

THE DREAM SCENE

Issue no. 60 1st of February 2012

Bienvenido a todos and welcome to our 60th issue.

I cannot believe that it is five years since the newsletter first appeared. Back then it was just four pages and since, it has grown steadily to its current size, thanks mainly to the generosity of our advertisers, subscribers and donors. This is the time of year when Tid and I take a view about the next 12 months and decide whether to continue it or not. And yes, thanks to your help and support, we will continue for the next 12 issues at least. Now that the Dream Scene is printed by an outside firm, this saves us a full day and a half every month, which we would normally spend printing, collating and stapling. Now we send the printing firm a completed master copy of the latest issue in PDF and, using a digitals photocopier, they photocopy the number of copies ordered. The only disadvantages of having them produced like this is that the pages have to be in multiples of four and of course the cost as well.

If you are wondering what a rose is doing in mild weather we have been having this winter. blooming in a neighbour's north-facing garden in the middle of January, this year. It has been wearing shorts still if I was allowed to!

Unfortunately, there have been a number of a particularly cheeky one where the thieves their friends were on the ground floor! I also of the urbanisation allegedly took a front door of concern was the damage to the electric behind the pools. This cable was cut in nine It now means that dog walkers cannot walk call 112 if you see a crime in progress. The if you need one.

The local council, Orihuela Costa, has got procedures. The town hall have admitted that on 'their patch.' Many bars and restaurants have been harassed by police in recent months even though application forms have been lodged. The council have now announced that they will be sending two inspectors to visit all businesses in the Orihuela Costa - including bars, restaurants, shops, hairdressers', language schools, plumbers, electricians and surgeries; to check that these businesses have the compulsory opening licence or at least have applied for one and paid the fees. Be assured that it is the last one that is important to the cash-strapped council.

Many thanks to Don & Joan Acott for their kind donation and to Pat Farnaby, for generously donating his winnings from Maypole's competition - €20, towards the Dream Scene costs.

Have a great month, Mick & Tid.



the middle of the this page, it is just to highlight the This is a picture of just one of several which were garden in the middle of January, this year. It has been wearing shorts still if I was allowed to!

robberies in our area during the last month. One was stole items on the first floor while the owners and received a report of an incident where two residents grill and a satellite dish from an empty house. Also cable linking the pathway lights next to the *barranco* places, possibly to make it removable for scrap metal. their pets there at night. Please remain vigilant and operator will direct you an English-speaking operator

into a complete mess with its business licensing they have no idea how many businesses are operating on 'their patch.' Many bars and restaurants have been harassed by police in recent months even though application forms have been lodged. The council have now announced that they will be sending two inspectors to visit all businesses in the Orihuela Costa - including bars, restaurants, shops, hairdressers', language schools, plumbers, electricians and surgeries; to check that these businesses have the compulsory opening licence or at least have applied for one and paid the fees. Be assured that it is the last one that is important to the cash-strapped council.

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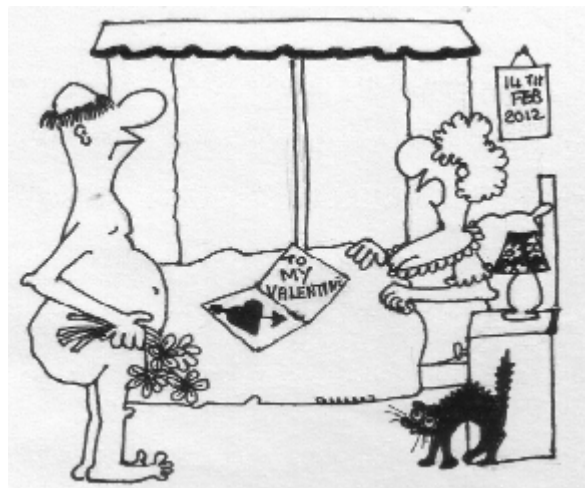
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Angela's Cartoon



'No! I said I wanted a good book for my present!'

What's Up?

The IMF predicts a further two years of recession for Spain. The new government in Spain have implemented a harsh package of expenditure cuts and a progressive increase in the income tax. These measures were necessary to offset the impact of the unexpected jump in the 2011 public deficit to 8% from the 6% originally forecasted by the previous government, i.e. they deliberately understated the true position! I have outlined these changes, or at least the ones which affect expats on page 11. A constitutional change has also been introduced to limit budget deficits in the public sector, with those who overrun their targets being penalised.

In January, the Valencian government was helped out by Madrid authorities to ensure it would not default on a maturing loan of 123 million euros owed to Deutsche Bank. The move underscored the liquidity problems of the most indebted of Spain's 17 semi-autonomous regions, with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 19.9 percent. Valencia is also to get further assistance from the national government to the tune of €420 million. This additional loan, due by the end of January, is to help the region to 'pay its bills.'

The unemployment figure in Spain has now risen to 5.3 million, 40% of whom are long term unemployed.

