

The Front Desk



May 2011

Dear Clients and Friends,

Those of you who visited Spain over the Easter period will know that we have had a week of strong wind and heavy rain. In spite of the weather the usual religious parades took place in villages and towns throughout Spain. Meanwhile in Northern Europe the weather seems to have been particularly good. It is no consolation to Easter visitors to learn that the weather here has returned to normal and that we are enjoying pleasant temperature and sunshine.

Fiestas, Holidays and Exams

You will recall from last month's newsletter that May Day falls on a Sunday, which means that the fiesta will be carried over to Monday 2nd May. As a reminder, the first day of Jamie's and my spring holiday (Greece again) is 4th May and will be back in the office on 12th. For that reason I am sending this newsletter out a couple of days early, in order to ensure that the office runs smoothly during our absence.

During this time Michael and Rodd will be holding the fort and the office will normally be staffed between 09.00 and 13.00 (Spanish time). For emergencies outside these times, please call our 24-hour helpline as usual **(00 34 606 97 58 55)**. Please ensure that your guests also have a note of this number.

Seasonal Reminders

Here is my usual annual reminder for the coming season.

- Air conditioning: if you have not already arranged a service with us, please confirm whether you would like this to be carried out
- Travel arrangements: when confirming your travel dates (however, tentative), please also let us have your flight details (arrival and departure) so that we can prepare for your visit in the most efficient way
- Cleaning: please also confirm your cleaning requirements (arrival and exit). It can be difficult to schedule work at the last minute (particularly at weekends and public holidays)

More Theatre

Last night Jamie directed a one-act play at the Fuengirola play reading group (THESPA). This is the same group that Michael is involved with, but he is "resting" at the moment while he revises for his Spanish exams. He was even offered the part as a female impersonator, but not even this could tempt him away from his studies.

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Police Targeting Distracted Drivers

According to a government report 39% of drivers involved in fatal accidents were distracted by mobile phone use, consulting a GPS, loading a CD or lighting a cigarette. The Guardia Civil Trafico have launched a series of campaigns to look out for these driving distractions. Last year almost 140k drivers were fined for using mobile phones while driving.

Bar Prices

Around 80% of bars and cafés in Málaga province do not observe the legal requirement to display price list by their entrances according to the consumer group Facua. Another part of the survey revealed that 4% show some prices as “s/m”, which means according to market price, which is also illegal. This latter aspect can often catch out the unwary visitor – always check the price.

Cigarette Sales Drop

Sales of cigarettes in the first three months since the new smoking law was introduced fell by 30%. Whether this means that there are fewer smokers or the same number (but smoking less) is not clear. Pipe and cigar sales remain stable. The Spanish tobacco industry is now investigating a switch from intensive tobacco growing to organic cultivation aimed at eliminating “harmful” substances from plants. However, for the non-smokers amongst us, visiting a bar or restaurant and enjoying the clean air is a real pleasure – unless you want to sit outside with all the smokers!

Air Quality

Madrid, along with Los Angeles, has become renowned for its poor air quality, principally due to the presence of large volumes of private vehicles. The high vehicle usage comes in spite of the extensive and excellent public transport network in the city. However, it comes as something of a surprise to learn that Marbella is in the same league. In 2010 the air quality was only regarded as good on 27 days. On 326 days the air quality was “admissible” and on 12 days it was categorized as “very poor”.

An early solution to this problem is unlikely in view of the present and prospective absence of a quality public transport network and the consequential reliance by residents on the use of their private vehicles. Rainfall levels over the past couple of years together with the climatic impact of the sea apparently help to reduce the seriousness of the problem.

Strolling on the Promenade

As a result of new construction work – including requiring property owners to redefine their boundaries – it is now possible to stroll along the “paseo marítimo” for more than half of the 27-kilometre length of the Marbella shoreline.

Royal Wedding

As you will know (unless you’ve been on another planet) there is a royal wedding in the UK tomorrow. Although not a public holiday in Spain, we will be on “light duties” that day, so that we are able to enjoy the spectacle on TV. I must leave you now so I can go and press my frock.

¡Hasta la vista!

Beverley

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