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FOOTBALL

A weekend of uncertainty for Malaga

Juan Ramón Muñiz's side are still unsure if their clash against Reus will go ahead **P44**



A NEW YEAR BLOSSOMS

Flowers are already appearing on almond trees across the province thanks to the recent warm weather spell **P6**

Almond trees in bloom in the Cerro del Águila with Malaga city in the background. :: NITO SALAS

Road deaths on the Costa are the lowest since records began

In 2018 there were 19 fatalities on the province's road network, 53 per cent down on a year earlier, helped by technology improvements, say experts

Despite the individual tragedy in each of the fatal road accidents on Malaga province's road network in 2018, data shows that there were fewer deaths than any year since records began.

After three years of increases, the figure dropped back to 19 deaths last year, a reduction of 53

per cent on 2017.

Compared to twenty years ago, when annual deaths on the road network connecting towns and villages on the Costa del Sol were well over 100, the latest figure is a staggering improvement helped by stiffer penalties, better awareness and improved car technology. **P8**

More workers needed for olive picking as the sector experiences a labour shortage **P2&3**

Vox threaten to derail new regional government by insisting gender violence plan is changed **P18**

Iconic chef Santiago Domínguez retires after 60 years of cooking for the stars in Marbella **P34**

The Three Kings arrive for the festive season's finale

Colourful processions will take place this weekend as the Wise Men come bearing gifts **P22**



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The olive oil industry needs workers

Many farmers in Malaga have not been able to harvest their olives yet because of a lack of labourers



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The economy in the province has picked up and many farm labourers have decided to take jobs in other sectors instead

MALAGA. Olives are by far the most important crop for the Malaga farming industry. The province has 130,000 hectares of olive groves, more than all the others in Andalucía put together, and 23,000 farmers make their living from this business. Last year alone, turnover was 254.5 million euros, of which 216 million came from olive oil and 38.5 million from edible olives. It accounts for 31.6 per cent of total agricultural turnover in the province, which in 2018 was 803.7 million euros.

These figures highlight the enormous importance of the olive industry in Malaga. In addition, the sector provides work for more than one million casual labourers every year, either picking the olives or in the mills. The Comisiones Obreras union says 30,000 people are employed in the farming sector of Malaga, of whom 14,000 form part of the agricultural development scheme known as PEFEA (formerly PER).

It may sound as if there is plenty of labour available in the countryside, but in fact farmers have been unable to find anyone to pick the olives during this latest harvest and it has become a major problem for many, especially those with small farms. Many are now offering higher wages in order to ensure their harvest gets picked.

“Not even in the years of the eco-



Two labourers spread the nets out on the ground to collect the olives as they fall from the trees. :: SALVADOR SALAS



The harvest is expected to be good this year. :: SALVADOR SALAS

nomie boom, when so many workers moved to other sectors such as construction, was the situation this bad” says Gonzalo Ramírez, a 29-year-old who owns land with more than 9,000 olive trees in Bobadilla. “There simply isn’t anyone who wants to do the job this year”.

Francisco Moscoso agrees. He is the provincial secretary of the UPA union and grows olives in Cuevas de San Marcos, a village on the boundary with Cordoba province. He says the lack of workers is a problem which is affecting the whole of Andalucía.

The overall picture for this sector since the olive harvesting season began in October is that the harvesting machines are lying idle because of the lack of workers and there is a major problem in training new ones for

the season. Some growers are worried because their olives have been on the trees for weeks already and the price of olive oil is expected to drop very soon.

Causes

Why is there such a lack of workers to pick olives in Malaga this year? The president of the young farmers’ association Asaja Malaga, Baldomero Bellido, says one possible reason is that many olive growers, in Malaga and the rest of Andalucía, have started picking earlier because of fears that the price of olive oil was going to drop. “The forecasts are that it will be a good olive harvest this year, in Spain and abroad. This increase in supply is making many people think that the price of oil will go down, so they wanted

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to harvest the olives early," he says. This has led to a shortage of experienced pickers in many places in Andalucía, but Bellido hopes things will improve once the earliest harvesting has been completed and the teams are free to work elsewhere.

Some farmers also wanted to pick their olives as early as possible because they are afraid they will be stolen. The longer the olives stay on the trees, the greater the risk that one day the farmers will get up and find they have gone. Gonzalo Ramírez is just one of those who share that concern.

However, that is not the only reason. Sources at Asaja say the economy in the province has improved and there are jobs in the construction industry again, so many people who would normally pick olives have chosen to work on building sites instead.

"Some teams who have picked olives for years have found jobs in the construction or service sectors now," says José Luis Navarro, the owner of a company in Antequera which provides temporary staff, including for the olive harvest. This year they have been able to supply two teams of workers, one less than in 2017.

There is also a generational problem, where olive farmers have grown older and their children have not wanted to continue in the family business. This has resulted in more companies being set up to maintain the olive groves and deal with the harvesting as well.

"Nowadays more farmers are encountering problems in finding

"This is hard work. If Ronaldo, the footballer, had a go at it he wouldn't last more than about three minutes"

teams to pick the olives so they are turning to one of the companies that do it instead," says Ramírez, who has his own brand of olive oil, Cortijo El Solano, produced from the olives he grows.

Immigrants

There are also fewer migrant workers this year. "Many went back to their own countries during the economic crisis, or they have moved to other EU countries where the economic situation is better than in Spain," says Baldomero Bellido.

In the Antequera area there used to be teams of Romanian olive pickers, and also in La Axarquía, where the lack of labourers for the olive harvest is now endemic although there are plenty of Arab workers in the area.

For Andrés González Gato, who is the secretary of the CCOO union's industrial department in Malaga, another reason for the lack of olive pickers could be that temporary jobs available under the Agricultural Training Plan (PFEA) have coincided with the harvesting of olives to make olive oil.

González is calling for the sector to sit down with the unions and negotiate better salaries and



Many farmers now use machines as well. :: S. SALAS

working conditions. One of the biggest problems with agricultural work, he says, is that it is seasonal and many workers would prefer to find more stable employment in other sectors.

He also considers it necessary to reconsider the complementary assistance paid to agricultural workers, so they would be able to work at peak times. He would also like better training to be available for such workers, to provide them with better job opportunities.

New types of farming

The problems in finding labour on olive farms and new trends in growing are leading to the design of new plantations with more efficient production and faster harvesting, using more machines and

fewer labourers.

At present the teams who pick olives consist of about ten people. In future, super-intensive olive farms will be able to harvest mechanically, using a machine which shakes the fruit from the tree into a bin and just three workers.

"At least, that looks to be the way things are going," says Bellido, who also explains that the trees in the new plantations are smaller and have a single trunk and not three or four as at present.

Although the growers say this is a temporary problem, in reality young people in general prefer to work in other sectors where they have a better chance of getting a permanent job so it is very likely that there are going to be vacancies for workers on olive farms for a long time to come.

Hard work and you need to be fit

Mechanisation of the olive harvest has marked a before and after for the industry. "The work used to be much harder because it all had to be done manually. The olives were picked up from the ground by hand and put into sacks. Nowadays sheets or nets are spread onto the ground to collect them, and teams of about ten workers can do the harvesting in half the time. In the old days at least 100 people would have been needed," says Francisco López. This 62-year-old farm worker is from Alcalá del Valle, in Cadiz province. Every day he travels about 80 kilometres to work on the olive harvest in Bobadilla. He says you need to be physically fit for this job, and not everyone can do it. "If Ronaldo, the footballer, had a go at it he wouldn't last more than three minutes. You have to work fast and if one person is slower it holds everyone else up," he explains. Normally, working a six and a half hour day, a team can strip 100 to 120 trees. Here, each worker is paid the same amount per day (56 euros). Andrés González of CCOO says the average is 43.88 euros, and for those who work with a machine it is 45.87.

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Dead man had been stabbed before being thrown from car on seafront

The victim was a Spanish national who was hit by a passing car on Malaga's Paseo Marítimo but the motive for the killing is still unclear

:: JUAN CANO / ÁLVARO FRÍAS

MALAGA. Police are hunting for those responsible for the mysterious death of a man of Spanish nationality who was found on the main road alongside Malaga's Paseo Marítimo.

The man had been thrown out of a vehicle with multiple stab wounds and subsequently run over by a passing car that was unable to avoid the victim in time. First indications are that this was a revenge killing or a score-settling.

The grim discovery was made around 6am on Sunday morning on the stretch of road alongside the La Malagueta beach. Emergency services received various calls from passers-by.

Although the victim was not carrying any identification, police have confirmed that he was a 32-year-old Spanish national with a criminal record, although this record is not linked to the traffick-



A police forensic van at the scene this week. :: SUR

ing of drugs, they stressed.

Officers are now investigating the dead man's movements prior to last Sunday, trying to identify if he had enemies and what the likely motive was for the killing.

The victim was not carrying any ID but police have now identified him

So far they have not said they have any more leads to go on.

National police take charge

Initially the Local Police attended the scene, believing that the man had been victim of a less-complicated road accident. However a first glance by officers at the man and his stab wounds saw the investigation passed over to National Police immediately.

The driver of the car that hit the man tested negative for drugs and alcohol.

Manilva arrest drug gang run "like a football team"

:: J. CANO / A. FRÍAS

MALAGA. The Guardia Civil has been giving details of two recent successful operations in the fight against drug smuggling from North Africa to the Campo de Gibraltar area.

In the highest-profile operation, officers have arrested a drug trafficking boss in Manilva known for training his smuggling group with the same discipline as a football team.

According to sources, the man had been a player for La Balona, the biggest football team in the Campo de Gibraltar area, and had transferred those skills into the management

of the gang he led. Investigators say that not only did he gameplay the shipments with them, but also coached them to make sure all would go well and provided feedback to correct mistakes.

The operation to break up the group, which started last September, has led to the arrest of 21 members of the so-called "footballers" gang in Manilva, where the leader has a villa.

The gang members had fled there on fast boats after being caught unloading a shipment on a beach near Sotogrande. The Guardia Civil seized 57 bails of hashish on the beach

weighing 1.75 tonnes.

Further operational success

The Guardia Civil has also reported on another recent successful operation. A further 21 people were held over shipments between Ceuta, on the North African coast, and Tarifa and Algeciras. Those arrested used semi-rigid power boats and similar leisure craft to bring consignments into marinas. The drugs seized in this separate operation was 1.5 tonnes and officers claim that the operation was bringing in around half a tonne of hashish a month into Spain.

During this investigation the Guardia Civil seized a van loaded with 1,300 litres of fuel on a beach in Tarifa. Officers also carried out various searches which led to the discovery of fake firearms and a large amount of cash.

112 REPORTS



The men in blue outside Malaga City Hall. :: SALVADOR SALAS

Malaga council gets serious with new kit for city's Local Police

MALAGA.

:: F. GUTIÉRREZ. Officers in the town-hall-controlled Local Police in Malaga city have been showing off their new equipment for special operations. The na-

tion's Local Police aren't know for their frequent intervention in serious disturbances or criminal activity, leaving that for the government's National Police instead. However sometimes needs must, and now the council has spent 100,000 euros on the new kit that also includes an extra adapted police vehicle and special protective and rescue tools.

New Year shootouts on notorious city estate

MALAGA

:: J.C. / A.F. Police say they have found around 50 bullets following two shootouts on a notorious housing estate in Malaga. The first incident in the La Palmilla area was at 2am on New Year's Day and the second one in the afternoon of the same day. Terrified residents phoned police and in one case a bullet entered a flat window.

Woman dies in moped fall in Benalmádena

BENALMÁDENA

:: SUR. A 37-year-old woman died in Benalmádena on New Year's Eve after the moped she was riding hit a car and then a barrier in the Torreblanca area of Benalmádena Costa. The accident happened at about 4.30pm and emergency services were unable to revive the woman when they arrived on the scene.

Over 330 calls to 112 in Malaga province at New Year

:: SUR

MALAGA. The 112 emergency service in Andalucía coordinated 330 callouts on New Year's Eve and the first few hours of 1 January in Malaga province, including the Costa del Sol, the Junta de Andalucía has said.

This represented 20 per cent of all the emergency calls received by the service in the Andalucía region.

The numbers are very similar to previous years over the same period, suggesting that 112 is now the principal generic number used to request an emergency service.

The two top categories for call-

outs were health emergencies, with 133 incidents, and public safety and police with 107. Traffic accidents were the third type of callout, reaching 22 in the period monitored from 3pm on 31 December to 6am on New Year's Day. The busiest time for people contacting the 112 service was from 4am to 6am.

The 112 service is free to use and multi-lingual, and the number is also used for all emergency services across the European Union, including police, ambulance and fire brigade.

Of the 330 callouts in the province, 117 were in Malaga city.



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Review your finances for the new year

By John McCann, Senior Partner, Blevins Franks

The new year is a good time to reflect on the previous 12 months and look ahead to what the coming year may bring. Make sure one new year's resolution is to review your financial planning to check it is up-to-date and on track to protect your family's long-term wealth.

Preparing for Brexit

Although the official Brexit date is just weeks away, there is still much uncertainty about what it will actually mean for British expatriates and when any changes will take effect.

If you are already formally resident in Spain, your right to remain should be secure. You can continue receiving the same access to healthcare and other benefits as you do today for as long as you are settled here.

But if you still plan to move to Spain or have not yet registered as tax resident, time really is running out. Even if a transition period is guaranteed, it is sensible to work towards the shortest possible cut-off date; so take steps to establish your settled status before 29th March 2019.

Tax planning

Regular tax reviews are crucial to ensure your investments and wealth are arranged in the most suitable way to limit your liabilities – wherever you have financial interests – while meeting your obligations.

Today, with the 'automatic exchange of information' regime well underway, it is more important than ever to get it right. Over 100 countries – including Spain and the UK – are already sharing data on residents' overseas income and assets. Your local tax office will receive financial information about you without having to even ask for it.

Last October, the UK government introduced tougher penalties for failing to declare offshore income, assets or activities accurately and on time. Now they can impose an unlimited fine and up to six months in prison where undeclared tax exceeds £25,000 in any tax year.

Cross-border tax planning is complex, so take specialist advice to achieve peace of mind and potentially secure significant tax

savings.

Savings and investments

The Bank of England (BoE) increased the UK interest rate to 0.75% in August – the first time in over nine years that rates reached over half a percent. While some banks eventually passed on an increase to savers, rates remain relatively low. Today's best rates for easy access savings accounts linger at around 1.5%, with up to 2.7% on offer for locking your cash away for five years.

Keeping savings in cash can be risky if you are not earning enough to keep pace with the increased cost of living. With the current rate of inflation still hovering above the BoE's target of 2% – reaching as high as 2.7% last August – many savers are actually earning a negative real rate of return. British expatriates have the added concern of exchange currency risk in what is currently a highly volatile time for Sterling.

Successful investing is about having a strategy specifically based around your personal circumstances, time horizon, needs, aims and risk

tolerance. You should ensure you have adequate diversification to avoid over-exposure to any given country (including the UK), asset type, sector or company. Using investment structures that allow multi-currency flexibility can help minimise exchange rate risk.

Remember to review your portfolio annually to take market developments into account, address any changes in your circumstances and take advantage of opportunities for residents in Spain.

Pensions

Today's pension landscape offers more choices than ever, but this may change with Brexit. For example, it is possible that tax-free transfers to Qualified Recognised Overseas Pension Schemes (QROPS) may be targeted once the UK sheds its EU obligations. Carefully weigh up all your options, as well as the tax implications in Spain and UK, to establish the best course of action for you.

Take regulated advice to protect your retirement savings from pension scams and do what is right for your personal circumstances and

aims.

Estate planning

It is important to review your estate planning when living in Spain, as both succession law and tax work very differently to the UK.

Your estate plan should be set up to achieve your wishes in the most tax-efficient way possible. If you remain UK domiciled – as many expatriates do – you continue to be liable for UK inheritance tax, so you should plan to reduce this liability for your heirs.

Whether it is investments, tax, pensions or estate planning, take personalised advice to establish the most suitable approach for you. Spending a little time on a financial health-check now can provide peace of mind that you and your family are in the best financial position to enjoy a prosperous 2019 and beyond.

New year. Key areas to review.

The big event for 2019 is, of course, Brexit – now is the time to review your financial planning to ensure you are as ready as you can be.

Cross-border tax and estate planning only gets more complex as the years go by. Pensions can be a minefield for expatriates. And it is more important than ever to have a carefully planned investment portfolio. Blevins Franks can review your strategy for 2019 and beyond to help you protect your wealth.

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IN PICTURES

The good weather has brought forward the almond blossom

High temperatures last month fooled the almond trees into flowering early

:: EUGENIO CABEZAS

MALAGA. The good temperatures registered throughout December and the almost complete lack of rain have brought forward the almond blossom in a number of areas of Malaga province, especially those exposed to the sun and closest to the coast.

The phenomenon, although not unusual, has surprised people on holiday who have ventured inland.

In the Montes de Málaga, in Almogía and Casabermeja, and in places in the Axarquía such as Arenas, Totalán, Sayalonga and Sedella, it is possible to enjoy one

of the greatest winter displays of nature in the province.

The peak floration period for almond trees usually starts from around 15 January and continues until mid-February.

Almond growing in the province is not as extensive as it was in the past; much has been substituted by more profitable subtropical fruit trees or olives.



Almond blossom in Almogía, with the village in the background. :: NITO SALAS



The first blooms appear. :: NITO SALAS



Flowers on the road to Arenas. :: E. C.



The trees on terraces. :: E. CABEZAS

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:: MIGUE FERNÁNDEZ

THE VERDIALES TAKE MALAGA BACK TO ITS ROOTS

Twenty-six bands took part in the traditional Fiesta Mayor competition last Sunday to find out who played the best verdiales (rural Malaga folk music) in Montes, Almogía and Comares styles. The tradition of verdiales goes back centuries and every year the Fiesta Mayor de Verdiales is celebrated in Puerto de la Torre.

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Accident deaths at lowest level ever on province's roads

There were 19 fatalities in accidents last year on the Malaga road network between towns and cities, a drop of 53 per cent on 2017

by JUAN CANO / ÁLVARO FRÍAS

MALAGA. Last year 19 people lost their lives on the road network in Malaga province, including the Costa del Sol. Not forgetting the human tragedy behind this figure, there is good news in that the number is a record low. This is the lowest number of people killed on the roads linking towns and villages ever recorded in a year in Malaga province. The data excludes deaths on local roads in urban areas.

The data has been compiled by Sur and confirmed by different sources, although it may vary a bit from the DGT national traffic agency's figures as that body also includes in its count victims who die in hospital within 30 days after a serious accident.

Whatever the method, the figure of 19 deaths in Malaga at the end of the year is an about-turn on the upward trend of the last three years

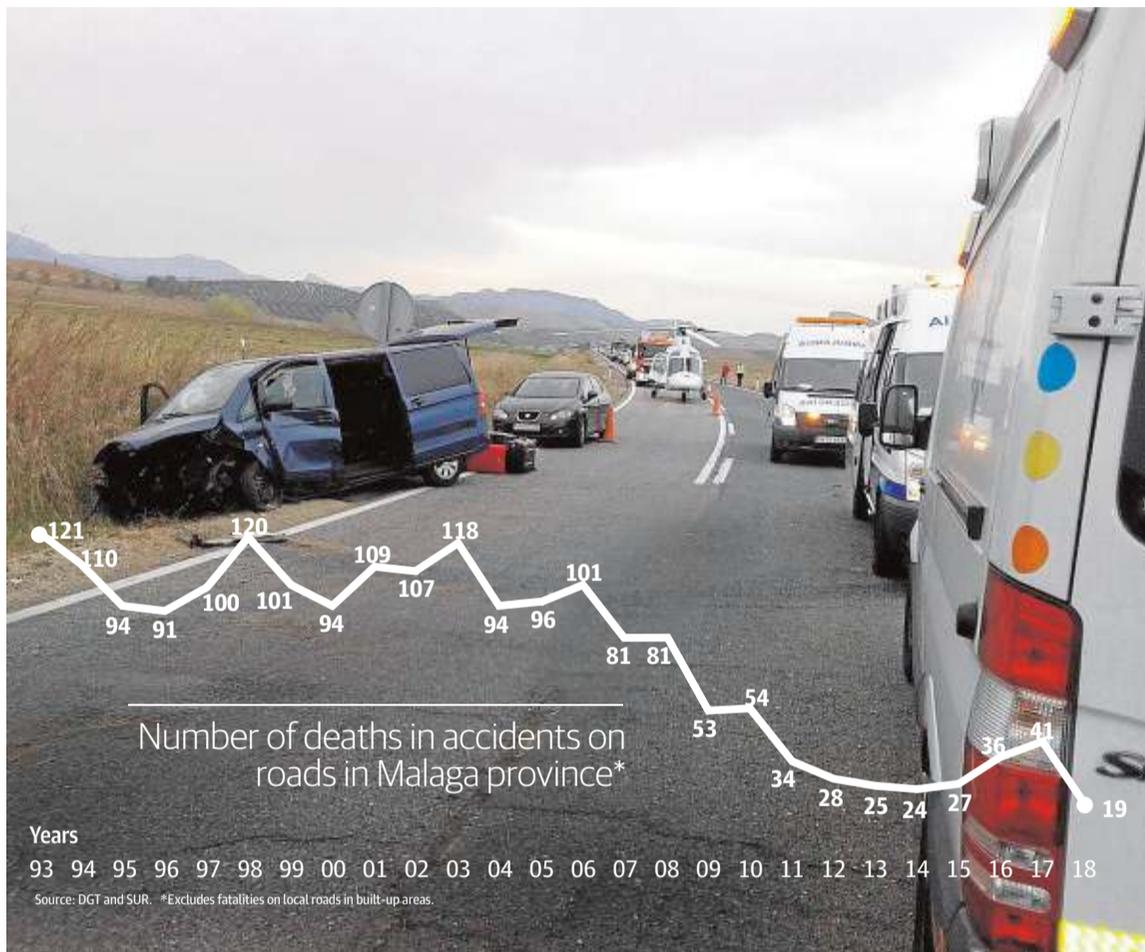
which was causing concern at both the national and local level.

