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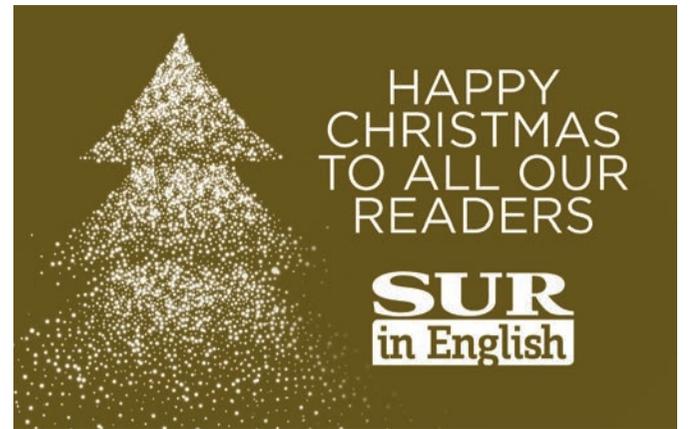
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FESTIVE BUSINESS

Holiday spending is up on trips, parties and presents **P2&3**



Crowds pack into Malaga city every evening to see the light show. :: NITO SALAS

A tonne of cocaine found hidden in avocado shipment in Vélez

Police seized the drugs, with a possible street value of 160 million euros, during a warehouse raid

National Police officers arrested four men and seized nearly a thousand kilos of cocaine in Vélez-Málaga earlier this month. The drugs were hidden in a shipment of avocados that had come into Spain via the port of Algeciras from South America. **P6**

Malaga pick up a vital derby win as attentions start to turn to the winter break and January reinforcements **P52&53**

What's behind our seasonal traditions? Read about the history of Santa Claus and Spain's sweet turrón **P22&48**

Huelva murder renews calls for harsher prison sentences in Spain

The confessed killer of a 26-year-old teacher had a previous murder conviction

The death of 26-year-old Laura Luelmo, in the Huelva village where she had recently moved to take up a teaching job, has sparked demands for more convicted criminals in Spain to be given life sentences. Luelmo's neighbour, 50-year-old Bernardo Montoya, who confessed to killing the young

woman on his arrest this week, had been in prison since 1995, serving sentences for murder and armed robbery, and was released in October. The case has revived the debate over Spain's controversial revisable full life prison sentence introduced in 2015, which some say violates human rights. **P13**

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Christmas means business

Restaurants, bars, hotels and shops are benefiting from tourism in Malaga and the thousands of people who come every day to enjoy the Christmas light show in the historic city centre

JUAN SOTO

Twitter: @JJSotoT



“This year we’re swapping the Christmas lights in Madrid for the ones in Malaga. Come and enjoy some festive spirit beside the sea”, said the publicity. Christmas business in Malaga city crosses frontiers these days, and the interest in its lights, nativity scenes, spectacular musical show and gastronomy goes beyond the boundaries of the province. Even beyond Andalucía, in fact.

In Almadén, a small village in Ciudad Real, 280 kilometres and a four-hour journey away, people have decided to forgo their traditional visit to the Spanish capital and come to Malaga instead. Leidy Pérez, the head of the agency which has organised the trip, says this is the first time they have decided to come south and the reason is that “it is a really good show and Malaga is well worth seeing at this time of year”.

It has become fashionable to spend Christmas in Malaga, and not just because the council says so or because of trips like this one by these 150 people from Ciudad Real. The growing interest in the city as a tourist destination and the thousands of people who come to the historic city centre every day to enjoy its Christmas spirit is welcomed by hotel, restaurant and shop owners, because their level of business shoots up at this time of year. With hotels 80 per cent full on average, restaurants busy

with company meals, get-togethers by groups of friends and bars opening at midday to attract these clients, there is no doubt that Christmas is big business in Malaga.

The Preview of Christmas Spending 2018, a report drawn up by the Consumers Union of Andalucía, concludes that families in Malaga will spend an average of 511 euros this Christmas, making it one of the provinces which spends most. In fact, the figure is well above the Andalusian average, which is barely 478 euros. Of the money spent, most goes on gifts and toys (174 euros), followed by entertainment (151).

Looking at Spain as a whole, a study by Deloitte shows that people are spending about 600 euros at Christmas, which is more than ever before and higher than anywhere else in Europe apart from the UK. Although the British spend more overall, more of their money goes on gifts and less on entertainment and travel. In Spain, it is the other way round.

In the leisure sector, the bars and restaurants of Malaga are expected to do best out of the festive season. Although different studies are carried out at this time of year, the most detailed one shows that 30 per cent of clients plan to spend more on lunches and dinners this year. According to El Tenedor, the average spend is between 25 and 35 euros. Specifically, the report shows that consumers are prepared to spend up to 45 euros, which is ten per cent more than last year. It also shows that group bookings are double those during the rest of the year and have increased by 20 per cent compared

with the same time last year. About 87 per cent of restaurants are expecting more group bookings during this Christmas period.

For business owners in the city, Christmas begins in earnest this weekend. The public holidays earlier this month were also very busy, but bar and restaurant staff are expecting to be rushed off their feet over the next two weekends.

The president of the Málaga Hostelería association, Javier Frutos, says Christmas is one of the three busiest times of year for this sector, together with the week of the annual fair and Easter. “What happens is that this celebration is longer than the others and people spend more,” he explains.

Although no specific figures can be predicted, turnover is expected to increase by at least one per cent this year. “Not just because of people attending company dinners, but also those who come to the city centre to see the lights and nativity scenes and have some-

thing to eat and drink while they’re here,” says Javier.

Pull effect

He also says the main change which has been noted in the city in recent years has been in consumption. The light show introduced by the council in Calle Larios has a strong pull effect and many people, residents and tourists, who come to see it, end up having a meal or tapas in bars or restaurants in the city centre. “Christmas comes as a great relief for us because things are very quiet for the couple of weeks after the two public holidays, so Christmas is a way of ending the year on a good note,” he explains.

This increased activity in the city before the arrival of Santa Claus and then the Three Kings also has a clear effect on job creation. The Randstad temporary work agency estimates that 4,250 contracts have been signed in Malaga this season, nearly nine per cent more than last year and it expects the number of tem-



porary jobs to hit a new record, not only in the province but in Andalucía and Spain as a whole. Of the total, more than half (2,500) the contracts signed have been in the bar and restaurant sector.

This changing trend is also being noted by hotels. Francisco Moro, the

One of the best places in the world to spend Christmas

It doesn’t snow, in fact the weather is likely to be warm and sunny and not at all wintry, but Malaga city is one of the best places in the world to spend Christmas. And it’s not just local residents who think so. Apart from being designated the best

place to enjoy a sunny Christmas by European Best Destinations and being included as such by the Rumbo portal, eDreams, one of the biggest online travel agencies, says bookings in Malaga have risen by 36 per cent compared with last year. In terms of Spanish rivals, it is beaten only by Barcelona, with an increase of 50 per cent, and Seville, at 38 per cent.

Surveys show that most people in Spain prefer to remain in

their own country at Christmas and New Year, but many of those who do decide to go abroad like to travel a long way, including the USA, Argentina and Colombia. For those who travel elsewhere in Europe for the festive season, studies show that the most important aspects they take into consideration are safety (78%), cost (78%), the climate (58%) and culture (57%), as well as the wish to explore new places (27%).

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Festive atmosphere in Calle Calderería. :: NITO SALAS

mas Eve or New Year's Eve. According to the reservations portal Booking.com, occupancy on 24 December is around 85 per cent, and 95 per cent on 31 December. Those who are spending New Year's Eve in the historic city centre are likely to be spending on average 300 euros per couple (as much as 600 in some of the newer, more luxurious hotels).

For Malaga council, the festive season can also be quantified. The decorations in Calle Larios and other emblematic areas of the city have cost 733,211 euros, a figure which rises to one million if the decorations in the districts further out are taken into account. It is justified, they say, because the city is becoming world famous and it generates more income than ever before at this time of year.

The councillor for Festivals, Teresa Porras, is proud of the amount of money which has been spent in the city since the new Christmas lights and music show were introduced. "The hotels are full, there is no room in the restaurants and coaches arrive every day from other parts of the province," she says. As if that were not enough, this year Malaga has been chosen as the best city in which to spend a sunny Christmas by the Euro-

head of Aehcos, the hotel owners association of the Costa del Sol, says occupancy is now above 80 per cent at this time of year, and many establishments are full on the most important dates: "Malaga has seen a big change in the past three or four years," he says, and he believes it is due to a combina-

tion of factors. "The new Christmas lights, which everyone loves, plus the gastronomy, the shopping, the weather... This time of year is no longer low season, it is medium-high season these days."

It is almost impossible to find a hotel with a room free for Christ-

IN CONTEXT

511

euros is the average amount spent by Malaga families over Christmas, according to a study by the Consumers Union. Most of the money will be spent on buying toys and on entertainment.

733.211

euros has been spent by Malaga council on the Christmas lights in Calle Larios and other parts of the city centre. The amount rises to one million euros when the lights in other districts are taken into account.

80%

is the average occupancy of hotels in Malaga city over the Christmas period, although most are full on the most important dates. Staying in a hotel in the historic city centre for New Year's Eve can cost up to 600 euros.

pean Best Destinations organisation.

More New Year's Eve parties
Nightclubs are another feature of the Christmas business in Malaga, and at this time of year they are busy with group bookings. The vice-president of the Andalusian federation for bar and nightclub owners, Juan Rambla, says the last weeks of the year are a "big boost for business" because they can open at times which they normally wouldn't. More and more clubs are now organising New Year's Eve parties.

Rambla agrees that the city's Christmas lights have played an important role in this change, because so many people come to see them. "They attract visitors to the city centre, and then they feel festive. It's not like an ordinary day," he says.

Nowadays, everyone is talking about Malaga. As well as the European Best Destinations award, the Rumbo portal also says it is an essential destination at this time of year, and one of the most popular in Europe. The light show in Calle Larios has become "an icon for the festive season in Andalucía, Spain and even Europe", it says, and points out that bookings have risen by 19.7 per cent this year. Christmas in Malaga is now a fully-fledged business.

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MARBELLA - FUENGIROLA - MANILVA

Four pupils are injured in a lab explosion during a science class

Those affected were transferred to Malaga children's hospital, where two stayed under observation and one in intensive care

CHARO MÁRQUEZ

ESTEPONA. Four pupils aged 12 to 13 suffered burns last Friday in an explosion during a science class at May-

fair Academy International, in the Atalaya Park area between Estepona and Marbella.

The alarm was raised at the private international school about 2pm when the pupils were carrying out an experiment in a laboratory under the supervision of a teacher that they had carried out many times before.

After the explosion, four female pupils were taken to the Costa del Sol hospital and then onto Malaga children's hospital.

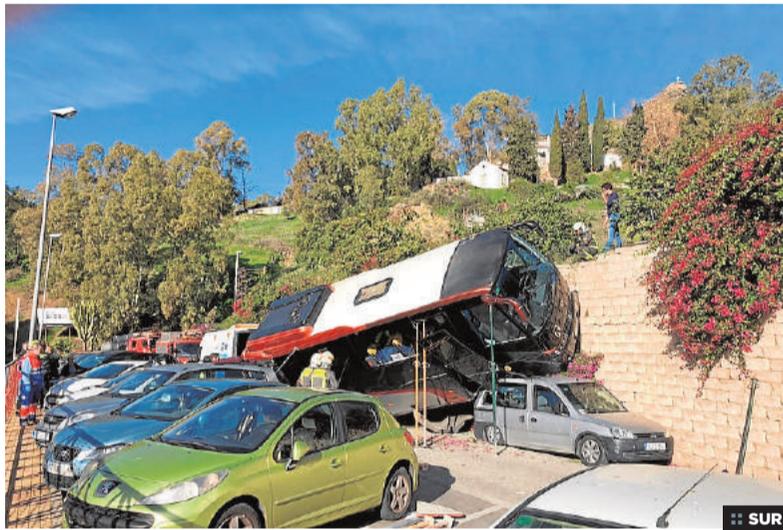
Hospital sources explained later that one was sent home, two were kept under observation and one was in the intensive care unit with second degree burns.

The teacher and another pupil also suffered burns to their hands.

School sources said that pupils normally carry out experiments at this age, "always with a teacher watching" and that last Friday they were mixing three products that are regularly used in their experiments.

CHRISTMAS BUS TRIP TURNS INTO LUCKY ESCAPE FOR EMPLOYEES

Workers at a Malaga company were looking forward to their annual seasonal getaway with colleagues, this year to Ronda. But as the bus was stopping to pick up in Álora, it rolled back 20 metres and fell off a five-metre wall. The 25 inside had to be rescued but nobody was seriously injured.



112 REPORTS

Arrests after San Pedro and Benahavís bombs

MALAGA

J.C. / A.F. There was some success for the fightback against organised drug crime on the Costa this week. Three Swedish nationals have been held over explosions at a Benahavís villa and a San Pedro industrial unit in October. They are also linked to crimes in Sweden.

Twenty years for parents of starved baby

MALAGA

A.F. / J.C. A couple has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for the unlawful killing of their baby girl through malnutrition. The sentence confirms that the parents knew they were underfeeding the child, giving bottles with tiny amounts of milk in.

Norwegian tourist has lip bitten off in attack

MALAGA

J.C. / A.F. Police in Malaga are hunting for a man who launched an unprovoked attack on a 22-year-old Norwegian tourist earlier this month. The man said he was sur-

prised in the street by his attacker late at night while looking for his hotel and had part of his lip and chin bitten off, without the attacker saying a word. Police have been unable to find the attacker, and although the victim chose to return home with his family, the investigation continues because of the severity of the injury.

Sharing of threesome photos leads to arrest

MALAGA

J.C. / A.F. What started as a game by a couple on dating app Tinder to find an open-minded woman has resulted in an arrest.

The man is accused of distributing images of the trio having sex after being upset after the couple broke up. The woman complained after her friends started receiving the pictures.

Former Marbella mayor back in the dock

MARBELLA

SUR. Julián Muñoz, mayor of Marbella from 2002 to 2003, has been in court again this week, this time facing new charges. Muñoz is accused of awarding public contracts without putting them out to tender and hiring workers without going through the correct procedures. He faces 11 years in jail and damages of 2.25 million euros.



Merry Christmas &
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When is your tax freedom day?

By Steven Langford, Partner, Blevins Franks

If you ever had the feeling that you have spent half your working life just paying tax, you are not far wrong. What with income tax, national insurance/social security, capital gains tax, VAT, council tax, excise duties and so on, a considerable amount of our hard-earned income gets diverted to the taxman each year.

Even if you are lucky enough to be retired, you are still faced with tax on your savings, investments and pensions, not to mention the amount payable in VAT each year. Having paid so much tax all your life, you will not want to pay any more tax than necessary. Whether you are working or retired, tax planning is an important part of protecting your wealth.

The tax burden of typical workers in the EU

Each year, the *Institut Economique Molinari*, measures and compares taxes payable across the 28 EU member states. While it focuses on employees and how much tax and social security they pay, it illustrates the general tax burden of each country and how they compare to each other.

The study calculates a “tax liberation day” for each member state, indicating how much of a year’s work is devoted to paying taxes, as well as the average “real tax rate” for employees there.

The 2018 results reveal that, on average, taxes are actually going down – but only slightly. For the fourth year in a row, the average real tax rate for typical workers in the EU reduced, falling 0.3% to 44.5%.

However, the report highlights that Europe’s ageing population is putting pressure on pension and healthcare spending for governments throughout the bloc. This does not bode well for future tax cuts; as the population ages, there are fewer people in employment to pay for these costs, leaving taxpayers to plug the gap. With under half the EU’s 508 million citizens in the labour force, the report concludes that “economic growth remains European workers’ best hope against tax increases in the near term”.

How does Spain fare?

According to the study, Spain’s tax freedom day fell on 8th June,

placing it eighth in the rankings. This means that Spanish employees worked for 159 days of the year just to pay their tax bill. While this is the same as the last two years, it is a long way off the 19th May tax freedom day enjoyed back in 2011.

The average gross salary in Spain is €34,111, but after the real tax rate of 43.31%, workers in the country are only left with €19,337 to spend on themselves and their families.

The country with the latest tax freedom day this year is once again France. With the highest real tax rate of 56.73%, the symbolic date when French workers stopped paying tax was well over halfway through the year, landing on 27th July.

Cyprus continues to have the earliest tax freedom day on 27th March – two weeks ahead of runner-up Malta on 10th April.

What about the UK?

According to the study, the UK’s tax freedom day comes fourth, landing on 8th May, with a real tax rate of 35.08%.

However, many think tanks undertake their own research to calculate their country’s tax freedom day, using different methodologies. While the *Institut Economique Molinari* looks at income tax, social security contributions and VAT, the UK’s *Adam Smith Institute (ASI)* measures the entire tax take, including taxes that do not come directly out of the earner’s pocket. This approach places the UK date three weeks later.

The ASI calculates that the 2018 UK tax freedom day landed on 29th May – three days more than the year before, and the latest date since comparable records began in 1995.

What does this mean for taxpayers?

These remain taxing times for taxpayers, and not just for workers, as retirees are also faced with higher taxes. Of course, the study is just indicative of the average taxpayer in each country – higher earners will generally have a later tax freedom day.

In many cases, there are steps you can take to lighten your tax burden,

especially on your capital investments and pensions. While we all have to pay our share of taxes, cross-border taxation is highly complex; do not risk getting it wrong or paying more than you have to. Take personalised, specialist advice on the compliant tax mitigation opportunities available in Spain and the UK – you may be surprised at how you can improve your tax situation.

All advice received from Blevins Franks is personalised and provided in writing. This article, however, should not be construed as providing any personalised taxation or investment advice.

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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.

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HERE AND THERE

Police identify petrol station robber**TORRE DEL MAR**

:: **A. P.** National Police officers say they have identified the person who threatened a female member of staff at a petrol station in Torre del Mar last Friday morning and escaped with the money he took from cash register. It is not known how much money was in the till at the time. The incident happened at around 8am at the Repsol petrol station on the N-340 at the entrance to the town near Mercadona.

Playmobil park to open by end of year**RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA**

:: **E. P.** Rincón de la Victoria town hall announced earlier this week that work has started to the playground next to the central Plaza de la Constitución, to build the town's first Playmobil children's play area. The theme of the new playground is Playmobil's Wild West, complete with 'Wanted' posters. The town's mayor, Francisco Salado, said earlier this week that the new play equipment will be ready to use "by the end of the year".

Missing German man found in Sierra Nevada**NERJA**

:: **E. C.** A 75-year-old German man who has dementia was found by police in the town of Guéja Sierra in the Sierra Nevada in Granada last Saturday. His family had alerted police to his disappearance after he went missing from his home in the Fuente del Badén area of Nerja the previous Wednesday. The man had had a car accident in the area. He was taken to a hospital in Granada city suffering from hypothermia and multiple injuries.

Police uncover a tonne of cocaine in a shipment of avocados in Vélez

The drugs and organised crime department say that it is the second biggest haul in the province this year, after 6.3 tonnes were found in October

:: J. CANO / A. FRÍAS

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. The drugs and organised crime department of the Costa del Sol's National Police force (Udyco) have revealed that at the beginning of December one of the province's biggest cocaine hauls was uncovered in a warehouse in Vélez-Málaga.

Almost a tonne of the drug was found by officers in a shipment of avocados which had arrived into Algeciras port from south America and were destined for one of the Axarquía's horticultural companies. The National Police raided the premises following a tip-off.

Four men, two of whom are Spanish, one Moroccan and one Romanian, have been arrested on suspicion of their involvement in the operation and have been remanded in



A haul of cocaine was found in a banana shipment in October. :: SUR

custody awaiting trial.

The find is the second biggest in Malaga province this year and one of the largest in the country. Police sources have said that the value of the cocaine is approximately 60 million euros, although its street value, once cut and mixed with other substances, could be anything up 160

million euros.

The biggest haul was seized from a warehouse in the Santa Teresa industrial estate in Malaga city in October. In an operation named 'Bananero', 6.3 tonnes of cocaine were found in a shipment of bananas which had entered Europe via Portugal.

40,000 PEOPLE ENJOY TORROX'S DÍA DE LAS MIGAS

Temperatures reached 22 degrees for the 40,000 people who attended Torrox Pueblo's Día de las Migas, which celebrated 37 years last Sunday. The traditional dish of bread crumbs fried with garlic was served up with the local arriera salad and muscatel wine. Journalist, Toñi Moreno, officially opened the day.



:: E. CABEZAS

Frigiliana set to receive EU funding to provide free WiFi in public places**:: E. C.**

FRIGILIANA. Frigiliana is the only place in Malaga province to have been chosen as part of a European Union initiative to provide free WiFi in public places.

A further 40 towns and villages have been selected in Andalucía and in total 223 towns or villages in Spain are participating.

The project, known WiFi4EU, aims to give residents and visitors to the selected towns and villages free internet access in public spaces, such as town halls, libraries, tourist information centres and museums and will also extend to outdoor areas.

In Frigiliana, the tourist information centre is set to be the first place to receive the service, which will be rolled out over the next 18 months.

In return for a 15,000-euro investment from the EU, Frigiliana town hall will have to find the money to maintain the service and pay the internet provider for at least three years.

In total Spain is due to receive 40 million euros to carry out the project.



A Frigiliana street. :: SUR

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Anger at plan to build Kingdom Hall on land meant for a school

Parents' groups say they don't have a problem with a religious building being built but claim Marbella urgently needs more space for educational use

:: HÉCTOR BARBOTTA

MARBELLA. Parents in Marbella have condemned the council for trying to give away municipal land meant for educational use to a new place of worship for local Jehovah's Witnesses. Last week Marbella town hall published plans for the 2,200-square-metre plot of land in the El Pinar II area of Río Real, east of the town centre.

The PGOU master plan allocates almost all the plot for a school or similar building. The lack of state schools in the municipality has long been the subject of complaint from parents, and although the piece of land is too small for a full-sized school, plans were drawn up in 2010 for a kindergarten for 160 children but it was never built.



The plot of land is officially meant for educational use. :: JOSELE-LANZA

Ampas, the association of parents' groups from local schools, said this week, "We've nothing against a religious building being built, but we do have a problem with it being built on land for educational or social use."

Opposition groups have also criticised the plan, which is at its public consultation stage, although a coun-

cil spokesperson said that other political parties had always known about the plan and that it had still to go to council for approval.

The current premises used as a Kingdom Hall, in the centre of Marbella, would be given to the council to use for five years as part of the deal.

Report commissioned to get to the bottom of the jellyfish problem

:: NIEVES CASTRO

MARBELLA. The swarms of jellyfish that disrupted the summer for many beachgoers also harmed a number of businesses along the shoreline.

In an attempt to find an environmentally-friendly solution to the problem, the authority representing the town halls of the western Costa del Sol has commissioned Aula de Mar, a local marine study centre,

to investigate the phenomenon with a view to reducing the jellyfish's impact on the local economy.

The report needs to be ready by April, so councils can take any action ahead of the high season, and aims to find out whether the swarms that arrive periodically, disrupting bathers, are naturally occurring or due to external factors, such as sea pollution or over fishing of the marine creatures' normal food.



The building is in the La Represa park, in central Marbella. :: J-L

Marbella's new library set for old Bonsai Museum site

Funding will come from the EU as part of a 15-million-euro injection for projects in the town

:: MÓNICA PÉREZ

MARBELLA. The building that housed the recently-closed Bonsai Museum, near Marbella's old town, is to be home to the town's new public library.

The town hall has put out to tender the contracts to draw up plans and to carry out the works, with a total budget of two million euros.

The renovation of the existing site is expected to be ready in 2020 and will include space for cultural use by local residents, as well as the library itself. As it will have official "central library" status, it will need to have at least 15,000 books, lending services, children's section and a community information area.

In total it will cover 1,600 square metres, with around half the space dedicated to the library.

The privately-owned bonsai collection left the building earlier this autumn when its contract wasn't renewed. It has been several years since Marbella had a main library after the previous one in the basement of the town's main market was closed after water damage.

EU development funds

Half of the funds for the new library will come from EU money. On Tuesday it was confirmed that the council had won its bid for 15 million euros of EU development cash to be spent on local projects up to the end of 2023. The council will put in an extra 20 per cent of its own money.

Eight million euros of it will be spent in next year's budget. This will include 481,000 euros on a survey of how to spend the money and its publicity campaign, 750,000 for three 'green' buses, 14,000 for a drone to survey the streets and 75,000 for tablet computers for the Local Police.



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Lighting up hearts at Cudeca

Following the switch-on of the hospice lights last Friday, Cudeca plans to take a thousand lights to Malaga city next week

:: SUR

BENALMÁDENA. Cudeca founder Joan Hunt OBE switched on the annual display of Christmas lights at the hospice during an evening of celebrations last Friday.

More than 300 people attended the grand switch-on, each holding a candle in memory of a loved-one. A prayer of remembrance was followed by a performance by Chilean tenor Rodrigo Orrego. The Sunny View School choir and A Touch of Class also entertained visitors, while youngsters enjoyed face-painting, a magician and a visit from Father Christmas. The lights will be switched on every night until 6 January. Anyone wishing to "light a light" for a loved one and write dedication is invited to visit www.lightupcudeca.org.

Cudeca will be lighting up again in memory of lost loved ones in Malaga on Thursday 27 December. Between 7 and 9pm volunteers and staff from the hospice foundation will be in the city's Plaza de la Merced, inviting members of the public to write a card to put on a message tree.



Candles were lit outside the Cudeca hospice last Friday. :: SUR

In exchange for a donation, the public can join in the lighting of 1,000 lights together at 9pm. This is the fourth consecutive year that Cudeca has held this event in the city.

All funds raised will go towards covering the expenses of the care given free of charge by Cudeca's professionals to more than 1,400 people suffering cancer and other terminal illnesses every year, as well as support for families.



Cudeca's founder Joan Hunt switched on the lights. :: SUR

HERE AND THERE

Not long left for owners to provide pet DNA

BENALMÁDENA

:: I. G. The period for taking pets to voluntarily register their DNA in Benalmádena will come to an end at the end of the month, the town hall has reiterated.

