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ISSUE No. 1694 || 21 - 27 December 2017 **MALLORCA » YOUR PAPER, YOUR VOICE, YOUR OPINION** WWW.EUOWEELYNEWS.COM

## Gender violence capital Islands have worst record in Spain

The Balearic Islands have the highest number of gender violence victims in Spain.

For every 10,000 women, 25.7 experienced gender violence in the third quarter of this year.

The figure compares to 10.7 in Galicia, which has the country's best record.

According to the data - from the Observatory Against Domestic and Gender Violence - 1,481 women have experienced gender violence on the Islands. Fifty men have also reported incidents.

The numbers are higher in



**GIRL POWER:** Madrid on International Women's Day.

other regions - with Andalucia reporting most women victims - but when population is accounted for the Islands do not fare well.

The 25.7 average is followed by Murcia (23.1), Valenciana (22.6) and the Canaries (21.5). Andalucia recorded 19.9 female victims per 10,000.

However, the Balearic Islands did see an 8.3 per cent decrease in the number of reported complaints, compared to last year.

The last quarter saw 225 convictions and 11 acquittals over the period.

## No white Christmas

A MILD Christmas is forecast for the majority of Spain.

An official from national weather office, AEMET said that while temperatures will be cool at night, there is almost no chance of heavy rainfall before the festive period.

Scattered showers are expected in central and northern Spain plus the Canary Islands, but Mediterranean parts of the country - including Alicante, Malaga and Almeria - will bask in daytime highs of 17-21°C.

The dry conditions are being driven by the return of an anticyclonic weather

system off Portugal, which is blocking the entry of Atlantic fronts.

See us on page 24

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### Sex theft

TWO masked men robbed €4,800 - €7,000 from a Palma brothel after intimidating one of the prostitutes, according to the owner. Police reportedly believe at least three people were involved.

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CATALONIANS vote in hotly anticipated regional elections today (Thursday). Some hope it will resolve the crisis which has engulfed Spain for the last two months but others fear it will further complicate the situation.

Here, we provide a handy timeline to the confusing saga.

**September 2015**

Pro-independence parties win a majority in regional elections.

**November 2015**

Catalonian MPs vote to support independence.

**January 2016**

Carles Puigdemont takes over as Catalan president.

**June 2017**

The Catalan government calls an independence referendum for October 2017.

**September 7**

The Spanish constitutional declares the referendum illegal.

**September 15**

Spanish police seize ballot boxes hidden by the regional government.

**September 20**

Spanish police storm and occupy Catalan government buildings. There are protests in response.

**October 1**

Catalans vote overwhelmingly for independence in the referendum, which is overshadowed by



**CONTROVERSIAL:** Thousands have participated in protests over the poll which sees deposed leader Carles Puigdemont (inset left) take on Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy (inset right).

## Timeline: Catalan independence crisis

police violence, 92 per cent vote in favour, turnout is only 43 per cent.

**October 3**

King Felipe VI condemns the Catalan government in a strongly-worded television address. There is a general strike and huge protests.

**October 11**

Prime Minister Mario Rajoy sets the Catalan government a five-day deadline to clarify whether they have declared independence or not. This is extended to October 19.

**October 21**

Spanish government suspends Cataluña's autonomy and says it will impose direct rule on October 28.

**October 26**

Catalan president Carles Puigdemont delays declaring in-

dependence, saying he will leave the decision to MPs.

**October 27**

Catalan parliament meets and unilaterally declares independence. The opposition boycott the

vote. The Spanish senate responds by approving new powers for Madrid to impose direct rule on Cataluña.

**October 28**

Spain dissolves Catalan Parliament - deposing president Puigdemont - and call fresh elections.

**October 29**

Thousands march through Barcelona calling for unity.

**October 30**

Puigdemont flees to Belgium with five ministers, shortly before a prosecutor files charges of rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds.

**November 3**

Spain issues a European arrest warrant for Puigdemont.

**November 5**

Puigdemont turns himself in to

Belgian authorities.

**December 4**

Spain's Supreme Court denies two former ministers - including the vice-president - bail, leaving them to contest the election from prison.

**December 5**

A Spanish judge withdraws Puigdemont's arrest warrant. Theresa May meets her Spanish counterpart Mariano Rajoy and gives him her support.

**December 11**

Scuffles break out as artwork is removed from a Catalanian museum.

**December 13**

The homes of Catalan officials are seized to pay for the costs of October's referendum.

**December 21**

Catalans go to the polls.

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## Polls predict tight race

By Harrison Jones

THE final official poll ahead of the regional elections projected a hung parliament.

Such an outcome could trigger further uncertainty and coalition negotiations.

However, an unofficial poll released yesterday suggested that the pro-independence parties could yet take an unlikely majority.

The National's poll predicts independence parties will win 69- 73 seats, 68 is required for a majority.

Data suggests 25 per cent remain undecided. Turnout is expected to be over 80 per cent, a record high.

Ciudadanos, a pro-Spanish party, are set to win most seats but be outnumbered by rival pro-independence parties working together.

Ousted president Puigdemont's party is expected to finish third, behind imprisoned vice-president Oriol Junqueras' ERC.

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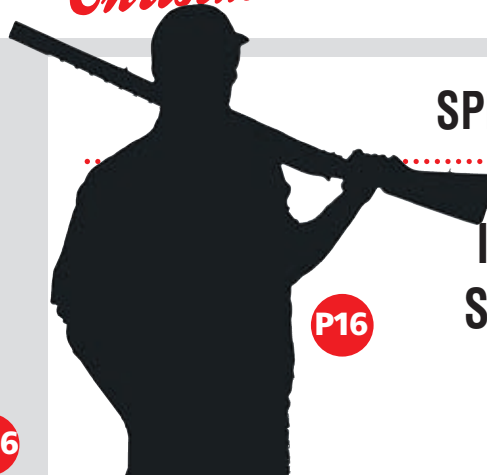
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**SPECIAL FEATURE**

IS IT TIME FOR SPAIN TO LEAVE HUNTING TRAIL?

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**SOCIAL SCENE**

What's happening near you this Christmas?

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# Space invaders

TWO asteroids have been named Andratx and Dragonera by the International Astronomical Union. Andratx is two kilometres long and is in the Aquarius constellation. Dragonera, named after the island, spans three kilometres and is in Eridanus. The Council of Mallorca will hold naming ceremonies shortly.

## Court chaos

HUNDREDS of people gathered outside Palma court to voice their support for jailed nightclub boss Tolo Cursach. It was the second demonstration held calling for the lead judge to be sacked. Protesters are largely family members and employees of Cursach and brought horns, whistles and drums.

## Tragic fall

A BUILDER was killed when he fell from scaffolding on Tuesday afternoon. The labourer, aged 57, fell from a height of four metres from a building in Palma's Son Quint neighbourhood. He had a helmet on but sustained massive head injuries before passing away.

## Rescued rover

POLICE rescued a dog which fell into a Palma pond. The animal plunged five metres into the s'Hort del Rei pond on Sunday night. Neighbours heard his whimpers and called emergency services. He survived with just a scratch on his leg and was returned to his owner.

## Rare rainbow

A RARE double rainbow was spotted across Mallorca on Tuesday as the island endured rain, wind and snow above 1,200 metres and an orange warning was issued. The sky will brighten over the Christmas weekend with

## SPANISH FACTS OF LIFE... 42

With the festive season upon us, Spain's traditional celebrations - from grapes, to kings and jokers - are not what you might expect, writes Harrison Jones.

# 'Tis the season!

ON Christmas Eve, while British children are getting overly excited, Spanish children have Christmas carols and midnight mass to look forward to.

Families eat their main Christmas meal on the 24th - often a varied spread including all sorts of fish, meat and cheese, depending on the region and family preference.

Tempting Christmas snacks also include turrón, mantecados, churros and marzipan.

After the eating and religious services, some Spaniards walk through the streets with music and lights. Christmas Day is not roundly celebrated and, traditionally,



THE MASSES: Spaniards go to mass on Christmas Eve.

there are not even presents - those come later in the festive season.

On the 28th, the country celebrates El Dia de los Santos (Innocents' Day).

Friends, family, and occasionally the media are in on this Spanish answer to April Fool's Day, with the unsuspecting being labelled 'Innocent, Innocent!' when caught out.

In Malaga, they also celebrate the Fiesta de Verdiales on the same day. This cultural celebration involves groups of musicians playing songs and dancing.

## 3 kings, 12 grapes

WITH Christmas antics complete, the real fun begins. In Spain, perhaps the biggest festive celebrations take place on January 6, on the Dia De Los Reyes (Three Kings' Day).

First, though, Spaniards celebrate New Year in style.

With the wine flowing, attention turns - oddly enough - back to grapes. Twelve 'lucky' grapes, in fact, with one for each striking of the midnight clock.

As the New Year comes in, Spaniards eat grapes one by one in time with the chimes, broadcast live on television.

If you can manage to eat the grapes in time, it is considered a sign for a year of prosperity and good luck.

The rest of the fiesta, which is often a family affair, is spent eating and drinking until the very early hours.

Five days later, on Three Kings' Day, 'Christmas' presents are given out.

Similarly to a Christmas stocking, children in Spain leave shoes by their door in the hope that the Three Kings will leave their gifts there.

The day is also celebrated by eating Roscon de los



NEW YEAR'S EVE: Madrid's Puerta del Sol, above, is a popular place for Spaniards to eat 12 grapes, right.

Reyes (ring-cake of kings), which is made to look like a king's crown. It is decorated with icing and sprinkles, often including glazed fruit.

A toy is also buried inside, with Spaniards being superstitious that the finder will have a year of good luck.

highs of around 16 degrees.

## Super Spa

A SPA in Soller was awarded the Best Spa Hotel in Spain at the prestigious

World Spa Awards 2017 ceremony held in Vietnam. The Jumeirah Port Soller Hotel & Spa offers 10 treatment rooms, a thermal pool with views of the Tramuntana mountains and a plush gym.

# 120

The total number of news and features which appeared in Issue 1693 of the Euro Weekly News Mallorca edition, including 41 local stories.

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# Work of art

## Festive sand sculpture is world's biggest



**CHRISTMAS CRACKER:** The giant scene from above and (inset) visitors admire the sculptures.

SPANIARDS are famous for inventing new twists on the traditional nativity scene.

And arguably the most spectacular of all is found on Las Canteras beach in Palma de Gran Canaria, the Canary Islands.

Every December, some of the world's premier international sand sculptors descend on the sandy strip to painstakingly carve a giant homage to the birth of Christ.

The tradition was started by Canarian artist

Etual Ojeda in the early 1980's, but has grown in scale since.

Said to be the world's largest open-air sand sculpture, more than 2,000 tonnes are now used to construct the incredible scene.

Entry is free, but visitors can leave a donation at the entrance with the proceeds given to local food banks.

In 2016 more than 200,000 people visited the nativity, raising €17,000.

**POLL OF THE WEEK**

Are there too many repeats on TV during Christmas?

■ **LAST WEEK'S POLL:**

Do you send online Christmas cards?

Yes 35% No 65%

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**Top 5 stories**

**Weather alerts for whole of Spain as Storm Ana set to hit TODAY**

- 6,648** views Weather alerts issued for the whole of Spain as storm Ana set to hit
- 4,503** views Lorry driver dies after crashing onto Costa del Sol beach
- 4,367** views December strike call by Ryanair ground staff in Spain
- 3,861** views Flights diverted and red alerts issued as storm Ana lashes Spain
- 2,362** views Raiders pillage wrecked lorry in southern Spain

*\*For week 11 - 18 December*

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# Prime Minister Theresa May's message to UK nationals living in Europe

THE following statement on Brexit and UK nationals living outside of the UK has been released by Prime Minister May.

## Road to Brexit

From the very beginning of the UK's negotiations to leave the European Union I have been consistently clear that protecting the rights of both EU citizens living in the UK and UK nationals living in the EU was my first priority. I know that the referendum result has caused considerable anxiety for many of you and your families.

That is why, at the beginning of the negotiating process, I made it clear that any deal guaranteeing the rights of EU citizens living in the UK would be dependent on such an offer being reciprocated for our UK na-

tionals in the remaining Member States.

So I am delighted to announce that in concluding the first phase of the negotiations that is exactly what we have achieved.

From speaking to my counterparts across Europe, I know that they hugely value the UK nationals living in their communities. We have worked hard to address the very complex and technical issues that needed working through before a formal agreement could be reached. The details are set out in the Joint Report agreed by the UK government and the European Commission, as published Friday December 8.

This agreement guarantees that your rights as residents in the EU will be protected in the Withdrawal

Agreement, so you can have certainty that you will be able to receive healthcare rights, pension and other benefit provisions as you do today. You can also benefit from existing rules for past and future social security contributions.