In 2017 there were 41 fatalities, meaning the figures have gone down by more than half, (53 per cent), over the last 12 months.

Increase in journeys

The 2018 statistic stands out even more if we take a look back. Scarcely twenty years ago, the provincial road chiefs set out to reduce, or at least contain, the number of deaths on the roads at 100 per year. The increase in the number of cars and the extent of the main road network, as tourism increased, had seen the number of car journeys soaring along the Costa del Sol.

Once it was realised that reaching zero deaths wasn't such an impossible dream, the authorities later introduced a range of measures to lower the accident rate further: toughening up fines and criminal sentences; a licence points system; a network of fixed and mobile speed cameras; alcohol and drugs checkpoints; increasingly shocking publicity campaigns, and recently, lowering speed limits on single carriage-way main roads. The experts cite other factors behind the decrease, such as the improvement in the



quality of the roads and, above all, an improvement in car technology.

After years of decline, official road deaths on Spain's roads have increased in the last four years. Ahead of any official announcement on 2018 figures nationally, in 2017 Spain saw 39 deaths per million of population (a total of 1,830 fatalities), below the European average of 50.

IN BRIEF

Town halls in Malaga city and Torremolinos hail 2018 tourist success

MALAGA

by I. GELIBTER / P. MARTÍNEZ. The city of Malaga and its next door neighbour Torremolinos, are celebrating a successful 2018. In Malaga city, the hotel sector saw an extra 6 per cent overnight stays compared to 2017, which was a record year. This was despite competition from the increase in Airbnb-style accommodation. Malaga town hall said last week that there were 2.62 million overnight stays in the city, equivalent to 1.32 million visitors, of which 64.5 per cent were international, a five per cent increase on 2017.

In Torremolinos, the council has said that the resort has had its best year in a decade. Data shows that people are spending more money on their hotels after high levels of investment in renovating properties. In 2018, the average hotel spend was 108.9 euros a night, up from 91.3 euros in 2015.

Rise of eight per cent in seat capacity on flights to Malaga until May

MALAGA

by PILAR MARTÍNEZ. A survey has shown that there are eight per cent more seats available on flights programmed to and from Malaga airport up to May this year, compared to a year ago.

The analysis by Turismo Costa del Sol, the local tourism authority, says that from December to February, airlines are putting on an extra capacity of around 13 per cent which then drops back to 4.5 per cent from March to May.

The data also shows a recovery in the planned numbers of British and Germans visiting the Costa del Sol. Between December and May there will be seven per cent more flight capacity to and from the UK. In the first ten months of 2018, Malaga airport saw a decline in British visitor numbers of almost five per cent.

Ryanair is the biggest airline from the airport and will also increase its capacity further.

Russian collection sees visitors decline, confirms city museum annual data

by ANTONIO JAVIER LÓPEZ

MALAGA. Three top museums in Malaga run directly by the city council have reported their visitor numbers for 2018, and it is disappointing reading for bosses at the Russian Museum.

Whereas Picasso's birthplace museum and the Centre Pompidou more or less held their visitor levels, the Russian collection saw almost 26 per cent fewer visitor last year.

In 2017, 116,897 people visited the gallery, which is in the Tabacalera building on the outskirts of the city. It is part of the collection of the Russian State Museum of Saint Petersburg but run by the town hall. This number fell back to 86,506 last year, says the data.



A previous exhibition. by S. SALAS

The Centre Pompidou Malaga, a branch of the Paris museum, saw 165,522 visitors and Picasso's birthplace 125,905.

In the CAC Málaga modern art gallery, privately operated on behalf of the council, there was also a 30,000 decline to 475,044 visitors.

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Yearly population census figures for the Costa del Sol show most growth in Mijas and Vélez-Málaga

The recently-published data is from January last year and says that Malaga province had a population of 1.64 million, up 10,506 on a year earlier

:: PEDRO GARCÍA / AGENCIES

MALAGA. Central government published its annual census of the population for 2018 this week, and it shows a small increase in the population of Malaga province, which includes the Costa del Sol.

The data is based on those who were registered as resident on the 'padrón', (municipal census log), in the different town halls across the country on 1st January last year.

Malaga province's population at the start of 2018 was 1,641,121, an increase of 10,506 on the previous year. The biggest increases were in Mijas, Vélez-Málaga, as well as the city of Malaga itself.

Mijas grew by 3,481 between 2017 and 2018 and had 80,630 inhabitants on its 'padrón' on 1st January 2018. Vélez-Málaga increased by 939 to 80,817 and the much-larger Malaga city had 571,026, up 2,024 residents in a year

In terms of big resorts along the western Costa, all except Benalmádena grew by around 500 people. Benalmádena fell back about 1,500 to 67,746. In non-coastal areas, the rise in Alhaurín de la Torre of 858 residents stands out, bringing its 2018 population up to 39,911.

On a national level, just over half the provinces of Spain lost popula-



Mijas grew the most. :: SUR

tion between 2017 and 2018, and the national population total on 1st January 2018 was 46.7 million. Malaga province saw the sixth biggest increase in population, only exceeded by Madrid, Barcelona, Alicante, the Balearics and Santa Cruz de Tenerife. In Andalucía, the provincial capitals of Cadiz, Huelva and Seville all lost population.

Registration on the 'padrón' is a requirement for all residents, including foreigners, and it helps councils secure more funding and provides access to social services.

IN NUMBERS

1,641,121

people were registered on the town halls' 'padrón' census logs in Malaga province.

571,026

residents in the city of Malaga on 1st January 2018, 2,024 more than a year earlier.

3,481

is the increase recorded in Mijas, the Costa municipality that grew the most, followed by Vélez-Málaga (+939) and Alhaurín de la Torre (+858).



The site of the old CEPSA petrol station. :: T. BRYANT

Torremolinos town hall ordered to reopen pedestrianised street

:: T. BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. Torremolinos town hall has been forced to comply with a court order to reopen Calle Olivarillo, a project that will cost 150,000 euros. The road was pedestrianised amid a row concerning the closure of the CEPSA petrol station in 2006, which was ordered by previous mayor, Pedro Fernández Montes, due to a supposed problem with the opening license. CEPSA appealed the order and a ruling to reopen the facility was made by the TSJA in June 2009.

The problem was aggravated by the pedestrianisation of the access road to the service station, which was given the green light in 2010, after the ruling that annulled the closure had already been issued.

"The closure of the street was initiated by the PP and it was illegal and pointless," Maribel Tocón, councillor for urban planning, said.

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Renovation of the train station in Torremolinos to begin in the spring

The work, which will cost 7.5 million euros, will make the station fully accessible to people with reduced mobility

:: TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. Following a period of uncertainty, Torremolinos town hall has announced that the long-awaited renovation of the Cercanías train station in Plaza La Nogalera is due to begin in June. News of the proposed works was announced by José Ortiz, Mayor of Torremolinos, during a meeting with Ascensor Ya! - an organisation that has petitioned for the station to be made more accessible. The work, which will cost 7.5 million euros, will reform the station's existing facilities, making it fully accessible to people with reduced



The long-awaited renovation of the station will begin in June. :: T.B

mobility.

Torremolinos is one of the few stations on the Malaga-Fuengirola line that fails to comply with accessibility standards in Andalucía, despite registering an average of 6,000 passengers a day.

The escalator is only operational for people leaving the station, despite repeated requests for the station to be modernised to allow easier access for travellers with mobility problems and those with push-chairs and heavy luggage.



Councillors and club representatives with the food. :: SUR

Charity football tournament raises awareness of vulnerable families

:: T. B.

CÁRTAMA. CD Cártama football club collected several hundred kilos of non-perishable food items during a charity sports event last month.

The fundraising day comprised a series of friendly football matches held in the Joaquín Martín Díaz

sports complex in Cártama. Entry to the event was possible with the contribution of one kilo of non-perishable food, or hygiene and cleaning products, which was distributed among families in danger of social exclusion.

The goods, which were delivered to Cártama town hall last week, were accepted by Isabel Sánchez, councillor for Social Welfare, and Juan Rodríguez, councillor for Sport, who thanked the club for its assistance in supporting those in vulnerable situations, while also promoting sport among the youngsters of Cártama.



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Licence to run Cabopino marina goes to previous holder for now

A four-year interim contract has been agreed at last; if all goes to plan, the deal will be made long-term and improvements carried out

:: MÓNICA PÉREZ

MARBELLA. The company that has been operating Cabopino marina, at the eastern end of Marbella municipality, without a formal agreement has been told by the owners, the Junta de Andalucía's port authority, that it can have an official contract for the next four years.

The decision ends the state of limbo that the small, 169-berth, leisure port has found itself in since the previous licence expired, which has meant little investment in maintenance and no regular dredging for the last two years.

The new contract was drawn up in December in favour of Marina de Cabopino, the company that held the licence up to 2016. That firm has agreed to pay a fee of 110,110 euros a year and fought off competition from two other bidders, including the operators of Puerto Banús.



The last operator's licence expired in 2016 at Cabopino. :: JOSELE-LANZA

The new contract has a maximum four-year term. However as the company explained, "It doesn't mean that we have to keep the contract for the full four years.

"We're waiting for them to approve the port renovation plan that we presented a few months ago. Once that has the green light, the tender process can start for a long-term licence."

When this happens, the company will have first right of refusal of the

licence, providing it can match the lowest bid price of any rival offers.

The first licence for Cabopino port, issued in 1976, expired in 2016, and Marina de Cabopino, which held the licence as it expired, presented plans for an overhaul of the marina. However bureaucratic delays and the need to modify elements of the plan delayed the new contract bidding process. The Junta has ruled out taking direct control of the port.

Estepona to invest more per person than all other councils in Malaga province

:: CHARO MÁRQUEZ

ESTEPONA. The approved budget for 2019 at Estepona council has revealed some interesting facts and figures.

One key piece of data is that Estepona tops the list of municipalities in the province of Malaga for its planned investment per local resident. The council wants to invest 15.7 million euros in 2019, which equates to 236 euros for every person living there, according to councillors.

Another interesting figure is that 16 in every 100 euros in Estepona's annual income, mostly coming through taxes, goes to investment in

the municipality, says the town hall.

Debt reduction

According to the budget plans, the council's debt will also go down faster than expected. A key aim of the current council is to reduce the money the town hall owes from the 300 million euros debt it "inherited" when it took over.

The target reduction was originally 25 million euros a year, but now town hall bosses think the debt repayments can be increased and reach between 27 and 35 million euros a year. At the end of 2018 the debt had already been reduced to 150 million

euros.

The councillor for Finance at the town hall, Manuel Águila, has said that the debt with the tax authorities, the regional government, the provincial authority and private companies providing council services, which had stood at 39 million euros, has now been completely paid off. He added that the council has also settled the so-called 33 million euros of "invoices in drawers" that was "found" in June 2011.

Opposition councillors have asked for an independent audit of the debt to prove its origin and "which political party really generated it".



Material arriving at the resort's Palacio de Congresos. :: SUR

Marbella gets ready for world launch of Audi's new eco-friendly cars

The event will run from 22 January to 14 February and bring together 6,000 executives

:: MÓNICA PÉREZ

MARBELLA. Car manufacturer Audi has started setting up its global Audi Dealer Meeting 2019, which it is hosting at Marbella's convention centre.

The prestigious event will take place between 22 January and 14 February and bring together 6,000

executives from the company.

There are 200 people working round the clock on the preparations for the event which will launch an eco-friendly range.

The mayor of Marbella, Ángeles Muñoz, has highlighted "the important promotional opportunity for our town in the middle of low season, as well as the chance to show off the Marbella brand to media from different countries".

She also thanked the council-owned Palacio de Congresos for its efforts to sign up Audi, which is paying the venue 260,000 euros.

IN BRIEF

San Pedro survey backs pedestrianisation plan

MARBELLA

:: **M. P.** The district town hall in the San Pedro area of Marbella municipality has announced the results of a survey of local residents. Among the main findings is confirmation of local support for the recent closure of the town's main access road, Avenida Marqués del Duero, to traffic. The council's decision to pedestrianise had been controversial. In total 451 people completed the survey and 70 per cent said 'yes' to the move.

New green space opened in Cancelada

ESTEPONA

:: **C. M.** The council in Estepona has opened a new green space for the people of Cancelada, to the east of the municipality. In the new 26,000-square-metre space there is a football pitch and a park with gardens and keep-fit equipment.

The council hopes that residents and visitors will enjoy the views of the Guadalmanza river from new tables and benches. There is also a children's play area and a petanque game court.

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HERE AND THERE

Town hall accused of hiding USA trip expenses

MACHARAVIAYA

:: E. C. The vice secretary of Malaga's Partido Popular (PP) political party, Natacha Rivas, announced last week that Macharaviaya town hall has been accused of hiding information relating to expenses for trips made to the city of Pensacola in the USA over a five-year period. The trips have been made to mark events related

to Bernardo de Gálvez, who led the Battle of Pensacola during the American War of Independence and was born in Macharaviaya. Rivas said in a statement that members of the town hall, which is led by the opposition socialist PSOE party, did not present credit card statements and other information related to subsidies and other financial help to pay for the trips when asked to. Public funds were used to pay for town hall representatives and Macharaviaya residents to participate in the trips.

Tender call for Vélez-Málaga tram repairs

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA

:: E. C. Vélez-Málaga town hall has put out to tender a project to repair the damaged sections of the town's tram infrastructure, which stopped running over six years ago. Mayor, Antonio Moreno Ferrer, announced last Friday that interested companies had until 16 January to express interest in undertaking the work, which is expected to take nine months to complete once a contract has been signed.



Vélez-Málaga tram. :: SUR

Road closed for zebra crossing installation

PUENTE DON MANUEL

:: E. C. The A-7205 in Puente Don Manuel will be closed to traffic until 27 February for the installation of a new pedestrian crossing. The road closure is on the section of road from the A-402 towards Vélez-Málaga between the intersection on the Moraleda de Zafayona to Viñuela village road and the intersection with the MA-4104. A 1.5-metre-wide crossing is to be installed.

Historic building in Nerja town centre to be pulled down this month

The town hall is developing plans to replace the Giner de los Ríos with a multipurpose space with capacity for large-scale events

EUGENIO CABEZAS

NERJA. The Giner de los Ríos centre on Calle Diputación in Nerja, just 200 metres from the Balcón de Europa, is to be pulled down later this month, once the Christmas period has ended. Work to demolish the centre is expected to take around 30 days.

The building has been in use for over four decades and started its life as the Paz primary school for 25

years before being renamed after Maestro Joaquín Herrera. The building was then used at the headquarters for a number of local associations and workshop space before being converted into the town's Salvador Rueda public library. More recently it formed part of the town hall premises. The building is now showing signs of deterioration and architectural problems.

At the start of the new millennium, the then Partido Popular administration at Nerja town hall, led by José Alberto Armijo, developed plans to pull it down and build a multipurpose centre in its place. However, the town hall was unable to secure funds from other public sources for the project and it never came to fruition.

The current socialist coalition promised to go ahead with the plans set by the previous administration when they won the 2015 elections.

Space for large-scale events

The town hall hopes to construct a new multipurpose social and cultural space which would be able to hold both large-scale indoor and outdoor events. Councillors say that it would complement the existing Centro Cultural de la Villa, which only has a capacity for 300 people.

Current plans for the new building include parking spaces and it has been costed at five million euros. No further information has been given as to whether the plans have been confirmed.



Rakel and Daniel with parents and children of the school. :: E. C.

Swiss-Spanish pair hope to raise funds for community eco-school in the Axarquía

Daniel Stocker and Rakel Domínguez have been working on the project for six months and follow the Gaia education philosophy

E. CABEZAS

ALMAYATE. Two entrepreneurs, Daniel Stocker, 33, from Switzerland, and 39-year-old Rakel Domínguez, from Malaga, are hoping to open the first community eco-school in Spain. They have identified an area in the village of Almayate, which belongs to Vélez-Málaga, but need to raise 10,000 euros in order to kick-start the project and attract funds from other sources.

Domínguez and Stocker say the school follows the Gaia educational philosophy, which bases itself on the idea of environmental awareness as well as cultural diversity and social justice. There are currently

just two other Gaia schools in Europe (one in Estonia and one in Denmark), as well as schools in Brazil, India, Thailand and Hong Kong.

The school currently has around 50 interested families. "As well as Spanish families, there are a lot of foreign residents in the Axarquía area who are very interested in giving their children an alternative education which teaches the values of sustainability, community, respect, cooperation, charity and altruism," explains Domínguez.

The school caters for children under the age of six, until which age school is not obligatory in Spain. They currently use wooden huts for the classrooms but need better installations, especially for the winter months.

Domínguez and Stocker have been running the pilot school for six months and they explain that they need to raise 10,000 euros in order to attract further funds and build better classrooms.



The Giner de los Ríos centre is in Calle Diputación in the centre of Nerja. :: E. CABEZAS

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"Brexit is the challenge for this generation," warns deputy chief minister

In his New Year message Dr Joseph Garcia recognised there may be more problems ahead, but said Gibraltar would overcome any obstacles

DEBBIE BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. The chief minister will be broadcasting his New Year message on Monday, but deputy chief minister Dr Joseph Garcia released his on Wednesday, warning that Brexit is now the challenge for this generation.

"In less than three months' time," he said, "barring a major surprise, the UK and Gibraltar will leave the European Union. Gibraltar has already overcome a number of challenges in this, our collective journey forward. No doubt there will be more. However, we are confident at the same time that Brexit will bring new op-



Joseph Garcia, deputy chief minister of Gibraltar. :: SUR

portunities and that Gibraltar is ideally placed to capitalise on them. The strength of our people, our resilience, our determination and our resourcefulness will see us through whatever obstacles may be thrown into our path. That is the story of Gibraltar and

of the Gibraltarians".

After detailing the government's achievements in navigating the choppy waters of Brexit, Dr Garcia insisted it will "show the same determination to protect our country and to promote our interests".

IN BRIEF

Longer opening hours at modern art gallery

GIBRALTAR

Longer opening hours at the Modern Art Gallery in Montagu Bastion are to be extended from 14 January. On Tuesdays and Thursdays after that date the exhibitions can be seen from 11am to 6pm, while on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays the gallery will be open from 11am to 3pm as usual.

Gibraltar International Song Festival entries

GIBRALTAR

Entries for the Gibraltar International Song Festival, which takes place on Saturday 18 May this year, can be submitted until the end of this month. Composers from all over the world are invited to submit previously unpublished works, and further information can be obtained from www.gibisf.com

Gibraltarians receive New Years Honours

GIBRALTAR

Three Gibraltarians have been named in the New Years Honours list 2019.

Richard Mifsud has been awarded the Queen's Police Medal for services to policing in Gibraltar, and Assistant Commissioner Richard Ullger the Overseas Territories Medal (OTM), also for serv-

ices to policing, while Albert Douglas Langston has been awarded an MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for services to banking and lay magistracy.

The governor of Gibraltar has also given three local Honours Awards, to Dr William Fitzpatrick for services to healthcare, Stewart Louis Harrison for services to information technology education and Charles Marfe for services to the Calpe House Charitable Trust.



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Malaga is being held back by lack of space for e-commerce warehouses

A report by CBRE says that there is more demand for logistics bases in the area than supply, despite talk of new projects

BY IGNACIO LILLO

MALAGA. The rise in online shopping has meant many businesses have set their sights on expanding their distribution operations near the large population centres in Malaga province and the Costa del Sol. According to a recent report by property consultants, CB Richard Ellis, the demand for these types of premises currently outstrips supply.

