

# THE DREAM SCENE

## Newsletter

Issue no. 30 1st of August 2009

Bienvenido and welcome to the August issue of the Dream Scene.

First of all I am happy to report that Pat Farnaby has now re-established the Dream Hills message board and you can now visit it at [www.dreamhills.co.uk](http://www.dreamhills.co.uk)

Second, thank you to those who have sent in jokes for publication. The criteria for accepting jokes is of course quality but also length. If a submitted joke cannot fit in the space I have available, it is kept for a later date but then possibly overlooked or forgotten about! Sorry!

This year the summer has been glorious and very, very hot. In nearly six years here, I have not experienced such a prolonged hot and dry period. Certainly, if you are not 'geared-up' for it, the heat can be cruel. Daily temperatures are now around 33° in the shade and night-time temperatures can be most uncomfortable for those without air conditioning or good ventilation. I have also seen seasoned residents being caught out with sunburn so do be especially careful with exposure to the sun, particularly when it comes to the little ones. To date, two people in Spain have already died this summer from heatstroke. The sea temperature at the moment is around 27/28°! So please, if you see Dave the handyman, the cleaners or the security guards perspiring copiously while going about their duties, do please be charitable and offer a cold glass of water occasionally.

The hot weather together with the combination of strong winds has led to some very serious fires throughout the whole of Spain. No region is now safe from fires. To make matters worse, some of the fires have been started deliberately. The attractive town of Mojacar had to be evacuated as the flames got to within 15 metres of the town buildings. It is similar story across Spain. Avila has been having a very difficult time this week with a major fire which was started intentionally and to date two people have been killed. Throughout the country, six firefighters have already lost their lives. I can recall a horrific incident some years ago, when eight firefighters died while fighting to control a massive fire caused by a barbecue.

About ten days ago, there were some very strong gusting winds. Many of the gazebos in Dream Hills took off and are now in orbit. One of the big ferries coming from Oran in Algeria was trying to dock in Alicante when it was dashed against the dock wall; the boat and unloading areas were damaged so badly that over 1,000 passengers had to spend an additional 20 hours on the ferry until the damage was repaired. Add to this delay the mix of the scorching temperatures and some 2,000 people waiting to board the ferry to go to Algeria. Police had to be called to restore order and were, at one stage, showered with bottles by the angry and very hot travellers waiting on the dockside. The police, also very angry and very hot, responded in kind. Eventually a substitute ferry was organised but this took some time to arrive.

Keep well and safe. Mick, Editor. (I can be contacted at [mick.dreamscene@gmail.com](mailto:mick.dreamscene@gmail.com))

### Not getting yours!

Remember you can make sure of getting your copy of the Dream Scene to your post box or home by subscribing five euro towards the printing costs for a full years subscription. The subscription year runs from March each year. A half year's sub costs just three euro.

Alternatively, you can have the Dream Scene sent to you (in glorious colour) by e-mail each month for just five euro or five pounds sterling for a full 12 issues.

Up to 300 free hard copies are distributed to the various retails outlets, bars etc locally who advertise in the newsletter.



**It's hay fever and I'm not going truffle hunting!**

# WHAT'S UP?

The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report produced by the World Economic Forum for 2009 reveals that Spain has dropped a place in the world ranking of the most competitive tourist destinations. Spain is now in sixth place behind Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France and Canada. The negative aspects found included a lack of competitive prices, the level of security and the regulations that govern the sector. All this was before the current scandalous behaviour of the car rental companies. The rates being charged for July and August this year have been extortionate, being double and even triple their advertised rates. Although the Valencian Community has been spending millions on promoting the Costa Blanca this year, the car rental companies, by their greed, are negating all this. You can get an all inclusive holiday in Portugal in August for what the car hire in the Costa Blanca would cost you.

A large bomb placed by ETA, the Basque terrorist organisation, injured more than 65 people and destroyed the 14 story Guardia Civil barracks in Burgos. There were 120 in the building at the time including 42 children. Although the front of the building was blown away, amazingly nobody was killed. Another ETA bomb exploded close to the Guardia Civil barracks at Palmanova, Mallorca on Thursday 30th, killing two Guardia Civil and injuring several others. A second explosive device under a car was diffused.