Furthermore, we have agreed that close family members will be able to join you in the Member State where you live, after the UK has left. This includes existing spouses and civil partners, unmarried partners, children, dependent parents and grandparents, as well as children born or adopted outside of the UK after March 29, 2019.

While I hope this agreement will bring you some reassurance, I know there are a few important issues that have yet to be concluded.



PRIME MINISTER: A message of reassurance.

ed. We raised these concerns, including the ability of UK nationals living in the EU to retain certain rights if they move within the EU, but the EU was not ready to discuss them in this phase of the negotiations. We will continue to raise these issues with the EU in

the New Year.

I will continue to push for the best possible deal for our nationals across the EU, but in the meantime, please do sign up for the latest updates on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).

The constructive way in which these talks have been conducted gives me confi-

dence that we will achieve a final deal that reflects the strong partnership between the UK and our European partners, and is in the mutual interest of citizens living across the continent.

I wish you and your families a great Christmas and a very happy New Year.



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## Let off the hook

A GERMAN sexual predator who drugged and abused a 12-year-old girl has escaped prison. Instead the Binissalem resident, aged 50, accepted a three year suspended sentence and will attend a sex education course.

He pleaded guilty to sedating several young girls, who were friends with his daughter, and sexually abusing one of them at his Binissalem home.

The court heard how he endangered the lives of his victims by plying them with a sedative he concocted himself, with no medical expertise.

The drink he offered as a 'dessert' contained a central nervous system depressant which numbs physical sensations.

His young victim was under the influence of the drug when he snuck into her room during a sleepover. He touched her breasts then ran away when she woke up.

She has since experienced severe anxiety and undergone psychological counselling.

Aside from the suspended sentence, the accused was ordered to stay away from the girl for 10 years.

He has moved from Binissalem but is still a resident on the island.

## OUR VIEW

# Christmas cheer needed

CHRISTMAS is suddenly upon us.

Amid the festive rush and preparations for family events, it is easy to forget that many people are in need at this time of year.

From the homeless, to the lonely, to migrants being held in an unopened prison, many people will not enjoy the happiest Christmas.

With the seasonal pay squeeze, helping those outside of your immediate circle also becomes more challenging.

But across the region various charities and volunteer groups are doing worthy work to make sure the less fortunate can enjoy - or at least be comfortable - at this time of year.

There are countless important causes - too many to name - that are worth your spare change and more, if you can afford it.

And as we gear up for Christmas, New Year and even Three Kings, we could do worse than to just offer our time to local charities.

Spain has plenty to offer over the festive period. Christmas lights, traditional winter snacks and Innocents' Day on December 28 are particular highlights.

Christmas is a time for family and friends - so enjoy the festivities but spare a thought for those who are less lucky.

We know it often isn't easy to part with your time or money - but it can be very rewarding if you do.

From everyone at *Euro Weekly News*: have a very Merry Christmas.

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AN outdoor hot tub was ground zero for the legionella outbreak which killed one man in Palmanova in October.

Public health investigators tracked the infection to the bath after analysing samples from every nook and cranny of the Calvia hotel where several of the 27 people infected with the disease stayed.

Regional health authority boss Maria Ramos said it was too early to

# Toxic hot tub

tell whether the hot tub was the sole source of the outbreak. Those affected stayed at seven different hotels in the Palmanova area.

Samples were taken from hot tubs, pools, sprinklers, pipes and a nearby car wash among other locations.

Twelve samples were identified as positive for legionella by a lab in Madrid. All the pathogenic samples originated in the hot tub.

The majority of those infected were British tourists who stayed in the seven Palmanova hotels between August

13 and October 13, by which time the outbreak was being investigated.

The man who died was a British national, aged 70, who was on holiday. He had a number of chronic health problems, including leukaemia and diabetes, which are thought to have contributed to his death.

Other victims, who have since recovered, included two Danes, two French tourists, a Swede, and a Czech.



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**SMELLY GOLD:** Ambergris valuable but hard to shift.

# Stinky treasure

A DOG dug up a huge chunk of ambergris valued at more than €20,000 during a walk on Cala Torta

beach. The rare substance is produced in the digestive systems of sperm whales.

Its use in expensive perfumes means a kilo of pure ambergris has a market value of €50-60,000. The lucky dog came across a 600 gram rock of the good stuff.

Two hikers were walking the dog went he went AWOL.

When they found him he was sniffing what they described as a strange stone

which smelled of a fishy septic tank.

Theirs was the second major ambergris find on Mallorca's beaches in recent months. In September two locals found a 1.5 kilo piece of ambergris.

Though it is valued highly, selling the ambergris poses a range of problems. The sperm whale is a protected species and trade in all of its products are strictly forbidden in Spain and many other countries.

## NEWS EXTRA

### Booze checks increased

POLICE have launched a Christmas crackdown on drink driving. Motorists can expect a sharp increase in spot checks over the festive period during a rigorous road safety campaign.

### Easy money

AN avalanche of applications have been submitted by construction companies eager to snap up the lucrative tender to build the Lluçmajor to Campos motorway which has a €38 million budget.

### Dear John

DIVORCE and separation requests rose in the Balearics in 2017 with almost 400 divorce applications from July to September, making the islands the third worst Spanish region for marital breakdowns.

### Cheap deals

AIRLINES which offer inter-island flights on the Balearics have faced a 30 per cent surge in demand for tickets after the residents' discount rose from 50 to 75 per cent.

### Fake taxis

FINES totalling €80,000 have been imposed on almost 50 pirate taxi drivers at Palma airport this year. In 2016 just two cabbies were penalised.

### Ka boom

FIFTEEN thousand illegal fireworks weighing a combined 30 kilos were confiscated by Guardia Civil officers who raided dozens of stalls and warehouses across Palma.

### Green eyed

A JEALOUS girlfriend was arrested for stabbing her partner twice in the back at their Palma home. It was the third time she had assaulted him.

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Advertising Feature

# Brexit divorce

## Commentary by Moneycorp

BREXIT negotiations continue to progress with all the ups and downs of a drama.

News of a deal on the divorce bill had bolstered hopes that the first stage of negotiations was drawing to a conclusion. However, rebellion from the DUP and Brexit secretary, David Davis' admission that the government's impact assessments don't exist cast the negotiations back on thin ice.

Theresa May negotiated through Thursday night to confirm an agreement. However, that wasn't the end of the story as this week Theresa May suffered her first parliamentary defeat at the hands of backbenchers as MPs voted in favour of a meaningful vote for parliament on the final Brexit deal.

The PM headed straight to Brussels after the vote for the next round of negotiations. Brexit may have dominated the headlines but it was not the only matter weighing on the pound. Aside from the ups and downs of Brexit, there was little to move the pound, with a mixed bag of statistics that included better than expected UK purchasing managers' index readings last Friday.

The services PMI this week was lower on the month, and at 53.8 it was quite a bit weaker than expected. Figures released by the Office for National

Statistics today show that inflation was at 3.1% in November, the highest level since March 2012. There was a brief flutter for the pound before settling at its opening levels.

Domestic statistics have driven the euro's performance in recent weeks. German factory orders showed increases of 0.5% and 6.9% on the month and the year and Swiss inflation rose to 0.8% in November as expected.

However, year-end demand by European banks for dollar funding has also contributed to the euro's weakness in recent days. The euro has fallen from a high of \$1.1960 on November 27 to \$1.1785 on December 13, a fall of 1.5%. The dip has pushed the year-to-date advance to 12.2%, according to Reuters data. This is a familiar occurrence, however, and isn't expected to indicate any longer term softening of the currency.

Despite controversial comments on Israel from President Trump, the focus in the US has also been largely domestic. Friday's US employment report showed 31k more jobs than predicted, due in part to a monthly increase of 228k in nonfarm payrolls. But earnings fell short of forecast, rising by an annual 2.5% instead of 2.7%. America's \$48.7bn trade

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deficit in October was the widest in nearly two and a half years. That figure was followed by two US services PMIs. One of them missed forecast by a point, the other by a point and a half. The dollar hesitated after the data but came back to add a net half-cent against sterling and a quarter of a cent against the euro.

However, this news and the anticipation of tax cuts only took the dollar so far. This week voters in Alabama rejected the Republican candidate in the Senate election in favour of the Democrat Doug Jones, leaving Trump with an even narrower margin for passing the bill.



Also in the US this week, the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates by 0.25%, the third increase in 2017. The move was expected, and three further increases are still expected next year. The Fed also improved their economic forecasts, projecting 2.5% growth in GDP in 2017 and 2018, although this projection rests in part on the potential tax cuts.

Meanwhile in Canada, the Canadian dollar weakened against its US counterpart after the Bank of Canada held interest rates steady and tempered expectations for a hike early next year. The tone of the central bank was more dovish than expected, particularly given last week's strong employment data.

Down under, the Australian dollar came to grief on account of weaker than expected third quarter growth. The predictions for Australian gross domestic product were that it would have expanded by 0.7% in Q3 and be up by 3.0% on the year.

Both of those targets were missed. Third quarter growth of 0.6% brought annual growth down to 2.8%. It was a case of swings and roundabouts when it came to the stats, imports went up by 2% in October but exports were down by 3%.

The New Zealand central bank gave some hope to the kiwi dollar, which edged higher earlier in the week after a statement regarding the potential to address low inflation with tweaks to monetary policy.

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Please quote: Euro Weekly News Mallorca

A HIGH voltage electricity line with 15 metre tall towers planned for Son Puig could be scrapped. There is mounting evidence that the towers could be such an eyesore that the Serra de Tramuntana would lose its UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

Residents have long protested the proposed power line. Two of the towers would be built less than 50 metres from some people's homes. A campaign, Salvem Son Puig (Save Son Puig), was started but largely fell on deaf ears.

## Electric eyesore

To be built by grid operator Red Electrica Española, the power line would supply Palma with more power. The city's needs are thought to overshadow those of Son Puig.

But now that the scale of the project is apparent, the Council of Mallorca is worried that the pylons could block the view of the Castell de Bellver for those arriving on ship.

An emergency meeting has been called with the Ministry of Culture in Madrid to discuss Plan B.

# Second in command Scandal shake up

A NEW Balearic vice-president has been sworn in. Bel Busquets, from the Mes per

Mallorca party, has replaced Biel Barcelo.

She also takes over Barcelo's role as minister for tourism. Barcelo resigned last week following a scandal over his jaunt to the Dominican Republic, funded by the Globalia travel company.

The appointment of Busquets on Monday means both the president and vice-president are women. President Francina Armengol of the ruling PSOE party showed little enthusiasm for Busquets taking the role. Mes threatened to pull support for the 2018 budget unless their pick was appointed.

Born in Palma in 1973, Busquets is a former secondary school teacher who became involved in politics

in 2001.

Her predecessor, the colourful Biel Barcelo, has now seen his legacy as tourism minister slammed by both sides of the political divide.

The Balearic Popular Party president, Biel Company, described Barcelo as "one of the worst tourism ministers in history." The conservative leader accused Barcelo of having a phobia towards tourism and said the Mes party, which advocates green policies, were "enemies of the economy."

Yet environmentalists Terraferida denounced the 'Barcelo effect' and accused the politician of overseeing the biggest rise in tourist numbers in Mallorca's history.

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**22** People died in road traffic accidents during the two Spanish national holidays this month.



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Courtesy of: Hunt Trip Spain/ Facebook

**FAMILY AFFAIR:** Hunting is often marketed as a family holiday.

**A** PROUD father kneels beside his three sons, each broadly smiling while squinting as the sun lights up the picturesque Spanish countryside.

Beneath the smiles lies a Southeastern Ibex, slain so that it can play its part in this uncomfortably joyous photograph.

In truth, it is a portrait that most families won't have in their photo albums.

However, when trawling through the 'Trophy Album' on one of Spain's most popular hunting tourism websites (Hunt Trip Spain) it is an image repeated time and again.

Be it fathers proudly standing between their kill and smiling sons or husbands embracing grinning wives while their guns rest against a defeated Red Stag, the frequency of the family kill portrait says a lot about the nation's obsession with hunting.

A favoured Spanish hobby (or sport, if that is the appropriate term), hunting has long been a tradition from the north to the south of the country.

After France, Spain has the largest number of hunters in Europe, according to a recent report published by the Círculo

lo Fortuny.

In total, there are an estimated 850,000 official hunting licences in Spain. That represents a slight drop since 2010, when the number exceeded one million.

However, the fact that 2 per cent of the population still retains a hunting licence, proves its lasting popularity.

To put that into context, those figures equate to one in every 54 Spanish residents owning a hunting licence.

Outside of the Nordic countries that is the highest percentage in Europe.

And it is a nationwide fascination. Andalusia, Castilla-La Mancha and Castilla y León register the highest number of licences, with Cataluña and Navarra also generating plenty of interest.

But why, with another New Year about to be rung in, does hunting still garner so much interest?