The company's report, entitled Core Cities, says that local market demand continues to improve, driven by the economic recovery, a strong tourism sector and e-commerce. But there are not enough modern, large storage warehouses



Companies like Amazon are still searching for a distribution base. :: SUR

available.

The report highlights the future Megahub Andalucia, planned for Antequera in inland Malaga province with 3.3 million square metres of space, of which almost a third will be for distribution warehouses.

However lack of space right on

the coast near Malaga city continues to be the most urgent, short-term problem, although some smaller projects are in the pipeline. Amazon is the highest-profile company that has yet to decide to open a local base, despite plans to do so.

New year brings pension and minimum-wage increases

BY SUR

MALAGA. The new year has brought in increases to both pensions paid out by the Spanish government and the national minimum wage.

For pensioners who receive an income for the time they paid into Spanish social security, the minimum pension is set to go up three per cent and for those receiving more than the minimum, it will go up 1.6 per cent.

The minimum length of time that a pensioner has to be paying in to the state system to retire at 65 is

now 36 years and nine months. For those with less qualifying years, the official retirement age in Spain is now 65 years and eight months for those stopping work in 2019. This figure is rising progressively to 67 years by 2027.

The minimum wage also rose on 1 January. In the biggest increase for 41 years, it has been increased by 22.3 per cent to 12,600 euros a year. This was one of the conditions for the Podemos party to continue supporting the national government of the PSOE. More than 2.5 million workers are set to benefit from the

increase, which will also see more money flowing into the social security system through the increased payments from employers.

The government has said that "there is only a small risk that some jobs will be destroyed" as a result of the increase, however companies have suggested the impact could be worse as their costs increase, with 70-90,000 net job losses, according to different studies.

For the self-employed, the so-called 'autónomos', the minimum amount their social security payments are calculated on has risen by 1.25 per cent a month.

'Autónomos' will now also get improved social security cover. For example they will not need to keep paying into the system if they have signed off sick and will now qualify for workplace accident payments.

THE EURO ZONE
MARK NAYLER

WHICH DIRECTION?



Here in Andalucía, the political landscape is undergoing seismic changes. Following the region's elections on 2 December in which the incumbent Socialists (the PSOE) took a heavy hit, Ciudadanos and the Popular Party (PP) made a deal which saw them take control of the Andalusian parliament's speaker's committee last week. Ciudadanos' Marta Bosquet is now the new speaker of the regional government and it's likely that the PP's Juan Moreno will become Andalusian president later this month.

Although a triumph for the Spanish right (Andalucía has been a Socialist heartland for decades), the Ciudadanos-PP deal will sound alarm bells for the country's left, especially for prime minister Pedro Sánchez. On 26 May this year, there will be local, municipal and European elections in Spain, prompting one to wonder if the changes in Andalucía will be replicated throughout the country. There is also the far-right group Vox to think about: after supporting the Ciudadanos-PP deal last week, they're set to become a powerful force in Andalucía and, if they do well on 26 May, all over Spain.

A world of uncertainty is contained in those last few sentences, but one thing seems clear. If some combination of the PP, Ciudadanos and Vox becomes the next Spanish government, whether in 2020 or following an early general election this year, there will be a marked change of economic direction

from that being pursued by Sánchez's PSOE.

The prime minister's proposed 2019 budget - which has yet to be passed - has been criticised by PP leader Pablo Casado, who has called its raft of expensive welfare policies "suicidal". One way in which the Socialist leader proposed to fund them was with higher taxes, both on individuals and corporations - a move which is opposed by all of the right-wing parties set to take control of Andalucía. Vox, in fact, proposes eradicating inheritance, estate and capital gains taxes altogether.

Thinking of a possible shift in economic direction for Spain, though, gives rise to the thought that such a change might only be theoretical. This is because the current Socialist administration can't actually pass any economic legislation. Indeed, Sánchez's profligate budget remains a draft document even as we enter the year it's supposed to cover: his minority government holds just 84 seats in the 350-seat congress and cannot secure approval for the spending plan.

The Socialists' recent loss of power in Andalucía serves to highlight just how precarious their position has become. If Sánchez can't secure his absurdly delayed budget's approval in a parliamentary vote scheduled for later this month, he ought to call a general election before his term expires in 2020. And if that happens, 2019 is set to be a tumultuous and fascinating year in Spanish politics.

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Far-right Vox threatens to derail new Andalucía government deal over gender violence law

PP and Cs have agreed 90 future measures for coalition and a candidate for president must be nominated 16 January

:: SUR

SEVILLE. Political newcomers, Vox, have said they will refuse to support the coalition deal between the Partido Popular (PP) and Ciudadanos (Cs) parties in Andalucía unless a planned measure relating to violence against women is changed.

The PP and Cs need Vox's 12 regional MPs to vote for them if they are to form a coalition and oust the Socialist PSOE government from power in Andalucía after 36 years.

As part of negotiations to share power, the PP and Cs have drawn up a list of 90 measures that they will introduce if they are successful in getting a majority in a forthcoming vote for a new regional president. The measures largely follow a social agenda without concessions to far-right Vox in order to gain their support. Vox were the shock success in the regional election in December, winning 11 per cent of the vote.



Francisco Serrano of Vox takes his seat in the regional chamber. :: EFE

Article 84

Now the Vox leadership has broken its silence. Criticising the failure of the PP and Cs to involve them in the negotiations for a new political programme in Andalucía, the regional leader, Francisco Serrano, said on Wednesday that Vox would not vote in favour of the two-party deal if a measure covering violence against women was not changed.

In point 84 of the 90 point deal, Cs and PP promise to commit

enough resources to the fight against gender violence against women.

In contrast, Vox have said that they want to replace "ideological gender laws that stalk men with a law against violence in the family".

Last week, the Andalusian parliament voted in a new speaker from Cs, Marta Bosquet. A candidate for new president of the regional government, expected to be Juanma Moreno of the PP, needs to be put forward for a vote by 16 January.

Seat León heads the list of the top ten car models sold in Spain in 2018

:: SUR

MADRID. There were 1.32 million new cars sold in Spain in 2018, an increase of seven per cent on the previous year.

Seat was once again the top make of car sold last year, followed by Volkswagen, Peugeot, Renault, then Opel in the top five.

The top-selling model of car was the Seat León, with 34,897 sales, and there were several models very close together within the top ten.

Second-placed model in the national top ten was the Seat Ibiza, (31,392 sold); Nissan Qashqai,



The Seat León. :: SEAT

(31,287); Dacia Sandero, (31,310); Renault Mégane, (29,082); Renault Clio, (28,859); Volkswagen Polo, (28,173); Volkswagen Golf, (27,090); Citroën C4, (26,193); and the Peugeot 3008, (22,870).

In terms of commercial vehicles, such as vans, Peugeot and Citroën occupy the first two spots for the top makes, followed by Renault and Ford.

The data was released jointly on Thursday by the association of car manufacturers (Anfac), dealerships association (Faconauto) and car repairers group (Ganvam).



Santiago Cantera at the Valle de los Caídos. :: ALBERTO FERRERAS

Prior of Valle de los Caídos refuses to allow Franco's remains to be removed

Visitor numbers to the site near Madrid were up 34 per cent last year amid all the extra attention

:: ANDER ASPIROZ / EFE

MADRID. The latest complication has emerged in the government's quest to exhume the remains of dictator General Franco from his ceremonial resting place and rebury him somewhere less controversial.

Santiago Cantera, prior of the Valle de los Caídos (Valley of the Fallen) monastery, which is responsible for the basilica in the Madrid mountains where Franco is buried, has said that he won't al-

low anyone in to take away the coffin when the time comes.

Government sources have said that it is hardly surprising that the prior has objected as he has a far-right political past.

The Socialist government has pledged to remove Franco, who many consider to be inappropriately buried in the gigantic Spanish Civil War monument. But it is taking much longer than expected, as ministers have faced protests from Franco's family and the need to change the law, inadvertently getting the Vatican involved as well.

Meanwhile, it has been announced that visitor numbers to the Valle de Los Caídos site surged by 34 per cent to almost 379,000 in 2018 amid all the extra interest.

MBE delight in New Year Honours for British voluntary workers on the Costa Blanca

:: SUR IN ENGLISH

MADRID. Three British residents in Spain have been awarded honours by Queen Elizabeth II in the 2019 New Year Honours List 2019.

Ricky Garland, Elaine Mary Horton and Candida Wright are

all active in HELP, a charity helping older and vulnerable expatriate residents in the Costa Blanca.

Ricky Garland is a volunteer of HELP Vega Baja, Elaine Horton is president of HELP Jalon Valley and Candida Wright is president of HELP Denia and Marina Alta. All will receive the Member of the British Empire (MBE) award for their services to British nationals.

The British Ambassador to Spain, Simon Manley, said, "I am delighted that the commitment and compassion of Ricky, Elaine and Candida have been recognised."

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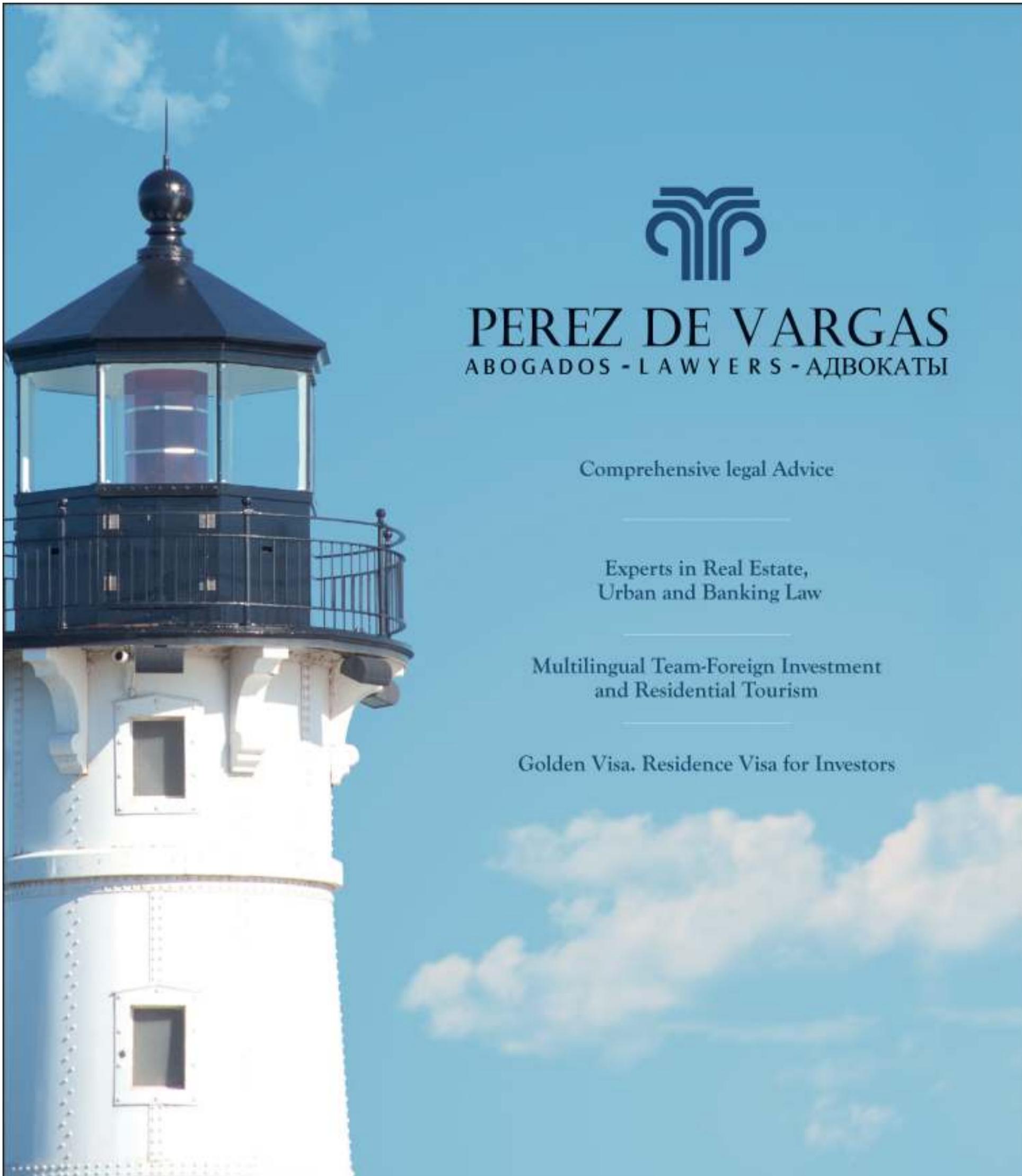
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LETTERS TO
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THERE IS A PRIZE FOR THE BEST CONTRIBUTION TO THIS PAGE
SO PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ADDRESS

Diesel, no thanks

Do you remember a few years ago when a diesel car was considered the best option? What happened to change that? Oh, it's because of pollution. Well, it would help to know that the merchant ships, the biggest fuel users on the planet, are going to switch to super unleaded, or perhaps to hear that sailing ships are coming back to carry goods across the seas.

Why are our governments so worried? I think it's great that Pedrito Sánchez has decided to forego using Falcon (his private jet) and instead start riding his bicycle to concerts with his wife. And watch how I'm [not] going to moan if I see them turn the official fleet of cars, which they use to go to the hairdresser or barber, into a pile of scrap metal. It cannot be true that the 'sacrifice' will be limited to re-

tiring all diesel vehicles and buying new ones with our hard-earned cash.

My wife tells me I'm a pessimist, that I always see the bad side of things, but I don't understand how we've fought for years to get the high-speed train line to Madrid, which shaves minutes off the trip, when the main problem is the length of time it takes to get there in the first place. Now they're trying to tell me that I need to buy an electric car, which might not have enough juice to get me all the way to the capital, meaning I'll have to stop on route to re-charge the battery, spending an hour at least having a soft drink. We just never wise up.

ROBERTO LANZA
BY EMAIL

Welfare over politics

I read (SUR in English, 21-27 December) of the new sewer plant at Villanueva de Tapia. This threw into contrast the absence of one in Nerja, now the only coastal town without one. In March, progress was heralded with the promise that it would be functioning by November.

Although now many years behind schedule, it would appear to be unfinished as yet. I

did write recently to Nerja council and to some individual councillors asking when it might come on line. I have not had the courtesy of a reply, despite this being a matter of great significance to the image of Nerja as a major tourist destination.

Are party politics more important than communal welfare?

ANTHONY SLADE
NERJA

Cars and effect

PETER EDGERTON
MUSIC MAKER WWW.E-PETER.COM

Anyone who happens to be wandering around a major town or city over the festive period surely can't help but be taken aback by the maelstrom of manic activity taking place at an extraordinarily breakneck speed. Cars hurtle and honk their way through the overcrowded streets, their owners presumably desperate to buy that last slab of Battenburg that no one will ever get round to eating anyway, before the cake shop closes.

It's at times like these that you realise just what a miracle road usage is. According to official statistics, there are over thirty million vehicles in circulation in Spain, most of which seem to be in the centre of Malaga at Christmas time. Thirty million! And there they all go, whizzing daily - and nightly - to their myriad destinations, for the most part perfectly intact.

Even one accident is too many of course, but I'm always amazed that there aren't thousands more little bumps and bangs considering the close proximity involved in most traffic circulation - it's frequently a matter of inches. If we factor in mechanical failures, squabbling children, bossy mothers-in-law, the double disgrace of mobile phone use and drink driving, health problems, poor eyesight, arrogant cyclists, fighting with your girlfriend, etc. it's truly astonishing that our roads aren't more akin to the old fairground dodgems that nobody ever really enjoyed when they were young except for the ubiquitous psychotic youth who always conducted proceedings sporting a devilish manic grin.

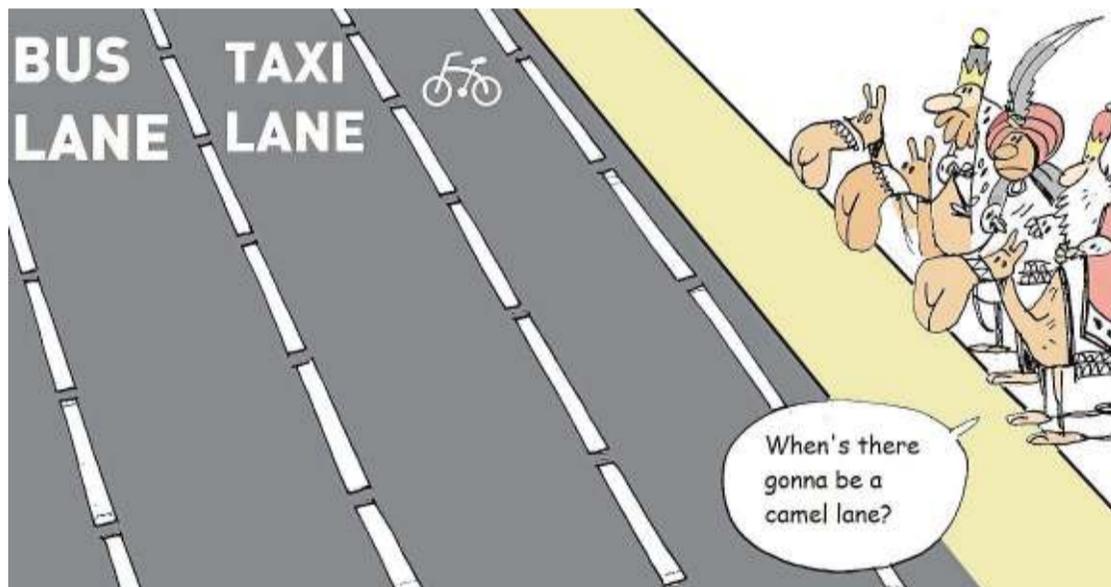
In spite of our constant carping about other road users, then, the vast majority of people drive re-

markably well, often in stressful circumstances.

It's quite a thing to be directing three or four tonnes of metal around a complex system of roads, lanes and highways, avoiding hundreds of others performing exactly the same task but very rarely sharing the same route. Imagine being a delivery driver under strict time constraints. Then imagine being a delivery driver under strict time constraints in a massive truck. On your first day. In a city you've never visited. With a broken leg. Only kidding about the last one but the more I think about it the more I think we should doff our caps respectfully to all those who - in spite of the extremely difficult circumstances - manage to drive safely day in and day out.

Now then, I'm off for that bit of that cake I never got round to eating at Christmas.

PACHI



SUR in English

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He never deserved to be end up as another statistic of the cruel abandonment, locked in a cage at the Sociedad Protectora de Animales de Málaga (Animal Protection Society Málaga). You left without looking back, with a clean conscience because at least you left him in the best possible place. "It would have been worse if I'd left him at the municipal pound- you told yourself, indolent and self-satisfied - because there they put them down."

The animal protection associations, which are there for the extreme cases, are at saturation point: irresponsible owners like you have spread like a plague and there is no physical way to look after one more animal. Another animal, waiting day after day, huddled in a corner of his kennel,

waiting for someone to take pity on him and give him a new home.

As usual, as soon as he stopped being an adorable furry toy he was pushed to one side. He began to hate being relegated to the role of hindrance, with no-one showing him the slightest affection, condemned to living locked in the

laundry room. Taken begrudgingly for a walk a couple of times a day; being beaten without knowing why. The vent of your multiple personal frustrations and your inability to raise that child with the minimum values that are needed to be a good person.

He didn't understand why you

dragged him by the leash into the car that fateful day. You then let him out at a petrol station and wouldn't let him get back in the car. Unable to fend for himself he ate rotting food he found in the rubbish and drank from dirty puddles, until fever and malnutrition made him weak and unable to re-

act when he wandered into the road just as a car was passing.

It could have been even worse. When those lads tempted him with a sausage and carried him off laughing, he thought he had found a new home. The dream was shattered with the agony of the first bite on the neck from the fighting dog which had been put in with him for a 'sparring' match.

If, at any time when you are reading this you think I am exaggerating, why not ask one of the volunteers or members of the protection society: the stories they will tell you will be even harder to bear.

No, that pet did not deserve to become another of the Kings' broken toys, thrown out with the rubbish without remorse. He just wanted to be part of your family, but you will never understand that.

Broken toys

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Spain eagerly awaits arrival of Three Kings

Children all over the country will be getting excited as they wait for Los Reyes Magos, the Three Kings bearing gifts on the night of 5 January

BY TONY BRYANT

MALAGA. The Costa del Sol, along with the rest of Spain, is getting ready for the traditional procession of Los Reyes Magos (the Three Kings, or Wise Men), the final spectacle of the Spanish festive season. Tradition says that the Three Kings, Melchior, Gaspar and Balthazar, followed a star that led them to baby Jesus and upon arriving, they offered gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh on the Twelfth Night.

