



THE DREAM SCENE

NEWSLETTER



Helping to keep expat's informed.....and smiling.

Bienvenido a todos and welcome to the February 2024 edition. Issue No.194

Welcome to the Feb' edition of the newsletter. The Dream Scene has now completed **17 years of publication**. Although printing costs have rocketed during the last three years, reducing the number of pages and the size of the paper page from A4 to A5 has helped deal with the increases as has the support of our many loyal & local advertisers. We have kept the **advert costs the same as day one** and hope to continue doing so. The newsletter is a hobby, not a business.

The compulsory use of **face masks** in all hospitals and healthcare centres throughout Spain has been reinstated. Although not instructed to do so in pharmacies, most people do now wear a mask at the chemists.

The Patient Ombudsman receives **333 complaints in 2023 for medical negligence** in the province of Alicante. The General Hospital of Alicante is the third hospital in the highest number of complaints in the Valencian Community after La Fe and Doctor Peset.

British citizens living abroad are now eligible to register to vote in UK general elections, regardless of how long they've been living outside the UK. A new law has removed the previous **15-year time limit**.

Alicante farmers will leave 100,000 tons of lemons in the ground due to their low price. The juice and essential oil industry pays just **3 cents per kilo**, compared to the 15 cents it costs to harvest. The sector estimates that losses from this crop could reach 40 million euros this year.

VAT (IVA) on olive oil has now **been eliminated** as prices reach an all-time high in Spain. Extra virgin oil has shot up by 69% in Spanish supermarkets in the last 12 months.

*My wife has just started going through the change.
It's going to be really weird calling her Dave.*

BIG BUSINESS

Amazon has decided to cancel a new €70 million, 140,000 m2 logistics centre it has built in Zaragoza (Aragón). 1,500 jobs that are now not going to happen. A general downturn in European consumer demand is the reason.

Decathlon plans to sell 90 of its stores in its bid to boost its ecommerce business. It will close stores in France, Portugal, Italy, Germany and Spain, its main European markets. Its new CEO, Bárbara Martín Coppola from Madrid, also wants to put an end to the company's dozens of its own brands. Decathlon has more than 1,750 stores in 72 countries around the world and in 2022 it earned 923 million euros.

Lidl has announced plans to open 30 new stores in Spain this year, taking its count to over 700 outlets. The aim of the German retailer is to reach 1,000 stores in Spain, according to corporate director Ferran Figueras.

Aldi also plan to open up 50 new stores in Spain this year. Over half the new stores will be in the Andalusia, Madrid, Valencia, and Catalunya regions.

Spanish infrastructure giant **Ferrovial** announced it is offloading its remaining 25% stake in London's Heathrow Airport to a French private equity group and Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund.

A poll in El Diario says a majority of Spaniards would **favour a referendum** on monarchy vs. republic. Support for each option in the poll is pretty evenly split, at 43.5% for a monarchy and 44.7% for a republic, 11.8% undecided.

Thanks to Terry & Judy for the donation.
Have a great month!

Mick, Tid and The Dream Scene Team.

The new local government in Orihuela has been grappling with the financial aftermath of the previous administration, leading to a series of issues such as the absence of beach amenities and neglected parks. The latest setback reveals that the Orihuela City Council **lacked sufficient funds to install Christmas lights and decorations** in peripheral areas, opting to concentrate on the city and the Orihuela Costa tourism hub.

A delayed Christmas switch-on was scheduled for December 15, the meagre budget of 61,175 euros ensures that the decorations were sub par, leaving residents in the city's 24 districts, including popular expatriate locations like El Arenal and parts of Torremendo, without festive illuminations.

Neighbours of Orihuela Costa have come together to create the first festival commission whose objective will be to organize different celebrations and events in the urbanization's of the Orihuela coast . The newly created Orihuela Costa Festival Commission was established during December and includes different associations in the area. A calendar of activities is already planned that will start on February 17 with the first Carnival parade to be held in Orihuela Costa, and for which no less than 27 troupes have already signed up. The city council won't help, saying they have 'no money to spare.'

The Orihuela City Council will hire a microbiological control service for the prevention and control of **legionellosis** in at-risk municipal facilities. The Consistory has put out the tender, at the proposal of the Department of Health , the contract for a maximum price of 140,640 euros for a period of two years, one year in duration plus an extension. The work will be carried out in municipal or subsidized facilities . The specifications state that there will be eleven locations in which this legionella control work will be carried out .

The social services section of the Torrevieja City Council **is short of 30 officials**. This includes case workers and psychologists.

Glen Wathall, a 65-year-old British fugitive convicted of murdering his wife in 1999, was apprehended in Torrevieja **after evading authorities for eight years**. Having been paroled in 2015, he breached his bail conditions, prompting a European Arrest Warrant. The arrest followed an appeal by UK Crimestoppers in April, seeking information on Wathall's whereabouts. UK authorities, collaborating with Interpol, informed the Policia Nacional in May that he was in the Torrevieja area. Wathall, using various identities and without a known address in Spain, resided with vulnerable British women, exploiting their vulnerabilities. The tip-off revealed he had lived with two women, one of whom died suddenly. Spanish authorities tracked him to Torrevieja's La Siesta urbanization, arresting him in late November. The National Court in Madrid will process his extradition to the UK.