"This is a necessary measure to protect animals from being abandoned or stolen," said mayor Víctor Navas. "We are appealing to pet owners to be responsible."

The DNA profile, which can be given at vets across the town, will also help identify and fine owners who don't clean up after their pets.

Fireworks awareness campaign launched

MIJAS

:: I. G. Mijas council has launched the campaign 'Don't buy, use or sell pyrotechnics' in order to inform the local population of the stress fireworks, bangers and other explosives can inflict on both babies and pets.

"It is a problem especially at this time of year," said councillor Laura Moreno. "These items cause a lot of stress to animals and we have seen cases of them trying to escape out of fear and ending up badly hurt."

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Parts of the Costa's most-populated towns are sinking, says report

Torremolinos and Benalmádena are two towns affected and the study puts the subsidence down to local differences in ground sediments

:: ALBERTO GÓMEZ

COSTA DEL SOL. An international team of experts, including researchers from the University of Malaga, has confirmed subsidence of up to 6.5 millimetres a year in two areas in Torremolinos and Benalmádena. In Torremolinos it is the La Colina area, to the east of the town, and in Benalmádena, the Puerto Marina leisure port that are both affected.

Data collected between 2015 and 2017 has been added to an original study that identified the problem between 1992 and 2009.

Experts are blaming the sinking of the land on the draining of natural water supplies from the underground channels flowing off the Sierra de Mijas mountains and increasing property development, both of which make the ground compact.



The phenomenon is still under investigation by the experts. :: SUR

Dr Pablo Jiménez Gavilán of the university said that the earth compacting is a widespread phenomenon but is particularly pronounced in these two areas in Torremolinos and Benalmádena.

The team has asked the local councils of the two municipalities to provide information of any reported

subsidence damage to buildings.

"Benalmádena showed some interest in collaborating but Torremolinos hasn't even replied," said Jiménez, adding that there was no need for any alarm.

Differences in the nature of ground sediments are believed to be behind variances in local subsidence rates.

Plan presented for new high-performance hockey centre in Benalmádena

Backed by the Andalusian Federation of Hockey, the project would put the town at the forefront of the Andalusian hockey scene

:: TONY BRYANT

BENALMÁDENA. Benalmádena town hall has proposed a motion for the creation of a new high-performance hockey centre. Mayor of Benalmádena, Víctor Navas, and the president of the Club de Hockey de Benalmádena, Sergio Torralvo, have presented their plan to the regional government in a bid to build one of the region's most im-

portant hockey centres.

The mayor pointed out that the project, which has the backing of the Andalusian Federation of Hockey, would benefit the town's hockey club.

The hockey club's senior men's team were one of the first Andalusian clubs to compete in the A Division, and they have become one of the strongest teams in the league.

The mayor also highlighted that Benalmádena is the ideal location to accommodate the new facility, because it is well connected by air, land and sea, and has "first class hospital facilities and a prestige hotel sector".

"We believe that our municipal-

ity meets all the requirements and has the potential to host a high-performance hockey centre. This would mean that national teams and teams from other parts of the world could come to Benalmádena to train during the winter months," the mayor said.

Enhancing the sports facilities in schools and the improvement of its sports clubs has been one of the town hall's main priorities since taking control in 2015.

Joaquín Villazón, councillor for Sports, said, "The creation of a new hockey centre is a step in the right direction to support our local sport, as it would put Benalmádena at the forefront of the Andalusian hockey scene."

HERE AND THERE



More than 100 bikers participated in the Solidarity Toy Run. :: T. B.

Two-wheeled Santas unite in Torremolinos solidarity run

TORREMOLINOS

:: T. BRYANT. More than 100 bikers dressed as Santa Claus descended on Torremolinos last weekend in order to participate in the IV Solidarity Toy Run.

In an event organised by local motorcycle club, Komando Amimoto, and Torremolinos town hall,

the red and white cavalcade visited dozens of commercial outlets in the town in order to collect gifts for children at risk of social exclusion. The convoy of Santas was seen off by hundreds of well-wishers, along with the mayor of Torremolinos, José Ortiz.

The bikers collected more than 400 toys and gifts, which will be distributed among several associations and foundations that offer support to local underprivileged families.

Council asks foreigners to officially register

BENALMÁDENA

:: I. G. The mayor of Benalmádena, Víctor Navas, has launched a campaign to get foreign residents to register on the town hall census, or 'padrón'. In addition he wants more people to register to vote in next May's municipal elections, which is an additional form to fill in once the "padrón" has been completed.

The mayor, who was accompanied by Ana Scherman, councillor for Foreign Residents, explained that some 30 per cent of the local population is made up of foreign nationals, and it was therefore "very important" that they had their say in the running of the town hall.

He added that more people registering on the 'padrón' allows the council to claim more money from central government to improve public services and gives access to reduced local taxes and services.

For those already on the 'padrón', an additional, simple form is needed to get on the electoral roll for those nationalities able to vote. The deadline to register new voters is 30 January.



The Benalmádena port. :: SUR

Puerto Marina dredging contract up for grabs

BENALMÁDENA

:: I. G. Puerto Marina, the leisure port in Benalmádena, is set to be dredged of silt and sand for the first time since 2011.

The council-owned operating company is putting the final touches to the tender document for bids to carry out the work. An expected 40,000 cubic metres of sand is expected to be removed from the water alongside the quays in order to restore it to the correct depth. The sand will then be added to nearby beaches.

The latest plan to dredge the port was kicked off two years ago with a seabed study.

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Moreno and Páez, left, opened the EDAR on Tuesday. :: SUR

Inland sewage works opens after 1.1-million-euro investment

More than 2,000 local residents will benefit from the new installations in Villanueva de Tapia

:: FERNANDO TORRES

VILLANUEVA DE TAPIA. In line with the European Union's Zero Waste project, Malaga province took another step forward with its waste treatment on Tuesday with the opening of a new plant in the inland town of Villanueva de Tapia.

This wastewater treatment plant, known as an EDAR, was opened on Tuesday by the Junta's delegate for the Environment in Malaga, Adolfo Moreno. According to information

provided by his department, the plant cost 1.12 million euros to build and was funded from the region's water infrastructure improvement budget.

Moreno explained that the plant was capable of treating 100 per cent of the wastewater of a population of 2,072 people, waste which was previously emptied directly into the Arroyo Cerezo stream.

He also highlighted the economic benefit to the area, explaining that 12 jobs were created during its construction and that more were to be created to maintain it.

Conscious of the importance of this type of infrastructure (Malaga received a multimillion-euro fine from the EU a couple of months ago for not complying with its treat-

ment standards), Moreno was keen to highlight that four new plants had been opened this year (Teba, in January; Villanueva del Trabuco, in July; and Cañete la Real, in October). Works are also near completion in Álora, Pizarra and Coín, with an investment of 14 million euros, as well as works to bring together the plants in Alhaurín el Grande and Cártama for 6.5 million euros.

Mayor of Villanueva de Tapia, Encarnación Páez, was also at the inauguration as responsibility for the plant's future use was passed over to the municipal authority.

She praised the work of the Junta in supporting infrastructure improvements in small towns where their budgets cannot stretch for projects so large.

'Coordinated action' exposes staff shortages at Archidona prison

An investigation is under way into more than half of staff being off sick on Wednesday, a trend reflected nationally

:: F. TORRES

ARCHIDONA. The prison in Archidona, known as Málaga II, became the latest headache for the prisons authorities on Wednesday when 17 of the 32 guards expected to be on duty were off work, citing health problems.

This was the highest proportion of missing staff across ten prisons nationally where the same situation has occurred this week, leading management at the Archidona jail to call staff back from holiday leave and make other officers work double shifts.

While the authorities are unwilling as yet to call it "coordinated action", they have said that they are "monitoring" the situation to see if any of these absences constitute some form of non-authorised protest. "We are checking whether these illnesses are genuine or not," said the prisons authority's general secretary, Ángel Luis Ortiz González.

This comes a year after the start of a campaign by the prison workers' unions calling for improvements to working conditions and salaries. The campaign is ongoing and no concessions have yet been made. Ortiz has made it clear that there is no possibility of any changes to wages at the present moment but that they were open to discussions over improving safety, providing "they leave extortion and insults to one side".



File photo of inside Archidona prison. :: NITO SALAS



Baby Juniper and her family with representatives of Ojén town hall. :: SUR

Ojén's first birth in forty years

Juniper Bird was delivered in the village in November

:: NIEVES CASTRO

MARBELLA. Despite having a Brazilian mother and a South African father, Juniper Bird is considered an "ojeneta" through and through. On 21 November, she became the first baby to be born in the village of Ojén in forty years.

Her parents, Carolyne and Bradford Bird, had opted for a home birth rather than travelling to a hospital outside the municipality.

The couple, who have lived in the village for just a few months, were assisted by two midwives.

"Since we first came to Ojén we knew we wanted to have our baby here," said Carolyne, who unknowingly gave her daughter a very fitting name.

Juniper branches were traditionally used as fuel for the fires that heated the stills in which the local Ojén 'aguardiente' was made.

Ojén council and the mayor, José Antonio Gómez, wanted to celebrate this first birth inside the municipal boundary in four decades. To do this they invited Bradford, Carolyne and Juniper to the town hall last week for a simple but warm tribute to welcome the new member of the family and presented them with the municipal lapel badge.

"The birth of Juniper is doubly happy. We are celebrating a new life in the world and the first baby to be born in the village for four decades," he said.

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Shock as teacher is murdered by neighbour with criminal past in quiet village in Huelva

The autopsy disproved Bernardo Montoya's denial that he had raped 26-year-old Laura Luelmo, who had just moved to the area to start a new job

:: SUR

HUELVA. The country was shocked this week by the brutal murder of a 26-year-old secondary school art teacher who had just moved to a quiet village in Huelva province to start a new job. Laura Luelmo had disappeared on Wednesday 12 December after going for an evening jog in countryside near the home in El Campillo she had only lived in since the beginning of December.

Laura's body was found, face down and partly clothed, hidden in undergrowth in a ditch on Monday. A post mortem showed that she had died from the effects of a head injury two to three days after she had first disappeared, although there was evidence of strangulation and a violent sexual attack, the report said.

On Tuesday, Bernardo Montoya, Laura's 50-year-old neighbour, was arrested while trying to flee police and denied in a confession that he had raped her, saying he attacked her near their homes before leaving her where she was found. Investigators are now probing that part of his version of events, which implies Laura may have been alive in the ditch for days in an area that rescuers had already searched previously.

Guardia Civil officers said on Tuesday that Montoya "had been obsessed with Laura since she arrived in the village". She had told her boyfriend by phone that his stare was unnerving her.

Details of the considerable crimi-



The victim's home guarded by police last weekend and inset, Laura Luelmo, who was found dead. :: EFE

nal record of Bernardo Montoya and his twin brother Luciano soon began to emerge this week.

Bernardo, who had a track record of drug dealing and addiction, had recently left prison after serving separate sentences for the murder of a pensioner and armed robbery.

He was banned from Cortegana, the Huelva village where those crimes were committed, and had also just taken up residence in El Campillo. He had served time for an assault in that village too.

His twin brother is in prison for a murder in 2001, in Cortegana, a village terrorised by the brothers, according to locals. Residents there were angry this week that the suspect had supposedly been allowed to act again so easily in El Campillo.

Laura Luelmo, an accomplished sketcher, had only just moved to Huelva province from a village in her native province of Zamora, some 500 kilometres away, to take a teaching job at a school in the village of Nerva, eight kilometres from El Campillo.

IN BRIEF

More families reporting domestic violence

MALAGA

:: J. C. / A. F. Malaga families are leading the way in reporting relatives over suspected domestic violence.

Records show that on a national level the involvement of families in first reporting their suspicions has recently declined whereas in Malaga province the amount of cases investigated as a result of relatives' complaints had increased six-fold in the third quarter of this year, from 12 in 2017 to 78.

An official said that this was good news for the fight against domestic and gender abuse.



Trial featuring two former presidents ends

SEVILLE

:: SUR. The high profile ERE trial, in which two former Andalusian presidents are among 21 defendants accused of being involved in irregular redundancy subsidies, came to an end on Monday. Manuel Chaves and José Antonio Griñán face a ten-year ban on holding public office and a five-year prison sentence, respectively. The trial has taken more than a year with 152 sessions. A sentence is not expected until next summer.

PP frustrated at Cs' delay in signing deal after agreeing 83 policy proposals

Whether to depend on the votes of far-right Vox to govern in Andalucía is still a sticking point in the coalition pact that would oust the Socialists

:: MARÍA DOLORES TORTOSA

SEVILLE. The proposed pact between the conservative Partido Popular and centre-right Ciudadanos, with which they aim to unseat the PSOE Socialist party at the helm of the Andalusian government, already included 83 agreed points earlier this week.

Among them were an anti-corruption law, new transparency policies and an Andalusian pact against gender violence.

The Partido Popular (PP), whose regional leader Juanma Moreno hopes to be invested as president of the Junta, regretted on Thursday that the deal with Ciudadanos (Cs) had not been making faster progress.

While the two groups had managed to agree on many proposed policies for a new government, whether or not to rely on the support of far-right newcomers Vox was still a sticking point.

Ciudadanos, whose Andalusian leader Juan Marín has agreed to support Moreno's investiture, giving up his own bid to lead the government, is still reluctant to ask for the votes of the 12 Vox regional MPs.

The centre-right group's preferred scenario is to persuade the



Moreno (PP), on Thursday. :: EFE

PSOE, who won most votes in the 2 December election but has no support to form a government, to abstain when Moreno stands to be elected as leader.

The Partido Popular has not ruled out talks with Vox, although it has not admitted to already holding negotiations. The Vox leader nationally, Santiago Abascal, however, has already announced negotiations with the PP to secure a significant role for his party's representatives in the Seville parliament.

The new Andalusian MPs are due to be officially sworn in next Thursday 27 December.

"Time is running out," said Juanma Moreno this week, adding that he would hold as many meetings as necessary with Cs, even on Christmas Eve.

The PP will still put forward Moreno as candidate for president even without a deal, he said, and leave it up to the parties to decide whether or not they want to put an end to 36 years of Socialist rule.





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A taxi waits at traffic lights next to a VTC car. :: F. JIMÉNEZ

Costa will end year with twice the number of private-hire licences

FRANCISCO JIMÉNEZ

MALAGA. The Costa del Sol will end 2018 with double the amount of private hire licences for cabs, including Uber-style services, than it started with.

There are now almost 1,200 local licences for these type of vehicles known as VTCs. Taxi drivers have been unhappy with the rise in these services, which they say are less regulated than theirs. However Malaga province ends the year with one VTC vehicle for every 2.3 taxis, a long way from the one in 30 legal limit.

The reason more licences are being issued is because they were requested between 2009 and 2015 when there were no restrictions in place. However the regional govern-

ment still rejected the requests at the time, and now courts are slowly finding in the original applicants' favour after complaints.

This process is what has allowed companies like Cabify and Uber to significantly increase their services on the Costa del Sol in the last year.

Lowest ratio in the country

Malaga province, including the Costa, has the lowest ratio of VTCs to taxis in Spain. While Malaga has 1/2.3, Madrid is next with 1/2.5 and Barcelona with 1/5.2. The Spanish average is 1/5.4.

Within four years, VTCs will also need an additional municipal licence in order to operate in an attempt to slow down the sector.

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OUT OF TIME



Spain will enter 2019 without the year's budget having been approved, a fact which casts serious doubt on Pedro Sánchez's mandate to govern the country. And if the last parliamentary session of 2018 - held in the form of a Q&A session in congress on Wednesday - was anything to go by, the Socialist leader has little chance of passing his draft spending plan in a vote tabled for January. Sánchez's weak hold on power is starting to cause real problems, not least because of his reliance on Catalan pro-independence parties, without whose votes he won't secure approval for next year's budget. Surely, it's time for the prime minister to call a snap election?

In Wednesday's heated session in congress, Popular Party (PP) leader Pablo Casado accused Sánchez of "imploing" Catalonia's president Quim

Torra for a meeting in Barcelona on Thursday. Ever since he took over as PP leader from Mariano Rajoy in July, Casado has been Sánchez's sharpest critic where Catalonia is concerned: his argument is essentially that, because the prime minister leads a minority government dependent on smaller parties for support, he's not as tough on Catalan secessionists as he ought to be.

For his part, Sánchez has been hoping that Vox's triumph in the Andalusian elections might unnerve the separatists and make them more willing to extend an olive branch to the PSOE.

As wonderful a Christmas present as that would have been for the prime minister, it's unlikely to happen. Indeed, it's hard to believe that Sánchez thought he might appease the region's separatists by holding his weekly cabinet meeting in

Barcelona today, rather than Madrid.

Predictably, his choice of destination was described as a "provocation" by secessionists, who announced their intention to hold widespread protests in the Catalan capital on the day of the meeting. I'm writing this on Thursday, but I'm willing to bet that if you turn on the Spanish news today (Friday), the first thing you'll see is a report on the disruption being caused by separatist demonstrators in Barcelona.

One of the pro-independence camp's most hardline groups, the Committee for the Defence of the Republic, vowed to stop Sánchez's cabinet meeting happening, circulating messages that called for members to take to the streets of Barcelona.

"Do you know any community that has achieved any rights by sitting on the sofa at home?" was the rhetorical question posed by one such missive.

The 2019 budget is merely one casualty of deteriorating relations between Madrid and Barcelona. Yet the fact that it still hasn't been passed, ten days before the beginning of the year it's supposed to cover, is also owed to the impotence of Spain's central government.

The time for a snap election has arrived.

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Law change makes it easier for neighbours to veto tourist rentals in their communities

The new voting rules brought in to control the effects of the rise in Airbnb-style rentals have satisfied neither side

▄▄ PILAR MARTÍNEZ

MÁLAGA. An urgent reform to the law was approved last week to make it easier for residents in communities of flats or houses to block their neighbours from renting out their homes over platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com.

Up to now, the 'comunidad' of owners had to unanimously agree that tourist rentals were not welcome. Now a vote by three fifths of individual owners and three fifths by the weighted share of their community fees is enough to stop a property receiving holidaymakers.

The change is not retrospective, meaning owners who already rent out this way can continue to do so, however a further change has removed tourist rentals from national rental law and redefined it as a business activity, which now makes it easier for the regional governments to control tourist rentals, in the same way they control hotels, and insist that owners register their Airbnb-style properties and meet certain minimum requirements.

When the measures were first mooted by the national government earlier this autumn, there was a surge in local owners registering their properties to legitimise their position ahead of any change.

The new rules had been called for by both the tourist sector and residents' associations in many towns and cities after the large increase in numbers letting out their homes over the internet in the last few years, sometimes not meeting standards or forcing rental prices up for long-term local residents.

Among other measures in the law change, owners will also be able to agree special community-fee rates for properties being let out to holidaymakers.

However the new rules haven't fully satisfied either side of the de-

bate over tourist rentals. The president of the Andalucía association of tourist properties, Carlos Pérez-Lanzac, said that the percentage required in a vote should have been 75% and not 60%, although he agreed with

Residents can now also set special community fees for properties being rented out to tourists

the right for different fees to be charged when a property is rented out to tourists.

However he stressed that other non-residential uses for homes should be subject to the same neighbours' voting restrictions, not just the holiday rental industry.

The president of the Malaga association of property managers, Alejandro Pestaña, praised the step taken by the government but said that "perhaps it has come too late" for places like Malaga city centre that have been affected by the surge in tourist rental properties.

LOCKDOWN IN BARCELONA FOR TODAY'S CABINET MEETING

The Spanish Cabinet was due to hold its weekly meeting outside the capital in Barcelona today, outraging the Catalan separatist movement. The venue for the meeting, the historic headquarters of the local chamber of commerce, is to be surrounded by a security cordon of thousands of extra police to stop demonstrations. Ministers were also hoping to arrange a mini-summit with pro-independence Catalan president, Quim Torra.



▄▄ EFE

Long-term rental law changed to favour tenants over owners

▄▄ EDURNE MARTÍNEZ

MADRID. As part of a promised tightening of national rental laws when it came to power, the PSOE government has updated property letting legislation in response to a big increase in rental prices in Spain recently.

The main change announced is to the minimum contract duration. Regardless of what length of time an owner and a tenant negotiate a contract for, tenants now have the right to remain in a property at least five years, in the case of a private owner, and seven years, where the landlord is a company. Previously it was three years. At the end of the period automatic renewals will also go up from one to three years, unless one side gives a month's notice.

Apart from the one-month-rent bank guarantee, owners can also now only ask for up to two months additional deposit, unless it is a very long-term let. In the case of when a company is renting out, the agents' fees and cost of setting up the contract now have to be met by the landlords.

Faced with an increase in the number of evictions over unpaid rent, the government has introduced extra safeguards to protect more vulnerable tenants.

Property industry representatives reacted by saying that the move would discourage owners from renting out and so push up prices up further.

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Blow for Gibraltar as EU excludes it from no-deal contingency plans

The government says the decision has not come as a surprise and it is studying the potential impact on Gibraltar in close detail

DEBBIE BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. The Gibraltar government began looking at the implications of a possible Brexit as soon as the EU referendum was announced in 2016, and throughout the negotiations with Spain and UK it has continued to make contingency plans in case Britain, and therefore Gibraltar, leaves without a deal - although this has always been seen as the worst scenario for the Rock.

Chief minister Fabian Picardo and his team, who negotiated the Gibraltar Protocol and Memoranda of Understanding, insist that the Withdrawal Agreement approved recently by the European Council provides Gibraltar with the best possible protection in the face of Brexit, and that no deal would be devastating for Gibraltar. Now, however, it looks as if the UK parliament will reject the deal negotiated by Theresa May and the dreaded no-deal scenario looks increasingly possible.



Gibraltar's chief minister, Fabian Picardo. :: SUR

Picardo and deputy chief minister Dr Joseph Garcia, who holds the Brexit portfolio, flew to London the other day for talks with senior officials about the latest situation. When they returned, they said that Gibraltar, like the EU and UK would now be stepping up preparations for a potential no deal, but insisted there was no cause for alarm. "It does not mean that this is going to happen," said Dr Garcia.

Shortly after their return, how-

ever, the EU released its own contingency plans for a no-deal Brexit and included a blow for Gibraltar: those plans will not apply to the Rock. The government is now studying the impact of that decision in detail, but stresses that it is "not surprised" and that it doesn't reflect the view of the UK government. Meanwhile it has already published technical notices on passports, pet passports, driving licences and motor insurance as part of its contingency plans.

Mayor's Awards presented to six people and one charity

D. BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. Seven local men and women were presented with a Mayor's Award by the mayor of Gibraltar, Kaiane Aldorino Lopez, at a special ceremony at City Hall on Wednesday.

Lance Corporal Conway has been given the Mayor's Silver Award in recognition of his actions while deployed in Bahrain, although he was unable to receive it in person as he is currently away on active service.

The other Silver Award was presented to Krisanne Lia for saving a neighbour's life by rendering first aid assistance when he had a heart

attack, just two weeks after completing a first aid course.

The other five recipients were presented with Community Awards: John Diaz received one in recognition of his voluntary work with the Prostate Cancer Support Group; Joseph Palmero for his charity work; Kishin Alwani in recognition of support for the community through the Alwani Trust and Foundation; Emily Adamberry Olivero MBE for her voluntary work with Clubhouse Gibraltar; and the Gibraltar Disability Society for its work in promoting the interests of disabled people.

Santa's Grotto in Ocean Village raises £2,600 for children suffering from cancer

D. B.

GIBRALTAR. Christmas is a time of goodwill and there was plenty of that about in Ocean Village recently, especially in the Santa's Grotto in O'Reilly's Irish Bar

which raised a massive £2,651.35 for the Research into Childhood Cancer association.

The association's founder, Craig Sacarello, said they were delighted with the amount raised, and he expressed their sincere thanks to Ocean Village for their support.

Emilia Hazell-Smith, the Events and Social Media Executive for Ocean Village, was also delighted as the money raised this year was far more than last year's total of £1,400, which was in itself a record.



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The Spanish anti-Brexit train gains momentum in the UK

Tube driver Aratxu Blanco is one of thousands of Spaniards living in the UK concerned about their future after Brexit

:: **ÁLVARO SOTO**

LONDON. Aratxu Blanco decided to get involved in the fight against “the madness” of Brexit when one day, after the referendum, one of her fellow London tube drivers asked her when she was going to pack her bags and return to Spain. “He made this ‘joke’, as he called it, three or four days in a row,” says the woman from Sestao in the Basque Country who can be found almost daily outside the Houses of Parliament, protesting against Brexit or calling for a second referendum.

Shortly after the first and so far only referendum, she found herself a member of the ‘Españoles en Reino Unido - Surviving Brexit!’ Facebook page which she soon became an administrator of.

“I couldn’t get behind the idea that this country, which has always been so liberal and which has welcomed me could suddenly be led by this black cloud, the far right,” she explains.

The group, which now has more than 5,000 followers, has become a valuable meeting point for the many Spanish people in the UK who feel threatened by the uncertainty of Brexit, as well as by far right-wing people emboldened by the outcome of the referendum.

“We’ve heard about a girl who lived in a small town being followed while she was with her small child, threatened by a woman who was following her; the Venezuelan parents of a Spanish girl who sold everything to move to the UK and don’t know if they’ll be able to stay; Spanish people married to Brits who don’t know what their status will be; divorces because of tensions in families; and various others who say they will leave, come what may with Brexit, because they don’t want to live here anymore,” says Aratxu.

However, her work is not just limited to social media, Aratxu regularly goes to Parliament to join protests: “Sometimes there have been ten of us, other times 57, but now there are hundreds as the vote in parliament draws closer.”

Despite threats and being called “traitors”, Aratxu is confident “we are on the right side of history”.

“They say that we are being anti-democratic but of course we believe in democracy, that’s why we’re protesting!” she says. “People are discovering what is going to happen and they are changing their mind.”



Aratxu protests almost daily outside Parliament. :: R.C.

