



RECOGNITION FOR AN IMPOSSIBLE JOB

Six local health service staff were chosen to receive the award for their 30,000 colleagues at the SUR 2020 Malagueño of the Year Prizes **P2**

SALVADOR SALAS

Andalucía announces gradual relaxation of Covid measures ahead of festive period

Movement between municipalities will be allowed from tomorrow and between provinces from 18 December

Shops, bars and restaurants can open later, while the night curfew is put back to 11pm next Friday

Up to 10 people are allowed to meet on Christmas and New Year's Eve, with a curfew from 1.30am

A two-phased easing of Covid restrictions will come into effect from midnight. The first phase, until 17 December, will see increased mobility between municipalities; this will be extended to provinces from 18 December to 10 January. Shops,

bars and restaurants will be allowed to open later and the night-time curfew will move to 11pm from next Friday. Special dispensation regarding gatherings and the curfew will apply on Christmas and New Year's Eve. **P3**

King emeritus Juan Carlos hands over 678,000 euros in unpaid tax

The former monarch's finances remain under scrutiny **P14**

How Malaga doubled for Down Under in hit series The Crown

Local locations were used for the Royal tour of Australia **P20**

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One out of every four Covid-related deaths has been a resident in a care home

Figures show that 26% of deaths in Malaga province were elderly people who lived in care homes and most were infected by asymptomatic workers

ALBERTO GÓMEZ

MALAGA. The coronavirus has a fatality rate of less than one per cent outside care homes, but the percentage in these homes is much higher. Despite having the data right there on the table, Spain has not been able to protect these residential facilities, where the pandemic is doing its worst. It happened in the first wave and is now being repeated in the second.

At least one in every four Covid-related deaths in Malaga province was an elderly person who lived in a care home, according to the latest figures from the regional government. Of the deaths registered in the province up to 24 November, 26.8 per cent were residents of these homes. The health authorities have announced 161 such deaths, but the lack of testing carried out in the early months of the pandemic means the real figure is certainly higher.

In Andalucía, the figure rises to 32.3 per cent of Covid-related deaths. Granada province has the highest number of deaths in care homes: 252 up to 24 November, just over 33 per cent of all deaths.

Although the infection can severely affect people with no underlying conditions, the over-65s are the highest risk group, as nearly half of all patients (47.9 per cent) who have been in intensive care units in Andalusian hospitals since the start of the pandemic were over the age of 65.

The figure is even more



Care homes have been affected by the second wave of the coronavirus, despite extra precautions. EFE

INE adds 18,557 to the national Covid first wave death count

The national statistics office, the INE, has added 18,557 deaths to the official tally recognised by the national ministry for Health in the first wave of coronavirus up to 31 May.

The INE calculates 45,684 deaths rather than the 27,127

of the Health ministry. Its data takes into account broader sources than Health ministry does and is likely to be considered the definitive mortality figure for the first wave from now on. Normally it would publish its annual causes of death in Spain study at the end of the year, but it has brought forward the information for the first few months of 2020.

startling when you look at the percentage of deaths among the over-65s: they account for 87.9 per cent of all Covid-related deaths in Andalucía. Most of these victims (73.2 per cent) were aged over 75.

The mortality rate among elderly people in care homes is

higher than 20 per cent. Of the 5,830 people diagnosed in Andalucía before 24 November, 1,214 died.

Unions point out that during the second wave, the virus has been brought into care homes by asymptomatic workers even

though the Junta has been carrying out weekly tests to detect incipient outbreaks. Early diagnosis is essential to control the spread.

Individual protection

The head of the CC OO union's Sociosanitary Sectors in Malaga, Juan Carlos Navas, is calling for full PPE to be provided for workers: "A lot of them only have masks, nearly always surgical ones, and don't change them every four hours as they are supposed to," he says.

Sources close to the Andalusian government, however, say "it is unbearable" to work in PPE, and the measure is limited to employees who have contact with elderly people who have tested positive or are suspected of being infected.

Focused mass testing continues in high-risk places in the region

SUR

MALAGA. The Andalusian government is to carry out new mass testing programmes for Covid-19 in 26 municipalities across the region, including the Malaga town of Álora.

Among the other places to have mass testing is the city of Almeria and the Granada Alpujarras town of Órgiva.

The widening of the tests to more municipalities came as the results came in of last week's mass testing on all residents in the Malaga province village of Cuevas del Becerro.

The small village had been experiencing very high case rates that stubbornly refused to drop. The PCR tests carried out showed 162 positives among the 1,599 tested, a rate of 10 per cent. People testing positive were told to self-isolate.

The more-accurate PCR showed a lower infection rate than the lateral-flow test carried out on a smaller sample a week earlier in Cuevas del Becerro.

The mayor of the village, Ana María García Picón, said that she hoped that with the measures now being adopted, normality would return little by little.

Regional Health minister Jesús Aguirre urged all people to go for mass testing if called in their town or village.

The more-accurate PCR test showed a lower infection rate than the lateral-flow tests carried out on a smaller sample

Health workers among SUR Malagueño 2020 prize winners

SUR

MALAGA. Health workers featured prominently in the 2020 Malagueño of the Year Awards held on Thursday. This is the twenty-first time the prizes have been given out to people and organisations who have made a significant contribution to the life of Malaga province. The scaled-down ceremony due to coronavirus was organised by SUR and Unicaja Banco as usual.

Among the winners were the 30,000 health workers in the province who received a prize collected

by six people representative of their profession. Accepting on behalf of them were: Silvia Montoro, a family doctor; Ana Ramírez, caretaker at Hospital Regional; Marta Pérez, Pneumology nurse; Antonia María Muñoz, laboratory supervisor at Hospital Clínico; Antonio Jesús López of the 061 emergency line; Antonia Moya Calderón, senior head of accommodation.

Other winners included: charity Cáritas; Grupo Mundo, an event organiser; writer Javier Castillo; Grupo Peñarroya, of Holiday World in Benalmádena; and the Rincón Fertilidad women's handball team.



Representatives of local health workers were presented with their awards on Thursday. SALVADOR SALAS

Coronavirus restrictions in Andalucía to be eased in two phases over Christmas

Travel between municipalities will be permitted from Saturday, and between provinces from 18 December

SUR

MALAGA. The president of the regional government, Juanma Moreno, has announced new measures that will come into force across Andalucía after the current rules end on Saturday. The restrictions will be eased in two phases, from 12 to 17 December and 18 December to 10 January.

Phase one

In the first phase, people will be able to move between municipalities within the same province. Shops will be able to open until 9pm, but bars and restaurants close at 6pm as now. The night curfew remains at 10pm during the first phase.

Phase two

From 18 December until 10 January, movement from province to province across the region will

be permitted. The curfew will be put back to 11pm (until 6am) and shops can go back to their normal opening hours. Bars and restaurants must close at 6pm, but can open again between 8pm and 10.30pm.

On Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve the curfew moves to 1.30am. Between 23 December and 6 January, travel outside the region will be permitted to meet up with family members.

On 24, 25 and 31 December and 1 January gatherings of up to ten people will be allowed, although the limit remains at six for the rest of the period.

Oxygen to the economy

Juanma Moreno sent a clear message on Thursday to the over eight million people in Andalucía, ahead of announcing the new Covid-19 restrictions that will come in across the region this Saturday.

Moreno said that his Junta government would "give as much oxygen to the economy as we can while protecting the health of the people of Andalucía", paying special attention in his comments to the hospitality sector.



Juanma Moreno on Thursday. EP

The two-phased scaling down of restrictions was announced after a meeting with the committee of experts on Thursday evening. The announcement had been delayed a few days to allow more data from the recent long weekend public holiday to be studied by the panel of experts.

The rate of Covid-19 infection detected per 100,000 in the last 14 days was 153,9 on Thursday this week, still just above the 150 needed to move the region into the medium risk category, although there is still a clear downward trend.

In Malaga, including the Costa del Sol, the equivalent rate was 121 cases, placing the province in the medium risk category ahead of the Junta's decision on Christmas. A week earlier it had been 238 per 100,000.

Fall in hospital cases

There were 1,554 people in hospital in Andalucía on Thursday this week, of whom 331 were in intensive care. A month ago, on 9 November, 3,335 patients were in the region's hospitals with coronavirus.

The announcement had been delayed a few days to allow data from the long weekend to be studied

Spain amends Covid test entry rules and adds a quicker test option for travellers

SUR

MALAGA. The Spanish government announced on Thursday that it was changing some of the rules around Covid-19 pre-testing to enter the country from higher risk places, including the UK and most of the EU.

From now on, Spain will admit a TMA test as an alternative to the PCR test. There had been criticism of the test rules introduced last month that require a negative result of a test taken no more than 72 hours before arrival. Delays in PCR results and cost were proving restrictive for travellers.

The newly admitted TMA (Transcription-Mediated Amplification) can be cheaper than the better-known PCR and get results back sooner. Lateral-flow (antigen) tests are still not allowed.

In addition, children under six are now exempt from tests and the results can be shown in French or German as well as English and Spanish.

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Family of man who gouged out the eyes of hospital patient seeking compensation

J. CANO / F. TORRES

MALAGA. The family of a man who, while in the Clínico hospital in Malaga having suffered a psychotic episode, gouged out the eyes of another patient before hitting him with a table and going back to sleep, have requested compensation from the Andalusian Health Service.

The family believes that the events, which took place in 2013, would never have happened had he been restrained correctly by hospital staff.

As a result, they believe that compensation is due to cover the costs of the compensation they, in turn, had to pay to the victim, as well as time their family member had to spend admitted to a psychiatric centre.

However, according to SUR sources, the Advisory Council of Andalucía has rejected the request, which amounted to more than 344,000 euros, on the basis that any possible malpractice could not be considered the cause of the attack.

Malaga forestry engineer kidnapped in Colombia is freed

Jesús Quintana was held by an unidentified armed group at an illegal roadblock in the Cauca region last Saturday

ANTONIO JAVIER LÓPEZ

MALAGA. Jesús Quintana García, the Malaga-based forestry engineer kidnapped by a "criminal group" in Colombia has been released, the local authorities have confirmed.

Quintana was released on Monday two days after being kidnapped by an unidentified armed group at an illegal roadblock in south-western Colombia while on a personal trip on Saturday and travelling by road in the Cauca region. Quintana had arrived in Colombia at the end of March to start a new phase in his already distinguished career, taking over as the managing director for the Americas at the Alliance of Bioversity International (CIAT), an organisation which aims "to help developing countries make farming more com-



Quintana is highly distinguished in his field. EFE

petitive, profitable, and resilient".

The news of his release was confirmed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Arancha González Laya, who tweeted: "I have just spoken with Jesús Antonio Quintana García, the Spaniard who was illegally held by an armed group in Colombia and who has been released thanks to the joint work of the Colombian and Spanish authorities."

His release came as a result of a joint effort between the Specialised Crime and Violence Unit

(UDEV) of the National Police and the Anti-Kidnapping and Anti-Extortion Directorate of the Colombian Police.

Details of his release have not been shared by the authorities nor his family who live in the El Palo neighbourhood of Malaga city. However, kidnappings in this part of Colombia, especially of foreign nationals is quite common.

"We can't tell you how happy we are," said family spokesperson Mercedes Pirez. "It's like we've won the lottery."

Spanish police help arrest two Scottish fugitives over gang-related murder in Glasgow

EFE

MALAGA. Two fugitives allegedly involved in a gang-related murder in Glasgow (Scotland) in August have been arrested, one in Marbella and the other at Glasgow Airport.

T. D., 27 and a UK national, was arrested in Marbella and has already been extradited while C. C., 22 and also British, was intercepted at Glasgow Airport having fled on a flight from Malaga hours previously.

The events for which they were wanted occurred on 17 August in Glasgow, when the two fugitives and a third individual shot a member of a rival drug-trafficking gang at point-blank range.

Investigators from the National Police, in collaboration with the UK National Crime Agency (NCA) and Police Scotland, launched a joint operation on learning that two of the alleged perpetrators of the murder were hiding in the province of Malaga.

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112 REPORTS



Victim Mario Saucó and his convicted killer Mark T. SUR

MALAGA

Brit sentenced for killing man is yet to pay any of the compensation

J. C. / A. F. Four months following the verdict in which Mark T., 45, avoided prison and was made to pay 183,500 euros in compensation to the family of Mario Saucó who died as a result his punch, the British national could be facing

time behind bars again.

Having not yet made a single payment (he was ordered to make monthly payments of 800 euros), the lawyers representing Saucó's family have asked the court that Mark T. should now be made to serve his two-year suspended sentence.

According to SUR sources, Mark T. has sent several emails to the court blaming problems with the bank transfer.

GUARO

Trial of pensioner accused of killing fellow care home resident to begin

J. C. / A. F. The trial of a 91-year-old man, accused of killing one fellow care home resident and injuring another in Guaro in August 2018, will begin next week.

The prosecution is calling for five years in prison, a fine of 300 euros, as well as compensation for the family of the deceased (60,000 euros) and the injured victim (440 euros).

The care home is also set to be liable for subsidiary civil liability having failed to restrain the alleged aggressor, who was suffering mental problems, correctly.

ESTEPONA

Man, 63, admits to giving minors drugs and gifts in exchange for sex

A. F. / J. C. A 63-year-old Spanish man from Estepona is facing six years and nine months in prison after admitting to giving drugs and other gifts to minors in exchange for sexual favours.

During the trial last Thursday, the alleged paedophile accepted the prosecution's version of events, that he would frequent a square in Estepona where young people would gather to pick up his victims.

The prosecution told the court that the Estepona resident would earn the minors' trust by offering them money and expensive gifts (including an iPhone X and expensive watches). He also gave them drugs to an extent where they became dependent. He did all this in exchange for sex, the court heard.

The man was eventually caught after police found out that he was on the way to a spa in Antequera with a 12-year-old girl from the victim's father. He abandoned the girl when he discovered that the police were in pursuit but was arrested shortly after.



Spend time in Spain or have a Spanish holiday home? What 2021 means for your freedom of movement

By Kelvin Chambers, Partner, Blevins Franks

When the Brexit transition period officially ends on 31 December, UK nationals lose the automatic right to come and go in Spain that has been in place for 48 years. From 1 January, only those who have already established lawful Spanish residence or EU citizenship will have unlimited access to the country.

So if you spend a lot of time in Spain but intend to remain UK resident, things are about to become much more complicated. Similarly, if you are thinking about moving to Spain after 2020, you may need to jump through more hoops than if you moved today.

While we remain confident that Spain will continue to welcome UK visitors, as no-one knows what the new immigration requirements will be, we can only speculate based on existing rules for non-EU/EEA ('third country') nationals.

The 90-days in 180-days rule

Unless there is an alternative UK/Spain agreement, non-Spanish resident UK citizens will be limited to visiting Spain for up to 90 days

within any 180-day period without a visa.

The 180-day clock would start when you first enter Spain – or any Schengen state – from 2021 as a non-EU citizen, with each subsequent departure and entry recorded and counted at border control. While being away from Spain for a full 90 days would allow a new stay of up to 90 days, once you have used up your allowance you will not be permitted to enter another Schengen country without a visa.

Those who maintain UK residency but own a Spanish holiday home will therefore need to take extra care when planning trips to Spain (or any Schengen country) to avoid illegally overstaying or potentially being denied entry. Also, be prepared to answer questions at the border about the duration and purpose of your visit.

For stays over 90 days or the right to work in Spain as a non-EU national post-Brexit, you would need to apply in advance – under as-yet-unknown conditions and rules.

Securing uninterrupted access to Spain

If you arrive before the end of 2020, register for Spanish residency, and commit to meeting the residence requirements, you will lock in the right to remain and receive citizens' rights protections under the Withdrawal Agreement for as long as you live in Spain.

You don't need to be physically present in Spain when the transition ends, but you do have to submit your application in person, where possible. While you actually have until 30 June 2021 to apply, you must be able to demonstrate that you were settled before 31 December 2020. What constitutes "proof" here could be open to interpretation, so it is risky to wait until after December to start the application process, particularly as there is already a backlog.

Once your application is lodged – even if your appointment is in 2021 – this indicates that you are settled and intend to remain in Spain. As well gathering as much evidence as you can (e.g. *padrón* certificate, utility bills, healthcare registration), take

care to meet the residence requirements by not spending too much time in the UK.

Minimum income requirements

One condition of becoming resident is proving you can financially support yourself and any dependents without relying on the state. Across the EU, this involves demonstrating annual income at least equal to the national minimum wage. However, in Spain the thresholds are generally decided on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the *extranjería* offices.

Up until recently, the "sufficient income" condition has not always been imposed on UK nationals seeking Spanish residence, but certainly will be from 2021. Beware that the thresholds for third country nationals are significantly higher.

Tax residence

When becoming Spanish resident, you will likely also be deemed tax resident in Spain, so take care to meet your obligations here. Spanish taxation is complex, but the way you hold your wealth and assets can make

a significant difference to your tax bill. A locally-based adviser with cross-border expertise is best placed to help you take advantage of suitable opportunities in Spain and guide you through steps to protect your position in Spain.

