

# THE DREAM SCENE



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*Bienvenido a todos* to the January edition of the Dream Scene.

After some very cold weather in early December, at present it is like an early summer's day. Recently, temperatures hit around 24° during the day, and I noticed that the temperature was around 18° at 1am one morning!

It is going to be a very lean Christmas for many, especially the Spanish public sector workers. You are probably aware that the Spanish normally get 14 monthly salary payments each year, one extra in August and in December. However this year, the public sector workers will not get the extra December payment due to the cuts. For most of December, the bars and restaurants have been very, very quiet. And the closer we get to Christmas, many expats have either returned to their own country for Christmas or gone to Benidorm! But many are not so fortunate. This Christmas, there will be 23,000 people living rough on the streets in Spain. 80% are men and half of these are under the age of 45.

There has been some good news concerning the local property market, particularly in Torrevieja and surrounding areas. The town saw 3,000 property transactions during 2012, over 83% of these were in the re-sale market. At its peak, Torrevieja saw 6,000 sales in its best year, the worst year being in 2009, when less than 100 new home licenses were issued. But this does not mean property prices are increasing. As one respected commentator put it, 'When selling your property, forget what you paid for it and forget what your neighbour got for his!'

Unfortunately, electricity prices are on the up again. I took the following from the Spanish newspaper El Pais: 'Electricity bills will go up by an average three percent beginning January 1 after power companies, who took part in a bidding procedure under the so-called TUR (Rate of Last Resort) system, offered higher rates for megawatts of power. At the same time, consumers who have contracted between three and 10 kilowatts of usage with utility companies, apart from those on a government hardship plan, who use more than 10 percent of their average consumption could also see extra charges on their bills of between one and eight percent. Power rates to more than 17 million households and small businesses are based on the government's TUR (Rate of Last Resort) system. Rates are charged under a different scheme for large companies, industries and some other sectors. In July 2009 the previous Socialist government introduced the TUR system to help keep power rates down by freezing prices. But the Supreme Court in 2011 found in favour of the private electricity companies, who filed suit against the government. Throughout the year, rates under TUR have gone up four percent in April and seven percent in July. In October they dropped 2.4 percent but consumers didn't notice the change because the IVA (VAT) was increased from 18 to 21 percent the previous month.'

Now, this means that if you exceed your 'average' usage you will be penalised! It also means that homes with large families will be penalised unfairly. Analysts believe that users on the 'dual tariff' will also suffer, as the charge will be applied after they have used less electricity. The consumer associations also believe that it is an unfair and ill-conceived change. FACUA state that 'this is a shadow price rise, dressed up as a fair measure to encourage rational consumption. Large and extensive families ..... will be penalised for consumption that is not excessive but a necessity.'

Great to see Alan back at The Rendezvous after his operation. He looks great, although he says the ladies there are giving him a hard time!

Thanks to Judy & Terry once again, for their sub' and kind donation towards costs.

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OUR READERS  
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Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy ruled out the need for Spain to ask the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) for a bailout any time soon. "For the moment we don't need it," Rajoy said in an interview with SER radio station. "If we need it, we will use it," he added. Seeking assistance from the ESM is a prior condition for the European Central Bank to intervene in the secondary market by buying the sovereign debt of financially strained countries.

Rajoy told union leaders earlier in December that Germany had dissuaded Spain from asking the European Union for a full bailout. Chancellor Angela Merkel convinced Rajoy not to seek further aid from the EU at this stage, because she feared that the request would not get favourable passage in the German parliament. At the same time, she was also concerned that the bailout plan would not get the unanimous approval needed from the rest of the 26 member states.

Spain received around €40 billion in European aid for its nationalised banks in December as agreed in a bank rescue package the country requested earlier this year. The majority of the money, €37bn, will go to the four nationalised banks: Bankia, Catalunya Banc, NCG Banco and Banco de Valencia. A further €2.5bn will be channeled into the "bad bank" which is being used to absorb and quarantine toxic real estate assets. The rescued banks must slash their balance sheets, cut jobs and impose losses on their credit bondholders as part of the rescue package, while Banco de Valencia has been sold to Caixabank for just €1. Bankia has already announced that they are sacking 5,000 staff. Banco Santander - not a rescued bank - have absorbed Bank Banesto, and will close 700 branches!

From January 1, 2013, the rate of IVA (VAT) on the purchase of a new dwelling in Spain increases from 4% to 10%! This is surely a perplexing move considering the perilous state of the housing industry. Still, it should make re-sales more attractive.

US billionaire Warren Buffett has bought the insurance business of Caixabank for €600m (£486m) in a deal that will allow the struggling Spanish lender to book a gain of €24m. He is currently reckoned to be the third richest man in the world with a fortune of \$46bn, according to Forbes magazine.

Economy Minister, Luis de Guindos, has said he will reduce the presence of politicians on the boards of savings banks and banking institutions. He'll also limit the number of people which can be nominated for a job on the board of a *caja* (savings bank) to 25%, compared to 40% now.

More than 600 students in Alicante will lose their scholarships after the available grants have been cut by 53% for 2013.

The former director general of Caja Mediterráneo (CAM) together with the chief of its business divisions, diverted funds from the lender to tax havens for their own profit and that of their associates, according to a lawsuit presented at the High Court by the current CAM board. CAM was bailed out by the state and subsequently nationalized following an audit by Deloitte.

Spain will not use the state lottery to raise funds for its cash-strapped regions, the Treasury advised, after pay-outs to nine autonomous territories came in around 1/3rd less than expected. 'The Treasury has decided not to proceed with the national lottery debt plan because this additional financing is not needed,' Spain's Treasury reported in a statement.

The province of Andalucia in the south of Spain suffered several minor earthquakes in mid-December. Most of the activity was in and around the area of Jaen, which experienced around 40 activities over the weekend and 18 more in the early morning of Monday, Dec' 17. The strength of these ranged from 1.7 to 3.3 on the Richter Scale and were recorded at various depths of between 1 to 14 km. The Christmas Day earthquake of 1884 claimed 200 lives when it destroyed properties across a 6,000 square km area of Andalucia; a bit like a Millwall away-game, I suppose!

Spanish car sales have seen a drop of 21.7% year on year in October. A three-percentage point increase in IVA (VAT) from last September did not help.

This year's El Gordo Spanish Lottery will be the last un-taxed prize fund. Thereafter, all winnings in excess of €2,500 will be taxed at the rate of 20%. This is considerably better than in the U.S. where large winnings are often taxed at around 50%!

The Spanish central government has paid off more than €1.1 billion of regional debts to suppliers, according to the budget ministry. Spain's regions are increasingly turning to the central government's Regional Liquidity Fund for help paying their bills. In highly decentralized Spain, the regions account for over one third of all spending. In Valencia this payout has enabled the Generalitat to pay €14 million of the outstanding €450 million debt owed to the region's pharmacies, with a promise of a further €17 million to be paid by the end of January 2013.

A defiant Catalonia announced that it will not enforce a proposed national education law that aims to restrict the use of regional languages in the classroom. Catalonia states that it will basically do whatever it wants! The new bill states that studies must be offered in both Spanish and local language "in balanced proportions" whereas the Catalan government wants to have Catalan as the main language in every sector.