Anti-Brexit campaigners react to EU plans to prepare for a no-deal scenario

British in Europe published a statement on the same day as the European Commission and UK warned of possible failure to reach agreement

:: **JENNIE RHODES**

MALAGA. The European Commission published a press release on Wednesday announcing that it had “started implementing its no-deal Contingency Action Plan”. With regard to citizens’ rights, the Commission said it was inviting “Member States to take a generous approach to the rights of UK citizens in the EU, provided that this approach is reciprocated by the UK”.

Co-chair of British in Europe, Jane Goulding, said in a statement the anti-Brexit group published following the Commission’s comments, “With the spectre of no deal rising again, so are people’s anxiety levels and it is wrong that citizens’ rights were not guaranteed at the outset.

“Now British citizens have been given a clear message that if there is no deal they are on their own, abandoned by the UK government and the EU. This is a far cry from the negotiators’ promises that we would be able to live our lives as before.”

The two statements came the day after the UK government announced it was ramping up plans for a no-deal

scenario. Following a lengthy cabinet meeting on Tuesday, Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson, told the House of Commons that “3,500 service personnel would be on standby” to manage long queues of lorries entering and leaving the UK.

Some 140,000 letters are to go out to businesses advising them to make preparations for a no deal and advice will also be given to the general public. Conservative ministers denied that the plans were a political hoax to get MPs to back the existing Withdrawal Agreement.

UK in EU decides to appeal court decision

The UK in EU group submitted an appeal on Tuesday following last week’s Royal Courts of Justice decision not to allow them to proceed with their legal challenge against illegal spending limits of the Vote Leave campaign.

Sue Wilson, lead claimant and chair of Bremain in Spain, said “I have complete confidence in our legal team and the strength of our legal arguments. We will continue to fight our corner until we have exhausted every legal avenue.”

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LETTERS TO
THE EDITOR

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The parakeet solution

Parakeets are becoming a major problem all along the Costa del Sol and unless eradicated totally will increase to plague-like proportions, damaging and possibly wiping out some species of native Spanish birds. Trust me - I have personal experience.

For 28 years I lived in Shepperton (famous for its film studios). It was also the first area in the UK to be overrun with these loud squawking pests. Folk law has it that during the filming of *The African Queen* starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn, the nearby studios shipped in some parakeets to become film extras. Later some escaped, leading over the years to a huge and troublesome colony becoming established in the area.

I recall a BBC documentary some years back detailing the problem. They filmed a row of poplar trees in nearby Esher, each one crammed full of parakeet nests, in all providing home to 300 breeding pairs.

Locals complained of lack of peace and quiet due to the birds' incessant loud squawking. Eventually the authorities, realising the problem would not go away of its own accord, took action to cull the ever-growing population

which in the main succeeded in stopping their spread to other areas.

I read with interest in SUR in English (November 30th to December 6th) your article entitled 'The days are numbered for Malaga's parakeets' and how at last, with numbers now around 5,000 birds in Malaga alone, action is to be taken to control the spiralling population.

All sounds good, but I foresee a problem. I live in La Carihuela area, near Torremolinos, just three to four miles outside Malaga. Here we are also overrun with the blighters. It's not unusual to see flocks of 30 to 40 sweeping between palm trees and the numbers seem to double yearly.

So I have some advice for the Malaga authorities - to cull just Malaga is pointless. Other birds from La Carihuela or other areas will just move along and repopulate Malaga.

Surely to succeed this has to be a concerted province-wide action, perhaps making each town council responsible for eradication within their own area.

Only then will this part of Spain be free from the invasion of parakeets.

ROGER KING
TORREMOLINOS

Where does the
money come from?

The recent invasion of Madrid by supporters of River Plate and Boca Juniors in order to be present at the second leg of the final of the Copa Libertadores throws up a number of questions.

With the economy of Argentina in dire straits, where do the thousands of fans find the money to pay for the travel, accommodation and tickets, never mind being able to absent themselves from their work?

Only a few months ago Argentina was bailed out to the

tune of 57 billion dollars by the International Monetary Fund.

A similar situation emerged during the World Cup in Russia this summer.

Attendance at matches saw Europeans easily outnumbered by supporters from South America.

Bearing in mind the prohibitive cost of tickets and accommodation and having to travel halfway around the world, just where does the money come from?

PETER SANDERSON
BY EMAIL

FESTIVE NOTES TWO VIEWS OF POPULAR CHRISTMAS HITS

Famous five

PETER EDGERTON
MUSIC MAKER WWW.E-PETER.COM

It's Christmas time/There's no need to be afraid/Unless you're dining with the in laws on which case you should be very worried indeed."

These may or may not have been the original lyrics to that old Band Aid song that I have to turn off sharpish every time it comes on the radio. But if they were, they couldn't have been much worse than the definitive version which was eventually inflicted on an unsuspecting public.

Christmas songs are, broadly speaking, rubbish. From that baffling Chris De Burgh one about, erm, a spaceman (me neither), to the Mariah Carey squawkfest whose title I can't remember and which is played on a loop in every supermarket on the planet, songwriters and performers alike have always managed to plumb new depths just when we thought we'd reached our nadir.

Here's a funny thing though - just a few Christmas songs are rather wonderful. So, in a bid to stimulate a swathe of arguments around the turkey, here are my top five in no particular.

The Power Of Love by Frankie Goes To Hollywood. I'm not sure if it's Holly Johnson's aching beautiful vocal or simply the bare faced cheek of sticking the three wise men on the video in a brazen attempt to make a very unchristmassy song apt for the festive season. Clever marketing, marvellous song.

Peace On Earth/ Little Drummer Boy by David Bowie and Bing Crosby. Both chaps sing magnificently and the bonus is Crosby's stony faced glare in the video, clearly not wanting to be there. Beautiful and hilarious at the same time.

Driving Home For Christmas by Chris Rea. It chugs along nicely. Perfect for the, er, drive home at

Christmas.

I believe in Father Christmas by Greg Lake. Despite the sometimes clunky lyrics, there's something about the overall atmosphere created that stirs emotion. In the light of this lovely effort, we might even forgive him his tortuous noodlings with Emerson and Palmer one day.

Finally, In The Bleak Midwinter by The King's College Cambridge choir. I know it's not a pop song as such but it's certainly popular in my house and rather splendid in its muted majesty, I hope you'll agree. This is, without doubt, the finest of all carols.

Maybe you were expecting some others in here like The Pogues or John Lennon or Elvis or Frank Sinatra but I'm sorry, no - the above five are simply miles better.

Discuss.

Oh, and very Merry Christmas to one and all.

Irritating piffle

TONY BRYANT

The season of goodwill brings with it numerous customs that have become essential to the holiday period. Christmas hits recorded by the world's most noteworthy rock and roll stars are among them.

However, while most of us will welcome the decorations and the chance to canoodle under the mistletoe, the timeworn festive offerings that are rehashed every year are about as welcome as Krampus.

This point was driven home last week as I waited in the queue at the cash desk of the local supermarket, for we were treated to Wonderful Christmas Time, Sir Paul McCartney's festive offering from 1979.

It is almost incomprehensible that this banal ditty could have

been written by the person responsible for some of the most inspirational songs in the history of modern music.

If this wasn't bad enough, next up was another titled crooner singing Mistletoe and Wine, although, fortunately, I was on my way up the escalator before the children started singing Christian rhymes. These worthless tunes might be part of the Christmas tradition for many people, but few of them have stood the test of time, which makes the fact they are rehashed each year even more annoying.

It became popular for artists to record a Christmas hit in the early 1950s, although one of the first was released in 1925. Of course, among the most aggravating are

Jimmy Buffett's All I Want for Christmas, followed closely by John Denver, Please Daddy (Don't Get Drunk this Christmas).

It was during the 1970s when the genre really took off. Just about every named artist turned out a trashy Christmas song and we were subjected to the mildly irritating to the utterly ridiculous and the absolutely terrible. These included Mary's Boy Child, I saw Mummy Kissing Santa and Millennium Prayer (Sir Cliff again). Unfortunately, they didn't get any better. The Jackson 5, Johnny Mathis, Shaking Stevens, Wham! and The Spice Girls all jumped on the Christmas sleigh. The list is endless, although I must admit that the one that really drives me insane is Sir Paul's simply irritating festive piffle.

Of course, it wasn't all bad, because there have been a few classic festive tracks. Voted one of the best Christmas songs ever recorded, A Fairy Tale of New York (The Pogues and Kirsty MacColl) is now at the centre of a PC row, as some believe that certain words in the hit should be censored. Do we really wish it could be Christmas every day?

IDÍGORAS

MALAGA, CHRISTMAS EVE



SUR in English

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CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

A saint who became Santa

Santa Claus evolved from traditions surrounding St Nicholas, a bishop with a reputation for secret gift-giving

BY TONY BRYANT

MALAGA. Santa Claus is a character that brings joy to children all around the world in the weeks leading to Christmas, and especially on Christmas Eve. As youngsters, we were told that Father Christmas, as he is affectionately known in the UK, lived in Lapland and only ventured out on his reindeers once a year to deliver presents to the “well-behaved” children. Later in life, we discovered that the man behind the story of Santa Claus is St Nicholas, an early Christian bishop who lived in ancient Greece at the time of the Roman Empire.

St Nicholas was said to have inherited a vast wealth from his parents and this gave rise to stories concerning his generosity, especially among underprivileged children.

The custom of hanging up the Christmas stocking is said to have evolved because of the saint’s charitable nature. Legend claims that on Christmas Eve he would toss small bags of gold coins through the win-

dows of the homes of the poor. After one bag landed in a child’s stocking that was hanging to dry, news soon spread, and children (and their parents) began hanging out a stocking on the night before Christmas.

Very little is known about the historical Saint Nicholas. The earliest accounts of his life were written centuries after his death and contain much elaboration. He is said to have had a reputation for secret gift-giving and most of the tales are based on his generosity.

The modern Santa Claus grew out of traditions surrounding this historical character. Pre-modern representations of St Nicholas merged with the English Father Christmas

The modern version of Santa was created by an American caricaturist called Thomas Nast

and the Dutch Sinterklaas and created the character known to Americans and the rest of the English-speaking world as Santa Claus. Washington Irving Americanised Sinterklaas into Santa Claus in his book, *History of New York*, in 1809.

However, it was not until later in the 19th century that the spirit of Saint Nicholas would evolve into Santa Claus, although unlike the saint, Santa was a non-religious character.

Father Christmas, dates back to the 16th century during the reign of Henry VIII. He was portrayed as a large man in green robes lined with fur who typified the spirit of good cheer at Christmas. England no longer celebrated the feast day of St Nicholas on 6 December, so the Father Christmas celebration was moved to the 24th of December to coincide with Christmas Day.

Victorian revival

The Victorian revival of Christmas included Father Christmas as the emblem of good cheer, although his physical appearance was variable, as the illustration of the Ghost of Christmas Present in Charles Dickens festive classic demonstrates.

The image of Santa developed as a jolly old man with a white beard



19th century image of 'Merry Old Santa' by Thomas Nast. :: SUR

dressed in a red suit trimmed with fur. The modern version of Santa was created by Thomas Nast, an American caricaturist who based Santa on the traditional German figures of Sankt Nikolaus. Nast immortalised Santa in Harper’s Weekly in 1863, with an illustration of Santa dressed in the American flag.

The idea of Santa on an airborne

sleigh pulled by eight reindeers was due to the significant influence of the 1823 poem, *A Visit from St Nicholas*. According to legend, the poem was composed by Clement Clarke Moore on a snowy winter’s day during a shopping trip on a sleigh. Moore’s poem is behind many of the features that are still associated with Santa Claus today.





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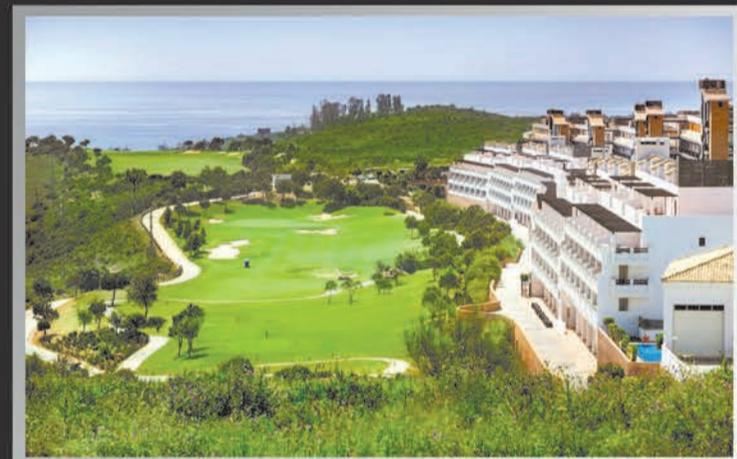
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SOCIETY SCENE

Mince pies and Christmas dinners

At this time of year clubs and societies have been holding their annual get-togethers to celebrate the Christmas holidays

:: SUR IN ENGLISH

**The Field Club
A mince pie meander**

The Field Club walking group celebrated its last trek this season with a two-hour walk along the seafront at Fuengirola. The walkers started and finished at the Hogar de Pensionistas where they had coffee and mince pies. The new walking season starts 7 January and details are on www.thefieldclub.org

**Age Concern Fuengirola / Mijas
Christmas gala dinner**

Age Concern Fuengirola/Mijas celebrated its annual Christmas gala dinner at the Tamisa Golf Hotel in Mijas recently. The event, which began with a champagne and canapé reception, was attended by 90 members. Guests tucked into a three-

course dinner while enjoying an evening of festive fun, complete with a grand Christmas raffle and a variety of entertainment. This included an a capella quartet, flamenco dancing and Costa favourite, Laura Elen, who performed everything from festive hits to pop ballads.

"It was our best Christmas party ever and the atmosphere was charged with enjoyment and seasonal goodwill," secretary, Steve Marshall explained.

**Age Concern Estepona / Manilva
Christmas lunch**

The Age Concern shop in Estepona held its annual Christmas lunch at La Rada Restaurant. During the meal four volunteers were presented with Lifetime Friends membership cards: Audrey, who was 93 on the day, started working for the charity on the market stall in the Plaza de Reloj in 2003; Pat, 90, started in 2005 as an administrative assistant; Pauline worked in the sorting, steaming and pricing area for 15 years; and Hazel started in the shop and then became the librarian, worked for 13 years for the charity.



Members of The Field Club on their end-of-season mince pie meander. :: sur



Pat and Audrey from Age Concern Estepona/Manilva.



Ladies at the Age Concern Fuengirola/Mijas party.

**Costa Press Club
Christmas feast**

The Costa Press Club held its Christmas party at the Miraflores Golf restaurant in Riviera del Sol, where members and guests were able to choose between a feast of turkey with all the trimmings and Christmas pudding, or less

traditional but equally delicious options.

Entertainment was provided by the Club President Jesper Sander Pedersen, who organised Secret Santa gifts for everyone and a topical Christmas quiz.

The quiz prizes were tickets to Big M concerts in 2019, kindly do-

nated by club members Martyn and Nessie Wood.

What are you up to?

If you are involved in a club or association and planning events, trips or activities that would be of interest to other readers of SUR in English, we would love to hear from you:

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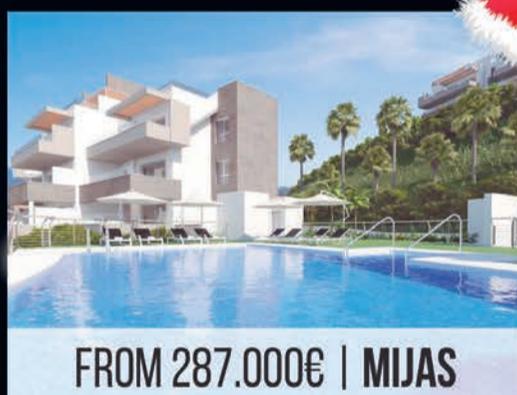
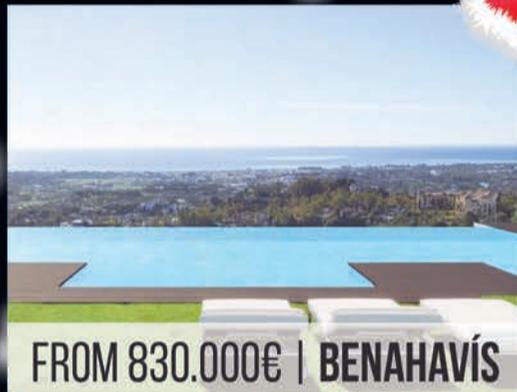


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DENISE BUSH



GARDENING

Cyphostemma juttae

The Namibian grape has a swollen trunk, large leathery leaves and attractive clusters of red 'grapes' in the winter

Cyphostemma juttae is native to South west Africa and grows in dry, desert conditions. It is drought tolerant but will grow better with occasional watering during the hottest months.

Common names include Namibian grape, tree grape, wild grape, bastard cobas and in Spanish, Uva de Namibia. Cyphostemma is a

member of the Vitaceae (grape) family and was previously classified in the Cissus genus.

Cyphostemma juttae is slow growing, even when it has plenty of space for its roots to expand: in a container it will grow even slower, but

with patience and ideal conditions it can reach 1.8 metres tall.

It can withstand very hot temperatures but the big, fleshy leaves may burn in full sun so some shade in the afternoon is advisable. In the winter it will drop all its leaves. As the tree grape matures, the trunk will become fat and swollen and the yellowish bark will peel off and hang down in strips; this helps it to withstand high temperatures by deflecting the sunlight from the trunk.

The tiny clusters of greenish-yellow flowers open in the summer and are not particularly noteworthy but after the blooms have gone, bunches of red grape-like berries form. They are not edible and children and animals should not be allowed to eat them.

The Namibia grape will not tolerate cold, wet winters which may cause branches to rot. Any diseased stems can be cut back to healthy material and new growth usually starts in spring from just below the cut. It is not difficult to grow but river sand mixed in with the compost will help drainage and in colder, wetter regions it is best grown in a container so that it can be moved under cover if necessary.

Propagation is best by seed, although it can take up to two years to germinate. This plant will develop slowly, which is probably why it is particularly popular with Bonsai growers.

The genus name comes from the Greek 'kyphos' meaning hump and 'stemma' meaning garland.

Malaga's Jardines Botánicos de la Concepción have a mature example of this plant which has several clusters of berries at the moment.



Cyphostemma juttae in flower and with berries (inset). :: WIKIMEDIA

READER'S PHOTO



:: CAROLINE SELLERS

THE COLOURS OF CHRISTMAS

A beautiful red flower spike against dark green leaves is a welcome sight at this time of year. Caroline Sellers sent in this photo of a festive-looking Aloe Vera

GARDENING IN DECEMBER

Andalusian Mistletoe

Mistletoe is a traditional Christmas plant that most people will be familiar with even though it is not quite so popular as it once was. It was originally hung in the home to ward off evil spirits and bring good luck. In Norse mythology it was used as a sign of love or friendship which is probably where the tradition of kissing under the mistletoe came from. Not all species have white berries, there are species with pink, red or transparent berries. *Viscum cruciatum* (muérdago rojo in Spanish), has red berries



when ripe and is found only in Andalucía and southern Portugal on the Iberian peninsula.

PHOTOS

Calling all gardeners

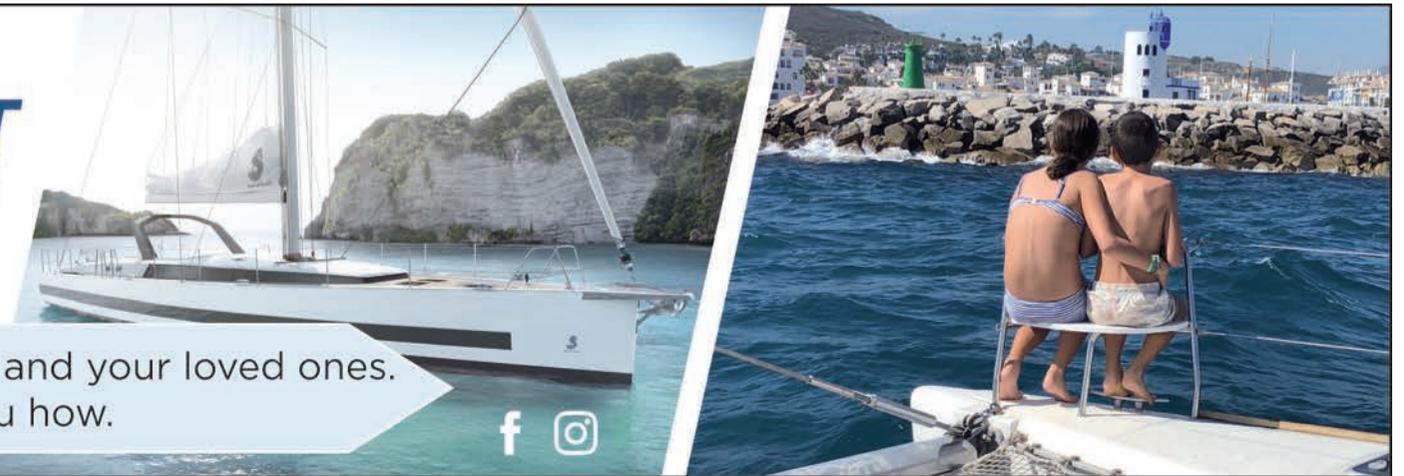
We know that many of our readers have lovely gardens, or enjoy growing plants on their terraces or balconies, so why not share them with others?

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. Alternatively, you can send them to us via Facebook ([surenglish](https://www.facebook.com/surenglish)) or Twitter ([@SUR_English](https://twitter.com/SUR_English))

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REVIEW

MORRIS BISHOP

WHAT COMES BETWEEN ANTICIPATION, JOY AND PRAISE?

The second Christmas concert given by Collegium Musicum in the magnificent Iglesia de Encarnación in Marbella was devoted to works by composers from the Americas, most of whose names were unknown to me. So the anticipation of hearing yuletide carols from a different culture, yet in the same language as my own, was heightened.

I must say from the outset that the some 100 choristers and musicians rose to the challenge, surpassing yet again the previous perfection of their performance, with a special mention of soloist Christie, whose voice was like that of an angel!

The evening opened with a fitting orchestral work, the first movement from Dvorak's 9th. Symphony 'From the new world,' which within the first few bars presented a

problem for them in that they did not have a timpanist! So CM's president, Delyth Bressington, besides being the musical arranger also became the percussionist, both electronic and actual.

The many carols that followed whose origin were from both North and South America, included those by Leroy Anderson and Mark Hays and even a Ca-

lypso by Jill Gallina. Lastly there was a 'sing-along' compilation of all the carols that we are familiar with.

It was truly a joyous evening that under the baton of the irrepressible and ebullient Annemarie Philipps, gave the packed house a wonderful evening's entertainment for which they showed their appreciation with abundance. All the members of both choir and orchestra should be extremely proud of their achievements.

Look out for their next concert on 26 May in Fuengirola and 28 May in Marbella.

Collegium Musicum is always looking for new voices and instrumentalists. So if you have the qualities to join this exceptional group – contact Diekje by email (secretaria@colmus.org) or by phone (95277492 / 696620872).



Philipps conducts in front of a full house. :: SUR

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Gerald Brenan's Yegen, a century on

The village the writer called home in the 1920s has gained motorcars and TV, but retains its "ocean of air"



MARK NAYLER

✉ markanayler@gmail.com

GRANADA. English writer and Hispanophile Gerald Brenan moved into the Andalusian village of Yegen in January 1920. Brenan, then 25, had been demobilised from the British Army and had come to Spain searching for a tranquil spot in which to read and write. This tiny settlement, located in the Alpujarra region of Granada's Sierra Nevada natural park, immediately appealed: he liked its isolation, its clean running water and the fact that it appeared as if it had been "made out of the earth by insects".

The writer lived in Yegen, on and off, until 1934 and wrote about his experiences in *South From Granada* (1957), a book that delights with its affectionate characterisation of 'pueblo' life as much as its descriptions of the Alpujarra's incomparable beauty. But does the Yegen or the Alpujarra that Brenan knew still exist?

Visiting the writer's former stomping ground after reading *South From Granada*, it seemed to me that, in many respects, this remote pocket of Andalucía hasn't changed much since the early twentieth century. Getting off the bus in Brenan's former pueblo (a twice-daily service runs from Granada and takes you through some of the Sierra's most humbling landscapes), a few old houses on one side of the narrow road were the only indications that I'd arrived in a human settlement.

The fresh, clean air was laced with the scent of rosemary - also one of the first things about Yegen that Brenan noticed. In the 1920s, it was due to the fact that the women used bushels of thyme, lavender and rosemary as fuel for their stoves; but now it seemed to come solely from clumps of the herb growing on the hillside. Gas and electricity have presumably removed the need for this aromatic kindling.

Still and silent

Leaving the "main" road, I took Calle Real into the village in search of the house now known as La Casa del Inglés. The village tumbles down a lush hillside, accompanied by streams of crystal-clear water, overlooking the Alpujarra's eastern plains. Brenan spoke of Yegen as being "washed by [an] ocean of air" - a phrase that perfectly captures the stillness, silence and freshness of the place.

Yegen, he wrote, "hugged life to itself.... The speaking tone [of the locals] was soft and... if anyone shouted, the sound was at once



A view of Yegen, a village that in some ways has changed little since Gerald Brenan lived there. :: IDEAL



Brenan, as a young man. :: SUR

sucked up into the silence". This is still true today. All I saw on my way to the centre was a cat dozing outside a closed bar and a lady sweeping the street outside Brenan's former home. Nothing stirred or made a noise. But from behind closed doors, some of them bearing Christmas decorations, I heard and smelt the sizzling of onions and peppers (it was almost lunchtime) and lively conversations. I also heard TVs - the first small sign that, despite its far-flung location and rustic appearance, Yegen has welcomed some aspects of the modern world over the last hundred years.

Brenan's house is found just past Pensión-Bar Fuente, where Calle Real meets Calle Era del Cañamo. It is a sprawling, somewhat ungainly building, accessed by a wooden door on Calle Real and bearing a plaque commemorating its celebrated former resident.

