short' jack. Equally players will work out what the opposition prefers and try to play a jack to a length that suits themselves and not the other team. So the strategy and tactics begin.

Petanca is indeed a game that requires some skill, team play and an idea of how to play to your own advantage. Each boule thrown changes the game and each end has a life of its own. Most of the fun comes from choosing the right shot and seeing how it works out. It reflects life in many ways: "Is this a time to play safe and protect what we hold?" or "Is this a time to change everything, take a risk and see what happens?" As far as the French are concerned, certainly those that I have played, petanca is a game to be lived and living involves taking risks. (J.C.)

If you would like to try it out go to the petanca courts by La Casita for 10 minutes to 5 every Monday - or have a go on your own at another time!

Psyched Out!

A child psychologist visited a school in Newcastle to find out what the children of today are thinking. First he sees a boy in the corner of the playground running around in circles and pretending to be a truck. "So what are you doing then?", the psychologist asks. "I'm a truck driver and I'm driving all over the world," the boy responds. Next, the psychologist sees another boy doing press-ups in the middle of the playground. "So what are you doing then?", the psychologist asks. "I'm sorting out his wife while he's gone."

Little Known Spanish Territories - Part 2 - The African *Plazas*.

Aside from the Canary & Balearic Islands and Llívia, the remaining Spanish territories are on the north coast of Morocco. The cities of Ceuta and Melilla have been classed as sovereign Spanish territories for more than 500 years along with a scattering of small islands, some no larger than rocks, off the Moroccan coastline. Naturally, Morocco wants the land back comparing their claim to that of the Spanish for Gibraltar. The cities of Ceuta (Pop. 75,000) and Melilla (Pop. 60,000) are valuable economic resources, important fishing and free ports and together with the small islands are considered to be of significant strategic value to the Spanish. These territories are much closer to the Spanish mainland than either the Canaries or the Balearics and the UN has surprisingly never regarded them as colonial territories proclaiming that the 'territorial integrity' principle in 1960 is regarded by Spanish authorities as proof that legal grounds outweigh any 'geographic argument' put forward by Morocco and that these areas were Spanish even before Morocco existed.

The Spanish borders of Ceuta and Melilla with Morocco are wholly enclosed by at least two six metre high fences together with barbed-wire, tear-gas traps, troops and guard dogs. This is designed to keep the north Africans illegal immigrants out. However occasionally, a large number of Africans, sometimes hundreds, will try and rush the fences with ladders - the most recent being during the Spanish penalties in the UEFA Cup when 50 were arrested! In previous years scores of immigrants have been shot dead by the Moroccan forces and Amnesty records another horrific incident when several hundred illegal's were rounded up by the Moroccan forces, then driven out into the desert and left without food or water.

One of the smaller Spanish islands, Perejil (Parsley), was occupied by Moroccans troops in 2002. Although this uninhabited island is only a couple of hundred metres from the Moroccan coastline and is only 450 by 450 meters in size - i.e. a large rock, the Spanish took this as a major affront and dispatched a small contingent of their special forces there with two helicopters and unceremoniously removed the Moroccans. After mediation by Colin Powell the island then returned to its deserted state.

Both Ceuta and Melilla can be reached by ferry, or by helicopter from Málaga airport.

Notes from La Casita

Petanca

With the arrival of the long awaited warmer weather the Petanca Club have moved to their summer playing times. We now start at 5 pm Mondays and play until about 7 pm. If you wish to play, please arrive by 10 to 5 in order to draw for teams.

All the regular classes and events continue to take place in La Casita throughout the summer months. Some interest has been shown in the proposed new events - Yoga, Pilates and English as a foreign language. Keep an eye on the notice boards for more details and contact numbers to phone.

BAAH!

A lawyer from New York was transferred to a small frontier town during the settlement of the West. After several weeks there he noticed that the town was populated solely by men.

He asked one of the local cowboys, "What do you do when you get the urge for a woman?"

The cowboy replied, "See them thar'sheep up on thet hill. We just go git us one."

"That is disgusting and barbaric!!" replied the lawyer.

After about 6 months the lawyer could not stand it any longer. He decided though, if he was going to 'romance' a sheep, he would show these yokels how to do it right. He picked out the prettiest sheep of the bunch, bathed & perfumed her, put a pink ribbon on her and wandered into the local saloon with the sheep under his arm.