José Joaquín Moya, photo, who was the socialist mayor of nearby Bigastro between 1983 and 2008, has according to the Orihuela courts, been a very naughty boy. José has been sentenced to **11 years in prison**. (A colleague of Moyain the council has also



received some jail time.) It seems that when a municipal plot was sold for €127,000, most or all of the money 'just went astray' before it reached the municipal coffers. However, José had another five cases to answer. These range from the gift to Moya of a high-end car by some businessmen to whom he had granted works; the alleged illegal payment of Social Security to more than 40 neighbours by the municipality despite having no employment relationship with it; several subsidies from different administrations that Moya would have used for a rural hotel project in Vistabella (Jacarilla) that was not carried out; authorizing a solar park on protected land in La Pedrera to a family member; allowing the processing of an urbanization with a resort on rural land; order the payment of the City Council's legal advice for ten years without a contract.

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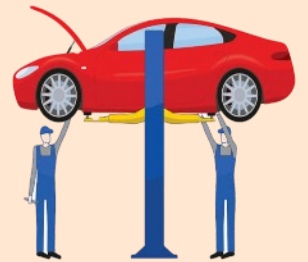
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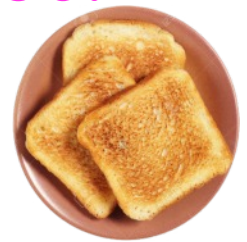
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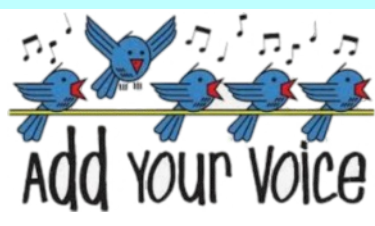


THURSDAYS FROM 3pm

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Come along and have a sing song



E-mailed Amazon this morning to see if they had the game 'OPERATION.' They said they did, but there was a two-year waiting list!

6 **SOME VAT (IVA) AND OTHER CHANGES**
VAT on electricity rose to 10%(from 5%) from January as opposed to the original 21% rate which was slashed in July 2021. The new rate will apply until the end of June this year. VAT on gas will be fully restored this February.

VAT will continue to be abolished over the same time frame, six months, on basic foods which include bread, flour, milk, cheese and eggs. A reduction from 10% to 5% of VAT on oils and pasta will also be maintained for six extra months. Bank cash withdrawal at the counter charges will also be scrapped for the elderly and disabled. The government will also extend the suspension of evictions from main homes for vulnerable individuals and families.

The government will also maintain its windfall tax on banks and energy companies- introduced in 2022- for an extra year. The windfall levy has raised €2.9 billion during 2023 according to the Spanish Ministry of Finance.



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OPEN THURSDAYS

10:30am - 12:30pm

“I was buying a large bag of Purina dog food for my dog at Consum and standing in line at the check out.

A woman behind me asked if I had a dog. On impulse, I told her that no, I was starting the Purina Diet again although I probably shouldn't because I'd ended up in the hospital last time, but that I'd lost 50 pounds before I awakened in an intensive care ward with tubes coming out of most of my orifices and IVs in both arms. I told her that it was essentially a perfect diet and that the way that it works is to load your pants pockets with Purina nuggets and simply eat one or two every time you feel hungry and that the food is nutritionally complete so I was going to try it again.

I have to mention here that practically everyone in the line was by now enthralled with my story, particularly a guy who was behind her. Horrified, she asked if I'd ended up in the hospital in that condition because I had been poisoned by the dog food.

I told her no; I stepped off a curb to sniff a poodle's ass and a car hit me.

I thought the guy behind her was going to have a heart attack he was laughing so hard.”

A SNAPSHOT

Spain is now home to the **world's most powerful passport**, according to the latest World Passport Index. It has beaten 198 other passports to come out on top in the VisaGuide. World Passport Index, released on December 1. Spaniards have passport-free access to some 43 countries, with another 106 allowing visa-free access to Spanish nationals.

During December 2023, Spain has **expelled two US embassy staff** who managed to infiltrate the Spanish CNI intelligence service by bribing two of its officers, who were arrested two months ago. One was a "middle-ranking member of CNI who had been recruited to obtain secret information on demand in exchange for a large sum of money. The other agent was his assistant.

Millions of plastic pellets, 26 tons of them, are turning up on the beaches of Galicia, reportedly from six containers lost by the container ship Toconao off Portugal. spreading from Galicia to Asturias to Cantabria and even the Basque Country. The little pellets have now spread next door to Asturias, They were lost on the night of December 8 off the coast of Portugal, who then informed Spain that same night, but this has only become a national news story during January. The regional government claims it didn't find out about it until after the New Year.

The National Institute of Statistics (INE) publish a property price index for Spain as a whole, plus indices for each of Spain's autonomous regions. Though Spain as a whole is **back to where it was fifteen years ago** (a recession), prices are higher in Andalusia, the Balearics, the Canaries, and Madrid, but still slightly down in the Valencian region, Catalonia, and Murcia.

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LOCAL

EXIT/ENTRY SYSTEM TO EU

A new EU digital border system that will require fingerprints and facial scans to be taken from British travellers on first use is expected to launch next autumn, according to reports.

The entry/exit system (EES) is earmarked to start on 6 October 2024, according to the i and Times newspapers, citing Getlink, the owner of Eurotunnel. The Guardian has contacted Getlink for comment.

Eurotunnel, which runs a car transport service between Folkestone and Calais, is said to be testing the technology, in which personal data will be collected at borders and entered into an EU-wide database.

Under the EES, passengers would have to agree to **fingerprinting and facial image capture** the first time they arrived on the continent. **After that**, the data, including any record of refused entry, should allow quicker processing, according to travel bosses.

The original planned rollout, which had been scheduled for last year, was delayed amid fears it could disrupt travel to next summer's Olympics in Paris.

The system is expected to cause significant delays. The Port of Dover has previously estimated the additional requirements were likely to add up to 10 minutes for a family of five in a vehicle on their first trip after the EES is introduced, compared with about 45-90 seconds usually.