A judge in Denia has opened an investigation into 300 frauds relating to false or unnecessary repair inspections on electrical and gas installations in Gandia (Valencia), La Vila, Denia and municipalities in Totana, Murcia and San Javier. The suspects in this network chose their victims from among the foreign owners of villas and bungalows "who have little command of the Spanish language" and have charged them amounts ranging between 400 and 1,200 euros. Regardless of whether these 'chancers' have uniforms or I.D. cards, never let any 'engineer' or 'inspector' on your premises unless you have requested them. Then make sure you always get a quote BEFORE anybody starts any work.

Today, Torre Vieja accounts for 106,836 registered inhabitants, an increase of 1,566 residents since January 2012. The town estimates that, based on the number of water meters, there are actually 150,000 habitual residents. Registered foreigners in the town total 57,070. Local statistics indicate that the Russian community has now become the second largest foreign group with 4,449 registered. They are now second only to residents from the UK who total 13,236 registered voters in the city. For the first time, residents from Germany have been knocked into third place, with a total of 4,096 registered in the city.

For every new resident on the *padron*, the relevant city/town gets €150 from Madrid.

## A trip to the Zoo.

The little boy had just returned home after an outing with his father.

'Well, dear, how did you like the zoo?' asked the boy's mother.

'Oh, it was great!' replied the boy. 'And Dad liked it too - especially when one of the animals came racing home at thirty to one.'

## Cross breeding

-What do you get when you cross an onion with a donkey?  
-Most of the time you get just an onion with long ears, but every once in a while you get a piece of ass that brings tears to your eyes.  
Anon.

## What's Up? continued

The Spanish 'bad bank' - La Sociedad de Gestión de Activos procedentes de la Reestructuración Bancaria (Sareb), has now received capital from 14 new investors. The new group comprises two foreign banks: Deutsche Bank and Barclays Bank; eight Spanish banks: Ibercaja, Bankinter, Unicaja, Cajamar, Caja Laboral, Banca March, Cecabank y Banco Cooperativo Español; and four insurance companies: Mapfre, Mutua Madrileña, Catalana Occidente y Axa. Santander, Caixabank, Sabadell, Popular, and Kutxabank were investors already. This means that all the major Spanish banking and insurance institutions are involved.

Any lessons learned following the recent night club tragedy in Madrid were quickly forgotten in Barcelona. In December a discotheque in the Sarrià-Sant Gervasi district was closed by the police. The club which had an authorised maximum capacity of 165, was discovered by police to contain 500 people inside and another 400 outside, all with tickets!

Our old friend Gerardo Diaz Ferran is in the 'mire' again. This chap, you may recall, is a regular in these columns. This guy was co-owner of the Marsans Group, the largest tour operator in Spain. It owned two airlines, Air Comet and Aerolíneas Argentinas. He also held the prestigious position of President of the Spanish Confederation of Business Organisations (CEOE) until 2010.

But in 2010, the group collapsed with debts totaling €19.4 million and supposedly assets of only €5.66 million. The company left 4,700 workers on the streets. It is now alleged that Ferran sold the bankrupt firm to Angel de Cabo for a nominal amount. However de Cabo is a well known asset-stripper and it is alleged that both Ferran and de Cabo then conspired to strip Marsans for their personal gain. De Cabo was arrested in February and charged with "practices of extortion, coercion and / or threats to receivers and court judges" - altogether, not a very nice guy!

Díaz Ferrán, is already facing a number of legal proceedings, and is also accused of fraudulent bankruptcy and siphoning-off assets. It is alleged that he used the proceeds from this to channel €4.9 million to Switzerland. According to a police report, the funds were diverted through an Irish company that formed part of the Marsans group. But then police raided Ferran's house, or one of them, and found a kilo of gold and €150,000 in cash; €400,000 cash at the home of de Cabo and over one million euros at the home of Susana Mora, a secretary to de Cabo. 11 high-end cars, including a Ferrari, a Volkswagen Touareg, five Mercedes sedans, a sporty two-seater Mercedes, an Audi and a BMW 750, were also discovered at Ferran's home. Not bad for a bankrupt!

It also seems that Ferran sold a property in Mallorca to some Russian investors for €4 million recently and was receiving €100,000 a month from de Cabo since 2010! There is much, much more to this story but the latest is that Ferran and de Cabo have been arrested and bail for Ferran has been set at €30 million and at €0 million for de Cabo, the highest ever set in Spain. It does not pay to threaten judges! More in due course.

Local Police inspected more than a hundred car repair workshops throughout the province of Valencia. Fourteen were found to be illegal and another 25 charged with various illegalities. Three people were arrested, a sawn-off shotgun was seized and a greenhouse growing marijuana was shut-down.

Authorities announced on December 16 that they have busted an organization that swindled about one million € from Spanish toll road operators by selling fraudulent passes to drivers. Officials at UDEF, the Economic and Tax Crimes Squad, said that a network of businesses also helped the organization by selling the package of the passes to frequent toll road users — who were mainly truckers — for 500 euros. A 76-year-old Barcelona engineer is said to have come up with the idea. According to UDEF, two types of passes were developed: one to be used solely on Spanish toll roads and another type valid on roads in France, Italy and Germany. 39 people have been arrested throughout Spain and more are expected.

Wife to husband: 'I need a new dress.'

Husband: 'what's wrong with the dress you've got?'

Wife: 'It's too long and the veil keeps getting in my eyes.'

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The Civil Guard have arrested two men in nearby Guardamar del Segura, aged 19 and 31. These two allegedly advertised new generation mobile phones over the internet, at prices only slightly less than

retail price, avoiding suspicion. They used several websites showing photos of the real



equipment and promised to send the phones after receiving the money. However, instead of sending the phones they sent packages of soap, cucumber, tomato and even a flowering potato! See photo. Guardia Civil sources reported that the scam has been denounced by numerous individuals resident in the provinces of Jaén, Badajoz, Seville, Barcelona and Tenerife.

Although I believe that cycling in Spain is about as dangerous as rock climbing, it can also prove to be expensive, particularly in the city of Alicante. In 2011, the town hall issued 1,560 fines to cyclists totaling €48,698. So far in 2012, 480 fines have been issued totaling €8,912! It seems cycling on pavements is a common problem there.

Civil Guard officers of Murcia have arrested five Romanians, two women and three men, aged 26 and 46, all residents of Alicante. The officers launched an investigation earlier this year after detecting an increase in the commission of robberies and thefts in rest areas and services of the A-7 passing through the province of Murcia. Those arrested are accused of 17 robberies, some violent at rest areas and services of the A-7. According to the police, the detainees committed the crimes in Murcia, Alicante, Valencia and Castellón.

Six National Police officers stood trial in Alicante last month. They are charged with confiscating drugs and money from drug dealers, after robbing the homes of these dealers and then selling the drugs. Some of the police had around €40,000 in their bank accounts which they could not explain.

The most significant and tragic event last month was the loss of Louise Clarke, a popular and talented journalist with the Round Town News. Louse passed away after an as yet undiagnosed debilitating illness, leaving behind her husband Lee and two lovely children. Louise was a crusading journalist in the Costa Blanca and we are all now a lot poorer without her.



**Louise Clarke. July 4, 1974 - December 7, 2012.**

From those who serve the community admirably, we move on to those who try to milk it. The former mayor of Torrevieja and PP Regional Deputy, Pedro Hernandez Mateo, has been found guilty in his most recent corruption case. The charges related to the manipulation and forgery of a municipal waste contract in 2004 worth €97.8 million. He has now been sentenced to a three-year jail sentence, a fine of €10,500 and forced to give the Torrevieja Town Council an indemnity of €12,000. He has also been suspended from any form of public office for nine years. No doubt that Mateo will appeal as any sentence over two years, even for a first time offence, must be served. The fines should not cause him any problems as he made more than €5 million when some agricultural land he had purchased for €180,000 was re-zoned as suitable for housing while he was mayor. Los Verdes brought a court case against him concerning this, but he was declared innocent of all charges.

