

THE DREAM SCENE

Newsletter

Issue no. 57 1st of November 2011

Bienvenido a todos!

After a superb hot summer, the first couple of weeks of October were glorious. Then for the first time in several months, the temperature dipped below 20° followed by some heavy showers; so it is fair to say that autumn has arrived.

A new survey carried out by the HomeAway holiday rentals company and real estate group Savills International has concluded that Spain is no longer the first choice among the Brits for their second residence. 1,700 British property buyers responded to the survey. More Britons now prefer France because of its better economic stability and the moderation in its house prices according to the survey. I don't believe this and suspect that Savills just have a lot of French property on their books! 40% of Brits who buy in Spain later rent out the property, sometimes obtaining an income of as much as €34,500 a year (seems an absurdly high figure!), but 24% still say that Spain is the place they have chosen for retirement. However, Spain continues to be the most popular holiday destination for the Brits. Experts are predicting that, for the first time, the number of tourists visiting Spain in 2012 will reach 1 billion. This year is expected to end with 940 million visitors. These figures come from the WTO, World Tourism Organisation, but it also says that Europe will lose its market share to the benefit of Asia and the emerging markets.

The EU have given the 'go-ahead' to the Mediterranean Corridor. This is a high-speed rail link, for passengers and freight, which will run from the South Coast of France, down the Mediterranean coastline of Spain to the South Coast of Portugal. (There will also be an artery running from France to the Italian coastline.) The Mediterranean line, on international standard-width tracks, will be 1,300 kilometres in length linking the major Spanish ports. The closest link to us would be the Alicante to Murcia section. To receive an EU contribution of about 10% towards the cost, the work would have to be completed before 2030 when the EU funding is scheduled to dry-up. This would mean that Spain would have to raise more than €50 billion for the project; a tall order even in the best of times. However politicians of all hues seem to be very enthusiastic and consider the project essential for the future of a modern Spain.

We are sad to report that Louisa McCormack from the bungalows passed-away quite suddenly last week. The funeral service was held on Friday October 28. Our sincerest condolences to her family.

The *Dia de Todos los Santos* or 'All Saints Day', is today, November 1. This is not the sad event it may at first appear to be: to the contrary, it is an uplifting fiesta, more of a celebration to remember and pay tribute to friends and relatives who have died - especially during the course of the previous year. You will notice that the cemetery in Torre Vieja will be packed with people having picnics, together with children playing in a festive but respectful atmosphere. *Huesos de Santo*, (saint's bones) little marzipan cakes, are also baked and eaten in remembrance of lost loved ones.

Many thanks to Richard Richardson for his very kind donation.

All the best from Mick & Tid.



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Angela's Cartoon



**So she said 'It's either prune the garden
or an afternoon of passion!'**

What's Up?

ETA, the Basque terrorist organisation, and the forthcoming general election on November 20, have tended to be the main topics in the Spanish newspapers. A hasty peace conference was called by the Basque nationalist left which was described by much of the Spanish press as a pantomime. A number of 'notables' were paid to attend the conference; Kofi Annan, ex Secretary General of the United Nations was paid US\$ 150,000; Bertie Ahern, former Prime Minister of Ireland, US\$ 40,000 and Gro Harlem Brundtland, three-times Prime Minister of Norway US\$ 35,000. Gerry Adams of Sinn Féin - the Irish Republican Party - also attended but did not request a fee! Tony Blair, ex-PM of the UK was also asked to attend but declined after speaking with Jose Marie Aznar, a former Spanish prime minister from the 'right.' Aznar was previously the target of an unsuccessful ETA assassination bid by a car bomb in April 1995.

Shortly after the stage-managed peace event, ETA issued a short statement stating that they have 'permanently ceased their armed campaign.' Although ETA announced a 'ceasefire' at least once before, there have been ten murders since, so the wise are taking the latest announcement with a heavy dose of scepticism. Although the Spanish left have all too often seem to 'bend-over' for the Basque and Catalan nationalists, it was good to see that the outgoing Socialist PM, Zapatero, refuse to concede to demands from the Basque nationalists last week for concessions to ETA prisoners including moving them closer to the Basque Region.

An introduction to the forthcoming General Election is included on page 4. The Spanish Airports Authority, AENA, has extended the period for the presentation of offers for the privatisation of the management of Barajas and El Prat airports by three months. This follows the suspension of the privatisation of the State lotteries because of the weakness of the markets. The final decision on the whole privatisation issue will fall to the government who wins the general election this November. The failure to privatise both the Lottery and the airport management has led to a shortfall of €13 billion in the state coffers.

Banco Santander have cancelled the sale of a number of properties in their real-estate portfolio after receiving much lower bids than they initially expected. Santander was rumoured to be in talks with a number of private equity funds who were interested in the properties, but the parties involved failed to agree on the value of the properties in question. Santander was hoping to release around 30% of its total portfolio, valued at over EUR3 billion, but the best bids received would have meant them selling at a 60% discount.

The five principal lenders that comprised the main Spanish banks are prepared to face additional capital requirements of more than 21 billion euros, a figure that could exceed 30 billion euros if credits awarded to the Public Administrations are also granted. According to sources from The Bank of Spain, Santander, BBVA, Bankia and La Caixa would have to meet additional capital requirements that would be between 4.5 and 5.0 billion euros. The same sources reduced Banco Popular's capital requirements to 1 billion. How will the banks comply? The two biggest will do so through capital increases, while Bankia would have to return to the FROB (a banking recovery fund). La Caixa would meet their requirements through sales of industrial shares. Banco Popular has yet to define its re-capitalisation strategy. An unwelcomed by-product of all this is that the banks will be lending less than they are at the moment.

Hacienda has now become the landlord for thousands of people in rental accommodation in Spain. The Agencia Tributaria is demanding that 92,740 renters now pay them directly what they owe in rent each month, because of the various landlords' tax debts.