Eurotunnel reportedly estimates the average time for processing a car through the French frontier will rise from less than 60 seconds to 5-7 minutes. (The Guardian)

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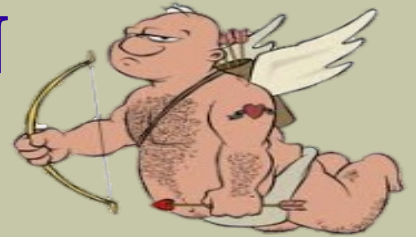
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I'm not a fan of innuendos, but I like to slip one in occasionally.

MAJOR WORKS TO SOME LOCAL ROADS

The Valencian government has set aside **20 million euros** from the 2024 budget to widen the busy CV-95 **between Los Balcones in Torrevieja and Orihuela**.

The expansion of this road has been on the cards since the 90s and the work will involve turning the 30-kilometre stretch into a dual carriageway to alleviate traffic jams and improve safety. The much-needed improvements won't happen overnight though; as it stands, the forecast is to invest two million euros in works during 2024, nine million in 2025 and finally, in 2026, another five million.

At the moment, the CV-95 has only one lane in each direction even though it has to cope with a huge volume of traffic to connect Orihuela with Torrevieja through the densely populated communities of Bigastro, Jacarilla and San Miguel de Salinas.

Although several roundabouts have been constructed in recent years to help the flow of traffic, the road is a well-known accident black spot. Overtaking is prohibited for the most part, a rule that is rarely obeyed, and large stretches pass right on the outskirts of bustling towns.

In addition to the 20 million, **another 5,060,000 euros** has been allocated specifically to the widening of the section of the CV-95 **between Los Balcones and Torrevieja Hospital**. This short one-kilometre thoroughfare has to cope with 20,000 vehicles every day and is by far the busiest of the entire road. Work will begin on turning it into a dual carriageway during 2024 and should be completed by the end of 2025.

Overall, the 30 kilometres of the CV-95 handles no fewer than 8,000 cars daily and is the most direct link between Torrevieja and Orihuela Costa and the main city.

The government is making major investments in road safety and efficiency over the next few years and has recently announced that work is finally due to begin on widening the N-332 single-lane road outside Torrevieja.

WATCH-OUT FOR.....

The painkilling drug metamizole, which is sold under the brand name Nolotil, is available on prescription in Spain but will be handed-out in some pharmacies without one. However, this cheap drug has been banned in more than 30 countries including the UK. There have been more than 40 deaths in Spain in which metamizole may have led to or contributed to death, including those of many Britons and at least one Irishman. Case reports in medical journals suggest **certain populations may be more susceptible to the side-effects**.

The latest was 42-year-old Mark Brooks, who resided in Quesada. A day after playing golf during last October, Mark went to a local clinic with some shoulder pain and received an injection of the drug. Three days after the injection, he was in intensive care with failing organs. Five days after the jab on Oct' 20, he was dead.

The death certificate records the causes as multiple organ failure, septic shock and cellulitis. You can read more here -

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/20/alarm-over-death-toll-of-britons-in-spain-linked-to-painkiller-nolotil-metazimole>



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THURSDAYS 4pm



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- That's his rear safety light, Murray.

Murray Walker and James Hunt



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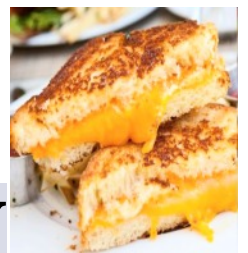
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'No,' replied the mother-to-be. 'He and my husband never get on.'

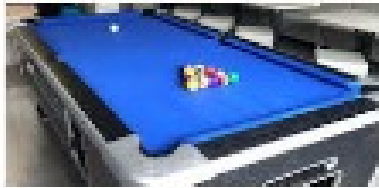
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The Glasgow man was angry when he found out his wife had been cheating on him.

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'Second fiddle!' she replied. 'Ah'll huv ye know ye're lucky tae still be in the band!'



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It was revealed this week that Lewis Hamilton will be driving in Monaco with diamonds embedded in his helmet. Christ, that's got to hurt. (Derek McGovern)

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It snowed last night.....

8:00 am: I made a snowman.

8:10 - A feminist passed by and asked me why I didn't make a snow woman.

8:15 - So, I made a snow woman.

8:17 - My feminist neighbour complained about the snow woman's voluptuous chest saying it objectified snow women everywhere.

8:20 - The gay couple living nearby threw a hissy-fit and moaned it could have been two snow men instead.

8:22 - The transgender man..women...person asked why I didn't just make one snow person with detachable parts.

8:25 - The vegans at the end of the lane complained about the carrot nose, as veggies are food and not to decorate snow figures with.

8:28 - I was being called a racist because the snow couple is white.

8:31 - The middle-eastern gent across the road demanded the snow woman be covered up .

8:40 - The Police arrived saying someone had been offended.

8:42 - The feminist neighbour complained again that the broomstick of the snow woman needed to be removed because it depicted women in a domestic role.

8:43 - The council equality officer arrived and threatened me with eviction.

8:45 - TV news crew from BBC showed up. I was asked if I know the difference between snowmen and snow-women? I replied "Snowballs" and am now called a sexist.

9:00 - I was on the Morning News as a suspected terrorist, racist, homophobe sensibility offender, bent on stirring up trouble during difficult weather.

9:10 - I was asked if I have any accomplices. My children were taken by social services.

9:29 - Far left protesters offended by everything marched down the street demanding that I be arrested.

By noon it all melted

Moral:

There is no moral to this story. It is what we have become, all because of snowflakes.