There was no sign of life as I lingered outside, just some builders renovating a dilapidated house opposite. Odd to think that this was Brenan's base for fourteen years - a



The Plaza de la Ermita in the village centre. :: IDEAL

home in which he hosted literary friends such as Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf (whose eventful visits are described in the book), read voraciously and recorded all aspects of life in 1920s Yegen.

Village life

A few steps beyond La Casa del Inglés is Calle Gerald Brenan - a flower-filled alleyway overlooking the immense spaces beyond Yegen. Walking on, I soon arrived at Plaza de la Ermita, where a bar had a few tables out in the sun.

Over tapas and beer, I watched locals come and go from a garage opposite: everyone who drove or walked past stopped for a chat, or shouted greetings to the chain-smoking mechanics. Yegen has a population of just 440 people, so everyone here must know each other, and probably far too much of each other's business too.

This close-knit way of life is something that Brenan loved about the village, yet the fact that a garage serves as one of its present-day focal points is another indication of

In the 1920s it took a couple of days to get to the provincial capital, on foot or by mule; now the road is high quality

Brenan wrote that if anyone shouted, the sound was "sucked up into the silence"; that is still true today

Everyone here must know each other's business; the close-knit way of life is something that Brenan loved

change. Mules, not motor cars, provided transportation in 1920s Yegen, and households fetched water from fountains that doubled as social hotspots. Indeed, the gossipy richness of South From Granada concerns a pueblo life that has changed a lot since Don Geraldo's time.

Brenan wrote, for example, that "the prostitute was...an institution: every [Alpujarra] village had two or three". Máxima, a "very plain" such woman in her early thirties, lived a few doors down from Don Geraldo, perhaps on the flower-filled dead-end now named after the writer. In order to put food on the table for her several children, Máxima coupled with local men in exchange for a couple of eggs - "or when the hens were not laying, one egg". It's probably been a while since such a transaction took place in Yegen.

Mules to motors

Other changes to the Alpujarra since Brenan's time are more obvious. A high-quality asphalted road now links the region to Granada, and is wide enough for two vehicles to pass each other without problems. In the 1920s, it took a couple of days to reach the provincial capital from Yegen, on foot and/or donkey. And most villages in the western Alpujarra are now popular tourist destinations, chief among them Pampaneira, Capileira and Trevélez (all of which have nevertheless retained their beauty and charm).

But Yegen, and the eastern Alpujarra as a whole, is still of a "different character" from the west, as Brenan observed almost a century ago. Despite the arrival of TVs, gas cookers, electric lights and the odd foreign visitor, Don Geraldo's former pueblo remains unspoiled, contentedly adrift in its "ocean of air".

DARYL FINCH



WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

21 DECEMBER 1983

Spain pull off unlikely win to reach Euro '84

La Roja needed to win by 11 goals against Malta and did just that; but recent revelations about the legendary 12-1 win have tainted one of the country's greatest sporting achievements

Until that moment, Spain had only scored 12 goals in their qualifying group for the 1984 European Championships. But on 21 December 1983, after the Netherlands defeated Malta 5-0 in the last of their games, Spain had a lot of catching up to do if they were to better the Dutch's +16 goal difference. They would need at least 11 if they were to reach the finals of the tournament in France the following summer.

Malta keeper, John Bonello, famously said: "Spain couldn't even score 11 goals

against a team of children."

At half time at the Estadio Benito Villamarín in Seville, Spain led 3-1 thanks to a hat-trick from Real Madrid striker Santillana. However, they were still well short of the now 12 needed from the remaining 45 minutes.

What followed has since been described as the greatest moment in Spanish sport as the side hit nine goals without reply to seal passage to Euro 1984.

However, there have always been suspicions about what occurred at half time (many suspected bribery after Spanish and



Bonello watches on as he concedes yet another goal. :: SUR

Maltese officials were seen meeting) but, according to accounts given in a documentary aired on Movistar+ in March, a number of Malta players believed that the Spanish players were on steroids.

Victor Scerri, then Malta head coach, suspected foul play the moment his team arrived. He said: "We arrived late but they wouldn't put the lights on to allow us to train in the stadium. Then they put us in a horrendous hotel where

the noise kept us up all night."

Forward Silvio Demanuele added: "During the game the Spanish players had an unusual amount of energy, some were foaming at the mouth and drinking water constantly. My brother is a body-builder so I know the signs of taking steroids."

However, the accusations don't stop there. The coach said: "At half time a short man dressed in white came in and offered us sliced lem-

LANGUAGE FOOTNOTE

Deportivo	Sporting
Fútbol	Football
Marcar	To score
Gol	Goal
Portero	Goalkeeper
Clasificar	To qualify
Delantero	Striker
Descanso	Half time
Entrenar	To train
Entrenador	Coach
Sospechar	To suspect
Soborno	Bribe
Árbitro	Referee
Rodaja	Slice
Hacer trampa	To cheat
Documental	Documentary
Culturista	Body-builder

ons. When the players sucked on them they reported feeling unwell and some asked if they had been drugged." Demanuele added: "It felt like I was drunk; like I'd been out all night."

There are also question marks over the referee on the night: "He was the worst I'd ever seen," said left-back Emanuel Fabri. "He let the Spanish players get away with everything and he kept saying things like 'let's go, play!' as if to hurry us up."

Bilingual crossword inside back page



The defence in disarray. :: SUR

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REF. N. O. C.

Some time ago I gave a friend a book that I had written and that I had previously registered. I wanted her to read it and give me her opinion before I published it, because I am quite modest about these things and I was afraid it would not be good enough. When I gave it to her, she was recommending

certain changes, but suddenly she stopped telling me anything, and when I tried to find her she would not answer my phone calls or emails. Now, all of a sudden, I have discovered that she has published a novel, where one of the characters tells a story identical to the one in my book. Of course, my indignation is tremendous, because I trusted her and she has taken advantage of my work. Is there anything I can do to claim?

If, as indicated in your question, you are the owner of the intellectual property rights of that work, you can, among other actions, report your friend for plagiarism. As measures to take, you could request the suspension of the exploitation of the work, the removal of the illegal copies, and even their destruction. Obviously, you could also claim compensation for damages.

REF. R. I. A.

I have been living in a flat for three months. I found the house through a real estate agency, which was responsible for drafting the contract and managing everything. Now the owner has contacted me and told me that from now on he wants me to pay him the rent in cash, and does not want to accept payment by transfer. Can he oblige me to do that?

According to the Law of Urban Leases, the payment of the rent must be made in the place and by the system agreed in the contract, and if nothing is established, it must be done in cash. If payment by transfer was agreed, you can refuse to pay in cash, but if nothing was specified, the owner can demand payment in cash and go to the house for collection. However, in this case the landlord is obliged to give you a receipt acknowledging that you have made the payment.

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PET CARE

PETER HARRISON

Meaning no harm

As a reader of this column you are almost certainly an animal lover. You abhor any form of cruelty and would like to see it stamped out. However, not all cruelty is intentional and there is much all of us can do.

What is most frustrating is when you feel you want to act but are powerless. Foremost in my mind is the time we were in Aswan, Egypt. We saw a baby crocodile for sale in a market. The vendor was a boy aged about eight and the crocodile had its jaws tightly closed with a rubber band was restrained with string. Our first instinct was to buy the unfortunate creature and release him in the nearby Nile but this is a serious offence as Egypt had spent years in ridding the Nile of crocodiles. The lad also depended on selling these animals for his livelihood. We were resigned to accept there was nothing we could do. The memory still lingers.

In Naples there was a different situation. I was making a television documentary on slum conditions and chose to live for four days in one of those poverty-stricken homes. The family were kind and generous people. They had a donkey for work, a dog for protection

and birds in cages which were sold at the roadside to passing tourists. But the saddle was too small and rubbed the back of the donkey sore, the dog was inflicted with ticks and the birds lived in tiny cages.

I purchased a used saddle plus a blanket from the local market and showed the family how to fit it, telling them the donkey would live longer and serve them better. I taught the family how to remove the ticks from the dog and how to make bigger cages so the birds would fetch a higher price.

In this case, here was a kind family with every good intention, but lacking in information. Nowadays, we still come across examples where lack of knowledge causes animals distress. An example I see regularly is the underestimation of the cost of keeping animals, especially horses. Dogs and cats need not only food but vaccinations and vets when ill, plus kennelling when you are away.

All these costs often put a strain on the household budget and deprivation makes for unhappy animals. Especially at Christmas, if you know of someone intending to buy an animal as a gift, share your knowledge with them. Why should the animals suffer?

VALORA VIEW, THE SMART APP THAT HELPS YOU FIND YOUR IDEAL HOME

This innovative mobile app by BBVA uses augmented reality to ease the house-hunting process, making it a comfortable, simple and natural one

House hunting, whether for a home to buy or to rent, has traditionally always been a tricky task. Hours of fruitless searches through multiple sources to find a property for which, in many cases, you can't even pinpoint the location. Up until now, that is.

Thanks to BBVA all we have to do now to find our ideal home is to take a walk through the neighbourhood we're interested in, point our mobile phone at a building and find out everything we need to know in a visual, comfortable and very simple way. Average land price, number of properties available and, if any are of our interest, we can view all the details and images on our smartphone straight away.

All of this, and much more, is what Valora View, an innovative mobile app that allows us to use augmented reality to search for property to buy or rent, has to offer us.

With this free new service, available both for BBVA clients and for those who are not clients of the bank, BBVA launches a tool which uses 'big data' to provide users with recommended rental and purchase prices for particular properties.

All in a stress-free, natural way while we walk through the streets where we wish to set up our new home, assisted by the efficiency of the new technologies.

Because when you choose a home it's very important to know the neighbourhood it's located in. The shops, the parks, the neighbours... and with Valora View you can explore the area you'd like to live in to discover everything it has to offer.

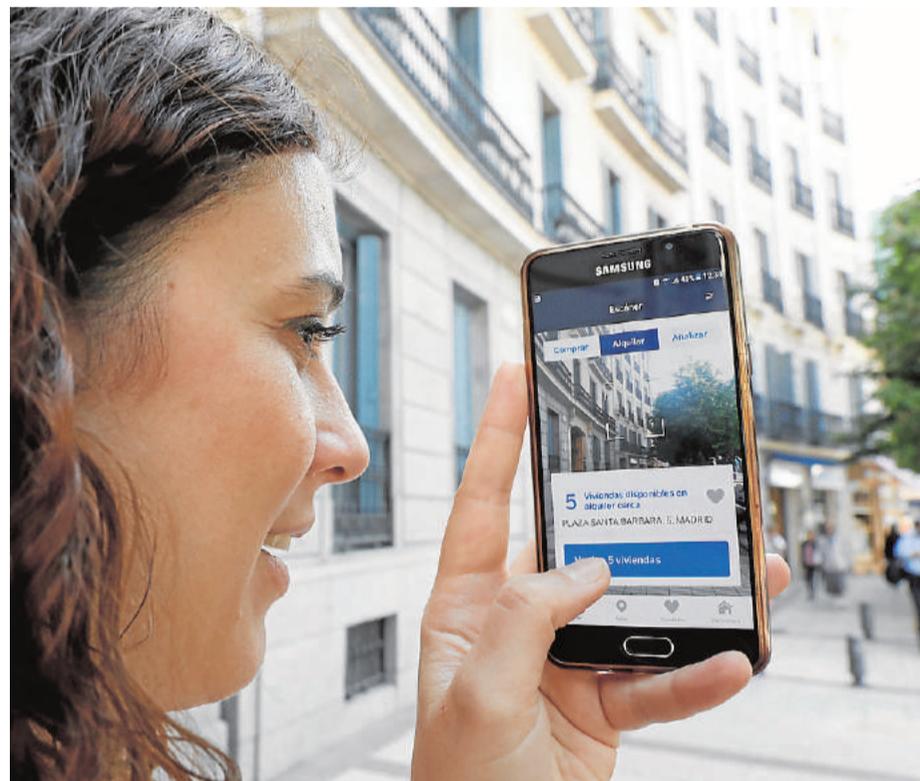
The tool also allows users to mark properties as favourites or highlight their preferred characteristics for each one. Close to schools, good price, for renovating, orientation... notes that can be helpful later on which it comes to making a decision.

MUCH MORE THAN JUST A REAL ESTATE APP

The advantages and facilities provided by Valora View don't end after finding the right property either.

This efficient digital tool helps us obtain an estimation of the purchase or rental price, and advises us on what a good negotiated price would be.

It also determines whether the user would be better off buying or renting, allows them to draw up a mortgage simulation and even allows them to apply for a mortgage in just one click. This means the user has access to a huge amount of great quality information regarding even-



A pioneering app. This tool is the first on the Spanish market to use the new technologies to offer users an integral house-hunting experience.

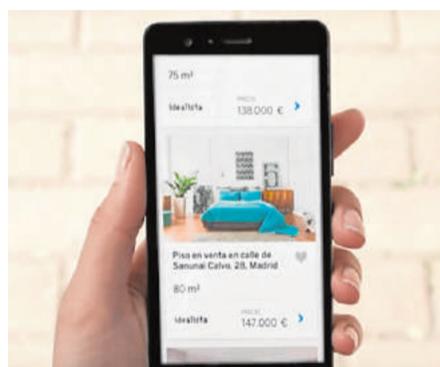
This app has been a pioneer in the Spanish market and is available for BBVA clients and also for those who are not clients of the bank

rything relating to their new home.

A GREAT WELCOME

Since it was launched at the end of May, the 'app' has been downloaded more than 100,000 times and used to carry out more than 275,000 searches, which has also led to an increase in activity for BBVA Valora, the benchmark house hunting application in this country.

On the Spanish market, the number of searches has surpassed 3 million since it was launched almost two years ago, with a monthly average of 150,000. Three out of every four searches carried out over the last month, by BBVA clients and by those who are not clients of the bank, were done on mobile devices. This figure is even higher when it comes



to mortgage simulations, as 93% of the total were done on a 'smartphone'.

The tool allows each user to create a simulation of what their mortgage would be like. Since Valora was launched, 900,000 simulations have been created.

This application has been a pioneer on the Spanish market, as it was the first tool to use the new technologies to come up with recommended purchase or rental prices. The tool has grown over time and in recent months has incorporated an option to calculate the value of the property purchased as well as working out the associated expenses: elec-

Valora View has been downloaded more than 100,000 times since its launch at the end of May and has been used to carry out more than 275,000 searches

tricity, water, community fees, etc. If necessary, an estimate of how much a renovation would cost can also be viewed.

A GOOD MOMENT FOR THE REAL ESTATE MARKET

Figures don't lie, the Spanish (and more particularly the Andalusian) market is experiencing a moment of prosperity. The region closed 2017 with 96,497 home sales, 15.6% more than the year before.

Moreover, three of every ten of these properties were in Málaga, which was one of the busiest provinces along with Seville.

In general, from 2013 to the end of 2017, sales in Andalusia have grown 64.2%, a percentage that while slightly lower than the average for the whole of Spain certainly reveals some fantastic figures that have been maintained this year, as in the first quarter more than 26,100 homes were sold, an increase of 5.7% compared to the same quarter in 2017.

Properties purchased as second homes by residents of other provinces accounted for 15.8% while those sold to foreigners represent 16.6% of the total. This segment of buyers has greater weight in Málaga, where it accounts for 33.5% of transactions.

The majority of Andalusians who buy a second home do so in other provinces of Andalusia. Málaga is the favourite province for buyers from Cadiz (42%), Córdoba (53.5%), Jaen (31.6%) and Granada (38.2%), while those from Seville choose Cádiz, those from Málaga choose Granada and those from Huelva choose Seville.

When it comes to property prices, in the first quarter of the year registered and increase of 1.4%.

Finally, according to forecasts the weight of the national demand on the Andalusian real estate market will be slightly higher than the overall average. According to BBVA Research, in 2019 Andalusia will register a growth just two decimal points under the national average.

Rest in freeze

A company in Valencia is a pioneer in Europe by offering cryopreservation services. It says it already has two clients

:: SUSANA ZAMORA

Walt Disney, who had lung cancer, dreamed of prolonging his existence beyond death and asked his loved ones to freeze his body after he died (he died in 1966). He wanted to be the first person to be cryopreserved, believing that one day, when medical advances made it possible, doctors could wake him up and he could go back to how he used to be. At that time many people believed in that utopia. Nowadays some still think Disney is being kept at minus 196 degrees in an aluminium capsule, waiting for science to give him back his life, but in fact it never happened. His family considered it to be an infantile fantasy, and had him cremated. So, Walt wasn't a pioneer in cryotherapy after all.

That position is actually held by



Cryotherapy is new to Spain and Europe, but not to the USA or Russia. :: R. C.

James Bedford, who died on 12 January 1967. Minutes before breathing his last breath, this psychology professor placed himself in the hands of the recently constituted Cryonics So-

ciety of California, persuaded that a scientific advance would bring him back into this world again. Fifty-one years later, the miracle has not happened... "yet", say those who

have blind faith in a technique, as experimental as it is controversial, which "will be totally viable within a few years".

One of these is Albert Estrada, the

medical director of Cecryon, a company in Valencia which will be the first in Europe to offer a corpse cryopreservation service. "We have sufficient arguments to think that cryopreserved people will be recuperated one day," he says. The main one is scientific and technological evolution. In the case of cryopreservation, the difficulties lie in technical problems derived from the large size of an adult human body. About 30 years ago they started to cryopreserve bull sperm, then ovules and embryos, and today they can vitrify and then recover a sheep's ovary or rabbit's kidney with biological viability. Next it will be a whole rabbit, then a cat, a pig and finally a human. "We will recover the patients when the medical techniques exist to bring them back to life in full health," says Estrada.

A money-making exercise

They don't see it like that at the Observatory of Bioethics and Law at the University of Barcelona. On the contrary, they consider this to be just another money-making exercise which generates false expectations because "there is no scientific, legal or ethical guarantee" to sustain it.

Obtaining a 'passport' for a hypothetical second life isn't cheap. The client has to pay 200,000 euros while they are alive, and the success of the procedure, say those who have introduced it in Spain, will depend on the speed with which it is carried out after death.

"Once declared clinically dead, the individual's tissues start to be damaged through the effect of hypoxia," explains Estrada, who is a specialist in clinical biochemistry. "When the heart stops beating, oxygen doesn't reach the organs and the brain is more

CRYOPRESERVATION

A complicated technique

Cryopreservation consists of lowering the temperature of the human body to minus 130 degrees, extracting the blood and substituting it with a cryogenic liquid, a type of antifreeze, to

preserve it. Then, it is placed in a capsule with liquid nitrogen. The idea is to keep it there until medicine has found a cure for the illness which caused the death.

"The objective is for the person to come back to life in a perfect state of health," says Albert Estrada, of Cecryon.

Three centres in the world

Only three organisations in the world offer this service: the Cryonics Institute (CI), in Michigan, USA; Alcor, in the branch of CI in Arizona, and KrioRus in Russia. At present about 400 people have been cryopreserved (350 in the USA and the rest in Russia).

200,000

euros, plus IVA, is the amount the Cecryon company charges anybody who wants to undergo a cryopreservation service after their death. Payment, obviously, is required in advance.

Is it legal in Spain?

Article 6 of Decreto 2263/1974, dated 20 July, says the final destination for any corpse has to be burial in an authorised site, cremation or immersion at sea. Spanish legislation does not include any specific regulations about cryopreservation.

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A LOOK BACK

James Bedford, the first to be cryopreserved

On 12 January 2018 it was 51 years since James Bedford, an American professor of Psychology at the University of California, died at the age of 73 from kidney cancer. He was the first person to be encapsulated, waiting for sufficient medical advances to beat death. They put him in ice and kept him connected to an artificial respiration machine. Then they injected him with dimethyl sulfoxide, a liquid which had begun to be used as a cryopreservative, and froze him with dry ice before submerging him in liquid nitrogen. He is still kept at the Alcor Life Extension Foundation.



"These days scientists vitrify and recover small worms who have previously been trained to look for food in a particular place and after passing through the process they still remember what they had learned. We also know of people whose hearts have stopped for more than two hours and had no brain activity, whose memories and personality remained intact after they recover."

The Spanish Bioethics Society doesn't believe the example of the worm can be extrapolated to a human being, "when we have 200 different types of cells and millions of them in our bodies," insists Francisco José Ramiro. "What is really complicated is that those cells don't die during the freezing, and at present there is no experimental evidence about the freezing and unfreezing processes. From a medical point of view, this can't be taken seriously, and from the ethical angle, it is playing on people's wishes for survival".

Cryopreservation itself is not new. About 350 people in the USA have been cryopreserved, and about 500 in Russia. Estrada is convinced that his business will be successful, "because we are the only viable alternative once current medical technology can do nothing more for the patient," he says.

A family passion

Albert grew up in this field because his father, Luis Estrada, is the president of the Spanish Cryonics Society. He is aware of misgivings in the medical profession. "I don't want to convert anyone or sell the product to anybody; anyone who wants to die can die," he says.

Spanish legislation does not include any specific rules regarding cryogenisation with a view to bringing people back to life when the illness which caused their death can be cured. A decree from 1974 says there are three options when somebody dies: burial in an authorised site, cremation or immersion out at sea.

However, Albert Estrada says regional rules in Valencia recognise that a body can be preserved. "We are licensed as a crematorium and the authorities only ask us to have an oven available for sanitary purposes. We will never use it, but they think

it is needed in case a corpse putrefies and has to be incinerated," he says. Ribarroja del Turia town hall, however, says the company is only licensed for cremation.

"If they want to provide a cryopreservation service, they'll have to apply to the Health Ministry for an expanded licence. With that documentation, we will ask the regional government what technical requirements the project will have to fulfil in order for us to grant them the permit. At the moment, though, they don't have that permission," insists the mayor, Roberto Raga.



James Bedford's body was cryopreserved. ■ R. C.

sensitive to this deficit. It is crucial to keep the blood flowing, lower the body temperature with water and ice and inject heparin to stop the formation of clots which obstruct the vascular tree and later stop us administering cryoprotective substances". This is a type of anticoagulant designed to stop crystals forming.

The procedure has to be carried out extremely slowly in order to avoid fractures; it can take up to five days. Cecryon plans to carry it out at a specially prepared 1,500-square-metre facility at the private Parque San Jaime de Ribarroja crematorium, in Valencia. The company has invested more than one million euros in it and says two clients already have their cryocapsules prepared. There they will remain 'sine die' in liquid nitrogen, in the hope of coming back to life one day. If that were to happen, what condition would they be in when they returned to the world? Would they remember their previous life?

Estrada has no doubts. "They will retain all their memory," he insists.

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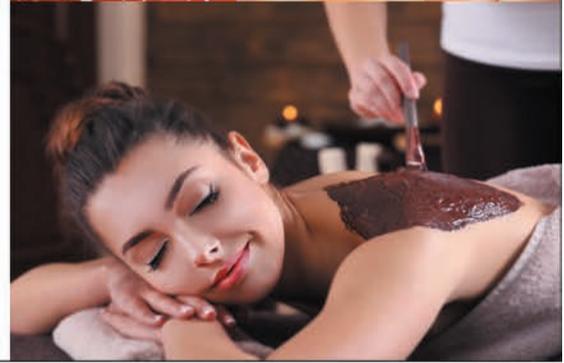
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Malaga hospital hosts an exhibition of photos used for a cancer charity calendar

The display, titled 'The art of living', can be viewed in the entrance to the consulting room area in the patio of B tower at the Clínico hospital

A. E.
MALAGA. The Clínico Universitario hospital in Malaga city is currently holding an exhibition of the photographs which have been used for the Spanish Association against Cancer (AECC) 2019 calendar, called 'El arte de vivir' (The art of living).

The display can be viewed in the entrance to the consulting room area off the patio in the hospital's B tower. There are also information desks about the association and the calendars which feature these photographs can be purcha-



Volunteers, AECC members and staff at the hospital, at the exhibition. :: SUR

sed there as well.

To mark this initiative, volunteers and representatives of the AECC were recently invited to visit the biomedical research laboratory at the hospital, which is part of the Malaga Institute of Biomedical Research (Ibima). Those who took part in the guided tour of all the translational research departments included the manager of the AECC in Malaga, Pedro González, and some of the volunteers and nurses from different departments in the Clínico hospital.

The photographs

This is the 14th year in which the photos from the annual calendar have been put on display at the hospital. This year 60 patients were featured in the 12 photos, most of whom are volunteers with AECC, and the aim was to reflect the positivity and determination of people who are affected by cancer to overcome their illness.

Each of the photos was inspired by classic works from famous creators, but they were given a personal and individual touch by the photographers, who provided their services free of charge.



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Luis Brito with his doctors. :: SUR

World kitesurfing champion Luis Brito chooses the Hospital Ochoa for a knee operation

:: SUR

MARBELLA. This week the world kitesurfing champion, Luis Brito, underwent knee surgery at the Hospital Ochoa in Marbella. The Italian sportsman suffered a serious injury at the end of June while competing in Tarifa.

"I ended up breaking my left knee; my right ankle had been hurting and because I was afraid to use it very much I did too much with my left and then felt my knee break," he explains.

The kitesurfing champion decided to place himself in the hands

of traumatologist Rafael Corrales, and it was he, with Eric Margalet, who carried out the operation.

"I have every confidence in Rafa and I came to Marbella so he could do a resonance scan," says Luis. "He recommended doing the operation in two stages."

About three weeks after the injury occurred, doctors at the Margalet Institute performed initial surgery on the meniscus and lateral ligament, and this week the surgeons used an innovative biological therapy to reconstruct the rear cruciate ligament.

Quirón expands its presence in Marbella with a new 1,000m2 medical facility

:: H. BARBOTTA

MARBELLA. The Quirónsalud hospital group has opened a new centre in Marbella as part of its plans to expand and improve its facilities.

The new centre, which was inaugurated this week, is 1,000 square metres in size, on two floors, and has specialist consulting rooms and diagnostic testing areas. It can be directly accessed from Avenida Severo Ochoa, beside the Quirónsalud Marbella hospital.

This latest generation medical centre has 13 consulting rooms, facilities for functional tests and offers a complete range of medical-surgical services. It even has a new Traffic Unit, with a gymnasium and 63 square metre rehabilitation area, its own consulting room and a waiting room.