In 2005, the 59 year old wife of President Olusegun Obasanjo, died two days after undergoing a liposuction operation in the Molding Clinic, a private clinic in Marbella. She succumbed to septic shock after losing a large amount of blood. The case is only now (five years later) in court; the prosecution is calling for two years in prison for the doctor and a five year ban from practicing in a case which was brought by the Nigerian Government. Another woman in Barcelona died recently following a liposuction. Her bowel was found to have been perforated in seven places.

In Spain a 16 year old can agree to any medical treatment without the consent or knowledge of his or her parents. This includes abortions under the new 'abortion law' and this has led to a hell of a ruckus.

A 35-year-old Italian was bitten by a moray eel after trying to drag it ashore at the Aguamarina Beach in Orihuela Costa in early July. This type of idiot deserves a special award. Last month we have had Portugese Man of Wars and moray eels off the Orihuela coast. What next? Box jellyfish and blue-ringed octopuses? The Dream Scene will offer a prize for the sighting of the first 'Great White'!

Alicante city hall is beginning to crack-down on graffiti with new by-laws. A 27-year-old woman, a fine-art student, was fined 710 euro, after being caught spraying early one morning.

The new airport proposed for Murcia is now looking for additional funding of 160 million euro in order to complete the works. 80 million has already been spent on the site by Aeropuerto de la Región de Murcia S.A. (AEROMUR), who say that the project is still on schedule. Actual photos show that the work to date is most unimpressive.

Construction of the new IKEA in Alicante is not now thought to begin until 2011. This is due to planning changes promised but not finalised by the town hall. The store will be situated on the Avenida de la Universidad in the Rebasea area close to motorway access. The mayoress is now trying to 'fast track' the approvals.

Banks and Savings Banks in Spain have applauded the new rules on bad debt announced by the Bank of Spain. Until now, banks have had to make provision for the full value of high-risk loans—those above 80% of the property's value—after two years of arrears. That was far too demanding, since property values rarely fall to zero. Under the new rules, they only have to allow for the difference between the value of the loan and 70% of the property's market value. This will assist the banks, particularly the savings banks, to post better results. The two largest banks, BBVA and Santander, have diversified abroad and have already returned good second quarter results. It is the many savings banks, who are heavily exposed to developers and non-performing loans, who will reap the benefits. However, it can be argued that these new guidelines do not solve the real underlining problems which includes a massive surplus of empty properties and banks who will not lend. The level of bad property debt in the commercial banks is massive, around 10 billion € and Spain's savings banks have still not publicly disclosed the extent of their debt.

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A forest fire in Benidorm's Sierra Helada on Wednesday afternoon of July 8 led the authorities to evacuate 5,000 people from the Aqualandia and Mundomar theme parks as a precaution. The 200 residents of three nearby urbanisations were also told to leave their homes, but were allowed back later in the afternoon when the flames threatening their homes were brought under control. The scorching conditions have also led to serious fires in Almeria with over 600 firefighters including the military and Guardia Civil in attendance. Over 4,000 hectares (one hectare equals 10,000 square metres) of the Sierra Cabrera natural park have been destroyed.

A drug smuggling gang of 13 employees at Barcelona Airport were arrested after they tried to bribe a customs official. The custom's official was offered 10,000 euro for every kilo of cocaine. The drugs were loaded on at Bogata and the members of the gang picked up the drugs hidden in airplane toilets or in luggage labelled as belonging to air crew; they then removed the contraband taking advantage of their ability to work in strategic places around the airport, including cleaning aircraft and loading and unloading luggage.

National Police in Madrid have broken up an extensive network of 'home delivery' of cocaine (Dialasnort?), which had a list of close to 500 regular customers. Following investigations into the murder of a Romanian night-club bouncer in Madrid the home-delivery network came to light. 'I'll have a pepperoni pizza and and some 'snort' please!'

In another drug story the Spanish authorities in Galicia arrested eight people, including three police officers, in an operation in which they also seized 815 kilograms of cocaine, hidden in a consignment of prawns. A Spanish lawyer in Vigo cleared the way for the smuggling route from South America, Ecuador and Colombia, by setting up a front company to give the appearance of legality to assorted imports, thus providing the traffickers with the ability to send "secure shipments" of the drug. Galicia has been a notorious drug smuggling area for many years.

