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CATALUNYA

for all English speakers

Feb 2009 monthly



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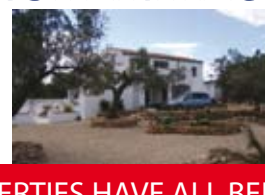
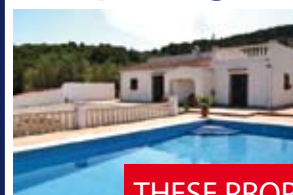


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EDITORIAL

MEET BOB THE EDITOR

WELCOME TO THE
FEBRUARY ISSUE.

VALENTINE'S DAY
IS A WONDERFUL WAY
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We met upon the Internet,
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GEORGE BARBIER L'HIVER POCHOIR 1925
FROM THE SERIES 1922 TO 1926 DEPICTING LIFE
IN THE FASHION, SOCIAL AND ARTISTIC CAPITAL OF
4 THE EARLY INTER-WAR YEARS.

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Barcelona launches variable traffic speed limits today on the C-31 and C-32 access roads to the city this morning. Illuminated signs will tell drivers that the speed limit

could be anything between 80 or 40 kilometres per hour, depending on congestion, contamination, accidents and climate. It's the first time that such a variable speed limit has been introduced anywhere in Spain, but it has proved effective elsewhere in Europe. In Barcelona its introduction only comes after a long political row, with local Mayors calling for the speed limit to be lifted at night. Plans are for the measure to be extended across the city over the next two years.

Bernie Ecclestone says Fernando Alonso will end up in Ferrari. Ecclestone also commented he thought Alonso was faster than Hamilton. Formula One supremo, Bernie Ecclestone, has said that sooner or later, Spain's Fernando Alonso will end up at Ferrari. There have been rumours linking Alonso to a move to the Italian stable next or the following season with the Santander as sponsor moving too. The latest were published in the Italian paper 'La Gazzetta dello Sport'. Ecclestone made the



remarks on Italian television channel 'Skysport24' and commented that he thought Fernando Alonso was faster than both Lewis Hamilton or Felipe Massa.

British musician wants to represent Spain in Eurovision. Phillip Rushton has already qualified into the second round. While Andrew Lloyd Webber has been given the task of coming up with Britain's Eurovision Song this year, and Spain is licking its wounds after last year's choice of Rodolfo Chikilicuatre, a British resident of Barcelona is among the candidates to represent Spain this time round. Under Spanish rules you only have to be a resident of Spain for two years to represent the country, and so Phillip Rushton from Barcelona hopes to prove there is life post-Wogan with his song 'Jericho'. Actually the song may be too good to qualify. Phillip is currently on the second stage of qualification with votes being cast online, and to get to the next stage he has to be in the Top 50, he's currently placed 81.

Tarragona protestors want an end to animals in the circus. A demonstration has been held today outside the Tarragona Town Hall. A group of animal activists have caged themselves naked in Tarragona in a protest against the use of animals in the Venice Circus which is visiting the town. They have painted their bodies in animal prints, and

called on the local Town Hall not to allow the circus to stay and to introduce a ban which is already in force in Barcelona and Lleida and some countries such as Sweden, Switzerland and Denmark. The AnimaNautiris activists say that the circus owners oblige the animals to perform under the constant threat of physical or psychological punishment.

Population Reaches 46 Million. Spain's population has reached 46 million, of which 5.2 million are foreigners. Figures for the year up to January 2008 show that numbers grew by 2.12% or 957,000 people. Andalucia remains the most highly populated region with 8.2 million inhabitants. Only two provinces in the country saw a fall in numbers, Orense and Zamora

Spain's "Grandchildren" Law Causes Queues in Cuba. A law introduced this week in Spain gives rights to apply for Spanish citizenship to descendants of exiles from the Civil War. This has already caused queues to form outside the Spanish embassy in Havana, Cuba, where it is estimated some 200,000 could be eligible. There could be half a million people around the world also able to benefit from this law.

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Benefits of Olive Oil. Researchers in Granada and Catalunya have found that good quality olive oil has anti-cancer properties. Their findings reveal that extra virgin oils contain photochemical polyphenols which are capable of triggering cancer cell death, and conclude that these may provide a basis for the design of new anti-cancer drugs.

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<p>465,000 Euros EXCELLENT nearly new VILLA of 230 m² on land of 16,000 m² with sea views, dining room with fireplace, kitchen, office, 4 bedrooms (one ensuite), 1 bathroom, garage air-conditioned, barbecue, swimming pool garden, well water electricity & totally fenced. Finca in full production and automatic irrigation.</p>	<p>PRICE: 182,000 Euros RURAL PROPERTY of 39,900 m² with newly built Villa of 72 m² composed of dining room with kitchen, office, 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, terrace of 46 m²</p>	<p>PRICE: 165,000 Euros PROPERTY OF 30,000 m² of olive trees, totally flat with house of 140 m² composed of dining room with fireplace, American kitchen, 4 bedrooms 2 bathrooms, legal own well, terrace, water, irrigation in all the property, & in full production. Good access and near to town.</p>



Barajas Airport in Madrid reopens after being closed by snow

By h.b. - Jan 9, 2009 - 6:05 PM

A heavy snow fall has surprised many in Madrid today and has brought traffic and travel chaos. The N-IV main road from Andalucía was closed as the snow settled, and long delays were seen on the M-30 and M-40 ring road. The capital was

liability for the tax has been eliminated by a 100% tax relief. The measure will apply for the Spanish tax year 2008 for which returns are due in 2009. Wealth tax is a tax on assets held as at 31st December each year. Residents are taxed on worldwide assets and receive deductions. Non-residents are taxed on Spanish assets without allowances. The tax rate ranges from 0.2% to 2.5%. There are still other taxes due on Spanish property. On buying a property in Spain one has to pay 6% transfer tax (ITP) (7% in Andalucía). If the property is a new build or a resold unregistered property there will be 7% Spanish VAT (IVA) to pay. Annual local property tax will range from £100 to £400 depending on the size of the property. There may be additional taxes in some areas for rubbish collection and special projects. If the property is let there will be a tax on the rental income. Only 50% of the net rental income of a Spanish resident is taxable at the normal scale rates from 24% to 43%. Non-residents pay 24% on gross income. On disposal of the property one is liable for capital gains tax at 18% for residents and non-residents plus a tax on the gain on the land called Plusvalía of 20%-30%.

Spain Still Top Spot for British Buyers A survey carried out by A Place in the Sun magazine has found that Spain is still the number one destination for Britons wanting to buy abroad, beating France into second place.

reported to be almost isolated by road with 390 kilometres of hold ups and four main routes into the city blocked. The trains were running, but RENFE suspended its punctuality price promise as AVE high speed trains reduced speed from 200km/hour to 160km/hour. Barajas Airport was closed for five hours by the snow, the first time it has ever been closed because of the weather. Despite the re-opening early Friday evening at the time the only access possible currently to Barajas was by metro.

No More Wealth Tax Although yet to be ratified, the abolition of wealth tax approved last April by the Spanish parliament will come into force in 2009. The



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CAN IT BE TRUE???

IT'S A HORRIBLE LIFE

GORDON Brown sat on the railing of the old iron bridge that takes people in and out of the small town of Bedford Falls and stared at the freezing water. Everything was messed up. Some people were saying it was all his fault. Maybe it was. Maybe it would be better if he just jumped into that deep, dark river and let it swallow him whole. He sighed and shook his head, wondering if he really had the courage.

Suddenly, he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned to see the smiling face of a kindly old man. The stranger held out his hand. "Hello Gordon, I'm Clarence," he said.

"Looks like you're fixing to do something drastic," said Clarence. "Well, let's just take a minute. Tell me Gordon, have you ever wondered what the world would be like if you had never existed? No? Well let's have a look, shall we?"

In the blink of an eye Gordon found himself transported to the middle of Main Street. Amid the glowing lights the good people of Bedford Falls were enjoying their last minute Christmas shopping. A cheerful song and the smell of roasted chestnuts filled the air. Everyone wished each other 'happy holidays!' as the shopkeepers stood in their doorways, beaming with delight and looking forward to another prosperous year.

"Nothing like having a man in charge who knows not to spend money you don't have on things you don't need and to save something for a rainy day," said Mr Malley, the baker.

