

The Front Desk



January 2012

Dear Clients,

Firstly, let me wish Feliz Año Nuevo to all our clients, friends and colleagues around the world. We have had very good weather here in the lead-up to Christmas (plenty of sun and warm temperatures) and it looks as though it will remain this way until the after the New Year. Sunbathers were even seen on the beach on Christmas Eve in swimwear.

Fiestas and Ferias

As you will already know, our office will re-open on Tuesday 3rd January (Monday 2nd is a public holiday). Our 24-hour emergency helpline **(00 34 606 97 58 33)** will be manned during this period to deal with urgent enquiries for clients in residence.

Of course the festivities do not finish in Spain on New Year's Day. Three Kings Day is the major event on Friday 6th January (see below), when we shall be observing the public holiday as well. Business will return to normal on Monday 9th January.

Talking of festivities, if you want to join in the festive fun of Spain, or avoid it, here are the feria and fiesta dates for your diary.

Public Holidays in Andalucía – 2012			
2nd January	Año Nuevo	15th August	Asunción de la Virgen
6th January	Tres Reyes	12th October	Fiesta Nacional de España
28th February	Día de Andalucía	19th October	San Pedro de Alcántara
5th April	Jueves Santo	1st November	Todos los Santos
6th April	Viernes Santo	6th December	Día de la Constitución Española
1st May	Fiesta del Trabajo	9th December	Inmaculada Concepción
11th June	San Bernabé (Feria)	25th December	Navidad del Señor

New Year's Day falls on Sunday, which means that the public holiday will be on the following Monday 2nd January. Similarly Inmaculada Concepción falls on a Sunday and the public holiday will be on Monday 9th December. Please remember that banks, offices and most shops will be closed on these days, although most bars and restaurants will be open. Our office will be closed on these public holidays, although our 24-hour client helpline will operate as usual.

The dates of these holidays may change somewhat as the new government of the Partido Popular has declared its intention to change the dates of national holidays annually so that they fall on Mondays or Fridays in order to avoid excessive disruption to the working week. However, legislation to bring about these changes is not immediately visible on the political horizon.

Please also remember that work on public holidays and Sundays attracts a premium rate of double time, so it is advisable to avoid these days for same-day changeovers.

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Cultural Events

Jamie and I will be rounding off the year on 30th December with a visit to the Teatro Cervantes in Málaga to see the Nutcracker Suite performed by the Moscow National corps de ballet. It is my first visit to the ballet since I have lived in Spain and I am looking forward to it. Michael and Ann will be joining us – although he will be in the posh seats – and they will also be going to see Swan Lake in the following week. He is hoping to pick up some ideas for his rock and roll dancing!!

New Prime Minister

Shortly before Christmas the new Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, gave his inaugural speech to the Spanish parliament. Rajoy led the PP to a landslide victory in the Nov. 20 general elections. The lower house voted 187-149 on Tuesday to confirm him as head of government. His headline commitment was to reduce the budget deficit by 8.8% (16.5 billion €) in 2012 in order to meet EU targets. He committed to raising pensions, but indicated that every other area of spending could be subject to cuts.

Drama at the Palace

King Juan Carlos has finally become completely fed up with his son-in-law, the Duke of Palma, who is apparently on the verge of being indicted on corruption charges (embezzlement of public funds, tax evasion and money laundering) related to his business interests. The king has described the duke's behaviour as "not exemplary". Apparently the King instructed his daughter, the Infanta Christina, and his son-in-law to remain in Washington where they live in order to avoid any media distractions in Spain over the festive period.

Plans have been afoot for several years for the Royal Family to be streamlined from the current 15 down to 6 "working royals", correspondingly reducing the number receiving funds from the public purse.

On The Stage

After a successful Christmas season with his theatre group, Michael has been instructed to "rest" by his Spanish teacher and concentrate on his next exam to be taken in June. Jamie and I, on the other hand, have a busy time theatrically in the New Year. Jamie is directing for The International Theatre Studio, dates etc. to be confirmed as well as playing the part of a Superman Kiss-O-Gram in the Gibraltar Diamond Jubilee Drama Festival in March. I will be taking part with the Thespa group in their February production, more of which will be revealed next month (as not sure myself yet!).

And Finally...

...we would like to send a big "thank you" to all our clients for your support in 2011. We have had a successful year – new clients, new business opportunities and new services. We are looking forward to continuing to work with you in 2012.

Have a very Happy New Year.

¡Hasta la vista!

Kind regards,

Beverley

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