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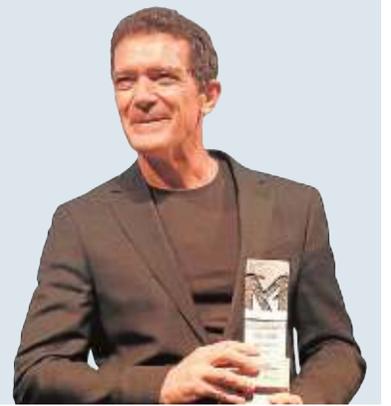
December 6th to 12th 2019
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SUR PRIZES

SUR rewards outstanding Malagueños

Antonio Banderas and golfer Azahara Muñoz were among this year's winners **P4**



SEASONAL SWITCH-ON

Malaga's Christmas display attracts thousands to the city centre **P10**



Crowds record the musical light show in Malaga's Calle Larios. :: SALVADOR SALAS

Costa police unions call for back-up after fourth shooting in a month

A 60-year-old French national was shot by masked gunmen in Cabopino on Tuesday

Revenge attacks between rival drugs gangs have been blamed for the recent spate of fatal shootings on the Costa del Sol. The death of a French man gunned down in Cabopino, Marbella, this week was the fourth

fatal shooting in the area in just over a month, although the authorities have said these are isolated incidents. Two weeks ago a British man was shot dead in Mijas Costa. A search was launched on Wednesday for the suspect in this week's shooting, a 29-year-old known contract killer of Dutch nationality. Police unions have called for more officers to be brought in to fight crime on the Costa del Sol. **P3**

Legal action being prepared to oust Sheikh Al-Thani from Malaga CF

Local authorities have backed Malaga CF's Association of Minority Shareholders to begin legal action to oust president Sheikh Al-Thani from the club for "improper management" and "misappropriation of funds". **P41**

Andalucía is in for 'green revolution', says president at climate summit

Regional representatives have been taking part in the COP25 United Nations climate summit in Madrid this week. Swedish campaigner Greta Thunberg plans to lead a rally in the Spanish capital today, Friday. **P2**

Smoking kills 3,000 in the province every year. A doctor who helps others kick the habit says more are smoking now than before bans came in **P36**

Top tips for an eco-friendly Christmas. More can be done to reduce the use of plastics and paper in seasonal traditions. **P20**

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COP25 IN BRIEF

2019 to round off the hottest decade in history

MADRID

ALVARO SOTO. 2019 will be the second or third hottest year since records began, capping off the hottest decade on record, according to the World Meteorological Organisation.

Petteri Taalas, the organisation's general secretary, explained that "Heatwaves and floods that used to happen once a century are becoming

regular occurrences".

Temperatures between January and October this year were 1.1 degrees higher than temperatures between 1850 and 1900, and Taalas warned that temperatures could easily tip over the two degrees agreed upon in the 2015 Paris Agreement; in fact, at current rates, the world is heading towards four or five degrees of warming.

This year saw record heatwaves in France, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany.

Greta Thunberg en route to Madrid summit

MADRID

IKER CORTÉS. Greta Thunberg, the young Swedish climate activist, reached Lisbon on Tuesday on her way to the Madrid COP25 Climate Conference. She arrived after a 21-day catamaran journey across the Atlantic. Thunberg was scheduled to attend a climate march in Madrid today at 6pm held by the Cumbre Social del Clima, the self-styled grassroots alternative to the COP25.



Greta Thunberg arrives in Lisbon. :: CARLOS COSTA / AFP

Spain at growing risk of extreme weather

MADRID

ALVARO SOTO. Spain is now the 38th most vulnerable country to climate change, according to NGO Germanwatch. Speaking at the COP25 on Wednesday, Germanwatch researcher Laura Schafer said "Extreme heatwaves are between 10 and 100 times more likely in Europe than a century ago". Both heatwaves and storms will become more frequent in Spain as climate change progresses.



A display welcomes visitors at the COP25 conference in Madrid. :: CRISTINA QUICLER / AFP

Climate change in the spotlight in Madrid as COP25 continues

25,000 will attend the conference, which had to be moved from Chile at the last minute due to unrest in the Latin American country

JAVIER GUILLENEA

MADRID. The Climate Conference began on Monday in Madrid, with delegations from nearly 200 countries set to attend the two-week

event.

It is the 25th United Nations Climate Change conference, and although it is taking place in the Spanish capital, it will be presided over by Chile. The South American country was set to host the summit, but large-scale protests and riots made this prospect unfeasible.

The most concrete achievement of the Climate Change conferences to date is the 2015 Paris Agreement, which makes signatories commit to keeping global emissions below two

degrees, and attempt to limit them to 1.5.

The UN has warned, however, that countries would need to triple their current greenhouse gas reduction commitments in order to meet the two degree target, and multiply them by five in order to limit warming to 1.5 degrees.

It is hoped that more ambitious targets will be agreed upon in Madrid. Greater financial support from developed countries to those in less rich nations will also be on the cards.

Juanma Moreno talks of 'green revolution' in Andalucía at Madrid summit

Andalucía's President spoke of the transition to a sustainable economy as an opportunity for businesses in the region

MARÍA DOLORES TORTOSA

SEVILLE. The President of the Andalusian regional government, the Partido Popular's Juanma Moreno, spoke on Wednesday at the Madrid COP25 Climate Conference. He gave details of his plans to combat climate change in Andalucía and invited local businesses to see the green transition as a business opportunity.

As part of his "green revolution", Andalucía will invest 350

million euros in reforestation, green energy, and other projects.

This region, he said, is the most at risk from climate change in Europe.

He encouraged local businesses and entrepreneurs to take advantage of the European Commission's announcement of a one-billion-euro fund until 2030 to support sustainable industries and green energy.

Moreno was speaking alongside several Andalusian activists and entrepreneurs with experience of the fight against climate change. Among them were Malaga-born Manuel Calvo, an arctic explorer and environmental activist, and Javier San Emeterio, of the water access NGO Wells Without Borders.



Juanma Moreno speaking at the COP25 Climate summit. :: E.P.



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Cabopino shooting horror as one man is killed at point-blank range in latest attack on Costa

Experts say drug gangs are carrying out reprisals when their hauls are stolen but the authorities claim the area is "completely safe"

:: A. F. / J. C. / C. M.

MALAGA. The evening calm of Cabopino, east of Marbella, was shattered on Tuesday by the latest fatal shooting to hit the Costa del Sol.

In this week's attack, a 60-year-old French man was approached by two masked men as he got into his car in the area by Cabopino campsite, alongside the A-7 motorway, where there are also some popular restaurants.

A witness said that the attackers were waiting in a blue Renault Megane for the victim to come to his car. The Megane fled the scene immediately, driving up through Calahonda to the AP-7 toll road, where it crashed through the barrier. It was later found burning on a mountain road near Mijas Pueblo.

Dutch hitman sought

This is the fourth similar murder in the Mijas and Marbella area in just over a month. They are all believed to be linked to score-settling be-



The scene in Cabopino near the A-7 exit on Tuesday night. :: JOSELE

tween rival drug gangs.

Investigators are looking for a known dangerous contract killer in relation to the Cabopino attack. The 29-year-old male has Dutch nationality, is about 1.8m tall, has an Arabic complexion and beard, and is very thin.

Police unions have called for more officers on the beat to fight crime on the Costa

Police and authorities were quick to stress this week that the incidents in recent weeks are not related to each other and were not part of any single, organised campaign of violence. The government representative in Andalucía added that he wanted to be very clear that the Costa del Sol is "completely safe".

An invisible luxury lifestyle

Police unions have called for more resources and more officers on the beat to fight crime on the Costa. They say that the larger towns along the coast, such as Marbella and Estepona, have grown in size and need reinforcements.

Experts say that the area attracts drug gangs because of its proximity to trafficking routes from North Africa and the ability of the leaders to merge into the luxury lifestyle as tourists or expatriate residents.

Thefts cut out risks

Those with knowledge say the surge in attacks could be linked to the relatively new tendency of gangs stealing hauls from each other once these have been landed in Spain. This saves the risks of buying and transport. When a theft takes place, the gang that has lost out is keen to take revenge, leading to the killings.

LATEST INCIDENTS

27 OCTOBER

Istán road, Marbella: The body of a Bulgarian man who had been shot dead hours earlier was found by the roadside.



15 NOVEMBER

Andasol, Marbella: Police were called to a property where they found one man shot dead and another injured.



22 NOVEMBER

Riviera del Sol, Mijas: A British man with a drug crime record was shot dead in his car when he arrived home from the gym.



3 DECEMBER

Cabopino, Marbella: A 60-year-old French national died after being shot several times by two masked gunmen.



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The prize winners line up for a photo after the award ceremony. :: SALVADOR SALAS

SUR holds annual award ceremony for outstanding 'Malagueños'

The newspaper group gave prizes in six categories for distinguished achievement and impact on the lives of those in the province

:: SUR

MALAGA. SUR newspaper group held its annual awards on Monday evening, recognising achievements of local people and organisations. Presented with support from Unicaja Banco, there were prizes in six categories.

The winners were chosen by

members of SUR editorial teams. They included names well-known internationally, as well as others who may not be as familiar but whose work is helping put Malaga and its province on the map in different fields.

Hundreds of people attended the gala event, the twentieth time it

has been held, and many senior representatives of local and regional authorities were in attendance at Malaga city's Palacio de Congresos.

Opening the evening, editorial director of SUR newspapers, Manuel Castillo, said that SUR "is a tool at the service of the people of Malaga", while the president of the Diputación provincial authority, Francisco Salado, added, "In these times of fake stories and the tyranny of social media, rigorous and truthful media are as necessary as ever."

Among the winners was Malaga-born Hollywood actor Antonio Banderas, who is tipped for an Oscar next year and has just opened his Teatro del Soho CaixaBank in the city. Top golfer, Azahara Muñoz, won in the Sport category.

One lesser known winner was Bernardo Quintero, founder of locally based technology company Virustotal, a firm that has been successfully working with Google on its cybersecurity strategy.

Two household names to both Spanish and expatriates also collected awards. Malaga Airport is 100 years old this year and the chief executive of Aena, its owner, was at the ceremony. El Corte Inglés also indirectly received a prize, given to Javier Caparrós who has been running the firm's business in Malaga for 40 years.

Perhaps the most emotional award of the night went to hundreds of people from the public and private sectors who fought to rescue Julen, the toddler that fell down a borehole earlier this year, a story that was followed around the world.

THE PRIZEWINNERS

► **Culture.** Antonio Banderas, actor and director. "We aren't just what we have lived but also what we have dreamed."

► **Sport.** Azahara Muñoz, golfer. "As a 'Malagueña' I'm really excited to receive this prize. Thank you for supporting this sport and me."

► **Society.** Jointly received on behalf of all public and private organisations who worked on the attempted rescue of toddler Julen from the Totalán borehole. Jesús Esteban, Guardia Civil. "There were many exemplary attitudes there, especially from the parents." Ángel García Vidal, civil engineers' association. "We will carry Julen inside us as our 'Malagueño'."

► **Outstanding Career.** Javier Caparrós, director of El Corte Inglés Malaga. "I dedicate this to my staff who have been with me loyally all these years."

► **Business.** Bernardo Quintero, Virustotal. "It's a really proud moment to receive recognition like this in our own part of the world."

► **Tourism.** Maurici Lucena, CEO of Aena, owner of Malaga Airport. "There is no more fitting end to the airport's centenary year than this distinction."

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Five things expatriates need to know about UK inheritance tax

By Sarah Burke, Partner, Blevins Franks

Year-by-year, inheritance tax revenue continues to soar for the UK Treasury, with more families getting caught in the net. A record high of over £5.4 billion was collected in the 2018/19 tax year – over double the amount from nine years ago.

For expatriates, it can be especially difficult to know where you stand with UK inheritance tax. But with an average inheritance tax bill of £179,000 paid for each affected estate, it pays to understand your position and what you can do to minimise exposure for your heirs.

1. You could still be UK-domiciled

Even after many years of living abroad, you could still be considered UK-domiciled, bringing your worldwide estate into liability for 40% UK inheritance tax. This could be the case, for example, if you hold UK assets or show intentions to return one day.

While it is possible to adopt a domicile of choice in Spain by severing all ties with the UK, domicile law is extremely complex. Also, new rules could mean that returning to the UK for a relatively

short period – say, due to family illness – could reignite inheritance tax liability for non-domiciles. Seek specialist, personalised guidance.

2. It affects UK assets, regardless of domicile

Even if you are domiciled outside the UK, any British assets you own will attract UK inheritance tax. Note that before 5 April 2017, property owned through a corporate structure ('enveloped') was generally exempt, but now all UK residential property is liable, however it is owned. If you hold UK residential property in this way, explore your options for the most tax-efficient way forward.

3. A new relief was recently introduced...

Between 2009 and 2017, the only available inheritance tax relief was a £325,000 nil-rate band (£650,000 for couples). But since April 2017, the 'residential nil-rate band' or 'family home allowance' has provided extra relief when passing on a main home to direct descendants.

You can claim this allowance on a property outside the UK, provided it

is your main home (although local inheritance taxes may still apply).

Currently at £150,000, the family home allowance is set to increase to £175,000 in April 2020 before it starts tracking inflation. As with the standard allowance, you can transfer any unused balance to your spouse/civil partner, making a total potential threshold of £1 million for a couple by 2020/21.

4. ...but it has limitations

To be eligible for the allowance, the property must be recognised as your main home, which excludes most investment properties. It is only available on one property that is passed directly to children or grandchildren, so homes owned indirectly through certain trusts, for example, may not qualify.

Also, larger estates will not receive full relief – estates worth over £2 million have a lower threshold, and those valued over £2.25 million are not currently eligible at all. Your entire estate is counted here – including savings and investments, certain trusts, pay-outs from life insurance policies, pension lump

sums from the death of a spouse/partner, cars, furniture and personal belongings such as jewellery.

5. Your home could tip you over the threshold

Despite the new allowance, the government's inheritance tax coffers continue to swell in large part due to the increasing value of assets – particularly property. As house prices have risen, so has the number of estates that fall in the IHT net – and the amount payable. If, for example, combined assets exceed the £2.4 million value threshold for the property relief in 2020/21, the £175,000 allowance could be replaced by a £70,000 inheritance tax bill.

Additionally, the standard relief – frozen at £325,000 since 2009 and fixed until 2021 – has not kept pace with inflation in the way that the value of property or other assets has. The Office for Budget Responsibility predicts the inheritance tax haul is on track to exceed £6.3 billion by 2023/24 as asset growth continues.

However, there are ways to mitigate

UK inheritance tax other than gradually transferring (or spending!) your wealth within your lifetime. Expatriates can explore using Spanish-compliant investment structures, for example, or acquire a domicile of choice overseas.

An adviser with specialist, cross-border expertise can help you establish your domicile status and how UK inheritance tax interacts with Spanish succession and gift tax. With good estate planning, you can structure your wealth to take advantage of all reliefs available and ensure your legacy ends up in the right hands without leaving your heirs an unnecessarily large tax bill.

Tax rates, scope and reliefs may change. Any statements concerning taxation are based upon our understanding of current taxation laws and practices which are subject to change. Tax information has been summarised; individuals should seek personalised advice.

Keep up to date on the financial issues that may affect you on the Blevins Franks news page at www.blevinsfranks.com

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Local councils agree to control parakeet plague using air rifles

The provincial authority will carry out a public awareness campaign to explain why such drastic measures are necessary

:: IGNACIO LILLO

MALAGA. The main local councils affected by the plague of monk parakeets agreed on Friday that the most appropriate, albeit unpopular, way of controlling the population is by shooting them with air rifles.

This was established at the meeting on Friday last week where the representatives of 14 local authorities got together with the Diputación provincial authority and experts from the University of Malaga and the Junta de Andalucía.

Shooting was the technique used in Zaragoza, which is the only city in Spain where the pest has been totally wiped out.

The surge in parakeet breeding in coastal and inland towns threatens native species and causes noise and damage. There are also fears that the birds could damage crops in the area.

Following the meeting a formal application will be submitted to the regional ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Sustainable Development, which will then draw up a specific control plan based on the information from the experts at the University of Malaga.

Each local authority will have to apply to put the plan into action, although the mayors at the meeting made a commitment to follow the same criteria.

In order to face the criticism from animal activists, the Diputación will run a parallel public awareness campaign to explain why it is necessary to adopt such drastic measures.

Antonio Román Muñoz, a Biology lecturer at the University of



The meeting in Malaga last Friday. :: SUR

Malaga and ornithologist has been studying this species of parakeet for several decades. He pointed out that the methods used until now in an attempt to control numbers, especially the removal of nests, have not only failed but also been counterproductive, encouraging the birds to spread to other areas.

The parakeets have already caused damage to trees in the university's botanical garden and affected almond crops near the airport.

Experts from the departments of the Environment and Biodiversity at

the Junta de Andalucía stressed that the monk parakeet is included in the Catalogue of Invasive Exotic Species which means that permission for the use of air rifles can be given.

It is estimated that there are 6,000 monk parakeets in the province. Around 3,500 of these are in the city of Malaga, the rest in mainly coastal towns, although they have recently started spreading inland to parts of the Guadalhorce valley and the Axarquía. There is also a small colony of ring-necked parakeets.

HERE AND THERE

Town hall confident of renewing Puerto Marina concession

BENALMÁDENA

:: A. GÓMEZ. Benalmádena council has expressed its confidence that it will be able to continue running the iconic Puerto Marina. After a 2014 ruling limited port concessions to 30 years, its concession is set to expire next year.

However, the town hall, in collaboration with others which directly control their marinas, has been working for several months on a change to the law which will revert the contracts to their original terms. "Everything seems to be pointing towards the law protecting us," said mayor Víctor Navas, who wished to convey a message of "calm".



Diggers at the scene. :: R. S.

Bridge demolished to make way for larger Plaza Mayor access

MALAGA

:: J. HINOJOSA. The demolition of the bridge over the MA-20 by Arrajanal caused tailbacks on Sunday as workers took four hours longer than expected after encountering "highly-resistant materials".

This bridge will be replaced by a smaller one which will join up with the new access ramp to the Plaza Mayor shopping complex and outlet village whose opening date, originally set for 22 October, has not been confirmed.

Fuengirola council criticises lack of progress on new Mijas hospital

:: IVÁN GELIBTER

FUENGIROLA. The council in Fuengirola has criticised a councillors' vote in neighbouring Mijas which agreed to give up land to the regional government for a long-awaited hospital. The facility is meant to cover patients in Fuengirola too and this week it said wearily, "What [Mijas] has approved is just a consultation to the Junta over the suitability of the site".

Israeli oil magnate buys Malaga city's old post office tower for 23.5 million euros

:: JESÚS HINOJOSA

MALAGA. Barring any last-minute surprises, the old Correos headquarters on Avenida Andalucía in Malaga will pass into the hands of Nitsba Spain, a company headed by Israeli oil magnate Haim Tsuff, in the coming fortnight.

Tsuff's business activities can be divided into two branches: the first is his company Isramco which operates in the oil and gas industry in Israel and the USA; the second is the

Nitsba group which invests in shopping centres, transport, residential developments and hotels.

The Nitsba subsidiary in Spain purchased the 13-storey tower, which has been vacant for nearly a decade, for 23.5 million euros at an auction at the regional ministry of Taxation in Seville on Monday.

The most likely scenario at this stage, given the building's designation in the PGOU planning document (for public service use), is that



The old Correos building. :: M. F.

it will be converted into either a residence for students or pensioners.

However, a petition to change its designation cannot be ruled out.

