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March 15th to 21st 2024
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Protesters tipped truckloads of lemons onto the road outside government offices. SALVADOR SALAS

FARMERS' BITTER PROTEST RETURNS

Wednesday's demonstration in Malaga showed signs of tension and division. P12

British film director Stephen Frears reflects on his career prior to his visit to the Hay Forum in Seville P18

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Heaviest rain in two years helps reservoir levels but drought is far from over

Last week's downpours provided about two months' worth of water in the province of Malaga and run-off was still flowing from the mountains into reservoirs in the middle of this week

Storm Monica brought the heaviest rain locally since March 2022, boosting water reserves in the province of Malaga by the equivalent of two month's demand. Up to 90 mm of rain fell in some parts of Malaga province at the end of last week, swelling rivers and filling many streambeds for the first time in many months. By midweek a total of 12 cubic hectometres

had gone into the province's reservoirs and 20,000 cubic metres an hour were still being added. Levels, however, were at an average of 18 per cent this Thursday, and water companies have stressed that the drought is far from over. The weekend's storm also affected beaches, washing away sand and damaging a chiringuito in La Cala de Mijas. P2&3

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Heaviest rain for two years adds two months' worth of water to Costa reservoirs

Some 20,000 cubic metres of water an hour was pouring into local reserves still in the middle of this week but the drought is far from over

CHUS HEREDIA



MALAGA. Storm Monica, which swept across Malaga province and the Costa del Sol last Friday and Saturday, left enough rain to add about two months' worth of water to the area's very low reservoirs.

It was the heaviest rain locally since March 2022, when the 'calima' muddy rain fell, staining buildings. However, there is still a long way to go for the drought the province is suffering to be over.

Up to 90 mm of rain fell in some parts of Malaga province at the end of last week, swelling rivers and filling many streambeds for the first time in many months. As well as the reservoirs getting rainfall directly, this week much more water has been pouring into them due to the delay in water running off the land.

By midweek a total of 12 cubic hectometres had gone into the province's reservoirs and 20,000 cubic metres an hour were still being added. That rate was the equivalent of an hour's water use by Malaga city or half of one of the million-euro water boats the regional government is thinking of bringing into Malaga port if the drought continues. In other words, the water being added after the rain is worth a lot.

Despite the good news, forecasters and water company bosses were keen to stress the drought is far from over. The average level of the province's reservoirs on Thursday was 18 per cent, half the amount of water they had in them a year ago.

More rain is needed

Referring to the main reservoir for the western Costa del Sol, Matilde Mancha, head of Acosol, the water company for that area, said, "The latest rains have brought some relief to our La Concepción reservoir... In addition to the reservoir, these rains have been very good news for land, irrigation channels and wells, which have benefited, but we must still be very cautious."

"We need these rains to continue to come in the next few weeks in order to be more optimistic," Mancha explained earlier this week, adding "This week-



A view over La Concepción reservoir, which feeds the western Costa el Sol, as the rain fell last Sunday. Water levels remain low. **SALVADOR SALAS**



Water feeding into La Concepción reservoir in Istán. **J. C. DOMÍNGUEZ**



On Sunday the river Turón near Ardales was an impressive site. **S. SALAS**

end's rain is a relief for the reservoir, bearing in mind that the Marbella desalination plant is also at full capacity while we are carrying out work to improve the filtering there."

SUR weather expert José Luis Escudero drew comparisons to the heavy, orange rain of two years

ago but said this time, rainfall was more evenly spread over the area. "Three bouts of rain like this and the drought would be over," he said.

Images taken around Malaga province this week showed the effect of the rain. At the back of La Concepción reservoir, in Istán close to Marbella, the flow from the Río



Source of the river Genal in Igualeja full of water this week. **S. SALAS**

Verde was strong.

In the mountains of Ronda, the source of the Genal river in Igualeja was gushing, when at the end of last year it was scarcely a trickle.

The Turón falls, which feed into Conde de Guadalhorce reservoir that serves Malaga city and which

were at record lows in the autumn, were flowing freely with 8,000 litres a second earlier this week.

The significant extra rainfall still needed to pull the Costa del Sol out of drought does not seem imminent from the forecasts however. Warm, drier weather is expected into next week.

Storm damage again as red tape delays La Cala beaches plan

El Bombo beach chiringuito was partly destroyed in the rain and 200,000 cubic metres of sand will be needed to get the area ready for Easter

LORENA CÁDIZ

MIJAS. Urgent work is under way to get El Bombo beach in La Cala de Mijas ready for Easter after it was hit by last weekend's storm.

Nacho Playa Beach chiringuito was severely damaged by the waves and 140 metres of the popular Senda Litoral walkway were unusable.

The local council said four diggers working in 12-hour shifts and 200,000 cubic metres of sand will be needed to get everything ready again. The mayor hit out at central government, which is responsible for the shoreline, for not doing enough to protect the beach from storms.

José Rueda, who has run Nacho Playa Beach bar for 30 years, said that he had only revamped and strengthened his bar two years ago but nothing like that had happened before. "No insurance policy covers natural disasters," he said.

He added that Easter was lost but he hoped to be back by May. "The pillars were fixed in the sand, in the water, otherwise the whole terrace would have been washed away by the storm," he explained.

Criticism

Central government has said it will create a plan to stabilise El Bombo beach with an investment of 2.2 million euros. However, no bid for the contract for drawing up the plan worth 70,000 euros was received when it was put out to tender in 2022 and ministers still need to put it out to tender again. The work would in-



José Rueda surveys the damage to his business. LORENA CÁDIZ



volve a breakwater and strengthened sea walls.

Mayor of Mijas Ana Mata said, "The ministry has to make a beach stabilisation plan that lasts for years. If, in other parts of Spain the breakwaters are working, why not here? Mijas lives from tourism, we are an internationally important destination and we cannot continue to work urgently pre-

paring for Easter and cross our fingers that another storm does not come, we need solutions," she said.

Defending the government, provincial representative for Madrid in Malaga province Javier Salas said the PSOE government had spent four times as much money as the PP party on beach stabilisation in the province and that Mijas's mayor should know that a plan to stabilise the beach was in the pipeline.

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LET'S GET SOCIAL:    

Anti-tourism stickers appear on Malaga holiday rental flats

“This used to be my house” is one of the more polite slogans used in the campaign, which has gained support from city residents and groups

CRISTINA PINTO

MALAGA. Malaga city centre is being plastered with stickers that vilify tourism. Anyone who has looked at the façades of numerous buildings recently, specifically those with the ‘AT’ tourist apartment sign, will have noticed the aggressive play on words that a group of anonymous Malaga residents is carrying out.

“AnTes una familia vivía aquí” (A family lived here before), “An-Tes to’ esto era centro” (All this was the centre before) and “An-Tes esa era mi casa” (That was my house before) are some of the phrases that can be spotted in this anti-tourism sticker initiative, using the letters A and T in the tourist apartment sign. Others are more insulting: “Apestando a Tur-ista” (Stinks of tourist), “A Tu puta casa” and “A Tomar por culo de



One of the plaques and the stickers. C. PINTO

aquí” (a not so polite way of saying ‘go home’) and even the mayor was included: “Alcalde Tusmuerto”.

The campaign started off with slogans posted on Instagram by Dani Drunko, owner of the city centre bar Drunk-O-Rama on Calle Ramón Franquelo who proposed people adding phrases with the

play on words.

The protest on social media was launched when Drunko was “kicked out” of the house where he had been living for ten years. “I live in Fuente Olletas and, after having to renew the contract, a few weeks ago they told me that they are not renewing it. They won’t renegotiate the rent, or sell it to me, or anything. I’m going to get kicked out of there; they’re going to adapt it for tourist rental,” Drunko said.

Since the end of February, groups such as ‘GuirisGoHome’ and ‘La Invisible’ have joined Drunko’s initiative.

“Every day I receive photos of new stickers, some of which are going viral. There is a lot of involvement because people are tired of the situation; I only proposed the idea of the phrases, I lit the spark, and now we have united to fight together,” Drunko said.

Declining city centre

The bar owner knows the city centre well because he works there every day and because the vast majority of his customers are from Malaga and many have been through the same situation as him. “I have been fighting this for a long time because many of my customers and friends have suffered from being kicked out of their homes to make way for tourist rentals. The centre has been in decline for some time now, so much so that if, for example, something breaks in the bar, I don’t have a hardware store handy to buy anything any more.”

Local PSOE party leader Dani Pérez supported the initiative and published an image on ‘X’ denouncing the situation. “You walk the streets of Malaga city centre and it is practically impossible to find an apartment building that does not have a keylock and password,” the councillor wrote on his social media account.

112 REPORTS



The driver was not in the vehicle when it crashed into the water. CPB

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA

Gas bottle delivery lorry plunges into pool

IRENE QUIRANTE. A lorry fully loaded with butane gas cylinders crashed out-of-control in the municipality of Rincón de la Victoria, on the eastern strip of the Costa del Sol, on Wednes-

day. The vehicle ended up in the swimming pool of a residential development. Despite the dangerous nature of the goods it was carrying, it just caused a scare and no injuries were reported. The driver was not in the vehicle because he was delivering gas cylinders. It is believed the incident could have been caused by a handbrake failure.

MARBELLA

Marbella restaurant peppered with shots

I.Q. Police officers are investigating a firearms incident in Marbella on Monday afternoon. Apparently, two individuals fired several shots at a restaurant located on Avenida Nueva Andalucía - causing damage to the window - although no injuries were reported. Several shell casing were found on the premises after the pair fled the scene on a motorbike.

MARBELLA

Escaped lynx captured after roaming Costa

E.P. Authorities in Marbella have captured an illegally imported endangered African lynx found roaming freely after it escaped from its owner’s property 20km away. The potentially dangerous feline, weighing around 20 kilos, was safely trapped in a private garden. Apparently, it was imported from Moscow and declared for entry into Spain as a domestic cat.

MALAGA

Passenger restrained on Ryanair flight

SUR. A passenger on a Ryanair flight between Rabat in Morocco and Malaga Airport is being investigated by the Guardia Civil after an alleged mid-air altercation. According to eyewitnesses, the woman had to be restrained by other passengers and tied to her seat. Apparently the woman had an argument with a cabin crew member who told her that she could not go to the toilet as the plane was descending.



Restrained. FUENGIROLASEQUEJA

MALAGA

Skeleton discovered on popular hiking route

J.C. Police have found a human skeleton in a difficult to access area off the 6.9km-long Picapedreros-El Boticario hiking route in Los Montes de Málaga. Initial forensic tests suggest the remains, believed to those of a male, could have been there for more than 10 years. A rucksack was found nearby. Police are investigating reports of missing persons from around that time, while awaiting DNA results.

TORREMOLINOS

Arrest after woman found dead in street

J.C. Police in Madrid have detained a 33-year-old man on suspicion of homicide and drug dealing following the discovery of Anne Mathea Morken’s body next to a pedestrian crossing in Torremolinos in September last year. The body of the sporty Norwegian, who was in her 20s, was discovered near the Benyamina Norte area. The Senegalese man was arrested along with another alleged accomplice.

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Malaga Airport keeps top three slot nationally with another bumper month

The gateway to the Costa del Sol saw a record-breaking 1,416,974 passengers for February pass through its terminal

PILAR MARTÍNEZ

MALAGA. Malaga Airport continues to post record figures. In February, the gateway to the Costa del Sol experienced the highest passenger growth of all of the operator Aena's major airports.

It did so with an increase of 26.7% compared to 2023, reaching more than 1.4 million passengers. This dizzying growth also allowed Malaga to consolidate its position as the third most important airport in Spain for passen-

ger numbers - surpassing Gran Canaria once again this winter.

In February 2023, Malaga Airport recorded a throughput of more than 1,123,000 passengers, which exceeded the 2019 figures by 6.7%; now surpassed by a massive 35%. This February the airport was placed as the third in the Aena network with the highest volume of passengers with 1,416,974. The figure represents an increase of 20% over the same period last year and shows a rate of growth double the national average, which has allowed the Costa del Sol facility to overtake Gran Canaria airport and become the third in Spain in terms of passenger volume.

The month also saw more than 10,000 aircraft movements on the runways, some 18% more



Arrivals area at Malaga Airport. SUR

than last year, when this airport handled 8,570 aircraft. Most of the passengers counted travelled on commercial flights, totalling 1,416,974. Of these, 276,996 travelled on flights to or from a Spanish airport, 10.4% more than in February 2023, while 1,139,978 opted for connections from abroad, which grew by 31%.

The countries with the highest numbers in absolute terms was Britain, with 293,867 passengers; followed by the Dutch market, with 97,875 passengers; the German market, with 94,116; the Italian market, with 70,975 and the French market, with 64,644.

Nationally Aena recorded 19,226,616 passengers using its airports in Spain last month.

Controversy after 35 trees chopped down alongside Costa del Sol train tracks

JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ CÁMARA

TORREMOLINOS. A town councillor has hit out at railway infrastructure company Adif after 35 trees were felled alongside the Costa del Sol C1 line train tracks in Torremolinos, allegedly without permission. The trees provided shade along three streets in the area: Avenida Manuel Fraga Iribarne, La Colina and Ronda Alta de Benyamina. Izquierda Unida councillor David Tejeiro pointed out the trees had been part of the landscape for years. Owner of the land Adif said the trees posed a danger and were removed as part of "regular vegetation control".

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Town hall gives positive response to Torre del Mar 'urban forest' idea

This type of project, which is already included in the Vélez-Málaga Urban Agenda 2030, could be financed by European funds

EUGENIO CABEZAS

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. Vélez-Málaga town hall has welcomed a proposal from local and environmental groups to create an 'urban forest' at the mouth of the River Vélez, between Torre del Mar and Almayate.

The proposal, initiated by Axarquía-based environment group GENA-Ecologists in Action and supported by Sociedad de Amigos de la Cultura de Vélez and the Emergencia Climática Axarquía group, was presented to the town hall on Monday along with a petition with more than 1,650 signatures of support for the project.



A digital image of the proposed urban forest. SUR

The area covers some 35 hectares south of the old N-340 coastal road and borders Torre del Mar to the east and Almayate to the west. It is home to up to 28 endangered species and is an area of environmental importance.

According to GENA, the town

hall "listened attentively" to the proposal and "the questions asked by politicians were answered". GENA also said they were told by the town hall that a project of this nature is already included in the Vélez-Málaga Urban Agenda 2030 and could be financed by EU funds.

Specialised fire and rescue unit to participate in first Algarrobo dog day

E. C.

ALGARROBO. Algarrobo Costa in the Axarquía is holding its first ever 'Día del Perro' (dog day) on Sunday. It is taking place on Avenida de la Torre Ladeada next to La Tarta and will start at 1pm with a canine competition. Those interested in taking part can register on the same day from 11am with a one-euro donation. At 1.30pm the Malaga fire and rescue unit (GERCCMA), specialised in rescuing people using the so-called 'Arcón Method', will be giving a demonstration. Animal charity Axarquía Animal Rescue will have a stand, entertainment will be provided by Duo Golden Cuba and there will be food and drink stalls. Proceeds will go to a local animal shelter.

Residents' groups reject plans to charge entry to Nerja beauty spot

E. C.

NERJA. The Junta de Andalucía's initiative to control access and charge people to enter the popular Río Chillar beauty spot in Nerja has been met with fierce criticism by local residents and environmental groups. A petition was started on Tuesday via Change.org. It was initiated by Aiden Rodríguez shortly after the proposals of the three companies bidding for the contract were published.

Graffiti with the message (in Spanish): 'no to the privatisation of the public river' has also been appeared around the so-called Tercera Fábrica de la Luz, the site where the walking tours along the riverbed are proposed by all three companies bidding for the contract.

Mississippi paddle steamer set to make last journey and be scrapped

Benalmádena council estimates the process to remove the Willow will cost around 90,500 euros but it remains to be seen who will foot the bill

LORENA CÁDIZ

BENALMÁDENA. After several years of uncertainty and a lengthy legal battle, Benalmádena town hall has started the process to remove and scrap the iconic Willow steamboat from its berth in Puerto Marina. The owners of the paddle steamer, which had been badly damaged by a storm and had remained partially submerged for five years, had been ordered to remove the vessel, although they failed to meet the deadline in April last year.



Sad sight; the half-sunken Willow in Benalmádena marina. SUR

Built at the start of the 20th century to sail the Mississippi, the Willow had spent almost three decades in the town, where it was used as a nightclub, a restaurant and even a clandestine hostess club.

The council claims the scrapping process will cost more than 90,500 euros. However, it remains to be seen who will pay the cost of the operation, a decision that is still in the hands of the courts.

Pool owners donate non-potable water to local council

L. CÁDIZ

BENALMÁDENA. There have been two more much-needed donations of water to Benalmádena town hall. On this occasion, the municipality has received 320,000 litres of water from private swimming pools that were going to be emptied and which will go towards watering gardens and street cleaning in the town.

Hotel Mac Puerto Marina in Benalmádena Costa donated 300,000 litres while Andalucía 2 Apartments contributed 20,000 litres as Malaga province continues to battle the ongoing drought crisis.

Town hall workers will collect the valuable water in tankers and use it for watering green areas throughout Benalmádena and cleaning the municipality's

streets. "The council has used non-potable water for irrigation and street washing and other municipal services for the last four months, when the drought decree came into force with severe restrictions," the town hall said.

The latest donations are in addition to previous offers from businesses such as Hotel Los Maites, La Perla residential development and Hotel Benalma Costa del Sol, following an appeal for non-potable water made by the council.

It comes as the council has obtained authorisation to water Parque de la Paloma with recycled water, as well as to take other measures aimed at saving water, such as the replacement of natural grass with artificial alternatives on various roundabouts in the municipality.


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Centre to honour important woman in town's history

Due to open in June on the site of the old market in Torremolinos, the new social centre will be named after a leading light in the town

TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. Mayor of Torremolinos Margarita del Cid has announced that the future multidisciplinary social centre that is being constructed on the site of the old market will be named after the late Isabel Manoja. Del Cid explained that the centre, which is due to open in June, will be another honour to the Monoja family, a family that has played an important role in the development of Torremolinos since it became independent in 1988.

"This is a deserving recognition of one of the most important



Artist's impression of the centre. SUR

women in the recent history of Torremolinos, a woman with a clear social vocation," the mayor said. The 3.1-million-euro multidisciplinary building will house the social services office, a family intervention team and a special area for the elderly, among others.



Tamarindos was one of the first seafront blocks to be built. SUR

Squatters add to problems of troubled seafront apartments

BENALMÁDENA

L.C. A dispute has broken out between the residents and administrators of the Tamarindos apartment block in Benalmádena, one of the first to be built on the town's promenade. After the closure of the company that maintained the premises, the building passed

into the hands of a local businessman who began converting some of the flats into tourist accommodation. Following complaints, the project was halted, leaving the entire lower floor open and accessible. Residents are now up in arms because squatters have moved into the space and claim the owner is doing nothing.

Tenth century Axarquía fortress goes green thanks to energy efficient LED lighting

E. C.

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. Vélez-Málaga's 10th century fortress has been fitted with new LED lighting as part of the town hall's commitment to efficiency and energy saving. The historic landmark has a new LED technology system thanks to an investment of 31,228 euros, co-financed between the town hall and European Regional Development (ERDF) funds.