The new centre was opened by Pilar Serrano, regional manager of Quirónsalud in Andalucía, and Tomás Urda, managing director of Quirónsalud Marbella. It is the fifth Quirónsalud centre in Marbella and the ninth in Malaga province.

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QUALITY This advanced physiotherapy centre works with the latest technology and equipment in the sector to offer patients and integral service of the highest quality

ANDRO FISIOTERAPIA, AT THE FOREFRONT OF HEALTH IN ESTEPONA

ESTEPONA

Although people tend to go to a physiotherapist following an injury or affliction, apart from just providing remedial treatment these professionals also help patients to recover, maintain and take care of their health. That's the philosophy at Andro Fisioterapia, an advanced centre that works from the base of a personalised and individualised recovery methodology to avoid future injuries and guarantee users' wellbeing.

As Andro Navarro, physiotherapist and clinic manager, explains: "As well as the clinical treatments for pain, inflammation and mobility, we employ therapeutic and/or guided individual or group functional exercise to normalise the injury and leave the patient even better than before they were injured."

In doing so, this clinic's main



Images of the centre and the staff at Andro Fisioterapia.:: AF



goal is to improve its patients' quality of life with the greatest possible efficiency. To achieve this, Andro Fisioterapia applies the latest therapeutic techniques

that have proven effective in injury recovery, from eco-guided invasive physiotherapy to focal vibes or hyperthermia equipment such as Indiba, among others.



The centre, with more than 400 metres of facilities, has different care units including, among others, pelvic floor, functional recovery, aesthetics or traffic accidents, a free service for victims who are up-to-date with their insurance payments.

It's hardly surprising, therefore, that in little more than a year and a half Andro Fisioterapia has become the benchmark centre for health in Estepona.

ANDRO Fisioterapia avanzada

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A lack of sunshine, smoking and pollution are all factors involved in multiple sclerosis



ÁNGEL ESCALERA

✉ aescalera@diariosur.es

The number of cases of this chronic, auto-immune and neurodegenerative illness has doubled in Spain in the past 20 years

MALAGA. Genetics are often related to the appearance of multiple sclerosis, but scientists have discovered that environmental factors also have a lot to do with more than half of cases of this chronic, auto-immune, inflammatory, demyelinating and neurodegenerative illness.

For example, a lack of vitamin D (through low exposure to sunlight), smoking, pollution and a diet with

too much fat increase the risk of suffering from multiple sclerosis, an illness whose incidence has doubled in Malaga province (and the rest of Spain) in the past 20 years, says neurologist Óscar Fernández, one of the most renowned Spanish experts in the condition.

At present about 1,200 people in Malaga province suffer from multiple sclerosis. Twenty years ago, the number was around 600.

In an interview to mark National Multiple Sclerosis Day, Dr Fernández explained that people should be in the sunshine for between ten and 15 minutes every day, and he referred to a study carried out in Malaga, Tenerife and Madrid which showed that many people are low in vitamin D because they don't get enough sun. Another risk factor involved in multiple sclerosis is smoking. Pollution also has an effect on this and other auto-immune illnesses. In terms of dietary recommendations, Óscar Fernández says the Mediterranean diet is best. "It is good to



Archive photo of a patient having a CAT scan. :: SUR



Óscar Fernández. :: SUR

eat fish, pulses, vegetables and fruits," he advises.

In Andalucía there are currently about 8,000 patients, out of a total of 47,000 in Spain. Two out of every

three people with multiple sclerosis are women.

The increase in sclerosis cases, in addition to environmental factors, is related to the creation of specialist units to attend to patients and greater knowledge about the illness; this means more people are being diagnosed and there are more effective treatments.

Every year 1,800 new cases are diagnosed in Spain, of whom about 70 per cent are people aged between 20 and 40. These days multiple sclerosis is the second cause of disability among young Spanish people, after

traffic accidents.

The president of the Malaga Multiple Sclerosis Association, Baltasar del Moral, says that this year the association is calling for every patient to be recognised as having at least 33 per cent disability.

It also wants people with this illness to be entitled to rehabilitation and physiotherapy treatments on the Andalusian public health service.

However, there is at least some good news: research into multiple sclerosis is making good progress, and this will benefit those who suffer from it.

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Merry Christmas!

Best wishes... And the best diagnosis.

EXHIBITIONS



Sonya Radan, Benezra Gallery

Alpino Club

San Pedro de Alcántara. Until 4 January. Centro Cultural San Pedro, Plaza de la Libertad. Fifty photos showing the 35-year history of the club including some of the expedition up the Himalayas.

Benezra Gallery

Marbella. Until 8 January. Avda Tomás Pascual, Urb La Quinta Golf. Yugoslavian artist Sonya Radan is exhibiting some of her work at the gallery.

Giovanni Ozzola

Ronda. Until 25 January. Museo Unicaja Joaquín Peinado. Italian artist Giovanni Ozzola is exhibiting some of his works. They include different formats such as video, photography and sculpture.

Yusto Giner

Marbella. Until 30 December. Galería Yusto Giner, C/Madera. An exhibition by artist Eduardo Balanza entitled Remix.

Movimiento Espartaco

Marbella. Until 18 April 2020. Museo Ralli Marbella. For the first time in Spain, an exhibition of works by the Argentinian collective of the 60s who expressed the political and social problems of the country through their art.

Diego Santos

Malaga. Until 27 December. Ignacio del Río studio. C/San Lorenzo. Malaga artist Diego Santos is holding an exhibition of his works all with the theme of the female form. Opening times are from Monday to Friday 5-8pm. Other times by appointment (tel: 667057356)



Fashion, Malaga.

Fashion exhibition

Malaga. Until 8 January. Museo Automovilístico y de la Moda. Beautiful dresses and hats, each

one a work of art, from the 40s and 50s when the aristocrats and famous had their clothes made by top designers in luxurious silks and decorated with diamantes, crystals, feathers and precious stones.

Pepe España

Malaga. Until 30 January. Museo Jorge Rando. A collective exhibition of forgotten Malaga artists starting with José Luis Jiménez España, known as Pepe España.

Picasso's Aquatints

Malaga. Until 3 February. Picasso Museo Casa Natal. Similar to the process for making etchings, Picasso made aquatints with acid on metal plaques. He then printed off his image.

San Telmo Escuela de Arte

Malaga. Until 31 January. Sala Mo-

reno Villa, C/Merced. Students at the San Telmo school will be exhibiting their work covering a broad selection of subject matter and styles.

Un experimento

Malaga. Until 4 January. University of Malaga Rectory. Open Monday - Saturday 10am-2pm, 5pm-9pm. Works from the artist Francisco Ferrer Lerín.

Nativity Scene

Malaga. Until 5 January, Sala Mingorance, Archivo Municipal, Alameda Principal 23. A hand-crafted 'Belen' has been set up in one of the Salas Mingorance of the Archivo Municipal. It has been made by José María Mesa a teacher from the Canary Islands.

Galería JM



San Telmo, Malaga

Malaga.

Until 11 January. Duquesa de Parcent 12. Los Sueños de Dante is the name of the new exhibition at the galeria being inaugurated on 1 December at 12.30pm. It is a display of works by Daniel Cuberta, Federico Guzmán, Judith Samen, José Luis Valverde and Santiago Ydañez. More info: galeria@galeriajm.com

Más Arte

Malaga. Until 11 January 2019. Restaurante Castaño Oscuro, next to El Corte Inglés. Sixteen artists with distinctive styles and using various media will be exhibiting their works entitled 'GastroArte' inside the restaurant. The exhibition has been organised by the Más Arte group.

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EXHIBITIONS

Pianos of Malaga

Malaga. Until 13 January 2019. *El Museo del Patrimonio Municipal.* An exhibition exploring the creation and playing of the piano.

College of Architects

Malaga. Until 20 January. *Sala La Concha, Museo de Patrimonio Municipal.* Around 70 works selected from the contemporary art held at the Malaga College of Architects.

La Infancia

Malaga. Until 27 January. *Museo Félix Revello de Toro* Eleven oil paintings completed between 1973 and 2016 by Félix Revello de Toro all featuring children. The exhibition coincides with the eighth anniversary of the opening of the museum.



Clot-nection, Frigiliana

Referencias Andaluzas

Malaga. Until 3 February. *Museo Picasso Malaga.* A collection of works demonstrating the influence of Mediterranean culture on Picasso's art.

Inflatable art

Malaga. Until 10 February, 9.30am - 8pm. *Centro Pompidou.* An exhibition 'Constuir el aire. Arquitectura y diseño hinchable, 1960-1975' is based on inflatable furniture and other objects that were designed in the period between 1960 and 1975.

Malaga Cathedral

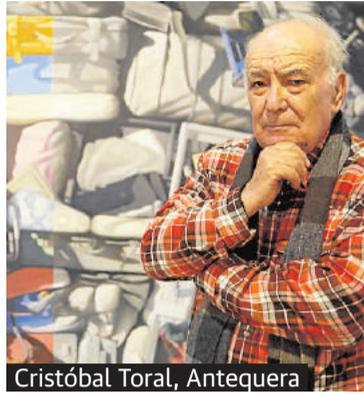
Malaga. Until 28 February, 10am - 6pm. 'Unfinished Symphony' is the title of the exhibition at Malaga Cathedral. It demonstrates the development process of the cathedral which has been in construction through several periods of history from the Renaissance, from 1527 to 1588; and the Baroque, from 1721 until 1782. This architectural treasure is yet to be completed.

José María Báez

Malaga. Until 10 March. *Centro de Arte Contemporáneo.* Around 150 works by artist José María Báez (Jerez de la Frontera, Cádiz, 1949), are on display.

Dionisio González

Malaga. Until 17 March, *Centro de Arte Contemporáneo.* Parresia y Lugar is the latest exhibition at the CAC in Malaga. It



Cristóbal Toral, Antequera

is the most important solo exhibition by Dionisio González in Spain in recent years. Around a hundred works are on display, among them photographs, videos, holographic prisms and scale models.

Cristóbal Toral

Antequera. Until 26 April. *Museo de la Ciudad de Antequera.* Internationally famous, local artist Cristóbal Toral returns to his roots with a magnificent exhibition of over fifty of his large format works. The paintings were created over the last forty years and there is also a display he has made comprising 500 suitcases and holdalls.

Pilar Peña

Mijas. Until 7 January. *Casa Museo de Mijas.* An exhibition of paintings by local artist Pilar Peña.

Mau Pavón

La Cala de Mijas. Until 28 January.

Centro Cultural.

Mauricio Pavón uses a bright pallet of colours for his 'experimental' works.

Galería Krabbe

Frigiliana. Until 8 January. *C/Rosarico.* The Christmas exhibition at the Galería Krabbe consists of Dorthe Krabbe's recent ceramic sculptures accompanied by lithographs by Danish artist Lars Nørgård. It includes the world's largest colour lithograph (200x280cm), created in collaboration with Christian Bramsen at Atelier Clot, Bramsen and Brunholt, in Paris. Email: gale-riakrabbe@gmail.com

'Buly' exhibition

Vélez-Málaga. Until 10 February. *Centro de Arte Contemporáneo.* Huelva artist Aurelio Díaz Trillo, known as 'Buly', is exhibiting nine of his works which include drawings, paintings and sculptures.

Impressionism & photography

Algeciras. Until 28 December. *Galería UFCA.* Exhibition by Manuela Quirós, from Algeciras, a photographer who alongside her digital images has a series of paintings that complement her photography.

Collective exhibition

Almuñécar. Until 6 January. *C/Vélez 2.* Art work by Beatriz Peñalver, Anabel Keatley, Gym Halama, Carlos

Márquez, Javier Domenech.

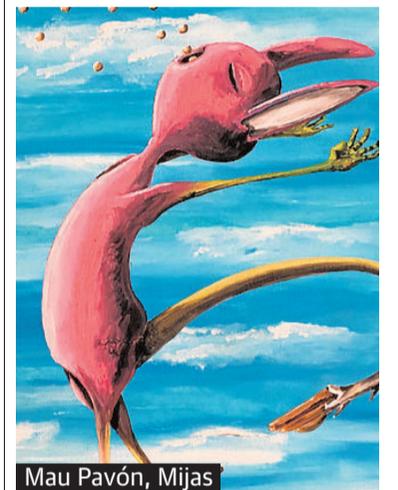
Nativity scene

Torremolinos. Until 6 January. *Lower floor of the town hall.* The town hall Nativity Scene is open for visitors 9am-1.30pm and 5.30-7.30pm week days and 10am-2pm, 5.30-7.30pm Saturdays and Sundays.

CHARITY

Masquerade Ball for Cudeca

Mijas. 21 December, 7.30pm. *Restaurante Valparaíso.* 30€. Entertainment by Simone and Mr Maph. Masks on sale or bring your own. A full menu with welcome drinks and canapes on arrival. Reservations: restaurant Valparaíso 952485996 or call Suzy: 619444184.



Mau Pavón, Mijas



MOVIE LISTING

From Friday 21st to Thursday 27th December
ORIGINAL VERSION SUBTITLED SPANISH



MARY POPPINS RETURNS

Director Rob Marshall
Starring Emily Blunt, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Ben Whishaw
ANIMATION · 130 min.
Language: English



Friday 21: 18:00, 20:15
Saturday 22: 15:40, 18:05, 20:15
Sunday 23: 11:30, 15:40, 18:05, 20:15
Monday 24: 15:30, 17:50
Tuesday 25: 18:00, 20:15
Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27: 15:40, 18:05, 20:15



SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE

Director Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey
Voices Shameik Moore, Jake Johnson, Hailee Steinfeld
ANIMATION · 117 min.
Language: English



Friday 21: 18:00
Saturday 22 and Sunday 23: 15:45, 18:00
Monday 24: 15:30 · Tuesday 25: 18:00
Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27: 15:45, 18:00



AQUAMAN

Director James Wan
Starring Jason Momoa, Amber Heard, Willem Dafoe
ACTION · 143 min.
Language: English



Friday 21: 17:40, 20:05, 22:45
Saturday 22 and Sunday 23: 15:40, 17:40, 20:05, 22:45
Monday 24: 15:30, 17:30
Tuesday 25: 18:00, 20:05, 22:45
Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27: 15:40, 17:40, 20:05, 22:45



RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET

Director Phil Johnston and Rich Moore
Voices John C. Reilly, Sarah Silverman, Gal Gadot
ANIMATION · 112 min.
Language: English

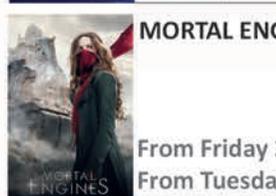


Friday 21: 18:00
Saturday 22: 15:50, 18:00
Sunday 23: 11:30, 15:50
Monday 24: 15:30
Tuesday 25: 18:00
Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27: 15:50, 18:00



THE GRINCH

Friday 21: 18:15
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Sunday 23: 11:45, 15:45
Monday 24: 15:30 · Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27: 15:45



MORTAL ENGINES

From Friday 21 to Sunday 23: 22:45
From Tuesday 25 to Thursday 27: 22:45





One thousand lights for Cudeca

Malaga. 27 December, 7-9pm. Plaza de la Merced. Join Cudeca in lighting a candle in memory of loved ones who are suffering, or have suffered with cancer. There will also be a tree to which special messages of hope and sympathy can be attached.

Charity run

Torremolinos. 31 December, 10.30am Plaza Blas Infante. The annual San Silvestre Solidaria de Torremolinos run (4km) will set off from the Plaza Blas Infante. Registration is online: <https://pmdt.torremolinos.es/iv-san-silvestre-de-torremolinos/> Fancy dress encouraged with prizes for best.

MUSIC & DANCE

The Wall Bar

Malaga. Hotel Vincci Posada del Patio, 11pm, entry free. 22 December. Irissoboe. Oboe and acoustic guitar play adapted jazz, soul, rock and pop music. 29 December. Baker Street. Javier Palomo and Pepe Triano play jazz hits. Vocals, guitar and cello.

Dr No in concert

Nerja. 21 December, 9pm. Centro Cultural Villa de Nerja. 12€. Dr No will play hits by bands such as The Beatles and the Rolling Stones as well as Bob Marley, Sam Cooke and Amy Winehouse.

The Rat Pack live

Marbella. 22 December, 9pm. Döss restaurant, Artola Alta, Cabo Pino. The Rat Pack will be performing all the best known tracks by the original Rat Pack (Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis jnr.) Tickets direct from the restaurant call: 952 000 772 or www.dossmarbella.com

Joe Cocker tribute

Malaga. 22 December, 10pm. La Cochera Cabaret. 10€. The Mad Dogs tribute band will be playing some of Joe Cocker's greatest hits such as Youa Are So Beautiful, Watching The River Flow, When The Night Comes etc.

Spiders From Marbs

Coín. 22 December, 9pm. El Cruce restaurant. 5€. The Bowie tribute band Spiders From Marbs, will be performing some of David Bowie's greatest

hits.

Christmas Karaoke

Mijas. 22 December, 7.30pm. Hotel Tamisa Golf. DJ Lee Jay will be hosting the karaoke mike. Tickets 25€ per person which includes mulled wine, two-course dinner and half a bottle of wine per person. Also for 100€ per couple for a twin room. Booking essential: call 722 336 978 or email reservas@hoteltamisagolf.com

Baroque orchestra

Malaga. 22 December, 8pm. Auditorio Edgar Neville. The Joven Orquesta Barroca de Andalucía (JOBA) under the baton of Hiro Kurosaki, will play pieces by Torelli, Corelli, Facco, Mafredini and Pex.

Choir and orchestra

Malaga 22 December, 8pm. Sala María Cristina. The Orquesta Promúsica de Málaga with the Santa María de la Victoria choir and violin soloists David Barea and Ángel Triguero will be in concert. The conductor will be Javier Claudio.

Joven Orquesta Mediterránea

Almuñécar. 2 January, 7pm. Casa de la Cultura. The orchestra will be playing pieces by Sibelius, Shostakovich, Strauss and Lehar. Conducted by Michael Thomas.

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra

Malaga. Teatro Cervantes 21 December, 8.30pm. Rachmaninov's concerto for piano and orchestra in C minor with pianist Kun-Woo Paik. Followed by Spanish carols with the Cármina Nova choir to end the programme for this year. 3 January, 8pm, A special New Year's concert by the OFM conducted by Georg Mark. The orchestra will play pieces by J Strauss, C. M. Ziehrer and R. Heuberger.

Concerts at the Jorge Rando Museum

Malaga. 28 December, 7pm. The Santa Cecilia choir will be singing traditional Spanish Christmas carols.

Malaga centre concerts

Malaga. Until 28 December. Plaza de la Constitución. There will be 20 free concerts in the Plaza de la Constitución over the Christmas period with two concerts every day. Besides traditional flamenco and zambombas, there will be jazz, gospel, orchestras and choirs.

Teresa Karcher

Almuñécar. 29 December, 8pm. Casa de la Cultura. A concert by Teresa Karcher with songs by Lorca, Falla, Bizet and Mariño.

Gospel choir

Almuñécar. 29 December, 7pm. Casa de la Cultura. Rebeca Rods and the Black Light Gospel Choir will be performing.

New Year's Concert

Gibraltar. 3 January, 8.30pm. John Mackintosh Hall.

A concert with the European Sinfonietta conducted by James Ham. The main concert is preceded by one for children (free) at 5.30pm. Tickets for the children's concert can be collected from the City Hall and Mario Finlayson Art gallery. Tickets for the main concert are £20 from Sacarello's Coffee Shop, the Silver Shop or from the Society on 200 72134 or <http://www.buytickets.gi>

FLAMENCO

Flamenco Abierto

Vélez-Málaga. Peña Flamenca Niño de Vélez, C/Tejeda 10. 22 December. 2pm. Zambomba del Sur a Belen. 26 December. 8.30pm. Zambomba de Santiago Al Perchel. 27 December. 8.30pm. Zambomba Flamenca de Alejandro Estrada.

Casa Pestiño

Torremolinos. 21 December, 6pm. Plaza de la Nogalera. Free. Popular songs and Spanish carols at this Christmas special zambomba.

Zambomba

Malaga. 22 December, 8pm. Teatro Cervantes. Encarni Navarro will be singing in this special Christmas show.



EVENTS

Las Mañanitas

Algatocín. Until 22 December from 5am. The inhabitants of Algatocín go to a special mass (misa de aguinaldo) early in the morning and then walk through the streets of the village singing Spanish carols (villancicos).

Día de Jeva

Antequera. 25 December, in the morning. Spanish carols, mantecados and a religious procession make up the Día de Jeva which is celebrated in various hamlets around Antequera.

The Arts Society de la Frontera

San Roque. 21 December, 11am. San Roque Golf and Country Club. Visitors 12€ "Monet and his Gardens" An illustrated talk by Brian Healey delafrontera@theartsociety.org

Magic Show

Coín. 26 December, 6.30pm. Plaza de la Alameda.

A young group of magicians called Malabaramagos will be performing magic and some circus skills in the plaza.

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Anglican church Costa del Sol West

www.costachurch.com
San Pedro. 23 December, 6pm. Christingle.
Sotogrande. 24 December, 11.30pm. Midnight communion.
San Pedro. 25 December, 10am. A Christmas day service.
Sotogrande. 25 December, mid-day. A Christmas day service.

Nativity scenes in Malaga city

Malaga A route map to see these can be found on ChatBot Victoria la Malagueña which can be entered via Google.

Municipal nativity.

Malaga town hall, Avda de Cervantes 4. Until 6 January.
Hermanidad del Sepulcro. Calle Alcazabilla 5. Until 5 January.

Asoc. Belenista de Málaga La Alcazaba.

Salón de Trono, Calle Hileria 2. Until 6 January.
Napolitan style nativity. Museo Cofradía. Calle Hileria 2. Until 19 January.

Hermanidad de la Sagrada Cena.

C/Compañía 44. Until 5 January.
Asoc. Pro-Tradiciones Malagueñas La Coracha. Subida La Coracha, 1. Until 5 January.

Peña Casa de Melilla.

Pasaje de Be-goña, 3. Until 5 January.
Cofradía de Estudiantes, Asoc. Cultural Zegrí. C/Alcazabilla, 3. Until 5 January.

Peña Cortijo de Torre.

Avda Nehenias, local 18-19. Until 5 January.

Museo Carmen Thyssen. Archicofradía de los Dolores de San Juan.

Plaza de Carmen Thyssen. Until 13 January.

Junta Municipal Distrito Bailén Miraflores.

Salón de Actos del Centro de Recursos Ciudadanos. C/ Martínez Maldonado, 58. Until 5 January.

Avecija Ciudad Jardín.

C/Emilio Díaz, 18. Until 6 January.

Decojardín-Verdecora.

Avda Enrique Granados, 3. Until 5 January.

Belén de la Mosca.

Peña El Belén, C/Escritor Manuel Solano. Until 5 January.

Fiesta Mayor de Verdiales

Malaga. 28 December, from 11am. Puerto de la Torre.

One of the main events of Christmas is this folklore fiesta where competing bands play various styles of verdiales.

Christmas Songs

Nerja 23 December, 8pm. Centro Cultural Villa de Nerja. 10€. A Christmas concert based on Swing with favourite songs made famous by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Ella Fitzgerald.

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Eugenio Chicano displays 30 works he created in under ten months. :: SALVADOR SALAS

The exhibition is open until 2 February. :: SALVADOR SALAS

A journey through pain to recovery

The paintings of Malaga artist Eugenio Chicano show scenes that reflect the pain and suffering throughout the history of Andalucía

:: ANTONIO JAVIER LÓPEZ

MALAGA. Just a little over a year ago, Malaga artist Eugenio Chicano was clinging to life while gravely ill with double pneumonia. He survived and has been using art as therapy to help him to recover.

'Aguatintas por seguriyas' is a vibrant exhibition of the 30 works that he completed in just ten

months, each one a reference to a time in Andalusian history. Not only is the exhibition a visual experience, thanks to modern technology provided by the University of Malaga it is also possible to hear the sounds that helped inspire each piece.

On the journey to recovery, Chicano recognised the suffering of the 'payos' (country folk) and Gypsies, in the prisons, in the forges, in the fields. "These are feelings that are tremendously human, but that have left us an important legacy," explained the artist.

Chicano touches a deep fibre within everyone with his brave and assertive paintings which make no concessions.

The exhibition also helps to heal another wound, that which was caused when the Santo Ángel church decided to hide away two of the works that Chicano had done for them.

Chicano's companion and curator of the exhibition Mariluz Reguero said, "His serious illness drove him to paint flamenco, something he has been interested in for all the 30 years that I have known him. He has been fond of it since childhood, pure flamenco, from beginning to end. I think that sitting weakly at home, without his studio and the resources of his library and his photographs, he resorted to his memories, to images that he stored deeply in his brain.

DETAILS

► **What.** Exhibition entitled 'Aguatintas por seguriyas'.

► **When.** Until 2 February.

► **Where.** Palacio Episcopal, Plaza del Obispo, Malaga.

"The experience was so pure, so direct and true that he forgot the 'pop' style of his painting over the last 30 or 40 years and returned to poetic paintings. The exhibition has closed the circle of Chicano's artistic life.



Living nativity, Almayate

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Christmas bazaar

La Cala de Mijas. Until 5 January.

Plaza Super Sol.

Crafts and gastronomy, live music, activities for children. The 28, 29, 30 December there is an ice rink.

Father Christmas village

Torremolinos. 21-24 December.

Avda Palma de Mallorca.

Father Christmas will be in the village weekends 11.30am - 2pm and 5.30 - 9pm. Christmas eve morning only. From 26 until 31 December the Royal Postman will

be collecting letters.

Almayate living nativity

Vélez-Málaga. 29, 30 December,

from 6pm. Colegio Juan

Paniagua.

This living nativity is the biggest in Malaga province and takes place during the last days of every year.

Christmas market

Puerto Banús. Until 6 January.

Muelle de Ribera

Father Christmas will be at the market until 23 December and the Three Kings' pages will be there accepting letters 26 December

until 4 January.