On hunting tourism website, the Stalker Group, Spain's geographical beauty combined with its colourful history is used as a way of portraying hunting as part of the nation's culture, drawing on its architecture and artists as parallels.

The website says: 'Geographically, Spain's diversity is immense. There are endless tracts of wild and crinkled sierra to explore, as well as some spectacularly rugged stretches of coast between the beaches. Culturally, the country is littered with superb old buildings, from Roman aqueducts and Islamic palaces to Gothic cathedrals.

**2% of Spaniards have a hunting licence, the biggest percentage in Europe**

Almost every second village has a medieval castle. Spain has been the home of some of the world's great artists: El Greco, Velazquez, Goya, Dali, Picasso, and has museums and galleries to match.

The country vibrates with music of every kind, from the drama of Flamenco to the melancholy lyricism of the Celtic music and gaitas (bagpipes) of the northwest."

It continues: "This is great chance to bring your family with you and enjoy both hunting and Spanish culture. Come and bag your magnificent Red Deer, Fallow Deer, Roe Deer, Mouflon, four species of Ibex and Chamois here. Traditional 'Monteria,' the royal hunting, is also available in Spain."

Again, hunting is dressed up as a family day out. Coupled with immersing yourself in the country's culture and breathtaking landscape, it all sounds pretty idyllic.

But for everyone who supports or partakes in hunting, there is an equal number against it.

One British expat who has seen the negative impact of hunting first hand is the president of dog rescue centre Adana.

Based on the Costa del Sol, Mary Page has had to tend countless hunting dogs beaten and then abandoned by their owners.

"Some of the hunters who use dogs are 100 per cent hijos de ----," Page told the *EWN*. "They can be extremely aggressive. I have called the police about it several times.

"We have experienced countless injured dogs, dogs cruelly disposed of - be it hanging, drowning or clubbing to death - or left to starve to death.

"We have even had hunters on our land firing at rabbits or boars."

She added: "Personally I detest anyone who kills animals for sport, but what

# The two sides of Spain

## One man's trophy is another's

*With animal rights groups and hunters at odds, David Noon takes a deeper look into the controversy.*

these hunters do to their own dogs is especially repulsive."

And the numbers speak for themselves. According to a *National Geographic* report, around 10,000 hunting dogs - galgos - are massacred each year.

Deemed unfit to hunt, the dogs are either destroyed en masse or abandoned and left to starve to death.

And yet, despite the tremendous number of hunts that take place, the animals on offer in Spain are seemingly not always exotic enough to satisfy all hunters.

Spain is the highest European importer of 'trophy kills,' accounting for 5 per cent of all imports around the world, according to the International Fund for Animal Welfare report *Killing for Trophies: An Analysis of Global Trophy Hunting Trade*.

Of that number some 10,334 imports between 2004 and 2014 were from threatened species.

Only the US accounts for more imports of trophy kills, with a staggering 71 per cent of all overseas kills being shipped to the US.

The most popular imports into Spain were blackbuck (Sasin), African elephant, hippopotamus, lion, and chacma baboon (see graph). Some 87 polar bears were also imported into Spain during the decade-long study.

Equally worrying is the number of trophy kills going the other way. The Aoudad (or Barbary sheep), a North African species that also inhabits the Iberian Peninsula, is the most exported threatened species heading out of Spain.

And it is not just the trophy kills that get the Spanish reaching for their shotguns.

Game and migratory Mediterranean birds face an unpleasant welcome when they choose to touch down.

Yet much like bullfighting, hunting has found itself in the spotlight as animal activists mount pressure on the government to put an end to what many consid-

er a family pastime.

It is true that in recent years the process (and cost) of obtaining a hunting licence has become less appealing.

To obtain and maintain a hunting licence in Spain, it is mandatory to have a gun permit, which costs around €20 a year, a hunting permit for about €80 a year, plus civil liability insurance which is around €40 per year.

In addition there is the €150 fee that the psycho-technical exam costs.

However, Spain's government has done little to appease the protests. In fact, it has seemingly done everything in its power to irritate them further.

In 2014, the ruling PP government angered animal rights groups after the Senate steamrollered through an amendment to Spain's National Parks Law to extend a moratorium on a ban on hunting in these specially protected areas.

The law as it stood said that hunting on private estates which fall within one of Spain's 15 national parks must end by 2017.

However, they have since extended that to 2020 to the frustration and bewilderment of environmentalists.

Slammed by the likes of the WWF, Ecologists in Action and BirdLife, the PP was accused of taking backhanders and wilting to the monetary powers of the hunting communities.

And it is not just the government that has had its fair share of hunting critics.

The former King Juan Carlos was no stranger to hunting scandals himself. In 2006, it was alleged that he had shot a Russian bear that had been given honey laced with vodka.

Six years later, he was again facing a backlash when news broke that he needed hip replacement surgery after falling during a 2012 elephant trophy hunting trip in Botswana.

Photos then emerged of the monarch posing with dead elephants and African buffaloes, as the media turned on the 74-

**85,000 signatories called for King Juan Carlos to be removed from WWF position after hunting scandal**

**ROYAL SHAME:** King Juan Carlos on hunting trip





# hunter's hunting story trophy tragedy

## Hunters constantly at loggerheads, into Spain's controversial pastime

year-old monarch, who - by the way - had the audacity to be an associated member of Spain's branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

This was a double-blow for the King, who was slammed for his expansive lifestyle during the economic crisis.

More damning however, was the backlash from WWF. Around

85,000 signatures called for Juan Carlos' resignation as honorary president of WWF Spain.

A public apology followed, but failed to persuade those at WWF as 94 per cent of general meeting members voted to remove him from his honorary position.

With a government that refuses to stamp it out and a former re-

cent monarch who actively revelled in it, the popularity of hunting is unlikely to diminish anytime soon.

Those against it can - and will - continue to make noise, in the hope that someone will hear their calls one day.

**10,334 endangered trophy kills were nationally imported from 2004 to 2014**

## When a disagreement goes too far

WHETHER for or against hunting, the tragic death of Melania Capitan earlier this year was a horrendous result of bitter quibbling between hunters and animal activists.

A female hunter aged just 27, Capitan took her own life in July after she was reportedly threatened by animal rights activists on social media.

Capitan, from Cataluña, regularly posted detailed personal hunting methods on her blog, with these attracting thousands of followers.

These posts attracted much controversy and she had been subjected to threats online.

And while several animal rights spokespeople condemned the online bullying of Capitan, the bullies couldn't resist one last dig.

As the news of her death spread, many



TRAGEDY: Melania Capitan.

took to her Facebook page, which has more than 32,000 likes, to leave comments apparently welcoming the news.

"You have done a favour to humanity! Bye bye," one comment read.

"She was so bitter that she had to pay for her hate killing innocent animals, thank God she killed herself, the only good thing she did lately," another comment said.

Whatever you think of hunting or thought of Capitan, celebrating somebody's suicide is a low that cannot be allowed to happen again.

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## Rolls Royce approved takeover

THE Spanish government has sanctioned the purchase of ITP (Industry Turbo Propulsions) by Rolls Royce for a reported €720 million.

ITP which has headquarters in Bilbao and employs 3,000 workers across the world is the ninth largest manufacturer of aero engine components used in both civil and defence aircraft.

Rolls Royce already held a 46.9 per cent stake in the company and will purchase the balance of shares from SEN-ER Grupo de Ingeniería SA

# Shopping centre take over

THE owner of Westfield shopping centres is to earn €21 billion in a deal that will see the brand extend throughout Europe.

The Westfield Corporation, an Australian group is to sell its portfolio to French property group Unibail-Rodamco which operates shopping centres in 13 locations around Spain.

There are currently 35 Westfield shopping centres in the UK and the US, while the French group owns 71 sites in Europe but wants to create more operations under the recognis-

By John Smith

able Westfield brand name in major cities within the EU including Barcelona, Paris and Vienna.

As well as giving the new owners access to lucrative markets in America and Britain it estimates that it will be able to make savings of at least €100 million in the first year following completion thanks to a consolidation of advertising and marketing expenses.

In order to help fund the acquisition, Unibail-Rodamco expects to

sell some of its smaller developments and hopes to raise some €3 billion to boost liquidity.

The takeover is the second major deal involving shopping centre owners to emerge in just over two weeks.

A proposed €3.88 billion merger between shopping centre operators Hammerson and Intu is set to create one of the UK's biggest property companies which will create a €24 billion giant provided that Intu shareholders vote in favour of the merger next year.

## Chinese company finds success

HUAWEI SPAIN, the Spanish arm of the Chinese tech manufacturer which employs 180,000 people worldwide sold two million smartphones in 2017.

According to CEO Tony Jin Yong it has seen growth in its three Spanish branches, infrastructures and networks, enterprise and private consumers.

So successful has it been that it claims to now own 20.6 per cent of the entire high street market for phones, tablets and wearables (such as smart watches).

With 1,200 employees in Spain it is now developing fibre-optic networks especially in rural areas as well as developing 5G networks and has opened service centres in Barcelona and Madrid.

### Quote of the Week

Seat is the only Spanish brand in the automotive sector, which is rooted in Barcelona and I see no reason to change this." **Francisco García Sanz**, Chairman of the Board of Management of Seat on the company's future.



Photo by Eric Salard flickr

Iberia A320 aircraft at El Prat airport.

## Barcelona airport Christmas strike

THE UGT union has announced that following a poll of its 2,000 Iberia Airline workers that there will be a strike at El Prat Barcelona airport from December 21 to 24.

According to the union, the decision to call the strike was forced upon the staff at the airport as employers IAG (who also own Aer Lingus, BA and Vueling) had not complied with the

terms of agreements entered into.

The decision to introduce partial stoppages in the week leading up to Christmas Day is to protest at the lack of staff needed to undertake necessary work at the airport and to highlight that staff there are owed 7,000 hours of leave.

The expansion of the Vueling presence has increased the workload for the staff.

### » BUSINESS EXTRA

## Google aid

PROJECTS from 26 European countries will receive in excess of €20 million as part of Google's Digital News Initiative. The Spanish share of this fund which is to be used to develop news platforms will be €1.5 million.

## Mango sale

AFTER suffering losses in 2016, privately owned Catalan fashion company Mango has reached an agreement to sell the facilities it has in Palau-Solità i Plegamans (Barcelona) for €100 million. It will then lease the property back and continue to trade there.

## Helping Rafa

THE company that has developed radiotherapy machines used by Rafael Nadal and the Spanish Basketball team has been sold for €65 million. Indiba which has been improving its range of specialist equipment for 40 years is now owned by Spanish investors Magnum Capital.



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## Careful when using wifi

BEWARE the use of public wifi as it has been revealed that a Starbucks in Buenos Aires had its service hijacked by scammers.

In this case, the hackers obtained access to customer's computers in order to use

their power to link with other computers to 'mine' for digital cash.

In this case no harm other than a slow-down of service occurred, but the dangers are clear.