The change to LED technology makes the lighting in the fort more efficient and safer, with a longer life and significant energy savings. It also reduces the emission of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

WOMEN'S DAY IN PICTURES



SALVADOR SALAS

Malaga marches for Women's Day

Between 15,000 and 18,000 people from all walks of life and all ages took part in the march for International Women's Day last Friday in Malaga city centre. A hairdresser provided 200 purple wigs to help make the protest more visible and many people carried placards calling for equality and justice for women.



THE K IMAGE

Making it happen on the Costa

The eleventh Costa Women Make It Happen By Being You conference took place to coincide with International Women's Day. The event brought together around 140 women from both the foreign and Spanish communities living on the Costa del Sol and beyond and was preceded by a networking evening on Thursday 7 March.

Lions diabetes group founder honoured

British resident Anne Bowles (second left), founder of the La Cala de Mijas Lions diabetes support group, was among six women honoured at events in Mijas last week. Anne was recognised for more than 20 years of service and for her continued efforts to raise awareness of the disease. Anne thanked the town hall, Lions, nurses and volunteers for "the support given to me and my late husband Frank and for helping make people more aware of the hidden causes of diabetes".



SUR

Yes, this really is still happening today

ANA BARREALES



There are still men who believe they are not sexist because they have wives and daughters. And they are so convinced that they say it out loud. There are those who get defensive when feminism is mentioned, as if it were an attack on them, as if equality did not have advantages for both, as if being able to truly share the raising of children or having a partner with the certainty that she is with you because she wants to be, and not because she has no other choice, were not a plus.

There are still people who believe that the inequalities we, as women, suffer are no big deal and that we should put up with it and sit back for a hundred years or so and wait for things to change and regulate themselves by inertia. And they do not find it strange that the majority of management positions are in the hands of men, because, although they agree that women are equally prepared, it is more frequent that we take a step back before a promotion because of the imposter syndrome or the ties of a family. And they do not think that the education received and the stereotypes with which we have lived and 'what is expected of us' have anything to do with it.

They think that going down a dark alley with fear, not losing sight of your glass in case someone pours something into your drink, knowing that if you get into trouble in a bar you have to go up to the barperson and ask for Angela (a password to ask for help in a hospitality venue in case of sexual harassment) and putting up with stares, as if evaluating where they would place you in their ranking, are things that are only complained about by bitter women who make themselves annoying going on about it.

And that since there are many countries where women are worse off we should keep quiet, which is like saying that because there is hunger in the world,

we shouldn't worry about housing prices.

There are still people who believe that men cannot be feminists and women cannot be chauvinists, as if this were a game of the high road versus the low road in which roles are divided as they have been all their lives. People who think that gender biases are another invention by women, ignoring scientific studies that warn that girls, from the age of six, are less likely to associate intellectual brilliance with their own sex and tend to shy away from activities they consider for 'very smart' boys, even though they get better grades in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. And that in multiple-choice tests they tend to have worse results because girls tend to take fewer risks and answer fewer questions.

And there are still women I consider very bright who confess before an interview that they don't know if what they have to say is going to be interesting, a phrase I have never heard a man say.

It is still necessary to explain that gender-based violence is something structural, that it occurs in all countries, at all times and at all ages. And that, like terrorism or assaults on medical service providers, it is a specific form of violence: they attack them because they are women and consider them their property. However, there are people who are more concerned about the possibility of a false accusation than about the more than 1,200 women murdered since official statistics began being recorded, in 2003.

Despite the nuances and differences that are often focused on for partisan interests, the strength of feminism is that it is a transversal movement, in which there is no room for backward steps, because there are many more things that unite us than those that separate us and because all this is what happens to us in our daily lives and it doesn't matter what party you vote for or what social class you belong to.

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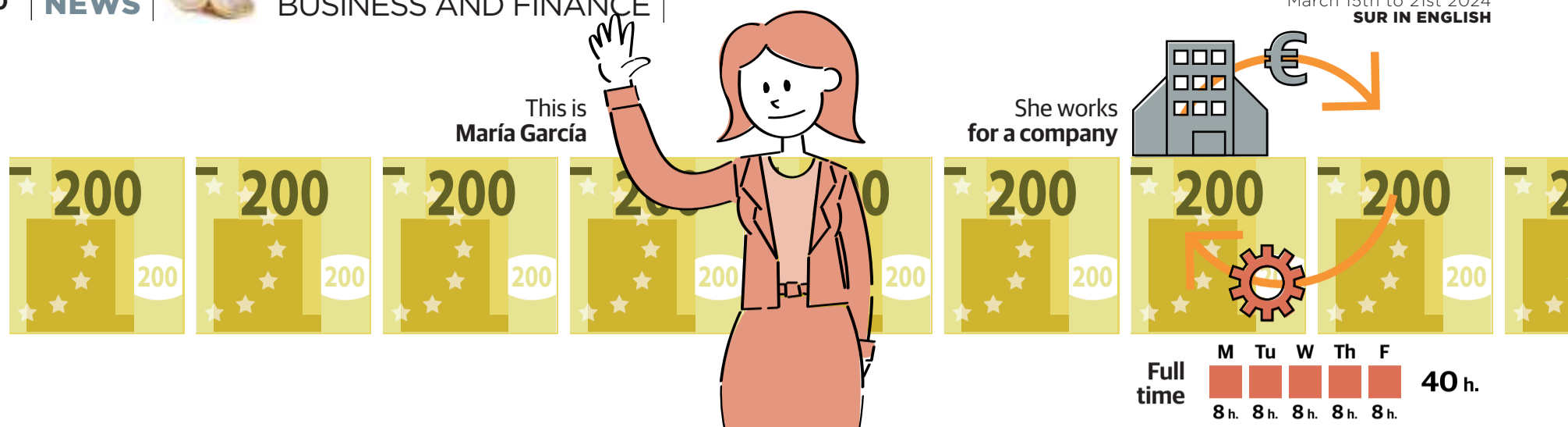
La Cala de Mijas
Avda. de Mare Nostrum, s/n



Torremolinos
C.C. Costasol Centro,
Avda. Circunvalación s/n.



Valle del Guadalhorce
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The average worker in Malaga province gives a third of their salary to the taxman

The tax burden in Spain is lower than the European average, but when compared to per capita income, the tax sacrifice is among the highest



NURIA TRIGUERO



MALAGA. María isn't a real person but there are many real life 'Marías' in Malaga province. The protagonist in this report represents the average woman, starting with her first name which is the most common in Malaga and continuing with her surname, García, the most common in the province. María is employed in retail (the sector of the economy that provides the most employment locally and earns 24,812 euros gross per annum which is the average salary in Malaga province. This annual income, if divided into twelve payments, is equivalent to 2,068 euros per month.

How much of this gross income stays in Maria's pocket and how much goes to the state coffers in taxes? This is the question we are going to answer with the help of a veteran tax advisor, Rubén Candela, who does the tax calculations in this simulation.

The first 'bite' of María's paycheck comes even before it is paid into her bank account. From her gross salary, the company deducts social security contributions, which is the tax used to finance the social security system. Unemployment benefits, pensions and financial benefits for temporary incapacity due to common illness and accidents at work, among others, come out of the social security fund.

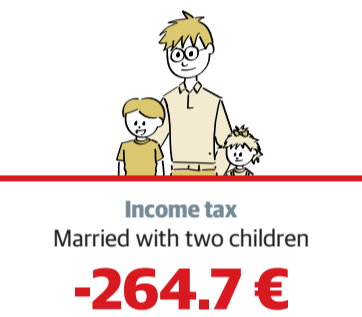
These social contributions are made up of two parts: the part paid by the employer (which is the larger part) and the part paid by the employee.

If María were self-employed instead of an employee, she would have to pay social security contributions herself. "The self-employed now calculate their contribution according to bands and pay 31.3% of the base, which they can set within the band of their monthly income. In our example, it would be the band between 2,030 and 2,330 euros. The monthly contribution you would have to pay would be 647.07 euros per month," explains Rubén Candela.

What if María were receiving unemployment benefit? In this case, the public employment service would act as the employer and pay the employer's contributions, while she would have a lower percentage withheld than active workers: 4.8%, equivalent to 99.7 euros. If, on the other hand, our taxpayer were retired, the Social Security would not touch a single euro of her pension.

Social security contributions are not the only deduction on María's salary slip. The tax authorities also take their share, withholding a percentage of the employee's income from the annual personal income tax (IRPF) bill. This monthly wage retention varies from case to case and, when the income tax return is filed, the tax office calculates whether the amount withheld over the previous year was lower or higher than the taxpayer's personal income tax liability. As a result, some taxpayers have to pay and others get a refund.

In our case study, we will apply the actual personal income tax bill and not the retention. In the case of María, who is married and has two under-aged children, the government will

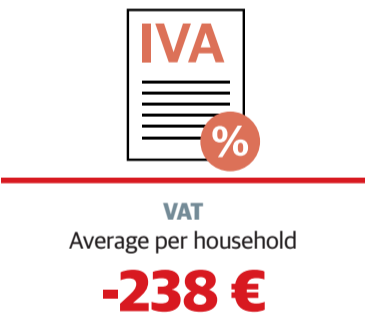


subtract 264.7 euros per month. This amount would be reduced to 174.4 euros if your partner has no income and you both file a joint tax return. If you had no children, you would have to pay almost 30 euros more per month: 284.1 euros.

It should be remembered that personal income tax is a progressive tax: this means that those who earn more pay more, not only in absolute terms but also in percentage terms. Thus, from the first 12,450 euros a taxpayer earns, 19% is withheld; from 12,450 to 20,200 euros, 24% is applied; from 20,200 to 35,199 euros, 30% is paid... and so on, the rate goes up and up. In the penultimate step, which is from 60,000 to 299,000 euros, the taxman takes 45%; and in the last step, from 300,000 euros onwards, taxation reaches 47%. Similarly, taxpayers who earn less than 22,000 euros a year are not obliged to file a tax return, although they do pay personal income tax through deductions from their salary.

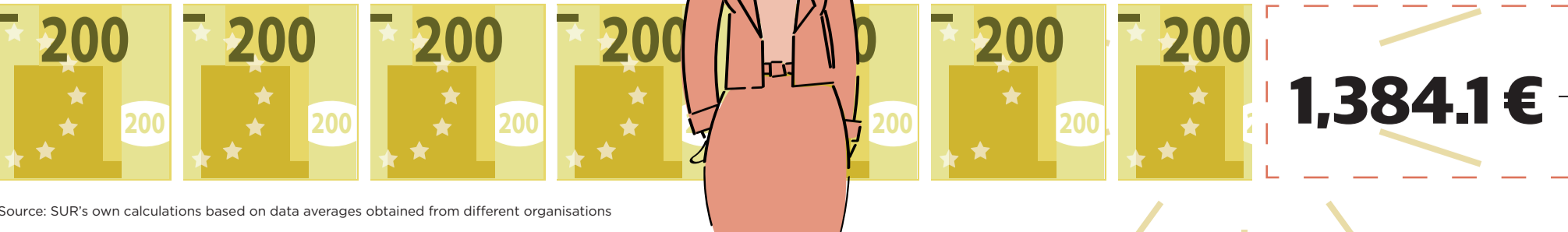
María García has already had

her net salary paid into her account: of the 2,068 euros gross that she is entitled to, she has 1,691.4 euros available. But she has not yet finished paying taxes. Every time you buy a product or contract a service, you will be contributing to value added tax (VAT, or IVA as it is known in Spain). It is difficult to calculate the average amount of money spent on this tax, as the rates vary from product to product: 4% applies to basic necessities, 10% to other foodstuffs and a range of other services such as catering and transport, and 21% to all others.



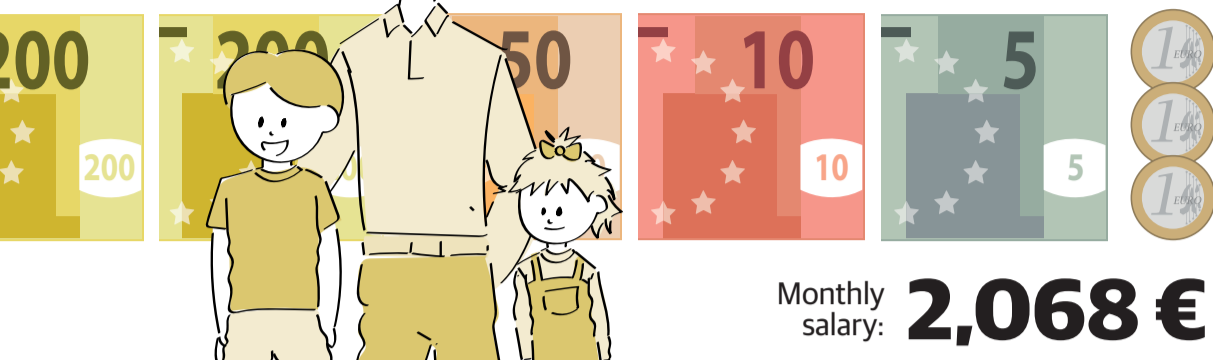
According to a study by Funcas, each household in Spain pays an average of 238 euros per month in VAT. This consumer tax bill has risen significantly

VAT is the tax that has increased the tax bill of families the most due to inflation



Source: SUR's own calculations based on data averages obtained from different organisations

She is **married**
and has **two children**



Special tax on tobacco
a pack a day
-89.5 €



Juan Roig this week. EP

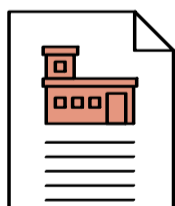
in recent years due to inflation: in 2022 alone, for example, it increased by 10.2%. If María shares the household expenses with her partner, her VAT contribution will be half of this figure, i.e. 119 euros per month.



Tax on electricity
Average electricity bill
-1.58 €

The list of taxes continues with the one specifically levied on electricity consumption (in addition to VAT). This is 'peccata minuta'. The standard rate of electricity tax is 5.113%. However, as it is a special tax, it is subject to VAT. Its real rate was 6.186% (VAT is no longer 21% of the bill, but 5%, as it is subsidised). But since September 2021, it has been reduced to 0.5%

In short: as María has the average electricity bill in Spain, which is 63.1 euros per month, she pays 1.58 euros per month in electricity tax.



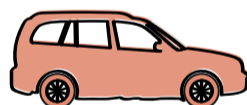
Rates
Monthly average in Malaga
-25.7 €

Let's go now to a municipal tax. As María follows the average in all aspects of her life, she lives in a

house she owns (mortgaged, of course). So every year she has to pay the rates (IBI). As the average annual receipt of this tax in Malaga city is 308.4 euros, the monthly amount is equivalent to 25.7 euros.

Also of a municipal nature is the 'tax on vehicles of mechanical traction'. And since María has a car, another small part of her salary goes to pay this tax. In the city of Malaga, drivers pay 65.8 euros a year if they have a low-capacity car and 138.9 euros if it is of the most powerful range. On average, it is 102.35 euros per year, or 8.5 euros per month.

But that's not the end of the tax bill for owning a car: every time she fills up her tank, María contributes to the treasury through the special tax on hydrocarbons. To calculate how much she pays per month, we take the average distance travelled per driver per year in



Car tax
Average in Malaga city
-8.5 €

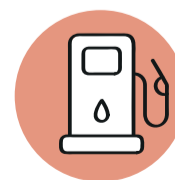
Spain, which is 11,204 kilometres. This mileage is equivalent to a consumption of 852 litres of petrol.

And so we come to the end of this subtraction. Of the 2,068 euros that María has earned for her work, 683.9 euros have gone to the state coffers. In other words: she has devoted a third of her income to paying taxes.

Is this a little or a lot? As José Juan Benítez Rochel, professor of

Applied Economics at the University of Malaga, says, "the answer is: it depends": on who we ask, which country we compare ourselves to or even how we compare ourselves. The expert explains that in terms of tax burden (which is defined as the percentage that taxes represent of GDP), Spain is one of the last countries in the European Union: it has 38%, which is below Germany (42%), Italy (43%), or France (48%), as well as the EU average (41%). But if what is measured is the tax sacrifice (i.e. the percentage that the tax burden represents of per capita income), Spain is above the European average (with 0.125 %).

Epilogue: María is not a smoker, but if she were, another tax charge would be added. And it would not be small: buying a pack a day, she will pay 89.5 euros a month for the special tax on tobacco products.



Special tax on hydrocarbons
Monthly average paid
-33.5 €

Salary left after paying tax

Amount paid in tax every month: **-683.9 €**

Mercadona posts a one-billion-euro record profit as it increases sales by 15 per cent

SUR

VALENCIA. Supermarket chain Mercadona increased its net profits by 40 per cent, reaching 1,009 million euros in 2023, after registering a 15% increase in its sales and hitting more than 35 billion euros.

President of Mercadona Juan Roig described the results as "spectacular" adding, "I am very proud of the 104,000 Spanish and Portuguese workers who make up Mercadona."

"In 2023 Mercadona did very, very well. It was the best year ever for all the parts of the business and we are very proud of these results," he added.

Roig opened the traditional press conference that he holds every year in Paterna (Valencia) to present the financial results of his company. It is generally the only time he appears in public in front of the media and, on this occasion, with a very special onlooker: his wife, Hortensia Herrero, who had never previously accompanied her husband at this event - despite being the vice president.

Profits reinvested

The founder of the leading supermarket chain in Spain explained that 800 million euros of the profit have already been reinvested in the company itself, to continue modernising it and making it more efficient, while the remaining 200 million euros have been distributed among the shareholders.

For Roig, Mercadona's success lies in three elements: having a great distribution model, making the right decisions and knowing where the company is going. "We are successful because we have a great business model, because we make many brave and sometimes unpopular and annoying decisions. We are very clear that we know where we are going," explained the Valencian businessman.

Tiredness and fraught tempers at latest farming protest in central Malaga

There was some heckling of the official union representatives by demonstrators supporting the groups organised over WhatsApp

MATÍAS STUBER

MALAGA. There was a further demonstration and road blockade by the farming community in the centre of Malaga on Wednesday morning in protest at, what farmers say, are unfair EU policies and imports.

This time eight farm vehicles and 200 demonstrators congregated outside the offices of the central government's representative in Malaga on the east side of the city and stayed there until 1pm.

The first protest was on 8 February and this week there were signs of tiredness among the protesters. Also evident was the split between the farmers who place their trust in the unions to negotiate for them and those who have sided with the non-official group that organised the initial protests on WhatsApp groups. There was heckling of the representatives of the union groups who had convened yesterday's protest by supporters of the non-official groups.

Riot police at the ready

Tensions escalated further with the arrival of two pickup trucks loaded with lemons which were scattered on the normally busy road, with some thrown at the government building. This forced National Police riot officers to take up position to protect the entrance.