The bankrupt real estate giant Martinsa has only handed over 100 of the 5,000 homes it has sold over the past year since it applied for bankruptcy protection. This has included just 72 apartments in the Valencia region. There are thousands of anguished clients clamouring for the release of their new homes or their money back., generally without much success.

The Telecommunications Commission in Spain has ordered the freezing of the monthly line rental charged by Telefónica. They have said the rental standing charge cannot rise in two consecutive years, so that it can approach what is charged elsewhere in Europe, which is generally cheaper than Spain. It means the charge will be fixed at 13.97 € a month next year. Telefónica have just announced 3.6 billion euro profits. This has exceeded all market predictions. They now has 264 million lines worldwide with 40% of their income coming from South America.

The Bank of Spain has warned that the recession has led to a greater number of counterfeit notes in circulation. They state that there has been a 17% increase in forged notes and have withdrawn 814,000 of them in the last 12 months. Mid month, a gang of 24 people were arrested in Barcelona, Tarragona, Lleida, Girona and Bilbao, for introducing counterfeit Euro notes into Spain. The gang also had links to prostitution and drug-trafficking in northern Spain.

In the Madrid hospital of Gregorio Marañón, a tragic story of incompetence and negligence has emerged. A 19-year-old expectant mother, Dalilah Mimuni, was admitted to the hospital. In due course Dalilah was found to have the Influenza A(H1N1) virus, (Swine Flu). A baby boy, Rayan, was delivered by Caesarian section at seven months but unfortunately the mother died a few hours after his birth. Although the baby did not have the virus, he was placed in intensive care. Here, in a monumental and tragic blunder, one of the nurses gave the baby its formula intravenously instead of by tube to the stomach! The baby died shortly afterwards. The father has now claimed that the doctors failed to consider testing his wife for the virus despite her rising fever and difficulty in breathing and that it took four visits to emergency rooms before she was admitted! (There are now 237,000 nurses in the country, but 150,000 more are needed to reach the levels recommended by the World Health organisation..)

Some thieves, wearing straw hats and bathing costumes, robbed a bank in Vélez, Málaga of 6,000 euro. I wonder where they hid that shotgun?

The director of Spain's CNI intelligence agency (Spain's MI5 & MI6), Alberto Saiz, has resigned after being accused of using public funds for private purposes. The CNI director allegedly used public funds for personal hunting and fishing trips in exotic countries, cleaning the swimming pool at his house and helping relatives and friends with employment in the service. He also attempted to 'polygraph' dozens of his employees in the service to determine who 'spilt the beans' to the press.

Police in Alicante province have been looking for the German Health Minister's official car, an armoured black S-Class Mercedes limo, which was stolen in mid July while she was on holiday in Dénia. There are red faces all round as the car keys were stolen from the chauffeur's/bodyguard's flat while he was asleep. The German newspaper, Bild, now reports that the car was not insured while it was in Spain!

#### **Nurses don't laugh.**

'Of course I won't laugh,' said the nurse. 'I'm a professional. In over twenty years I've never laughed at a patient.'

'Okay then,' said Fred, and he proceeded to drop his trousers, revealing the tiniest 'man thingy' the nurse had ever seen. Length and width, it couldn't have been bigger than a AAA battery.

Unable to control herself, the nurse started giggling, then fell to the floor laughing. Ten minutes later, she was able to struggle to her feet and regain her composure.

'I am so sorry,' she said. 'I don't know what came over me. On my honour as a nurse and a lady, I promise it won't happen again. Now, tell me, what seems to be the problem?' 'It's swollen,' Fred replied.

She ran out of the room.

## Swine flu in Spain

Spain reported the first case of swine flu (H1N1) in Europe in late April, a 23-year-old man who returned from a trip to Mexico. At the time of writing Swine Flu has caused seven deaths in Spain. There are currently around 1,800 confirmed as having the virus. Most have been sent home by the hospitals with just 20 or so cases remaining in intensive care.