The piano fell silent, people dropped drinks and all the cowboys turned, and stared in shocked disbelief.

The lawyer said, "You bunch of hypocrites. You look at me as if I'm some sort of freak for doing what you've been doing all along. I'm just doing it with a bit more class."

"That ain't the problem," replied one cowboy. "That's the sheriff's gal you're with!"

(Jock)

Having a bad day? Just remember, it could be worse...

The average cost of rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdes oil spill in Alaska was \$80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensively saved animals were being released back into the wild amid cheers and applause from onlookers. A minute later, in full view, a killer-whale ate them both.

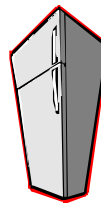
Still think you are having a bad day?

A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen shaking frantically, almost in a frenzy, with some kind of wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current, she whacked him with a handy plank of wood, breaking his arm in two places. Up to that moment, he had been happily listening to his Walkman!

(PatC)

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MOVING TO SPAIN is not always like moving to paradise. Yes it's sunny throughout, has beautiful beaches that run for miles and looks really pretty, but it's also a place which can drive the normally patient and understanding WILD! 'In the Garlic' authors Valerie Collins and Theresa O'Shea share their top 10 tips about living in Spain.

Tip 1

When dealing with any facet of Spanish bureaucracy, remember The Law of *Falta Uno*: that however many documents and photocopies you take along there will always be ONE missing. Always double check that you have every piece of paper that you think you might need (and possibly even a few more that you don't).

Be patient. Be assertive. Take plenty of reading material. Rope in a friendly mentor who speaks the lingo, and check any papers you are given with a fine tooth comb for names, dates, accounts numbers and more BEFORE you leave the desk or *ventanilla* (window). Any undiscovered glitch may set you back years. Oh, and don't forget the rabbit's foot!

Tip 2

Do not forget to tip the butanero – the man (and it will be a man) who throws those two-ton orange gas-bottles on his shoulder and climbs four flights of stairs when the lift is broken to deliver what may well be your main source of heating and fuel.

Tip 3

If it is your birthday, don't stand around grinning, waiting for someone to buy you a drink, or bounce jauntily into work expecting to be showered with goodies. Not only do the Spanish drive on the wrong side of the road, they've also got the whole birthday thing completely wrong. It's your birthday, it's your shout. As if it's not bad enough chalking up another year, you have to treat your colleagues and friends to boot. If it's your child's birthday, make sure he /she takes a big bag of sweets to school to share with his / her classmates.

Tip 4

Do not go to the beach in August. Three quarters of the population of Spain and their families will be there, too. Along with several kitchen sinks. You will wait nine hours to get served at a restaurant, another nine hours for the food to arrive, plus two or three more before you get fed up waiting for the bill and do a '*sinpa*' (ie a runner, from *sin pagar* - without paying).

Tip 5

Do not pop into the bank / gestor's office / estate agent / post office / mechanic's between 9.30 and 11 in the morning. There will be a queue and one over-worked, stressed-out, don't-you-dare-complain employee will be holding the fort. Should you wish to see a specific somebody, you can be sure said somebody will be in the nearest bar, tucking into his/her *segundo desayuno* (second breakfast). If you can't beat them, join them, and order a nice large *café con leche* with a torpedo-sized toasted roll drizzled in oil, rubbed with tomato and stuffed with ham / cheese / tuna / tortilla / or any combination thereof.

Tip 6

Remember, children are not only to be heard and seen. They are also to be picked up and cooed over at every possible instant, allowed to stay up as late as their parents during the summer holidays, and thought of as nothing but cute as they scream around your table while you try enjoy a quiet drink.

Tip 7

If you need to attract a busy barperson's attention, a polite raised finger and a timid '*Perdone*' or '*Disculpe*' (Excuse me) won't get you very far. Clear your throat, along with however many decades of ingrained politeness, and yell: '*¡Oiga!*' (Listen, person-that-I-don't-know), or if you're really really brave, '*¡Oye!*' (Listen, person-that-I-don't-know-but-will-speak-to-as-if-I-did). That should do it, you'll fit right in, and no-one will mutter anything about 'manners' and 'upbringing'. Forthright and direct is ok. Just remember you can make your intonation sound polite – and smile.

