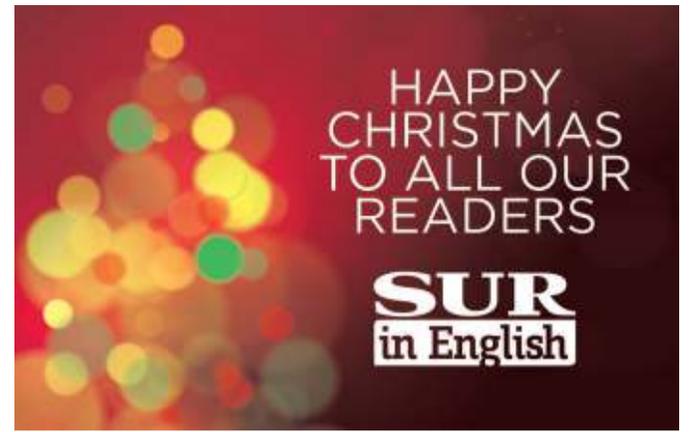


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Crucial vote determines future direction of Catalonia

On Thursday 5.5 million were called to the polls in an expected record turnout

The people of Catalonia took part in historically important regional elections on Thursday as the rest of Spain looked on, waiting to see what would happen to the region's support for separatist political parties. Seven main parties were vying for 135 seats in the regional parliament with the great unknown being whether the three pro-independ-



A voter on Thursday. :: AFP

ence parties would secure the 68 seats needed for a majority, as they did last time in 2015. Recent opinion polls had shown a small swing to non-separatist parties, suggesting no overall majority for independence groups, which could plunge Catalonia into different uncertainty as parties negotiate pacts in order to govern. **P23**

Record-breaking figures after first decade of high-speed rail travel

Ten years after the AVE first hit the Costa, the service has moved 2.4 million passengers in 2017 **P3**

Costa gang which smuggled cocaine inside pineapples is dismantled and North Africa's 'biggest drugs trafficker' arrested **P4**

A police officer dressed as Spiderman. Edu Rodríguez spends his spare time as a superhero on children's hospital wards **P42-44**

Getting all chocolatey for Christmas. A Vélez-Málaga family business shows off its innovative confectionery **P52-53**



CHRISTMAS ON THE COSTA

P26-32 & 46-50

Young people take part in the nativity staged in the Alameda park in Marbella. :: JOSELE-LANZA

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Malaga granted licences for vehicles with seven to nine seats on the condition that they were adapted for wheelchairs. :: FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ

Few large towns on the Costa del Sol have enough taxis for disabled users



✉ pjimenez@diariosur.es

Malaga, Marbella and Estepona are the only municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants that have the regulatory five per cent of adapted taxis in their fleets

MALAGA. Taxi services in Malaga province have progressed in terms of accessibility for the disabled, but there is still a long way to go

before they fully comply with the regulations that state that at least five per cent of all taxis should be able to carry passengers with mobility difficulties. These adapted vehicles are known as 'eurotaxis'.

These conditions to ensure that disabled people do not suffer discrimination are laid down in a royal decree which came into effect in December 2007, and town halls were given ten years to take the measures necessary to comply.

This period of grace has just expired, but only three large municipalities in Malaga province - Malaga, Marbella and Estepona - have succeeded in fulfilling the regulations, and they only just managed it within the deadline, as shown in a study carried out recently by the ONCE Foundation and the Spanish Committee of

Representatives of People with Disabilities (CERMI). The report looked at the situation in 135 municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants.

Vélez-Málaga, Mijas, Torremolinos, Fuengirola and Benalmádena also have populations of more than 50,000 but, as the report shows,

they do not have the required percentage of adapted taxis.

In terms of numbers Vélez-Málaga is worst, because if two people in wheelchairs are using a taxi, a third person will have to wait or make other travel arrangements. However, the lowest ratio is in Benalmádena, where only five

TAXI FLEETS ON THE COSTA

Town	Population	Taxis	Adapted (%)
Malaga	569,009	1,432	82 (5.7%)
Marbella	140,744	325	17 (5.2%)
Vélez-Málaga	78,890	44	2 (4.5%)
Mijas	77,769	114	5 (4.4%)
Fuengirola	77,486	114	4 (3.5%)
Torremolinos	67,786	135	5 (3.7%)
Benalmádena	67,245	130	3 (2.3%)
Estepona	66,683	95	6 (6.3%)

Source: ONCE Foundation and CERMI

of the 135 taxis (2.3 per cent) are accessible to the disabled.

Sudden progress

In this study, which covered the whole of Spain, only three large towns in the province passed the test and they did so practically at the last moment.

Estepona, which one year ago only had two licences for eurotaxis, has now authorised a further four, so out of the taxi fleet of 85 vehicles, six can carry passengers in wheelchairs or those with severe mobility difficulties.

In July, Marbella council also granted licences for two more eurotaxis, bringing the total to 17 (5.2 per cent of the fleet).

Malaga has also made efforts in the past two years, and the council there found that the principal incentive to expand the fleet of accessible taxis was to authorise licences for vehicles with seven or nine seats, on the condition that they were adapted to transport people with mobility problems. Thanks to this policy there are now 82 adapted taxis, which is 5.7 per cent of the fleet of 1,432 in the city.

The formula used by Malaga city hall is highlighted in the study, because as well as being able to transport disabled passengers it means there are more taxis for families or groups of five or more people, who would otherwise need two cars.

Along the same lines, the ONCE Foundation and CERMI are also putting pressure on platforms such as Uber and Cabify so that they too guarantee the existence of a percentage of adapted vehicles.

Malaga province is not alone in lacking this type of transport; the situation in the rest of Spain is similar.

Of the 135 municipalities analysed in the report, only 50 have more than the statutory five per cent of adapted taxis. In fact, 42 of them have less than two per cent.

Topping the list is Chiclana de la Frontera, in Cadiz province, with 18.9 per cent (seven adapted taxis out of 37). The first municipality in Malaga on the list is in 34th place: Estepona.



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LONDON OFFICE

Record passenger figures after ten years of high-speed rail travel to Malaga

The AVE ends 2017 with 2.4 million passengers while plans are under way for new services such as a connection to Granada and faster service to Seville

IGNACIO LILLO

MALAGA. On 23 December 2007, a high-speed train arrived for the first time at Malaga's main railway station, María Zambrano. The arrival of a Series 103 at about 12.30pm was a historic moment in Malaga province. The commercial service began the following day.

Tomorrow, Saturday, it will be ten years since that landmark event. That day brought an end to a decade of projects and works. Rather than bringing something to a close, though, this proved to be a new beginning in linking Malaga and the Costa del Sol to the rest of Spain and the world.

The service is marking its first major anniversary in fine form, with 20.5 million people having travelled between Madrid and Malaga during that time, and it has reached a new record this year with more than 2.44 million users. That is about 3.8 per cent more than last year, which was already very positive.

Over the past ten years more direct connections have been added, with cities such as Barcelona, Zaragoza and Valencia, and next year there will also be a service to Granada. The journey to Seville from Malaga is also expected to become much faster in 2020. Lines are being built to other destinations as

well, so the AVE high-speed services will continue to expand in coming years. The whole rail network with its epicentre in Malaga has been used by 27.5 million people since 2007.

The AVE has brought Malaga and Madrid closer together with an optimum journey time of just over two and a half hours, especially impressive for the inhabitants of the Spanish capital, where any journey within the city can take around an hour. From a business perspective, it can be said that the Costa del Sol has already become a technology park and hub for investment which is accessible from Madrid, and from a tourism point of view, it has become one of three major destinations for those seeking sunshine and beaches, together with Valencia and Alicante.

The key to making all this possible is the Cordoba-Malaga High Speed Line (LAV), which cost 2.53 billion euros, of which 890.3 million were financed by the European FEDER regional development funds. The track, which is 154.5 kilometres in length, runs through 19 municipalities in Cordoba, Seville and Malaga. Since it opened, more than 75,000 trains have run between Madrid and the capital of the Costa del Sol, according to figures from the Ministry of Public Works and the Renfe railway company.

Continual improvements

This infrastructure, which was highly complex technically, made it possible to reduce the journey time to Madrid by an hour and a half (on the Talgo 200 trains), with considerable improvements in comfort,



The high-speed trains have revolutionised rail travel in Spain. :: SUR

reliability and twice as many seats.

It also meant that a rail network could be developed progressively so that today, in addition to those already mentioned, there are direct connections to places such as Tarragona, Lérida, Ciudad Real and Cuenca, and others can be reached via connections.

In January 2009, Renfe began to offer direct routes between Barcelona and Malaga, without stopping in Madrid, taking advantage of a rail

'bypass' which meant the trains could continue straight on to Aragón and Catalonia. This new route reduced the travelling time to Barcelona to five hours and 40 minutes. The high-speed rail services were completed in June 2013 with direct services to Valencia at weekends.

The options for rail travel will continue to grow in the medium term. Tests are already being carried out on the Granada line, which could become operative in 2018, and it will

mean the city can be reached in just one hour from the Costa del Sol. Work is also being carried out on a new 1.9 kilometre bypass at Almodóvar del Río, which will mean the journey between Andalucía's two main cities will take an hour and 35 minutes.

Every day, 46 high-speed trains pull into Malaga's María Zambrano station. The arrival of the AVE ten years ago, then, was not an end; it was the beginning of a story which still has a great deal to tell.

Anniversary ticket sales

As part of the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of high-speed rail travel in Spain, Renfe is putting 50,000 tickets on sale for 25 euros on its website at midnight tonight (22 December). The tickets are for AVE and long distance services around Spain. On previous occasions however, the offer has sold out in less than an hour.

Government to upgrade Bobadilla-Algeciras line by 2021

The central government's Minister for Public Works (Fomento), Íñigo de la Serna, announced this week that the renovation of the Bobadilla-Algeciras railway line will be complete by 2021. The modernisation project has a budget of 350 million euros and is vital to improve freight transport from the ports of Malaga and

Algeciras.

This is the first time that an end date has been offered for the project which has suffered delays and stoppages in recent years.

The government's commitment has cleared up doubts concerning the stretch between Antequera and Ronda. The minister's words indicate that this line will receive the same treatment as other stretches: a renewal of the existing track and the addition of a third international gauge line as well as electrification work.

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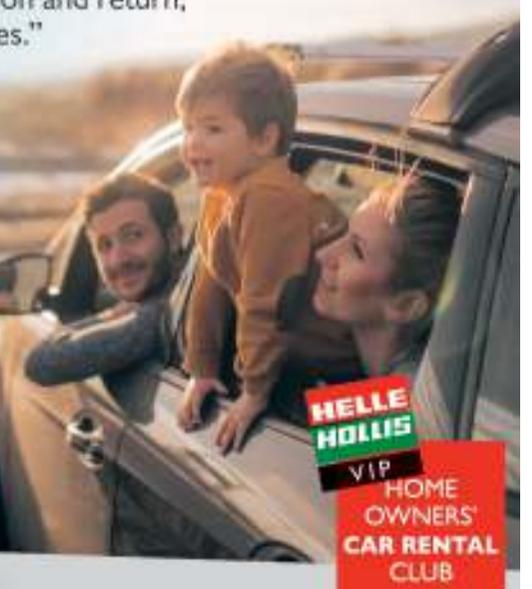
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North Africa's biggest cocaine trafficker held after drugs found concealed in pineapples

:: SUR

MALAGA. A 72-year-old Moroccan man considered North Africa's biggest cocaine trafficker has been arrested after a National Police operation, in conjunction with the Tax Agency, intercepted a tonne of cocaine and dismantled a trafficking network operating on the Costa del Sol.

The network made use of real estate and financial infrastructures to create the appearance of a genuine business and dodge police and border controls.

According to a National Police

press release, the organisation, comprising its leader and his four sons and two sons-in-law, transported cocaine from South America inside shipments of pineapples.

In one shipment from Costa Rica, 33 kilos of the drug were found concealed inside the fruit in cylinders covered in yellow wax.

The operation began in October last year and led to the arrest of the leader who began trafficking in the 1970s, transporting hashish around North Africa before moving to the Costa del Sol and the trafficking of cocaine.



Police had to open up thousands of pineapples. :: SUR

112 REPORTS



Cash and the group's ledger were among items seized. :: SUR

Two arrested in Marbella over forced prostitution

MARBELLA

:: **H. B.** A joint operation between police forces in Spain and Romania has led to the arrest of 11 people (two in Marbella, three in Madrid, two in Oviedo and four in Romania) in con-

nection with people trafficking and forced prostitution.

The arrests followed 12 simultaneous raids on properties in both countries which yielded two pistols, Samurai swords, top-of-the-range vehicles and more than ten thousand euros.

The group's leader, 'Becu' was among those arrested in Romania.

Man who sold thousands of non-existent PS4s arrested

MALAGA

:: **J. CANO / J. SOTO.** An Italian man resident in Malaga has been arrested in connection with a fraud that claimed more than a thousand people as victims.

He is alleged to have advertised a PlayStation 4 for sale at below

market value (250 euros, plus games), but not low enough to arouse suspicion. Once customers transferred the money, the product was never shipped.

Following his arrest, police found on his seller profile that he had carried out the same fraud, using the same product, on more than a thousand people.

A further two people were arrested for allegedly helping with the fraud.

Men responsible for death of homeless man at airport facing four years

MALAGA

:: **J. C.** Four men are facing four years in jail for their alleged involvement in the death of Steven Allford at Malaga airport in October 2016. Allford, who was living at the airport, was tied up on a bench outside the train station and was found dead the next morning.

Prosecutors are calling for four years on charges of involuntary manslaughter and degrading treatment.

The men were identified by Finnish police from a video uploaded to Facebook.

Psychiatric custody for beating and raping adoptive mother

MALAGA

:: **Á. FRÍAS.** A Malaga man, 40, has been sentenced to 11 years in a psychiatric facility after being found guilty of beating and raping his adoptive mother, 76, in 2015. A few hours after being told to move on by Guardia Civil for throwing stones at a building, he went to his mother's house and broke into her bedroom in the early hours, "in a state of excitement", according to the sentence.

Due to his hebephrenic schizophrenia, the man avoids prison.

POINTS RECOVERY COURSE AND HOW THEY WORK



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952 174 834

SPANISH POINTS-BASED LICENCE SYSTEM

The Spanish points system gives 8 points to drivers who have held a licence for less than 3 years and 12 points for drivers who have held it for over 3 years. If no traffic offences are committed after 3 years drivers receive an additional 3 points. A point is awarded every subsequent 3-year period up to a maximum of 15 points. Drivers can recuperate points by completing a re-education course of 12 hours or a 24 hour course if drivers have lost all their points. Once the course is passed successfully drivers are awarded 8 points on their licence.

WHAT IS COVERED?

Under Linea Directa's Traffic Fine Handling service, the policy holder or owner of the insured vehicle as well as any other drivers legally entitled to drive the vehicle can benefit up to a maximum of €500 off the cost of traffic re-education and awareness courses, as well as the fees payable in connection with the driving licence recovery test.

HOW ARE POINTS DEDUCTED?

Drivers will lose 6 points if under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other illegal substances. Reckless driving, refusing to take a breathalysing test or drugs test, driving over 50% of the speed limit. And drivers will lose 4 points for putting other drivers at risk, throwing objects on the road that could cause accidents or fire, exceeding limits by over 40kph, endangering cyclists, illegally parking, exceeding maximum passenger capacity by 50%. Driving without a seatbelt, using a mobile phone and not keeping a safe driving distance will result in a 3-point fine.

HOW DOES REIMBURSEMENT WORK?

Linea Directa will decide whether payment shall be made to the beneficiary directly or by means of reimbursement upon delivery or the relevant proof of payment.

EXCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Cover shall be provided only once during each policy period. Only penalty points lost in connection with the insured vehicle and for a reason not excluded in the policy shall be taken into account. Claimants must notify Linea Directa within 3 months of the notification date of points loss or licence disqualification. Cover shall not be provided in the event of disqualification if the beneficiary is given a guilty verdict. Any loss of points arising from legal infringements or criminal acts are excluded. Drivers must pass the driving licence recovery course on first attempt to qualify for cover.

We hope the information provided in this article is of interest. If you would like to contact Linea Directa please call **952 174 834**.

More information about Linea Directa online at www.lineadirecta.com

Developers launch 250-million-euro residential complex in El Higuerón

FUENGIROLA

Urbania International plans to build a thousand homes on an area of land covering 500,000 square metres

II IVÁN GELIBTER

Developers Urbania International launched the first phase of the Higuerón West 217 project in Fuengirola on Monday.

The 250-million-euro scheme involves the construction of a luxury apartment complex in the Higuerón Capellania area in Fuengirola next to the Reserva del Higuerón Double-Tree by Hilton Resort and Spa.

The new residential project, which has been described as “sustainable and innovative”, has been designed by the Broadway Malyan architecture and design studio. The complex will be surrounded by 100,000 square metres of nature, gardens and sports facilities.

The launch of the initial phase of the new development was attended by the mayor of Fuengirola, Ana Mula, along with the founders and partners of Urbania International, Mark Farber and Tomás Gasset. Mula highlighted the close collaboration between the town hall and Urbania that has enabled the project to get off the ground.

“It’s a different product that is going to generate significant wealth and a lot of jobs. Attracting investment of this magnitude puts Fuengirola on a level with other Costa del Sol municipalities and in a better position than others that haven’t got their planning in order,” said the mayor.

The founding partner of Urbania International, Tomás Gasset, offered details of the project and thanked Fuengirola town hall for its “receptiveness and understanding”.

Gasset went on to explain that the firm would invest 250 million euros over the next four years to build around a thousand homes. This, he said, would create a thousand jobs - directly and indirectly.

“One of the main differences,” he said, “is that this is not a development aimed just at foreign buyers but it is



Ana Mula and founders of Urbania opened the cycle track running through the complex’s green areas. II I. G.

open to all nationalities, including Spanish people looking for a first residence.”

First phase

Further information provided by the firm reveals that the first phase of the project will include 76 apartments with two, three or four bedrooms with prices ranging from 289,000 to 775,000 euros. Modern construction materials are being used, said the representatives (“always respectful of the environment”), and design fea-

tures will improve the properties’ energy efficiency.

Higuerón West will be connected to the neighbouring Reserva del Higuerón Resort and residents will have access to the services and sports facilities, being members of the Sports Club and Nagomi Spa.

The future users will also have access to a beach club, swimming pools, electric vehicles, country footpaths, circuits for pedestrians and cyclists, nine restaurants, including one with a Michelin star, a coworking space

and a concierge service, as well as business premises on the complex.

During its 15 years in Spain, Urbania International has built more than 2,000 homes in exclusive locations on the Costa del Sol, and has taken part in the restoration of old buildings in Madrid, Barcelona and Malaga.

The firm’s most recent investments include Icon Marbella, which explained the firm, consists of 212 exclusive villas in Santa Clara Golf (Marbella), involving an investment of 150 million euros.

Higuerón West: engineering with experience from the World Trade Center

II I. GELIBTER

FUENGIROLA. Urbania International explained on Monday that Higuerón West 217 has been designed by the world-renowned British architecture and design studio Broadway Malyan.

“The properties reflect the high

quality achieved by Urbania in exclusive developments such as Icon Marbella. Higuerón West 217 offers large interior and exterior open spaces with terraces with sea views,” said the firm’s representatives.

The final project, on 500,000 square metres of land, includes more

than 100,000 square metres of sustainable parks, green sports facilities, dog parks and picnic areas.

The quality control part of the project will be in the hands of the prestigious engineering firm Hill International, better known for supervising the reconstruction of the space where the World Trade Center once stood in New York. Managing partner of Urbania International, Mark Farber, said, “Higueron West 217 is a luxury, sustainable and innovative residential complex. It is a dynamic space that encourages its residents to lead healthier lives.”

Mijas reserves land for the construction of a care home for the elderly

II I. GELIBTER

MIJAS. Mijas town hall has designated a plot of land for the construction of a long-awaited residence for the elderly in Las Lagunas. This step in turn gives the green light to the drawing up of the plans and the tender process. The mayor, Juan Carlos Maldonado, said that this future social facility was “much needed by the elderly in our town”.

He added that thanks to an agreement with the Junta de Andalucía the residence’s rates would be “affordable” and that the construction work would be able to start at the end of 2018.

The site reserved for the new care home is behind La Vega secondary school in Las Lagunas. According to initial plans the residence will have 200 places.

Port hotel investors reveal three hotel groups are interested in the project

II IGNACIO LILLO

MALAGA. The investors behind a planned tower housing a luxury hotel in Malaga’s port area said this week that three hotel groups have expressed an interest in running the building once complete.

Representatives of Andalusian Hospitality II, for the Qatari Al Bidda group, said while meeting the city’s mayor and port officials on Wednesday that the hotel chains are interested, “because they consider that this city is key in the Mediterranean and clearly on the up in Spain from a tourism, cultural and economic point of view”.

They went on to say that they hope the building work could begin as soon as possible. The project has overcome some important initial planning hurdles in 2017 and will continue with the planning permission process into 2018.

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HERE AND THERE

Five more underage migrants taken into care from Archidona

ARCHIDONA

:: **FERNANDO TORRES.** The Junta de Andalucía has taken into care a further five more underage migrants identified among those being held at the new Archidona jail, in inland Malaga province. This brings to seven the total number of Algerian children removed by

social workers.

Archidona's unopened prison building is being used as a temporary detention centre for some 500 illegal migrants while their cases and possible deportation are being processed.

Trade unions and civil rights groups continue to protest at the use of the building and in support of migrant rights. Demonstrations took place both last weekend and on Wednesday at the gates to the prison.

Low rainfall has hit farmers' sales in 2017

MALAGA

:: **A.P.** The low rainfall levels in 2017 have had a significant impact on the value of agricultural and farm produce sold in Malaga province in 2017. According to Asaja, an industry representatives' group, sales have fallen almost 11 per cent on 2016, which was a record year, to 740 million euros. This is almost 90 million euros less income than last year.



Drought has hit farming. :: s.s.

Electricity cables in Las Lagunas go underground

MIJAS

:: **I. G.** Mijas council has said that power company Endesa has finishing putting an overhead high voltage electricity cable underground in the Las Lagunas area between the Coín road and the Avenida de Andalucía area, behind Parque Miramar. The 200,000-euro work was in preparation for the development of the area that "soon will start to take shape".

Emergency call for help in Marbella as homeless numbers increase

The Red Cross has called for donations of sleeping bags, mats and waterproofs to help the homeless through the cold temperatures this winter

NIEVES CASTRO

MARBELLA. The local branch of the Red Cross in Marbella (Cruz Roja) has launched an appeal for help due to an increase in the numbers of homeless in the town. The organisation offers on-the-spot help to people sleeping rough in the streets with its Intemperie programme, through which volunteers take aid in the form of food and warm clothing.

Since the middle of October the number people requiring this type of help has doubled, to more than 40, with no apparent explanation.

In its appeal for help the Red Cross has called for donations of sleeping bags, sleeping mats and waterproofs, the items needed most urgently. Hats, gloves and scarves are also wanted.

Julián García, the president of the Cruz Roja in Marbella, said: "We need warm clothes to give out to these people. Sleeping bags, mats and rain jackets. Now at Christmas, we get a lot of offers of food and toys, but bringing these other materials is a magnificent way to collaborate."

García is in permanent contact with the local Social Services Department, says that the only explanation he can think of for the increase is the closure of a shelter for the homeless in a neighbouring province.



Cruz Roja volunteers visit a person sleeping in the street. :: J-L

The volunteers go out into the streets twice a week offering help to whoever needs it. They estimate that the average age of a homeless person in Marbella is between 45 and 50. However there are cases of homeless people over the age of 80, they say, who are particularly vulnerable in the cold weather.

The Social Welfare Department has been offering eight beds in the África youth hostel where the Cruz Roja has been referring those with "an urgent need to sleep in a room". This agreement, however came to an end on Monday as the hostel closed its doors until January. The local authority said an alternative location would be provided to fill this gap.

"There are 40 people in the street right now and our aim is to provide a little bit of comfort while the town

hall looks for a provisional shelter," said García.

New centre

Meanwhile the council has said it will speed up plans to open a municipal centre offering immediate help to the homeless. The new facility, located in the former Social Services building in Miraflores, will open 12 hours a day and will have an annual budget of 307,000 euros. The building is still waiting to be furnished and for an agreement to be signed between the town hall and the Cruz Roja before it can open. Its aim will be to help socially reintegrate those sleeping rough.

Donations : Email the Cruz Roja marbella@cruzroja.es or call 952861688.

Torremolinos criticised for acting 'too slowly' against the red palm weevil

If palm trees are not regularly treated, they are at high risk of being infested, say environmental groups

ALBERTO GÓMEZ

TORREMOLINOS. Environmental groups have criticised Torremolinos council for not acting fast enough when the notorious red palm weevil attacks palm trees.

Following complaints from activist organisations, such as Torrenatura, the town hall has carried out pruning work on dozens of

palms in public areas in an effort to prevent the weevil from spreading further.

The red palm weevil can initially go undetected, killing a palm tree by eating into its trunk if chemical treatments aren't applied regularly.

The environmentalists have also reminded the council about the need to protect the municipality's palms with preventative treatment and, where they cannot be saved, to remove dead trees quickly to prevent the weevils moving to other healthy trees. They say the council "takes weeks" to respond to a call to deal with an infected tree.



Trees have to be pruned to stop the predator spreading. :: sur

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Brexit breakthrough on expatriates' rights

By Chris McCann, Partner, Blevins Franks

A landmark agreement has been reached in Brexit talks which has bolstered the rights of UK citizens resident in other EU countries and moved negotiations onto the next phase.

The key for UK nationals living in Spain is that for those with permanent residence status it preserves the rights of residence locally, including health benefits.

Prime Minister Theresa May and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's joint "progress report" outlines the key areas of agreement on the three priority issues – citizens' rights, the Irish border and financial settlement. The key aspect we feel is the implications for citizens' rights and particularly UK nationals living in – or planning to move to – other EU countries.

What does this mean for you?

Three key points noted in the joint UK-EU statement are that:

'UK nationals...who are legally resident in the host State by the specified date, fall within the scope of the Withdrawal Agreement'

and
'...those already holding a permanent residence document issued under Union law at the specified date will have that document converted into the new document free of charge.'

and
'...Rules for healthcare... will follow Regulation (EC) No 883/2004. Persons whose competent state is the UK and are in the EU27 on the specified date (and vice versa) ... continue to be eligible for healthcare reimbursement, as long as that stay, residence or treatment continues.'

We consider below the implications for UK citizens who are:

1. Registered as permanently resident in another EU country

British expatriates who already have official permanent residence status in their country of residence, such as Spain, France, Portugal, Cyprus or Malta, can look forward to a secure future in their chosen country of residence.

The confirmation that the rules for healthcare will continue for those who are resident in an EU27 country on the specified date is particularly welcome. It means that those who qualify for healthcare under current rules will continue to do so as long as they remain resident in countries such as those noted above.

2. Have a home in an EU country – but are not registered as tax resident

If you wish to become permanently resident in Spain or another EU country, the clock is ticking.

You need to start looking at obtaining official permanent residence status ahead of the UK's withdrawal date (currently scheduled for 29th March 2019). We would encourage you to start that process now as there are likely to be lots of others applying to the authorities.

Blevins Franks can advise you how to benefit from the local tax rules to ensure you are in the best financial situation to enjoy life in Spain.

3. Living in the UK and considering moving to another EU country

The joint statement serves as a call to action to accelerate your plans so that you can become a permanent resident in Spain or your country of choice ahead of the withdrawal date in March 2019.

We can advise you on local rules, laws and taxation. Take advice as soon as possible, however, as the steps you take in the UK in this tax year can have a positive impact on your situation, compared with delaying them until you have changed your residence.

What happens next?

Following the EU summit on 14th-15th December, the EU27 formally agreed that "sufficient progress" had been made to trigger the next phase of Brexit talks. Next planned steps are discussing the transition period in the new year before tackling the future trade relationship, tabled for March 2018. But there is still much to agree. You could benefit from reviewing your financial planning and exploring your options before any changes take place. A locally-based adviser with cross-border expertise can help you secure financial peace of mind and prepare for Brexit

developments that might affect you. To let us help guide you on the implications for your situation, please contact your local Blevins Franks office (see advert below) or contact us through our website www.blevinsfranks.com.