## LONDON - FTSE 100

CLOSING PRICES DECEMBER 18

COMPANY	PRICE(P)	CHANGE(P)	% CHG.	NET VOL
Anglo American	1,405.00	-5.00	-0.35	19,503.05
Associated British Foods	3,135.00	292.00	10.27	22,641.88
Admiral Group	1,872.50	-34.50	-1.81	5,500.15
Ashtead Group	1,899.00	5.00	0.26	9,595.12
Antofagasta	914.50	-16.00	-1.72	9,020.59
Aviva	506.50	4.00	0.80	20,076.43
AstraZeneca	4,865.00	-16.00	-0.33	61,836.87
BAE Systems	570.00	7.00	1.24	17,920.89
Babcock International Group	684.00	-8.93	-1.30	3,412.78
Barclays	201.50	-0.75	-0.37	34,572.72
British American Tobacco	4,910.00	-57.00	-1.15	112,949.40
Barratt Developments	626.00	0.06	0.01	6,378.29
Berkeley Group Holdings	3,705.00	-455.00	-10.94	5,553.38
British Land Co	644.00	-27.00	-4.02	6,707.28
BHP Billiton	1,382.50	-37.00	-2.61	29,315.56
Bunzl	2,014.50	0.20	0.01	6,782.43
BP	504.13	-1.07	-0.21	99,648.50
Burberry Group	1,750.00	27.00	1.57	7,364.37
BT Group	272.50	-5.05	-1.82	27,159.85
Coca-Cola HBC	2,387.00	62.00	2.67	8,507.38
Carnival	5,000.00	170.00	3.52	10,052.51
Centrica	145.50	7.50	5.43	7,733.52
Compass Group	1,541.00	7.00	0.46	24,126.39
Croda International	4,340.00	9.00	0.21	5,638.07
CRH	2,680.50	148.50	5.86	21,223.45
ConvaTec Group	205.85	0.00	0.00	3,966.16
DCC	7,250.00	20.00	0.28	6,310.96
Diageo	2,620.00	-35.00	-1.32	65,584.12
Direct Line Insurance Group	402.80	37.00	10.11	5,009.13
Experian	1,546.50	-54.50	-3.40	14,587.79
easyJet	1,430.00	13.00	0.92	5,664.19
Ferguson	4,800.00	-470.00	-8.92	12,982.93
Fresnillo	1,399.00	63.00	4.72	9,616.46
G4S	290.00	38.00	15.08	3,906.92
GKN	310.00	12.00	4.03	5,102.63
Glencore	357.50	-5.25	-1.45	51,439.61
GlaxoSmithKline	1,300.00	5.00	0.39	63,475.74
Hargreaves Lansdown	1,704.50	-7.17	-0.42	8,106.11
Hammerson	528.00	-6.00	-1.12	4,216.00
HSBC Holdings	740.00	-11.50	-1.53	151,259.72
International Consoltd Airls Grp	646.50	13.00	2.05	12,964.02
InterContinental Hotels Grp	3,860.00	-721.00	-15.74	8,559.06
3i Group	900.50	9.00	1.01	8,668.28
Imperial Brands	3,110.00	25.00	0.81	29,088.98
Informa	693.25	-46.75	-6.32	6,081.16
Intertek Group	5,222.50	177.50	3.52	8,101.81
ITV	164.00	-1.70	-1.03	6,694.26
Johnson Matthey	3,130.00	91.00	2.99	5,840.84
Kingfisher	332.50	0.80	0.24	7,219.24
Land Securities Group	960.00	-24.00	-2.44	7,255.01

COMPANY	PRICE(P)	CHANGE(P)	% CHG.	NET VOL
Legal & General Group	271.00	2.80	1.04	15,849.29
Lloyds Banking Group ORD	66.33	-0.08	-0.12	47,721.56
London Stock Exchange Grp	3,839.50	59.50	1.57	13,172.53
Micro Focus International	2,409.00	-109.00	-4.33	10,834.67
Mediclinic International	716.50	107.50	17.65	4,581.97
Merlin Entertainments	360.85	0.04	0.01	3,695.95
Marks & Spencer Group	323.55	19.75	6.50	5,025.33
Mondi	1,869.00	51.00	2.81	8,618.58
Morrison (Wm) Supermarkets	215.45	-1.35	-0.63	5,026.32
National Grid	880.00	11.40	1.31	29,132.67
NMC Health	2,900.00	100.00	3.57	5,862.88
Next	4,168.50	-77.50	-1.83	6,344.22
Old Mutual Group	204.00	0.60	0.29	9,943.94
Paddy Power Betfair	7,767.50	-817.50	-9.52	7,211.60
Prudential	1,835.00	-12.50	-0.68	47,682.97
Persimmon	2,480.00	-146.00	-5.56	8,184.86
Pearson	709.25	-15.75	-2.17	5,938.05
Reckitt Benckiser Group	6,695.00	-36.00	-0.53	47,145.19
Royal Bank of Scotland Group	270.80	-5.50	-1.99	33,243.22
Royal Dutch Shell	2,375.00	-53.50	-2.20	110,101.41
Royal Dutch Shell	2,442.50	-10.00	-0.41	90,996.60
RELX	1,640.00	-89.00	-5.15	18,367.91
Rio Tinto	3,548.25	-76.25	-2.10	48,183.24
Rolls-Royce Group	851.00	20.00	2.41	15,148.10
Randgold Resources	6,495.00	-460.00	-6.61	6,509.87
RSA Insurance Group	638.75	31.25	5.14	6,157.37
Rentokil Initial	285.50	-23.90	-7.72	5,671.85
Sainsbury (J)	237.00	0.90	0.38	5,182.03
Schroders	3,542.50	70.50	2.03	7,845.24
Sage Group (The)	777.50	-4.00	-0.51	8,472.00
Segro	575.25	0.00	0.00	5,696.62
Shire	3,765.00	2.50	0.07	33,518.11
Smurfit Kappa Group	2,392.50	-13.50	-0.56	5,636.93
Sky	1,065.00	47.00	4.62	17,018.27
Standard Life Aberdeen	410.25	-7.75	-1.85	12,326.56
Smiths Group	1,490.00	46.00	3.19	5,718.30
Scottish Mortgage Invstmnt Trst	433.50	-3.50	-0.80	6,130.54
Smith & Nephew	1,297.50	15.50	1.21	11,266.13
SSE	1,322.50	7.50	0.57	13,278.01
Standard Chartered	731.00	-26.10	-3.45	25,032.27
St James's Place	1,166.00	-18.00	-1.52	6,200.75
Severn Trent	2,090.50	-10.38	-0.50	4,876.53
Tesco	205.75	-1.55	-0.75	16,951.57
TUI AG	1,531.50	69.50	4.75	8,417.25
Taylor Wimpey	203.35	1.45	0.72	6,592.75
Unilever	4,105.00	-91.00	-2.17	51,004.59
United Utilities Group	804.00	-12.00	-1.47	5,455.11
Vodafone Group	231.25	1.25	0.54	61,270.40
Worldpay Group	463.70	28.30	6.50	8,584.00
WPP Group	1,285.50	-103.50	-7.45	17,194.89
Whitbread	4,206.00	342.00	8.85	7,025.25

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COMPANY	PRICE	CHANGE%	CHANGE	VOLUME(M)
3M	238,000	-0.03%	-0,080	142,201,44
AMERICAN EXPRESS	98,5200	+1.41%	1,3700	85,593,11
APPLE	173,970	+1.02%	1,750	891,544,01
BOEING CO	293,940	+0.02%	0,060	175,340,64
CATERPILLAR	146,690	+0.28%	0,410	87,252,96
CHEVRON	119,73	+0.17%	0,20	227,734,93
CISCO SYSTEMS	38,190	+0.77%	0,290	190,852,06
COCA-COLA	46,19	+0.35%	0,16	196,544,58
DOWDUPONT	70,00	-1.03%	-0,73	164,185,42
EXXON MOBIL	83,03	+0.16%	0,13	352,400,11
GENERAL ELECTRIC	17,8200	+1.02%	0,1800	154,102,95
GOLDMAN SACHS	257,17	+0.66%	1,69	97,329,30
HOME DEPOT	182,5800	+0.25%	0,4500	213,581,11
IBM	152,50	-0.97%	-1,50	141,312,80
INTEL CORP	44,5600	+3.01%	1,3000	209,457,93
J.P.MORGAN CHASE	106,1400	+1.41%	1,4800	368,693,04
JOHNSON & JOHNSON	142,4600	+0.57%	0,8100	381,647,04
MC DONALD'S CORP	174,0600	+0.53%	0,9200	138,989,31
MERCK AND CO. NEW	56,24	+1.21%	0,67	152,718,31
MICROSOFT	86,850	+2.55%	2,160	666,321,13
NIKE	64,79	+0.40%	0,26	84,530,52
PFIZER	37,2000	+2.03%	0,7400	221,380,67
PROCTER AND GAMBLE	91,890	+0.98%	0,890	232,537,58
TRAVELERS CIES	134,89	+1.74%	2,31	36,979,05
UNITED TECHNOLOGIE	126,17	+1.95%	2,41	100,755,57
UNITEDHEALTH GROUP	221,82	+0.26%	0,57	214,784,11
VERIZON COMMS	52,67	+0.63%	0,33	214,945,74
VISA	113,82	+0.80%	0,90	206,333,91
WAL-MART STORES	97,1100	-0.02%	-0,0200	291,782,39
WALT DISNEY CO	111,2700	+0.63%	0,7000	168,203,47

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## NASDAQ

CLOSING PRICES DECEMBER 18

COMPANY	PRICE	CHANGE NET / %
<b>Most Advanced</b>		
Educational Development Corporation	\$ 16.75	2.70 ▲ 19.22%
TiGenix	\$ 24.92	3.25 ▲ 15.00%
Crocs, Inc.	\$ 12.55	1.61 ▲ 14.72%
Surgery Partners, Inc.	\$ 11.15	1.40 ▲ 14.36%
Forterra, Inc.	\$ 10.83	1.35 ▲ 14.24%
Roku, Inc.	\$ 52.31	6.16 ▲ 13.35%
Compugen Ltd.	\$ 2.80	0.30 ▲ 12%
Presbia PLC	\$ 2.16	0.23 ▲ 11.92%
Diana Containerships Inc.	\$ 5.44	0.57 ▲ 11.70%
FormFactor, Inc.	\$ 16.60	1.70 ▲ 11.41%
Overstock.com, Inc.	\$ 68.35	6.85 ▲ 11.14%
<b>Most Declined</b>		
Marinus Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	\$ 7.89	1.44 ▼ 15.43%
Allena Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	\$ 10.50	1.88 ▼ 15.19%
Verastem, Inc.	\$ 3.14	0.51 ▼ 13.97%
Syndax Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	\$ 8.03	0.97 ▼ 10.78%
Frontier Communications Corporation	\$ 11.86	1.39 ▼ 10.49%
China Internet Nationwide Financial Services Inc.	\$ 42.95	4.87 ▼ 10.18%
Mountain Province Diamonds Inc.	\$ 2.45	0.275 ▼ 10.09%
Restoration Robotics, Inc.	\$ 4.86	0.54 ▼ 10%
ACM Research, Inc.	\$ 5	0.54 ▼ 9.75%
Xunlei Limited	\$ 15.77	1.68 ▼ 9.63%
Corvus Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	\$ 9.30	0.94 ▼ 9.18%

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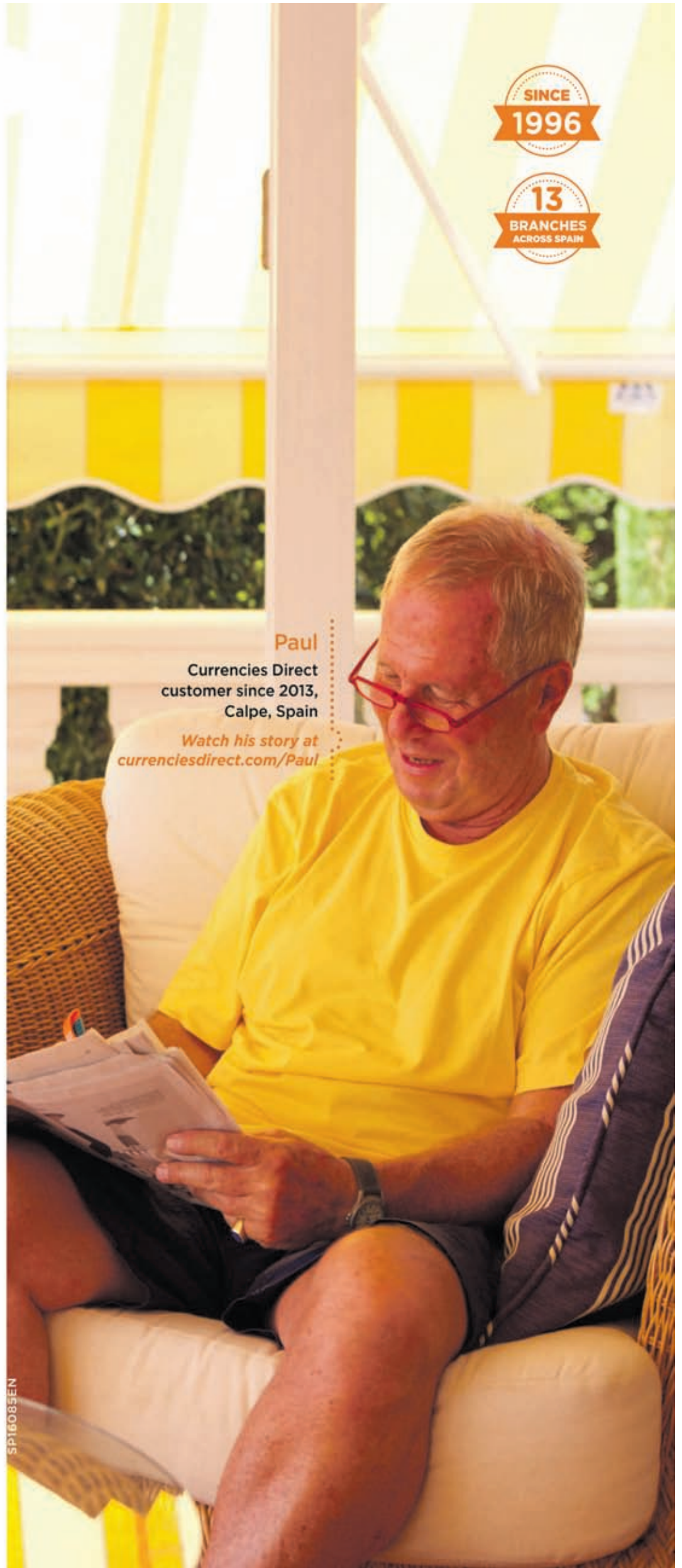
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SP16085EN

# Qatar works with Spain

## Needs assistance to produce more food

THE Qatari government has been isolated as other Middle Eastern countries accuse it of supporting terrorism which has meant that it has expanded its economic relationships with Europe.