The farming industry was expressing its unease once again about the current situation in the countryside, which members say is becoming dangerously unsustainable due to current agricultural policies. This message was communicated by the president of Asaja, Baldomero Bellido, the secretary general of Coag, Antonio Rodríguez, and the manager



Tonnes of lemons were tipped onto the road outside the central government offices in Malaga. **SALVADOR SALAS**



A protester throws a lemon at the building. **SALVADOR SALAS**

of Cooperativas Agro-Alimentarias, Carlos Cintas. Among the demands raised were urgent solutions to the drought and control of products entering from outside the European Union.

Salvador Hevilla, a honey producer from Coín, told SUR that "produce coming in from other countries that does not meet the same requirements that are demanded of us makes this unsus-

Tensions escalated further with the arrival of two pickup trucks loaded with lemons which were scattered on the normally busy road

tainable". He also appealed to the consumer "to be aware of where the product comes from and to consume national produce".

Unfair competition

Paco Ruiz, an olive grower, whose business is Aceites Finca Rosa Alta in Archidona, said that "unfair competition is making agricultural activity increasingly unsustainable. And competition is not only a problem of price, it is also the lack of health controls of products coming in from outside".

Mónica Jurado, owner of a mango farm in Frigiliana, expressed her concern about the lack of water and called for "urgent solutions to alleviate the drought". She added that, "we must make progress in the construction of desalination plants".

The protest this Wednesday was also attended by council members of the hard-right Vox party. Spokesperson Antonio Alcázar, said, "We came to support our farmers."

Driving over lemons

RACHEL HAYNES

When Chris Stewart thought up the title for his famous novel about life in rural Andalucía, he almost certainly was not picturing the scenes in Malaga city on Wednesday. There, farmers were literally driving over lemons, crushing the things, in fact, with their heavy tractors, paraded down into town on the motorway in yet another protest.

Farmers in Spain are not prepared to let their protests fade away in the public eye, something that is always a danger when someone repeats a complaint several times, however valid it might be. So a few tonnes of crushed lemons on the road is a good reminder.

A trip to the local market makes us realise how lucky we are to live in a place where so much fresh produce is available and much of it hasn't travelled far. We might not be able to find everything all year round, but that's the point. In an ideal world, we eat what is in season locally - and that will generally taste ten times better than the supermarket version shipped halfway around the world.

This is not an ideal world, however, and local farmers are at the wrong end of a chain in which everyone seems to be making money except for them - and, of course, the consumer.

New rules from the EU and competition from countries not subject to those rules are taking their toll, as is the drought, and the farmers are making their presence felt in the city. This week they have lemons to drive over - what comes next might not be quite so colourful, but their protests are unlikely to go away.

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Artist's impression of the second phase along the foot of the gorge. **V. M.**

First phase of Ronda's 1.6m-euro gorge walk due to be opened by head of Junta

RONDA

Regional president Juanma Moreno will inaugurate the refurbished path that takes visitors down to the foot of the 'new bridge' on 1 April

VANESSA MELGAR

The first phase of work on Ronda's new 1.6-million-euro gorge walk, which the town hall hopes will become another of the big attractions to the popular tourist town in the mountains, is nearing completion.

Work as part of the first phase of construction of the Camino del Desfiladero del Tajo project has in-

volved refurbishing an existing route which started at the old Casa Manolillo and snakes down to the base of the famous 'new bridge'. The existing access path, until now, did not meet the necessary safety conditions.

Junta de Andalucía president Juanma Moreno is expected to attend the official closing of the first phase of the project, which the Andalusian regional government funded with 300,000 euros.

The occasion will also signal the start of work on the second phase of the project which will involve the construction of a new walkway along the bottom of the 'Tajo' gorge, designed by the architect of Malaga's famous Caminito del Rey tourist attraction. The town hall has recently given the green light to the start of this final phase of the project. A scheduled start and completion date have not yet been announced.

The Camino del Desfiladero del Tajo will start in the Campillo area of the town and head down the La Albacara path to the Casa de Manolillo, where the control point will be located. It will then descend to the base of the 'new bridge' and continue along the walkway, on the left side of the gorge. The route will then pass under the Puente Nuevo and the 'old bridge' and exit alongside the Curtidurías bridge to end at the San Miguel hermitage in the Padre Jesús neighbourhood.

HERE AND THERE

JIMERA DE LÍBAR

Serranía village goes wild for orchids

SUR IN ENGLISH. A small white village in the mountains of the Serranía de Ronda is welcoming visitors this weekend to catch a glimpse of the up to 20 species of wild orchids that grow in the municipality. On Saturday and Sunday, Jimera de Líbar town hall has organised a festival and a host of activities to introduce people to the many different 'orquideas' in the local area. The design of the flowers of the various varieties of orchids is one of the most complex of all known, and the main purpose is to attract insects and achieve pollination.



Local wild orchid. **K. SMALLMAN**

There will be guided walks on both days, including night hikes under the stars, for which registration is needed (www.jimerade-libar.es or call 952 180 004) and a plant and craft market.

RONDA

Car park start held up by skeletons discovery

V.M. Plans to start work on a new five-million-euro, 500 space car park in the San Francisco neighbourhood of Ronda are still on hold due to the discovery of almost 200 human skeletons during archaeological excavations on the site. The construction project was originally pencilled

in to start immediately after the town's major Pedro Romero fair in September 2022 but the start date has been postponed due to the findings, which also include fragments of vessels and other ceramic and household items. The land for the car park site is in an area designated as Asset of Cultural Interest (BIC) in the 1960s and, as a result, the excavations involving archaeologists and an anthropologist are supervised by the Junta.

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The Prime Minister and King and Queen led the European Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Terrorism. EFE

Madrid marks 20 years since Europe's worst terrorist attack

On 11 March 2004 ten bombs exploded on four commuter trains in the nation's capital and 192 people were killed

SUR

MADRID. The horror began to unfold at 7.37am on the seemingly ordinary day, 11 March 2004, in the midst of winter at the Spanish capital's Atocha railway station. In the following three minutes a chain of ten explosions would take the lives of 192 passengers travelling on Cercanías commuter trains in the area and bring the war of jihadism to the heart of Europe.

On Monday this week Spain remembered what was the worst terrorist atrocity so far this century. The day was a true reflection of the wide distance that these days separates the country's two main political parties, the ruling PSOE and opposition PP.



Opposition politicians at a later event in Madrid's memorial garden. EFE

The tragedy was commemorated with two formal tributes in Madrid to the victims of the 11 March and to comfort their families. One was organised by the EU - led by the King and Queen and attended by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and ministers - for the European Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Terrorism, which is marked

on the 11th March each year now. And another by the Madrid region, led by Isabel Díaz Ayuso, the region's president in the central Puerta del Sol square and attended by the leader of the PP, Alberto Núñez Feijóo.

Actions and consequences:
Page 16

MPs approve controversial Catalan separatist amnesty bill as expected

The amnesty - modified last week following a last-minute pact between PSOE and the Catalan Junts and ERC parties - will now go to the Senate

PAULA DE LAS HERAS

MADRID. MPs in Congreso approved on Thursday this week the text of the law to give an amnesty to those involved in the illegal Catalan independence declaration in 2017 and events around it. The controversial law passed by 178 to 172 votes with the support of the same parties that had voted in the government

last year except one Canary Island regional party MP.

The amnesty - modified last week following a last-minute pact between PSOE and the Catalan Junts and ERC parties - will now go to the Senate, the upper house of parliament. Here the opposition PP will use its majority to slow down approval that cannot be avoided for long. It is expected that in mid-May the law will return to the lower house and be definitively approved.

The bill was proposed by the ruling PSOE party as a way to secure its government with the support of Catalan separatists after last July's general election produced a hung parliament.

Decision to call Catalan elections impacts 2024 budget approval nationally

Ministers realise that negotiations of spending plans will be difficult as a result of the upcoming vote on 12 May

SUR

BARCELONA/MADRID. The president of the Catalan government - the Generalitat - announced on Wednesday this week early elections will be called in the region on 12 May. It follows the regional MPs' rejection of the Generalitat's 2024 budget the same day.

The president, Pere Aragonès, of left-wing separatist party ERC, had been hoping to survive until his term ended in February

next year if he could get the delayed budget through the regional parliament. But in the end only the Catalan branch of the Socialist party backed him.

The dissolution of the Catalan parliament had an immediate impact on the national political scene in Madrid.

The ruling PSOE party took the decision not to push through its 2024 budget for Spain but instead renew last year's budget, as the law allows. Ministers realise that negotiations of spending plans will be difficult if Catalan elections are being contested. Its coalition partner, Sumar, has said it is not happy with the decision to cancel budget plans for this year.

THE EURO ZONE
MARK NAYLER

False hope



On Wednesday, pro-independence Catalan president Pere Aragonès announced an early regional election for May 12th, after failing to pass a budget for the region. The next day (the day of writing), congress voted on the government's proposed amnesty deal for Catalan separatists, recently tweaked to exclude Carles Puigdemont from absurd terrorism charges.

If Catalan secessionists lose the May election, which is likely, Pedro Sánchez might expect them to stop making awkward demands in exchange for parliamentary support. But defeat in the regional vote would ultimately do nothing to undermine the power wielded by Junts and ERC over the Socialist-led government. If Sánchez hopes to be dealing with a more subdued Catalan separatist

camp from May onwards, he's in the grip of a false hope.

The latest test of Catalonia's political mood revealed a dramatic decline in support for disconnecting from Spain. Conducted last November by the regional government's polling agency, it showed that only 31% of Catalans support secession - the lowest that figure's been for twelve years. Two other results stood out: first, that the Socialists would win the next regional election; and secondly, that 60% of Catalans support the amnesty bill, a piece of legislation detested by the majority of Spaniards.

Say Catalan secessionists do lose the vote in May. Well, that wouldn't reduce the number of seats they currently hold in the

national congress at all (although it might suggest that they would also drop seats in the next general election). But if their home region has rejected secession, you might wonder, what basis would they have for continuing to push for a break with Madrid? The bottom would surely drop out of their cause.

Not so. Catalan nationalist parties would still be able to campaign for a legal referendum on independence, modelled on that held in Scotland in 2014 with prior permission from London (although the Spanish Constitution makes such a vote more problematic than it ever was in the UK). And for this they do have a great deal of support: a poll taken

last spring revealed that 77% of Catalans want to be able to vote on their political future.

This is why, even if the Socialists take Catalonia from separatists in May, Sánchez's job won't become any easier. Puigdemont's and Aragonès' bottom line remains a state-backed referendum on secession, although it now looks almost certain that they would lose it (just as Scottish nationalists lost the 2014 vote).

Given Sánchez's flip-flopping over Catalan independence - one moment in favour of the punishment meted out to its champions, the next bending over backwards to promote their cause - perhaps this is not an unreasonable thing for which to hope or ask.

LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Overcrowded Costa trains

Last year Ignacio Lillo wrote about delays and overcrowding on Costa train line C1 Malaga to Fuengirola. To get under the 20 minute service on the line would be very costly, however to extend the train with two extra carriages would not. The drawback is the platforms are too short, so it is not possible to use the first and last exit on the train.

In the future it would be possible to extend the train with another three carriages and thereby getting 100 % more capacity on the C1 train line. The drawback is not all exits on all stops will be possible to use without extending the platforms, and maybe not even then due to technicalities.

So it is up to the town halls of Malaga, Torremolinos, Benalmadena and Fuengirola to put the pressure on the C1 train line provider. The idea of a train line between Malaga and Marbella would be very costly, it would be better using extended doubledecker buses on the AP-7.

OLE LUNDGAARD

New Marbella animal shelter

Who on earth thought these structures would work? there's no natural light, no natural air source, the cats can't be outside as they can jump over the fence and now it's flooded to top it off.

What an absolute joke of a project. Two million euros for this! Ayuntamiento de Marbella should be

ashamed. I can only imagine how hot it will become inside in the summer. It's absolutely disgraceful.

SAM BROWN

It's not fit for purpose, the main building is a disaster and the dogs should not have been put in there.

They had a chance to make something great and it's just sad.

MATTHEW CAREY

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Conversation stopper

On a fairly frequent basis, a dejected-looking person will slump at the bar in the pub and avail anyone within earshot of their frustrations regarding their attempts to learn the Spanish language. They'll say that they're really doing their best but every time they try to engage in a conversation with a local, they'll get a reply in English.

The trouble is, a good number of the Spanish people that a foreigner comes across on a day-to-day basis will be working in jobs which pay the minimum wage and will only have been convinced to take the post because 'there'll be a great opportunity to practise and improve your English'. It's probably the highlight of their first day of employment to see a ruddy-faced chap in a baseball cap shuffle in, looking vaguely confused by his surroundings, grappling in vain with a bum-bag. Imagine the bitter pang of disappointment, then, when his opening gambit is 'Hola'.

When I first arrived in Malaga, I felt it was really im-

portant for me to speak as much of the language as possible in order to pick it up quickly. Unfortunately, having been dubiously blessed with features that couldn't be more British if I'd had a union flag tattooed on my forehead at birth, I was constantly faced with the problem of everyone talking English to me at every available opportunity. It was often a battle of wills - two gun-slingers in a one-horse town eyeing each other suspiciously, seeing who would be the first to flinch. I'd always play the first card.

"Hola."

"Hello." (Dammit).

"Qu...i...er...o un...a cer.vez...a, por fa...vor."

"Of course, sir. Which would you like, draught or bottled?" (Dammit again - her English is a million times better than my Spanish. I'll have to up my game. There's only one thing for it - I'll have to employ the nuclear option: the one complicated phrase I know, learnt by heart for just

such an occasion).

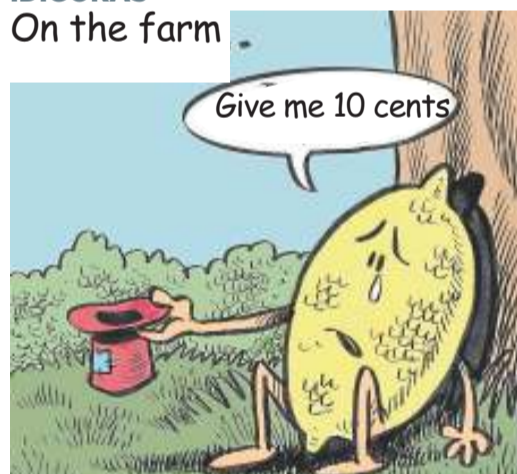
"Desafortunadamente, he dejado mi cartera en casa y tendré que volver para buscarla."

Your rival is shocked by your language skills and has no choice but to reply in Spanish. You have no idea what she says but you sense victory, whip out your wallet, wave it in the air and slap your forehead in the time-honoured 'silly me, it was in my pocket all the time' style. For the rest of the evening the vanquished, deflated waitress talks to you in Spanish and you smile, nod and point at things as if you have a clue what she's going on about until, some time later, you leave feeling pretty pleased with yourself.

Not for long, though. In your heart, you know it was a Pyrrhic victory - your Spanish is no better than it was when you first walked in and the burden of guilt that you carry, knowing that it would have been much kinder and more productive to let the lovely girl practise her English for a while, is almost too much to bear.

IDÍGORAS

On the farm



At the supermarket



SUR in English

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THE BOTTOM LINE
DAVID ANDREWS

Actions and consequences

This Monday, Spain commemorated the 20th anniversary of the 11-M terrorist attack in Madrid, the worst on European soil this century. The fateful date is remembered across the EU as the European Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Terrorism.

The events are particularly memorable due to, of course, the number of victims (193) and the events which occurred throughout the ensuing days. To summarise, the attack took place early on Thursday morning (before 8am) on Madrid's busy commuter-train system. The right-wing PP, who was in government at the time, from

the outset pointed the finger at ETA (the Basque-nationalist terrorist group who had reined terror on Spain since the 1960s), however as the hours (and days) progressed the police investigations and certain media sources moved the focus to Al-Qaeda and a jihadist cell. On Friday (12th) more than 2,000,000 people took to the streets to condemn the attacks, however the national elections on the Sunday were what really interested the politicians. Conclusions were reached in government offices, if the attack was carried out by ETA, the PP would return to power; if the attack was the work of Al-Qaeda, then the left-wing PSOE had a

chance of winning. On Saturday thousands marched throughout Spain demanding a thorough investigation and a credible line of argument from the government. On Sunday the PSOE won with a simple majority.

What stemmed from these terrible attacks, many believe, was the definitive fracture between the left and the right in Spain. Until then, terrorism had always been viewed as a matter of national importance and a point of common consensus between political parties. However, this nexus of connection was broken and, depending on your political allegiances, defined your stance on this matter (and many others) until today. For the right, the PSOE came to power on the wave of anger from the 11-M attacks and, as such, were an illegitimate government. For the left, the PP tried to maintain power using a terrorist attack as a way to galvanise its voters and sway the moderate centre. To date, the two sides cannot agree

on a common narrative and the fallout remains an emotive bone of contention.

For me, it also paved the way to a slippery slope where politicians' actions and words started to have no real or moral consequences. A free-for-all where inflammatory rhetoric has become the order of the day and voters have become impervious to the lies and deceit of their own representatives; the goal on both sides being to incite and rabble-rouse their own irascible electorate into turning out and voting for them. The fact that what is actually being said is untrue, preposterous or plainly insane nowadays seems to bear neither comeback nor moral/political retribution.

As a society, we seem quick to "cancel" a lame-brained celebrity for his/her idiotic comments on "X", yet unable to hold to account our politicians who wilfully lie, deceive or manipulate us.



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'I have a curious mind, so coming up with fresh material is key'

Stephen Frears
Film director and producer

Celebrated for real-life stories about controversial subjects, the British director talks to SUR in English prior to his visit to the Hay Forum in Seville

TONY BRYANT



SEVILLE. Celebrated British film director and producer Stephen Frears arrives in Seville this week to participate in the Hay Festival Forum, an international gathering of experts and leaders in the field of ideas, architecture, literature, film, art and culture. Now in its second year in the Andalusian capital, cinema plays a leading role in the forum, and along with the chance to listen to Frears talking about his long career in the film industry, there was also an opportunity to see three of his most celebrated films in English: *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, and *The Queen*.

SUR in English caught up with the 82-year-old, who claims "being a film director is an odd combination of involvement and detachment", to talk about his early work, his rise to stardom in Hollywood and some of the actors he has most enjoyed working with.

Frears spent most of his early directing career in television, mainly for the BBC. He has since become world-renowned for his real-life stories that explore controversial subjects or events, like interracial relationships, homosexual promiscuity, political scandal and the British class system, most of which are a mixture of tragedy and comedy.

Born in Leicester, Frears began his career working as an assistant director in theatre and television, directing his debut feature film, *Gumshoe*, in 1971. However, it was to be in the 1980s when Frears' career really took off, in particular, with the movies, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, which launched Daniel Day-Lewis on his acting career; and *Prick Up Your Ears*, the true-story of playwright Joe Orton's tragic life, which starred the young

actors Gary Oldman and Alfred Molina. These three actors were relatively unknown at the time, but they were not chosen because Frears has an eye for new talent.

"I didn't have enough money to use anyone famous at that time. What happens is you do it out of necessity. There were four people on the list for Dan's part. They were the ones who were around at that time. It's true, we didn't have enough money, but we were saved by our poverty," he says, bursting into laughter.

