

# The Front Desk



February 2010

Dear Clients,

After the wettest Christmas season for sixty years and just when we thought that it was safe to hang out the washing to dry, the rains returned with a vengeance. We even had hail falling at El Alto. The last week of January has been both wet and cold, but there are signs of improvement during early February.

This month we have public holidays on 28<sup>th</sup> February, but as this date falls on a Sunday the holiday is carried over to 1<sup>st</sup> March. I am taking a few days' holiday in England at the end of February and into early March (26<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> inclusive) and am leaving Jamie and Michael to run the show.

## **Speaka Da Lingo!!**

After having learnt to dance (and now teach) modern jive, Michael is rising to a new challenge – to learn Spanish properly. Although he speaks quite good German, his Spanish leaves “room for improvement”. And it couldn't be easier...his teacher comes to him via the wonders of Skype (the software application which you can download for free and which also allows you to talk for free over the internet for as long as you like). For those of you not familiar with Skype, take a look at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com).

Michael's teacher is Vanessa Alexander who now lives in Cheltenham in the west of England. He first met Vanessa on the Costa del Sol where she was one of his original dance teachers. However, she had also been teaching Spanish for ten years, either one-to-one, in couples, or small groups from beginner to intermediate level. Although her background is Public Relations, a friend heard her speaking Spanish and asked Vanessa if she could teach her and another friend. Word spread quickly that there was a fun and effective way to learn everyday Spanish with someone whose mother tongue was English and who could therefore explain the grammar points clearly in the students' own language.

Now here is a note to the ladies. When the chaps bring their laptops on holiday, don't complain because you will be able to continue your lessons with Vanessa wherever you are in the world. All lessons are personalised to suit the students' ability and interests. So, when Michael wanted some retail therapy at the sales, Vanessa designed a lesson around clothes purchases. Sounds good girls!!!

The lessons are a mixture of structured grammar, conversation and daily bits and pieces, which build in intensity as the student becomes more knowledgeable and confident. Many of Vanessa's students who initially spoke no Spanish whatsoever can now speak and write in the present, future and past tenses! Her rates are extremely competitive at £20 per hour, with discounts offered for more than one lesson per week. For further information contact: [vanessa@learn-spanish.org.uk](mailto:vanessa@learn-spanish.org.uk) or let us introduce you.

## **Chiringuitos Reprived**

It has now been confirmed that Andalucian regional government will take over control of the beach bars and restaurants, the Chiringuitos. Central government had planned to close the majority of these, because they contravene planning regulations for beach activities. However, indications are that around 90% will be reprived and local town halls are being encouraged to ensure that they are properly licensed as soon as possible.

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## **Reservoirs**

One positive consequence of the recent heavy rain has been that La Concepción reservoir, which supplies water to this part of the Costa del Sol, has been refilled. As recently as early December there had been concerns that the reservoir was less than 40% full. La Concepción is a main feeder to other reservoirs, but the connecting pipes are too small to handle large volumes of water. Consequently the sluice gates were opened and enough water to supply the Costa del Sol for six weeks went to waste.

## **On Stage**

On 27<sup>th</sup> January Michael, Jamie and I performed in a play reading in Fuengirola with The English Speaking Players Association (THESPA). The play was called "Deception" by a local writer and we are still scratching our head and wondering what it was all about!!

On 9<sup>th</sup> February Michael and I are reading a play with the International Theatre Studio in San Pedro. It is called "A Talk in the Park" and is a comedy by Alan Bennett. The director (making his debut) is Jamie and we are taking care to follow his instructions...no change there, then!!

## **Gas Man Scam**

We have received a report of a "company" of gas engineers calling on ex-pat homes in order to issue new gas licences for (orange) propane gas use. This appears to be a scam. So, if you get a visit, contact us.

## **Electricity Tariffs**

Most of our clients transferred to the Tarifa de Último Recurso (TUR), the tariff of last resort, when the Spanish electricity market became liberalised on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010. Endesa have confirmed that this tariff will continue to apply to supplies where the contracted tariff for less than 10 kw. However, for supplies above this level, it is necessary for clients to contract for a new tariff.

Where we have access to clients' electricity accounts we are checking whether the current contract is for above or below 10 kw and we will advise accordingly. Where we do not normally see your electricity accounts, please check your accounts and confirm your situation – you will find the information in the top right hand corner of your bills: **potencia contratada**.

## **Paseo de Marítimo**

Those of you who enjoy a walk along the promenade will be pleased to know that a pedestrian bridge is in its final stages of construction over the Rio Verde. This will link the promenades of Puerto Banus and Marbella. For those of you who like to be armed with interesting facts, the 3-metre wide bridge is constructed from laminated wood, is the longest in Spain (70 metres) and has no supports in the riverbed.

## **New Road Construction**

Work to create a third lane on the eastern stretch of the Malaga by-pass is continuing. Construction is complete on terra firma, but work is now underway to widen viaducts and flyovers. Once complete, the additional lane will reduce congestion – until there are more cars on the road to fill the vacuum. On the western side of Malaga you will see the construction of the northern access to the airport. Currently this is not causing any traffic hold-ups. However, there is some narrowing of the lanes, so extra care should be taken.

If the year continues at its current pace – we are in for a short one!

¡Hasta Luego!

*Beverley*

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