FOREIGN NATIONALS IN SPAIN

Spain's population passed 48 million in 2022 and now counts more than six million foreign nationals, whose numbers jumped last year, the National Statistics Institute (INE) reported. (Remember, these figures do not include unregistered individuals.) The number equates to an **increase of almost 600,000 people** within the year. Of the overall number, 6,089,620 are foreign nationals who make up 12.7% of the population.

One factor driving the increase was Russia's war on Ukraine, which began in February 2022 and prompted hundreds of thousands to flee with some 83,401 Ukrainians moving to Spain that year, the figures showed.

Of the foreign nationals living in Spain, **the largest group are Moroccans** (893,953), then Romanians (629,755) and Colombians (453,911).

Italians represent the largest EU foreign population group in Spain with 301,791. There are also 284,037 UK nationals residing in Spain, according to the latest INE population stats. The largest number of foreign nationals **to leave Spain in 2022** according to INE were Romanians, whose number fell by 9,742, and UK nationals with 7,328 fewer than a year earlier.

Low Emission Zone in Alicante

Under pressure from the Vox far-right ultras, the PP government of the city of Alicante under Mayor Barcala, are dragging their heels about addressing the implementation of the low emission zones (LEZ) and the penalties for not complying with the restrictions. In Alicante the PP require the continued support of VOX to rule.

British Second Home Owners in France.

France's highest constitutional authority has announced in mid-January that it **has rejected** a proposal to lift post-Brexit visa requirements for British second-home owners that would ease the 90-day rule. No doubt the Spanish authorities will have also noticed this.

Why does Prince Nazeem get a gong just because he's good at punching people. I'm brilliant at it but the most I ever got was 200 hours community service. Viz

Blowing Money at the UN

The United Nations has ordered one of its former officials, Vitaly Vanshelboim, photo, — once the second-in-command at the U.N.'s logistics agency — to repay \$63.6 million personally, after he lost a vast amount of U.N. funds by entrusting them to a man he met at a party, according to court filings.



Mr. Vanshelboim and his boss, seeking to raise their profile within the U.N., amassed millions for the organization by charging governments and other U.N. agencies extra for construction jobs. Then they invested about \$60 million with companies all linked to a British businessman named David Kendrick, defying internal warnings and dangerously concentrating their risk. If he does not repay the money, he will not be eligible for a U.N. Pension. Under U.N. rules, staff members who are found to be “wilful, reckless or grossly negligent” can be made to reimburse “any financial loss suffered by the United Nations as a result of the staff member’s conduct.” In this case, Mr. Vanshelboim’s office invested **\$60 million, but got \$6.2 million back**. It also gave \$3 million to a nonprofit run by the businessman’s daughter.

The investments were meant to finance renewable energy and housing projects. But they went poorly, according to U.N. audit reports. An inquiry last year found that the U.N. had recouped only about 10% of its investment.

Quickies.

The deadly nightclub fire in Murcia that killed 13 people on October 1, 2023 was caused ‘accidentally due to **‘negligence’** in the use of a spark machine inside the venue. The managers and administrators of the nightclubs face 13 counts of involuntary manslaughter.

When the OCU consumer group tested **38 brands of semi-skimmed milk** they found the Hacienda brand to be the most superior.



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The Popes Christmas Message

The Pope was finishing his sermon. He ended it with the Latin phrase, "Tuti Homini" - Blessed be Mankind.

A women's rights group approached the Pope the next day. They noticed that the pope blessed all mankind, but not Womankind

The next day, after His sermon, the Pope concluded by saying, "Tuti Homini, et Tuti Femini" - Blessed be Mankind and Womankind.

The next day, a gay-rights group approached the Pope. They said that they noticed that he blessed man kind and woman kind, and asked if he could also bless gay people.

The Pope said, "Sure".

The next day, the Pope concluded his sermon with, "Tuti Homini, et Tuti Femini, et Tuti Fruiti."

My mate Harry had a one-night-stand but he couldn't get a hard-on. Luckily the woman he was with was very understanding and she just said, 'Don't worry, that used to happen to me.'

Harry also suffered from premature ejaculation. Eventually he screwed up the courage to go and see his doctor. Showed her his dick and said, 'Look, I'm worried that I might be a bit premature.' She said, 'You certainly are. I'm the receptionist!' Gary Delaney

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SHAKIRA COUGHS-UP

MORE THAN €21 MILLION

Colombian pop star, Shakira, 46, reached a last-minute deal to avoid the risk of going to prison on the opening day of her tax fraud trial in Barcelona during late November.

The trial, which would have included more than 100 witnesses over several weeks, was instead called off after just eight minutes.

Shakira told the presiding magistrate, José Manuel del Amo, that she accepted the agreement reached with prosecutors. She answered 'yes' to confirm her acknowledgement of six counts of failing to pay the Spanish government €14.5 million in taxes between 2012 and 2014. Under the deal, Shakira is to receive a suspended three-year sentence and a **fine of €7 million**. She had already paid the full €14.5 million in back taxes that the prosecution had requested, plus a surcharge.

Shakira finally recognised that she resided in Spain at the time of the events, despite previously insisting that was not the case. Spain has cracked down on soccer stars such as Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo over the past decade for not paying their full taxes. The former Barcelona and Real Madrid stars were found guilty of evasion but both avoided prison time after their sentences were suspended, following payment of fines.

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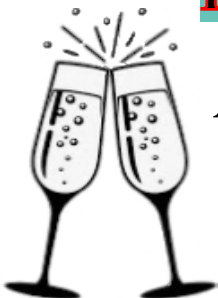


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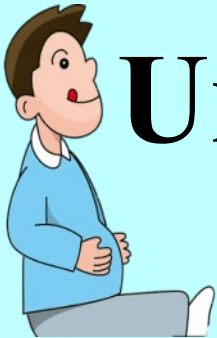
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My new girlfriend and I were travelling to meet my parents, when she got a flat tyre. So I called my parents and said, "Sorry, mum. We are going to be late. My girlfriend's got a puncture."