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Strike at the Costa del Sol hospital supported by 70 per cent of staff

The Agencia Sanitaria Costa del Sol, which runs the hospital, says it is "sensitive to" the workers' concerns over job insecurity

CHARO MÁRQUEZ

MARBELLA. The SMM (Sindicato Médico de Málaga) union says seventy per cent of staff of the Agencia Sanitaria Costa del Sol who work at the hospital in Marbella took part in strike action on Monday, and in some departments 100 per cent of workers supported the action and consulting rooms and operating theatres had to be closed for the day.

This was the second day of protest called by the union over the lack of a written agreement over contracts and working conditions. Dr José Luis Prada, the SMM representative at the hospital, said the last



Protestors demonstrate outside the hospital. **CHARO MÁRQUEZ**

agreement expired in 2009 and has never been replaced, causing job instability for many of the professionals who have worked at the hospital for years. The union claims that about half of the staff, including 200 of the 450 doctors, are affected and it accuses the administration of having handled human resources purely to suit its own interests since 2010.

The SMM insists that the strike was aimed to put pressure on the management, not patients, so the oncology, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, haemodynamic and dialysis departments were not affected by the strike, and neither were the emergency department or intensive care unit.

On this occasion, unlike the previous stoppage on 25 November, the Agencia Sanitaria Costa del Sol spoke out in support of the protesters, saying it is "especially concerned about and sensitive to" the situation of the hospital workers, because "all these professionals have undergone a rigorous and demanding selection procedure" and that stabilising job positions is a priority.

However, it quotes different figures for support for this latest strike, saying only 6.76 per cent of the employees joined in.

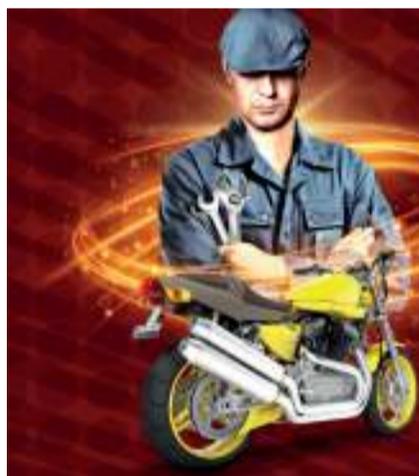
New Casares hotel and equestrian centre will cost eight million euros

CHARO MÁRQUEZ

MÁLAGA. A new tourism complex is to be built on the old El Pollo estate in Casares, at a cost of eight million euros. The project will include a 12-room hotel with a spa, restaurant, bar and swimming pool, a high-performance equestrian centre and stud farm which will include an artificial insemination laboratory for Spanish thoroughbreds, an information centre and museum showing the history of the estate, which is in a rural location at the foot of the Sierra Cristalina, and a series of walking routes.

The resort will also include accommodation for staff at the hotel and equestrian complex.

The mayor of Casares, Pepe Carasco, says the project will have a very low environmental impact and will create jobs and boost the local economy.



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New luxury boutique hotel opens in a former mansion in Malaga city centre

The restaurant in the 68-room hotel in Calle Granada will be run by Michelin-starred chef José Carlos García, who also has a restaurant in the Port

EFE/SUR IN ENGLISH

MÁLAGA. The Palacio Solecio luxury boutique hotel in Calle Granada, in the historic city centre, opened yesterday (Thursday). The hotel, which will be run by the Marugal company, has been created in an 18th century building at a cost of 30 million euros.

It has 68 rooms and facilities including three meeting rooms, a gymnasium, bar and restaurant run by chef José Carlos García, who has been awarded a Michelin star for his restaurant in Malaga Port.

Sales manager Paloma Rando said the Palacio Solecio is a four-star hotel offering a five-star service.



Many of the original features have been retained. **ÑITO SALAS**

The mansion, which was built in 1789, is thought to have been designed by architect José Martín de Aldehuela, who also designed the Puente

Nuevo in Ronda, and retains some of its original features, such as the grand staircase and archways in the central patio.

HERE AND THERE

Number of horse-drawn carriages to be reduced

MARBELLA

N.C. Marbella council has assigned 335,000 euros from its 2020 budget to buy back some of the licences for horse-drawn carriages which take tourists on tours of the town. The decision to sell will be voluntary, but the local authority believes about 11 of the 19 licence holders will welcome the move, which is aimed at easing traffic flow and bringing the service more in line with demand.

20,000 poinsettias planted for Christmas

ESTEPONA

SUR. Estepona is to be embellished with 20,000 poinsettias for the festive season this year, 5,000 more than in 2018. The plants have all come from the municipal nursery, and some are pink and yellow as well as the traditional red. Most of the poinsettias will be on roundabouts and in planters, but there will also be 14 floral towers around the town centre.

Further progress on the Coastal Path

MARBELLA / ESTEPONA

C.M./N.C. Estepona council is preparing to build another stretch of the Senda Litoral, or Coastal Path, between Laguna Village shopping centre and Dominion Beach, and once completed it will mean people can walk along the path through the municipality

for ten consecutive kilometres. This will be the longest stretch in Estepona so far, and will take six months to complete.

Meanwhile, there will also be progress on the Coastal Path in Marbella next year as several more stretches are planned. The contracts will be put to tender in the first three months of 2020, and the idea is that the works will be completed by the end of the year.

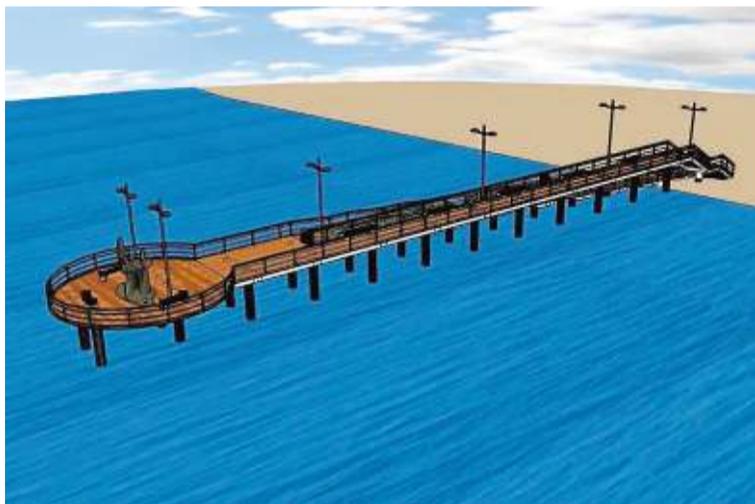
Junta de Andalucía studying plans to construct pier in Torre del Mar

According to the current design, the pier will be 65.5 metres long and five metres wide with a 10-metre wide lookout point at the end

AGUSTÍN PELÁEZ

TORRE DEL MAR. Plans to construct a pier off Torre del Mar beach have reemerged, two years after the project was first announced. However, the town hall has had to make a number of modifications to the original design, following indications from the Junta de Andalucía's coastal department, Demarcación de Costas. "We have been working continually with 'Costas' because we want to make this project a reality," said deputy mayor and councillor for beaches, Jesús Pérez Atencia, on Monday.

According to the current design,



A drawing of how the pier is expected to look when finished. :: SUR

the finished pier will measure 65.5 metres long, five metres wide and will have a 10-metre wide mirador at the end.

It will be wheelchair accessible and will be built using sustainable

and water-resistant materials, according to PROAMB S.L., the consultancy firm working on the design. The Junta de Andalucía is currently evaluating the viability of the current design.



Guardia Civil and experts looking for clues near Arenas. :: E. C.

DNA tests show bones found during search are not Dana's

E. C. / A. F.

ARENAS. Forensic tests have shown that bones found during last Saturday's search for Dana Leonte's body do not belong to the missing Romanian woman.

More than 300 people participated in the search in the mountains around Arenas, Sedella and Salaraes, including Guardia Civil, fire and civil protection officers, hunters and mountaineers as well as an army helicopter. Clothes found

were also dismissed as they do not correspond with what Leonte is believed to have been wearing on the day of her disappearance.

Meanwhile, a number of people gave witness statements last week during the investigation of Sergio Ruiz; Leonte's partner and only suspect in her murder. Ruiz's former partner and mother of his first child said he was a "violent and aggressive person" who she had previously denounced for domestic violence.

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Almuñécar tourism office reopens in nineteenth-century Palacete de Najarra

J. RHODES

ALMUÑÉCAR. The mayor of Almuñécar, Trinidad Herrera, officially opened Almuñécar's new tourist office at the town's Palacete de Najarra on Monday. The listed building, which was constructed in the nineteenth century in a neo-Arabic style, was closed for restoration work for two years and to incorporate the new tourist information office.



The mayor at the Palacete. :: SUR



SERVICE USERS WATCH CAVES LIGHT UP

Volunteers and users of Nerja's Taller de la Amistad watched on as part of the interior of the Nerja cave was lit up in blue on Tuesday to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which is held every 3 December. The event was one of the last to be held in the cave in its 60th anniversary year. Last week representatives from the international press were invited to take part in the celebrations.

HERE AND THERE

Tourist train to operate over festive period

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA

J. R. Vélez-Málaga's tourist road train will be in operation every Tuesday in the lead up to and during the festive period according to the town hall. It will leave from the Azucarera building in Torre del Mar at 10am and visit places of interest in Torre del Mar and Vélez-Málaga. Tickets cost six euros and can be bought at tourist information offices or online: apta.axarquiacostadelsol.org

Crack down on fake disabled parking badges

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA

SUR. Police in Rincón de la Victoria have started a crack down on fake blue disabled parking badges. Officers have already issued 25 fines and gathered reports for fake badges being used between July and September. Officers have released images of the fakes, which are smaller in size compared with genuine badges. The town hall says it is going to run an awareness campaign.

Woman in custody accused of attempting to murder her husband

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA

E. C. Rincón de la Victoria police released a press statement on Wednesday which stated that a 47-year-old woman originally from Ecuador had been arrested and was being held in custody accused of the attempted murder of her hus-

band. The statement revealed that on 27 November emergency services attended a suspected suicide at an address in the town. The woman's son called an ambulance when it became apparent to him that his mother had faked an earlier call. When the victim regained consciousness having suffered a cardiac arrest as a result of his injuries, he told police that his wife had tried to kill him. The woman is due to appear in court.



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS IN PICTURES



Marbella. Crowds admire the Christmas lights in Avenida Marqués del Duero. :: JOSELE



Malaga. Calle Larios in all its festive splendour. :: M. FERNÁNDEZ

Festive spirit on the Costa

Lights come on to welcome the Christmas season in Malaga city as well as towns and villages in the area

Malaga's Christmas lights came on last Friday night amid much anticipation as tens of thousands of people watched with their mobile phones held high to record the moment. The event had a celebrity touch this year as actor Antonio Banderas switched on the lights, accompanied by the president of the Junta de Andalucía, Juanma Moreno, and the mayor of Malaga, Francisco de la Torre.

This year the city's lights have three focal points: Calle Larios, turned into a Christmas forest with music and light shows three times every evening; Calle Alcazabilla, where a Christmas tale is told with

the projection of images on the façade of the Alcazaba; and in the newly revamped Alameda Principal where a story is told by an ancient ficus tree.

Fuengirola also lit up for Christmas on Friday with two million LED bulbs in 70 streets, squares and parks. New additions this year are the lights in Los Boliches.

Saturday night saw the switch-on ceremonies in Marbella and San Pedro, where Christmas was welcomed with concerts and parades. Highlights are the "cathedral" of lights in Avenida Marqués del Duero and the 20-metre high tree in Avenida del Mar.



Marbella. Artificial snow. :: JOSELE



Malaga. The Christmas tree outside the cathedral. :: F. PALACIOS



Fuengirola. The giant bauble in Plaza de España. :: SUR



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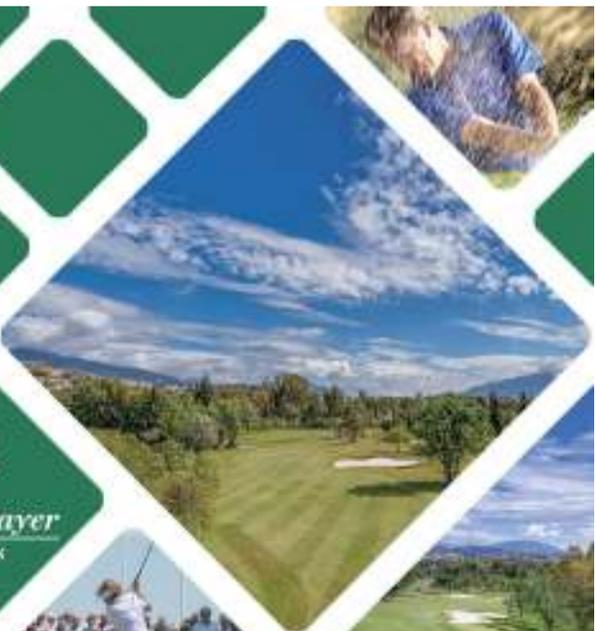
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The organisers in Malaga's Lagunillas neighbourhood. :: IGNACIO LILLO

Walking tours give a new climate-conscious view of Malaga

FRANK GAVURIN



✉ english@diariosur.es

New free tours allow participants to get to know the city while exploring climate change's effects on the Costa del Sol's capital

Pouplard, one of the founders of El Caminito, was keen to stress the importance of small-scale, community activism in the fight against climate change. "We look around and see abandoned plots but think nothing of it. We forget that the city is ours, and it can't hurt to see if you can start a small project like this. The idea is that everyone comes away from today looking to start their own initiative in their neighbourhood."

"Natural solutions"

The tour guides, Luis Jiménez of Explora Málaga and Jesús Iglesias of SIC4Change, also stressed the need for government action alongside citizen initiatives. They discussed the need for massive investment in public transport, while the sight of the barren mountains to Malaga's north-west sparked discussion of the need for ambitious reforestation projects, both to suck in carbon dioxide and combat flooding, which will become more common as climate change leads to increasingly unstable weather patterns. "The best solutions are always natural ones," Iglesias insisted.

Iglesias, Jiménez and Líbero's Fernando Blasco spoke this week at Madrid's COP25 climate summit. They will be sharing their perspectives on the conference at the first English-language Ruta del Clima on 13 December.

i For more information, see rutaclima.city/malaga

MALAGA. Three Malaga-based organisations came together last Friday to organise the inaugural Ruta del Clima, a free walking tour which aims to inform participants about climate change in the city.

The tour is the product of collaboration between environmental organisations SIC4Change and Líbero and free tour operator Explora Málaga. Their intention is to carry out at least one tour a month.

Friday's tour started by the Roman Theatre, before snaking up the hillside of Monte Gibralfaro towards the viewpoint. The panoramic vista that took in the sea, ferries steaming into port and planes taking off from Malaga's Airport provided the backdrop to an exploration of the effects of mass tourism in the city and the risk of rising sea levels.

The route then continued to Lagunillas, where the focus was on community initiatives and local commerce, with a visit to Verde Quimera, a shop which only buys local produce, as the owner explained.

The final stop was urban garden El Caminito in Olletas, where decisions are made collectively and produce is shared by the members. Christophe



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HERE AND THERE



The Lions Diabetic Support volunteers at the show. :: SUR

Hundreds attend Costa expat lifestyle show

FUENGIROLA

:: **T. BRYANT.** The first edition of the ExPat Expo - formerly the 50 Plus Expo - was held at the IPV Hotel in Fuengirola last month. The lifestyle event featured an extensive mix of interests, including fi-

nance, legal and consumer advice, as well as fashion shows, yoga demonstrations and free health tests. One of the most popular stands was the Diabetic Support Group, which offered free testing to more than 300 people.

Organiser Des Duggan said, "Such was the interest in the event that we are seriously considering repeating it in the spring."

Specsavers joins food collection campaign

MARBELLA

:: **SUR.** Specsavers Ópticas Marbella and Fuengirola has joined the Operación Kilo Campaign, in collaboration with the Bancosol foodbank, to collect non-perishable food for those in need on the Costa del Sol.

Non-perishable foods - oil, milk, tinned foods and meals, beans and pulses - are in particular demand and can be dropped off at Specsavers Ópticas in Fuengirola or Marbella.

Directors of these opticians are asking for donations in return for their free eye test and encouraging anyone who recently had a free eye test to also join the collection and donate before the end of the year.

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Disappointing monthly jobless total despite hopeful growth forecast

The increase in Malaga made up most of the rise in the Andalucía region, as the tourist high season in the province came to an end in November

N. TRIGUERO / J.L. PIEDRA MALAGA / SEVILLE. November was a black month for unemployment in the province of Malaga, including the Costa de Sol. In the monthly statistics from the Social Security department, which measures those signed on as unemployed,

there were 5,649 more looking for work locally and 10,794 fewer paying into the system with their social security contributions. Malaga province saw the second biggest jobless increase in Spain, after the Balearic Islands; both areas where the end of the tourist high season has a greater impact on data.

The increase in Malaga made up most of the 7,501 rise across the Andalucía region. In Malaga and its province there are now almost 150,000 registered unemployed.

Across Spain, the number of registered unemployed rose by 20,525, the worst November in three years,

bringing the total up to 3.2m.

Optimistic report

Just a day after the results were published on Wednesday, a report by BBVA Research said that Andalucía would create 150,000 new jobs by the end of 2020 and the regional economy would grow by 1.6 per cent next year. The job growth would be a quarter of the expected levels nationally, putting the region back to numbers in work last seen in 2007. However the percentage unemployed would stay at 20 per cent, as the overall number of people available to work has increased since then.



JOSELE

MARBELLA BUSINESS LEADERS' PRIZES

The CIT Marbella business association held its annual gala at the Puente Romano hotel last Friday. Praising the strength of the local business community, CIT president Juan José González called for a "stable and moderate [central government] that encourages an entrepreneurial spirit". Receiving prizes were representatives of the Andalusian business confederation (CEA), the Malaga chamber of commerce and the national federation of self-employed (ATA).

Nightmarish though it is for Pedro Sánchez, the ongoing battle with Catalan separatists is distracting public attention from the so-called ERE corruption case, in connection with which José Antonio Griñán, Socialist premier of Andalucía from 2009 to 2013, received a six-year prison sentence last month. For now at least, Catalonia is acting as a smokescreen, behind which the details of yet another vast and intricate fraud scandal are emerging.

Prosecutors in ERE - which is named after the Spanish acronym for a workforce lay-off scheme - argued that PSOE ministers in the Socialist Andalusian government fraudulently distributed €680 million of public money between 2001

THE EURO ZONE MARK NAYLER

SMOKESCREEN



and 2010. In total, 21 former PSOE ministers were tried for misconduct and/or misuse of public funds and 19 were found guilty of either or both offences. Yet despite the fact that ERE has been overshadowed by recent events in Barcelona, it reveals the Socialists to be just as susceptible to corruption and fraud as their arch-rival, the conservative People's Party (PP). Although Sánchez is not directly

implicated in ERE, the case couldn't have concluded at a worse time for the embattled Socialist leader. It was Sánchez, after all, who last June tabled and won a no-confidence vote against his predecessor Mariano Rajoy over the Gürtel kickbacks-for-contracts scandal. This sprawling case saw the PP fined for benefiting from fraudulent practice, the party's former treasurer, Luis Bárcenas, sen-

tenced to 33 years in prison and Rajoy himself testifying - the first time in Spanish history that a prime minister appeared as a witness in a criminal trial. In the wake of these damning verdicts, the PP faces a formidable task in regaining voters' trust.

ERE has the potential to inflict as much reputational damage on the acting government as Gürtel caused the PP, but that's not to say that Sánchez should resign - the course of action requested by Albert Rivera, ex-president of the centrist group Ciudadanos. Pablo Casado, who took over as PP leader from Rajoy last June, also said that his party cannot support Sánchez at the upcoming investiture votes; the PSOE, he claimed, stands revealed as "the protagon-

nist of the biggest corruption scandal in the history of Spain" (a questionable description, despite ERE's severity).