Living nativity

Marbella. 23 December. Parque de la Alameda. 12.30 and 4.30pm.

A living nativity scene featuring more than 125 actors, dozens of animals and decoration.

O. V. FILM

SUR in English advises calling cinemas to check for any last minute time changes. Lunchtime and late night screenings weekends only.

Cinesur El Ingenio

Avda. Juan Carlos I, Vélez-Málaga.

Tel. 667 77 31 87.

Spider Man: Into The Spider-

Verse: 12.30 (Sat-Mon, Wed, Thu)

Mary Poppins Returns: 12.20

(Sat-Mon, Wed, Thu)

Aquaman: 11.55 (Sat-Mon, Wed, Thu)

Cinesur Miramar

Avda. de la Encarnación, Fuengirola.

Tel. 952 19 86 00.

Bohemian Rhapsody: 12.00.

Ralph Breaks The Internet:

12.10.

Mary Poppins Returns: 12.00,

16.30, 19.05, 21.40, 0.20.

The Grinch: 12.00, 15.55.

Spiderman: Into The Spider-

Verse: 12.15, 16.40.

Aquaman: 11.50, 16.20, 19.05,

21.50, 23.50

Opera: Don Giovanni: 11 Decem-

ber, 20.00

Bohemian Rhapsody Sing-a-

long: 27 December, 21.00

Cines Teatro Goya

For tickets and information call 951196665.

www.cinesteatrogoya.com

The Grinch: 11.45 (Sun); 15.30

(Mon); 15.45 (Sat, Sun, Wed,

Thurs); 18.00 (Tues); 18.15 (Fri).

Ralph Breaks The Internet:

11.30 (Sun); 15.30 (Mon); 15.50

(Sat, Sun, Wed, Thurs); 18.00

(every day except Sun, Mon).

Aquaman: 15.30, 17.30 (Mon); 15.40

(Wed, Thurs); 17.40 (Fri, Sat, Sun, Wed, Thurs); 18.00 (Tues); 20.05, 22.45 (every day except Mon).

Mary Poppins Returns: 11.30

(Sunday); 15.30 (Mon);

15.40, 18.05 (Sat, Sun, Wed,

Thurs); 18.00 (Tues); 20.15 (every

day except Mon).

Spider Man: Into The Spider-

Verse: 15.30 (Mon); 15.45 (Sat,

Sun, Wed, Thurs); 18.00 (every

day except Mon).

Mortal Engines: 22.45 (every day

except Mon).

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Jerez de la Frontera has a very special festive ambience thanks to its 'zambombas flamencas'. :: SUR

DISCOVER ANDALUCÍA

The music which enhances Christmas in Andalucía

**JAVIER
ALMELLONES**

Some very traditional folk events, such as the 'zambombas' and 'verdiales' are still a very popular feature of Christmas in many parts of the region



AMBIENCE. Traditional carols give Christmas a very special atmosphere in Andalucía.

JEREZ. This city in Cadiz is one of the homes of flamenco and its Christmas 'zambombas' are very traditional

MALAGA. The province is famous for two traditional and popular folk music events at this time of year.

WHEN. All over Christmas.

Sounds dating back centuries

Jerez de la Frontera is one of the cities with some unusual Christmas celebrations, including parties at which the famous traditional flamenco carols are played and sung

Where to eat

Mesón Alberto. Restaurant offering traditional cuisine, in the Puerto de la Torre district of Malaga city.
Calle Lope de Rueda, 250, 29190 Malaga. Telephone 636 898 256.

Where to stay

Tierras de Jerez. This three-star hotel in the city centre is ideal to enjoy the festive atmosphere and the zambombas at this time of year.
Calle Corredera, 58, 11402 Jerez de la Frontera (Cadiz) Telephone 956 346 400.

Christmas in Andalucía has a sound all of its own thanks to its deep-rooted musical traditions. At this time of year in all eight provinces you will hear carols played by different groups, ranging from 'pastorales' to flamenco choirs. These popular songs form a type of soundtrack to the festivities, particularly because so many people in Andalucía are keen to maintain their traditions.

In cities, towns and villages all over the region the Christmas ambience is enhanced by the sound of music, but in Cadiz province in particular Christmas would not be Christmas without the famous 'zambombas', especially in Jerez de la Frontera, one of the cities considered a home of flamenco.

The 'zambomba' is a very traditional percussion instrument which is always played at Christmas in this province in the southwest of the country, and in Jerez the same name is also given to parties where people gather to sing flamenco-style carols accompanied by its unusual rhythm. In this case, gastronomy also has an important role, in the form of traditional cakes and sweets and local wine. This unusual way of celebrating the festive season dates back to the times when people lived in apartments around communal patios, where they used to get together to sing and share food and drink.

Between now and Christmas Eve there will be numerous 'zambombas flamencas' in the different districts of Jerez city. In fact, by the time Three Kings Day on 6 January is over there will have been around 240 organised events of this type, as

well as impromptu and informal ones, making it clear that this musical tradition is far from falling into oblivion. Over this pre-Christmas weekend, there will be at least a dozen zambombas in Jerez, six of which will take place on Saturday around lunchtime.

Delightful though they are, the zambombas, which also take place in other parts of Cadiz province and in Seville, are not the only options to enjoy some Christmas music in Andalucía.

OTHER TRADITIONS

Cordoba province has its own traditions during the festive season, including a popular event which takes place in the village of Pozoblanco, where musicians known as 'campanilleros' sing and play carols which are little-known elsewhere in the country.

Malaga province also has some very long-established folk traditions of its own such as those known as 'pastorales' and, of course, the famous 'verdiales'.

This musical style, which is said to have been the origin of the fandango, is extremely popular with local people at Christmas, and there will be plenty of opportunity for residents and



Verdiales. :: SUR

the three styles which form the 'verdiales': Los Montes, Almogía and Comares.

In chronological order, though, we should first mention the event known as the Fiesta de Jeva, which takes place in the chapel of the same name, and is celebrated by the people of hamlets and outlying areas in the municipality of Antequera.

This has been declared a National Tourism Event, where people gather in the area by the chapel to pay tribute to the Virgin of Purification, and a painting of her is carried in procession. This is where the verdiales have an important role, because they play throughout the proceedings. It is traditional on this day to also enjoy Christmas treats like mantecados, accompanied by coffee and anís.

Three days later, on 28 December, the Puerto de la Torre district of Malaga city hosts one of the biggest events of Christmas, the Fiesta Mayor de Verdiales, which goes on practically all day.

Next Friday, about 26 'pandas' will be taking part, singing and playing the three styles of verdiales in a fun-filled and original atmosphere.

visitors alike to enjoy them this year.

Two of the biggest events of this type will be taking place on 25 and 28 December, when the folk music groups known as 'pandas', whose leaders are known as 'alcaldes' (or mayors), sing and play in

FURTHER ESCAPES

The Vía Verde de la Sierra

Between Olvera and Puerto Serrano

Cadiz and Seville provinces
At this time of year those who enjoy cycle tourism will love the Vía Verde de la Sierra, which runs through part of the provinces of Cadiz and Seville. The route, which passes through the countryside of the Sierras Béticas, is about 36 kilometres long in total, running along the foot of the most southerly mountains of the Iberian peninsula, between the Cadiz villages of Puerto Serrano and Olvera.

Another attraction of the Vía Verde de la Sierra is that it is close to nearly a dozen protected beauty spots, such as the Peñón de Zaframagón, the Arroyo de Santiago stream, El Salado in Morón and Matabueyes, the Guadaira and Guadalete rivers, the Sierra Lijar and the natural monument of Chaparro de la Vega, among others.

As well as these natural enclaves, this cycling route also enables you to find out more about the area at the



A route for cyclists. :: SUR

Peñón de Zaframagón information centre, in the hamlet of the same name, and the Vía Verde de la Sierra centre, in Estación de Olvera.

Unlike other 'vías verdes', this one originated as a railway track along which, paradoxically, no train ever ran. There were, at least, plans for it. What was known as the Railway of the Sierra, which would run between Jerez de la Frontera and Almárgen,

was a very exciting project at the beginning of the 20th century for the people in Cadiz and Seville provinces who lived in that area.

Of the planned 119 kilometres of line, only a 21-kilometre stretch between Jerez and the Jédula sugar factory was ever built. At one time the tracks were extended as far as Arcos de la Frontera, but test trains were the only ones to use them.

36 kilometres long in total.



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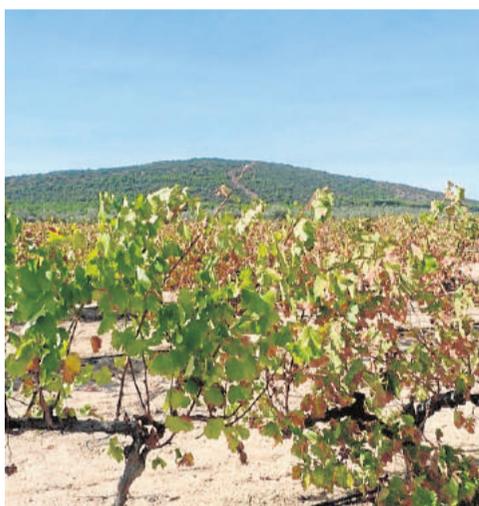



**JAVIER
ALMELLONES**

AROUND MALAGA

Where the Great Trail of Malaga reaches the heart of the province

The halfway point of this walking and cycling route is in the centre of the province and passes through stunning countryside in the Guadalteba valley and Vega de Antequera



QUICK GUIDE

The villages

Alameda. The end of stage 16 and start of stage 17.
In the Vega de Antequera.

Fuente de Piedra. Finishing point of stage 17 and start of stage 18.
In the Vega de Antequera.

Humilladero. A diversion from stage 18 passes through here.
In the Vega de Antequera.

Mollina. A diversion from stage 18 passes through here.
In the Vega de Antequera.

Campillos. End of stage 18 and start of stage 19.
In the Guadalteba valley.

Álora. Stages 20 and 21 pass through its terrain (El Chorro district).
In the Guadalteba valley.

Carratraca. Stage 21 passes through here.
In the Guadalteba valley.

Ardales. End of stage 21 and the start of stage 22. Stages 19 and 20 also pass through its territory.
In the Guadalteba valley.

El Burgo. End of stage 22 and the start of stage 23.
In the Sierra de las Nieves

Different regions Length. More than 100 kilometres in seven stages through these areas.



On its circular tour of the province, the Great Trail of Malaga (Gran Senda de Málaga) reaches its halfway point in the areas of the Vega de Antequera, the Guadalteba and Guadalhorce valleys and the Sierra de las Nieves, with its remarkable landscapes full of contrasts. Salt water lagoons, expanses of olive groves, large reservoirs and rugged mountains are some of the views the Great Trail gifts to those who do the stretches between stages 16 and 23, which pass through nearly a dozen small municipalities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants.

So, after leaving the Sierra Norte from Cuevas Bajas, this great trail, which is also known as the GR-249, enters the Vega de Antequera via the village of Alameda, which is well-known, among other reasons, as the place in which the most famous bandit in Andalucía died. Unsurprisingly this village, together with others in the region, forms part of the 'Ruta del Tempranillo' a route through places associated with him.

NORTH. Alameda, Fuente de Piedra, Mollina and Humilladero form part of this itinerary.

RESERVOIRS. The Great Trail includes the beautiful Three Reservoirs area.

GAITANES. The route passes through Álora and Ardales via the Sierra de Huma area.

TURÓN. From Ardales to El Burgo, the GR-249 links the Guadalteba and Sierra de las Nieves regions.

DIVERSION. On stage 18 you can visit Mollina and Humilladero.

Where to eat

Restaurante Yerbagüena.

This restaurant in Campillos has been open for ten years and is ideal to sample creative cuisine based on local products. You can have tapas at the bar or sit at a table and delight all your senses with the tasting menu or some of the most original dishes. At

weekends there are plenty of good quality fish and seafood dishes.
Ctra. de la Estación, s/n, 29320 Campillos.
Telephone: 952 722 320.

Where to stay

Hotel La Casa Grande.

With a long history behind it as a rural hotel, this establishment in the centre of El Burgo is one of the best options for enjoying the attractions of this part of the Sierra de las Nieves. The rooms are decorated in a lovely 18th-century style and transmit calm and relaxation for those who stay here.

Calle Mesones, 1, 29420 El Burgo. Tel. 952 160 232.
www.hotel-lacasa-grande.com





The village of Ardales and its territory are part of the Great Trail of Malaga. :: J. A.

From Alameda, the Great Trail of Malaga leads to Fuente de Piedra, a village which has become famous as the home of one of the most important nature reserves in Andalucía. This is a large lagoon in which numerous species of birds can be seen, although the best-known is, of course, the pink flamingo.

From Fuente de Piedra the 18th stage heads towards Campillos, a town in Malaga province which can also boast a very valuable nature reserve, consisting of half a dozen lagoons on the outskirts of the urban area. Although you can take a direct route to Campillos, the Great Trail of Malaga also offers the chance to take a diversion through the villages of Humilladero and Molina, both of which are in the Vega de Antequera region.

This enables those doing the route to see some of the places which form part of an important tourism itinerary, the Washington Irving Route. The Nativity Scene Museum in Molina and the Sierrecilla in Humilladero are some of the places of interest which are well worth a visit in these two neighbouring villages

in the Vega de Antequera.

From Campillos, a town situated in the Guadalteba valley region, the Great Trail of Malaga leads to the Three Reservoirs complex in the beautiful area of the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes. Before that, though, stage 19 makes an initial incursion across the territory of Ardales to its vertex where the three reservoirs (Guadalhorce, Guadalteba and Conde del Guadalhorce) converge.

The 20th stage begins further south, continuing through terrain which is part of Ardales to end in El Chorro, which is in the municipality of Álora. This stage takes you into the rugged Sierra de Huma, with fantastic views of the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes gorge.

From El Chorro, a route which was created years ago leads to the centre of Ardales village, but beforehand, you pass through the Sierra de Aguas and come to Carratraca, famous for being one of the villages with the highest number of protected buildings in Andalucía. A quick look around its streets is enough to explain why this should be the case.

Continuing along the way, you come to the final point of the 20th stage in the village of Ardales, where the layout of the oldest part is a clear reminder of its Andalusian past, as is its castle, the Castillo de la Peña.

From Ardales there is a lovely walk towards El Burgo through the Turón valley: the Turón is one of the principal rivers whose source is in the Sierra de las Nieves. This is the 22nd stage of the Great Trail of Malaga, leading to the village of El Burgo through the Sierra de las Nieves.

Before reaching there, walkers or cyclists will pass through stunning natural countryside which is full of contrasts. It will come as no surprise to learn that two different regions coincide here, the Guadalteba and the Sierra de las Nieves.

El Burgo is also an enclave with important historic remains, as can be seen as you pass La Molina bridge, which was originally built by the Romans, at the start of this stage, and a few kilometres further on, when you go past what was at one time the fortress of Turón.

FURTHER ESCAPES

Salt water lagoons

Fuente de Piedra and Campillos

Vega de Antequera and Guadalteba valley
Stages 18 and 19 of the Great Trail of Malaga take you to some of the most important wetlands in Andalucía, which are protected as a nature reserve because of their biological value.

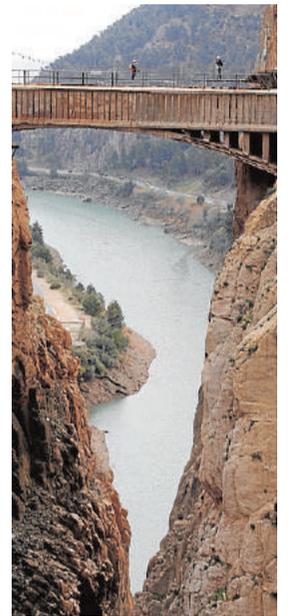
One part of the trail passes the Fuente de Piedra lagoon in Antequera, which covers 1,300 hectares and is home to a large colony of flamingos who turn it into a sea of pink every year. It is classified as one of the most important wetlands in



the world.

The Great Trail also passes the complex of lagoons which are situated on the outskirts of the town of Campillos. The biggest and most environmentally important of these lagoons is called the Dulce, followed by the Capacete, Salada and Camuñas.

Along stages 18 and 19 of the Great Trail of Malaga.



Desfiladero de los Gaitanes

Ardales and Álora.

The Guadalteba and Guadalhorce valleys

One of the greatest attractions of stage 20 of the Great Trail of Malaga is the area around the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes gorge, which is considered one of the most spectacular in Europe. Its dizzying dimensions and narrowness make it a geological treasure.

The Guadalhorce river flows through the gorge, and is crossed via the Caminito del Rey, a historic walkway which was restored through arduous efforts in 2014 and 2015.

However, in addition to a walk around this karst gorge there are numerous other attractions in this area, such as historical enclaves and places where you can take part in outdoor activities in close contact with nature, such as walking and climbing. This impressive gorge is 300 metres deep and less than ten metres wide.

It has been protected as a natural area because of its extraordinary geomorphological interest and the presence of environmentally-valuable fauna, including griffon vultures. In this area you can also see other birds of prey such as peregrine falcons, eagle owls and Bonelli's eagles, as well as birds which are commonly found in wetland areas and near rivers.

Stage 21 of the Great Trail of Malaga.

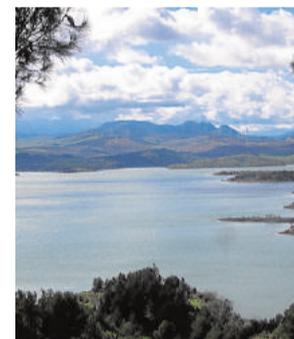
The Three Reservoirs

Campillos, Ardales and Álora

The Guadalteba and Guadalhorce valleys

Between stages 19 and 21, the Great Trail of Malaga passes the Tres Embalses, or Three Reservoirs, which are in the area of the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes gorge. They are called Guadalhorce, Conde del Guadalhorce and Guadalteba, and they are like a sea at the heart of the province of Malaga.

Thanks to these reservoirs, there are some fantastic views in this area, with the water forming a



lovely contrast with the surrounding limestone mountains.

In addition to the reservoirs, there are other places of interest which are well worth a visit, such as the Necropolis of Las Aguillillas and the Caminito del Rey.

Between stages 19 and 21 of the Great Trail of Malaga.

Turón river valley

Ardales and El Burgo Guadalteba valley and the Sierra de las Nieves.

Stage 22 of the Great Trail of Malaga, which leads from Ardales to El Burgo, runs alongside the Turón river, which starts in the Sierra de las Nieves and flows into the Conde del Guadalhorce reservoir. On the way its waters form spectacular pools and pass below some historical bridges.

This part of the itinerary also takes you to places which were important in history such as the Turón fortress, and follows the footsteps of the 'Pasos Largos', con-



sidered by many to have been the last, and most violent, of the bandits who once frequented this area.

This tour of the Turón valley is also a good opportunity to discover the natural and historical heritage of this verdant area of the Sierra de las Nieves, part of which is protected as a Biosphere Reserve and Ecological Reserve.

Stage 22 of the Great Trail.

Dani García abandons haute cuisine

His Michelin-starred Marbella restaurant will close in October 2019 and reopen as a steak house

"I am sorry for Marbella and Malaga but this is a personal decision," admitted the chef who is planning several new projects for the future

:: **MARINA MARTÍNEZ**

MALAGA. In November Dani García's restaurant at the Puente Romano hotel in Marbella gained its third Michelin star and barely a month later the Marbella-born chef has dropped a bombshell. At a meeting on Tuesday he announced to his team that "2019 will be the last for the Dani García restaurant". The poker faces of his workers said everything.

"The day I got the third star I wanted to change things and do them differently." So that is what he has done. "I'm sorry for Marbella and Malaga but this is a personal decision," he explained.

The previous day he had discussed his decision with the Michelin Guide management to explain his motives.

They accepted it "as a great loss to Spanish haute cuisine" but



Dani García explains his future plans to his staff. :: **JOSELE-LANZA**

treated his decision with "absolute respect."

The Dani García restaurant at the Puente Romano will close on 22 October, a month before the new guide comes out.

"We have 314 days and 202 sittings left." Dani García does not intend to retire, far from it; in fact he is expecting his new project to involve more work.

His restaurant will reopen as a steak house called Leña. And of course, one of the main items on the menu will be burgers. It may seem absurd to exchange the world of haute cuisine for the most basic of foods but it has always been Dani García's intention to bring his cooking to a wider public, moving away from the list of elite customers he has catered for in the past.

He admits that the third Michelin star was the catalyst that prompted him to start a new career from the beginning.

"What is life if you don't have a dream? Now we are going to conquer the world by turning everything on its head. It may seem a shame to do this but we are not just top chefs, we are great cooks," observed García, ready to start a "new revolution" in

the world of gastronomy.

"We've got as far as we can but the world is a big place and there is a lot to do. I want to take Andalucía to every corner [of the world]," he added.

He has plans, besides the Leña project, to open a bar called Hoso, serving traditional Andalusian gastronomy and another called Iris, a restaurant that will open in the Four Seasons hotel in Madrid at the end of 2019.

Repercussions

He is aware of the repercussions of his news, but says, "This isn't goodbye, there are many possibilities." These include the expansion of his BiBo project already planned in Qatar and with a window opening also in Dubai, London and perhaps Barcelona. Not forgetting Lobito de Mar, another restaurant that could expand into Madrid, where BiBo opened two and a half years ago.

His return to the centre of Malaga city has not been ruled out either. Dani García is leaving the door open. "Some day we will be coming back but on a smaller scale, the way it should be, something more exclusive," he said.

HOMELY The restaurant has become a firm favourite for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve dinners for its culinary excellence and great atmosphere

RESTAURANTE PLAYA BELLA, TO ENJOY A CHRISTMAS WITH GOOD FOOD AND GOOD COMPANY

ESTEPONA

Lunch and dinner dates multiply over the Christmas period and, although the company is the most important thing, enjoying them in a welcoming and charming setting is also essential.

With more than 45 years of experience, Restaurante Playa Bella is committed to providing diners with excellent quality and a friendly service to make them feel at home at any time of the year. It's therefore hardly surprising that the restaurant's clients consider their traditional Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve dinners to be must-attend events and all the tables were booked up weeks ago.

The staff, service, atmosphere and of course the culinary excellence are all the main reasons that lead diners to place their



trust in the restaurant when it comes to spending the most important nights of the year with their families and friends.

Moreover, the restaurant puts

itself out to decorate the venue and make it as pleasant as possible, with Christmas decorations and a beautiful nativity scene to enjoy in the warmth of the



fire. A household name in Málaga cuisine

Located in Playa Bella residential complex, this restaurant

has known how to distinguish itself during its long career for its commitment to quality, which is apparent both in the prime materials used for its careful preparations and in its staff, who offer clients a friendly, professional service.

The restaurant is already preparing new things for the next season, during which it will continue, as always, to offer its very best for its clients to enjoy.

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MISSED CALLS



There is considerable difference of opinion about taking photos in restaurants. Some places are not happy about it, while others look on the practice as a compliment.

So what about mobile phones? The smart phone is arguably the most useful invention to come into our lives, but also the most anti-social. Nowhere is the generation gap more evident. Younger people cannot live without continually glancing at the screen, while the older generation can go hours untempted. In a group of over-50s you can even imagine you are still living in pre-mobile days.

Allegedly some hosts ask guests to hand in their phone at the door on arrival, which seems quite understandable, but they may need to be wrestled from the hands of younger cousins. What is not in doubt is that mobile phones are definitely not welcome in restaurants. Chefs like Gordon Ramsey, David Chang and Danny Meyer never tire of telling us that they do not improve the dining experience, and Meyer is on record as stating he would prefer people to smoke at table rather than use mobiles. "At least they talk to each other..." In

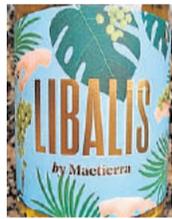
some countries it is becoming normal for customers to be incentivised not to use phones. The US Contact Bar and Kitchen chain offers a substantial discount, and a restaurant in Sydney gives free wine to anyone handing in phones.

The Japanese don't agree. In many ramen restaurants, the characteristic bowls have wooden supports attached, enabling diners to use their phones while eating.

WINE OF THE WEEK

Libalis by Maetierra

The very go-ahead Vintae group is run by 30-something wine fanatics from Rioja, and in less than a decade they have come to control wineries in six Spanish regions. One thing they enjoy is recovering disappearing grape varieties, and this luscious white wine is made from a small muscatel grape that existed before the phylloxera bug wiped out all the vines. Around seven euros.



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A still-life painting of sweets and turróns, by the early 17th century Spanish painter Juan Van der Hamen. :: SUR

The sweet history of turrón

The almond treat that fills the shelves at Christmas every year is one of the many culinary treasures that Spain inherited from the Moors

:: ANA VEGA PÉREZ DE ARLUCEA

MÁLAGA. Christmas in Spain wouldn't be without its favourite seasonal sweet treats. Turrón, marzipan, polvorones, mantecados, pedadillas, alajúes, alfajores, tortas reales are just some of the names of the mainly almond-based delicacies that fill the shelves in supermarkets and homes at this time of year.

There are two traditional types of turrón; every Spanish home has someone who loves the soft Jijona turrón, as well as an admirer of the hard type from Alicante. However the trend in recent years has turned more towards chocolate coating and unusual ingredients, making the shape of the packet sometimes all there is in common with the traditional varieties.

Diversity is not such a new thing though. Centuries ago people used to make turrón with hazelnuts, walnuts or pine nuts and use flavours such as cinnamon, orange, ginger and aniseed. There were white varieties, black ones and red ones, guirlache and candied fruits, a vast and scrumptious array which shows the complexity of the old Spanish sweet-making.

Arabic roots

This was all thanks to the Moors, who, apart from conquering the land, knew how to win over people's palates. Readers are probably familiar with halva, a typical sweet in Islamic countries made with semolina and dried fruits or nuts, which is remarkably similar to our traditional bars of turrón. In fact the word 'halva' is how Father Pedro de Alcalá translated the word 'turrón' in his Arabic-Spanish dictionary in 1505.