For this reason, every year, as 6 January approaches, children begin to write letters to their favourite king. In these letters, the children tell the kings how well they behaved during the year and ask for the gifts they would like to receive. In theory, and in a similar manner to the tradition of Santa Claus, the better the children have behaved, the better their gifts will be. After this, comes one of the children's favourite moments, when they deliver their letters to the kings when they arrive on 5 January, or to the emissaries found in the centre of all towns and cities a few days before.

The Three Kings festival, as such, is not very widespread and is celebrated only in some Spanish-speaking countries, mainly because Santa Claus has prevailed elsewhere.

Gift giving in Spain is delayed until 6 January. The night before, the kings announce their arrival by means of a colourful parade known as La Cabalgata de Los Reyes. The streets are lined with thousands of excited children clamoring for the sweets thrown from the elaborately-decorated floats, accompanied by an array of cartoon characters.



The Three Kings as they made their grand entrance into Malaga last year. :: BEATRICE LAVALLE



The colourful procession makes its way through Marbella. :: JOSELE-LANZA

Costa del Sol

The processions embark on their journeys through the main streets of each town or village from late afternoon on Saturday, 5 January. Malaga's grand parade begins at the town hall in Avenida Cervantes at 6pm and runs through the main streets of the city centre, passing along Calle Larios, the Plaza de la Merced and on to Malaga Cathedral.

The procession in Nerja will begin in the Parque Verano Azul at 5.30pm, while in Vélez-Málaga, the parade will commence at 6pm from Plaza de las Indias.

Torre del Mar's event will start at 5pm in Calle Manuel Azuaga, and the celebrations in Churriana will begin at the municipal market at 5.30pm.

PROCESSIONS

► **Malaga. 6pm.** Town hall in Avenida Cervantes, Calle Larios, Plaza de la Merced, Cathedral.

► **Vélez-Málaga. 5.30pm.** Palacio de Beniel (on foot) **6pm.** Plaza de las Indias

► **Torremolinos. 5pm.** Plaza Blas Infante (town hall building) Avenida Los Manantiales, Plaza Costa del Sol.

► **Fuengirola. 4pm.** Arrival by helicopter at the Elola Sports Complex. **5.30pm.** Calle Mallorca, Avenida de Mijas, Camina de Coín, Avenida de Los Boliches.

► **Marbella. 6pm** Avenida Severo Ochoa (edificio La Zambomba), Avenida Ramón y Cajal, Avenida Ricardo Soriano, Plaza Monseñor Rodrigo Bocanegra.

Three processions will take place in Mijas at 5pm: Parque María Zambrano in Las Lagunas, Plaza Virgen de la Peña in Mijas Pueblo and from the Centro Cultural de Mijas in La Cala.

Three airborne kings will arrive at the Elola Sports Complex in Fuengirola by helicopter at 4pm.

The parade in Arroyo de la Miel leaves Tivoli World at 6.30pm, while in Benalmádena Pueblo, the procession will leave the Recinto Ferial Los Nadales at 4.30pm.

A grand procession will leave the Torremolinos town hall at 5pm and continue to the centre of the town, where five tonnes of sweets will be distributed to the crowd.

Other parades include Coín (Montesol at 6pm), Marbella (Avenida Severo Ochoa at 6pm) and Estepona, in Avenida Andalucía at 5pm.

Gifts will be opened eagerly on Sunday 6th, and this year, Monday 7th is a public holiday as well.

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Palatial living

They may be inconvenient, lack modern facilities and cost a fortune in maintenance, but the owners of some palaces and mansions love them and are determined not to let them be turned into museums or the headquarters of companies or institutions



ANTONIO PANIAGUA

There are palaces which stand out because of their magnificent gardens, and others for their sumptuous staircases. Some have impressive carved ceilings, and others wonderful libraries. Palaces may be embedded in walls or attached to a tower. Manor houses which are the envy of many, because of their beautiful interior patios. Buildings with carefully carved stone chimneys and areas where carriages, saddles and tack are still stored. Properties with overwhelming kitchens, enormous dining rooms and ancient

couches.

These are residences which are unmistakably aristocratic, lived in by families with a long lineage. Visiting them, walking through their rooms, whose plush carpets muffle the sound of footsteps, is like taking a trip back into history and art. Many of them can be visited because they are classified as Buildings of Cultural Interest (BIC), but anyone who wants to take their time exploring them, sitting comfortably in an armchair, can do so in the book 'Palacios y casas señoriales de España', which has recently been published by Turner.

This book, written by Ignacio González-Varas Ibáñez, a professor in the History of Architecture, is the result of the endeavours of Mariana Gasset, who has coordinated the work and persuaded the owners of the 38 palaces which are featured in it to open the doors of their properties to her.

As a result this book is a compendium of buildings of great artistic and architectural importance, whose interiors house impressive collections of furniture and objets d'art.

"We wanted to show houses which are lived in. Many of the pal-



Casa de las Dueñas

A bedroom in the Casa de las Dueñas (Seville). Above, the lemon tree courtyard of the palace, which dates back to the 15th-16th centuries and belongs to the House of Alba

aces which remain nowadays are being used as the headquarters of banks, foundations, official institutions or ministries. Not many of them resemble residences any more. People live in about 90 per cent of the houses featured in the book, although that doesn't mean they can't be visited," says Mariana Gasset.

Noble inheritance

There is no lack of palatial architecture to admire. The palaces of Los Golfines, Casa Pilatos, Medina Sidonia, Dueñas, Pazo de Oca, Liria, Marqués de Santa Cruz and many others are in per-





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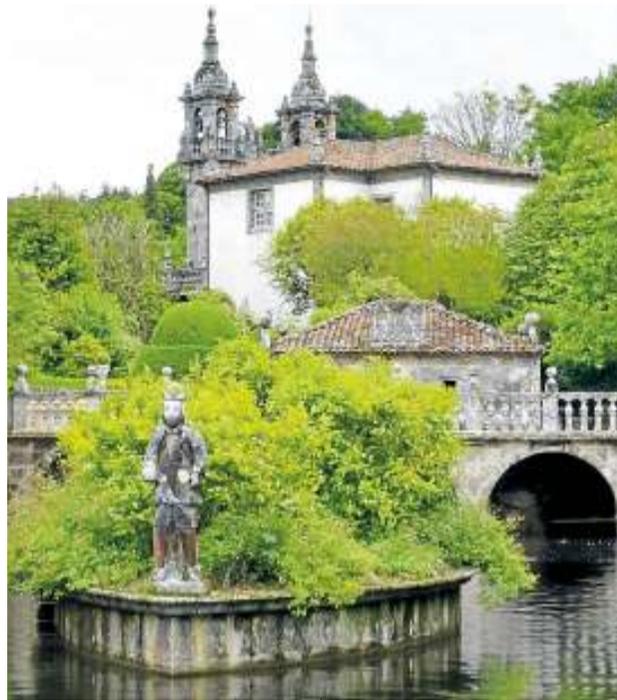
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Golfines de Arriba

In the oldest part of Cáceres. It dates back to the 14th-16th centuries and was owned by the Marquises of Espinardo.



Can Clota

In Esplugues de Llobregat. It is owned by Baron Vilagayá.

Pazo de Oca

In A Estrada (Pontevedra). Owned by the Dukes of Medinaceli.



Palacio Vinade

Murcia XVIII century.



Liria

Madrid. Dates from 1762-1780



Escribá y Boil

Valencia. 18th century.

Perfect condition: these are not piles of stones which have heroically tried to resist the passage of time. "Nearly all of them are owned by titled people who have inherited them. The properties are handed down from one generation to another; some of them have been in the same family for 500 years," say sources at Turner.

Despite their magnificence, some of these palatial houses may not feel exactly comfortable to stay in. When she went home after each trip, Mariana Gasset felt grateful to be surrounded by her peaceful, simple decor once again. "In one mansion, they showed me a bedroom in which Alfonso XIII had slept. The curtains hadn't been changed since. They were in tatters. However, because these houses are inhabited they are normally in good condi-

tion. But just imagine the cost of keeping the heating on in big stone houses like these," she says.

Mercedes López de Montenegro has inherited the palace of Los Golfines de Arriba, in the historic centre of Cáceres. The building, which dates back to the 14th and 16th centuries and belonged to the Marquises of Espinardo, is a sturdy construction with four corner towers, of which three still remain. Chess player Anatoli Karpov, Prince Philippe of Belgium and cyclist Mikel Induráin have all stayed here. Now Mercedes has left it temporarily, because her children are studying in Madrid.

"I've got the builders in at the moment because the roof is leaking. We're having to change 1,700 square metres of roof tiles, and the repairs are being done in two phases.

We also have termites, and have to apply a treatment every five years. The house is a burden in terms of maintainance, but I do love it. When we started to do the first restoration work we had a two million peseta grant, but that barely covered the cost of putting the scaffolding up," she says.

As lifestyle changed in the early 20th century, fewer people built palaces. Many of the existing ones were demolished: urban speculation and neglect have had terrible consequences for this type of architecture. In many cases the properties have been completely ripped out inside and now only the façade remains.

That is not the case with Can Clota, a palace which stands amid the traffic of Esplugues de Llobregat, a densely populated municipi-

Mercedes L. de Montenegro

"The builders are in at present because the roof leaks. We also have termites"

Eduardo de Delás

"I've never wanted to sell it; on the contrary, I'd rather get rid of other things to pay for it"

Carmen Martos

"Every now and again we have to do a complete restoration, but there are a lot of us so it's easy"

pality on the outskirts of Barcelona. The owner, Eduardo de Delás, Baron Vilagayá, insists that living in the palace is very comfortable. "I don't heat the whole house, of course, only my bedroom and a few other rooms," says De Delàs, who drives into Barcelona every day for his work in the real estate business.

"In the tower I have a library on two floors, and I keep about 18,000 books there. My favourite place is the gallery, which gets a lot of sun," he says.

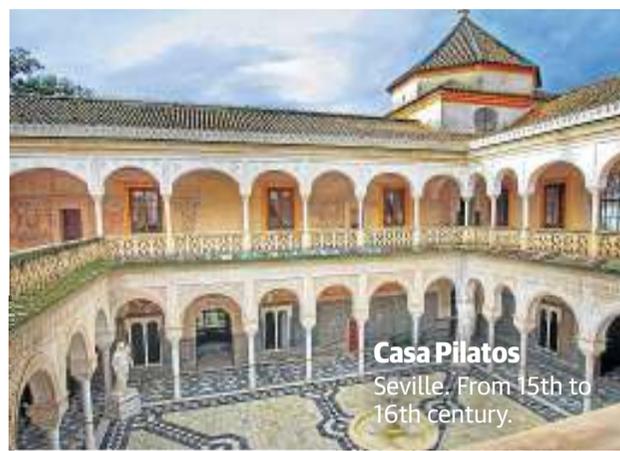
The baron doesn't see anything inconvenient about living in a house like this. He says he has had to carry out some repairs, although that hasn't been a problem because he has someone to look after the maintenance. "I have never been tempted to get rid of it. On the contrary, I would rather sell other

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Palacio de Narros
Zarautz (Gipuzkoa).
Dates from 1536-1541.



Casa Pilatos
Seville. From 15th to
16th century.



San Feliz
Oviedo. 18th century.

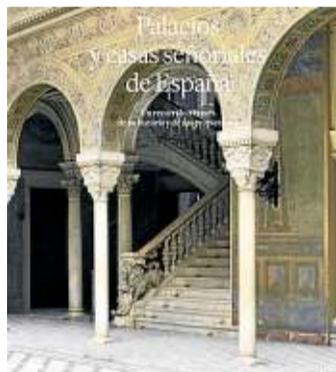
DETAILS OF HISTORY

Reconversion

Although there are many palaces and mansions in Spain, few are lived in nowadays. Most have been taken over by foundations or official bodies, reconverted or completely ripped out inside so only the façade remains.

Configuration

The structure of the nobleman's house is similar to that of Roman times, when the rooms were arranged around a central patio.



ding are Los Golfines, Casa Pilatos, Medina Sidonia, Dueñas, Pazo de Oca, Liria and Marqués de Santa Cruz, but they are all very special. These buildings have escaped modernity, urban speculation and the decline of the aristocracy. Some, however, have only managed to survive in the form of museums.

38

palaces and mansions are featured in the book 'Palacios y casas señoriales de España' (Turner). Among the most outstan-

things to pay for the palace," he insists.

The property, which dates from 1869, has a chapel, an entertainments room with a billiards table and a lavish living room with a wooden ceiling painted in rococo style.

Summer residence

Like Isabel II, who used the Palacio de Narros in Zarautz (Gipuzkoa) as a summer residence, Carmen Martos, one of the present owners, usually spends her summer holidays there. The manor house has hosted King Balduino of Belgium and his wife Fabiola, and celebrities such as Marlene Dietrich and Jacqueline Kennedy. It belongs to the Azlor family of Aragón, and is shared by about 15 people. "Every now and then we have to do a complete renovation, but as there are so many of us it is easy for us to do that," says Carmen.

In the middle of a bleak Manchegan landscape, there is a palace which comes as a surprise because of its desolate location. It was built by admiral Álvaro de Bazán in Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real, close to Valdepeñas). To silence those who criticised him for building such a monument in such a place, far from the sea, Bazán used to point out that he wasn't the first. "The marquis built a palace in El Viso in the first place because he could, and because he wanted to. So why shouldn't I?" he would ask.

Since the 1950s the building has

housed the General Archive of the Spanish Navy, which pays a symbolic rent of one peseta a year.

With their living rooms, offices, dressing rooms, oratories, antechambers, gardens and flowerbeds, more than a few palaces have been turned into museums which reflect the way of life of other eras.

The first of these mansion-museums was dedicated to El Greco, and was located in the Jewish quarter of Toledo. It was followed by others dedicated to Miguel de Cervantes, in Alcalá de Henares (Madrid), Rosalía de Castro (Padrón), Sorolla and Lope de Vega in Madrid, among many others.

According to González Varas, the structure of the noble house used to be based on that of a Roman house, with the rooms arranged around a patio. There was a special interest in the construction of palaces in the Early Middle Age in the 14th and 15th centuries, a time when their residential function was shared with the military one of towers and castles. It is for that reason that the palaces were often built alongside the towers, to make them more habitable and "to provide the family with a larger and more representative space to celebrate noteworthy occasions, such as welcoming important guests or signing major agreements", he says.

Some palatial properties, like Los Golfines in Cáceres and Can Clota in Barcelona, are examples of mansion houses which began life as a tower.

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On the day I braved the rain to see the Malevich retrospective at Malaga's Russian Museum - hesitating between catching a number 3 bus on the Plaza de la Marina and unearthing the new number 7 stop amid the metro excavation works on the Alameda Principal - Frédérique Deleuze, a French artist hailed for her cool portraits of 20th and 21st century heroes, had shared a striking likeness of David Bowie on internet. Emblazoned with the slogan "The Icon Is You", it stopped many of her Facebook followers in their tracks, as they scrolled through their breakfast notifications. I, for one, hit the share button. Then, as the morning rolled on, both her drawing and its engaging message stuck in my head, like a catchy tune.

Perhaps this explains why I walked away from the Malaga branch of the St Petersburg State Museum, a few hours later, not exactly Singin' in the Rain, but at least filled with a glorious feeling - Yippee! Could this be the real thing? The kind of cultural thrill art historians experience, when they uncover a missing masterpiece, or shed new light on a well-trodden theory?

I wouldn't go so far, but... I had already visited the brilliantly refurbished Tabacalera building, in the Huelin area, on several occasions and, upon reflection, none

REVIEW
GEORGINA OLIVER

MALEVICH SUPERSTAR

Remember, "You are the icon"



Malevich in the Russian Museum, Malaga. :: SUR

of the diligently documented historical exhibitions staged there had struck me as relevant to who we are now. By contrast, what I had just seen displayed on the bright-hued walls of Malaga's former tobacco factory was something else. I couldn't take my eyes off Malevich's faceless semi-abstract figures representing listless peasants set against stark backgrounds, barely suggesting boundless landscapes. Somehow, they reminded me of us here and now, of what we are fast becoming: not so much icons as avatars, heralding the advent of an algorithm-driven era.

Merci, Frédérique...! If not for that impactful image advertising your skills as a portraitist, key aspects of the museum's current homage to Kazimir Malevich (1879-1935) would most likely have escaped me. I might not have figured out the link between Russian icons; this pioneer of abstract geometric art's iconic black square; post-Warholian personal branding; and (what could be more to the point than an umbrella topic, on a rainy afternoon...?) human identity - past, present, as well as virtual.

Although amazingly modern, Kazimir Severinovich Malevich's

KAZIMIR MALEVICH
The temporary exhibition is at the Colección del Museo Ruso, the Malaga branch of the State Russian Museum in St Petersburg, in the Tabacalera building (Avda Sor Teresa Prat, 15, Malaga) until 3 February 2019.

brazenly unorthodox iconography did not come out of nowhere. How and why this revolutionary artist, the founder of Suprematism - a movement advocating the supremacy of non-representational visual sensations - reinvented the icon is rooted in the religious mysticism and popular folklore of his rural childhood. He replaced the sun with a black square and twirled it into a cross, prior to opting for multi-coloured shapes with a cosmic dimension, eventually revisiting figurative painting, and bowing out of the artistic arena with a nod to his Renaissance predecessors.

When he unveiled his emblematic Black Square in St Petersburg (by then renamed Petrograd), two years before the October Revolution, at an avant-garde event pitched as The Last Exhibition of Futurist Painting 0.10, he chose to hang it in the place traditionally reserved for sacred icons in Russian homes: nestled in a corner, high up on the wall.

"Remember, you are the icon," would be an apt motto or meme for this trailblazer, who added a mini black square, similar to present-day web icons, and the words "the artist" to the signature of his later works. An introductory video, strategically presented at the entrance, is a perfect preamble to the show. For some reason, I found myself thinking of another superstar as I watched it.

The author of a radical manifesto entitled "The Non-Objective World" (1927), Kazimir Malevich invented a brand-new mode of expression, which he described as "the zero of form". Though not exactly a household name, not sufficiently familiar to the general public to feature on tubes of oil paint or stain-whitening toothpaste, he is a leading light of abstraction. Revered by minimalist artists to this day, he is their hero; their Vermeer, their... Rembrandt.

Not unlike the universally acclaimed Dutch master, Malevich left a legacy of self-portraits, reflecting his rise to

fame and gradual fall from grace. Initially considered a hero, saluted for his bold urban projects and costume designs, he was subsequently rejected by the Soviet regime. His final years were marked by illness, poverty and political harassment, and his paintings were banned from public view for decades. A compelling story remarkably told by this time-transcending curatorial tribute, to be seen till 3 February.



LEGAL ADVICE



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REF. T. A. P.

I have a bad relationship with my brother, with whom I have argued on numerous occasions for economic reasons. Some time ago he lent me money, which I returned, but he considers that I still owe him money, when it is not true. Recently, he took my car without permission. I reported the theft to the police, and he

was arrested the next day. He was sent to the judge and within a few hours he was free. How is that possible?

It depends on many factors, including whether the judge considered that there was a real willingness to appropriate the vehicle or simply use it and return it later. In this case, your brother probably claimed that the car belonged to you, and that he was returning it. Considering the penalty that could be imposed and the seriousness of the facts, normally the courts consider that if the person is simply available until the trial is held, it is enough.

REF. L. O. R.

Last week I had Christmas lunch with my colleagues of the company where I work. During the meal, I had no alcohol except a sip of champagne at the beginning of the meal. After that, I only drank water and soft drinks. Once the meal was over, we

went for a few drinks, but again I had a couple of soft drinks. However, when I returned home I was stopped in a breathalyser and to my great astonishment the result was positive. I demanded the agents for a second test, because they had stopped many cars and maybe they had confused my result with that of another driver, but they refused and fined me. Is it true that I do not have the right to have the test repeated, as the agents assured me?

No, it's not. According to Spanish law, if after the first test the result is positive, the driver has the right to perform a second test, and between the two there must be a minimum period of ten minutes. In fact, the agents have the obligation to inform that you have the right to double check positive results by means of a blood, urine or similar test. In this case, therefore, the fine should be appealed.

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WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

4 JANUARY 2000

Burial of the Countess of Barcelona

Doña María lived in exile with her husband, Juan, the heir apparent to the Spanish throne, during the Franco years and played a pivotal role when Franco named their son as his successor

On 4 January 2000, the funeral of the Countess of Barcelona, Doña María de las Mercedes de Borbón, mother of the then King of Spain, Juan Carlos I, at the San Lorenzo de El Escorial monastery in Madrid. She was buried with Queen's honours.

King Juan Carlos I was photographed crying during the funeral and the image made the front pages the following day, which happened to be his 62nd birthday.

The Countess was 90 when she died suddenly of a heart attack on 2 January at the royal residence of La Marea, in Lanzarote, where

the royal family had gathered to celebrate the New Year.