Power plays within the Partido Popular led to internal party elections in both Torrevieja and Orihuela. The current mayor of Torrevieja romped home with a substantial majority to confirm him as local PP President. In Orihuela, the contest was less easy to predict. The nominee of ex-Mayoress Monica Lorente, Pepa Ferrando, faced Emilio Bascuñana for Presidency of the Orihuela PP. Bascuñana resigned his presidency of the Red Cross as he was confident of winning. Silly boy! However, the vote revealed that Ferrando acquired 60% of the vote and Bascuñana 40%. Lorente and Ferrando were obviously jubilant, but are still in opposition to the tripartite ruling council in Orihuela. Although the tripartite are in a minority, only 11 out of 25 votes, members who have been banished by them are unable to vote to depose the ruling council due to a legal nuance. They can however vote against the tripartite on other issues. This is why the budget for 2013 has not been passed. To circumvent this, the ruling council are using the figures for last year's budget for next year, something they are apparently allowed to do. The problem with power is that when some people have it, they hang on to it even with their fingernails! *Informacion* reports that bill-paying by the council is going from 'bad to worse': of the 1,827 invoices which were presented for payment between July and September 2012, only 69 were paid. This is despite legislation that bills have to be paid within 40 days.

The Department of Land (*La Conselleria de Territorio*) has requested a six-month extension to the deadline made by the Committee on Petitions of the European Union (EU) concerning the assessment of the Cala Mosca building project in Orihuela Costa. This involves the construction of 1,700 new homes and extra time is required to compile an environmental assessment. The present council do not want this building project to proceed and may have to compensate the builder if it cancels it. This would involve several million euros compensation or its equivalent.

The Teatro Municipal has been operating in Torrevieja since June 28, 2006, without a license. Although all the technical documentation is available, it hasn't been submitted to the Department of the Interior yet.

#### Birth of a Nation?

On the sixth day, God turned to the Angels and said: 'Today I am going to create a land called Israel. It will be a land of mountains full of snow, sparkly lakes, forests full of all kinds of trees, and high cliffs overlooking sandy beaches with an abundance of sea life.' God continue, 'I shall make the land rich so as to make the inhabitants prosper, I shall call these inhabitants Israelis, and they shall be known to most people on earth.'

'But Lord,' asked the Angels, 'don't you think you are being far too generous to these Israelis?' 'Not really,' God replied, 'just wait and see the neighbours I'm going to give them.'

A judge in Murcia has assigned the Trampolin Hills golf resorts case to the High Court in Madrid. It is believed that the case involves a massive scam involving more than 1,500 purchasers who have lost an estimated €62 million. According to a Murcia Supreme Court spokesperson, around 500 people from 35 Spanish provinces and six EU countries have signed-up to a court case against the builder. Trampolin bosses have been charged with a series of frauds including providing forged bank guarantees, using customers' money for personal purposes and more. Over 2,800 homes were due to be built in two projects, but as you can see from the photo here, the place is still a desert. This investigation began five years ago and it is disappointing that the case is only now going to the appropriate court. How long more will it be delayed there?



Some days it is probably safer just to stay in bed! A 64-year-old man from Torrevieja, drove two miles down the wrong side of the AP-7 Alicante / Cartagena motorway and continued into the wrong side of the tunnel at Pilar de Horidada. Inside the tunnel he crashed into a car driven by a 47-year-old woman coming the correct way. The man was seriously injured, but managed to phone the emergency services himself. Thankfully, the lady suffered only minor injuries. As you can see from the photo below, they were extremely lucky no one was killed.



The Health Department of Torrevieja has cancelled 14,000 health cards belonging to EU and non-resident aliens in this area. The SIP cards can be reinstated if the person can prove their legal residence status to the Social Security Institute in order to reactivate their accreditation.. There have been several complaints and a number of 'shouting matches' at the *saluds*, people complaining that the information they are receiving is poor and opaque.

*'Ah,' said Mrs Bigginswhistle, peering into the pram at her friends baby. 'He looks just like his father - lying there on his back clutching a bottle.'*

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In the Bible, God made it rain for 40 days and 40 nights. That's a pretty good summer for us in Wales.  
I was eight before I realised you could take a Kagoul off. Rhod Gilbert

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## More Changes to Spanish Healthcare.

The Health Ministry has announced further additions to the co-payment scheme in the health system. The change relates to the non-urgent use of ambulances which will soon cost five euros per trip. The concept of co-payment for ambulance use was included in an overhaul of the sector, approved by the government in April as part of its austerity drive. The payment system is expected to be passed in the form of an executive order at the next meeting between the central government and the regions - which are responsible for healthcare in Spain - which took place in late December 2012.

Patients will be asked to pay 10% for each ambulance trip, calculating the co-payment of 50 euros, independent of the real price and length of the trip. Patients will be asked to pay 10% of that amount per trip. A return journey would, therefore, cost 10 euros.



The draft order defines three types of trip: the transfer of a patient from a health centre to his home after receiving emergency treatment or after being released from hospital; those that are "occasional" and those that are "periodic" in the case of chronically ill people receiving, for example, dialysis or cancer treatment.

As with the co-payment system for medicines, the order establishes a monthly maximum that patients will be required to spend on the basis of their income. For those earning between 18,000 and 100,000 euros, the maximum payment per month is 20 euros. For those earning less than 18,000 euros, it is 10 euros, and for those earning over 100,000 it is 60 euros.

The new co-payment system has also been extended to medical equipment. For example, patients will now be expected to pay between €20 and €40 for external prosthesis which include hearing aids, prosthetic hands, breast prosthesis or prosthesis palate for congenital malformations, trauma and cancer, wheelchairs, and for the renewal of the external components of surgical implants. Those earning between 18,000 and 100,000 euros will be expected to pay 50% of the product price for crutches, up to a maximum of €40.

Also, a new range of 46 drugs, now in the co-payment system includes certain medicines for cancer, hepatitis, macular degeneration or multiple sclerosis within the list. Previously free, these drugs will now cost the patient a maximum of €4.13 each. You can see a full list of these drugs here -

<http://static.correofarmaceutico.com/docs/2012/12/12/apohos.pdf>

## A testing time!

A Scotsman takes a huge jar of urine to a clinic and pays to have it tested. When the results come back he discovers that there is absolutely no sign of any illness. He gets on the phone and says, 'It's me, Willie. Tell your Auntie Mary that there's nothing wrong with you, her, me, Grandpa, or the dog.'



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**and any more in all Spain.**

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# Belushi's Bar & Grill

J.J. & Rob hope everyone had a lovely Xmas and Best Wishes for the New Year to all our customer old & new.

**EXCITING MENU - ALL FRESHLY COOKED  
AUCTION DAY EVERY WEDNESDAY 2PM.**

**Book tables early & bring your unwanted items.**

**THURSDAY NIGHTS - QUIZ**

**FRIDAY NIGHT IS  
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**ICELANDIC COD €6-50!**



**Saturday Night Steak Special**  
Choose any starter or any dessert plus  
Sirloin Steak with all the trimmings plus  
choice of sauce and glass of wine or small beer inc.