During the decade that ERE's key players were running Andalusia, Sánchez was a city councillor in Madrid. In other words, he has about as much responsibility for the people involved as Casado does for the protagonists of Gürtel, the latter of which can more plausibly be described as Spain's biggest ever corruption scandal. If we were to ask for the resignation of every senior Spanish politician who belongs to a party tainted by corruption, there would hardly be any occupied seats left in congress. Still, the smokescreen behind which the PSOE is currently hiding won't (and shouldn't) last forever.

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Zero tolerance towards drink-driving in Gibraltar this Christmas

The police have filmed a hard-hitting video warning that people can still be over the limit the morning after a night of heavy drinking

:: **DEBBIE BARTLETT**

GIBRALTAR. The Royal Gibraltar Police (RGP) are cracking down hard on drink-driving with a special pre-Christmas campaign which includes the warning that drivers can still be under the influence of alcohol the morning after a night of heavy drinking.

In a hard-hitting video filmed especially for this year's campaign and shown on local TV, the message is that a shower, copious amounts of coffee or even a fry-up for breakfast the morning after the night before may make you feel better, but does not reduce the alcohol level in your bloodstream. You will probably still be over the limit and your reactions will still be slower despite the number of hours have passed since drinking.

Although the RGP carries out a drink-driving campaign before Christmas every year, this one has more impact than ever before,



The drink-driving video was filmed locally. :: **ROYAL GIBRALTAR POLICE**

maybe because it is local. From visits to schools to talk to pupils who are old enough to have a motorcycle or drive a car, officers felt the message they were trying to get across didn't seem to be effective enough and the teenagers weren't really relating to it. That is why this video has been filmed and produced locally and features a Gibraltar-plated vehicle, to bring the message closer to home. Filming took place on a Sunday morning in No-

vember, at the pelican crossing by the Trafalgar cemetery, using special effects.

Regarding another aspect of road safety, after receiving a number of complaints, police in Gibraltar have also issued a warning this week that it is an offence to cycle or use e-scooters on pavements or footpaths in town because it poses a danger to pedestrians. Only mobility scooters are exempt from this regulation.

Gibraltar marks International Day of People with Disabilities

:: **D.B.**

GIBRALTAR. Tuesday 3 December was the International Day of People with Disabilities and the Ministry of Equality set up a stand in the town centre to mark the occasion and provide information about its initiatives and achievements in this field, which it describes as "unprecedented".

The Ministry aims to make Gibraltar more accessible to those with disabilities, under two strategies called 'Equality Means Business' and 'Gibraltar: everybody different, everybody equal'. The achievements under these strategies so far include a disability in-

formation card which can be applied for, so that people can discreetly inform anyone who needs to know about their disability without anybody else having to find out; the RADAR Key pilot scheme which enables people who are unable to use standard lavatories to have a special key for the accessible ones; a number of information booklets to raise awareness and provide guidance in relation to disabilities, among many others.

The government is also introducing tax incentives for modifications to business premises to make them more accessible.

Next stage of the restoration of the Grand Battery beside Casemates Square is under way

:: **D. BARTLETT**

GIBRALTAR. A further stage of restoration works is being carried out on the Grand Battery, one of the key military monuments which formed part of Gibraltar's

Northern Defences.

The first phase of the works included the removal of a World War Two blast wall, which exposed a series of eighteenth century fire steps hidden behind it along the northern defensive wall. These steps will be repaired and reconstructed where necessary as part of the present works.

The Grand Battery is next to Casemates Square, and once the restoration is completed the area will be used to display some of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment's artillery pieces.

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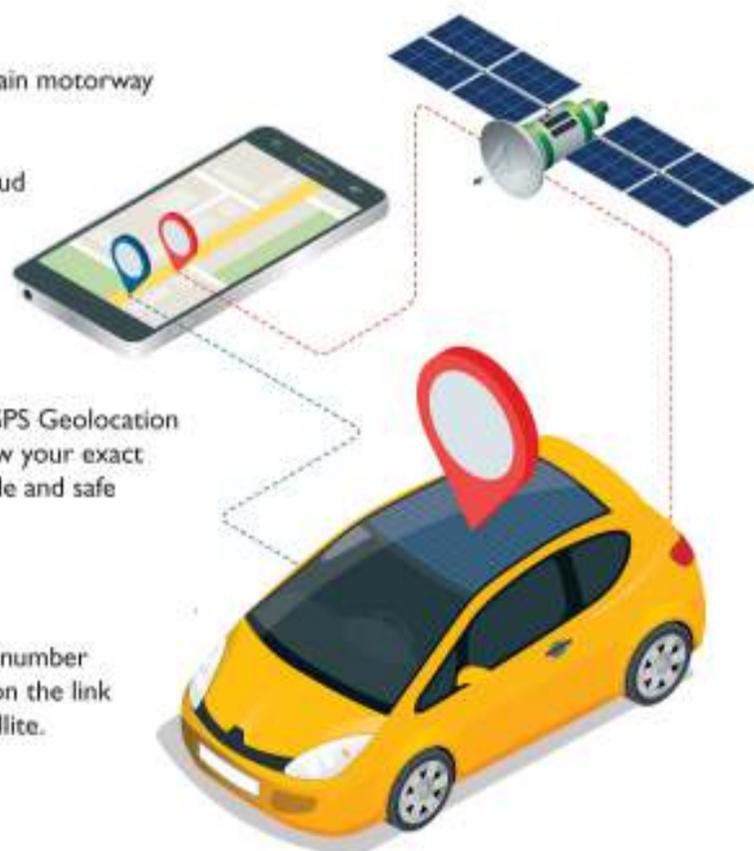
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Swearing in of MPs takes place in parliament but no agreement on government yet

PSOE needs the support or abstention of the ERIC Catalan republican party to see Padre Sánchez become PM in a coalition with Unidas Podemos

:: SUR

MADRID. The official swearing-in ceremony for MPs in the country's new parliament took place on Tuesday. During the day's events, the speaker was chosen and the MPs (diputados) swore allegiance.

Now that parliament has officially opened for business following the general election last month, MPs can focus on voting on who will be the next prime minister and form a government. Current acting Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez has the most MPs with his PSOE party but still needs more support to get a majority in an investiture vote.



The 'diputados' sitting in the Congreso chamber during the swearing-in ceremony on Tuesday. :: EFE

There was a sense of déjà vu during Tuesday's swearing-in, as the parliament had only last been opened in May, before the failure to form a government had forced Spain back to the polling booths this autumn.

There was the usual procedural discussions over how much say the smaller parties will get in deciding parliamentary business and complaints from right-wing parties that pro-republican and separatist MPs had changed the wording of their acceptance of allegiance to the King.

Meritxell Batet was reappointed as speaker. She met with the King on Wednesday. Felipe VI now must decide who to nominate as candidate to be PM after meetings with all party leaders, and it is seen as unlikely that an investiture debate will take place before January.

Catalan republican support

The PSOE continues to meet with the ERC (Catalan republican party), whose abstention it needs in order to take power in a coalition with Unidas Podemos. Both sides said this week that their positions were getting closer. ERC wants a formal forum to discuss Catalonia's position within Spain, which many even within the PSOE are nervous about agreeing to.

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Disappointing results for Spanish school pupils in the PISA tests in science, maths and reading

The three-yearly tests evaluate education systems in different countries and indicate that Spain and Andalucía are below average

:: ALFONSO TORICES

MADRID. The results of the 2018 PISA tests (Programme for International Student Assessment) organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have just been released and although Spain did not come bottom of the class, the results can only be described as mediocre.

These tests, which take place every three years, aim to evaluate educational systems in different countries by comparing pupils' knowledge of maths, science and reading comprehension, and their ability to resolve problems, at the age of 15. Three years



36,000 pupils in Spain took the tests. :: EFE

ago Spain achieved the average mark for the countries which were assessed, but this year the results of the 36,000 pupils who took the ex-

ams took Spain back to the level of 2000, 14 points below the average for the most advanced countries. In fact, the OECD has only published

the Spanish results in maths and science, because some of the pupils presented such "anomalies" in the answers to the reading tests that it affected the overall result for the group as a whole and it was impossible to compare it with that of other countries.

In Andalucía, the PISA results indicate that there has been no improvement in the educational system of this region in the past ten years and the marks are still some distance behind the national average. In 2009 there was a difference of 19 points for science, which reduced to ten points in 2012, rose again to 20 in 2015 and is now still 12 points lower. With regard to maths, the marks for pupils in Andalucía were very similar to 2009 and have always been around 20 points behind the national average.

The 2018 PISA tests were taken by 2,100 students from 53 schools in the region, including 400 pupils from 10 schools in Malaga province.

IN BRIEF

58 migrants drown on way to Canarys

MADRID

:: SUR. 58 migrants were known to have drowned, and 40 more were missing on Thursday, after the boat they were in overturned on a reef off Mauritania. The vessel was en route to the Canarys. 83 were rescued, with only those who knew how to swim surviving. Most passengers were said to be West African young men.

Strike action forces Renfe to cancel trains

MADRID

:: SUR. National rail operator, Renfe, had to cancel 155 trains on its long and medium distance network on Thursday in a partial stoppage called for by trade unions. The government stipulated minimum service levels. The disruption came at the start of the double public holiday long weekend, one of the busiest times of the year.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Climate change

Global warming is an issue that normally only brings bad news and, despite all the fuss made when this type of news appears, little or nothing seems to be done to change the situation in a resolute manner.

Now Madrid has replaced Chile as the venue for the United Nations COP25 climate summit. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the problems and the measures that could be taken against climate change.

However it's really quite ironic that Spain was proposed as a substitute for Chile, when this is one of the European countries that is under con-

stant supervision from the European Commission due to its repeated breach of EU regulations for nitrogen dioxide and nitrogen levels.

So, could this have been a political strategy on the part of Pedro Sánchez to draw attention to his party with regard to the recent elections?

Do the political representatives of the Spanish state really want to adopt an active attitude with regard to the climate crisis?

To politicise an issue such as climate change is the worst thing we could do.

MICHAELA STOFANIKOVA
BY EMAIL

Promotion through bridge

On behalf of all of us who work voluntarily for the Marbella International Bridge Tournament, we would like to thank SUR in English for giving us a space in this newspaper.

The bridge-playing community is growing more and more on the Costas and in the world. With so many participants coming especially for the tournament, we feel that we are doing our bit to help promote Marbella and the surrounding area.

MÓNICA BROMIGE
MARBELLA

Road to nowhere at shopping mall

I felt I had to write as I have been held up for an hour today near the airport; they were knocking down a bridge giving access to the Plaza Mayor shopping centre. Bizarrely, this cost and effort is to "improve access". Having seen the other access they are "improving", can I alert the authorities that, in my view, the problem is not going to be solved? I await more delays this time next year while the old access is being put back again.

R. SMITHSON
BY EMAIL

Share prizes fail

PETER EDGERTON
MUSIC MAKER WWW.E-PETER.COM

All those school sports days that became de rigueur in the nineteen eighties and nineties where nobody ever won and nobody ever lost and everyone got a prize just for turning up did not, you'll be glad to hear, go to waste.

The annual absurdityfest which is the Turner prize has just been presented but rather than give it to who they thought was the best, the judges risibly acquiesced to a request from the four finalists that it be presented to them all. I'm not sure what the entries were this year but I'd hazard a guess at the following: a cauliflower on a broom handle, a half-eaten cheese and pickle sandwich, a paper clip bent into the shape of Donald Trump's nose and the contents of an artist's airing cupboard. I may be wrong.

Anyway, whatever the work on offer, it was wildly overshadowed by publicity photos of the four 'winners' embracing each other

and grinning uncontrollably at the thought of sticking a sawn-off quarter of a trophy on their mantelpiece.

I'm with Nick Berry on this. 'Every Loser Wins' he warbled unconvincingly many years ago and a whole nation wondered what on earth he was going on about. Clearly ahead of his time, though, the Heartbeat heartthrob had cut right to the core of a timeless and invaluable truth - it's good to lose sometimes.

When I was at primary school, our football team was set to play a in a cup semi-final against another school fully expecting to emerge victorious and claim our prize - to play the final at Skelmersdale United's ground. This was a big deal for some ten-year-olds, as it was, in fact, for our over-excitable ginger PE teacher and master tactician Mr Parker. We should have known things weren't likely to go our way, however, from the mo-

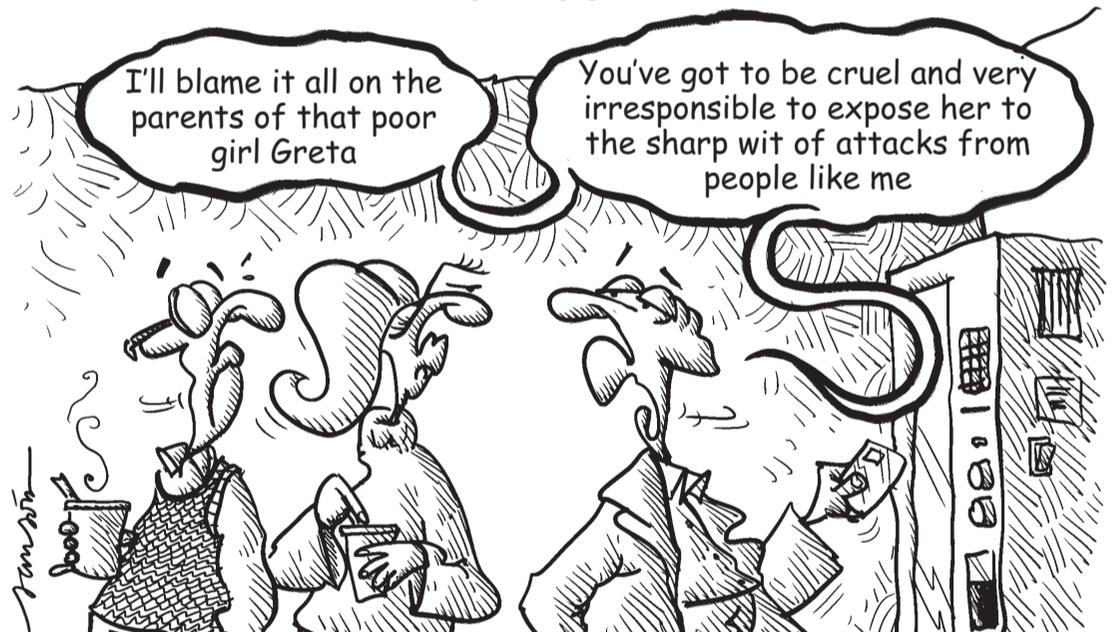
ment the opposition trotted out of the changing room followed by their manager - Steve Heighway. Steve Heighway! The legendary Liverpool winger was coaching the other team. As it happens, we only lost out to a lucky hoof in the dying minutes which carried on the gale that was blowing throughout and sailed cruelly over Jeff Branigan's despairing grasp into the back of our net. 1-0. We were out.

Undeterred, however, the next season we won everything in sight, spurred on by the heavy disappointment of our defeat at the hands of Heighway's Heroes or whatever they were called.

Losing builds character. Sharing prizes, by contrast, turns you into a big blancmange.

For that reason, when the inevitable Pulitzer prize for journalism eventually wends its way to my door, I'll refuse to share it with anyone on a point of principle. Nick Berry would be proud.

SANSÓN



SUR in English

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From time to time Marbella is shocked by a shooting. Or perhaps not. Gangland killings have started to form part of the routine and so talking about being shocked is an exaggeration. Strength of habit is such that we run the risk of treating as normal what is simply habitual.

We have been accepting the unacceptable for too long. Four murders in a month, plus two more the previous month, ought to be enough for local residents to feel invaded by a sense of insecurity. But that's not happening. The only thing we feel invaded by is the mafia-style gangs.

It seems as though this has nothing to do with the local population and that's how we should treat it.

Habitual,
not normal

HÉCTOR BARBOTA

The same happened some time ago, until a stray bullet fired by a clumsy hitman ended the life of a child who was passing by.

That episode, back in 2004, brought an end to the absurdly mistaken criteria that had been adopted by the majority of citi-

zens, and also the authorities, which made us think that mafia gangs and decent people live and move in parallel universes.

That moment of awareness was brief. Now we have gone back to a state of absurd unconsciousness, as though we didn't realise that

anyone could just happen to be passing through the wrong place at the wrong time. It's perhaps too much to suppose that a hitman will always be a good shot.

The relationship between organised crime and Marbella and the rest of the Costa del Sol has gone through different phases. First, this was just a place to come to live discreetly and spend ill-gotten money. Later with the property bubble and municipal corruption, this became a money laundering paradise. The next step was to start doing business here and lately the Malaga coastline seems to have become an extension of the Campo de Gibraltar.

There are some nightspots in Marbella, including some of certain prestige, where the doorman

greet clients with a metal detector. It's not sensible to believe that the prestige of this town can allow this to go on for much longer.

The police say that this is not an escalation, just a succession of isolated incidents. Four in a month, six in two months. It's the same argument they used last year, when the gangs made a qualitative leap and started to use explosives in this war that, the authorities insist, isn't a war.

These gangland killings are taking a worrying turn but the worry isn't just whether there's one more shooting here or there.

What's really worrying is that we are starting to consider it part of the routine.

And that the authorities are doing the same.

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BY THE BEACH



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Have yourself an eco-friendly Christmas

Simple changes in the way we buy presents, food and decorations can all help save the planet



EARTH MATTERS

When it comes to presents and especially toys for children avoiding plastic seems like an impossible task but there are plenty of options available

MALAGA. There's lots of advice on the internet about having an eco-friendly Christmas, so SUR in English teamed up with Sarah Spencer from Malaga-based firm Eco Passion to discuss the alternatives.

All that glitters isn't...

biodegradable. Christmas is the time to get sparkly - clothes, wrapping paper, Christmas cards and make-up all have it - but sadly the vast majority of it is tiny pieces of plastic, or micro-plastics, most of which end up being washed down sinks and going

into our rivers and oceans. There are biodegradable options available so check on the packet before buying. UK-based Eco Glitter Fun recommends checking that any glitter or product with glitter in it has the Bioglitter® logo on it. The company, which sells environmentally friendly glitter as well as wooden tree decorations, has confirmed to SUR in English that it delivers to Spain.

Christmas presents

Think packaging, eco-friendly and ethical alternatives, dig around in second-hand shops (there are more and more popping up in Spain and of course if you're heading back to the UK for Christmas then the high streets are full of them). Environmental charities also sell their own products online and that way you are also donating money to a cause.

Buy something someone will really like and don't be tempted by plasticky gimmicks that will be thrown out soon after Christmas. Buy an experience rather than a gift or even make something. And for smellies, go for refillable or non-plastic packaging. Shampoo bars and other plastic-free toiletries are becoming easy to find nowadays from outlets such as Lush and Eco Passion.



Kirsten Andrea Schrör's recyclable Christmas gift bags. :: K. A. S.

For the person who has everything? Sponsor a child, animal or granny.

Buy from small local shops rather than big chains, is another piece of advice offered. There's a saying going about at the moment that goes along the lines of "Every time a small, independent shop makes a sale they

do a happy dance."

When it comes to toys for children, Sarah admits that it can seem "like an impossible feat to achieve a plastic-free Christmas for little ones". However, she suggests looking for gifts such as Lego, board games and computer games and

books secondhand.

She recommends looking on Ebay or Amazon's secondhand sections and adds that "the quality is often very good". Charity shops are also full of board games, puzzles and books for all ages. "If everyone did this more, the demand, production and waste would all reduce," Sarah points out.

Decorations and trees

While the glimmering Christmas decoration in shops can tempt you into upgrading your tree adomments, there are lots of wooden, recycled, homemade or even edible tree decorations. "There are a million posts and videos online to help you get inspiration and if you have children, what better way to get prepared for Christmas by having a craft session together and teaching them why you are making this and not buying plastic," Sarah says. Go for LED lights on your Christmas tree and around your house and invest in a reusable advent calendar.