The two recipes are very similar, a sweet made with honey, egg whites and nuts which appears in the Arabic recipe books from the tenth century as 'nātif'.

In the Kitāb al-Tabīkh or Book of

Dishes, a cookery book written just over 1,000 years ago in Baghdad by Ibn Sayyar al-Warrāq, we find instructions on how to make this proto-turrón.

Mediterranean and the Moorish conquest in-between, it is probable that this recipe came into the hands of the artisan bakers of Alicante before 1248, when the city returned again to Christian rule.

"Beat the honey as it cooks for an hour and then add egg whites and mix well. For ten pounds of honey, use ten egg whites. Stir until the honey turns white and when it has thickened, season it with pepper, cassia, cloves and spikenard. Also add any nuts you like, such as almond, pistacho, hazelnut, walnut, pine nut, sesame or hemp. It will take three hours of beating for the mixture to become thick enough, God willing," says the recipe.

Various names

During the time of Al-Ándalus, this delicious dessert was called mu'qqad in Hispano-Arabic, torron in Catalan and turrón in Castilian Spanish, undoubtedly because the nuts 'se

turraban', or were toasted, before being added to the mixture.

Despite their infidel origins, don't think for a moment that the Christians avoided these treats. During the Middle Ages sweets and cakes were among the most luxurious and coveted foods and they played a double role as food and medicine.

From Enrique de Villena, who in 1423 wrote Arte Cisoría about the art of carving, we know that at the court of Castilian king Juan II they

ate "turrónes, miegados, obleas, letuarios and such things", which later became popular with the lower classes as well.

A century later Lope de Rueda, the actor and dramatist from Seville, would make a first reference to the turrónes of Alicante as an object of gluttony, while an unnamed copyist wrote the first instructions in Castilian Spanish for making turrónes:

"For every pound of honey add a well-beaten egg white and mix well. Beat hard, and leave to rest for a day. The next day, cook the honey, stirring constantly until well cooked. Test by putting a drop into a bowl of cold water and if it crumbles it is ready, and if it doesn't it isn't. When cooked, put pine nuts or almonds or toasted and peeled hazelnuts in, and heat for a short while. Then take it off the heat, add chopped pineapple or whatever you fancy."

At that time it was already popular to eat turrón "at Christmas and on Three Kings Day", when meat was prohibited. By the mid-16th century the Christmas tables of the powerful included a variety of turrónes.

At that time turrón had become a completely Spanish dish, as Dr Francisco Núñez de Coria wrote in 1572 in his 'Aviso de sanidad', a guide to good health.

"In Spain many sugary gifts are made, in pharmacies as well as shops, and they are eaten for dessert. There are types of cakes with pine nuts, almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, flour, sugar and honey, and they call them turrón and alaxu (sic)," he said.

So now in the 21st century perhaps we should look at the simple turrón differently. Soft or hard, and no matter what the flavour, it is one of the of this country's history.

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Full-back Federico Ricca runs towards the fans with Jack Harper to celebrate scoring the winning goal. :: SALVADOR SALAS

LA LIGA 123

Results	Next match day
MALAGA - Cádiz 1-0	Tenerife - Granada
Granada - Oviedo 1-0	Mallorca - Gimnástico
Numancia - Albacete 1-2	Lugo - Sporting
Reus - Córdoba 1-1	Oviedo - MALAGA
Sporting - Mallorca 1-0	Zaragoza - Extremadura
R. Majadahonda - Elche 1-3	Elche - Almería
Osasuna - Alcorcón 2-1	Córdoba - Las Palmas
Las Palmas - Tenerife 1-1	Cádiz - Deportivo
Extremadura - Gimnástico 0-1	Reus - Osasuna
Almería - Lugo 1-1	Albacete - Majadahonda
Deportivo - Zaragoza 3-1	Alcorcón - Numancia

Table	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PT
★	1. Granada	18	11	4	3	26	12	37
★	2. Deportivo	18	9	8	1	31	13	35
■	3. MALAGA	18	11	2	5	22	13	35
■	4. Albacete	18	9	7	2	27	16	34
■	5. Alcorcón	18	10	3	5	21	11	33
■	6. Cádiz	18	8	5	5	24	15	29
	7. Osasuna	18	8	5	5	23	19	29
	8. Mallorca	18	7	6	5	23	17	27
	9. Sporting	18	6	7	5	18	15	25
	10. Las Palmas	18	5	9	4	23	21	24
	11. Almería	18	6	6	6	21	19	24
	12. Oviedo	18	6	5	7	20	24	23
	13. Numancia	18	5	6	7	19	22	21
	14. Lugo	18	5	5	8	18	20	20
	15. Elche	18	4	8	6	16	22	20
	16. Majadahonda	18	6	2	10	15	24	20
	17. Tenerife	18	3	9	6	15	22	18
	18. Extremadura	18	4	5	9	23	27	17
▼	19. Reus	18	4	5	9	12	25	17
▼	20. Zaragoza	18	3	7	8	18	24	16
▼	21. Córdoba	18	2	8	8	19	34	14
▼	22. Gimnástico	18	3	4	11	12	31	13

Malaga the victors in hard-fought derby

Captain Federico Ricca scored the winner against in-form Cadiz to help leapfrog Alcorcón into third

by DARYL FINCH

MALAGA. Captain Federico Ricca led by example to give his Malaga side a 1-0 win in the latest Andalusian derby against Cadiz at La Rosaleda on Friday night.

Having received a massive confidence boost with a last-gasp win in Mallorca last week to end their away curse, Malaga faced a tough test in their last home game of the season against a side who boasted the best record in Europe, having won seven games on the bounce.

The first chance of this top-of-the-table clash went the way of the hosts. Juanpi, playing from the right but given licence to interchange with

Dani Pacheco, cut onto his favoured left foot to whip in a cross for Gustavo Blanco Leschuk who got the faintest touch with his head to draw a fine reaction save from Cifuentes in the Cadiz goal.

This was one of very few moments of excitement in what was an attritional first half an hour of football with neither side willing to take too many risks. However, with half time approaching, Cadiz started to show why they are the in-form team in Europe.

First Dejan Lekić had a tame header saved on the stretch by Munir, then the visitors were incensed that they were not given what appeared to be

a clear penalty when Pau Torres blocked Lekić's strike with his arm. Pau hit the deck feigning injury while the referee pointed for a corner.

The game opened up in the second half with Malaga taking the game to their opponents.

Blanco Leschuk got a lot more support as Pacheco, Juanpi and especially Jack Harper played higher up the pitch.

Pacheco came close with a low strike from the edge of the area before Harper thought he had given his side the lead when he tapped home the rebound after Cifuentes parried Juanpi's side-footed effort bound for the bottom corner. Unfortunately for

1-0 MALAGA-CADIZ

Malaga: Munir; Cifu (Lombán, 90+3'), Diego González, Pau, Ricca; Juanpi (Ontiveros, 65'), N'Diaye, Adrián, Pacheco (Renato, 89'); Blanco Leschuk, Harper. Unused substitutes: Kieszek, Miguel Torres, Lacen, Hakšabanović.

Cadiz: Cifuentes; Correa, Sergio Sánchez (Keckojevic, 61'), Marcos Mauro, Oliván (Aketxe, 80'); Álex Fernández, Garrido, José Mari, Jairo; Manu Vallejo, Lekic (Carrillo, 63'). Unused substitutes: David Gil, Perea, Edu Ramos, Romera.

Goals: 1-0 Ricca (70').

Referee: Trujillo Suárez. Sent off Malaga match day delegate Josemi in the 58th minute. Yellow cards for Pau, José Mari, Juanpi, Sergio Sánchez, Oliván and N'Diaye.

the Scotsman, the linesman's flag denied him.

Former Malaga defender Sergio Sánchez, who had received a warm welcome on his return to La Rosaleda, was forced off with an injury in the 65th minute and this handed a major boost to the Blue and Whites.

Substitute Javi Ontiveros got straight into the action with some

direct running and shortly afterwards released a fierce strike from 25 yards which proved too hot to handle for Cifuentes but there was no one able to pounce on the rebound.

The pressure eventually told in the 70th minute when Harper picked up the scraps from a corner kick and beat his man, before sending the ball across the face of goal for captain Federico Ricca to prod home. The manner of the finish was far from convincing but the ball nestled into the side netting and the Uruguayan celebrated vociferously with the fans regardless.

As you'd expect against a side managed by Álvaro Cervera, the final twenty minutes were not going to be straightforward. Malaga coach Juan Ramón Muñoz could be seen repeatedly appealing for calm from the sidelines as the visitors threw men forward in search of the equaliser.

But although the ball spent the majority of the time in the Malaga half, the hosts' defensive organisation meant that they didn't cede any chances until deep into stoppage time when José Ángel Carrillo headed over from six yards out, albeit from an off-side position.

With the win, Malaga returned to the top three of Segunda ahead of

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Up next

REAL OVIEDO (A)

by JAMES CHAPMAN

Malaga's final game before the Christmas break sees them travel to the 30,000-capacity Carlos Tardiere stadium in the Asturian capital, Oviedo.

Real Oviedo, an outside bet for promotion this season, have an impressive La Liga history, having spent 38 seasons there between 1933 and 2001. However, since 2001, they have suffered severe economic troubles and they dropped down to the 4th division for the 2003/04 season.

In 2012 the club had to raise two million euros to prevent closure and they appealed to their supporters to buy shares. Several ex-players who had started their careers there, notably Santi Cazorla and Juan Mata, also offered their financial support and the club was saved.

In 2015 Oviedo were promoted back to the second division where they have stayed ever since, always on the cusp of promotion.

their final game before the Christmas break next Saturday away in Oviedo.

The Blue and Whites will have to do without Alfred N'Diaye who picked up his fifth booking of the season.

Getafe forward Sergi Guardiola on Malaga's radar for January

The striker scored 22 goals for Cordoba last season but is finding playing time hard to come by

by SERGIO CORTÉS

MALAGA. With the January transfer window almost upon us, Malaga's major priority will be to bring in a new centre forward. With Héctor and Sead Haksabanović expected to return to their parent clubs, Atlético Madrid and West Ham United, respectively, Malaga's recruitment team is looking for competition for the two forward spots.

While Gustavo Blanco Leschuk started the season strongly, his form has dropped off and, paired with the injury to Mamadou Koné, that leaves only youth player Jack Harper as a viable option.

It is understood that Sergi Guardiola is sporting director José Luis Caminero's number one target. The 28-year-old, who helped save

Cordoba from relegation last season with 22 league goals, is now at Getafe where he has found game time hard to come by. However, he is not short of suitors, especially in the second division.

Curiously, Guardiola, who previously played under coach Juan Ramón Muñoz at Alcorcón, has never stayed at any team for more than a year.



Guardiola, right, during his time with Cordoba. by RAMÓN GÓMEZ

Leti scores direct from a corner to rescue a point for Femenino in Albacete

ALBACETE 1 MALAGA 1

by OPTA

ALBACETE. Malaga's women's side came away from the Ciudad Deportiva Andrés Iniesta with a valuable point on Sunday having fought back from a goal down to claim a 1-1 draw.

An Alba Redondo penalty in the 65th minute gave Albacete the lead before Leti scored direct from a corner kick to level the scores.

This was Malaga's first point away from home since match day six and helps to stave of relegation trouble for the time being at least.



The Malaga players celebrate Leti's equaliser. by OPTA

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A LOOK AT LA LIGA

ROB PALMER
Commentator, Sky Sports
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The natural successor?

Diego Simeone would be a great fit for Manchester United but strangely many fans aren't too keen on the Atlético Madrid boss

I'm so surprised that Diego Simeone's name hasn't been more prominent as Manchester United start the worldwide recruitment drive to find their next leader.

The fact that he's reportedly the third best paid coach in the world suggests that he's right up there with the very best there is.

Simeone has broken the duopoly of Barcelona and Real Madrid in Spanish football and also muscled in on the European scene. In seven years he boasts seven majors. At home he's won La Liga and the Copa del Rey while in Europe he's claimed the Europa League twice and reached two Champions League finals.

Strangely the Manchester United fans I've communicated with (they tend to talk at you rather than with you on Twitter) are quite anti the idea of the Ar-

gentinian being in the running for their club. Apparently, he's too much like Mourinho?

He's not one of life's natural smilers, so he's no Jürgen Klopp, that's true. The allegation is that he is a defensive coach. Yes, his teams do have excellent defensive records but most importantly they tend to outscore the opposition.

The Atlético supporters certainly appreciate his achievements and their stadium rocks when they are playing at home. Like Pep Guardiola at Barcelona, now Manchester City, and Klopp at Liverpool, his teams do tend to play in his image. His 'man in black' brooding persona certainly works at the Wanda but United fans aren't buying into it.

So, many apologies to the Atlético fans for even suggesting he should move on after seven years

and apologies to United fans for suggesting that he has the quality to manage your great club.

There have been stories that he's ready to sign at extension with Atlético (is the only manager I can recall asking for a contract reduction!), so now would be the apt time.

Atlético are ahead of Real Madrid, just behind Barcelona in La Liga and they have a thrilling Champions League tie with Juventus in the New Year. The club's fans are right up there with Liverpool and Manchester City when it comes to buying into the coach's philosophy.

Meanwhile what happens to José Mourinho? When the Sky cameras captured him on the way to Waitrose the day after he was relieved of his duties at Old Trafford, he had the cut of a man



Simeone has been at Atleti for seven years. :: EFE

who'd won the lottery which I guess he had with a reported £24-million payoff. What do they say, he'll never have to work again? He will though and it could be a marriage of convenience with Real Madrid. Their last relationship ended in an unpleasant divorce

but not all love was lost.

These days the manager is often the superstar at the club as football clubs jostle for the backpage headline. Mourinho is undoubtedly box-office and he'd be welcomed back with open arms by the Spanish sports editors.

The Marbella resistance lasts just five minutes

Visitors Cartagena could hardly believe their luck when they found themselves two goals up in the opening exchanges

Julio Rodríguez

MARBELLA. Five minutes was all Cartagena needed to seal victory on their visit to Marbella on Sunday. Two quick-fire goals from the high-flying visitors meant a return to the usual script for the hosts of their effort not being converted into goals.

The opening goal came after just

0-2

MARBELLA-CARTAGENA

Marbella: Wilfred; Ismael Gallar, Marcos Ruiz, José Cruz, Rafa Muñoz (Hakim, 45'); Elías, Alex Bernal (Juanma, 63'); Manu Molina (N'Diaye, 55'), Añón, Sillero, Montero.

Cartagena: Joao Costa, Pedro Orfila, Jesús Álvaro, Moisés, Ayala, Julio Gracia, Moyita (Fito Miranda, 67'), Vitolo (Cordero, 15'), Aketxe (Rubén Cruz, 74'), Santi Jara, Elady.

Goals: 0-1 Elady (1'), 0-2 Aketxe (5').

Ground: Antonio Lorenzo. (Around 1,000 spectators.)



Marbella's Manu Molino puts in a cross. :: J. RODRÍGUEZ

46 seconds, stemming from a Marbella attack. A long ball up to Montero was cut out and a lightning-fast counter-attack ended up with Elady one-on-one with Wilfred.

The forward tucked his effort away with aplomb, but his side were not done yet. With just five minutes on the clock, they went two

goals up thanks to Aketxe's powerful near-post header, cueing bottles to be thrown in disbelief from the Marbella dug-out.

"I'm tired of saying the same things," said Marbella coach Padilla after the game. "Ninety per cent of the goals we've conceded have come from mistakes we've made."

Commentator Michael Robinson announces he has skin cancer

R. C.

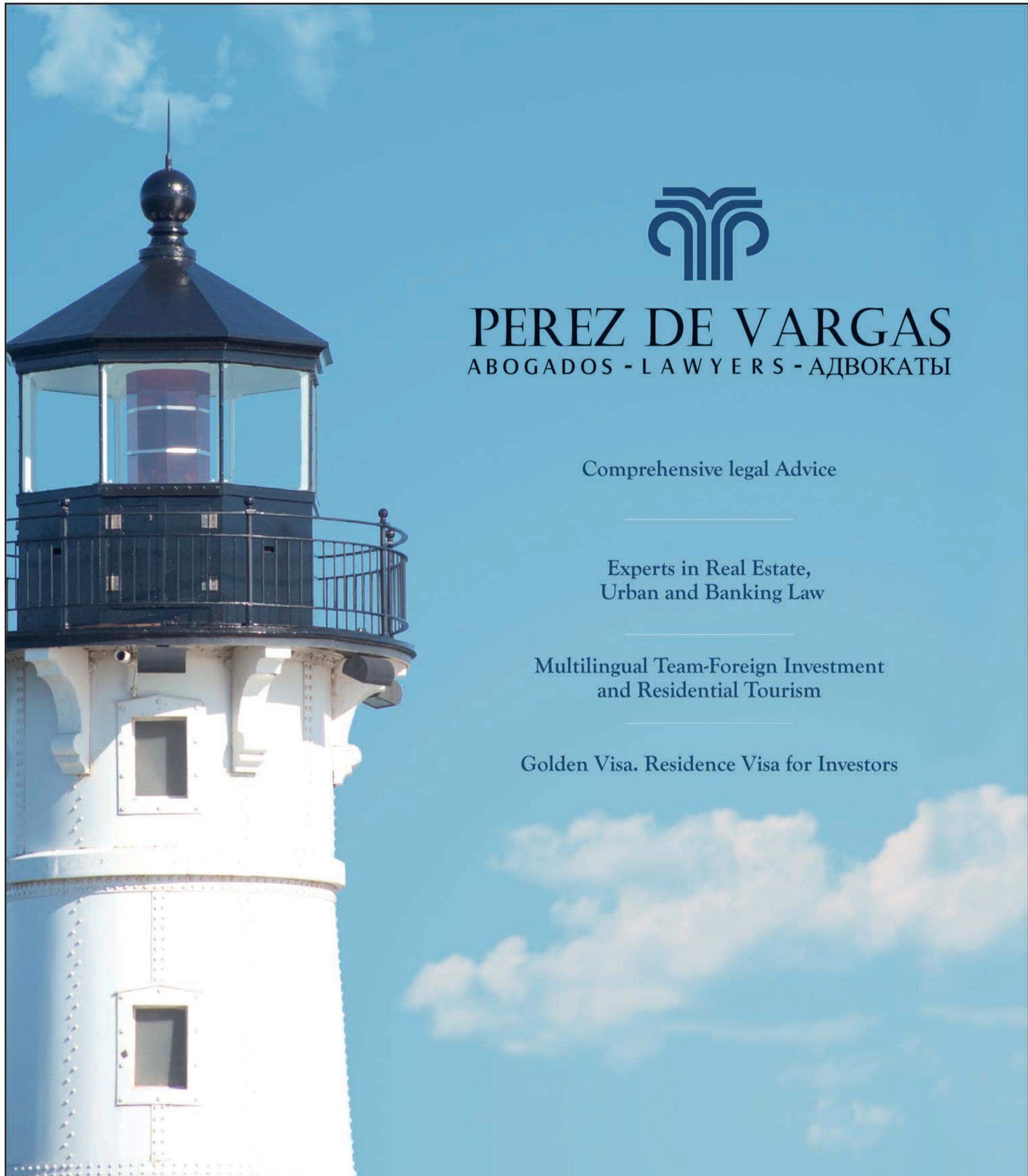
MADRID. Former footballer Michael Robinson, 59, has announced that he has a malignant melanoma which has metastasized.

He shared news of the diagnosis on his own programme on the Movistar sports channel, where he is a highly-regarded analyst and commentator. "Unfortunately I'm in this fight but it's clear I'm going to win it," he said.

Robinson, who won the league, League Cup and European Cup with Liverpool in 1983-84, finished his career with Osasuna and has remained in Spain since.

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"Tennis is a close-run thing now"

Alejandro Davidovich Tennis player

"I don't want the ranking to become an obsession," he says after completing his first year as a senior and ending as the world number 231

:: PEDRO LUIS ALONSO

MALAGA. He has just taken a well-deserved holiday, returning to Sweden to visit his father, although it only lasted for ten days. Speaking to us in the familiar setting of the tennis courts at the Don Carlos Tennis & Sports Club, Alejandro Davidovich analysed his first season as a senior, and his forthcoming challenges. This rising star seems more concerned about his progress than his ranking, and says he is satisfied with his first season as a senior, after winning the Junior title at Wimbledon in 2017. His first trophy (the Futures at Quinta do Lago) and the final in the Challenger at Szczecin marked his 2018.

-You're ending your first year as a senior at 231st in the ATP ranking. I guess you're happy with that?

-Yes. I didn't start the season too well, I wasn't able to play in many matches. By mid-September, however, I started to see results. The objective for my coach and myself was to reach the qualifier for the Roland Garros, but it wasn't possible. In the end I reached a final in the Challenger in Poland (Szczecin) and now we are thinking about the qualifying stage of the Australia Open. As my tour in China went quite well, we have classified for that.

-The season has ended with you in good form, hasn't it?

-Yes. I finished feeling good, but I also need to rest. I have played several tournaments in succession, been away for weeks on end. My body wants to be at home now, enjoying being with my family and friends and disconnecting from tennis.

-What is most important to you, winning the Futures in Quinta do Lago or being runner-up in the Challenger at Szczecin?

-I'd say Poland. I was playing well right from the start and from then on I was able to move up a few stages.

-That was a clay court. What was that like?



Alejandro Davidovich, during the interview at the Don Carlos Tennis & Sports Club. :: JOSELE-LANZA

THE PERSONAL SIDE

-Tell me about a film you have seen recently...

-It's not a film, but I have just finished watching all the seasons of 'Prison Break' for the second time. I saw them in the original version this time. It is a series that grips you and makes you want to see what happens next, and I liked it better in English.

-A song that motivates you?

-I don't normally listen to much music before competing. I like reggaeton and hip-hop.

-What do you like to do in your spare time?

-I have just bought a Thermomix so I'm spending a lot of time cooking. I like it. I'm experimenting with healthy things.

-Apart from tennis, what other

sport do you like?

-I like all racket sports. I enjoy playing padel tennis and organising matches with friends.

-What annoys you?

-People who arrive late.

-Do you have any pets?

-No. My coach's mother has a Maltese Bichon and I see that a lot.

-Which do you prefer, beaches or mountains?

-Mountains. Although it depends on the time of year. I don't like the beach in the summer because it's so hot, and the sand... mountains in winter are impressive. I like cold weather.

-Meat or fish?

-I love fish, but really it's half and half.

-Well, the speed differs, maybe. But it doesn't really matter to me.

-You're still one of the few players who doesn't have a favourite surface.

-No, there are times when I can lose the first round on clay or a fast surface. It depends on many things, although maybe clay is the best surface for me.

-There were some important matches when you played better tennis at the end of this season, but you lost because of small details. I don't know if you will agree, but at the end of the season there were two clear examples, the quarter-finals in Liuzhou, against Kavcic, and the one which brought the season to a close in Andria against Gaio. What do you have to say about those?

-Kavcic is a very experienced player and I knew it was going to be a very

close match. I lost the first set because of small details, because I was 3-0 up in the tie break. I was playing very well, but in the third set my energy dropped and he was stronger than me. Against Gaio the court was very fast. It was like ice, one of the fastest I have ever played on and it wasn't very good for me. It works better for other players. I tried to adapt to the court, but Gaio played really well at the most important moments.

-What have you learned from this first year as a senior?

-That concentration and patience are very important. Above all, those 20 seconds between one point and another. That is where you have to be really focused and forget about the ball you just missed, because you're going to have another one to deal with straight away.

-Do you think you're improving in that aspect?

-I'm working with Antonio de Dios, who has been my psychologist for the past five years, on my mindset and one of the most important things in that sense is to concentrate on the next point.

-In which matches do you think you have played best this year?

-During the week at Szczecin. It was a very high standard, I realise that. Every time you win a match you grow a little, although there are always times when you're not going to place the ball where you want it and have to let it go, to go on to the next step.

-Do you think you might reach the top 100 in 2019, or would that be too much to expect?

-We haven't thought about it. We are going to take it tournament by tournament. I will play a Challenger in Australia (in Playford) before trying for the qualifying stage of the Australia Open. That's where my head is at the moment, and then we'll see what other tournaments come up, without planning for them. I don't want the ranking to become an obsession. I don't have too many points to defend at the start of the season, and I'll give it all I've got to keep moving up and gain confidence for the rest of the year.

-What are you aims on a personal level?

-I'd like to pass a classification phase

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for an ATP 250 and do well in the Grand Slam, but above all continue to gain points and confidence for what lies ahead of me in tennis.

-Because you reached 231st place in recent weeks, it gives you another passport for the Challengers or qualifying stages of major tournaments, because at the start of the season you were almost obliged to respond to invitations. You'll be more free to decide what to do now, won't you?

-Obviously, but even if you come up against the favourite it doesn't matter. Tennis these days is very equal. There will be weeks when you get into the top 100, and others when you end up at 500.

-At the start of this year you were training with the Davis Cup team. What was that like?

-I learned a lot from them, how they trained, their pauses and rhythms. I get on well with David Ferrer. It was a very good experience. Personally, I don't like the new tournament format, with a week of competition and in the same place. You lose a bit of the feeling.

-We have mentioned psychology, but from a tennis point of view where do you see a margin for growth?

-We're trying to improve on my first serve. I'm not a very flamboyant person. I know it's in there, but I haven't

QUOTES

Learned from the elite
"Concentration and patience are very important; above all, those 20 seconds between points"

New rules at the ATP
"It'll be harder to get into the top 100 now, even more so with the change in the rules in 2019"

Evolution of his game
"It's difficult to say, but it's possible that a clay surface is the best one for me"

Objectives for 2019
"I'd like to pass the qualifying stage for an ATP 250 and do well in the Grand Slams"

been able to show it and psychology is making it possible to bring it out.
-From a physical point of view this was a good year, with no injuries, wasn't it?

-Yes, I only had a grade two ankle sprain, and it only lasted for a week.
-What has changed in your everyday life or your way of working this season, compared with before, in terms of resources?