The crisis caused by the epidemic has exposed shortcoming in the coordination between Spain's autonomous regions and the Health Ministry. The Spanish health system is unique in the Western world, with responsibilities divided between the Health Ministry and the regions themselves, to the extent that there is often conflict between the separate parties. Regional governments, for example, are in charge of managing the sale and financing of medicines, while it is the Ministry that takes decisions about introducing new drugs into the system. So often, the Ministry will give the green light to the introduction of new medicines, without the agreement of the regions, who must foot the bill.

Some regions, notably Catalonia and Castilla-La Mancha, are now saying that it is time to adopt a federal system to respond to the crisis and to improve efficiency. Swine flu, they argue, has shown the need for the adoption of a common government system, which is agile, responsive and involves all parties. As cases of swine flu continue to rise, many countries are slowly putting their contingency plans into operation. France, for example, has purchased 94 million doses, which would be sufficient to vaccinate 70% of the population, whereas Spain has purchased 37 million doses - enough, according to the Health Ministry - to cover 40% of its 45.8 million inhabitants. All the treatments will be taken in capsule form.

The Health Ministry sees those most in need of receiving the two-dose vaccine as workers in basic essential services such as health, emergency services and teaching, children under 14, and those with a chronic medical condition or obesity. It's understood the autonomous communities will be responsible for administering the vaccines in their areas. The head of the Health Ministry, Trinidad Jiménez, also confirmed that Spain will be following the recommendations of the World Health Organisation, and will not, for the moment, be delaying the start of the new school year over the threat from the virus. There are no current plans either to close schools in cases of infection, although the situation in schools will be closely monitored after the summer break, with new campaigns of information also planned. Jiménez admitted however, that the vaccines may not be available before children go back to school this September.

Around 8,000 people die annually directly or indirectly from seasonal flu. The Spanish Health Minister has stated that 'It is foreseeable that it (Swine Flu) will cause a high number of deaths too.'

### Ouch!

While in China, a diplomat was very promiscuous and never wore a condom. A week after arriving back home to the U.K., he wakes one morning to find his 'todger' covered with bright green and purple spots. Horrified, he immediately goes to see a doctor.

The doctor, never having seen anything like this before, orders some tests and tells the man to return in two days for the results. The man returns a couple of days later and the doctor says, 'I've got bad news for you, you've contracted Mongolian VD. It's very rare and almost unheard of here, we know very little about it.'

The man looks a little perplexed and says, 'Well, give me a shot or something and fix me up, Doc.'

The doctor answers, 'I'm sorry, there's no known cure. We're going to have to amputate your penis.'

The man screams in horror, 'Absolutely not! I want a second opinion.'

The doctor replies, 'Well, it's your choice. Go ahead, if you want but surgery is your only choice.'

The next day, the man seeks out a Chinese doctor, figuring that he'll know more about the disease. The Chinese doctor examines his penis and proclaims, 'Ah, yes, Mongolian VD. Vely lare disease.'

The guy says to the doctor, 'Yeah, yeah, I already know that but what can we do? My English doctor wants to operate and amputate my penis!'

The Chinese doctor shakes his head and laughs. 'Stupid henglish docta, always want to opelate. Make more money dat way. No need to opelate!'

Oh, Thank God!' the man replies.

'Yes,' says the Chinese doctor, 'wait two weeks. Fawl off by itself!'

### ??

A mate of mine told me he's knocking-off his girlfriend and her twin. I said how can you tell them apart? He said her brother's got a moustache!!!!

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### **Cock-Up at Desal' Plant.**

A two year delay has been announced for the Torrevieja desalination plant, as it has been established that there is not the electrical power necessary to power the facility. The plant needs a new high tension line to be laid over the eight kilometres from San Miguel de Salinas to Torrevieja, and the construction of a new electricity sub-station, which needs planning permission which has not yet even been applied for.

Now this project had a budget of 200 million euro and for them to wait until this stage to say 'Oh by the way, where do we plug this thing in?' is just unbelievable!

According to the Spanish press, the new desalination plant will be largest in Europe when it comes into operation, producing 120 cubic hectometres of drinking water a year; enough to guarantee both the urban and agricultural needs in Alicante and Murcia. A tall order I feel and a claim they may yet regret.