**ONLY €25 PER COUPLE!! MUST BOOK!!**

**FREE WiFi**

**ALL SPORTS ON BIG SCREEN TV'S**

Help for Heroes wristbands €3

Check Belushi's Facebook for events!

693 985 122

VIA PARK V



## Mubarak's millions in Spain, or at least some of them.

It has just emerged that the ex-President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak (photo), had been accumulating assets in Spain. (That is not to say

that he has been doing similar in other countries!) The National Police in Spain have located around €28 million in property and bank accounts belonging to Mubarak, his family and other senior officials in the former regime.

Access to these has now been blocked in line with the 'content and spirit' of the UN Convention against Corruption.

Amongst those seized were two properties in Madrid worth around €7 million and seven properties in Malaga worth some €3 million. Five 'high-end' vehicles in Madrid were also impounded and €18.4 million in various financial instruments were also frozen.

Mubarak was sentenced to life imprisonment in June 2012, and is reported to have been seriously ill since the sentencing.



## 'Big-Head?'

I am not saying that my husband is a 'big-head' or anything, but every time he opens the fridge door and the little light comes on, he takes a bow!

Donna & Richard

Welcome you to

# THE PHOENIX



**TUESDAY - QUIZ  
WEDNESDAY - FUN DARTS  
FRIDAY - QUIZ  
+PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT  
RAFFLE & GREAT PRIZES!**

**Tues: CURRY NIGHTS! 2 COURSE €5.95**

**&**

**FRIDAYS - 2 MEALS FOR €7.95  
5 - 8:30pm**

**NEW YEAR'S EVE  
OPTIONAL FANCY DRESS!**



**January 26th  
Surprise International Singing Star!!**

**ALL SPORTS ON  
GIANT HD & 3D SCREENS  
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A warm welcome awaits you at



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**BAR & GRILL**

**Eat in or Take-Away**

Great food at unbeatable prices!

**Breakfasts from €**

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**Large Pizza from €5.90**

**Doner Kebab from €4**

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**NOW WITH MINI-SUPERMARKET**

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**CELEBRATION!!**

**FIRST SMALL BEER FREE!!**

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# LIME BAR



**NEW YEAR'S EVE  
FANCY DRESS  
BALL!  
COME EARLY!  
8pm 'TILL LATE.  
(No Jimmy Savile costumes!)**

VIA PARK III  
ALL SPORTS ON 7 LARGE SCREENS!  
CATCH 3 GAMES AT 4pm EVERY SATURDAY!  
SLIMMER'S WORLD EVERY MONDAY AT 11am.  
MON & THURS AT 9PM DOMINOES & CRIB NIGHTS  
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WITH MEAT RAFFLE,  
STAND-UP BINGO &  
PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT!

**GREAT  
PRIZES!**



JOIN THE LIME BAR  
GOLF SOCIETY & FISHING CLUB  
Free WiFi  
Happy Hour Mon - Fri 4 'til 8 pm  
Tel: 659 899 831

## LIME BAR GOLF SOCIETY, LOS ALTOS, ORIHUELA COSTA

The golf society's venue for the 13th December 2012 was held at El Valle Golf Course.

Again the weather can only be described as good even if a little cold at first; the course was in fairly good condition although a bit tricky for some players which resulted in the scores.

The competition was in the Stableford format, and the scores were recorded, as follows:-

Nearest the Pin in two on the 9th hole was Charlie Mc Gonagle.

Nearest the Pin on the 16th hole was Mick Slater.

Best guest was Charlie Mc Gonagle with a score of 29

Silver Class 3rd place was Dave Kirk with a score of 23 points.

Silver Class 2nd place was Don Martin with a score of 24 points.

Silver Class 1st place was Norman Dobson with a score of 28 points

Gold Class 3rd place was Bob Adair with a score of 25 points.

Gold Class 2nd place was Mick Slater with a score of 30 points.

Gold Class 1st place was Michael Heighway with a score of 31 points.

A very enjoyable days golf in pleasant company, thank you to Captain Mick Slater and Vice Captain Stewart Coleman for organising the event and also thanks to the Staff at The Lime Bar for a most enjoyable meal. Anyone wishing to join our friendly society just needs to phone Mick on 659866468 or Stewart on 966180003.



### UP-COMING FIXTURES

Fixtures for the first five months of 2013 are:  
January 9<sup>th</sup>, Presidents Trophy at Vistabella – 35 Euros;

February 13<sup>th</sup>, Mar Menor – 50 Euros;

March 13<sup>th</sup>, Altorreal – 35 Euros;

April 10<sup>th</sup>, Curtis Cup at Vistabella – 35 Euros;

May 8<sup>th</sup>, Captains Day at La Torre 50 Euros.

All games include green fee, buggy, prizes and buffet.



**LARGE BAVARIA  
DRAFT €2.00!  
BOTTLES  
JUST €1!!**



VIA PARK III

**HAPPY HOUR 3 - 7pm**  
Pints: Bavaria €1.40  
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FROM GREAT STEAKS, LAMB & GAMMONS  
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HOMEMADE CHIPS, NEVER FROZEN!**



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THE BEST 'WINTER WARMER' DEAL ON THE COSTA BLANCA  
ONE COURSE €5!  
THREE COURSES ONLY €8.50!!**

**BINGO! EVERY WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY AT 2 PM. COME EARLY!  
WEDNESDAY NIGHT FUN QUIZ WITH STEWART  
INCLUDING STAND-UP BINGO  
AND PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT!**



**RACE NIGHT JANUARY 13 AT 9PM !!**

**SATURDAY NIGHT KARAOKE!**

**FULLY BOOKED!**



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For bookings telephone 968 972 906 or 637 046 438.**



**TRY OUR NEW  
COCKTAIL LIST!**

**How many?**

Abe walks into a chemist and asks for some condoms. 'Yes sir, do you want the Catholic pack, the Protestant pack or the Jewish pack?' Abe asks, 'What's the difference?' The chemist replies, 'The Catholic pack has six, one for each day of the week but never on Sunday. The Protestant pack has eight, one for each day of the week and twice on Sunday. And of course the Jewish pack has twelve.' 'Why twelve?' Asks Abe.

The chemist sighs and counts on his fingers, 'January, February, March.....'

### Ryanair card charges

Ryanair has announced that "in order to comply with the UK Office of Fair Trading's recent ruling on credit card fees it will introduce an avoidable 2% credit card processing fee on all new credit card bookings made from 30 November, to cover credit card payment costs."

The statement went on to read that the 2% credit card fee can be avoided by using debit cards - including Ryanair Cash Passport cards.

Furthermore, the € / £6 admin fee will apply to all new bookings made from 30 November, except those bookings made using a Ryanair Cash Passport in Ireland, Germany and Spain, where admin fees can be avoided until 1 February, 15 February and 21 March 2013, respectively.

The statement explained that "This will bring all of Ryanair's European operations in line with its UK procedures, following the OFT's ruling".

The OFT carried out an investigation into airline charges earlier this year and consequently ruled that passengers should not be charged extra to pay by debit card as this was the equivalent of using cash online, however it said airlines "could charge extra for credit card payments as long as they were 'upfront' about the fees."

### Don't get sick at Reus Airport!

The CCOO workers union has criticised AENA, the Spanish Airports' Authority, following the death of a passenger at Reus airport at Tarragona in Catalonia, in mid December. The Union claims that the passenger died unnecessarily as the direct result of the airport's only trained nurse being dismissed due to cuts earlier in the year.