While it's not quite "now or never" for securing access to Spain, it will certainly get harder from 2021, so weigh up your options now for making the most of what Spain has to offer.

All advice received from any Blevins Franks firm is personalised and provided in writing. This article should not be construed as providing any personalised taxation and/or investment advice. All information is based on Blevins Franks' understanding of legislation and taxation practice, in the UK and overseas at the time of writing; this may change in the future.

Is your cross-border tax planning in order?

Over 100 countries now exchange tax information under the Common Reporting Standard. Whether you live in Spain or the UK, if you have financial assets in another country your personal details are automatically shared with your local tax authorities – who compare it the data on your tax returns and *Modelo 720*.

You need to take great care with your tax planning, making sure you correctly declare your overseas income and assets, and in the right country. Talk to the wealth management specialists at Blevins Franks for peace of mind and advice on tax-efficient, compliant arrangements.

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Private investors hope to get go-ahead for eco glamping project near Benagalbón

A study which forms part of the plans revealed that 87 per cent of travellers would like to travel in a more sustainable way and 48 per cent never do so

EUGENIO CABEZAS

BENAGALBÓN. A group of investors from Madrid are hoping to get the go-ahead for a sustainable 'glamping' (glamorous camping) site near the village of Benagalbón.

Through their company, Collective Bliss S. L., the group is currently in talks with regional, provincial and local governments to obtain the appropriate licences.

Should the proposed project get the green light it will consist of 60 glamping units made from recycled and reformed transport con-



The land outside Benagalbón earmarked for the eco glamping site. **E. C.**

tainers, as well as a shop and restaurant.

Each unit will be able to accommodate two people with some that could be adapted for family groups.

Emilio Akl Safir, 56, who is leading the project, said that one of the main objectives was "to seek synergies between tourism, nature, agriculture, recycling and renew-

able energies".

He added that the Tabía project, as it is called, would be the first of its kind in Malaga province and one of only a few in Spain. "It is inspired by similar projects in Costa Rica," said Safir, who is originally from Venezuela.

According to Safir, a study that forms part of the Tabía project plan revealed that 87 per cent of travellers say they would like to be able to travel in a more sustainable way and that 48 per cent never or rarely manage to do so.

"One of the objectives is to create a space where people can discover, understand and experience sustainability, not just as a necessity for the survival of the human race, but as an element of personal wellbeing," he explained.

The company hopes to open the site in 2022.

Sports enthusiasts to climb Pico de Europa three times in 12 hours for local food charities

NERJA

E. C. Two local sports enthusiasts, Javier Martín and Pablo Martínez, are planning to climb the Pico del Cielo mountain near Nerja three times in 12 hours on 20 December to collect food for disadvantaged families in the town.

The two men will start from the Balcón de Europa at 8am and hope to have completed their challenge by 8pm on the same day.

The food will be distributed by the town hall's Social Services department as well as the charities Nerja Solidaria and Cáritas. For more information visit Facebook Ultras JML or WhatsApp 663 999 478.

IN BRIEF

CÓMPETA

Three days of mourning for deputy mayor who has died from Covid-19

E. C. Three days of mourning in Cómpeeta came to an end today following the death of deputy mayor, Adela Ruiz Martín, who died from coronavirus on Tuesday aged 60.

Ruiz Martín had spent several weeks in intensive care. Both she and the village's mayor, Obdulio Pérez Fernández, tested positive for Covid in November which led to the town hall being closed for a number of days.

She had been a councillor for the Partido Popular (PP) party in Cómpeeta since 2007. Official flags



Councillor Adela Ruiz Martín. **SUR**

were flown at half mast in her honour. Pérez Fernández said that Ruiz Martín's memory would "remain in the hearts of the people of Cómpeeta."

NERJA

IOM offers residency help for Brits in Nerja

J. R. The United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) will be holding an informative meeting on residency and TIE cards in Nerja next Thursday.

Experts from the organisation will be providing free assistance including legal advice during the session, which will take place at the Centro de Cultura (Calle Granada, 45). The event starts at 10am and places must be reserved by email (UKnationalsSP@iom.int) in advance.

All COVID restrictions must be adhered to including mask wearing and social distancing.

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA

Prize draw and elves to encourage shoppers

SUR. Rincón de la Victoria town hall announced last week a plan to stimulate the economy by encouraging people to shop locally in the run-up to Christmas.

For the seventh year running the 'golden client' prize draw is part of the initiative, with the lucky winner receiving a 6,000-euro cash prize.

There will also be a Christmas shop window display competition and on 23 and 24 December and 4 and 5 January, Santa's elves will be on the town's streets to "create some magic for the children" said mayor Francisco Salado.

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The interior of the Benalmádena Club de Hielo. **SUR**

Benalmádena ice rink closes due to sharp fall in users

IVÁN GELIBTER

BENALMÁDENA. The ice rink in Benalmádena took its users by surprise last weekend, informing them that the activities due to take place had been cancelled as the complex was closing.

Given the surprise caused by the closure, mayor Víctor Navas offered his “support” for the

both the workers of the club, who have been furloughed, and its users. Navas said that the closure could be attributed to the decline in the number of users due to the pandemic.

The council added that if the contract holder was not willing to continue operating, the town hall would “rescue” the contract in order to protect jobs.



JOSELE

A Global Gift to the community

The Global Gift Foundation, created by businesswoman María Bravo (pictured), has collected three tonnes of food to be distributed among different charity organisations and individuals in Marbella this Christmas.

HERE AND THERE

FUENGIROLA

New sports centre announced for Carvajal

I. G. Work is already under way on a new 2,525-square-metre sports centre in Carvajal, primarily dedicated to the development of young basketball talent.

The project, which will cost 2.77 million euros, should be completed within nine months.

ALHAURÍN DE LA TORRE

Legal battle launched against treatment plant

A. JIMÉNEZ. Residents of the Mesanza area of Alhaurín de la Torre have enlisted the help of renowned lawyer Marcelino Abaira to launch a legal battle against the planned wastewater treatment plant (EDAR) in the area, saying the project is “arbitrary” and better locations have been ignored.



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Dog found in bag of rubble now seeking new permanent home

The story of Ulysses went viral in June but now he has been returned to health it is time to find him a new family

IGNACIO LILLO

MALAGA. News of the event spread quickly around Spain at the beginning of June. A resident of the Puertosol neighbourhood on the outskirts of Malaga city heard some disturbing noises coming from a container full of garden waste as he was walking past. When he got closer, he noticed a sack of rubble, closed tightly with rope. When he slit it open, a dog immediately poked his nose out to breathe. Inside was a seven-or eight-month-old Spanish Mastiff puppy, dying.

Local Police specialists took him out and contacted the Pro-



Inma Laure with Ulysses. **SUR**

tectora animal shelter, which took care of him and admitted him to a veterinary hospital.

Thus began the story of the salvation of Ulysses, who not only managed to survive, but six months later has become a great dog, just over a year old and about 40 kilos of nobility and kindness.

Since he left the vets, where they managed to bring him back to health and stabilise him through the use of transfusions, medication and special food, he has been staying in Mijas with Inma Laure, a volunteer who is part of the network that the NGO calls upon for animals that are in a particularly vulnerable situation. However, the time has now come to find Ulysses his new, permanent family and the Protectora has made an appeal on social media to find the best adoptive ‘parents’.

“It’s not good for the dog to stay in a home where he cannot be kept. We must find a family to take care of him in the long term,” said the organisation’s president, Carmen Manzano.

After the ordeal he has been through, he still has some psychological issues, which make him afraid, although he is not aggressive.



The birds were kept in a cage inside the vehicle. **SUR**

Police free around 20 wild birds captured illegally

SUR

MALAGA. National Police have intercepted a vehicle in Malaga city as its occupants transported around 20 wild birds, apparently captured illegally in the countryside. In the boot of the car officers also found prohibited hunting gear (nets and ropes), so the investigation for alleged crimes against fauna

and flora was passed on to the Guardia Civil.

The events took place last Wednesday when the suspicious behaviour of the driver alerted the police, who identified the occupants, two Spanish men aged 32 and 35.

The rescued birds (15 chamarixes, five verdones and two goldfinches) were released into their natural habitat.



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"We are hoping for a miracle to help us stay afloat"

Fabienne Paques
Animal Care España (ACE)

ACE is 21 years old today, but with donations plummeting and no student volunteers, the charity is in dire straits

TONY BRYANT



MIJAS. Animal Care España (ACE) will mark its 21st anniversary today (Friday) but, instead of celebrating, the charity has made a desperate appeal for help and financial support.

Due to restrictions enforced to combat the spread of coronavirus, the animal refuge centre in Mijas Costa has found itself in dire straits, with donations plummeting, student volunteers un-

able to visit due to travel restrictions and the cancellation of all fundraising events.

The charity is usually assisted by around 300 volunteers from Belgium, Holland and Spain, however, this year, as with all charity organisations, volunteer support has diminished.

Also known as Spanish Honden in Need (SHIN), the animal charity was founded in December 1999 by Belgian animal lover Fabienne Paques and Dutchman Ton van den Broek. Over the last 21 years, the organisation has rehomed more than 22,000 dogs.

Fabienne Paques speaks to SUR in English about problems the refuge is facing and how they hope to overcome them.

-How many animals do you have at the refuge in Mijas Costa?

-At the moment we have more than 400 dogs and 100 cats, but



Founder Fabienne Paques at the animal refuge centre in Mijas Costa. SUR

this figure is rising daily.

-How has the pandemic affected the refuge?

-The pandemic has seriously affected us and we are struggling to survive. We function purely on donations and fundraising events, so we are experiencing very hard

times at the moment.

-Have you seen an increase in abandoned animals because of the crisis?

-Yes, an enormous increase and we are struggling to cope with it. The financial condition in our area is very bad and people are

abandoning dogs that need medical assistance because they just cannot afford to pay for it.

-Do you think the charity will survive the crisis?

-We hope to survive the crisis, but only time will tell. We will continue to support all animals, but we desperately need more help in order to survive.

-How important is your work at this time of year?

-The work we do is very important. Our philosophy is that every life counts. The neglect has been worse than ever and you sometimes wonder where all these poor dogs come from.

-How are you managing to finance your work at the moment?

-We are fortunate that people send us donations, although these have been far less than we would normally receive. We are hoping for a miracle in the form of a large donation to help us stay afloat, but we can only hope.

-Other than money, what else is the refuge in desperate need of?

-We need food, especially puppy food. We also require blankets, towels and cleaning products.

-How can people get involved or help at the moment?

-We desperately need people to offer foster homes or virtual adoption, as well as volunteers to walk the dogs and help out at the refuge. We welcome any help, no matter how small, everything counts.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Christmas burpee challenge

Fitness fans from Gibraltar to Estepona have so far raised over 5,000 euros for underprivileged children on the coast

SUR IN ENGLISH

Dozens of people are taking part in a festive fundraiser this month to help feed children along the Costa del Sol. The event challenges people to do 100 burpees (a push up, followed by a leap in the air) a day for 12 days in a row, while dressed in festive clothing.

So far 26 people have helped raise more than 5,000 euros for the Feed a Child campaign and organisers hope to raise a further 5,000 euros by 24 December.

The funds are being used to provide a packed lunch for 100 children between Manilva and Estepona for the whole of 2021 — as part of an initiative run by the St George's charity in Manilva. Organised by Jo-Hannah Ruby



Jo-Jo, right, with her son. SUR

Effer France, the event has seen dozens of people from Gibraltar to Estepona take part.

British expat Jo-Jo, 50, who works as a fitness instructor in Sotogrande, told SUR in English: "Most of us have no idea what it feels like to be really hungry. We couldn't imagine sending our kids to school every day without at least a snack. Well, for many families along the coast, this is

a daily occurrence. There are many, many children in Estepona alone that go all day until they eat a meal, and this meal is actually supplied by the soup kitchen."

She explained that social services in Manilva have helped identify 100 children who urgently need help.

Jo-Jo, a mother of one, who is originally from West Bromwich (UK), added: "It is really important to stress that these children are on the poverty line and in desperate need of our help."

Jo-Jo and her son have already completed the burpee challenge, clocking up 1,200 burpees in just under 4.5 hours earlier this week. However, most people are doing 100 burpees a day over 12 days.

She added: "It was tough, but lots of fun and we have raised plenty of money so far."

! To donate to the event or to get involved, visit:
<http://gofundme.com/f/stgeorgexmas2020>



Lions members with donors. SUR

MIJAS

Icing on the cake donation for the Lions

T. B. La Cala de Mijas Lions have been busy collecting food and toys from their members, volunteers and supporters to help local underprivileged families enjoy Christmas.

The campaign was boosted when the Miraflores Lady Golfers offered their support by donating generously to the initiative.

Lion's spokesperson Anne Bowles said, "When the lady golfers asked to be included in the mix, it was the icing on the Christmas cake. Their generosity will make a massive difference."

TORREMOLINOS

Town hall and Red Cross aid campaign

T. B. Torremolinos town hall has launched its annual solidarity initiative to collect donations of non-perishable foods and toys for underprivileged families during the festive season. The campaign is coordinated by the Torremolinos branch of the Red Cross, with the support of several local charitable organisations.

Teams of volunteers will operate outside several of the town's main supermarkets throughout the month in order to collect donations of dried food and toiletries, while the popular two-wheeled Santas will help with the collection and delivery of Christmas toys for children in danger of social exclusion.

Mayor José Ortiz said, "We must set an example and not forget those that most need our support at this time of year."



Mayor of Torremolinos

Carrefour



Estepona | Fuengirola | Mijas |
Torremolinos | Valle del Guadalhorce

OFFERS OF THE WEEK



PREPARE FOR THE FESTIVITIES WITH CARREFOUR

This holiday period, you'll find all the products you need at the Carrefour shopping centres in Estepona, Mijas, Fuengirola, Torremolinos and Valle del Guadalhorce

Although it looks like it will be rather different to usual this year, Christmas is a time to enjoy and to share with loved ones at home. A table laden with the best local and gourmet products, moments of leisure, play and laughter or relaxing with music and a good book. All of that, and much more, can be found at the Carrefour shopping centres in Estepona, Mijas, Fuengirola, Torremolinos and Valle del Guadalhorce.

These establishments stand out for their commitment to quality and customer service. A wide range of products which customers will always find at the best prices.

In this way, 'foodies' will be able to purchase fresh fruit and veg, meat and fish from the La Despensa (pantry) sections of these centres to triumph during the festivities with their most delicious creations. Those who wish to combine tasty flavours with taking care of themselves can choose from among the best Bio and Eco items on the market. Moreover, these establishments have a bulk section where customers can obtain a wide range of goods such as rice, pasta and legumes in paper bags, thus reducing on plastics and residues.

What better than to accompany these delicacies with something from the premium Bodega (wine cellar) with labels from different denominations of origin. Local wines, including a selection of Sabor a Málaga (Málaga Flavour) products, and international wines from benchmark countries in wine

production such as France, Italy or Chile, among others. To top it all off, nothing better than to choose from the wide range of Christmas desserts and sweets, from mantecados to roscos, nougats or panetones, which will be the delight of children and adults alike.

Likewise, the Hogar (home) section has everything you need to decorate your house and create a festive atmosphere, and in Textil you can find the best clothes to keep warm and look fashionable and stylish.

In Electronics and Multimedia, as well as the most sought-after gifts of this Christmas, the Carrefour centres in Estepona, Mijas, Fuengirola, Torremolinos and Valle del Guadalhorce have all the latest products and technology to liven up family moments. Video game consoles, music systems or smart TVs with offers and discounts. To overcome physical distances, there are computers, tablets and smartphones which will connect you to your loved ones with the maximum quality and definition. All arranged in a comfortable and simple manner, with professional staff to advise you or solve any queries.

And as Christmas isn't the same without the excitement of the youngest members of the household, these Carrefour centres have the most sought-after toys on the market. Educational games, dynamic games and games for the whole family. A selection aimed to provide happy experiences for people of all ages to treasure the best memories.

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'Independent auditing is the best way of proving a publication's circulation figures'

Manuel Sala **OJD Managing Director**

Being part of OJD is vital in guaranteeing the reliability and quality of publications for both readers and advertisers

RACHEL HAYNES

MALAGA. If anyone knows about media auditing in Spain, it's Manuel Sala. With more than 20 years' experience keeping tabs on the figures of the publishing world, he has been Managing Director of Spain's leading media auditing organisation, OJD, since 2014. At a time when readers and advertisers demand reliability and transparency more than ever, Sala talks to SUR in English - the only English-language publication on the Costa del Sol audited by OJD - about the importance of certified circulation for both paid-for and free newspapers.

Briefly, what services does OJD (Oficina de Justificación de la

Difusión) offer?

-Our firm certifies circulation figures for publications, both print and digital, which carry advertising. We have several brands: OJD for paid-for media and PGD for publications that are distributed free of charge, among others.

-How does it work? How do you audit the circulation figures?

-Our methodology is totally reliable and accredited. Bear in mind we've been auditing newspapers since 1965 (more than 55 years). Declarations of print run and circulation figures are given by the publishers of each of the audited media, with the required details, and OJD carries out auditing techniques to check the figures. It publishes the certifications quickly and always according to market standards.