"Oh," she sighed, "I thought you had a real one this time!"



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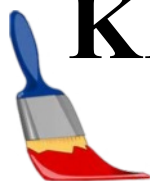
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Boris Johnson

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*David, you are a highly valued professional who people have come to respect and rely on. Your personal integrity and knowledge are highly valued by myself and others who endeavour to support those who have none.
SC. Royal British Legion, Orihuela Costa Branch*

*David visited us in Catral. We couldnt find anyone to visit us so far inland. You certainly get what you pay for.
No such thing as a free lunch as they say. B&P W. Catral*

*David helped me when moving my Husband to a care home in the UK. His knowledge of the UK care system is amazing. The amount of time he gave to us was fantastic. We couldn't have done it without him.
GD-Torre Vieja*

*I contacted a group for help with welfare and care They gave me some forms and advice. I didn't have the time or energy & a friend recommended David. He visited and helped me with the application & is also helping with the Spanish care. Yes he charges but his knowledge and help makes it so worth it.
MT. San Miguel.*

David just helped me claim £47389 back from unpaid state pension. All for free!!! IL- Catral.



0034602465565



advocacycostablanca@gmail.com

Advocacy Costa Blanca is operated by David Minto, a UK registered Social Worker. Get in touch if you need advice or guidance related to UK and Spanish welfare support.

This includes UK benefit applications (Attendance Allowance/PIP) or support to return to the UK with care.

I am registered with the UK professional body for Social Work & every year must provide proof & evidence that my experience, knowledge and skills are up to date. As a self-employed (Autonimo) social worker in Spain I am also required to provide professional liability and indemnity insurance.

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Low Emission Zones

The Spanish government has been fairly lenient so far on regions who haven't implemented Low Emission Zones or ZBEs ('Zonas de Bajas Emisiones' in Spanish), but the crunch time has arrived and several towns and cities across the country plan to rollout the new rules sometime this year.

Low Emission Zones are part of the Climate Change and Energy Transition Law approved by the Spanish government in 2021 which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality in city centres by limiting access to the most polluting cars. Kind of like the ULEZ in London.

Essentially, all municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, which encompasses 149 cities and large towns, will have to set up ZBEs. Furthermore, Low Emission Zones are required in regions with more than 20,000 residents but which exceed the maximum pollution levels.

Spain is being paid substantial sums of money from the EU to introduce these zones. Orihuela and Torrevieja **may** well avoid these zones.

One day a student came to Socrates and said "master, I have to tell you something"

Socrates said, "before you tell me, you must answer three questions"

The student agreed. "First", Socrates said, "Is it true?" The student said "I'm not sure."

It was told to me by another student and I don't know for a fact that what I have to say is the truth." "OK" Socrates said, "then tell me, is it kind?" "On the contrary" the student replies. "It is not at all kind."

"There is still one more question that you may yet pass. Is it necessary?" the master asks.

"No, I don't suppose you can say that what I heard was necessary" the embarrassed student answers.

"So, what you wanted to tell me may not be true, is not kind and is not necessary, yet you came running to tell me, nonetheless"

The student lowers his head and slowly walks away. This is why Socrates was the greatest philosopher of his time.

It is also the reason why Socrates never found out the Plato was banging his wife.

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Too Many Alicante Men Firing Blanks!

The quality of men's semen has worsened and the province of Alicante is one of the places in Spain where it has deteriorated the most. The decrease in semen quality is a fact that doctors have been studying for years and that has even worsened with Covid -19, which could cause fertility problems even in the long term in men who have suffered a mild infection and without symptoms, according to recent research. It has now been shown that, in addition, the number of motile sperm is different depending on geographical location. The research carried out by Dr. Rocío Núñez Calonge scientific coordinator of the UR International Group, with headquarters at the Vistahermosa Reproduction Unit, has determined that Alicante, along with Madrid, are the provinces that register the worst sperm quality in the entire country. "In order to know the reasons for these differences, we want to expand the study with more data on the men included in it: smoking, body mass index and occupation."

Dear Editor,

Can you please help-out. Which is more painful, giving birth or getting a kick in the nuts?

Perplexed Pete, Los Altos

Hi Pete,

Now normally, I would refer these type of questions to our medical correspondence, 'Dodgy Prescription' Derek. But as he is currently helping the police with their enquiries, I now had to grasp this perplexing nettle.

So after some deep thinking (and a couple of medicinal Soberanos), it all began to become very clear.

Women always maintain that giving birth is way more painful than a guy getting kicked in the nuts, but how could they know?

But of course getting kicked in the nuts is much more painful. And here is the proof!

A year or so after giving birth, a woman will often say, it might be nice to have another child."

But you never hear a guy say "You know, I think I would like another kick in the nuts."



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Welcome to the new Dream Scene TechTips. These tips, which are not written by me, are designed to help those with little or no knowledge of technology. If you miss any of the tips or need a refresh, then just visit the Dream Scene archives online for back issues.

TECH TIP 1, ROUTERS.

Routers, did you know that rebooting your router every month or so, will speed up your internet connection. Experts say that unplugging your router from the power source (plug-socket) and after 30 seconds (I say 20 is enough) plug it back in, speeds up your internet as it clears the cache (memory) and chooses new Wi-Fi channels.

Your ISP (Internet Service Provider) will also see that it has disconnected and rebooted, so if you have problems with your internet, you have done the first important step.

