

The Front Desk



May 2010

¡Hola Clientes y Amigos!

Well, last month I reported that the rain had stopped and the sun had broken through...I spoke too soon. The rain returned with a vengeance, causing further damage to properties. I am not predicting any further meteorological events except that the weather will be great in Greece, which is where Jamie and I will be next week. Thank heavens things have returned to normal flight-wise. Our last day in the office is Monday 3rd May and we will be back at work on Wednesday 12th.

Fiestas

On 1st May Spain celebrates the Fiesta del Trabajo. This falls on a Saturday and will not be carried over to the following Monday. So, it will be business as usual. On Friday 11th June we celebrate the Feria of San Bernabé, the patron saint of Marbella. The week leading up to this will be a full of celebration and in common with other businesses, our office will be closed on that day.

Construction Projects

We are now extending our range of services to clients through the formation of an alliance with a local company, Dimension Four Construcción. The intention is that Dimension Four will act as the construction division of HPS and will be our preferred provider of new build, refurbishment and major building maintenance services. Jamie will continue to handle smaller scale projects himself with the use of specialist contractors as in the past, plus continue to oversee the larger projects.

This development effectively formalises a working arrangement that has been in operation for some while. Examples of where we have worked in the recent past include:-

- major reforms to a villa creating new dining areas and a gym
- construction of major retaining boundary walls
- new terraces and pool surrounds

We anticipate that by working with an experienced company we will be able to offer clients a quality service which will continue to be overseen by us.

Business Development

Next month we shall be submitting our final proposal for the provision of cleaning services to a large urbanisation. If we are successful, this will bring to four the number of urbanisations where we provide services to communities. None of this takes anything away from the services we provide to private clients. In fact it has the beneficial effect of allowing us to retain experienced staff throughout the year when they might otherwise have to be laid off in the quieter periods of the year and might be lost to other employers.

We hope to expand our services to communities further. You will notice that I now sign off my emails as follows: ***Property Management, Rental and Community Administration.*** With the exception of specific legal matters, where are able to work with an experienced accounting and administration company, we are able to provide the full range of services that a community requires.

IVA Increase in 2010

This is a reminder that the standard rate of IVA will increase by 2% to 18% with effect from 1st July 2010. The Partido Popular has started a campaign to encourage voters to apply pressure on the government to withdraw this increase. With a general election during the next year it is an interesting political move. Unfortunately, in line with all businesses, we will have to pass this cost through immediately, except where the prepayments of fees have been made, i.e. 5% reduction on annual fees paid in advance.

Tel: (0034) 952 78 49 83, Fax: (0034) 952 78 34 08, Emergency Helpline: (0034) 606 97 58 33

Web site: www.spanishrentalholidays.com E-mail: enquiries@spanishrentalholidays.com

HPS Property Services Siglo XXI (SL), Urb. El Alto Nº 16, Los Arqueros Golf, Benahavis, 29679, (Málaga), España.

CIF Nº B – 92606953

Benahavis News

Most of our clients live in the Municipality of Benahavis and the town hall now has a very useful website which contains general information about life in Spain as well as covering local subjects – see the following link

<http://www.benahavisvillage.com/en/home.html>.

One of the important issues that owners (not only permanent residents) can register with the town hall to vote in local and European elections. This is a simple process and we can advise on and the foreign residents department is very willing to help. The more people registered, the more subsidy is received from central government.

Finally the arrangements to collect bulky items of rubbish from Benahavis residents has been improved. If you email the following address residents@benahavis.es, arrangements will be made for the special refuse truck to pass by. The information required is your address, telephone number, where the item will be and on which date and at what time. Benahavis town hall will collect from your garden gate, drive or community. 48 hours notice would normally be fine excluding public holidays and weekends.

Solving the Spanish Debt Crisis

Many Spanish people are solving their debt problems by raising cash by selling jewellery. Similar to pawn shops in other countries, there is a network in Spain known as the Montes de Piedad (Mountains of Pity), which are actually part of the banking network formed by Unicaja, Bancaja and Cajasur amongst others. However, because this service is now carrying so much stock, it has set up a website www.subastasmontes.es to sell unredeemed items. Michael pointed this news item out to me and I think that he has already bought all his Christmas presents...

To Smoke or Not to Smoke

The “zero tolerance” ban on smoking in bars and restaurants has been put on hold until 2011. Officially this is because the Minister of Health has indicated that there will be insufficient time to enact legislation before the holiday season. Cynics think that it has more to do with public opinion, i.e. that of the smoking lobby, and the forthcoming general election. Don't hold your breath...

Disney Characters

Meanwhile, getting government priorities right, the Minister of Equality has proposed banning children from seeing Disney classics such as Snow White and Sleeping Beauty. This is because they apparently place women in a passive role from which the main characters (men) have to save them. I say let the men continue to think that they are in charge...we ladies know who the real bosses are!!!

Digital TV

Spanish TV broadcasting has now gone digital. TDT (television digital terrestre) signals from Spanish broadcasters can be received by newish TVs with an inbuilt TDT receiver or via a stand-alone TDT box. One special feature is that you will normally be able to watch programmes dubbed in the Spanish in the original language. These boxes act like a satellite receiver and have their own remote controls. At the last count they receive 28 channels. Contact us if for more details if this is of interest to you.

More Drama

On 28th April Michael has his debut as a director with THESPA at Fuengirola. The play is about a group of over-60s on holiday by the seaside. He has guaranteed that there will be no resemblance between the characters and any of our clients. He is also acting in a play on the same evening, playing the part of a social worker. He was selected because of his sympathetic nature...I can't see it myself!!

Finally this month, we would like to say a big “congratulations” to our client, Mark Roberts, who finished the London Marathon in a time of 5 Hours & 6 Minutes. There is still time to sponsor him at <http://www.justgiving.com/Mark-Roberts2>. All the money goes directly to the very deserving charity Whizz-Kidz. Well done Mark!

More from me on our return from our holiday. Saludos, avrío.

Beverley

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