Doña María was born in Madrid on 23 December 1910 to Prince Carlos of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, Infante of Spain, a grandson of King Ferdinand II of the Two Sicilies, and his second wife, Princess Louise of Orléans, giving her the full title, in Spanish, of María de las Mercedes Cristina Genara Isabel Luisa Carolina Victoria de Todos los Santos de Borbón-Dos Sicilias y Orléans.

In 1931 Spain became a republic and Doña María, like the rest of the Spanish royal family, was forced into exile.

In 1935 she met her future hus-



The Countess of Barcelona with the royal family in 1999. :: EFE

band, the Infante Juan, in Rome. Juan was at that time serving in the British Royal Navy and theoretically heir to the Spanish throne. María and Juan married in Rome on 12 October 1935 and went on to have four children.

On 2 June 1953, the Countess

represented the Spanish Royal Family at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey in London.

In 1976, one year after the monarchy was restored in Spain, the family returned to the country, having spent their years in exile

LANGUAGE FOOTNOTE

Condesa	Countess
Monasterio	Monastery
Entierro	Burial
Matrimonio	Marriage
Príncipe	Prince
Restablecer	To reinstate
Herederó	Heir
Monarquía	Monarchy
Nochevieja	New Year's Eve
Tauromaquia	Bullfighting
Abadía	Abbey
Nacimiento	Birth
Portada	Front page
Prevenir	To prevent
Cumpleaños	Birthday
Marido	Husband
Familia	Family

in Cannes and later Paris. The countess mediated between her son and her husband as Juan Carlos had been designated by Franco in 1969 to become his successor upon his death; Franco believed that his father was too liberal. Her intervention, behind the scenes, is said to have prevented a lasting rift between father and son.

Doña María was a fan of bullfighting and football and loved the city of Seville.

Bilingual crossword inside back page



King Juan Carlos I at his mother's funeral. :: SUR

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GARDENING

Montonoa bipinnatifida

Native to Mexico and Central America, this large shrub has attractive lobed leaves and scented, daisy-like blooms

Montonoa bipinnatifida is an erect shrub with thick, brittle stems and large hairy leaves. During the spring and summer it grows thick and lush but once the temperatures start to drop, it produces clouds of white and yellow blooms which are said to smell like chocolate or recently-

baked cakes. Common names are the tree daisy and the tree chrysanthemum and it is a member of the Asteraceae family. There are between 50 and 150 species in the genus Montonoa, this widely differing num-

ber is because not all the species have been recognised officially.

The genus is believed to be named after leading Mexican physicist Luis José Montana (1755-1820).

Montonoa's tall brittle stems means it needs shelter from strong winds and possibly some support.

It prefers a position in full sun or partial shade and although drought resistant for short periods, it will benefit from regular watering and feeding during the hottest months.

The tree daisy is not fully frost hardy although it usually will recover after a short, overnight frost. If the top dies back, it can be cut back quite hard and will resprout in the spring. In any case, it is a good idea to cut it back after flowering, when it may start to look leggy, in order to promote new growth from the base. The cuttings can be used to produce new plants.

After flowering, if not cut back, the tree daisy will produce lots of pale green seed heads which are very attractive in flower arrangements. The ripe seeds can also be collected and sown in the spring.

It grows rapidly and will reach a height and spread of around two metres. Other species tend to be a lot bigger. *M. grandiflora* will reach around four metres and *M. guatemalensis* is said to be able to reach a massive nine metres with leaves over 30cm long. There are also double flowered varieties within each species.

The flowers of Montonoa are a source of winter nectar for late Monarch butterflies.



Montonoa bipinnatifida and double form (inset). :: WIKIMEDIA

READER'S PHOTO



:: CAROLINE SELLERS

UNKNOWN TREE

Caroline Sellers sent in this photo recently and says, "On one of my recent nature walks, I came across a bush or tree full of red berries. Could you let me know the name of the berry?"

GARDENING IN JANUARY

Rising from the ashes

Cold evenings mean log fires and inevitably, lots of wood ash. Nowadays, wood ash is an unwanted side product of a 'proper' fire but many years ago it was invaluable for making soap and as a mild abrasive for cleaning all sorts of household items. Gardeners have always been aware of the value of wood ash to improve soil. It contains trace elements which are the building blocks for healthy plant growth and raises the pH level of soil. Most people are familiar with the importance of pH levels when trying to grow hydrangeas with blue flowers. Hydrangeas flowers are pink in alkaline (sweet)

soils and blue in acidic (sour) soil. Soils that are too alkaline can be made more acidic by adding ammonium sulphate or soils too acidic can be made more alkaline by adding potassium carbonate which, along with calcium carbonate, is present in wood ash. However, with pH levels too high or too low, plants may not be able to absorb the nutrients they need. A simple test kit to measure the pH level of your soil is available from most garden centres. So save your wood ash, not only is it good for the garden, sprinkled around delicate plants it will help to keep the slugs and snails at bay too.

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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Your stars for 2019

Work, travel, relationships, health, love and finances; what will your stars bring you this year?

The year ahead promises to be rollercoaster of ups and downs with a lot of changes for everyone, whether they are here or abroad. Cassandra Nye gives us a breakdown of the predictions for each star sign for 2019.

Aquarius
21 January - 19 February



Well, here we go again! Uranus is stirring the pot of change and will soon be joined by Taurus.

Here and there, you see odd flashes of where you are heading and it looks good. Work-wise there is a need to get up to date and be ahead of the competition, or at least up with colleagues. As you know, you are very adaptable - clearly this is going to be a part of a new you.

Relationships need a bit of a shake-up as there is sometimes the tendency to take others for granted. What you see is what you get, right? If closeness is what is desired, though, a lot more effort in the romantic stakes is needed.

Maybe a holiday based around what your partner wants rather than what you think they should want?

Overall: A year of honesty, changes and leaps into the future. Do your best.

Pisces
20 February - 20 March



As the year begins, the changes you hoped for seem slow to come, but bide your time.

In spring, Uranus brings the push you need to move ahead. A sense of freedom to be yourself takes over.

What has changed? Probably very little but your own attitude. This could be triggered by someone new in your life, perhaps some-

one very similar who understands your quirky ways. To be appreciated for who you really are is a great confidence builder.

You know all of those things from the past that you dwell on? Yes, those things that nibble away at you and affect the future before it even arrives? Jettison those thoughts. You are unique. Only those who like that need apply for the job of friend, partner or lover! Pisces, this is truly your year.

Overall: A revelation and, by the time autumn comes, a feeling of being truly free will too.

Aries
21 March - 20 April



Right from the beginning of this year, your enthusiasm for the future is fired up.

Uranus is encouraging you to make real changes. Some give you pause for thought and yet you know they are meant to be. You flit from one area to another without taking too much in. Even so, when your dreams start to show the way ahead, thoughts turn more long-term.

How are you going to be able to get where you want to be without upsetting anyone?

Bring your passions into line, as Neptune urges you to look deeper inside of yourself. You will need vision and courage to go for what you really want. Giving more quality time to your relationships means sharing your thoughts, ambitions and feelings.

Overall: A year that makes demands of you but brings rewards of which you can only dream.

Taurus
21 April - 21 May



The planets do a dance around your life this year that may truly make

your head spin! Change is in the centre of it all (not something that you're over-fond of).

So, what is wrong with your life at the moment? Probably not very much, but you are being urged to do better. Being yourself is not always easy. Take charge, Taurus! Don't sit at the gate snorting, barge through it!

Progress at work gives you more independence and this is the area in which you can truly thrive. Be admired for your courage, enthusiasm and confidence, not your willingness to go with the flow.

Relationships are there for your satisfaction and enjoyment, not to tie you down and stifle your talents. When you believe this, your mind will open.

Overall: A year in which you will learn much about others and, eventually, find out those who are good for you.

Gemini
22 May - 21 June



This is the year when you truly start to value your own beliefs and talents.

Of course it is hard for any of us to see ourselves clearly. We are biased and tend to value ourselves according to others. This means that any negative comments go right to the heart of our confidence, either boosting it or (more likely) chipping away at it. Enough, Gemini!

Now is the time to get rid of any negative influences. Develop relationships with people who appreciate and support you. Using your imagination, especially if it is attached to work, brings a highly creative burst of innovation.

Of course you remain a bit of a social butterfly. What is a passion to you one minute could become boring the next. For that reason



you need to be honest and open, especially when it comes to love and romance.

Overall: A year in which you become stronger, more determined and able to enjoy life as it comes.

Cancer
22 June - 23 July



A big part of last year saw you being shunted out of your comfort zone and into awkward situations, but by this spring, life becomes more ordered. Even so, your most creative moments and ideas will come out of the blue. This is likely to be because you decide to go with the flow a bit more and stop fretting.

Spontaneous journeys take you to new places and people. Meeting like-minded folk makes such a difference to your mood and feelings of security.

You are happy to take responsibility but don't want to be bogged down with it. There is a sense of wanting

more freedom to grow and experience new things. Give priority to your own health and wellbeing. Show appreciation for what you have in this area and give up any bad habits. Who needs them anyway? Not you, Cancer!

Overall: A year in which you need to show your confidence and build on your ability to influence others.

Leo
24 July - 23 August



With your naturally high standards and expectations of others, you are sometimes bound to be disappointed. When others fail, you somehow feel it in a personal way, but this is set to be a year when you finally get rid of any negative people or things in your life.

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and the joy of feeling at one with yourself can be stripped away if you take on too much.

This year, a deep personal fulfilment comes with your partner (who some of you have yet to meet!) and they help you to look after yourself and your wellbeing.

The best times ahead are when you decide to live in the present.

Here is where the best memories are made and personal growth flourishes.

Overall: A year in which you nourish your inner self and where you want to be is where you must go.

Virgo

24 August - 23 September

As this new year begins, you may have the sensation of treading water. Your efforts are on-



going but nothing much seems to be happening. However, think again.

Gradually, the future takes on a different look. This is a wonderful year to build on your relationships. Encourage and nourish those that are kind and positive.

When pushed for time (you do sometimes take too much on), ask for help or involve those colleagues who are willing. Remember that others need to build their confidence, so be generous with your praise and advice.

Romantically, it is important to pay attention to your special friends, even if you are busy. A few well-chosen words can make someone feel closer to you, even if you are not together.

Overall: A year when you can afford to be less critical of yourself and learn to love the person others see.

Libra

24 September - 23 October



Being able to see the funny side is what will help to fire you through the year ahead. Perfect situations are what you like but there will be few of those. Instead, the unexpected and downright bizarre take their place.

Should you ever feel like a fish out of water, take charge. This can mean anything from asserting your

view, to just walking away. Because you always think the best of others, it surprises you that others do not understand your motives. Well, have you ever told them? And being someone who is generally self-sufficient (I'll sort out my own problems), sometimes others assume they know you.

Those who are looking for someone special should keep looking. When you find them you will know it was worthwhile. Really, polish up that optimism!

Overall: A year in which you find out who you are and what you need to move ahead.

Scorpio

24 October - 22 November



Still seeing a certain amount of disruption due to Uranus on your tail - determination is key. The planets are urging you to keep moving forward. Not always a good place to be. However, in business and personal ambitions this can be very rewarding.

A bit of adventure and the odd challenge keep your mind and body sharp. There is a great deal of power in your chart and most of it comes from one place - you! Be aware that, in order to win the game, you do not always need to run ahead of the ball.

Using your experience and one or two sharp turns can see you score big-time. Share your feelings and dreams with someone special or just take special note of them yourself. Know where you are going, Scorpio. Start to enjoy the journey.

Overall: a year in which you need to understand your needs and motives. Easy-peasy. What do you want?

Sagittarius

23 November - 21 December



A wonderful year is ahead for you, Sagittarius. To make the most of it, keep moving forward. You may think that you do not want to change very much. Fair enough. Even so your curiosity leads you down the streets of your imagination.

Where family are involved, there is not the problem of having to spend time away if you communicate. All in all, there is a strong air of optimism. Good old Jupiter, eh? One word of caution. Being lulled into a dreamlike state may be nice but can be dangerous.

Stay sharp when it comes to folk you do not know very well and keep your secrets and purse well under cover. You don't like to be told what to do but sometimes

your friends have a point to make. Common sense must have a place in the everyday life of an adventurer such as you.

Overall: A year of adventure and optimism in which you need to be at your impressive best and make the right moves.

Capricorn

22 December - 20 January



Last year stirred you up enough to bring out your determination.

This continues right through the year, and you can look forward to the entry of Saturn as a period of greater optimism and stability. Much as you like to be in charge, there will be times when events overtake you. However, you can and do influence events, just not all of them!

There are challenges ahead (and you know how much you love those!) but the joy of being able to meet them is so, so satisfying. Being asked to look inside your own mind can be uncomfortable but can show you what is really worth having.

Partners of any kind expect a little more from you now and you should be willing to face that. A parting of the ways? Maybe.

Overall: A year for being realistic and gaining the knowledge and experience to carry you forward.

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The end of an era at Santiago's

The chef's sixty-year career has made him an icon in Marbella with his restaurant being a popular venue for the rich and famous

:: HÉCTOR BARBOTA

MARBELLA. The seafront in Marbella won't be the same any more. Santiago Domínguez, founder, owner and soul of the Marisquería Santiago is about to do something that no-one has expected - retire. Now 80, he has worked for 75 years, starting at the age of five helping his family in the fields around Vadocondes in Burgos where he was born.

The restaurante has been sold to El Urogallo, a group of Asturian businessmen with five restaurants in Madrid and this will be their first venture in Andalucía. The Marisquería Santiago, which will keep its name, staff and menu, is known as the most emblematic restaurant in Marbella. In a town which has a total of six Michelin stars, the biggest concentration in Andalucía, and which is in the vanguard of gastronomic innovation, Santiago continued with the recipes he had used all his life.

The sale includes the main restaurant and the tavern on the first floor on the Avenida del Mar. Santiago will keep the adjoining property, which will be operated autonomously. In this way he will be free to carry on serving his countless friends.

Santiago's career forms part of the history of the Costa del Sol town since 1957, when Marbella wasn't yet a tourist destination. He opened a chiringuito (beach bar) with his brother on the beach in front of the present restaurant.

Before he arrived in Marbella at the age of 20, he had already made sacrifices in his desire to do well. After leaving his hometown, he went to Madrid and then London where he took his first steps in his trade. He then headed to southern Spain, a decision which he has not regretted.

Seven years after opening the chiringuito he moved to premises in Calle Antonio Belón and then in 1972, for 45 million pesetas, he



Santiago Domínguez in the kitchen of his restaurant. :: SUR



Jacqueline Kennedy with Santiago. :: SUR

acquired the building right by the beach. There he became one of the main characters in Marbella's Golden Age during the 1970s.

In the summer of 2015, he closed the restaurant for the first time in its history, for two months for renovations. He continued with even more verve until he made the decision to sell last year.

His sixty-year career ran through many different eras and his diners have included celebrities from the

world of politics, business and culture. The list is endless but includes Charles de Gaulle, Helmut Kohl, Sophia Loren, Anthony Quinn, Grace Kelly, Liza Minelli, Aristotle Onassis and Jacqueline Kennedy. In a final act before closing, Santiago organised a charity event which raised 11,000 euros towards the purchase of bionic prosthetic limbs for Sarah Almagro, the young Marbella girl who lost her arms and legs to a rare bacterial infection.

ANDREW J. LINN

VEGANUARY



There are no reliable figures about how often we eat meat. Some people eat it daily, others twice a week; some say they refuse to eat dead animals, and others simply say they don't like it.

What is becoming increasingly common is that the other option one step further than vegetarianism – veganism – is making big strides, and becoming, on a seasonal level, an option for the 'dry January' type dieters. Would it be an exaggeration to call it a fad?

While there is little doubt that giving our livers a rest for a month can do no harm, and probably has some benefit, there is a complete lack of scientific or medical evidence that shows the same is true of a temporary vegan, or even vegetarian, diet.

Periods of alimentary deprivation have been practised by virtually all the world's religions. Fasting is taken to what many people will consider an extreme level by the Mormons, who fast on the first day of every month. Christians have their Lenten period, and if we add in the Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, Taoists, Hindus, etc, the list is almost endless. The reality is that there are two ways to fast: either by eliminating a type of food, or by going without food completely for a period.

This puts Muslims, for example, at a severe inconvenience in comparison with other religions, as even on the hottest days during Ramadan they cannot drink

water.

Conversely, a practising Catholic will fore swear meat for the Lenten period, but that is hardly stressful unless you are a Texan and cannot exist without a daily steak. But relief is at hand.

A Californian company, funded by Bill Gates and Leonardo DiCaprio, has developed a type of artificial chicken that is indistinguishable from the real thing. Its other advantage is that it has been accepted by religious authorities as 'non-meat' for fasting purposes. The day cannot be too far off when Muslims will have a little, mullah-approved, pill they can take during Ramadan that will stave off hunger and thirst during the day.

WINE OF THE WEEK

Dehesa de Luna Garnacha Blanca 2017

Even the most astute wine critic would be stretched by this one. The Albacete region must be one of Spain's least-known areas, and certainly not a region that is recognised by wine-lovers. However this superb 90% Garnacha (with a smidgen of Viognier) is a revelation. Just one of a range of organic wine, costing 10 euros, it can be bought online (<https://dehesadeluna.com/en>).



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Now in Guadalmína!

EXHIBITIONS

Biennial Contemporary Art Marbella. *Cultural Centre Kunsthaus Berlin, Polígono Nueva Campana local 2 Nueva Andalucía.* In collaboration with the Fred Friedrich Foundation, Marbella town hall and the Mexican Ambassador in Spain, Don Raphael de la Madrid. Fifteen local and international artists are exhibiting their work. info@redaktionkhbm.de



Museo de Moda, Malaga

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 to scale the Himalayas.

Magpie International Art Gallery Marbella. *From 7 January until 22 February. C/Virgen del Pilar.* A special exhibition of unique jewellery designed for the Belgian company Embellie Bijoux by artist Nathalie Laroche, will be on display. There is also an exhibition of neon artwork by Darren West.

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.

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.

Permanent exhibition Marbella. *Museo Ralli Marbella.* Recent additions to the permanent exhibition at the Museo Ralli includes works by artists such as Rufino Tamayo and Ernesto Deira.

Ernst Kraft Malaga. *Botanical gardens 'La Concepción'.* A sculpture 'The Tree of Life' by

Ernst Kraft will be on permanent display in the gardens on the lawns next to the pond. The minimalist structure of iron rods is five metres tall and is based on the pre-pharmonic pictogram representing the union of heaven and the underworld.

The Russian museum Malaga. *Edificio Tabacalera, Avda Sor Teresa Prat. Tues-Sun 9.30am - 10pm.*

One of the seasonal exhibitions at the museum includes works by Kazimir Malévich, famous for his colourful abstract works. They follow his creative development which resulted in the suprematism movement. The other seasonal exhibition features works by David Burliuk, known as the Father of Russian Futurism. Both exhibitions end 3 February. The permanent exhibition, also running until February is entitled 'Radiante Porvenir. El Realismo Soviético' and consists of 132 works, many on loan from the museum in Saint Petersburg. The collection covers the period between the 30s and the 50s in Russia, a time of great controversy. The interior staircase of the museum has an abstract painting by D. Darko and entitled 'Primer Movimiento', completed as part of Málaga de Festival Cine en Español. It is on display until March.



Revello de Toro, Malaga

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.

Ruiz de Luna Malaga. *Museo Municipal del Patrimonio (MUPAM), Paseo de Reding.* An exhibition dedicated to the Ruiz de Luna ceramic dynasty. Around 300 pieces are on display including ceramics, drawings, watercolours and sculptures.

Malaga Glass Museum Malaga. *Permanent exhibition. Plazuela Santísimo Cristo de la Sangre.* The glass museum has two new glass panels on display that have been painstakingly restored. They were both made by the Spanish company Mauméjean.

Imagination Museum Malaga. *Permanent exhibition. Calle Martínez Campos 13, Soho.* Toys, drawings, contraptions and sets which play with science, the



Galería JM, Malaga

senses and how we perceive things

'Neighbours IV' Malaga. *Permanent collection. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Calle Alemania.* Works by local Malaga artists are on display in 'Neighbours IV'. Many different techniques and subjects are included.

Guitar legacy Malaga. *Museo Interactivo de Música Málaga (MIMMA).* The museum is exhibiting instruments, documents and tools belonging to the Domínguez family. The workshop of Francisco Domínguez Valderrama and then his son José Domínguez García, was the last of the Malaga school of guitar makers which was started in the seventeenth century. They carried on the legendary Casa Lorca tradition making guitars, lutes and bandurrias (a type of lute).

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.

Mimi Ripoll Malaga. *Until March. The staircase to 'Colección Utopías Modernas, Centro Pompidou. Free.* 'Melodías Rítmicas is the title of the exhibition which uses strong symbolism using black lines, shapes and textures which change in the natural light that floods in from the stairway next to the collection.

