

# The Front Desk



August 2011

Dear Clients and Friends,

The summer temperatures continue to sizzle, as evidenced by the number of pink bodies parading around in some agony at the moment. This brings me to the annual health care message – plenty of high factor sun cream and frequent application (particularly after swimming), wear a hat, and drink plenty of water.

## Message from Michael

“Thank you everyone for the very many kind messages of concern and wishes for my speedy recovery. I am currently working half-time and hope to be back to normal before too long. I am lucky to have had the support of all the HPS team, who have carried on admirably without me during our busiest period. Perhaps I am not indispensable after all and ought to retire and let them carry on without me in the future!! I must give that some thought!!” Message from Beverley: “I don’t think so, Michael!”

## Fiestas

The next public holiday celebrated locally is the Asunción de la Virgen on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August. Our office will be closed. Please ensure visitors have our **24-hour help line number** in their phone **0034 606 975 832**

## Local Crime

I don’t want anyone to get worried, but this is again my annual warning to take sensible precautions. There has been a recent small spate of burglaries in the area – not an epidemic, but a timely reminder of sensible precautions to take. Lock all doors (double lock front door) and windows at all times unless supervised. Keep all valuables (wallet, credit cards, cash, jewellery, etc) in the safe when available.

There have also been a number of distraction robberies – usually in supermarket car parks. These often happen when the husband is putting away the trolley and the wife is organising the shopping or just sitting in the car. Someone walks up to the single occupant of the car and asks for information or points out a “problem”. The occupant gets out of the car and is distracted in conversation. Meanwhile an accomplice enters the car and steals whatever they can of value. All is over and done with in a matter of seconds.

## Tradesmen’s Summer Hours

Most tradesmen and their administrators are working summer hours – no work after 3.00 p.m. and definitely none on Saturdays or Sundays. In July many close their operations completely. Please alert visitors that if they experience problems, they should contact us early in the morning in order for us to have the best chance to arrange for a tradesman to attend.

Whilst on the subject of repairs, we have noted that many owners do not have any basic tools in their apartments. Consequently they or their guests cannot carry out the simplest of repairs, i.e. those which they would do at home, and need to call on us. Whilst we do not want to turn away business, we would recommend that you have a simple set of tools (screwdrivers, hammer, pliers, etc), which you can purchase very cheaply as a kit from Leroy Merlin. Similarly, it would help if you had a small step ladder for changing bulbs and fixing curtain hooks. Clearly not everyone wants to spend time on holiday doing their DIY, but it is worth a thought.

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## **“Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics”**

This famous expression is attributed the 19<sup>th</sup> century British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli. Applying it to a recent report about driving offences in Spain, it seems that 12% of drivers in Andalucía have been prosecuted in the first six months of 2011. This means, according to the report, that roughly one in nine is a good driver. So, those of you who thought that most Spanish drivers were crazy are obviously wrong – according to the statistics.

## **National Speed Limit**

The 110 kph temporary speed limit has been scrapped and the 120 kph reinstated. The original justification for the reduction was to save the government foreign exchange charges on overseas fuel purchases. Now that the price of crude oil has dropped, saving money (in spite of the parlous state of the Spanish economy) does not seem to be a priority. Of course, there was a huge outcry from the motoring lobby when the reduction was introduced and the cynics might think that the reinstatement of the old limit is a popularity measure by the government after the massive defeat of their party in the May local elections.

During the period of the reduction, road deaths reduced by 50%. But this does not win many votes.

## **Local Speed Limit**

It is reported that the A7 coast road throughout its length between Marbella and Fuengirola now has a reduced limit of 80 kph, which is being closely monitored by the police and there are fixed radar cameras in Mijas costa. The reason for this reduction by the central government is to improve safety and reduce accidents and injuries. (See previous comments about increasing speed limits – are you confused?)

## **Malaga Airport**

Malaga airport reports a sharp upturn in flights and passengers in the first six months of this year. Whilst this increase is very welcome to the economy of the Costa del Sol, the number of passengers only reached the 2005 level and the number of flights its 2003 level. The peak year was 2007, since when the situation has generally been one of decline.

## **Security Alarms**

This is a reminder that security alarms in Spain can only be armed if they are connected to and monitored by a security company. Unmonitored alarms that are triggered and cause annoyance to neighbours can lead to the property owner receiving a hefty fine. So far, I have never heard of a resident leaping into action at the sound of a burglar alarm; they are more likely to report it as a nuisance. If you want information about converting your unmonitored system, let me know

In accordance with the new Private Security Law, monitoring companies will summon the police to attend if the owner/resident on-site is contactable and requests this action. If no contact is made, the monitoring company will only require police to attend if three alarmed zones have been breached.

## **Entertaining Summer**

Following on from last month's report about Tom Jones, one of our clients immediately responded and booked front row seats at the Puente Romano Hotel. Jamie Cullum will be appearing at the Sohail Castle in Fuengirola this Thursday the 4<sup>th</sup> of August. Hope you have a great August.

Hasta la vista!

*Beverley*

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