Having been awarded the FIFA World Cup Final for 2022 it has to ensure that it has a markedly improved infrastructure in order to guarantee that air conditioned stadiums are built, as well as accommodation and training camps which will be sufficiently cool for the huge number of visitors expected.

It has been steadily investing in Europe over a period of years and through a subsidiary in Luxembourg, Qatar Airways is the largest shareholder (with 20 per cent) in IAG which operates airlines Aer Lingus, BA, Iberia and Vueling.

Now, an alliance of Spanish agribusiness companies AgroQatar has signed a memorandum of understanding with Gulf Petroleum for the development of a system of high-tech greenhouse production of fresh fruit and vegetables.

According to a statement from the Spanish embassy in Qatar, this project intends to improve the self-sufficiency of Qatar in fresh food supply.

Gulf Petroleum president Abdul Aziz Hamad al-Dulaimi and AgroQatar general manager and chief operating officer Juan Carlos Santiago signed the memorandum in the presence of Spanish ambassador Ignacio Escobar.

According to the embassy, Gulf Petroleum was recently awarded the right to develop 100 hectares of greenhouse facilities by the Qatari government and AgroQatar is supported the Spanish Export Promotion Authority (ICEX) which includes the financing of its projects in Qatar.



Photo Credit: The Peninsula Qatar Twitter

### Signing the memorandum of understanding.

“The objective is trifold: to contribute to the growth of the agricultural economy in the state of Qatar and guaranteeing its self-sufficiency, to increase the participation of the non-hydrocarbon sector in the national economy and, finally, to develop the private sector” its spokesman said.

The organisation was created specifically to facilitate the development of agribusiness adapted to the climatic conditions of Qatar.

## INDITEX GROUP CONTINUES TO SEE PROFIT GROWTH

# Third quarter figures up

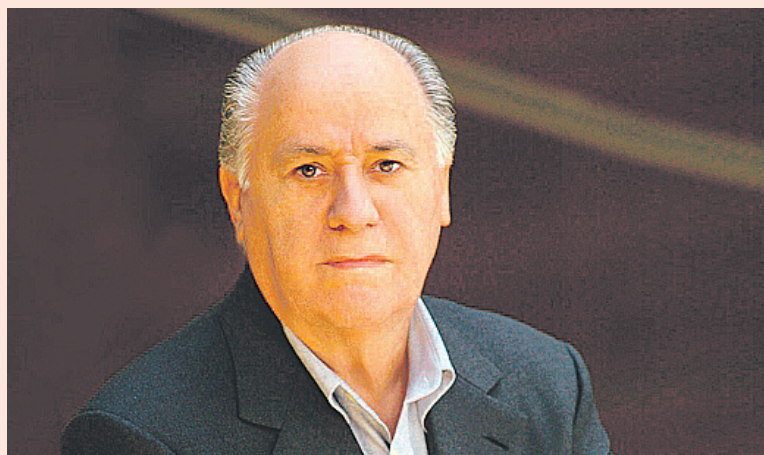
THE world's largest fashion retail group Inditex has reported continued growth and profits of €11.15 billion by the end of the third quarter of 2017.

Its turnover for the same period of €18 billion would rank it number 100 in the world alongside Latvia and Paraguay if it was a country.

The company which owns Zara, Bershka and a number of other brands just keeps expanding and during 2017 has opened 212 new stores across the world giving it a total of 7,504 in 94 countries with 162,000 employees.

Interestingly however it has been reported in foreign financial media that it is looking to sell 16 of its stores (14 in Spain and two in Portugal) in a sale and leaseback venture with an asking price of €400 million.

The reason for this decision is that the bulk of its stores around the world are operated on a leased basis and it has also seen a growth



**AMANCIO ORTEGA: Founder of Inditex.**

in internet sales within Spain which has been notoriously slow in embracing online shopping.

The group has invested a great deal of time and money in upgrading its internet presence and believes that the Spanish market is ready to see a definite move away from store purchases to online shopping which means that its stores may start to become redundant to some extent.

One of the properties that it is believed to be looking to dispose of is the Zara store in the upmarket Calle Preciados in Madrid, said to be the most expensive Spanish street in terms of retail rents.

One independent analyst has been quoted as saying that whilst pan-European internet purchase is expected to rise by 12 per cent per annum, Spain is likely to see a growth of 18 per cent up by 2021.

Profit margins for the company are in excess of 50 per cent over cost and this has been achieved by a policy of entering into arrangements with suppliers who will produce additional stock at very short notice, ensuring that the group does get left with an excess of previous season's clothing.

Still privately owned by Amancio Ortega who is currently listed as the world's fourth richest man, the Inditex Group has weathered all financial storms to become a true Spanish success story.

## Jaime Botín accepts that he is tax evader

THE former Bankinter president Jaime Botín has accepted a sentence of nine months in prison and a fine of €506,134 for allegedly defrauding €1 million.

He has now accepted a 'plea bargain' with the prosecution agreeing that he pretended that a private plane which was actually based at Madrid Torrejon airport was actually located in Portugal where no taxes would have been paid.

As part of the agreement, he has accepted full responsibility for this matter meaning that charges against three of his former colleagues will be dropped.

There is however another charge pending against the millionaire member of the family which controls Santander Bank regarding the attempted sale of a painting by Picasso outside of Spain.

## ECB confident for the future

AS the European Central Bank (ECB) has increased its growth forecast for members of the eurozone, the Bank of Spain has blamed Cataluña for an expected reduction.

Spain has been something of an economic powerhouse over the past few years so by dropping its forecast for 2018 to 2.4 per cent, it aligns itself with the increased expectation of the ECB for 2.4 per cent by the end of 2017.

Whilst the ECB president Mario Draghi has indicated that the bank is much more confident than it was a few months ago, the Spanish Bank is also dropping the 2019 forecast to 2.1 per cent.

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# Niki airline goes bankrupt

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AFTER Lufthansa pulled out of a rescue attempt due to EU Commission opposition, Niki Airlines filed for bankruptcy.

All flights were suspended leaving an estimated 5,000 passengers stranded without flights, although the airline website told passengers who had booked with tour operators to contact them for assistance whilst listing five 'friendly' aircraft who may assist in returning passengers to Austria, Germany and Switzerland until the end of 2017.

The airline which was part of the Air Berlin group (also in liquidation) has 20 airlines and flew across much of Europe with seven destinations in Spain including Malaga and Palma de Mallorca.

The original founder of the low cost Austrian airline - which he sold in 2011 - former F1 racing driver Niki Lauda has reportedly shown an interest in making a bid for it.

This is the third European airline to fall into the hands of liquidators this year.

## Bid to take over toll operator still dragging on

IT WAS IN May of this year that Italian company Atlantia bid €16.3 billion to take over Spanish toll road operator Abertis.

A few months later, that offer was topped by Hochtief the German subsidiary of Spanish construction group ACS who have indicated that they would pay €18.6 billion.

The matter is now being considered, but two Spanish ministers have joined in the discussions suggesting that the bid from the Italian group was not ideal as Abertis also owns Hispasat, which controls Spain's national satellite communications system.

The suggestion is that they would rather see ACS, whose chief executive Florentino Pérez is also President of Real Madrid

football club, take control of the company which relies upon the goodwill of the government which grants the rights to manage toll roads across Spain.

There is however a problem with the Hochtief bid as ACS is half the size of the Italian group which is controlled by the Benetton family and has less access to cheap funds which could cause shareholders in the Spanish operator to prefer a sale to Italy.

It has been suggested that the ACS/Hochtief bid will have to be supported in part by the issue of new shares and main shareholder in Abertis, CriteriaCaixa may not want to take stock in a construction company when it can take cash from the other party.

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# What are they thinking?

LEAPY LEE SAYS IT

OTHERS THINK IT



DELIGHTED to have been invited to attend the Westminster Parliamentary Carol Service last week. Not quite so impressed with the almost unbelievable lack of security which surrounded the event.

Don't they ever learn anything? Just two minutes from the terrorist attack on Westminster Bridge, and with half the cabinet, including Jeremy Corbyn expected to be in attendance, we walked from our traffic-jammed Uber to the church, without observing even one member of the security forces - let alone an armed officer.

Our tickets could have been run up on anyone's PC and, although asked to bring our passports, they were not requested and we were allowed to pass unchallenged into the building, with no search, no metal detection and the briefest of ticket scrutiny. We took our seats among the MPs and peers of the realm, clutching an unchecked bag and umbrella, with yours truly wearing a long raincoat, which could have concealed a bomb or an AK47.

Frankly, I don't care if we were closely examined by a whole truck load of CCTV cameras, had I been a terrorist, I could have taken out half of those in attendance before any security force



PEW FOR PEERS: Leapy takes a seat.

could even have raised a small Glock. It was actually quite disturbing, and I truly did feel vulnerable in a situation which should have been sewed up tighter than the duck's proverbial. What are these people thinking?

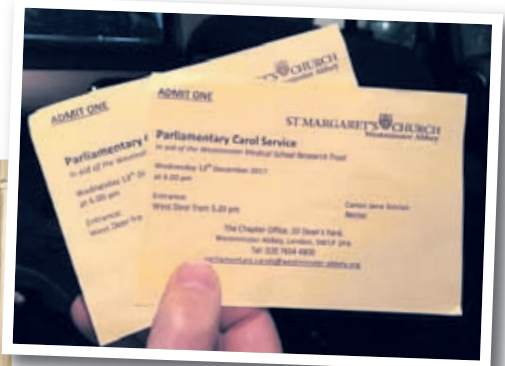
I was actually surprised to see Corbyn in attendance at all (May sent a representative, obviously Brexit negotiations more important than her catching a glimpse of Leapy!) I didn't think the Labour leader 'did' religion; I was therefore not surprised to see him leave before the prayer segment of the service. Speaker John Bercow smiled as he passed my pew, he obviously doesn't read



STEEPED IN HISTORY: Winston Churchill married here.

the column! All in all, apart from the feelings of vulnerability, a wholly interesting and enjoyable event in a church which is steeped in historical occurrences, including the marriage of Winston Churchill and Lord Louis Mountbatten.

The same building in 1555 AD, witnessed a priest attacked at the altar, after which the perpetrator, a William Flower was burnt at the stake outside the church. (Perhaps it is a good thing they haven't actually read Leapy's blurb!) The Westminster choir were of course superb and fair caused many a droplet and lump. A truly unforgettable and wholly unique experience. This was



TICKETS: The only thing that was checked.

the lesson read by the Speaker of the House, which made quite a pleasant change from 'Order Order.'

BC-AD

This was the moment when before turned into after, and the future's un-invented time keepers presented arms.

This was the moment when nothing happened. Only dull peace sprawled boringly over the earth.

This was the moment when even energetic Romans could find nothing better to do than counting heads in remote provinces.

And this was the moment when a few farm workers and three members of an obscure Persian sect walked haphazard by starlight, straight into the Kingdom of heaven.

Keep the faith

columists@euroweeklynnews.com

Love Leapy. leapylee2002@gmail.com

Leapy Lee's opinions are his own and are not necessarily representative of those of the publishers, advertisers or sponsors.

## TECH FOR THE TIMID

UNTIL last month, where I live it was quicker to send out a messenger with a cleft stick than to use e-mail.

Then despite the hesitance of the town's largely-elderly inhabitants who still think the Interweb is the devil's spawn, we received a wonderful early Christmas present: fibre-optic broadband.

I wouldn't want to spoil the festive season for the rest of you living in seriously inferior settlements, but what a joy it is to send an e-mail and not have to brew up a cuppa while waiting for the progress bar to complete. How ecstatic it is to click a news-site video and not be treated to stop-motion puppetry.

It almost didn't happen, after the town fathers questioned the need for such new-fangled jiggy-pokery. That it would cost each and every one of us a whole €3 more a month almost sank the deal.

Fortunately thieves came to our rescue (not a sentence I ever thought I would write). They stole the town's copper feeder cable,



BROADBAND: Spain the world's 22nd-fastest.

## Strike up the broadband

With Spain now 22nd in global connectivity speed, Terence Kennedy is in a fever about his new fibre.

twice, and the service provider decided to give us fibre whether we wanted it or not. As indeed did Mr Kellogg all those breakfasts ago.

For the less fortunate, there are things you can do to improve your connectivity, other than lobbying

your service provider and local authorities. Or moving. Or indeed stealing the copper cable.

If you're still on prehistoric ADSL as we were (1.5 Mbps on a really good day, courtesy of that excellent site for testing your

broadband speed, [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net)), you may have two other options: mobile, or satellite.