-What are the advantages for a publication of having independent auditing?

-It's the best way of proving that their circulation or distribution



Manuel Sala, Managing Director of OJD. SUR

figures are true and that they have adequate coverage and frequency to make them the ideal vehicle for advertising. Our stamp is an indicator of the quality of a publication because it can be compared with others of the same type or in the same geographical area. A publication that is in OJD is on the media lists that agencies receive every month so they can plan [advertising] based on objective print-run and circulation data. They are not estimated figures (readership), but audited (how many copies are produced), checked each time by the OJD's team of highly specialised auditors.

-Why is this so important for advertisers?

-Because that way they can calculate the cost by the impact they will have with each publication (dividing the cost of a page of advertising by the number of copies) and optimise their campaigns. What's more, by committing to being audited by OJD, publishers avoid discrepancies occurring between the number of copies promised and those that are really produced, guaranteeing the efficacy of the advertiser's communication, and that their advertising reaches a given number of readers.

-And what message does belonging to OJD give readers?

-The most important media in Spain (newspapers and magazines) are controlled by OJD on a recurring basis. Their readers know that the advertising that goes in the publication contributes to keeping the sale cost down [in the case of paid-for publications] and keeping the quality of the published content high. In many Spanish cities and provinces, appearing in the press is fundamental for local commercial campaigns and activities. Advertising becomes a service to the public and shapes many ac-

ADVANTAGES

ADVERTISERS

"Being audited by OJD, publications guarantee that advertising reaches a given number of readers"

RELIABILITY

"There is a huge difference between having access to information and being well-informed"

activities with the support of the media (fun runs, concerts, shows, etc). **-Today, with so many sources of information on the internet and social media, transparency in the press is more important than ever...**

-Without a doubt. There is a huge difference between having access to information and being well-informed. The internet, and in particular social media, mean that everyone has access to information, but they also contribute to spreading hoaxes and fake news that damage individuals and institutions. Being well-informed requires means of communication produced by professionals and whose information comes from reliable sources. Transparency is one of the characteristics of these publications, which are valuable because they help shape public opinion with guaranteed veracity of facts and

control over misinformation.

-Why do you think there are some publications that do not subscribe to the services of OJD?

-Their reasons could be diverse. In many cases it's because the real print run and circulation figures are very low and would not stand up to a comparison with the figures quoted by the publication in its advertising. In others, it's a case of very niche publications that know their sector's advertisers and, as they have no reliable circulation figures, the advertising prices are the result of pure negotiation. There are also publications that have just appeared on the market and are waiting for more established figures before certifying them. We offer all publications a service at a very reasonable price, because our aim is to add transparency to circulation figures.

-The OJD/PGD in Spain is part of the International Federation of Audit Bureaux of Certification (IFABC) which also includes the UK's ABC. Why are international relations important for auditors?

-This is very interesting. All countries where advertising is highly developed have offices similar to the OJD. They have different names in each country: in the UK, India, Serbia and Croatia, it's the Audit Bureau of Certifications. In the US it is called Alliance for Audited Media and was formed back in 1914 to offer advertisers reliable press figures. In France it is OJD, in Argentina and Brazil, the Instituto Verificador de Circulación, in Italy ADS, in Germany IVW, in Belgium CIM... The important thing is that not any firm can do it. To be a circulation auditor you have to guarantee independence. For that the organisation has to be formed (as owners) by advertisers, agencies and media of that country. In that way they can guarantee that the data responds to market standards.

-What projects has OJD developed in line with changing media?

-Before I became Managing Director in 2014, I was responsible for OJDinteractiva, the division for auditing online media (websites, newsletters, apps, etc.). In recent years we have launched certification services for Outdoor Advertising (billboards, MUPIs, etc.) and event attendance. This year has been complicated due to the pandemic, but we've continued with our services and provided support for publishers to continue controlling their circulation.

We've just taken a giant step forward in the certification of digital editions of magazines (the replica version for tablets or mobiles). From 2021 these will be certified by OJD as part of total circulation. We are also talking to several publishers to audit digital subscriptions via paywall.



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The government hopes to vaccinate the whole adult population. **D.B.**

Covid vaccinations to begin in January in Gibraltar

HEALTH

D. BARTLETT. Gibraltar was expecting its coronavirus vaccine to arrive this week but logistical problems have delayed it until January. However, there will be between 50,000 and 100,000 doses, which

is more than originally planned, to avoid sending the extremely fragile drug in batches.

The first to be vaccinated will be people over the age of 80 and care home workers, then over-70s, adults at risk, frontline workers and the general adult population.

New insurance company authorised to operate in Gibraltar

ECONOMY

D. B. Marshmallow Insurance Company has become the second UK insurtech to establish its own insurance company in Gibraltar, where the sector is worth billions of pounds. The first was Extracover, by insurtech Zego last year.

Established in 2018, Marshmallow is one of the new breed of insurtech businesses that are using technology innovations to disrupt the current insurance industry model. It recently closed a \$30 million investment round which included a prominent fintech backer and a large financial institution.

IN BRIEF



The vans are fully electric. **SUR**

ENVIRONMENT

All Post Office vehicles have gone green

D.B. The Royal Gibraltar Post Office is the first public postal service in the world to have a fully electric fleet of delivery vehicles.

This is part of the Green Gibraltar scheme.

The previous fleet of 13 vehicles was 17 years old and did not meet the EURO 6 standard.

BREXIT

Brexit negotiations continue with the EU

D.B. Chief Minister Fabian Picardo updated the Gibraltar parliament on Thursday on the ongoing negotiations about the future relationship between Gibraltar and the EU following the end of the transition period in a few weeks' time.

Picardo said there are issues of great complexity, such as the immigration and economic relationships and the possibility of a Customs Union or bespoke free trade agreement, and many of them are as sensitive as they are important.

However, he said the government and "our negotiation partners" remain optimistic that an agreement is possible, but Gibraltar has full contingency measures prepared in case it is not. "We are still talking," he said, "and will do so up to the last minute".

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King emeritus Juan Carlos and his son, King Felipe in 2014. AFP

King Juan Carlos pays 678,000 euros to taxman over undeclared credit cards

The former monarch has repaid the debt, plus interest and charges, according to his lawyer

MATEO BALÍN / CRISTINA VALLEJOIRMA

MADRID. King emeritus Juan Carlos admitted this week that he had used funds not declared to the tax office for personal expenses.

The former monarch has made an extra declaration to the tax authorities covering a debt of 678,393 euros, "including interest and charges", according to his lawyer.

The office of Juan Carlos's son, King Felipe, did not comment, however the news of the voluntary back-tax payment re-em-

phasised the decision of the present king to cut ties with his father last March and give up rights to his inheritance.

The back tax refers to the use of under-the-radar funds to cover credit card use by some of the Royal Family for at least three years: 2017, 2018 and 2019. Neither King Felipe nor Queen Letizia are said to have benefited. Sources said that the amount being declared could be as high as 1.5 million euros.

King Juan Carlos has been living in Abu Dhabi since August. Courts are also investigating two other alleged offences, which his lawyers have denied; the transfer of 65 million euros to his former lover, Corinna Larsen in 2012 as "a show of gratitude" and 10 million euros found in offshore Jersey and supposedly linked to the former head of state.

Defence minister asks for inquiry into retired officers who called for 'firing squads'

The far-right views expressed in a private phone-chat group led to angry exchanges in parliament

MATEO BALÍN

The Minister of Defence, Margarita Robles, has asked for State prosecutors to look at the content of an incendiary phone-message chat among some retired Spanish air force officers.

Controversy built last week after it emerged that the private message group had been discussing "coups" and "firing squads". The Ministry wants to see if those in the chat have committed any sort of offence and says that the chats, "carry views totally against the constitutional order, making veiled mentions of a military uprising".

The messages were revealed by the Infolibre website and were reportedly written by the retired military men, all over 70. Some members have come forward to distance themselves from the content.

The messages criticise the current government and mention the need to carry out "uprisings" due to political drift.

One of the group members is a general, who Infolibre named as Francisco Beca and who professed his wish to "shoot 26 mil-



Margarita Robles last week. EFE

lion sons of a bitch" opposed to his ideology.

"Spain is full of ungovernable people and the only way is to make them more cultured, something that's impossible with the left," one message reportedly said.

There were fierce arguments between Socialist MPs and hard-right Vox in parliament, with the latter citing similar incendiary comments in the past on the left.

The conservative PP said that the comments did not reflect the modern armed forces.

IN BRIEF

MADRID

Podemos spokesman is former bank robber

SUR. The newly elected spokesperson of far-left Podemos in Madrid's regional assembly is a convicted bank robber.

José Luis Nieto Pereira, who is already an established political activist for Podemos in the capital, was sentenced in 1982 by the Audiencia Nacional to five years in jail for robbing a bank in Galicia with a radical independence group.

He served half the sentence.

EXTREMADURA

Record-breaking egg weighs 182 grammes

C. J. VINAGRE. A free range hen in the Extremadura region has laid an egg weighing 182 grammes. This is three times the normal size and the biggest ever recorded in Spain.

The owner of the chicken farm, Emilio Manuel Pérez, who collects hundred of eggs by hand every day, confessed that he didn't know what to do with his prize. The record-breaker has a circumference of 19cm and beats the previous Spanish record of 176 grammes.



The prize egg. EFE

BADALONA

Fire kills three in migrant industrial unit

SUR. At least three people were feared dead on Thursday after a fire swept through an industrial unit occupied by undocumented migrants and other vulnerable people in Badalona, near Barcelona, the previous evening.

The private premises were being used by mainly African migrants in poor conditions for around 12 years and had facilities including a bar inside. On Thursday, seven people were being reported as critically injured.



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Central bank warns Spain will be the EU country most affected by Brexit

A study by the Bank of Spain also found that the UK will be negatively affected by the split much more than the EU will

EDURNE MARTÍNEZ

MADRID. On the same day that the UK government announced Brexit negotiations had reached a "very difficult" stage, the Bank of Spain published a report that predicted that the UK would suffer much greater negative consequences than the rest of the EU as result of Brexit.

The report predicts a reduction in the UK's GDP of between 1.5 per cent and three per cent for 2022, compared to 0.4 per cent in the worst-case scenario for the EU.

However, the worst consequences for the EU will be felt in Spain, the report concluded. With the pandemic taking resources away from transition arrangements, the two countries' financial and commercial relations are set to be affected, es-



The Bank of Spain in Madrid. SUR

pecially if there is a no-deal Brexit and the UK opts to trade on World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.

Particularly affected by the sudden imposition of tariffs and quotas on goods will be Spanish exports of foodstuffs, tobacco and industrial intermediate goods.

What's more, in 2019, one in five tourists coming to Spain were from the UK, while the British were the biggest foreign buyers of property in the country.

THE EURO ZONE
MARK NAYLER

A king's ransom



This week, Spain's King emeritus, Juan Carlos, paid almost €680,000 in back taxes - a hefty settlement that in no way implies that he's guilty of the more serious fraud charges pending against him. It does, however, make one wonder why the once-beloved monarch owed quite so much, and for how long he hadn't been paying any or the appropriate amount of taxes.

Juan Carlos's move in August to the United Arab Emirates certainly achieved what one imagines was its true (rather than its stated) purpose: to enable him to retreat from speculation concerning his intricate finances and a former affair with Danish businesswoman Corinna zu Sayn-Wittgenstein. But the announcement of this week's tax settlement has returned Juan Carlos to the forefront of attention in Spain, just before he's apparently due home for Christmas. If he does

come back for the muted festivities, King Felipe's father might find public interest in his affairs - both fiscal and amatory - just as keen as it was when he fled to Abu Dhabi in August.

Last month, Juan Carlos entered a "Rich List" of the world's ten wealthiest royals, compiled by the online investment magazine Buy Shares. The monarch, widely credited with returning Spain to democracy in the 1970s, secured last place, with an estimated fortune of \$2.3 billion (€1.9 billion) - not peanuts, for sure, but an almost embarrassing amount compared to the \$30 billion (€25 billion) amassed by the King of Thailand, the planet's richest monarch.

This estimation of his personal fortune comes at a sensitive time for the former head of state, as serious questions remain over the legitimacy with which some of it was accrued. Ongoing investigations concern

a €100 million "gift" Carlos received from King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia in 2008 - €65 million of which he transferred to Sayn-Wittgenstein in 2012 - and the source of sums held in Swiss bank accounts.

But according to an anachronistic section of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, Juan Carlos possessed "inviolability" during his reign and can't be prosecuted for anything that occurred before his abdication in 2014. If this venerable document is ever tweaked, as the Socialists and Podemos rightly want it to be, this should be one of the first sections to go.

The wider context of Juan Carlos's troubles is a debate about the future of the Spanish royal family. Polls indicate that Spaniards are roughly split down the middle as to whether the country should become a Republic, a spread that's more 80-20 among the political class, with only radical and separatist groups openly against the monarchy. Still, while they're around, at least the occupants of the House of Bourbon's Madrid branch are more colourful and, in a way, more human than their boring counterparts in Windsor. That, perhaps, is about the best thing that can be said about them.

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Sorolla painting seized as part of Malaya case sells at Sotheby's for 890,000 euros

HÉCTOR BARBOTA

MARBELLA. Prized oil painting 'Before the bullfight', painted in 1898 by Joaquín Sorolla and seized during the Malaya anti-corruption case in Marbella, sold for 801,500 pounds (889,000 euros) at auction in London on Wednesday.

The auction, conducted by Sotheby's, lasted for a week during which three bids were made. It went ahead despite a company claiming ownership of the work to a provincial court in Malaga to try to prevent it.

The company, Neira de Rei, said that they had taken ownership of the work in a capital increase in which it absorbed the mercantile company CCF21, previously owned by the businessmen Carlos Sánchez and Andrés Liétor, convicted in the case as partners of Marbella corruption mastermind Juan Antonio Roca.



Who's who on the restaurant scene? New guide available with SUR in English this week

SUR

MARBELLA. Last week saw the launch of SUR's 2021 edition of the bilingual (Spanish and English) Who's Who Guide to Malaga Gastronomy. The almost 200-page guide was presented at a reduced-capacity event at the Puente Romano hotel in Marbella in which figures from the local restaurant scene gathered in a show of strength in the face of the difficulties faced by the industry as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Copies are available at selected SUR in English distribution points today, Friday. If you can't find your copy email distribucion.su@diariosur.es.

Cudeca's fundraising campaign continues to gather pace

ANA PÉREZ-BRYAN

MALAGA. The Cudeca hospice's campaign to raise the 185,000 euros needed to finance a home care team for a year reached 85,000 euros this week. With the ambitious objective of raising the full total by 6 January, the foun-

dation stepped up its campaign by stopping off at the Diputación provincial authority HQ in Malaga on Wednesday to stress the importance of its work.

There are various ways to contribute, with the easiest being through Cudeca's specialist platform www.sunflowereffect.org.



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LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Fuengirola's Roman site

In recent editions of SUR in English there have been articles about the work and preservation of Roman sites in Marbella and Malaga.

However, there is a Roman villa and accompanying buildings here in Fuengirola that it appears no one is preserving.

As far as I know this villa is the most intact and important archaeological site in Fuengirola.

It is called Finca del Secretario, and is near the elevated rail line in Los Boliches.

This is a large villa with what would have been a colonnaded courtyard, several household rooms, a hypocaust system and plunge pools of various temperatures.

The courtyard still has a beautiful mosaic floor, and some of the other rooms show partial mosaics and the remains of white marble walls.

In the area of the villa are stone fish tanks for making a valuable fish sauce, known as garum, much prized around the Mediterranean during antiquity.

In the 22 years I have been coming to Fuengirola I haven't seen any attempts by the local authority to protect this amazingly rare site.

When it rains the mosaic areas fill up with several inches of water which just sits there until it evaporates, and there are weeds growing through the mosaics.

This could be a valuable tourist attraction if a sympathetic pantiled canopy was built over the entire villa to protect it from the elements.

Instead of unnecessarily re-modelling Angel Square, some of that money could have been used to protect Fuengirola's ancient heritage.

It's not too late!

ROBERT HUDSON

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THE MUSIC MAKER
PETER EDGERTON
www.e-peter.com

Bye bye maybe

Many's the time that Spanish friends of mine have looked on, aghast at my behaviour. One of my favourites was about fifteen years ago when, after some social occasion or other, I bade farewell to the assembled mob and left. A few days later I was with two of the people present at another engagement.

"Why were you so rude the other day?"

"Eh?" (Thinking that could be most days.)

"When you left the restaurant so abruptly. Had someone offended you?"

"No, I haven't been offended since I was about six. I just wanted to go home, said goodbye and left."

"Come on, you were annoyed about something."

"No."

"You were."

"Nope."

"There you go again - so abrupt."

To be honest, it took about another five years and various up-

braidings, mainly by incredulous girlfriends, for me to cotton on to the root of the problem - you can't just say goodbye and leave in Malaga; there's a ritual which goes something like this:

1. "I'll have to be off shortly." (To first be muttered about two hours before departure).

