

The Front Desk



April 2008

Dear Clients,

To use the old English expression, March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. Certainly the last few days of the month have been very sunny and generally warm. The higher temperatures were attributed to the warm wind known as the "Terral". As you know, Easter was very early this year and visitors were able to enjoy some good weather, although this was mixed in with some strong winds which caused quite a bit of damage to fences, plant pots and anything that was not tied down!

Public Holidays

Sadly we have to wait until 1st May for our next Fiesta!!! This is always a busy time on the roads and the airlines over here. So, if you are travelling around that time, please allow a little extra time for your journey.

Spanish General Election

The General Election in Spain on 9th March was the major event in the country during this month with the ruling Socialist Party retaining power with 43.64% to the votes cast, although without an overall majority. The economy featured as a major issue in the run-up to the election, with a background of rising inflation and unemployment, a stagnant property market and slowing economic growth.

New Business

I am pleased to report that HPS has been contracted to carry out the cleaning and property maintenance at the La Torre urbanisation at Los Arqueros. This is the third urbanisation in which we have been awarded a cleaning contract, working in collaboration with our accountant (who is also the community administrator).

This contract has been awarded after some two years of discussion with the community president. The services were originally provided by Taylored Services, who lost the contract twelve months ago because of the poor quality of service and cost. They were replaced last year by Sagesa, whose performance seemed to be a repeat of that previously provided. So, we are very pleased that the owners have had the confidence to place the contract with HPS. So far, so good... We hope that, in the fullness of time, we shall be able to secure similar future contracts at Los Arqueros and elsewhere.

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Spain Still Popular

According to reports from the recent Homebuyer and Property Investors Exhibition in London, Spain remains the most popular overseas destination for prospective purchasers. Although property prices in Bulgaria, Turkey and Morocco are lower, Spain ranks alongside France as a place to live.

Unfortunately, negative publicity about a recent case where UK owners watched as their "illegal" house was demolished before their eyes has made some potential buyers more wary of making an investment

The Circus Is Coming To Town

Looking ahead to the early summer we see that Cirque du Soleil (the famous innovative circus) is returning to Malaga for a run from 05th June – 13th July 2008. The show is called Quidam and tickets are now available to purchase on-line from the following direct website:
<http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/cirquedusoleil/en/showstickets/quidam/tickets/Malaga.htm>. Everyone who attended last year's show said it was spectacular, so why not combine this with one of your visits?

Rising Prices

This week Spain's National Statistics Institute reported that inflation had accelerated to 4.6 percent on the year in March, up from a 4.4 percent rate in February. One practical example of this is the cost of fuel for vehicles, with prices having risen by as much as 34% over the past year in some instances.

Changing Populations

According to a recent report in Sur in English almost all municipalities in Malaga have at least doubled their foreign population over the past five years. In Benahavis, where most of our clients' properties are located, the numbers have risen from 990 to 1676. More than half of foreign residents have retired to Spain from northern Europe. The remaining largely younger newcomers are mainly from Morocco and South America and have come in search of better working conditions.

April Fool's Day

Well, no one played any tricks on us this year – except our friends at Telefonica. In the continuing saga of how they like to plague our lives, we now find that our neighbour has had to listen to our calls because of a crossed line. So, we were disconnected on 1st April for a couple of hours while they made a repair. So, if you were trying unsuccessfully to call us, that's the reason why.

Holidays

Jamie and I are off to Greece for a few days from 7th May to 15th May inclusive. As usual we shall try to make Michael's life as pain-free as possible during our absence. So, if you can give me as much notice as possible of your travel plans, cleaning requirements, car hire, golf, etc, it will be much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Beverley

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