Despite the crisis in Euroland the Euro MP's have voted against reducing the €4,300 they can each claim in unjustified costs each month. Spanish MEP's voted in favour of all possible savings.

Spanish retail sales fell by 5.8 percent year-on-year on a calendar-adjusted basis in September, official data showed after a revised fall of 3.8 percent in August. This marks the 15th month in a row of falling retail sales figures. Unemployment has now also risen to 21.5%, 4.98 million people.

Radio stations in Spain have offered the Spanish League the paltry sum of €800,000 for rights to cover the Primera Liga games on the radio. The price is for access, broadcast cabins, phone lines, and a social area! It's a wonder they didn't ask for some girls to be thrown in as well. The offer is far lower than the 11 million which has been demanded by La Liga.

The CEOE employers' organisation has called for severance pay in Spain to be reduced from 20 days pay per year worked to 12 days. They also called for more simple labour legislation from whoever wins the General Election saying that the current 43 different types of work contract should cut down to just six, and there should be more flexibility in part time and training contracts.

The Generalitat regional government in Valencia has said it is closing 262 beds in public hospitals in the region to save on maintenance, electricity and cleaning costs. The measure will allow a saving of 2.6 million € a month. 160 of the beds will go in Alicante province, 53 in Valencia and 50 in Castellón. Wards closed over the summer period have not been reopened. This is probably sensible as some 40% of the beds are empty during the winter period.

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It seems that Sir Paul McCartney is not too happy with his new wife.
Apparently she is spending twice as much on shoes as the previous one. Phil Herdman

Sometimes it is a very small world. A Belgian couple who had their car stolen at gunpoint in Belgium some months ago could not believe it when they recognised their attackers when on holiday in Alicante. They saw them on the beach in Guardamar, Alicante, last month and quickly called the Spanish police. While they were waiting for the police to arrive, the couple found their own car parked nearby, and the owner decided to puncture the tyres to ensure that the thieves could not take it again. After the police arrived a search of the car revealed a replica pistol. The two men, 47 year old L.J. and 20 year old G.C.D., were taken into custody and it's now known that there was an international search and capture order in force against them. One of them has served time for serious sexual crimes against children. They have now both been passed to the National Court ahead of being extradited to Belgium.

The 'long arm of the law' reached all the way from the US of A last month and arrested a 61-year-old British man in Torrevieja. It appears the gentleman is wanted in the US for a series of frauds in 1999 which involved the alleged 'pocketing' of his companies pension funds.

On a normal school day, in February 2009, María Soledad E. H. went to the institute where her young daughter studies to give her a chocolate egg. When the mother arrived at the school to hand over the gift, the girl's teacher informed her that what she was doing was against school rules and that she could not be permitted into the building. María Soledad E. H. responded by hitting and kicking the teacher several times, pulling her hair and insulting her, causing her to fall. The teacher was forced to take two months off after the incident. Two-and-a-half years later, a Bilbao court has handed down a severe sentence: two years and a day in prison for the crime of an attack against authority and one year and three months for causing injury, together with damages of 5,089 euros. As the sentence is more than two years and the assailant has got a record, the time has to be served although she can appeal.

Police in Spain have arrested seven suspects and seized almost half a million doses of illegal medicines as part of an international operation against the online sale of illegal and counterfeit medicines. It involved police in 81 countries and led to the confiscation of potentially dangerous products valued at 6.3 million dollars. The week-long Operation Pangea, coordinated by Interpol, has arrested 55 suspects and closed down more than 13,000 websites across the world. The Interior Ministry said in a press release on Thursday that the National Police have identified 69 websites where the products were offered for sale in Spain. The items seized in Spain include products for erectile dysfunction from Holland, Portugal and the UK, plus anabolic steroids and hormones which were distributed in gyms.

A couple who live in a block of flats in Xirivella, Valencia, have been ordered to leave their own home for three months because neighbours have taken legal action over the noise coming from their home. The situation has also seen a court case for the making of threats between the couple and those who have denounced them. The neighbours even recorded the noise coming from the flat, and the First Instance and Instruction Court 1 in Mislata agreed it was unacceptable. The community of owners has complained to the couple about the noise, above all at night, coming from their home since the end of 2006. They claimed loud music and shouting at 4am and people going to and from the patio. After several meetings and no progress the legal action was started. A Community of Owners lawyer stated that the horizontal property law allows for an owner to be deprived of their home for a maximum of two years, but noted that, for now, the judge gave only three months.

A French woman in Tenerife has confessed to the Guardia Civil that she buried her mother in the garden. The woman's mother, aged 90, died in 2007 of natural causes and was buried in the garden of their home in Adeje so the daughter could continue to collect her mother's pension.

An independent councillor from Masquefa in Barcelona province, faces two charges of attempted murder for intentionally driving his van at two people when they were taking down a Spanish flag which he had hung from the Town Hall just minutes before to celebrate Spain's National Day on Oct 12. One of the two escaped with minor bruising, but the second man has undergone surgery for fractures to his leg. The intervention of the police and a passerby stopped any further damage. (Catalan nationalists don't consider themselves Spanish !)

A new driving test has been announced in Spain in which the pupil will choose the route to take for ten minutes. Another change is that the pupil will be given the result note at the end of the drive, as well as a list of the mistakes made. However the examiners will remain silent until the test is ended, with the full drive lasting a maximum of 25 minutes. Seven Spanish provinces, Madrid, Barcelona, Burgos, Segovia, Gran Canaria, Sevilla and Navarra, have been chosen to pilot the new format of the exam, and driving schools in Burgos, Gran Canaria and Sevilla are already geared up. The DGT traffic director said the idea was to create an examination of 'higher quality' and to adapt to the European guidelines.