Even though many of his films are based on real-life characters, Frears rarely seeks to meet the people he is portraying.

"Well, I never met the Queen, or Joe Orton, and I've never met Tony Blair. I've no desire to meet them, because that would have confused me. I don't think real life helps, because, in a way, it's much better to use one's imagination," he explains.

Academy nominations

Frears received international attention as a director in 1988, when he directed *Dangerous Liaisons*, which starred John Malkovich, Glenn Close and Michelle Pfeiffer. The film received world-wide critical acclaim and was nominated for seven Academy and ten British Academy awards, launching Frears onto the Hollywood scene. In 1990, he directed the crime thriller, *The Grifters*, which was produced by Martin Scorsese, someone for whom he obviously holds much respect.

"I was always waiting for Martin to phone. One day he rang. He had seen *Laundrette* and thought that the man who made this must make *The Grifters*. I thought this was brilliant," he says.

Another "big moment" in his life was when he went to Hollywood in 1992 to make *Hero*, starring Dustin Hoffman.

"*Hero* was a studio film, and I didn't really know much about working for the studios. I don't think I know that much now. I was quite perplexed by it all," he declares, with sincerity.

A string of box-office hit movies followed and Frears began to establish himself as a much sought-after director, but he never turned his back on the UK and the



Frears directing on the set of his latest mini series, *The Regime*, which was produced by HBO. M. MIZUNO/HBO

FILMMAKING

"Making a film is a journey of discovery; they are a way of learning about life"

DIRECTING

"Being a film director is an odd combination of involvement and detachment"

HUGH GRANT

"I remember thinking when I first met Hugh that I would have a part to play in his life"

KNIGHTHOOD

"The thing about it was that it was of no relevance, but the day was rather charming. Princess Anne was charming"

British film industry. He returned to directing for television with *The Deal* (2003), which was based on the alleged deal between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown as to which of them would lead the Labour party in 1994. This was followed by *The Queen* (2006), a film based on the death of Princess Diana from the angle of Queen Elizabeth II. The lead role was played by Helen Mir-

ren, who had described the movie as "a hot potato". Mirren claimed that it was only the professionalism of the director that put her at ease. It premiered at the Venice Film Festival, and Mirren, who claimed she was "petrified at the thought of making it", won Best Actress for her portrayal of the monarch.

"When I was first introduced to Helen, I thought it was a very good idea for her to play the role. When she sat down, the producer said, 'Oh my goodness, she looks exactly like the queen.' Helen was so good, but I didn't feel the subject was a hot potato. She was brilliant. I remember her going into wardrobe, and when she came out, she was the queen. It's as simple as that," Frears says.

Although he sometimes works with the same actor for different movies, he claims he does not have any favourites. "I don't really have favourites, but I remember thinking when I first met Hugh [Grant] that I would have a part to play in his life. We started flirting, and then along came the film *Florence Foster Jenkins*, which was enjoyable to make. Next was the film about Jeremy Thorpe, *A Very English Scandal*. I always knew Hugh would be brilliant, although he took some convincing."

Journey of discovery

Frears believes that "making a film is a journey of discovery; they are a way of learning about life".

"I have a curious mind, so coming up with fresh material is key. I pick a film because I like it, and because I think it's well written. I am astonished that writers seem to be able to write the inside of my head. The idea of repeating myself is very depressing though," he explains.

In 2017, Frears made *Victoria* and *Abdul*, a British film about the real-life relationship between

Queen Victoria and her Indian Muslim servant. The film starred Judy Dench, whom he had worked with on *Mrs Henderson Presents*, in 2005, which also starred Bob Hoskins. He had also collaborated with Dench in 2013 on the film, *Philomena*, which explored the story of Philomena Lee's 50-year search for her son, who was taken from her when she was a young unwed mother at a Catholic convent, and then adopted by an American family.

Although he has been voted among the top 100 most influential people in British culture, and hailed as one of the film world's "most influential creators in recent decades", Frears claims he "takes no notice" of this praise. Even his knighthood in 2023 is something he believes to be of little use in the film world.

"I must say that I was surprised when I heard about the knighthood, but it's not a title I would ever think of using. The thing about it was that it was of no relevance, but the day was rather charming. Princess Anne was charming," he says.

The director acknowledges that the film industry has changed greatly since he first began, which is why he feels that forums like the one in Seville are important.

"When I grew up, you went to the pictures, to the cinema. I've always preferred that. I can see the world is not the way I wanted it to be, so these types of festivals have become important.

"The way films are made is also easier today, but of course, the easiness is its own trap, because in the end, it's about thought and imagination," he concludes.

Stephen Frears' latest project, *The Regime*, which stars Kate Winslet and Hugh Grant, premiered on HBO at the beginning of March.

OBITUARY

Costa mourns death of June Rendle, a woman with a passion for theatre

TONY BRYANT

SAN PEDRO ALCÁNTARA. The local, English-speaking theatrical sector was saddened by the death of June Rendle, a talented actor, playwright and director who died peacefully at her home in San Pedro Alcántara on Monday 4 March. June had been involved with the local theatre and cultural scene in the province of Malaga for many years, and she also wrote amateur theatre production reviews for SUR in English, something she enjoyed until 2023.

An only child born in Walsall (West Midlands) in 1930, June gained her passion for drama at the age of 16. She was offered a place at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London, although her father decided she should work for him at his garage instead, something that June would regret all her life.

In 1952, June married Johnny Rendle, a former Royal Air Force pilot. Living in Walsall in a house designed by her husband, June



Theatre lover June Rendle. SUR

became a “typical 1950s housewife”, bringing up two children. During the 1960s, June, who became close friends with Eric Morecambe and his wife, Joan, began teaching drama at Aldwickbury School.

She made her debut for the Abbey Players in St Albans in the 1970s, playing the lead role in their inaugural performance in front of the Queen Mother.

June appeared in several adverts and in television programmes like The Benny Hill

Show. She also made it to the final two actresses to replace Honor Blackman as Emma Peel in The Avengers, although the part was eventually given to Diana Rigg.

June first arrived on the coast with her husband in 1979, where she brought a holiday home in Nueva Andalucía (Marbella), and the couple settled permanently on the coast in 2005.

June began writing short stories and magazine articles in 2009, shortly after her husband died. Her love of theatre had followed her to Spain, and she became a valued member of the International Theatre Studio in Marbella (ITS), an amateur theatrical group that will mark its 50th anniversary on the coast next year. June was an active and prominent member with the ITS for many years, offering her skills as an actor, playwright and director.

In a social media post, the ITS wrote, “We will miss her passion, expertise, knowledge and guidance.”

June is survived by her daughter Nikki and son Miles.



Films strike gold at Festival de Málaga

The jury of the official feature film section of the 27th Festival de Málaga awarded the Golden Biznaga for Best Spanish Film to Segundo Premio by directors Isaki Lacuesta and Pol Rodríguez (above C and L); and the Golden Biznaga for Best Ibero-American Film to Radical by Cristopher Zalla.

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DENISE BUSH

READERS' PHOTOS



CAROLINE SELLERS

Return of the Wigandia

SUR in English reader Caroline Sellers sent in this photo and says, "The last time I spotted this Wigandia was in Marbella in 2020. However, the park gardeners cut the tree right down to a stump, much to my disappointment. But now, four years later, I'm glad to say that the tree is back, the branches are a bit thin and wiry but the flowers are beautiful."

Pristine calla lilies

Calla (or arum) lilies, botanical name Zantedeschia aethiopica, are native to Africa and a favourite for wedding bouquets. This photo, sent in by Alison García, is of the classic white form but there are more and more brightly-coloured varieties becoming available.



ALISON GARCÍA

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 they are out and about. Why not share them with others?

Please email your photos to english@diariosur.es with a caption and a few words of explanation and you may get your photos published on this page. Alternatively, you can send them to us via Facebook (surenglish) or X (@SUR_English).

GARDENING
Molucella laevis

Native to the Mediterranean, Molucella laevis is an annual plant belonging to the mint family (Lamiaceae). It has the characteristic square stems of that family but stands out with its unusual bell-shaped flowers.

Commonly called bell's of Ireland and shell flower, Molucella (sometimes spelt Mollucella in some catalogues)

is a genus with only three species: M. laevis, M. olgae and M. spinosa.

It is best grown as an annual as around July, when the heat becomes extreme, it will die and is unlikely to come back the following year. However it is fast growing and seed sown in spring should be

blooming within 100 days.

The light green bells, pale white or pinkish flowers and pale green foliage make this a flower arranger's dream. It needs a spot that gets some shade in summer afternoons and the soil should be moderately rich and free-draining. Molucella laevis is not drought hardy and needs frequent watering. A layer of mulch around the base will help to prevent loss of moisture.

It makes a lovely statement for a border or a container and the unusual hooded flowers attract bees and other pollinating insects.

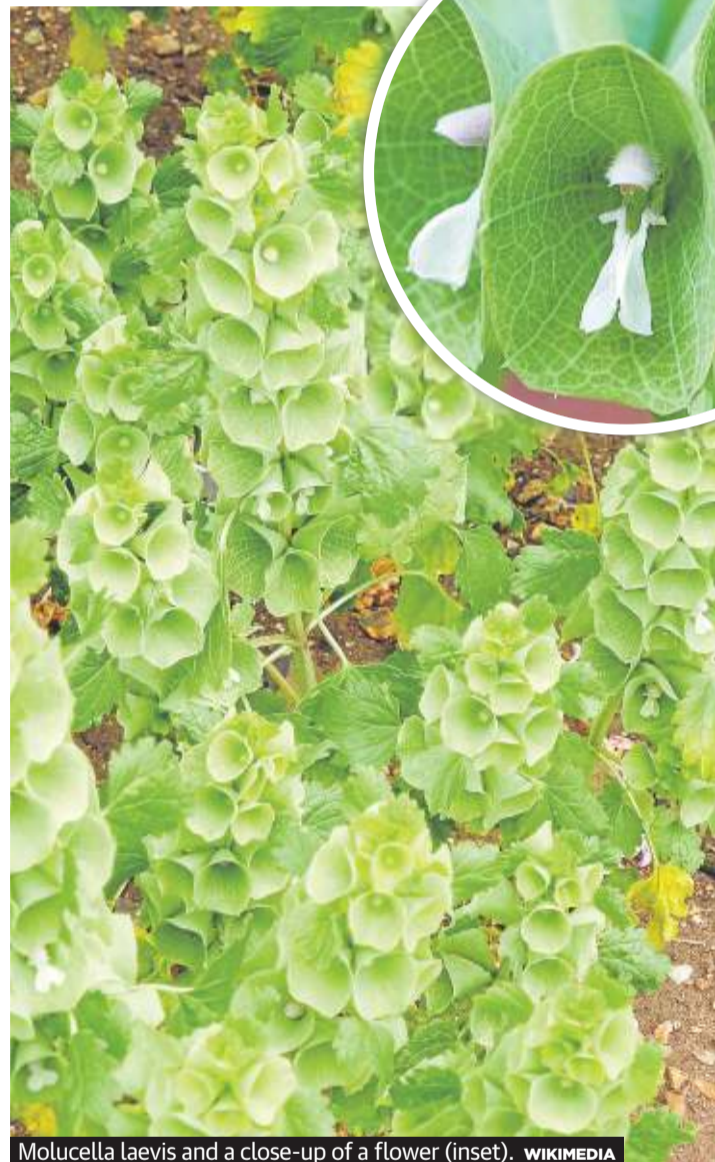
Deadheading and removal of dry stems prolongs flowering and also prevents the development of prickly thorns that it grows as it matures.

Depending on the location, it should reach between 75 and 90cm tall. The stems are fairly rigid but may need staking in exposed areas.

Propagation is from seed and can be a bit hit and miss. Storing the seeds in the freezer and then soaking in tepid water for 24 hours might increase the germination rate.

Another way to help the seeds to sprout is to place them on a damp paper towel and keep it somewhere warm. They should germinate within a few days and can be planted into small pots.

Don't plant out until the seedlings have at least two pairs of leaves and the risk of cold weather has passed.



Molucella laevis and a close-up of a flower (inset). WIKIMEDIA



Jan Van Hesik

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Jan from Boedha Lounge Bar, after a short illness.

His life has been a blessing to so many, he was a very special person who always took care of weaker people and pets.

He will always be dearly remembered and missed by all his friends. Jan will be buried in the family grave in the Netherlands as he wished.

A mass will be celebrated in the church Inmaculada Concepción in Arroyo de la Miel, on Sunday 17th of March Saint Patrick at 1.30 pm in English and at 7.30pm in Spanish.

Signed by His friends from Benalmádena

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THE STORY BEHIND A PLACE NAME

Olvera
An olive grove in a beautiful valley

The origin of this name has divided historians and theories range from Celtic, Visigoth, Roman and Arabic, although none has been proven



TONY BRYANT

The exact origin of the place name of Olvera (Cadiz) has confused his-

torians for many years and differing theories have developed, one of which is that it was originally a Celtic settlement called Caricus. Other academics claim that there was a Visigoth town called Cenosia situated near the current town of Olvera, located in an area known as Vallehermoso (beautiful valley).

Located northeast of the Cadiz mountain range, bordering the provinces of Seville and Malaga, numerous Roman settlements have been discovered in the area. Archaeologist Lorenzo Perdigones' survey of this area resulted in the discovery of the remains of a 3rd century BC Roman town: the foundations of the town's castle also proved to be



Aerial view of Olvera and the Cadiz mountain range. SUR

from the Roman era. The geographical adjustment of a map of Roman Spain published in the late 19th century led historians to believe that the original Roman town could have been Ilipa, but this has never been certified. It would appear that the first reliable explanation of the origins of Olvera comes from documentation from the Arabic period, when it was noted in chroni-

cles in the 12th century as an outpost in the mountains called Wubira; it was referred to as Uriwila nearly 200 years later when retaken by Christian forces. Adolfo de Castro, a member of the Royal Academies of Language, History and Moral and Political Sciences of Spain, disagrees with the etymology of the toponym. He suggests that the Arabic town was called Al-Berr, meaning the field, and that it is

LANGUAGE FOOTNOTE

Celta	Celtic
Visigodo	Visigoth
Romano	Roman
Árabe	Arabic
Demostrar	To prove
Escudo	Coat of arms
Actual	Current
Valle	Valley
Hermoso	Beautiful
Frontera	Border
Encuesta	Survey
Restos	Remains
Cimientos	Foundations
Fiable	Reliable
Evolucionar	To evolve
Fonética	Phonetics
Rama	Branch

Bilingual crossword inside back page

from this that the name of Olvera evolved. Most of Olvera's surrounding lands consist of agricultural areas dedicated mainly to the cultivation of olive trees, giving rise to another theory that Olvera comes from Olivera, and that the 'i' has been lost phonetically over the years. The fact that the town's coat of arms includes two olive branches has added fuel to this theory.

THY WILL BE DONE. Paul Blackmoore

POWER OF ATTORNEY IN SPAIN AND EUTHANASIA

COSTA DEL SOL.
Paul Blackmoore (Practice Principal). Many folk do not realise that euthanasia in Spain is legal and has been since 2001. If you are a British ex-pat who is resident in Spain you can elect to choose euthanasia when certain conditions are met and, in order to do so, it is important that your instructions are detailed in writing on a Health and Welfare Power of Attorney/ Advance Directive Document with the details of your elected representative advised so that they are legally able to speak on your behalf if you are incapable of doing so at that time. A Power of Attorney for Finance is also strongly recommended to enable a trusted person to deal with

your financial matters in the event that you are unable to speak for yourself and will also give your elected, trusted representative the ability to unfreeze any assets and bank accounts should that scenario occur following any incapacity diagnosis. The Health and Welfare Document will need to be registered at the Patient Services Desk (SAIP) of a local hospital to you within 3 months of it being signed and the Financial Power of Attorney will need to be notarised after production. Thy Will be Done are experts in this area and can guide and assist you in these matters, just give us a call on 865 756 058 to discuss this with us in more detail. Like an insurance policy, you always hope never to need to use it, but it is important to have it in place just in case.

If you are a British ex-pat who is resident in Spain you can elect to choose euthanasia when certain conditions are met and, in order to do so, it is important that your instructions are detailed in writing



Paul Blackmoore with little helper Benny, his rescue French Bulldog

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An American in Cajiz: David Beatty brings the music of Frank Sinatra to the Axarquía

The singer has lived in Granada province since 2018 and is involved with a number of international choirs in Almuñécar and Vélez-Málaga

JENNIE RHODES

CAJIZ. American singer David Beatty, who is bringing the music of Frank Sinatra to El Molino de Cajiz later this month, admits that he “doesn’t come from a musical family”. In fact, he says that he was “going to be an architect in seventh grade,” but he started learning songs from records when he was six, took his first voice lessons at 14 or 15 and by ninth grade he had “decided rather arrogantly” that he was “going to be a great opera singer as that was the Olympics of singing”.

But David confesses that he had never heard opera before. The first one he went to was while he was at college and he admits that it

“scared the hell” out of him.

Despite the shock of that first experience, David went on to obtain two degrees in music and sang opera and classical music throughout his twenties. He toured with the National Opera company in the USA and took part in over 250 performances.

However, seeing that he “wasn’t going to get to the Metropolitan Opera or earn a great living just by singing”, in his thirties David decided to study Finance at the University of Chicago. He went on to have a successful career in banking and says, “The same skills that helped me stand on stage helped me talk to people on the phone and be a salesman of banking products became a thing I could do quite well.” Although David continued to sing in a choir while he was working he acknowledges that “life was too busy to do much”.

When he retired, David and his wife began to look at the possibility of moving abroad. He had spent time in Germany during his col-



David Beatty at the Nazari Gardens in Vélez de Benaudalla in 2022. SUR

lege years and his wife had done some travelling around Europe in the past too, but neither had been to Spain.

Choirs in Spain

The couple spent their first year moving around the country and tried Madrid and Barcelona before coming to Andalucía and to Alhama de Granada, before finding their dream home in Vélez de Benaudalla (Granada province) in October 2018. Once settled, David decided that it was time to revive his singing career and set about finding a pianist and local choirs.

He is a member of a number of choirs including Coralaxalia in Vélez-Málaga. He says of his experience, “The choirs here are good

and I think the presence of so many English, Germans and Scandinavians also adds because of their strong choral traditions.”

David also sings as a soloist with pianist Jose Luis Lopretti, who is originally from Uruguay and who has lived and worked in the Netherlands as a bass and piano player and also as a professor of music in Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

José will be accompanying David for the two concerts in Cajiz. David explains, “Every song, except for a solo piano piece that José will play, will be one that had been recorded by Frank Sinatra.” He promises some of the classics, but also says, “I’m pretty sure that there will be at least two songs that no one has ever heard of.”

David is keen to point out that he is “not a Sinatra imitator” and explains that his voice is very different from Sinatra’s. David says of his hero that his first wife played violin during Sinatra’s final three tours, but he never had the chance to meet him. “I think of Sinatra as the greatest singer outside of classical music,” he says, although he admits that Ella Fitzgerald is also high up on his list.

David says of his own singing career: “It is a lifelong passion that is more rewarding with each year.”