The points above are based on the Joint UK-EU Joint report from the negotiators of the European Union and the United Kingdom Government on progress during phase 1 of negotiations under Article 50 TEU on the United Kingdom's orderly withdrawal from the European Union put to the meeting of the European Council (Article 50) of 14-15 December 2017, and which it is planned will subsequently be incorporated into the overall withdrawal agreement.

Blevins Franks accepts no liability for any loss resulting from any action or inaction or omission as a result of reading this information, which is general in nature and not specific to your circumstances.

Brexit. The clock is ticking.

The EU and UK have agreed to preserve the rights of UK nationals who are resident in the EU before Brexit. If you already have official residence status you can look forward to a secure future in Spain. If you do not, you need to take action now to formalise your position. We can advise you.

Keep an eye on the Blevins Franks website for Brexit news - www.blevinsfranks.com/brexit and contact us if you want to sign up for regular updates.

Talk to the people who know

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Work starts on Estepona's new athletics stadium complex



An artist's impression of the scheme which is due for completion late next year. :: SUR

The six-million-euro project will also see a large entrance plaza, car park, BMW track and landscaped gardens built

surrounded by some 20,000 square metres of landscaped gardens.

In all, the work will cost over six million euros, paid for out of town hall funds, and is expected to be finished by the end of 2018.

Increase in original budget

The project was originally put out to tender in September 2016 and eight companies bidded to carry out the work. Although one company from those was chosen, the final negotiations over the deal and preparations for the work forced the council to increase the allocated budget, such that the work had to be put out to tender again. Eventually the contract was awarded to a consortium of Bonifacio Solís and Alvac.

Estepona mayor, José María García Urbano, said last week that the stadium complex is "one of the biggest projects for Estepona in this current council legislature and it will be available for a wide variety of uses".

He added that this is an important part of the plan to consolidate the northern area of the town and complement existing facilities such as the fairground, the Muñoz Pérez football pitch and the Felipe VI auditorium.

:: CHARO MÁRQUEZ

ESTEPONA. The town hall in Estepona started work last week on the construction of a new athletics stadium and underground car park next to the town's feria showground.

This is one of the star projects of the current mayor and aims to create one of the best athletics venues in Andalucía on a site covering 34,132 square metres.

The project includes an athletics track over 16,500 square metres, an underground car park for almost a thousand cars and support buildings for sporting and cultural use covering a further 3,000 square metres.

As well as athletics, field events will be able to be held there and there will be a normal size football pitch plus a half pitch for seven-a-side matches. There will also be a large entrance plaza with space for open-air sporting events and, on the edge, a BMX track. All this will be

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Malaga's planned new pet cemetery 'to open by the end of 2019'

The complex, offering cremations and burials, will provide a public alternative to current services run by dog and cat homes

:: FRANCISCO JIMÉNEZ

MALAGA. The public company that runs Malaga's cemetery park on the outskirts of the city has announced that its plans for a special pets burial and cremation area could come to fruition by late next year.

Parcemasa says it plans to offer a

cremation service as an alternative to the cremation of pets provided by various dog and cat homes. They also hope to offer extra services such as corteges, farewell ceremonies, burials and rentals of niches.

To bring their plans to life on a plot of 15,000 square metres, a one-million-euro investment is needed. The pet cemetery will have a different entrance to the main cemetery.

A team of economists has carried out a viability study of the project, which still needs approval from the board, and has said that the investment can be recovered within twelve years through income from pet burials and other services.

The study estimates that some 7,500 dogs die in Malaga city each year and that one in three owners would be interested in using the new pet cemetery's services. The business plan states that prices will start at 140 euros for a cremation and 150 for a shared grave.



Plans say it will cost 140 euros to cremate a dog or cat. :: SUR



CUDECA LIGHTS A LIGHT

The Cudeca Hospice held its traditional Christmas 'Light a Light' ceremony last Friday 15 December. The event was attended by founder and honorary president, Joan Hunt, and directors, Marisa Martín and Rafael Olalla. In addition to switching on the lights, Father Christmas was present together with the choir from Sunny View School and the Costa Soul Singers.

Argentinian court decides that former councillor can be returned to Spain for trial

:: HÉCTOR BARBOTA

MARBELLA. Carlos Fernández, the former Marbella councillor wanted in Spain in connection with the Malaya corruption scandal and other charges, was told yesterday that a court in Argentina has allowed him to be extradited.

Fernández fled Spain in June 2006 as the wide-reaching corruption scandal was breaking and evaded detection and arrest until September this year.

The Spanish authorities had asked for extradition on six charges, however in the end the Argentinian judge only considered one linked to another corruption case at Marbella town hall called Saqueo 2. He said the other charges had expired.

The decision can be appealed.

Tickets go on sale for next year's Starlite as initial acts announced

Sting is the first international artist to confirm and well-known national names already on the bill also include Sara Baras, David Bisbal and Pablo Alborán

:: MÓNICA PÉREZ

MARBELLA. The Starlite Festival has already started warming up for next summer with the announcement of the first acts that will be performing at the six-week-long event.

Recently festival organisers confirmed that the event, which has become one of the most prestigious summer concert series in southern Europe, will be staying in Marbella for 2018. Since controversy last summer over opening hours and venue licences, there had been fears that the event would relocate somewhere else next summer.



Sting. :: AP



Pablo Alborán. :: SUR



David Bisbal. :: SUR

The festival will run from 12 July to 25 August and the first international name of the many expected to confirm is Sting, who will perform on 19 July.

So far, well-known Spanish artists

to confirm for the venue, which was once a hillside quarry in the Nagüeles area of Marbella, include Pablo Alborán, David Bisbal and Sara Baras.

Tickets are on sale on the website www.starlitemarbella.es

Three beaches in Marbella to get rescue equipment to help save lives year-round

:: NIEVES CASTRO

MARBELLA. Three of Marbella's beaches are to have equipment installed to enable members of the public to help save lives in an emergency at any time of year, even with no lifeguard on duty.

The devices, known as 'puntos naranjas' (orange points) for their high-visibility colour, consist of a harness linked to a rescue sling or float and tied to a cable some 400 metres long. The mechanism allows the person being saved and the rescuer to be winched in, saving time and energy.

The large orange boxes placed on the beach also automatically call emergency services once they are activated. They will be installed on La Venus, Cabopino and San Pedro beaches.

Some other Spanish beach resorts now also have the devices.



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Starved horses rescued in Huelva recover at Alhaurín el Grande shelter

:: TONY BRYANT

MALAGA. Following reports of animal cruelty in the village of Lucena del Puerto, near Huelva, the Guardia Civil's environment protection unit, Seprona, discovered 28 abnormally thin and weak horses. It is claimed that the owner was not feeding the horses nor had they any sort of shelter or veterinary care.

The police sought a court order and a veterinary inspection was ordered, which confirmed that all of the horses were in extremely bad condition. The vets claimed that there were 12 horses with visible bones and no muscle tone.

The courts authorised the removal of the horses and the owner will now be processed for animal cruelty and for denying veterinary assistance.

The Andalusian Rescue Centre for Horses in Alhaurin El Grande (ARCH) was only able to take two since their paddocks are already filled to capacity. Ten were taken to Cab-



Recovering in Alhaurín. :: J-L

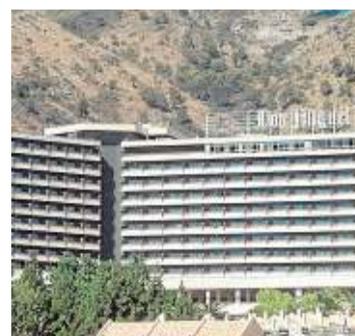
allos Luna, a horse rescue centre close to Seville, but one of the weakest mares had to be put down. The authorities are still seeking refuge for the other 16 horses.

HERE AND THERE

Go-ahead for 70m refit and partial demolition of old Don Miguel hotel

MARBELLA

:: H.B. The council in Marbella has given approval for Magda Hotels, the new owner of the old Don Miguel hotel, to carry out partial demolition work to some buildings that don't form part of its 70-million-euro project to relaunch the landmark hotel behind the town. The hotel is due to reopen as a Club Med resort in spring 2019, creating 300 new jobs.



The old Don Miguel. :: SUR

New boutique hotel opens in Marbella in old Casa Club villa

MARBELLA

:: SUR. The Avantum group has launched its new boutique hotel, which will open to the public on December 27. The 11-bedroom hotel, called The Touch Puerto Banús, is in the old Casa Club Marbella building, a villa built in 1960 in the Cortijo Blanco area towards

Fire breaks out on La Resinera finca in Benahavís

BENAHAVÍS

:: SUR. Fire broke out on Tuesday in the Finca La Resinera rural estate near Benahavís. Emergency services were called at 7.45am. In total, 85 firefighters from the Infoca forest fire team were on the rugged site though the day. By evening it was under control. The estate was once owned by the ex Libyan dictator, Colonel Gaddafi.

San Pedro. It is targeted at higher-end guests.

The hotel aims to personalise its service and will not have a receptionist. Instead each guest will be allocated their own, personal host to look after them.

Prices start from 140 euros a night in low season, rising to 1,500 a night for the best rooms in high season.

Avantum also runs luxury holiday apartments in the Marbella area.

Marijuana plantation found in villa in Sierra Blanca

MARBELLA

:: SUR. Police have uncovered a marijuana plantation inside an empty luxury villa on the Mirador de Sierra Blanca estate in Marbella. A 43-year-old Serbian man has been arrested on drug offences and 1,250 plants destroyed. Neighbours had reported a strong smell and the whirring noise of motors coming from the villa.

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Pedestrianisation work in Torremolinos to begin in January

The project will incorporate 10,000 square metres and involves an investment of 2.5 million euros

BY TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. After two years of delays, work is to finally begin on the pedestrianisation of the Plaza Costa del Sol in Torremolinos.

The town hall has announced that the renovation of the centre, which has been closed to traffic since December 2015, and the Avenida Palma de Mallorca will start on Monday 8 January 2018.

The council was given the green light after the Junta de Andalucía recently approved the town's updated urban development plan (PGOU).

The project involves an investment of 2.5 million euros and will run in two phases, the first from January until May. The second phase will begin in September and should be completed by December 2018.

The renovations will be overseen by architect Salvador Moreno Peralta and involves the transformation of more than 10,000 square metres. This will incorporate parts of Calle de la Cruz, Calle Hoyo, Avenida Isabel Manoja and Calle Marqués de Salamanca.

The mayor of Torremolinos, José Ortiz, explained that the centre of the town will be transformed into a "grand boulevard".

"This is the first step in transforming Torremolinos into an innovative, avant-garde town, giving it a new image of cultural importance. This will be the biggest change the town has seen since the 1960s," the mayor stressed.

The construction of the new boulevard is only the first step of transformation of the centre of Torremolinos. Throughout 2018 other renovation work will take place in Plaza La Nogalera, Cuesta del Tajo, Calle del Peligro and the Pimental Tower.

Grand transformation

The emblematic Barrabino mansion will gain prominence as the central focus of the Plaza Costa del Sol. The former residence of Maria Barrabino - remembered as one of the town's



An artist's impression of the new Plaza Costa del Sol. :: SUR



Sculpture by Elena Laverón. :: A. G.

most charitable people - was purchased by the Torremolinos town hall in September and the grand palatial home will now be renovated and turned into a cultural, artistic and exhibition centre. The grounds of the house will be opened to create an avant-garde style plaza complete, with an open-air theatre embellished with several bronze sculptures by Elena Laverón.

The Plaza Costa del Sol will include an emblematic pergola, shaded green areas, ponds, fountains and water features.

Work on the new train station will start early next year

The Town hall has announced that the work to make the train station in Plaza La Nogalera more accessible will now go ahead as planned, although a little later than originally intended.

Following a period of uncertainty, rail company Renfe has confirmed that, although the work will not begin in January, the new station, which will cost

7.5 million euros, should be complete by the end of 2018. The planned works will result in the comprehensive renovation of its existing facilities and will make them fully accessible to people with reduced mobility.

Torremolinos is one of the few stations which still fail to comply with accessibility standards in Andalucía, despite registering an average of more than 6,000 passengers a day. The escalator is only operational for people leaving the station, despite repeated requests for the station to be modernised to allow easier access.



More than 100 bikers dressed as Santa for the Toy Run. :: T.B.

A hundred biker Santas ride into town bearing gifts

BY T. BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. The centre of Torremolinos was overrun with Santa Clauses last weekend, although they were not riding in open sleighs, but on motorcycles of all makes and sizes.

In an event organised by local motorcycle club, Komando Amimoto, and Torremolinos town hall, more than one hundred bikers dressed as Santa took part in the third edition of the Toy Run Soli-

dario. The motorcycle cavalcade began in the Plaza La Nogalera and continued through the streets of Torremolinos in order to collect toys to be distributed among several associations and foundations that offer support to local underprivileged families.

The red-and-white-clad convoy visited shops and outlets, collecting more than 300 toys and games destined for children in danger of social exclusion.

Council donates 5,000 euros to the AFAB Alzheimer's centre in Benalmádena

BY T. B.

TORREMOLINOS. The social services department of Torremolinos town hall has joined forces with the Benalmádena-based association of families of patients with Alzheimer's (AFAB), in order to help improve the quality of life of those affected by the disease. The town hall has given a grant of 5,000 euros to assist with the daily cost of counselling, medical assistance and the gen-

eral running of AFAB day centre in Arroyo de la Miel.

Torremolinos councillor for social services, Pedro Pérez, said, "There are 15,300 people over the age of 60 in Torremolinos, almost 23 per cent of the population. If we consider the influence of the disease in this age group we can say that there may be more than 1,000 people affected by the disease."

Maricruz Azuaga Ruiz, president of AFAB, pointed out that by 2050 the amount of people affected by the disease will triple. She also suggested that Alzheimer's will begin affecting younger people.

Torremolinos does not have a day centre that specialises in dementia, so the town hall provides transport for patients to visit the facility in Benalmádena.

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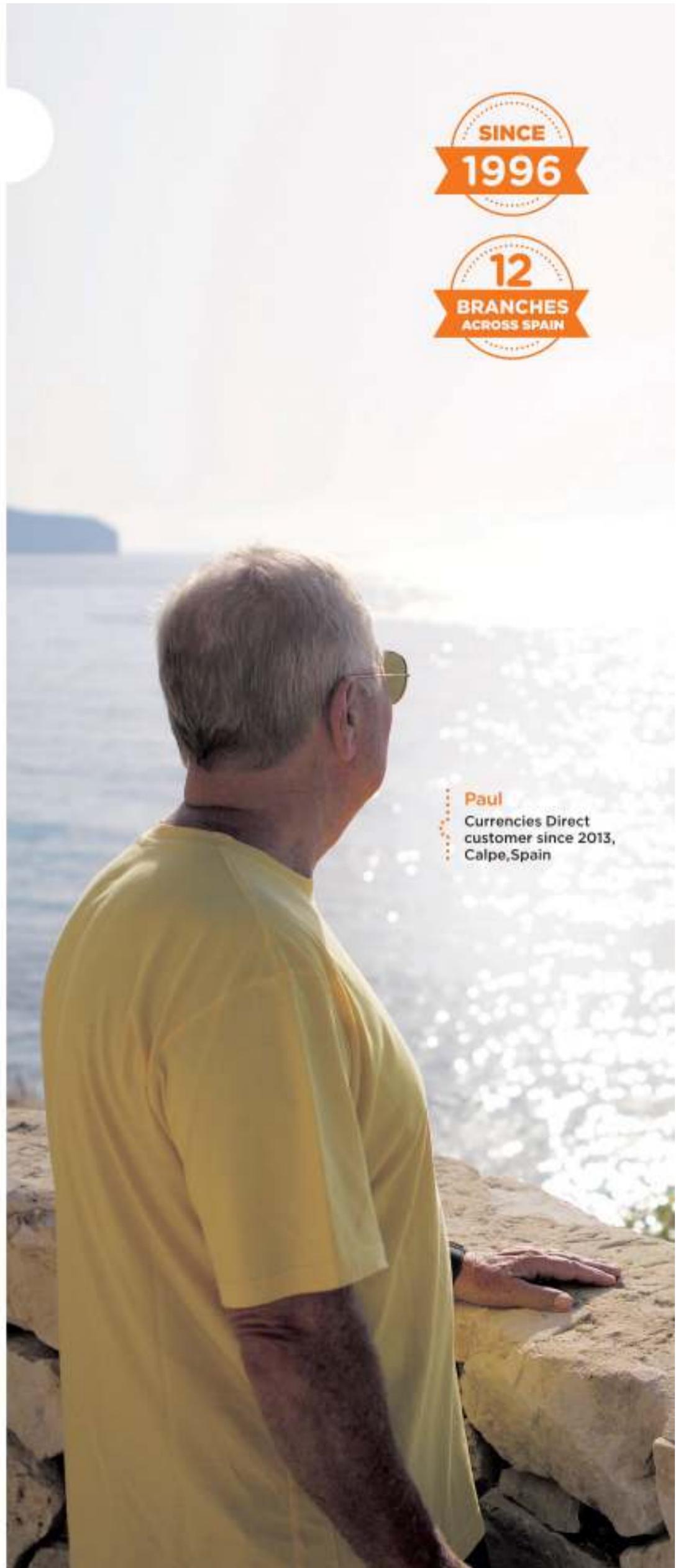
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Paul

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Torrox Migas festival includes gluten-free option for the first time

More than 40,000 visitors attended the annual event, which always takes place on the Sunday before Christmas

:: J. RHODES / E. CABEZAS

TORROX. Torrox's annual fiesta de las migas was enjoyed by over 40,000 people, according to the town hall. The festival, which took place in Torrox Pueblo last Sunday, offered gluten-free migas for the first time ever. According to organisers, more than 300 people asked for this alternative.

Francisco Domínguez Azuaga, who was in charge of cooking the gluten-free migas, said that the flour used for them was "more difficult to cook" than normal migas, which are traditionally made with breadcrumbs.

Both the gluten-free and normal migas were served with the typical 'arriera' salad, comprising oranges, olives, tomatoes, onions and cod. In total 1,600 litres of local sweet wine



More than 40,000 attended this year's festival. **:: E. C.**



The gluten-free option. **:: J. R.**

were also consumed.

Mary and Paul Page who live near Torrox and are originally from Kent said, "This is the third year we have been. It's a very good event and the town hall put it on for free."

As well as the migas tasting there was dancing, music and stalls selling handicrafts as well as local produce such as wine and olive oil.

LOCAL ARTIST TO EXHIBIT WORK FOR ARTS SOCIETY ANNIVERSARY

Lieuwke Loth's 'Eternity' sculpture received the highest number of votes at the Arts Society Nerja's recent Jubilee Exhibition which was held at the town's cultural centre. The exhibition formed part of celebrations to mark both 50 years of the Arts Society and 25 years of the Nerja branch. The sculpture, along with 10 others, will be sent to London for the international society's 50th anniversary exhibition in 2018.



:: SUR

HERE AND THERE



Rosa Arrabal and others at the fire station on Tuesday. **:: SUR**

Long-awaited fire station set to open in January 2018

NERJA

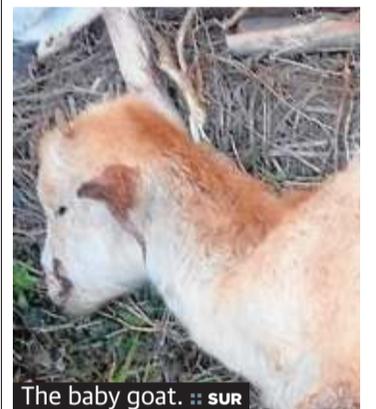
:: J. RHODES. Mayor of Nerja, Rosa Arrabal, along with councillors and representatives from Malaga province's Diputación signed off the

completed work to the town's fire station on Tuesday. The service, which will cover Nerja, Frigiliana and Torrox, is expected to start operating in January 2018 after two and a half years of delays. There have been regular protests in Nerja over the delays and posters and signs have been a feature on the closed gates to the station for some time.

TROPS set to open up HQ on the Algarve

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA

:: A. P. Tropical fruit giant, TROPS, which has its headquarters in Trapiche, north of Vélez-Málaga, is set to open its first operation outside Spain. The company has chosen the town of Tavira on the Algarve in Portugal, as avocado production there is successful. According to TROPS manager, Enrique Colilles, there is "no shortage of water" in the area, unlike in Malaga.



The baby goat. **:: SUR**

New flea bite cases despite council's claim

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA

:: E. C. Parents and teachers of the Reñidero primary school in Vélez-Málaga continue to complain that pupils are suffering from flea bites, although the town hall insists that the problem has been solved. They say that more than 30 new cases were reported last week despite claims by the council that classrooms have been "thoroughly disinfected" and the plot of land next to the school has also been treated.

Reward for information on mutilated baby goat

BENAGALBÓN

:: E. C. A resident of Benagalbón whose baby goat had its four hooves cut off has offered a 500-euro reward for "trustworthy information" about who was behind the crime. Francisco Javier Jiménez explained to SUR on Monday that he had bought the goat, which was just two months old, as a pet for his two children. "I bought the kid in Colmenar a month ago as a pet because my children love animals," he explained. The goat had to be put down.

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Following the funds to Nepal

A Marbella estate agent has been to meet children she has been raising money to help

::RACHEL ARMSTRONG

MARBELLA. Local real estate agent Marianne Steneholm took some time off from selling luxury properties in Marbella last month to visit Nepal and see how money she has raised will be used to help child and women victims of human trafficking.

Marianne has raised 48,626€ so far this year in aid of Maiti Nepal through various charity events and fundraisers. She now hopes some Christmas donations will help her reach, and even exceed, her target of 50,000€.

Maiti Nepal is a non-profit organisation dedicated to protecting girls and women from crimes such as trafficking and various forms of exploitation and torture.

The money raised has been used for various necessities at the refuge including new carpets and mattresses as well as nappies and sanitary pads. It has also gone towards electricity and water bills and repairs of hot water systems that had broken and caused leaks around the shelter.

Travelling with her sister and two friends, Marianne took suitcases vacuum-packed full of nearly 300 soft toys which the Swedish



Some of the children with their soft toys. :: SUR

school in Marbella had helped to collect.

“To meet all the children after working so hard through this year was beautiful,” said Marianne. “We were made to feel so welcome at Maiti Nepal. The shelter headquar-

ters in Kathmandu is such a nice place, full of love and care. The children have a great future there and are being well taken care of.”

One little girl in particular stole the fundraiser’s heart straight away: four-year-old Katyeni. “From the



Marianne and Katyeni. :: SUR

very first day she came and wanted to sit with me,” Marianne said. “Always laughing and smiling, she has such a beautiful aura around her.”

The Swedish real estate agent has sponsored Katyeni which covers her living expenses and school fees for the year. As she hasn’t started school yet, the additional money will be used to pay for extra medical care.

“Katyeni was almost starved to death as a baby and is therefore very small and in need of lots of supplements and additional support to grow into the size she should be at the age of four,” Marianne explained.

Many people in Nepal have not been able to rebuild what was destroyed in the 2015 earthquake and some remote villages that they visited have no water, heating or toilets. She has found sponsors for five children so far and is encouraging others to get involved as well.

Describing the trip to Nepal as “the journey of a lifetime”, Marianne admitted it has had a “huge impact” on her outlook on life, teaching her “to appreciate life and be more careful”. She said: “Many of these women and children have such real smiles and are so loving and caring. They have very little and they still give 100% - I find that so impressive.”

i More information :
acmariannes@gmail.com or visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/mariannesteneholm



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British PM reassures expats that their "rights as residents in the EU will be protected"

:: SUR

MALAGA. British prime minister Theresa May has told UK nationals living in the EU that the agreement the UK Government and the European Commission published on 8 December "guarantees that [their] rights as residents in the EU will be protected in the Withdrawal Agreement".

"You can have certainty that you will be able to receive healthcare rights, pension and other benefits provisions as you do today. You can also benefit from existing rules for past and future social security contributions," said May in a message

published on Facebook on Tuesday afternoon.

"While I hope this agreement will bring you some reassurance, I know there are a few important issues that have yet to be concluded," said the PM, referring to the ability of UK nationals living in the EU to retain certain rights if they move within the EU.

"We will continue to raise these issues with the EU in the New Year," added May, finishing by wishing all UK nationals in the EU and their families a happy Christmas.

See surinenglish.com for a link to the full message.



Pro-EU demonstrators in London on Thursday. :: AFP

LEGAL ADVICE



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REF. R.E.T.

Three years ago I divorced my husband, with whom I have two children. After a long struggle at Court, with my husband rejecting all my requests, the judge established visiting arrangements so that my husband could see the children. I have never opposed to these arrangements and I facilitate them as much as I can,

but he has his own interpretation of the visiting times, and comes whenever he wants. If there is a weekend when he has to be with them, but he decides to go on a trip with his new partner instead, he does not turn up. Up to now I did not care much about this, but I am fed up of never knowing if he is going to come or not. Is there anything that I can do to change this situation?

Visiting rights are indeed a right but they are also an obligation. The main aim is to cover the emotional and educational needs of the children and therefore the primary interest is the children's interest. Visiting rights can only be limited or cancelled if there are serious circumstances indicating that those measures are advisable. Therefore, if you consider that your ex-husband's behaviour affects your children seriously, you can ask the court for the modification of visiting rights.

REF. L.U.Z.

I am forty, single and have been living for several years in Spain. I have delayed my desire to have a child for several years, as my partner was not sure if he wanted to have children. This has been the main cause of our breakup, as due to my age I could not continue waiting for him to decide. I have put a lot of thought into the issue, and although I have considered adoption, I prefer to enter IVF treatment to have a child. Can I proceed even if I am not married and have no partner?

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HAPPY CHRISTMAS



IN BRIEF

High Commissioner of Australia visits the Rock

GIBRALTAR
:: D.B. The High Commissioner of Australia to the United Kingdom, His Excellency the Hon Alexander Downer, came to Gibraltar on a fact-finding visit earlier this week. He had a number of briefings and working meetings on a wide range of subjects, including Brexit, future trade and the economy, and attended an official dinner to which the Australian expat community in Gibraltar was also invited.

Fascinating National Archive film series

GIBRALTAR
:: D.B. The 2018 Gibraltar National Archive Film Night Series will begin on 17 January at 6pm at the university. The event is free of charge, although it is necessary to register in advance by emailing archives@gibraltar.gov.gi or by phoning 200 79461.

After a 15-minute vintage Gibraltar photo movie, the audience can see 'Gibraltar: Honouring a Generation', about the evacuation, 'The Clue of the Missing Ape', and then an interview.

Botanic Garden tour programme 2018

GIBRALTAR
:: D.B. The programme for the 2018 guided tours of the Botanic Gardens has just been announced. These fascinating tours will take place on 27 January, 24 February, 24 March, 28 April, 26 May, 23 June, 21 July, 25 August, 22 September, 27 October and 24 November. All these dates are Saturdays. Adult tickets cost £5, and there is no charge for children. All the tours will start at 10.30am from the George Don Gates.

UK confirms support for Gibraltar as Spain pushes for further veto

Speaking in response to the EU's latest negotiating guidelines, Theresa May insisted that Gibraltar will not be sidelined in the Brexit transition period

:: DEBBIE BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. Clause 24 of the EU's negotiating headlines raised its ugly head again this week, causing tension in Gibraltar and between the UK and the European Union, and leading British prime minister Theresa May to reiterate in the House of Commons that Gibraltar has her full support and will not be left out of negotiations for the transition period of Brexit.

Clause 24 caused shock back in April, when it effectively gave Spain a veto over any UK-EU agreements that relate to Gibraltar once Britain has left the EU. The clause says that no future agreement between the UK and the EU can be applied to Gibraltar without prior agreement between Spain and the UK.

The reason for the present concern is because the EU has just published its negotiating guidelines for the next phase of the Brexit talks, and these once again refer to Clause 24.