Now your router location is also important. For it to work well please keep it out of direct sunlight and if possible have your router as high as possible. If your router is on the floor your Wi-Fi won't be as good as if it was on a Table or high up on a wall. If you nip into a coffee shop you will see their internet routers can be on the ceiling, can't get much higher than that.

Ethernet or Wi-Fi, I will explain more on this in future editions, however the golden rule is were possible plug in to your router via ethernet (socket on rear of router), this is good for computers and Smart TV's because you will get the best and most consistent speeds available.

Ringling the Bell!

An old man and a 20-year-old girl got married and for three weeks they were very happy, until one Sunday he collapsed and died. Her mother arrived to console the unhappy girl.

'Oh, mum,' she cried, 'it was such a wonderful marriage. We were always so passionate, especially on Sunday when we would make love to the rhythm of the church bells.'

The girl suddenly looked thoughtful. 'Do you know, I'm sure he'd be alive today if the fire engine hadn't gone past, clanging its bell so ferociously just minutes before he died.'

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WELFARE TEAM

Following a review of this service, we would like to appoint volunteers to assist our Welfare Officer offer information and assist in the completion of Attendance Allowance applications. If you have experience in either the care or benefit service or simply an interest in finding out if your experience is relevant, please call Richard.

EVENTS TEAM

With restrictions being eased we are once again looking at organising fundraising events. Under direction of an Events coordinator, we wish to appoint a team of volunteers. We are keen to hear from anyone who is interested in helping the charity to raise funds – events, raffles, donation boxes etc.

Fundraising is crucial to the charity and volunteers must be committed to the role.

HELP Vega Baja – supporting people in the community

COST OF LIVING CHANGES

VAT rates on domestic electricity bills in Spain will double in the New Year from 5% to 10%.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced the move following a meeting of the Council of Ministers. The main item on the agenda was deciding which measures to renew or change by royal decree which were introduced to fight inflation and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

VAT on electricity will rise to 10% in the New Year as opposed to the original 21% rate which was slashed in July 2021. The new rate will apply until the end of next June and will no doubt be reviewed then.

Pedro Sanchez told a lunchtime news conference that the cost of electricity had dramatically changed over the last 22 months.

“On the eve of the invasion of Ukraine, the price per megawatt was €360 per hour, and last Friday it was seven times lower at €51.80,” the Prime Minister said.

“We have decided to withdraw the tax reductions on electricity and gas, gradually over the next six months,” he added.

Sanchez revealed that VAT on gas will be fully restored in February ‘once the winter is over’.(!?)

VAT will continue to be abolished over the same time frame on basic foods which include bread, flour, milk, cheese and eggs.

A reduction from 10% to 5% of VAT on oils and pasta will also be maintained for six extra months.

The government will extend the suspension of evictions from main homes for vulnerable individuals and families.

Aid to public transport will remain in place for another year meaning that current free services will continue like for frequent users of certain Renfe train services.

The new Spanish government also plans to increase monthly unemployment benefit in Spain from €480 to €570 for the first six months.

Spain will extend a windfall tax on banks and energy companies by an extra year. The tax is set to raise about €3bn in 2023, its first year, and will now also be payable in both 2024 and 2025.

The PM said companies would, from January 1, be able to deduct “strategic investments linked to industrial projects and also linked to the decarbonisation of the production system in our country”.

There was no relief for the banks. Awwwwwww!



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During a police raid in Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Catalunya, a **female squatter** faces the **possibility of losing her arm** after placing it in a barrel of cement in an attempt to hinder eviction. Mossos d'Esquadra officers, deploying eight units and two drones, sought to clear the Lakasa Estudinou building. Despite unsuccessful attempts by other squatters to adopt the same strategy, the woman, described as a 'young woman,' persisted. Following her rescue from the barrel, she was rushed to the Germans Trias i Pujol Hospital in Badalona in serious condition. Initially, the prognosis indicated a high likelihood of amputation due to blood circulation obstruction for at least six hours. However, subsequent reports suggested an improvement in her condition, raising hopes that amputation might not be necessary.

A 73-year-old man **died after being trapped with his car in a car wash** in the Valencian town of Gandía, apparently due to recklessness. The tragic accident occurred around 5:30 p.m. at a gas station in a shopping complex. Apparently, the victim entered the vehicle into the car wash and, at one point - when the car was already running - he got out of the car to check if it was properly positioned, leaving the door open. At that moment, the vehicle gained momentum for unknown reasons and the driver ended up hitting a pillar, which caused head and chest trauma. As a result of the attack, the deceased was trapped between the car and the pillar of the car wash.

In the summer of 2024, the Tcherassi brothers are set to launch Ura, a multifaceted establishment spanning 1,700 square feet in Allapattah, in downtown Miami. Ura will encompass Sushi Namba and the Listening Room, a jazz lounge featuring Cocktailante Oboro (a member's only bar). Access to these exclusive offerings requires a substantial **\$10,000 membership fee** for Miami residents, granting them monthly seats at the sushi counter, bar, and jazz lounge. The cost for a sushi omakase meal ranges between \$400 and

\$500 per person. The Tcherassi brothers plan to limit membership to approximately 300 individuals and have already started accepting reservations. It's noteworthy that while Sushi Namba imposes a significant initiation fee, it follows the precedent set by Major Food Group's ZZ's Club, an existing \$10,000 members-only Japanese venue in Miami that also includes a \$3,500 annual membership fee, a feature absent from Namba's model.

Hmmm, all that money to eat some raw fish?