2. "I need to be going soon." (To be stated every fifteen minutes thereafter).

3. Get car keys/house keys/any keys out and fiddle with them for twenty minutes.

4. Rise to feet stating your intentions (see steps one 1 and 2.)

5. Sit down again.

6. Stand up again.

Now this is where things get really interesting. A hearty wave to all concerned and bolting for the door is tantamount to insulting everyone's mother (my classic mistake). So, you need to say goodbye individually to everybody. Before Covid, this involved myriad kisses and handshakes which, depending on the number of people present, could take from half an

hour to six weeks to perform and it's not over yet.

According to the rules of the game, any one of the people you're saying goodbye to is now perfectly entitled to detain you to ask about the welfare of your pets, even if you haven't got any. Or your cousin in Madrid, or the state of your privet hedge. This phase of proceedings can last decades, or that's how it feels.

Anyway, at least by now you can slink off to your car/bus/taxi/psychiatrist and heave a huge sigh of relief. Or can you?

"Peter!" A disembodied voice rises from the ether and your blood turns cold.

"Are you angry? It's just that you didn't spend three hours saying goodbye to that woman in the big hat that you've only just met."

"No, I'm not at all angry but I was actually hoping to get home before The End Of Days and maybe catch a bit of the snooker."

"Oh, ok. By the way, how's your goldfish..?"

IDÍGORAS

I'm going to take the Pfizer vaccine; Gaspar, you take the Moderna one; and you Balthazar, don't bother to take anything - last time you took myrrh and it was totally useless



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THE BOTTOM LINE
ANA BARREALES

Are they controlling us or not?

It seems that determining whether a gathering of people has become a crowd or not doesn't depend on the number of people gathering, nor on what space they are gathering in, but on what they are gathering for and who is promoting it. Let's give some examples...

Calle Larios got quite crowded when they turned the Christmas lights on. The city hall decided it was all just an optical illusion. Elías Bendodo, spokesperson for the Junta de Andalucía, on the other hand

decided that there were too many people and that such events should be avoided. "What we saw the other day does nothing to flatten the curve," he said. Restaurant and bar owners, meanwhile, were left wondering why you could take in the sights from the street but not from their terraces.

The same goes for travelling, short trips and Christmas gatherings. They ask you to avoid unnecessary trips yet they don't stop you from travelling - seemingly so it doesn't appear that they're controlling

you. So why is there a curfew? On the one hand they make us stay indoors at a certain time, on the other they trust us to act responsibly.

They put up the same Christmas lights as any other year and install them earlier than ever, as if to make a point that not even a pandemic can take them away. But what is their aim? Do they want people to see them or not? Because I'm not sure which of the two options is worse.

Some measures can only be left to individual responsibility because they're impossible to control, so why then are others that can easily be controlled not enforced? If they don't want us to travel at Christmas, they need to have the courage to restrict it.

Banning things never sits well, but what do they expect to happen? To allow one thing and recommend the opposite only

serves to confuse people. If you travel in spite of everything that's going on? Bad. And if you decide to stay at home out of a sense of personal responsibility, once Christmas has passed you'll be expected to stay home out of obligation, because not everyone acted like you did.

I remember how unfair I found collective punishments when I was at school. Something would happen in class and they wouldn't find out who did it. Instead they'd take everyone's playtime away.

That's what could happen to us with Christmas. They've spoken so much about saving Christmas, (as if what was in danger was Christmas and not life), that now they dare not forbid us to travel. And if we don't all "behave ourselves", a third wave will come and, whether we're careful or not now, we'll all be collectively punished again later. And that's not right.

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How Malaga became Australia in The Crown

The tempestuous relationship between the Prince and Princess of Wales becomes a crisis in the fourth season, where scenes that took place in Australia were actually filmed on the Costa del Sol

FRANCISCO GRIÑÁN



MALAGA. The sixth episode is the one to look out for. One of the most keenly awaited moments in the fourth season of the Netflix series The Crown is when the people's

princess, Lady Diana Spencer, arrives on the scene.

It has to be said that the scriptwriters didn't hold back when portraying her role in the royal family or her stormy relationship with Prince Charles, especially when she rapidly became more popular than her husband and even Her Gracious Majesty, Elizabeth II.

This mixture of heaven and hell

became especially obvious during the couple's four-week visit to Australia in 1983 which, according to the series, led to the definitive separation of Their Royal Highnesses after an attempted reconciliation.

All this is shown in episode six, Terra Nullius (nobody's land); but actually that land does belong to somebody, because in the scenes representing their stay in Sydney

and Canberra there are some familiar locations in Malaga. You do have to look carefully to spot them, though, because staging and digital retouching make them look very different on screen.

"The most spectacular location was the Malaga Palacio hotel and Calle Molina Lario, because we placed a remote [camera] head on a crane on the hotel terrace and the result was brilliant," said the locations manager in Spain, Tate Aráez, who is himself from Malaga and who also selected locations in the province for the previous season. On that occasion actress Helena Bonham Carter (Princess Margaret) 'landed' at the Palacio de Congresos in Torremolinos, acting as Los Angeles airport.

Aráez, who won an Oscar for his Game of Thrones locations, led a team from the firm A Film Location, who scouted for settings for this fourth season of The Crown. Almeria became the Australian desert and the famous Mount Uluru; and the crowds when the Waleses visited Brisbane were actually in Malaga city centre. The Australian city of skyscrapers was filmed from the 15-story Malaga Palacio hotel with hundreds of extras thronging the streets to cheer.

"Once we decided to use the hotel, we had to be very careful that the other settings fitted in with the script," said Aráez, adding that during the week that Emma Corrin (Diana) and Josh O'Connor (Charles) spent in Malaga they also went to La Concepción botanical gardens to film the couple's supposed car tour through Adelaide.

The iconic Puente de Hierro (iron bridge) in Cártama is Darwin in the series; a polo match was filmed at the local sports complex; and a meeting at the Canberra residence of Australian prime minister, Bob Hawke, was actually shot at the Palacio Monte Miramar.

Many of these scenes worked perfectly and needed no digital retouching. For example three scenes which were filmed at the Castañón de Mena military residence: the pool is where Diana met a swimming team; her visit to a hospital in Sydney was filmed at the building's rear entrance; and the front steps were used for the couple's arrival at a party.

In others, though, digital effects have worked 'magic' and nobody would realise this was Malaga, although the visionary Tate Aráez confirms that the Cortijo de Torres open-air auditorium was the setting for Charles' speech at the Sydney Opera House, which was added post-production.

The subsequent visual is sublime, as Charles compliments his charming wife in public. Although later his pompous words sounded as false as this trick of film production. It seems real, but it is actually fiction.

THE AUSTRALIAN SCENES IN THE SERIES AND THEIR REAL LOCATIONS IN MALAGA



Brisbane: Calle Molina Larios and Hotel Malaga Palacio

Spectacular camera work from the terrace of the Malaga Palacio hotel shows cheering crowds appearing to welcome the Prince and Princess of Wales to Brisbane.



Prince of Wales in Sydney: Cortijo de Torres auditorium

It seems impossible, but this scene at the Sydney Opera House was actually filmed at the Cortijo de Torres open-air auditorium in Malaga. The background was changed later by digital technology.



Sydney party: front steps of the Castañón de Mena residence

The Castañón de Mena military residence was used in three different scenes: one where the couple arrived for a party, the princess meeting a swimming team and a visit to a hospital.



Stay in Darwin: iron bridge in Cártama

The iconic Puente de Hierro iron bridge also appeared in one of the Australian scenes, and a polo match was filmed in the sports complex in Cártama.



Car tour of Adelaide: La Concepción botanical gardens

In a beautiful Rolls Royce convertible, the Prince and Princess of Wales were driven around the Jardín de la Concepción, although viewers think they are in Adelaide.



Prime Minister's house Canberra: Palacio Monte Miramar

The meeting between Prince Charles and the Australian prime minister was shot at the Palacio Monte Miramar. The Monte Gibralfaro can be seen in the background.

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READERS' PHOTOS



HANS SCHMID

An exotic bloom

Hans Schmid grows South African Proteas in his garden in Casares. He has sent SUR in English this photo of one which he says will continue flowering into spring.

Festive colours

This photo was sent in by Vibeke Holm who says, "We have the pleasure of this gorgeous plant - which flowers all year round - and expands in both directions above the terrace window." It is a Mandevilla or Dipladenia hybrid vine which originates from tropical and subtropical zones of the world. It is drought-resistant and comes in a variety of colours.



VIBEKE HOLM

PHOTOS

Calling all gardeners

We know many of our readers have lovely gardens, or enjoy growing plants on their terraces or balconies and some like to take photos of plants they see when out and about. Why not share them with others? Email

your photos to english@diariosures or send them to SUR in English, Avda Dr Marañón 48, 29009 Málaga, with a caption and a few words of explanation. Alternatively, you can send them to us via Facebook (surenglish) or Twitter (@SUR_English).

GARDENING

Dais cotinifolia

Native to South Africa and Madagascar, Dais cotinifolia is a small, deciduous tree and member of the Thymelaeaceae family (the same family as Daphne, a better-known ornamental shrub). It is commonly called the pompom tree or pincushion tree and is a small, multi-trunked tree with bluish-green leaves and a profusion of star-shaped flowers that form in

large, globular heads at the ends of the branches. Flowering can be so prolific that the whole tree can appear to be smothered in a pink cloud. The flowers are sweetly scented and are an important source of pollen and nectar for bees and butterflies. After flowering, the green,

cup-shaped bracts of the flowers dry hard and brown and these are often used in dried flower arrangements. The leaves are bluish on the top surface and are patterned with translucent, light-green veins. In cool winters Dais cotinifolia may lose all or some of its leaves.

It is a fast grower and easily grown from seed, usually flowering in the second year. In ideal conditions, Dais cotinifolia, which can reach a height of around six metres, can self-seed although the resulting seedlings are easy to eradicate. Once the pompom tree is established, it is drought-resistant, although flowering is much improved if it is watered regularly during the hottest months. It can also withstand short periods of frost. It is a useful tree for providing shade as it forms a dense, rounded canopy.

It is an ideal tree for a patio or small garden but does not like to have restricted roots and is therefore better planted in the ground rather than in a pot. The roots are not invasive and Dais cotinifolia can be planted two metres away from buildings and pools without causing damage. Pruning it after flowering will keep it bushy and the cuttings can be used to propagate new plants. An ideal spot is somewhere with full or partial sun. The genus has only two species, D. cotinifolia and D. glaucescens, the latter rarely grown as an ornamental plant.



Dais cotinifolia and close up of blooms (insert). WIKIMEDIA

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WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

11 DECEMBER 1813

Napoleon acknowledges Ferdinand VII as King

A treaty signed in December 1813 was a first step towards the return of Ferdinand to the throne Napoleon had given to his brother Joseph Bonaparte

The Treaty of Valençay was signed between the French Empire and the Spanish Crown on 11 December 1813. The agreement provided for the restoration of Ferdinand VII as King of Spain, who had been imprisoned in France, in the Château de Valençay, since his abdication in 1808. That year, 1808, soon after the start of the Peninsular War, Napoleon occupied Spain. The French considered the occupation as bringing modern liberty to a people still governed by the Inquisition. Meanwhile, Ferdinand, the eldest surviving son of Charles IV of Spain, believed that

the French troops were in Spain to support him after his frightened father had abdicated in his favour. Napoleon Bonaparte had another plan. He was sure that the Spanish people would accept his brother Joseph as king while the rightful heir sat in a French prison. However, the Spanish people hated Joseph Bonaparte, seeing him as a foreigner and an upstart, and they put up resistance, keen to change the situation. In August 1808, British troops under the command of Sir Arthur Wellesley (1st Duke of Wellington) landed in Portugal and sided with the Portuguese and the Spaniards against the French. The British government acknowledged Ferdinand VII as king of Spain on 14 January 1809. However Napoleon only allowed Ferdinand to return to Spain in March 1814, after recognising him as king in Valençay the previous December.



Ferdinand VII of Spain (left) and Napoleon Bonaparte. SUR

During the war against the French a group of liberal Spaniards in Cadiz wrote the Constitution of 1812, which placed severe limitations on the power of the monarchy. Therefore, a liberal monarchy was expected, but Ferdinand returned to the authoritarian rule of his father. He abolished the Constitution of Cadiz, imposing the absolute power of the crown. Ferdinand's

return to absolutism was supported by the church and wealthy landowners. Empowered by the Spanish parliament, he attempted to rule as a despot. For the rest of his reign Ferdinand governed by force of arms. Ferdinand VII ruled Spain till his death. The royalists called the king 'el Deseado' ('the desired one'). The liberals meanwhile, seeking freedom from absolute

monarchy, gave him a nickname 'el Rey Felón' ('Felon King'). In March 1820, they finally forced the king to restore the Constitution of Cadiz. The Treaty of Valençay also provided for an armistice between France and Spain, although this was never ratified by the Spanish parliament. In addition, Ferdinand VII had apparently given a secret oath to turn over the Spanish army to Napoleon if the British and the Portuguese continued to attack France.

LANGUAGE FOOTNOTE

Tratado	Treaty
Reconocer	To acknowledge
Emperador	Emperor
Imperio	Empire
Castillo	Castle
Abdicación	Abdication
Adinerado	Wealthy
Hermano	Brother
Derrotar	To defeat
Terrateniente	Landowner
Soberanía	Sovereignty
Apodo	Nickname
Reinado	Reign
Diciembre	December
Acuerdo	Agreement

Bilingual crossword inside back page

RDMC'S

RDMC'S IS A FAMILY RUN BUSINESS WITH MANY, MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE GLAZING, CONSTRUCTION AND STEEL INDUSTRY



ANDALUCÍA
SUR. The business idea first started with Dan, who wanted to start a glass manufacturers business making sealed units (double glazing), as back in the UK he was a line manager overseeing the making of the units. Dan started the business with his wife and parents-in-law back in 2004, and Dan's brother joined them not long after. Dan and his brother grew up with their father, who owned a window and doors manufacturers, so it wasn't long until the company expanded. Firstly, they changed locations from a small unit to a double factory and bought a toughening machine to produce glass for all requirements; then they gained the distribution and manufacture of SUNFLEX glass curtains and started their own in-house stainless-steel welding and manufacture and lastly they started manufacturing windows and doors, something Dan was extremely familiar with. They soon went from a small, family-run business to a

much larger operation, employing many specialists in their fields to manufacture and install. Today it is still very much a family-run business with more staff and family members than ever before, all striving to carry on the good name and reputation that RDMC'S has obtained over the last 16/17 years on the coast. So here is a run-down of what they can do: They are specialist manufacturers of Glass Curtains, stainless steel, UPVC & Aluminium, Bi-folds, windows & doors and pool surrounds. They use only the highest quality materials, including 316 marine-grade stainless steel, to avoid corrosion problems. They have their own glass-toughening plant which means that the complete glass curtain system, including the glass, is manufactured under one roof. They also manufacture UPVC and Aluminium windows and doors; they can manufacture roofs, fixed or sliding (electric or

manual); complete steel structures; acoustic glass for bars; mirrors; table tops; sealed units; splash backs; shop fronts; shelves; walk-on-glass; stairs; glass balustrades; pool surrounds; in fact they can assist you with all your glass needs. They also produce bi-fold doors and a system called OPENMAX, which is new to the market. A video of this system is available, upon request, or you could visit their Facebook page for installation photos and videos of all their work. The Glass Curtain system Sunflex that they manufacture is typical of German design, much time and thought has gone into the system, making it one of, if not, the best system available on the market today. The system is completely different to other systems, which are of a similar price; it is top hung which means that the weight of the glass is distributed evenly and not all sitting on the bottom, rubbing metal against metal. This system runs on stainless-steel wheels and stainless-steel, thrust-needle bear-

ings, each panel of glass has four holes drilled into it, so that the profile can be bolted to the glass as well as glued, this is the only system to do this, most other systems are merely glued to the profile. Other companies will claim that a bottom-hung system is better; however as glass manufacturers, who make our own glass and understand the weight that is involved per square metre for 10mm glass, we know that the best way for a system to function correctly is to hang the glass, so as not to impose such weight and strain onto the system below, causing scraping and juddering over a period of time and regular use. RDMC's Glass Curtains also come with an additional adjustable bar, this means that, if there is any movement at all, the glass curtains can be adjusted up or down with just an alan key, instead of having to take all the panels of glass out and start again. The system has undergone many tests in Germany, including an opening and closing test of over

10,000 cycles and also a wind test of up to 2000 Pascal's, all the test documentation can be viewed at RDMC's offices. RDMC'S recommends, in these uncertain times, that anybody, looking to install glass curtains, windows & doors or stainless steel, visit the factory and see where they are being manufactured. With the current situation, many companies on the coast have filed for bankruptcy; unfortunately, you will find that these companies are still trying to trade without proper premises and licences and merely change their company names. Do ask questions, a reliable company has nothing to hide. RDMC's would like to take this opportunity to thank all their customers and wish them, and future clients, a Merry Christmas and to please stay safe. Check out their Facebook page for regular updates on installations or for any info, please email us on rdmcsglass@hotmail.com or call 952477963, 677712742.