One of Spain's grand old politicians, Manuel Fraga, passed away last month. Fraga, 89, served in several roles during Franco's regime, including that of Tourism & Information Minister, when he played a major role in revitalising the Spanish tourist industry. He was one of the key players helping Spain's transition to democracy in the 70's and helped to re-write the new democratic constitution. He also was founder of the right-of-centre Alianza Popular, which was later re-founded as today's ruling PP party. 200 Galician bagpipers played a hymn at his funeral on Jan 21, which was - if you pardon the pun - enough to wake the dead!

Francisco Camps Ortiz, ex P.P. President of the Valencia Government, and Ricardo Costa Climent, ex Secretary General of the PP in Valencia have been found not guilty of passive bribery by five votes to four in the Gürtel suits case. Although neither of the two could prove they had paid for their clothes themselves, the court had not found enough evidence that it was the heads of the Gürtel companies who had paid instead. Under Spanish law, with a jury of nine, a guilty verdict needs seven votes, while 'not-guilty' needs only five. The 'not guilty' verdict was a major surprise and the prosecution may appeal. The real crime has been the waste and profligacy of Camps and his cronies who have devastated the economy of Valencian region.

Iberia pilots represented by the SEPLA union have been carrying out a succession of daily strikes. The pilots are objecting to Iberias's attempt to introduce a low cost carrier - Iberia Express. Hundreds of flight have been cancelled to date.

Spanair ceased trading on Jan 27 stranding more than 1,000 passengers abroad. The airline was heavily subsidised by the Catalan government, possibly illegally, and merger talks with Qatar Airways failed.

Ryanair have lost their appeal against the Alicante air bridge decision.

Iberdrola are to revert to billing every two months.

*Did you hear of the two Spanish firefighting brothers?
Hose A & Hose B.

*What do you call four sheep tied to a post in Wales?
A leisure centre.

The Mariano Rajoy administration plans to increase central control over regional governments' finances. Budgetary overshoots by some of the 17 semi-autonomous regions that make up Spain are partly to blame for the country's inability to meet its own targets. Besides the state-wide austerity measures already underway or in the pipeline, the central government is keen to show the markets that it has some control on regional spending as well. But the measure has not been welcomed by all the regions, especially those with strong nationalist movements such as Catalonia. The Catalan government spokesman said that central budgetary control would "blow away our financial autonomy" and "violate the rules of the game set down in the Constitution." The Canary Islands went further and said it would go all the way to the Constitutional Court if there is "an invasion into our powers" and if Madrid attempts to "re centralize," according to the regional justice commissioner Francisco Hernández Spínola, of the Socialist Party.

In Spain the directors of the savings banks which have been rescued with public money from the FROB bank rescue fund, were paid €70 million last year. Wages as high as €2.3 million have been paid in some cases.

Seat cars led the market in Spain in 2011, although only 73,524 Seat cars were sold, 17.8% down on 2010.

The second best selling brand was Volkswagen with 71,608. Biggest selling vehicle of the year was the Renault Megane which sold 35,597 and the Seat Ibiza was in second place with 31,106, 22% down on the previous year. Spain sold 375 electric cars in 2011, only 1.8% of the Government's objective of 20,000.

Buildings which are more than 50 years old are to be obliged to have a so-called ITV/MOT inspection from July. The new legislation affects buildings older than 50 years in towns of more than 25,000 inhabitants. Buildings will be obliged to display a certificate before any flats can be sold.

The going rate!

A woman sat down in a psychiatrist's office. 'I think I might be a nymphomaniac,' she said.

'I see. Well, I can help you but I ought to tell you in advance that my fee is €200 an hour.'

'Hmmm,' she said. 'How much for all night?'



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The regional governments established some 200 'embassies' abroad to promote their regions. At a cost of €150 million they are now facing closure. Cataluña has 25% of these offices, some 48 in total, double the number seen from Valencia and Andalucía and four times the number from Madrid itself. All Spain's regions have opened their own offices in Brussels, and some have also established a presence in China, Mexico and Argentina.

The Infanta Cristina, King Juan Carlos II's daughter, obtained 510,000 € from a 1,500 € investment in the Aizoon company, which she had a 50/50 share with her husband, Iñaki Urdangarin, the dodgy duke (see January issue), who has now been indicted. 95% of the income of the Aizoon company came from the Duke of Palma's allegedly non-profit Nóos Institute. The couple charged their expenses, such as phone, gas and restaurant bills to Aizoon, according to the case summary. The ex President of the Valencia Football Club, Juan Bautista Soler, has said, speaking as a witness in court, that he 'felt obliged' to give money to the Duke of Palma, Iñaki Urdangarin. The club gave the Nóos Institute some 30,000 € in 2005. Soler said that at the time he felt 'something did not smell right'

A Murcia judge has been fined €3,000 for his bullying treatment of his staff and the offensive language he used about members of the public. The judge, Antonio Martín Ferradal, who is in charge of the Civil Registry in Murcia, has been disciplined by the General Council for Judicial Power for a serious abuse of his authority and a lack of consideration towards civil servants and the public. He is reported to have referred to single mothers as 'whores', gay men applying for same sex marriage as 'maricones' and foreigners who apply for Spanish nationality as 'riffraff'. I wonder where he keeps his swastikas?