The UK and Gibraltar governments consider that any arrangements for Britain's transition period automatically include Gibraltar, because Brexit will not yet have happened, but Spain appears to be putting pressure on the EU to specifically apply Clause 24 to these negotiations as well.

In response to a question put to her by the DUP's Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, May reiterated comments she had made on Monday regarding Gibraltar and the Brexit negotiations.

"We and the EU have been clear



May addressing the National Day crowds by video this year. **:: SUR**

"The European Union itself has nothing to gain from this," insists deputy chief minister Joseph Garcia

that Gibraltar is covered by the withdrawal agreement and our Article 50 exit negotiations," she said. "As we negotiate this, we will be negotiating to ensure that the relationships are there for Gibraltar as well. We are not going to exclude Gibraltar from our negotiations for either the implementation period or the future agreement."

The Gibraltar government was quick to respond to the news, accusing Spain of "negative motivation" and "outright bad faith". Deputy chief minister Dr Joseph Garcia said: "Spain has absolutely nothing to

gain by this. Current and future Spanish workers have nothing to gain by this and the uncertainty created by their government as a result. Indeed, the European Union itself has nothing to gain by this. All that they have done is slap in the face a small community that voted by 96% to remain in the European Union. Moreover, the purported veto is not even in the interests of Spain itself or of the many thousands of Spanish and other EU nationals who live in Spain and work in Gibraltar."

It should be noted that these are proposed guidelines from the EU regarding the next stage of talks, so nothing is set in stone. However, when asked about the application of Clause 24 to the transition period, EU negotiator Michel Barnier indicated that "the spirit of April's guidelines is reaffirmed on this particular point in the document agreed today."

Enhanced cardiac rehabilitation centre at St Bernard's hospital

:: D. BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. The cardiac rehabilitation centre at St Bernard's hospital has been completely modernised, with new gym equipment and a fully integrated audio-visual system to provide music during exercise sessions and support education, mindfulness and relaxation needs.

The unit is designed to create an optimal, healing environment for patients with cardiopulmonary problems or those classified as high risk. It has been named after the late Mr Lionel Perez, who was chairman of the Cardiac Rehabilitation Support Group, in recognition of his voluntary services.

Neil Costa, Gibraltar's Minister of Health, opened the unit earlier this week and described it as impressive. "It has refreshed a vital clinical service, which will benefit our cardiac patients and will prove pivotal in our continued drive to improve and modernise the health services which we provide to our community, he said.



The official opening. **:: SUR**



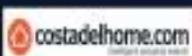
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Half a million workers to benefit from 4% increase in minimum wage

The move is in line with EU recommendations and the government aims to give further rises up to 2020

Lucía Palacios

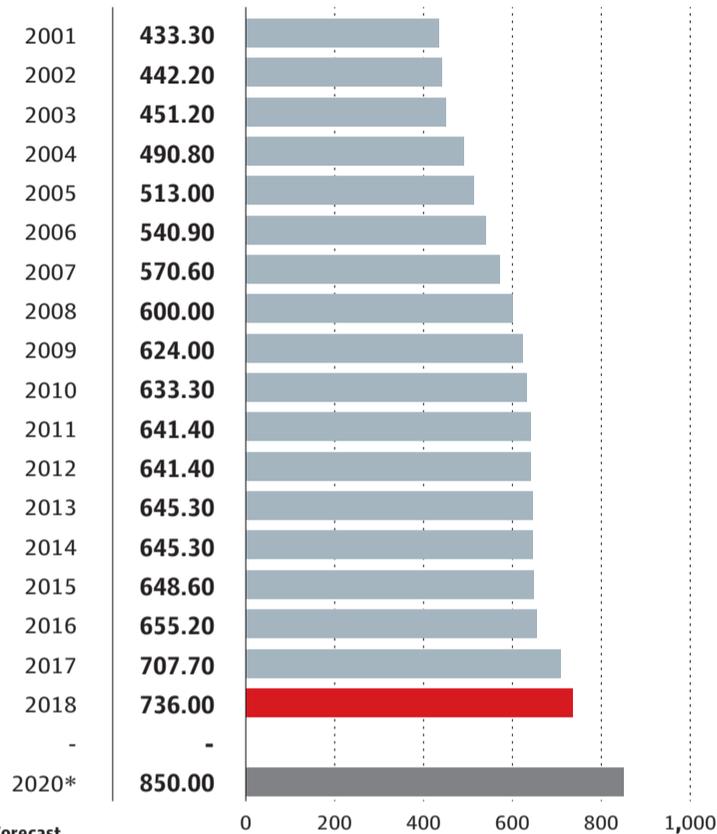
MADRID. More than half a million workers in Spain on the minimum wage will see their pay packets go up by 4 per cent in January.

Government, trade unions and representatives of business have announced that they have reached an agreement whereby 533,978 people, some 3.5 per cent of those paying social security, will see their salary rise. It will go up from 707 euros to 736 euros, (where paid in twelve monthly payments plus two equivalent monthly payments in July and December, as is common in Spain).

Explaining the changes on Tuesday, Minister for Employment, Fátima Báñez, also said that the plan was to increase this amount in stages to 850 euros (where paid in 14 payments across the year) by 2020. Sources said that the government is planning the biggest increase in 2020 itself, which would be the largest single hike in the minimum wage in a year since 1983.

Growth of the minimum wage in Spain

14 payments a year (in euros per payment)



* Forecast

Source: Ministry of Employment

R. C.

By 2020 the minimum wage will have gone up by 200 euros in four years.

The economy needs to grow

The move is in line with EU recommendations to set the minimum wage at around 60 per cent of the average salary. However the minister pointed out that to have funds to meet this requirement, the economy will need to grow by an average of 2.5 per cent a year and an average of 450,000 people extra a year need to find jobs and join the social security system.

For the moment the agreed 2018 figure of 736 euros, in the typical case of 14 payments across the year, is equivalent to an annual 10,302.60 euros before tax. The minimum for workers on day rates instead is now at 34.85 euros and domestic staff must receive at least 5.76 an hour.

According to data, women, foreign residents, unqualified personnel and those on temporary contracts are currently the most likely to receive the minimum wage. Age is also a factor, with someone aged 20 ten times more likely to be on the minimum wage than someone between 50 and 59 years old.

The Canary Islands is the region of Spain with the highest percentage of minimum wage workers and in terms of sectors of the workforce, the most affected are retail, hotel and catering, drivers and machine operators.

With the increase, the social system will collect an extra 33.22 million euros windfall in 2018.

Unicaja sells portion of 'toxic' real estate to Norwegian debt company

J. V. A.

MALAGA. Unicaja Banco has reached an agreement for an undisclosed sum with Axactor, a Norwegian company, to offload 252 million euros' worth of real estate it received when owners defaulted on their loans in the last recession. Some of the property was acquired in 2014 from former savings banks in northern Spain that Unicaja rescued.

Axactor specialises in buying debt and distressed assets and has grown heavily in Spain recently. The company is buying 75 per cent shares in the property portfolio and Malaga-based Unicaja is retaining the remaining 25 per cent. A joint company will be used to promote it to buyers.

The operation is the latest part of Unicaja's strategy to divest its problematic real estate assets. Earlier this year a further 265 million euros' worth was sold, including a portfolio of land in Malaga to developer Neinor with a value of 100 million euros.

This is the second deal with Axacor. Last year Unicaja sold it almost 60,000 loan contracts that had defaulted on payments.

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NO END IN SIGHT

I'm writing this column on Thursday, as Catalans vote for their next government in an election called for by Mariano Rajoy last month. In normal circumstances, it would be a tricky piece to write, because I know that these words will be published tomorrow, when the result is known; yet I must write them today, while the outcome is still in the future.

We're not living in normal circumstances, though - we're living in Spain at the close of 2017. I can therefore say with certainty that whether the majority of Catalans voted for anti or pro-independence parties yesterday, or whether the election eventually results in a hung parliament, there is no end in sight to the Catalonia debacle.

At the time of writing, polls indicate that the vote is evenly split between pro and anti-independence parties and that both sides will struggle to gain a par-

liamentary majority if victorious. In other words, the Catalonia saga is about to reach new heights of complexity and, potentially, animosity.

As a result, the Bank of Spain is erring on the side of caution in its analysis of the Spanish economy's medium-term future. According to its latest predictions, which were released a few days before yesterday's election, Spain's GDP growth next year will be 2.4%, down from an original forecast of 2.5%; the bank also lowered its projection for 2019, from 2.2% to 2.1%. These slight downward adjustments were made because of uncertainty surrounding the Catalonia situation.

Even if secessionist parties form a government after yesterday's vote, they will still disagree on how to proceed in talks with Madrid. Esquerra, the largest pro-independence party, favours dropping the campaign for outright in-

dependence and negotiating with Rajoy instead. The anarchist-communist party CUP, meanwhile, continues to support a full split from Spain.

Pro-independence feeling in Catalonia has undoubtedly been increased by Rajoy's ham-fisted attempts to quash the secessionist project since October 1st: it will not simply disappear if anti-independence parties form an administration following yesterday's election. But that's assuming they even get that far, which is by no means a given.

Centrist newcomer Ciudadanos looks set to become the strongest anti-secession force in Catalonia, yet it requires the backing of other parties to lead the region's next government. It can forget the support of the leftist Catalunya en Comú Podem, a party that's ambivalent about independence but steadfastly anti-Ciudadanos. This may make kingmakers of the region's Socialists, who are anti-independence but have their differences with Ciudadanos.

So whichever way yesterday's vote plays out, it looks like we're in for a miniature version of the Spanish general election in December 2015, which left Spain without a government for ten months. Indeed, the farce that was Spanish politics last year showed us that, in present day Spain, elections create more problems than they solve.



A festively decorated polling station in the town of Vic, in Barcelona province, on Thursday. :: REUTERS

Catalonia decides in 'most important election in 40 years'

Spain waited with bated breath to see if pro-independence parties would win enough regional MPs for a majority again or if their support had waned

:: SUR

BARCELONA. People across Catalonia went to the polling stations for a regional election yesterday in what many observers were calling the most important vote in Spain in the forty years since democracy was restored.

On going to press polls were just closing with the result seemingly on a knife edge and Spain waiting with bated breath to see whether pro-independence parties would secure a majority in the 135-seat regional parliament again, or the pro-union parties would make a breakthrough.

In all 5.5 million Catalans of voting age on the electoral roll were called to vote, unusually for Spain on a working day rather than a Sunday. Many parents complained that



Ciudadanos' Inés Arrimadas, narrow opinion poll leader, votes. :: REUTERS

they had had to find childcare as schools closed for the day. Rolling figures by early evening suggested a turnout six percentage points up on the last regional elections in 2015.

Opinion polls before the vote had shown the pro-Spain Ciudadanos party, under Inés Arrimadas, slightly ahead of the ERC, support-

ing an independent republic. However the final distribution of seats and how the seven main parties expected to win seats would pact between them was the most eagerly awaited news last night.

Elections were called by Madrid when the regional parliament was dissolved in October over an illegal declaration of independence.

Dangerous Serbian 'killer' wanted across Europe held in Spain after triple murder

Norbert Feher, known as 'Igor the Russian', is accused of killing two Guardia Civil and a farmworker in Aragón

:: SUR

MADRID. A 36-year-old former Serbian soldier was arrested late last week after a series of violent attacks in Teruel province, Aragón.

Following an armed attack in a rural area earlier this month, the Guardia Civil had been carrying out extra searches in the province. On Thursday last week two

officers were shot at close range and a farmhand who had been helping the searches was found close by, also fatally wounded. Next morning, Norbert Feher was found sleeping by a road and arrested on suspicion of the crimes.

He carries the nickname 'Igor the Russian' and has been the subject of an arrest warrant since last July after violent incidents in Italy. In September this year Italian police asked Spain to check Mijas and Puerto Banús where it was rumoured he was hiding, but he was not found. He was described as extremely dangerous and violent.



'Igor the Russian' amid high security after leaving court. :: EFE

IN BRIEF

One in five won't buy Catalan this Christmas

BARCELONA

Despite campaigns to boycott the region's produce over the independence movement, almost 73 per cent of people in Spain won't stop buying products made in Catalonia this Christmas. In a poll 20.42 per cent however have said they won't buy Catalan products, including the traditional festive cava.

Policeman held for puncturing tyres on A-7

BARCELONA

A 51-year-old policeman on sick leave has been held in connection with a wave of burst tyres on lorries driving on the A-7 motorway in Barcelona province. On 1 December 13 lorries were damaged and four days later a further 30 had their tyres burst by an object on the surface, causing hold ups.

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THERE IS A PRIZE FOR THE BEST
CONTRIBUTION TO THIS PAGE
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Dignity forty years on

I read with interest the article by Sr Castillo about dignity and Andalucía (SUR in English December 8th).

As an outsider who has lived here for eighteen years I have observed many things which contradict this whole idea. Face it. When many politicians and lawyers have jail time on their CV and get out and then carry on in their chosen field it does seem a little strange.

When articles every summer say Nerja has blue flags for clean beaches and the next page talks about the proposed site for their sewage treatment plant one has to wonder.

Construction slows down so architects are getting paid to perform energy assessments on village houses; the doors and windows do not fit and there is no insulation so what is the point?

Families who can afford to rent a house and spend money

in the bars and shops would not be here if they all had to stay in a hotel and eat in restaurants.

Next we hear there are strict rules about air conditioning, and a myriad of other costs if you want to rent out a private house.

The man in the street is fine, nice, friendly and helpful but much higher up the social scale and it all goes pear-shaped.

Dignity will, I fear, not be achieved in my lifetime.

MIKE LINCE
TORROX

Food for thought

I loved the pictures of all the shellfish in last week's edition of SUR in English. It's incredible how much people are willing to pay for a special delicacy on their table at Christmas time. Perhaps we should spend just half as much on 'gambas' and donate the other half to the local soup kitchen.

J. KYLE
BY EMAIL

THIS
WEEK'S
WINNING
LETTER

United in peace

JENNIE RHODES

It was impossible not to be moved by the last carol sung at the Lux Mundi carol service in Torre del Mar last Saturday: Silent Night. Noche de Paz in Spanish and Stille Nacht in German. The words were put up on giant screens in all three languages so that the congregation could sing in whichever language they were most comfortable with - and all three if they wished.

First it was sung in English, then Spanish, then German, with a repeat of the first verse in all three languages at that same time. The result was a harmonious union of nationalities, all at peace with each other under one roof.

It would have been interesting to do a straw poll to see how many people at the service were reminded of Christmas Day 1914 when German and British soldiers held a temporary

ceasefire during World War One, played football and sang Silent Night together. However, Basil Falwy whispered "Don't mention the war" in my ear so I shook hands or gave two kisses to the Austrian lady to my left and my Danish friend on my right and went home.

It still left a bitter taste though, that more than 100 years after that historic ceasefire and another war not long after, many in Britain still wish to have an uneasy relationship with their European neighbours and we, particularly those of us in Spain, are still unsettled by what Brexit will deliver.

We are reminded though, through moments like that last carol on Saturday evening, that Germans, British and other Europeans live in peace and can sing Silent Night together 103 years later.

Headstrong

PETER EDGERTON
MUSIC MAKER WWW.E-PETER.COM

A piece of a bus fell on my head last week. I realise that that's probably not a sentence you expected to read when you got out of bed this morning but it is, nonetheless, entirely true.

There we were, five passengers and a driver tootling merrily along a country road on the outskirts of Malaga when - crash, bang, wallop! - a ceiling panel came tumbling down and biffed me squarely on the bonce. Fortunately, it was made of some synthetic material or other (bad news for the environment, good news for my head) and was, consequently, fairly light, so damage was minimal.

What did prove to be a bit discombobulating on further investigation though, was the size of the four humungous screws protruding from each corner. It might be

going slightly too far to say they were each the dimensions of The Eiffel Tower but they weren't far off, let me tell you.

The driver half-heartedly asked me if I was ok but clearly had more important things on his mind like what colour Cristiano Ronaldo's boots might be this weekend. An old woman fussed around a bit until she saw there was no blood and so went back to her soup of letters puzzle thing with, I could swear, an expression of mild disappointment on her seasoned features.

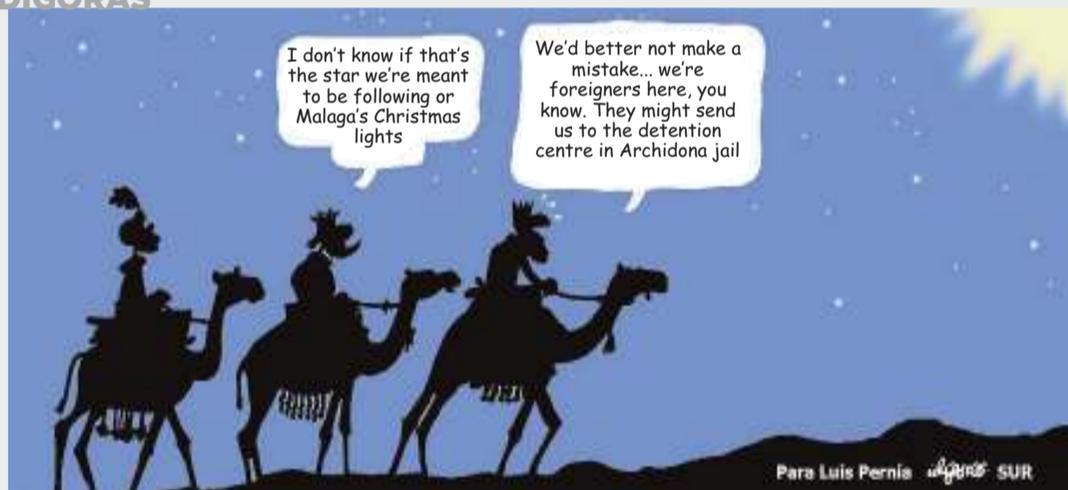
Meanwhile, I was left to contemplate the eternally fragile nature of our existence within an infinite and merciless universe, while chomping on a Twix which seemed to be a lot smaller than the ones I enjoyed as a child although it might just have been an optical illusion created by my bigger hands. "A cou-

ple of inches to the left and one of those screws would have given me a nasty old cut," I thought, "and the driver may have got into trouble for not checking his vehicle more thoroughly and then I might have had to go to the hospital with a gaping head wound, or concussion, or blind in one eye..." Prudently, I pulled up there sharpish before I'd convinced myself that I was lucky not to have had my head amputated before tea time. A vivid imagination can be a heavy burden to bear.

Something good came of all of this however as I was able to begin today's column with the very best of sentences: "A piece of a bus fell on my head last week." Perhaps they could use it for the opening line of a short story competition.

Oh, and talking of magnificent phrases, here's another - Merry Christmas, everyone.

IDÍGORAS



A season of love

REVD ADRIAN LOW
ANGLICAN CHAPLAIN, COSTA DEL SOL WEST

I have just taken a funeral for a baby boy. What a tragedy, all the more poignant when Christians around the world are celebrating the birth of another baby boy. The two events are so hard to hold in the same hand.

But both events remind me of the fragility and improbability of human life. In a universe of 100 billion galaxies and 100 billion stars in each galaxy we still can't find any life beyond Earth. It just means that all the life we have here is incredibly special. It took nearly ten billion years to evolve a sustaining

cosmos that supports life, and then another four billion to evolve humankind to give birth to these two baby boys. God is truly an architect with extraordinary patience!

The Christmas event, as recorded in John's gospel with amazing clarity, connects that immense cosmos creation to the most fragile life, born, out of wedlock, to a poor family camping among the animals, in an occupied country in the Middle East. "Through him (Jesus) all things were made," says John, and, as if to emphasise his point, says "without him nothing was

made that has been made."

All this life, all of it, happens because of a God of love. Christina Rossetti wrote: Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine, Love was born at Christmas, star and angel gave the sign.

When a most-loved child dies, love does not simply fizzle out. Love determinedly goes on and on - as if that life goes on and on. And for billions of Christians across the world, death is simply not the end of either the Christmas story or of our story. Indeed, why should it be - given the investment of God in getting us up and running in the first place.

Life matters because it is so rare and so amazing. Life matters because it is a gift where love can happen. And in a world where life is cheap and national leaders make decisions that bring pain and grief rather than hope and joy, we need the love of that baby boy who came down at Christmas to live on and on and on.

SUR English

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The intriguing history of a Christmas staple

Carols gained popularity when Francis of Assisi began producing nativity plays



TONY BRYANT

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Most people will know the words to at least one Christmas carol, even if they last sang them during secondary school morning assembly

MALAGA. Christmas is the season to deck our halls with boughs of holly and don our gay apparel, according to one popular Christmas carol, while others tell us that, unlike many festive traditions, man will live forever more because of Christmas day.

Many aspects of the stereotypical Dickensian Christmas have virtually disappeared over the years, including Yule logs, eggnog, ghost stories and the tradition of carol singing.

Although a great majority of us may never actually visit a church over the holiday season, most people will know the words to at least one Christmas carol, even if the last time they sang them was during secondary school morning assembly.

Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago, although they were pagan songs usually sung during the Winter Solstice. The word 'carol' actually means to dance around a circle, or a song of praise and joy. Originally, they could be performed during all four seasons, although they would eventually only be associated with Christmas.

Early Christians replaced the pagan solstice celebrations with Christmas and Christian songs replaced

the pagan ones.

In the 9th and 10th centuries, Christmas Prose was introduced to monasteries in Northern Europe and in the 12th century, a Parisian monk named Adam of St Victor began to derive music from popular songs, introducing something closer to what would become the traditional Christmas carol.

The Christmas carol started to gain popularity in 1223, when Francis of Assisi began producing his Nativity plays in Italy. These plays included songs that told the story of Christ's birth and these new carols spread to France, Germany, Spain and other European countries.

These early carols were seen as entertaining rather than religious. They were usually sung in homes or by travelling minstrels, but never in churches. The singing of carols in churches in England is thought to have first begun in Truro cathedral, Cornwall, on Christmas Eve in 1880.

Traditionally, carols were usually based on medieval chord patterns and it is this that gives them their uniquely characteristic musical



A group of young carol singers. :: WILLIAM MURPHY / FLICKR

The singing of carols in churches in England is thought to have begun in Cornwall in 1880

sound. Some carols, like 'Good King Wenceslas' and 'The Holly and the Ivy', can be traced directly back to the Middle Ages and are among the oldest musical compositions still regularly sung.

Christmas carols in English first appeared in 1426 and many carols

that have gained popularity today were first printed in 'Piae Cantiones', a collection of late Medieval Latin songs which was first published in 1582. Early forms of carols such as 'Christ Was Born on Christmas Day', 'Good Christian Men Rejoice' and 'Good King Wenceslas' can be found in this book.

Good King Wenceslas

Good King Wenceslas tells a story of a Bohemian king who, braving harsh winter weather, embarked on a journey to give alms to a poor peasant on 26 December – The Feast of Stephen. English hymn writer, John Mason Neale, wrote the lyrics to

the carol and it first appeared in 'Carols for Christmas Tide' in 1853. Neale's lyrics were set to the melody of a 13th-century Finnish carol called 'The Time is Near for Flowering', first published in 1582.

When Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans came to power in England in 1647, the celebration of Christmas was forbidden. The singing of such things as 'The Holly and the Ivy' would have landed one in serious trouble, for Cromwell wanted to cleanse the nation of its most decadent excesses. On the top of his list were Christmas and carol singing.

Victorian revival

The singing of carols did not become popular again until Victorian times, when William Sandys put together a selection of Christmas music collected from various villages in England.

The publication of numerous Christmas music books in the 19th century helped to widen the popular appeal of carols. 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen' and 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' first appeared in William Sandys' 'Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern', in 1833.

Another significant contribution to the revival of carols in Victorian England was the publication of Henry Ramsden Bramley and Sir John Stainer's 'Christmas Carols, New and Old'. The first edition of 20 carols was released in 1867 and a second series of 22 carols followed in 1871. A third series in 1878 added another 28 songs, bringing the collection to a total 70 carols. The Bramley and Stainer editions, which included 'Once in Royal David's City' and 'The First Noel', were well received by the British public and the series was reprinted up until the 1950s.

Andalucía stays faithful to 'villancicos' tradition during the 'fiesta zambomba'

:: TONY BRYANT

MALAGA. Spanish Christmas carols, 'villancicos', originate from medieval peasant songs called 'canto de villano'. Villancicos gained popularity in the second half of the 16th century in Spain and these devotional songs, which were sung during the feasts of the

Catholic calendar, became extremely popular in the 17th century. With the decline in popularity of the villancicos in the 20th century, the term became used to signify a Christmas carol.

In Andalucía the villancicos are performed during the 'fiesta zambomba'. The name derives from

the instrument that is traditionally used to accompany these lively festive songs. The zambomba is a percussive instrument that would once have been made from an old paint tin or flower pot, over which a membrane is stretched: a stick attached with small cymbals is inserted through

the skin and this is moved up and down to create a droning rhythm.

Frying pans, anis bottles and an array of home-made rhythmic instruments are also used to accompany these songs, known in Andalucía as the flamenco Christmas carols. The tunes are to all sorts of rhythms but in general they are performed in the style of the flamenco 'bulerias', 'tientos' or 'rumbas'.

Jerez de la Frontera is the foremost city where the fiesta zambomba takes place in the week leading to Christmas, but most towns will present zambomba nights in their central plazas.



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The service represented Spain, UK, Denmark and Germany. :: SUR

Uniting nations through song

:: JENNIE RHODES

TORRE DEL MAR. Residents from all over Europe, including the UK, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Spain and beyond, attended an international carol service held at San Andrés church in Torre del Mar on Saturday evening.

The service was led by Gloria Uribe from Lux Mundi Torre del Mar and was accompanied by the British Reverend James Taylor; Don Miguel Ángel Alonso and Manolo Palma from the San Andrés Church; Reverend Jorgen Madsen from Denmark; and Fransiscan Friar José A. Naranjo.

Readings were given by volunteers from Lux Mundi and members of the 'Los Cantores' German choir.

The three choirs leading the carols were Spanish Choir 'Amigos de Lux Mundi', the aforementioned German choir directed by Lisa Kropp, and the TIMS English Choir directed by Margaret Williams.

The service started with 'Oh Come All Ye Faithful', led by the British choir and the choirs took it in turns to sing traditional German, Spanish and British carols. The lyrics were displayed on screens at the front of the church.

The hour-long service finished with 'Silent Night', which is a popular carol in Germany, Spain and the UK. The first verse was sung in each language in turn and ended with people singing in all three at the same time.



COLLEGIUM MUSICUM WELL RECEIVED ON CHRISTMAS TOUR

As part of its Christmas programme, the multinational Collegium Musicum orchestra and choir performed sell-out concerts at the Hotel IPV Palace and Spa Beatriz in Fuengirola and the Iglesia de la Encarnación in Marbella (pictured). Performing 14 works spanning four centuries, including Handel's harp concerto and popular Christmas carols, the group received a rousing reception at the end of both shows.

Gala dinner gathers funds to give an education to underprivileged children in India

:: SUR IN ENGLISH

MARBELLA. The Diksha España association, which currently sponsors school education for 230 underprivileged and needy children

in India, hosted a fundraising Christmas dinner in Alanda Club Marbella last Friday.

The guest of honour was Dr Vicenta Llorca, CEO for Laboratory V Lift Pro, who made a donation of 3,770 euros to the project - a sum which could provide further education to five children, either orphaned, HIV-positive or living below the poverty line for a year.

The event was organised by Dr Jovanka Manojlovic. Entertainment at the dinner was provided in the form of live Indian music and dance performances.



Traditional Indian dress. :: SUR

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SOCIETY SCENE

Festive cheer and goodwill

Associations and groups across the province are filled with seasonal cheer at this time of year

:: SUR IN ENGLISH

Anglican Church (Costa del Sol West) Chocolate oranges and fair

The Anglican Church of the western Costa recently handed over 600 chocolate oranges and hundreds of Christmas biscuit packs, donated by customers of Overseas in Puerto Banús, to Emaus in Estepona and Cáritas in San Pedro, respectively. It is hoped that these will be welcome additions to the Christmas fare for those less fortunate at this time of year.