The concerts are taking place at El Molino de Cajiz on Sunday 23 March at 7pm and Saturday 30 March at 7.30pm. For further information and tickets visit: www.elmolinodecajiz.com.



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41 Club Nerja presents 500-euro cheque to Cudeca manager

The 41 Club Nerja presented a cheque for 500 euros to the local branch of Cudeca last week after the club's current chairman, Dr Brian Karet, nominated Cudeca as the club's chosen charity for this year. Receiving the donation, Eli Aragüez, regional manager of the Cudeca charity shops said, “41 Clubs have a long tradition of supporting smaller local charities which benefit local people.” She went on to say, “We are immensely grateful for donations like this which are of great value to the foundation” and that “constant funding is needed to keep the centre running”.



SUR

EXHIBITIONS

On The Rugs, Roman Řehák
MARBELLA. *Until 31 March. SIN Studio Gallery, Avda. Ricardo Soriano, 59.* On The Rugs is an exhibition of photos of famous personalities created by Czech artist Roman Řehák on his mobile phone. The protagonists of his work have been Czech personalities like Karel Gott, Marta Kubišová, Jan Saudek and Václav Havel, Hollywood actors like Pierce Brosnan and Antonio Banderas, and the vocalist of Deep Purple Ian Gillan, among others. Email: marbella@sinstudiogallery.com.

Museo Ralli
MARBELLA. *Urb Coral Beach, Río Verde.* The Ralli Museum of Marbella collection contains works of contemporary art of mostly Latin American and European origin. Permanent exhibitions: Surrealisms. From Giorgio de Chirico to Francis Bacon; Contemporary art in Oaxaca. Vanguard, Myth and Tradition; Figurative art in Contemporary Latin America. Temporary exhibition: American Abstraction. Carlos Mérida. Free entry. www.museoralli.es

Ocean Collection
BENALMÁDENA. *Until 31 March. Centro de Exposiciones de Benalmádena, Avd. Antonio Machado.* The Centro de Exposiciones in Benalmádena is holding an exhibition - curated by founder and designer of Fashion Art, Manuel Fernández - which features works by 25 artists who use their art to denounce the effects of climate change on the world's oceans. Free entry.

Lotta Leon
MIJAS COSTA. *Until 18 March. Centro Cultural la Cala.* German-born artist Lotta Leon will exhibit her latest collection of abstract and semi-abstract works that present her impressions of Andalucía - Fantasías Andaluzas.

Nuevo Enfoque
MIJAS COSTA. *Until 31 March. Urb El Coto, Los Olivos.* A selection of photographs by the Nuevo Enfoque club.

Sensualidad
LAS LAGUNAS. *Until 8 April. Casa de la Cultura.* A collective exhibition of works by Galería Studio 33, an art centre which promotes multidisciplinary skills and



Naomi Lautier, Russian Museum.

diverse activities.

Fantasia
MIJAS PUEBLO. *Until 31 March. Tourist Office.* Artist Elena Shcherbakova will be exhibiting some of her art in this exhibition entitled Fantasia.

Juan Miguel Alba
MALAGA. *Until 31 March. La Concepción Botanical Gardens.* The exhibition Etiopía y las Etnias del Sur is a collection of 24 photos which captures the hard lives of the remaining Ethiopian tribes. The moving pictures were taken by the late Malaga photographer Juan Miguel Alba.

Museo Picasso Málaga - MPM
MALAGA. *Calle San Agustín.* **The Echo of Picasso.** *Until 31 March.* Works by over fifty artists, including Willem de Kooning, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Louise Bourgeois and Jeff Koons, that create a direct dialogue with the works of Picasso. **María Blanchard.** *From 30 April until 29 September.* This new exhibition presents a chronological record of the different creative stages of the life of Spanish artist María Blanchard christened the 'dame of Cubism'. www.museopicassomalaga.org.

Museo Picasso Casa Natal
MALAGA. *Plaza de la Merced.* **La Imagen de Picasso.** *Until 28 April.* To mark the fiftieth anniversary of Picasso's death, the Casa Natal is holding an exhibition which marks the various stages in his life. It includes paintings, drawings, ceramics and sculpture as well as photography.

Todo Por Tu Amor 1923-2023
MALAGA. *Until 31 March. Salas Min-gorance del Archivo Municipal, Alameda Principal.* The historical-artistic exhibition commemorates the centenary of the dedication of the Virgen del Amor, co-titular of the El Rico brotherhood. The exhibition, titled Todo Por Tu Amor (Everything For Your Love) showcases the heritage of the El Rico brotherhood through a diverse collection of historical documents and valuable pieces such as embroideries, gold, jewellery, sculptures, paintings, sketches, and photographs.

Museo Ruso
MALAGA. *Edificio Tabacalera, Avda Sor Teresa Prat.* **Images Cities.** *Until 5 May.* A photograph exhibition by Russian photographer Anastasia Samoylova which includes not just photos of her birth-place (Moscow) but also of many other cities around the world. **Jorge Fin.** *Until 16 June.* A large mural at the end of the escalator painted by Madrid artist Jorge Fin especially for MaF (Málaga de Festival). It represents a scene from the film 'Ivan's Childhood' by Russian director Andréi Tarkovsky. **Pensando en Bucle.** *Until 16 June.* An audio-visual exhibition by Boris Gruys which includes clips from films, musicals and documentaries forming a collage of moving images and sounds. **Naomi Lautier.** *Until 30 June.* An exhibition by twelve-year-old Naomi

Lautier who suffers with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). She accidentally discovered that oil painting allowed her to explore her sensory and creative abilities, capturing moods and emotions in the world around her.

Centre Pompidou Malaga
MALAGA. *The Cube, Muelle Uno.* <https://centrepompidou-malaga.eu/> **Fósiles Futuros.** *Until 9 April.* The new installation at the Pompidou explores virtual environments. The video is the result of a collaboration between artists Ida Kvetny and Diane Velasco.



María Blanchard, Museo Picasso.

CAC Málaga.
MALAGA. *Centro de Arte Contemporáneo. C/ Alemania.* **Günther Förg.** *Until 26 May.* The Legacy of Modernism is the title of this exhibition that concentrates on the works by the late German minimalist artist, Günther Förg. **Theresa Chromati.** *Until 2 June.* The works of this American artist explore the traditional boundaries of painting through fragmented forms and abstract figuration through various layers of femininity using bright colours and vibrant textures. **Noé Martínez.** *Until 28 April.* The audiovisual work Hasta Cuarenta Cuerpos Fueron Trocados Por un Animal de Carga by Mexican artist Noé Martínez, focuses on a deep investigation of the legacies of his indigenous ancestors.

CAC La Coracha
MALAGA. *CAC Málaga - La Coracha.* **Viola.** *Until 7 April.* Seville artist Fran Ramirez (Viola), presents a collection of his anime characters in this neo-pop exhibition entitled One Summer's Day. **Little: Keep It Cute.** *Until 7 April.* Cordoba artist Pablo J. Rodríguez (Little) is exhibiting a collection of works reflecting the balance between adult and infancy, between maturity and the ingenuous.

Revello de Toro y Sus Maestros
MALAGA. *Until 28 April. C/Afligidos.* A total of eleven works make up this temporary exhibition which demonstrates the artists who influenced the Malaga painter. They include Manuel Benedito, Federico Bermúdez Gil, Fernando Labrada, Enrique Martínez-Cubells, José Nogales Sevilla and Julio Moisés. www.museorevellodetoro.malaga.eu

Estepona hosts audio-tactile sculpture exhibition

TONY BRYANT

ESTEPONA. The Casa de las Tejerinas cultural centre in Estepona is exhibiting Naturaleza Viva (living nature), a new collection of works by sculptor Toby Govan, along with the collaboration of local poet Lorena Jiménez, from 22 March until 7 April.

The audio-tactile exhibition, which will be officially inaugurated at 8.30pm on Friday 22 March, offers a journey through emotions. Each sculpture is accompanied by a QR code that offers descriptive poems and micro-stories. Visitors are advised to bring their own mobile phones and headsets, although the artists will supply these facilities to those that need them.

While touching artwork at exhibitions is prohibited in just about every gallery in the world, Govan openly encourages visitors to embrace his sculptures. The Scottish artist says that his prime purpose when creating a sculpture is for them



Scottish artist Toby Govan. SUR

to be touched. His work focuses mainly on animals, and he has pieces in private collections in the UK, France, Germany and the USA. There are also four pieces located in Estepona, one of which is an elephant that weighs one tonne.

Govan's latest exhibition can be viewed everyday between 10am and 11pm.

MuseoRalli
Marbella

Latin American art in Marbella



Free entrance. Open Tuesday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. More in museoralli.es

EXHIBITIONS

Magnum. Contact Sheets

MALAGA. *Until 27 March. La Malagueta bullring.* Renowned photography agency Magnum Photos has made a collection of its most iconic photographs from the last 70 years. Free to attend and open Tuesday to Sunday.

La Térmica

MALAGA. *La Térmica. Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 2pm and 5pm to 8.30pm*
Presente Continuo. *Until 17 March.* La Térmica is offering a new exhibition, Presente Continuo to celebrate a decade of its Creadorxs programme. It is a collection of work by various artists who have stayed at La Térmica. The exhibition addresses a variety of themes from the climate crisis to popular culture.
Aaron Johnson. *Until 1 June.* We Are Made of Stardust is an exhibition of 16 paintings by American artist Aaron Johnson, with the collaboration of the Almine Rech Gallery



Marino Amaya, Ronda.

Museo del Patrimonio Municipal

MALAGA. *Paseo de Reding. Colección Castillo Torreblanco. Until 25 August.* The exhibition of 19th century and early twentieth century works includes paintings by artists Moreno Carbonero, Emilio Ocón, Antonio Reyna Manescau, Guillermo Gómez Gil, Ricardo Verdugo Landi and Julio Romero de Torres among others.
Tomar Posición, Tomar Posesión. *Until 26 May.* Drawings, paintings and sculptures created over the decades by Malaga residents. Info.mupam@malaga.eu

Vino. Arte y Símbolo

MALAGA. *Until 21 April. Centro Cultural Fundación Unicaja, Plaza del Obispo.* The Museo Vivanco de la Cultura del Vino de Briones (La Rioja) has loaned a selection of its collection for this exhibition which highlights significance and relevance of wine depicted in art since Mesopotamia up to present day. The 80 works on display include art by Picasso, Warhol, Chagall and Sorolla among others.

OXO Video game museum

MALAGA. *Plaza del Siglo. Final Fantasy exhibition. Until 31 March 2024.* Unique in Spain and Europe, this interactive exhibition focuses on video game Final Fantasy, of which 180 million copies have been sold since it was created in the 1990s. Tickets: www.oxomuseo.com/entradas

Museo Carmen Thyssen

MALAGA. *Plaza Carmen Thyssen, Calle Compañía.*
Man Ray. *Until 21 April.* Man Ray, Fotografías Selectas' features over sixty pieces signed by Man Ray - the pseudonym of Emmanuel Radnitzky (Philadelphia, 1890 - Paris, 1976) - on loan from a private French collection. The exhibition is structured around three themes, nudes, portraits and personal rayographs (rayographs are created without a camera by placing objects on photosensitive paper and exposing them to light for a few seconds) .
Modernidad Latente. *From 16 March until 8 September.* Over 70 pictures, the majority from the Colección Telefónica, cover a period in Spanish art marked by a historic change: from before the Spanish Civil War and over Franco's era. www.carmenthyssenmalaga.org

Ateneo

MALAGA. *Ateneo, C/Compañía, 2*
Alejandro Montiel. *Until 29 March.* Going Back Forward is the title of this exhibition by Alejandro Montiel. The artist has used classic paintings and added surreal elements. An example is the portrait of Felipe IV painted by Velásquez which Montiel has seated riding an inflatable T-Rex dinosaur.

Casa Gerald Brenan

MALAGA. *Until 26 April. C/ Torremolinos, Churriana.* The winter exhibition is by sculptor Elena Laverón and includes small, medium and large sculptures as well as some of her drawings.

Model exhibition

ANTEQUERA. *Until 29 March. Sala Manuel Cascales, Museo de Ciudad de Antequera.* The Art of War is an exhibition of models of war machinery created by Antonio Lara Villalodres. The scale models are of weapons used by the Ancient Greeks, Romans and in the Middle Ages.

Photography Exhibition

ANTEQUERA. *Until 31 May. Fundación Unicaja.* Fundación Unicaja is holding a photography exhibition Entre Luces y Sombras (Between Lights and Shadows), which showcases the work of Alicante photographer, writer, teacher and industrial technical engineer Juan Ferrete. The exhibition includes over a hundred snapshots of plants from Doñana National Park as well as from other natural flora in Spain, many of which are in danger of extinction. Ferrete made these photographs using 19th-century techniques in order to raise awareness about the protection of biodiversity

Unicaja Art Competition

RONDA. *Until 30 March. Museo Unicaja Joaquín Peinado.* The entries to the competition are on display and consist of 39 works by 38 artists.

Marino Amaya

RONDA. *Until 30 April. Fundación Unicaja, C/Sor Ángela de la Cruz.* The Pastor Que Quiso Ser Un Sculptor (the priest who wanted to be a sculptor) is the title of this exhibition of works by Marino Amaya.

CAC Vélez-Málaga

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. *C/ Félix Lomas, 27.*
Lúmina. *Until 30 March.* A light installation by Pablo Berenguer in the gardens of the CAC.
Los Colores de Atardecer Preparan Los del Alba. *Until 31 March.* An exhibition by Quique Sarzamora.
El Pensamiento Pintado. *Until 7 April.* A selection of 79 art works by 34 artists from the CAC Málaga collection.

Women in Art

ALMUÑÉCAR. *Until 17 March. Sala de Exposiciones Rowland Fade.* An exhibition of works by female artists for International Women's Day.

MUSIC AND DANCE

La Cochera Cabaret

MALAGA. *Avda de los Guindos. 16 March, 10pm.* Mercedes Cañas.
22 March, 10pm. Lord Malvo. Tickets: www.lacocheraentradas.com/

Clarence Jazz Club

TORREMOLINOS. *C/Danza Invisible.. 15 March, 10pm.* El Oso y sus Sabandijas. Chicago blues.
16 March, 10pm. Pascalle & Co.
20 March, 10pm. Blues jam session.
21 March, 10pm. Jazz jam session.
22 March, 10pm. Brew 4ET

Sala Paris 15

MALAGA. *C/ de la Orotava. 16 March, 9pm.* Hens.



Model exhibition, Antequera.

16 March. Xpansion IDM 002.
22 March, 9.30pm. Rojuu. <https://paris15.es/>

La Trinchera

MALAGA. *C/ Parauta, 25.*
15 March, 9.30pm. Quique González.
16 March, 7.30pm. 2 Minutos punk rock.
22 March, 9pm. Kings Festival tribute night with The Exploding Boys (The Cure & Depeche Mode);- Parachutes (Coldplay); The Hype (U2).
23 March, 9pm. Tribute to Linkin Park
12 April, 9pm. Pol Granch. <https://salatrinchera.com/>

Velvet Club

MALAGA. *C/Convalecientes 11.*
15 March, 9pm. Not Your Business (hardcore) and Oniric Prison (thrash crossover). <https://entradium.com/>

La Posada

MALAGA. *Vincci Posada del Patio, Pasillo de Sta Isabel. 8.30pm every Friday.*
15 March, 8.30pm. Dana & Gianni.
22 March, 8.30pm. J Aranda & Bea Ross. www.tallerblues.es

Museum concerts

MALAGA.
Museo Carmen Thyssen. www.carmenthyssenmalaga.org/
16 March, 8.30pm. The Cuarteto Carmen Thyssen will be playing pieces from Haydn's The Seven Last Words of Christ.

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra

MALAGA. *.Teatro Cervantes.*
15 March, 8pm. Anton Bruckner, Symphony nº9 in D minor.
21, 22 March, 8pm. Easter concert. Beethoven.

Rachmaninov

MARBELLA. *18 March, 6.30pm. Escuela Universitaria Les Roches.20€.* Sentir Rachmaninov (to feel Rachmaninov) is a workshop on the composer and his music. To register: reservas@musicaconencanto.org

Sala María Cristina

MALAGA. *Sala Unicaja de Conciertos María Cristina.*
16 March, 7pm. The Orquesta de Cámara Promúsica. Easter Concert with music by Eduardo Ocón with the Sta María de la Victoria choir and with Mari Carmen Vicente Téllez (soprano), Iván Villa Domínguez (tenor) and Javier Moreno Ramos (bass).

<https://www.fundacionunicaja.com>

Ensemble de Guitarras y Piano de Tokyo

ALMUÑÉCAR. *20 March,8pm. Auditorio Casa de la Cultura.* The concert has been organised to raise funds for the Personas con Necesidades Especiales charity. Entry fee is a donation of 5€. Tickets from the box office or from Librería Fenicia

Easter Concert

ALMUÑÉCAR. *20 March,8pm. La Encarnación Church.* In aid of Cáritas charity with the Ciudad de Almuñécar choir.

Stabat Mater Dolorosa

MALAGA. *23 March, 8pm. St George's Church, Avda de Pries 1.* A concert with soprano Lourdes San Miguel, contralto Clarice Williams and pianist Sabastian Robles. Tickets 15€: www.stgeorgesmalaga.com

Molina de Cajiz

CAJIZ. *C/Barreña, 7.*
24 and 30 March 7pm. Finally Frank. Tribute to Frank Sinatra with David Beatty (vocals) and José Luis Lopretti (piano). Reservations: elmolinodecajiz@gmail.com

Rob Sas Band

ESTEPONA. *30 March, 11.30pm. Bar Louie Louie, Estepona port.* Rob Sas is a veteran musician of British Rock of the 80s and has played alongside the John Coghlan Band (ex Status Quo); Nick Simper (Deep Purple) and Lindsay Bridgewater (Ozzy Osbourne) among others.

The Stolen Gnomes concerts for St Patrick's Day

MALAGA. *Various venues.* The Stolen Gnomes five piece Celtic fusion band. Lively Irish/Celtic songs and tunes, Soul, Blues and Popular songs with a Celtic twist.
15 March, 10pm. Mullarkey's, Av Antonio Machado, Benalmádena.
16 March, 6pm. Plaza Canterbury Calle Nuño de Cañas, Jerez de la Frontera.
17 March, 2pm. Biddy Mulligan's Blvd. de la Cala, La Cala de Mijas.
17 March, 9pm. Bar Patrick's 19th Puerto Banus 17, Calle Ribera, Marbella.

Sacred and Ancient music

VARIOUS. *8, 9, 16, 23 March. 16 March, 12.30pm. Almáchar. San Mateo Apóstol Church.* Sacrum Ministries.



Thyssen Quartet, Museo Thyssen.

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23 March, 12.30pm. *Cómpeta, Nstra Sra de la Asunción Church.* Cuarteto Lígula.

Sun & Snow Festival

GRANADA. From 5 until 7 April. *Sierra Nevada.*

The activity-filled weekend focuses on the European Club scene with performances by DJ Holographic, Hunee, Jimi Jules B2B Trikk, John Talabot, Keope Live, Leafar Legov, Orla and others. More info: www.sunandsnowweekend.com

FLAMENCO

Jaime El Estampio and Company

ALMUÑECAR. 15 March, 7pm. Auditorio Casa de la Cultura. Tickets: Casa de la Cultura box office, Viajes Azulmarino and Librería Contreras.