-My contacts have increased. When you're in the ATP you get to know people. It's easier to contact people for the pre-season. I can't give names at the moment, but my contacts are Spanish and they are not youngsters. I have my coach (Jorge Aguirre), physical trainer (Adrián), psychologist (Antonio) and physiotherapist. The So-hail clinic in Fuengirola attends to my injuries and pain. I normally travel with my coach, but this year the plan is for me to go with my physical trainer.

-Do you have any free time?

-In the end, ten days of absolute rest are enough if you organise yourself properly and do what you said you would do. If you're off the court for a month you lose form. With a shorter time off, you can recover more quickly.

-Is there a chance of you playing in the Next Gen ATP Finals (a tournament for the seven best under-21 players in the ATP ranking and a local guest) sometime in the next two years?

-This year I ended 28th in the ranking and that is also one of my objectives for the forthcoming year.

Whether it is easier in 2019 or 2020 depends, because within two years new players will also have come along.
-Some people are critical of the Next Gen and the fact that it is harder nowadays for young players to reach the top 100 or just burst onto the tennis scene. That wasn't so unusual a decade ago or so, was it?

-It's more difficult to get into the top 100 these days, especially with the change the ATP is going to make to the rules, because the Futures won't count and the qualifiers for the Challengers will have very few players. The ATP 250 points will count for more than the Challengers, so it will be more difficult for that group to get into the top 100.

-Your talent isn't in doubt, though. There are only four players higher in the ranking who are younger than you. Does that put you under pressure?

-I don't think about it much, so no. The others are bigger and stronger than me, so a year doesn't change anything. I'll carry on in my own way. Players might be younger or older, it makes no difference. I'll continue my routine and my career.

-Who will be the next world champion? Who'll take over from Djokovic, Federer and Nadal?

-I couldn't say. Tennis is a close-run thing these days. It could be anybody, really.



Last year's San Silvestre. :: SUR

Torremolinos sees out old year with the San Silvestre solidarity fun run

:: TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. Hundreds of fun runners are expected to participate the fourth edition of the San Silvestre de Torremolinos, a non-competitive street race held annually to help underprivileged families in danger of social exclusion.

The race, which will officially close the town's calendar of sporting events for 2018, will start at the town hall building in Plaza de Blas Infante at midday on New Year's Eve and continue through the streets of Torremolinos.

The event is free and open to runners of all ages: the only requirement is that participants donate one kilo of non-perishable food, which will be distributed among local aid organizations.

Those taking part, whether seasoned athletes or fun runners, are asked to dress in festive costumes and prizes will be given for the most inventive designs.

Those wishing to take part can register online (www.torremolinos.es/pmdt) or from 10.30am on the morning of the event.

SAN SILVESTRE FUN RUN

► **When.** New Year's Eve at midday.

► **Start.** Torremolinos town hall, Plaza de Blas Infante.

► **Requirements.** Bring one kilo of non-perishable food and register at www.torremolinos/pmdt or on the morning of the event.

Los Monteros reopens its legendary tennis club

The Set3 company will run the courts, which can be hired by the general public and will also host major events

:: HÉCTOR BARBOTA

MARBELLA. Los Monteros has just paid off a debt with its own history. The Grand Luxury five-star hotel, one of the oldest in Marbella, has now reopened its tennis club, which was inaugurated in 1971 but has been closed and abandoned for nearly 30 years.

This is thanks to an agreement with the Set3 Sports&Events company, which will run the club and aims to make it a benchmark for sports on the Costa del Sol once again.

The club, which has eight tennis courts, six padel courts and a

sand one which can be used for beach volleyball or beach padel tennis, is reopening under the name Los Monteros Racket Club and will be aimed at three different markets: the general public, who can use the facilities without being members and just pay to hire the courts; the hotel clients; and for major events.

Healing a wound

The hotel manager, Fernando Al-Farkh, says the reopening of the club will be like healing a wound which occurred years ago when it was closed down, and it will be excellent for the hotel guests because they will be able to practise sport without leaving the complex.

He stresses that the facilities are top quality, with latest-generation technology. Four of the tennis courts have the 'top-play' system, which consists of a layer

of artificial grass covered with clay, the latest of its type.

The head of Set3, Sebastián Tobaruela, says the reforms which have been carried out will make this a benchmark for racquet

sports in Spain. So far, three events have already been agreed for early next year: a company padel tennis circuit, another 'Padel Experience' amateur circuit, and one for junior tennis.



Al-Farkh, Tobaruela, and federation presidents at the opening. :: J-L

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▲ **Basketball.** There was a good atmosphere but ultimately no Guinness World Record as 6,593 basketball fans, in the build-up to the Unicaja-Barcelona game in Malaga's Martín Carpena on Sunday, attempted to break the world record for balls bounced at the same time. Organised by Worten, in conjunction with the city hall, there was music, cheerleaders and other entertainment but the attempt fell short of the 7,557 needed. :: SALVADOR SALAS



▲ **Golf.** Baviera Golf on Saturday concluded the year with two tournaments - the annual youth Christmas tournament and the inaugural Friend Cup. In the latter, participants (pictured) were invited by members to try their hand at the sport for the first time. :: SUR



▲ **Triathlon.** More than 250 athletes from the province of Malaga participated in the XXI Torremolinos Triathlon last weekend. Organised by Torremolinos town hall, the multisport race, comprising three continuous and sequential endurance races, was held in the Villa Deprotiva sports stadium and the surrounding pine forests. The men's race was won by Rubén Fortes, who completed the course in 00.33.31. Nidia Ruiz triumphed in the women's race, with a time of 00.38.31. :: TONY BRYANT



► **Lawn Bowls.** Mijas Bowls Club recently hosted the four-day Ball & Chain competition for married couples. The format was a Round Robin which also included a plate. Mary and John Pearce saw off Hazel and Phil Gutteridge in the final (finalists pictured) while Nel and Theo Bellaart beat Josie and Alan Bloom to win the plate. :: SUR



▲ **Walking football.** The tournament to raise funds to buy prostheses for Marbella girl Sarah Almargo Vallejo (seated centre) who lost her limbs to sepsis was a great success and raised a total of 950 euros. The grand final on Saturday was won by first-timers Atlético Marbella with a last-gasp goal against San Pedro. :: SUR

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Foreign Residents Dept.	952809031

FUENGIROLA

Bus Station	952475066
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Taxi Service	952471000
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MIJAS

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Town Hall Las Lagunas	952473125
Taxi	952478288
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CRUISE SHIP MOVEMENTS (SOURCE: MALAGA PORT AUTHORITY)

Ship	Date	From	Next port	Docks	Sails
Norwegian Spirit	21/12	Funchal	Alicante	07.00	17.00
Aidamar	25/12	Arrecife	Cartagena	10.00	19.30
Mein Schiff 2	29/12	Gibraltar	Valencia	07.00	21.30



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Denmark	Calle Córdoba 6 404, Malaga	952211797
Norway	Avda Los Boliches, 60, Edf Rosenkranz, Fuengirola	952667955
Canada	C/Cervantes, Edif. Horizonte, Malaga	952223346
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Ireland	Avda. Los Boliches, Fuengirola	952475108

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Austria	Alameda de Colón 26, Malaga	952600267
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Saudi Arabia	Mauricio M. Pareto 2 bloque Sur 2º, Malaga	952310358
Greece	Salitre, 16, Malaga	952311847
Iceland	Paseo Marítimo 91, 29640 Fuengirola	952661200
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Hungary	Av. de Andalucía 26 29007 Malaga	952308393

THE STARS

Aquarius
January 21 - February 19
Someone realises how much you have done for them over the last year. When the desire is there it is easy to keep love alive, so be sure not to let familiarity cloud your view.

Pisces
February 20th - March 20th
It is hard to be practical when there is so much going on around you. Even so, something that you are keen to get on with keeps popping into your mind. Well, you do prefer to be organised.

Aries
March 21st - April 20th
Your path this week is in providing comfort and fun for others. Be aware that you are so good at providing these that friends and relatives may not want to leave!

Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
Those who are drawn to you at this time are likely to be long-term friends. A few quiet hours on your own as this week begins allow you to plan ahead.

Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
This is a time when new friendships are made. This year those friendships are likely to be longer term. Being much more adventurous and trying new things is the key.

Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
Recent changes have made you appreciate a few quiet days. Quite often you are content in your own company. The aim now is to give yourself and others comfort and a stable situation.

Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
Keeping an open heart and mind over this festive period fires up your imagination. Plans that include someone close to you show promise.

Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
Precious moments in this special week give the best of times with loved ones. Even time spent on your own brings forth unusual and bright ideas.

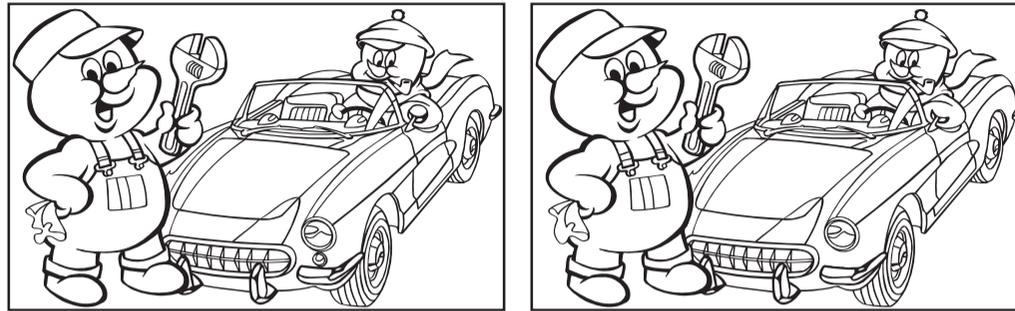
Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
Your natural curiosity is aroused by a comment this week. This leads you to see others in a different light. Before letting your imagination run away with you, ask a few questions.

Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
Avoid letting plans for the New Year take up so much time that you cannot be flexible. Showing your gentle side brings a good response. Be kind to someone who expects the opposite.

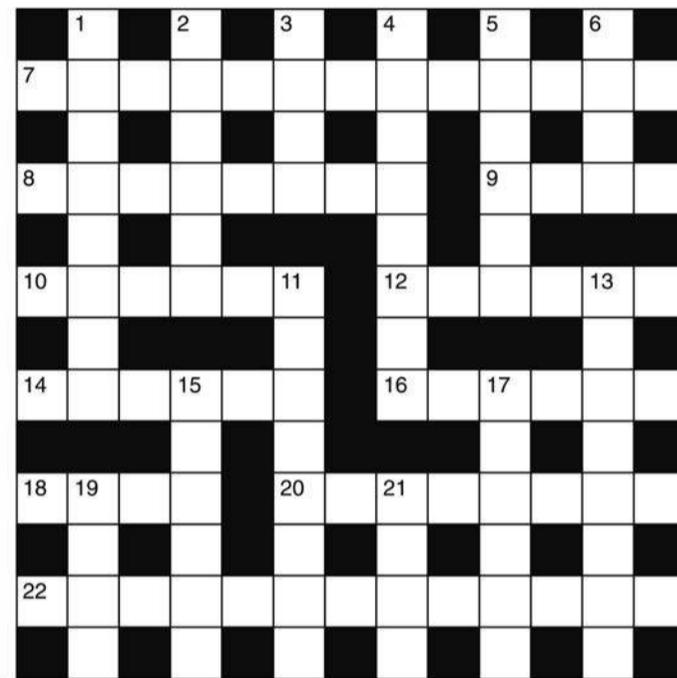
Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
Within all the fun and festivities you may try to do too much. Burning the candle at both ends could leave you with a very short wick!

Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
Be adventurous at the weekend when invited somewhere new. In a lucky period, make the move that could change your fortunes.

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11326



Across

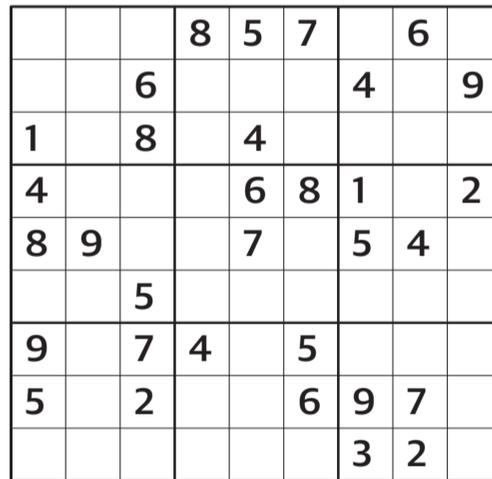
- 7 Confirmation that fabulous bird returned to steal speech (13)
- 8 About 50 are rivals to finish (8)
- 9 Mean? So be it! (4)
- 10 Swear about nothing in the process (6)
- 12 Are not decorated (6)
- 14 Entertain with kingly letter (6)
- 16 Visions of 500 packets of paper (6)
- 18 Square 2 (4)
- 20 They are out after a catch (8)
- 22 Black driving that has cut journey times? (3,10)

Down

- 1 Doctor hasn't any change for note - it's all one pitch (8)
- 2 Fitting support by the sound of it (6)
- 3 Clever abstainer leaves tablet (4)
- 4 Release hothead with ancient absolute possession (8)
- 5 Stress the street gets a downpour (6)
- 6 500 to 1 it's finished (4)
- 11 In which the winner gets cross more times than his rivals (8)
- 13 The noise of a redesigned motor after midnight tonight (8)
- 15 Unexpected bar put out (6)
- 17 Silent way to join up (6)
- 19 9 with nothing for a portent (4)
- 21 A shivering fit among the beleaguered soldiers (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



THE WORDPUZZLER

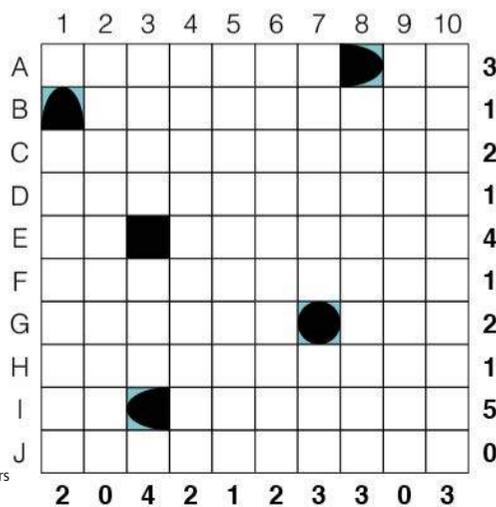
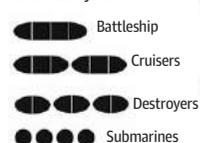


Can you identify the words that may follow 'air' from the clues listed below?

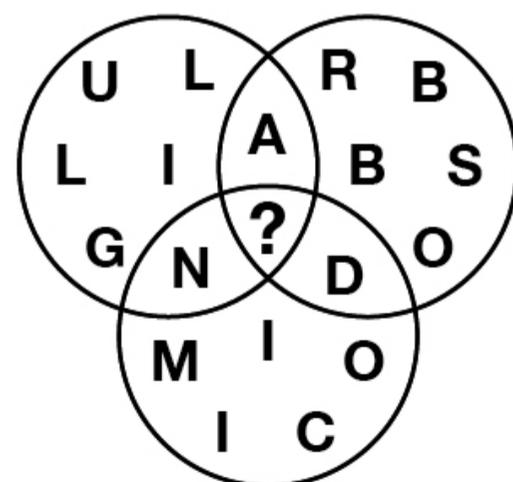
- 1. Shotgun
- 2. Interrogate
- 3. Cot
- 4. Send
- 5. Coercion
- 6. Footwear item
- 7. Factory
- 8. Attack
- 9. Container
- 10. Unit of distance

BATTLESHIPS

Instructions Find where the fleet of ships (1 battleship, 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 4 submarines) are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some have been filled in to start you off.



CIRCLEGRAM



Instructions
Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters in each circle can be arranged to form words, names or terms on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

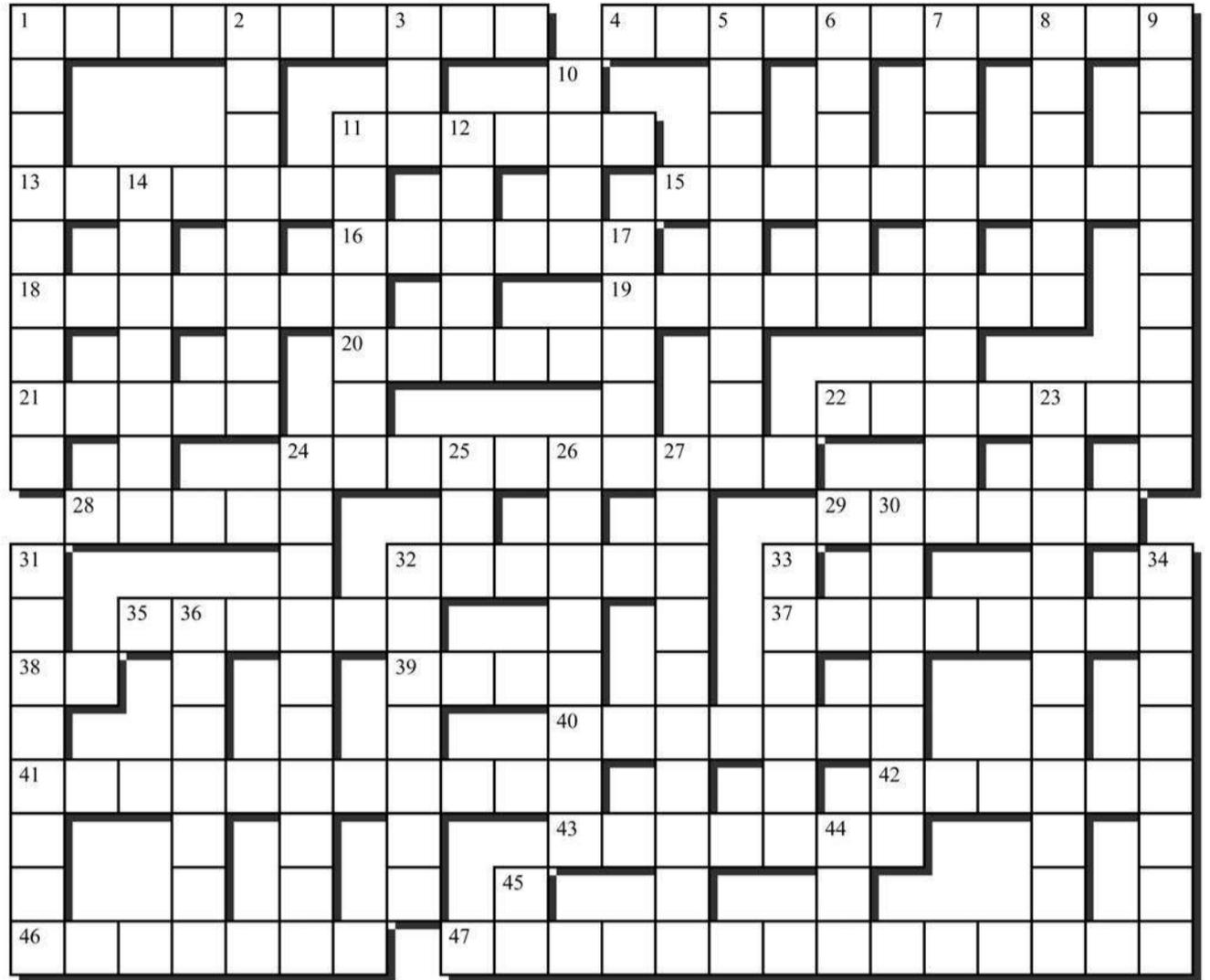
LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD

Across

- 1) Documentary (10)
- 4) To cheat (5,6) (11)
- 11) Exit (6)
- 13) Referee (7)
- 15) Steroids (10)
- 16) Drink (6)
- 18) Tourism (7)
- 19) To share (9)
- 20) Risk (6)
- 21) Red (pl) (5)
- 22) Goalkeeper (7)
- 24) To commiserate (10)
- 28) Tribe (5)
- 29) White (6)
- 32) Ball (6)
- 35) Textile (6)
- 37) Half time (8)
- 38) You (2)
- 39) Dawn (4)
- 40) Defender (7)
- 41) Exercising (11)
- 42) Doping (6)
- 43) Secret (7)
- 46) Slices (7)
- 47) Midfielder (14)

Down

- 1) Striker (9)
- 2) Maltese (pl) (8)
- 3) Aunt (3)
- 5) I will consume (9)
- 6) Recipe (6)
- 7) Cake-making (10)
- 8) To bite (6)
- 9) Accusation (9)
- 10) Age (4)
- 11) Bribe (7)
- 12) Free (5)
- 14) To shuffle (7)
- 17) He takes in (5)
- 23) Found (pl) (11)
- 24) Body-builder (10)
- 25) Foot (3)
- 26) Drugged (pl) (8)
- 27) To qualify (10)
- 30) List (7)
- 31) To train (8)
- 32) Banana (7)
- 33) Where (6)
- 34) He suspects (8)
- 36) Energy (7)
- 44) Aunt (3)
- 45) From (2)



ANSWERS

Quiz answers

Answer : Dwarf actors.
Of interest: Casting for the Christmas parties usually starts in spring and as Snow White and the Seven Dwarves is one of the most popular of all, dwarf actors are in high demand and are booked early.
Answer: Sending cards.
Of interest: In 1843, Henry Cole introduced the world's first commercial Christmas card, commissioning artist John Callcott Horsley to make the artwork. He is also believed to have designed the worlds first postage stamp, the Penny Black.

Language Crossword

ACROSS:
 1. DOCUMENTAL 4. HACIENDA
 2. COMPAÑEROS 28. TRIBU 29. BLANCO
 3. PELOTA 35. TEXTIL 37. DESCANSO
 38. TI 39. ALBA 40. DEFENSA
 41. ERCTANDO 42. POPAJE
 43. SECRETO 46. RODAJAS
 47. CENTROCAMPISTA
DOWN:
 1. DELANTERO 2. MALTESES 3. TIA
 5. CONSUMIRE 6. RECETA 7. REPOSTERIA
 8. MORDER 9. ACUSACION 10. EDAD
 11. SOBORNOS 12. LIBRE 14. BARAJAR
 17. ACOGE 23. ENCONTRADOS
 24. CULTURISTA 25. PIE 26. DRÓGADOS
 27. CLASIFICAR 30. LISTADO
 31. ENTRENAR 32. PLATANO 33. ADONDE
 34. SOSPECHA 36. ENERGIJA 44. TIA 45. DE

Cryptic Crossword

Solutions: Across: 7 Corroboration; 8 Complete; 9 Amen; 10 Course; 12 Ornate; 14 Regale; 16 Dreams; 18 Four; 20 Trawlers; 22 Jet propulsion. Down: 1 Motone; 2 Proper; 3 Able; 4 Freehold; 5 Strain; 6 Done; 11 Election; 13 Tomorrow; 15 Abrupt; 17 Enlist; 19 Omen; 21 Ague.

Wordpuzzler solution

1. Rifle
 2. Pump
 3. Bed
 4. Mail
 5. Force
 6. Sock
 7. Plant
 8. Raid
 9. Bag
 10. Mile

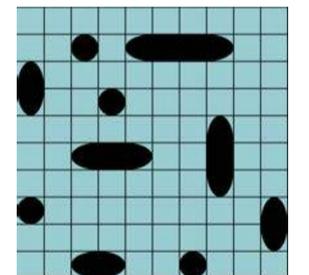
Sudoku solution

2	6	7	3	5	8	1	4	9
9	5	1	2	7	4	3	8	6
4	8	3	6	1	9	7	2	5
5	1	2	4	9	6	8	3	7
7	9	6	1	8	3	4	5	2
8	3	4	5	2	7	9	6	1
6	4	9	7	3	5	2	1	8
3	2	8	9	6	1	5	7	4

Circlegram

The letter represented by the question mark is A. Anguilla, Barbados, Dominica, all Caribbean islands.

Battleships



WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?



Whirling in the wind

Last week: Fuengirola

This monument to the peseta is located in the Paseo Marítimo Rey de España. It was created by local artist and sculptor José Gómez Guerrero, and was the first in Spain dedicated to the old currency which went out of circulation in 2002.



THE SUR IN ENGLISH CORNER

Season's greetings

With this last edition of SUR in English before Christmas we are about to launch into more than two weeks of special events. The festive season in Spain starts this weekend and goes on literally throughout the entire 12 days of Christmas.

It's the perfect time, once the British-style celebrations have fizzled out by Boxing Day, to really enjoy Christmas. Until 6 January the streets are still bustling with people buying gifts on behalf of

the Three Wise Men. The Christmas lights and carol singers still have that same power of excitement as they do on Christmas Eve and there's plenty of time to enjoy the numerous crib scenes set up around the region.

Whatever you do, don't forget to pick up your copy of SUR in English, out as usual on Friday 28 December and Friday 4 January, and as always, contact us at surinen-english.su@diario-sur.es. Season's greetings!





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Two thousand young voices herald a multicultural Christmas

Schoolchildren took to the steps of Malaga cathedral to sing and bring some unexpected festive cheer to tourists and passers-by

REGINA SOTORRÍO

MALAGA. Passers-by in the Plaza del Obispo in Malaga city were wished a "Merry Christmas" in English, German, Romanian, Turkish and even Swahili on Thursday morning as some 2,000 schoolchildren took to the steps of the cathedral for a special carol concert.

In the presence of bishop Jesús Catalá, the municipal band accompanied the children, who sang some of the most popular 'villancicos', or Span-

ish Christmas carols, such as Las Barbas de San José, Los Peces en el Río, Arre Borriquito, Campana Sobre Campana and Noche de Paz, the latter being the Spanish version of Silent Night.

The singing lightened the mood around the cathedral on an overcast day as tourists stopped to take in an unexpected moment of festive cheer during their tour of the city and locals joined in, singing the more well-known verses. The young singers were all students from schools that form part of the Fundación Victoria diocese group.

It was a special day for the youngsters, many of whom had to be hushed because, although they performed with absolute professionalism, at the end of the day they are still children.



The municipal band accompanied the schoolchildren on the cathedral steps on Thursday. **MIGUE FERNÁNDEZ**

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- 27 January · Vanilla



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