Banco Santander Chairman, Emilio Botin, lost a bid at Spain's National Court to block three groups' ability to file complaints against him over accusations he broke national tax laws by hiding funds in Switzerland. The complaints were made by Ciudadania Anticorrupcion, Asociacion Contra La Corrupcion Sistemica Y En Defensa Del Libre Ejercicio De La Acusacion Popular and Manos Limpias, the court said. In Spain, any citizen can make a so-called popular accusation in legal proceedings even if they are not directly involved in the matter.

A total of 68,000 pedestrians have been run over in Spain over the past six years, 13,500 of whom were seriously injured and 3,300 killed. 40% of traffic accidents involving someone getting run over occur at traffic lights or on zebra crossings. A new study published by the insurance giant, MAPFRE, shows that the under 14's and over 65's are the most likely to be run over.

Idiot of the Month Award goes to the Mayor of Málaga, the PP's Francisco de la Torre. Francisco it seems, is stuck on the idea that museums are key to attracting more visitors to the city. Yes, I can just imagine the golfers and piss-heads queuing up for these. So to date, the city has a Museum for the Holy Week Brotherhoods, for cars, for wine, for glass, and even for dolls. Then Francisco decided to have a museum of gems called the Art Natura Gems Museum and contracted a firm, Royal Collections, to provide the gems and management. Royal Collections expected the museum to open in 2008, and when the work was still not completed in March 2011, the gem company asked for the contract to be cancelled; but this was rejected by the courts and an ultimatum was issued to the company to open the new museum. So the gem museum opened on Jan 18, but there are no gems or anything on display and it is highly unlikely that there will ever be any. An old tobacco factory (see



photo) was converted at a cost of €40 million - €17 million more than the original budget! - but even now the museum lacks security doors and CC TV's. Admission is free.....if you feel like driving down! Mayor Francisco, not one to shy away from turning a financial disaster into a calamity is now toying with the idea of a museum of museums!

How come there is never a deranged gunman around when you need one?

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Four burglars got more than they expected when they were caught stealing from a shop in nearby Murcia. The burglars were caught in the act by the owners - four Columbians. The Columbians held the would-be burglars for three hours, threatened them with torture and then forced their captives to take money out of their own bank accounts before releasing them! Somebody obviously reported it to the police - probably one of the burglars - and the police have now arrested the Columbians and the burglars. A suitable bit of rough justice I thought!

Drama of an unexpected sort in the Valencia town of Pobla de Farnais, during the Three Kings Parade. King Melchor had a heart attack and died while sitting atop his float. The man, who was in his 50's and a great fan of the local fiestas and traditions, is reported to have told people to carry on with the procession just before it began, although he was not feeling well.

Out & About

The main observation for January has been how quiet it is everywhere. Roads have been deserted in the evenings with bars and restaurants taking a big hit.

New Year's Eve was good in some bars although very few could be described as packed; but as you can see from some of the photos in this issue, people were really enjoying themselves.

One Sunday evening together with a friend, I visited de Bassus, the beer Keller at La Zenia, in the hope of some life, but it was as quiet as a graveyard. The few customers who were there all had long faces (maybe they ran out of sauerkraut) and we were shocked when we ordered some spirits to see that the barman used a small measuring container to pour the spirits! I have never seen that before in Spain and unfortunately it says a lot about de Bassus, who I understand have a new management team on site. (Earlier in the month my wife and I called twice to the location hoping to have a coffee outside. Even after ringing an electronic service-bell on the table, no one came to take our order on both occasions so we had to go elsewhere. Seems to me it is the management who are in need of a shakeup.)

So being unimpressed with de Bassus, my friend and I took a taxi (bandits with licences) to the Mosquito Bar at La Florida which was ringing to the thumping rocky sounds of The Faith! Charlie and Robbie were rocking up a storm and the crowd was loving it. The music was infectious, the measures were generous, the prices fair, and to top it all, the barmaid was a stunner!

Speaking of musicians, I am delighted to see that Alan Warden will be playing at Belushi's on Valentine's Night. I have seen Alan perform before and if you like your rock a la Thin Lizzy etc, don't miss it!

The Lime Bar and Belushi's both featured a young magician during the month, who was, I understand, superb.