Poking fun at the Germans

How do you say 'brassiere' in German? 'Keipsemfrumfloppin.'
 What did the German clockmaker say to the clock that only went 'tick, tick, tick'? 'Ve haff ways of making you tock!'
 A sailor got into trouble off the German shore. In desperation he radioed in to the coastguard: Mayday, Mayday,... we are sinking, we are sinking!!!!'
 With great relief he heard the radio crackle into life, followed by.....'Und vhat are you sinking about?'

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The shirt, being displayed by the Italian waiter above, is the new 'strip' for the English football team. The 'strip' can also be worn by the English rugby team, the cricket team and any European banker.

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The Spanish General Election

The next Spanish General Election takes place on November 20 this year. It was originally scheduled for the spring next year, but faced with rapidly declining support for the Left by the electorate and a disastrous economic environment, the Socialist Government wisely called for an early election. Unfortunately we non-Spanish Europeans cannot vote in this election, despite paying our taxes and being resident here; although we can vote in the local and European elections.

The Spanish Congress of Deputies (Spanish: *Congreso de los Diputados*) is the lower house of the *Cortes Generales*, Spain's legislative branch. It has 350 members, elected by popular vote on block lists by proportional representation in constituencies matching the Spanish provinces. Deputies serve four-year terms. The upper house of the *Cortes Generales* is the Senate, which we will look at another time. Although they share legislative power, the Congress holds the power to ultimately override any decision of the Senate by a sufficient majority (usually absolute majority or three-fifths majority), so, as with most countries, the upper house is often only a 'talking shop'. In the Congress, members of the Parliament from the political parties, or groups of parties, form parliamentary groups. Groups must be formed by at least, five deputies. The deputies belonging to parties who can't create their own parliamentary group form the Mixed Group.

The last elections were held in 2004 and the results, by party, were as follows: The PSOE - the Socialist Group 169 deputies; the PP Group - right of centre - 153 deputies; the Catalan Group - Convergence and Union - 10 deputies; the Basque Group - Basque Nationalist Party - 6 deputies; the Left Group (Republican Left of Catalonia, United Left & Initiative for Catalonia Greens) - 5 deputies; and finally the Mixed Group which comprises the BNG, CC, UpyD, NaBai and the UPN - 7 deputies. This represents a total of 350 seats in all. At the last election 84 individual political parties entered the fray although most of the minor parties did not contest in all of the 50 electoral regions. As the PSOE did not have an overall majority, they were obliged to seek the help of the minority parties, particularly the Catalans, to remain in power. This proved to be very expensive.



On the left, appropriately, is the new leader of the Socialist Party, Alfredo Pérez *Rubalcaba*, PM Zapatero deciding not to stand at the next election. Rubalcaba, occasionally referred to as *Rasputin*, is a formidable, battle-scarred, wily old fox; a political 'street-fighter' with plenty of governmental experience. Again, appropriately on the right, above, is Mariano Rajoy, the Leader of the Opposition and President of the PP - the right of centre party. By contrast Rajoy, although experienced, is considered boring, dull and uninspiring; if he were any more boring he would be a Prozac tablet. Despite this the PP are expected to beat the Socialists in the coming election. If they secure an overall majority, they face a huge task and we can look forward to some interesting times ahead. More on the outcome next month.

Doing it by the numbers

A doctor was in his surgery having sex with a woman patient. Suddenly, the woman's husband bursts in on them, brandishing a shotgun. The doctor panics and shouts, 'It's not what it looks like. I am only taking her temperature!' 'Oh, yes?'" replies the husband, taking aim with the gun. 'When you take it out, let's see if it's got numbers on it.'

Downton Abbey

Lady Grantham was greeting her dinner guests at a banquet and was welcoming the bishop when she suddenly let out a huge bubbling fart which lasted about five seconds. Embarrassed, she looked around, sees her butler and decides to shift the blame onto him. 'Carson!' she cries. 'Stop that at once.' 'Certainly, madam.' replies Carson. 'Which way did it go?'



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Happy Families

Murphy and O'Leary were chatting. 'I come from a big family,' says Murphy. 'Sixteen children. I blame it on my mam being a bit deaf.' 'A bit deaf?' says O'Leary. 'How do you work that out?'

'When my mam and my daddy went to bed,' says Murphy, 'he'd always roll over to her and say, "Do you want to go to sleep or what?" and she'd say, "What?"'

'When I was a kid my dad would say, 'Emo, do you believe in the Lord?' I'd say, 'Yes!'

He'd say, 'Then stand up and shout Hallelujah!' So I would - and I'd fall out of the rollercoaster.'

Emo Phillips

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Bad Taste Corner!!!

Michael Jackson Doctor's Trial.

Dr Conrad Murray has told the court about Michael's dramatic weight loss... "Michael has got so thin that although his pajama tops were still adult size, he could still squeeze himself into children's bottoms. "

Phoenix Golf Society

On a beautiful day at Roda, the society and a few guests had their October outing.

The overall winner was Rob Hughes with a excellent 38 points and a nearest the pin on the 11th.

The gold section was won by Austin Brenhan who also was nearest the pin on the 13th.

Silver went to Dave (Whats my handicap?) Everson with 34 well earned points and I hope Gill has her sewing kit ready for the repair on his shorts at the first tee with his new driver.

The bronze was taken by Jim Storey with 29 points ,improving once again. The 'Must Try Harder Award' is going home for the next month,a well deserved trophy for John Bradbeer once again.

The 'best guest' was Terry Bunn and the next free games went to Richard Hirst and Austin Branhan.

Details of the society can be found in the Phoenix Bar,Dream Hills at Via Park 5.

John Bradbeer

Although golf was originally restricted to wealthy protestants, today it's open to anybody who owns hideous clothing.

Dave Barry

The reason the pro tells you to keep your head down is so you can't see him laughing.

Phyllis Diller

Golf and sex are the only two things you can enjoy without being good at either.