### **Stopping the noise.**

Torrevieja Town Hall has been told that it has to compensate local residents who are affected by noise from pubs and clubs. The Valencia High Court of Justice, TSJCV, has rejected an appeal placed before it by the Torrevieja Ayuntamiento, against an earlier sentence from the Alicante Provincial Court which ordered it to pay 12,000 €compensation to several residents, considering that the Town Hall had failed to comply with anti-noise legislation.

The residents concerned live in the Avenida de las Habaneras, above bars and discos, and some of them have been suffering the noise since 1997.

What is interesting here is that the residents had to sue the council to get satisfaction. This has also happened elsewhere but look how long it took to sort out - 13 years!

### **Legal System grinding to a halt?**

Courts in Alicante have now 30,000 more cases waiting to be heard than a year ago. The long delays are increasing in both the Civil and Social courts as the number of bankruptcy and debt hearings add to the demand, along with other restrictions brought about by the recession.

Informacion newspaper quotes data from the General Council for Judicial Power, which says that there are now 154,193 cases pending in the courts of Alicante province alone.

### **Clever Pooch**

A guy sees a sign in front of a house in Los Altos: "Talking Dog for Sale."

He rings the bell and the owner tells him the dog is in the backyard.

The guy goes into the backyard and sees a black mutt just sitting there.

"You talk?" he asks. "Sure do." the dog replies. "So, what's your story?" the man asks.

The dog looks up and says, "Well, I discovered my gift of talking pretty young and I wanted to help the government, so I told MI6 about my gift, and in no time they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders, because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping." The dog paused, "I was one of their most valuable spies eight years running. The jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger and I wanted to settle down. So I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security work, mostly wandering near suspicious characters and listening in." The dog took a drink, "I uncovered some incredible dealings there and was awarded a batch of medals. Had a wife, a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired."

The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog.

The owner says, "Ten quid."

The guy says, "This dog is amazing. Why on earth are you selling him so cheap?"

"Cause he's a bloody liar. He's never done any of that stuff"

### **Violence**

The level of violence in Spain can sometimes be a little unsettling. There is no doubt that different attitudes prevail. Take the Spanish attitude to pets, sometimes very caring but at other times, and regrettably too frequently, incredibly cruel. Also what we refer to as 'domestic' violence, many Spanish newspapers call it 'macho' or 'machismo' violence. Now, there is nothing 'macho' about hitting a woman.

Two years ago, Murcia was the murder capital of Spain, but it worth noting that more than half of the aggressors were non-Spanish.

I had intended to do a full page report on violent crime (and kidnappings), much of it in our general area. However as each week went by, there were more and more cases to report on and they would have filled a whole issue! In the end I decided to cancel it as it was too depressing. But then a number of horrific cases came to light which seem to defy any measurement one puts on human decency and show how certain crimes, and their perpetrators, are handled very differently in Spain.

The first concerns the repeated rape of a 13-year-old girl by a gang of six boys, five of them underage, in Baena, Córdoba. One of the boys was 13 and could not be charged so he was sent home. Another boy who is mentally handicapped was also released.

A few days later, in Isla Cristina, Huelva, a mentally handicapped 13-year-old was raped by a gang of 7 youths, all below the age of 16. Again, two of the boys have not yet reached 14 so they cannot be charged under current legislation and were escorted home by the police!

Finally, one newspaper, El Mundo, had the story of Sergio and Luis, aged 15 and 14, who have now been placed on 'controlled release' just nine months after killing a class mate.

Many of you can probably remember the murder of little Jamie Bulger by two children in the U.K. Can you imagine the uproar if both were allowed to go home then? There would have been riots in the streets.

The leader of the PP opposition party, Mariano Rajoy, has now called for an immediate review of the Juvenile Law saying that it protects young criminals but not their victims. They want the law reformed this year to include the possibility of criminal charges being placed against juveniles under the age of 14 in the most serious of cases.

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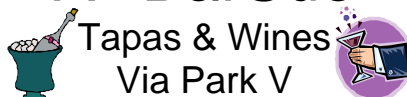
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### Quickies!