The passenger was given first aid by baggage handling staff who had no medical knowledge, and who had not received training on how to correctly use the defibrillator which could have saved his life. Furthermore, the first ambulance arrived after 20 minutes - some 13 minutes longer than specified in airport emergency protocols.

AENA have rejected the Union's claims, stating how they comply with the regulations laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organization, which states that airports with less than 5 Million passengers per year - as with Reus - do not need to provide a dedicated emergency healthcare team, and can instead use local resources.

Fortunately, El Altet airport at Alicante has a medical team, but it is unlikely that San Javier or the 'new' airport at Corvera will have sufficient traffic to justify an emergency health team. I would have thought that the fire service in all airports would surely have some staff trained in emergency techniques.

### Heading for intensive care?

A blind man makes his way to a bar stool and orders a drink. After sitting there for a while, he yells to the bartender, "Hey, you wanna hear a blonde joke?" The bar immediately falls absolutely silent. In a very deep, husky voice, the woman next to him whispers, "Before you tell that joke, sir, I think it is only fair .... given that you are blind.... that you should know five things:

1. The bartender is a blonde woman with a baseball bat.
2. The bouncer is a blonde woman who doesn't need a baseball bat.
3. I'm a 6-foot-tall, 175-pound blonde woman with a black belt in karate.
4. The woman sitting next to you on the other side also is blonde and she's a professional weightlifter.
5. And the woman standing right behind you is a blonde -- and a professional wrestler."

"Now, think about it seriously, mister. Do you still wanna tell that joke?"

The blind man thinks for a second, shakes his head, and mutters, "Nah! Not if I'm gonna have to explain it five times." (Pete Dudman)

## COASTAL PROPERTY LOUNGE

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SERVING BREAKFASTS



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Darren Lilley Tel: 638683941

### Queen Sofia of Spain



It is nice to see the Spanish Royals, or at least one of them, trying to cut costs and give a good example. Queen Sofia, probably the royal with the best public image, recently visited London on a shopping expedition, accompanied by her sister Irene of Greece. Normally the royals would stay at Claridge's at a rate of around €2,000 per night. On this occasion she choose the Meliá White House, whose rates are around €380 per night. She used this trip to Christmas shop at Harrod's for her grandchildren and immediate family, and to visit the remainder of the Greek Royal Family now living in London. The Greek monarchy was abolished by a plebiscite in 1974 and most of them eventually settled in London after a spell in Rome. Whereas King Juan Carlos prefers to shoot animals (see previous issues), there is no doubt that Queen Sofia has a passion for animals, some of her pets often accompanying her on her travels. Among the many charities she is associated with are several devoted to the animal welfare. She has a rescue dog, Paquita (photo), which she took in 2012. She also has a couple of terriers called Topsy and Topsy, a grey parrot, several cats and a tortoise. She is a strict vegetarian and, unusually for a Spanish Royal, dislikes bullfighting.



### Smile!

A bossy and downright ugly woman said to the photographer: 'Make sure your photos do me justice.' 'Madam,' replied the photographer, 'you don't want justice - you want mercy!'

### THE LIME BAR FISHING CLUB.

Report on the second match of the Winter Series fished on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at Nancy's (The Sweet Water Canal).

This match was originally scheduled for November 13<sup>th</sup>, but due to bad weather it was re-scheduled. What a difference a week makes!

We arrived on the banks at 7.30am, (the Spanish were already fishing for their suppers of mullet) just as the sun was about to come up, and we sat in the sun all day with temperatures of 20° plus. Of the 13 members due to fish, only eight turned out; seven of them catching fish only; one dry net and I went home for an early bath.

1<sup>st</sup> on the day was Davey (The Little Chef) Baxter, with 22lb 1oz, fishing the feeder using 'bread & corn' and using Auntie Betty's secret ground bait.

2<sup>nd</sup>, Geordie (Must catch fish) Baine, with 16lb 9oz, fishing the feeder using (if I tell you, I will have to kill you) maggot & corn.

3<sup>rd</sup>, Lucky Bob Cummins with 5lb 1oz, fishing the feeder using corn and a lot of prayers?

There is an old saying, '*Nothing makes a fish bigger than almost being caught!*' Unfortunately, fishermen have a reputation of exaggerating. I wonder why?? This again proved to be the case on the day, with one member informing me that he lost 20lb of fish that day and another telling me he lost the biggest fish he almost nerarly caught since he moved to Spain. Do these fish jump on the scales and then jump back into the river???

All for now. Next match is in December.

Report by Mrs. Crabtree's Grandson.

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**WITH CASH PRIZE**

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**HAPPY HOUR 4 - 7, MON TO SAT**

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### **THE NEW COURT FEES.**

Whereas most of you will never have to take a case to court, it is worth bearing in mind that it is no longer a free or cheap process to bring a case to court in Spain. These new changes, which came into effect in late November, relate to court charges only, not lawyers charges which are extra. The changes also relate to civil cases only.

Briefly, if you wish to bring a case to the civil courts, a non-returnable fee is now payable, this is whether you win your case or not!

For example, if you have a traffic ticket for a fine of less than €100 and with no points deducted, the court fee for contesting this case will be a non-returnable fee of €200!

However, there are two parts to the fee. The first part is the fixed part fee and these fees range from €100 to €1,200. The example quoted above would mean that that is the only court fee payable. HOWEVER, if there is an 'economic interest' in the lawsuit, a further variable fee of 0.50% for the amount of that 'interest' up to one million euros is payable and a fee at the rate of 0.25% for amounts greater than one million euros!

Another example, if the occupant of a vehicle was involved in a catastrophic car crash which involved terrible injuries, disabilities etc, and a claim was lodged for €1,300,000; a fixed part fee of €300 is payable. But an addition fee is payable in relation to the amount of the claim. So an additional fee - 0.50% of €1 million, €5,000 plus 0.25% of the €300,000, €750, totaling, together with the fixed fee, €6,550!

So for example, in a dispute over an inheritance claim on Auntie Esmeralda's property, worth say €300,000, a fixed fee of €300 is payable plus a variable fee of €3,000!

Civil cases range from medical malpractice claims to labour and of course urbanisation claims for non-payment of fees.

Pensioners and 'those who cannot afford to pay' are exempt from all these charges.

The introduction of these charges has caused ructions within the legal profession; one judge says that he will not apply the charges, while others say that the charges are unconstitutional.

The above is for general information only. Always consult a competent professional (and they are not all competent!) before making important legal decisions.

You can read more here -

<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2012/11/21/espana/1353486868.html#comentarios>

And the charges are detailed in the following government PDF publication -

<http://estaticos.elmundo.es/documentos/2012/11/21/tasas.pdf>

Both are in Spanish.



### **Do your sums!**

I'm not good at math. I've never been good at math. I accepted it from an early age. My teacher would hand me a math test. I'd just write on it, 'I'm going to marry someone who can do this.'

(Rita Rudner)

The metric system did not really catch on in the States, unless you count the increasing popularity of the nine-millimetre bullet.

(Dave Berry)

### The Spanish Brand, who are the best ambassadors?

Queen Sofia is valued more by the Spanish than King Juan Carlos and peoples' respect for the political classes continues to decline. These are the two main conclusions in a survey compiled by the Elcano Royal Institute. The survey focused on the perception of Spaniards in choosing the best ambassadors to enhance 'Brand Spain.' The Queen (who got the highest score out of 10) 7, the Prince of Asturias, 6.8, and the King, 6.5, are the top personalities chosen because of their ability to project a good image of Spain abroad. They are followed by Felipe Gonzalez (a previous Socialist President in the post Franco period) and Judge Baltasar Garzón (see March 2012 issue). By contrast, the least valued by the Spanish are members of the political class. For example, the current Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy scored a dismal 4.2, with last position going to the current leader of the PSOE, Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba, with 4.1. Felipe González, former leader of the first Socialist government, beat the current PSOE leader by almost 1.5 points.