Jimmy Demaret

I am not saying my golf game is bad, but if I grew tomatoes they'd come up sliced.

Lee Trevino

The only time Nick Faldo opens his mouth is to change feet. David Feherty

Letter from Association Street Cats.

To Val, Jean & Neighbours,

Thank you so much for the cash donations and for all the goods you give us to sell to raise money for the cats.

Recently we held a barbeque and the raffle etc raised the amount of €424. At this time it is very helpful because recently we have lost a number of cats/kittens to a virus, Feline Peritonitis, which means all of the cats have to be blood-tested and vaccinated and the reduced cost if €1,000 so every cent counts.

Once again many thanks from Assoc. Street Cats

J.H.

Cats' hearing apparatus is built to allow the human voice to go easily in one ear and out the other.

Stephen Baker

To bathe a cat takes brute force, perseverance, courage of conviction, and a cat. The last ingredient is usually hardest to come by.

Stephen Baker

You can tell your cat is overweight when mice point at it and snigger.

Another Doctor

Doctor: I am so sorry John, your condition is pretty bad. My guess is that you have only about three minutes left.

Patient: Oh, no! Three minutes! Doctor, please, there isn't anything you can do for me?

Doctor: In three minutes? Well, I can make you a Pot Noodle.....



To J.J.
Happy 40th Birthday
 With lots of love
**Rob, Olie &
 Carling**
 X X X



Worth noting

The European Commission has complained about Spain to the EU Justice Tribunal over the 'discriminatory norms' in respect to **succession (inheritance) tax** and donations, which Brussels says results in non-residents paying higher taxes than residents. Both central and regional governments in Spain control succession tax and donations in Spain where residents have a series of tax breaks which in practice means they pay much less tax. The Commission considers that this is 'fiscal discrimination and represents an obstacle to the free circulation of people and capital'. The EC notes that Spain has not changed the legislation despite an ultimatum being handed down last February. This is a significant issue for most of us as we will probably leave our Spanish property to non-resident family members, who will receive a whopping tax bill, if the current arrangements remain, when we finally depart for heavenly or warmer climes!

A **new liaison officer** has been appointed at the Playa Flamenca Town Hall. She is multilingual expat Denise Wasserling. Originally from Yorkshire, Denise has spent several years in a law practice here on the Costa, so is familiar with the type of problems and difficulties faced by many residents. She can be reached on 966 760 000 ext 32 or by email at: dwasserling@orihuela.es Many have asked me about Dream Hills's own Stefan Pokroppa who held a similar job for four years. Stefan still resides in Dream Hills and is studying for his Masters Degree which he hopes to complete early next year.

The long explanation

A wife came home early and found her husband in their bedroom making love to a very attractive young woman. Obviously upset she shouted, 'You are a disrespectful pig!' she cried. 'How dare you do this to me -- a faithful wife, the mother of your children....I even used to iron your underpants!! I'm leaving you..... I want a divorce right away!' Cool as a cucumber, the husband replied, 'Now, just hang on a minute love so at least I can tell you what happened.' 'Fine, go ahead,' she sobbed, 'but they'll be the last words you'll ever say to me, you swine!' And the husband began -- 'Well, I was getting into the car to drive home from my 10-hour- workday, when this young lady here asked me for a lift. She looked so down and out and defenceless that I took pity on her and let her into the car. I also noticed that she was very thin, not well dressed and very dirty. She told me that she hadn't eaten for three days. So, in my compassion, I brought her home and warmed up the *enchiladas* I made for you last night, the ones you wouldn't eat because you're afraid you'll put on weight. The poor thing devoured them in moments. Since she needed a good clean-up, I suggested a shower, and while she was doing that, I noticed her clothes were dirty and full of holes, so I threw them away. As she needed clean clothes, I gave her the designer jeans that you have had for a few years, but don't wear because you say they are too tight. I also gave her the underwear that was your anniversary present, which you don't wear because I don't have good taste. I found the sexy blouse my sister gave you for Christmas that you don't wear just to annoy her, and I also donated those boots you bought at the expensive boutique and don't wear because someone at work has a pair the same.' The husband took a deep breath and continued - 'She was so grateful for my understanding and help that as I walked her to the door, she turned to me with tears in her eyes and said, "Please Do you have anything else that your wife doesn't use?"'



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Men drive too fast, we are told, because the car is an extension of the penis. But if it were, men would surely not drive too fast; they would just back in and out of the garage.....or maybe just polish it all the time. Jeremy Hardy

Out and About

It was sad to see that both Christina's and Stallion's in **Via Park V** have now both closed down, not just for the winter, but permanently. This means that there is now no business operating from the top floor, with just Belushi's and All Bar Sue 'flying the flag' on the lower ground floor. Belushi's now offer free *Wi-Fi* to customers. Galadriel have had a revamp and have created a very attractive lounge bar area with very comfortable seating and a well stocked bar. You can now sip a comforting G&T while watching your favourite team underperform on Sky Sports.

The Phoenix has re-painted the interior of the bar/cafe which lightens it up enormously and stops the darts' players from hitting the customers. They are holding a *Race Night* on November 19, so if you fancy a small *flutter* and an exciting evening why not pop along. Christmas Day lunch is also on offer at just €28.50/five courses - limited space left. They also have 3-D TV now which is very realistic: when Man City trounced Man U recently, a Man City customer got a black-eye from a United supporter all the way from Old Trafford!

After enjoying a beautifully succulent *half-chicken* at the Sun Bar & Grill recently, I could not help but notice the impressive range of crisps, sweets, nuts and ice-cream they now have on display, certainly enough to keep the *ankle-biters* happy for a few minutes. The Sun also sells freshly baked bread. The 2GB Indian Restaurant have several special offers now which should be very welcoming during the colder weather. The meat samosas and Peshwari naans I had last week were superb.