IN THE FRAME

Travelling the world in search of creative direction

Kjell Sorrong. The artist studied design in New York and went on to create his own men's fashion collection

TONY BRYANT



Swedish artist and interior designer Kjell Sorrong has spent his life travelling the world exploring different creative directions. The 58-year-old decided to settle on the Costa del Sol in 2000. After spending 20 years as the driving force behind the Astracán Marbella design company, Kjell is now dedicating much of his time to his art, hosting several exhibitions along the coast over the last few years. During his last exhibition in Estepona in October, the artist sold 21 paintings. Today, he lives in Estepona with his partner Ben - a Belgian concert pianist whom he met in 2011.

Born in Stockholm in 1962, Kjell studied music at the Adolf Fredrik Music School in Sweden, although, after six years, he decided to turn his attention to fashion design.

"The music school I went to is very famous in Sweden. I studied choral singing, but I also played the flute and the piano. I have continued with the piano, but I have very tough competition at home nowadays," Kjell explains to SUR in English.

Following several "boring" years in banking, he studied at the St Göran School of Design in Stockholm and began dreaming of working in New York, Paris and London. In 1987, Kjell headed to America to study design in New York, but after just twelve months, he returned to Sweden to work at a fashion company.

"I went to the Parsons School of Design on 5th Avenue and had a great time, but I was offered what seemed to be the dream job in Stockholm a year later. I worked with the company for several years, designing my own menswear collection," he says.

In 1991, he opened the celebrated Swedish interior design

and furniture shop Bohem, which, although Kjell sold before moving to Spain, is still operating today.

Boutique hotels

Kjell moved to the coast in order to open a boutique hotel, The Beach House, in La Cala de Mijas. Three years later, he opened a second hotel.

"We chose the Marbella area for the climate and sunny weather, which is kind of important when you are about to open a hotel. We started to look for the perfect place to open a small boutique hotel, and we found it in Mijas Costa. We opened our second, The Town House, in the Old Town in Marbella in 2004," he explains.

Kjell decided to dedicate time to his art shortly after arriving on the coast and he began taking classes with Mijas-based artist Joy Fahey. His art, which he describes as "contemporary and abstract", includes various techniques and he uses a mixture of media. The artist claims that one of the reasons he began to paint was because he often had problems finding the right artwork for his interior design projects.

"Painting and drawing have always been there for me as a hobby since I was a kid. It was a part of my design and fashion education.

"Doing endless numbers of interior projects here on the coast, in Sweden and in France, I have looked for so many things to put on walls, but sometimes I had a hard time finding the perfect size, colours or style, so I thought I'd better do it myself," he says smiling.

Dark colours

Much of his work has a somewhat sombre feel, as he uses dark colours and pale tones, although he has recently been



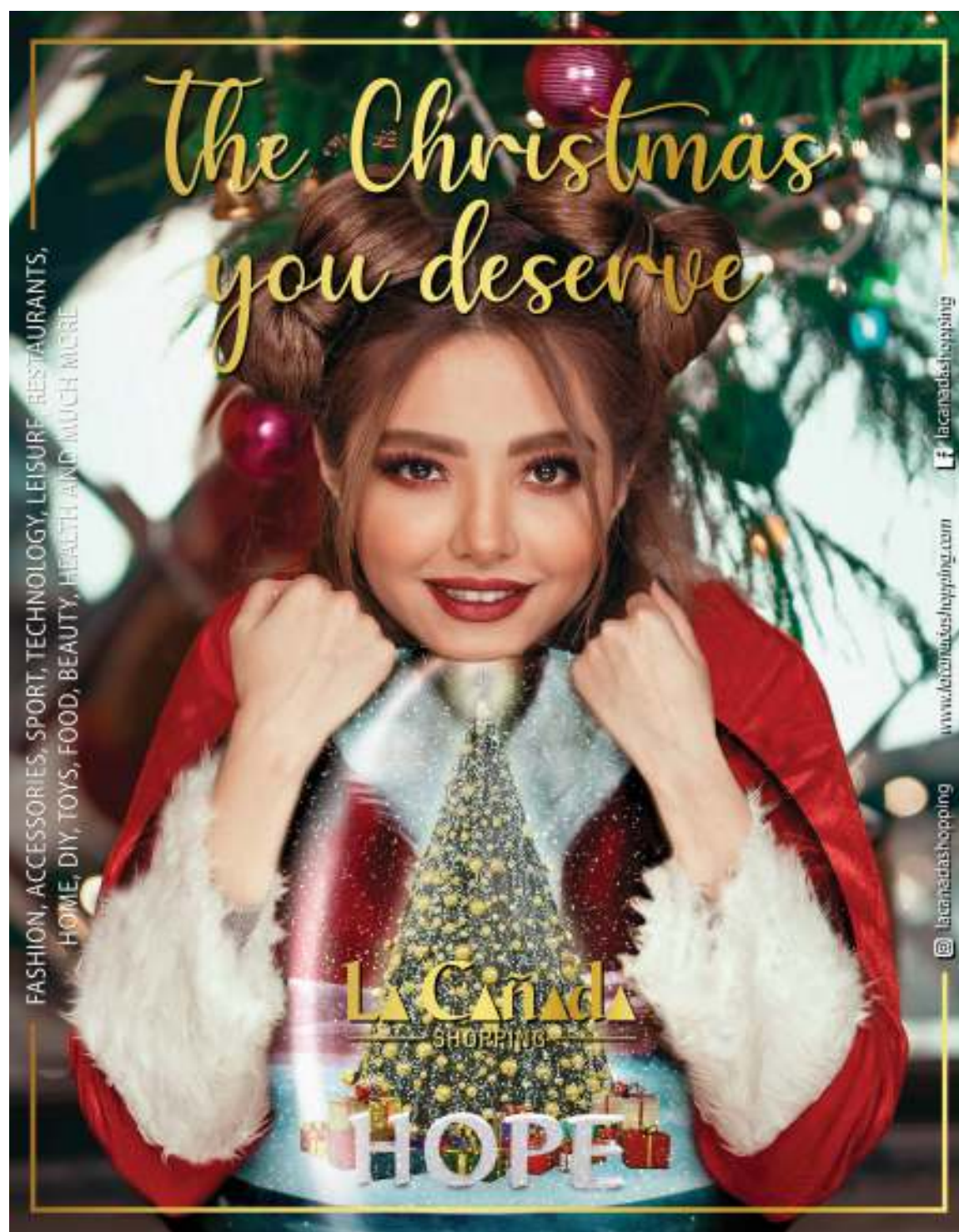
Swedish artist Kjell Sorrong in Estepona. SUR

using more colour and light to create his paintings. This, he explains, could be because of the current pandemic.

"I am a huge nature lover and I can get inspiration from anything I see while out hiking. For the last few years I have not been using lots of bright colours, mainly beiges, blacks, greys and white, but maybe it is because of the lockdown that I am now using a lot more colourful tones than ever," he says.

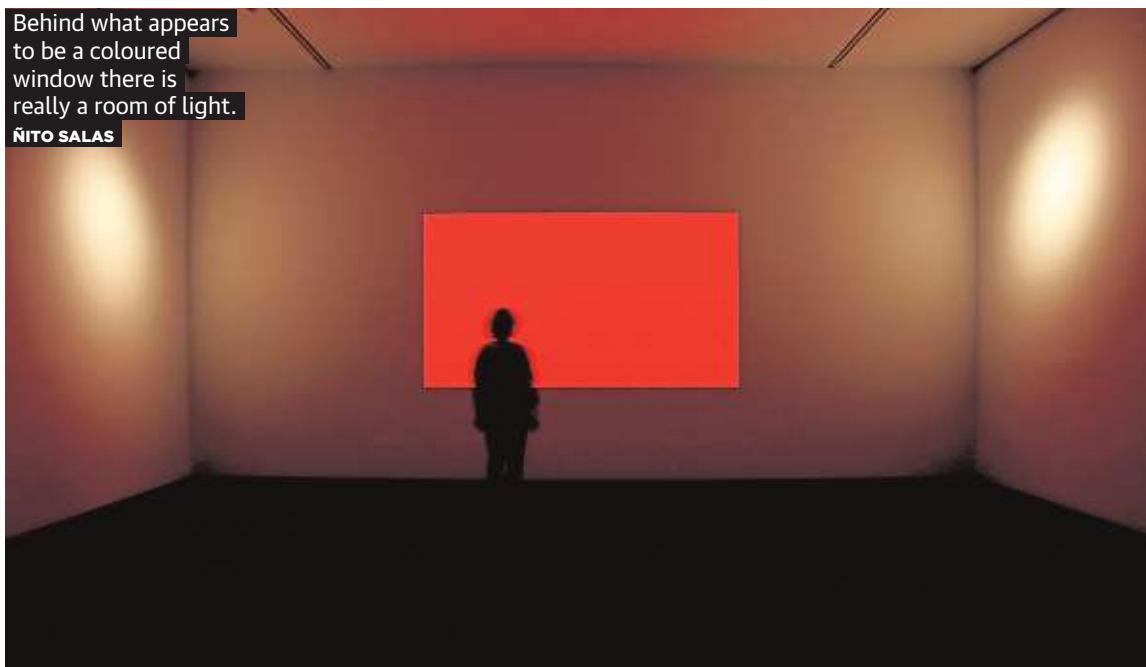
Kjell is currently working on paintings for several exhibitions he has planned for 2021. He is also looking forward to travelling the world again.

"I can't wait to show the new art in next year's exhibitions. I also look forward to being able to travel again, as I really miss that now, but every day we tell ourselves that we live in paradise, so there's no real rush," he says.



Behind what appears to be a coloured window there is really a room of light.

ÑITO SALAS



James Turrell: what the eye thinks it sees

Installation. The American artist experiments with light, space and time in *Cherry*, a game of visual perception which is both hypnotic and disturbing at the same time

REGINA SOTORRÍO



James Turrell creates his works without paint or brush, or even a canvas. His background is space and his tool is light, so an exhibition of his works is not a succession of items in a room, it is the room itself as can be seen in *Cherry*, a display which has just opened at the Picasso Museum. Turrell is fascinated by light and it is forms the basis of his immersive creations, which play with visual perception to create a hypnotic and disturbing sensation in those who view them.

Cherry is part of this American artist's Space Division Constructions series and is in three parts. After passing through a tunnel to get your eyes used to the dark and widen your pupils, you come to a closed space with a large cherry-coloured rectangle on a black background. This is the 'viewing space', and it is here that the eye defrauds the brain, making it think it is seeing something it isn't: at first, you seem to be looking at a flat projection on a wall, but no. If you get closer you can 'enter' this red area. What really lies behind the frame is a room filled with light, nearly three metres deep with concave corners giving an unexpected effect. Turrell calls this the 'sensing space', where light is projected towards the room. As your eye is already used to darkness, the perception of the work changes and you begin to appreciate different nuances.

Ten minutes is the recommended exposure time to this work, and it passes in total and absolute silence. For some it invites calm and inner peace; in others, it can be disconcerting. As Turrell has said, "my work has no subject, no image, no focus. So without those, what do you see? You see yourself. What I want to do is create an experience of thought without words." While great artists throughout history have used light to place the focus on a particular area of their work, in his case the light is the picture itself.

The fascinating work of this unconventional artist can be seen at the Picasso Museum until June.

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From globalisation to localisation: cities post-COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a change in the mentality of citizens. Now we are more aware of our impact on the environment, we demand a healthier and more relaxed lifestyle, seeking more efficient mobility solutions in greener environments. Moreover, the post-COVID era has brought with it the development of much more local consumption models. For this reason, cities are in a process of change in line with the demands of their citizens, and the digital transformation of the new metropolis will be a key element for advancing in locally based techno-innovative cities.

Keynote speaker:
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Government of Colombia
VICE MINISTER OF CREATIVITY AND THE ORANGE ECONOMY

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EXHIBITIONS

Photograph exhibition

MIJAS COSTA. Until 14 December. Casa de la Cultura, Las Lagunas. This is the annual collective exhibition organised by the Asociación Nuevo Enfoque.

Victor Porlen

LA CALA DE MIJAS. Until 7 January. Centro Cultural. Jaén artist Victor Porlen will be exhibiting a selection of his works.

3D tour of museum

COÍN. Online. The Centro Antonio Reyna Manescáu has opened its doors to the whole world by creating a virtual tour of its exhibition rooms. Find the link half-way down the page <http://turismo-coin.com/>

Christmas Nativity scene

FUENGIROLA. Until January. Museo de la Ciudad de Fuengirola. The traditional display of belenes (nativity scenes) takes place this year but visitor numbers are restricted.

Nativity Scene

MÁLAGA. Until 5 January. Archivo Municipal. The Asociación Belenista de Málaga La Alcazaba have created a display entitled "Nace Jesús en un Pesebre" which is a fragment of a nativity scene showing the birth of Christ in a stable. The figures are made out of terracotta and hand painted by sculptor Joaquín Pérez.

Centre Pompidou

MÁLAGA. Muelle Uno. **Dar la Cara.** Until 11 April 2021. The latest exhibition, Dar la Cara, consists of photos and videos by 26 artists. Classic portraits are mixed with contemporary and innovative styles, sometimes surreal and disquieting.

Piña y Más Allá

MÁLAGA. Until 10 January. Casa Amarilla, C/Santos. An exhibition of art works by over 40 artists is on display in the gallery.

Estrada - Mother and son

MÁLAGA. Until 5 January. Salas Minogorance, Archivo Municipal. Mari Pepa Estrada and Rafael Pérez, mother and son, are exhibiting their works which are different in styles but linked by an invisible thread.

Rinus van de Velde

MÁLAGA. CAC Málaga, C/Alemania. Until 24 January. This 40 minute film entitled the Villagers is a compendium of fragments interpreted by different characters in undefined places that are linked through image editing. This allows Van de Velde to experience different roles within his artistic production and allows the spectator to enter the universe of the artist.

José Cabrera and guests

ALMUÑÉCAR. Until 19 December, 6-9pm. La Sala Rowland Fade, Casa de la Cultura. An exhibition by José Cabrera and guests including Rafael Barbero and José Antonio Lerta Marmol.

Piggy

ONLINE. Until 12 December. www.designyard.com Malaga-based Irish artist Ciaran McCoy (Piggy), has an online exhibition of 26 of his colourful contemporary paintings entitled Seven Spanish Angles.

LIVE CONCERTS AND MUSIC

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra

MÁLAGA. Teatro Cervantes. 17, 18 December, 8pm. Christmas concert with Puccini's Messa di Gloria



José Cabrera, Almuñécar.

and Rossini's William Tell Overture. With tenor Eduardo Aladrén, bass/baritone Rui Silva and the Malaga Opera Choir. www.orquestafilarmonicade-malaga.com Tickets: <https://www.unientradas.es/>

Javier Ruibal

MÁLAGA. 12 December, 7pm. Teatro Cervantes. A concert with Javier Ruibal (vocals and guitar), Javi Ruibal (percussion) and Lucía Ruibal (dance). Tickets: www.unientradas.es

Terral

MÁLAGA. 13 December, 12pm. Sala Trinchera, C/Parauta. Rock 'n' roll music band Terral from Rincón de la Victoria in concert. Tickets: www.wegow.com

Dúo Dalí

ALMUÑÉCAR. 13 December, 7pm. Auditorium of the Casa de La Cultura. Aida Velert on piano and Fernando Pascual on violin will be playing Romanza by F. Kreisler and Prokofiev's Violin Sonata No. 2 in the first half and Sonata in A major for violin and piano (César Franck).

Malaga Jazz festival

MÁLAGA. 19 December, 1pm. Suzette Quartet in Calle José Iturbi, Bailén Miraflores. 19 December, 4pm. Anachronic. Parque de la Alegría, Ciudad Jardín.

Carol concerts

TORREMOLINOS. 17 December, 8pm. The Coral Torremolinos will be in concert in the Centro Cultural.

Spanish carols

ALMUÑÉCAR. 11, 18, 30 December, 5-8pm. 24 December, 11.30am - 2pm. The María Gómez de la Canastería singing group will be performing Spanish carols in the old town and commercial centre. On 21 December, the Cosas Nuestras choir will be performing in the streets of the old town between 5 and 8pm.

FLAMENCO

Magpie Gallery hosts collective art initiative



One of the works in the Christmas Collective Exhibition. SUR

TONY BRYANT

MARBELLA. The Arts and Culture Association (ACA) is hosting a festive exhibition under the banner of The Christmas Collective Exhibition this month.

Held at the Magpie Art Gallery in Calle Virgen del Pilar (Marbella), the exhibition, which will run until Friday 18 December, will feature works by eight national and international artists. These include Carmen Gordo Bermejo, who will be showing her nature-inspired paintings for the first time. Other artists who will be exhibiting their works

are Italian abstract artist Liviana Leone; Stella Kamazón, the Malaga-born painter, engraver and sculptor whose intriguing figures are created with recycled materials; and Jordanne Morris, an emerging British artist who uses resin, inks, acrylics and gold leaf to create unique canvases.