Wrapping paper

Get creative when wrapping your presents and think of alternatives that you probably have lying around your house. Wrap a present in an old scarf you never use. How about all those old copies of SUR in English

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Eco Glitter Fun wooden tree decorations. :: ECO GLITTER FUN

you have lying around? Or even maps of cities you have visited can make funky alternatives.

More and more shops are using brown paper bags which can also be used and look simple and stylish under the Christmas tree. Sarah says, "It is thought that in the UK alone the amount of wrapping paper used and then thrown away is enough to wrap around the equator nine times – that's 227,000 miles and that's just the UK. Add to that the plastic bags that are often used to put the waste in and you start to feel giddy and rather sad." She adds that you can even avoid sellotape by using jute string or strips of fabric from old clothes that can be cut into strands.

Look for local craft people who make reusable gift bags. Here in the

Axarquía, La Viñuela resident, Kerstin Andrea Schrör, makes and sells her own bags from jeans and is doing a superb line in recyclable gift bags. Find her on Facebook on the La Viñuela news page.

Food

"This is another area where it can seem tricky to avoid plastic and too much waste in general. I read that each year in the UK 17.2 million sprouts are thrown away," says Sarah. Then there is all the packaging from turkeys, mince pies, chocolates, party food and the list goes on.

"If you or your family are not ready to ditch the meat from your dinner table, then at the very least try to source your meat from local farms and producers who will have a minimal impact on the environment and who have reared their animals in the best possible way and avoid supermarket and factory farmed meat," she adds.

A few simple changes to Christmas habits can make the 2019 festive season merry and bright for us as well as our planet.

Useful websites :

www.ecopassion.es
www.ecoglitterfun.com
www.greenpeople.co.uk

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REF. M. T. P.

I have a significant amount of money in cash and I want to take it out of Spain as I intend to buy a car in Germany. However, I have been told that I cannot take out more than 10,000 euros, and that if I need more money I will have to make a transfer to the car dealer. Obviously, I do not

want to make a transfer without having tested the car. Is it true that there are restrictions as to the amount that you can take out in cash?

There are indeed certain restrictions, but it is not true that you cannot take out more than 10,000 euros in cash. That is the threshold that you can take out freely, but if you need or simply want to take out more, you can make a declaration to the Tax Office informing about the movement of the money. Obviously, this could lead to an inspection if the tax administration finds something that does not match with your previous tax declarations, but if the origin of the money is legal and you can prove it, you have nothing to fear. If on the contrary you do not declare the money and try to take it out of Spain, the authorities can retain the amount exceeding the limit until you justify where the money came from.

REF. R. E. M.

Three months ago I had an argument with a neighbour because I am fed up with him parking his car in part of my parking space. There is a column on the other side, and sometimes I cannot park because the space left is too narrow. During the argument, he insulted me in public and I sued him. Last week we had the hearing, but he did not appear at Court - he lodged a statement of defence instead. Can he legally refuse to appear?

Depending on the kind of proceeding and the defendant's domicile, law allows the defence to be carried out in writing, without having to go personally to defend himself against the charges. If this has been allowed, it is because it could be done that way, as otherwise the Court would have rejected the statement of defence.

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More at IKEA.es

Here it comes again, that metaphysical fireworks display sparked by yuletide, in the wake of Black Friday fever. To question or not to question, that is the question. For example: is it OK to fall for the magic of Christmas lights, or 'watt'?

New Year is on the horizon, prompting us to wax existential as we walk along the seafloor, with our sights set on those amazing daybreaks and spectacular nightfalls, which are at once an unfathomable source of inner harmony and the Costa del Sol's chief selling point - as in Selling Sunset. (What d'ya think folks? Isn't Netflix's docu-soap about LA girls who clinch million-dollar property deals, a surefire candidate for Guilty Pleasure of the Year?)

My idea of luxury? Something that cannot be gift-wrapped: to nod off and wake up to the sound of the ebb and flow of the sea; hearing the planet breathe night and day is humm... to be in touch with the Universe, no less. Did someone mention the soaring cost of tourist accommodation? Por favor, let's not go there! Instead, let's venture off the beaten track, in search of unexpected artistic thrills.

Casa Amarilla

"Malaga, Ciudad Genial" - aka 'Picassoland', aka 'Banderas City', a museum-goer's paradise... - is as

ART
GEORGINA OLIVER

DON'T WORRY, BE ARTY

Georgina Oliver comes across Casa Amarilla in her search for artistic thrills off the beaten track in Malaga



irresistible as its slogan, all year round. Yet, even off-season, dodging the crowds can be tricky, which is why stopping by the Casa Amarilla - an artist-run gallery-workshop-cum-residency - installed on several floors of a house in the heart of the historical centre, is such a pleasant alternative to the hectic hustle and bustle of festive shopping.

Facing Casa Aranda - a mega-rated traditional churros 'n' chocolate hotspot - and within steps of the Thyssen Museum,

LA CASA AMARILLA
The gallery-workshop can be found in Calle Santos, 7, in Malaga city centre, near the Carmen Thyssen museum.

ERNST KRAFT
The artist's El Universo is at Sala El Pósito, Plaza de la Constitución, Vélez-Málaga until 10 December.

this hip haven attracts contemporary art aficionados, luring them into its web, with offbeat offerings. Storefront performances are part of the package. By hook or by crook, there is always something 'on' (or 'off') to look forward to: an in situ happening or an exchange with another city; an artist residency or a brand-new group show...

Your hosts will be one of the Casa's two super enterprising partners, or both: David Burbano and/or Sara Sarabia. Sara, whose solar personality (and architectural background) shines throughout the entire mellow yellow gallery+ concept, lets me into the whys and wherefores of the multi-level art space they spear-headed almost a decade ago, in another locale: "Why yellow? Because of Van Gogh and the dream he had: to create a community of artists... to sow seeds; that's the spirit..."

Cosmic concept

If planning an excursion to Vélez-Málaga, a Moorish gem east of Malaga city, don't miss a further opportunity to pause for thought.

To be seen at the Sala El Pósito until Tuesday 10 December, Ernst Kraft's elliptical metal mesh and cable installation dubbed "El Universo" is a conceptual "parenthesis" inviting us to reflect upon infinity. A priceless pleasure.

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IN THE FRAME

A truly diplomatic relationship

Anne Duse, 68, and Andreas Ekman Duse, 73, are both retired Swedish diplomats who have lived in Nerja for two years. Attracted by the Spanish culture, they are learning the language and are keen to integrate. They are also both active members of the Nerja Arts Society. Few are aware, however, of the fascinating diplomatic careers that took them around the world.

Having studied languages at university (Anne, Japanese, and Andreas, Russian) and with a keen interest in international politics, they both felt that a future in diplomacy called. Anne explains that her father was a local politician in Sweden so, she says, "Politics was our daily bread."

Anne and Andreas first met in London where they had both been posted by the Swedish government. For Anne it was her first foreign posting. The opportunity had come about because a more senior colleague didn't want to go. "I hadn't been working there for long, but the other woman didn't want to go so I went instead," recalls Anne, who was single at the time. Once in London, her secretary, an older "rather traditional lady", decided that what Anne needed was a boyfriend and already had her eye on the "man on the third floor", she laughs.

Andreas had been in the UK capital for two years then and was about to throw a party for some British friends. He was planning to serve up surströmming, or fermented herring, a Swedish delicacy, which to put it diplomatically, could be said to have a somewhat pungent aroma.

At the time Andreas had the Archbishop of Canterbury as a neighbour as, he explains, Lambeth Palace, the Archbishop's official residence, was being renovated.

Shortly after the party (Andreas doesn't remember whether the invited Brits liked the herring or not) he was called into the ambassador's office. It turned out that the archbishop had complained about the smell emanating from Andreas's flat during and after the herring party.

"It was always a bit scary when you got called into the ambassador's office," Andreas recalls. However, on this occasion the ambassador didn't take the complaint too seriously. The other thing to come out of the party was a relationship between Anne and Andreas.

Since then the couple have clocked up a number of postings between them, but they say they have mainly travelled together. They have lived in Tanzania, Tokyo and Congo as well as 10 years in the USA, where they spent time in Washington, Los Angeles and New York. In fact it was

while the couple were in Washington that they did spend time apart as Anne accepted a job in New York working for the UN. Anne went on to work for some time in Estonia, although Andreas was already retired by then, and they have also both spent time in Stockholm,

where their two children were born.

While Andreas's line of work has been largely related to trade and commerce, Anne dedicated most of her working life to promoting press and cultural links between her native Sweden and the different countries she lived in. As well as an extensive

list of countries, the pair can name drop quite an impressive list of celebrities they've met, including Swedish pop band ABBA, Hollywood actor and former California governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and American singer, Bert Bacharach.

Both Anne and Andreas speak openly and passionately about the work of diplomats and the importance of being able to adapt to very different cultures from one day to the next. "There is no time to read-just when you go to another country," they explain. "You just have to get on with it and learn as quickly as possible the different cultural and social norms of the countries you are in," they say.

Citing an example, they speak about the total contrast between the tactile nature of Tanzanians and the people of Japan, their next destination, where "there is no touching". They laugh about how easy it is to "commit a faux pas", not just for diplomats but when, for example, they have hosted visits by Swedish royalty and the host country does not understand the etiquette.

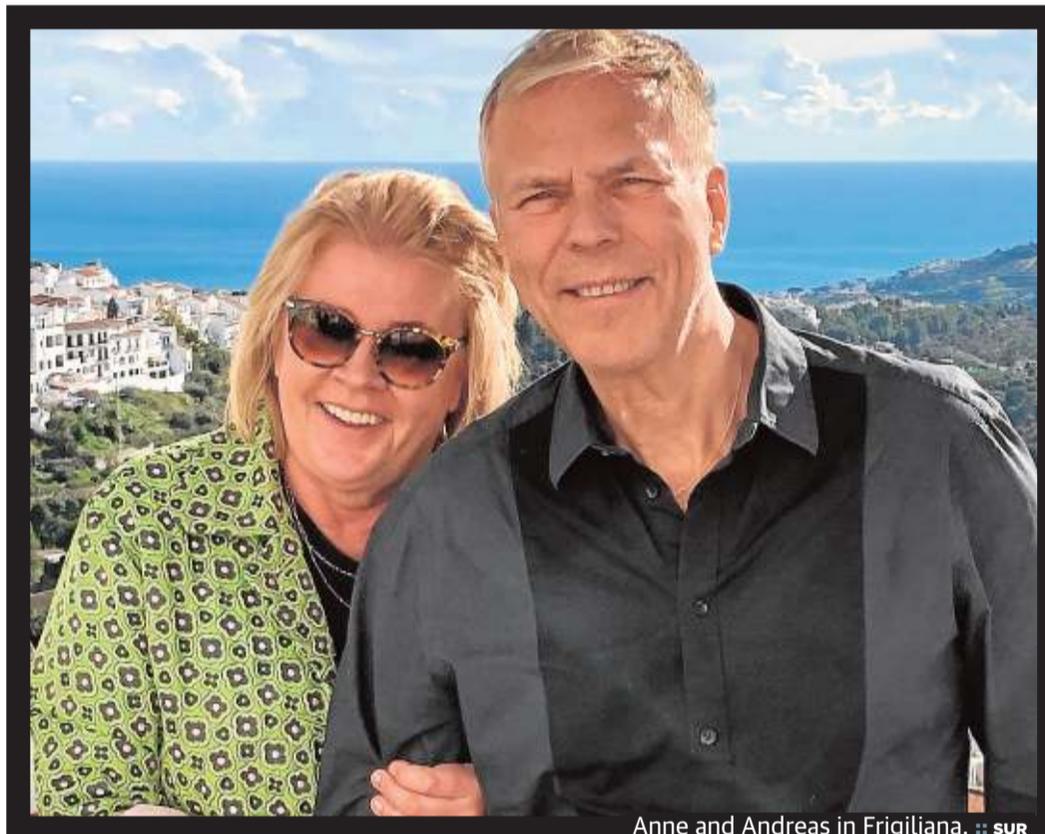
"It was always a bit scary when you got called into the ambassador's office!"

A lot of the work, they say, is about analysing political, educational, scientific and commercial situations and being able to provide "on-the-spot information" to a minister who might be meeting someone from the country.

Over a traditional Swedish 'fika' ('break' in English) of cinnamon buns and coffee in the couple's home in Nerja, they conclude by saying that having worked in the UK in the 1970s, they think that Brexit is seen by Sweden as "very sad" as the two countries are "on par in the EU on many issues".

As for their decision to retire to Spain, Anne says, "It was a new challenge. We had never lived in a Spanish speaking country so it was out of curiosity. The Spanish culture has always attracted me."

The couple return to Andreas's native island of Gotland in Sweden every summer to visit family.



Anne and Andreas in Frigiliana. :: SUR

Anne Duse and Andreas Ekman Duse first met while on postings to London. Despite a slightly sticky start which involved a national Swedish dish and the then Archbishop of Canterbury, the couple have had fascinating careers which have taken them to very diverse countries

JENNIE RHODES



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World's most expensive Christmas tree unveiled in Estepona

Decorated with jewels, diamonds and martini glasses, the tree has taken pride of place in the Kempinski Hotel's lobby

ASH BOLTON

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ESTEPONA. Bosses at an Estepona hotel claim to have put up the world's most expensive Christmas tree.

The festive showstopper is valued at over 12 million euros and was unveiled at the Kempinski Hotel last Saturday during the hotel's Christmas market.

Decorated with high-value stones,

the five-metre-tall tree is peppered with pink, red, white and black diamonds, edible treats and traditional decorations.

Hundreds of people turned out to see the grand unveiling of the tree including the mayor of Estepona, José María García Urbano, and Debbie Wingham, who designed the tree.

Kempinski Hotel General Manager Axel Bethke, said: "We are delighted to unveil this year's Christmas Tree with a glamorous twist! Debbie Wingham's design is quite the showstopper in our hotel lobby and we're certain it will make guests' time spent at the hotel during the festive season that bit more splendid."

The tree also features unique martini glasses, feathers, perfume bottles, 3D printed chocolate peacocks and decorated baubles, created with a mixture of materials, from diamond dust and 24-carat gold to emu and ostrich eggs.



The Kempinski Hotel's lavish tree is worth over 12 million euros. :: SUR



CHOIR SINGS FOR CHARITIES

The CantoLibre choir raised funds for Age Concern Estepona and the local Alzheimer's Society last Friday in Sabinillas. The singers performed English and Spanish carols and Christmas songs at the International Fair of Christmas Cakes organised by the Manilva Foreigners Department at Villa Matilde. In appreciation of their contribution the town hall made a donation to the two charities. The choir's next public performances will be in Estepona Port, on 18 December at Bar La Luna and on 19 December at Bar Vice Versa, both at 6.30pm. Above, the cheque is presented to the Alzheimer's society.

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TONY
BRYANT

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

6 DECEMBER 1978

Spain ratifies Constitution of 1978

A referendum marked the culmination of the Spanish transition to democracy after the death of General Francisco Franco

On Wednesday 6 December 1978, the people of Spain voted in a referendum to ratify the new Spanish Constitution. The vote marked the culmination of the Spanish transition to democracy after the death of General Francisco Franco.

The dictator had ruled Spain with an iron fist for almost 40 years and the new fundamental principles saw the country undergo a series of political and social changes that transformed the country from a dictatorship into a democratic state.

The transition was a complex process that gradually changed the structure of the regime by slowly approving, or abolishing, laws to establish a representative government.

The new constitution was approved by the Spanish parliament (Cortes Generales) on 31 October

1978, and by nearly 90 per cent of Spanish voters in the referendum on 6 December. It was sanctioned by King Juan Carlos on 27 December and came into effect on 29 December, the day it was published in the Official State Gazette (BOE).

Since then 6 December has been a national holiday in Spain.

The constitution was drafted and approved by the constitutional assembly that was elected after the 1977 general election. It is organised in ten parts, which advocates as the highest values liberty, justice, equality and political pluralism.

A seven-member panel was selected to work on the draft of the constitution and they became known as the 'Fathers of the Constitution'. These seven people were chosen to represent the deeply divided political spectrum within the Spanish Parliament, while the leading role was given



Juan Carlos I sanctions the Spanish Constitution of 1978. :: EFE

to then ruling UCD party.

The assembly nullified the fundamental laws of the regime as well as existing laws that refuted the principles that the new constitution established.

The writing of the preamble was a task that required astute literary ability and was considered to be a great distinction. This hon-

our went to Enrique Tierno Galván, a Spanish politician, lawyer and essayist who went on to become Mayor of Madrid from 1979 to 1986. The preamble states that the Spanish nation - wishing to establish justice, liberty and security - proclaims to guarantee democratic life within the Constitution and the laws according

LANGUAGE
FOOTNOTE

Constitución	Constitution
Ratificar	To ratify
Democracia	Democracy
Borrador	Draft
Principios	Principles
Valores	Values
Justicia	Justice
Preámbulo	Preamble
Garantizar	To guarantee
Protección	Protection
Sancionar	To sanction
Gobierno	Government
Asamblea	Assembly
Tradiciones	Traditions
Derechos	Rights
Libertad	Freedom
País	Country
Artículos	Articles

to a just economic and social order. It also promotes the protection of all Spaniards in the exercise of human rights, their cultures and traditions, languages and institutions, in order to ensure a decent quality of life for all.

The constitutional history of Spain dates back to the Constitution of Cadiz (1812), known as La Pepa, one of the first constitutions in world history.

Bilingual crossword inside back page

ADVERTORIAL Villa Dale

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If you're looking for really good quality furniture and household items from a reliable supplier, all at affordable prices, then look no further than Villa Dale furniture in Marbella.

Their new showroom in the La Ermita Polígono Industrial has a wide range of high-end, mainly British-made furniture and beds of top quality from brands such as John Lewis, DFS, Sofology, etc. as well as mattresses from Reylon Gold, SilentNight Studio and Cashmere.

The warehouse stocks all new items as well as some ex-display, all with huge discounts from the original prices.

For landlords looking to furnish properties which are to be used for holiday lets, there is a range of good quality, cheaper furniture, and they can also arrange and provide made-to-order furniture as well as some ex-catalogue stock.

The shop is also due to begin supplying fridge freezers and electric appliances soon, mean-



ing they will be able to provide everything you need to furnish your home or rental property.

For those who require them, delivery and assembly services can be arranged to take the hard work out of the process.

Visit the showroom to check out what's available, and talk to the helpful staff members to find out about all the possible options as well as their frequent deals and special offers.

Located on Calle Torno number 5 in Marbella's Polígono Industrial La Ermita, the showroom is open to the public from 9am to 1pm and from 3pm to 6pm, Mondays to Fridays. Call the mobile number below to ask about weekend visits.

For telephone enquiries call 952 264 852 or 602 584 371. Visit www.villadale.es

PET CARE

PETER
HARRISON

Safe Christmas gifts

Only buy pets toys designed for animals

It is the same challenge every year. What on earth shall we give as a Christmas present to the kind neighbour who watered the plants when we were on holiday and what about the friends who did our shopping when we were ill or the lady who walked the dog when we could not?

If the intended recipient is a pet owner the challenge is simplified. Pets love new things even if they have plenty of the same, especially toys, but do buy those toys at a good pet shop or at a vets' surgery which sells toys.

Ordinary toy shops sell toys designed for children and these are usually completely wrong for animals with sharp teeth and a desire to tear apart with curiosity. They are stuffed with material like kapok, and if swallowed are dangerous. Toys with beady eyes can have the eyes pulled out and eaten with disastrous result. Toys specifically designed for animals do not have such hazards.

You may think you are offering a pet a treat with chocolates but chocolates for humans contain a class of chemicals called methylxanthines which can make a dog seriously ill and even result in death. You can buy chocolates especially for dogs which exclude this chemical. These are often stocked at vets' surgeries.