Amy Winehouse went to Glastonbury Festival the other week. She had to wade through filth, hypodermic needles and empty booze bottles and that's before she even got to her front door.

I see that Blake Fielder-Civil has divorced her. And they say that prison doesn't straighten you out.

A man goes into a library and asks for a book on suicide.

The librarian says, "Bugger off, you won't bring it back."

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### Hole in one!

A man staggers into A&E with a concussion, multiple bruises, two black eyes and a five iron wrapped around his neck. Naturally, the doctor asks him what happened.

"Well," the man says, "it's like this; I was playing a quiet round of golf with my wife, when at a difficult hole, we both sliced our balls into a pasture of cows. We went to look for them, and while I was rooting around, I noticed one of the cows had something white on its rear end. I walked over and lifted up the tail, and sure enough, there was a golf ball with my wife's monogram on it ... stuck right in the middle of the cow's backside. That's when I made my big mistake."

"What did you do?" the doctor asks.

"Well." the man replies, "I lifted the cow's tail and yelled to my wife, Hey, this looks like yours!..... I don't remember much after that."

### Wayne, Shane and Tracey

Wayne and Shane were talking one afternoon and Wayne says, "Yer know, I reckon I'm 'bout ready for a holiday, mate. Only this year I'm gonna do it a little different! The last few years, I took your advice about where to go. Three years ago, you said to go to Benidorm. I went to Benidorm and Tracey got pregnant. Then two years ago, you told me to go to Magaluf and Trace got pregnant again. Last year you suggested Falaraki and bugger me if Trace didn't get pregnant again."

Shane says, "So, what you gonna do this year that's different?"

Wayne says, "This year I'm taking Tracey wiv me."

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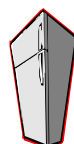
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### Short Joke

A man walks up to a woman in his office each day, stands very close to her, draws in a large breath of air and tells her that her hair smells nice.

After a week of this, she can't stand it any longer and goes to HR.

She tells them what the co-worker does, and that she wants to file a sexual harassment suit against him.

The HR supervisor is puzzled by this approach and asks "What's sexually threatening about a co-worker telling you your hair smells nice?"

The woman replies, "It's Keith, the midget."

## Out & About

Credit to the Orihuela Town Hall for completing the new motoring sections of the N332 by the start of July as promised. There are now two southbound and two northbound lanes which makes driving along the Orihuela Costa during the summer months much less of an ordeal. Some new pedestrian bridges have been added although I am not sure what will happen at the Cabo Roig end, where either a pedestrian bridge or a tunnel is required. Unfortunately the town councils of Pilar de Horidada and Torrevieja have not been so industrious and their N332 upgrade projects - particularly the latter's - are way behind. So you can now zoom along the Orihuela Costa stretch only to get to a bottleneck at the start of both these adjoining boroughs.

August, the main holiday period, is not the month to try and get anything done by the Spanish. If the Spanish had a *Ramadan*, this month would be it. I remember trying to get the air-con in the Seat fixed one August. It took four weeks, three visits to the main Seat dealers and oodles of patience to get a small piece of plastic piping sent from the Barcelona supply plant.

Work has restarted on the bridge linking Entre Golf and Dream Hills 2 and it should be finished shortly. It has now been confirmed that it is an Eco Park and not a dump which is being placed at the bottom of Entre Golf. 'That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet,' I suppose! Promised a golf course and get an Eco Park instead. It would piss me off!

The pipeworks at the top of Dream Hills/Los Altos area has now been completed and the road has been re-tarmacked and lined, a vast improvement, although now nobody knows where the bus stops. The bins (at the top of Dream Hills), were still causing many problems, but thanks to Stefan at the town hall, they have this week been placed in their correct positions. ( Incidentally, congratulations on your promotion at the town hall, Stefan.)

**Could the business operators in both Via Parks please collapse their cardboard boxes and put the folded cardboard beside the bins!** Common sense really. Madison's Bar (closed for some time) in Via Park 3 will be re-opening as an Irish-theme bar. That'll make a nice change!!!

