

The Front Desk



November 2011

Dear Clients and Friends,

Jamie and I are back from our very refreshing holiday in Mexico...some good weather and great locations to see. We would certainly go back again. Meanwhile the Costa del Sol enjoyed some excellent weather - warm days and clear skies for much of the month – contrasting with some record breaking heavy rain and lightning storms. Fortunately there was little or no damage to client properties, although checks the following day revealed that their electricity had been interrupted by the lightning strikes. It is still warm enough to enjoy a day on the beach, but evenings are now distinctly cooler.

Fiestas and Ferias

The San Pedro feria passed without incident, that is to say it did not rain as tradition requires. November started with the fiesta of Todos Los Santos on 1st November when the Church remembers all the saints (known and unknown). As usual businesses closed on that day. There are no further local or national public holidays in November.

Here is some news about December. Tuesday 6th and Thursday 8th are public holidays in Spain (Día de la Constitución and Inmaculada Concepción respectively). Our office will be closed on these days and we will be giving you more details of our office arrangements during this period in our December newsletter. Our 24-hour helpline **0034 606 97 58 33** will be available as usual for urgent enquiries.

“La Crisis” and Direct Debits

It is clear that the current economic climate is encouraging utilities and local councils to take a more aggressive approach to the collection of outstanding invoices. Just as a reminder, the Spanish psyche has no concept of a “brought forward” account. Endesa, for example, will try to take a direct debit payment on, say, 6th day of the month. If the direct debit is rejected by the bank due to insufficient funds, Endesa will normally try again in about two weeks. If this also fails, the invoice is then moved into their debt collection process; it is not carried forward to the next month's. The consequence is that, even if every future account is paid on time by direct debit, at some stage a disconnection notice will appear and the invoice must be paid in cash at a post office.

If a number of direct debits fail in consecutive months, Endesa will discontinue all future payments by this method and it will be necessary to pay all future bills by cash until a track record of good payment is established. We have a number of clients who have fallen into this trap. Normally we can establish the circumstances by monitoring utility bills – most clients' accounts are sent to our office for monitoring – and funds transfers can be arranged in time to avoid any interruption to supply, whether it be electricity, water or telephone.

The moral of the story is to monitor continually any transactions (or absence of expected transactions) in your Spanish bank accounts.

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On The Stage

The International Theatre Studio will be performing a full length play (“Look Who’s Talking” by Derek Benfield) from 11th – 13th November at the Atalaya Park Hotel. And “Ladies Night” will be on the stage from 4th to 8th November at the Salon Varietes theatre in Fuengirola. Michael will be performing in a play in Fuengirola on 30th November with the English Speaking Players Association and will be directing the December evening, which will be an evening with Radio and TV favourites.

San Pedro Tunnel

According to the contractor, the San Pedro tunnel will be open by the end of December. However, the general consensus is that this promise was made more in hope than in expectation. The mayor of San Pedro was so excited at the news that he asked the contractor if he could visit the construction site and walk through the tunnel in order to see the progress for himself. The request was refused. So, the new theory is that there was still much to work to be done and the opening will be put off until some time in 2012. I hope to be proved wrong!!

New Motorway Links

Sections of the upgraded motorway network around Málaga have finally been opened, improving road travel for those wishing to by-pass Málaga. Combined with the newly opened section of motorway to the south of Valdepeñas, it is estimated that the travel time to Madrid from Málaga has been reduced by about half an hour.

Billboards

Advertising hoardings at the side of the road are a common eyesore along the coast and local councils are taking action. In the municipality of Mijas, for example, 600 billboards have been counted, of which the majority have been erected illegally. Steps are under way to remove the offending boards, starting with those on public land, and to appoint a management company to control and licence any future constructions. Hopefully this will make travel a little easier on the eye.

Ballet Fans

And now for something completely different... The Russian National Ballet will be performing the “Nutcracker Suite” at the Cervantes Theatre in Málaga on 22nd and 30th December. Tickets are bookable via the internet and can be collected from any Unicaja ATM simply by inserting the credit card used for the purchase and selecting the “ticket” option.

The Cervantes is a beautiful theatre and has a range of high quality national and international acts and is currently featuring a season of jazz music. It is certainly worth a visit and a performance can be combined with an overnight stay in this very vibrant city.

That’s all for now.

Hasta la vista!

Beverley

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