Dogs love bones but some bones like poultry and rabbit will splinter and can cause the animals great harm. A good butcher, not just a seller of meat, will sell you a bag of marrow bones which are enjoyable and safe.

Finally - dare I repeat it yet again - if you know of someone who is considering the idea of giving a gift of a puppy or kitten for Christmas, do dissuade them. They are committing someone to a long-term obligation, for which they may not be prepared.

Erny and I wish you and your pets a very Happy Christmas.

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29730 Torre de Benagalbon - R. de la Victoria (Málaga)
951 567 015

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DENISE BUSH



GARDENING

No sweeter leaf

An attractive perennial shrub with bright-green, pinnate leaves and small red flowers followed by cream berries

Native to East Asia, Borneo, India and South China, *Sauropus androgynus*, also called katuk, star gooseberry, sweet leaf and cinnamon leaf, is a tropical or subtropical shrub that loves hot,

humid conditions.

In an ideal situation with damp soils and some dappled shade, sweet leaf will reach about three metres high. However as the thin stems are

unbranching they are vulnerable to being broken by strong winds so are best shortened to 1.5 to two metres.

In Asia it is called katuk and is a staple food. The young leaves are used in salads and older leaves cooked like spinach. The young shoots are also eaten and said to taste like asparagus while the berries are said to taste like peas. Each marble-sized fruit contains five or six angular seeds.

The leaves of some cultivars have silver markings. They all contain valuable nutrients and are high in protein. Compared to spinach, they are said to contain 20 times more vitamin C, six times more iron and three times more calcium.

The chemical Papaverine is present in the leaves and this helps to lower blood pressure. However excessive consumption of the raw leaves on a daily basis can cause lung damage by dilating the tiny blood vessels supplying the lungs.

Propagation is by cuttings which root easily in water, or by seeds which need to be sown while fresh. They are slow to germinate, taking around two to three months to sprout.

Sweet leaf can be grown in a container to make it easier to give it protection during the winter. It is not drought resistant and needs consistent moisture although it is not fussy about soil quality.



Sauropus androgynus and berries (inset). :: WIKIMEDIA

READER'S PHOTO



:: GILLIAN WATSON

A MEMORIAL GARDEN

Reader Gillian Watson sent in this photo and says, "This little corner on my often sunny but rather windy open terrace in Calahonda is dedicated to the memory of my husband whom I sadly lost to Alzheimer's in 2017. I have to do very little to maintain these plants and like to think my husband's green fingers are still at work for me to admire the results!"

GARDENING IN DECEMBER

Battening down the hatches

With autumn weather on the cusp of changing to more wintry temperatures, make sure your more tender plants are adequately protected. Remove any dead or dying stems of climbers and shrubs before wrapping them in horticultural fleece or straw and sacking. Long willowy stems should be tied into supports or trimmed back to

avoid wind damage and pack mulch around the base of plants which die back to the ground in winter. Compost heaps should be covered with a lid, with a piece of old carpet or a few sheets of cardboard to prevent heavy rain making it too wet. Group pot plants together in a sheltered spot for protection.

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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DISCOVER ANDALUCÍA



About 300 people participate every year in this re-enactment in the Algeciras village of Pelayo. :: **AYTO ALGECIRAS**



A scene from the living nativity. :: **AYTO ALGECIRAS**



QUICK GUIDE

What to see in Algeciras

Río de la Miel. This beautiful riverside location is near the village of Cobre. *Parque natural Los Alcornocales. 11201 Algeciras*



Los Arcos aqueduct. The remains of an important hydraulic system built in the eighteenth century. *Barriada de El Cobre, s/n. 11206 Algeciras*

Merinías Arab baths. Remains of the palatial town erected by Amir Abu Yusuf Yaqub between 1279 and 1285. *Parque María Cristina, s/n. 11206 Algeciras*



Centro de Interpretación de la Cultura Andalusí. Thematic centre on the medieval past of Algeciras. *Prolong. Avda. Blas Infante, 6. 11206 Algeciras.*

Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Palma. Algeciras' main church, built in 1738. *Plaza Alta, s/n. 11201 Algeciras.*

A nativity full of life

JAVIER ALMELLONES

Two days in Algeciras

Car + walk.

Duration of journey: 1 hour 40 minutes from Malaga. Living Nativity: 3 hours. Visits to monuments: 3 hours.



Not even ten years has passed since it started and the nativity in Algeciras has already become one of the main living representations of the event in Andalucía.

Every December, the small Algeciras neighbourhood of Pelayo becomes one of the obligatory places

for lovers of Christmas traditions to visit.

This staging of the nativity, held in the visitors' centre in Huerta Grande just a short distance from the hamlet of Campo de Gibraltar, is a popular tradition open to all members of the public.

The re-enactment is open from today, Friday,

until Sunday 22 December and performances alternate between mornings and afternoons over weekends and bank holidays.

Today, next Monday, the following Sunday and the last day (22 December), the nativity will be open from 12pm until 2pm. On Saturdays 7, 14 and 21 December, the performance of the living nativity will be held between 6pm and 8pm. This way people wishing to view the nativity can choose between daytime or nighttime performances.

Over 300 people participate every year in the event which not only relates the birth of Jesus but also the customs of the time which, in this case, are linked with the agricultural past of the area.

In each of the cubicles, the visitor will be able to see scenes showing ancient trades, including traditional baking and crafts of this part of Andalucía and the village of Pelayo.

Pelayo, situated around seven kilometres from Algeciras, has a mainly agricultural past as can be seen in the visitors' centre in Huerta Grande. It is also possible to trace the links that the village had with the Los Alcornocales and El Estrecho natural parks.

The access to El Pelayo is relatively easy as it is crossed by the N-340 road.



Visitors' centre in Huerta Grande. :: **SUR**

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CHRISTMAS EVENTS

ADANA Christmas dinner Manilva. 6 December, from 7pm. Duquesa Golf. 35€.
Three-course Christmas dinner (fish option available), with glass of cava on arrival and glass of wine, beer or a soft drink with the meal. Entertainment provided by Neily Diamond, Ivan (80s hits) and guitarist Les Carter. Bookings: adanaevents@gmail.com

Christmas Market Almuñécar 6-8 December. Plaza de la Constitución.
A traditional Spanish 'merienda' with a performance by 'Sabor a Mar' dance group on 6 December at 5pm. Also a International Christmas Market by the foreign residents of Almuñécar.

Nuevo Futuro Rastrillo Malaga. 6-9 December from 11am until 9pm. Palacio de Ferias y Congresos.
Nuevo Futuro raises funds to provide welcoming homes for children who come from difficult back grounds. They will be holding a market with various stalls selling all sorts of crafts, Christmas gifts and foods.

Love To Sing Carol Concerts Manilva. 7 December, from 3.30pm.
Plaza de la Vendimia. Gastronomy Fair.

Absolutely Bazaar Christmas Boot Sale Alhaurín el Grande. 7 December, sellers from 8am, buyers from 10am. Venta Los Arcos.
Sellers to display their goods on a table or stand. Book a pitch: www.absolutelybazaar.es. Call: 652150951

Malaga city centre fills with Christmas music for festive shoppers

by JUAN SOTO

MALAGA. The streets and alleyways in the old quarter of Malaga city centre will host over thirty activities for all ages over the festive season.

The programme of events starts today, Friday 6 December, in the **Alameda Principal** with 'La Navidad Llega a la Alameda' and from 7.30pm there will be a circus performance, a zambomba and a concert by the Brass Band.

From 17 December until 29 December, the **Plaza de la Constitución** will be holding a series of concerts, 'Música en Navidad', which will include a concert by the Sierra Blanca El Romeral choir and performances by the Teatro Musical Victoria and Gym Victory.

The traditional 'nevada' (snowfall) will take place in the **Plaza de las Flores** at around 8.30pm on 18 and 19 December

The **Plaza de Camas** will be hosting various children's shows including, on 21 December, 'Su-



A zambomba in Malaga. :: SUR

percalfragilístico' from Mary Poppins.

Between 6 and 8pm on 19, 20 and 21 December, the CDR Renfe choir will be performing in **Calle Nueva, Calle San Juan and Plaza de Félix Sáenz.**

The popular Fiesta Mayor de Verdiales will be celebrated in **Puerto de la Torre** on 28 December.

Ricky Lavazza's Christmas Cracker Benalmádena. 7 December, doors 8pm. Moonlight Lounge, Sunset Beach Hotel. 12.50€.
The TAPAS choir join popular vocalist Ricky Lavazza in his Christmas Show. Karen Danzig will also appear. Tickets available from Sunset

Beach reception or www.lava-productions.rocks

Christmas Bazaar Marbella. 8 December, from 3pm. Clínica Buchinger Wilhelmi.
Art, crafts, books and information on health and wellbeing. Live music, fruit juices and infusions

available.

Christmas Carols and Brunch Nerja. 7 December, 11.30am. El Parador de Nerja. 42€.
A recital with soprano Lucía Millán and harpist Félix Miguel Ángel Sánchez followed by brunch at the hotel. Reservations: 690 073 871 or www.ventana-abierta.es/reservas.

Coraxalia Christmas Concerts Nerja. 10 December, 5pm. Church of San Miguel (near parador).
Alcaucín. 14 December, 8pm. Church of Ntra Sra del Rosario. eucorax@hotmail.es / 689 111 352

TIMS Christmas Concert La Cala de Mijas. 10 December, 6pm. Town hall.
The choir will sing arrangements of Christmas songs. Tickets on door or from 654 891 790. www.timschoir.org

Christmas Dance and Concert Vélez-Málaga. 10, 11 December, 7pm. Teatro del Carmen.
Students of the Vélez-Málaga Municipal school of Music and Dance will be performing a dance show on 10 December followed by a concert on 11 December. Entry by invitation collected from the school or town hall.

Candelit carol service Alhaurin de la Torre. 11 December, 7pm. Evangelical church, Puente de Don Manuel.
Mince pies and mulled wine will be served at this Christmas carol service. Directions: www.evangelical-churchelpuente.com

Czech choir La Cala de Mijas. 11 December, 4-8pm. Town hall plaza.
A special Czech Christmas event with stalls selling mulled wine, typical cakes and pastries. At 6pm a

Czech Choir will perform.

Phoenix Singers La Cala de Mijas. 12 December, 6pm. Town hall. Free.
International Christmas concert with the Phoenix singers. Book a seat by email: frd@mijas.es

Meeting of Christmas choirs Nerja. 13 December, 9pm. Iglesia de El Salvador.
The Orfeón Virgen de la Escalera (from Cadiz) and the Coral Alminares from Nerja will be in concert together.

International Christmas Festival Arroyo de la Miel. 13, 14, 15 December, from 1pm. Plaza de la Mezquita.
Gastronomy, performances, typical products and crafts will be available at this international festival.

TOPS panto and show Alhaurin el Grande. 13, 14 December. Food from 7pm, show starts 8.30pm. Venta La Recta. Show 10€.
Tickets on sale at Cristina's, UK food Stores and DEE DEE's hairdressers in Alhaurin El Grande. Contact Maggie (topsforcharity@gmail.com) to reserve a table. This year TOPS is supporting the local charities AID and Caritas.



Buchinger bazaar, Marbella

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Ecumenical Carol Service

Torre del Mar. 14 December, 6pm. Parish church of San Andrés. Carols sung by the Spanish choir Amigos de Lux Mundi, the German choir Con Los Cantores director Lisa Kropp and the TIMS English choir director Margaret Williams.

SEARCH Christmas Open Day

Coín. 14 December, from 12pm. Hot turkey rolls, veggie burgers, mince pies and homemade cakes, mulled wine, coffee etc – drinks cost 1€ each. Limited places: 660 220 700 or email info@serch.es. www.serch.es or S.E.A.R.C.H Facebook page.

Christmas concerts and choirs Almuñécar.

14 December. The Banda de Música Almuñécar will be in concert at 7pm in the Casa de la Cultura while the Pedro Mena child choir will be performing in the La Encarnación church at 8pm.

Coral Ciudad de Benalmádena

Arroyo de la Miel. 14 December, 8.30pm. Inmaculada Concepción Church. Coral Ciudad de Benalmádena, organiser of the event, together with Coral Polifónica Ciudad de Marbella and Coral Municipal de Casabermeja will perform Christmas songs from all over the world. Conductor: Óscar Luis Sánchez.

Traditional Villancicos

Almayate. 14 December, 6.30pm. Almayate Church. Seven choirs unite to sing traditional Spanish carols (villancicos) in an event that is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

Collegium Musicum Costa del Sol Christmas concert

Fuengirola. 15 December, 6pm. IPV Palace Hotel and Spa. 12€.

The choir and orchestra will be presenting a variety of carols from around Europe. Tickets from the hotel, Nicholson's Jewellers and choir members. Reservations for finger food buffet (15€) before 8 December. www.colmus.org or call: 952775492 / 696620872

Triple A Christmas fundraiser Marbella.

15 December, 7pm. Puente Romano restaurant. 100€ Coctail and canapes on arrival, three course meal with drinks, raffle and live music. Email: events@tripleamarbella.org Tickets by Whatsapp: 0031683157025 or online: www.restaurante.covermanager.com/cena-tripple-a

Musical Christmas party

Coín. 16 December, 5pm. Olive Tree Restaurante. 14€ members / 16€ non-members. The TAPAS choir will be singing festive favourites, old and new following a two-course Christmas dinner. 679 757 610.

Christmas Sing Song for Dementia sufferers

Estepona. 17 December, 12pm. 11&11 Restaurante, Estepona port. This is a special Christmas event for dementia sufferers their carers, families etc. Familiar Christmas songs with singer Helena Paul. Call: 606849692 or email: Julie-Janefundraising@gmail.com.

Age Concern Christmas Party

Mijas. 17 December, 7pm. Restaurante Valparaíso. 35€. Welcoming drink and canape followed by three-course meal with wine and soft drinks. Raffle, live entertainment with the Quist duo and dancing. Tickets from Age Concern in Los Boliches, La Cala, Mijas Pueblo or Arroyo de la Miel. 952476210

MUSIC & DANCE

Jazz Festival

Gibraltar. 6 December, Chatham Counterguard. At 4.30pm there will be a marching band starting from John Mackintosh Square followed at 6.30pm by performances by Ananya Feat Ny-Gee, The Street Dogs and Jamba Brass Band. 7 December, 6.30pm. St Michael's Cave. Performances by Levanter Breeze Feat Surianne Dalmedo and Stefano Di Battista Quartet.

A Touch Of Class

Fuengirola. 6 December, 7pm. St Andrew's Church Hall. 10€. St Andrew's Chaplaincy welcome A Touch Of Class to present an evening of cabaret 'Kaleidoscope'. 952026811 or email: touchofclasstickets@gmail.com

La Cochera Cabaret

Malaga. Avda de los Guindos. www.lacocheraentradas.com/ 6 December. 10pm. The Free Soul Band. Funk and soul classics on the 20th anniversary of the Free Soul Band. The legend continues.

Delirium Blues Fusion

Almuñécar. 8 December, 7pm. Casa de la Cultura



Collegium Musicum, Marbella.

The best of soul, jazz and funk blues.

Chamber Orchestra concert

Vélez-Málaga. 12 December, 8pm. Teatro del Carmen. 10# The Conservatorio Superior de Málaga Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Daniel García Caro, will play Beethoven's Symphony n°1 followed by Concerto for piano and orchestra N°3 with soloist Federico Cruzado.

Louie Louie Rock Bar

Estepona. Avda Luis Braille. 6 December. 11.30pm. ASP Road Show Project. 5€. 7 December. Midnight. The Soul-breaker Company. Sewed With Light Tour. 10€. 8 December. Midnight. Brown Cats. Underground Sound. 5€. 13 December. Midnight. Milky Bread.

Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga

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MUSIC & DANCE

The Rob Sas band

Estepona.
7 December, 9.30pm. La Cabana, near Laguna Village, Estepona.
www.therobsasband.com

Opera & ballet at the Cervantes

Malaga. Teatro Cervantes.
www.teatrocervantes.com
6 December, 7pm.
El Barberillo de Lavapiés, a zarzuela in three acts by Francisco Asenjo Barbieri.
11 December, 8pm.
Sleeping Beauty, performed by the Saint Petersburg Classical Ballet company.



Reyna Manescau, Coín.

Viola and Piano recital

Malaga. 12 December, 8pm. Sala Maria Cristina.
The Sociedad Filarmónica de Málaga presents Molly Carr (viola) and Anna Petrova (piano) playing pieces by Weinberg, Arroyo and Katchaturian.

Handel's Messiah

Malaga. 13 December, 7.30pm. Teatro Cervantes.
Instruments of Time and Truth with the Oxford Singers conducted by Edward Higinbottom. Tickets: www.unientradas.es

The Best of Blues

Nerja. 13 December, 8pm. Centro Cultural Villa de Nerja.
The Lito Blue Band has a big following in Spain playing music made famous by Eric Clapton, Etta James, Jimi Hendrix, Robert Johnson and many others.

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra

Malaga. Auditorio Edgar Neville
13 December, 8.30pm, 14 December, 8pm.

The orchestra will play Bach's Christmas Oratory with soprano Alba Chantar, mezzosoprano Lidia Vinyes Curtis, tenor Juan de Dios Mateos and bass Joan Martín Royo accompanied by the Cármina Nova choir.

LECTURES & TALKS

U3A Lectures

Fuengirola. Lux Mundi. free to members, guests 5€. www.u3a-fuengirolacostadelsol.com
Art And Artists: The Making Of An Altar Piece'
11 December, 11am.

Gentile da Fabriano's "Adoration of the Magi" required the work of a large team of craftsmen before Gentile began to paint. Group leader Liz Cochrane.

Debating and Discussion Group:
11 December, 11am.

"That the first past the post system for electing Members of Parliament must not be changed?" Group leader Geoff Cooke.

The Arts Society

Fuengirola. 9 December, 4.30pm. Salon Varietés Theatre. Visitors 10€. www.theartsociety-costadelsol.org

Nerja. 10 December, 6pm. Cultural Centre, C/Granada. Visitors 10€. www.theartsocietynerja.com
'Carmen in Sevilla, The John Leith Memorial Lecture'

Bizet's opera Carmen is about the tragic life of a gypsy. Lecturer Simon Rees has worked as dramaturge on many productions of Carmen and researched costumes, locations and sets etc.

EVENTS & TRIPS

Craft Fair

Benalauria. 6-8 December.
Stalls selling homemade gifts and crafts as well as healthy breads and other products. On Saturday night is 'Noche Mágica' which will include a light and music show.

Marbella design Academy Expo

Marbella. 13 December, 7pm. Camino Hotanca, Monda.
The Graphic Design and Interior Architect students will be displaying their creative design projects and the Fashion Design students will be showcasing their collections. www.designschool.com

The Taste of Manila

Manilva. 6-8 December.
The gastronomy festival 'Saborea Manilva' will include wine tasting, free paella, cheese and jamón and many other activities. Christmas lights will be turned on at 7pm on Friday.

Medieval Market

Almuñécar 6-9 December. Paseo de San Cristóbal.
A medieval market selling gifts, crafts etc.

Fiesta de Las Mozas

Tolox. 6-8 December.
The town of Tolox remembers the revolt of the Moors in the sixteenth century with this festival.

Christmas Lights, Puente Genil

Fuengirola. 10, 11 December. Various departure points.
Full details contact Fundación Lux Mundi Fuengirola, C/Nueva 3. 952474840. www.lux-mundi.org/

Seville Christmas lights

Torre del Mar. 10-12 December. Various departure points.
Staying at 4* Hotel Fernando. 219-239€. Lux Mundi Torre del Mar. 952 543 334 or luxmundi@lux-mundi.org

Animals In Distress auctions

Alhaurín el Grande. 13 December. La Peña Asfahal.
Sellers call 626 942 427. Auction starts at 7pm. Viewing between 6 and 7pm. www.animals-in-distress.eu/events.html

EXHIBITIONS

Reyna Manescau

Coín. Permanent exhibition. Centro Cultural Reyna Manescau.
The recently opened new cultural centre is dedicated to Coín born artist Reyna Manescau, known as the Painter of Venice. The permanent exhibition is entitled Intimo y Universal.