On the eve of the Chinese New Year (Year of the Dragon), 'She who must be obeyed' and I booked to go to Maritao's Kitchen at Playa Flamenca to celebrate. On the way there the roads were deserted but when we arrived at the restaurant it was packed to capacity, made up entirely it seemed of Norwegians and British. Entertainment was laid on but the buzz from the crowd tended to drown it out. The food was, as always, excellent; starting with a selection of dim sum, followed by a generous portion of aromatic duck with pancakes, followed by a choice of lamb, beef, pork ribs or their prawns - which are unbeatable! This was accompanied by sticky rice in lotus leaves. If you had room, there was lemon-type dessert but we had left by this stage as it was a bit too crowded for us.

I notice that a small laundrette has opened next to the Supercor petrol station & shop opposite the hospital. Most of you probably have washing machines anyway but the industrial dryers there could be handy for the mother-in-law's swimming costume this summer.

Fuel prices rocketed up during January, with the cheapest diesel reaching €1.45 at one stage.

Sorry to hear that Sue from the Lime Bar took a bit of a tumble. Chin-up Sue! We all need a 'break' now and again!

Hopeless with animals.

#An old Irish farmer's dog goes missing and he's inconsolable.

His wife says "Paddy, why don't you put an advert in the paper?"

He does, but two weeks later the dog is still missing.

"What did you put in the paper?" his wife asks.

"Here boy!" he replies.

#Soon afterwards Paddy takes his goldfish to the vet'.

"I think it's got epilepsy," says Paddy.

"It looks calm enough to me," says the vet'.

Paddy says, 'I haven't taken it out of the bowl yet!' (Pete Dudman)

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The Phoenix Golf Society

On a beautiful sunny morning at La Finca, Algorfa, the society started the new year with the new captain, Pete Brain. After a quick brandy, things got underway with some excellent tee shots. The winner of the gold section was Mike Highway with Pete Brain taking the silver. The bronze being taken by John Bradbeer, not before time some would say, others maybe not. The nearest the pins were Ken Sutton at the 13th and the 16th, with Ron Smith the 6th and Rob Hughes the 3rd and also the nearest the pin in 2. The Must Try Harder award went to a deserving ex-captain, Dave ('everybody has a bad day') Wightman who fooled everyone.

Thanks to Donna for the buffet. Details of the society are available in the Phoenix Bar, Via Park 5, Dream Hills.

John Bradbeer.

What is the difference between an Australian wedding and an Australian funeral?

One less drunk at the funeral.



This happy bunch on the left is the **Lime Bar Christmas Party.**

Below, some images from the Lime Bar New Year's Eve Fancy Dress Party.



Below, some of the happy faces at the New Year's Eve Party at Belushi's.



Four lovely ladies
At All Bar Sue on
New Year's Eve

On the right, Peter proudly wearing the Fraser Hunting Tartan at All Bar Sue's on New Year's Eve. I asked Peter what was worn under the kilt? He replied, 'There's nothing worn under my kilt! Everything is in perfect working order!'



The Lime Bar Golf Society.

Our society golf was played at Mar Menor Village, on the 11th January 2012. A wonderful day to play golf and the course, as always, was in good condition, thanks to all the management and staff.

Our 2011 Gold class had a play off, and the eventual winner was Bob Adair, and runner-up Steve Cottle, well done to both, a credit to our society.


The results of the day are as follows:- Nearest the pin on the 2nd went to Steve Cottle: on the 14th went to Dave Gill: and on the 17th went to Chris Butler: Silver Class runner up was Dave Kirk with 31 points, Silver Class winner went to Paul Abbott with 32 points. Gold Class runner up with 32 points was Dave Gill, and the Gold Class winner was Bill Denne with 33 points; however I would point out that this was after much adjudication. The best guest prize went to Charlie McGonagle with 27 points.

In our society there is a gentleman by the name of Stewart Coleman, who is playing in the World Open One Armed Golf Championships at St Andrews in Scotland on the 29th of June, celebrating 75 years of the society, Stewart being one of the 72 players competing. Anyone interested in helping Stewart in his quest, please go firstly to their website - <http://www.onearmgolf.org/>. The SOAG, Society of One Armed Golfers, was originally founded for ex servicemen, but has now grown beyond that. Stewart is looking for support by means of sponsorship from us all in his quest to become the One Armed Champion. (If the funds raised exceed the sponsorship requirement, the balance will go to Paul Cunningham Nurses.)

The Lime Bar at Los Altos and the Courtyard at Los Balcones, have shown great interest in running a Race Night etc to help Stewart; any inputs and financial help would be greatly appreciated by Stewart and the Lime Bar Golf Society. Finally anyone interested in joining our society please give George a call on 693-789082. Our sincere thanks go to Sue and Pete at the Lime Bar for the wonderful food and all the help they give to our friendly society. (Colin Capper)



(Please don't take 'shots' with the sun behind; that's for Japanese snipers!)



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*I met a girl in the park the other evening. There was an instant spark between us and she immediately dropped to her knees and laid down on the grass at my feet. As we lay there making love, I thought "These Taser guns are well worth the money."