Many Spaniards wandering about Via Park V this summer, often aimlessly. I also noticed that very few of the menus in the dining establishments have been translated into Spanish; surely not a difficult task which could only boost trade in the busy season. I was in a restaurant in El Galan last year when four Spaniards sat down at a table. When they saw that the menus were only in English they walked out. After all *Estamos in España!*

What used to be Nikka's in **Via Park III** has now opened as 'P.J.'s. More on Via Park III next month.

The CAM cash machine (*ATM*) is operational again at the Punta Marina shopping centre in Punta Prima. What used to be the bank branch is now a shoe-shop. Why is it that Spanish shoeshops never have shoes larger than men's size 45 (10's). It is a similar problem with ladies shoes sizes. We are not all 'munchkins' you know!

The proliferation of **Chinese todos** (and woks) makes you wonder if Orihuela Costa should be re-launched as *Chinatown*. Some of the todos can be quite handy for 'bits & bobs', tools, etc. One of the largest is a new one near Benijofar. If you take the Crevillente Road to the roundabout outside of Quesada and take the right turn to Benijofar, it is on your right after about 250 metres and there are plenty of parking spaces with a very wide range of goods inside.

While driving around Torrevieja it is disappointing to see a number of small businesses closing down. What is shameful however is cessation of work on the desalination plant pipework in Torrevieja, also on the new proposed security centre at La Zenia, the King Juan Carlos Treatment Centre at Los Balcones and the new educational establishment by the Banana Tree at the back of Villamartin. Now that the N332 works have been completed, I was dumbfounded to find out that the widening of the N332 around Torrevieja was neither planned nor budgeted for; consequently nothing has been done to nor is planned for the carriageway in the future! Meanwhile the privately financed massive shopping centre near the toll at La Zenia is racing ahead. Three cheers for private enterprise!

In-out, In-out!

The captain of a Roman galley assembles his crew. His officers and oarsmen gather round. 'Men,' he shouts, 'I have good news and bad news. The good news is that our galley has been selected to row Emperor Nero to his new Sicilian palace.' The officers and oarsmen cheer. The captain continues, 'The bad news is, he also wants to go water-skiing.'

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The Fighting Norwegian

The old Norwegian fighter ace from WWII was describing to the audience how he escorted bombers over Germany.

"Ve vould fly wit de bombers, and ven de Germans met us, ve vould shoot de Fockers down."

The embarrassed chairperson stepped up and asked the audience to recall that a 'Focker' was a make of German aircraft. The Norwegian ace interrupted, saying "No dey vass Messerschmidts, but ve still shot de Fockers down."



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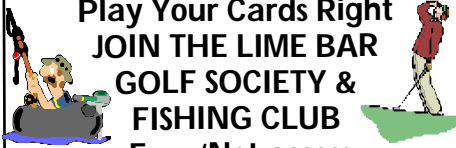
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Camilla's New Shoes

Camilla bought a new pair of shoes for her wedding, which got increasingly tighter and tighter as the day went on. That night after the festivities were finally over, she & Charles retired to their room at the palace. Camilla flopped on the bed and said "Please remove my shoes darling, one's feet are killing one." Ever obedient, the Prince of Wales - Charlie Windsor, attacked her right shoe with vigour but it still would not budge.

"Harder" yelled Camilla. "Harder?" Charles yelled back, "I'm trying darling but it's just so bloody tight!" "Come on give it all you've got" she cried. Finally it released, Charles let out a big groan, and Camilla exclaimed, "Oh God that feels so good."

In the bedroom next door, The Queen turned to Prince Phillip and said, "See, I told you she would still be a virgin with a face like that!"

Meanwhile back in the other bedroom, Charles was attempting to remove the other shoe, when he cried out "Oh God, darling this ones even tighter!"

At which point Prince Phillip turned and said to the Queen: "That's my boy. Once a Navy man, always a Navy man!"

It's all Ball's

A woman asks her husband at breakfast time, "Would you like some bacon and eggs, a slice of toast, and maybe some grapefruit juice and coffee?"

He declines. "Thanks for asking, but I'm not hungry right now. It's this Viagra," he says. "It's really taken the edge off my appetite."

At lunchtime, she asked him if he would like something. "How about a bowl of soup, homemade muffins or a cheese sandwich?"

He declines. "The Viagra," he says, "Its really spoiled my need for food."

Come dinnertime, she asks if he wants anything to eat. "Would you like a juicy rib-eye steak and some scrumptious apple pie? Or maybe a rotisserie chicken or tasty stir fry?"

He declines again. "No," he says, "it's got to be the Viagra. I'm still not hungry."

"Well," she says, "Would you mind getting off me? I'm bloody starving."

A Catholic goes into the confessional box after years being away from the Church. He pulls aside the curtain, enters and sits himself down.

There's a fully equipped bar with crystal glasses, the best vestry wine, Guinness on tap, cigars and liqueur chocolates nearby, and on the wall a fine photographic display of buxom ladies who appear to have mislaid their garments. He hears a priest come in: "Father, forgive me for it's been a very long time since I've been to confession and I must admit that the confessional box is much more inviting than it used to be".

The priest replies, "Get out, you idiot. You're on my side".

(Both from Ann Ball)



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Maritao's Kitchen, a success story.

Several years ago, when we first arrived in the Costa Blanca, we used to have the occasional meal in Dinastia, the Chinese restaurant in Punta Prima. Then it was a bustling enterprise with a sushi bar upstairs and a quality Chinese restaurant on the ground floor. The front-of-house was then managed by Mari while her husband, Tao - who used to work as a chef in the Chinese Embassy in Berlin - produced some wonderful Oriental dishes in the kitchen.

Mari and Tao then left Dinastia to set up their own restaurant at the Playa Flamenca Commercial Centre called **Maritao's Kitchen**. Shortly afterwards, they expanded the size of their premises by also taking the property next door and gradually over the years acquiring two additional properties, one in Centro Campoamor between El Galan and La Fuente Commercial, and the latest at La Marquesa, Campo de Golf in Rojales.