O. V. FILM

SUR in English advises calling cinemas to check for any last minute time changes.

Cine Albéniz

C/Alcazabilla 4, Malaga. Tel: 902 36 02 95. www.cinealbeniz.com

The Irishman: 18.20.

The Two Popes: 22.00.

Les Misérables: 21.35.

Cinesur El Ingenio

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

Frozen II: 12.30, 16.40.

Charlie's Angels: 19.30 (every day); 21.30 (Tues).

Knives Out: 18.35, 21.10 (Tues).

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The Good Liar: 15.45 (every day); 18.00, 20.10 (Tues); 21.45 (every day except Tues).
Charlie's Angels: 19.00 (Tues); , 21.45, 0.10 (every day).
Midway: 17.45, 21.30 (Tues).
Frozen II: 12.00, 15.45, 18.00 (every day).
Knives Out: 16.00 (every day).
Ballet Coppelia: 20.15 (Tues).
Bruce Springsteen: 20.30 (Thurs).

Cines Teatro Goya

For tickets and information call 951196665.

www.cinesteatrogoya.com

Frozen II: 12.15 (Sun); 16.15, 18.15, 20.15 (Fri-Mon); 17.00, 19.00 (Tues).
Knives Out: 15.45, 18.10, 19.45, 22.45 (Fri-Mon); 17.20, 19.30, 22.00 (Tues).

Midway: 20.15, 22.45 (Fri-Mon); 19.30, 22.00 (Tues).

Charlie's Angels: 20.30, 22.30 (Fri-Mon); 19.30, 21.30 (Tues).

Last Christmas: 22.45 (Fri-Mon).
The Good Liar: 20.00, 22.15 (Fri-Mon); 21.45 (Tues).

Abominable: 12.00 (Sun).

Bobby The Hedgehog: 12.30 (Sun).

Yelmo Cines, Plaza Mayor

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

Tel: 902 902 103 or visit

www.yelmocines.es

Knives Out: 12.55, 16.05 (Fri - Mon); 16.05 (Wed); 18.40 (Tues).

Frozen II: 19.00 (Tues).

Joker: 19.35 (Tues).

Le Mans '66: 20.45 (Tues).

Last Christmas: 17.50 (Tues).

The Good Liar: 13.00 (Fri, Sat, Sun); 15.55 (Fri - Mon, Wed); 18.10 (Tues).

Charlie's Angels: 21.30 (Tues).

Midway: 12.30 (Fri-Mon); 19.25 (Tues).

Yelmo Cines, Rincón de la Victoria.

Calle Arroyo Totalán

Tel: 902 220 922 or visit

www.yelmocines.es

Frozen II: 18.00 (Tues).

Joker: 19.25 (Tues).

Last Christmas: 20.30 (Tues).

Knives Out: 19.45 (Tues).

Bruce Springsteen Western Stars: 20.30 (Thurs).

The Good Liar: 19.30 (Tues).

Last Christmas: 22.30 (Tues).

Charlie's Angels: 22.15 (Tues).

Yelmo Cines, Vialia.

Centro Comercial Vialia. Tel: 902 220 922

or visit www.yelmocines.es

Le Mans 66: 12.10 (Tues).

Charlie's Angels: 21.00 (Tues).

Joker: 12.25 (Sat, Sun, Mon); 19.30 (Tues).

Frozen II: 16.45 (Tues).

Last Christmas: 22.50 (Tues).

Hustlers: 20.45 (Tues).

Knives Out: 12.35 (Sat, Sun, Mon).

Bruce Springsteen Western Stars: 20.30 (Thurs).

The Good Liar: 12.45 (Sat, Sun, Mon); 19.45 (Tues).

Midway: 18.50 (Tues).

The Audience from NT: 20.00 (Thurs).

The intimate sculpture of Perry Oliver at Isla Negra

After ten years, the artist exhibits again in Malaga city with a display in a bookshop

ANTONIO JAVIER LÓPEZ

MALAGA. The idea to get off the bus in Nerja back in 1968 arose almost by chance. Since then, half a century has passed and chance has become intertwined with the iron will and bonhomie that makes Perry Oliver a major player in the contemporary art scene in and around Malaga.

Despite the increased interest in contemporary art, his last exhibition in Malaga city was over ten years ago. Now he is back with an exquisite exhibition of around 100 works in the Isla Negra bookshop and art gallery.

"It is an intimate project", explains Oliver who was born in 1941 in Pennsylvania. The display of his pieces are intermingled with other objects in the gallery, "I wanted my works to integrate



Perry Oliver with some of his creations. :: NITO SALAS

INFORMATION

► **When.** Until 14 December.

► **Where.** Isla Negra library and gallery, C/Álamos 15, Malaga city.

► **What.** An exhibition of drawings and small format sculptures by American artist Perry Oliver.

into this space, with the odour of old books, the light shining in through the window... I wanted to add to that intimacy with my own small contribution," he adds.

Small describes the format of the pieces in the exhibition, many being abstract iron sculptures that fit in the palm of your hand that he calls Enlazados. The engravings are more studied: "In that sense, the exhibition begins very abstract and ends with a proposal which is more figurative."



Advertisement for Puerto Banús Christmas Market. The background shows a harbor scene with a boat labeled 'SS. M.M.' and a town at night. The text includes:

- Logo: **B** (in a circle)
- Text: **PUERTO BANÚS** (Marbella 1970)
- Section-Header: *Christmas Market*
- Text: **December 5th - January 5th**
- Text: **Muelle de Ribera**
- Sponsored by: **MARBELLA** (with logo and stars)
- Financed by: **GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA** and **MINISTERIO DE TURISMO**
- Text: **More information and complete schedule at puerto-banus.com**
- Social media icons: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn



The Sabor a Málaga fair pays tribute to local produce with over 100 stalls in the city this weekend

The event is in its seventh year and will include around 40 activities including the first Gastronomic Forum

|| JUAN SOTO

MÁLAGA. There are cured meats from Benaolán, cakes from Antequera, olives from Álora, olive oil from Periana... yes, once again this year the Paseo del Parque in Malaga city has become a spectacular food market where visitors can discover the thousand and one flavours of the province.

Over 100 producers from different areas have stands at the Gran Feria Sabor a Málaga, which is taking place over this holiday weekend and is a very special way of bringing this year's programme of fairs to an end.

The fair started on Thursday (5 December) with the official inauguration in the Eduardo Ocón auditorium, and will continue until Monday. As well as the stalls, around 40 activities have been organised, including cookery demonstrations by local chefs, presentations of products, workshops and tasting sessions.

Juan Carlos Maldonado, who is first vice-president and responsible for Sustainable Economic Development at the Diputación de Málaga (the provincial government), said



Visitors sample local cheese at last year's event. **|| SUR**

that for this seventh edition of the fair, the Diputación has set itself the objective of strengthening the links between Sabor a Málaga and the hotel and restaurant sector in the province. "We believe that this sector is the one that has the closest association with local products, and the one that should use them most," he said.

This year's programme includes some unusual attractions, such as the preparation of the biggest 'Ensaladilla Malagueña' in the world, with more than 400 kilos of ingredients.

SABOR A MÁLAGA FAIR

► **Where.** Malaga. Stalls are in the Paseo del Parque; activities will be in the Eduardo Ocón auditorium.

► **When.** The fair opened on Thursday and continues until Monday 9 December. It is open from noon until 10pm.

► **Stands.** There are 119 producers from 43 towns and villages in Malaga province.



Award winners, authorities and organisers. **|| SUR**

SUR launches culinary Who's Who guide with awards ceremony

Restaurants, chefs and critics gathered at Anantara Villa Padierna Palace resort on Thursday

|| M. MARTÍNEZ

MARBELLA. Chefs and restaurant owners picked up awards on Thursday at the launch of SUR's new Who's Who in gastronomy bilingual guide. The Anantara Villa Padierna Palace resort in Benahavis was the venue for the event presented by critic Enrique Bellver, who explained some of the changes in this year's guide compared to previous editions.

Awards were presented to La Cosmopolita; to Rafael de la Fuente, for his career devoted to the hospitality industry; to Cristina Socorro, maître d' of the Hotel Molina Lario in Malaga; to Bruno and Giuseppina Filiponne of the Da Bruno restaurant group; to the Benahavis hotel and catering school; to La Deriva restaurant in Malaga; and to Paco Roncero for his restaurant 'O'.

The event, attended by some 300 guests, was opened by vice-president of the Diputación and head of the Sabor a Málaga brand, Juan Carlos Maldonado, with the closing words delivered by the Mayor of Benahavis, José Antonio Mena.

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ARARA INSPIRATION

Mokoto (fish in a rich stock)

Mokoto is a Brazilian dish made with the stock from cow's or pig's feet.

Mokoto INGREDIENTS FOR FOUR PERSONS

- 200g pig's trotters
- 1 litre water
- 1 garlic bulb crushed
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 red onion
- 5 ripe tomatoes
- 20g chopped coriander
- 1tsp dried oregano
- 1tsp ground cumin
- 1tsp salt
- Pinch of pepper
- 2tsp paprika
- 1chili pepper
- 1 raw cassava

Confit of white fish

- 100g loin of a firm white fish
- 0.5 litres olive oil

Black garlic mayonnaise

- 5 cloves black garlic
- 700g mayonnaise

METHOD FOR MOKOTO

Gently sweat the chopped red onion and the finely chopped garlic until transparent, add the tomatoes and continue to poach until soft. Add the spices and the water, the cassava and then the



cleaned pig's trotters. Simmer for around two hours. Drain the stock and keep to one side.

METHOD FOR THE CONFIT

Pour the oil into a small saucepan and heat. When it reaches 65°C add the loin of white fish and cook for 12 minutes.

METHOD FOR BLACK GARLIC MAYONNAISE

In a mixing bowl use a hand held food processor to finely chop the black garlic cloves. Add the mayonnaise and mix well. Spoon the mayonnaise into a piping bag.

PLATING UP

Remove the loin of white fish from the oil and place in the middle of a deep serving dish. Pipe the black garlic mayonnaise over the top and place under a grill for a few minutes until golden.

Reheat the stock from the trotters and pour around the fish loin. Decorate with sprigs of coriander and slices of cooked cassava.

Diego Gallegos is at the helm of the Michelin-starred restaurant Sollo and Arara bistro bar, both in the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Resort & Spa Reserva del Higuero, Fuengirola

DIEGO GALLEGOS



ANDREW J. LINN

GARCÍA & ASSOCIATES



Few chefs succeed in getting their images recognised internationally. Jamie Oliver and Gordon Ramsay are identifiable on any continent, but other great chefs, like Spain's Arzak, don't always turn heads outside their immediate environments.

Dani García, Marbella's favourite kitchen character, is known on a national level, and not because of Michelin stars. Dani's secret, if he has one, is knowing how to promote himself, although he also has a personal PR and a Malaga PR agency, La Madre de Los Beatles.

An essential part of the Dani García publicity plan is to tell everyone how difficult it was getting to the top. He had a tough time and once had to sell his car (wow! really?) As it happens, Dani, a highly talented innovative cook, must of necessity depend on financial backers to develop his career. And one problem is that his professional record is full of holes. When he left Tragabuches in Ronda after it had, thanks to Dani, achieved a Michelin star, he embarked on a series of adventures locally that started at the Hotel Meliá Don Pepe: a disaster, as were subsequent attempts, such as La Moraga.

Dani is not of course the type who can see himself working in a particular restaurant for ever. As he begins a new project he is already thinking about the next

one. The only thing wrong with that is that it may dilute concentration levels for the job in hand.

Two days after closing his Marbella 3-star establishment at Puente Romano, with the intention of re-opening it in May as a steak and hamburger joint, Dani was at a San Sebastian seminar telling a large audience that New York beckoned. And not just New York, but the entire world, with hundreds of Dani restaurants across the globe, or at least this is what he envisages. Obviously, his present financial backers have backed his projects to date, but his plans for world domination may be harder to handle. Although, to be fair, Dani has revealed himself to be proficient at attracting money whenever he needed it, a surefire sign of a good chef.

WINE OF THE WEEK

Dorado

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"The number of smokers is higher now than before the anti-smoking laws came in"

Salvador de Oña Doctor and director of the Asociación contra el Cáncer's anti-tobacco unit in Malaga



ÁNGEL ESCALERA

✉ aescalera@diariosur.es

"Politicians thought they had done everything they needed to do with regard to smoking, but in reality we have gone back to where we used to be," says Dr De Oña

MALAGA. Before he started helping other people to stop smoking he used himself as a guinea pig and applied some therapies designed to help him kick the habit (he used to smoke 25 cigarettes a day). Twenty years have passed since then, during which time Dr Salvador de Oña has headed the tobacco addiction unit of the Spanish Cancer Association (AECC) in Malaga. During that time, he has helped around 5,500 smokers, and is very pleased that so many people have overcome their addiction. In this interview, Dr De Oña stresses that more people in Spain smoke now in Spain than before the two anti-tobacco laws came into force. To stop this trend, he says the price of tobacco, especially rolling tobacco, needs to be increased considerably.

–It must be satisfying to know that you've helped so many people to stop smoking in the past 20 years.

–Well, yes. I'm proud of having contributed towards creating awareness of the dangers of tobacco. I consider myself a 'helper'. I help people who want to give up smoking.

–In these 20 years, how many people have attended the AECC's tobacco unit in Malaga?

–Since 1999, about 5,500 people. The success rate is around 66 per cent within six months, although we continue to monitor them for the first year. During the first six months the controls are more exhaustive and structured.

–Do more men than women come to your unit?

–At first, they were mainly men, but then it went the other way, especially when the anti-smoking laws came into force in 2005 and 2010. We started to see women, who were younger than the men. They were highly motivated and had a high success rate. Women tend to be better at stopping smoking than men.

–Have you set a particular target in the fight against smoking?



Salvador de Oña helps people to stop smoking. :: FÉLIX PALACIOS

–We are achieving the objective we wanted: to be a benchmark unit for complex patients with a very high level of addiction. We treat people who are referred to us by GPs or health centres or they come as a last resort after failing to give up smoking in the past.

–What type of therapies do you use?

–We offer a free programme based on a medical, pharmaceutical and psychological treatment, and treat 15 people at a time in group therapy. We use individualised pharmaceutical treatments and provide psychological therapy which is very focused on the cognitive-behavioural. Although we are evolving now, the combination of medical and psychological aspects is key to our success.

–What is the attitude of the smokers when they come to your unit?

–The people who come to us are already convinced that they have to stop smoking. During the process we use psychological techniques to motivate them, but most of the people we see are already keen to have the treatment. Very few come without knowing what it involves beforehand.

–How many sessions are there in the treatment?

–We do eight sessions, once a week

"The problem is the ease with which young people can take up smoking"

on a Tuesday or Thursday. After that, we have a series of intermittent sessions until they have been coming for six months, and then there are very spasmodic sessions until the end of a year.

–Where in the province do the sessions for smokers take place?

–The anti-smoking unit basically consists of me, with the collaboration of several psychologists. We provide the therapy in Malaga city, Marbella, Fuengirola, Antequera, Ronda and Benalmádena, because that's where the AECC has centres.

–Is there a waiting list to join the anti-smoking programme?

–Yes, but it is not as long as it used to be, which was nearly two years. We were the first in Andalucía and the second in Spain to have an anti-smoking unit. The waiting time now is around four months.

–Why is tobacco so harmful?

–Because it is addictive. The addictive chemical substance is nicotine, which in order to be absorbed by the body is attached to tar, which is toxic. Also, when you smoke you ingest many more toxic substances.

–Have the two Spanish laws against tobacco been effective?

–They were effective, but what has happened has been a bit disappointing. Before the 2005 law came into force, 32 per cent of the population smoked. Within a couple of years it had dropped to 29 per cent. With the second law, in 2010, which aimed to protect non-smokers and prohibited smoking in public and enclosed places, the percentage also dropped. What is happening is that now, in 2019, 34

per cent of the population smokes, in other words more people than before those two laws. That is hard to explain.

–Are you in favour of increasing the price of all types of tobacco?

–Yes, of course. The problem with an addiction to smoking is the ease with which young people can take it up. Loose tobacco is really cheap. That's one of the causes of the increase in smokers. Also, tobacco is associated with the consumption of hashish. This creates a duality and young people get into an addictive circle and keep smoking for a very long time.

–Of course, consuming hashish encourages people to smoke tobacco, doesn't it?

–That is a contributory factor, but the main reason people start is that rolling tobacco is so cheap.

–Apart from the price of loose tobacco, why are there more smokers now?

–The number of smokers has increased, but the average number of cigarettes they smoke has dropped. It's ten a day now, eight fewer than in 2005. Having said that, from the point of view of public health, there has been a relaxation in the view of the dangers of tobacco. The politicians thought everything had been done, there was nothing else to do, and the reality is that we have gone back to how things used to be. Consumption continues to increase; policies need to be much more aggressive. Tobacco addiction is the main public health problem we have.

–So is it essential for work to be done to raise awareness among children and teenagers?

–Definitely. We need to make it more difficult to access tobacco too, by putting up the price of packets of cigarettes and rolling tobacco.

–Do people respect the law that protects people from passive smoking?

–In general, people accept the law perfectly well and it is applied properly. They don't smoke in public places, although there has been some relaxation about the terraces of bars. People do still smoke in cars, though, and in private spaces.

–Would you like to see smoking in cars banned?

–Yes, yes, I would. As someone who used to smoke, I'm aware that smoking in the car is a risk factor for the driver, because you can burn yourself, the cigarette can fall onto your trousers, you are distracted while lighting up... and apart from the fact that the smoke can harm the passengers, smoking while you drive means you aren't concentrating at times.

–When did you stop smoking, and what made you decide to take that step?

–I gave up in 1999, a few months before starting with the AECC anti-smoking unit in Malaga. I did it because I really wanted to stop. I had tried several times, but relapsed. So I went to the library at my hospital, looked up information, which was all in English, and saw that the Americans had protocols for stopping smoking. So I followed the guidelines in that documentation. I taught myself. I gave myself the treatment the Americans were proposing. I was so enthusiastic that I proposed to the AECC that something should be done. And when I had been a non-smoker for six months, I started to apply the

HIS VIEW

AECC in Malaga

"We were the first in Andalucía and the second in Spain to have an anti-smoking unit"

Legal measures

"The anti-smoking laws were effective, but what has happened since has been a bit disappointing"

Consumption and price

"Rolling tobacco is very cheap. It is one of the causes of the increase in smokers"

Prevention

"We need more aggressive policies, because tobacco addiction is the principal problem of public health that we have"

protocols I had learned and set up the groups.

–Did you smoke a lot? I suppose you have never started again?

–No, I have never relapsed. I used to smoke about 25 cigarettes a day.

–What do you think of electronic cigarettes?

–That's a controversial subject. There has been an epidemic of pneumonia linked to electronic cigarettes, but only in the USA. It didn't happen anywhere else. That pneumonia is related to a vitamin A oil which they used to use to consume hashish. The cause wasn't the traditional e-cigarettes which contain nicotine. From a public health point of view, e-cigarettes are safer than traditional tobacco ones, but that doesn't mean there are no risks involved with them.

–Why do you think the UK is so keen on e-cigarettes?

–Britain is the only country in the world to support them, and it has done so as a public health measure. They want to reduce the number of smokers and increase the number who use electronic cigarettes. They think the number of tobacco-related illnesses will go down. Now, they are more cautious and warn that e-cigarettes are not innocuous, although they are not as harmful as tobacco.

–In the case of loose tobacco, is it true that it is more harmful than packet cigarettes?