Jimmy Carr

*The French Government announced today that it is imposing a ban on the use of fireworks at Euro Disney. The decision comes the day after a nightly fireworks display at the park, located just 30 miles outside of Paris, caused the soldiers at a nearby French Army garrison to surrender to a group of Czech tourists.

All Bar Sue

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A recipe is a series of step-by-step instructions for preparing ingredients you forgot to buy in utensils you don't own to make a dish the dog won't eat the rest of. Henry Beard

Blood Money?

An Arab Sheik was admitted to Torrevieja Hospital for heart surgery, but prior to the surgery, the doctors needed to store his blood in case the need arose. As the gentleman had a rare type of blood, it couldn't be found locally, so, the call went out across Europe. Finally a Scot was located who had a similar blood type. The Scot willingly donated his blood for the Arab.

After the surgery, the Arab sent the Scotsman as appreciation for giving his blood, a new BMW, diamonds & a bundle of euros. A couple of days later, once again, the Arab had to go through a corrective surgery. His doctor telephoned the Scotsman who was more than happy to donate his blood again.

After the second surgery, the Arab sent the Scotsman a thank-you card & a small jar of sweets. The Scotsman was shocked that the Arab this time did not reciprocate his kind gesture as he had anticipated.

He phoned the Arab & asked him: "I thought you would be generous again, that you would give me a BMW, diamonds & money... But you only gave me a thank-you card & a mucking jar of sweets".

To which the Arab replied: "Aye, but I now have Scottish blood in my veins".



More than a hundred people have taken part in Montilla, Córdoba, in creating the world's largest bar of chocolate (above), a 250 metre-long slab which El Mundo reports has broken the previous world record which was held by Armenia. A Jaén manufacturer provided the 3,100 bars of different types of chocolate which went into making the massive slab, which has now been broken up into 9,500 portions and sold off to raise money for charity. The money is to be used to help the local Alzheimer's residence centre and the residents of the San Rafael retirement home. The record-breaking bar was the work of the parish association 'El Dulce Nombre', which already has other world records to its name: a 200 metre Roscón de Reyes (a cake for the three kings) and a giant 500 metre sandwich filled with 180 kilos of ham. No portion control in Montilla!



Don't panic! The 'beauty' on the left does not mean that the Dream Scene will start printing 'cheesecake.' The photo is taken from the Sports' page of El Mundo. This lady, Melissa Satta, is the girlfriend of Kevin-Prince Boateng, the AC Milan midfielder. Boateng, it seems, is off injured for the next four weeks, missing a Champion's League match against Arsenal. However, the 25-year-old Melissa says that Boateng's injury is caused by their having sex seven to 10 times a week! Apparently he strained his ...ahem...thigh. Miss Satta also went on to tell Vanity Fair, "I hate foreplay, I want to get straight to the point. My favourite position is on top so I can take control." You almost feel sorry for the guy.....?



La Razon newspaper has revealed that the day after losing the General Election, the outgoing Socialist government reported spending €63 million on 200 'cooperation' projects abroad. These ranged from an award of €316,900 to the women in Kayes (a lovely lady from Kayes on left) in the Mali Republic, so that they can 'exercise their sexual and reproductive rights.' Now without sounding misogynistic, I doubt that the women of Mali have little problem in exercising their sexuality. Even the 'gays' in Bamako, Mali, were not forgotten and were awarded €169,900 so that they can 'strengthen their capacity to demand their sexual rights.' €293,900 has also been given to help 'settle the conflict between hippopotamuses in Guinea-Bissau' and the farming regions. And you probably thought that your tax money was just being wasted!

The new government have now cut the foreign development aid budget from 1.5 billion euros to 484 million.

A voice from above.

Luigi was given the job of painting the ceiling of the local Catholic church. He had been lying on his back on the scaffolding for two weeks and it was becoming boring. One morning he saw a large Italian woman enter the church dressed in black. She knelt at the statue of Virgin Mary and began to pray. Luigi decided he'd have a bit of fun. 'Hey you down there,' he yelled, 'this is Jesus Christ talking to you in person!' The Italian woman stopped praying and looked up to the ceiling where the voice came from. 'Hey you upa there!' she screamed, 'shudduppa you face - I'ma speaka to your Mudda!'



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LATE NEWS!

QROPS PENSION WARNING !!!!!!!!

Due to impending Inland Revenue rule changes , anyone who has transferred their pension into a QROPS may be left with a large tax bill after April 5th.

If you think that this may be something that affects you then contact me urgently on 966844979 or mike@maypolefs.co.uk

AVALON FUNERAL PLANS

Good news , I have been able to extend the date for the special offer of 150 Euros off each plan for another month , with costs from as little as 7 cents per day !!!

Please contact me 966844979 or mike@maypolefs.co.uk for further details.

I can always visit you in the comfort of your own home to discuss how the plans work.