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 from which he then printed off his images.

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.

Galería JM Malaga. *Until 11 January. Duquesa de Parcent 12.* Los Sueños de Dante is the name of the latest exhibition. It is a display of works by Daniel Cuberta, Federico Guzmán, Judith Samen, José Luís 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.



Mimi Ripoll, Pompidou Malaga

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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.



José M. Báez, CAC Malaga

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.

tween 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.

La Furia del Color

Malaga. Until 3 March. *Carmen Thyssen Museum.* The museum is exhibiting a selection of works by Francisco Iturrino commissioned by Lourdes Moreno.

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 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.

Exotic Vibrations

Mijas. *Mijas Tourist Office, Mijas Pueblo.* Seven international artists living and working on Costa del Sol will be displaying original artworks in oils, pastels, watercolours, textiles, silk paintings and acrylics. Also greeting cards and miniature art.

Torremolinos Chic

Torremolinos. *Permanent exhibition, Casa de los Navajas.* An exhibition of photographs taken in the 60s and 70s entitled Torremolinos Chic. It features around twenty photographs including one of the legendary Bridget Bardot posing on Carihuela beach in a Cordobés hat.

Picasso ceramics

Mijas. *Permanent exhibition. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Mijas, Calle Málaga, 11am - 7pm.* An exhibition of 44 ceramics created by Malaga artist, Pablo Ruiz Picasso.

Pilar Peña

Mijas. Until 7 January. *Casa Museo*



Furia de color, Malaga

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: galeriakrabbe@gmail.com

María Zambrano

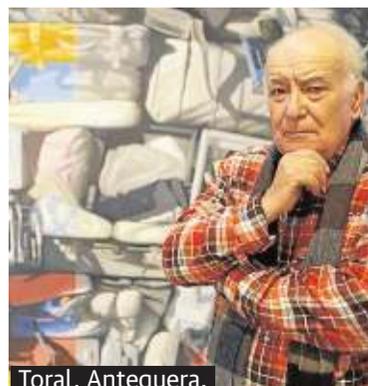
Vélez-Málaga. *Permanent exhibition. Palacio de Beniel de Vélez-Málaga. Monday-Friday, 9am-2pm.* An exploration into the life and works of Malaga-born philosopher and writer María Zambrano. For further information call 952500244.

Marine collection

Vélez-Málaga. *La Sala de Mezquitilla.* Francisco Javier Pastor Daga started collecting sea shells when he was little and went on to form a collection of shells, fossils and examples of marine life totalling over 1,500 pieces. He is also a talented wood-carver winning second prize for his work from the Universidad de Bellas Artes in Seville in 2016.

'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 draw-



Toral, Antequera.

ings, 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.



Galería Krabbe, Frigiliana

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

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra

Estepona. *Auditorio Felipe VI 4 January, 8pm. 10€.* A charity performance for Mirada Libre and the Asociación Gatos y Amigos which were badly affected by the flooding last October. Tickets available from either of the charities. Conducted by Georg Mark, the orchestra will play pieces by J Strauss, C. M. Ziehrer and R. Heuberger.

MUSIC & DANCE

1980 Pop festival

Malaga. 29 December, 10.30pm. *París 15. 30€.* The 'Mi Generación, el Tour 2018 de 1980 Pop Festival' arrives in Malaga bringing with it some of the great names in Spanish pop music from that era.

D.O.M.A.R

by Oscar Velasco

Óscar Velasco meets with the Mediterranean









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Louie Louie Live

Estepona. *Louie Louie Bar.*
28 December, midnight. Pantano and Briatore. 10€.
29 December, midnight. Top Secret. 2€.
31 December, from 9.30pm. DJ Rubén and the KP Band. 10€.

Classical music mornings

Malaga. *One Sunday a month at midday. El Palacio de la Aduana.* In total there will be thirteen concerts consisting of jazz, flamenco, Gregorian, gospel, chamber music and processional marches. Members of the Orquesta Filarmónica de Málaga, the Orquesta Joven de Andalucía, the Escuela Reina Sofia, the Joven Orquesta Nacional de España and the Las Chapas choir from Marbella will be performing among others. www.orquestafilarmonicademalaga.com



Daniel Amat, Estepona.

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra

Estepona. *Auditorio Felipe VI*
4 January, 8pm. 10€.
A charity performance for Mirada

Libre and the Asociación Gatos y Amigos which were badly affected by the flooding last October. Tickets available from either of the charities.

Daniel Amat and Francis Posé

Estepona. *11 January, 8pm. Centro Cultural Padre Manuel. Free.* Latin jazz concert with pianist Daniel Amat and double bass player Francis Posé presenting their new album 'Hermano'.

Música Con Encanto

Marbella. *20 January, 4.30pm, 7pm. Vasari Centre, Urb La Alzambra, Puerto Banús. 25€* 'Seekers of the Truth' a performance by Danzas Sagrados de Gurdjieff. Info: <http://www.musicaconencanto.org> Tickets: 689 000 944

Orfeón del Universitario choir

Malaga. *5 January, On the steps of Malaga cathedral after the procession of the Three Kings.* The Escalonia del Orfeón Universitario will be in concert on the steps of the cathedral.

Rob Sas band

Estepona. *19 January, 11.45pm. Louie Louie Bar.* The Rob Sas band will be performing rock hits.

LECTURES

Essential Christianity

Estepona. *Wednesday evenings,*



Rob Sas Band. Estepona

7.30pm. Revd Adrian Low, the Church of England Chaplain to the Anglican Church in Costa del Sol West, will be leading a course, in English entitled 'Essential Christianity'. It is open to all (14 years upwards) who want to find out what Christianity is about, the beliefs of the Christian church, the sources of the Bible and the relevance of the faith in the world today. At the end of the course, you can be 'confirmed' as an Anglican. www.costachurch.com.

USA Lectures

Fuengirola. *Lux Mundi reference Library, free to members, guests 5€.* Email: u3afuengirola@gmail.com

History: The Hanoverian Kings

15 January, 10.45am-12.15pm. Why did Great Britain need a monarch from another country? Where was Hanover? The early life of George Louis- George I. Lecturer

is Kay White.

Art History: Kazimir Malevich

16 January, 11am. An illustrated talk about the Russian artist. This will complement the exhibition in the Russian Museum Malaga which closes on 3 Feb.

Inspirational opera and ballet: Handel's Acis and Galatea

14 January, 11am-12.30pm. Group leader: Patrick Shaw.

Debate and Discussion: 'Political Correctness, Opening Our Eyes Or Closing Our Minds?'

16 January, 1-2.30pm. Opposing speakers welcome.

A Mixed Bag: 'The Natural History of Australasia: The Start of Australia.'

13 November, weekly, midday to 1pm. This series of DVDs explores why the wildlife of Australasia is so special - a mix of the surprising, the

strange and the deadly.

Science and technology: 'Why Quantum Mechanics?'

9 January, 11am. An understanding of Classical Physics enabled the Industrial Revolution to happen, and the recent technological revolution could only happen with an understanding of Quantum Mechanics. We'll look at the development of QM in a historical context.

Poetry Circle:

7 January, 11am. A meeting to discuss topics for the coming year.

FESTIVALS

Fiesta San Hilario de Poitiers Comares. *13 January.*

To coincide with the anniversary of the death of the French bishop, Hilario de Poitiers, the village holds a fiesta with verdiales bands and huge paella.



Art History lecture, Fuengirola



MOVIE LISTING
From Friday 4th
to Thursday 10th January
ORIGINAL VERSION SUBTTLED SPANISH

SIMMBA
Director Rohit Shetty
Starring Ranveer Singh, Sara Ali Khan, Ajay Devgn
ACTION - 158 min.
Language: Hindi
Simmba, a Corrupt Officer, enjoys all the perks of being an immoral and unethical police officer until a life-changing event forces him to choose the righteous path.
From Friday 4 to Sunday 6: 22:30
From Monday 7 to Thursday 10: 17:30

MARY POPPINS RETURNS
Friday 4 and Saturday 5: 15:40, 18:05, 20:10
Sunday 6: 11:30, 15:40, 18:05, 20:10
From Monday 7 to Thursday 10: 17:45, 20:05

SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE
Friday 4 and Saturday 5: 18:00
Sunday 6: 11:30, 18:00
From Monday 7 to Thursday 10: 17:45

LIFE ITSELF
Director Dan Fogelman
Starring Oscar Isaac, Olivia Wilde, Annette Bening
DRAMA - 117 min.
Language: English, Spanish
As a young New York City couple goes from college romance to marriage and the birth of their first child, the unexpected twists of their journey create reverberations that echo over continents and through lifetimes.
From Friday 4 to Sunday 6: 15:50, 18:10, 22:45
From Monday 7 to Thursday 10: 17:50, 22:30

BUMBLEBEE
Friday 4: 15:50
Saturday 5 and Sunday 6: 15:50, 18:00
From Monday 7 to Thursday 10: 18:00, 20:15

AQUAMAN
From Friday 4 to Sunday 6: 17:45, 20:15, 22:30
From Monday 7 to Thursday 10: 17:40, 22:30

RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET
From Friday 4 to Sunday 6: 15:50

THE GRINCH
Friday 4 and Saturday 5: 15:40
Sunday 6: 11:45, 15:40

FLAMENCO

Flamenco in the Museum

Malaga. Museo de Arte Flamenco Peña Juan Breva, C/Ramón Franquelo. 8.30pm.

10 January. María 'La Manzanilla' and dance group.

17 January. Dani Heredia and flamenco group.

19 January. Mariola Marín and flamenco group.

24 January. Marta Cañizares and flamenco group.

26 January. Fernando San Juan and flamenco group.

31 January. Alejandro Estrada and flamenco group.

For information and bookings call 687 607 526 or email: info@flamenka.com

EVENTS

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.

Hermandad del Sepulcro. Calle Alcazabilla 5.

Until 5 January.

Asoc. Belenista de Málaga La Alcazaba. Salón de Trono, Calle Hilería 2.

Until 6 January.

Napolitan style nativity. Museo Cofradía. Calle Hilería 2.

Until 19 January.

Hermandad 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 Nehemías, 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.

Until 5 January.



Medieval market

Villanueva del Rosario. From 4 - 6 January.

A market with stalls selling crafts, food and drink, a falconry display and workshops and activities for

children.

Thespa

Los Boliches. 30 January, 7.30pm. Masonic Hall, Edf Bougainvillea. Members 16€, guest 18€.

The first one-act play will be 'The Visitor' by Maurine Lee. This will be followed by dinner. The second play will be 'The Rose and Crown' by J. B. Priestly. Reservations: thespabooking@gmail.com or call: 622454422

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.

Christmas market

Puerto Banús. Until 6 January. Muelle de Ribera

The Three Kings' pages will be accepting letters until 4 January. There are stalls selling toys, crafts etc.

The Royal Postman

Torremolinos. Until 4 January. Plaza Costa del Sol.

The Three Kings' postman will be collecting letters under the new pergola erected in the Plaza Costa del Sol. 11am-4pm, 5pm-9pm.

Three Kings' parades

Estepona. 5 January. 5pm leaving from Avda de Andalucía.

Around fifteen kilos of sweets and thousands of toys will be handed out this Saturday.

Malaga. 5 January. 5pm leaving from the Palacio de la Alcazaba.

Fourteen floats will make up the procession, the majority of which are new this year. The kings will leave the Alcazab at five and the procession will start at 6pm from the town hall.



The Three Kings

O. V. FILM

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

Cine Albéniz

C/Alcazabilla 4, Malaga. Tel: 902 36 02 95 www.cinealbeniz.com
Under The Silver Lake: 22.30 (every day).

Cinesur El Ingenio

Avda. Juan Carlos 1, Vélez-Málaga. Tel. 667 77 31 87.

Mary Poppins Returns: 12.30 (every day); 17.00, 19.35, 22.05 (Tues, Thurs).

Aquaman: 11.55 (every day); 17.00, 19.45, 22.30 (Tues, Thurs).

Spiderman: Into the Spider-Verse: 12.20, 16.55.

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.

Aquaman: 11.50, 16.05, 18.50, 21.40, 0.20

Bumblebee: 12.10, 16.00, 22.30

Cines Teatro Goya

For tickets and information call 951196665. www.cinesteatrogoya.com

The Grinch: 11.45 (Sun); 15.40 (Fri-Sat, Sun).

Ralph Breaks The Internet: 15.50 (Fri-Sun).

Aquaman: 17.40 (Mon-Thurs); 18.00 (Tues); 17.45, 20.15 (Fri-Sun); 22.30 (every day).

Mary Poppins Returns: 11.30 (Sunday); 15.40, 18.05, 20.10 (Fri, Sat, Sun); 17.45, 20.05 (Mon-Thurs).

Spider Man: Into The Spider-Verse: 11.30 (Sun); 17.45 (Mon-Thurs); 18.00 (Fri, Sat, Sun).

Bumblebee: 15.50 (Fri, Sat, Sun); 18.00 (Sat-Thurs); 20-15 (Mon-Thurs).

Life Itself: 15.50, 18.10, 22.45 (Fri-Sun); 17.50, 22.30 (Mon-Thurs).

Yelmo Cines, Plaza Mayor

Centro de Ocio Plaza Mayor, Avda. Alfonso Ponce de León.

Tel: 902 902 103 or visit www.yelmocines.es

André Rieu New Year Concert: 20.30 (Fri).

Bumblebee: 13.10 (Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon); 20.30 (Tues).

Bohemian Rhapsody: 12.49 (Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon); 19.40, 22.20 (every day).

Aquaman: 12.00 (Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon).

Ralph Breaks The Internet: 12.00 (Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon).

Spiderman: Into the Spider-Verse: 12.15 (Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon).

Mary Poppins Returns: 12.00, 14.35 (Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon); 19.45 (Tues, Wed, Thurs).

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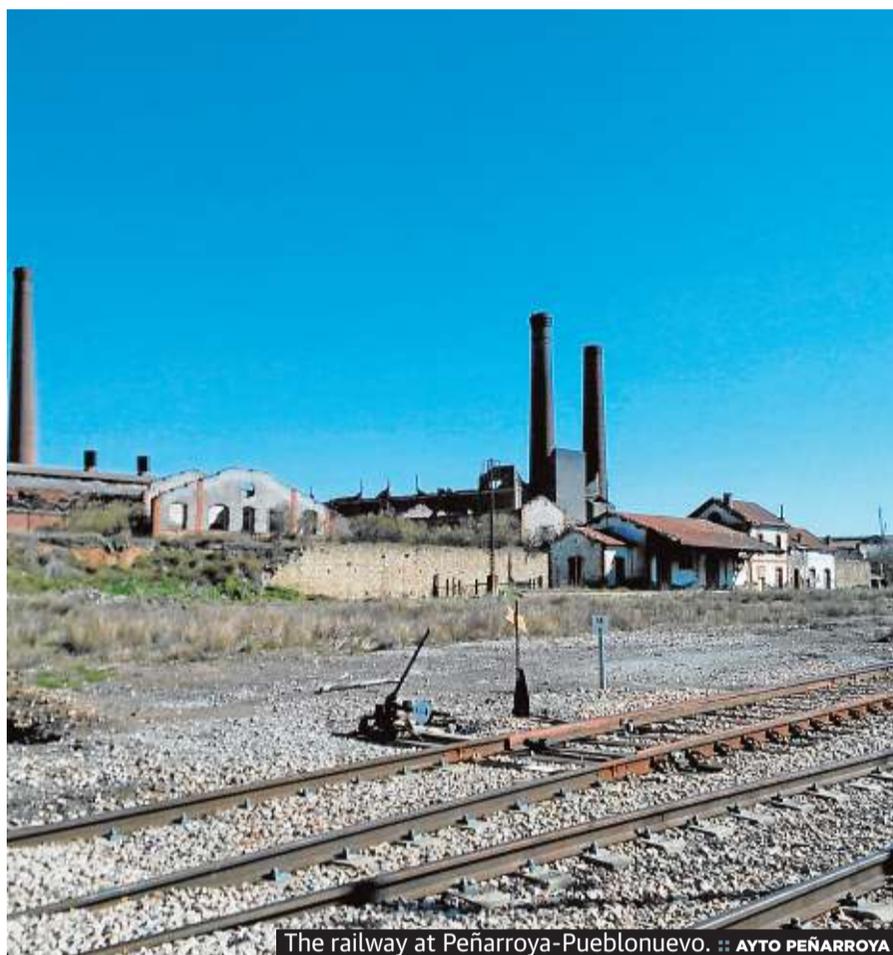
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DISCOVER ANDALUCÍA



The railway at Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo. :: AYTO PEÑARROYA



JAVIER
ALMELLONES

The mining history of Cordoba

Two days in Alto Guadiato

Car + Walking.

Journey time: Two and a half hours from Malaga to Bélmez.

Mine & Museum visits: Six hours.

Castles: Three hours.



Like some of the other provinces in Andalucía, Cordoba can boast an interesting mining history, especially in its most northerly area, close to the Valle de los Pedroches.

To be exact, this is the area called Alto Guadiato, which is part of the valley of the same name, and at one time it used to have a very prosperous mining industry. This is especially evident even today, from the landscapes and the way it has preserved its industrial heritage.

There are several museums based on mining in this area in the north of Cordoba province, and the remains of some of the mines upon which the local economy thrived can also be visited.

The villages of Espiel, Fuente Obejuna, Bélmez and Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo lie within what was at one time the coal mining basin of the Alto Guadiato, and they are home not only to some important remains from the mining industry but also museums based on mining

and the geology of the area.

Today, a glimpse of the splendour of the 19th century mining industry can be seen at Cerco de Peñarroya-Pueblo Nuevo, as can some of the pits which were active until only a few years ago, such as the María mine in the town of Fuente Obejuna.

In addition other vital infrastructure from that period can still be seen, such as the railway station which was essential for the transportation of coal from the area, and the houses in which the pit managers used to live, known as the Barrio Francés, or French District, which still remains today in the village of Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo.

A visit to the museums mentioned above is an excellent way to gain a historic and geological perspective of the Alto Guadiato area. The exhibitions which can be seen in the Geological and Mining museum in Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo, the Copper Museum in the hamlet of Cerro Muriano and the History and Mining Territory Museum in Bélmez are interesting and educational, for adults and children alike.

Of course, the Alto Guadiato area has other attractions for visitors, apart from the valuable legacy from its mining and geological past. For example, it is home to many ancient fortresses which have been silent witnesses to the history of this interesting region in the north of Andalucía.

One example is the castle of Bélmez, which stands on a hill near the village of the same name and is well worth seeing. It is Moorish in origin, and was even used during the War of Independence.

Another good example is in Espiel, where part of the walls of El Vacar castle are still standing.



Bélmez castle. :: TURISMO ANDALUZ



QUICK GUIDE

What to see in the Alto Guadiato

Geology and Mining

◀ **Museum.** Exhibition of minerals and fossils from all over the world.

Carretera de la Estación, s/n - Polígono Industrial La Papelera, s/n. 14200 Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo.

◀ **Copper Museum.** A former Guardia Civil station which now houses an exhibition about copper mining in the region.

C/. Acera del Cuartel Viejo, s/n. 14350. Cerro Muriano (Obejo y Córdoba).



History Museum of Bélmez and its Mining Territory

◀ **History Museum of Bélmez and its Mining Territory.** Valuable collection of archaeological pieces, fossils and mining items from the Alto Guadiato.

Calle Córdoba, 3. 14240 Bélmez.

◀ **Bélmez castle.** A fortress dating back to Moorish times.

Cerro del Castillo, s/n. 14240 Bélmez.