The exhibition, which is free, can be viewed from Monday to Friday between 10am and 4pm (private viewings: c.benitez@acamarbella.com).

The ACA is an independent organisation that supports and promotes culture, history and heritage.

Zambomba Flamenca

MÁLAGA. 13 December. Teatro Cervantes. Flamenco performance with the Antonio de Verónica dance company and Sara Cortés. www.unientradas.es

Alicia Moreno

ALMUÑÉCAR. 21 December, 8pm. Auditorium of the Casa de La Cultura. Flamenco performance.

TALKS / LECTURES

British Consulate residency advice

FUENGIROLA. 18 December, 10am - 4pm. Lux Mundi Ecumenical Centre. The British Consulate International organization for Migration, is coming to the Lux Mundi Centre to give free advice about residency status. By appointment (half an hour each),

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Advice on getting residency

NERJA. 17 December, 10am. Centro Cultural. Free.
IOM UN Immigration are holding an informative event for UK nationals to apply for residency and TIE. Book a place, email: UKnationalsSP@iom.int

The Arts Society

NERJA. Lectures online.

The Arts Society Nerja season of lectures free online for members and supporters. www.theartsocietynerja.com/

15 December, 6pm. Santa Claus. The art that turns him from St Nicholas to Father Christmas: Lecturer Christopher Bradley.

The Arts Society Costa del Sol

FUENGIROLA. Lectures online.

The Arts Society Costa del Sol streams lectures to its members. You can also register for a single lecture. To join email: amanda.nadfas@gmail.com

14 December, 4.30pm. Santa Claus: The art that turns him from St Nicholas to Father Christmas. Lecturer Christopher Bradley.

CHARITY

Charity concert

NERJA. 20 December, 1.30pm. Iglesia de el Salvador, 25€.

To help local families who will otherwise struggle to provide a Christmas for their families this year, the Orquesta Málaga Camerata will play



Santa lecture, Fuengirola / Nerja.

pieces by composers such as Händel, Pachebel, Bizet, Praetorius and Reading. Tickets: 690073871 or email: ventana.abierta.acp@gmail.com

La Cochera Cabaret

MÁLAGA. Avda de los Guindos, 15€ donation.

12 December, 12pm. Juan Pinilla and Rojo Cancionero will be in concert to raise funds for the Asociación Al Quds (www.alqudsandalucia.org). Tickets: <https://lacocheraentradas.com/>

MORE IDEAS

¡Va por tí! book signing

MÁLAGA. 15 December, 4.30 to 6pm. The Shakespeare pub, Calle Muro de Puerta Nueva, 5.

Author Liz Parry will be signing copies of her book ¡Va por tí! (This is for you!) - an updated version of her Spanish Phrase Book, aimed at residents who want to get a little bit more out of life in Spain.

Christmas Fair

MÁLAGA. 13 December, 12.30pm. St George's Church, Avd de Pries.

Christmas gifts, home-made jams and preserves, baked goods, second-hand books and clothing and accessories. Food and beverages will be available from the bar. Free entry.

Christmas Carol Service

MÁLAGA. 16 December, 7pm. St George's Church, Avd de Pries. Due to COVID restrictions, numbers are limited. Reservations: pa.frlois@gmail.com. Mince pies, mulled wine and a Christmas Raffle.

Lux Mundi Christmas Carol Service

TORRE DEL MAR. 12 December, 5.30pm. San Andrés parish church. An ecumenical carol service. Call: 952 543 334 or email: luxmundi@luxmundi.org

Lux Mundi Taize Prayer

TORRE DEL MAR. 18 December, 8.45pm. San Andrés parish church. Monthly prayer meetings. Call: 952 543 334 or email: luxmundi@luxmundi.org

Lux Mundi Taize Prayer Meeting

FUENGIROLA. 17 December, 7pm. San José church. To be included in the prayers email: luxmundif@gmail.com

Lux Mundi

TORRE DEL MAR. From Friday 18 December, 11am - 1pm. Lux Mundi Ecumenical Centre, Avda Moscatel. A special Christmas coffee morning will be held on 18 December
17 December. Trip to Gibraltar. Various departure times and pick-up points. Passport needed. Tel. 952 543 334 or email: luxmundi@luxmundi.org

Long-standing Celtic tradition comes to Benalmádena

T. BRYANT

BENALMÁDENA. The Sur Pipe Band, the coast's only Spanish pipe band, will perform three outdoor concerts in Benalmádena on Saturday. The mini concerts have been organised by Benalmádena town hall as part of its festive cultural agenda.

The bagpipe ensemble was founded in 2019 and consists of a collection of pipers, the majority of whom are Spanish. Led by Leslie Thompson, an Argentinian of Scottish descent who has lived in Benalmádena since 1990, the band will perform a collection of traditional Celtic pipe music.

The concerts, which will last for half an hour, will begin at midday in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Benalmádena Pueblo. The second performance will take place outside



The Sur Pipe Band will perform in three locations on Saturday. SUR

the Casa de Cultura in Arroyo de la Miel at 1pm. For the final show, the pipers will head to Bil Bil castle in Benalmádena Costa at 2pm.

The concerts have been made possible with the support of The Irish Association, and Mickminibus, who have supplied the transport to ferry the musicians to each location.

Leslie Thompson, who has

played the bagpipes for more than 50 years, explained that the concerts are a way of thanking the town for its support and hospitality. "The inhabitants and authorities in Benalmádena have always been very kind and generous with our pipe band project, and these concerts are our way of saying thank you and Merry Christmas."



Why are people afraid of the Covid vaccines?

Doubts. They have been produced in record time and with new techniques. Although there is no such thing as zero risk, we asked experts to comment on the most common concerns about their safety and side effects

ROCÍO MENDOZA



Dates have now been set for authorising the first two Covid vaccines which will be used in Spain: 29 December and 12 January. Europe will enter 2021 with the hope that a new drug will slow down the pandemic that has taken so much away from us. However, even though we know these vaccines are going to be authorised and will be available very soon, some people are still wary of them. The first time the CIS sociological research centre carried out a survey about whether people wanted to have the vaccine as soon as it was authorised, a disheartening 40

per cent said no. That says a lot, but it hides even more. Many people still have doubts and fears, so we have set some of their concerns out below and asked doctors, researchers, scientists and manufacturers to respond to them.

They have produced it too fast: Shouldn't it take years?

The fact that vaccines normally take up to 10 years to produce has had such an effect that some people don't trust the Covid vaccine because it has appeared so quickly, barely a year after the pandemic began. However, there are reasons for this. ➤

Best Christmas stories sound better in good company

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➤ The first is to do with something that has happened in all sectors. Society has shown that it has been able to react on a large scale to new and unexpected changes. For instance, would we be able to work from home en masse to keep the cog wheels turning? We didn't know until we tried and found that we could. What has happened with the vaccines is quite similar: we have been able to produce these faster.

Emili Esteve, the technical manager of Farmaindustria, says that "never in history have so many people worked on something at the same time and so intensively". From need came cooperation. Rival companies have joined forces, and opposing fields like university and private research have shared their resources and talent. That meant the result was always going to be unconventional.

In this race, bureaucratic obstacles have also been eased. For example, regarding the time the authority responsible for guaranteeing the safety of the product, the European Medical Agency (EMA), takes to study and authorise a drug.

"In the best of cases, it normally takes a year after the tests have ended for a drug to be studied and authorised," says Esteve, but in this case the tests were completed and authorisation granted

almost at the same time. How was that possible?

"By studying the scientific evolution of the vaccine at the same time as it was being developed. The EMA reviewed the documentation as it was produced, during each phase, instead of waiting for all of it at the end," he says. So the answer came immediately: when they had to give their decision, they had already done the work.

In addition, some logistical requirements had been set aside, such as labelling. Under normal circumstances it would be unthinkable for a product to come onto the Spanish market with a label in nothing but English, but making sure it could be ready in every EU language would need "a huge amount of effort" and would hold everything up.

The Pfizer laboratories, who have produced the vaccine developed by BioNtech and the first to receive EMA authorisation, make another important point:

"We are investing at risk to do what is necessary to produce the highest

"Never in history have so many people worked on something at the same time and so intensively"

possible number of doses as quickly as possible," they say. This has never been seen before: producing 'at risk'. They mean they are not waiting for official authorisation before starting to produce the vaccine. This has never happened with any drug before, but the medical emergency makes it necessary. What they are risking, though, is a financial loss, not the quality of the vaccine. Although they are working "at extraordinary speed", they are com-

The 'messenger RNA' technique may be quite new but it would be wrong to describe it as experimental

plying fully with "all normal regulatory and operational measures," says Pfizer.

I don't want to be the first, they haven't tested it enough

This speed has also applied to the clinical tests. Has the testing time been long enough, when it normally takes years?

All the experts we consulted said it has. They say it is "impossible" that an institution like the EMA would give the go-ahead for an unsafe vaccine.

"No body would approve it if it

didn't meet the technical requirements," insists Federico Martín Torres, the head of Pediatrics at the Santiago de Compostela hospital and a member of the WHO's vaccine advisory committee. "They aren't being any less vigilant. They have increased the number of tests carried out to provide safe and efficient data," he says.

By this, he means that whereas 200 people might normally take part in the three phases of testing over three years, for example, about 40,000 people have taken part in the tests for the Covid-19 vaccine over a few months. Would these changes in time and numbers affect anything? "No, it doesn't affect what is essential, which is the results," says Esteve.

For Martín, "after giving the vaccine to this many people, and monitoring them for two months, we can strongly rule out any serious side effects, which is what could occur immediately and has to do with the body's immune system. There is an absolute guarantee of safety in the short term".

What about side effects in the long term?

With these samples, say the experts we asked, the only adverse effects which could be missed are those which are rare or highly improbable, affecting one person among many thousands after a time. For now, the side effects described as serious, occurring with a frequency equal to or greater than 2% of participants, have been fatigue (3.8%) and headache (2%) after the second dose, says Pfizer. But the participants will continue to be monitored for a further two years.

Federico Martín Torres agrees: "Approval of drugs in emergency situations is also regulated and in this case there will be special monitoring," he says. What is common to all drugs is the so-called 'vigilance phase' which begins when the product reaches the general population.

"With the data we have," he says, "I don't believe we will see serious side effects, at least during the time the first people to have the vaccine are monitored". If after a time side effects do occur, there are resources to detect them and intervene. "Nothing we do is zero risk, but no other product is safer than the vaccines," he says.

He and Ángel Gil, who is an epidemiologist and professor at Rey Juan Carlos I university, recall an example of these control mechanisms working. Sometimes vaccines have been withdrawn because of serious side effects. That occurred with the vaccine for rotavirus. After being authorised for use in the USA, they saw an increased risk of intestinal intussusception (when one part of the intestine slides into another) in a percentage of breast-feeding mothers; this could be fatal if not dealt with immediately. The vaccine was withdrawn and the later tests were the biggest ever carried out.

"The vaccine was stopped for



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seven years, until it was made safer," says Gil. "When drugs come onto the market they are always monitored and any side effect would be detected in time".

These techniques are new, why experiment with them at a time like this?

These first two authorised anti-Covid vaccines use the 'messenger RNA' technique, but it is not correct to refer to it as experimental. With normal vaccines an infectious vector is injected so that the body develops antibodies, but with this ribonucleic acid technique the cell receives an 'instruction' from this RNA. "These are temporary orders, in this case, to synthesise a similar protein to a specific part of the coronavirus so the cellular machinery creates defences against it," explains Martínón.

It is true that no other vaccine on the market uses this technique, but it is not new. Research has also been carried out on it for other illnesses such as flu (that has been temporarily halted to give priority to Covid), and its use is being normalised in other medical treatments such as those against cancer. "It is a promising and relatively simple technology," says Martínón. Its main advantage is the ease of reformulating the RNA message if the virus mutates. "The production process is fast and efficient," says Pfizer.

They work on genetic material, that's scary!

"Maybe the population has more information than it can deal with and people get confused about the terms. We see that every day in our field. The messenger RNA is not DNA, which can be recoded and cause genetic changes," explains Ángel Gil. The messenger RNA is a molecule that takes an instruction to the cell and, once it has done that, it disappears. "It's extremely fragile," says Martínón. That's why it needs to be kept at such a low temperature, one of its disadvantages which needs work to improve it.

What if I'm one of the 5% for whom it doesn't work?

Well, rather than fearing side effects, we should continue to be afraid of the coronavirus, so in the risk/benefit equation the balance lies in favour of the vaccine. If someone who has the vaccine finds themselves among the tiny percentage in whom it is not effective, it just means they will not be immunised. In fact, that is what is really unknown about this vaccine: how long will it protect the body against Covid? This is why the WHO says people should not drop their guard and stop taking precautions against the coronavirus, because the vaccine may mark the beginning of the end of the pandemic but it is not going to bring it to an end in the immediate future.



Health professionals and therapists with the dogs. **SUR**

Axarquía hospital introduces animal-assisted therapy for children

Director José Manuel Ramón said the presence of dogs can help overcome fears

EUGENIO CABEZAS

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. The Paediatric unit at the Axarquía hospital in Torre del Mar has introduced

some new members of staff to the team in the form of therapy dogs, thanks to a pioneering animal-assisted therapy programme.

Every Tuesday morning from 10am to 12pm children who are either spending time in hospital or have outpatient appointments will get the opportunity to spend time with the animals,

providing their condition allows them to do so.

According to José Manuel Ramón, director of the hospital's Paediatric unit, the presence of dogs during certain interventions can "help professionals and patients overcome different situations and fears". He added, "Therapy dogs can form bonds with children without using words."

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**Creamy chicken curry soup****Ingredients:**

Two chicken thighs, two onions, one carrot, four cloves of garlic, a litre of chicken stock, 100 ml coconut milk, curry powder, chilli, lime, fresh coriander, spring onions, salt and pepper.

Method: Cut the chicken thighs into thin slices, finely chop the onion, carrot and garlic and boil them in the stock for 10 min. Add the chilli, curry powder and coconut milk. When it has boiled for a few minutes, add the chicken. Finely chop the spring onions. Serve the soup with slices of lime and sprinkled with spring onions.

**Apple and celery soup****Ingredients:**

6 green apples, 4 sticks of celery, a cucumber, a lemon, ricotta cheese, horse radish sauce, vegetable sprouts, virgin olive oil, salt and pepper.

Method: Wash and core the apples and wash the celery. Cut them into chunks. Peel and remove seeds from the cucumber. Liquidise them and add lemon juice, salt and pepper. Mix the ricotta with a little horseradish. For serving chill the soup and pour into bowls. Add dollops of the cheese and decorate with vegetable sprouts and a trickle of olive oil.



Ten good reasons to make soup

Versatile. Modern-day life, a faster pace and taking packed lunches to the office has pushed soups out of favour, despite their benefits

SOLANGE VÁZQUEZ



tance," said Yale historian Paul Freedman. "Also, with many houses having central heating, it's no longer of vital importance to fight the cold." He added that soup takes time to prepare.

"We are de-souping ourselves!" declares Toni Massanés, general manager of Fundación Alicia, one of the most prestigious culinary research centres in Europe.

He says it with sorrow and amazement. Soups have not only taken away a lot of hunger over the centuries - because they can be made with anything - but they also "are universal, since each culture has its own, highly valued soups, such as the Vietnamese pho, the Galician broth and the Russian borscht".

The problem is that we have

become lazy and have lost the traditional knowledge of our own local recipes.

More reasons for their decline? Yes, a very ridiculous one: it is not a photogenic meal.

"On Instagram soup doesn't look as cool as other dishes," laments Massanés, who explains that its appearance has been a handicap since the times of 'nouvelle cuisine', which almost made soups disappear and used them as a garnish, as the base of a dish or in a small accompanying glass. An injustice that Fundación Alicia wants to correct.

To this end, it has brought out a book simply called Sopas (published in Spanish by Planeta Gastro), which offers a wide range of recipes - with traditional, ethnic, modern, cold, hot, salty and sweet soups - and explains tricks and delicious combinations in order to reconcile us with the humble spoon.

This has many advantages whichever way you look at it. Here are the first ten.

1. Versatility

If you don't have all the ingredients, or don't like the taste of something, it is easy to substitute it for something else or leave it out altogether.

The spices and fresh herbs allow a lot of variations and the basic elements (meat, pulses, vegetables) are usually interchangeable. "This makes recipes easy and should encourage anyone to try their hand at making soup," says Massanés.

2. Sustainability and thrift

Everything can go into a soup: the chicken carcasses, fish heads and bones, giblets, less-than-fresh vegetables, left-over pulses and even stale bread. "Soups are anti-waste," he says.

3. Variety

Even if you're not a fan of soup there are so many different varieties that you can't hate them all.

Made with meat, vegetables, pulses, served cold, served hot, creamy textures, with pasta, more or less chunky, sweet and

sour, spicy... it's impossible to not find one (at least) to your taste.

4. 'Healing' power

In all cultures soups are attributed with both a healing and a preventive power.