However, this is not the only charitable work the church is carrying out at this time. Hundreds of people, 25 classic cars, 35 stalls, Father Christmas on a throne, two choirs, bouncy castles, a magic show, face painting and ten charities made the Multi-Charity Christmas Fair at Estepona Palacio de Congresos a major success.

The Anglican Church will be passing on about 6,000 euros to the different charities the church supports.

The Field Club of Fuengirola Christmas walk to Carvajal

Members of the Field Club, a multinational walking club based in Fuengirola with over 200 members, recently enjoyed its annual Christmas walk along the Fuengirola paseo to Carvajal, with many sporting festive costumes.

The group, which walks twice a week from various locations along the coast to all over Malaga province, meets every Monday at the Hogar in Fuengirola at 10.30am.

For more information, visit

www.thefieldclub.es

RAF Association Annual dinner and dance

Members of the RAF Association held their annual Christmas dinner dance last Friday.

Jack Griggs, the chairman of the Costa del Sol Branch; Charmaine Arbouin, the British Consul to Andalucía and the Canary Islands, and other honoured guests attended the event which included live entertainment with singer Laura Elen.

A raffle and the 'name the bear' competition raised 190 euros for welfare work aiding both serving and former members of the Royal Air Force and their families.

The Costa del Sol branch organises various events throughout the year to which anyone is welcome. There is also a social get-together at noon on the first Tuesday of the month at Restaurante Los Morenos, Alhaurín el Grande, and at 2pm on the third Monday of the month at El Jardín Bar, Arroyo de la Miel.

For more information visit the website: rafacostadelsol.co.uk

Santa María Bowls Club Hamper singles competition

Both ladies and men from the Santa María Bowls Club recently competed in a random draw singles competition. All were dressed in red and ready for some competitive bowling.

After the fifth round, the donated hampers were presented to the top five players. Craig Lewis and Garry Aldridge won all their games but Craig won by a superior shots difference. June Baldry came third, Pat Fisher fourth and Barbara Bartlett fifth.

A fun corner to corner was then played and won by crown green superstar Barbara Bartlett.



Stalls at the Multi-Charity Christmas Fair, organised by the Anglican Church, in Estepona. :: SUR



RAF Association annual Christmas dinner and dance. :: SUR



Santa María Bowls Club competed to win donated hampers. :: SUR

New members and visitors will be welcome after 6 January. Call 664 068 020 for details.

Royal British Legion Coín Christmas dinner and dance

The Coín Branch of the Royal British Legion launched the festive season with a Christmas Dinner Dance at Los Candiles at which entertainment was provided by Juliet Williams.

Chairman of the Branch, Jo Taylor, paid tribute to Jean Merry, Maureen Ramayon and Rosie Mahoney who decorated the dining room and made table arrangements.

The branch also took the opportunity to celebrate their very successful 2017 Poppy Appeal year. In October the Poppy Launch and Autumn Fayre raised 865 euros and in November generous donations and the money collected in poppy boxes totalled 3,191 euros. This brought the overall sum raised by the Coín branch in 2017 to 8,874 euros.

The Coín branch has a full entertainment programme, details of which can be found at www.co-inrbl.info

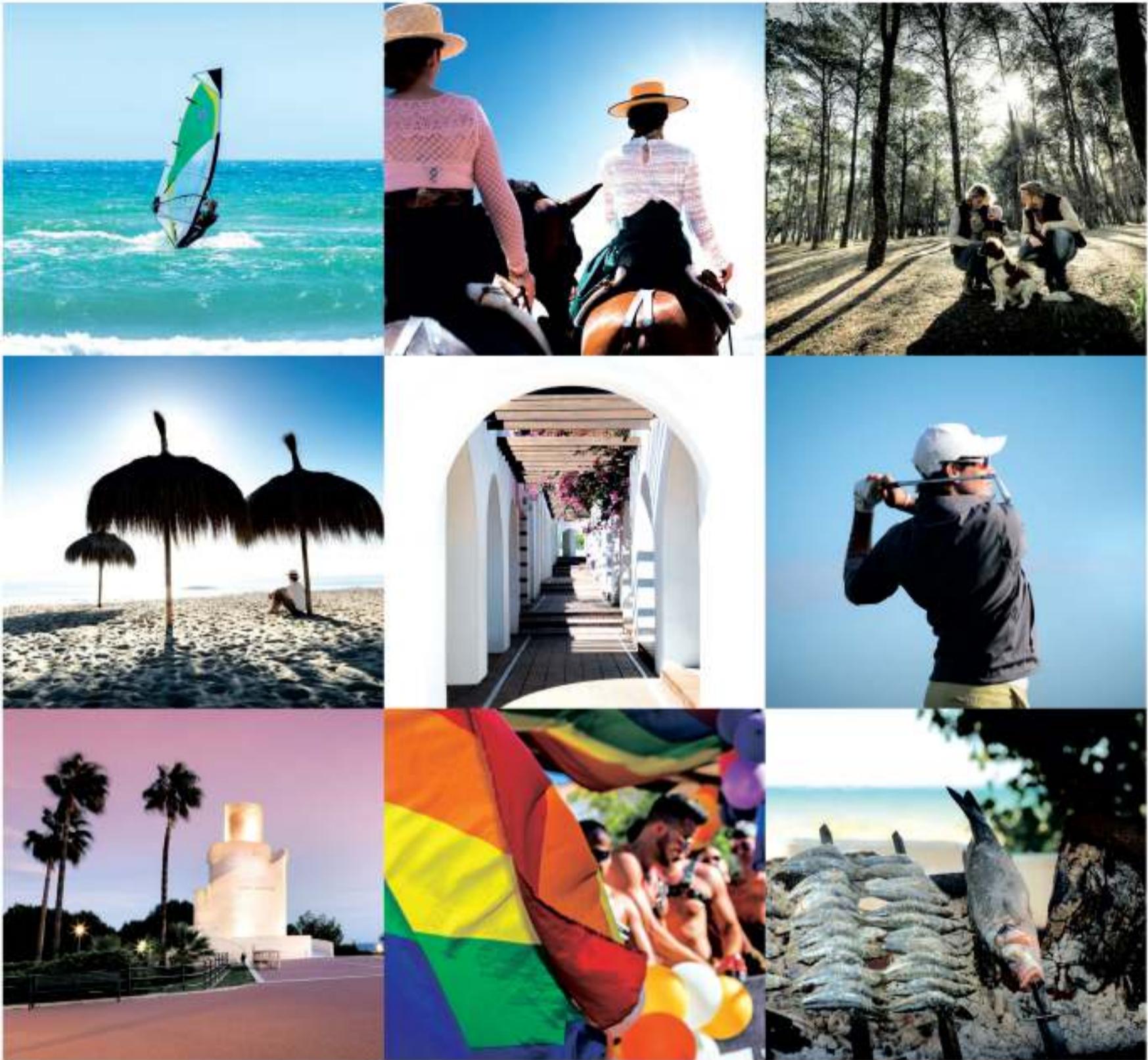
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WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

22 DECEMBER 1893

Spain holds its breath and hopes for 'El Gordo'

There is always an air of great excitement and anticipation in Spain on 22 December, because it is the day of the Christmas Lottery, known as 'El Gordo', meaning 'The Fat One', although the nickname refers to the first prize rather than the lottery itself.

It is hardly surprising that people hope for a win: this is the biggest lottery in the world in terms of prize money, totalling over two billion euros and with the main winner receiving around four million. Around 75 per cent of adults in Spain are believed to buy a ticket or a 'décimo', a fraction of one-tenth, for El Gordo, in the hope of making a fortune.

In 1967, there was great rejoicing in Malaga when it became known that tickets for the first

prize, over 600 million pesetas, had all been bought in the city. The winning number was 43758.

The 'Sorteo de Navidad,' as it is officially known, is the second longest-running national lottery in the world, beaten only by the Dutch 'Staatsloterij', which began in 1726. The Spanish lottery continued all through the Civil War (1936 - 1939) although 1938 was unusual because there were two of them. Both took place on 22 December, but one was republican and drawn in Barcelona, and the other nationalist and was held in Burgos.

However, the Spanish Christmas lottery has not always been held on the same date. It began on 18 December 1812 (18/12/1812), and was the idea of the exiled government, which at



A pupil reads the number on a ball from the giant drum. :: AFP

the time was based in Cadiz, as a way of raising money to cover the costs of fighting Napoleon's troops during the Peninsular War. It was held on different dates in December after that, and it was not until 1893 that it was held on 22nd for the first time.

The winning numbers are sung, rather than spoken, by pupils from San Ildefonso school (originally, it was an orphanage) and until



Tickets on sale. :: SUR

1913 the numbers were printed on paper. From then onwards, the system of wooden balls which is still in use today was introduced.

For the past seven years the draw has taken place at the Royal Theatre in Madrid;

prior to that it was held at the Spanish parliament.

Tickets for the very first Christmas lottery cost 40 reales. In 1944 they were 100 pesetas and by 1953 the price had doubled, to 200. It

LANGUAGE
FOOTNOTE

Lotería	Lottery
Ilusión	Excitement
Décimo	One-tenth
Navidad	Christmas
Nacional	National
Sorteo	Draw
Premio	Prize
Fortuna	Fortune
Billete	Ticket
Fecha	Date
Suerte	Luck
Agraciado	Lucky winner
Exiliado	Exile
Orfanato	Orphanage
Colegio	School
Números	Numbers
Bolas	Balls
Precio	Price
Tradicción	Tradition

doubled yet again, to 400 pesetas, in 1957, and by 1970 people were paying 1,000 pesetas. Now, a décimo for El Gordo costs 20 euros.

Statisticians say that 85 per cent of those who buy a ticket for the Christmas lottery will not win anything, but it doesn't put people off. El Gordo is part of Spanish history and tradition, and the anticipation and excitement are all part of Christmas in Spain.

i Bilingual crossword inside back page

ADVERTORIAL Marbella Design Academy

Improve your design skills

Marbella Design Academy, the international design academy established in Monda, celebrated its December annual exposition and graduation ceremony last Friday.

The January intake Graphic Design and Interior Architecture students took the opportunity to showcase their final projects to the public. The Fashion Design students organised a fantastic catwalk show where professional models displayed their collections.

It is in this great atmosphere, surrounded by their friends and fami-

lies, that the students were awarded their Bachelor of Arts degrees certified by Marbella Design Academy's UK partner university.

Over its 22 years of existence, the academy is proud to have created a unique system. The students benefit from 80% tuition time and small tutoring groups, quite different to most design schools and universities who normally only provide 20%.

The academic and administration teams of the school are pleased to offer a friendly learning environ-

ment where everybody is supported and encouraged in their creativity, in order to reach their potential.

All graduate students are prepared to start off a design career, or to equally continue with a Masters in any university of their choice. And all this staying in southern Spain, benefiting from its great weather and way of life.

The academy offers two intakes for the BA-validated programmes in Graphic Design, Interior Architecture and Fashion Design, in January and September.

It also offers a Foundation Course, a preparatory course to enable all students to prepare for the BA-validated programmes, in June and September, as well as summer courses for professionals and beginners alike who would like to improve their design skills.

This year Marbella Design Academy would like to wish the best possible future as great and renowned designers to its newest graduate students!

i For more information about Marbella Design Academy programmes and summer courses, visit www.designschool.com



Applause at the graduation ceremony. SUR



:: CHLOE GAVIN

FATHER CHRISTMAS PICKS PERIANA FOR DRESS REHEARSAL

Father Christmas chose the town of Periana in the Axarquía for his dress rehearsal last Sunday ahead of the big night. He said that he likes to "make sure everything is ok" a week before he does it for real in case he has to make any changes. This time he was flying with his paramotor as he said that Rudolph the other reindeer need to be in "tip-top condition" for the long night on 24 December and that he didn't want to risk tiring them out before then.

:: JENNIE RHODES



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IN PHOTOS

Nativity scenes and carols usher in the festive period

Towns across the province are preparing for Christmas in their own unique styles

by DARYL FINCH

MALAGA. As the big day draws closer, a number of towns and cities the breadth of Malaga province have been preparing for Christmas with a series of events, some traditional, others more unusual.

In Marbella, the central Alameda park was on Sunday taken over by a living nativity in which the story of the birth of Jesus was recreated according to the holy scriptures in front of an amazed audience.

Some 125 volunteers, from actors to costume designers, helped with the production with also included live animals. The event, celebrating its 32nd year, raised funds for the Asociación Española Contra el Cáncer.

The air of Malaga city centre, meanwhile, was filled with the sound of Christmas as around twenty 'pastorales' groups from across the province passed through the streets, singing local, traditional carols.

While most public buildings in the country have a nativity scene, there is something more unusual underwater in Benalmádena: visitors and rays alike will be able to take in the 'belén' unveiled recently at the Sea Life aquarium.

i For Christmas events near you, see the What To Do section, pages 46 to 50.



The nativity play in Marbella's Alameda. :: JOSELE-LANZA



'Pastorales' groups passing through Malaga. :: NIÑO SALAS



The underwater 'belén' at Sea Life Benalmádena. :: SUR

THE NIGHT SKY

KEN CAMPBELL



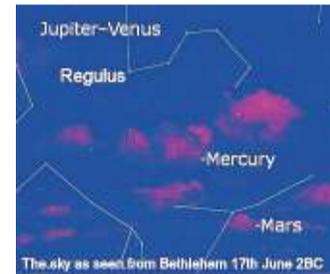
Oh little star...

Everybody has heard of 'The Star Of Bethlehem' and astronomers have pondered for centuries on what it could have been. One of the problems in answering this question is ascertaining exactly when Jesus was born. One of the main characters in the story of the Nativity is of course King Herod. There is documented proof that Herod died in the year 4BC, so if Jesus was born on 25 December in the year 0 then Herod wasn't around at the time. And if the account of shepherds watching over their flocks of sheep is taken into account, then Jesus was probably not even born in December, as the sheep would not have been out in the fields.

The three wise men or Magi, were astronomers/astrologers and 2,000 years ago they wouldn't have known that 'wandering stars' were actually planets.

When the Magi reported to Herod, he asked them when the star appeared; if there had been a very bright star in the sky wouldn't Herod have seen it for himself? They also say that they saw the star in the east, but Jerusalem is to the west of the Orient so they would have been going the wrong way! Perhaps what they meant to say was that they saw the star from the east.

Using modern computer programmes that can show the sky how it was at any period, around that time there really was a very unusual amount of conjunctions and alignments of the planets. On 20 February 6BC, there was



a very close grouping or conjunction of Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and the moon. On 19 May 3BC, Mercury and Saturn were very close together in the morning sky. Then on 12 June 3BC, Saturn and Venus came very close together. A few weeks later on 12 August 3BC, Jupiter and Venus were extremely close together.

These events would have had great significance to the Magi in astrology terms. But the cruncher comes on 17 June 2BC there was a conjunction between the brightest planets Jupiter and Venus, that was so close that, to the naked eye, the two planets appeared to touch and form one very bright star. The conjunction also formed a straight line passing through Regulus the 'regal' star in Leo and joining Mercury and Mars to point to a particular point (or stable) on the horizon.

Perhaps the 'Star of Bethlehem' was a series of events rather than a miraculous vision of one bright object.

i More information : www.costadelstars.com

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INTERVIEW Salvador Camero Soto, director of Francisco Camero Funeral Directors, tells us about what it's like to take on the responsibility of running a successful, long-standing family business

CARRYING TRADITION FORWARDS

Francisco Camero Funeral Directors is a true family business which has been running on the Costa del Sol for more than 100 years.

In the late 1800s, Francisco Camero Roldán began providing funeral services in the municipality of Benalmádena. His son, Salvador Camero Bañasco, and later his grandson, Francisco Camero Contreras, continued with the family business, building up a reputation for reliability and empathy. The current generation of Cameros are proud heirs of this reputation and, with their staff, strive to uphold and preserve it.

In the 1970s, as a result of the changes on the Costa del Sol and the large expat community that arose at that time, the company entered its present configuration, gradually adding funeral plans, repatriations and a privately owned crematorium - the first in the province of Málaga - to its services.

A few weeks ago we were introduced to the new generation currently learning the ropes at Francisco Camero funeral directors. This time, we've been talking to the current leader of the company, Salvador, about what it's like to take on the responsibility of running a successful, long-standing family business.

Salvador, what was it like to be handed the baton?

When your family decides that you should take the lead in running its company, it gives you both great pride and anxiety. The recognition of capacity is the source of pride but the responsibility in upholding the family reputation is awesome. To these two feelings we now add another one of joy and pride when we see our new generation joining the ranks of the company. You met some of them through our previous advertorial.

So are your children, this new generation, the future of the company?

Now I'd like to share with you some thoughts on the company.

The expat community has been very kind to us by allowing us to be of help at a moment as delicate as that of the loss of a loved one. We try to respond in kind by



Salvador Camero Soto, leader of the company. :: sur

"The recognition of capacity is the source of pride but the responsibility in upholding the family reputation is awesome"

preserving 'a reputation of caring', which we consider to be our biggest asset.

So, though the 'New Generation' is bringing new ideas and technology, there is nothing that replaces the "personal touch" and this is what we, the older generation, are enthusiastically transmitting.

The older generation you speak of has also played a huge part in

making the company what it is today, has it not?

My father, who founded the company in its current form, made sure that his five children were aware of the importance of family. This feeling we transmit to the new generation, and it is also shared by our staff who are like family to us too.

My two brothers, Paco and Rafael, personally manage the crematoria we own in Benalmádena, thus guaranteeing the care of the dear departed. This is a huge responsibility as there is zero tolerance for mistakes.

My two sisters, Pilar and Micaela, take care of the administrative side. Another highly delicate task where every detail is checked. They are the oil that

keeps every cog in our organisation running efficiently.

You mentioned your staff. How do you make sure those not born into the business show the same degree of care and attention to detail that Francisco Camero funeral directors is known for?

Our staff are more than employees, they're imbued with our philosophy and each brings his own personal qualities which are supplemented by continued training. **Your company specialises in funeral plans. What can you tell us about them and how do they compare to other products on the market?**

I like to think they don't "compare" as they are an extension of our services. The aim of our plans is to facilitate preparation by pro-

viding you with the full knowledge of what kind of attention and care will be extended to your loved ones. By buying a funeral plan, you will help those left behind to cope with the often complicated and painful processes involved at an already difficult time.

"We try to respond in kind by preserving 'a reputation of caring', which we consider to be our biggest asset"

We've delved deeply into our experience to create three options that adjust to the particular needs of the time, notwithstanding that each of these can be adjusted to a bespoke plan.

Our 'essential' plan covers the basic needs including paperwork to take some weight off loved ones. The middle of the range, 'traditional' plan has been designed to ensure that most of the fundamental elements of a funeral service are included, while the high end 'dignity' plan covers everything so that at the time of bereavement all that family and friends need worry about is saying goodbye.



Francisco Camero

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GARDENING

Texas lignum-vitae

A source of the second hardest wood on the planet, *Guaiacum angustifolium* has purple scented flowers and attractive red seeds

Lignum-vitae or Guaiacum (Guayacán in Spanish) is a genus of flowering plants in the Zygophyllaceae family. The genus consists of just five species of slow-growing shrubs and trees. Common names include Guajacum and Lignum-vitae.

The heart wood of Lignum-vitae officinale is renowned for its

strength. Internet sources rank it as the second hardest wood on the planet, using the Janka hardness test (first place goes to Schinopsis or Quebracho which gets its name from the Spanish 'que-

brar hacha' or breaking the axe).

It was the Spanish who first discovered this plant in Santo Domingo in what is now the Dominican Republic. They brought it to Europe and in the sixteenth century it was hailed as being the only cure for syphilis which had raged across the continent for nearly one hundred years. The sap was used to treat the contagious disease as well as many other illnesses including arthritis and coughs.

Wood chips were also infused to make a tea.

Lignum-vitae officinale is strictly protected and international trade is limited. Therefore it is very difficult to get hold of specimens outside of the Americas where it is native. However, *G. angustifolium*, native to southern and western Texas and northern Mexico, is easier to find. Common names include Texas lignum-vitae, Soapbush (the roots were once used to make soap) and Iron wood.

G. angustifolium has narrow, leathery green leaves which fold up at night to conserve moisture. The scented, violet-blue flowers form in clusters from spring through to the end of the summer and attract butterflies and bees. After flowering, heart-shaped seed capsules form containing bright-red, glossy seeds. The entire Guaiacum genus is drought resistant and will grow in full sun or partial shade. Its dense foliage and gnarled branches provide cover for wildlife and do not need pruning.



The red seeds of *G. angustifolium* and the flowers. :: WIKIMEDIA

READER'S PHOTO



:: J.S.T

MISSING CHRISTMAS PLANTS

A reader in Vélez sent in this photo of a half empty pot of poinsettias in the town. Scarcely a week after they were planted, already hundreds have gone missing. Malaga town hall plants around 100,000 of them every year and expect to lose between 20-30% through theft and adverse weather conditions.

GARDENING HINTS FOR DECEMBER

A gardener's little helper

There are two types of hedgehog in Spain, the European hedgehog and the Algerian hedgehog. They look similar but the Algerian hedgehog is a bit smaller, lighter in colour and has bigger ears. It also has longer legs and snout. This little North African mammal can be found along the Mediterranean coast, but it is now rare, its natural habitat destroyed by urban encroachment. Hedgehogs are voracious eaters, their main diet being exactly the things that gardeners

hate: snails, grubs, insects such as millipedes and earwigs, and slugs. They also eat worms and carrion when given the opportunity. Milk and bread are definitely not healthy alternatives. You can make your garden more hedgehog friendly by leaving unmanicured areas and piles of leaves or logs. Make sure ponds have a 'get out' ramp in case they fall in, remove any netting they might get tangled in and always check bonfires before lighting.

PHOTOS

Calling all gardeners

We know that many of our readers have lovely gardens, or enjoy growing plants on their terraces or balconies, so why not share them with others?

Email your photos to english@diariosur.es or send them to SUR in English, Avda Dr Marañón 48, 29009 Malaga, with a caption and a few words of explanation, or send them via Twitter @SUR_English or Facebook @surenglish and we'll do the rest!

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THE PERFECT VENUE FOR THE PERFECT WEDDING DAY

Every bride and groom-to-be want their wedding to be perfect, a once in a lifetime experience and a day that both they and their guests will always remember.

Making this dream a reality is now easier for couples in southern Spain, who have an incredible opportunity to hold and celebrate their weddings at Alcaidesa Golf, a unique, privileged location in San Roque, Cádiz, close to Gibraltar.

Alcaidesa Events offers a venue located in stunning natural surroundings, perfect for an exclusive wedding by the sea with spectacular views of Gibraltar and North Africa.

The location is perfect for civil weddings, which can be held beside its exclusive water feature with the sea and the surrounding golf courses as a magical backdrop for a truly charming event.

Couples can have their wedding photos taken against the green backgrounds of Alcaidesa Golf's courses, which they will reach via a fun buggy ride, an excellent way to record their special day for posterity.

The Club House at Alcaidesa Golf has various areas which wedding parties can make use of to suit their requirements. The outside terrace is perfect for cocktails and to take in the spectacular views of the golf courses and the sea, before moving either to the inner, Mexican-style patio with central fountain for outdoor dining in good weather or the spacious events hall with space for 350 diners. The indoor hall is completely soundproof and has both heating and air conditioning and is ideal for celebra-



tions, with plenty of light and idyllic views both provided by its large windows.

The highly qualified and professional kitchen team is able to offer a great variety of menus, all traditionally made, and the catering team are on hand to provide any and all services required for the ideal banquet.

All couples are assisted by an events consultant to help make sure every step of the process goes smoothly and leads to a perfect, unforgettable wedding day. The entire Alcaidesa Events team works towards the main goal of taking care of every single detail

of the wedding so that all the happy couple needs to worry about is enjoying their special day.

This venue is ideal for brides and grooms to be who are looking to avoid the conventional and hold an original, personalised and different wedding that will surprise and delight their guests and result in a memorable, once in a lifetime special day.

The professional event organisation team will lend their expertise and suggest all sorts of ideas to help couples arrange the weddings of their dreams. Dedication, personalisation and minute attention to detail all com-

bine to mark the difference between any old wedding and an exclusive one. As well as weddings, Alcaidesa Events also caters for all other types of business and family events.

CORPORATE

The Club House, with its privileged location in natural surroundings, amongst mountains and near the beautiful Mediterranean Sea, provides an unmatched setting for successful corporate events of all types, including product presentations and launches, seminars, conferences, committee or business meetings, team breakfasts,

business lunches and dinners or gala dinners, for example.

The qualified, professional event organising team lends their expertise to arrange every detail of events ensuring they meet clients' requirements.

The scalable air-conditioned hall, with capacity for up to 350 people, is fully equipped with the latest technology including computer projectors, multimedia areas, sound system, microphone and portable screen.

Additional services such as a cloakroom service can be arranged to suit the specific needs of the event, and there is ample parking for up to 200 vehicles.

FAMILY

Alcaidesa Events also knows how important it can be to celebrate special occasions with the family and, therefore, the events team will work hard to make that day or event extra special for you and your loved ones.

The privileged setting, near the sea, lends itself perfectly for both civil and religious weddings and wedding banquets and parties, christenings, first communions, birthdays, baby showers, Christmas dinners and large or extended family meet-ups.

CONTACT

To make an appointment to view the venue and discuss possibilities, contact Alcaidesa Events today on:
956 791 040 / 639 049 168
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ADVERTORIAL

DISCOVER ANDALUCÍA



The living nativity in Torrecampo (Cordoba) takes place on 28 and 29 December. :: SUR

Christmas nativity scenes in Andalucía

TWO DAYS IN BEAS AND TORRECAMPO

Journey + Nativity scenes

Journey time: 3 hours 15 minutes from Malaga to Beas and 3 hours from Malaga to Torrecampo.



JAVIER ALMELLONES

One of the best-loved Christmas traditions in Andalucía is its Nativity scenes, of which there are different types. Some are models, and are put on show as decorations in houses, patios or shop windows, while others are performed by local people and are known as 'living nativities'.

Once the public holidays on

6 and 8 December were over, many villages in the region started their Christmas celebrations by performing this reenactment of the birth of Jesus. Some of the living nativities are truly spectacular, such as the one which has taken place at this time of year for nearly half a century in the village of Beas, in Huelva province.

From now until January 1st, there will be several performances in the Avenida del Belén Viviente in Beas, which is named after this tradition.

With nearly 50 years of experience behind them, local residents have produced a show which is extremely moving and realistic.

There are also living nativities in other villages in Huelva province which have become major tourist attractions, such as Corales and Galaroza, where they will be performed every weekend until the end of the year.

In the village of Torrecampo,

this time in Cordoba province, local people are currently finalising the arrangements and rehearsing for their living nativity, which will take place in the main church on 28 and 29 December.

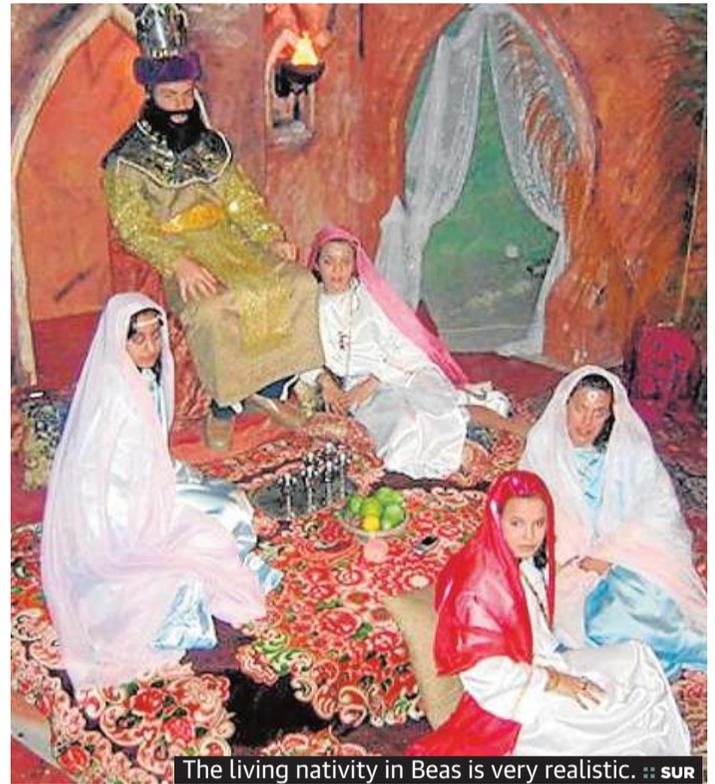
Although Torrecampo is a relative newcomer to this type of celebration in Andalucía, it is already proving popular and attracts a large number of visitors from near and far.

