

The Front Desk



July 2010

¡Hola Clientes y Amigos!

Temperatures are beginning to soar over here and the weather looks set fair for the rest of the summer. We have just had a sunblind fitted on the office terrace and this is helping to keep the heat down, as well as giving me a shaded area to sit when Michael is not in the office.

Fiestas

This month is a fiesta free zone for us, but watch out for August 15th, Asunción de la Virgen. This falls on a Sunday, so offices (including ours), banks and stores will be closed on the Monday.

Preparing Your Visit

As you know we try to prepare for your arrival (and departure) and that of your guests as far ahead as possible in the summer season, in order to ensure that we have sufficient staff at peak times for housekeeping. Our working assumption is that guests will not arrive before 3.00 pm at the beginning of the visit and will vacate by 10.00 am on the day of departure. Clearly this will not always be the case and it is important for us to be aware of these details, in order to schedule work in the most efficient way. For that reason I will be pestering you for details of arrival and departure times.

British Consulate in Malaga

The British Consulate in Malaga has been organizing a series of “roadshows” over the past 12 months or so, aimed principally at the resident ex-pat British community. However, these presentations can be equally of interest to those thinking of spending more time in Spain in the future or even retiring here. The Consul, Steve Jones, comes from a customer service rather than a diplomatic background and his approach to informing his “customers” is very refreshing. More, including details of roadshows, can be found at <http://ukinspain.fco.gov.uk/en/>.

Festival Internacional de Arte de Marbella

This year saw the second Festival held in central Marbella (www.festivaldeartemarbella.com). An estimated 20,000 visitors saw examples of sculpture, painting, photography and ceramics, and were able to enjoy a range of musical talent ranging from traditional Spanish to rock music. The Festival is supported by the Marbella town hall and was the brainchild of American artist, Pixie Glore, who wanted to promote the growing multicultural community in the town.

University of the Third Age (U3A)

On the general theme of those relocating to Spain for longer periods or to retire, U3A is a “learning co-operative” drawing upon the knowledge, experience and abilities of its own members. Although English-speaking, members come from many nationalities and enjoy classes ranging from Spanish conversation through to computer skills, acting, painting, walking, photography, and so on. Classes are mainly centred around Marbella and Fuengirola. You can find out more at the following website www.u3acostadelsol.org.

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Spanish General Strike

Spanish trade unions have called for a General Strike to take place on 29th September in protest against the government's austerity measures and changes to employment law. However 75% of people interviewed for a recent poll in Madrid did not support the call to strike and felt that the trade unions have lost credibility, because they had until recently been active supporters of the government for the past two years and it was "too late to get tough now!". More on this when we get nearer to the due date.

Electricity Prices

Tariffs were scheduled to increase by between 5% and 10% with effect from 1st July. However, the government has suspended this increase in order to help to reduce costs to beleaguered business and domestic customers. However, prices will still increase as a result of the increase in IVA from 16% to 18%.

On a separate note, Michael will be writing to clients with further information about electricity tariffs in the near future.

Ryanair and Malaga Airport

Ryanair is perhaps not the world's favourite airline, but it has established a new hub at Malaga, making it its third biggest base in Spain. It now has 44 routes from Malaga to cities throughout Europe.

Meanwhile further construction on the access roads is underway during this month and this may have an effect on your travel time to and from the airport – so allow a little extra time just in case.

Keeping Cool

I mentioned at the beginning of this newsletter that we have installed a sunblind ("toldo") on the office terrace in order to provide shade and to reduce the heat coming into the house. Clients thinking of upgrading may want to consider this as an option – feel free to come and take a look.

Similarly, those of you who are not keen on air conditioning, ceiling fans are an excellent option – they are virtually silent and keep electricity costs down significantly. However, you may also want to think about free standing fans, for parts of your property where ceiling fans cannot easily be fitted.

"HomeAway" Owner-Only Rental Website

Some owners have been having reasonable success with this rental website www.holiday-rentals.co.uk, either by marketing their apartments themselves or asking us to do it on their behalf. In fact, we have two properties at Alcaidesa which are rented out for most of July and August. These properties also benefit from having professional photographs on the website. If you would like any further information about this option, please let me know.

Summer Sales

Onto my favourite subject now... No, definitely not the football nor the tennis... Shopping. The sales started on the 1st of July and continue until the end of August, with most of the stores offering very good discounts. Who knows ladies, your savings may even pay for your flight over to Spain!

So on that cheery note, let me wish you all a good July.

Until August!

Hasta Luego,

Beverley

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