The first thing that hits you when you enter one of these establishments is the attentive staff; all dressed smartly in black with a pleasant helpful attitude. Walter is one of the senior staff at the Playa Flamenca location and a thorough professional. The internal décor is similar at all three locations, with comfortable fabric covered chairs inside and padded chairs outside with a canopy to protect diners from the sun.

So why is it that Maritao's is such a success and what is it they have that seems to have eluded so many other restaurants? Most of the Oriental restaurants in the CB - including the profusion of *woks* - can be categorised together by their blandness. Sometimes you almost wish the cooks would add more MSG just to give the food some oomph. Order a dish with Szechuan sauce in many restaurants and it will be so weak and insipid it could be fed to a baby! Not so at Maritao's. If you ask for 'spicy' at Maritao's then that is what you will get. I ordered some extra spicy Szechuan prawns one day and they were so fiery they could have kick-started a dead locomotive. So take care! Start off with mildly spicy or medium just to 'test the water' before becoming too adventurous. The skilled chefs can respond to reasonable personal requests here.

But it is not just spicy food and good service that has earned Maritao's its deserved reputation. One must surely add quality and price. The seafood and meats are of the highest quality, in particular the prawns, sea-bass and beef. The menu, which is extensive, is divided into sections. There is the chef's recommended menu which is available lunchtimes and evenings and is excellent value with two courses at €8.95; three courses for €9.95. Here there is a choice of nine starters, ranging from Aubergine pillow stuffed with minced pork, Crispy duck rolls, Thai chicken salad & my favourite, Mongolian beef skewers (which may be too spicy for some). Here you get three skewers of marinated lean beef - simply presented but very tasty. From the recommended menu there are seven main courses available ranging from Grilled beef fillet with creamy pepper sauce, veg and chips (for the unadventurous), Grandmother's spicy chicken with veg and rice, Oriental roasted salmon to Baozai - three delicious - a sizzling hot wok of rice with lots of chicken, beef and plump prawns....absolutely delicious. If you have any space left in your tummy there is a choice of four desserts which include Fried banana with a home-made vanilla sauce. Now these are all full portions, not slimmed down versions for the recommended menu.

Then there is the daily special lunch dish which also offers around six or seven choices of a main course. There is Curried chicken with chips, a springroll and fried rice for just €4.95 and Malayasian sweet hot duck with baked cheese potato, spring roll and rice for €6.95. Superb value.

The full menu has over 100 dishes, - some traditional and some new featuring Chinese, Thai, Taiwanese and Japanese recipes - definitely something for everybody. There is also a children's menu - four choices - which starts at €4.80 and I was very impressed by the quality of these, for example the Fried chicken fingers with chips were made from fresh chicken, lightly coated in batter and there's not a beefburger in sight! A large Heineken beer here cost just €2.50 and the wine list is very fairly priced without sacrificing quality. Entertainment is usually provided on Saturday evenings and booking is highly recommended, certainly for Friday and Saturday evenings, telephone **965 325 079**. As the Playa Flamenca restaurant is on the street level close to the commercial centre entrance, it is best to park on the stretch of road leading from the front of Supercor and walk the last 100 metres or so around the corner.

We would personally place Maritao's Kitchen in our top five restaurants on the Costa Blanca.

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More Airport Fun!

You may recall my brief report on Castellón Airport last month - big rush by politicians to open the new airport last May, airport boss earns more than the Spanish PM, and no flights this year. The company running the airport have now decided to send out a tender for eight falcons and eight ferrets to patrol the installation so that it is kept free of wildlife and not endanger any planes. The budget? €450,000 over three years. But the airport still does not have any flights to the airport for either this year or next! And they will be in a 'right pickle' if the falcons eat the ferrets!

And the latest is that Spain's first private airport has gone bust and closed. The Ciudad Real Airport was opened in December 2008, considering that it could act as a Madrid overflow for residents in the south, but that just has not happened. The very last flight took off from the airport for Barcelona on Saturday October 29. It had problems with the environmental agency in 2005 as it is located in a special bird protection area, there were complaints that as much as 50% of the building works were illegal, it needed a continued supply of capital, and the intervention of the Bank of Spain in the CCM Castilla La Mancha savings bank revealed more irregularities concerning funding. The company, CR Aeroportos, owing its creditors more than €290 million. Ciudad Real City Hall still carries a poster for the airport which says 'Our dreams take off.' This should read, 'Our dreams take off with your money!' There has been a rash of private airport projects in Spain which started during the economic boom. There were six projects in total in Cataluña, Aragón, Valencia, Murcia, Andalucía and in Ciudad Real. Only one was opened, which has now closed.

Which leads us on to the new airport being constructed at Corvera. The giant construction firm SACYR, is the building contractor for the proposed airport. However last week, the SACYR Board of Directors decided to dismiss their chairman, Luis del Rivero. The Minister of Public Works and Planning, Antonio Sevilla, released a statement announcing how the decision of the SACYR Board of Directors to dismiss Luis del Rivero, will have no effect on the smooth running of construction and development of Corvera Airport. All contracts and commitments between Aeromur and Corvera International Airport will remain in place. Sevilla emphasised that in addition to being responsible for the construction of the airport itself, SACYR was also a 60% shareholder in Aeromur, who will own the airport upon completion. The Minister however omitted to mention that SACYR has a debt of €4.9 billion and owe the Spanish Hacienda around €67 million.

A very, very naughty boy!

A five year old boy and his grandpa are sitting on the front porch together,
when gramps pulls a beer out of his cooler.

The little boy asks: "Can I have a beer Grandpa?"

Grandpa replies: "Can your pecker touch your ass?"

The little boy answered: "No Grandpa. It's just a little pecker."

Gramps says: "Well then, you're not man enough to have a beer."