María Toledo

MALAGA. 6 April, 8pm. Teatro Cervantes. Flamenco singer and pianist María Toledo presents her 7th recording, Vicente. www.teatrocervantes.es

THEATRE, BALLET AND OPERA

Salon Varietés

FUENGIROLA. 7.30pm daily, 7pm Sunday. *The Salon Varietés Theatre, Calle Emancipation.*
Grease: From 21 until 31 March the Rock'n'Roll musical Grease with a cameo appearance by Johnny G.

The Assassination of Julius Caesar

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA. 15 March, 9.30pm. *Cueva del Tesoro.* 5€. A production by the Calíope Teatro company. Tickets: www.turismorincon.es

LECTURES

The Arts Society

MARBELLA. 19 March, 7pm. *Hugo Investing, Urb La Carolina.* Benahavis Art Society's March lecture is Taking the Waters by lecturer Jane Tapley. Jane traces the history of spa towns from Roman days to current

Revamped Picasso museum exhibition inaugurated with talks in English

The exhibition, Pablo Picasso: Structures of Invention. The Unity of a Work at the Picasso Museum Malaga, includes talks and presentations

SUR IN ENGLISH

MALAGA. The event on Tuesday, 19 March, 6pm in the Christine Ruiz-Picasso Auditorium, will begin with an inaugural talk by Michael Fitzgerald, Professor of Art History at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut (USA). This will be followed by brief presentations from the five researchers who reorganised the present display to include five spotlight ex-

hibitions. Each expert presents a short study on issues which influenced Picasso's artistic development. These themes range from his relationship with African sculpture, showcasing African works from Picasso's own collection, curated by Joshua I. Cohen; to his paintings on wooden panels, curated by Meta Maria Valiusaityte; his plaster sculptures of 1930s, by Rocío Robles Tardío; his life in Paris during World War II, by Blair Hartzell; and the massive mural he painted in 1957-58 for the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, curated by Giovanni Casini.

The event, in English, will end with a roundtable discussion. Entry is free and the event can also be watched on the museum's YouTube channel.

TALKS

► **6pm: Pablo Picasso: Structures of Invention.** Michael FitzGerald. FABA. Professor of Art History. Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut.

► **6.20pm: Picasso and African sculpture.** Joshua Cohen. Associate Professor of Art History City College of New York & CUNY Graduate Center.

► **6.35pm: Picasso on wood.** Meta Valiusaityte. Doctor of Art History and curator.

► **6.50pm: Plaster sculptures of the 1930s.** Rocío Robles Tardío. Associate Professor.

Department of Art History. Complutense University.

► **7.05pm: From Studio to Salon: Picasso and the Liberation of Paris.** Blair Hartzell. Art historian and independent curator.

► **7.20pm: The Path to Creation: The UNESCO Mural.** Giovanni Casini. Assistant Professor. University of Turin.

► **7.50pm: Round table.** Moderators: Ross Finocchio, FABA, Senior Associate Research Professor, and Michael FitzGerald. Participants: Giovanni Casini, Blair Hartzell, Joshua Cohen, Rocío Robles, and Meta Valiusaityte.

times. The ones which stand out are of course Bath in England, which reached giddy heights of fashion in Regency times, and Baden Baden in Germany, but there are many lesser-known locations elsewhere in Europe and quite a few of them are in Spain. Tickets cost 10 euros for members and 15 euros for guests.

Financial Planning Seminars

MALAGA. Blevins Franks Wealth Management will be giving an update on the tax, inheritance and financial planning issues affecting UK nationals living in Andalucía. This year the seminars will be small group sessions.
19 March, 11am. The Oasis Business Center, Marbella.
20 March, 11am. The Oasis Business Center, Marbella
Reservations and information:

www.blevinsfranks.com
Call freephone 900 670 047 or email events.spain@blevinsfranks.com.

CHARITY

ACE Spring Dinner

LA CALA DE MIJAS. 16 March, 7pm. *El Olivo de La Cala , C/Butiplaya 5.* A three-course-meal with ½ bottle per person of red, white or rosé wine, beer, or soft drinks. Live music from Nick Cripps and a raffle with quality prizes. Tickets 45€ (includes a 10€ donation to ACE) in advance from-Restaurante El Olivo de La Cala, Ibex Insurance (Fuengirola), call: 711039124 or email: info@ace-charity.org
www.ace-charity.org

Lend a Hand Spring Festival

GAUCÍN. 23 March, 11am-6pm. Plaza



Roman baths, lecture Marbella.

del Santo Niño.
A plant sale, auction, Easter Bonnet competition as well as food and drinks. Live music by the Alpha Dogs

and the Gaucín International Choir. To raise funds for Médecins sans Frontières. More information Lend A Hand - Gaucín Facebook page.

Tapas route

CAMPANILLAS. Until 17 March. The XIV Ruta de la Tapa de Campanillas offers gourmet tapas and a drink, or dessert and a coffee, for 3€ in nineteen bars and restaurants. More information: www.fedelhorce.es/14-ruta-de-la-tapa-campanillas/

Walking tours for Alzheimer's MIJAS.

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FIESTAS AND FAIRS

Fiestas Patronales de San José

LA HERRADURA. From 16 until 19 March.

To celebrate the patron saint of the town, San Jose, various activities have been organised such as a tennis, football, padel, fishing and ping-pong tournaments, children's games, a family cycle ride, live music (including Chenoa on Sunday evening), flamenco performances, procession, offering of flowers etc.

FIESTAS AND FAIRS

St Patrick's Day

ARROYO DE LA MIEL. 17 March, from 12pm. Plaza de la Mezquita. Organised by the Irish association Spain and the town hall, there will be live music and dancing from Bandido, Danny Easton, Dance and Dreams as well as a U2 tribute by The Hype and craft beers Guinness etc.

BENALMÁDENA. 16 March, 8pm. Puerto Marina Dársena de Levante, C. La Fragata, Locales 1-2, 3, 29630. Kaleido Puerto Marina is hosting a celebration to mark St Patrick's Day.

MARBELLA. 17 March, from 12pm. Glorieta de la Fontanilla, paseo Marítimo. The Celtic Dancers, Andaluz Choir and other entertainment has been organised as well as craft beers, Guinness, Irish beef burgers etc

Día del Perro

ALGARROBO COSTA. 17 March, from 1pm. Avda Torre Ladeada. Breed competitions, puppy contests, demonstration of the search and rescue dogs of the firemen GERCCMA (1.30pm), Funny Dog show, prize giving and Axarquía Animal Rescue charity stand. Registration of dogs competing from 11am.

MORE IDEAS

Lux Mundi

TORRE DEL MAR. Lux Mundi Ecumenical Centre, Avda Moscatel. 952 543 334, email: luxmundi@luxmundi.org.

Trip to see Grease the musical. 23 March

Taize Prayer. 23 March, after mass at the Parish Church of San Andrés, Torre del Mar.

English market

MÁLAGA. 16 March, from 11.30am until 6pm. Avda Pries, 1. The English Cemetery is holding a Mercadillo Inglés (English Market) with stalls selling crafts, books, vintage, items of decoration, ceramics etc and there will also be a foodtruck for refreshments and food.1€ donation entry, children free. www.elmercadilloingles@gmail.com

Rare and exotic plant fair

BENALMÁDENA. From 29 until 31st March. Parque La Paloma. The Feria de Plantas de Colección focuses on succulents but there will be over fifty local and national horticulturists exhibiting and selling all kinds of plants including rare and

Costa goes green with annual festivities to celebrate St Patrick's Day

Large-scale events and an array of different activities have been organised to honour the patron of Ireland

TONY BRYANT

MÁLAGA. Irish communities along the Costa del Sol will join in the world celebrations to mark the feast day of Saint Patrick, the patron of Ireland, on Sunday (17 March).

Large-scale parties, concerts and an array of different activities are organised by town halls and individual associations, and thousands of people are expected to turn out dressed in their country's national colours, along with the floppy hats and amusing costumes that have become synonymous with the day.

Benalmádena will host one of the biggest celebrations in Plaza de La Mezquita, an event that attracts thousands of revellers from all over the province, along with an army of patriotic Irish visitors who leave the Emerald Isles especially for the occasion.

The town's activities begin at 1.30pm with a mass in the church of the immaculate conception in Arroyo de la Miel. This is followed at around 2.30pm by the traditional parade from the square



A previous St Patrick's Day parade on its route from the church in Arroyo de la Miel to the main square. SUR

in front of the church to the Plaza de la Mezquita, where an afternoon of live Celtic music and dance will take place. Organised by the Irish Association of Spain and the town hall, the festivities will include performances by Danny Easton, Dance and Dreams, Sur Pipes Band, New Tricks, and a special tribute show to Irish rockers U2. Of course, traditional Irish cuisine will be available, and plentiful Guinness to get everyone in the mood for the 'craic'.

As in other towns in the province, emblematic places

such as El Bil Bil castle will be illuminated in green to honour the day.

The area of Montemar (Torremolinos) will also host a day of fun in honour of the Apostle of Ireland. Most of the bars in this area, known locally as 'little Ireland', are decorated for the occasion and offer live entertainment, along with menus offering typical Irish gastronomy, in particular, the steadfast stew.

Another large-scale event will be held on the Paseo Marítimo (next to the tourist office) in Marbella between

midday and 11pm on Sunday. Also organised by the Irish Association of Spain, the day will offer a series of performances, including The Celtic Dancers, The Andaluz Choir, Bandido and New Tricks; as well as plenty of black velvet.

Biddy Mulligans Irish Pub in La Cala de Mijas will also host its St Patrick's Day party on Sunday, starting at 2pm with Celtic music from The Stolen Gnomes, a popular local band celebrated for their Celtic fusion, blues and soul.

For events in other towns, see town hall social media.

exotic species. The fair starts at 5pm on Good Friday.

Hash House Harriers

AXARQUÍA. 17 March, 12pm. C/Trasera Gloria, near fort, Vélez-Málaga. The Hash House Harriers is a social club which meets every other Sunday at different locations in the Axarquía. Members take turns at laying a trail for the rest of the Hash to follow (duration 1.5-2 hours). It is completed at your own pace, open to all ages, abilities, sexes and nationalities. All that is needed is a pair of trainers and a sense of humour. This Sunday, St Patrick's Day, people taking part are encouraged to dress up accordingly. Cost is 4€ which includes beer and cold refreshments. Afterwards members head to a restaurant for lunch. www.AH3.es

O. V. FILMS

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

Yelmo Cines, Plaza Mayor
MÁLAGA. Centro de Ocio, Plaza



Día del Perro, Algarrobo Costa.

Mayor, Avda Alfonso Ponce León. Tel: 902902103. www.yelmocines.es.
Dune Part 2: 12.30 (Sun); 17.30, 20.45 (Fri-Sun), 19.15 (Tues).
Kung Fu Panda 4: 12.30 (Sun); 16.30 (Sat, Sun).
The Iron Claw: 13.00 (Sun); 19.40 (Tues).
Oppenheimer: 13.05 8Sun), 20.00 (Tues).
Imaginary: 20.15 (Tues)

Yelmo Cines, Rincón

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA. C/ Arroyo Totalán. Tel: 902220922. www.yelmocines.es
Dune Part 2: 19.15 (Tues); 21.30 (every day).
The Iron Claw: 19.40 (Tues).

Yelmo Cines, Vialia
MÁLAGA. Centro Comercial Vialia. Tel: 902220922. www.yelmocines.es
Dream Scenario: 13.25 (Sun).
Dune Part 2: 12.15, 14.10 (Sun); 17.00, 19.10 (Mon, Tues, Thurs); 17.30, 20.45 (Fri-Sun, Wed).
Kung Fu Panda 4: 14.30 (Sun), 18.30 (Fri-Sun, Wed); 20.25 (Tues).
Oppenheimer: 14.00 (Sun); 20.00 (every day).
The Iron Claw: 19.40 (Tues).
Poor Things: 13.30 (Sun).
Imaginary: 20.30 (Tues).
May, December: 21.45 (Tues).

Cinesur Miramar
FUENGIROLA. Avda de la Encarnación. Tel: 952198600.
Kung Fu Panda 4: 11.45, 16.30, 18.30 (Sat, Sun); 18.00 (Fri, Mon-Thurs).
Dune 2: 11.45, 16.20, 19.30, 20.30 (Sat, Sun), 18.00 (Fri, Mon, Tues, Thurs), 20.00 (Fri, Wed).

The Iron Claw: 12.00, 16.15 (Sat, Sun); 17.15 (Fri, Mon-Thurs).
How To Have Sex: 12.15, 16.00, 18.00 (Sat, Sun); 17.15, 19.15 (Fri, Mon-Thurs).
Imaginary: 12.15, 16.00 (Sat, Sun); 17.15 (Fri, Mon-Thurs).
Bob Marley: One Love: 12.15, 15.45 (Sat, Sun); 21.10, 22.00 (Fri, Mon-Thurs).
Poor Things: 12.00 (Sat, Sun).

Cinesur Ingenio
VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. Avda Juan Carlos, 1. Tel: 667773187.
Dune 2: 11.50, 15.50, 19.00, 21.50 (Sat, Sun); 19.00, 21.40 (Fri, Mon-Thurs).
Kung Fu Panda 4: 12.10, 16.10, (Sat, Sun).
Imaginary: 22.20 (Tues).

Kinepolis La Cañada
MARBELLA. Crta Ojén. La Cañada Centro Comercial.
Kung Fu Panda 4: 12.15 (Sun); 16.30 (Fri-Sun); 16.15 (Tues-Thurs); 17.15 (Mon).
Dune: Part 2: 12.15 (Sun); 17.15, 20.30 (Fri-Mon); 16.15, 19.30 (Tues-Thurs).
The Iron Claw: 20.30 (Tues-Thurs); 21.30 (Mon); 22.00 (Fri-Sun).

Craze for cosmetic treatments leads to boom on Costa del Sol

Men turning to aesthetic treatments and a willingness to openly discuss procedures are behind a huge increase in the number of cosmetic clinics in the province

IVÁN GELIBTER

MALAGA. Malaga now has more than double the number of cosmetic clinics than the province had back in 2015, new data shows. Eight years ago, there were 30 aesthetic medicine clinics on the Costa del Sol and in Malaga province. According to the Junta's regional Ministry of Health, this number shot up to 74 in 2023, a 150% increase. Faced with the evident increase, Medesma, an association of cosmetic doctors in Malaga, was founded a few years ago in the province. Its training officer and spokesperson Dr Javier Romero

said the increase in clinics is "exponential". He attributed the rise to two key elements: more men opting for cosmetic surgery and the elimination of a taboo in society and people's growing interest in "improving" their physical appearance.

More male patients

"Until recently patients were women over 40, now we have a lot of 20-year-olds," Romero said. He added about 70% of patients are women and 30% are men. "Thanks to the increase in the number of Master's degrees, there are a lot of new aesthetic doctors coming out every year. That facilitates the growth of the business. When we started there were five of us and we all knew each other," he said. Romero urged patients to check their clinic has a NICA accreditation and that the doctors are also accredited. An emerging issue is dental practitioners who have started to perform cosmetic procedures that aren't oral related.



Botox is the most popular treatment for both men and women. **sur**

"As a dental clinic they have the right to add an aesthetic department, get the NICA accreditation and hire an aesthetic doctor. There is no problem there. The issue is that dentists claim that they are the professionals of the mouth, and that they could also do lip fillings and the like. We at SEME (national association of aesthetic doctors) have discussed this and for the moment we don't agree," Romero said.

Treatments

SEME presented a new report last week in Malaga, in which it pointed

out that half of the Spanish population has had cosmetic treatment. The figure is high as it also includes nutritional treatments. The report pointed out that the age group receiving cosmetic treatment is widening: younger patients (14-20%), 16-25 year olds (14-20%) and people over 45 (28-38%) are on the rise (14-20%). In terms of social class, 69% correspond to the "upper or upper-middle class". According to this report, the treatments most associated with aesthetic medicine are nutritional

counselling (50%), followed by botox (39%) and other injectables (38%). As for the most popular aesthetic medicine treatments: IPL, hyaluronic acid fillers, mesotherapy, PRP and toxin. Romero said the most common procedure among women is botox, while in men it is also botox, but to treat excessive sweating. "Treatments in general have been dropping in price, and that allows more people to have them done. Some 25 years ago, botox cost 700 euros. Today it is between 300 and 400," he added.

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What are you scared of?

Survival mode. Be it a fear of love, of an apocalypse, creepy crawlies or simply getting caught in the rain, there are literally hundreds of phobias, some more unusual than others

ISAAC
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You must be afraid of something. Denial would be stating a lie as we are talking about a basic human emotion. Experts go so far as to say that feeling no fear would have rendered us extinct a long time ago. Imagine if our bodies did not warn us about situations that could put us in danger! True, not all people react in the same way, but even the bravest person will have felt fear at some point. Cast your minds back. Maybe it is not as irrational as a phobia, but a justifiable fear: maybe of heights, of a certain creepy-crawly, of getting trapped somewhere or of flying through air turbulence. "We appreciate that feeling of fear rising up in the face of a real threat, as it is fulfilling a function that's been adapted for our very sur-



vival," says Judith Forns Pous, psychologist, expert in phobias and academic at the University of Barcelona.

The problem is that sometimes we can experience an irrational, excessive and uncontrollable fear triggered by something that represents no real danger at all, placing certain limits on our daily life and generat-

ing symptoms similar to those of anxiety. This is when fears become phobias, and their appearance is due to "a mixture of psychological, environmental and genetic factors or even bad experiences that have been poorly managed," explains Carolina Vázquez Morcho, clinical health psychologist and academic consultant at Deusto Salud.

"Most phobias stick around through constant avoidance of the feared object or situation, which means that people do not learn to manage the fear these can generate. Many phobias also originate from vicarious experiences, that is, from observation or imitation, or from shared stories," says Isabel Aranda, behavioural psychologist

at TherapyChat.

Six per cent of population affected

Claustrophobia (fear of enclosed spaces), amaxophobia (fear of driving/ being driven) or agoraphobia (fear of open spaces) are some of the most well-known, but there are dozens more of every kind. Some 6% of Spain's popu-

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ILLUSTRATION SANDRA LODI

lation suffers from some type of phobia, according to data collected by the Spanish Society of Psychiatry and Mental Health. That percentage is likely to be higher as many sufferers will not consult their doctor for fear of being labelled as having 'a psychological problem'.

Apart from those with phobias of specific things, such as spiders or flying, and those with non-specific fears or with several 'assumed' fears, there are people with phobias of more extraordinary things and situations, deemed extraordinary because they are so rare. Some examples of irrational fears: of specific numbers (arithmophobia), of getting wet from rainwater (pluvio-phobia), of clowns (coulrophobia), of a certain colour (chromophobia), of contracting a venereal disease (cypridophobia), of the world ending due to environmental problems (ecophobia), of falling in love (philophobia) or of going to work (ergophobia).