The air-conditioned Raheny Bar is now fully open in Via Park V and is now offering a full food service. Another air-conditioned venue, All Bar Sue, is now holding a 'Salsa & Sangria' session every Wednesday evening. The salsa session is organised by Matt and it is always an enjoyable evening. Matt is also very knowledgeable on Spanish wines and would welcome the opportunity to discuss these with you and help you with any questions you might have. R Bar is holding a Caribbean Night on Tuesday 4th with Chicken Jerk etc, Caribbean music from Johan, limbo dancing and generally a good time. Sounds like a great party night!

As mentioned previously, car-hire rates are now extortionate on the Costas. It is very short sighted of the renters and their policy of overcharging during a recession will do nothing to encourage visitors. Many people have also found that although they booked a car over the 'net', once they arrived to pick it up were informed that no vehicles were available! There is no doubt that dodgy practices are back again and it is the foreign visitors who are being stuffed. Unfortunately it is the image of the Costa that will also suffer in the long run.

### The Oracle of Dream Hills



A bartender is just a pharmacist with a limited inventory.

If ignorance is bliss, you must be orgasmic.

Genius does what it must, talent does what it can, and you had best do what you're told.

If you lent somebody 50 euro and never saw them again, It was probably worth it.

### High Flyer

A bright and ambitious young man volunteered for Navy service during World War II. He had such a high aptitude for aviation that he was sent straight to flying school skipping boot camp.

The very first day at flying school, he solos and is the best flier on the base. All they could do was give him his gold wings and assign him immediately to an aircraft carrier in the Pacific.

On his first day aboard he took off and single-handedly shot down 6 Japanese Zeroes. Then climbing up to 20,000 ft. he found 9 more Japanese planes and shot them all down, too. Noting that his fuel was getting low, he descended, circled the carrier and came in for a perfect landing on the deck.

He threw back the canopy, climbed out and jogged over to the captain. Saluting smartly he said, "Well sir, how did I do on my very first day?"

The captain turned around, bowed, and replied, ".....  
"Yo make one velly important mistake!"



### A brief history of Gibraltar.

I suppose it could be called an historic meeting. On July 21st, the Spanish foreign minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos became the first Spanish government minister or Spanish 'big-wig' to visit Gibraltar in more than 300 years. There he met with Gibraltar's chief minister, Peter Carauna, and the British foreign secretary, David Miliband. Their objectives were to discuss greater cooperation in dealing with their mutual problems without backing away from their very strong views on sovereignty.

Gibraltar, Gib' or the Rock is a self-governing British overseas territory located on the southern end of the Iberian Peninsula. The area may only be 2.64 square miles but it has remained an important region throughout history. Its proximity to North Africa, only 8.6 miles, and its undoubted strategic value as a naval base and port at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean has made it a sought after prize through the centuries.

Human habitation in the Gibraltar area dates back to Neanderthal man. (Some say they never left!) Next came those great sailors and traders, the Phoenicians around 950 BC, followed by the Greeks who called it the Pillars of Hercules. Later came the Cathagenians who were ousted by the Romans. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Visigoths were briefly in occupation of the area until they were removed by the Moors in 711. The successful Moorish invasion force was led by Tariq ibn Ziyad and it was from the Arabic for 'Tariq's Mountain,' *Jabal al-Tāriq*, that the name 'Gibraltar' evolved. 'Tariq's Mountain' would remain in Moorish hands for three quarters of a millennia.

Gibraltar was finally seized from the Moors by the Duke of Medina Sidonia in 1462 ending 750 years of Moorish control. It was later held for a period of three years by a contingent of more than 4,600 Sephardic Jews from Córdoba and Sevilla, but in 1501 it passed into the hands of the Spanish Crown. In 1607 the Dutch fleet surprised the entire Spanish fleet which was at anchorage in the Bay of Gibraltar and annihilated it. Then in 1704, following a bombardment lasting six hours, 1,800 British and Dutch marines captured the town.

Most of the town's inhabitants left peacefully and later in 1713, during the Treaty of Utrecht, Spain ceded Gibraltar to Great Britain in perpetuity. Article X of the Treaty states 'The Catholic King does hereby, for himself, his heirs and successors, yield to the Crown of Great Britain the full and entire propriety of the town and castle of Gibraltar, together with the port, fortifications, and forts thereunto belonging; and he gives up the said propriety to be held and enjoyed absolutely with all manner of right for ever, without any exception or impediment whatsoever.'