Businessmen, journalists, sportsmen and showbiz figures, all received better assessments than the politicians. Top business people came out well in the survey - the textile magician Amancio Ortega, founder of Inditex with 7.5. He is followed by Florentino Perez, the President of Real Madrid FC with 6.3, Antonio Garrigues (a lawyer who helped Spain's transition to democracy) 5.8, the Koplowitz sisters (rich and philanthropic businesswomen) 5.8, and the president of the CEOE (one of the largest trade unions), Joan Rosell with 5.5.

For Spanish trademarks, the survey placed 'Zara' on top, followed by Repsol, Iberdrola and Seat. All of the companies included in the survey were considered good ambassadors for 'Brand Spain', and all scored over 6 in the survey.

However, if they could handpick their ambassadors, the Spanish would choose their elite athletes. The highest average rating by sector corresponds to sports. The first two on the list are the National football team, 9, Rafael Nadal with 8.9, closely followed by Pau Gasol, (basketball). And despite his recent scandal relating to drug enhanced performances, the cyclist Alberto Contador scored a high 7.9!

Spain's top ten 'ambassadors' were the national soccer team, opera singers Plácido Domingo and Montserrat Caballe, Don Quixote, the Museo del Prado, Zara, Real Madrid FC, the owner of Inditex Amancio Ortega, Queen Sofia, journalist Lorenzo Mila and NGOs. The NGOs are non governmental organisations such as the Red Cross, voluntary, charitable and non-profit organisations.

I hope in future issues to be able to expand on some of these personalities and others, so that we get a better understanding of what has made or makes Spain tick.

#### I'd give my right arm....

A golfer was involved in a terrible car crash and was rushed to the hospital. Just before he was put under, the surgeon popped in to see him. "I have some good news and some bad news," says the surgeon.

"The bad news is that I have to remove your right arm!"

"Oh God no!" cries the man "My golfing is over! Please Doc, what's the good news?"

"The good news is, I have another one to replace it with, but it's a woman's arm. I'll need your permission before I go ahead with the transplant."

"Go for it doc" says the man. "As long as I can play golf again."

The operation went well and a year later the man was out on the golf course when he bumped into the surgeon.

"Hi, how's the new arm?" asks the surgeon.

"Just great," says the businessman. "I'm playing the best golf of my life. My new arm has a much finer touch and my putting has really improved." "That's great," said the surgeon.

"Not only that," continued the golfer, "my handwriting has improved, I've learned how to sew my own clothes and I've even taken up painting landscapes in watercolours"

"Unbelievable!" said the surgeon, "I'm so glad to hear the transplant was such a great success. Are you having any side effects?"

"Well, just one problem," said the golfer. "Every time I get an erection, I also get a headache."



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*My mum used to drink so much, Gordon's thought she was a wholesaler.*

### Fear of Flying?

Okay, it might not be a good time to read the following if you are about to board a flight soon and are of a nervous disposition.

The 153 passengers on an Airbus A-320 Vueling flight from Granada to Barcelona on Sunday, November 25, received the 'fright of their lives.' As the plane ascended towards its cruising altitude, it began to shake strongly and the left (port) engine caught fire.

The crew then informed the terrified passengers that they had "a problem with the engine." The pilot cut the power to this engine, but nevertheless, decided to continue the flight to Barcelona.

"There were moments of panic," one passenger told *El Confidencial*. "The engine began to emit bursts of flame, and the plane shook violently several times. We were terrified, and the flight attendants were also very pale. They told us to remain calm, but how could they reassure us if one engine was on fire?"

An airline spokesman consulted by the newspaper tried to downplay the incident. He acknowledged that the engine "backfired" and issued "several flashes" but said that it was all "just a burning issue". When asked why the pilot did not return to Granada or just land at another airport on route, the spokesman said that the pilot followed the correct procedure for this particular plane and situation, as outlined by the manufacturer.

However, independent aeronautical sources consulted by *El Confidencial* questioned that version. "If the incident was caused by a simple combustion problem, as the company reported, the plane would have been immobilized in Barcelona airport for 36 hours after arriving at their destination. It is more than likely that it was a much more serious fault. And in any case, it would have been preferable that the pilot had reported the emergency to the control tower of Granada and had returned to there or another airport for an urgent check."

The low-cost Spanish airline does seem to be a bit accident prone. The following are two incidents which took place in August.

On August 29, a Vueling flight from Malaga had to be escorted by two F-16 from the Dutch Air Force as it approached the airport in Amsterdam. This was because there was a loss of communication between the plane and the control tower and the Dutch, fearing a high-jacking, took appropriate action.

But a similar incident occurred in 2011, also on a Vueling flight from Malaga bound for the Dutch capital. When the aircraft was flying over French soil, a Mirage intercepted the plane after it lost contact with French air-traffic controllers. Guys! Turn on your \*\*\*\*ing radios! Okay!

Also last August 22nd, another Vueling flight had to make an emergency landing in Barcelona's El Prat airport. A few minutes after take-off to Santiago de Compostela, passengers felt strong vibrations and a violent jolt. The pilot reported that there had been a failure in one of the engines and announced he was returning to Barcelona. After the emergency landing, several passengers had to be treated for nervous breakdowns...and probably soiled trousers as well.

### TRANSLATOR & COMPUTER TRAINER

If you find computers too complicated or need assistance in your everyday Spanish life, then, I'm your man!

Computer training and translations are my speciality. I live in the Dreams Hills area. I'm originally from Spain, and have two years of experience as a translator, and many years dealing with computers, since I have two computer-related college degrees from the US.

Please, let me know if you need any assistance with the following:

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- COURT
- TOWN HALLS
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### SPANISH 101.



'Be careful! Don't step on there.'

'Why?'

'When my mother steps on, she cries.'

#### The Bump.

Two men were fitting a wall-to-wall carpet in an elderly lady's house when they noticed a bump right in the middle of the carpet. As they finished fitting it, the workmen didn't really relish the thought of taking up the carpet again, especially as one of the workmen said: 'It must be that empty packet of cigarettes I was going to throw away.' So, in order to get rid of the bump, the two workmen jumped up and down on it and it soon flattened and the new carpet looked perfect.

Just then the little old lady came into the room and said: 'Excuse me, but I wondered if you had seen my budgie anywhere? It's hurt its wing and can't fly and so it just walks around on the floor.'

#### Hair today, gone tomorrow.

Two hundred kilos of human hair were stolen from a wig manufacturers in Murcia, last week. The local police are said to be combing the area. The police say they are looking for a man with one eye. Typical inefficiency!

# Fly Screens 4 U!!

'Feel the breeze not the bites'

Bernie, Michelle and family arrived in Spain September 1999. After commuting to the UK every month with Bernie's business commitments, it was getting very stressful. So in 2003 Bernie and Michelle looked at insect screens rather than high-maintenance rollers and sliders; after extensive research over a 12 month period they invented their unique 100% magnetised and totally flexible, frameless fly screen system for any shaped windows and doors.

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All Fly Screens 4 U products are measured, made and fitted by Michelle, with a same day service available if required. The special magnets used are UV protected and have a lifetime guarantee.