Anyone who is near the village of Almayate in Malaga province on 29 and 30 December can also enjoy watching a spectacular nativity scene at the Juan Paniagua school.

There are also other options for seeing living nativities in Andalucía, in places such as Guaro (Malaga), Constantina (Seville) and Pozo Alcón (Jaén).

Chocolate 'belén'

In addition to these theatrical performances, many visitors love to see the static nativity scenes in the principal cities and towns of Andalucía, including Jerez de la Frontera, Seville, Úbeda and the Botanic Garden in Cordoba, among others. One of the most original is in the town of Rute in Cordoba, which each year creates figures for its nativity scene using more than 1,000 kilos of melted chocolate.



The living nativity in Beas is very realistic. :: SUR



QUICK GUIDE

What to see in Beas

San Bartolomé church.

The main church, built in the 17th century.
Plaza de España s/n, 21630 Beas, (Huelva).

Pozo del Concejo. A well which supplied water to the village back in the 18th century.

Calle Pozo Concejo s/n, 21630 Beas (Huelva).

Los Clarines chapel. Construction of this chapel, which is six kilometres outside the village, began in the 14th century.

Urbanización Clarines, Recinto Ermita, 1, 21630 Beas (Huelva).

What to see in Torrecampo

Posada del Moro museum. Archaeology and folk collection.

Calle del Mudo 1, 14410 Torrecampo (Cordoba).

Virgen de Gracia chapel: Built in 13th and 14th centuries over a former synagogue.

Calle Ejido 2, 14410 Torrecampo (Cordoba).



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In the space of half a century, Daniel Buren, the bright spark behind the multi-hued cube that beckons visitors into the Pompidou Centre at Malaga Port, like a beacon or landmark, has become France's flagship artist, par excellence.

Paris has the Eiffel Tower and Malaga - or should that be "Marca Málaga", the Costa del Sol's brand-new contemporary art Eldorado? - has El Cubo by Buren, who has also applied his magic touch to a unique visual experience, specially created for the Paris museum's 40th anniversary.

A series of kaleidoscopic projections to be seen at Malaga's Pompidou Centre until 14 January provides a welcome break from last minute festive shopping.

On the weekend I picked for my fly-on-the-wall visit, the centre was packed. Admission to the semi-permanent collection on loan from Paris for two years was free. Families, in neatly-pressed Sunday best, stood in line queuing to catch a glimpse of the outgoing inaugural display spotlighting *The Body, The Portrait, Self-Portraits*, before it was replaced by the current thematic overview focusing on *Modern Utopias*.

Only a handful had come to see Daniel Buren's temporary show, but those who did decide to 'enter the maze' were in for an unexpected psychedelic thrill, and I have to say that I too was happily surprised.

REVIEW
GEORGINA OLIVER

HAPPY SURPRISE

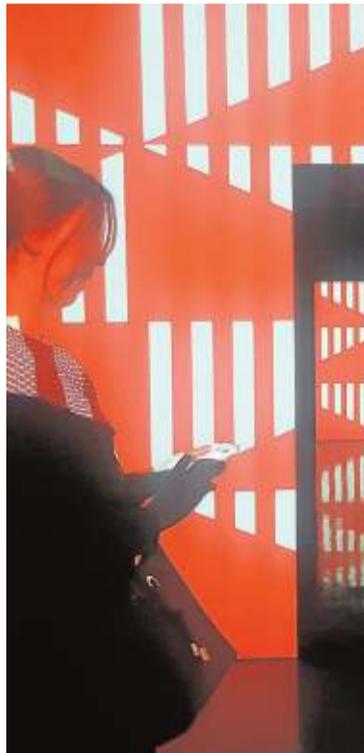
France's flagship artist strikes again

Why surprised? Why was I dragging my steps, as I watched that long winding queue of eager tourists and locals enter, after placing their bags on the centre's streamlined wooden security scanner? Perhaps, because Buren struck me as an unsurprising choice...

Almost as famous as ubiquitous 'starchitect' Jean Nouvel, this soon-to-be octogenarian 'avant' artist has acquired a degree of global visibility that makes young(er) French artists turn green with envy.

The artist formerly known for his vertical-striped canvases taking their cue from the classic awning cloth, which graces the windows of Parisian stately buildings - Daniel Buren's trademark "visual tool" discovered at a flea market, back in the sixties - is a living monument to the impact of cultural diplomacy à la française.

Fast-rewind to 1977. The unveiling of the Pompidou Centre - better known to Parisians as "Beau-



Projections in the Pompidou. :: SUR

bourg" - heralded the rise of a coterie of contemporary artists, bearing the seal of approval of world-class curators. Among the freshly anointed, Buren had displayed six of his striped banners at the Oxford Museum of Modern Art, today's Modern Art Oxford, at the behest of future "Most Influential", "Nick" Serota, aka Sir Nicholas Serota, who went on to revolutionise the Tate.

Daniel Buren made a quantum leap towards pyramidal success under the impetus of President Mitterrand's flamboyant minister of Culture Jack

Lang. In 1986, he was the Artist of The Year. Given the reins of the French pavilion at the Venice Biennale, he won

the Golden Lion, whilst his first public commission - the black and white-striped columns he conceived for the courtyard of the Palais-Royal, a stone's throw from the Louvre... - sparked a media controversy of a rare magnitude, considering social networks had not yet been invented.

Maybe I'm not the only one to have developed a jaded view of 'The Buren of Things', but Hey! Look At What I Almost Missed!

Daniel Buren's site-specific concepts are about the process of entering an artwork, and the space in which it is shown: in this case, a windowless basement, with bare

DANIEL BUREN
Daniel Buren's Projections / Retroprojections show can be viewed at the Pompidou Centre Malaga until 14 January.

anonymous walls. Undaunted by the lack of light and unwelcoming atmosphere, he has on this occasion immersed the onlooker in a floor-to-ceiling "dark room" environment, treating the public to a giant magic lantern-like slideshow.

This XXL 'lightshow' turns out to be a two-step experiment, and I for one entered it twice.

Cautiously, almost fearful of the glossy black floor and matching walls... I stepped into the first room, presided over by a red and white square, emblazoned with a mix of geometric motifs and lines, before suddenly realising that I had to turn back, and retrace my steps. Why, silly me? Because - surprise, surprise...! - the projections on the square arch leading into that first room are linked to the piece inside. Buren makes us look again.

"How are we supposed to react?" was written all over the faces of a group of 'art consumers' leaning against one of the walls, in an ostensibly relaxed posture, as they observed a permanent stream of syncopated abstract images, ranging from lines reminiscent of zebra crossings to colourful target symbols.

In contrast, a little girl with pig-tails and a pink T-shirt needed no prompting to immerse herself in the artwork. Warming to the whirl of colour, she broke into a spontaneous dance, rockin' and reelin' with an invisible hula-hoop.

My advice: Don't think twice. Just dive in!

PET CARE

PETER HARRISON



Little dogs - lots of energy

A loose collar on a lively young dog caused distress for an elderly owner

The elderly gentleman sitting on a seat beside the road in the town looked decidedly distressed and the reason was obvious. In his hand was a dog lead and a collar attached. It is something I have seen too often. The dog had slipped his or her collar and run off. The sad fact is that owners fit the collar too loose around the neck and it just needs a sharp noise or another dog to intrude and off your dog goes.

The owner confirmed that this was true. "I had just taken him for a long walk and I am so tired I could not go after him. He is a tiny Yorkie and I thought he would be worn out but he ran off like lightning."

I looked around the street and found the little chap and took him into my custody so he was soon reunited with the owner who was very happy indeed.

There are several lessons to be learned here. Collars must be very snugly fitted so even the most determined attempt to escape fails. A talk with this well intentioned owner revealed that he only put the collar on when the dog went for a walk. This is a big mistake. Emergencies such as fire, flood or other disaster give no warning and very often occur at night and dogs panic. You, the owner, must take full control of your pets. No time to seek the collar and put it on. It is a myth that the collar disturbs the dog's fur when sleeping. Our dog Digger always has his collar on with a large easily read telephone number. This owner had not had the dog microchipped: "I planned to get it done when we next go to the vet."

It turned out that the owner had not had a dog before and had

bought Tiger because he was so small and would not need long walks. This is a real fallacy. Very large dogs like Great Danes and Saint Bernards are happy to flop around and not walk far but the little chaps are extremely active. I once walked a Fox Terrier over an extensive moor so I was totally exhausted but he was ready for another route march after ten minutes.

The Yorkie that this elderly man had chosen was two years of age and the owner had bought him for company as he lived alone. Had he made provision for the dog if he predeceased the dog? A tricky subject but one which must be faced.

However a crisis was solved and owner and dog are together for Christmas and we hope they have a good time.

Erny and I wish all our readers and their pets a very Happy Christmas. Don't forget them. They give us so much joy and wonderful company. What would we do without them?



NOVEL LAUNCH AT THE CEMETERY

St George's church at the English Cemetery in Malaga was the unusual setting on Sunday for the presentation of a novel by award-winning Spanish author Jaime Aguilera. The novelist (pictured above, second left) explained that the book, entitled *Fluidos Corporales*, was largely inspired by the character and international ambience of the English Cemetery.



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A 5,895-metre climb to say goodbye

Hessia Fernandes climbed Kilimanjaro in July in memory of her brother, who committed suicide



MINDY BURROWS
Twitter: @MindyHABurrows

SUR in English spoke with the amateur climber, who will have climbed two of the world's most famous mountains by the end of next year

MALAGA. For many people, doing something for charity means making a regular donation, or attending an event, but for 46-year-old Hessia Fernandes, this is not the case. "For me, giving back has to involve physical and mental challenges where I don't need to wear a gown," she told SUR in English.

Currently a consultant director for Oracle Communications, she has lived in England and Germany and moved to Malaga 14 years ago with her husband and twin sons, who are now 15 years old, and they live in San Pedro. This summer, Fernandes climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in memory of her brother Nabil who tragically took his own life when he was 16.

Not a professional climber, and "not a young bird", as she describes herself, Fernandes trained for six months prior to the challenge. Her training involved lots of cardio to raise her fitness levels, yoga and climbing La Concha mountain in Marbella with a 10-kilo bag every Saturday and Sunday for the final month prior to the trip. "This was my personal challenge," she explained. "It was all about my late brother."

"Quite tough"

In Tanzania she joined a team of 15 people for the climb itself, including sherpas, cooks and a medic. She was the only individual climber which meant sleeping in a tent alone. "It was okay if you had a good day, but if you had a bad day, it was quite tough," Fernandes remarked.



Hessia Fernandes at the peak of Kilimanjaro in July. :: SUR



With her late brother when they were children. :: SUR

Her brother Nabil tragically took his own life when he was just 16 years old

She will attempt to reach Everest Base Camp in October next year



The Strait of Gibraltar could be the next challenge. :: SUR

Although she felt well-prepared physically and mentally, no training could keep altitude sickness at bay. Fernandes suffered on the second and third day of the five-day ascent. "It's the weirdest feeling, you feel like you have fog glasses, you cry for no reason.

You want to vomit but you aren't eating," she described.

Summit night was the second major challenge: "It was the toughest. You have to walk so slowly. It's freezing, you don't feel your hands", she said. "It's about you being able to put

one foot in front of the next."

But it was all worth it when she got to the top. "It was fabulous, the sensation, the achievement, you run on adrenaline."

Hessia Fernandes did all this in aid of Samaritans, a UK-based charity which provides emotional support to people in distress. For Fernandes, work like this is so important in the world we live in today, and close to her heart. "With social media nowadays, everything is meant to be amazing, but actually lots of people don't feel their best all the time, people feel like they've got to keep a certain image." She praised the work of the volunteers who "listen to people when they feel so shit they don't know who to turn to."

A "fantastic" response

Response from everyone has been "fantastic". Fernandes received numerous messages of support on her Just Giving page before climbing Kilimanjaro. She is moved by the response she has received from strangers, as she was fairly private about this undertaking. "It is so great for them to mention my brother and they don't even know him," she stressed.

Fernandes' next challenge is Everest Base Camp, which she will be taking on in October next year. For this climb, she will be raising money for Malaga charity Nena Paine. This association helps underprivileged children around the province. "You might come from an underprivileged family but everything is possible, education is key," Fernandes says.

All of her incredible achievements are entirely self-funded and every penny raised goes to charity. "This time I will be more vocal because I want to make more money as so many children are involved," she said.

Just getting started

Hessia is full of ambition and motivation now and the mother-of-two is only just getting started. After Everest, she wants move away from mountaineering - her next goal is swimming the Strait of Gibraltar.

"These physical and mental challenges are my way of contributing," she said. "All the galas that charities have are great, but not for me."

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M A L A G A



AROUND MALAGA

Walks in the most rugged parts of the Axarquía

JAVIER ALMELLONES

One of the most striking aspects of the region of the Axarquía is the fact that its rugged mountains are not far from the coast, and it is home to some of the most picturesque villages in Malaga province.

Some of these, such as Totalán, nestle in the foothills of the Montes de Málaga and Arco Caliza Central area, while others perch on the slopes of high mountains in the Sierras de Tejeda and Almirajara.

Among the former are Comares, Colmenar, Riogordo and Periana, and also Totalán, as mentioned above, although it is situated much further south than the others.

Those in the Sierras de Tejeda and Almirajara include Periana, Alcaucín, Canillas de Aceituno, Sedella, La Viñuela, Alfarnate and Alfarnatejo.

The last two, with their similar-sounding names, are the highest villages in Malaga province, standing at around 900 metres above sea level.

They share some signs of identity, such as the Sabar river valley, rocky gorges and ancient olive groves, but they are generally very different although they each have an important historical heritage and places of interest, such as the old Venta de Alfarnate and various churches.

All these villages are well worth a visit.



Alfarnate is one of the highest villages in the province. :: J.A.

Comares

Balcony. This village is situated between the Montes de Málaga and the Axarquía and it is known as the natural viewing point of the region because it perches on a mountain which is 700 metres high. When visiting, it is easy to see why it is nicknamed the 'balcony of the Axarquía', and this position gave it great strategic importance in the past. Like many other villages in this region it has good views of the Mediterranean and the streets reflect their original Moorish layout.

What to see: La Tahona, the Mesa de Mazmúllar and El Rosario church.



Colmenar

Gastronomy. With part of its territory in the Montes de Málaga natural park, but also forming part of the Upper Axarquía, this village has a variety of landscapes. In addition to the stunning countryside and the village itself, gastronomy is one of its great attractions. Unsurprisingly, you can buy and sample numerous traditional products in Colmenar, such as honey, cured meats, wine, cheese and olive oil, among others.

What to see: The honey museum, Candelaria chapel, and the church of La Asunción.



Alcaucín

Nature. Situated on one of the slopes of the Sierra Tejeda, Alcaucín is an ideal choice for nature lovers. A few kilometres outside the village you will find El Álcazar, a natural monument with remarkable vertical rock walls. It is also the starting point for one of the walking routes up to the peak of La Maroma. Opposite the village you can see the remains of the Zalia castle. In the village itself you can drink from the Five-Spouted Fountain, the 'Fuente de los Cinco Canos.'

What to see: El Álcazar, the Zalia castle and the Five-Spouted Fountain.



Canillas de Aceituno

Mountain. Situated at the foot of the Sierra Tejeda, this white village which looks towards the sea is the departure point for one of the classic routes up to the top of La Maroma, passing the cave known as La Rábita on the way. Nor is this all there is to enjoy in the area around Canillas de Aceituno. There are some very beautiful enclaves such as La Rahíge, which is reached via El Saitillo, and walks to the source of the Bermuz river and La Fájara cave, among others.

What to see: La Rábita, La Rahíge, La Fájara cave and El Saitillo.



Periana

Olive groves. Although this village has some very steep and mountainous landscapes, it is the olive groves that mainly dominate the countryside, most of them producing the Vélez variety of olive. In fact, the extra virgin olive oil which is made here is one of the gastronomic emblems of the Axarquía. However, Periana also has a great deal more to offer, such as its delightful hamlets, the Vilo baths and the old washing trough which nowadays is one of its most emblematic fountains.

What to see: The Vilo baths, the hamlet of Mondrón and the source of the Guaro river.



Riogordo

Countryside. This village has some spectacular contrasting landscapes and beauty spots and amazing views, such as the combination of steep rocky slopes and sinuous hills. Olive and almond trees also coexist in harmony, colouring the area in different shades of green. One of the best ways to enjoy the natural spectacle is to follow some of the walking routes, but a visit to the village itself should also not be missed.

What to see: Folk museum, the Virgen de Gracia church and chapels of San Sebastián and Jesús Nazareno.





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A policeman dressed as Spiderman

An officer from Malaga travels all over Spain to visit children suffering from cancer

Eduardo Rodríguez spends his free time raising a smile among the sick children, who he thinks of as his "younger brothers and sisters"

:: JUAN CANO

MALAGA. Edu was watching television when something on the news attracted his attention. The presenter was talking about Mike Wilson, the British man who jumped from the roof of his house dressed as Spiderman to surprise his son for this fifth birthday. Little Jayden was suffering from brain cancer which ended his life a month later, at Christmas in 2014. That video, which went viral, gave Edu the idea: "I'm going to take Spiderman to hospitals in Spain," he decided.

So he set to work. First, he had to find the costume. "I wanted a good one. I thought that would be easy, but it wasn't. I finally found one abroad for 600 euros. My mother laughed; she said they wouldn't let me into the hospitals,



Edu, outside the Materno hospital; as we took the photos, two children recognised him and rushed over for a hug.

:: SALVADOR SALAS

dressed like that," says Edu 'Balboa' (his profile name on Facebook), who borrowed the name of the legendary character portrayed by Sylvester Stallone because "he was a fighter."

His real name is Eduardo Rodríguez González, and he was born and brought up in the Carranque district of Malaga. On working days, Edu puts on his National Police uniform and goes out on patrol. He passed his police exams when he was 19 and, after training at the Academy in Ávila, he joined the Public Safety force in Madrid.

On his days off and holidays, he dresses in the costume of the superhero, fills his car with petrol (at his own expense) and goes off to different hospitals to visit children who are suffering from cancer. "I've been to hospitals in Madrid, Seville, Cadiz, Jerez, Murcia, Malaga... I go wherever I'm called," he explains.

But the superhero who lies beneath the police uniform was born long before Superman. "I was always affected by things," says Edu, who is 28 now.

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“When I was little, when I used to see famous people visiting children with cancer in hospital, I used to ask myself why they couldn’t be like any other child, at home in their house. It had a real impact on me, seeing them with no hair, wearing a mask, and it seemed so unfair.”

It all started six years ago. Once he had finished his training and been awarded his police badge, Edu decided the time had come to do something.

“I had more spare time by then, and I joined an association as a volunteer. When I had time off, I used to come to Malaga and spend three hours a week visiting children in hospital,” he says.

He recalls what it was like to walk onto the Oncology ward for the first time. “I felt very nervous. I saw a little boy running outside and going under a table. He wanted to play hide-and-seek. I decided to forget protocol, and got under the table with him,” he says.

That boy was Sergio, aged seven, from La Línea de la Concepción, and he has been cured. Edu always tries to keep in contact with the families and children he visits.

The story of Lolo, an eight-year-old boy from Madrid who had spent three years undergoing treatment for an unusual type of leukemia, resembles that of the film ‘La vita è bella’ (1997), directed by Roberto Benigni, in which Guido Orefice, an Italian Jew, used his imagination to protect his son from the horrors of a Nazi concentra-

tion camp. Manuel, like Guido, turned the hell of the hospital into a game for his son Lolo, making him believe that he was there to find out what type of superhero he was. That, said Manuel, was why he had to have so many tests.

When they put the reservoir in place to give Lolo the treatment, his father told him he was Ironman.

When they did transfusions, Manuel said they were injecting him with spider venom which held the superpowers of Spiderman.

When they sedated him, it was to give him the ‘adamantium’ which Wolverine’s body also contains.

And when they gave him the chemotherapy, his parents said the orange colour of the drugs was because they were magic potions.

However, in the world they created for their son, there was a need for a flesh-and-blood superhero, and that superhero was Edu.

“One day Mariano (who was on the reception desk) told me that Spiderman was coming, and that’s how I met Edu. Lolo was in a bad mood that day, but meeting Spiderman had a very positive effect



Little Lolo dressed up to give Edu a surprise when he was due to visit him at the hospital. :: SUR

on him. They became great friends and I thought it was fantastic,” says Manuel.

Afterwards, it was Lolo who surprised Edu: he hid in the wardrobe and when the policeman went into the room, he suddenly appeared in a Spiderman costume of his own. “They are a really great family,” says Edu.

Lolo has now been released from the Niño Jesús hospital in Madrid, where he had spent two years. The results of his latest check up, earlier this month, were “good”.

Facebook and Twitter

“They see me as a big brother,” says Edu, who has a Facebook page and a Twitter profile with the name ‘spidermanylossuperpelones’, where he receives requests for visits and keeps in contact with the families. “I normally make one trip a week,” he explains.

He pays for everything himself and receives no assistance. “I won’t accept money from anybody. I never have. Once, a mother rang me and asked how much it cost. It’s free. I would cut my hand off rather than take a single euro from parents who are going through

something like this,” he insists.

He says he has lost count of the children who have found a smile when they saw him dressed as Spiderman. “It’s impossible to know, because when I go to a hospital I visit everyone in the ward and it can be 20 or 25 patients. But I keep in contact with most of the families who ring me because they want me to surprise their children. Every one leaves you with a special memory, because they are all unique and special.”

There are some that he hasn’t lost count of: the ones who are no longer with us.

“There have been 29,” says Edu. “It’s very hard, because you become friends with their parents and they seem like younger brothers or sisters to me, too. You are with them in that final stage and help them to die so that at least they are not afraid. That is something truly important. We need more people who are prepared to do that. It isn’t easy. If a parent comes and asks you whether their son is going to die, you want to say “no, everything’s going to be fine, you’ll see.” But you can’t lie to them, because they’ll only blame you later. You have to be honest and say, “Look, I don’t know.”

–How can you go through that pain over and over again? How do you cope with it?

–Sometimes you go home feeling really depressed and you lose faith in everything. “How can this happen?” you think. “Why should a three-year-old die?”

Edu pays for everything himself: “I would cut off my hand rather than ask parents for money”

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➤ But the children make everything easier because they never stop being children. And you can't let yourself be overwhelmed by it. If you do about one, you can't help the next one. When you do feel like that, though, it's important to know how to get out of it, because otherwise you could end up suffering from depression and having to take medication.

Spiderman is only skin deep. An easy photo. "People know I get dressed up in a costume to visit the hospitals, but that is only looking on the surface. This isn't like Carnival in Cadiz. About 99 per cent of my work is done without the costume. Every time I have a day off, I go to the hospital as Edu, not as Spiderman."

Over time, he has developed a very personal theory about how death can be the antidote to living with a daily hell.

"When you spend time doing this, you understand that death as we know it doesn't exist. We all come here for something and we all have to leave for a reason. And we will never know exactly what that is until the film ends for us and we read the words 'The End'. I think these children are like soldiers. They come to fulfil a mission, which may be to meet their parents, and discover the important things in life, or maybe they will be the reason for two brothers who haven't spoken for years to reunite. Like soldiers, they suffer, and then afterwards they go home."

-Do you believe that you have su-

A prize winner for his work

Eduardo Rodríguez on Tuesday received the ¡Buenos días, Javi y Mar! Prize for his work with children with cancer.

The prize, awarded by Cadena 100, recognises the work of people who selflessly give up their time and efforts to make the world a better place.

Edu received the award at a gala evening, held at the Cine Capitol in Madrid, from singer Sergio Dalma, athlete Chema Martínez and magician Antonio Díaz.

perpowers?

-We all have them. The strongest ones are love and determination. A person who is determined, even if they have no arms and legs, can't be stopped by anybody. Those are my superpowers, but there's nothing special about me. I have them, and so does everyone who wants to do what I do. What I do know is that this is my path. Everyone has their place in life, and this is mine.

When we were photographing Spiderman, Eduardo and the police officer, three people in one skin, for this article, outside the Materno hospital, a mother arrived at the door of the Emergency Department with two small children. "Look Mummy, it's Edu!" exclaimed the little ones almost in unison, as they ran to give him a hug.

"I'm Batman and together we're the 'Superheroes of Hearts' "

The president and secretary of the Andrés Olivares Foundation sometimes dress up and accompany Edu on his visits to hospitals

:: J. C.

MALAGA. There is not the saga of the X-Men or the Avengers, and their rivals aren't Magneto and Loki. Their enemies, the ones they try to beat with through smiles, are fear, sadness and loss of hope.

"I'm Batman, and together we are the 'Superheroes of Hearts'," says Andrés Olivares, president of the foundation which bears his name and works on emotional help for children with cancer, and their families.

Although they arrived at the same destination, they did so via different roads. For Edu 'Balboa', the police officer and Spiderman, it was through empathy, while for Andrés it was due to a very traumatic personal experience. His son Luis had leukemia and, after a long battle against the cancer, he died in 2007. He was nine years old. "I had this



The group of superheroes, on one of their visits to a hospital. :: SUR

idea before he died. He was very generous," says Andrés. "It was dreadful at the time, but I have grown since then. It woke me up. My son changed my life because of his illness."

So, three years later, the foundation was born. When Edu arrived there dressed as Spiderman, and Andrés saw how much the children loved it, he decided to go even further. "I dress as Batman and Rob-

erto, the secretary, as a Transformer," he says. They visit hospitals together whenever they can. "We're like three brothers," says Andrés.

Edu admits that Andrés is his 'teacher' as well as a good friend. "Our routine is a bit unusual. We arrange to meet up and have lunch together in the cafés at the hospitals. I wouldn't take any step in the future unless Andrés thought it was a good idea," he says.

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Carlos Haya and Ibima participate in a Europe-wide project to detect allergies earlier

:: SUR

MALAGA. Researchers at the Allergy Clinical Management Unit at the Carlos Haya regional hospital and at the Biomedical Research Institute in Malaga (Ibima) are taking part in a European project which is researching the use of nanotechnology as a way of detecting food allergies.

The main objective of this project is to transfer into clinical practice a technological optic diagnostic device which will enable doctors to detect at least 90 per cent of the most common food allergies in Europe early.

The early detection system involves testing a single drop of blood and it will reduce costs and the technical requirements which are currently necessary.

María José Torres, a researcher and the director of the Allergy CMU at the regional hospital, says "the availability of cheap, fast and reliable results will change the way people organise their health and dietary habits."

The device, which is known as 'AllerScreening', is expected to mark a turning point in allergy diagnosis as it can be carried out at local health centres.



Helping to start the new year on a positive note

Refuge Recovery weekly meetings for those struggling with addictions or depression are starting up in El Trapiche on 9 January



JENNIE RHODES
✉ rhodes_jennie@hotmail.com

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. Christmas and New Year can often take their toll on people already struggling with depression or addictions, be they alcohol or drug dependency, shopping or the inability to leave a mobile phone for more than a few minutes.

New Year is traditionally a good time to think about new beginnings and a new weekly meeting, starting on Tuesday 9 January at Centro Dharma in El Trapiche, could be a good place to start.

Bob Manning, who is Welsh, came to Spain in 1986, and Gerda Smit, who is Dutch and came here in 2008, are leading the sessions and they explain that they have both experienced addictions themselves: "The more we get to know about addictive behaviour, the more we realise that we all are somewhere on the scale."

"We as society have cultivated the habit to look away from anything inconvenient, to mask our fears, grief, guilt or shame - often with depression or dependency as a result."