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"Last thing this town needs is a man who gives jobs and big, fat pensions to all and sundry at our expense just so as they'll vote for him," replied Mr Logan, the butcher.

Gordon spun around, taking it all in. His drab little town seemed so alive. With the giddy excitement of a child on Christmas morning he raced along the pavement, running so fast he almost tumbled over. "Hello Woolworths!" he shouted. "Hello MFI! Hello Whittards!"

But just as as he reached the local branch of Northern Rock, everything turned dark. He looked back along Main Street to see the shops boarded up, and for sale signs in every window. Mr Logan, a cleaver in each hand, was desperately fighting off some local youths. A burning mattress was the only source of light and somewhere in the darkness, someone screamed.

In an instant Gordon was back at the old bridge. Clarence appeared at his shoulder. "I'm afraid that's how life really is Gordon. And yes, it is all your fault, you total asshole. Anyway, I just wanted you to see all that before I pushed you in." And with that Clarence grabbed Gordon by the heels and tipped him into the dark, freezing river. They found his hat three days later

THE



The savings and loan was in a bit of a pickle

LIVE PRESS

HOROSCOPES

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CAPRICORN Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

This month, dear Capricorn, you are busy building your resources, buying new things that have long-term "shelf life", and thinking up ideas about how to make more money. Financial matters are in focus. Sensual pleasures appeal more than usual.

AQUARIUS Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

February is a banner month for your personal interests, energy, charm, and initiative, dear Aquarius. Despite some blockages around the 5th, when the past comes back to haunt you, the month brings pleasant energy and fun surprises.

PISCES Feb. 20 - Mar. 20

Taking time out to research, reflect, and develop your inner resources figures strongly this month, dear Pisces. Much of your energy is channeled into private matters. Around the 9th, there could be changes necessary in your job or health routines.

ARIES Mar. 21 - Apr. 20 -You are pouring a lot of energy into generating business income, building your dreams, and planting the seeds for ideas this month, dear Aries. Others are taking up a lot of your time as well, whether they are friends, members of a group, or simply part of your own community efforts.

TAURUS Apr. 21 - May 21

Career and professional matters become a top priority in February, dear Taurus. While career is at the forefront of your mind, your instinct is to retreat from the hustle and bustle. Relationships are practical more than emotional.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun. 22

The urge for more from life than what you get from everyday mundane activities is strong, dear Gemini. You want to broaden your horizons in any way that leads you into unexplored territory, whether this is intellectual or physical (or both).

CANCER Jun. 23 - Jul. 22

This month, you are pulling back a little, strategizing, observing, and researching your options, dear Cancer. While work and other public matters are not making headlines for you in February, your personal life is certainly heating up.

LEO Jul. 23 - Aug. 23 -Much of your attention is drawn to improving your close relationships in February. It's best to give the stage to others now, and to put your personal projects on the back burner just for now. A Lunar Eclipse occurs in your sign on the 9th, giving you a cosmic push to change your image or redefine your personality.

VIRGO Aug. 24 - Sep. 23 -Any suspicions that you are a workaholic will probably be confirmed this month, dear Virgo! You are making a dent in your "to do" list. You might notice aches and pains a little more now, as you do all the little things that don't seem to be working "just right".

LIBRA Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

A truly fun month is in store for you, dear Libra. In 2009, you are discovering (and re-discovering) all the things that bring joy to your life and February is a good example of this playful energy. Entertaining, recreation, romance, children, and hobbies—all of these things appeal more than ever.

SCORPIO Oct. 24 - Nov. 22 -The year 2009 brings much contentment on the home front for you, dear Scorpio, but that doesn't mean you won't be busy in this area of life! In fact, this month, activities in and around your home and involving family occupy much of your time.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23-Dec. 21

You can't seem to sit still this month, dear Sagittarius! With all that's going on around you, be careful not to let the little things cloud your perspective of the bigger picture. Great conversations, happy news, and plenty to learn—these are the themes of February.

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FELINE FOES



Curiosity killed the cat; unfortunately, it did not act alone! Our feline friends have 7-9 lives depending on whom you ask or where you live. Not all of these lives are enough when faced with one or more of the often fatal or chronic (mostly viral) diseases of cats. Fortunately there are vaccines available for some of these diseases such as those falling into the feline respiratory disease complex: **Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (a Herpes Virus), Feline Calicivirus, and Feline Pneumonitis (a Chlamydial infection), as well as Feline Distemper/ Panleukopenia, and the Feline Leukaemia Virus (FeLV) which may all be combined into a single vaccine injection.**

FeLV is a viral infection among cats that can produce the leukaemia cancer in the blood and lymph systems, it requires fairly direct contact among individuals. There is a vaccine against Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) but there are some doubts as to how effective a vaccine it is, compared with the other vaccines currently in use. There is no vaccine against Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) also known as Feline AIDS or FAIDS, which often shows clinical signs similar to an upper respiratory ailment, it is not contagious to people. It should be pointed out that this disease is not as contagious as the other diseases we vaccinate against in the feline respiratory disease complex, which can be spread by air borne infection. Feline AIDS is most frequently transmitted by direct contact, for example: in saliva, or sharing a common water bowl in a relatively short time period. It also may be dormant for a long time, weeks to years, and stress or another health problem may provide the opportunity needed for it to develop into a clinical problem. There are blood tests available to test for this and FIP, as well as some

of the other diseases mentioned, however, there are no specific curative remedies for FAIDS, FIP, or FeLV.

The existence of the virally produced FeLV and FAIDS has helped medical research in understanding HIV/AIDS. These are referred to as slow viruses because of the long time from infection to illness. FIP on the other hand is not a slow virus so the disease becomes evident or symptomatic sooner. It is passed on orally through contact with infected saliva or faeces. In all three of these diseases (FAIDS, FIP, or FeLV) the immune system is affected and some studies show that 40-50% of cats with FIP also have FeLV. Feline Leukaemia and Immunodeficiency Virus infections are on the increase in our area and because of the slow nature of these diseases it can only get worse.

The symptoms are varied and generally non-specific, (with exceptions to the trained eye), which may reflect another secondary disease process as they tend to suppress the immune system, although, many times they start out as flu-like or allergic, for example, watery eyes, coughing and/or sneezing, lethargic state, with a lack of interest in food. As they affect the immune system and open the door to other disease processes in different parts of the body may be implicated

Feline viral rhinotracheitis



Neonatal deaths associated with Feline leukemia virus infection



Feline Calicivirus



Feline Distemper

and other diseases will take hold. The only method of determining if the cause of the illness is one of those three is with a blood test. Treatment of infected animals is aimed at symptomatic treatment for the disease condition they are suffering from to make them more comfortable, they are not always fatal diseases and often there will be a recovery from the secondary illness. There are no specific anti-viral treatments, other than some experimental treatments of questionable efficacy for any of the three, and there is only a means of prevention for FeLV by way of the vaccination mentioned earlier.

The other disease cats may get is Rabies and vaccination against Rabies is required by law in Spain. This law requires that concomitant to the Rabies vaccination a microchip be implanted. The reason for the requirement of a Rabies vaccine is that this is a disease that can be passed on from our pets, and other mammals, to us. It is this potential human health hazard and the proximity to Morocco, where there have been recent cases of domestic (as opposed to feral) Rabies reported! The microchip is also a protection device designed to discourage theft - pet-napping - as well as an aid in controlling uncared for populations of domesticated animals against cruelty.

Bulletin: Aspirin and Paracetamol may be good for you but never for your cat.

Ronald Rosenfeld D.V.M.



Living in Els Ports we have 1.5 hectares of terraced olive and almond planting. Close to the house is the huerto, our vegetable garden where we produce enough veg to be very nearly self sufficient in all things green and healthy!

Here in the Catalan Garden we like to make things simple. Rather than remember anything we're list makers. Below are some of the things we need to get on with this month.

Planting, Sowing, Harvesting & Other Things To Do in the Vegetable Patch in February.