Tip 8

Remember, time is relative. In Spain *la mañana* lasts until about 2pm, *la tarde* (the afternoon) stretches to nightfall, there is no word for evening, and the early hours have their own special name: *la madrugada*.

Tip 9

Do not attempt to buy a house, get a new kitchen put in, renew your driving licence, make an insurance claim, see a doctor, give birth etc in August. Spain is not in (It's gone to the beach. See 4).

Tip 10

Do not refer to catalan, valenciano or gallego as dialects of 'Spanish' or Castilian – unless you want to get right up the nose of a Catalan, Valenciano, Gallego big time. They are all languages in their own right, and are co-official with castellano in the autonomous communities in which they are spoken (ie Catalunya, Valencia and the Balearics, and Galicia).

Editors note: 'In the Garlic' is a quirky, humorous and helpful A-Z guide about Spain written by Valerie Collins and Theresa O'Shea. It is available from the Bookworld España chain, amazon.co.uk and all good bookshops.

Q. How do you get 150 old ladies to shout 'Bollocks!'?

A. Just get one of them to shout 'Bingo!'

'Ello, 'Ello, 'Ello!

If you only have one ball, a sexually transmitted disease, flat feet, a high-pitched voice, diabetes or psoriasis or if you suffer from migraines or stutter, you cannot be a member of the Spanish Guardia Civil. *El País* recently reported that the list of prohibitions was drawn up in 1988 and describes them as 'quite questionable'.

The paper claims that people have been refused admission to the force in the past simply because they have a scar, and say that now some patients associations are trying to get the list, seen as obsolete and prejudiced, changed.

There was some progress in 2005 however when people who stutter were finally described as being apt for service as a Civil Guard.

Local police on patrol in Redovan were drawn to the local cemetery after hearing loud banging noises coming from that direction in the early hours of the morning. On arrival they found a man outside the cemetery, methodically breaking up a number of aluminium gates with a sledgehammer, ready to load them into a nearby van. He claimed to have found them in a container nearby, but the officers realised that they were in fact gates from individual family crypts within the cemetery. Upon investigation, it was found that 9 such gates had been forcibly removed from their moorings. Only the gates had been removed, leaving the ornaments and religious objects within the crypts untouched. The accused allegedly later told police that he was quite confident that, given where he was, nobody was going to complain about the thefts immediately! The aluminium was destined to be sold as scrap metal.

CHANGES TO FREE HEALTHCARE ENTITLEMENT IN THE REGION OF VALENCIA

You may recall an article in the October '07 edition of the Dream Scene entitled 'HEALTHCARE - POSSIBLE CHANGES', where it was highlighted that European Union citizens under pensionable age have no automatic right to medical help in Spain beyond emergencies. Whereas previously, the Valencian authorities had turned a 'blind-eye' and treated these people under a category of 'extensión o demada', this practice will now cease. The Generalitat regional government said that some 3,000 foreigners have been benefiting from the arrangement, 1,600 of them British residents, and that there were a high number of operations for problems such as cataracts, angina or other heart problems carried out - the costs of these treatments being met by the regional health service in Valencia which has now said 'no more.'

The change in practice in Valencia was supported by both the Partido Popular and the Socialists in a move to better control access to health resources. The move could well be followed by other regional health services in Spain.

The Valencia Government has announced the replacement of the Circular 1/2002 scheme with a new law called "*Ley Aseguramiento Sanitario*" which took effect from 5th June 2008.

This previous circular allowed people with no entitlement to healthcare to access the system free of charge on 'humanitarian grounds'. The new law aims to regulate and control (i.e. restrict!) free access to the Health System in the autonomous region of Valencia.

The people most affected by this measure are British nationals who do not have access to State Health System through an E121 or E106 or who do not pay Spanish Social Security contributions. These are mainly early retirees who do not work in Spain and who accessed the system through the "legislation letter" issued by Newcastle (and not people who have been forced to retire through accident or illness). Although most of these people will now be resident and paying their taxes in Spain, they are effectively 'in limbo' - unable to access free NHS care in the UK and now not entitled to free care in Spain.