A little later Grandpa lights up a cigar.

The little boy asks: "Can I have a cigar Grandpa?"

Once again, Grandpa asks: "Can your pecker touch your ass?"

Once again the little boy replies, "No, it's too little."

Gramps replies, "Then you're not man enough to have a cigar."

A little later the little boy comes out of the house with milk and some cookies.

Grandpa asks, "Hey there young feller, can I have a cookie?"

The boy asks, "Can your pecker touch your ass?"

Laughing, Gramps replies, "Hell yes, my pecker can touch my ass."

The little boy replies, "Then go f**k yourself. Grandma made these for me."

Pete Dudman

The History of Spain. Part 26 - 1808, Fernando VII & a Corsican King for Spain

The naval disaster of Trafalgar (1805) completed the virtual destruction of the Spanish navy, and the subsequent British domination of the Atlantic, coupled with the imposition of Napoleon's French-controlled economic "Continental System" the following year, threw the Spanish economy into profound depression. Commerce declined catastrophically, unemployment grew in the towns, inflation mounted, the government's financial situation became almost hopeless, and real wages for workers continued to decline. Famines and plagues also took their toll and it is hardly surprising that during the eighteenth century, the average life expectancy in Spain was 27 years.

Napoleon Bonaparte's strategy was to set up a continental blockade against Britain's trade, the source of her prosperity and power. The occupation of Portugal, Britain's closest ally on the continent, was a key part of achieving this. French troops flooded into Spain and by 1808 there were 100,000 French soldiers on Spanish soil which went beyond the terms of the agreed operation against Portugal. Important cities such as Pamplona and Barcelona were garrisoned and rumours began to spread among the Spanish like wildfire that Godoy, the Chief Minister, was conspiring with Napoleon to deprive the son of Carlos IV, Fernando, of his rightful inheritance. But it was Fernando who had in fact secretly approached Napoleon, praising him as the 'saviour of Europe' and putting forward a scheme to overthrow the 'earthly trinity' of Godoy, King Carlos IV and Queen Maria Luisa - his father and mother. (Fernando had planned to have Godoy and his own parents executed.) Fernando was arrested for high treason and after three days of interrogation made a humiliating confession craving forgiveness. He was pardoned by his father but his own mother called him 'a spiked vine of cowardice.'

Violent riots broke out in Madrid on March 18, 1808, and the royal family took refuge in their palace at Aranjuez some 48 km south of Madrid, see photo on right. Godoy had to hide in a rolled-up carpet for two days. By the time he emerged from hiding Carlos, under pressure from the pro-Fernando mob, had abdicated to his son who was now proclaimed as King Fernando (Ferdinand) VII. Ironically the masses saw Ferdinand as their symbol of staunch opposition to the French not realising that Fernando VII was a knave and the most contemptible king in Spanish history.

Ferdinand, see portrait below, returned to Madrid in triumph only to discover that the city had been occupied by a French army under Murat only the day before. Murat packed Ferdinand, Carlos, Maria Luisa and Godoy all off to Bayonne in France to appear before Napoleon. By all accounts the degrading spectacle of the royal family shouting scandalous insults at each other and grovelling for the emperor's favour shocked even the cynical Frenchman. When Fernando accused his mother of repeated adultery, Napoleon reminded him that if this was true it might compromise his claims to the throne. Later Bonaparte would write that Carlos was 'a nice man' but his son was 'very stupid and very wicked.' The queen, he observed, 'has her past and her character written on her face, which is all I need say. It surpasses anything one dare imagine.' Fernando was forced to abdicate to his father: then Carlos was also forced to abdicate in turn to Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, who was then sent off to Madrid.* Fernando was detained in France where he spent the next six years in increasing debauchery, while Carlos, Maria Luisa and Godoy were forced into retirement and a lifetime of exile in France. Napoleon also assembled a group of distinguished Spaniards to approve a written constitution for Spain, its first.

But Napoleon had seriously underestimated the passion of the common people of Madrid for the royal family, particularly Fernando who they dubbed *el deseado* - 'the desired one.' On May 2, the masses rioted in Madrid fearing that the remaining members of the royal family were going to be murdered or spirited away to France. A number of the French cavalry Mamalukes were slaughtered by the mob. French revenge was quick and merciless. The next day before dawn, May 3 - El tres de mayo de 1808 - the French rounded up hundreds of Spaniards and executed them at various locations in Madrid. Goya, then the most famous painter in Spain, captured one of the executions in an extraordinary painting called *El tres de mayo de 1808*, see detail on right.

By now 'the dye was cast' and men throughout the unoccupied part of the peninsula began to take up arms. Napoleon predicted a quick end to the affair, but once again the emperor had got it wrong. He proclaimed to the nation, 'Spaniards,I have seen your ills and I shall remedy them.' His brother Joseph, King José I, now had the task of replacing Spain's medieval remnants with modern French ideas and systems. José has been described as amiable, placid and soft-spoken. Despite a conscientious effort by the new Corsican monarch, he was rejected by the great majority of Spaniards, who referred to him sneeringly as *Pepe Botellas* (Joe Bottles) because of his supposed fondness for drink. The only real support for the regime came from a small minority of the *afrancesado* intelligentsia, supporters of Napoleonic-style enlightened despotism, who were no more than twelve thousand or so in a population of more than ten million. King José I would write, 'My position is unique in history. I have not a single supporter here.'

*(Later in exile in St. Helena, Napoleon would trace his own downfall to that one day's events at Bayonne.)



The following is an article I have taken from the online version of the newspaper El País. At first I was going to include just a precis of the article and put it in as the *Idiot of the Month Award* in the *What's Up?* section, however on re-reading it I thought it was a little poignant and deserved to be printed in full, despite it being a little jumbled in translation.

The Basque basketball brothers and the botched bank raid.