Here's a guide to what could be happening in the vegetable patch this month:

Sowing: Beetroot * Chillies * Coriander * Peppers * Radish * Rocket * Tomatoes **Planting:** Horseradish **Harvesting:** Broccoli * Brussels Sprouts * Cabbage * Cauliflower * Celery (individual stalks) * Jerusalem Artichoke * Leeks * Lettuce * Spinach * Spring Onion

Things to Do:

- Check carrots, onions, garlic and tomatoes in store
- Save water - check water butts are filling - you'll want all the water you can get come the summer
- Spread compost on empty beds as produce is pulled
- Tidy up - keep on top of removing rotting brassica leaves to prevent pests and diseases building up.
- Dig over more plots if necessary - it will be spring planting time soon, make sure you've got enough space for everything you're hoping to grow
- Maintain your cold frame/greenhouse/nursery beds - you'll have lots of seeds going in, make sure you've got somewhere sheltered for them to thrive
- Keep some Jerusalem Artichoke tubers by, to be re-planted next month

Every year varies according to the weather and what we feel like trying / repeating so be flexible in your huerto. However the information above is the general outline of what will be happening in our Catalan Garden during February.

For a free vegetable gardening year plan just subscribe ON MY WEB SITE.

Visit me at

www.catalangarden.com

for more information on vegetable gardening and rural living in Catalunya.

olivepress.eu

13

A. M. P. A. R. E. The society for the protection of animals Ebro region. Based

"HELLO, I AM ENCARNADA"

THE ANIMAL REFUGE TERRES EBRE, PLEASE HELP ME!!!!!! CALL ARCA TODAY TO PROVIDE A HOME TO ONE

OF 200 DOGS

NEEDING A

A.M.P.A.R.E.
PROTECTORA D'ANIMALS
DE LA RIBERA D'EBRE
Based in MORA LA NOVA

CONTACT | Lynn : 638 731434 English
Isabel: 977 404 720 / 657 905 465 Spanish/ Catalan
www.naturahumana.com/ampare

in Mora La Nova. We desperately need to re-home dogs to make room for more! We have over 200 dogs for adoption. Lynn 638 731434 English Isabel 977 404720 Spanish/ Catalan Donations always appreciated.

I HAVE 20 PUPPIES AND 70 DOGS, 40 CATS PLEASE I NEED FOOD FOR DOGS AND CATS....."

I have adopted an abandoned dog. Have you?

Alberg d'Animals de les Terres de l'Ebre

657 18 14 37
619 84 87 78

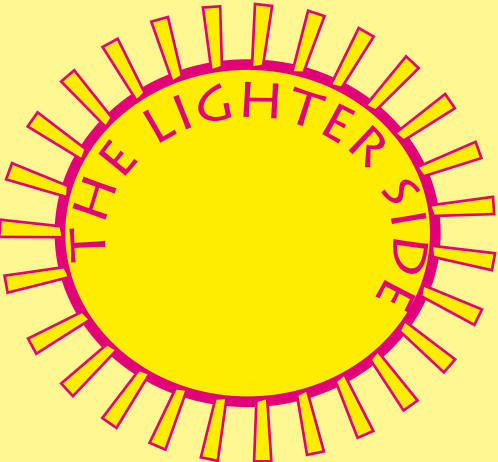
www.albergdanimals.com

Association for the refuge and Care of Animals

Arca

Hundreds of lovely dogs need homes
Donations and Volunteers needed
Maeve (English) 678 975 816, Cinta 625 915 605
Anna 649 507 427, Carmen 655 040 359
protectora.arca@wanadoo.es
<http://www.protectoraarca.org/>

LOVING HOME or IF YOU CAN VOLUNTEER ANY ASSISTANCE WITH THE DOGS



POLICE ALERT: PICK POCKETS
POLICE ARE URGING VISITORS TO THE CITY CENTRE TO BE ESPECIALLY VIGILANT FOR A NEW GANG OPERATING A SLICK ROUTINE THAT IS AIMED AT STEALING FROM UNWARY PERSONS.

THEY SAY THAT THE GANG USUALLY COMPRISES FOUR MEMBERS. WHILE THE THREE YOUNGER ONES, ALL APPEARING TO BE CUTE AND INNOCENT, DIVERT THEIR "MARK" OR INTENDED TARGET) WITH A SHOW OF FRIENDLINESS AND FUN, THE FOURTH - THE ELDEST OF THIS GANG OF CRIMINALS - SNEAKS IN FROM BEHIND THE PERSON'S BACK TO EXPERTLY RIFLE UNDETECTED THROUGH THEIR POCKETS AND BAGS FOR ANY VALUABLES BEING CARRIED.



THE ATTACHED PICTURE TAKEN FROM CCTV OPERATING IN THE INNER CITY SHOWS THE GANG IN OPERATION.

THE

Subject:..... Proud to be English

Goodbye to my England, So long my old friend

Your days are numbered, being brought to an end

To be Scottish, Irish or Welsh that's fine

But don't say you're English, that's way out of line.

The French and the Germans may call themselves such

So may Norwegians, the Swedes and the Dutch

You can say you are Russian or maybe a Dane

But don't say you're English ever again.

At Broadcasting House the word is taboo

In Brussels it's scrapped, in Parliament too

Even schools are affected, staff do as they're told

They must not teach children about England of old..

Writers like Shakespeare, Milton and Shaw

The pupils don't learn about them anymore

How about Agincourt, Hastings, Arnhem or Mons?

When England lost hosts of her very brave sons.

We are not Europeans, how can we be?

Europe is miles away over the sea

We're the English from England, let's all be proud

Stand up and be counted - Shout it out loud!

Let's tell our Government and Brussels too

We're proud of our heritage and the Red, White and Blue

Fly the flag of Saint George or the Union Jack

Let the world know - WE WANT OUR ENGLAND BACK !!!!



A handful of 7 year old children were asked 'What they thought of beer'. Some interesting responses, but the last one is especially touching.

'I think beer must be good. My dad says the more beer he drinks the prettier my mom gets.'

--Tim, 7 years old

'Beer makes my dad sleepy and we get to watch what we want on television when he is asleep, so beer is nice.'

--Mellanie, 7 years old

'My Mom and Dad both like beer.

My Mom gets funny when she drinks it and takes her top off at parties, but Dad doesn't think this is very funny.' --Grady, 7 years old

"My Mom and Dad talk funny when they drink beer and the more they drink the more they give kisses to each other, which is a good thing." --Toby, 7 years old

'My Dad gets funny on beer. He is funny. He also wets his pants sometimes, so he shouldn't have too much.' --Sarah, 7 years old

'My Dad loves beer. The more he drinks, the better he dances. One time he danced right into the pool.' --Lilly, 7 years old

'I don't like beer very much. Every time Dad drinks it, he burns the sausages on the barbecue and they taste disgusting.'

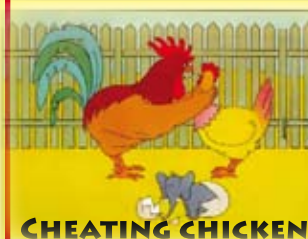
--Ethan, 7 years old

'I give Dad's beer to the dog and he goes to sleep.'

--Shirley, 7 years old

'My Mom drinks beer and she says silly things and picks on my father. Whenever she drinks beer she yells at Dad and tells him to go bury his bone down the street again, but that doesn't make any sense.'

--Jack, 7 years old



Having a sick sense of humor himself, the Grim Reaper would sometimes stroll the corridors of the hospital just to see the looks on people's faces.

HONEY PLEASE, JUST CALM DOWN. LET ME EXPLAIN...



--Ethan, 7 years old

'I give Dad's beer to the dog and he goes to sleep.'

--Shirley, 7 years old

'My Mom drinks beer and she says silly things and picks on my father. Whenever she drinks beer she yells at Dad and tells him to go bury his bone down the street again, but that doesn't make any sense.'

--Jack, 7 years old



It was my first time ever, And I'll never forget. I'd do it again Without a single regret.

The sky was dark, The moon was high, We were all alone: Just she and I.

Her hair was soft, Her eyes were blue, I knew just what She wanted to do.

Her skin so soft, Her legs so fine, I ran my fingers Down her spine.

I didn't know how But I tried my best, I started by placing My hands on her breast.

I remember my fear, My fast beating heart, But slowly she spread Her legs apart.

And when I did it, I felt no shame; All at once The white stuff came.

At last it's finished, It's all over now. My first time ever At milking a cow...