Aurelio Teno collection

A display of works by avant-garde artists. *Monasterio de Pedrique 14210 Villaharta.*



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Malaga university attracts international talent to research the medicine of the future

The eight young scientists who are working on their doctoral theses have published articles in important journals and opened up new lines of research in their first year of work at Bionand



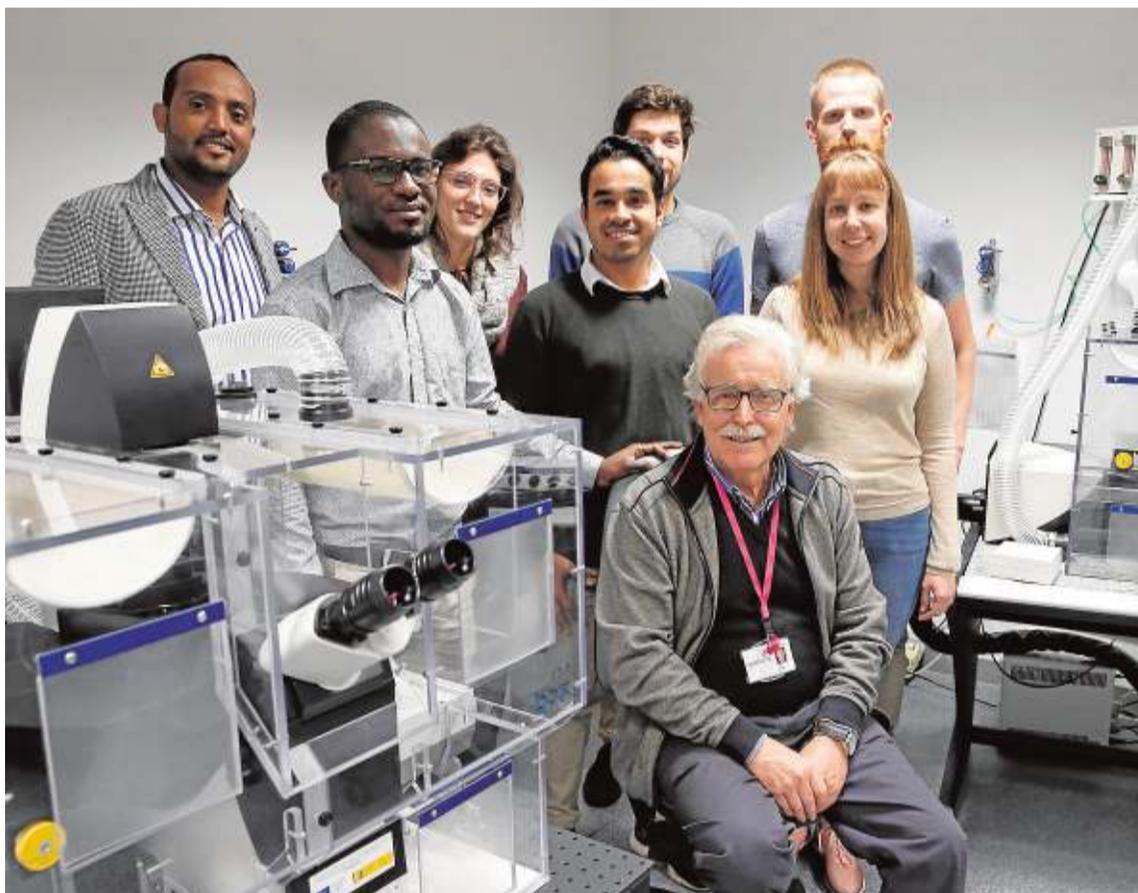
FRANCISCO GUTIÉRREZ
fgutierrez@diariosur.es

They are combining nanomedicine and biotechnology to provide personalised treatments for cancer, multiple sclerosis, heart attacks and allergies to antibiotics

MALAGA. In the corridors the conversations are in English, and in the offices and laboratories there are young people of different nationalities and skin colours. Having researchers from all around the world “is a great opportunity; they bring a fresh approach, a new view of the problems and a different way of working, and that is enriching for everyone,” says José Becerra, a professor of Cellular Biology at Malaga University and the scientific director of Bionand, which is hosting the eight young researchers from other countries.

Four continents

Clàudia Oliveira is from Portugal, Ana Ercegovic Rot is Slovenian, Liliya Kazantseva is Russian but lives in Peru, Precious Kwadzo Pomary comes from Ghana, Jonas Leuermann is German, Vladimir Stamenkovic is Serbian, Amene Tesfaye Ayane comes from Ethiopia and Ashish Avasthi has come to Malaga University from India. These eight young people have been



Amene Tesfaye Ayane, Precious K. Pomary, Clàudia Oliveira, Ashish Avasthi, Vladimir Stamenkovic, Jonas Leuermann and Liliya Kazantseva, with José Becerra. :: NITO SALAS

given a three-year contract as part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme, financed by the EU, to carry out their doctoral theses in Malaga in the field of nanomedicine and biotechnology.

They were selected from more than 100 applicants from all over the world, which gives an idea of the level of interest in Malaga and this research centre. The process took a year, and the

final selection was decided by the Agencia Andaluza de Conocimiento, with external evaluators to ensure that the process was impartial.

The researchers have completed one-third of their stay in Malaga now, and the results of their work are already evident: publication in important scientific journals, or new lines of research. “They know they have to complete their thesis within three

years, so they are working at a good speed,” says José Becerra.

The medicine of the future, in which nanotechnology and biotechnology go hand in hand to provide new therapies which are practically tailor-made for each patient, is being investigated by leading research centres worldwide.

Malaga has achieved a high ranking on this map of excellence in re-

search thanks to Bionand, the Centro Andaluz de Nanomedicina y Biotecnología, an institution which includes Malaga University and the regional ministries of Health and of Conocimiento y Universidad.

Millionth of a millimetre

In their laboratories, using large electronic microscopes and latest generation optics, nuclear magnetic resonance, fluorescence or bioluminescence equipment, the researchers are working with molecules of unthinkable dimensions: nanotechnology works on the manipulation of material with a size equivalent to one-millionth of a millimetre.

Few of them knew much about Malaga before being selected. Some admit they wouldn't even have been able to find it on a map. Now, however, they are all delighted with their decision to come here, not only because of the state-of-the-art centre in which they work and carry out their research but also because they like the city.

Some of them are still struggling with the Spanish language, partly because at Bionand English predominates. Jonas and Amene are taking lessons and Liliya, who speaks it because of the years she has spent in Peru, acts as interpreter. Clàudia, from Portugal, also manages to get by in Spanish.

They all came to Bionand because they have done previous work, mainly for their Masters degree, on nanomedicine and biotechnology. “I was looking for an important centre where I could carry on with my studies into the chemistry of nanomaterials, and I came across Bionand and these grants,” says Amene Tesfaye.



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- Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)



Jonas already knew about Malaga and the university, because his research group was in contact with the Communications Engineering faculty. When the director, Íñigo Molino, went to Germany they discussed the possibility of him doing his thesis in Malaga. Ana Ercegovic Rot is working on cellular reprogramming and its applications, a line of research into the patients' own cells being used to cure them, and thereby preventing rejection. Ashish Avasthi, from India, has a Masters degree in nanotechnology and was looking for a place where he could do his doctoral thesis while continuing to work on the biotechnology and nanomaterials he had already studied. "Curiously, it turned out there was one in Malaga," he says.

Liliya Kazantseva agrees that one of the major advantages of Bionand is that nanomedicine and biotechnology are under the same roof. "We have everything we need here, with equipment you don't always find in universities," she says. Jonas Leuermann explains that his project requires a great deal of equipment and team work. "We began a new line of research, and we needed other teams for it. We quickly found those, and it is fantastic to work with all these facilities," he says.

Few of them know what they will do after the three years are up. Liliya says she might continue to work in Malaga, Clàudia wants to return to Portugal and Amene says he is hoping to find work at a university back in Ethiopia.

THE RESEARCH STUDENTS

Precious K. Pomary
Ghana



María Luisa García Martín is supervising his thesis, which focuses on the search for new diagnostic and prognostic biomarkers for multiple sclerosis. These would enable doctors to anticipate the onset of the illness and provide more effective and personalised treatment.

Liliya Kazantseva
Russia-Peru



She is studying nanotechnology and regenerative medicine for the treatment of skeletal conditions. Professors Leonor Santos-Ruiz and José Becerra are directing her thesis, which combines nanotechnology and cellular therapy to try to target medications specifically at bone tissue.

Vladimir Stamenkovic
Serbia



He is using synthetic nanostructures to study immune recognition and modulation of responses to antibiotics such as amoxicillin, which is often used in hospital treatments. Professor Ezequiel Pérez-Inestrosa is directing his thesis.

Clàudia Oliveira
Portugal



Together with Professor José María Pérez Pomaes, she is looking for new pharmacological targets in myocardia, trying to identify molecules involved in the inflammatory response and the development of fibrous tissues after a heart attack to modulate or counteract these phenomena.

Jonas Leuermann
Germany



With Professor Íñigo Molina, he is working on developing and setting up a photonic sensor platform to detect biomolecules, with applications for the effective detection of different illnesses and toxic substances. The 'photonic chips' are opening up new lines of research.

Amene Tesfaye Ayane
Ethiopia



Under the direction of María Isabel Montañez Vega, he is also studying recognition and modulation of immunological responses to amoxicillin, in this case imitating in a test tube the molecular recognition process of the proteins which occur in the living organism.

Ashish Avasthi
India



Glial tumors (cells in the nervous system) are very aggressive and the average survival rate is 15 months. With this thesis, supervised by María Luisa García Martín, he is looking for therapeutic and diagnostic alternatives using nanotechnological tools.

The eight researchers from four continents have three years to complete their theses

The doctoral programme in nanomedicine is funded by the EU and Malaga university

Progress

After a year of work in Malaga, they have made major progress in their projects and have even opened new lines of research, as in the case of Jonas, who was looking at photonic (light) sensors to detect illnesses. His thesis director, Íñigo Molina, says they have applied for funding for a

project to design a new generation of 'photonic chips' which incorporate nano-structured materials.

María Isabel Montañez, a researcher at Bionand who is directing Amene Tesfaye's thesis, says that in just one year "we have discovered a battery of nano-structures and published a very inter-

esting article" about 'in vitro' diagnosis of allergies to amoxicillin and other medications.

Working together under one roof also leads to interesting interaction and positive feedback, so that each person's work is enriched by contributions from the others, says José Becerra. He says this is prov-

ing a very positive experience, and that the researchers all show an extraordinary degree of motivation.

There are now plans to incorporate post-doctoral graduates in the future, thereby expanding even further the contribution of this leading research centre in the field of new medical technologies.

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Help from the heart for young Palestinians

An intensive care doctor and nurse from the Materno hospital went to Nablus to look after children who had heart surgery

The two professionals from Malaga joined a British NGO on an international cooperation mission

∴ ÁNGEL ESCALERA

MALAGA. They went to look after Palestinian children who needed surgery for a congenital heart condition, and came back happy to have been able to help and satisfied at a job well done.

In September, pediatrician Antonio Morales and nurse Cristina Arcos, who work in the pediatric intensive care unit of the Malaga children's hospital, the Materno Infantil, travelled to the Palestinian town of Nablus, situated to the north of Jordan, as part of the team organised by HLH, a British NGO which was created to carry out international cooperation missions.

The aim of this particular project was to carry out heart operations on Palestinian children between three months and four years old, who would otherwise not have been able to have the surgery. In total, seven youngsters were operated on, for congenital cardiac conditions of different degrees of severity.

Antonio and Cristina were responsible for looking after the children once they came out of the operating theatre.

"The first 48 hours are vital after an operation of this type. At the hospital in Nablus we did what we normally do at the Materno. The results were very satisfying. Only one child suffered complications, and he managed to overcome them," says Dr Morales.

Cristina Arcos explains that in addition to caring for the children, she provided training for Palestinian staff on nursing care for critically ill patients.

"There are said to be three parts to my profession: care, teaching and research. However, I would say there is a fourth aspect as well: cooperation. I think everyone should take part in a project of this type at least once in their lives. When you have done it once, it makes you want to do it again," she says.

Interest in cooperation

Antonio Morales already knew what it was like to work on the ground with children in countries where medical help is needed. Last year he went on a mission to Nigeria. He says he has always been interested in cooperation, because it is a way of providing assistance for young patients who are really in need of it.

Antonio and Cristina both say they wouldn't hesitate to repeat the experience. They taught local staff in the hospital in Nablus but say they also learned from the people there about humanising the ex-



Antonio Morales and Cristina Arcos, in the intensive care unit at the Materno Infantil hospital. ∴ SUR

perience of patients in Intensive Care Units. As at the Materno Infantil hospital in Malaga, the parents were allowed to be with their children 24 hours a day.

The seven children who underwent heart surgery on this occasion would not have been able to have had their operations if the team from HLH had not travelled to Nablus, not because the doctors aren't trained but because they

As well as nursing the young patients, they provided training for Palestinian staff

don't have the resources needed to carry out highly complicated operations of this type.

Antonio Morales and Cristina Arcos, and HLH in general, have also expressed their thanks to the Infancia Solidaria NGO, which helped them in the administrative processes needed so that they could participate in a humanitarian mission which none of them will ever forget.

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Sunny skies bring strong turnout for La Cala diabetes group's fun run

The Lions Club event had been delayed from earlier in the autumn and was part of a programme of activities for World Diabetes Day

:: SUR IN ENGLISH

MIJAS. La Cala de Mijas Lions Diabetic Support Group has reported a successful 2018, not least due to its fun run held just before Christmas. Speaking after the event, La Cala Lions president, Margaret Bobowicz said, "We have achieved exactly what we wanted - to raise awareness of diabetes. We feel the day was an incredible success thanks to the many people who helped to make it happen."

The marketing message used by the support group for their day was 'Activate against Diabetes', and the day formed part of a series of activities linked to World Diabetes Day in November which included public testing for diabetes in which 600 people took part.

"The original plan for the fun day had to be postponed because

NEXT DIABETICS MEETING

► **When.** Friday 25 January, 10.30am.

► **Where.** Hogar pensioners' club, Calle Blanca Paloma 1, Fuengirola.

► **Speaker.** Renowned diabetes expert, endocrinologist Dr Francisco Gómez Trujillo.

of very heavy rain and it was rearranged for 16 December," organisers of the group explained. With the help of the department for Sport at Mijas council, over 200 supporters turned up for the new date. Sporting blue t-shirts, participants of all ages and abilities took part, according to organisers. To add to the fun on the very sunny day, there was a warm up and cool down session.

Organisers were keen to thank those businesses that had sponsored the event and made it possible.

For more information about the Diabetic Support Group, email annediabetics@gmail.com



A donation is required. :: SUR

Handmade scarves, a wintry way to raise money for Cudeca

:: SUR

FUENGIROLA. Residents and visitors to the Fuengirola area are being urged to pay a visit to a local pilates studio next Tuesday, 8 January, in order to help the Cudeca cancer care charity.

From 9am to 10pm, handmade scarves will be available at the Living Pilates Studio (Calle Simancas

2) in Fuengirola, in return for a voluntary donation towards Cudeca Cancer Care Hospice.

The scarves are handmade by Cristóbal Corral, an 83-year-old retiree, with sheep wool of various thicknesses and colours. Cristóbal said he was very happy to donate to a good cause as part of this novel initiative.



Supporters warming up for the fun run in La Cala de Mijas. :: SUR



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Will Malaga's game this weekend against struggling Reus still go ahead?

The Catalan side could take to the field with only ten professionals after various players cancelled their contracts over unpaid wages

:: PEDRO LUIS ALONSO / SERGIO CORTÉS

MALAGA. With 5.2 million euros of debt, wages not paid for the last three months and just ten professional players now on the books, Malaga's opponents this Sunday, Reus, face an uncertain future.

The fixture at La Rosaleda itself (kick-off 8pm) has been under threat for some time ever since the Catalan side's players unanimously decided to terminate their contracts last month. Since then there has been plenty of to-ing and fro-ing and the result has been just ten pros remaining under contract and a scheduled return from their winter break on 2 January, just four days before the fixture is due to take place. By contrast, Malaga returned to training on Monday with an open training session.

While it seems probable at this present moment that the fixture will go ahead as planned, it wouldn't be a massive surprise if the Catalan side did a no-show.

After all, with a squad so small, their relegation from the division is surely a formality, and with La Liga rules dictating that sides must have seven professionals on the field at any one time, injuries or suspensions could cause them massive problems.

If Reus decide to withdraw from competition, Malaga will be automatically given six points (wins from the games they have not yet played) with the margin of the wins decided by the average of goals conceded by Reus, divided by the games played (26 in 19 games).



Five hundred fans turned out to see Malaga's open training session on Monday. :: GERMÁN POZO

Mikel returns from loan prematurely

One of the players caught up in the Reus saga is Malaga's Venezuelan centre-back Mikel.

The 25-year-old has returned to La Rosaleda after terminating his season-long loan but is unlikely to play a role between now and the end of the season.

With Pau Torres firmly established as the left-sided centre-half and Malaga looking to reduce the wage bill, it is most likely that a new loan deal will be sought for the defender who had made 12 appearances for the Catalans, ten of them from the start.

Ukrainian striker Seleznyov top of wishlist as raft of players head for the exit door

:: S. CORTÉS

MALAGA. With the January transfer window now open, it seems increasingly unlikely that Malaga will have their new recruits in place for Sunday's match against Reus as they had hoped.

The squad still has two places available with the '2' and '16' shirts still not occupied, but the wage cap is the main obstacle stopping the club from recruiting.

Top priority for coach Juan Ramón Muñoz is a centre forward to compete with Gustavo Blanco

Leschuk and Jack Harper. It is understood that Ukrainian striker Yevhen Seleznyov, with whom Muñoz worked at Dnipro, has been personally recommended by the coach. The 33-year-old is believed to be keen to come having found himself out of favour at current club Akhisar.

Reinforcement in central midfield is also high on the list of priorities with Alfred N'Diaye set to miss the last portion of the season as he represents Senegal at the African Cup of Nations.

Sale of land could break Academy deadlock as Sheikh Al-Thani comes under fire

:: ANTONIO GÓNGORA

MALAGA. Construction on Malaga's new Academy, in the Arriajanal part of the city close to the airport, has come to a complete standstill with constructors Bilba removing all machinery from the site. The stumbling block has been finance tied up in land owned by the club in El Viso.

Red tape has held up its sale, but SUR understands that the club and the city hall have reached an occupation agreement to free up the 4.5 million euros needed to kickstart the Academy project.

This came after club president Sheikh Abdullah Al-Thani took to Twitter to leap to his defence after attracting criticism for the absence of funding from the 'IU-Málaga para la Gente' group on the council. Al-Thani said: "We are on good way to finish the Academy of Málaga CF and you will see the reality [sic]."

However, to fund these moves, the club must first offload players who have found themselves surplus to requirements. An agreement has been reached with West Ham United to terminate the loan of winger Sead Haksabanovic once a new destination has been found for him.

Finding new clubs for midfielder Badr Boulahroud and keeper Cenk Gönen will be more difficult, however. They join forward Héctor on the exit ramp out of the club this month.

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A LOOK AT LA LIGA

ROB PALMER
Commentator, Sky Sports
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Basqueing Alavés

Abelardo has steered the club to new heights; well above their more illustrious neighbours, Athletic Bilbao and Real Sociedad

The Basque country is a little like the north-east of England where football very much represents and reflects the people. For Newcastle and Sunderland, read Athletic Bilbao and Real Sociedad.

Back in the eighties, La Liga was dominated by these two clubs who gave sporting credence to an area which was fighting for independence. These days the region's two major clubs are in danger of becoming independent from Spain's ruling football classes. Alavés, meanwhile, sit just one point behind fourth-placed Real Madrid, while their northern neighbours have one foot on the door to the drop.

This small club is from the regional capital, Vitoria. When you pick up a tourist guide it highlights the medieval streets, plazas, university, art galleries and cathedrals. A little like York, historic Vitoria is on a significant train line, but it is fifty miles from the nearest passen-

ger airport. Football hardly gets a mention.

You can't compare the club to Real Sociedad, a founding member of La Liga, who reached the European Cup semi-final in 1982. Or Mendizorrotza to San Mamés, regarded as the birthplace of Spanish football.

Athletic, formed by British miners, play in the colours of Sunderland and are in danger of suffering their first ever relegation. 'La Real' too have won a few battles in recent years and are just four points off the bottom three. Athletic are just one place and one point ahead of those who would be condemned if the season was to end at the festive break.

By contrast, these are the headiest days in the history of Alavés since the turn of the century when they finished 6th and then reached the 2001 UEFA Cup Final. You can still see hipster Liverpool fans sport-

ing the distinctive blue shirts with a band of yellow worn by Alavés in the quite amazing nine-goal final which was famously decided by a golden own-goal.

Captain Manu García epitomises the whole club. He is a one-time season ticket holder who wouldn't be considered for a contract at any other Liga club. He leads a squad of players who are generally unwanted elsewhere but prove that the collective is more important than the individual.

Abelardo Fernández, known as 'Pitu' (or smurf in English), was an underwhelming third managerial appointment of last season which started with eleven defeats in the opening fourteen games. The vessel had hit an iceberg and it appeared that his directive was to just steer it to the scrapyard of Segunda. The club was doomed, they hadn't scored in the opening five games. The



Abelardo (right) has put Alavés in European contention. :: EFE

only question at the start of December 2017 was which other two clubs would go down with them.

Abelardo's reputation had been harmed by an unsuccessful previous season at Sporting Gijón and his only claim to fame was his almost lifelong friendship with Luis Enrique. A year on and his standing as a coach is up there with the national coach. If the Barcelona post was to become available, he would be a leading contender.

How Athletic Bilbao and Real So-

ciudad would love someone that could galvanise a club like Abelardo has. He not only kept Alavés up but has created a team that has more than an outside chance of playing in the Champions League for the first time.

It isn't beyond the realms of possibility that the Alavés and Liverpool fans will reunite two decades later and those collector item shirts will be proudly modelled once more. Football folk may no longer smirk when they hear the nickname 'El Glorioso'.