"In China and Al-Andalus, recipe books from centuries ago proclaim their medicinal properties," says Massanés, adding, however, that science hasn't yet confirmed the claims.

Soup certainly hydrates because of its high water content and it contains many healthy elements infused from the ingredients such as salts, minerals and valuable proteins. For an example: the cooking water from chickpeas has enough protein to make a vegan mayonnaise.

Soup has traditionally been fed to the sick. In fact, the term restaurant - the first modern style ones opened around 1770 in Paris - derives from the French 'restauration', which means, in this context, a hot and restorative drink.

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Hot and sour soup with prawns

Ingredients:

12 prawns, fish stock, a courgette, a carrot, a turnip, 4 garlic cloves, a small piece of root ginger, soy sauce, limes, 1 chilli, fresh mint and coriander, salt and pepper.

Method: Using a mandolin, make the vegetables into thin spaghetti. Finely chop the ginger and the chilli and pound it together with the garlic in a mortar adding soy sauce and lime juice. Cook the vegetable spaghetti in the fish stock for 3-4 minutos. Add the contents of the mortar and season with salt and pepper. Add the prawns and remove from the heat. Serve the soup with fresh leaves of mint and coriander sprinkled over the top and wedges of lime.



Cream of lentil soup

Ingredients:

200g orange lentils, a leek, two carrots, two tablespoons tomato paste, parsley, bay leaves, oregano, butter, a small tub of plain yoghurt, curry, water, salt and pepper.

Method: Finely chop the leek and carrots and sauté in butter for 15 min. Add the tomato paste, parsley, bay leaves and oregano. Sauté briefly then add the lentils and cover with water. Cook for ten minutes. Mix the yoghurt with a pinch of curry powder and stir in. Remove the bay leaves and season with salt and pepper.

of Castile, chicken stock... many are a feast for our taste buds.

6. Soup can help you to slim

"If soups have the fat removed, they are usually highly recommended for weight loss," Massanés argues. Its high water content - which is what defines soup in comparison to a stew or some purées - is satiating. Also it contains fibre.

7. Suitable for 'lazy' people

Lack of time is one of the excuses for not making soup. In the book there are tricks and short cuts for everything. You can cook them over the weekend for the week ahead, use a pressure cooker or use frozen stock as a base. And why not use a shop-bought stock to which you can add the other ingredients to save time?

8. Comfort food

Eating soup makes us feel good and it warms us up. That is why it is one of the so-called comfort foods that make us happy inside and sometimes bring back fond memories. "For me, soups remind me of one my grandmother used to make which contained breadcrumbs, ground almonds and small pieces of meat," added Massanés.

In these establishments they served broths and consommés "for the body and the soul" as something medicinal.

5. Concentrated flavour

"Biologically, we are adapted to perceive the taste of broths and soups as good for us," says the manager of Fundación Alicia, Toni Massanés.

Japanese miso soup, with a lot of umami (that intense taste so difficult to explain), the broths

Hip flasks

ANDREW J. LINN



It's usually a surprise when someone pulls out a hip flask and offers us a swig, although in many situations we would probably be more grateful than startled.

In a crowded airport with stratospheric bar prices, it would surely come as a welcome gesture, as it would in many similar 'dry' situations where alcohol is unavailable.

The sight of a hip flask brings back memories of the USA's prohibition era, when no right-minded person left home without one in his or her pocket. And today neither does any grouse moor enthusiast or follower of drag hunts.

Chosen tippie

So what is the chosen tippie? Overwhelmingly whisky or brandy, with gin and vodka running a close second.

Hip flask use has national considerations, and in countries with strict licensing laws it is obviously more common than in places like Spain, where a drink can always be obtained around

There are hundreds of different styles of hip flask selling on the internet from engraved crystal to pure silver

The sight of a hip flask brings back memories of the USA's prohibition era when no one left home without one

the clock.

But who habitually carries a hip flask today? Surprisingly, and probably the last person you would think of - Victoria Beckham. She puts hers to untypical use by filling it with good red wine, as she has a self-confessed aversion to any wine costing less than 12 euros.

As owner of a Napa Valley vineyard, she and husband David enjoy splashing out. To celebrate their last wedding anniversary in Paris, the star was Chateau Lafite Rothschild 1990. Not hip flask material, but it is good to know that the tradition is alive and well, and there are hundreds of different styles of hip flask selling on the internet, from engraved crystal to pure silver.

Indeed, a habit that should be kept alive.

WINE OF THE WEEK

Tintoralba Roble 2019

Recently given the top award in the Golden Bacchus competition, indicating that it is in theory Spain's best tinto. 65% Garnacha Tintorera and 35% Syrah from 30-year-old vines. Amazing when one considers that until recently wines from La Mancha were not taken seriously. Around four euros.



Law firm no longer representing the Al-Thani family in legal battle

“Disagreements over the defence strategy” have led to the split, the firm says, just before Malaga CF’s majority shareholders were due to testify

BORJA GUTIÉRREZ

MALAGA. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Thani and his family will now have to seek new legal counsel after the firm Baker McKenzie announced on Thursday that they would no longer be representing the family in the case brought forward by the Malaga CF Association of Minority Shareholders against the Qatari majority owners of the club a year ago.

The consequences of this new development, which comes just before the sheikh and his sons Nasser, Rakan and Nayef were expected to testify from the Spanish embassy in Qatar, are not yet clear. It is expected to mean a further delay in the investigation, as the Al-Thani family will now have to designate new legal representation or wait for one to be assigned to them.

The reasons given to this newspaper by sources within the law firm for the split are “disagreements over the defence strategy”.

The person who has led the defence so far is experienced criminal lawyer Jesús Santos, a specialist in crimes involving fraud. Among his most notable achievements was leading the defence of the Partido Popular in the Gürtel case. He also advised Cristiano Ronaldo when the Portuguese star was accused of tax fraud.

Multiple lawyers

This isn’t the first time that the Al-



Jesús Santos, left, led the defence. **SALVADOR SALAS**

Thanis have changed law firm. Although this is the first time they have had to seek new lawyers for this case, during previous litigation they have moved from one law firm to another on up to three occasions (even simultaneously).

On this occasion, the Al-Thanis require a considerable change in

fortunes, having seen every one of their appeals so far denied by judge María de los Ángeles Ruiz González.

The Al-Thanis currently find themselves firmly on the sidelines, having been replaced at the helm of the club by a judicial administrator and having their property and shares in Spain frozen.

Administrator seeks explanations from BlueBay for missing 2.65 million euros for shirt sponsorship

ANTONIO GÓNGORA

MALAGA. Malaga’s judicial administrator José María Muñoz has this week cast doubt on the payment of 2.65 million euros from hotel group BlueBay to put the company’s name on the squad’s shirts during their time in control of the club.

Muñoz says that there is no evi-

dence that BlueBay ever paid to have their name below the shirt number during the 2013-14 season (a year of transition after being in the Champions League) and has asked the courts how to proceed in this case.

At the time it was described as a two-year arrangement but the BlueBay logo was replaced after a year by Benahavis town hall.



Joaquín tries to squeeze the ball in at the near post. **S. SALAS**

Malaga’s home form continues to disappoint

The lowly visitors had a helping hand from VAR to condemn the Blue and Whites to their fifth game without a win at La Rosaleda

MALAGA
CARTAGENA

1
2

DARYL FINCH

MALAGA. Their away form may be among the best in the division, but Malaga continue to struggle at La Rosaleda. After a 2-1 defeat to Cartagena on Saturday afternoon, the Blue and Whites have now gone five games without a win on home soil.

This was despite starting the game much the better team. Orlando Sá headed the first chance of the encounter well wide before Malaga took the lead in the 17th minute. Cristian Rodríguez’s spectacular volley from the edge of the box found the net after a for-

tunate ricochet off the post hit the back of the sprawling Cartagena keeper Marc Martínez before crossing the line.

However, Malaga’s fortune didn’t last long. In the 29th minute the scores were level after Álex Gallar’s free-kick from long range crept in at the far post. Despite there being four Cartagena players in an offside position, the VAR controversially concluded that they weren’t interfering with play even though keeper Juan Soriano reacted late, seemingly as a result of their presence in front of him.

VAR attracted further ire from the Malaga players after the restart when Alberto De la Bella gave the visitors the lead from a tight angle after a neat one-two. Again, the video assistant ruled against Malaga who had complained that Jozabed had been on the receiving end of a robust challenge in the build-up.

Coach Sergio Pellicer refused to comment directly on the officiating but said that he felt “anger” at the way in which his team lost the game.

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Marbella let another win escape their grasps

LAS PALMAS B 1
MARBELLA 1

ADG

LAS PALMAS. Marbella's victory over Recreativo last week seems to have been a false storm. The Costa side's inconsistent form returned on Sunday as they surrendered a lead to draw to the Las Palmas B team in Gran Canaria.

The first half was characterised by a territorial battle in mid-field with the hosts forced to soak up the pressure as they lacked the quality to cause any damage themselves.

The first sign of class to shine through came just before half time and it was the visitors who benefited from it when Callejón, from the edge of the area, placed a sublime effort into the back of the net, clipping the crossbar on the way in.



Marbella celebrate the opener. ADG

Marbella's lead didn't last long though; 12 minutes after the re-start Satoca levelled the scores with a left-footed strike beyond the reach of Alfonso Herrero.

Sadly for the 180 spectators in attendance, the stalemate returned and neither side seemed able, or willing, to go all out for the winner.

IN BRIEF

COPA DEL REY

Rincón to play Copa del Rey tie at La Rosaleda

J. R. PADILLA. Fifth-tier Rincón de la Victoria will play their historic Copa del Rey first-round clash at La Rosaleda stadium in Malaga, the club has confirmed.

The side, which has progressed this far for the first time, will play against La Liga team Deportivo Alavés next Wednesday, 16 December, at 9pm.

Malaga, meanwhile, will travel to Coruxo on the same day for a 3.15pm kick-off.

WORLD CUP 2022

Sweden, Spain's toughest opponents in qualifiers

D. FINCH. The draw for the qualifying round of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar was kind to Spain on Monday as they were drawn in Group B alongside Sweden, Greece, Georgia and Kosovo.

Coach Luis Enrique should be pleased with Sweden, who they faced in Euro 2020 qualifying, their toughest opponent.

Gibraltar, meanwhile, face the Netherlands, Turkey, Norway, Montenegro and Latvia in Group G.



A LOOK AT LA LIGA
ROB PALMER
Commentator, Sky Sports

Time for Messi to go?

With Barcelona's financial situation significantly worsening, the club can ill-afford to carry their clearly unmotivated star



Here it is, I'm finally going to say it... It's time to end the marriage of Lionel Messi and FC Barcelona.

The relationship turned sour in the summer. It looked like a little counselling had cleared the air, however it's clearly not working and the once-perfect relationship is beyond repair.

Messi appears unmotivated and the club's financial situation is worsening. He can leave in the summer for free, but it may be best for everyone if they could persuade someone to pay a fee in the winter transfer window, take him out of his misery and lighten the wage bill.

When Neymar went public with his desire to reunite with Messi one last time, many assumed he was hinting at a return to the Camp Nou. In reality, it's more likely that Messi would have to head to Paris for the reunification, as Barcelona can't afford one 'galáctico', so forget two.

If he stays – and signs a new contract – he'd be looking for around 50 million euros per year, that's 110 million euros per year before tax is taken. This is a club that has reported debts of around 600 million and has told the players that bi-annual bonuses won't be paid in January.

There are no signs of supporters filling the vast stadium, the museum which can attract



Messi hasn't hit top form. AFP

10,000 visitors a day is closed, and, as a result, the retail arm is virtually redundant.

It's a desperate financial outlook and their biggest outlay is the wage of a footballer who is counting the days until he ends his glorious career.

In the humiliating defeat against Cadiz, he gave the ball away 29 times and his body language screamed 'get me out of here'.

There is no greater sight than Messi in full flight, but this season it's a rarity. He's seeing out a contract that is unlikely to be renewed and the interim president conceded that he should have been sold in the summer. The chances of winning La

Liga are over before the year turns. Barça have advanced into the knockout stages of the Champions League but don't have the team to realistically challenge.

For the first time, they are in danger of carrying Messi rather than depending on him. Even the prospect of going head-to-head with Cristiano Ronaldo for what could turn out to be the final time didn't inspire him. Ronaldo, finding a new lease of life in Juventus colours, scored two goals and his eternal rival completely overshadowed him.

Messi would be doing Barcelona a massive favour if he went early. They need the money they'd save in wages and a moody cloud would be lifted. At some point in the very near future the age of "Messi-dependencia" needs to end. The club have relied on his brilliance and now they have to adjust to life where they don't lean on him.

I've stated my case but I'm not sure exactly where he should go. Manchester City fans would love to see him skipping around the Eastlands of Manchester but Mrs Messi relocating to Cheshire is debatable.

It's likely that only the French club could afford him - but probably in the summer. Yet he'd be doing everyone a favour if he headed for Paris in the springtime.

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Rincón Fertilidad keeper Merche Castellanos played a crucial role in the win with eight saves. EFE

The 'guerreras' progress to the main round of the European Championships

Spain's handballers were far from their best but managed to muster a late comeback win against the Czech Republic to progress

MARINA RIVAS / DARYL FINCH

MALAGA. They did it the hard way, but Spain's women's handball team, known as 'Las Guerreras', have made it through to the main

round of the European Championships being played out in Herning and Kolding (Denmark) until 20 December.

After a defeat in their opening qualifier against Russia last Thursday, (31-22), was followed by a 23-23 draw with Sweden on Saturday, Spain knew that they had to win against the Czech Republic to stand a chance of progressing to the tournament proper. And they did it, right at the death.

Having been far from reproducing the form that made them World Championship runners-up, the Guerreras had to dig deep and produce a reaction, albeit a late one.

The Czech side took advantage of Spain's lack of conviction in attack to earn themselves a six-goal lead (their biggest of the game) going into the break. Carmen Martín though had the last laugh for the half, which ended 11-16.

Things didn't improve much for Spain who until 20 minutes to go were still five down. But then the comeback began. Carmen Martín found her form to lead the attack with 12 goals, while Alicia Fernández forced a penalty and scored twice, before Carmen Campos put the cherry on the cake to make it 27-24.

At the other end Rincón Fertilidad keeper Merche Castellanos also played a major part - her eight saves kept Spain in the game.

First up for in the main round is a match against France, taking place at the time of going to press on Thursday night.



Márquez undergoes surgery again

Six-time MotoGP world champion Marc Márquez has had to undergo surgery on his fractured right arm again after an infection was discovered which had been holding back his recovery.

"Can anyone help me find my golf clubs? I need them to play in the US Open"

Local golf star Azahara Muñoz was separated from the tools of her trade when returning to Miami from playing in the Open de España

PEDRO LUIS ALONSO

MALAGA. Fresh off the back of her participation in the Open de España at Guadalmina (Marbella), local star Azahara Muñoz faced an anxious wait as she fought to be reunited with her clubs in time for her participation in the US Open.

Muñoz was separated from the tools of her trade during her flight back to Miami from Spain and went four days without them, turning to Twitter and her 40,000 followers for help.

"Any chance you can help me locate my bag??", she tweeted. "I need it to play in the US Open".

The story had a happy ending, though. On Sunday Muñoz tweeted: "Got my clubs last night at 1am thanks to this guy that works at Miami airport. He made sure someone brought me the clubs home. Didn't even catch his name but thank you thank you!"

The US Open got under way yesterday, Thursday, at the Champions Golf Club in Houston (Texas). Muñoz will be hoping to improve on her sixth-place finish in Marbella.



Azahara Muñoz

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THE STARS




Aquarius
January 21st - February 19th
Networking and socializing, both online and offline, can connect you with people who may have a beneficial influence on you.




Pisces
February 20th - March 20th
This week's Solar Eclipse can catapult you to the next level. If an opportunity comes your way, grab it and run, it could be the making of you.



Aries
March 21st - April 20th
With sobering Saturn and jubilant Jupiter entering Aquarius, you'll also be keen to network and connect with others on your wavelength, and the benefits gained can be numerous.




Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
This is not a time for half measures, but an opportunity to embrace those goals that you've been dreaming about for some while.



Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
A relationship could go through a renaissance as a potent lunar phase encourages you and a partner to take on new challenges and enjoy new experiences.



Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
The changes you desire could get underway this week, starting with a powerful Eclipse that can inspire you to branch out into a new job or a more liberating and interesting way of life.



Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
Ready to take a leap of faith? This week's star map is perfect for furthering a creative venture. You may have big ideas and this is a great opportunity to set them in motion.



Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
With work and lifestyle options undergoing a dynamic shift, it's time to find new and innovative ways to enhance your income.



Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
This week's Eclipse is perfect for initiating new projects, networking, studying or for starting an internet business.



Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
Ready to become more adventurous with your money? With savvy and wise investment you can do well. There might be major changes at home too, as Saturn and Jupiter move in.