Turning to our fears around the

seasons of the year, one particular phobia is very seasonal: Samhainophobia is the fear of Halloween, a time of year specifically designed to trigger fear. However, for sufferers of Samhainophobia they will be afraid of anything and everything that Halloween entails, starting with all its associated iconography. In the case of this and other phobias, the symptoms that can manifest themselves range from palpitations, profuse sweating, a feeling of suffocation, numbness in all extremities and even extremely negative thoughts related to the fear of dying.

For sufferers of such phobias the experts stress the importance of turning to mental health professionals, as they will know how best to treat them, especially if such fears are negatively affecting their daily lives. It becomes essential when symptoms intensify or when that person must be irremediably exposed to the feared stimulus (for example, having to fly for work reasons when that person is afraid of flying).

The good news regarding these irrational fears is that they can be cured by working on them. Any bad news? Well yes, we would have to be exposed to our particular phobia. Of course, this is done in a "controlled, progressive and well-timed manner, in a safe environment and with cognitive behavioural therapy tools, where they are shown how to cope with all the physical symptoms and then, when any signs appear, we can work on them through neurolinguistic programming techniques," explains Morrocho, who agrees with Forns on the importance of "restructuring all these emotions to learn to trust oneself," as well as acquiring the ability to face any adverse situation.

"The goal is not to become wholly at ease with whatever causes the fear, but to learn to face that fear with more resilience. It's the being able to choose whether or not you want to do such a thing because, when you have a phobia, you have no choice," sums up Carmen Rodríguez, director of the Psychological Intervention Area at Affor Health.

Never underestimate a childhood fear

In the case of children's fears, creating a safe family environment is essential. For example, if they are scared of ghosts, monsters or vampires – usually when aged 2 to 7 – "we must stay by their side, as exemplars of facing that fear, explaining to them what any of our fears are and how we face them". Humour is a powerful tool and so is storytelling - choose one with content about overcoming fears.

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Cheese without COWS

ANDREW J. LINN



Most readers of this column probably have limited ambitions as far as saving the planet by changing their eating habits are concerned. Nevertheless, accepting that veganism is a growing trend, it is hardly surprising that commercial interests are doing all they can to hitch their wagon to this particular star. A typical convert has gone on record as saying she'd been surprised by how many foods were easy to give up. She barely missed bacon, butter or cow's milk. But here's the rub: she couldn't live without cheese.

Six months later she finally found a creamy, smoky Irish white cheddar imitation—made from cashews, coconut oil, tapioca starch, seaweed, paprika, and a secret bacterial culture—with a texture indistinguishable from goat cheese. Vegan cheeses - which mimic the taste and texture of the dairy version without using animal products - may run to dozens of different versions, including herb and peppercorn 'no-goat', caramelised onion cheddar, garlic chive cream cheese and even a vegan halloumi. Vegan cheese boutiques are primed to be the new gluten-

free bakeries, and the global vegan cheese market is valued at about \$2.4 billion (US), approximately half of what the plant-based meat market is currently worth. Cheese alternatives may produce about half the CO2 emissions of dairy versions and vegan cheese is becoming more palatable than its plasticky predecessors. Of course, increased consumption of artificial cheese means less cows, which, in the long run, means fewer farms and farmers, so while one problem may be partially solved, as in most such cases, another one is created.

WINE OF THE WEEK

La Pastora Manzanilla 2023
Forget light finos and manzanillas; this type of sherry is classified as 'pasada', or 'aged', and it has spent more time being matured in butts than is usual. It is also sold 'en rama' signifying it has been bottled direct from the barrel rather than via a mechanical bottling line. Around 14 euros per half bottle.



Major police operation against counterfeit Malaga wines

A gang allegedly marketed a lower-quality product from La Rioja as a superior wine from Malaga province with a recognised and protected designation of origin

EUROPA PRESS

LOGROÑO. Police in Spain are investigating three people after detecting an alleged fraud ring involving 18,400 bottles of falsely labelled wine from La Rioja, which they claimed to be from Malaga. The trio are believed to be responsible for financial fraud exceeding 227,000 euros.

They were using a business network that marketed low-quality wine from La Rioja as a higher-quality wine originating from a region with a recognised protected designation of origin in Malaga, specifically from Málaga, Sierra de Málaga, and Pasas de Málaga.

A complaint from a representative of these designations prompted an investigation by the Seprona unit of the Guardia Civil. The complaint revealed the unauthorised sale of certain bottles of white wine prominently featuring the term Manilva which is protected and reserved exclusively for those registered in its regulatory council.

Through investigations involving over a thousand labels and bottle strips, it was determined that the packaging of the fraudulent wines had been carried out in bottling plants based in La Rioja. The majority of these fake wines had been sold through specialised online wine platforms.

The analysis of bottles purchased from one of these websites by the Agri-Food Quality Control Service of the Ministry of Agriculture of La Rioja determined that the wine had not been produced with one hundred per cent Muscat of Alexandria grapes, as is the practice



A Guardia Civil officer at a winery during the investigation. SUR

for companies affiliated with the wine designations of origin in Malaga, with a residual percentage instead.

It was also confirmed that the wine had been made with grapes from the La Rioja designation of origin.

The Seprona officers identified the modus operandi the network employed. Through a person acting as a sales representa-

tive, they sold the wine using terms protected by the designation of origin itself, such as Denominación de Origen Certificada (Certified Designation of Origin) DOC Vinos de Fincas, without being registered with the National Accreditation and Certification Entity (ENAC), nor having authorisation from the aforementioned designation.

In this way, the gang deceived

the consumer into believing that the purchased wine was from Malaga with its corresponding designation, when in reality, it was from La Rioja.

In this operation, codenamed Utem, three individuals have been investigated for crimes against industrial property, document forgery, market and consumer-related offences and fraud.



Toroitich, winner of the Malaga Half Marathon for the second year on the trot

Over 5,000 athletes took part in the race around the city on Sunday, with new records set in the women's category

PEDRO LUIS ALONSO

MALAGA. For the second time in a row, Kenyan runner Geoffrey Toroitich clinched victory at the TotalEnergies Malaga Half Marathon which took place on Sunday. This time, however, he clocked exactly one minute more (1h.00:13, compared to 59:13) than his record in the event.

Despite more than favourable conditions throughout, Toroitich fell short of his previous performance as his pace fluctuated, slowing down slightly as the race progressed. Despite this, he, nonetheless, pulled ahead solo by the eighth kilometre.

Toroitich finished more than two minutes ahead of Vincent Kipkorir in second (1h.02:30), followed by Barnabas Kipkoech (1h.02:32). The top European finisher was Jonas Glans (1h.02:44), while the top Spaniard, Daniel Gracia, secured eleventh spot (1h.08:51).

Local athlete Ignacio González finished with a time of 1h.09:33, using the race as part of his triathlon training.

New women's record

The highlight of the event was the women's race, with Loice Chemnung smashing the previous re-



The Kenyan runner as he crossed the line on Sunday. MARILÚ BÁEZ

cord with a remarkable time of 1h.05:58, placed seventh overall.

Winfridah Moraa followed closely with a time of 1h.05:59. Both runners broke the previous record by over a minute and a half.

Chemnung, known for her impressive 10,000-metre record of 30:08, made her half marathon debut, while Moraa surpassed her personal best of 1h.06:40.

Despite their efforts, Fatima Azzahraa from Cordoba failed to break the Spanish half marathon record, finishing at 1h.11:32. Nonetheless, Malaga now ranks as the third fastest city in Spain for half marathons, with Sunday's women's record-setting performance solidifying its place among the top fifteen

fastest cities globally.

The race course, starting from Ciudad de Málaga athletics stadium on the western side of the side and ending at the eastern coastline with minimal elevation changes, provides ideal conditions for achieving fast times.

Prize money totalling 1,500 euros was awarded to both the male and female winners, with an additional 1,000-euro incentive for breaking the race record, which Chemnung accomplished in the women's category.

With over 5,000 participants this year, similar to the previous edition, the event marked another success, especially considering the shorter interval between races.

Nerja athlete vows to clear name after testing positive for banned substance

During a recent routine anti-doping control, Ouassim Oumaiz gave a positive result for GHRP-2, a growth hormone-releasing peptide

MARINA RIVAS

MALAGA. Spanish athlete Ouassim Oumaiz tested positive for GHRP-2, a growth hormone-releasing peptide, during a routine anti-doping control earlier this year, it has been revealed.

The 25-year-old, who hails from Nerja, is the current Spanish champion in the 5,000 metres and is hoping to qualify for the upcoming Paris Olympics.

Speaking to SUR, he strongly denied any intentional use of banned substances: "I firmly believe I'm innocent. It's really upsetting to have my reputation damaged without any solid proof."

He added: "I'm not familiar with this substance and would never knowingly take anything prohibited. I always consult with my doctor before taking any supplements. My integrity means everything to me, and I would never put my reputation at risk."

While the Spanish Athletics Federation has acknowledged the ongoing investigation, no provisional sanctions have been imposed on Oumaiz at this time.



Oumaiz, left, representing Spain at the World Championships. EFE

European Cricket League action hots up as finals week approaches

The lineup for Championship Week, which begins on Monday, is set to be decided this weekend

DARYL FINCH

MALAGA. The European Cricket League action currently taking place at the Cártama Cricket Oval is gearing up to its climax as the group phase draws to a close this weekend.

The Championship Week, which will see all of the group winners face off, begins on Monday and, at the time of publication, five teams had already sealed their passage.

In the opening weeks of the competition, English side Hornchurch and Jersey's Old Victorians joined Group A winners Jinnah Brescia (Italy) in the next round.

Then, last Friday, defending champions Dreux progressed from



Group F action at the Cártama Oval this week. SUR

Group D after winning the all-French clash with Paris Université Club by 41 runs.

On Monday, Scottish side Forfarshire qualified from Group E, despite coming fourth, by beating Dutch team V.O.C. Rotterdam by six wickets in the play-offs.

At the time of going to press, 2022 winners Pak I Care Badalona (Spain) were getting on well in their

quest to reach finals week, with just one more group needing to be decided this weekend.

For those keen on experiencing the action firsthand, there will be four or five 90-minute matches, with each side restricted to ten overs, played daily from 11am to 9pm until the grand final on Friday 22 March. Admission to the matches is free of charge.



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Malaga's winning run brought to a disappointing end

Coach Sergio Pellicer believes his team were denied a "textbook penalty" in Sunday's goalless draw in Sanlúcar de Barrameda

SANLUQUEÑO **O**
MALAGA **O**

DARYL FINCH



MALAGA. The winning streak is over for Malaga CF, who had to settle for a goalless draw on Sunday afternoon away at struggling Sanluqueño.

It was a difficult day for Sergio Pellicer's side; they had to adapt to the circumstances (windy conditions and a particularly physical opponent) and were never truly comfortable in what was ultimately a scrappy affair.

Although the visitors controlled possession, the conditions at El Palmar were a level-



The visitors passed up on a series of good chances in Cadiz on Sunday afternoon. **AGENCIA LOF**

ler and the match remained evenly poised right until the end.

That said, Sanluqueño started the brighter of the two teams, but Malaga had the clearer chances. The first major opportunity fell the way of Dioni who somehow missed the target after squeez-

ing the ball through the keeper's legs from a tight angle.

Next, Genaro's strike from outside the box required the intervention of Samuel Pérez's fingertips to keep the scores level at the break.

In the second half, Pellicer

made attacking substitutions to increase the pressure, but Malaga struggled to convert their opportunities.

Dioni, again, was culpable, missing a double guilt-edged chance from close-range before substitute Álvaro Bastida struck

the base of the post for the hosts at the other end.

Penalty shout

Then, as it looked like the game was done and dusted, Malaga thought they had a chance to snatch all three points in the dying moments when Javier Avilés was on the receiving end of a kick to the shin after having already got his shot off. However, the referee decided against giving the penalty.

"It's pretty clear, I saw it on TV," said Pellicer following the game. "That was a textbook penalty."

That said, the coach was happy with the outcome overall: "I'm satisfied with the team's performance and keeping a clean sheet, but we must continue to push and improve. The result this time was fair."

While Malaga's unbeaten run continues, their momentum has been halted. With leaders Castellón losing to Alcoyano, a win would have helped Malaga to narrow the gap to the top. As it is, the Blue and Whites sit fourth, eight points adrift, and with Cordoba having strengthened their grip on third place.

Up next for Malaga is the visit of Intercity to La Rosaleda on Sunday (noon kick-off).

Keeper's heroics earn Antequera a point

Elsewhere, it was a disappointing matchday for Malaga's local sides in the regional tiers of Spanish football

ADG / J. R. PADILLA

MALAGA. Antequera have goalkeeper Iván Moreno to thank after the Malaga side picked up a hard-fought point on their visit to the capital to take on Real Madrid's B team.

After a low-key first half, the hosts stepped up the intensity after the break and forced the visiting keeper into action on multiple occasions.

Three minutes into the second half, Moreno had to make a crucial save to block a close-range effort from César Palacios.

But the pivotal moment came in the 59th minute when Pepe Mena fouled Palacios to give Nico Paz the opportunity from the penalty spot. However, the keeper kept the effort out with a splendid dive to his left.

Moreno proved decisive again in the 65th minute with a great save with his feet to stop Álvaro Rodríguez.

In the closing minutes, though, when the wind and a deflection left him powerless to stop Víctor Muñoz's cross-shot,



Iván Moreno's penalty save. **LOF**

the post came to his rescue and the ball bounced back into play.

This goalless draw keeps Antequera in contention for the Primera RFEF play-offs; they currently sit seventh, five points off fifth place.

No wins for Malaga sides

In the division below, there were no wins for the local sides this weekend. Marbella (third) suffered their first defeat in the second half of the season, losing resoundingly on the road to Antoniano (3-0).

Neighbours Estepona (sixth) put in a better performance away from home but ultimately conceded in the 83rd minute to Lucas Pérez, gifting Sevilla B the 1-0 win.

Strugglers El Palo (17th), how-

ever, were able to salvage a point at home against Yeclano, with Aranda's goal sealing a 1-1 draw.

Nine-point lead

In Tercera RFEF, leaders Juventud de Torremolinos extended their lead over Real Jaén to nine points after putting on an attacking masterclass against Poli Ejido (4-0) thanks to a brace each from Iker Burgos and Fran Castillo.

Conversely, Torre del Mar (third) lacked an attacking edge in their goalless draw against Huétor-Vega. The result means they were unable to reclaim second spot and now risk missing out on being part of the title race.

In fact, just below them sit Atlético Malagueño whose impressive recent form, plus a valuable 1-0 victory against Real Jaén, have boosted their own chances of promotion. For them, Chupete sealed the win with a superb header from a corner taken by Cordero in the 51st minute.

At the bottom of the table, Rincón (16th) missed another opportunity, drawing 1-1 at home with Poli Almería after conceding an equaliser in the 89th minute.

Málaga City (14th), meanwhile, delivered a solid performance in Torreperogil, earning a 1-1 draw of their own.

First match under new ownership ends in draw for struggling Vélez

Argentine businessman Pablo Sebastián Nilo is the new owner and insists the club is still in financial difficulty

J. R. P.

MALAGA. The new era at Vélez Club de Fútbol started in earnest on Sunday as the side bagged a 1-1 draw in their first game since Argentine businessman Pablo Sebastián Nilo took over.

Despite Ciudad Real's dominance, the hosts were able to hang on for a point and currently sit 12th in the Segunda RFEF table.

Nilo, 42, officially took the reins last week, bringing to a close three-and-a-half years of Swedish ownership.

"We have come to put out a fire, but the situation is still critical and the club could have disappeared," he said during a press conference on Thursday 7 March when the news was announced.

Asked how much the club owes, he said that they are still "studying the numbers".

New coach

Responding to questions about

Jesper Norberg and Magnus Pehrsson, president and vice-president, respectively (Pehrsson is also the current coach and sporting director), Nilo commented, "We appreciate their work. They are part of the previous project and there is a transition, so in a few days we want to announce a new coach." Nilo added that he would be Argentinian.

Pehrsson arrived at the club in the summer of 2020, earning promotion to Segunda RFEF. However, failure to secure a further promotion led to the club falling into debt and players and other staff not being paid for up to four months. This led to a player exodus.

The club brought in players from the reserve and youth teams for the last few games, in which they miraculously managed to scrape two draws.

In addition to the financial problems brought about by failure to find investors, the club also failed to reach an agreement with Vélez-Málaga town hall for the transfer or purchase of land for a future sports city, through which the club had hoped to develop its football academy.



Nilo



A LOOK AT LA LIGA
ROB PALMER
Commentator, ESPN

Bringing the trophy back home

Statistically, at least, Spain stands a chance of boasting the European champions. Not bad for a country that is said to have a 'farmers league' by the uninitiated out there



Let's not have the "Which is the best league in the world?" argument yet again, but La Liga must be very proud of having more clubs in the Champions League quarter finals than any other country.

Neither Real Madrid, Atlético or Barcelona breezed through, yet they all have a decent chance of bringing the elite European trophy back to Spain.

The obvious favourites are the Premier League clubs. Manchester City have an immense side and enviable pool of players to dip into. Arsenal are strong and have talent in their prime years. The danger for both English clubs is that they will have to concentrate so hard on the fight for the domestic title that it will impact on the European adventures.

The two German teams shouldn't be underestimated, however Bayern Munich look too fragmented to launch a serious bid and Borussia Dortmund appear to have exceeded all expectations by getting this far. Paris Saint-Germain always seem to flounder when it gets serious, and this is the weakest team in recent years from the French capital.

So, there's a great opportunity for the two Madrids and Barça. With their best eleven, I'd argue that Real could challenge Man City as the top team in Europe. Sadly, Thibaut Courtois, Éder Militão and



Pau Cubarsí. EFE

David Alaba are long term casualties. With those three I'd back them to win the whole tournament, without them they lack a little ballast. Carlo Ancelotti has done a remarkable job in patching things up week in and week out to walk La Liga. The Champions League may just need a little more stability.

Nobody expected Barcelona to get this far, especially their coach Xavi Hernández; otherwise, he wouldn't have announced that he's packing the job in at the end of the season. Their best two players are teenagers - and they have no fear factor. Pau Cubarsí won player-of-the-match in his Champions League debut this

week. Lamine Yamal, still only 16, continues to astound everyone with his incredible talent.

Factor in the know-how of İlkay Gündoğan and Robert Lewandowski and you may have a team to be reckoned with. It's the last realistic chance for the German and Poland stars.

Combine this with the energy of the emerging talent and you may have a proper underdog.

I predicted in this column that Atlético would be favourites to win the Spanish title. Well, that's not going to happen! Maybe I chose the wrong competition? They have a team of seasoned stars, one of the best managers in the world, and have reached the final twice in the last decade.

Diego Simeone's side haven't lost at home in the league or Europe this season. They are very capable of holding opponents on their own turf, quietening the crowd and then turning them over at the Metropolitano. That was the plan that was executed perfectly against Inter Milan, even if they needed to hold their nerve in the penalty shootout.