Tesla is recalling nearly every car it has sold in the US. The autopilot feature in more than 2 million vehicles will need to be updated following a two-year investigation by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They need to update software and fix a defective system that's supposed to ensure drivers are paying attention when using Autopilot. It seems a series of crashes happened while the Autopilot partially automated driving system was in use. Some were deadly. Autopilot can steer, accelerate and brake automatically in its lane, but is a driver-assist system and cannot drive itself, despite its name. Independent tests have found that **the monitoring system is easy to fool**, so much that drivers have been caught while driving drunk or even sitting in the back seat.

NHTSA has dispatched investigators to 35 Tesla crashes since 2016 in which the agency suspects the vehicles were running on an automated system. **At least 17 people have been killed.** The real problem, safety experts maintain, aren't drivers, but the technology itself, which has issues with spotting obstacles and shouldn't be allowed on the road.

The Spanish anti-corruption prosecutor's office has recommended a **12-year prison sentence** for Watford Football Club's owner, Gino Pozzo, after he was accused of implementing "a long-term criminal plan" while in charge of the Spanish club Granada to evade paying more than €9m in tax on transfers.

Do you know there's a rich Arab trying to buy every Fish & Chip shop in Britain?

His name is Sultan Vinegar.



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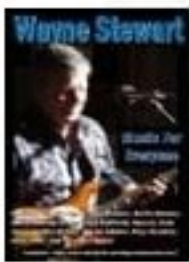
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Become a member of our Golf Society with outings on the third Wednesday of each month. Pop into the bar or drop us a message on Facebook or WhatsApp for more information.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for regular updates.

Mary, in London, sent her husband a text on a cold winter evening: "Windows frozen."

Julian texted back: "Pour some warm water over them."

A short while later Julian received a text back..."The computer is completely fucked now!"

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& SATURDAY at 2pm!!

**LIVE
WORLDWIDE
RACING
COVERAGE**

A bride on her wedding night says to her husband, 'I must confess darling, I used to be a hooker.' He says, 'That's a bit of a shock dear, but I must admit, I find it quite erotic. Tell me about it.' She replies, 'Well, my name was Nigel and I played for Wigan.'

It is fair to say that controversies continues to hound the current, fairly new (some say regurgitated) socialist government. Although they call themselves the "Coalición Progresista" or Progressive Coalition, others refer to it as 'Frankenstein 2', being a miss-match of several left wing, looney and nationalist parties, much the same as the previous administration.

The blanket amnesties to the Catalan separatists has shocked many as it appears that the current **judicial/legal system is being "massaged"** to purely facilitate supporting votes for the PSOE government from the Catalan nationalists.

PM Sánchez has now agreed to transfer immigration policy to Catalonia because Puigdemont's party, Junts, demanded he do so at the last minute for their seven MPs in Madrid to support his new economic measures. They abstained and the bill passed, just. **Immigration policy in Catalonia has just been ceded to national populist separatists** who have demonstrated they are willing to force the rule of law beyond its legal limits. No other region has this ability to determine who is in or out of the region. In theory, the Constitution reserves such

matters exclusively for the national government in Madrid. As Madrid First Minister, Ayuso (conservative PP), stated "What could possibly go wrong by ceding immigration policy to some xenophobes."

Meanwhile the lunacy continues in Catalunya. Catalonia has released a draft law which could allow children **aged 12 and older** to ask for mediation if parents disagree with their gender identity. It comes after the national government approved a 'trans-equality' law allowing gender self-determination in February last year.

But it is not just the Left who would cause one to gasp. Santiago Abascal, the leader of the Spanish far-right party VOX, the third largest party of many in this country, travelled to Argentina to congratulate their new PM Milei on his inauguration. Problem was, Santiago had a go the the current Spanish PM Sánchez stating that "there will come a time, when people will want to **hang him up by his feet,**" and this comparison to the ultimate fate of Mussolini (and his girlfriend) obviously caused ructions!

VOX is never shy of controversy. Any news is good news!

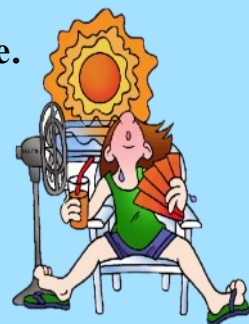


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Lime Bar Fishing SUNBATHING Club

At the end of November, we had the Old Farts match and Presentation night.

The presentation night went well. See photo of the winners. Thank you, Sue & Christine, for presenting the trophies again, Jane for running the raffle & taking “delayed” photos, and everybody for the “American supper” that fed most of the Lime Bar. A special mention goes to “Daffy” for running the quiz. Unfortunately, he thought we were a brainy bunch and the questions were part of a Mensa challenge! I didn’t have a clue! Even the resident quiz master struggled. Come back Baz! We’ll let you sing.



When we arrived at El Bosquet for the Old Farts match the temp was 0°, so the writing was on the wall. We had 12 anglers on the bank with one of the 75-year-olds being classed as a whipper snapper. It made his day! The individual matches were very close, with 2 of the matches being won by 1 lucky fish, but the result went the way of the whipper snappers 5 – 1.

Fishing was very patchy but congratulations must be given to the Old Bill (a youngster) who didn’t catch a fish until gone 13.00, but went on to beat our resident professional. On completion we retired to the Lime Bar to lick our wounds, and the presentation and drink from the quaich.

We didn’t fair much better in the December match. Leading up to the match, a few of us had fished Eden 2 with good results. On a sunny but cool day, 9 of us turned up to find the water at the lowest level this year. BFC only had 18” of water in front of him so he had to move pegs. We had 4 x blanks and the fish that were caught were mainly tiny mullet. That is except for the Shropshire Lad, who on the downstream end peg in about 4 feet of water landed 11 carp and 10 mullet for 9.6 kilos. 1 of his carp would have beaten all the other anglers combined weights! I was 2 nd with 10 tiddlers for 0.8 and 3 rd was Fagash with a carp & barbel for 0.7 kilos. At least Bigastro would have had some water in it....