The generous Scot.

Hamish and Morag were walking past a swanky new restaurant.

Morag exclaimed, 'Did you smell that food? It's incredible.'

Hamish, being such a nice guy, thought 'I'll treat her.'

So they walked past it again.

(Pete Dudman)

How the new tax increases will effect you!

At the end of 2011, the new government announced a new austerity drive to restore public finances, including the second largest tax increase in Spain's recent history. The tax increases were announced just one week after the new prime minister announced that there would be no tax increases! The latest increases are supposed to be only for the years of 2012 and 2013, but we have already seen what politicians' promises are worth.

The tax increases are expected to bring in around €6 billion extra, while a new range of spending cuts are expected to save a further €9 billion. However, it is widely expected that further austerity will be required, so you can expect the belt to be tightened even further, probably by an extra budget in March.

The **old and new income tax rates** are outlined below, with the new rates becoming effective on February 1, 2012.

Income band	Previous rate	Increase	New rate
€0 - €17.007	24%	0,75%	24,75%
€17.007 - €33.007	28%	2,00%	30,00%
€33.007 - €53.407	37%	3,00%	40,00%
€53.407 - €120.000	43%	4,00%	47,00%
€120.000 - €175.000	44%	5,00%	49,00%
€175.000 - €300.000	45%	6,00%	51,00%
More than €300.000	45%	7,00%	52,00%

Some regions such as Catalonia, Andalucia, Asturias and Extramadura also add extra taxes to high earners, adding on an additional 2 or 3%!

It is worth remembering that your personal allowance increases when you reach 65 and again when you reach 75. But Spanish income tax is not a simple affair, particularly when taking into account married couples allowances, disability and 3rd party care allowances, parents living in allowances, children's allowances etc. You are strongly advised to seek professional advice from an experienced assessor such as Mar Services on page 3 rather than 'winging it.'

Savings income is also being hit for additional progressive tax contributions, with the rate of tax applied increasing from 18 to 21% for savings income up to €6,000 and up to 25% for savings income up to €24,000.

Non-residents have also been hit with the flat rate of 24% being increased to 24.75 for 2012 and 2013. The 19% withholding tax also increases to 21%.

Madrid has also told local authorities to revise cadastral values selectively. For us this will mean that the **IBI, Impuesto sobre Bienes Inmuebles** (like an annual property/rates charge), will increase by around 10% this year. (Again, this is supposed to be a temporary measure.) This is not a surprise in Orihuela Costa as the tax has remained the same for several years even though municipal costs have increased. Even with the new increase, the IBI on a similar property in Torrevieja would be at least €100 extra. All these empty theatres and tennis courts have to be paid for!

The Rajoy government has declared a moratorium of the **Dependency Law**. No new cases will be accepted until 2013. This is not something which expats benefit from greatly, but there is no reason why they shouldn't. Its roll-out in the Valencian region has been a disaster and with no new cases admitted until 2013 it has become a catastrophe! Rajoy has already gone on record to say that the law is unviable.

The **IVA/VAT** reduced rate of 4% on new house purchase is to remain and the tax deduction for property purchase returns.

Funding to political parties and to businessmen and union groups will be cut by 20%. That these groups still receive funding from taxpayers money is ridiculous.

The minimum wage remains frozen at €641.40 per month and pensions rose in January by 1%, much less than the rate of inflation which is hovering around 2.4%.

Finally, the Valencian Government have added an additional one cent tax to every litre of fuel sold in the region.

Tough Guy!

To the horror of the locals, Satan suddenly appeared in the main street of a small town one Sunday morning. Everyone rushed indoors except for one old timer who calmly stayed on his porch reading a book. The devil was furious that this one person should not be afraid of him and went over to challenge him.

'Are you scared of me?' screamed Satan at his most menacing.

'Nope.' said the old timer.

'Aren't you terrified that I'm going to wreak havoc in your nice little community?'

'Nope.'

By now steam was coming out of Satan's ears. He thundered: 'You do know who I am, don't you?'

'Should do. Been married to your sister for 46 years.'




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Food Prices

Often, when I drive past the beautiful orange and lemon orchards in our area, I wonder just just how much the farmers/growers get for their produce. Lemons for example, are often an exorbitant price in the supermarkets; whereas growers will often it seems, not bother to pick them from the trees and just allow them to rot. Then I came across a short article in *El Mundo* which reported that the small farmers were complaining (aren't they always); however they do seem to have a case this time.