Now they are in their 8th year with countless happy customers, going from strength to strength with their new summer promotion of a gift of an electricity energy saver which could help to reduce your electricity costs and help to pay for your fly screens, on all orders over 3 windows.

We carry with us a sample window incorporating our unique flexible fly screen to demonstrate how the system works.

If you would like to know more about Fly Screens 4 U, then please contact us on 965 078 877 or 695 504 034.

## Relationships.

A strikingly beautiful young woman boards first class on a transatlantic flight. All the passengers notice her beauty as well as a huge diamond ring on her left hand, as she takes her seat. The man sitting next to her has to remark on the huge gem. 'Oh, this?' she replies. 'This is the Rivara diamond. But it comes with a curse!'

Shocked, the man asks, 'A curse! What's the curse?'

'Mr. Rivara,' she replies.

A man and his wife divorced over religious differences. She worshipped money and he didn't have a penny.

Glenda wakes up with a headache every morning. She has a cure, though: she sends him out to work.

Jane and Mary are discussing their husbands. Jane says, 'My Frank's very fussy. If a steak isn't cooked just the way he likes it, he won't touch it. What about your Fred? Is he hard to please?'

'I don't know,' replies Mary. 'I've never tried.'

## Idiot of the Month Award



The National Police have arrested a woman at the El Prat in Barcelona travelling from Bogota (Colombia). While being questioned by custom's officials, she was being very vague about the reason for her trip to Spain. The 20-year-old Panamanian was then searched and the official noticed that the woman had a piece of bloody gauze under each of her breasts. The woman stated that she had breast implants inserted two months previously.

A further examination and x-rays revealed that the woman had two breast prostheses, each containing more than half a kilo of cocaine. The young woman was then hospitalised, where it was found that the bags of cocaine were leaking into her blood stream and were removed, see above.

This is the first time that the custom's officials discovered this somewhat bizarre method of drug smuggling. It begs the question as to what drove the young woman to such idiotic, dangerous and surely painful lengths.

Smugglers can be very creative when finding ways to transport their drugs. A submarine has been used in Columbia to ferry drugs to Mexico for distribution then to the U.S. Tunnels between Mexico and the US are common. In 2006, police in Texas found a *Pringles* can containing what were essentially moulded wafers of solid cocaine that were thinly sliced and shaped to resemble potato chips/crisps.

But it is not always high-tech. These two giant catapults below were used to launch marijuana into Arizona from the Mexican city of Agua Prieta. Oddly enough, this was the second time that catapults were detected for sending drugs from Mexico across the border to the US.



### Different ways of dealing with the crisis.

Some of the drug dealers in Alicante are adapting their marketing to cater for these difficult times. They are now providing some hashish, tobacco and a cigarette paper for between two and five euros to their customers. These products are now known as 'anti-crisis packs.' The police have arrested eight people in connection with this, including two minors, following raids on two houses in the Virgen del Carmen neighbourhood of the city. They also seized 10 kilograms of hashish, 30 packets of tobacco, three precision scales, one air gun, an 'taser' pistol, a puzzle(!), mobile phones, various electronic and computer devices, 1,000 euros in cash, and tools & instruments for manipulating narcotics.

Less controversial was the decision of the council of Daya Vieja, a town of 800 residents south of Alicante between San Fulgencio and Rojales, to cancel this year's spend of €2,300 on Christmas lights for the town. PP Councillor for Social Services, Maite Fernandez, said that the money would be spent on basic foodstuffs, such as rice, milk and hygiene products and distributed to ten families, five of them with children. Additionally the families would be given vouchers for between €100 and €60 to redeem for bakery products in the town. Those who benefited from this excellent gesture were either all unemployed or those who did not reach the minimum wage.

There are a handful of other small towns in Spain which are following this practical example.

### Letters to the Editor



PLEASE BE WARNED!

Over the last month I have become a victim of a clever 'Eastern European' scam while out shopping. Simply popping-off to Mercadona supermarket for a bit of shopping turned out to be quite an experience. Don't be naive enough to think it couldn't happen to you or your friends. Here's how the scam works:

Two very good-looking 20-21 year-old girls come over to your car as you are packing your shopping into the boot. They both start cleaning your windscreen, their breasts almost falling out of their skimpy T-shirts. When you thank them and offer them a tip, they'll say 'No' and instead ask you for a lift to another supermarket, in this case, Consum. You agree and they both jump in the back seat. On the way, they start undressing, until both are completely naked. Then, when you pull over to remonstrate, one of them climbs over into the front seat and starts crawling all over your lap, kissing you, touching you intimately, and thrusting herself against you, while the other one steals your wallet!!

I had my wallet stolen on December 1st, 4th, 6th, 10th and 11th and twice yesterday!

So, please warn all the older men you know to be on the lookout for this scam. (The best times seem to be just before lunch and about 4:30 in the afternoon.)

P.S. Aldi have cheap wallets on sale for £1.99 each, but Lidl wallets are £1.75 and look better.

Signed 'Disgusted! Los Montesinos.'

(Pete Dudman)

Dear Editor,

I must mention how pleased we are with the security guards. It is a comfort to see them regularly patrol this urbanisation in the evenings and their response time to activated alarms is incredibly quick.

A grateful 'Well Done and Thank You' to them both.

Yours,

Geoff Fisher (Dream Hills I)



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### The Papal Audience.

While getting his hair trimmed, Patrick tells his barber about a planned holiday to Rome.

'Who knows?' says Patrick. 'I might even meet the Pope.'

'You'll never meet the Pope,' says the barber. 'He's much too important to mix with the likes of you.'

'But I might meet him,' replies Patrick. 'It's not impossible.' 'Rubbish,' says the barber. 'I'll bet you a hundred euros you don't meet him.'

'Okay,' says Patrick. 'You're on.'

A month later Patrick comes back and says, 'You owe me a hundred euros! I was walking around St. Peter's Square when the Pope saw me from his balcony, invited me into the Vatican and asked me a question.'

'My God,' says the barber, 'what did he say?'

Patrick replies, 'He said, "Where the \*\*ck did you get that awful haircut?"'

### Mail Order Bride?

Two Irishmen looking through a mail order catalogue. Paddy says "Look at these gorgeous women! The prices are reasonable too."

Mick agrees "I'm ordering one right now."

Three weeks later Paddy says to Mick "Has your woman turned up yet?"

"No" said Mick "but it shouldn't be long now though. Her clothes arrived yesterday!!" (J. Bradbeer)

*The trouble with the global village  
is all the global village idiots.*

*Paul Ginsparg*





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### The Companion

Simon and Sarah were snuggling up on a sofa when Simon said: 'You know, I've been thinking. For the past few years I've been content just living on my own. But now I feel the need for a faithful companion. Someone who is loyal and will look at me with devotion in their eyes. Someone who.....'

Sarah interrupted him: 'That's a great idea! Shall we go together to the pet shop and I'll help you choose the puppy?'

# Gallery.

**BEFORE.**



**AFTER!**



Okay! I know what you are thinking! These hirsute or 'moustached' blokes on the left remind you of the male cast in a 70's porn film? Or possibly the Mexican bandits in the movie 'The Treasure of the Sierra Madre?' (Badges! We don't need no stinkin' badges!) Wrong, I am afraid; this bunch of 'hairies' grew moustaches for the month of November and had them shaved off, all for charity. Missing from the photos, but who also took part, are Rik from Galadriel's, Rob from Belushi's and Dave from The Captain's Table, Punta Prima. All in all, an amazing €600 plus was raised by this little group. The funds have already been paid into charities which research into prostate & testicular cancer. (The chap in the front row above, third from the left, was on loan from the circus.)