GOTCHA!



CHINESE NEW YEAR

Chinese New Year starts on the New Moon (26th January 2009) after the Winter Solstice and is celebrated by Chinese people all over the world. It heralds new beginnings and a fresh start. At a social level, it is very much a family affair, a time of reunion and thanksgiving. Chinese New Year falls Monday (Lunar calendar) 15.55 China, (Monday 26th Barcelona 08:55) This is the date you celebrate the Chinese New Year with Ang Pow, fireworks etc and not the date you use to place your cures and enhancers 2009 in Feng Shui (February 4th 2009).

The Lunar Chinese New Year Day is very different from the Solar (Hsia) New Year Day (February 4th 2009). The Lunar Calendar formulates the days of the month according to the cycle of the moon whereas the solar year is governed by the sun. Although the Chinese solar year starts on a different date from the western year, the theory whereby the year is calculated on how long it takes the earth to go round the sun is the same. The lunar cycle lasts approximately 29.5 days and in order that the start of the Lunar New Year is not too far removed from the Solar New Year, the Chinese insert an extra month, this being called an intercalary month, once every few years. This is why Chinese New Year Day falls on a different date in each of the two calendars.

You may have come across a few websites stating that 2009 is the 4707th Chinese New Year, if you cannot find the reason, here is an answer for you:

The Yellow King's appointment was held in the spring of 2697 B.C. But they used the winter solstice day as the first day of the year. So the first winter solstice was on around December 23rd, 2698 B.C. Today's January 1st means nothing to the Yellow King. If we count that extra eight days in 2698 B.C. for a year, then year 2009 is the 4706th Chinese year.

The weeks running up to New Year's Day are very important because one must be well prepared for the New Year as it sets the example for the year's luck. First, all debts have to be repaid before the beginning of the New Year or you will be in debt to others throughout the year. By the same token, anything lent out to family and friends must be collected before the beginning of the New Year or else one will be lending for the rest of the year.

Making sure that the house is cleaned and dusted is important to ensure that old stagnant qi is cleared away making way for fresh auspicious qi. The whole house must be cleaned before New Year's Day. Cobwebs must be cleared out and any old and broken items thrown away. Following cleaning, all brooms, brushes, dusters, dustpans are put away out of sight. To do otherwise would be to threaten the new qi that is arriving and this is something that everyone wishes to avoid.

This is also the time to renew protective talismans that are used to expel evil. To achieve this, people will decorate the home with auspicious couplets and emblems with the additional aim of summing good fortune. These appear on red paper or with a red background. To the Chinese, red is a life giving colour, associated with summer, the south and the vermilion bird, which is similar to a phoenix (oddly enough symbolic of rebirth in the west too) and represents the fire element. Red to the Chinese also represents good fortune, fame and riches. Be very careful when using red inside your home though, in traditional Feng Shui this is the most potent colour and if used correctly can give good results, if used in a wrong location it can cause many problems.

In readiness for the New Year the house must be decorated with live blooming plants which symbolise rebirth and new growth. Flowers such as pussy willow, azalea, peony and water lily or narcissus symbolise wealth and high position in one's career.



YEAR OF THE OX 2009

If there are no flowers, the result would be a lack of fruit later in the year. It is considered very lucky for the household if a plant blooms on New Year's Day as they can then expect a year of prosperity. Plum blossoms and bamboo are also displayed to symbolise perseverance, reliability and longevity.

After flowers come the fruits. Oranges and tangerines are two very symbolic fruits in the celebration of Chinese New Year. They are symbols for abundant happiness. The colour of oranges and tangerines represents gold and, together with a 'hung bao' ang pow, (red packet containing money), they are offered to friends and family as gifts symbolising gold ingots.

Traditionally, the run up to the celebration of Chinese New Year is the 'Reunion Dinner'. An extravagant banquet is laid out to mark the onset of the New Year where young and old gather for a reunion dinner to symbolise family unity. Family members try to get home from different places before or on New Year's Eve to celebrate this special occasion in the family home. Married daughters will spend their reunion dinner in the husband's family home.

Some of the dishes that are laid on the banquet table have superstitious attributes such as: Ginkgo nuts which represent gold ingots and are therefore much appreciated. Black moss seaweed is an indicator of prosperity. This is also true in the case of a whole chicken which is a desirable addition to the feast. Dried bean curd is for happiness and luck. Lotus seed is seen as a fertility symbol and signifies having many offspring. Nian Gao is a traditional sweet steamed glutinous rice pudding, the eating of which will aid growth and abundance. Bamboo shoots as, in Chinese, the words sound similar to the Chinese for "hoping that all turns out for the best". A whole fish with its head and tail intact representing togetherness.

Children are bathed and dressed in their new pyjamas and promised the arrival of "Tsai Shen Yeh" (Chai Shen Yeh) (the Wealth God). Whilst they sleep, the parents slip an ang pow (a red envelope with money) under their pillow signifying a visit from 'Chai Shen Yeh'. Children can also expect to receive red envelopes from uncles and aunts with the amount that is given being dictated by the closeness of the family relationship and also the age of the child. The amount contained has to be in even numbers. Even numbers are auspicious unless it is a single Chinese i-ching coin on its own.

At midnight at the turn of the old and new year, people let off fire-crackers which serve to drive away the evil spirits and old qi of the past year and to greet the arrival of the New Year. Greetings and an air of festivity remains for another eleven days through to the full moon of the first lunar month when another celebration follows but this time it is to mark the closing of the Spring Festival. Day 15 is also called the 'Spring Lantern Festival' (Yuan Xiao Jie). This wonderfully romantic celebration takes place under a full moon on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month of the year.

On this day, old and young carry a colourful lantern and gather in a public place. They gather to admire and appreciate the first full moon of the year (very similar to the Mid Autumn Festival).

In China, there are still villages which hold a big Tang Yuan (rice dumplings) cooking and eating session. The dumplings are round and symbolise family unity and completeness. The mid-month Lantern Festival traditionally brings the seasonal passage of the New Year to a conclusion.

I hope you have enjoyed reading this and may you have a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year in 2009.

Gong Xi Fa Cai (May You be Happy, May You be Wealthy)!



Mobile Homes, aka static caravans, aka modulós have certainly come a long way in the last 20 years.



From the single door, 1 bedroom, 5ft x 3ft flat roof, single glazed breezy windows with a single bulb to light your way :-

To today's 3 bedrooms, 35ft x 12ft pitched, tiled roof, double glazed PVC windows, spot lamp lighting in the beamed ceilings,

air conditioning and fitted kitchen.

Today there is a wide range of mobile homes on the market. The most common sizes are 26 x 10ft (8 x 3m), 28 x 10ft (8.5x 3m), 28 x 12ft (8.5 x 3.7m) and 34 x 12ft. (10.5 x 3.7m). Within these dimensions the distribution of the rooms varies quite considerably. The main difference is whether you prefer a "central lounge" with the bedrooms on either side of the lounge or an "end lounge" with the bedrooms grouped at one end of the mobile.

The standard spec for most mobile homes these days includes minimum 2 bedrooms, a bathroom with shower and WC, a kitchen area that boasts refrigerator or fridge freezer, hob and oven with grill, a living area with seating and often included is a convertible bed within the seating. A gas powered or electric boiler provides the hot water and heating is generally a gas fire or electric heater.

The prices of mobile homes also vary widely. Very much like car dealers, it is better to deal with a reputable supplier who can offer you the correct quality product that suits your needs for the best possible price. ICA MODULOS SL has been operating within the mobile home industry for the last 20 years and has been supplying and transporting mobile homes to private individuals, campsites and tour operators in Spain for the last 10 years. As a general guide, reasonable quality used mobile homes can sell from as little as 4500 euros up to 20,000 euros. You can sometimes

pick up a "deal" from as little as 1500 euros, but, beware "you always get what you pay for!"

New mobiles can go from 15,000 euros up to 70,000 euros.

Whatever the age or the size mobile homes are a great asset for many reasons.

- They can be an affordable primary or holiday residence at a fraction of the cost of an apartment and sometimes the mobile home can be as large as a small apartment. (Some occupy over 40m2 of indoor living space.)
- They can be used as a permanent residence or just short term, such as somewhere to live while you build your dream home.
- They can be used for storage of personal items.
- Some older models have been used as homes for pets or garden sheds.
- If you move location you can take it with you.
- You can sell it on when you are finished with it.
- You can start a business by buying them to rent to holidaymakers.