–Yes, because it doesn't have the filters that cigarettes have, so much more nicotine and a lot more tar enter the body. Although it has been shown that loose tobacco is much more harmful, it tends to have a reputation for being safer.

–Is there a number of cigarettes a day which is considered less dangerous for health?

–That depends on each person's genes. Smoking damages the respiratory tubes and the cardiovascular area, as well as causing some types of cancer. So the answer is that it is not clear where the safety level is. Some people are predisposed to the damage, so can develop illnesses if they smoke

a small number of cigarettes. Others have more resistant genes and can smoke more without being affected. However, in all smokers, notwithstanding their genes, tobacco ages two organs: the heart and the lungs.

–Do you agree that the national health should finance drugs to help people give up smoking?

–It seems a good idea. I hope it will be managed sensibly, because I fear there will be a 'boom' in requests. There is more to stopping smoking than just taking a tablet. People need psychological help and support from their families.

Tobacco responsible for 3,000 deaths in Malaga each year

Almost 3,000 people die in Malaga province every year as a direct result of tobacco consumption. Around half of the deaths are caused by cardiovascular illnesses, 40 per cent are a result of cancer (primarily of

the lung, larynx, pharynx and bladder) and the remainder are caused by respiratory pathologies. Nationally, the figure stands at 52,000 a year.

These statistics were presented during a workshop entitled 'Tobacco and Cancer', organised by the Malaga branch of the Spanish Cancer Association (AECC) on Tuesday to mark the 20th anniversary of its anti-tobacco unit.

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Bacteria found in olives limit the absorption of toxic metals in the body

Jaén University researchers studied the Aloreña type of olive to establish this health benefit

AGUSTÍN PELÁEZ

ÁLORA. A group of researchers led by Jaén University have carried out a study which shows that the natural fermentation process of the Aloreña variety of olive develops a series of bacteria, already present in the fruit, that limits the absorption of toxic metals during digestion. The study is now in the live validation phase, after successfully passing laboratory testing.

The scientists say these organisms act by covering the mucus of the intestine, thereby stopping molecules of arsenic, cadmium and mercury passing through its walls and entering the bloodstream.

"These bacteria act like a sponge and soak up those particles, so they are less available in the digestive system and are eliminated through defecation," says Hikmate Abriouel, the head of the research group. Although this quality is not unique, these are still exclusive genetic mechanisms which are not present



Hikmate Abriouel and her research team. :: F. D.

in other microorganisms.

The key to the process lies in the way the olives are treated, in the traditional method using brine. The fruit is put into this liquid which has a lot of salt dissolved in it, and soaked for a period ranging from several days to several months.

"The bacteria that enable these particles to be retained are in the olive when it is still on the tree. During the fermentation process, they proliferate because of their ability to grow in an environment with low pH and also in the presence of heavy metals, which they can trap," explains Abriouel.

The study has focused on the Aceituna Aloreña de Malaga, a variety with its own Protected De-

nomination of Origin. The researchers used samples from different companies which produce them, so they could analyse their probiotic properties.

Heavy metals

Heavy metals are chemical elements that have a certain toxicity for humans, although some (such as iron and zinc, for example) are essential. EU and Spanish laws regulate the maximum amounts permitted in foods. The olive fermentation process is unusual in being able to 'kidnap' these metals and is due to an adaptation mechanism in one of the bacteria (*Lactobacillus pentosus*) present in the olives which is not found elsewhere.



A statement was read out to mark World Aids Day. :: JOSELE

Council awards a 114,000-euro grant to Aids charity

ANDREA JIMÉNEZ

MARBELLA. Marbella council has awarded a grant of 114,000 euros to the Concordia Anti-Aids association, which has been working in the town for 25 years. "This grant is so that the association can continue with its projects to help people affected by this illness and carry on with its impressive work," said the mayor, Ángeles Muñoz, as she signed the agreement along with the president of Concordia, Princess Marie Louise of Prussia.

Over the years, the association has given informative talks to over 45,000 young people as a preven-

tive measure, provided psychological assistance to 6,000 patients and medical help for another 8,000. The association's president said Concordia is "very happy" to receive the grant, because "it is going to help us a great deal".

Just before the agreement was signed, a statement was read out to mark World Aids Day, which was last Sunday, 1 December. It called for society to end discrimination against people who are suffering from the illness. Marbella council is supporting the campaign this year, and said the grant was an expression of that commitment.

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Malaga's Dani Pacheco is closed down by Numancia's Otegui during Friday's encounter. :: AGENCIA LOF

SEGUNDA DIVISIÓN

Results	Match day 19
Numancia - Malaga 0-0	Albacete - Extremadura 0-0
Alcorcón - Huesca 0-2	Racing - Fuenlabrada 0-0
Mirandés - Sporting 0-0	Alcorcón - Oviedo 0-0
Ponferradina-Albacete 1-1	Malaga - Tenerife 1-1
Tenerife - Almería 1-3	Huesca - Rayo 1-3
Zaragoza - Girona 3-3	Sporting - Ponferradina 1-0
Fuenlabrada - Cadiz 1-0	Almería - Mirandés 2-1
Oviedo - Rayo 2-1	Girona - Lugo 2-0
Elche - Racing 2-0	Deportivo - Zaragoza 0-0
Lugo - Deportivo 0-0	Las Palmas - Numancia 0-1
Extremadura-Las Palmas 0-1	Cadiz - Elche 0-0

League table	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PT
1. Cadiz	18	12	3	3	27	15	39
2. Almería	18	8	8	2	28	16	32
3. Huesca	18	10	2	6	23	13	32
4. Fuenlabrada	18	9	4	5	23	18	31
5. Girona	18	8	4	6	25	21	28
6. Zaragoza	18	7	6	5	25	21	27
7. Elche	18	7	6	5	24	20	27
8. Numancia	18	6	8	4	19	16	26
9. Albacete	18	8	2	8	13	19	26
10. Alcorcón	18	6	7	5	21	20	25
11. Las Palmas	18	7	4	7	21	22	25
12. Mirandés	18	6	7	5	22	26	25
13. Ponferradina	18	5	9	4	24	21	24
14. Rayo	18	4	9	5	25	24	21
15. Lugo	18	4	9	5	18	23	21
16. Sporting	18	4	7	7	17	19	19
17. Tenerife	18	4	6	8	21	24	18
18. Oviedo	18	4	6	8	22	28	18
19. Malaga	18	3	8	7	14	18	17
20. Racing	18	2	10	6	20	23	16
21. Extremadura	18	4	4	10	16	26	16
22. Deportivo	18	1	9	8	14	29	12

0-0

NUMANCIA-MALAGA

Numancia: Dani Barrio; Calero, Carlos Gutiérrez, Escassi, Héctor Hernández, Otegui (Kako, 71'), Gus Ledes; Nacho (Zlatanovic, 68'), Marc Mateu, Moha; Higinio (Guillermo, 83'). Unused substitutes: Juan Carlos, Alex Sola, Derik, Noguera.

Malaga: Munir; Cifu, Luis Hernández, Lombán (Diego González, 18'), Mikel, Juankar; Dani Pacheco, Keidi, Luis Muñoz (Benkhemassa, 58'); Sadiku, Antón. Unused substitutes: Kellyan, Boulahroud, Ramón, Renato.

Referee: Arcediano Monescillo. Yellow cards for Escassi, Carlos Gutiérrez and Gustavo Ledes.

Ground: Los Pajaritos (2,962 spectators).

Malaga's winless run stretches to five with draw at Numancia

Other results on matchday 18 meant that Friday night's 0-0 draw in Soria wasn't enough for Malaga to escape the drop zone

by ANTONIO GÓNGORA

MALAGA. Malaga have been left glancing nervously over their shoulder after yet another draw, this time at Numancia last Friday night.

The hosts were dominant in the first half, and it was only due to their poor finishing that Malaga were still in the encounter after ten minutes; Nacho spurned two excellent chances, and Moha another.

Malaga's prospects were looking dire, as Numancia frequently bypassed Keidi Bare in midfield. Things went from bad to worse when David Lombán was yet again forced off with injury with less than 20 minutes gone, with Diego González replacing the Asturian.

The hosts were unable to keep up the pressure, however, and the Blue and Whites eased their way back into the encounter, Armando Sadiku stinging the goalkeeper's palms with a well-struck left-footed effort from distance.

Dani Pacheco also had a chance, and later thought he had scored, only for his goal to be ruled out by VAR due to a previous offside.

After the interval, which Malaga coach Víctor took advantage of by

bringing on Mohamed Benkhemassa in place of Luis Muñoz, the rhythm of the game slowed considerably, with no real goalmouth action in the opening stages.

Malaga gathered momentum, however, and began to create some decent chances, often looking dangerous on the break.

Pacheco had another chance, but his left-footed effort was inaccurate, while a Sadiku header sent Antón racing through on goal, only for an excellent last-ditch challenge from Héctor Hernández to deny him the chance to score. Neither side ultimately found the finishing touch, and both will be left rueing opportunities wasted.

Despite his side not having tasted victory in their last five fixtures,

Víctor insisted that he was not worried by the situation. "It was a game of two halves. We got lucky in the first. We weren't good enough and we've got to recognise that. We got better in the second half, because we started pushing into attacking areas and we were more confident in our midfield play. There were a couple of good chances and we just needed to be more ruthless in order to take all three points."

"We only have one centre forward in the squad, which makes it tougher to finish our chances. But if you keep creating chances, then the wins will start coming eventually."

The Malaga coach was also keen to emphasise the importance of the fans: "The supporters are behind us no matter what, and that's funda-

mental to our work. We're so grateful to have fans like this, and a lot of the points we have are due to them."

Malaga now sit 19th in the table, only one point off safety, after Oviedo beat Rayo Vallecano to leapfrog the Andalusians into 18th place. Their next fixture is another Friday night encounter, when they face fellow strugglers Tenerife at 9pm tonight, 6 December.

Arantxa and Adriana fire Femenino to deserved victory over Levante B

LEVANTE B 1 MALAGA 2

Saturday's victory capped off a month in which Malaga went unbeaten, taking 11 points from a possible 15

:: SILVIA RODRÍGUEZ. ADG

VALENCIA. Malaga Femenino picked up three points from their visit to Levante B on Saturday, and could easily have returned to the Costa del Sol with a far better goal difference than their 2-1 victory gave them.

Although the visitors were the superior team for more or less the entire game, it was Levante who took the lead, when Ana beat a helpless Noelia with an effort from the edge of the box shortly before the 20 minute mark.

Malaga got themselves back into the game when Arantxa beat Ángela with a well-struck free kick. Just two minutes later, the comeback was complete, as Adriana fired another wonderful effort past the Valencian side's keeper.

Malaga went into break with a well-earned lead, and they looked



Ángela dives in an attempt to save Adriana's effort. :: ADG

to increase their advantage after the interval. They were by far the better team in the second half, controlling possession and creating several clear-cut chances. Adriana nearly got her second of the game, but hit the crossbar, while Edna almost got on the scoresheet as well when she headed an Encarni cross narrowly over the bar with minutes to go.

Saturday's was an impressive performance, and the necessary reaction to a draw at Cordoba the pre-

vious matchday where the visitors deserved more.

Malaga now find themselves fifth in the Segunda División Femenina Sur, level on points with Cordoba in sixth place and two behind Villarreal in fourth.

In their next fixture, they host Juan Grande on Saturday. They will be hoping they can carry their fine November form, which saw them undefeated in five games and picking up 11 from a possible 15 points.



Government representatives leave Sunday's meeting. :: M. FERNÁNDEZ

Local administrations set to back legal case to oust Al-Thani

:: ANTONIO GÓNGORA

MÁLAGA. After prospective new Qatari investors failed to convince Malaga's owner Sheikh Abdullah ben Al-Thani to part with his shares in the club, Malaga city council, as well as the provincial and regional government, are backing another attempt to get rid of Al-Thani: a criminal case by the club's Association of Minority Shareholders.

Al-Thani's intransigence has been evident for some time, but on Tuesday, the hotel group BlueBay, who are due 49 per cent of the sheikh's initial shares in the club according to a recent court ruling, said that the owner's unwillingness to negotiate meant that the prospective Qatari takeover, which would involve BlueBay being bought out as

well, was no longer viable. The stalling of negotiations ultimately led to the current focus on the minority shareholders' case.

This case accuses the sheikh of improper management of the club and misappropriation of funds. The case calls for an injunction against Al-Thani, removing him from the running of the club, and recommends an emergency judicial administration.

Following a meeting at the city hall on Sunday, the local, provincial and regional governments became set on involving themselves in the case on the side of the prosecution. They intend to name lawyers soon who will bring evidence to bolster the minority shareholders' case.

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A LOOK AT LA LIGA

ROB PALMER
Commentator, Sky Sports
@robopalmer



The best there's ever been

Virgil van Dijk is a phenomenal defender, but there was only ever to be one winner of the Ballon d'Or: Lionel Messi

As a guest on Liverpool FC's global TV station, I was put on the spot this week when asked if Lionel Messi really deserved to be crowned the best player in the world ahead of their own giant Virgil van Dijk.

I referred the host back to an old commentary line of mine: "Lionel Messi is the best there is, the best there has ever been and probably the best there ever will be."

It could be argued that van Dijk was Liverpool's MVP, the most valuable player, as they claimed their sixth European title and he rightly ran the little Argentinian close.

In the eyes of Liverpool fans, the Dutchman is the boss; but in the mind of the rest of the football



Lionel Messi poses with his six Ballon D'or trophies in Paris on Monday. :: REUTERS

world, Messi is still the marvel.

It's significant that by taking the title for a sixth time he moved one ahead of the great Cristiano Ronaldo, making him the record winner of the coveted crown. It's an accomplishment that is never likely to be bettered.

In years to come Messi's magnificence will go down in folklore

and we are lucky to be alive with HDTV coverage when he is performing his magic week in and week out.

As van Dijk was scoring two goals for the runaway Premier League leaders, taking them eight points clear of the pack, Messi was scoring a sensational solo goal to take Barcelona to the top of La Liga on

goal difference. He was the difference against Atlético Madrid who have one of the best defences in the world.

That is the difference: van Dijk is an integral player in an outstanding team, Messi is the difference between Barcelona and potential mediocrity.

Last season Messi recorded 51

goals in 50 games in all competitions, 36 of them as they won the championship. The argument is that he didn't win the Champions League. In the elite European competition, he weighed in with 12 goals in nine starts. His two goals were the difference between Barça and Manchester United in the quarter-finals and remember he scored a brace in the first leg of the semi-finals against Liverpool before the Reds' legendary comeback.

I realise the last paragraph is too laden with statistics so here is a quote: "It was an amazing year, but there's a couple of players like that who are a bit unnatural. I was close, but there was just someone a little bit better."

That's from van Dijk who came close to taking the best player award.

How did my assertion go down with the rest of the LFC TV panel I hear you ask? Well, one was the club's in-house commentator and the other was the editor of the fanzine so they thought Divock Origi was a head of Messi.

For me, the Liverpool centre-half is the best defender there is, probably ever has been and maybe ever will be... but Messi is still the best footballer.

Let's savour him while we can.

Marbella bounce back from first league defeat with deserved victory over Sevilla B

MARBELLA 2 SEVILLA B 1

:: JULIO RODRÍGUEZ

MARBELLA. After suffering their first defeat of the season last weekend, Marbella responded well by beating a stubborn Sevilla B side on Sunday. The Costa del Sol outfit knew the pressure was on after their rivals Yeclano had won, and Badajoz, who were the side to end their unbeaten run last weekend, had gone ahead as well in a game that they would ultimately go on to win.

Marbella's determination and belief showed, and they went ahead with just over 10 minutes gone, when

the prolific Óscar redirected a header from a corner with a clever backheeled finish.

The visitors nearly put themselves level a matter of minutes later, when Juanlu went clean through after a defensive mixup, but couldn't find the finish.

Sevilla paid for their wastefulness shortly after, when Mustafá's pressure gave Óscar the chance to fire home from just outside the box with the keeper well off his line.

As the hosts began to sit back in the second half, Sevilla grew in stature, and ramped up the pressure on Marbella. Wilfred managed to keep



Álex Bernal and Diego José in action. :: JULIO RODRÍGUEZ

out efforts from Berrocal and Javi Pérez, but Pedro Ortiz's smart finish from the edge of the box with five minutes to go led to a nervy ending.

Ultimately, though, David Cu-

billo's side were able to hold on and pick up an important three points. The victory leaves them in third place, level on points with San Fernando in second.

Spain get a favourable draw for the European Championships

:: IGNACIO TYLKO

MADRID. The draw for the 2020 European Championships Final on Saturday was favourable for Spain as they missed out on any of the big guns in the group stage.

La Roja, with the returning Luis Enrique as coach, will take on Sweden, Poland and a team which are yet to qualify through the play-offs.

The tournament will get under way in Rome on 12 June with a clash between Italy and Turkey, concluding at Wembley (London) exactly a month later.



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Dutch golfer Anne Van Dam wins Open de España for second year running

Marbella's Azahara Muñoz secured fourth place in the event held last weekend at Aloha Golf

:: ALEJANDRO DÍAZ

MALAGA. Dutch golfer Anne Van Dam left it late but ultimately came out on top in this year's Open de España, hosted by Aloha Golf in Marbella, winning on Sunday in a tournament in which the Malaga-born Azahara Muñoz came fourth.

Van Dam won the tournament last year but looked like she may well have scuppered her chances of repeating her victory coming into the last day of the Open after an 18th hole to forget the day before. This had left the Dane Nanna Madsen and the Swede Julia Engstrom three clear of Van Dam.

It was the Indian Aditi Ashok who burst into action first on Sunday, leapfrogging Madsen with three birdies between the second and fourth holes, while Madsen, who had led going into the penultimate day of the tournament and throughout much of Saturday, hit



Van Dam with the trophy. :: EFE

a double bogey on the third hole.

Madsen fought back, however, with a birdie on the seventh hole and a spectacular eagle on the ninth, which boosted her back into top spot.

Van Dam did everything she could to keep up with the Dane, but Madsen still had an advantage of two over her rival going into the



Azahara Muñoz on the last day of the tournament. :: EFE

FINAL RESULTS

Last day

1. Anne Van Dam (HOL)	-13
2. Aditi Ashok (IND)	-12
+ Nanna Koerstz Madsen (DEN)	-12
4. Azahara Muñoz (SPA)	-10
+ Olivia Cowan (GER)	-9
7. Julia Engstrom (SWE)	-9
+ Cheyenne Woods (USA)	-8
+ Christina Kim (USA)	-8
+ Marianne Skarpnord (NOR)	-8
10. Nuria Iturrioz (SPA)	-6

last nine holes.

She blew her lead, however, with an unexpected double bogey on the 13th hole. This meant she was level with Van Dam going into the 18th, where the Dutchwoman finally secured victory.

Azahara Muñoz finished in fourth place, making her the highest-ranked Spaniard at this tournament. She managed to finish every day below the par, but this was not enough for her to emerge victorious in a tournament which she has won twice before, in 2016 and 2017. Nuria Iturrioz finished in 10th place on -6, while Beatriz Recari and Luna Sobrón both finished in 20th place.

Davidovich to feature in ATP Challenger Marbella

:: JULIO RODRÍGUEZ

MARBELLA. Local tennis prodigy Alejandro Davidovich, currently 87th in the ATP rankings, will play in his hometown in next year's ATP Challenger Marbella.

2020 will be the third year running that the town's Puente Romano Tennis Club hosts an ATP Challenger tournament. It will be played between 30 March and 5 April, with 48 players competing.

The tournament's organisers are hoping to attract between five and 10 top 100 players, one of these being the aforementioned Davidovich.

"I'm really excited to play in front of my family and friends -that'll be really great extra motivation," the 20-year-old said.



Wednesday's launch. :: J. R.