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Sports weekend raises 14,000 euros for Sarah Almagro

More than 2,000 people took part in different sports events to raise funds for the 18-year-old, whose hands and feet had to be amputated after suffering sepsis

:: CHARO MÁRQUEZ

MARBELLA. Local athletes have shown that they are not only concerned about improving their results, but they support good causes as well.

The charity sports weekend for Sarah Almagro, between 14 and 16 December, raised 14,000 euros for the 'Somos tu ola' association, which is helping the 18-year-old from Marbella. Both Sarah's hands and feet had to be amputated last year after she suffered from sepsis, and her family are trying to raise the money for her prostheses.

The councillor for Sport, Javier Mérida, says the initiative was extremely successful. Around 2,000 people contributed to the cause by buying the wristbands which were on sale to raise money for Sarah.

The event began during the afternoon of 14 December, when stands were set up at all the town's sports centres to sell the wristbands, coinciding with the local football league and different training sessions.

The following day began with a



Press conference after the event. :: JOSELE-LANZA



Sarah Almagro. :: SUR

swimming relay organised by the Marbella Triathlon Club, with 200 swimmers taking part in 20 teams.

The sports centre in San Pedro Alcántara hosted a rhythmic gymnastics display by more than 300 girls from the municipal sports schools, while the Carrera del Pavo, organised by the Maté Cycling Academy, brought together 50 cyclists of different ages for a race and a cycling workshop organised by La Vereita Club and Marbella ByCivic.

On Sunday 16 December there was a solidarity multi-sport tournament with 500 participants at the Paco Cantos sports stadium, and disciplines

including tennis, frontenis, padel, skating, yoga, belly dancing, crossfit, climbing, Nordic walking, five-a-side football and basketball. The basketball took the unusual form of 'Two ball', in which pairs of players had to win the highest number of points in a limited time.

At the municipal stadium 450 athletes took part in a relay marathon, and at the Antonio Serrano Lima complex 300 people participated in a karate display.

The 'Somos tu ola' campaign was supported not only by sportsmen and women, but also by local businesses, social and cultural associations and authorities.

Business owner Lorenzo González, for example, has promised to cover the cost of Sarah's expenses for several years, which will be about 200,000 euros.



Ángel Mora will run 42.2 kilometres on 17 February. :: SUR

Running a marathon to show solidarity with 'Butterfly Skin' children

Ángel Mora, a runner from Marbella, will be taking part in the Zurich Marathon in Seville to raise funds to help people who suffer from Epidermolysis bullosa

:: MÓNICA PÉREZ

MARBELLA. Ángel Mora, an athlete who is part of the 'Deportistas por una Causa' group, is to run the Zurich Marathon in Seville on 17 February to raise money for the Piel de Mariposa association. He will tackle the 42.2-kilometre challenge to "give wings to sufferers of Butterfly Skin disease".

"When you meet these children you can't stop thinking about them, about their eyes, their smiles, their wish to live the same way as other

children. So you decide to do whatever you can to help them," says Mora.

He is also calling for everyone else to provide their "grain of sand" to help to improve the quality of life for sufferers and their families. He has set up a crowdfunding site, www.migranodearena.org, and says he will use his determination and his legs to help, while others can do their bit by making a donation. "Between us we can give them the wings they need to have a better life," he says.

Butterfly Skin disease, otherwise known as Epidermolysis bullosa, is a rare and incurable genetic illness. Its sufferers have extremely fragile skin, and even the slightest scrape can cause it to blister, scar or flake. It is extremely debilitating, as injuries can easily occur during everyday life.

Torremolinos ends the year with San Silvestre fun run

Nearly 700 people participated in the charity run in fancy dress to raise funds for families in vulnerable situations

:: TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. Almost 700 runners took part in the fourth edition of the San Silvestre fun run in Torremolinos on New Year's Eve.

The popular, non-competitive, four-kilometre run was organised by Torremolinos town hall and included runners of all ages, most of whom participated in fancy dress.

The route took the runners through the centre of the town, where hundreds of supporters lined the streets, and on to the finish line at the town hall.

The participants contributed one kilo of non-perishable food, which was distributed among several social organisations that care for local families in vulnerable situations.



Runners set off from the start line. :: T. BRYANT



People of all ages participated. :: T. B.

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THE STARS

Aquarius
January 21st - February 19th
A general dissatisfaction in your love life may be felt or, if felt, ignored. What are you afraid of? Will you stick with what you know or venture further afield?

Pisces
February 20th - March 20th
Want to try something new to boost your income? This is a lucky week overall and you can only be held back by your own thoughts.

Aries
March 21st - April 20th
Taking charge of your health and wellbeing has to be a priority, so avoid burning yourself out. Stay active and energy will also stay high. Your opinion is important and sought out.

Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
Dodge any negative comments by keeping up the pace of change. Don't expect everyone to agree with your attitude. That is because they are not you and fail to understand.

Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
Wanting to be free to pursue your own goals needs a bit of work yet. There is a need to reassure those on the home front that you are planning ahead. Be seen to take responsibility.

Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
As strongly as someone is making their case to you, that does not mean they are right. Someone shouting loudest does not impress you.

Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
Go for what you need and want yourself. It will make you stronger, more confident and much more willing to put in that extra effort.

Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
You are not expected to agree with others just to keep them happy. Indeed, this is a time to do what is best for yourself both in the longer and short term.

Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
Don't try to please everyone or you will run yourself ragged. Joining a relative in a fun jaunt brings you closer together. It also gives the chance to compare your thoughts for the future.

Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
When fired up about something it is hard for you to be diplomatic. Even so, curb your more extreme comments when dealing with a hot issue.

Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
Something that has been holding you back is now seen clearly. Not content to stay stuck in the same place, you seek freedom. This may not be overnight but if you don't start you could fail.

Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
Last week you no doubt made New Year resolutions, right? Gather all of your self-control together to see these through. A lifestyle change brings so many rewards.

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11328



Across

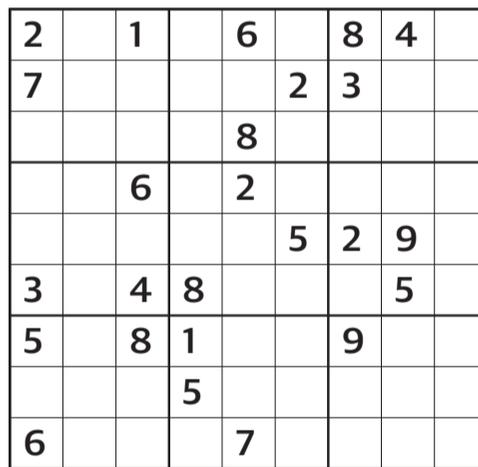
- 1 An angler's tale, presumably (5,5)
- 7 Extent of anger about new head (5)
- 8 Bulb set in harvest remains (7)
- 10 Yet aping a middle Easterner (8)
- 11 Air for which a huge amount could be paid (4)
- 13 He asked for more - beyond about 51 (8)
- 15 Where 7 got dunderhead confused (6)
- 17 Being affectingly playful would give the bishop promotion? (4)
- 18 Renounce aim after Sid comes up with 150 (8)
- 21 It comes between two flights or at the end of one (7)
- 22 It produces a turning of the wheel at her request (5)
- 23 Law, no longer observed by deceased landlord (4,6)

Down

- 1 Queer sort of bone? (5)
- 2 The ghosts of the press etc. (8)
- 3 Men say he can't think for himself (3,3)
- 4 Be sorry after initial thrill? Correct (4)
- 5 Spring back despite being tied up again (7)
- 6 Nobody pays for the fight? (4-3-3)
- 9 Still with less feeling and whole when halved (4,6)
- 12 Note call from one of Arthur's men (8)
- 14 Anger in service? (7)
- 16 Not matched as yet (6)
- 19 Subsequently more at the back, perhaps (5)
- 20 Be careful about one's candid opinion (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

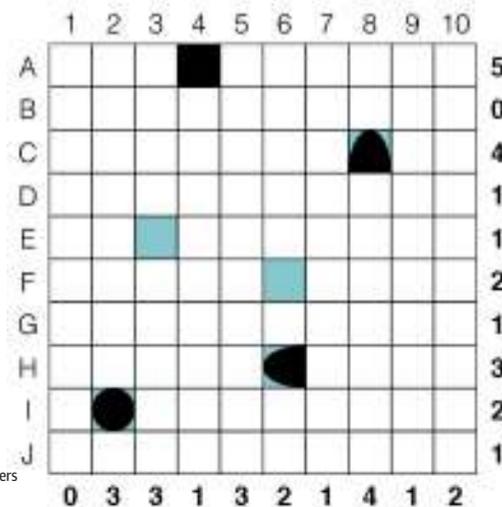
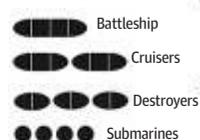


Can you identify the words missing from the Shakespeare quotations listed below?

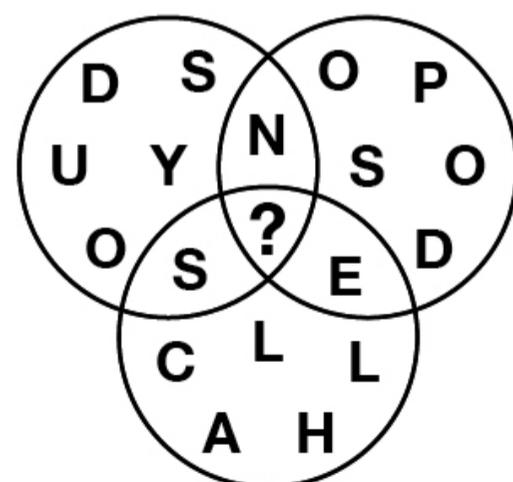
1. If --- be the food of love, play on
2. Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ---
3. Once more unto the ---, dear friends
4. Now is the --- of our discontent
5. The course of true love never did run ---
6. A --- by any other name would smell as sweet
7. Neither a borrower nor a --- be
8. My kingdom for a ---
9. All the World's a ---
10. I came to --- Caesar not to praise him

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 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?

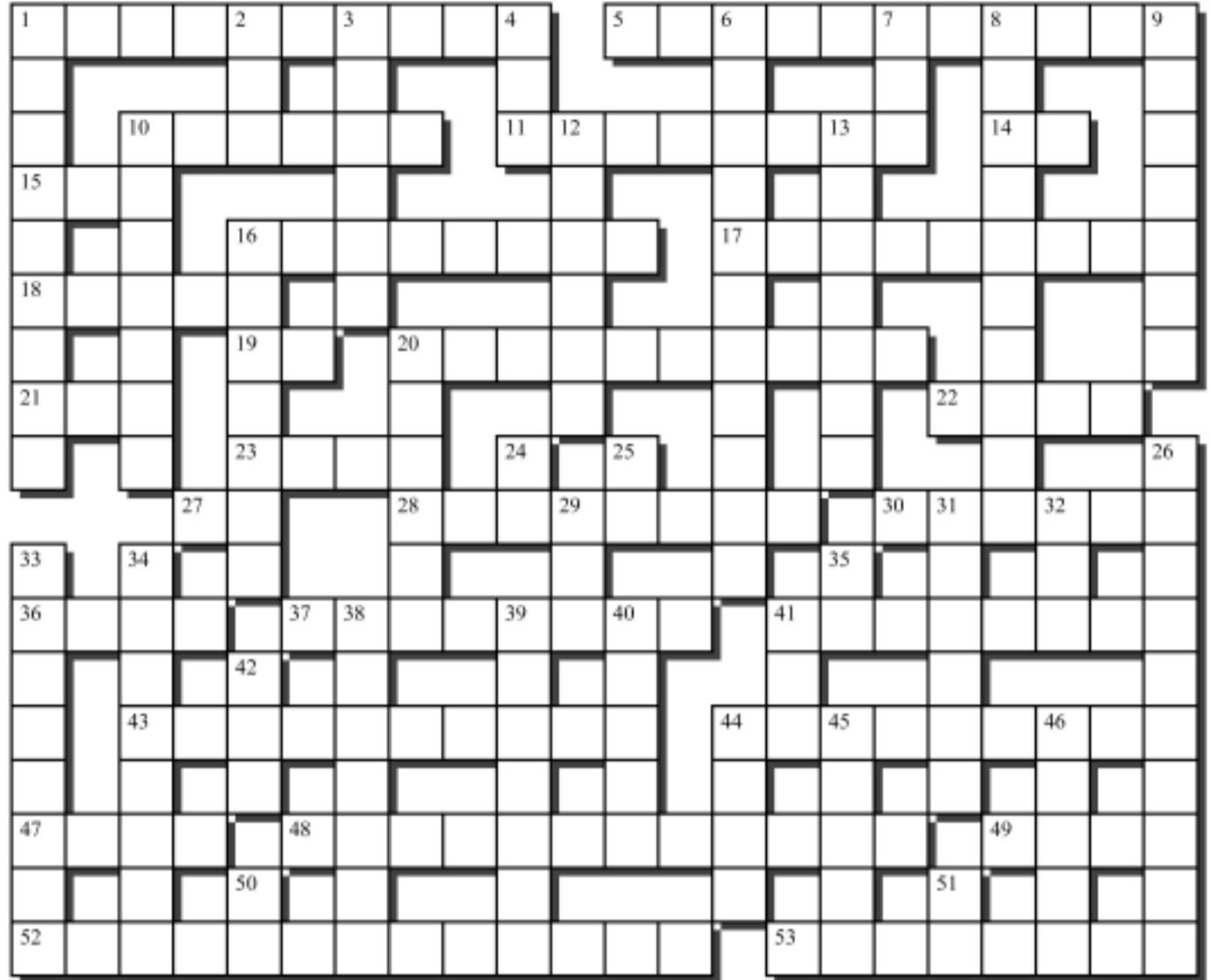
LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD

Across

- 1) Monastery (10)
- 5) Marriages (11)
- 10) Abbey (6)
- 11) To raise (funds) (8)
- 14) The letter C (2)
- 15) Even (3)
- 16) Prince (8)
- 17) Obsolete (pl) (9)
- 18) Cheese (5)
- 19) D (musical note) (2)
- 20) Birthday (10)
- 21) One way (3)
- 22) Candle (4)
- 23) Blue (4)
- 27) Go! (pl) (2)
- 28) To prevent (8)
- 30) Alarm (6)
- 36) Walnut (4)
- 37) Acrobat (8)
- 41) I went down (8)
- 43) Coronation (10)
- 44) I understood (9)
- 47) Tail (4)
- 48) Reinstated (12)
- 49) Train (4)
- 52) Originally (13)
- 53) Heir (8)

Down

- 1) Monarchy (9)
- 2) Is (subj.) (3)
- 3) Exile (6)
- 4) To hear (3)
- 6) Bullfighting (11)
- 7) Sea (3)
- 8) New Year's Eve (10)
- 9) Successor (7)
- 10) Aerials (7)
- 12) It soaks (6)
- 13) Anxious (7)
- 16) Front page (7)
- 20) To blame (6)
- 24) She sees (2)
- 25) Of (2)
- 26) Birth (10)
- 29) Road (3)
- 31) Madness (6)
- 32) Rum (3)
- 33) Burial (8)
- 34) I discovered (8)
- 35) Faith (2)
- 38) Countess (7)
- 39) I will dance (7)
- 40) Tunnel (5)
- 41) He gave (3)
- 42) Gold (3)
- 44) Coconut (4)
- 45) Mother (5)
- 46) North (5)
- 50) If (2)
- 51) You (2)



ANSWERS

Quiz answers

Answer: Pope mobile.
Of interest: The specially designed motor vehicle used by the Roman Catholic Pope during public appearances has the registration SCV 1 or SCV2. It stands for Stato della Città del Vaticano.
Of interest: The American science fiction film starred Charlton Heston, Roddy McDowell, Kim Hunter, Maurice Evans, James Whitmore, James Daly and Linda Harrison. It was based on the 1963 novel La Planeta des Singes by Pierre Boulle. It was the first in a series of five films.

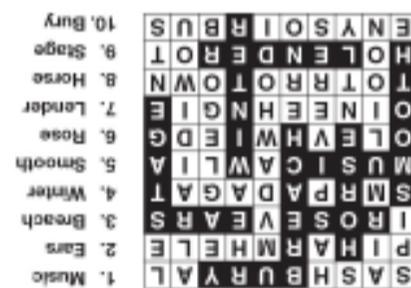
Language Crossword



Cryptic Crossword

Solutions: Across: 1 Fishy story; 7 Range; 8 Stubble; 10 Egyptian; 11 Tune; 13 Oliver; 15 Garden; 17 Arch; 18 Disclaim; 21 Landing; 22 Lath; 23 Dead letter; Down: 1 Funny; 2 Spectre; 3 Yes man; 4 True; 5 Rebound; 6 Free-for-all; 9 Even number; 12 Lancelot; 14 Incense; 16 Single; 19 After; 20 Mind.

Wordpuzler solution



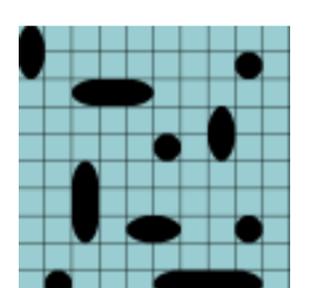
Sudoku solution



Circlegram

The letter represented by the question mark is I. Dionysus, Poseidon, Achilles, all characters from Greek mythology.

Battleships



WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?



A family vehicle

Last week: Fuengirola

'Rotonda del Obelisco' is known locally as the Rotonda de Los Peces because it replaced another fountain which featured fish. It is on the roundabout that connects the roads to Mijas, the train station, bus stop and municipal market.



MALAGA PORT INFORMATION

CRUISE SHIP MOVEMENTS (SOURCE: MALAGA PORT AUTHORITY)

Ship	Date	From	Next port	Docks	Sails
Viking Sky	08/01	Cartagena	Vigo	07.00	19.00
MSC Magnifica	09/01	Barcelona	Funchal	08.00	18.00
Norewegian Spirit	11/01	Funchal	Alicante	07.00	17.00





Meet Lucas and Luka, 2019's earliest arrivals

The first baby on the Costa was born in Malaga just after midnight, with Marbella hospital catching up at 6am

:: IGNACIO LILLO / NIEVES CASTRO

MALAGA. The Costa del Sol didn't have to wait very long for the first birth of 2019. Little Lucas wasn't able to hang on until the champagne corks had finished popping and came into the world at just five minutes past midnight on 1 January. He was also the first baby of the new year in the whole of the Andalucía region, and was born at the Materno, Malaga city's children's hospital.

The second baby in Malaga was Sheila, born at 3.24am across the city at the Hospital Clínico. Elsewhere on the coast, the Hospital Costa del Sol maternity ward also sprang into action in the early hours and a boy, Luka, was born at 6am.

Lucas in Malaga won first prize

"We'll take our time opening the champagne and eating the grapes now," said Manuel David Torres, the father of Lucas, Malaga's first born, referring to the Spanish tradition of eating a grape on each stroke of midnight to bring luck for the year ahead.

The couple had been having supper at 11pm in the Ciudad Jardín district of the city when the birth started. "It was a very fast birth, we didn't think he would be so keen to arrive," he added. It was a natural birth and Lucas weighed 3.47 kilos (seven pounds and ten ounces).

There is no family history of the name Lucas; they chose it because they liked it. The newborn already



Lucas, with his parents, Manuel David Torres and Mónica Martín in Malaga. :: ÑITO SALAS



In Marbella are Cristina and Francisco, with baby Luka, and other family members. :: JOSELE-LANZA

FIRST-BORN OF THE YEAR

Lucas

Born at 12.05am

The baby boy was born in the city's Hospital Materno.

Sheila

Born at 3.24am

The baby girl arrived at Hospital Clínico, Malaga.

Luka

Born at 6.00am

He was born at Hospital Costa del Sol outside Marbella.

has a three-year-old brother, David. Manuel David and his tired but happy wife, Mónica Martín, live in Rincón de la Victoria. Mónica works in administration and David in construction. Both are self-employed.

Luka was third to be born

The parents of baby Luka were clear that they had wanted their son born at Marbella's Hospital Costa del Sol. Cristina Morales, the mother of Luka, said that the Maternity ward there had a good reputation and that the hospital staff made the process a lot easier for her and her family.

Cristina, from Granada, and her husband, Francisco Roldán, from Seville, had been expecting their child on 2 January. In the end Luka arrived at 6am on 1 January after 25 hours of labour.

The name is Luka, "with a 'k' but no 's'", they were keen to point out, explaining that nobody in Andalucía would have properly pronounced the letter 's' anyway.

Luka is "a child we'd longed to have, have gone in search of and have found in the first month of the year," and he is the "perfect gift", his mother explained. He weighed 3.39 kilos (seven and a half pounds).

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