Satellite is the ultimate and perhaps only choice for those far out 'en medio de la nada'; but it's expensive and prone to crippling traffic jams, especially when the kids get home for a happy evening of slaughtering people online.

If you're lucky enough to be in range of a cellular tower, you could 'go mobile,' especially now that mobile data packages are dropping in price.

Unless you're contemplating watching Game of Thrones online instead of on telly like the rest of us, 10 or 20 GB of data a month should do nicely thank you, at an affordable price.

You don't even have to buy a special modem to do it; just turn on your smartphone's hotspot and bingo, you've got your own new WiFi source in the house, driven from your SIMcard.

So go on: if you're still limping along on snail-paced broadband but you've got a reasonable 4G or even 3G signal within reach, why not? All you need is a smartphone with data and Roberto's your tio.

## Selling cellular

ACCESSING mobile data is not just the preserve of phones and tablets.

You can buy a MiFi gadget for home and mobile use for €100 or less. Insert a data-enabled SIM card, plug it in or use its battery, and you've got a 3G/4G WiFi 'router.'

The cheaper solution is firing up your smartphone's WiFi hotspot, activated in your phone's settings. Do be aware though that leaving it on continuously will hammer your phone's battery, so keep it on charge.

You can continue using your phone throughout. But perhaps you have an old smartphone lurking in a drawer which you could dedicate to hotspotting?

Or just bite the bullet, buy an €80 second smartphone and away you go. Because you're worth it.

# YOUR PAPER - YOUR VOICE - YOUR OPINION

Letters should be emailed to [yoursay@euroweeklynews.com](mailto:yoursay@euroweeklynews.com) or make your comments on our website: [www.euroweeklynews.com](http://www.euroweeklynews.com)

Views expressed and opinions given are not necessarily those of the EWN publishers. No responsibility is accepted for accuracy of information, errors, omissions or statements.

## A word of warning for expat drivers

SIR,

Two weeks into December I received a renewal notice from my car insurance company. The cost had gone up by €45. After experiencing yearly price increases, I decided to change to a cheaper firm.

The call centre said: "You should have done this before December 1: we shall renew your annual insurance on December 31 and we deny your request to cancel."

I said they had only informed me of the hike in a letter dated December 1, received on December 14! The operative cut across me and said loudly: "That is not our problem: you are wrong because you didn't give a month's notice."

I decided to explore this issue and quickly discovered my legal rights, as explained on the CAB, Spain website ([citizensadvice.org.es](http://citizensadvice.org.es)), where the wording of a 2015 law change states that a price rise should have been communicated two months before renewal!

I called back and told them what I had found, and they instantly said they would send me a form to sign and my insurance would be cancelled.

### Eating in the fifties

**PASTA had not been invented. It was macaroni or spaghetti.**

**Curry was a surname.**

**Taco? Never saw one till I was 15.**

**Pizza? Sounds like a leaning tower somewhere.**

**Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.**

**All chips were plain.**

**Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking.**

**Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.**

**Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.**

**Chickens didn't have fingers in those days.**

**None of us had ever heard of yo-**



**THE 1950'S: Tea was made in a teapot.**

**ghurt.**

**Healthy food consisted of anything edible!**

**Cooking outside was called camping.**

**Seaweed was not a recognised food.**

**Kebab was not even a word, never mind a food.**

**Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold.**

**Prunes were medicinal and stewed.**

**Surprisingly muesli was readily available. It was called cattle feed.**

**Pineapples came in chunks or were round with a hole in the middle, in a tin; we had only seen a picture of a real one.**

**Water came out of the tap. If someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it, they would have become a laughing stock.**

**There were three things that we never ever had on the table in the fifties, elbows, hats and mobile phones!**

**... and there were always two choices for each meal...**

**'Take it!' or 'Leave it!'**

*Anne Edwards, Mallorca*

Clearly, they had been aware but tried to force me into renewing. This is disgraceful and I am making a complaint to the insurance industry regulator in Spain.

*Gareth Thomas, Finestrat*

### Way to save

I HAVE lived in Spain for the last 12 years, and each Christmas have bought tickets to the El Gordo Lottery.

Normally I have bought these while shopping in Malaga City, or from street vendors in various locations nearby.

Each ticket has cost me around €23, which I thought was the official price, but this week I bought a ticket from my local tobacco shop in La Cala de Mijas, and was charged €20.

I do not begrudge individuals providing a service making a profit, but I wonder how many others might be like me... paying more in ignorance without realising that by calling at the local tobacco shop a saving of more than 14 per cent is possible.

*M Gormley, El Faro*

### HAVE YOUR SAY

All letters by email or post should carry the writer's address, NIE and contact number though only the name and town will be published.

Readers who have missed correspondence can see all letters - which can be edited before publication - posted on: [www.euroweeklynews.com](http://www.euroweeklynews.com).

## Pet goat mutilated in 'savage attack'

I hate the evil that permeates through the human race. Absolutely gutted for the poor goat and his owners. *Jim McClure*

Omg why would anyone do such a horrendous thing I hope they serve a long time when they catch them. *Tricia Hawkins*

How absolutely cruel poor little thing. *Pat Ward*

### Ryanair and Vueling rated worst short haul airlines

If I leave Malaga and arrive in one piece in Glasgow three hours later and it costs me between 25 and 50 quid, I really don't care how they are rated. *John Grieve*

Fly with them both every three weeks, from Malaga to Manchester and back the day after, cheap fares, so no complaints as they make it possible for us to live in Spain. *Chris O'Hare*

I have flown Ryanair many times to Jerez (my nearest airport) from Stansted as they are the only direct route from the UK, but so much uncertainty over the last flight (which didn't get cancelled) that now I fly to Sevilla with easyJet - more of a drive in Spain but a bit more reliable... *Rob James*

### Comments from EWN online

Well that's not much of a surprise as they both cancel flights whenever they feel like and with no bloody notice. Will never ever fly with any of them again especially Ryanair.

They cancelled my flight from Malaga to Edinburgh in October and I only found out through text message in the afternoon and my flight was early the next morning and it cost me hundreds of pounds and an overnight in Prague before eventually getting to Edinburgh later the next day.

Absolute shocking experience considering my flight had been booked months in advance. *Beverley Walker*

Once checked a flight starting at 24.99 with Ryanair that ended up almost 100 quid and that didn't include bags, just a carry on. Need to book seats as I am a nervous flyer. Extras were for carry on bag, seat selection and paying with credit card. It's the extras that always put me off. Have a friend who used Vueling and was treated very well indeed. Good and bad in all really. *Moirá Armitage*

### Costa Blanca parade accused of racism

Why can they not leave children's traditions alone. First in Holland. Zwarte Piet. Translated is Black Piet. He helps Sinterklaas to bring the presents for the children December 5 and throws sweets for them. The troubles every year recently because he is black is unbelievable. It is Dutch tradition through the generations and suddenly some people try to stop it. Very sad! *Edith Farminer*

I think I'm right in saying that the reason he's black is because he came down the chimney and got covered in soot isn't it?? Nothing racist about that, people need to just leave things be, totally agree with you on this Edith Farminer. *Sarah Aldeguer*

### Raiders loot death crash lorry

I do not see anything even remotely disrespectful in taking the tomatoes out of the truck. They would be disposed of anyway. As long as people take them for their own use I find it totally acceptable. *Peter Sauer*

This is just so disrespectful to the poor man who lost his life... Are people really hard up for a couple of tomatoes in La Cala? *Stéphanie Maire*

Disgusting! The driver died in that lorry! Not much surprises me any more. *Tessa Green*

### Could be worse

I WAS interested to read on your website that Ryanair has been voted the worst short-haul airline. What short memories people have! Thirty years ago these no-frills carriers did not exist meaning flights to Spain were way more expensive. Cheap flights are surely one of the backbones of expatriates' lives here!

*Margaret Robins, Alfaz del Pi*

### Festive cheer

WHAT a wonderful place Spain is at this time of year. A heady mix of sun, sea and family values that we would never see the likes of in the UK! I for one cannot wait to tuck into my turkey on the terrace while friends and family shiver back home!

*T Maidland, Torrevieja*

### Festive tear

THE way Spain has embraced Christmas over the last few years is truly depressing.

This over-commercialised spend-fest appears to have overtaken traditional celebrations like the Three Kings in many ways, and how confusing and expensive it must be for some Spanish families to buy two lots of presents, although presumably the kids love it!