Before purchasing a mobile home it is better to consider the following points:-

- What is its purpose? To live in all year round or just holidays? If you are looking to live in it all year round you may want to look at the longer 12ft wide mobile homes that offer more living space than the 10ft. If you are only holidaying in it for a couple of weeks at a time shorter 10ft wide mobile may suffice.
- When purchasing the mobile ask if transport is included or is extra. Most of the time the transport price is extra. Moving any mobile home over 10ft (3m) wide will legally require the transporters to employ a pilot car. Thus, these wider mobiles will cost about 200 to 300 euros extra to transport. ICA MODULOS SL only uses registered and experienced transporters.
- Consider the access to the plot you wish to place the mobile on. Are the access roads wide enough and high enough. The mobile home usually comes on a rigid flat bed truck and the combined height is about 4 metres. The transporters are contracted to deliver the mobile to "the most accessible drop off point" without damaging the truck or driver and able to exit the drop off point after unloading.



You can save money on transport if you are purchasing two mobiles that can fit onto one truck with trailer. The maximum size for this 8 x 3.66m. Make sure you consider access carefully if you choose this option as these trailers are a lot more difficult to manoeuvre. If the trucks cannot access your plot the mobiles can be dropped off near your access road and taken by 4 x 4.

- Do you have access to electric, water and drainage? Gas appliances for mobile homes work off one orange butane gas bottle.
- Installation of the mobile home, i.e. positioning and levelling plus connection of services is something that can be done by yourself if you feel capable but there are companies that specialise in this. ICA MODULOS SL can recommend companies upon request.
- Is the mobile water tight? This is the most important aspect of the purchase. Leaking roofs and soft floors indicate problems.



Find out some history on the mobile. Where did it come from? ICA MODULOS SL purchases its mobile homes direct from reputable UK tour operators with whom we have long standing agreements. The mobiles have all constantly been serviced and maintained by a team of trained technicians.

- How can you pay for your mobile? ICA MODULOS SL takes payment in euros or sterling in cash or via bank transfer. We also take credit cards.
- You can increase the size of your living area by adding wooden decking to your mobile to create an al fresco dining and seating area.



So when you are ready to take the plunge and purchase your mobile home or need any more information please give us a call.

For more information on our selection of mobile homes for sale please contact Shaun on 629743327 or email info@icasl.net or visit our website at www.icasl.net or visit our sites in La Tallada D'Emporda, Gerona or Cambrils in Tarragona.

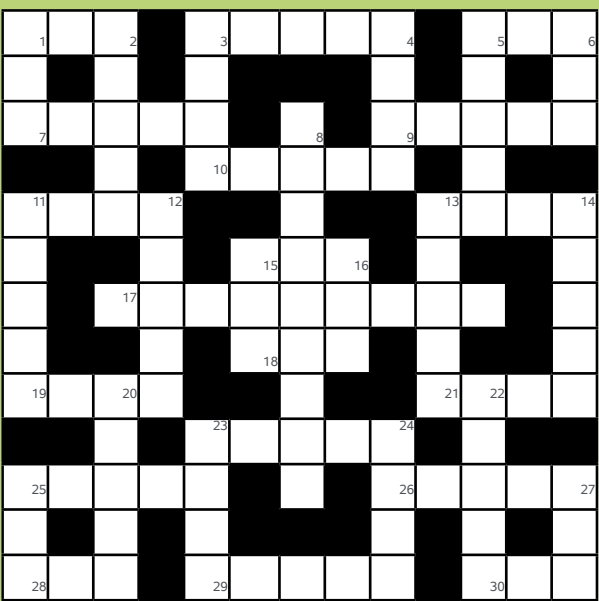
SPANGLISH?-ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

ACROSS

- bad
- fair/market
- eye
- wheel
- sand
- encabritarse (E)
- house
- pasado (E)
- oreja (E)
- corazón de León(E)
- two
- kiss
- este (E)
- grúa (E)
- owner
- extra
- vara (E)
- female friend
- remo (E)

DOWN

- sea
 - maneras lascivas (E)
 - miedo (E)
 - housewives
 - sheep
 - ova
 - carrots
 - algarroba (E)
 - attic
 - message
 - confianza (E)
 - fin (E)
 - beast
 - gastar (E)
 - cavern
 - hello
 - fabric
 - to give
 - aire (E)
- BY SARAH (E=translate to english otherwise to spanish)**



ACROSS:

- reloj
- brazo
- emplear
- plaza

ANSWERS TO THE JANUARY ISSUE OF SPANGLISH

DOWN:

- ademas
- triste
- ember
- ojeriza
- ducha
- libro
- parecer
- acostar
- peaje
- abrir
- aborto
- grand
- barro

CASA PINO DEL MAR



Pino and Erika welcome you to their new Mediterranean Oriental Restaurant with a wonderful terrace overlooking the sea. Specialising in exquisite menus from all over the Mediterranean including some excellent delicious Moroccan cuisine

A Chill out space where you can enjoy our selection of cocktails

We offer different menus
Plus we cook with daily fresh produce:



Daily menu at 10,50€ - Evening menu - A La Carta
Here is a small selection of what is on offer taken from the extensive A La Carte menu:

Ensalada "Perigourdine" (Foie Grass, Magret de Pato, etc - salad with Duck Liver, marinated Duck) 11,00€
Calamares a la Siciliana 10,00€
Pasta con Truffas y Jamon Serrano 16,00€
Magret de Pato flameado con Calvados
Duck Filet flambé with Calvados 16,00€

Bogavante(lobster) 'Casa Pino' Precio según mercado
Mejillones(mussels) Provençal 12,00€
Specials
Chicken tagine with Mint, Coriander, Fig and Sesame 13,00€
Couscous Royal 15,00€
Lamb tagine with Almonds, Prunes and Coriander 16,00€

"We are open all year from 10 am till closing time
Tuesday closed except June/September and bank holidays

Address Carrer Vall d'Aran 124
43892 Miami Playa (Playa Cristal)
Tel: 977 811 904
Mobile: 699 353 641

We are looking for staff at Casa Pino del Mar if you are interested please email: casapinodelmar@hotmail.es



RESTAURANTE - BAR - CHILLOUT- COCKTELERIA

Mediterranean-Oriental Restaurant
with a wonderful terrace
overlooking the sea at Playa Cristal



We are open all year from 10 am till closing time
Tuesday closed except June/September and bank holidays

Fresh produce
Daily menu
Mediterranean-Oriental and French Cuisine
Tapas
Evening Menu
A la carte
Cocktails

Address Carrer Vall d'Aran 124
43892 Miami Playa (Playa Cristal)
Tel: 977 811 904 Mobile: 699 353 641



Valentines menu on 13th, 14th & 15th February- Reserve by 12th
Menu of St. Valentines day
Aperitif and Canapé
.....
Mille - feuilles of Goat cheese with Apple, Salmon and Honey
or
Fimbal of Italian Bacon with Foie Grass, Grapes and a Muslin sauce with Champagne and Port
.....
Canelloni of Prawns and Clams with a Champagne coulis
or
Ox 'Tagliata' with a Truffle and Rosemary sauce
.....
The Lovers delight
.....
Coffee and Sweets
.....
39,00 with our selection of wine included

To Amore

HEALTH SELF-HELP TOOLS (2) FOR FINDING BALANCE: PAYING ATTENTION: USING MINDFULNESS MEDITATION – WHAT IS IT?

Many people these days have a sense that meditation could be a useful tool for helping find some kind of sanity in a complex & challenging life, but don't know what it is and whether you have to be like the Beatles or Tibetan to do it properly. There are many forms of meditation but one particular method called mindfulness (paying attention) meditation is being increasingly used to help people with heart problems, stress and for chronic pain control.