At the age of nine, Bob was sent to

a military boarding school, which he believes seriously affected him psychologically. For the last seven years he says he has recovered from a dependency to alcohol that spanned three decades, after managing to stop his cocaine addiction 20 years before that. Now he uses his experience and knowledge to help others. He is a licensed counsellor and detox acupuncture therapist.

Gerda grew up in a family that was affected by alcoholism and depression and has struggled with suicidal depression herself for many years. Since moving to Spain she says she has been able to reevaluate her life and lifestyle. She says her focus is now on energy medicine (licensed), trauma-release, meditation and whole foods.

Bob and Gerda say that while a lot of people are able to face their fears and turn their lives around, many more struggle with the perseverance and consistency that are needed to make the change: "Having a like-minded and compassionate community at one's side has proven to be of great support in life-changing processes."

The weekly meetings, held under the umbrella of 'Refuge Recovery', are described as "a mindfulness-based, peer-to-peer approach to recovery". The couple explain that while they are neither Buddhists nor Christians,

they "take spiritual practices at heart", putting mindfulness, forgiveness, compassion and generosity into their practice.

The meetings will be open to anyone who feels they could benefit from them and are on a donation basis. They include guided meditation, recovery-related tools, group sharing and discussion. "The only requirement is to be sober when you come," adds Gerda.

Bob and Gerda explain that Refuge Recovery is not a centre, but a free recovery programme, like Alcoholics Anonymous and SMART Recovery. It is a young organisation which first started in the USA and is gaining momentum in the recovery world. Bob and Gerda are set to start the first group in Spain calling it Sun, Sea and Sangha.



Gerda and Bob will start their weekly meetings on 9 January. :: SUR

"This is not only for people in active addiction, but also for people who are already recovering but are suffering from depression, codependency, having problems with overeating because they stopped smoking, drinking or using, etcetera," they say.

Bob and Gerda add that family members are welcome to attend the meetings to learn how they can help

their loved ones.

The meetings will take place every Tuesday, starting 9 January, from 7 to 8pm at the holistic center Centro Dharma on Calle Poeta Garcia Valverde in El Trapiche.

For more information, directions or private consultations contact either Bob on 642352013 or Gerda on 605601139.

OCEAN CLINIC RECEIVES GERMAN AWARD

Following two charitable missions to Kenya to carry out reconstructive surgery, treating 85 adults and children, Ocean Clinic Marbella has received the Medical Charity Award at the German Medical Awards. The clinic is now seeking support for its 2018 Relief Camp.



:: SUR



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EXHIBITIONS

Roberto Matta

Marbella. *Until 26 May 2018.* Museo Ralli, Urb Coral beach. Temporary exhibition of the Chilean artist Roberto Matta of surrealist abstract art. His works represent his own vision of the world and art through the invisible, the psyche, the cosmos, without losing reference to his origins or nature. Tel. 952 85 79 23 / marbella@rallimuseums.org

The Russian museum

Malaga. *Edificio Tabacalera, Avda Sor Teresa Prat. Tues-Sun 9.30am - 10pm.* The seasonal exhibition 'La aventura del color' which is running until 4 February next year, will feature Alexei Jawlensky (1864-1941). A contemporary and friend of Vasily Kandinsky, Gabriele Münter and Paul Klee among other famous artists of the early twentieth century. The museum is also holding an exhibition of political posters 'Carteles de la Revolución' consisting of simple but effective images deemed suitable for the masses. The posters featured workers, soldiers in the Red army and country labourers personifying the power of the people. The annual exhibition is entitled La Dinastía Románov and includes many portraits of Russian royalty before the last Tsar and his family were assassinated in 1918.



Dvuelta will perform at Coín's Christmas concert on Friday. :: SUR

A rock and roll Christmas in Coín

:: TONY BRYANT

COÍN. Coín will be getting in the festive mood when the town hosts a live music Christmas party in the Alameda today, Friday.

The concert will be performed by Coín rock band, Dvuelta, a popular five-piece who have been performing together for more than 20 years.

The event promises to be a must for lovers of pop and rock music because Dvuelta will pay tribute to some of Spain's most legendary bands, including Los Secretos, Radio Futura and Los Ronaldos, all of whom were part of the La Movida movement of

the 80s and 90s.

Dvuelta will also perform some of the biggest hit songs of international artists like Tina Turner, The Rolling Stones and The Police.

The band is extremely entertaining and is sure to get the audience moving with their energetic stage show and musical professionalism.

The concert, which is free, will be held on the bandstand in the Alameda de Coín and will start at 11.30pm and continue until 2.30am.

i www.coin.es

Rubén Guerrero

Malaga. *Until 28 January.* Centro de artes Contemporáneo. The 'Familias Mínimas (Rojo, amarillo y azul)' exhibition features 11 paintings of places, buildings and words.

Museum Jorge Rando

Malaga. *Until 25 February.* Cruz del Molinillo, 12. A temporary exhibition entitled 'Nacerán Nuevas Auroras' (the Birth of Colour) is currently on display. The museum also holds poetry and musical events. kontakt@museojorgerando.org

Female artists and surrealism

Malaga. *Until 28 January.* Misunderstood, fighters and rebels, in some cases eclipsed or abused by their male partners, their lives and reactions to criticism and social convention were reflected in their art. The art from this group of female artists was not recognised nor accepted for far too long; they include names such as Eileen Agar, Claude Cahun and Unica Zürn.

Playmobil nativity scene

Malaga. *Until 12 January.* Salas Minogorance, Archivo Municipal, Alameda Principal. The Association 'Click Clack' have set up a complete nativity scene using 3,000 Playmobil figures and 20,000 pieces in total, including the scenery etc.

JM Galería

Malaga. *Until 1 January.* Duquesa

de Parcent 12.

JMshow consists of photos, paintings, drawings and sculpture by various artists. www.galeriajm.com or email: galeria@galeriajm.com

Pat Graham

Malaga. *Until 5 January.* Centro Cultural Provincial Maria Victoria Atencia. American photographer Pat Graham is exhibiting a collection of his photos taken with a polaroid camera. The theme of 'Pasado perfecto' as the exhibition is called, is urban cultures.



Ventana Abierta, Casa Natal

Buren at the Cube

Malaga. *Until 14 January.* Pompidou Centre, Malaga port. Daniel Buren, the artist who created the iconic design on the 'Cube' at the Pompidou Centre, is exhibiting more of his work at the museum.





MOVIE LISTING
From Friday 22th to
Thursday 28th December

ORIGINAL VERSION SUBTITLED SPANISH



JUMANJI: WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Director Jake Kasdan
Starring Dwayne Johnson and Jack Black
ACTION - 119 min.

Friday 22 and Monday 25: 18:00, 20:30, 22:45
Saturday 23: 11:45, 15:45, 18:00, 20:30, 22:45
Sunday 24: 11:45, 15:30, 17:45
From Tuesday 26 to Thursday 28: 15:45, 18:00, 20:30, 22:45



FERDINAND

Director Carlos Saldanha
ANIMATION - 108 min.

Friday 22 and Monday 25: 18:00
Saturday 23: 11:45, 15:45, 18:00
Sunday 24: 11:45, 15:45, 17:50
From Tuesday 26 to Thursday 28: 15:45, 18:00



MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

Friday 22 and Saturday 23: 20:15
From Monday 25 to Thursday 28: 20:15



PADDINGTON 2

Friday 22 and Monday 25: 17:45
Saturday 23: 15:45
Sunday 24: 15:30
From Tuesday 26 to Thursday 28: 15:45



WONDER WHEEL

Friday 22: 20:30, 22:45
Saturday 23: 17:50, 20:30
Monday 25: 20:30
From Tuesday 26 to Thursday 28: 17:45, 20:30



WONDER

Saturday 23: 18:00
From Monday 25 to Thursday 28: 18:00



STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI

Saturday 23 and From Tuesday 26 to Thursday 28: 15:45, 17:50
Sunday 24: 16:00
Monday 25: 17:45



COCO

Saturday 23: 11:45, 15:50
Sunday 24: 11:45
From Tuesday 26 to Thursday 28: 16:00



Subconscious in a box, Malaga.

Jaime Sordo

Malaga. Until 14 January. Sala de La Coracha, Museo del Patrimonio Municipal, Pase de Reding. Free. In the annex to the MUPAM is an exhibition of contemporary photographs from the collection Los Brazales belonging to businessman Jaime Sordo. The exhibition is entitled 'Escenas: acción y representación' and includes work by Pierre Gonnord, Per Berclay, Regina José Galindo and many others.

Subconscious in a box

Malaga. Until 7 January. Museo Picasso. Youngsters and woman at risk have contributed their creative talents to an exhibition at the Picasso Museum. 'El cajón del subconsciente' consists of many little boxes which contain the artists' subconscious thoughts. Some examples are conceptual, others more emotional.

Picasso, Ventana Abierta

Malaga. Until 7 January. Fundación Picasso, Casa Natal. An exhibition of works completed by students who have attended the educational programme 'Arteterapia'. The aim of the programme is to assist the social rehabilitation of patients between 30 and 58 years old with mental health problems.

Gris and Blanchard

Malaga. Until February. Museo Carmen Thyssen, C/Compañía, 10 Works by Maria Blanchard, Juan Gris, Jean Metzinger, Jacques Lichitz and Albert Gleizes illustrate the 'second period' of cubism.

Paco Cabello

Malaga. Until 2 February. Fundación Unicaja, Mon-Fri -8pm. The Unicaja Foundation will be holding an exhibition of works by the sculptor Paco Cabello.

Antonio Yesa

Malaga. Until 16 January, Galeria Alfajar opposite the gardens of Malaga Cathedral. 'Cualquier lugar es Bueno', is the name of the exhibition by Antonio Yesa.

Francisco Leiro

Malaga. Until 7 January. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo. An exhibition of sculptures completed over the last decade by Galician artist Francisco Leira whose work reflects fragility and human vulnerability.

Madame Butterfly

Malaga. From 23 December until 10 January. Museo Automovilístico y de la Moda, Edificio Tabacalera. 10am-7pm Closed Mondays. The seasonal exhibition at the museum is entitled 'Madame Butterfly' and is dedicated to the luxury of fashion from an era when Oriental style was in vogue. 24 and 31 December open 10am-2pm.

Bad Taste

Malaga. Until 14 January. La Térmica, Avda de Los Guindos, 48. The exhibition forms part of the Festival de Cultura Basura. 'Suburban culture' take centre stage accompanied by conferences and prose by the filmmaker and writer John Waters.

'Picassiano'

Malaga. Until 21 January. Casa Natal de Picasso, Plaza de la Merced. The exhibition entitled 'Guernica y

Otros Desastres' aims to bring a new approach to Guernica, Picasso's mural showing the horrors of war, on the 80th anniversary of the bombing of the village.

Ignacio Tovar

Malaga. Until 21 January. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo. 'Cantándote Bajito' is the title of the exhibition by Ignacio Tovar who interprets flamenco in his paintings using the full spectrum of colours on his palette.

Dance Practice

Malaga. Until 8 January. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo. The video entitled Dance Practice was made in 1995 by Douglas Gordon, Jonathon Monk and Dave Allen. It shows a mix of music and dance, combining the music of the 60s with contemporary art.



Gris and Blanchard, Malaga.

The Stones and The Beatles

Malaga. Until 18 June. La Térmica, Avda de Los Guindos. 'Rival' photographers Terry O'Neill and Gered Mankowitz immortalised some of the most important bands in history including The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.

Antonio Montiel

Antequera. Until 6 January. The Town Hall. An exhibition by local artist Antonio Montiel.

Mijas Photography Group

Mijas Pueblo. Until 7 January. Casa Museo de Mijas. A collection of photos taken by a group international photographers.

Alfredo Opisso

Mijas Pueblo. Until 10 January. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo. An exhibition of works by Alfredo Opisso.

Loida CriadoMore

Mijas. Until 7 January. Casa de la Cultura Las Lagunas. An exhibition of photographs taken by Liado CriadoMore entitled Women 5.2.

Galería Krabbe

Frigiliana. Until 20 January. Galería Krabbe, C/Rosario La Joaquín. The Christmas collective exhibition will feature the work of six female Danish artists. galeriakrabbe@gmail.com



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Christmas at Cervantes

MALAGA. The Cervantes Theatre in Malaga has some spectacular shows planned over the Christmas period.

Today, Friday 22 December, is a concert by the Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra of Handel's / Mozart's Messiah with soprano Isabel Monar, mezzosoprano Marta Infante and baritone Thomas Laske. It starts at 9pm.

The San Petersburg Army choir, ballet and orchestra will be returning again this year to perform at the theatre. With over one hundred musicians, dancers and singers, they will be performing dances and songs from traditional Russian folklore. The show is on Boxing Day, 26 December at 5.30pm.

Following the San Petersburg Army Choir will be the Alabama Gospel Choir. They will be singing a variety of gospel songs reflecting the influence of Negro Spirituals and African slave music mixed with funk and blues. The curtain goes up at 9.30pm on 26 December.

More rousing music is planned for 27 December with the Cinema Symphony Orchestra which will be performing tracks from the biggest Hollywood films. The concert starts at 5.30pm.

At 9.30pm the same day, Queenie, the Queen tribute band, will be in concert. The powerful ballads of Freddie Mercury, the universally known anthems that took Queen to the top of the charts many times over the last forty years are faithfully reproduced by what is billed as 'The Best World Queen Tribute Band'.



The San Petersburg Army Choir and Ballet, Malaga.

CONCERTS

► **Where:** Teatro Cervantes, C/Ramos Marín, Malaga.

► **Tickets:** www.unientradas.es or from the box office.

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra is back at the Cervantes Theatre on 3 January at 8pm for the Special New Year's Concert.



'Queenie', Malaga.

3 January at 8pm for the Special New Year's Concert.

Christmas concert for Oxfam

Malaga. 22 December, 8pm. Sala María Cristina, Fundación Unicaja, C/Marqués de Valdecañas. 10€
Choirs from Rincón de la Victoria, La Invisible and the Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Málaga will take part in a concert to raise funds for Intermón Oxfam.

Navijazz for AVI

Malaga. 23 December, 8pm. Sala María Cristina, Fundación Unicaja, C/Marqués de Valdecañas. 10€
Swing jazz concert by the Asociación de Jazz de Málaga to raise funds for the Asociación por la Vida Independiente (AVI) who help people with diverse disabilities to integrate into society and live independently. Tickets from their Facebook page or www.avimalaga.org

MUSIC & DANCE

The Wall Bar

Malaga. Hotel Vincci Posada del Patio, 11pm, entry free.

22 December: Sñr Blues. Jesús Aranda and Alberto Soler. Blues, country and rock'n'roll.

23 December: Susan Valery and Adrian Lombardi. Jazz and vocals.

Joven Orquesta Barroca de Andalucía

Malaga. 23 December, Auditorio Edgar Neville, C/Pacífico.

The Orfeón Preuniversitario de Málaga choir will be performing with soprano Alba Moreno and mezzosoprano Marta Infante in a varied programme. Free by invitation.

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra



Candy Christmas, Torremolinos

Malaga. Teatro Cervantes

21, 22 December, 9pm. The Messiah by composers Händel and with adaptations by Mozart. Soprano Isabel Monar, mezzosoprano Marta Infante, tenor Enrico Iviglia and baritone Thomas Laske. They will be accompanied by the Cármina Nova choir.

Bud Spencer Band

Torremolinos. 22 December, Sala Pink Elephant, C/Decano Juan de Espino.

Tributes to Bob Dylan, The Who, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Bad Company, Rolling Stones etc. More details can be found on the Facebook page: The Pink Elephant.

Candy Christmas

Torremolinos. 22 December, 8.30pm. La Plaza Costa del Sol.

Gema, Laura and Sara from the Geiko Group will be performing traditional Christmas carols in English and Spanish songs. Their repertoire includes pop, soul and funk, among other genres.

Mad Dogs

Malaga. 22 December, 10pm. La Cochera Cabaret. Av. de los Guindos. 10€

The Malaga band Mad Dogs pay tribute to Joe Cocker. www.lacoheracabaret.com

City centre concerts

Malaga. Plaza de la Constitución.

22 December, 7pm. Gospel I, 8pm. Ortigosa. Esto es la Navidad
23 December, 7pm. Hans Christian Anderson theatre. 8pm. Zambomba Casa Pesteño.

26 December, 7pm. Escalonías Ntra Sra de Gracia and Colegio Gibralfaire. 8pm. Grupo Mediterráneo.

27 December, 7pm. Benajemí choir, Nuestro Navidad. 8pm. Son de Málaga choir.

28 December, 7pm. Romero de la Hermandad de la Alegría choir. 8pm. Gym Victory.

29 December, 7pm. Zambomba Hermanas Alarcón. 8pm. Antonio de Verónica. Zambomba de la Familia Sánchez Cortés.

Zambombá

Malaga. 22, 23 December, 8pm.

Teatro Echegaray. 15€
Singer Alejandro Estrada heads the programme of one of the most popular Spanish traditions, the zambombá.

The Royal Russian Ballet

EXHIBITIONS

Colores en Navidad

Almuñécar. Until 7 January. Casa de la Cultura.

Paintings, sculpture and prints by artists Marikilla Cascos, María Angeles Raya, Pepe González, José Cabrera, Doris Pizarro, Paco Ariza and Sagrario Peramos. Organised by Asociación Arte-Sur.

CHARITY

Christmas day with AID

Coin. 25 December, from 1.30pm.

Los Cabales restaurant. 39.90€. Full Christmas lunch with live entertainment from Geoff Jameson. No children under 13. Book in advance from AID second hand warehouse in Alhaurín el Grande. Tel: 626942427.

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Malaga. TeatroAlameda
25 December, 7.30pm. The Royal Russian ballet will be performing Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite.
26, 27 December, 9.30pm. The Royal Russian ballet will be performing Swan Lake.
Tickets: www.teatroalameda.com

Christmas concert
Toremolinos. 28 December, mid-day. Plaza Costa del Sol
The Malaga Promúsica Chamber Orchestra and the Young Orchestra will be playing for passerbys in this open-air concert.

Traditional carol concert

Malaga. 29 December, 8.30pm. Malaga Cathedral. Free.
The Canasteros choir will be singing Spanish villancicos (carols).

European Sinfonietta
Gibraltar. 4 January, John Mackintosh Hall Theatre, 5.30pm for children, £7; 8.30pm adults 10£.
The European Sinfonietta, conducted by Wouter Padberg. The programme combines compositions by the Strauss dynasty. The concert for children will include a draw. Winners will be able to conduct and instruments will be supplied so that they can play with the orchestra during those pieces. Tick-

ets for the Orchestral Concert for children are free of charge for kids and their families. Collect them from City Hall, Mario Finlayson National Art Gallery reception. Children's ID cards must be shown. Tickets for evening performance £20 from Scarello's Coffe shop, Silver Shop or call 200 72134. www.buytickets.gi

Concert for the Kings
Sotogrande. 4 January, 8pm. Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Merced
The soprano Lourdes Martín-Leiva and the tenor Luis M^a Pacetti will be accompanied by the pianist José Manuel Padilla in this grand gala



New Year's Eve, Torremolinos.

concert.

TIMS Christmas concerts
Malaga. 21 January, 8pm. Malaga cathedral.

Flamenco and carols
Malaga. 29 December, 9.30pm. Tea-

tro Cervantes.
Ainhoa Arteta and Estrella Morente will be performing traditional flamenco with an added Christmas twist of traditional Spanish carols.

EVENTS

New Year's Eve celebrations
Torremolinos. 31 December, from 11pm. La Plaza de la Nogalera.
A marquee will be set up with a bar and live music from Kassia and Money Makers to welcome in the New Year.

Trip to see Three Kings parade
Fuengirola. 5 January departing 2.25pm from bullring and 2.30pm Feria ground. 15€
Fundación Lux Mundi Fuengirola. C/Nueva 3. Call 952474840 for more information. >



Pieces have come from all over Spain. :: F.G.



The bust of San Juan de Dios :: FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ

Exhibition of baroque art

ANTONIO JAVIER LÓPEZ
MALAGA. Works by one of the most renowned sculptors in the Spanish baroque style are on display in the Palacio Episcopal in Malaga. They were created by Malaga-born Fernando Ortiz, who worked for the court during the early eighteenth century. His work was often overshadowed by another famous artist of the time, Pedro de Mena.

The works of the artists differ in subtle but important ways: Mena had a more mystic and contained style in comparison to the exuberance of Ortiz.

For example, in the work 'Do-

DETAILS

► **When.** Until 14 January.

► **Where.** Palacio Episcopal, (Ars Málaga), Plaza del Obispo.

► **What.** Over thirty pieces of religious art from all over Spain.

lorosas' by Mena, the figure has hands clasped together in a sign of restraint, while Ortiz sculpts them with arms spread wide and the face lifted to the sky.

Around 31 pieces from all cor-

ners of Spain have been brought together for the exhibition. One sculpture, the Virgen de la Merced has been in the main altarpiece of the Mercedarian monks of Osuna (Seville) for the past 150 years and is now displayed in the Episcopal palace.

There is also a wooden carving of St Francis of Assisi (1738) from the Museo Nacional de Escultura and a Santa Teresa de Jesús (1766), a carving that displays the artistic identity of Ortiz.

Entry to the exhibition is four euros (half price for pensioners, students, large families, the unemployed and disabled).

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EVENTS

Trip to Arcos de la Frontera

Fuengirola. 5 January, 7.55am various departure points 36€. One of Andalucía's most dramatically-positioned villages. Included is transport, a guided tour and lunch. Fundación Lux Mundi Fuengirola. C/Nueva 3. 952474840

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Age Concern dinner and dance

Mijas Costa. 22 December 7.30m. Hotel Tamisa Golf. 30€ Age Concern Christmas party with canapes and drinks on arrival followed by a four-course meal with fish and vegetarian options. Also wine, water and Christmas crackers. Entertainment is provided by singer Laura Elen. A special 20% discount off bar prices for all Age Concern guests and transport to and from the hotel. 12€ return per person with a minimum of 40 guests booking the coach. Tickets: Age Concern Charity shop, C/Francisco Cano, Los Boliches or the Hotel Tamisa Golf Reception. Call 686289904.



Christingle church services

Live nativity

La Herradura. 23 December, 9.30pm. Plaza de la Independencia. The townspeople all take part in bringing the nativity alive in the village by dressing up and converting the streets into a village from biblical times.

Christmas market

Gibraltar Until 23 December. Wed, Thurs noon until 8pm, Fri, Sat 10am until 10pm. Line Wall Road. Cultural Services and the Gibraltar Artisans market are joining forces.

Film and music with Brenan

by TONY BRYANT

MALAGA. The Gerald Brenan Cultural Centre in Churriana (ACGB) have organised a special dual-language seminar on one of Gerald Brenan's most celebrated works today, Friday 22 December.

The event will begin with the screening of the film, South from Granada, based on Brenan's book of the same name.

The film, by award-winning Spanish film director, Fernando Colomo, is an autobiographical account of Brenan's life in Yegen, the small village nestled in the Alpujarras in Granada where he settled in 1920.

Brenan had just been demobbed when he went in search of a cheap place to live where he could study and become a writer. The young Englishman spent his time reading, writing and catching up on an education which he felt he had missed by not attending university. Despite the re-



Gerald Brenan. :: SUR

moteness of Yegen, Brenan's contact with the Bloomsbury Group, of which he was a fringe member, continued and his book recounts the visits of Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey and Dora Carrington.

Following the film, which will have English subtitles, a informal roundtable will be held to discuss the importance of Gerald Brenan's work and his association with Spain. The event will be chaired by Lola Ortega Muñoz, president of the ACGB, and the audience will have the opportunity to ask questions to a select panel of British and Spanish writers and journalists that specialise in the culture and customs of Andalucía.

The event, which is free, will be held in the Sala de Actos in the El Corte Inglés, in Avenida de Andalucía, Malaga.

The film, which lasts for almost two hours, will begin at 5.30pm and the roundtable will commence at 7.30pm and last for one hour.

The evening will finish with a special piano concert performed by Malaga pianist, Julián Laguna Vicioso, who will perform a selection of festive music.

There will be craft stalls, mulled wine, mince pies, entertainment, and face painting etc.

New Year's swim

Los Boliches. 1 January, 2pm. Restaurante Videra, Paseo Marítimo. A new venue this year at the Videra restaurant. There will be safety divers to assist if necessary, an auction, raffle and BBQ. Proceeds to PAWS. Facebook 4pawsadoptions or tel: 606572407, email stacey@4pawsadoptions.com.

Christmas market

Torremolinos. Until 3 January. Avda Palma Mallorca. The Christmas market in the Avda Palma de Mallorca is open from 10am-4pm and 4.30pm-9pm.

Papá Noel Village

Torremolinos Until 4 January. Plaza Costa del Sol. The Father Christmas village will be open every day from 11am until 2pm and 5pm until 9pm. Next to the village will be free children's activities and workshops.

Christmas church services

Alhaurín el Grande. Cemetery

chapel.

24 December, 4.30pm. Family Christingle Service with Holy Communion. (No Sunday morning service).

25 December, 11.30am. Holy Communion.

Benalmádena. Capilla San José. 24 December, 9.30am. Morning prayer. (No service on Christmas Day).

Calahonda. Iglesia San Miguel. 24 December, 9.30am. Holy Communion. **7.30pm.** Family Christingle Service.

25 December, 9.30am. Holy Communion.

Los Boliches. Church of Saint Andrew.



New Year's swim, Los Boliches

24 December, 11.30am. Morning prayer. **Midnight.** Midnight mass.

25 December, 11.30am. Holy Communion.

Los Boliches. Evangelical Church 25 December, 11am. Readings and popular carols. Tel: 952 460 728

O. V. FILM

SUR in English advises calling cinemas to check for any last minute time changes. Lunchtime and late night screenings weekends only.

Cine Albéniz

C/Alcazabilla 4, Malaga. Tel: 902 36 02 95 or visit www.cinealbeniz.com or www.unientradas.es

Wonder Wheel: 18.15, 20.15, 22.15.

Downsizing: 16.00, 20.00, 22.25.

The Sense of an Ending: 17.00.

Cinesur El Ingenio

Avda. Juan Carlos 1, Vélez-Málaga. Tel. 667 77 31 87.

Ferdinand: 12.30 (Sat, Sun); 16.50 (every day)

Star Wars: The Last Jedi: 12.10 (Sat, Sun); 16.30, 19.30 (every day)



Living nativity, La Herradura

Cinesur Miramar

Avda. de la Encarnación, Fuengirola. Tel. 952 19 86 00.

Ferdinand: 12.15, 17.00 (every day).

Wonder Wheel: 12.10, 16.45, 19.00, 22.30, 00.30 (every day).

Star Wars: The Last Jedi: 12.00, 16.20, 19.20, 22.20 (every day).

Cines Teatro Goya

For tickets and information call 951196665. www.cinesteatrogoya.com

Paddington 2: 15.30 (Sun); 15.45 (Sat, Tues-Thurs), 17.45 (Fri, Mon).

Murder On The Orient Express: 20.15 (Everyday except Sunday).

Wonder Wheel: 17.45 (Tues-Thurs); 17.50 (Sat); 20.30 (Every day except Sunday), 22.45 (Fri).

Coco: 11.45 (Sat, Sun); 15.50 (Sat); 16.00 (Tues-Thurs).

Wonder: 18.00 (Sat, Mon-Thurs).

Star Wars: The Last Jedi: 15.45, 17.50 (Sat, Tues-Thurs); 16.00 (Sun); 17.45 (Fri, Mon); 19.45 (Fri).

Ferdinand: 11.45 (Sat, Sun); 15.45 (Sat, Sun, Tues-Thurs); 17.50 (Sun); 18.00 (Fri, Sat, Mon-Thurs).

Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle: 11.45 (Sat, Sun); 15.30, 17.45 (Sun); 15.45 (Sat, Tues-Thurs); 18.00, 20.30, 22.45 (Fri, Sat, Mon-Thurs).

Yelmo Cines, Plaza Mayor

Centro de Ocio Plaza Mayor, Avda. Alfonso Ponce de León.