*Grumpy, Albox*

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THURSDAY	BBC one	BBC TWO	itv	CHANNEL 4	CHANNEL 5	sky sports main event				
21 DECEMBER	4:35pm	Wallace and Gromit in the Curse of the Were-Rabbit	3:00pm	Natural World	5:00pm	Tipping Point	3:15pm	Christmas with the Andersons	11:00am	Premier League Daily
	5:50pm	Merry Madagascar	4:00pm	Victorian Bakers at Christmas	6:00pm	The Chase	4:00pm	Lost and Found	12:00pm	Sky Sports Daily
	6:15pm	Pointless	5:00pm	Back in Time for Christmas	7:00pm	ITV News London	5:00pm	A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun	1:00pm	SKY Sports News
	7:00pm	BBC News at Six	6:00pm	The Lake District: A Wild Year	7:30pm	ITV Evening News	6:00pm	Kirstie's Handmade Christmas	2:00pm	SKY Sports News
	7:30pm	BBC London News	7:00pm	Sacred Rivers with Simon Reeve	8:00pm	Emmerdale	7:00pm	The Simpsons	3:00pm	SKY Sports News
	8:00pm	The One Show	8:00pm	Inside the Christmas Factory	8:30pm	Tonight	7:30pm	Hollyoaks	4:00pm	SKY Sports News
	8:30pm	EastEnders	9:00pm	MasterChef	9:00pm	Emmerdale	8:00pm	Channel 4 News	5:00pm	SKY Sports News
	9:00pm	DIY SOS The Big Build	10:00pm	Joanna and Jennifer: Absolutely Changers	9:30pm	Coronation Street	8:00pm	The Supertv at Christmas	6:00pm	SKY Sports News
	10:00pm	Love, Lies and Records	11:00pm	Absolutely Fabulous	10:00pm	Gordon, Gino and Fred's Great Christmas Roast	9:00pm	Christmas Lights	7:00pm	SKY Sports News
	10:00pm							10:00pm	Donny Osmond's Easy Listening Christmas	8:00pm
FRIDAY 22 DECEMBER	6:00pm	Puss in Boots: The Three Diablos	5:15pm	Back in Time for Christmas	4:00pm	Dickinson's Real Deal	4:00pm	5 News	12:00pm	Sky Sports Daily
	6:15pm	Pointless	6:15pm	Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger!	5:00pm	Tipping Point	5:00pm	Mariah Carey's a Christmas Melody	1:00pm	SKY Sports News
	7:00pm	BBC News at Six	8:00pm	Inside the Christmas Factory	6:00pm	The Chase	5:30pm	Mrs. Miracle	1:30pm	Live World Championship Darts
	7:30pm	BBC London News	9:00pm	Mastermind	7:00pm	ITV News London	6:30pm	The Gadget Show	5:30pm	SKY Sports News
	8:00pm	The One Show	9:30pm	Only Connect	7:30pm	ITV Evening News	7:00pm	Christmas with the Dog Rescuers	7:00pm	SKY Sports News
	8:30pm	A Question of Sport	10:00pm	Saturday Night Fever - The Ultimate Disco Movie	8:00pm	Emmerdale	8:00pm	Celebrity 5 Go in Search of Santa	7:30pm	Carling in Off the Bar Pre-Match
	9:00pm	EastEnders			8:30pm	Coronation Street	9:00pm	In His Own Words	8:00pm	Football
	9:30pm	Miranda			9:00pm	You've Been Framed!	10:00pm	Super Casino	11:30pm	SPFL Matters: Old Firm Special
	9:30pm	Have I Got 2017 News for You			9:30pm	Coronation Street				
	10:00pm				10:00pm	AI Murray's Make Christmas Great Again				
SATURDAY 23 DECEMBER	6:30pm	Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme Christmas Special	3:40pm	Talking Pictures	2:35pm	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	5:00pm	Kirstie's Handmade Christmas	12:00pm	Soccer Saturday Pre-Match
	7:00pm	BBC News	4:10pm	Mildred Pierce	5:30pm	Despicable Me	6:00pm	Channel 4 News	12:30pm	Football
	7:10pm	BBC London News	6:00pm	Natural World	7:30pm	ITV News London	6:10pm	Gogglesprogs	3:30pm	Live World Championship Darts
	7:15pm	Pointless Celebrities Christmas Special	7:00pm	Bill	7:40pm	ITV News	7:10pm	Christmas Special	6:00pm	My Icon
	8:10pm	Even Better Than the Real Thing - Christmas Special	8:30pm	Lenny Henry: A Life on Screen	8:00pm	You've Been Framed!	7:30pm	Crocodile Dundee	6:15pm	Football
	9:05pm	Casualty	9:30pm	Dad's Army	8:30pm	Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway	8:00pm	The World's Best Christmas Lights: From Liverpool to Bethlehem	8:30pm	Football
			10:00pm	Feud: Bette and Joan	9:00pm	The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies	9:00pm	The Wolverine	11:00pm	Live World Championship Darts
			10:50pm	Feud: Bette and Joan	11:35pm	ITV News	10:00pm			
			11:35pm	What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?						
SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER	3:20pm	Monsters University	2:20pm	Alex Polizzi's Christmas Fix	5:00pm	Cannonball Christmas Special	6:20pm	The Snowman	9:00am	Christmas Eve Total Goals
	4:55pm	Doodlebugs	3:20pm	Natural World	6:00pm	You've Been Framed!	6:55pm	The Snowman and the Snowdog	10:00am	Christmas Eve Total Goals
	5:10pm	Home	4:20pm	Guys and Dolls	6:30pm	ITV News London	7:20pm	Channel 4 News	11:00am	SKY Sports News
	6:35pm	BBC News	6:45pm	Carols from King's	6:35pm	ITV News	7:30pm	The Muppet Christmas Carol	2:00pm	SKY Sports News
	6:50pm	BBC London News	8:00pm	Dad's Army	6:50pm	A Christmas Chase: Celebrity Special	9:00pm	Child Genius v Celebrities Christmas Special	2:30pm	Cricket
	7:00pm	Countryfile	9:00pm	Christmas University Challenge 2017	7:40pm	All Star Musicals	10:00pm	Gogglebox 2017	6:00pm	SKY Sports News
	8:00pm	Mary, Mel and Sue's Big Christmas Thank You	9:30pm	Winter's Weirdest Events	9:30pm	Maigret in Montmartre	12:05am	The Inbetweeners	6:30pm	Live NFL
	9:00pm	EastEnders	10:30pm	The Great Gatsby	11:25pm	ITV News	9:00pm		10:00pm	Live NFL
	9:30pm	Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show							2:00am	SKY Sports News
MONDAY 25 DECEMBER	4:10pm	Cinderella	6:35pm	The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show 1977	12:10pm	Mr Bean's Holiday	3:25pm	Channel 4 News	3:00pm	Hamilton: My 4th World Title
	5:45pm	The Highway Rat	7:45pm	Winter's Weirdest Events	1:50pm	Santa Claus	3:30pm	The Alternative Christmas Message	3:30pm	Best of Moeen Ali
	6:15pm	BBC News	8:45pm	Dad's Army	4:00pm	HM the Queen	3:35pm	Scrooged	4:00pm	Phil Taylor the Greatest
	6:30pm	Doctor Who	9:25pm	Upstart Crow	4:10pm	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	5:30pm	Dumbo	5:00pm	Sky F1 Christmas Special
	7:30pm	Strictly Come Dancing	10:00pm	Tom Jones and Beverley Knight's Gospel Christmas	6:50pm	Emmerdale	6:50pm	Home Alone	6:00pm	Info not available
	8:40pm	Call the Midwife	10:00pm		7:50pm	ITV Evening News	8:40pm	The Great Christmas Bake Off	7:30pm	AJ - The Knockouts
	10:00pm	EastEnders			8:00pm	Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs	10:00pm	First Dates at Christmas	8:00pm	Boxing's Best of 2017
	11:00pm	Mrs. Brown's Boys			9:00pm	Coronation Street	11:00pm	Alan Carr's Christmas Chatty Man	10:00pm	Live NFL: Pittsburgh @ Houston
	11:35pm	300 Years of French and Saunders			10:00pm	Victoria				
	12:25am	BBC News								
TUESDAY 26 DECEMBER	3:10pm	Shaun the Sheep Movie	2:20pm	The Eagle Has Landed	10:25am	Ferris Bueller's Day Off	1:10pm	Alvin and the Chipmunks	3:10pm	Balmoral: A Hidden History
	4:30pm	Doodlebugs	4:30pm	The Repair Shop at Christmas	12:25pm	Cats and Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore	2:55pm	Channel 4 News	5:10pm	Sandringham: The Queen at Christmas
	4:45pm	Mary Poppins	5:30pm	Final Score	2:00pm	ITV Racing: Live from Kempton	3:00pm	Child Genius v Celebrities Christmas Special	6:15pm	A Royal Night Out
	7:00pm	BBC News	6:35pm	Matthew Bourne's Cinderella	4:30pm	E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial	4:05pm	The Great Christmas Bake Off	8:00pm	The Strictly Story: Fake Tan, Tangos and a Ten From Len
	7:20pm	BBC London News	8:30pm	Christmas University Challenge 2017	6:50pm	ITV Evening News	5:20pm	The Little Mermaid	9:30pm	Dirty Dancing: Making Movie Magic
	7:30pm	Snow Bears	9:00pm	Reindeer Family and Me	7:10pm	Emmerdale	7:00pm	Back to the Future	11:00pm	Dirty Dancing
	8:30pm	EastEnders	10:00pm	Dragons' Den	7:40pm	Jurassic World	9:00pm	Travel Man		
	9:00pm	Little Women	11:00pm	QI	10:00pm	Coronation Street	10:00pm	Big Fat Quiz of the Year		
	10:00pm	The Miniaturist								
	11:30pm	BBC News								
WEDNESDAY 27 DECEMBER	8:00pm	Celebrity Mastermind	3:20pm	World's Most Extraordinary Homes	4:00pm	Tenable	4:10pm	Four Rooms with Sarah Beeny	10:10am	Mofy
	8:30pm	A Question of Sport	4:20pm	Inside the Factory	5:00pm	Tipping Point	5:15pm	Channel 4 News	10:15am	Cruising with Jane McDonald
	9:00pm	Little Women	5:20pm	The Man Who Never Was	6:00pm	The Chase	5:30pm	Back to the Future Part II	10:30am	World's Strongest Man 2017
	10:00pm	The Miniaturist	7:00pm	Tropical Paradise	7:00pm	Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs	7:30pm	Hollyoaks	11:30am	North Sea Hijack
	11:00pm	BBC News	8:00pm	Dad's Army	7:30pm	ITV News London	8:00pm	The Supertv at Christmas	1:25pm	Operation Crossbow
	11:20pm	BBC London News	8:30pm	Christmas University Challenge 2017	7:45pm	ITV Evening News	8:00pm	Supersoppers Sales Special	3:40pm	Operation Daybreak
	11:30pm	Mrs. Brown's Boys	9:00pm	Six Robots and Us	8:00pm	Emmerdale	9:00pm	Miranda Does Christmas	5:55pm	The Guns of Navarone
	12:00am	Not Going Out	10:00pm	Alan Partridge	8:30pm	Coronation Street	10:00pm		9:00pm	World's Strongest Man 2017
	12:40am	Comic Relief 2017: A look at some of the projects helped by Comic Relief 2017.	11:00pm	Oasis	9:00pm	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire			10:00pm	Most Shocking



# Mince pies, Crowns and the odd disaster

*THE CROWN* (Netflix) has returned with all the drama, excitement, and Royal insight we were drawn to in Season One. Claire Foy continues to play a wonderful Elizabeth II, knocking the socks off a couple of Dames who have gone before her, but what has happened to her accent? I was reaching for the subtitles at one point.

Surely if anyone should speak the Queen's English, it's Claire playing The Monarch? Stick with the accent though, Season Two doesn't disappoint.

If you enjoyed *The Real Marigold Hotel* series, check out *The Real Marigold on Tour* (BBC1 and 2 and *Catchup*). The original gang are split into two groups of four this time around, exploring what it is like to grow older in countries around the world.

The series started in China, followed by Cuba, Iceland (where it was cold, who knew...) and will conclude in Thailand. Don't be put off that the BBC didn't venture to Spain, *Marigold* is just as good in Global Tour format.

I'm not sure that any of the celebrities will be persuaded to uproot and move home though. It's a good job



**GREAT WATCH:** *The Real Marigold on Tour.*



**WONDERFUL:** Claire Foy in *The Crown.*

too, where would the lovely Miriam Margolyes get her clothes and I'm not sure anyone but the Brits would understand Wayne Sleep, but it is an interesting way to sample life, albeit with a walking stick. I just hope our celebrities were able to fly First Class between filming.

With no spoilers over the mince pies, what is happening in Soap Land as we head for Christmas?

For the *EastEnders* (BBC1, nightly) we know there is trouble when Sharon Mitchell (still played by Letitia Dean) announces 'Good knees up at The Vic, that's what Christmas is all about.' Well, not in my house Sharon, not even if Peggy was serving the drinks around the pool.

We already know that Max Branning (Jake Wood) is consumed by revenge and wants to get back at every-

one who has wronged him. There is also a catastrophic event coming up for the Branning family. Feliz Navidad Albert Square.

It looks as though life risks turning into a wild west show for the residents of *Coronation Street* (ITV1, nightly). Billy Mayhew is set to ride down the street guns blazing as Peter Barlow drives Todd Grimshaw and Summer out of Wakefield before taking revenge on

the vicar for being part of Susan's death. All that's needed are saloon doors on *The Rovers* and a stage coach rattling down the cobbles. Ken Barlow in a stetson anyone?

Meanwhile on the farm, the cast of *Emmerdale* (ITV1, nightly) aren't going to be fooled by Charity Dingle's personal life apparently settling down. She deserves it given recent story lines, but has an explosive New Year coming up, rocking the all too short Christmas calm. I hope she has a Merry, but quiet Christmas.

To finish this week, my Christmas Eve and Christmas Day recommendations include *Dad's Army* (BBC2, Christmas Eve) is pure genius for those of us old enough; *The Queen's Speech* (BBC & ITV, Christmas Day) isn't Jungle winner Toff eating bugs, but the annual message from Her Majesty and finally the Christmas episode of *Victoria* (ITV1, Christmas Day).

This episode of *Victoria* has been in development for over a year now. Expect snow, Prince Albert enjoying too much Christmas spirit and watch out for the number of Christmas trees, the Royal children had one each apparently.

Happy viewing and Merry Christmas everyone.



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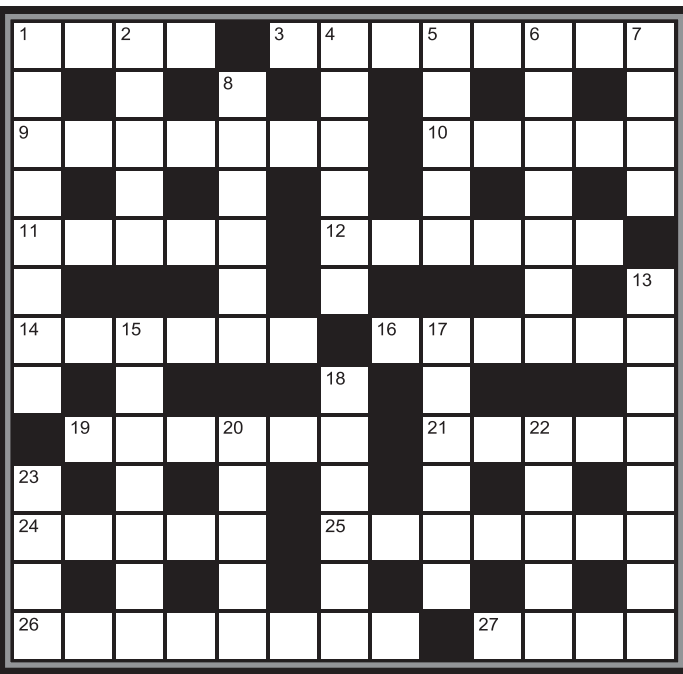
Cryptic

Across

- 1 Performs on stage, appearing after John (4)
- 3 Accepts devious beer scam (8)
- 9 Around lake there's poor cover (7)
- 10 Girl from German-Italian background (5)
- 11 Boy gets the French serving spoon (5)
- 12 Point to prime kind of silly smile (6)
- 14 Dehydration results from a scruffy T-shirt (6)
- 16 A predicament caused by disorderly capers (6)
- 19 Engineers model for peace of mind (6)
- 21 Jolly pirate emblem (5)
- 24 Old Testament character, New Testament incident (5)
- 25 Repeat some of the composite rates (7)
- 26 Late drink that goes to your head? (8)
- 27 Early historian's sleeping place on boat (4)

Down

- 1 A sailor, Spanish sun, mid-January, end of August and June, it's perfect (8)
- 2 Dainty daughter making cloth (5)
- 4 Gloomy doctor got up (6)
- 5 Kingdom in actual miles (5)
- 6 Throw me a rich fire-breathing



Greek (7)