It is a self-help practice, a standalone practice free of any other trappings though originating in Buddhist meditation, where you learn to pay attention to (or be mindful of) where you are, of whatever is going on. It works in fact mainly by your learning to notice those moments when you are not present, when your mind is off wandering telling itself stories - as minds do - about all the things you've done or need to do, shopping lists, projects,..... You notice pretty fast if you try to rest your mind on one ordinary object of attention - like your breath in your body, or how your feet feel as they meet the ground when you're walking the dog - that your mind wanders all over the place half the time – well more, in my case! Minds endlessly tell us stories, & there is of course nothing wrong with that, it's just what they do, like waves' energy is to move in the sea. But we all know how you can ride a bike down the road and suddenly realise you were completely unaware of where you were for the last 3 blocks, or be eating pizza whilst thinking how much better it might have been if it was from the restaurant next door. As it can be a pain, that tendency to miss the current slice of pizza, when we practise meditation for a few minutes a day at the moment we notice that we've spent the last 10 minutes rehashing the list for the hardware shop, we then place our attention gently back to the present, to being back with our feet on the dirt track or sitting on the chair.

Practising coming home to the present over and over again tends to give you more chance of doing likewise in everyday life. Or when circumstances around are a bit rockier, like in the middle of an argument with your neighbour you might suddenly lose conviction in the rightness of your position as you have a flash of noticing how rough he looks this morning. Out of that flash a whole different way of tackling the argument might happen. Or we find that if we lean with softening our breath into the pain in our back, as current chronic pain research is showing, strangely it reduces rather than increases.

Training in paying attention to those ordinary moments when nothing particular is happening except – just sitting, cleaning the engine or pruning the tree - tends to make that 'nothing' turn out to be a more and more rich nothing. Paying attention helps us be less wary of our own experience & we notice that we can always manage the current moment however bad we think it is. We taste its texture (sad, edgy, excited, or whatever), let go & feel the space we are in. Then comes the next moment.

Julia Cameron says in 'The Artists Way' that the quality of life is in proportion to the capacity for delight and that the capacity for delight is a gift of paying attention. Paying attention is always good medicine - both for us and luckily usually for others too - as the art of connection.

Taru Burstall is a psychotherapist who has practised this form of meditation for 25 years, is trained to teach it and is always happy to pass it on & practise with other people. 629 301 509. She also practises massage & acupuncture.



Your recipe especially for Olive Press readers from the chef at Restaurant del Mar

PAN FRIED EELS IN WINE

INGREDIENTS

1 kg of eels (cut into chunks and salted)
3 cloves of garlic (crushed)
Parsley
2 ripe tomatoes
1 spoonful of red pimiento
1 spoonful of flour
1 bay leaf
1 glass of white wine
Oil
Salt (to taste)
Water



COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

Lightly fry the garlic, parsley and tomato. Then add pimiento and the flour and remove from heat. Add the wine and water. When it starts to boil, add the eels, previously cut in chunks and salted; The water should not cover the eels completely.

Leave them to cook until they are tender and at their best.

RECOMMENDATIONS

You can add onion. Instead of water, you can use fish broth/stock. If you have big eels. It is better to fry them before cooking.

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WINTER MENU

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Pork filets cooked with roquefort cheese.
Entrecote of veal with fried mushrooms.
Monkfish kebab wrapped with bacon, peppers and prawns.
Traditional spanish paella (min 2 persons)
Fideua with 'alli oli'.
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Desserts

Crema catalana.
Fresh fruit salad in fruiti juice.
Hot chocolate coulant.
Handmade pastries
Medal of vanilla and chocolate icecream coated in honey nuts.
Pears in wine.
Sweet milk flavoured icecream in a chocolate boat.
Price Per Dessert 5€ (Vat Included)

PLANNING AND BUILDING ON RURAL LAND IN CATALUNYA

If you are new to this area or maybe have been living elsewhere in Spain, you may not be aware that rural planning and building regulations vary from one autonomous community to another.

This means that what's allowed here in Catalonia can differ considerably from what's OK in nearby Castellón province or Teruel.

Catalonia's planning laws are basically those laid down by its autonomous government, the Generalitat.

Extra regulations may be imposed by each province's *Urbanisme* (planning) departments, and in particular, by *Ajuntaments* — local councils.

The ubiquitous *almacén*

New building on rural land in Catalonia is now effectively limited to storage buildings: the ubiquitous *almacén*. Square meterage and height allowed vary from village to village, and are often linked to the amount of cultivated land.

Intended as somewhere to store tools and crops, *almacenes* can usually include an open fire, a kitchen area and a WC/ washroom — but remember that the council is not actually giving you permission to build a dwelling.

Some councils no longer allow *almacenes* at all unless you have a set, minimum amount of land, or can prove that you make a substantial part of your income from it.



Renovating an existing building

Renovating existing buildings is nearly always possible, provided you respect existing area, height and volume, and maintain the same use.

For example, the use of small 'casitas' that have clearly never been dwellings cannot be changed. So as far as the authorities are concerned, a small barn cannot become a full-time home.

Larger, multi-room buildings that were evidently inhabited year-round in the past can usually be renovated as dwellings, subject to approval. This planning process requires basic architect's plans and can take a year or more.

lovely example of a casita



In our experience, it's generally not worth applying to significantly extend this kind of property — permission is rarely granted. But we find you can often get permission to put a roof on an adjacent *corral* or livestock enclosure.

Take extra care with rural land in a *Natura 2000* or PEIN protected wildlife areas. Within them it can be harder

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to get permission to renovate an existing building, and sometimes an *almacén* may not be allowed at all.

If you plan to renovate an existing building or build an *almacén* and need some guidance, feel free to email me at jeff@fincasdirect.com. We deal with local councils, architects and builders, and can commission and coordinate their services for you if you are not in the area.

Jeff Greensmith runs www.fincasdirect.com and is a registered estate agent and experienced Spanish/Catalan translator and interpreter. He has lived in Catalonia since 1986.

While the points contained in this article are true to best of our knowledge, they do not constitute legal advice on the part of Fincas Direct or The Olive Press. **Please use this information responsibly and seek professional legal advice if in doubt.**

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Reverse Osmosis	NO	NO	YES	?	NO	YES	NO

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FESTA MAJOR DE LA CANDELERA L'AMETLLA DE MAR



FIESTA MAYOR – To celebrate the day of "Our Lady of the Candelera" In honour of the Patron Saint of L'Ametlla de Mar. (1st week in February)



mass, blessing of the candles and the procession through the church; the floral offering, where all the local members of the village participate; and the procession through the streets of the town, with the candles lit.

From the 2nd of February the main activities begin. There are religious acts such as the procession with Candles (a procession with more than two thousand torches to remember the day when its light saved the fishermen of the village) and the offering of flowers to Our Lady. There are also days which are dedicated to senior citizens, women and sport. Other activities include a meeting of "giants", dances, street activities, "correfocs", fireworks. The acts start the weekend prior to the 2nd February, with the beginning of the sport contests (football, room football, basketball and athletics).

On the eve of the main day, on the 1st February, in the morning there is prayer and ringing of the bells, and in the afternoon a "passacaglia" summons all to hear the public announcement proclaiming the Heiress and the Damsels of Honor for the year.

On the 2nd February the main festivities begin. In the morning there are many acts dedicated to the patron saint of L'Ametlla de Mar; the Virgin of the Candelera, including

The following day the 3rd February is the Day for the Pensioners, a homage to the great persons of the town, activities include the morning procession, the domino competition, mass, and the concert performed by the choir. The main incentive of this day is the Competition of Suquet de Peix Calero, one of the gastronomic acts of the Candelera cooked in front of the public. where 20 people compete in order to see who can make the best "suquet" (fish casserole). During the competition you can try regional cakes and "cremat" (hot rum punch) – On the 4 of February it is the Day of the Woman, including a lunch celebrating the feminine "passacaglia".

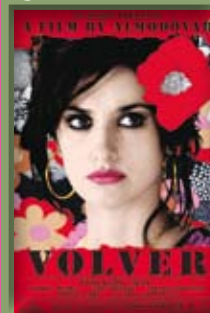
On 5 February it is on the Day of the Young, with several sport contests and the popular street walk in the morning. Finishing with performances of rock groups that attract the youngsters of the neighbouring towns, and discos continue into the early hours. **Information Culture Regidoria (977.49.37.54) and Tourist Association (977.45.64.77) www.ametllademar.org**



Welcome to Olives & Popcorn, your monthly guide to great Spanish based films that in my opinion should not be ignored.

