

The Front Desk



March 2009

Dear Clients,

We ended February with Andalucía Day – which also fell at the end of Semana Blanca, which is when the schools in Spain have their half term holiday. The weather has not been great - the old English expression is that March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb and it's certainly been true in Spain this year with rain, wind and cool temperatures. Reservoirs levels have risen significantly and La Concepción – the reservoir that serves our area -has filled to overflowing. So hopefully water supplies will be less critical in the summer months.

Household Insurance

Our clients continue to receive good service and benefits from using our contact, San Pedro Insurance Service, representing the Estrella company. Working with a reliable agent has proved invaluable in dealing with claims on behalf of clients – where we have had to deal with a call centre, e.g. Linea Direct, the claim process is often very protracted and the staff unhelpful.

Many clients find themselves tied into a particular insurance company at the time they take out their mortgage, but the banks often only sign you up for “buildings” cover and do not bother to talk about contents. So the first question is: are you tied into the insurance policy proposed by your bank? One of our clients (two bedroom townhouse) has been able to save over 100€ per year by switching.

The second question is: do you have contents insurance and is it adequate? What ever the answer, would you like us to arrange a competitive quote in time for the renewal?

Public Holidays

March is a fiesta-free month: so the next public holidays will be during Holy Week on Thursday and Friday 9th and 10th April when we will have the usual spectacle of parades during the day time and evenings. I see that many of you are already making plans to visit over that period.

In general tourism during January was down by almost 20%, with UK visitors down by almost 27%. In view of the general economic situation, this is not surprising. However, Spain still remains the most popular holiday destination for British visitors.

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Sevillana Endesa

Following up last month's report, your local friendly electricity company has managed to cover itself in glory by introducing a new invoicing arrangement. In summary they will now be sending out accounts monthly instead of two monthly. In each two-month period the first account will be estimated and the second will be billed to an actual reading.

However, this change has been very controversial. Apart from the fact that the estimates do not always appear to be based on logic, Endesa has rounded down the first account and then applied a tariff increase to the second (rounded up) account. Their cash flow has improved and their customers have suffered.

The Andalucian government has stepped in to sanction the company and customers are receiving amended accounts where there is a serious problem. However, the main thing to look out for in your bank account is that Endesa will be taking money monthly and, if there are insufficient funds, you risk the supply being disconnected.

Let The Train Take the Strain

In order to attract more passengers, Renfe (Spain's national train operator) is launching on 11th March its new last minute cheap tariff for travelling on the AVE (high speed train) and for other long distance travel. Discounts of up to 50% will be available on tickets purchased within 24 hours of travel. Check out <http://www.renfe.es/> for updated routes and timetables.

They're Off...

Horse racing on Sundays has started again at the Mijas Hipódromo, with some 5000 people attending the first meeting of the season. The races start at 11.00 am with gates open from 10.00 am. Admission to the racecourse is free for the under-18s and over-65s and costs five euro for everyone else. Parking is free of charge.

Once More With Feeling

As you may remember from last month's Front Desk, Jamie and I are appearing in a Comedy Thriller later in the month at the Atalaya Park Hotel, from the 20th until the 22nd of March. The play is called 'Tiptoe Through the Tombstones' by Norman Robbins and sees Jamie in some very strange costumes. This leads me nicely onto the fact that "The Full Monty" is being performed from 20th – 29th March at the Salon Varietes in Fuengirola, followed by "A View From The Bridge" by Arthur Miller from 4th – 8th April. Those of you who have been to the Salon before will know that the productions are up to "West End" standard. So let us know if you would like us to reserve tickets for you.

Until next month!

Hasta Luego,

Beverley

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