Those in possession of a valid card will not have their entitlement taken away from them immediately. However when the temporary SIP card runs out they will not be able to renew their cover. No new applicants will be accepted onto the scheme. The new legislation does not effect EU citizens of retirement age.

Those residents that find themselves in this situation and do not have entitlement to healthcare through the E121, E106 or Spanish National Insurance contributions should consider taking out private health insurance.

For more information on entitlement to an E121 or E106, please contact the Dept for Work and Pensions Medical Benefits unit on 0044 191 218 1999 or www.dh.gov.uk

<p><i>Kevin & Kaz Welcome you to</i></p> <h1>R Bar</h1> <p>Via Park V OPEN 12 TILL 1.30am New People-New Deal Friday July 4 Lee Tracey - Outrageous Drag Queen 2 Course Dinner + Show €14.95 Strictly Adults Only Quiz Night - Thursday Superb Sunday Roasts Food served daily 12 'till 12 Take-Away Service available <i>"There are no strangers at R Bar - only friends who haven't met!"</i></p>	<p><i>pizzeria</i> CRISTINA <i>Restaurante</i> Via Park V  </p> <p>Your favourite Italian Food Freshly cooked to order Friendly Service Generous Portions Steaks, Fish, Pizza & Pasta Take-Away Service The best Pizzas on the Costa Blanca Tel: 677242117</p>
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GIFTED!

A lonely widow, aged 70, decided that it was time to get married again.

She put an ad in the local newspaper that read:

HUSBAND WANTED: MUST BE IN MY AGE GROUP (70's), MUST NOT BEAT ME, MUST NOT RUN AROUND ON ME, AND MUST STILL BE GOOD IN BED! ALL APPLICANTS PLEASE APPLY IN PERSON.

On the second day she heard the doorbell. Much to her dismay, she opened the door to see a grey-haired gentleman sitting in a wheel chair. He had no arms or legs.

"You're not really asking me to consider you, are you?!" she said. "Just look at you .. you have no legs!"

The old gentleman smiled, "Therefore, I cannot run around on you!"

"You don't have any arms either!" she snorted.

Again, the old man smiled, "Therefore, I can never beat you up!"

She raised an eyebrow and asked intently, "Are you still good in bed??"

The old man leaned back, beamed a big smile and said, "I rang the door bell, didn't I?"

The wedding is scheduled for Saturday.

The word 'aerobics' came about when the gym instructors got together and said: If we're going to charge \$20 an hour, we can't call it 'Jumping up and down.'

We've begun to long for the pitter-patter of little feet - so we bought a dog. Well, it's cheaper, and you get more feet.

To attract men, I wear a perfume called "New Car Interior." Rita Rudner

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The Lone Ranger & Tonto

The Lone Ranger and Tonto went camping in the desert. After they got their tent all set up, both men fell sound asleep.

Some hours later, Tonto wakes the Lone Ranger and says, "Kemo Sabe, look toward sky, what you see?"

The Lone Ranger replies, "I see millions of stars." "What that tell you?" asked Tonto.

The Lone Ranger ponders for a minute then says, "Astronomically speaking, it tells me there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo. Time wise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three in the morning. Theologically, the Lord is all-powerful and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What's it tell you, Tonto?"

"You dumber than buffalo sh*t! It mean someone steal tent!"

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Out & About

This Friday, the 4th, the R Bar is featuring the Outrageous Lee Tracey - Last of the Red Hot Drag Queens - 2 Course Dinner plus Show €14.95. Strictly Adults Only.

All Bar Sue's and The Pasty Shack are repeating their successful 'Paella & Salsa Night' this Wednesday, July 2nd, at 7.30pm. The first one was great fun and you can just have a drink and watch or participate if you prefer. If you are not keen on *paella*, there will be plenty of other dishes to choose from including international tapas from All Bar Sue and, if they have any left you must try one of Dave & Anna home-made cheese burgers - to die for!

Scampi's have also extended their menu to now include juicy steaks and chops.

The Welcome Inn in Via Park 3 is now open so do call in for a 'cold one' and welcome them.

The Mas y Mas in Punta Prima is now open on Sundays until 2pm and many of the other supermarkets should soon be opening on Sundays as well for July and August.

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