### Happily Ever After?

This photo shows Joanna (Jo) Rich and Ian Smith who recently appeared in a new pantomime called 'Happily Ever After' at the Cardinal Beluga Theatre in San Fulgencio. The panto was produced by the Stagestruck Drama Group and was a tremendous success raising an admirable €1,412 for local charities. The group distributed €1,212 to the Alzheimer's Association and the remaining €200 was used to buy a food hamper for the orphanage at Elche. Ian, who is the quiz master for the Friday Night Quiz at The Phoenix in Via Park V, played 'Buttons' and Jo, who hails from Dream Hills 2, played one of the 'not so pretty' sisters!



Part of the large crowd at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Carol Concert which was held in Constitution Square Torrevieja just before Christmas.

And on the right is Alan Schofield from El Corte Real, who plays with 'Just Brass' who performed on the evening.



### Julie's back!

Julie had passed away and her funeral was being held at a local church. Justin, her husband for over forty years, had tears in his eyes. At the end of the service, as the coffin was being wheeled out, the trolley accidentally bumped into the doorframe and jarred the coffin. To everyone's total shock, they heard a faint moaning coming from the coffin. They quickly opened it and found that Julie was alive. Wonder of wonders - a miracle if ever there was one.

Julie and Justine lived together for ten more years and then Julie died. The ceremony was again held at the local church. At the end of the service, as the coffin was being wheeled out on the trolley, Justin shouted out, 'Watch out! Don't hit the doorframe again!'



It's 'Adiós!' to the popular Victor, left, (and family) from the Bar Laguna Vista in Lago Jardin II, who has left because of family commitments, and *bienvenido a Matías* (on right) who is now 'at the helm' in this very Spanish bar. *Matias* comes from the *Alinghi* group so we know that the bar's tradition of the best Spanish hospitality and great value will continue. Do pop-in for an authentic Spanish experience!



This photo shows **The Faith** performing outside Bar Laguna Vista on Halloween. The duo which comprises Robbie Priest, vocalist, on the right, and Charlie 'The Pirate' Farley, guitarist, also played at Victor's Farewell Party on December 15, but by the time I arrived with my camera, the local 'fuzz' had stopped the music; probably Country 'n Western fans!

In the middle is the very lovely Louisa, 'strutting her stuff' possibly to 'Highway to Hell.' The Faith are the ultimate party band. They would make a dead man get up and dance, or at least get his feet tapping! Their popularity is evident from the frequent gigs they perform locally. Every Friday afternoon, they play at El Rincon del Tio behind Dialprix in Torrevieja; and at The Mosquito Bar in La Florida every Sunday evening. You can catch-up on all their gigs at - [www.thefaith.biz](http://www.thefaith.biz) And yes, Charlie the Pirate was wearing a dress.....but it was a special occasion!



On the left is the Christmas tree in the centre of Torrevieja in Constitution Square. The tree was donated by the Norwegian residents. The whole square was very attractively decorated, with the front of the church lit-up, the *belen* attracting lots of visitors and stalls selling *churros*, chestnuts etc. However, the decorations in the remainder of Torrevieja were very low key and understated, certainly not worth a special trip.

On the right is the modern Christmas tree in the central square of Zenia Boulevard. Although not a traditional Christmas tree, I thought that all the seasonal decorations in the shopping centre were very attractive. All the side shopping streets leading to the main square were beautifully finished, well worth a look. When I visited the main square on the evening of Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>, I was surprised by the number of people who had



congregated there for a coffee, a beer or a chat. However, with all those people I noticed that very few had shopping bags, even though the shops were still open. I think the Spanish people were using the facility as a 'town square' to meet and mingle, which is a good thing. Orihuela Costa lacks a central social gathering point, and I guess that this is as good as any. Also the fact that a live Real Madrid game was being shown on a giant screen in the square may also have helped! I also took some photos of the decorations outside the coastal *ayuntamiento*, but the area was so dark, dismal and vacant, I haven't included them here.

**Break it to me gently!**

A rich businessman goes on holiday. While he's away his butler sends him a message saying 'Cat's dead!' Distraught at the loss of his beloved feline pet, the man returns home and berates the butler for being so callous and unfeeling. 'You should break bad news gently,' says the businessman. 'If I'd been telling you that your cat was dead I'd have written, "The cat's on the roof and can't come down." A few hours later I'd have written, 'The cat's fallen off the roof and is badly hurt.' A while later I would have sent another message saying, "The cat has sadly passed away." 'Very good, sir,' says the butler. 'I'll remember that in future.'

The business man resumes his trip, books back into his hotel, and finds that the butler has left another message. It reads, 'Your mother is on the roof and can't get down.'



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### Old Blokes.

Larry is trying to sell life insurance to an old man. The old chap is ninety five years old and is proving to be a difficult customer. 'Know it's more than you wanted to spend,' says Larry, 'but you don't have to decide now. Go home and sleep on it. If you wake up, give me a call.'

An old man walks into a pharmacy and asks for a bottle of Viagra. The pharmacist says, 'Do you have a prescription?'

'No,' says the old man, 'but here's a picture of my wife.'

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**Gwen Harrower, President of the Association of Street Cats, would like to thank Val, Jean and all the other residents from the various urbanbisations who contributed donations and cat food to the association over the last 12 months.**

### The 'Canny' Scot.

A Scotsman, an Englishman and Claudia Schiffer are sitting together in a train carriage. Suddenly the train enters a tunnel and it goes dark. There's a kissing noise and the sound of a loud slap.

When the train comes out of the tunnel, Claudia Schiffer and the Scotsman are sitting as if nothing has happened and the Englishman is nursing a sore face. The Englishman is thinking, 'The Scottish fella must have kissed Claudia Schiffer, she slapped him but missed and got me instead.'

Claudia is thinking, 'My God, that Englishman must have tried to kiss me, kissed the Scotsman instead, and got slapped for it.'

The Scotsman is thinking, 'This is great! The next time the train goes through a tunnel I'll make that kissing noise and slap the Englishman again.'

### The Good Deed.

It's night and a couple are sleeping in bed when there's a knock on the front door. The man gets out of bed and hurries downstairs. He opens the door and finds a drunk waiting outside.

'Hey,' says the drunk, 'Can you be a pal and give me a push please?'

'No!' Shouts the man. 'Do you know what time it is?' The man slams the door, goes back to bed, and explains what happened to his wife. 'You should be ashamed of yourself,' says the wife. 'That man was asking for our help and you turned him down flat. I don't care if he was drunk, go out and help him push his car.'

The man gives in, puts on some clothes, and goes out to find the drunk. He opens the front door and calls out into the darkness, 'Hey!' he shouts. 'Do you still want a push?'

'Yeah!' shouts back the drunk. 'I'm over here on your swing!'

### The Last Message.

A man goes on holiday to Jamaica. His wife is on a business trip and is planning to meet him there the next day. When the man reaches his hotel, he sends his wife a quick e-mail but mistypes the address. The next day the grieving wife of a recently dead preacher checks her e-mail, screams, and drops dead from a heart attack. Her family find a disturbing message on the screen: 'Dearest Wife, Just got checked in. Everything prepared for your arrival tomorrow.

Your Loving Husband. P.S. Sure is hot down here.'

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