Talking of Bigastro, that is where we held the January match, and yes it had water it, but were there any fish? That all depended on your peg! Again, we had 9 anglers on the bank and the usual end pegs did NOT produce, in fact they never had a bite all day. Sweeney in peg 4, had a carp within 10 mins, followed immediately by BFC in peg 6. When BFC finally landed his lump, it weighed in at 3.5 kilos. I was in the next peg 7, and shortly afterwards landed a nice barbel. We thought we were in for a good day.... Then it dried up. In the afternoon, 3 Rods lost a carp at the net (he blamed his hook), and later on he hooked into a huge carp. Unfortunately by this time he was using his pole, when the fish torpedoed off and had reached Fagash’s swim, the elastic bottomed out and snapped his hook length. He said it would have won the match. Oh well! BFC won with 5 kilos, my 5 barbel got me 2nd spot with 3.5 kilos and 3rd was 3 Rods with 2 kilos.

The next meeting bun fight is at The Lime Bar on Tuesday 6th February.

Stay safe.

Fishy fingers, The Ghost.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence or AI is certainly getting a lot of coverage in the media of late, although some of the response is very guarded and worrison, which I believe is a mistake. I am old enough to remember the documentaries showing the threat of the rapid growth of automation in US factories and how it would put us all out of work!

I have used two of the free versions of AI - BARD & CHATGPT - on a number of occasions during the past two months. Some of the searches I carried out were helpful and on four occasions I used them to write a precis of some articles - look, I'm 76 and need all the help I can get!

Already The New York Times is suing OpenAI and Microsoft for copyright infringement. The NYT state that searches on OpenAI reveal articles from the newspaper quoted almost verbatim from the original. OpenAI calls it "regurgitation" or "inadvertent memorization" not theft of copyrighted content.

Others have now joined the damages bank wagon. Actress Sarah Silverman, authors Jonathan Franzen and John Grisham and the photography syndicate Getty Images are also suing claiming the unauthorised use of their copyright materials in training the chatbots.

The Meta (Facebook) chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, has said the company will attempt to build an artificial general intelligence (AGI) system and make it open source, meaning it will be accessible to developers outside the company.

He stated that they are committed to building a powerful AI system on a par with human levels of intelligence. The Facebook founder has also raised the prospect of making it freely available to the public. Zuckerberg is spending **\$15-18 billion** on 600,000 Nvidia H100 GPUs (graphics processing unit \$30,000 each) or equivalents to do even bigger AI: open source AGI. Mark Zuckerberg has been accused by many of taking an irresponsible approach to artificial intelligence.

But there is still hope for civilisation. Artificial Intelligence is no match for natural stupidity. And, as with computer programming - "Garbage in - garbage out!"

GHOST AIRPORTS

There are now at least 10 'ghost airports' (aeropuertos fantasma) in Spain. In these, traffic ranges from zero to a handful of passengers weekly.

The Huesca-Pyrenees airport, in north eastern Spain, still functions but is very quiet, with 95 passengers passing through last year.

Madrid's tiny Cuatro Vientos airport had just 814 commercial passengers in 2023.

Córdoba airport had just 2,419, for an average of 6.6 a day, and Burgos just 3017, for an average of 8.2 per day.

Salamanca, Logroño, Lérida, Albacete, Castellón and León also have airports that most Spaniards have neither used nor heard of.

Many of these airports were built prior to the 2008 financial crash when billions of euros supported by EU funds were pumped into a building extravaganza across the country.

Every region wanted their own international airport. Corvera airport is a typical example of this period. However this airport may be recovering, albeit very slowly.

Laura Lou

A man was sitting quietly reading his paper when his wife walked up behind him and hit him across the head with a magazine.

'What was that for?' he asked.

'That was for the piece of paper in your pocket with the name Laura Lou written on it' she replied.

He explained, 'Two weeks ago when I went to the races, Laura Lou was the name of one of the horses I bet on, I bought you those flowers with the winnings.'

'Oh darling, I'm sorry,' she said. 'I should have known there was a good explanation.'

Three days later he was watching TV when his wife walked up and hit him on the head again, but this time with a frying pan, which knocked him out cold.

When he came to he asked, 'What was that for?'

'Your horse phoned.'

Girl Corner?

Women are more irritable than men, probably because men are more irritating.

If a man said what he thought, he'd be speechless. If ignorance is bliss, why aren't there more happy men?

Women don't make fools out of men. They only conduct the performance.

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The editor, Mick, can be contacted at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com (Or in some Bar!)

A radio station was running a competition. Words that weren't in the dictionary yet could still be used in a sentence that would make logical sense. The prize was a trip to Bali.

DJ: "96 FM here, what's your name?"

Caller: "Hi, my name's Dave."

DJ: "Dave, what's your word?"

Caller: "Goan ... spelt G-O-A-N pronounced 'go-an'."

DJ: "You are correct, Dave, 'goan' is not in the dictionary. Now, for a trip to Bali: What sentence can you use that word in, that would make sense?"

Caller: "Goan fuck yourself!"

The DJ cut the caller off and took other calls, all unsuccessful until:

DJ: "96 FM, what's your name?"

Caller: "Hi, me name's Jeff."

DJ: "Jeff, what's your word?"

Caller: "Smee, spelt S-M-E-E, pronounced 'smee'."

DJ: "You are correct, Jeff, 'smee' is not in the dictionary. Now, for a trip to Bali: What sentence can you use that word in that would make sense?"

Caller: "Smee again! Goan fuck yourself!?"



"Pretend you are a purse snatcher - I want to try something."

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