Statistically, at least, Spain stands a chance of boasting the European champions. Not bad for a country that is said to have a 'Farmers League' by the uninitiated out there.

Malaga-born Brahim chooses to play for Morocco over Spain

BORJA GUTIÉRREZ

MALAGA. Real Madrid's Brahim Díaz will play international football for Morocco, having grown tired of being overlooked by the Spanish national team, SUR can confirm.

Though he was born in Malaga and came through the Blue and Whites' academy (and later Manchester City), Brahim has decided to finally accept the offer to play for Morocco, who have been trying to recruit him since before the 2018 World Cup.

Brahim has North African roots on his father's side, with his paternal grandmother, with the surname Abdelkader, having been born there.

The desire of the now Real Madrid midfielder had been to succeed with Spain (as he did in every youth category since he was part of the under-15s setup). However, the lack of interest shown by the Federation and current coach Luis de la Fuente have finally exhausted the patience of the 24-year-old.

This decision was finalised on Sunday night and the Malaga man will obtain Moroccan nationality in the coming days, making him eligible for selection for the upcoming friendlies against Angola and Mauritania.

A lost talent?

The news has had major repercussions for Spanish football, with

many left with the feeling that Spain have allowed one of the greatest talents of his generation to get away.

The main trigger for this decision has been a continued refusal to call the player up, both when he was a key player for AC Milan during his three-year loan spell and this year, now that he is one of La Liga's breakout stars since his return to Madrid.

One of Brahim's fears had been that even if he were to be called up by Spain now, he may not get regular game time and could once again miss out on major tournaments. In contrast, in Morocco, they have promised to treat him as the star of their national team, with major events on the horizon such as the Africa Cup of Nations, which they will host in 2025, and the 2030 World Cup, which they will co-host alongside Spain and Portugal.



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Aries
March 21st - April 20th
As Mars your personal planet eases into Pisces over the weekend, you'll need to pace yourself. Energy levels can rise and dip.




Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
Ready for a respite? The Sun's entrance into your spiritual zone makes this a time to tie up loose ends and resolve issues that have been hanging over you.




Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
The Sun's move into Aries could find you being more proactive in this regard, which is great for networking, social media and for linking up with the movers and shakers in your area.




Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
You might be ready to do more travelling or to study, as Mars in Pisces from this week encourages you to exit your comfort zone and be more adventurous.




Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
The movement of the Sun, your guide planet, into Aries and your travel sector might help lighten the mood, while its tie to Pluto can inspire you to make a bold decision.




Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
Some things aren't meant to stay the same, and you know this, which is why the Sun's move into Aries could be a call to tackle a matter that really needs to shift.




Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
A relationship issue could come to a head over the next day or so, bringing an opportunity to clear the air. Perhaps you need to get something out in the open.



Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
You'll be motivated to get your life in order, and it may be because you're ready to start something new. It could be an exciting project or a decision to get fit or lose weight.

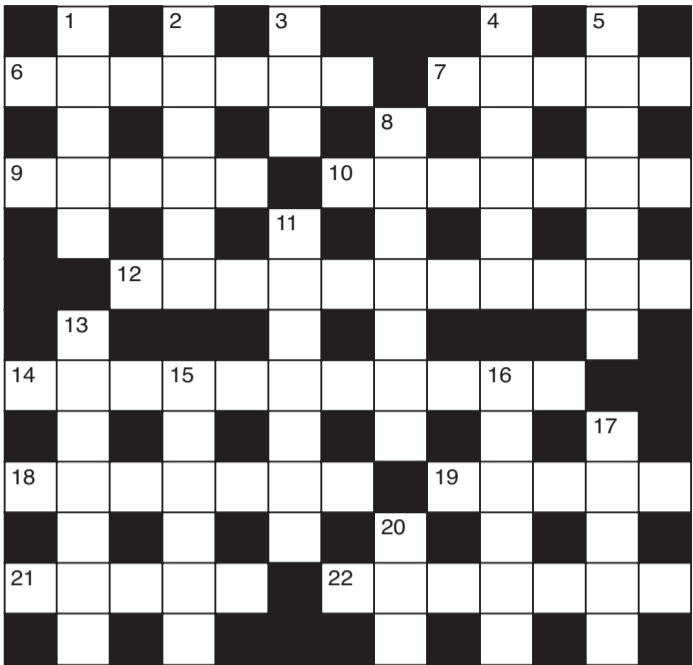


Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
Been busy with domestic issues recently? Mind, as Mars enters Pisces, you'll be keen to take decisions that improve home and family life.



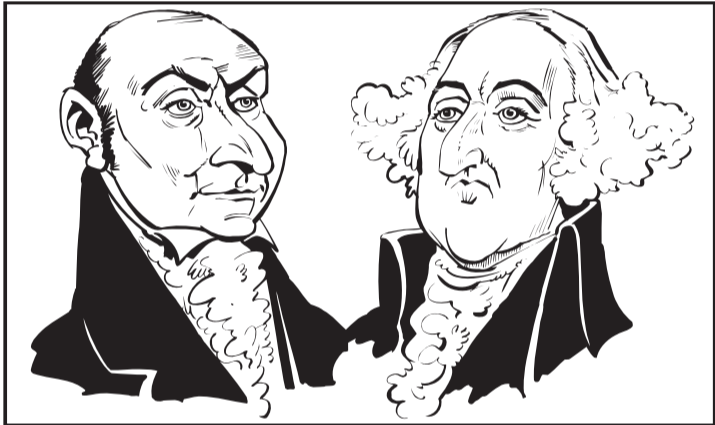
Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
As Venus aligns with prudent Saturn, you may need to attend a formal or business meeting that brings key issues into focus.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11613



- Across**
6. Meat cooked in ovens (7)
7. Earth's core (5)
9. There's one in new development in Italian city (5)
10. The first breach? (7)
12. Not the revolutionary part of Europe apparently (5,6)
14. They may result from snap decisions (11)
18. Satisfied with the subject-matter (7)
19. Made an attempt, but was thoroughly tested (5)
21. Nimble return partly because of tensile ligaments (5)
22. Clear it for musical performance (7)
- Down**
1. Kind of exceptional ability one is lacking in (5)
2. Somewhat splendid conclusion? (6)
3. Male relative found reading a sonnet (3)
4. In which love means nothing (6)
5. Craft in frenzied movement (7)
8. Fight and beat like an ancient Greek (7)
11. Temporary platform for putting on shows (7)
13. Finished though connected (7)
15. Story about abstainer is idle talk (6)
16. Drug is one swallowed by bird (6)
17. Write to a learner by way of punishment (5)
20. Catch what remains after all deductions (3)

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



SUDOKU

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

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

THE WORDPUZZLER

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

THE words missing from the clues listed below are all names of pop groups. Can you find them in our grid?

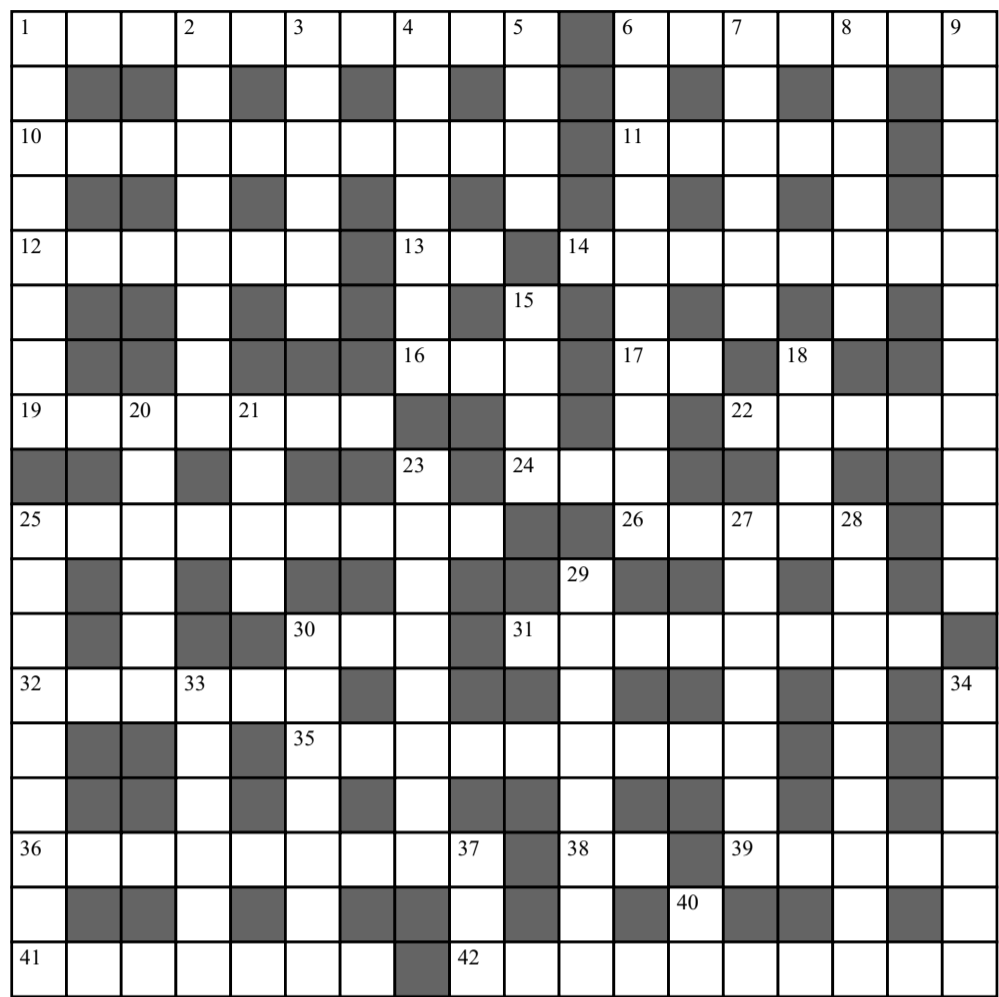
- and butter
- Traffic ---
- force
- Pie in the ---
- of the crop
- nothings
- in your eye
- of Oz
- or no
- Her Majesty the

CODEWORD

18	25	16	6			8	23	8	2	13	22	13	10	
25		3				6			9		19		13	
1			19	26	12	11	8	26	10		17		8	
21	25	4					1			11	13	3	10	
6		13			8	23	8	24			3		3	
	25	6	13	10			14		10	25	6	7	24	
				10			13		13					
6	21	9	I	22	6		1		8	15	3	13		
5		12	C			4	13	13	20		9		4	
25	22	9	7				22				20	8	26	
8		12		20	8	7	7	13	6	7			9	
26		3		9			9			13			10	
13	3	13	12	7	9	19	22			13	10	16	13	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	I	10	11	12	C	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		

Instructions
Each number in the codeword grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have two letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares. As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD



- Across
- Down
- 1) Asparagus (10)

6) Beautiful (f) (7)

10) Diners (10)

11) A lot (5)

12) Coat of arms (6)

13) It is (2)

14) Border (8)

16) He loves (3)

17) If (2)

19) Mayor (7)

22) Valley (5)

24) Wing (3)

25) Foundations (9)

26) Dirty (f) (5)

30) It was (3)

31) Towns (8)

32) Reliable (6)

35) To reoffend (9)

36) To prove (9)

38) You (pl) (2)

39) I felt (5)

41) Romans (7)

42) It evolves (10)
- 1) Survey (8)

2) Appropriate (f) (8)

3) Remains (6)

4) Biscuit (7)

5) Bland (m) (4)

6) Comedians (10)

7) Stingy (m) (6)

8) Smells (6)

9) Currently (11)

15) Branch (4)

18) Almost (4)

20) Food (6)

21) They read (4)

23) Phonetics (8)

25) To confuse (9)

27) Paintings (7)

28) Shaving (9)

29) Visigoth (8)

30) Coffin (7)

33) Slug (6)

34) Eagle (6)

37) She laughs (3)

40) You (2)

QUIZ

Which of the Beach Boys was born today in 1941?

1. Al Jardine 2. Carl Wilson
3. Brian Wilson 4. Mike Love



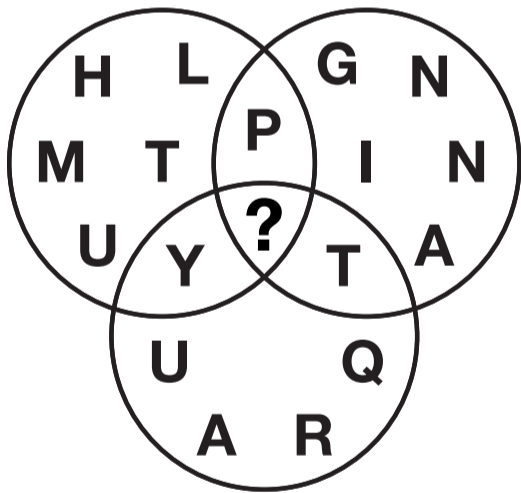
Who was purported to have been close friends with Dennis Wilson?

1. Charles Manson 2. Ted Bundy
3. Carl Watts 4. Ian Brady

How many of the Beach Boys could actually surf?

1. One 2. Two 3. Three
4. None

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?

THE SUR IN ENGLISH COLUMN

Talented youngsters at Costa schools

March brings with it the start of spring and for many parents it is also a month for thinking about which school to send their children to in September. Here on the Costa del Sol we can boast a wider variety of education options than most places.

As well as the local Spanish public and private schools, there are many international schools and colleges in Malaga

and along the coast. Sixteen of these schools sent in material for our special SUR in English Education and Learning supplement which you will find inside this edition.

The art, poems and short stories offer just a small sample of the high quality work that the students are producing every day.

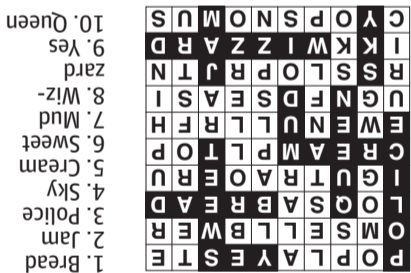
We at SUR in English would love to hear your views and news and you can contact us at: surinenglish.su@diario-sures.es, Facebook @surenglish. 'X' SUR_English or online at www.surinenglish.com

SWERS

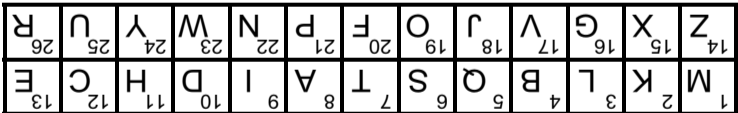
Quiz answers

Answer: Mike Love
Of interest: American singer and songwriter Michael Edward Love was the oldest of six children. Brian, Carl and Dennis Wilson, three of the other bandmates, were his cousins.
Answer: Charles Manson
Of interest: By Manson's own account, he had met Dennis Wilson on several occasions. He also claimed that Wilson invited him to visit his Sunset Boulevard home when he visited Los Angeles.
Answer: One
Of interest: Dennis Wilson was the only member of the band who could surf, the others all tried it but according to reports, 'were rubbish at it'.

Wordpuzzler solution



Codeword



Language Crossword



Circlegram

Cryptic Crossword

The letter represented by the question mark is O. Plymouth, Paiton, Torquay, all places in Devon.

Across: 6 Venison; 7 Heart; 9 Turin; 10 Opening; 12 White Russia; 14 Photographs; 18 Content; 19 Tried; 21 Agile; 22 Rectal. Down: 1 Genius; 2 Finish; 3 Son; 4 Tennis; 5 Frantic; 8 Spartan; 11 Staging; 13 Through; 15 Tattle; 16 Heroin; 17 Penal; 20 Net.

The seven differences



Malaga marina for megayachts reaches cruising speed

This month at least three large super-luxury yachts will be docked at the port's Muelle Uno, making temporary or winter stopovers

IGNACIO LILLO

MALAGA. To use a seafaring term, you could say that the Malaga marina of the megayachts is starting to pick up cruising speed. Since last week, and at least until the end of the month, a minimum of three large super-luxury craft will be calling or wintering at quay one (Muelle Uno). And there may be more, as negotiations are still under way with other boat owners to bring their vessels to the city during their current winter cycles, when they are preparing for the routes they will make during the high season.

First arrival

The first large pleasure vessel to arrive, I Dynasty, a 101-metre superyacht, came to overwinter in the berth near the lighthouse last October. According to port sources, it plans to stay there until this spring and is the first major stopover for the boat and its crew, made up of 30 professionals. The modern vessel was built in 2015 for the late Alijan Ibragimov, a billionaire from Kazakhstan, co-founder of the multinational Eurasian Natural Resources Corporation (ENRC), which is involved in mining, processing, energy, and logistics.

The refurbished harbour between quays one and two was

designed to receive large boats such as this and provide them with the necessary services during low season, such as high-power electrical connections.

Lady Moura

The second to arrive, on 7 March, has been a frequent visitor to Malaga marina for at least a decade. The Lady Moura is scheduled to stay for several weeks. It is owned by Nasser Al Rasheed, a Saudi magnate, who has one of the largest private fortunes on the planet. He heads the engineering consultancy Rasheed Engineering and is also an advisor to the Saudi royal family.

With a length of 105 metres and a beam of 20 metres, it is considered one of the most luxurious yachts in the world due to its profusion of exotic details. The first of these is its transom name board and coat of arms, which is made of pure gold. Its facilities include a spa, casino, party room, several lounges, an operating theatre, a heliport and several pleasure boats. It can accommodate up to 30 passengers and has twice as many crew. The ship was designed by Italian architect Luigi Sturchio and was built at the prestigious German shipyard Blohm+Voss in 1990, since when it has been refurbished twice. It is powered by 6,900-horsepower diesel engines, so it can reach a maximum speed of 20 knots (37.04k/h).

Limitless

Limitless, the third superyacht, is also the most innovative in these latitudes. The owner of this 96-metre boat will be familiar,



Megayacht I Dynasty, with the lighthouse in the background, moored at the port. **MARILÚ BÁEZ**



Side view of Muelle Uno with the yachts that have been moored there over the last few days. **SUR**

Luxury megayacht Lady Moura is equipped with its own casino, spa, operating theatre and heliport

Malaga's port authority and IGY have collaborated with Caribbean ports to encourage luxury vessels to spend the winter here

above all, to the female public as it is the American businessman Lex Wexner, founder of the well-known lingerie firm Victoria's Secret, among other companies.

Since its construction in 1997, in the German Lürssen shipyard, the Limitless has been a regular visitor to the island of Mallorca, but it had never stopped in Malaga, until now. Painted in navy blue and white, it has three decks, a steel hull and an aluminium superstructure. It has capacity for a dozen guests and 20 crew. Powered by a hybrid diesel-electric engine, it can reach a cruising speed of 17 knots

(31.4k/h), and up to 25 knots (46.3k/h) at top speed.

Limitless's arrival is thanks to a new collaboration with Caribbean ports. MalagaPort, which operates under the Port Authority, together with operator IGY, have recently worked with the marina of Isle De Sol, on the island of Saint-Martin, which is some 240km east of Puerto Rico and is divided between France and the Netherlands. Thanks to these negotiations, the Limitless has come to the Costa del Sol for the first time on a technical stopover. It has plans to stay for at least several weeks.

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