It was about 2.10pm on Friday, October 7 when the telephone rang in the office of Iñaki Gastón, 53, manager of a branch of the savings bank Caja Vital in Vitoria in the Basque Country. A little nervous, the chief took the phone and heard one of the employees ask whether there was any problem, since two minutes earlier a suspicious individual with a baseball cap, wig, beard, mustache and false teeth had been seen entering his office with an object wrapped in a supermarket bag - which was later found to have been a replica pistol.

Iñaki played dumb, omitting to explain that the man in disguise was his elder brother, Luis Antonio Gastón, 60. He told the other man that all was well, and hung up. It was then that Luis Antonio, who had slept only a few hours - having emerged at 7am from his job as night watchman at the Provincial Archive of Araba - explained that he wanted to cancel the bank robbery they had been planning for months.

'This is going to turn out badly, I have enough problems already, we are still in time to drop it,' said Luis Antonio, before going out the door of the bank branch at 2.12pm. Hours later at the police station, they ended by admitting a fiasco in which they have been the big losers: the police accuse them of attempted robbery with intimidation, and both have been preventively removed from their respective jobs.

A witness saw Luis Antonio Gastón putting on the disguise in a car that turned out to belong to his brother, followed him, and called the police. Little good came of the manager's first explanations to the law: he said that the disguised man merely inquired about a financial product. Later, at the police station, the two confessed that the idea was to lock everyone in the office, without hurting anyone, and take 20,000 euros to solve the dilemma created by the manager's second separation. Iñaki Gastón needed a place to live - his ex-wife had kept the flat - and did not wish to throw out his elder brother, who had been living in the flat together with his wife, his two children and his daughter-in-law. They have no criminal record.

The two brothers, sons of a former head of the Basque Basketball Federation, Koldo Gastón, were two sides of the same coin. Iñaki, an extrovert with 134 friends on Facebook and a good salary - a manager makes about 3,000 euros a month - was well known as a trainer of local basketball teams. Last season he took Electro Alavesa near to the quarter-finals of the Spanish championship, losing 37-70 to Estudiantes. "A friend cheated me and now I'm training a junior women's team. Between one thing and another I have no time for anything else, and my wife is furious," he said in March 2010 on his Facebook profile, which abounds in references to his liking for salsa dancing and paddle-ball.

The elder brother is shy, reserved. As a night watchman in the archive, he made about 1,500 euros a month. On the job he never spoke of his private life, and his main amusement there was to put on earphones and listen to the day's basketball matches. In his confession, Iñaki affirms that the two of them agreed on the robbery plan. Luis Antonio, meanwhile, says that it was his younger brother's idea. Since then, Iñaki's circle have laid the blame on the night watchman. On Thursday Luis Antonio, with glasses, abundant gray hair and polite manner, opened the door of the modest flat where he lives, not far from the bank branch, when the journalist rang. He did not care to make any statements, or say which lawyer will handle his defence. "But it isn't a crime to go into a bank in disguise," said a waitress in a bar nearby. It remains to be seen whether the judge will be so sympathetic.

The New Wine Taster.

At a wine merchant's warehouse the regular taster died, and the director started looking for a new one to hire.

A retired Marine F-4 pilot, drunk as a skunk and looking as rough as a bear's ass, came to apply for the position. The director wondered how to send him away but gave him a glass of wine to taste anyway.

The old pilot tried it and said, "It's a Muscat three years old, grown on a north slope, matured in steel containers. Low grade but acceptable." "That's correct," said the boss. "Another glass, please."

"It's a cabernet, eight years old, south-western slope, oak barrels, matured at eight degrees. Requires three more years for finest results." "Absolutely correct. A third glass."

"It's a pinot blanc champagne, high grade and exclusive," calmly said the drunk.

The director was astonished and winked at his secretary and whispered something. She left the room and came back in with a glass of her urine.

The Marine tried it....."It's a blonde, 26 years old, three months pregnant, and if I don't get the job, I'll name the father." (Simon Kennefick)

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The Last Laugh

I got arrested for flashing. They took me to a small claims court.

Rodney Dangerfield

Convicted paedophile Gary Glitter is now back in the UK and is about to relaunch his career. There is talk of a new panto this Christmas, possibly *Babes in the Wood*.

In the pub, I saw six men hitting my mother-in-law with bar stools. My friend said, 'Are you going to help?' I said, 'No. Six of them should be enough.'

Les Dawson

Liverpool - 30 miles from Greatness. (Manchester United banner seen at Anfield.)

There was a gold-wrapped chocolate on each pillow, it being a peculiar assumption of expensive hotels that the kind of people who can afford to pay a labourer's weekly wage for one night's accommodation will suddenly go ape-shit with gratitude for a free piece of confectionery.

Mark Lawson

If women ran the porn industry, the climax of the movie would be when the man shouts, 'I was wrong!'

Tom McCudden

The average man speaks 25,000 words a day. The average woman says 30,000 words a day. Unfortunately, when I get home at night, I've spoken my 25,000 but my wife doesn't start hers until we get into bed.

Michael Collins

An elderly Jewish lady was leaving the garment district to go home from work one evening when suddenly a flasher appeared before her and opened his raincoat. She looked at him and said; 'You call that a lining?'

A little boy said to his grandfather, 'Make a frog noise for me, Grandad.'

'No, son. I don't feel like making a frog noise right now.'

'Oh, please, Grandad, make a frog noise'

'No, I don't want to.'

'Oh, please Grandad, make a frog noise'

'Why is it so important to you that I make a frog noise?'

'Cos Mum says when you croak we can all go to Disneyworld.'

Did you hear about what happened to the gay Arab with a heart condition? They found him dead up an Ali.

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Ten priests are killed in a bus accident & arrive at the Pearly Gates. St Peter says "If any of you are paedophiles, go straight to Hell now!" Nine of them start walking away. St Peter shouts "And take the deaf bastard with you!"

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