There were several unsuccessful military incursions later by the Spanish and a siege was placed on the area by the French and Spanish from 1779 to 1783. The siege was broken when the British destroyed the floating batteries of the French and Spanish.

After Britain recognised the Franco regime in 1938, Gibraltar had two Spanish Consulates, a Republican and a Nationalist one. During WW2, Britain evacuated all the women and children from the Rock and turned it into a fortress. Franco prevaricated about joining the Axis in the war and refused to let German troops pass through Spain to assault the Rock. After WW2 relations between Britain and Spain deteriorated over the Rock, particularly in 1969 when Spain cancelled the work permits of almost 5,000 Spaniards who worked in Gib. Ships were boycotted from using the port; Spanish airspace was severely restricted and the border was closed.

Following Spanish entry into the European Union and NATO, tensions have subsided. The signing of an agreement known as 'The Brussels Accord' in 1984 between Spain and the UK eliminated the sanctions and restrictions on Gib. In 1985 the border was reopened, after having been closed for the preceding 15 years.

Today the Spanish still desperately want the Rock back, although the vast majority of Gibraltarians reject this. Whereas the current Spanish administration now believe in using the 'carrot approach', a new administration or government in Spain might wish to take a much tougher stance.

More on Gibraltar in a future issue.

The normal 'History of Spain' series will return next month.

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WATCH****EHIC - European Health Insurance Cards**

Last week the Costa Blanca News devoted its front page to changes to the EHIC system which will come into effect on March 1, 2010. This is not the Tarjeta Sanitaria SIP card but the card which entitles the holder to free emergency medical treatment in other EU member states. They report that 'these changes will affect those persons who are in receipt of a state pension or long-term incapacity benefit who receive free healthcare under the current E121 system. Under the changes it will mean that people who are in receipt of this service will have to obtain their EHIC cards from the relevant UK authority. Expat residents who receive healthcare under other agreements will not be affected by the changes.'

This information did not appear in the other English language papers nor were details provided as to how one might now apply for the card and how to collect it. I will try and get these details for next month's issue.

**Get on your bike!**

Most of you will, by now, be familiar with the government and local subsidy for new cars. Now it is the turn of the motorbikes.

The new Plan Moto-E has come into effect with help of up to 750 € for those who want to trade in their motorbike for a new model. The plan is open to individuals, the self employed and small businesses who buy a new bike with a maximum price of 9,500 €

For mopeds less than 50cc the help will be 225 € 75 from the Government and 150 € from the manufacturer.

**Electricity - Excess Charges**

The Ministry for Industry has announced it is to eliminate the controversial charge for excess use of electricity. The excess charge which was being levied on a per-property basis took no account on whether the property was occupied by a large family or a single person.

The charge had been introduced in July last year.

**Costa Blanca SAMARITANS****902 88 35 35****Frog Joke**

Three Legionnaires are walking through the desert under a baking sun. They're fully equipped with enough water for days but little food. On the shimmering horizon, mirages come and go and come again. They see visions of swimming pools attended by dusky maidens and stalls full of ice creams and sorbets of every conceivable flavour. But the Legionnaires do not crack. Instead they keep marching solidly on. Suddenly one of them freezes. "Pssst," he says.

His companions halt and strain their eyes to where the first Legionnaire is pointing. "Le voila," he says, "Regardez, mes amis, isn't zat a bacon tree on ze'orizon."

And sure enough, there it is, proud and defiant in the middle of the desert - a real bacon tree. Slowly they creep forward towards the far off mystery object. Inch by inch, or should I say, centimetre by centimetre, until they are within a stone's throw of the bacon tree. Ever nearer they creep until suddenly a shot rings out, dropping one of the Legionnaires in his tracks.

The other Legionnaires hit the ground as bullets thud into the sand all around them. The other two return fire and give first aid to their wounded companion..... as they bandage him and pour water over his face they hear his faint voice saying.....

"Zat was no bacon tree," he gasps, "Zat was an 'am bush."

(And you can blame Pat Chambers for zat one.)

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