The Consumer Price Index Source together with some of the farming associations have published data to show that there was a fivefold increase at the end of 2011 between what the farmer is paid and what the supermarkets

charge at the checkouts. In December 2010, the price differential between what the farmer was paid and what the consumer paid was a factor of 3.93 times. By December 2011, this had risen to a factor 5.13! This shows that, not only have the large supermarkets shafted the farmers, but they have also royally stuffed the consumer as well by not passing on the savings resulting from the collapse of fruit and vegetable prices. Products such as potatoes, onions, peppers, zucchini, oranges, lemons and bananas are paid at source up to 50% cheaper than a year ago but I doubt whether you and I are paying less in the shops with the inflation rate standing close to 3%. Exorbitant margins are now being charged by the supermarkets on most fresh products, with onions up by 1,600%; bananas by 805%; potatoes by 786%; lemons by 759% and oranges by 712%! The price multiplier between farm and consumer for pork is now 5.35 and 4.42 for beef. So it is no surprise that the large supermarkets in Spain have announced record profits for last year and have done little to ease the plight of the hard-pressed consumer.

One small helping hand has come from Carrefour. They have now launched a special scheme for the over-65's whereby the company will absorb the IVA (VAT) on more than 4,000 food products. It is called **Plan 65+** and it will apply to purchases of meat, fish, fruit, bread, cakes, take-away's, eggs, veg and cheese. IVA rates on food items range from 4% to 8% and these will be absorbed by the company, who believe that the over-65's can save between €225 to €250 each year. To participate in the scheme one must be over 65 and have a Club Carrefour card (which is free). When you present the card at checkout, the relevant IVA will be deducted. Carrefour will review the scheme at the end of March this year and modify it, if necessary.

The Costa Concordia

#A man phones his local craft shop and asks "Do you have a model of an Italian cruise liner?"

The shop owner replies "Yes, we have just one left". "Oh that's great," says the man. "Can you put it on one side for me?"

#Costa Concordia - the only place where you are guaranteed to get your drink on the rocks.

#Reports say Italian divers have found two Glaswegian's in the bar area of the stricken cruise ship. the two Glaswegian's told the divers to f**k off as they were on an all-inclusive!!!

#I just bought a ticket for this weeks Costa Concordia lottery draw. Last week's was a roll-over

#Paddy and Murphy are on the cruise ship Costa Concordia.

Paddy says "It's awfully quiet on deck tonight."

Murphy says, "Everyone will be watching the band."

Paddy says, "There isn't a band playing tonight."

Murphy says "I definitely heard some f**ker say "A band on ship".

(Kevin Wood & others.)

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TWO HEROES!



In the early morning of January 18, a fire caused by a short circuit, broke out in a house on the outskirts of Granada. The family of eight were sound asleep, the grandmother and her two grandchildren downstairs and the remaining five upstairs. Simba, a Shar Pei, raced upstairs while Nala, a Chihuahua, remained downstairs. Both dogs woke-up the family, one by one, and barked non-stop until everybody was awake. Five adults and three children managed to escape unhurt although Simba had to be treated for smoke inhalation but is now fine.

Faster than a speeding bullet!

A little boy was sitting on the footpath with a bottle of turpentine. He was shaking it up and watching all the bubbles. A Priest came along and asked the little boy what he had. The little boy said, 'This is the most powerful liquid in the world, Father; it's called Turpentine.' The Priest said, 'No son, the most powerful liquid in the world is Holy Water. If you rub it on a pregnant woman's tummy, she'll pass a healthy baby.' "Well," the little boy replied, 'if you rub this turpentine on a cat's arse, he'll pass a Harley Davidson !'

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Medieval Market at Orihuela, 3 - 5 February



It has just been agreed by the town council that Costazul will provide bus services to the Medieval Market in Orihuela (the largest in Spain) from the coastal section of the municipality.

Last year the buses were free, but the current financial situation means that there will be a charge of 4.90€ for the return journey this year. Reservations are needed and must be made in advance at either the Tourist Office or the Foreign Residents Office, over the phone on 0034 966 760 000 ext 31 and ext 32 or via email to touristinfo_orihuelap@gva.es. The council have also said that if there is enough interest from other areas such as Los Dolces or Entre Naranjos they will consider offering more starting stops.

Friday 3rd February

Leave Playa Flamenca 17:00

Leave Orihuela 22:00

Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th February

Leave Playa Flamenca 10:00 & 17:00

Leave Orihuela 15:00 & 22:00

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More Health Service Cuts

As part of the cost cutting measures in the Valencia region, more health service cuts have been announced. The latest action plan to reduce hospital waiting lists has been scrapped. Patients will no longer be referred to private hospitals and clinics for treatment. Many treatments, from cataracts to heart surgery, will cease to be referred to these installations, which will have an adverse effect on the waiting lists. The cost of medical supplies and equipment are being addressed and cheaper alternatives sought. Similarly with medicines dispensed at the chemist, generic equivalents will be offered. At hospitals, medical staff will revert to stitching rather than staples and bed linen in the wards will not be changed until the patient has left the hospital! These are just a few of 177 new measures being introduced to save money. (Source: Costa News)

All the regions are being urged to tighten their belts on public spending in 2012 to meet the country's deficit targets, now forecast that they will spend an average of 6% per person less on healthcare than they did last year. When added to the cutbacks already introduced last year it is expected to result in savings of 10%. In financial terms this means that the regions will now spend an average 1,210.95 euros per person in the public health system this year, compared to 1,288.58 euros in 2011 and 1,343.95 in 2010.