Any comments are welcome. Also if you want to know more about a particular film and how to get a copy again get in touch via my email below.

This month I present a film I mentioned last year and now I proudly present it for your viewing pleasure. This is a good one for anyone feeling the new year blues.....**Volver (Comedy)**



Volver (Spanish: "to return" (specifically: to return to a place), pronounced [bol'βer] is a 2006 Spanish film by director Pedro Almodóvar.

Volver was one of the films competing for the Palme d'Or at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival. It eventually won two awards: Best Actress (shared by the six main actresses) and Best Screenplay. The film's premiere was held on March 10, 2006, in Puertollano, Spain, where the filming had taken place. Cruz was nominated for a Golden Globe, SAG Award and the Academy Award for Best Actress, making her the first Spanish woman ever nominated for an acting Academy Award.

The film opens in a cemetery full of women cleaning and tending to their families' gravestones. Two sisters, Raimunda (Penélope Cruz) and Sole (Lola Dueñas) and Raimunda's daughter Paula (Yohana Cobo) are cleaning the grave of their parents who

had died in a tragic fire. The events which had occurred on the night of the fire are only gradually revealed, but are central to the plot of the film.

After their Aunt Paula (Chus Lampreave) dies, Sole returns to the village for the funeral. Aunt Paula's neighbour Agustina (Blanca Portillo), whose mother had disappeared without a trace three years ago, tells Sole that she has heard the aunt talking with Sole's departed mother, Irene (Carmen Maura). Agustina helps Sole, who is "terrified of the dead," to avoid seeing the corpse at the funeral. In her aunt's house, Sole encounters the ghost of her mother, who had "died in the arms of her husband" in the fire. Arriving home, she hears a knocking sound from the rear of her car, and opens the car and again encounters her mother's ghost. She has brought luggage and intends to stay with Sole for a while.

This film is a very sweet story set in modern day Spain and only a director of such vision as Almodóvar can tell it in such a way that a subject we would normally feel is cold and unfeeling comes across as a wonderful celebration of what we should all truly care about.....

Almodóvar says of the story that "it is precisely about death...More than about death itself, the screenplay talks about the rich culture that surrounds death in the region of La Mancha, where I was born. It is about the way (not tragic at all) in which various female characters, of different generations, deal with this culture." The plot of Volver follows the plot of a movie-within-the-movie based on the main character's novel in Almodóvar's 1995 film La flor de mi secreto.

**Jason.M.Berry 09/01/2009 Contact e-mail:
gatchajay@hotmail.com**



CHALLENGES OF GARDENING IN CATALUNYA

February in your garden
Practical seasonal hints and tips from active
gardeners and authors

* Clodagh and Dick Handscombe.

February is very much about completing the annual garden cutback and clean up, which hopefully you commenced during January – deciding on where to plant new trees next month and progressing construction projects such as raised beds, paths and terraces to keep warm.

When pruning around the flower garden do shred as much waste as possible and add to a compost heap. We only leave out cypressus, palms, yuccas and oleander prunings.

When pruning existing trees and thinking about new ones do think beyond whether they have nice leaves, flowers and fruit and ensure that you are also using them to provide for essential summer shade and sheltered winter sun spots for both people and the more delicate plants.

Like most, you probably came to Spain for the sunny weather so ensure that your garden design allows you to enjoy it to the full.

The generally sunny weather also enables one to grow an amazing diversity of fruit and vegetables for harvesting on every day of the year. Our books 'Growing Healthy Vegetables in Spain' and 'Growing Healthy Fruit in Spain' describe the possibilities in detail. Most importantly the latter includes long sections on the selection, planting, pruning, spraying and feeding of fruit trees each being

important tasks for February and March.

When planting new fruit trees do improve the soil before planting to provide the nutrients essential for early growth and to ensure that the soil is free draining

in addition to being moisture retentive. Many fruit trees, especially citrus trees, never grow and fruit well in expatriate gardens because :

- their roots never spread out from small planting holes in unprepared clayey soils,
- the young roots are burnt by the over application of strong chemical fertilizers in an attempt to stimulate new growth, and
- young roots become waterlogged in poorly draining soils and therefore rot away.

With forethought such problems are easily avoided.

When designing a network of paths and terraces do recognise that there are many possible surfaces. We discuss seventeen in chapter 2.4 of our book Your Garden in Spain – From planning to planting and maintenance. And don't make them all straight and the same width. With a little forethought and creativity a wander round your garden can become magical whether a wooded or mountainside site covered in naturally growing herbs. Also recognise that paths are not only to walk on but can be used to move excess rain water around the garden to where needed most.

***The two books mentioned above can be obtained from many bookshops and internet bookshops. Do a search of 'Clodagh Handscombe' for a choice of the latter. If more convenient they can also be obtained by mail order from Santana Books on 952-485838 from 10.00 to 14.00 Monday to Friday.**

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NEWS FROM OUR CATALUNYA CORRESPONDENT (NORFOLK)

'GOODBYE WOOLWORTHS'

By your celebrity DJ, you can listen to him live on www.futureradio.co.uk Wednesday mornings 10.00-13.00

When started as a 'new boy' at a minor (very) English Public School more years ago than I care to remember we were given a list of school rules. I still have this and it might make a topic for another article but suffice to say most of the restrictions that were placed on all pupils are now handed out as punishments by juvenile courts. Not eating in the street, not being permitted to go out at any time without wearing the school uniform and being banned from all places of entertainment were fairly self-explanatory. However one rule puzzled me. 'Members of the school are not permitted to enter chain stores during term time'. Now, apart from a cycle lock, I had never felt the need to buy a chain. What was dreadful about them? Was there a danger than small boys would roam the street wielding lengths of chain and threatening passersby? It was pointed out to me that chain stores were branches of nationwide stores that were familiar to every High Street. In those days

this meant Woolworths, Marks and Spencer's and British Home Stores. All these establishments were conveniently, or inconveniently, situated directly opposite the school entrance.

Now I was not too concerned about the banishment from M & S. Perhaps the 'powers that be' were concerned that small boys would be corrupted by lingering in the lingerie department. After all this was an all boys school and we were also banned from going near girls. I suspect this had more to do with school uniforms only being obtainable from a designated outfitter who charged inflated prices and presumably gave generous 'back hander' to the headmaster. British Home Store seemed, almost exclusively, to sell lampshades as I recall. No great loss not going in there.

What did hurt was the forbidden territory of Woolworths. Now I had been brought up, as many of my generation had, to regard Woolly's as a kind of Aladdin's cave full of all sorts of goodies that we often affordable from meagre pocket money and holiday earnings. Who has never drooled over the day-glo splendour of the pick'n'mix section? In the early days there was none of the health and safety laws that ensured that consumable goods should be covered.

Everything was exposed and many a child would scamper out of the store clutching a bizarre assortment of confectionary seasoned with fly droppings. Then there were the toys, again usually easily affordable, which came in garish boxes. Usually these were rip-offs of much more expensive items obtainable in 'proper shops'. But did we care about the quality? Not a bit of it. Nor did we mind that the K-Tel records, which were so crammed with tracks that a grasshopper sneezing would send the pick-up arm on your record player scudding across the surface.

All the stores had the same layout. You knew where you were in Woolworths. Somewhere at the right side of the store was a tea and coffee counter. For some unaccountable reason you could only stir your beverage using a communal teaspoon that was chained to the counter. Had they been plagued by a gang of 'teaspoon bandits' who had snatched their entire stock except for this solitary item?

'Saturday girls' had a certain allure. These were casual workers, very, who would stare disinterestedly at the produce and defy you to buy something. After all these were the days before 'scanning' and so buying an assortment of small goods at various prices would involve them in a massive exercise in mathematics which was never going to be the strong point of these 'Saturday Girls' who would do their calculating on the back of brown paper bags.

But, alas, on January the 6th 2009 all these stores, some of which had become 'big w's, closed their doors for the last time. it was a sorry sight to see the staff lockers, shelving and baskets for sale in those final days. ironically in the final weeks, as stock was reduced to a fraction of the original price, they were packed to doors. I suspect a lot of items, including the pick'n'mix were being bought purely out of nostalgia. cheap and nasty goods can still be bought in pound shops and their like, but we shall never see the variety of 'tat', albeit useful 'tat' under one roof again. and small public school boys will never feel the sense of elation as we did on the last day of term when we invaded woolworths for a bit of down to earth shoplifting.