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PERSONAL

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THE STARS

Aquarius
January 21 - February 19
After a tricky invitation arrives you need to discreetly find out what is going on. A clue could be in the other people invited.

Pisces
February 20th - March 20th
Do you feel like breaking free and having a very quiet holiday? Remember, though, that some things are very unpredictable.

Aries
March 21st - April 20th
There are chances to make great strides in your working life. Just be sure that you do not have to stretch finances too far!

Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
Being in an atmosphere where you can be yourself and not worry about impressing anyone is what you should aim for. If you find this, it is lucky indeed.

Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
Being in a partnership brings security and inspiration. When it comes to agreements, pick the right time and place.

Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
At this time of year it is even more important to keep the work/home balance right. Maybe involving someone close could even give you a new perspective.

Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
As much as you like to socialise, let others take on some of the work. Doing this also frees your mind to get any business matters tied up before the holiday.

Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
Find the time to listen carefully to some ideas from a friend. You may pick and choose your path ahead. However, be aware that you should avoid making rash promises.

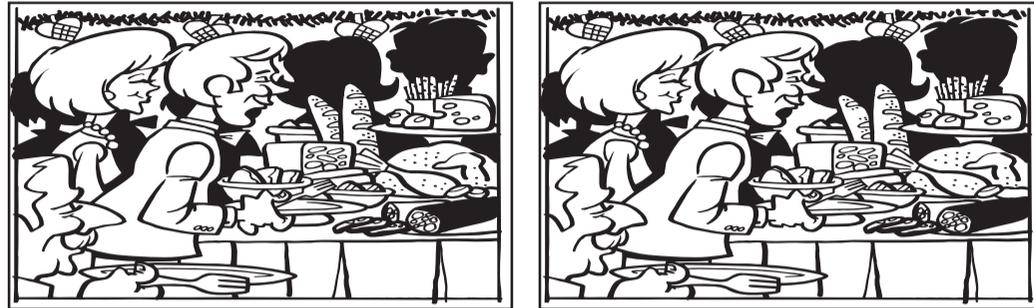
Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
Expect your friends to be lukewarm about your choices. You do know what you want and need, so make it clear. Avoid always letting others get their own way.

Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
Some chances of success need chasing rather than letting them come to you. Being a time of year when others are busy, make it your job to be helpful.

Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
Find time to look for bargain presents midweek when there is the chance to get to grips with finances. Don't hurry your choices. Keep on with a good diet and at least some exercise.

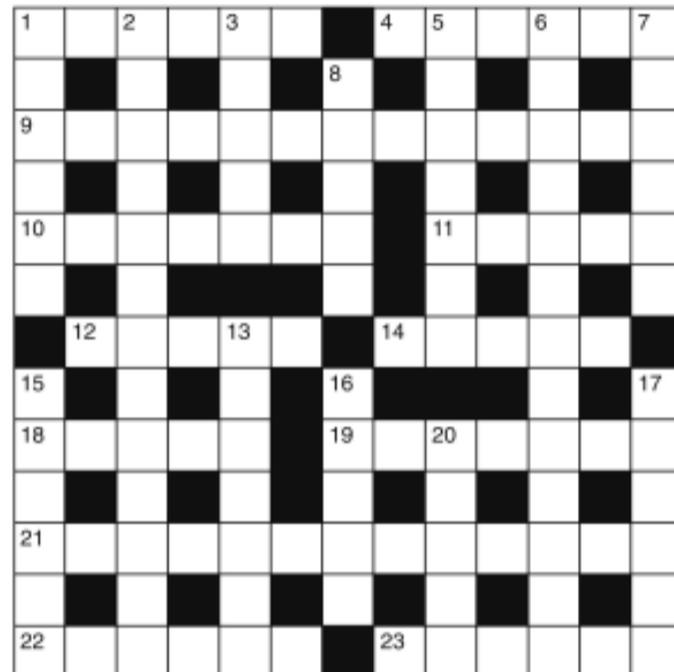
Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
Someone who's attitude seems rather lax could just be confused. What has been happening to them recently? Find out. Show that you are genuinely interested.

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



Please note: Due to a printing error last week's Seven Differences puzzle was incomplete. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11386



Across

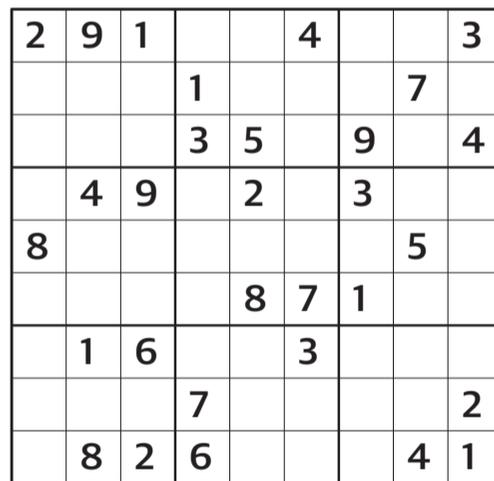
- 1 Spread the remainder around Pennsylvania (6)
- 4 Tangled reeds near a trade route to the East (3,3)
- 9 An ally makes the commanding officer aggressive (13)
- 10 Train me to change gear (7)
- 11 One caught in diabolical trap is a South American ungulate (5)
- 12 He defeated Montcalm back among the flowerbeds (5)
- 14 Father has upset the governor (5)
- 18 Lift shafts, we hear (5)
- 19 Soft wood worker (7)
- 21 Considerable amount of craft needed going from bank to bank (6,2,5)
- 22 Reason to speak about the return of the money (6)
- 23 Direct arrangement for favourable bank balance (6)

Down

- 1 Put down what the criminal has (6)
- 2 Collective view of those in the local? (6,7)
- 3 Tray with no end of ointment (5)
- 5 Pick an artist for Sophocles' play (7)
- 6 Brush off all the chessmen and be completely victorious (5,3,5)
- 7 Not in the forefront in any craft (6)
- 8 Piece of harness that needs to be adjusted right (5)
- 13 Apprehension about eastern cargo (7)
- 15 Carefully examines soft garments (6)
- 16 Rings up for a firm (5)
- 17 Good health for one engaged in sport, maybe (6)
- 20 Brown removes the top from useless stock (5)

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

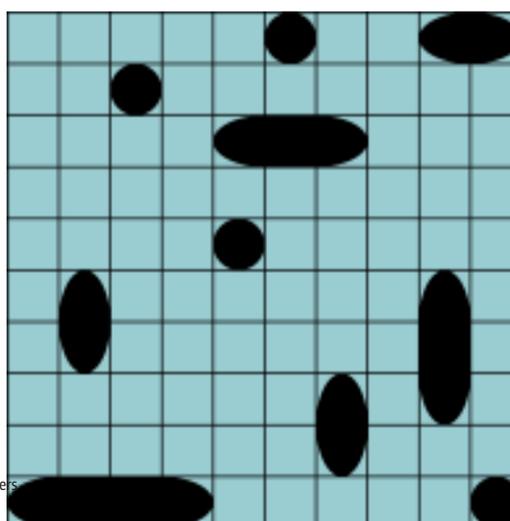
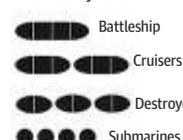


Can you identify the missing musical partners?

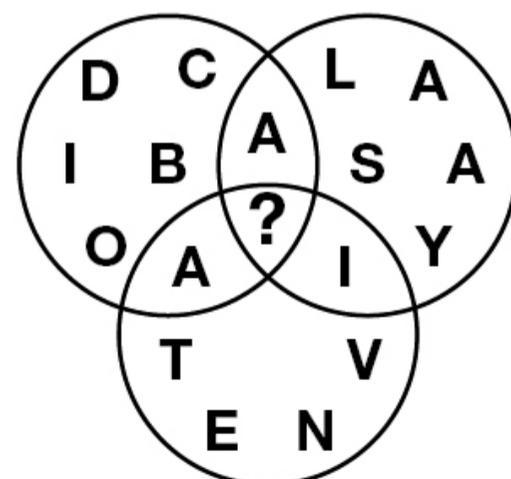
- 1. --- and Oates
- 2. --- and Gordon
- 3. Peter, Paul and ---
- 4. --- and Garfunkel
- 5. Peters and ---
- 6. Sonny and ---
- 7. --- and Kim
- 8. --- and Vangelis
- 9. --- -N-Papa
- 10. --- and Renato

BATTLESHIPS

Instructions Find where the fleet of ships (1 battleship, 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 4 submarines) are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some have been filled in to start you off.



CIRCLEGRAM



Instructions
Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters in each circle can be arranged to form words, names or terms on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

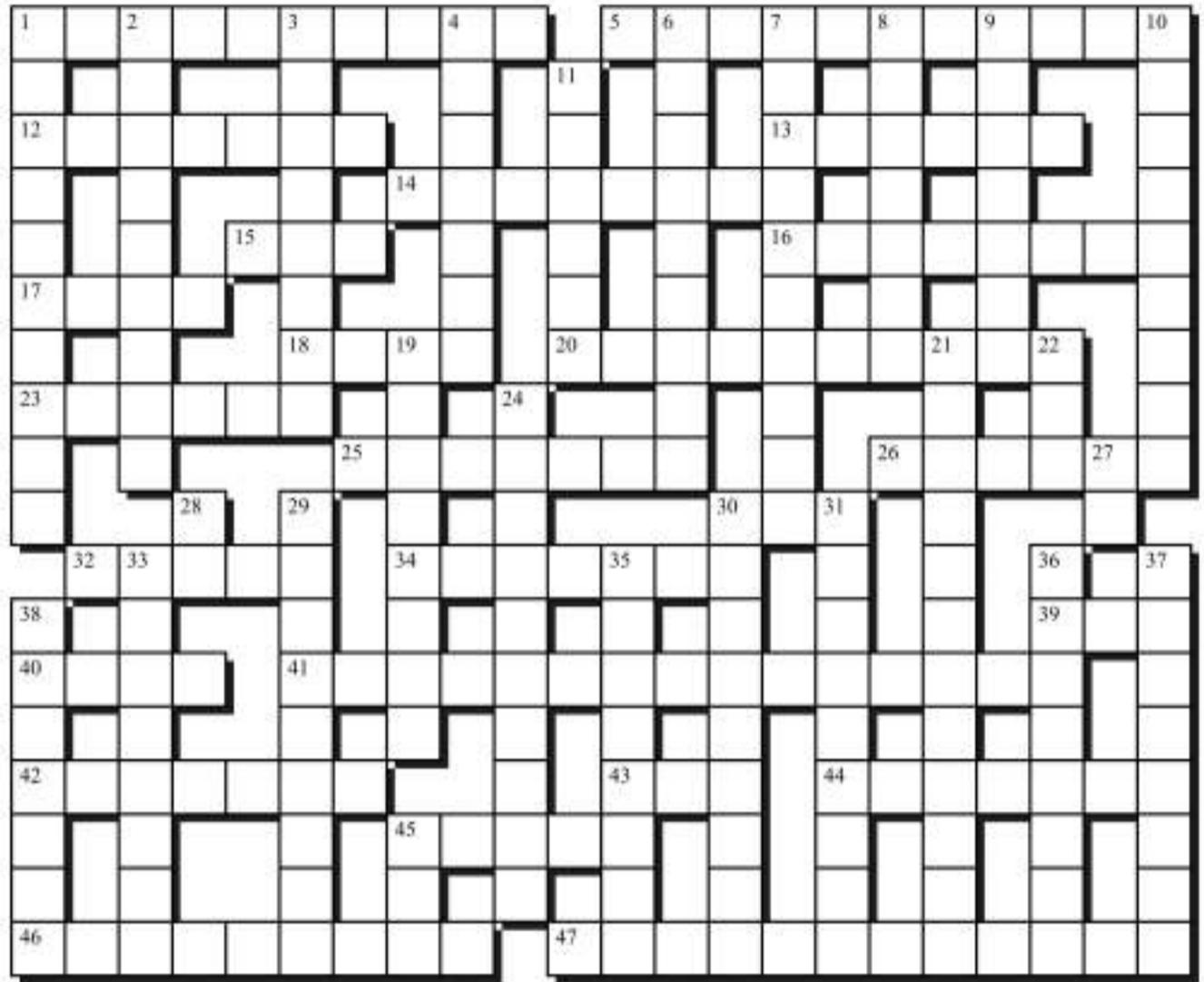
LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD

Across

- 1) Protection (10)
- 5) Traditions (11)
- 12) He installs (7)
- 13) Merit (6)
- 14) Divided (8)
- 15) South (3)
- 16) To cancel (8)
- 17) She would go (4)
- 18) Dawn (4)
- 20) To clarify (10)
- 23) Idols (6)
- 25) Creator (7)
- 26) Unity (6)
- 30) To give (3)
- 32) To win (5)
- 34) It appears (7)
- 39) One (3)
- 40) Agile (4)
- 41) Events (15)
- 42) He gave an opinion (7)
- 43) Aeon (3)
- 44) She writes (7)
- 45) They bring (5)
- 46) To sanction (9)
- 47) Represented (12)

Down

- 1) Principles (10)
- 2) Obsessive (pl) (9)
- 3) Cultures (8)
- 4) Oblique (7)
- 6) To ratify (9)
- 7) Democracy (10)
- 8) Lacking (7)
- 9) She obtains (7)
- 10) Security (9)
- 11) Twenty (6)
- 19) Draft (8)
- 21) Constitution (12)
- 22) Network (3)
- 24) To guarantee (10)
- 27) To the (2)
- 28) In (2)
- 29) Preamble (9)
- 30) To deny (9)
- 31) We retain (9)
- 33) They guess (8)
- 35) He switches on (8)
- 36) Justice (8)
- 37) Government (8)
- 38) Values (7)
- 45) Aunt (3)



ANSWERS

Quiz answers

Of interest: Jean Harlow featured in a series of films in 1923. In 1929 he was nominated for an Oscar for Best Actor but was pulled from the competition when it became apparent that he would win.

Of interest: Known affectionately as Rinty by his co-stars, Rin Tin Tin was a German Shepherd who featured in a series of films in 1923. In 1929 he was nominated for an Oscar for Best Actor but was pulled from the competition when it became apparent that he would win.

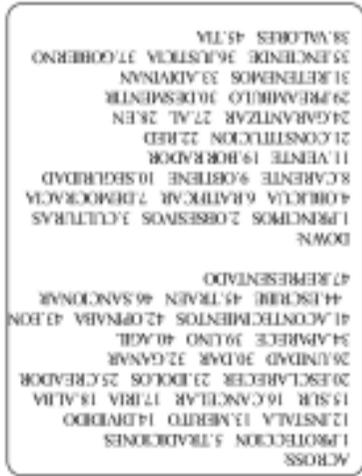
Answer: Jean Harlow

Of interest: Dinner at Eight is a 1933 American comedy-drama film which starred Jean Harlow. She was only on the screen from 1928 to 1937, before her death at the age of 26, but she became one of the biggest movie stars in the world.

Answer: Rin Tin Tin

Of interest: Known affectionately as Rinty by his co-stars, Rin Tin Tin was a German Shepherd who featured in a series of films in 1923. In 1929 he was nominated for an Oscar for Best Actor but was pulled from the competition when it became apparent that he would win.

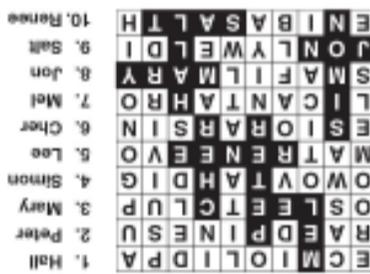
Language Crossword



Cryptic Crossword

Solutions: Across: 1 Repeat; 4 Red Sea; 9 Cobalt; 10 Raiment; 11 Tapir; 12 Wolf; 14 Pasha; 18 Raise; 19 Plumber; 21 Bridge of Sighs; 22 Santa; 23 Credit; Down: 1 Record; 2 Public opinion; 3 Sable; 5 Electra; 6 Sweep the board; 7 Aster; 8 Gift; 13 Freight; 15 Probe; 16 Spool; 17 Prost; 20 Umber.

Wordpuzzler solution



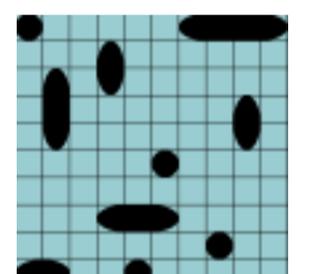
Sudoku solution



Circlegram

The letter represented by the question mark is M. Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, all South East Asian countries.

Battleships



WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?



Dolphins leaping from a fountain

Last week: Benahavis

This pretty roundabout is found at the junction of Avenida Andalucía, Avenida Fiscal Luis Portero García and the A-7175 in Benahavis.



MALAGA PORT INFORMATION

CRUISE SHIP MOVEMENTS (SOURCE: MALAGA PORT AUTHORITY)

Ship	Date	From	Next port	Docks	Sails
Costa Mágica	10/12	-	Tenerife	08.00	18.00
Viking Sky	13/12	Cartagena	Cadiz	08.00	20.00
Arcadia	14/12	Cadiz	Cartagena	07.30	18.00
Mein Schiff 4	18/12	Gibraltar	Valencia	07.00	23.00
Amera	23/12	-	-	08.00	20.00
Aidamar	24/12	-	-	10.00	19.30





The true spirit of Christmas in the Axarquía

Janet Hassall and a team of volunteers work tirelessly throughout the year to help a Malaga charity

by JENNIE RHODES

ALCAUCÍN. On a Friday afternoon in late November and tucked away in a church hall at Puente Don Manuel in the Axarquía, I found a group of ten volunteers putting together bags of Barbie and baby dolls with assorted clothing and accessories. Surrounded by toys, and of course cups of tea, they really did look like helpers in Santa's grotto.

The volunteers form part of the Axarquía Supporters of Los Angeles Malagueños de la Noche. The project was the brainchild of Axarquía resident Janet Hassall who, together with her team, spends all year collecting and making gifts to give the children whose families rely on the food given out by the Malaga-based charity. They have been running the group project for four years and now donate about 150 dolls to the charity.

"It came from the idea of no child without a toy. I went to see what you could actually buy a child with say five euros and the answer was, very little, especially for girls," explained Janet.

The initiative has grown over the years and volunteers as well as their families and friends send dolls, clothes and accessories that they find



Janet Hassall (right) and volunteers put the doll bags together. :: J. R.

in charity shops in Spain and the UK, or donate ones that their own children or grandchildren no longer play with. Many even knit, sew or crochet doll's clothes.

That Friday the team were busy putting together the bags, which are also handmade by volunteers, in which one Barbie, or similar, is put along with four changes of outfit and

an accessory. Each volunteer is given a list of items which are duly ticked off as they go in the bag. "It's a great excuse for the ladies who volunteer to relive their childhood," said Janet, smiling.

The team also collects clothes, toiletries and other items to go to Los Angeles Malagueños and this week 144 pairs of socks, 132 pairs of

gloves, 72 hats and 192 pairs of pants have also been sent thanks to a donation from the Nerja 41 Club. These were collected through a campaign which includes clever straplines like 'Sockit to the homeless' or 'It's pants being homeless'.

In addition, over 200 toiletry bags with toothpaste, shampoo, soap, toothbrushes and so on, also donated by or bought with money raised by the Axarquía team, have gone to the city.

The dolls are given to children, along with other presents donated to the charity, on Kings' Day, but the operation starts before then. Children of the families who use the service write their letters to the Three Kings and they are delivered to Los Angeles Malagueños, who try to make sure that all the children get the presents they asked for, where possible. Tamara Essex, who is a volunteer, explained that on Kings' Day there is a carrier bag, marked with their name, for each child, as well as extra toys for those who did not send a letter so that nobody goes away empty-handed.

That church hall in Puente Don Manuel in late November really was full of the true spirit of Christmas.



The contents of the bags. :: J. R.



HIGH-END *furniture*







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