Tel: 902 902 103 or visit www.yelmocines.es

Ferdinand: 12.40 (Sat, Sun); 20.45 (every day except Sun)

Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle: 18.45 (every day)

Star Wars: The Last Jedi: 12.15 (sat, Sun); 16.30 (every day except Mon); 19.30, 22.30 (every day except Sun)

Wonder Wheel: 21.15 (every day except Sun)

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EXCELLENCE The marina which places the emphasis on boat owners' needs has won the prestigious 5 Gold Anchor award for high-quality service and facilities for five consecutive years

ALCAIDESA MARINA, AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO BERTH IN ALL SEASONS

LA LÍNEA

Spain may have been suffering from a serious economic crisis in recent years but some businesses have gone from strength to strength thanks to their high standards and commitment to putting their clients first. Alcaidesa Marina is one of these, and can be justifiably proud of its achievement in having won the prestigious 5 Gold Anchor award for high quality and service for five consecutive years.

ALCAIDESA IS DIFFERENT

Anybody who visits Alcaidesa Marina for the first time will immediately see that it is different. For one thing, its location with fabulous views of Gibraltar, makes it an inviting marina for boat owners and boat lovers alike. However, the ambience is also different. Alcaidesa believes ports should be places where the emphasis is on boats and their owners, not on shopping, restaurants and nightlife for those who prefer to keep their feet firmly on terra firma. As a result, this is a quiet marina in which boat owners can enjoy a good night's sleep, undisturbed by late-night revellers and loud music.

This does not, however, mean that it lacks facilities: there is a very good restaurant, Alcaidesa Lounge Bar, which serves Spanish cuisine at reasonable prices and the tapas bars and restaurants (and of course excellent



shops) of La Línea and Gibraltar are just a five- or ten-minute walk away, respectively.

EASILY ACCESSIBLE

Alcaidesa Marina is totally focused on boat owners' needs. For a start, look at the location. The port is perfectly located for cruising the Costa del Sol to the east or the Costa de la Luz to the west and North Africa is only a few nautical miles away.

For those who need to travel by air to or from the UK, Alcaidesa's proximity to Gibraltar airport makes it an extremely attractive and effortless option. Just a few minutes away on foot or by car,

it cuts travelling time and hassle down to a minimum.

Other factors which most boat owners need to take into account, whether berthing their boats temporarily or permanently, are the facilities and the cost. Alcaidesa wins on both counts.

STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES

In terms of services, this marina provides 24-hour, deep water access, effective security including CCTV, keycoded gates at the bridgeheads, lighting, modern water and electricity supplies, showers and lavatories, and free WiFi.

There are fuelling facilities, the assistance of professional staff, a

75-tonne travel hoist so that essential maintenance and repairs can be carried out in a fully-secure gated area, and a chandlery for stock and supplies.

The marina has 625 berths including finger berths with side-to access for boats up to 15 metres and stern-to berths for those up to 100-metre superyacht size.

COMPETITIVE COSTS

And what, you are probably asking, does all this cost? Well, there's even more good news in that respect. The annual and short-term rates are all highly competitive. For example, in 2017 the estimated annual berthing rates including the T5 and T0 taxes are 3,025 euros for a boat which is 10 metres long, 3,521 for 12 metres, 4,961 for 15 metres, 6,632 for 18 metres, 8,155 for 20 metres and 11,331 for 25 metres (prices do not include IVA).

It therefore comes as no surprise that in 2017 Alcaidesa Marina continued to welcome ever increasing, annual clients and experienced an important rise in the number of people leaving their boats in the port for the winter.

INNOVATION

Another reason that Alcaidesa has won the coveted 5 Gold Anchor award so many times is its innovative ideas from the marina team headed up by marina manager Tony Valbuena.

The latest initiatives include the low rates boat owners can enjoy at this time of year: Alcaidesa's low season offer enables berthing for as little as 183 euros a month and annual berthing for catamarans at the same rate as a monohull (limited offer).

It is little wonder, then, that Alcaidesa Marina has already made a name for itself, not only as a place which is easily accessible, with state-of-the-art facilities and where boats and boat owners are the priority, but as an example for others to follow.



Alcaidesa Marina

CONTACT

Telephone: 956.021.660
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Damián Ramos and Sebastián Guerrero are creating delicious and innovative top quality confectionery with unusual fillings, using products from the province of Malaga

ESPERANZA PELÁEZ

CALETA DE VÉLEZ. The back of the house which contains the Pastelería Ramos bakery and cake shop opens onto the seafront in Caleta de Vélez, and Damián Ramos and Sebastián Guerrero, the fifth generation of the Ramos family of bakers, smile when they remember spending their childhood between two paradises, the beach and the oven from which there was a delicious smell of baking bread and cakes - no matter how hard their grandmother tried to stop them going in there when they were covered in sand.

It was their great-great-grandfather who started the bakery. Many years later, Damián's mother introduced the recipe for the 'tortas de Algarrobo' and then other cakes as well, but the revolution came when Damián and Sebastián started to become interested in chocolate.

"First we read books, and then we went to a talk given by a confectioner at CIO Mijas and we decided we ought to learn more. We took courses and exams, and here we are today," says Sebastián.

We are interviewing the two cousins in their chocolate studio, on the upper floor of the building. It is 9am and they have already been making their bars of gourmet chocolate for three hours. It smells glorious. "A bakery never really stops. We start making cakes very early in the morning and when the last person leaves at night the bakery workers start to arrive. There are 18 of us altogether, and we make everything by hand," explains Damián as he coats moulds in melted chocolate. On the ground floor, a batch of cakes is being taken from the oven and the air is fragrant with chocolate, aniseed and

Damián Ramos and Sebastián Guerrero have revolutionised the family run cake shop in Caleta. :: D. MALDONADO

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cinnamon.

Their first creation was chocolate turrón filled with ganache of 'torta de Algarrobo'. Now, their famous bars of special chocolate turrón are made with flavours such as pistachio and raspberry; pine nuts and salted caramel; Zumbral moscatel wine and jasmine; mango; orange and Cointreau; avocado and lime; and this year, something new: ganache of goats' cheese, Cortijo La Fuente Pedro Ximenez and ecological pecans from Haza de Palmar. They are all local products.

"We decided right from the start that we wanted to work with local ingredients, but since we joined the Sabor a Málaga brand, our range of products has grown tremendously. We came up with this year's turrón because at the Sabor a Málaga fair last December, we were beside that cheese factory, that winery and the family that grows the nuts. We tried their products, and the idea just came to us," says Sebastián, as he fills the chocolate moulds with different ganaches. They will be producing 8,000 bars of turrón for sale this Christmas, and need more space: they plan to convert a terrace overlooking the sea into a production room.



New this year, pecan, cheese and Pedro Jiménez turrón. :: DANIEL MALDONADO

"We didn't expect to be this successful, but we really love what we do and our products are made with love, the finest ingredients and, most important, a team who share our enthusiasm," says Damián. The team includes workers who started with Damián's parents as well as young people who have trained at the Castillo del Marqués catering college.

"We are also very proud that Natividad Mercado has joined us; one of her desserts won the Andalucía Sabor cookery competition. It was a great achievement, but she has a great deal of talent. She had been working in London and when she came here we offered her

a job and she accepted," he says.

While the innovations are being produced upstairs, the bakery downstairs continues to make traditional breads, tortas de Algarrobo and cakes, such as the 'cow's feet' with cream and madeleines. This Christmas it will also be selling different types of turrón, 'roscos de vino' and 'borrachuelos', which are filled with cream of Malaga moscatel raisins, seeds and all.

"The seeds are part of the essence of our raisins and we refuse to remove them because they don't affect the taste and anyway, the cream is beaten so you don't notice them," says Damián.

However, despite their innovative ideas, these two young men, who are the only confectioners from Malaga in the Eurotoques association of European chefs, remain true to their roots. "We have to give clients, who have always been with us, what they like, and they really love the traditional types of cake, especially the tortas de Algarrobo," explains Damián. Those were the cakes which his mother began to make, and which opened the door to a whole new concept of confectionery.



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A. J. LINN

THE BOX WARS CONTINUE



How will our progeny drink wine in the future, if indeed they drink it at all? This year we have seen wine in tins, in cardboard bottles, in mini stainless steel tanks and much more. Box wine is already well established, and Amazon reports 200% annual increases in sales. Many drinkers will not touch it, believing wine should be dignified by a glass bottle and nothing less will do. However, there are multiple examples all over the world of producers whose livelihoods have been saved by using this sensible and economic option, sensible because it is clean, hygienic and keeps the wine fresh, and economic because a box is much cheaper than a glass bottle, label, cork and capsule.

There is one type of wine bucking the trend: sherry. The controlling body of the Jerez and Manzanilla region has said a rotund 'no!' in spite of the fact that many producers are clamouring to be allowed to sell their wine in this way. The matter has been dragged through the courts, much to the delight of lawyers, and the authorities can make lightning raids on bodegas to see the law is being complied with.

But what has sherry that is so special that it must be sold in bottles, when top-drawer wines such as Marlborough Springs Sauvi-

gnon Blanc, Stormhoek Chenin-Chardonnay and Les Dauphins Cotes du Rhône have been sold in boxes for many years? The official argument is that empty sherry bottles could be refilled with box wine, but they can do that now from the 5-litre glass containers used legally for transport. Some of the large bodegas that are against putting sherry in boxes already use them to export their products and to sell other wines within Spain. It is not as if Jerez is like it used to be, and the sensibilities of the sherry aristocracy would be offended to see their wine in anything but the classic glass bottle.

WINE OF THE WEEK

Viña Bujanda

The Rioja region is host to multiple varieties and qualities and the argument about whether it should be subdivided is ongoing. At the top there are some superb value wines like Viña Bujanda, made from Graciano grapes and aged for 12 months in French oak. Deep flavour and full fruit. Around €16 for the 2014 vintage.



Marbella hopes its Michelin stars will boost tourism

Marbella's four Michelin-starred restaurants will be present at Fitur, the International Tourism Fair in Madrid

■ HÉCTOR BARBOTA

MARBELLA. Marbella council is hoping that the four restaurants who recently had their Michelin stars renewed, will help bring more tourists to the town. The first step will be at the Feria Internacional de Turismo de Madrid (Fitur) where the four establishments, Dani García, El Lago, Skina and Messina will be taking part.

The aim is to highlight the quality of the gastronomy available in Marbella at the fair and to make the tourist attraction of the town less seasonal.

Although the programme of events is still to be confirmed, on Tuesday 16 January, the eve of the inauguration of the fair, the council will offer cocktails at the Santa Coloma Palace with the catering provided by Dani García. It is expected to be attended by over 200 guests.

Two days later, the other three restaurants in Marbella that have Michelin stars - El Lago, Skina and Messina - will offer 'show cooking' at the Marbella stand. The intention is that both events will have a huge impact and place Marbella on the haute cuisine map.

All the municipalities and



Dani García in his Michelin starred restaurant. ■ JOSELE-LANZA

autonomous regions of Spain will be striving to make an impact on the national and international press at the fair.

Besides promoting the town's gastronomy, Marbella council is

also planning to promote forthcoming major sporting events (the Davis Cup and Iron Man) in a bid to make Marbella an all-year-round tourist attraction.



my home SUR

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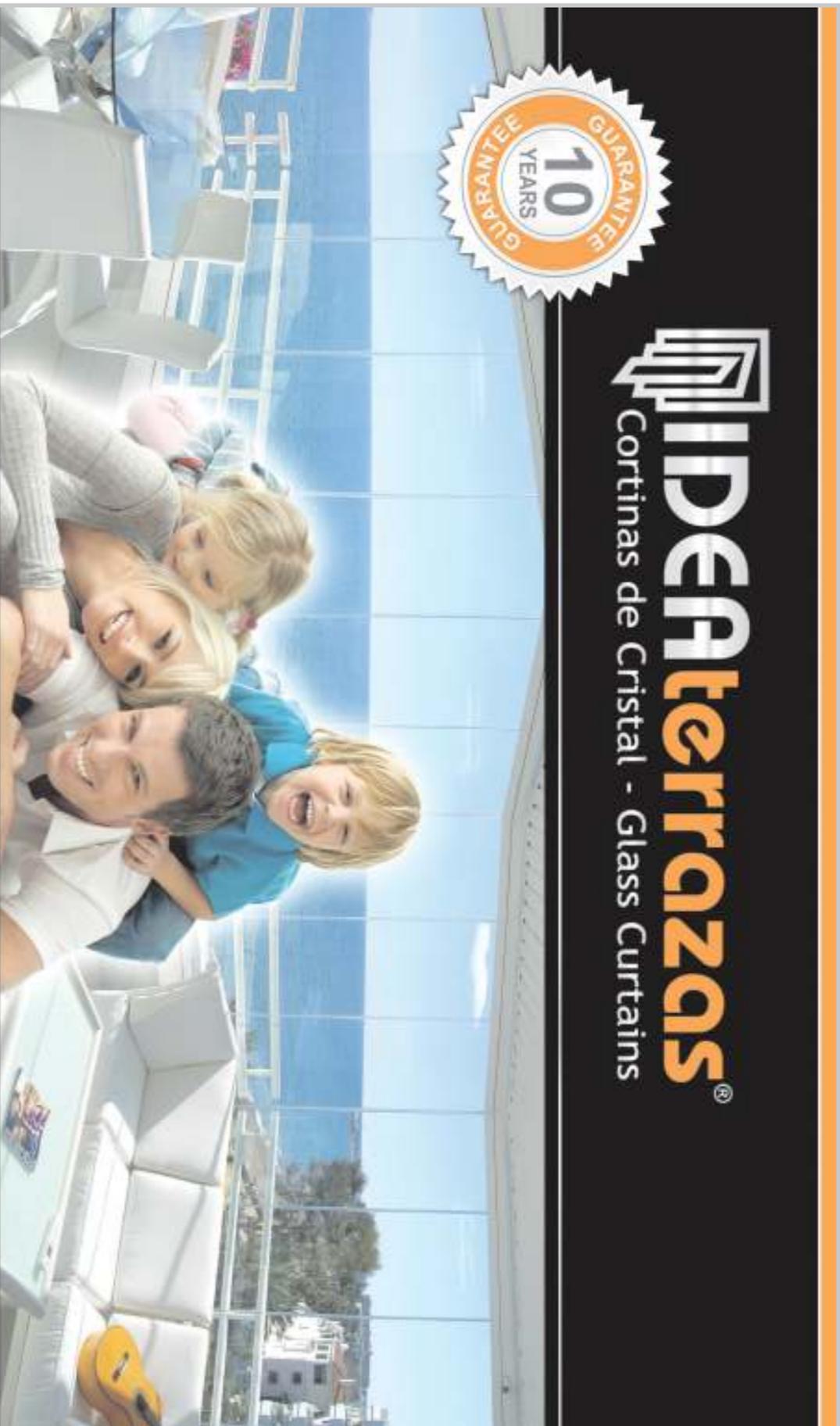
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A LOOK AT LA LIGA

ROB PALMER
Commentator, Sky Sports
@robopalmer



The league's ugly ducklings

After years in the wilderness, Getafe are once more a club comfortable in their own skin

It's quite apt that I've been accompanied by Terry Gibson, an FA Cup winning hero of the Wimbledon 'Crazy Gang', when commentating on Getafe games recently.

It's no great confession to admit that there are teams that make your heart sink when you are assigned one of their games, and in their last La Liga spell they were the 'Ugly Duckling'.

They inhabited a concrete bowl of a stadium in the suburbs of Madrid and few wanted to go there, especially their own fans. It had the ingredients of a fairytale when they joined the top league for the first time in 2004 and soon reached two cup finals. They even made the quarterfinals of the old UEFA Cup against the mighty Bayern



José Bordalás is an old-school manager. :: IDEAL

Munich.

More romance was added by the appointments footballing legends Michael Laudrup and Michel, but then it became a slog. It was a seasonal scrap against relegation and

they finally fell through the trap door in 2016.

They departed with the image of MK Dons, a new town club who needed to revert to gimmicks to attract supporters. It failed and

only Eibar with their tiny stadium had lower average attendances.

Now they are back and they are complete Crazy Gang! My favourite member is full-back Damián Suárez who plays, and looks like, he's just escaped prison. Decorated in tattoos, shin pads hanging out of his socks, he charges around the field freely kicking folk, testing referees like a jailor until he's finally punished.

This is a club happy in its own skin. They have the least percentage of possession yet the 7th highest number of points after their final game of 2017.

I've touched on coach José Bordalás on these pages before. He looks like a bespectacled college professor but acts like a proper old school manger, similar to 'Mad Dog' Martin Allen, the old Barnet boss who tried to persuade his players to swim the Thames by jumping in the icy waters first (they didn't all follow).

Bordelás has assembled a team made up of players like Suárez, who have knocked around for years, and others unwanted elsewhere. His key man is Jorge Molina who looks older than his 35 years, probably because of the elbows and studs flying his way in a mainly lower-league career.

There aren't too many '70s children' still earning a living from playing professional football but their club captain Sergio Mora is a Peter Pan figure, well actually more wizened like Captain Hook, but you get my drift - he's 38 years old.

The old heads guide some promising younger talents like Amath N'Diaye, who Atlético Madrid let go for three million euros, and Djené Dakonam, a centre-half whose presence belies his sub-six-foot presence.

The suburban supporters are buying into the story once more. They faithfully stuck around in last season's promotion campaign and now attendances are up an amazing 50 per cent on their last spell in the top league.

Their marketing department have adopted some strange strategies in previous years. They tried a dating app with the idea of couples using game night as date night. May I suggest they approach another London club to utilise another slogan: "No one likes us, we don't care."

The Ugly Duckling certainly isn't a swan. In fact it isn't even a cute duckling... but it's a loveable duckling once more, all ruffled feathers and ruffling feathers.

Marbella resounding winners in final game before winter break

The Costa side took the lead in the first half before giving a masterclass in the art of the counterattack in the second

VILLANOVENSE 0 MARBELLA 4

:: OPTASPORTS

VILLANUEVA DE LA SERENA (BADAJOZ). Marbella secured an emphatic victory in Villanueva de la Serena on Sunday as they nullified one of the division's fiercest opponents on their own ground.

It wasn't the most attractive of performances but it was certainly effective as goals from Carlos Julio, Catena, Ferrón and Sergio Narváez sealed all three points.

Both sides, though, found it hard to get going at first, however it was the visitors who carved out the first chance through Ferrón who was denied by keeper Leandro's foot in the one-on-one.

After a quarter of an hour, Marbella started to dominate the ball in the midfield but were unable to convert this pressure into chances. That was until the 36th minute when a partially-cleared corner landed to Car-

los Julio who spectacularly volleyed his side into the lead.

Minutes after the restart Marbella had doubled their lead with Catena heading home Luis Rioja's cross from the right.

This dampened spirits within the ground but there was further damage to come four minutes later when Villanovense were stung on the counterattack by a through pass from Sergio Narváez which set Ferrón through to poke past the advancing keeper.

At this stage the hosts were all over the place, as demonstrated by Javi Sánchez carelessly losing the



Goalscorer Sergio Narváez puts on the press. :: OPTASPORTS

ball to Rioja who ran at the defence before giving an easy tap-in to Sergio Narváez against his former club.

The Extremadura side resorted to long-ball football in the closing stages but Marbella, well in control,

were able to soak it up.

Marbella go into the winter break in third place, just three points off leaders Cartagena.

Segunda B action resumes on 7 January.



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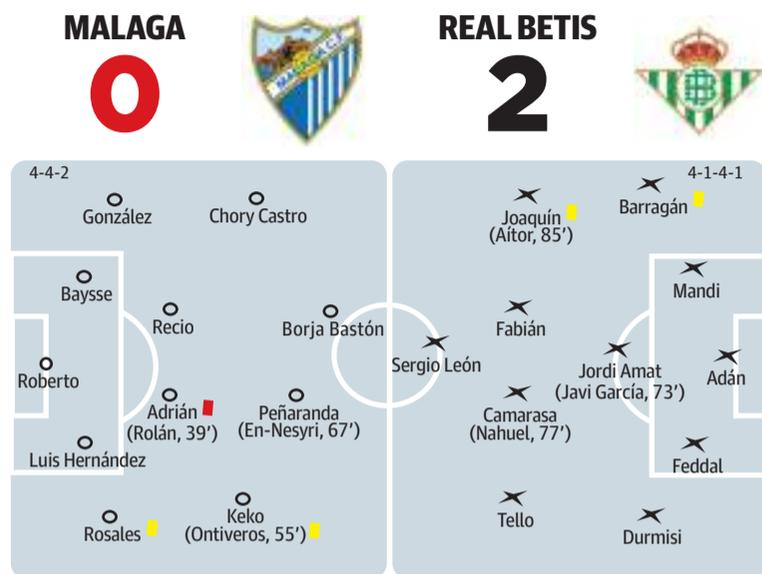
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LINE-UPS



Unused substitutes: Prieto (GK), Rolán, Juanpi, Miquel.

Unused substitutes: Dani Giménez (GK), Rafa Navarro, Toşca, Julio Gracia.

STATISTICS

BALL POSSESSION	
46%	54%
MALAGA	REAL BETIS
0	Goals
11	Total shots
3	On target
8	Off target
3	Corners
3	Offsides
15	Fouls committed
2	Yellow cards
1	Red cards

Goals: 0-1 Sergio León (24'), 0-2 Camarasa (50').

Referee: Javier Alberola. Red card for Adrián after being substituted (61').

Venue: La Rosaleda (22,488 spectators).

TABLE & FIXTURES

MATCHDAY
16

LEAGUE TABLE

TEAM	PTS	P	W	D	L	GF	GA
★ 1. Barcelona	42	16	13	3	0	42	7
★ 2. At. Madrid	36	16	10	6	0	25	7
★ 3. Valencia	34	16	10	4	2	36	16
★ 4. Real Madrid	31	15	9	4	2	30	11
■ 5. Sevilla	29	16	9	2	5	19	19
■ 6. Villarreal	24	16	7	3	6	23	20
7. Girona	23	16	6	5	5	20	22
8. Betis	21	16	6	3	7	25	29
9. Eibar	21	16	6	3	7	18	28
10. Getafe	20	16	5	5	6	20	16
11. Real Sociedad	20	16	5	5	6	28	28
12. Leganés	20	15	6	2	7	12	14
13. Celta	18	16	5	3	8	27	24
14. Athletic	18	16	4	6	6	16	19
15. Levante	17	16	3	8	5	15	22
16. Espanyol	17	16	4	5	7	13	21
17. Deportivo	15	16	4	3	9	18	31
▼ 18. Alavés	12	16	4	0	12	12	25
▼ 19. MALAGA	11	16	3	2	11	13	30
▼ 20. Las Palmas	11	16	3	2	11	13	36

Results

Celta - Villarreal	0-1
Barcelona - Deportivo	4-0
Sevilla - Levante	0-0
Athletic - Real Sociedad	0-0
At. Madrid - Alavés	1-0
Las Palmas - Espanyol	2-2
Girona - Getafe	1-0
Eibar - Valencia	2-1
Malaga - Betis	0-2
Leganés - Real Madrid	(Post.)

Fixtures

Valencia - Villarreal
Deportivo - Celta
Real Madrid - Barcelona
Levante - Leganés
Real Sociedad - Sevilla
Betis - Athletic
Alavés - MALAGA
Espanyol - At. Madrid
Getafe - Las Palmas
Eibar - Girona

Betis bring Malaga crashing back down to earth



DARYL FINCH

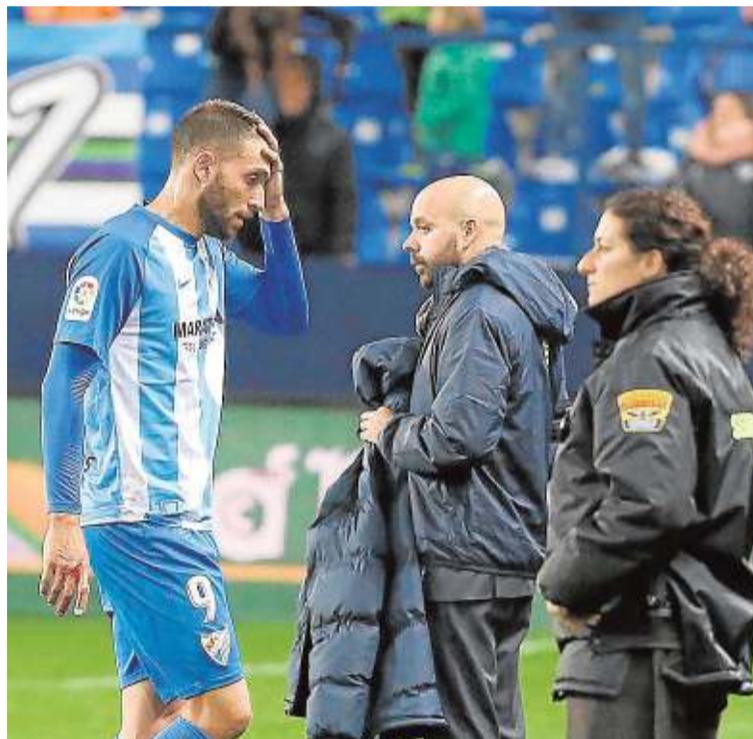
✉ dfinch@diariosur.es

The Blue and Whites were second best in the Andalusian derby and miss an opportunity to gain ground on their relegation rivals

MALAGA. Malaga's unbeaten home run dating back to October came crashing to an end as they lost 0-2 in the Andalusian derby against Real Betis on Monday night.

On the back of an impressive win away to Real Sociedad last week, Malaga fancied their chances against a Betis side who have been on a disastrous run of form, without a win in their last six games.

Malaga thrice could have taken the lead in the opening quarter of an hour. First, defender Paul Baysse headed onto the roof of the net from an inswinging Chory Castro corner; moments later, José Recio, in an almost identical scenario,



A dejected Borja Bastón at the full-time whistle. :: SALVADOR SALAS

freed himself of his marker but headed wide from the penalty spot when it was easier to score.

The third chance, though, was possibly the most clear-cut. After Adalberto Peñaranda had his shot blocked, the ball ran nicely for

Keko whose strike missed the far post by inches.

The visitors, who enjoyed the possession without creating chances, then hit Malaga with a sucker punch. Attacking the final third for the first time, former Malaga winger

Joaquín's through pass set Sergio León free in behind Diego González and forward's first-time shot crept under the hand of Roberto to nestle into the centre of the net.

The Malaga stopper more than redeemed himself before half time when Joaquín's whipped freekick from wide on the left clipped the inside of the post but was clawed out of the goal by the keeper's outstretched arm. Replays, however, showed that the ball may well have crossed the line. Malaga, nevertheless, could breathe a sigh of relief.

The reprieve wouldn't last long. Having lost central midfielder Adrián to injury, the Blue and Whites looked disorganised having brought on forward Diego Rolán and upsetting the natural balance of the side.

This disorganisation continued after the break and the visitors capitalised. A neat ball into Antonio Barragán on the right side of the area was sent straight back across the face of goal for Victor Camarasa to head into a virtually empty net.

Malaga could have replied immediately but Borja Bastón flashed his header just wide of the far post.

Substitute Javi Ontiveros injected life down the left-hand side and almost replicated his phenomenal strike against Deportivo last season,

minutes after replacing Keko.

With just 66 minutes on the clock, Malaga head coach Michel used his final change, going all out and bringing on yet another striker in the form of Youssef En-Nesyri.

However, the Moroccan was never given a sniff by a resilient Betis side who showed they were much more savvy than their adversaries, closing the spaces and time wasting to brilliant effect.

Malaga had all of the possession for the closing 15 minutes but failed to create a single chance. Betis, for their part, could have bagged a third deep in stoppage time when the hosts' defence opened up for Nahuel to square across the face of the goal but none of his waiting teammates could apply the finishing touch.

The win lifts Real Betis to a lofty 8th place, with just six points separating them and 17th-placed Deportivo La Coruña.

Alavés-Malaga

Malaga were, at time of going to press on Thursday evening, facing Deportivo Alavés in Vitoria in a relegation 'six-pointer'. A win could move them to within a point of safety if results go their way in matchday 17.

See www.surinenglish.com for more information.