© Mike Stevens December 2009



DAMAGE to a Lincolnshire wind farm turbine may not have been caused by aliens, experts claimed last night.

Police insist the most likely explanation for the damage to the 300-ft turbine is a high speed crash involving an extra-terrestrial spacecraft.

One of the blades was badly dented and another disappeared, as is often the case in alien-windfarm collisions.

Inspector Tom Logan said: "What seems to have happened is an alien being has travelled millions of light years across space from a planet we have never heard of, using technology we can only dream about, and then collided with a windfarm in Conisholme.

"I've said it before - these alien craft are designed



Police believe the aliens are trying to have some form of hi-tech intercourse with the wind farms

for high-speed intergalactic travel. They do not handle well in the Earth's atmosphere, mainly due to our fluctuating magnetic fields.

"The aliens need to slow down or preferably use a different mode of transport once they arrive on Earth. There's an excellent bus service between Mablethorpe and Market Rasen."

Although police consider aliens the most likely explanation they are not ruling out other lines of enquiry, including giant wasps or a massive urang utan.

Local villagers have also reported gangs of angry voles with ladders, while nearby farmyards are being checked for cow catapults.



Liverpudlian Steven Gerrard pictured buying a 'load' of 'chip-butties' for his 'mates'

disruptive and cruel? Now imagine them with an annual budget of £5 million."

The Institute has proposed a block release system where footballers would spend eight weeks a year at Cambridge learning to use George Bernard Shaw quotes instead of stamping on someone's forehead.

There would also be regular dinners at the Dorchester where players would be awarded points for correctly identifying the dessert fork and then bonus points for not jamming it in someone's windpipe.

PREMIER league footballers have remained utterly ghastly despite their multi-million pound salaries, according to new research.

Experts say the huge sums invested in the country's top players have failed to alleviate their violent, working class horridness.

Professor Henry Brubaker, of the Institute for Studies, said: "The majority of them remain largely unintelligible and, when not buying fashionable clothing or hitting people, they sit around on their cream leather sofas, watching Jason Statham films and eating Pringles.

"Even someone like Steven Gerrard, who once had the makings of a gentleman, is unable to resist the lure of ghastly suburban nightclubs frequented by DJs and fitness instructors and moderately successful plasterers.

"And yes, Wayne Rooney does have an impressive wine collection, but only so his dreadfully inarticulate friends will have nice, heavy bottles to smash over each other's heads."

He added: "Remember those nasty boys in school who were gratuitously violent, foul mouthed,

An educated, middle-class footballing trend did emerge in the late 1980s when Everton winger Pat Nevin was seen enjoying 'Doonesbury' in the Guardian but ended in 1993 when Blackburn and England full-back Graeme Le Saux was branded a homosexual for using the word 'eclectic' in a post-match interview.

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AUDI CONVERTIBLE 2 litre manual, metallic green, full electrics, 95,000, pas, airbags, alloys, clarion cd, history, clifford alarm, half leather, vgc, €2,600 part ex.

Welcome to this month's computer guide. In the next few articles I will be giving some advice on how to make windows behave in the way you would prefer. This makes using your PC more enjoyable and efficient. These tips are for Windows XP, and although some of them are relevant, I will provide specific advice for Windows Vista in the future.

1. Increase the Amount of Frequently Used Programs Displayed on the Start Menu

The Windows XP user interface has some learning features, whereby it will customize itself to fit your computing style. One of the most obvious examples of this is the frequently used programs section on the bottom left side of the start menu, where shortcuts for the programs you have most recently used are displayed. Normally, this section only has room for about six program icons, but it's a fast and handy way to access your software, so why not add more?

To increase the amount of icons in the frequently used programs list right click on the start menu and choose 'properties'. Select the 'customize' button to the right of the 'start menu' option.

Change the 'select an icon size for programs' option to 'small icons' and in the 'number of programs on start menu' counter below, enter a new value based on how many icons you would like to see. Realistically, depending on your desktop resolution you are not likely to be able to fit more than 15 or so icons here, but enter a higher number if you wish. The system will cut off what it can't display. Hit 'ok' and enjoy your newly useful start menu.

2. Stop Automatic Grouping of Taskbar Programs

If you're not fond of the way that Windows XP groups similar icons together into a single entry on the taskbar (a group of Internet Explorer Windows for example), you can restore the default taskbar behaviour of previous versions of Windows quite easily.

I find that the default setting annoys me to no end, so this is something that I employ personally. Right click on an empty area of the taskbar or start button and click 'properties.' Choose the 'taskbar' tab and uncheck the 'group similar taskbar buttons' option. There, all done!

3. Close Multiple Desktop Windows Fast

If you've opened several related windows, there's an easy way to close all of them fast. Simply hold down the SHIFT key as you click on the X button to close the most recent of the windows. This will close all the windows related to the one you clicked on. This is great for getting rid of all those windows that seem to generate when working with email and on the internet.

I hope this provides a useful introduction to configuring Windows XP. If you have any questions on this or any other technical matters please feel free to contact me.

Colm Blake E-mail info@dovepcsoluciones.com Tel: 660 600 636
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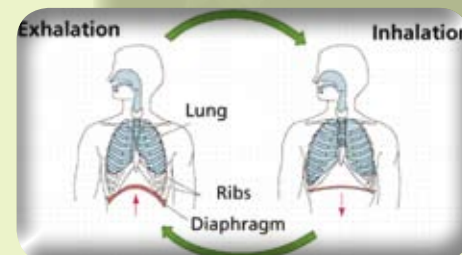
Living with chronic pain, can be a cause of constant discomfort, with an attack on your reserves of strength, energy, and feelings of well-being. Using Yoga techniques for pain management

can help minimize medication usage and help you lead a happier and fuller life. The best techniques for pain management are Yoga breathing (pranayama), relaxation, and meditation. These three aspects of Yoga act to distract your mind from pain, reduce your body's tension in reaction to pain, and provide an opportunity to "move through" the pain instead of resisting it so it loses its full impact.



Yoga is believed to reduce pain by helping the brain's pain center regulate the gate-controlling mechanism located in the spinal cord

and the secretion of natural painkillers in the body. Breathing exercises used in yoga can also reduce pain. Because muscles tend to relax when you exhale, lengthening the time of exhalation can help produce relaxation and reduce tension. Awareness of breathing helps to achieve calmer, slower respiration and aid in relaxation and pain management. The act of controlling the breath in yoga also helps reduce pain. The body has a natural phenomenon built in to the nervous system, which keeps tension in the muscles "on stand by" when the lungs are full, or "pressurized".

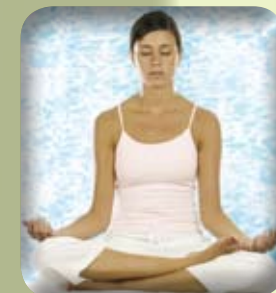


Lengthening the time of exhalation can help produce relaxation and reduce tension in the body.



Relaxation training is a step - by - step process of relaxing each of your body's muscles; this helps to counteract the body's natural tendency to increase muscle tension in an unconscious effort to "push" the pain away – which only causes the pain to increase. Mental relaxation is more effective in the relief of chronic pain, when combined with meditation and rhythmic breathing.

Meditation training is a conscious effort to reduce your mind's constant chatter and to concentrate instead simply on the feeling of not thinking. Regular daily practice of meditation builds a foundation of internal strength by opening a door to a part of yourself that is not governed by the demands of your physical body. Start with five minutes. Build up the time slowly until you can do 20 minutes. You might want to try two 20 minute sessions eventually, one in the morning and the other at night. If you can only do five minutes, don't worry, you'll still feel the benefits.




Yoga's inclusion of relaxation techniques and meditation can help reduce pain. Part of the effectiveness of yoga in reducing pain is due to its focus on self-awareness. This self-awareness can have a protective effect and allow for early preventive action.

Sarah Good is a Sivananda trained yoga teacher offering weekly drop-in yoga classes. Please feel free to call for more details on 663 140 297



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