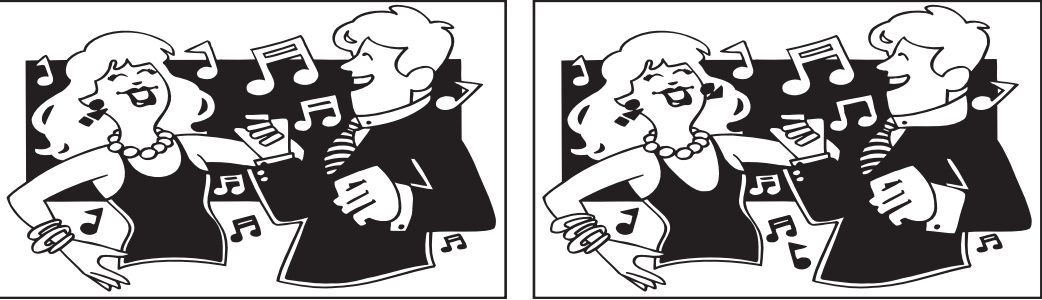


Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
The Solar Eclipse in your sign can catapult you onto a new and exciting path, one that might involve learning new skills. This could be very enjoyable though.

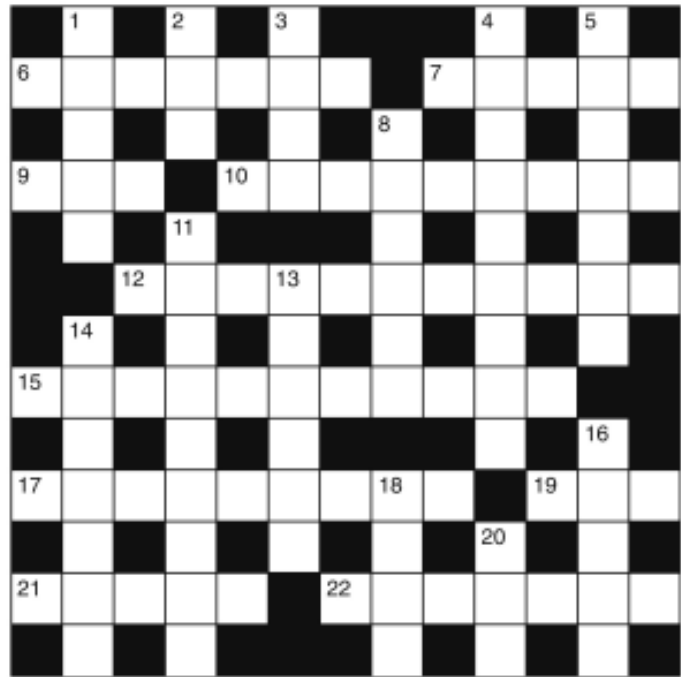


Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
Saturn enters your money zone along with Jupiter, so you may want to pare back expenses but also invest spare cash wisely. Embracing cutting edge ideas can help.

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11439



- Across**

 - 6 Learned about rude tie (7)
 - 7 Intends to get the wherewithal (5)
 - 9 Worker in a plantation (3)
 - 10 Game for a drink at a dance (9)
 - 12 Possibly avoid client with farewell speech (11)
 - 15 Entry is made into type of rock (11)
 - 17 Statement about señoritas (9)
 - 19 Record piece of wood (3)
 - 21 and 22Ac You have to do this many times to do it once (5,1,6)
 - 22 See 21Ac.
- Down**

 - 1 Quiet row following practical joke (5)
 - 2 Fuss concerning a party (3)
 - 3 German whose return goes unnoticed (4)
 - 4 They write about hotel workers (9)
 - 5 Effect of an offence in rugby (5-2)
 - 8 Help to put an animal first (6)
 - 11 Ring following clear statement of policy (9)
 - 13 Level road set up for happenings (6)
 - 14 A course to leave, say (7)
 - 16 Coupon given to a man (5)
 - 18 Slow-moving birds (4)
 - 20 Consumed a number, say (3)

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

	1				7			
5					8	7		
2				5		3	1	
6		3						2
4			2			5		
			8		6		4	
		2			9			
1	5							
				1	5			8

THE WORDPUZZLER

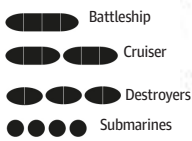
T	E	M	P	A	T	R	A	I	B
E	D	A	M	E	O	R	G	E	L
M	I	S	A	L	R	O	U	Z	U
A	C	T	R	U	F	F	I	R	E
S	H	O	C	K	I	N	T	U	S
P	E	R	L	O	C	K	A	G	E
L	E	M	U	C	H	A	R	G	E
I	R	A	B	R	A	V	I	E	L
K	A	L	I	F	I	E	L	D	E
E	Y	E	N	O	R	D	E	E	D

Can you identify the words that may follow 'electric' from the clues listed below?

- 1. Surprise
- 2. Stringed instrument
- 3. Slippery fish
- 4. Meadow
- 5. Depressed
- 6. Tempest
- 7. Fee
- 8. Beam
- 9. Sack
- 10. Seat

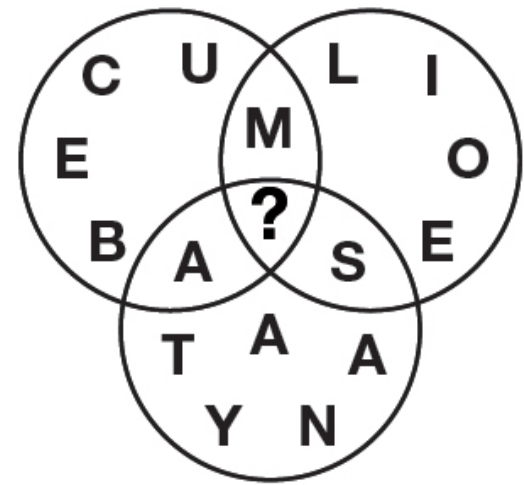
BATTLESHIPS

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.



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A										4
B										0
C										2
D										1
E										4
F										0
G										3
H										2
I										4
J										0
	1	3	1	3	2	3	1	3	1	2

CIRCLEGRAM



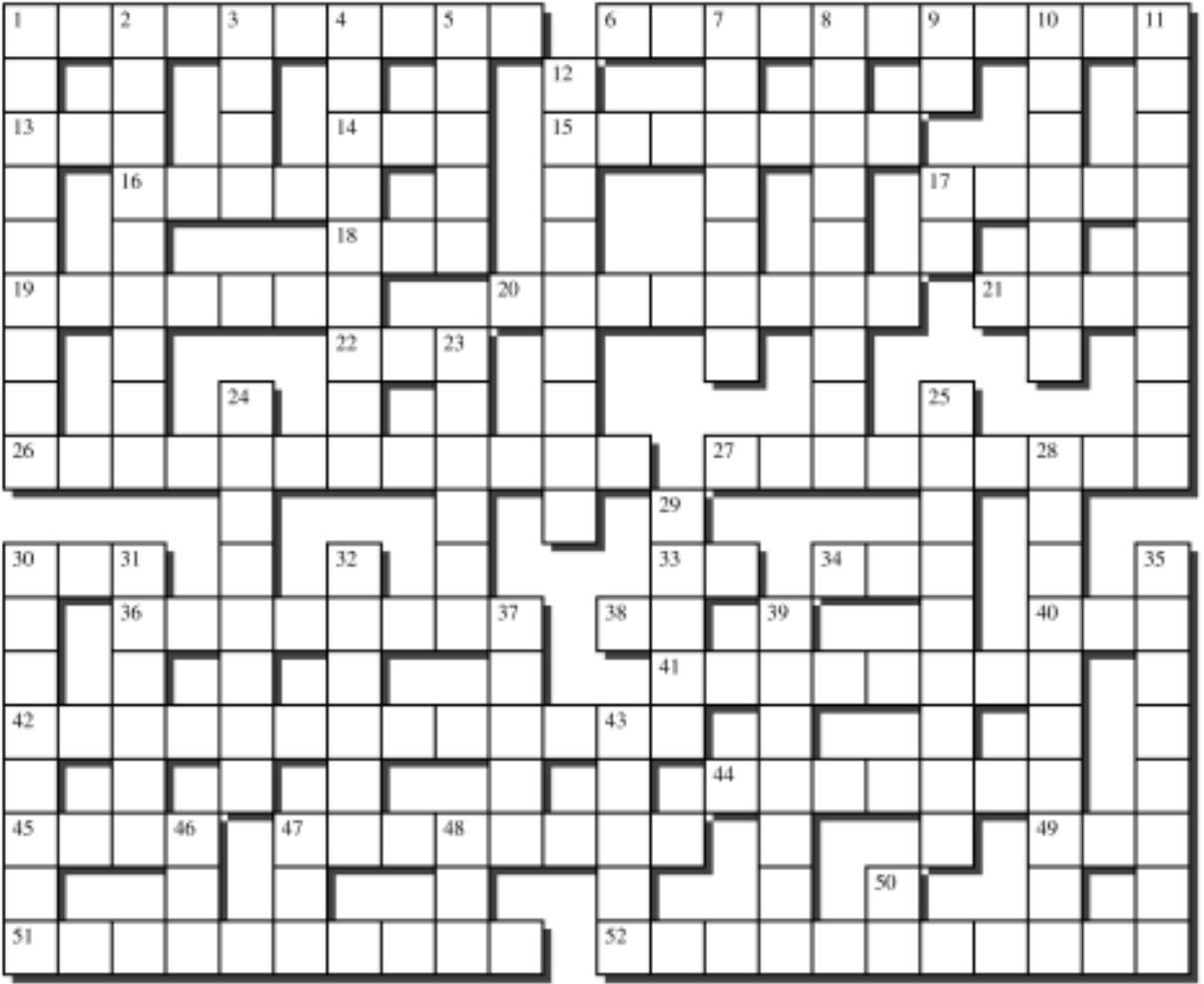
Instructions
Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters in each circle can be arranged to form words, names or terms on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD

- Across

 - 1) Empowered (m) (10)
 - 6) Foreigners (11)
 - 13) Wee (3)
 - 14) With (3)
 - 15) To invade (7)
 - 16) Nickname (5)
 - 17) Where (5)
 - 18) Us (3)
 - 19) Murderer (7)
 - 20) Heir (m) (8)
 - 21) She hates (4)
 - 22) Cabbage (3)
 - 26) Restoration (12)
 - 27) Banned (f) (9)
 - 30) Road (3)
 - 33) Ace (2)
 - 34) Like that (3)
 - 36) Freedom (8)
 - 38) My (2)
 - 40) Wave (3)
 - 41) We fill (8)
 - 42) Landowner (13)
 - 44) Empire (7)
 - 45) Royal (4)
 - 47) To defeat (8)
 - 49) Role (3)
 - 51) Abdication (10)
 - 52) Absolutism (11)
- Down

 - 1) Emperor (9)
 - 2) Passengers (9)
 - 3) Finger (4)
 - 4) To acknowledge (9)
 - 5) Dunes (5)
 - 7) Treaty (7)
 - 8) Wealthy (m) (9)
 - 9) Ha! (2)
 - 10) Reign (7)
 - 11) Sovereignty (9)
 - 12) Foundations (9)
 - 17) He gives (2)
 - 23) Madness (6)
 - 24) Words (8)
 - 25) December (9)
 - 28) Impostors (10)
 - 29) Dance (5)
 - 30) Victory (8)
 - 31) Alarm (6)
 - 32) I'll bring (6)
 - 35) Castle (8)
 - 37) Owner (m) (5)
 - 39) Brother (7)
 - 43) Plot (5)
 - 46) I read (3)
 - 47) Day (3)
 - 48) River (3)
 - 50) You (2)



ANSWERS

Quiz answers

Answer: One hundred.

Of interest: The pleats in a chef's hat (called a toque) were said to represent the number of ways the chef could cook an egg – 100 pleats being the ultimate goal and badge of honour, denoting the skill.

Answer: Marenco

Of interest: According to legend, the dish was first made after Napoleon defeated the Austrian army at the Battle of Marengo, Italy, when his chef Dunand foraged in the town for ingredients and created the dish from what he could gather.

Language Crossword



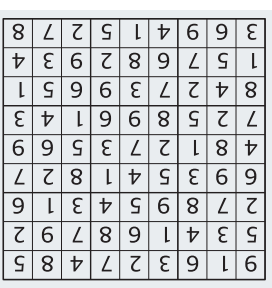
Cryptic Crossword

Solutions: Across: 6 Enraged; 7 Meant; 8 Art; 10 Hippocampus; 12 Validation; 15 Sedimentary; 17 Assailed; 19 Log; 21 White; 22 A White Down: 1 Frank; 2 Add; 3 City; 4 Repent; 5 Knock-on; 6 Assail; 7 Chair; 8 Ray; 9 Five; 10 Chair

Wordpuzzler solution



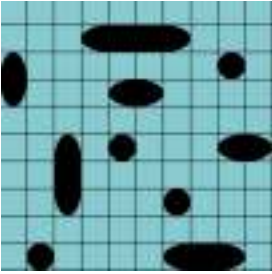
Sudoku solution



Circlegram

The letter represented by the question mark is R. Cumbrae, Lisimore, Taransay, all Scottish isles.

Battleships



WHERE IS THIS?



Last week: Baza

Plaza de las Eras in Baza has this pretty fountain with a monument to the famous Cascamorras fiesta.

CORONAVIRUS ADVICE

To notify symptoms of coronavirus

If you have symptoms and/or have been in contact with someone with coronavirus

APP Salud Responde: take the coronavirus symptoms test

If the virtual test is **positive**, the health services will contact you by telephone

Coronavirus information **If you have symptoms call**

955 545 060 **900 40 00 61**

When our freedom is restricted, we have to become more creative, or at least that's the philosophy of Dani García, one of the top authorities in Malaga province on the subject of mountaineering. This outdoor sport has become more popular recently, as people find it a way of escaping from the stress of the pandemic. Dani, a fire fighter from Rincón de la Victoria, used to be a boxing champion but decided to take up trail running instead when he realised that he felt more at home running up a mountain than he did in the ring.

His level of fitness soon attracted attention and he often competes for the Andalusian and Spanish trail running teams. He was in the winning team at the world championships in Italy and his achievements as a high-performance athlete have been recognised by the Athletics Foundation and Mountaineering Foundation.

Like all sportsmen and women, this year had looked promising for Dani but Covid-19 put paid to that. To make up for the lack of competitions and keep himself fit, he decided to set himself a challenge and take up 'Everesting' in the province which is his home.

This sport began in 2014 and its creation is attributed to Australian cyclist Andy van Bergan. It sounds easy but is actually very hard. It involves walking, running or cycling up and down a hill or mountain as many times as necessary to complete 8,484 metres (the height of Everest) in a single day. Dani decided to 'climb Everest' in this way but without leaving Malaga province, to demonstrate to other people how many mountains there are in this area and how easy they are to access.

Obviously, it will take him time to complete his challenge, but to

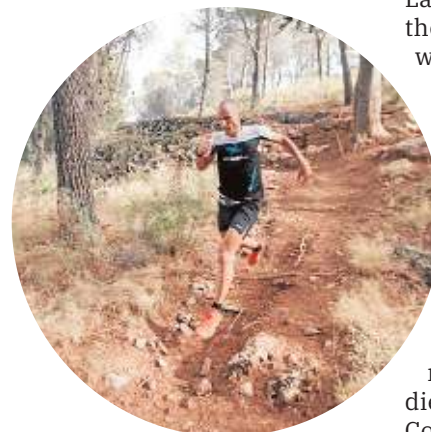


Not content with doing the distance, Dani García is also trying to set a record time. **SUR**

'Everesting' across Malaga province

Dani García. The international trail runner has set himself the unique challenge of running up the province's highest peaks to reach a total of 8,484 metres, the elevation of the world's tallest mountain

MARINA RIVAS



▲ **Fitness.** Dani, a fire fighter by profession, is a champion trail runner who competes for Andalucía and Spain. **SUR**

make it a bit more competitive he decided to explore the limits of his body. "I have been up all the most emblematic mountains in Malaga at some time, but what I want to do now is set records by going up and down as fast as possible from the nearest village," he says.

He uses two apps designed for runners, Strava and Wikiloc, where the GPS on your mobile phone shows the route, the gradient and altitude and the time it has taken, kilometre by kilometre, from start to finish.

Progress so far

Dani began Everesting in September and has achieved record times on each mountain he has tackled so far.

"I started in the Axarquía with La Maroma (2,069 metres) from the village of Sedella, and then went on to the peak which has no name," he says. That peak is slightly higher, at 2,087 metres, and is the highest in Malaga province. On that day he ran 16.2 kilometres with a gradient of 1,515 metres, in a time of 2:07:28.

After that, he did the Pico del Cielo in Nerja (19.43 kilometres, 1,532 metres of gradient and a time of 1:50:05), La Concha, in Marbella (9.91 kilometres and 996 metres of gradient, in 1:31:14) and La Bola, in Mijas (13.85 kilometres and 954 metres of gradient in 1:12:54). He is now planning to do La Reina, in Malaga; Chamizo, in Alfarnate; Lucero, on the boundary of Malaga province and Alhama de Granada; Los Reales, in Estepona and Torrecilla, in Tolox. This unusual and competitive challenge may even start a trend among keen runners in the province.

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