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Suspended RFEF chief blames the government as Spain face possible exclusion from the World Cup

Political meddling in the election of a new head of the Spanish Football Federation means Spain's participation in Russia could be under threat

By A. GÓMEZ / D. FINCH

MADRID. "The only ones responsible for the possibility that the national team could miss out on the World Cup is the current government," said suspended RFEF (Span-

ish Football Federation) chief, Ángel María Villar - who is currently awaiting trial for charges of corruption - three days after Fifa threatened to exclude Spain from the upcoming World Cup in Russia.

According to Fifa rules, federations must "manage their affairs independently and ensure that their own affairs are not influenced by any third parties". However, the process of electing a new RFEF chief has come under scrutiny following a complaint allegedly lodged by Villar himself.

This came after the Consejo Super-

rior de Deportes (CSD), the Spanish government's national sports council, forced the RFEF to stage a presidential election following Villar's suspension and arrest.

According to news agency Efe, the RFEF has received a letter from Fifa warning them over their conduct. If they fail to comply, the national team will be excluded from the World Cup, opening the door for Italy, among other nations.

"It won't happen"

Both Fifa and acting RFEF president



Villar, giving a press conference on Monday. :: JOSÉ RAMÓN LADRA

Juan Luis Larrea confirmed on Friday that talks would take place after Christmas, while the latter moved to calm fears, telling the sports newspaper AS: "No-one is going to take Spain out of the World Cup. It's impossible and never been talked about. It's the final straw when people say things

like that.

"It won't happen. What do these people want: that Spain are withdrawn from the tournament so Italy can get in?"

"The federation is functioning normally, the national team earned their place on the pitch, and Fifa agree with us on that."

IN BRIEF



Manuel Iturra. :: MALAGA CF

Iturra: "I'm grateful to be given another chance"

MALAGA

By C. J. MARTÍNEZ. Midfielder Manuel Iturra was officially presented as a Malaga player for the second time on Tuesday after the Chilean completed the paperwork on his free transfer move from Mexican side Necaxa.

He said: "I'm very grateful to the club for the chance to come and play again. I hope I can help wherever possible."

The 33-year-old signs a deal until 2019 and could make his debut against Espanyol on 8 January.

Chances of a Sandro return are "remote"

MALAGA

By S. CORTÉS. Despite the hopes of head coach Michel, the chances of forward Sandro Ramírez returning to Malaga are "remote", according to sources. The 22-year-old, who only joined Everton from Malaga in the summer, has so far failed to make an impact on Merseyside.

However, his salary, believed to be in the region of three million euros net a year, would be impossible for the Costa club to cover, barring a huge wage cut.

Michel, speaking at a press conference this week, stated his belief that the forward wanted to return.

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Águilas get under Lions' skin and claim top spot in Liga Sur

The Fuengirola Lions lost top spot after a bruising game against the Murcia side at the weekend

BY DARYL FINCH

FUENGIROLA. There were fireworks as Águilas and the Fuengirola Lions faced off in Liga Sur in Murcia at the weekend with the Fuengirola side feeling particularly aggrieved by refereeing decisions.

With tempers flaring and several penalties for both sides, both Rubén Fuente and Alex Hughes for the Lions received their marching orders for dissent. At the time of Hughes' dismissal, the scores were level at 4-4 but the loss had an unsettling effect on the Fuengirola side - exactly Águilas' gameplan.

In the end Águilas went and won the game 9-5 and with a superior goal difference to the Lions, they now head the table with 15 points.

Order restored

The last game of the day saw the Lions face off against Tiburones de Cartagena. A tight match was expected, especially with Hughes serv-



Alex Hughes had to serve a suspension in the second game. BY S. TYNYS

ing a suspension.

However, the Fuengirola squad didn't give a chance to Cartagena and at the end of the first period it was already 5-0 to the Lions. The game ended 11-1.

There were debuts for Tommi Sjelvgren and Sam Bould, who was a former teammate of Hughes in the UK.

Fuengirola's Miika Suntinen is the

new points leader (MVP) after the latest round of games with 18 points.

Liga Sur action returns in February after a winter break.

Four stages of next year's Vuelta a España to pass through Malaga province

The race will start at Malaga's Centre Pompidou but also take in the Caminito del Rey and the Axarquía

BY CARLOS J. MARTÍNEZ

MALAGA. The 2018 edition of the Vuelta a España will feature four stages in Malaga province, it has been announced.

The first, on 25 August 2018, is an individual time trial starting at Malaga's Centre Pompidou in Muelle Uno before crossing the city and concluding in Plaza de la Constitución at the end of the iconic Calle Larios.

The following stage will run from Marbella to the Caminito del Rey in El Chorro - the latter being used for a finishing line for the second consecutive year.

Provincial chief Elías Bendodo said to the race's general director,

Javier Guillén, at the presentation recently: "I would love to see the Caminito as a permanent feature in the Vuelta and I invite you to look into the possibility."

Guillén replied: "It certainly is a beautiful stage end and we are looking at this option."

The third stage will connect Mijas and Alhaurín de la Torre - the latter being used as a finishing line rather than a starting point as was the case in last year's stage to the Caminito.

All corners of the province

The fourth and final Malaga stage will leave from Vélez-Málaga, taking in the Axarquía before finishing in Granada province.

"The Axarquía is another of our objectives," said Bendodo, and "we are happy that the Vuelta will do a full tour of the province."

The full route will be made public at a presentation in Estepona on 13 January.



BY J. I. CEJUDO

DAVIDOVICH, OUT AT THE QUARTERS IN THE NATIONALS

Young Malaga tennis star Alejandro Davidovich crashed out of the MAPFRE Campeonato de España on Friday after falling to Guillermo García López 6-7 (5), 2-6 at the quarterfinal stage. The 18-year-old was left ruing the loss with the draws for passage to the final ultimately favourable.

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IN PHOTOS

National Skateboarding Tour concludes in Malaga

Mallorcan Jaime Mateu came out on top in the Natural Bowl Riders event which took place at the Rubén Alcántara skate park over the weekend

:: JUAN CALDERÓN

MALAGA. The first National Skateboarding Tour came to a close on Sunday with the second Málaga Natural Bowl Riders event at the Rubén Alcántara skatepark in Malaga.

Following on from the street style on Saturday was the park skateboarding on Sunday which attracted vast crowds.

Despite the large number of foreign skaters, the victor was Spanish - the Mallorcan, Jaime Mateu. Second and third place were both occupied by Brits - Jordan Thackeray and Alex Hallford. In the women's category, Catalan skater Daniela Terol came out on top, followed by Eugenia Ginepro and local girl Almudena Navas in third. There were a lot of local participants in the under-16 category but it was Sevilla-born David Parrilla who pipped local boys Javier Briales and Miguel García to top spot on the podium.

With skateboarding becoming an Olympic sport for the next Games in 2020, classifications on this tour will be taken into consideration when forming the national team.

i SUR.es: Discover more photos from the day in our galleries.



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MARBELLA center stunning Thai ladyboy kissable lips, top/ bottom, in/ outcalls. 602493030

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PURE ecstasy in Nueva Andalucia with young pretty independent masseuse. Erotic body, tantric and other completely relaxing massages in private apartment. 656350401

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DISCOVER the benefits of tantric massages! Feel the pleasure in your skin...635290724

MAIAH, Fuengirola. Erotic, professional massage, body2body, happy ending. Miah, 647101046

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SENIOR CITIZEN Full body massage by Sabrina from New York City. 658189191 Benalmadena Costa (by windmill roundabout)

FUENGIROLA: Madonna, Hot oil/horny massage with my boobs! Happy ending.631281988

BEAUTIFUL Russian masseuse: Spectacular relaxing massage and ending. Malaga 603100025

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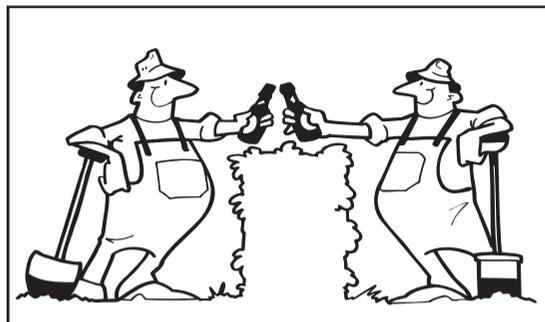
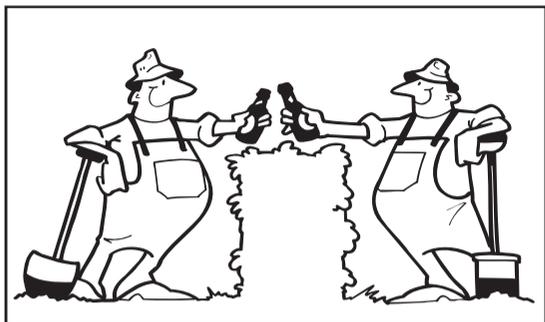
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THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



THE STARS

Aquarius
January 21 - February 19
When someone smiles and utters soft words, you melt. Just keep your feet on (or at least near!) the ground!

Pisces
February 20th - March 20th
Don't give in to the feeling that you should be 'doing' something. You don't need an excuse to indulge yourself.

Aries
March 21st - April 20th
Your inner voice is trying to give you a message. Instincts are spot on and this helps when choosing the right words for a loved one.

Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
A gift given with lots of thought really pleases you. Do you give this person enough attention?

Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
Enjoying the company of your choice is always a joy. This year it could mean some travel.

Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
Try not to rush ahead with New Year plans this week. Better options and methods are likely to appear.

Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
Someone whose attention you crave may not be responding in the hoped-for way. Let them know that it is possible to compromise on an important issue.

Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
After a few mentally foggy days what happens next weekend brings everything into focus.

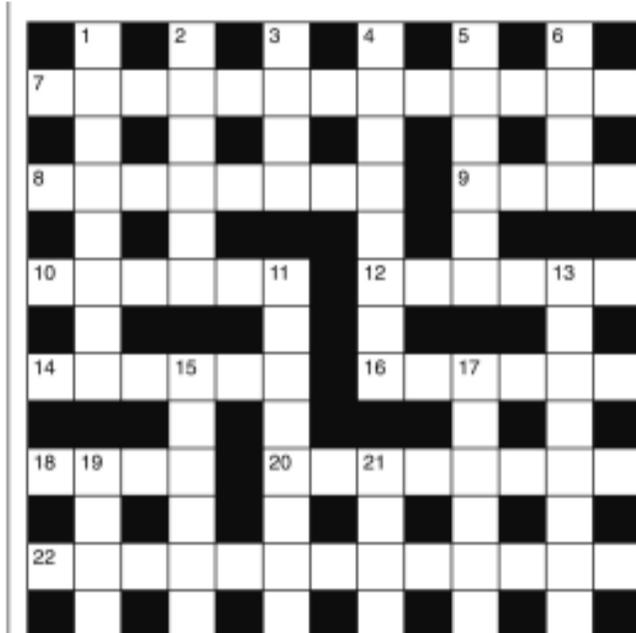
Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
Make the very best of the time that you have with loved ones. The New Year will give the chance of being even closer.

Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
Loving your home comforts and friends, this week can see you in your element. Extra efforts are really appreciated.

Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
Someone who is providing you with lots of entertainment will not succeed in distracting your attention.

Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
Midweek you find a way forward that touches on that real spirit of adventure. Are you ready to share?

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11274



- | | |
|---|---|
| Across | Down |
| 7 Length times breadth with people? (9,4) | 1 For celebrating harbour's victory over enemy leader (4,4) |
| 8 Begin to play as industrial action increases (6,2) | 2 Birds which lose courage? (6) |
| 9 Ancient deity in authority (4) | 3 Libertine in the garden? (4) |
| 10 Failed to be called a spinster? (6) | 4 Offer reduced assistance to the unprotected (8) |
| 12 Put the charm on as neared turn (6) | 5 All twisted, but the floor wasn't bare (6) |
| 14 Secluded spot for a holiday? (6) | 6 Ban an animal doctor who has nothing (4) |
| 16 Splinter evinces evidence of cold? (6) | 11 Removes the perfume, perhaps, in drops (8) |
| 18 I leave the principal to cook (4) | 13 Changing the conclusion reached in the morning (8) |
| 20 When there is a gentle rise and fall of the sea? (8) | 15 Singular personal estate as a consequence (6) |
| 22 Mental agility from a nimble but underweight monarch (5,8) | 17 Consumption of tea and ink (6) |
| | 19 Time allocated to us by hothead (4) |
| | 21 A way out of the complexities of the situation (4) |

SUDOKU BY HANZO

Instructions
Complete the square making sure that every row of nine numbers includes all digits from 1 to 9, every column includes all digits from 1 to 9 and every 3 by 3 subsection includes all digits from 1 to 9

	8	7	5	4				3
5								
					7	9	2	
7				5				8
	3			9	1			
		8		3		4		
	6		1		3		9	7
		2						
3			9					4

CLOCKWORD

The solutions from 1 to 12 are all six-letter words ending with the letter R in the centre. Moving clockwise from 1, the letters in the outer circle will spell out the name of a famous British naturalist.

1.	Physician
2.	Fisherman
3.	Steam
4.	Weaken
5.	U.S. currency unit
6.	Dairy product
7.	Newspaper boss
8.	Pantry
9.	Loiter
10.	Seem
11.	Adviser
12.	One who shouts

THE WORDPUZZLER

S	T	E	M	P	L	E	R	G	I
P	A	N	I	U	P	V	E	U	R
E	S	T	O	R	I	E	S	M	E
A	E	W	C	P	E	X	I	A	N
S	T	A	L	L	I	P	A	R	K
T	H	R	A	E	A	R	U	K	U
L	I	S	T	N	P	E	L	I	G
A	R	O	L	L	A	S	T	E	S
B	D	E	V	I	B	S	R	L	U
R	Y	H	A	M	R	O	E	G	N

CAN you identify the words missing from the Spielberg film and TV titles listed below?

- Schindler's ---
- Jurassic ---
- Indiana Jones and the --- of Doom
- Empire of the ---
- The Color ---
- Amazing ---
- Indiana Jones and the --- Crusade
- The Sugarland ---
- Raiders of the Lost ---
- Close Encounters of the --- Kind

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91.5 Costa del Sol East
91.9 Costa del Sol West
98.7 Gibraltar/Sotogrande
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Central FM (98.6 FM, 103.8)
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ACE FM (106.8 FM)
Inland radio, news and music
The Beat fm (106 FM)
24 hours, music and entertainment

Spectrum (105.5 FM, Costa Almeria/Mojácar 92.6 FM)
24 hour music and entertainment

Radio Mijas (107.7 FM)
3 p.m. News, views and music

Radio Sol Almirajara (99.1 FM)
Nerja radio in English and German and night time World Radio Network

Heartfmspain (88.5 FM Costa, 96.1 FM inland) Music, entertainment, news

Lick FM (103.6 FM Marbella)
Urban music broadcast between Gibraltar and Calahonda

Rtv Puebla (107.7 FM)
Monday evenings, Rock music memories. 7 - 9pm. email: radiopuebla.musicmemories@yahoo.com
Fb: Radiotelevision Puebla de Cazalla

QUIZ

QUESTION 1
What religious service is celebrated in Spain on Christmas eve?

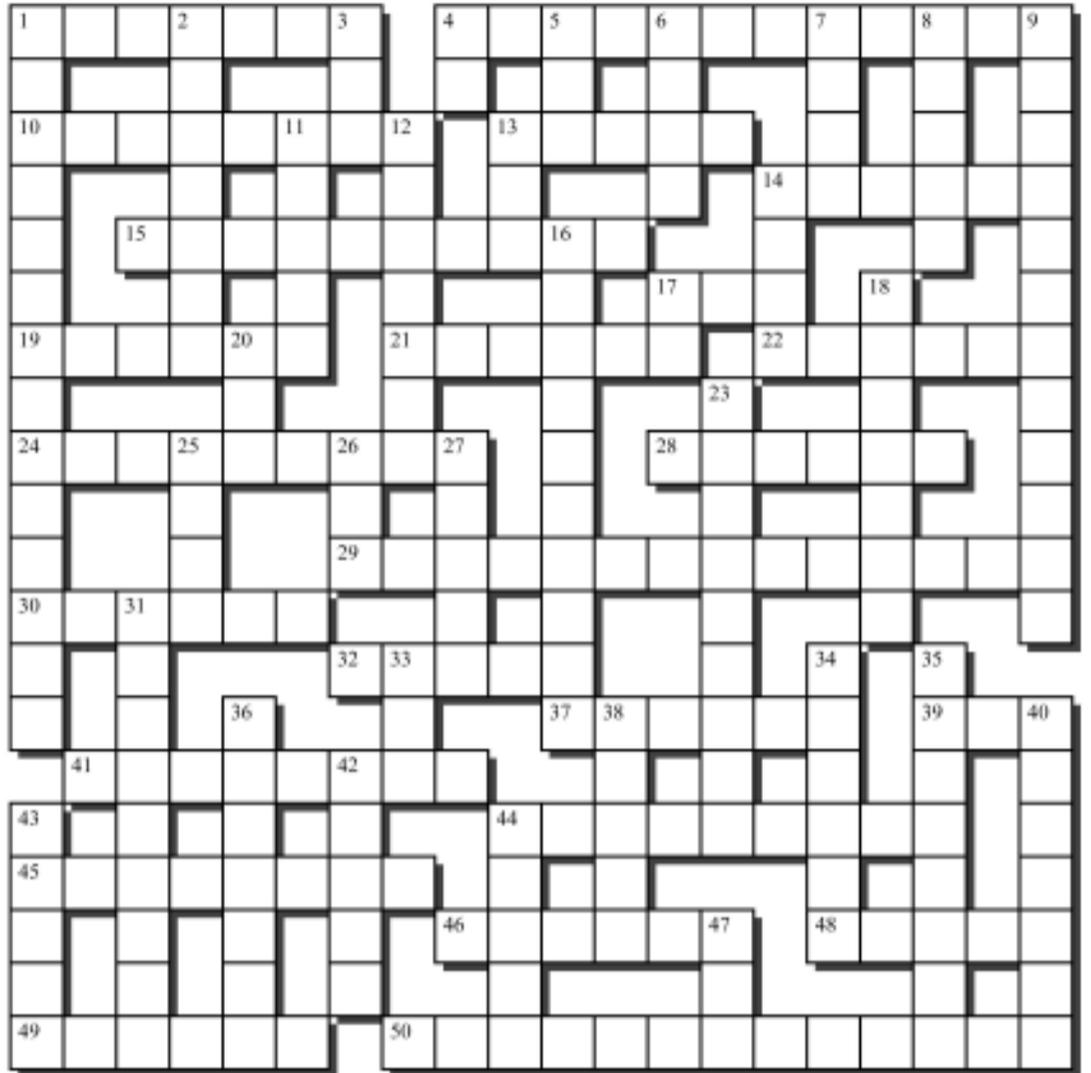
- Santa Misa
- Misa de Aguinaldo
- Navidad
- Misa del Gallo

QUESTION 2
Which family has a pet dog called 'Santa's Little Helper'?

- The Flintstones
- The Simpsons
- The Whos of Whoville
- The McCallisters

LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Across | Down |
| 1) To bet (7) | 1) Administration (14) |
| 4) Spectators (12) | 2) Skill (7) |
| 10) Millions (8) | 3) It gnaws (3) |
| 13) Series (5) | 4) The (m) (2) |
| 14) Moustache (6) | 5) Foot (3) |
| 15) Advertising (10) | 6) Baby (4) |
| 17) Ugly (3) | 7) I said (4) |
| 19) You dream (pl) (6) | 8) Reindeer (5) |
| 21) Luck (6) | 9) Superstition (12) |
| 22) Villa (6) | 11) Void (pl) (5) |
| 24) Resentful (9) | 12) Incidents (7) |
| 28) Prize (6) | 13) Thirst (3) |
| 29) Special (14) | 14) Notebook (4) |
| 30) Index (6) | 16) Lucky winners (10) |
| 32) Fat (5) | 17) Faith (2) |
| 37) Exit (6) | 18) Christmas (7) |
| 39) They go (3) | 20) Gone (3) |
| 41) National (8) | 23) Tradition (9) |
| 44) To report an offence (9) | 25) Almost (4) |
| 45) Equality (8) | 26) Listen! (3) |
| 46) Traffic jam (6) | 27) To choose (5) |
| 48) To hate (5) | 31) To have breakfast (9) |
| 49) Draw (6) | 33) Wave (3) |
| 50) Celebrations (13) | 34) Magical (6) |
| | 35) Loathing (8) |
| | 36) Ticket (7) |
| | 38) Harness (5) |
| | 40) Numbers (7) |
| | 42) Haystack (5) |
| | 43) Children (5) |
| | 44) Date (5) |
| | 47) He prays (3) |



ANSWERS

Quiz answers

Answer 1: Misa del Gallo
Of interest: Literally 'rooster's mass' it is a mass celebrated at midnight on Christmas Eve and ends the nine Misas de Aguinaldo which are celebrated from 15 December.

Answer 2: The Simpsons
Of interest: Santa's Little Helper, voiced by Frank Welker and Dan Castellaneta, is the Simpsons' pet greyhound. He first appeared in "Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire" as a race dog adopted by Homer and Bart.

Cryptic Crossword

Solutions: Across: 7 Populated area; 8 Strike up; 9 Thor; 10 Missed; 12 Ender; 14 Recess; 16 Shiver; 18 Chef; 20 Eventide; 22 Quick thinking; Down: 1 Port wine; 2 Quails; 3 Rake; 4 Helpless; 5 Matted; 6 Veto; 11 Descents; 13 Amending; 15 Effect; 17 Intake; 19 Hour; 21 Exit.

Clockword solution

SOLUTION: 1 Doctor, 2 Angler, 3 Vapour, 4 Impair, 5 Dollar, 6 Butler, 7 Editor, 8 Larder, 9 Linger, 10 Appear, 11 Mentor, 12 Yeller, NATURALIST; David Bellamy.

Wordpuzzler solution

1. List	STEMPLER
2. Park	PANIPUR
3. Temple	ESTORISME
4. Sun	AEWCPXIAN
5. Purple	STALLIPARK
6. Stones	THRAVARUKU
7. Last	LISPPELLIG
8. Express	AROLLASTES
9. Ark	BDEVIBSRLU
10. Third	RHYAMROEGN

Sudoku solution

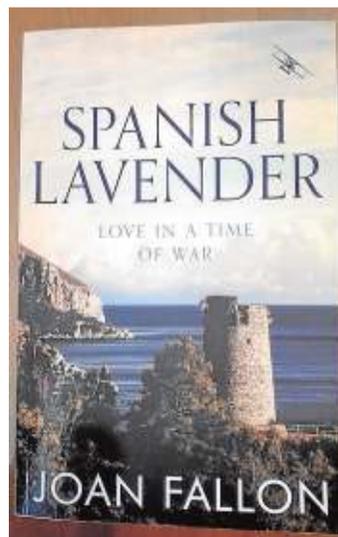
3	7	5	9	6	8	2	4	1
1	9	2	4	7	5	8	3	6
8	6	4	1	2	3	5	9	7
2	5	8	6	3	1	4	7	9
4	3	6	7	8	9	1	5	2
7	1	9	2	5	4	3	6	8
6	4	3	8	1	7	9	2	5
5	2	1	3	9	6	7	8	4
9	8	7	5	4	2	6	1	3

Language Crossword

ACROSS: 1. POSTAR; 4. SPECTADORES; 10. MILITONES; 13. SERIE; 14. BROTTE; 15. PUBLICIDAD; 17. FIEBO; 19. SONSALS; 21. SUFENTE; 22. CHALET; 24. RENCONROSO; 28. PHEMO; 29. EXTRAORDINARIO; 30. INDICE; 32. GORDO; 37. SALIDA; 39. VAN; 41. NACIONAL; 44. BENCINAR; 45. INVADID; 46. AVASCO; 48. DIAR; 49. SORTIO; 50. CELEBRACIONES.

DOWN: 1. ADMINISTRACION; 2. SOLICITURA; 3. BROT; 4. EL; 5. PHE; 6. CERO; 7. DECI; 8. RENOS; 9. SUPERSTION; 11. NULOS; 12. SUCESOS; 13. SED; 14. BLOC; 16. AGRACIADOS; 17. FIE; 18. INVADID; 20. IDO; 23. RADICION; 25. CASI; 26. OVE; 27. OPTAR; 31. DESAVINAR; 33. OLA; 34. MAGICO; 35. AVERSION; 36. BILLETE; 38. ANES; 40. NUMEROS; 42. NIARA; 43. NIOS; 44. DITIL; 47. ORA.

BOOK OF THE WEEK



Spanish Lavender
Joan Fallon

Spanish Lavender, written by British author Joan Fallon, is a novel which starts as the civil war reaches Malaga in 1937. Elizabeth, a budding photographer, decides to stay behind in the city when her family returns to England. She begins to regret her decision until she meets Juan. The couple, along with Alex, another Brit caught up in the events, decide to flee Malaga. Seventy years later, a young girl inherits a substantial sum of money and discovers a family secret which takes her to Malaga to find out who she really is.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree

ROY L. SMIT

THE SUR IN ENGLISH CORNER

Best kept traditions

Christmas is a special time and most of us like to celebrate by doing exactly the same thing every year, with the same people, the same food and the same order of events. After all, it's tradition, and anything or anyone that dares to break it is playing with fire. Having to work on Christmas Day is considered a cruel blow to an entire family and simply deciding to do something different, or even go on holiday, is an insult that's hard to forgive. Living in Spain gives us more of an excuse to break with tradition - if we want to - and learn that other people's ways of

celebrating are just as important to them as ours are to us. Here, for example, not being able to have Christmas Eve dinner with the family is as big a tragedy as failing to turn up for turkey on Christmas Day in the UK. The beauty of the Costa del Sol, though, is that whatever country you're from you'll find some holiday traditions that match yours, and many others that are waiting to be discovered if you're feeling brave enough. There's one thing though



that won't change: SUR in English will be out every Friday as usual over the festive period.





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Gazing at Malaga from the decks of a galleon

The tall ship Galeón Andalucía is currently at Muelle Uno in Malaga port, where it can be visited until 7 January

∴ PABLO MARINETTO

As a major tourist destination and the southern gateway to Europe, Malaga port is used to welcoming passenger ships and luxury private yachts almost every day. However, when a classic tall ship anchors beside its quays it is something unusual, a special occasion which may even feature in the history books of the future.

This Christmas, the Nao Victoria Foundation has set its sights on Malaga, and from now until 7 January there will be the chance to tour the impressive Galeón Andalucía, a replica of the galleons used by the Spanish for their maritime expeditions between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Together with two other sailing ships, Nao Victoria and Nao Santa María - which is still being built, it is one of a collection managed by the foundation, which are used as museums and also as venues for events.

During its tour this year the An-



The Galeón Andalucía is one of the Nao Victoria Foundation's classic sailing ships. ∴ FRAN ACEVEDO

dalucía has visited Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Virgin Islands, USA, Canada and several Spanish ports. This is its first time in Malaga, although the foundation's flagship,

the Nao Victoria, was here in February. A ticket to visit the ship costs six euros for adults and three euros for children aged from five to ten, and the tours take place between

10am and 7pm.

Boarding a galleon and walking across its decks gives an idea of what it must have been like to be a cabin boy; to step back in time and put

yourself in the place of the crew members who sailed the seas over half the world for three centuries. The aim is for people "to appreciate the challenges and feats of the Spanish sailors centuries ago," says foundation representative Fernando Viota. "A visit to the ship is full of symbolism."

Malaga was also the birthplace of one of the greatest explorers of the 16th century, Ruy López de Villalobos, who some historians think discovered what is today Hawaii.

Almost the whole of the Galeón Andalucía can be visited. The ship is 55 metres long, has six decks, seven sails and ten cannons. There are also quarters for top-ranking officers, such as the captain, with cabins, bathrooms and what is known as the Admiral's Room. Although the view hardly differs from that of the quay, looking at the cathedral, the Gibralfaro castle, big wheel and Equitativa building from the deck of a tall ship takes visitors back in time. If we also take into account the characteristic movement of this type of ship in port, it is almost like being in a film.

This is a fascinating experience, and something different to enjoy during the festive season, before the ship leaves for its next port of call, with a fair wind and at full sail.



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