However, there is disparity amongst the regions, with some paying more this year than last. Spain's Federation of Associations for the Defence of Public Healthcare (FADSP) predicts that the regions forecast to spend less on healthcare in 2012 are: Navarre, Extremadura, La Rioja, Murcia and Catalonia. Regions where spend per person is expected to increase are: Andalusia, Aragón, Asturias, the Balearics, the Canaries, Castilla y León and Madrid. Others, such as Valencia, the Basque Country and Galicia, will see similar spend to last year.

What will not change is the enormous difference in spend between the regions. In 2010 the highest difference was 556 euros - between the 1,066 euros per person spent in the Balearics compared to 1,623 in the Basque Country. In 2012, the widest discrepancy will be 497 euros, between the 1,061 Euros spent in Valencia and the 1,558 Euros per person spent in the Basque Country. That the difference has dropped by almost 10% in two years shows that the cutbacks have been applied equally in all regions, regardless of the figures that divide them. (Source: El Pais)

The Raffle

A voluptuous woman arrives home from work and her husband notices she's wearing a beautiful diamond necklace.

'Where did you get that necklace?' he asks.

'I won it in a raffle at work. Now go and get my bath ready while I start supper.' The next day, the woman arrives home from work wearing a lovely diamond bracelet.

'Where did you get the bracelet?' asks the husband.

The woman replies, 'I won it in a raffle at work. Now go and get my bath ready while I start supper.'

The next day, the woman arrives home with a mink coat.

'I suppose you won that in a raffle at work?' says the husband.

The woman replies, 'Yes I did! How did you guess? Now go and get my bath ready while I prepare supper.'

After supper, the woman goes to take her bath and finds there's only half an inch of water in the bath. She yells down to her husband, 'Hey, there's hardly any water in the bath!'

'I know!' shouts back her husband. 'I didn't want you to get your raffle ticket wet.'

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Gone to the Dogs!

*My best mate came round today, he looked a bit stressed out.

"What's up?" I asked.

"My dog keeps biting people when I take him for a walk around the Playa Flamenca area" he replied.

"Muzzle 'im" I suggested.

"Yes mainly" he said!

*Ever notice that when the doorbell rings, the dog's the first one to the door, but it's never for him?

*Did you hear about the blind man who went bungee jumping?

Scared the hell out of the dog.

(Phil Herdman & others)

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The **express bus service** between Torrevieja and Alicante airport will continue to operate during the winter period. Tickets €6.79. The timings are as follows -

TORREVIEJA – AEROPUERTO ALICANTE

09.00 – 11.00 – 13.00 – 15.00 – 17.00 – 19.00 Hrs

AEROPUERTO ALICANTE – TORREVIEJA

10.00 – 12.00 – 14.00 – 16.00 – 18.00 – 20.00 Hrs

Let's hear it for the ladies!

A woman goes into a shop to buy a wedding dress - for her fourth wedding. She chooses a traditional white dress, which surprises the sales assistant.

'Oh, but I'm still a virgin,' the woman replies.

'How can that be if this is your fourth wedding?' asks the sales assistant.

'My first husband was a psychologist, he just wanted to talk about it; my second husband was a gynaecologist, he just wanted to look at it; my third husband was a stamp collector.....God I loved him!'

Contrary to the teachings of the Bible, God created Eve first. She was intelligent, beautiful and interesting.....and had three breasts!

After a few days God came to check on her and she complained that the third breast was a bit uncomfortable, so he said: OK, we'll throw one away.' This made Eve happy.

Over the next few months she wandered around seeing other animals walking around in twos, and said: 'God, I feel lonely. I need a man.'

God said: 'No problem. Now tell me, where did I throw that useless tit?'

What do you call a woman without an arse?

Single!

How many men does it take to change a roll of toilet paper?

Nobody knows, it's never happened.

What is the difference between a man and childbirth?

One is a constant pain and is almost unbearable, the other is just having a baby.

Johnny's parrot died and fell off its perch. It was lying on its back on the bottom of the cage, its legs pointing upwards. Johnny asked his father, 'Dad, when birds die, why do their feet always point upwards?'

'Well, Johnny, they do that so that God can reach down, take them by the claws and pull them up into Heaven.'

Next day when Dad got home from work, Johnny rushed over to him and said, 'Gee Dad, we nearly lost Mum today.'

'What do you mean?' queried his father.

'Well, I heard these noises upstairs so I rushed up to see what was happening. There was Mum, lying on the bed, with her legs pointing straight up and she was yelling, "God, I'm coming." If it hadn't been for the gardener holding her down, we'd have lost her for sure.'

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