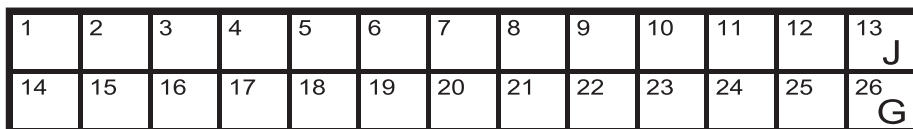
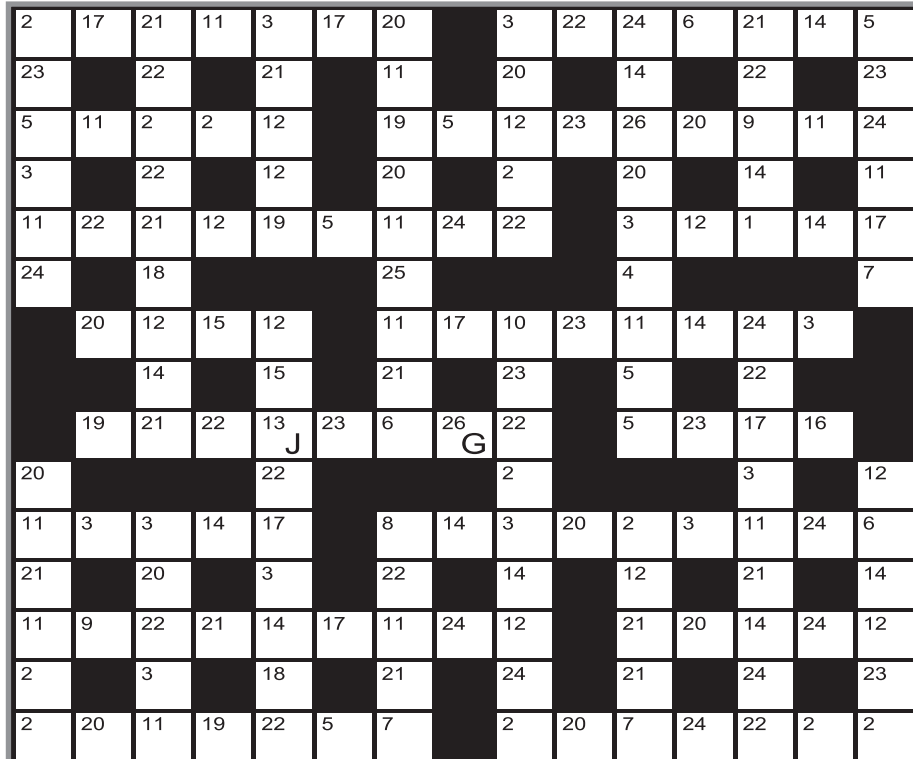
- 7 Hit one's friends back (4)
- 8 The rest from the Isley Brothers (6)
- 13 Dog with no tail - get back! (8)
- 15 Some nice Bergen sandwiches contain lettuce (7)
- 17 Floor covering from Oscar

Peterson's house (6)

- 18 About end product in a light-sensitive area (6)
- 20 A group of eight musicians etc to reform (5)
- 22 Amazing girl? (5)
- 23 An average sort of name (4)

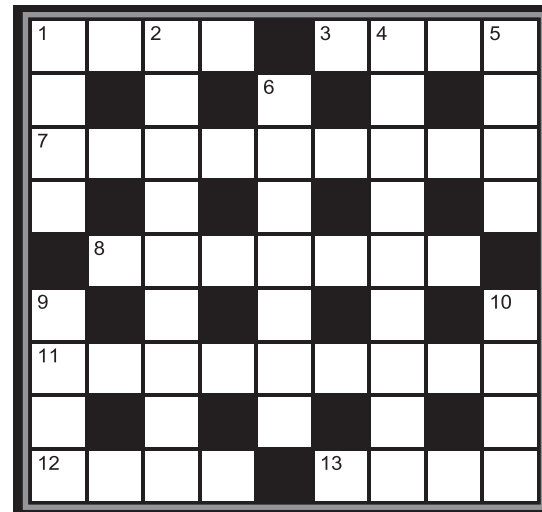
Code Breaker

Each number in the Code Breaker grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. In this week's puzzle, 13 represents J and 26 represents G, so fill in J every time the figure 13 appears and G every time the figure 26 appears. Now, using your knowledge of the English language, work out which letters should go in the missing squares. As you discover the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and the control grid.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION FACING PAGE

Quick



Across

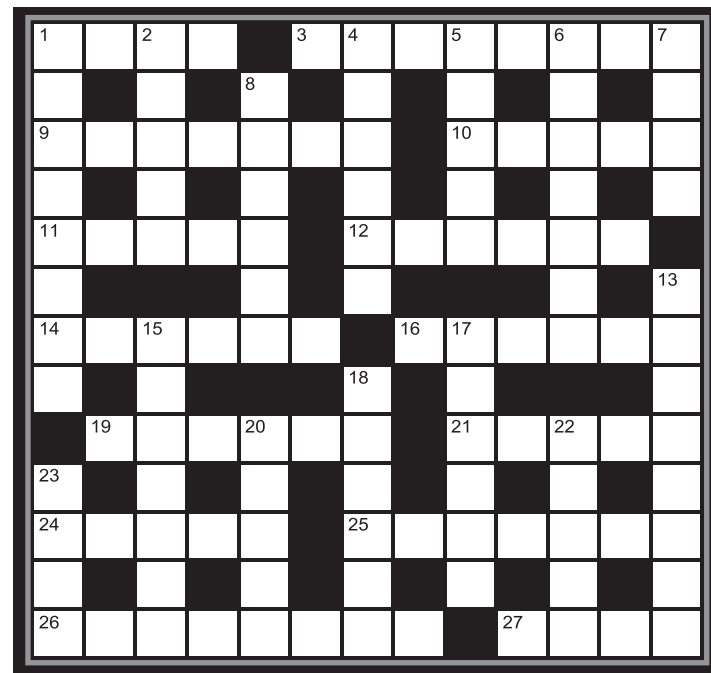
- 1 Neat and tidy (4)
- 3 Overdue (4)
- 7 Allured or enticed (9)
- 8 Mother of your father or mother (7)
- 11 Kept from happening or arising (9)
- 12 Digits of the foot (4)
- 13 Boundary of a surface (4)

Down

- 1 Snare (4)
- 2 Intervene (9)
- 4 Tried (9)
- 5 Finishes (4)
- 6 Frequented by a ghost (7)
- 9 Dot (4)
- 10 Not in action or at work (4)

English - Spanish

The clues are mixed, some clues are in Spanish and some are in English.



Across

- 1 Simpático (4)
- 3 Té de especias (5,3)
- 9 Pavos (7)
- 10 Mary (5)
- 11 Visita (5)
- 12 Uno de los renos de Santa (6)
- 14 Caramelo (6)
- 16 Hug (6)
- 19 Ivy (6)
- 21 Cometa (5)

Down

- 1 Natividad (8)
- 2 Corchos (5)
- 4 Inn (6)
- 5 Beds (5)
- 6 Card (greetings) (7)

Across

- 24 Reindeer (5)
- 25 Happiness (cheerfulness) (7)
- 26 Shepherds (8)
- 27 Himno (4)
- 7 To roast (4)
- 8 Sofá (6)
- 13 Tren de juguete (3,5)
- 15 Amigos (7)
- 17 Refñir (6)
- 18 Desfile (6)
- 20 Wish (5)
- 22 Alegre (5)
- 23 Envolver (con papel) (4)

CROSSWORD PAGE

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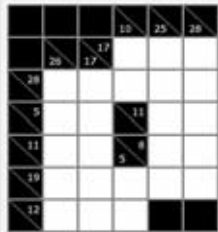
MADDOCKS' VIEW ON LIFE



'IT'S SO BRIGHT THAT STAR COULD BE ANOTHER WORLD!'

Kakuro

Fill all the empty squares using the numbers 1 to 9, so that the sum of each horizontal block equals the 'clue' on its left, and the sum of each vertical block equals the clue on its top. No number may be used in the same block more than once.



Nonagram

How many English words of four letters or more can you make from the nine letters in our Nonagram puzzle? Each letter may be used only once (unless the letter appears twice). Each word **MUST CONTAIN THE CENTRE LETTER** (in this case M) and there must be **AT LEAST ONE NINE LETTER WORD**. Plurals, vulgarities or proper nouns are not allowed.



TARGET:

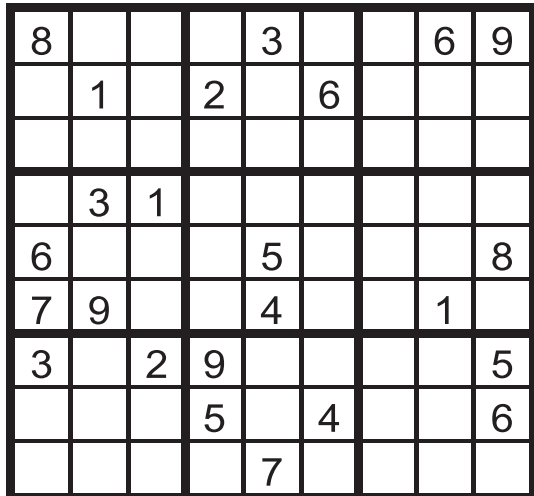
- Average: 15
- Very good: 29
- Good: 20
- Excellent: 38

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

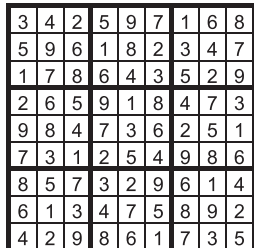
able ably alee ally bald bale ball bell belt blat bled dale deal dele dell eely lade lady late lead leal tael tale tall teal tell yell alley badly baldy baled bally belay belle belly betel blade bleat bleed dally dealt delay delta elate label ladle lated table tally telly baldly ballet beadle belled belted elated lately tabled yelled belated belayed bleated eyeball labeled elatedly BELATEDLY

Sudoku

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3X3 box contains the digits 1-9. There's no maths involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



LOTTERY

UK NATIONAL LOTTERY

Saturday December 16



IRISH LOTTO

Saturday December 16



EURO MILLIONS

Tuesday December 12



Friday December 15



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LA PRIMITIVA

Thursday November 14



JOKER: 8 001 577

Saturday December 16



JOKER: 6 940 439

EL GORDO DE LA PRIMITIVA

Sunday December 17



YOUR STARS FOR NEXT 7 DAYS

**AQUARIUS** (January 21 - February 19)

It is difficult to avoid repeating mistakes made in the past. Your approach to certain situations has not changed and therein lies the problem. Someone who blames you for a mistake shows ignorance but that does not make it less upsetting.

**LEO** (July 24 - August 23)

Your attention is needed on more than one front, and some decisions are at odds with your personal thoughts and attitudes. Being reminded that 'business is business' does nothing to relieve your conscience.

**PISCES** (February 20 - March 20)

Who is trying to push you into a corner? Maybe it is being done so subtly that you have not even noticed. Who wants a decision from you? Appear to take pressure lightly and not give in to an irritation. There is some jealousy this week but refuse to be drawn into petty matters..

**VIRGO** (August 24 - September 23)

Are you willing to take a risk on someone who has let you down before? Looking into their recent past is likely to tip the balance. What you find shows clearly if there has been a change of heart on their part or if they are trying to pull the wool over your eyes.

**ARIES** (March 21 - April 20)

A rather slow start to the week leads you to feel bored but be assured that the weekend will be far from dull. A recent conversation or correspondence with an old friend leads to unexpected contact.

**LIBRA** (September 24 - October 23)

A disagreement with a friend upsets you but is short-lived. To avoid such a situation in the future, look at how you should have dealt with it. There is always something to know that guides us to a better position. It will make you smile that someone has taken you for a fool because you have the last laugh.

**TAURUS** (April 21 - May 21)

Everything on the home front is emphasised and there will be a flurry of activity. Get others involved in any changes. Work in the garden or painting is much more enjoyable and half the work if you enlist the help of someone you get on well with.

**SCORPIO** (October 24 - November 22)

A great feeling of joy comes over you more than once in the week ahead. Your inner child has been set free, and this is likely to be because of recent restrictions, which are now lifted. Do not feel guilty about this because it is a choice that will serve you well in the future. Right now, things may seem like a bit of an effort for small reward.

**GEMINI** (May 22 - June 21)

When discussing a holiday with others, be aware that agreement is not always easily met. Although you are not inclined to compromise, it is necessary to go with the majority decision.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 23 - December 21)

Travel arrangements may have to be changed at the last minute. Do not fret, however, because success is more likely later in the month. During a dream, or when reading a book, an idea comes to you. Can this really make a difference to your future? You may need to act quickly to start a new project but progress will require patience.

**CANCER** (June 22 - July 23)

After the 22nd it is much easier to see the path ahead. This is particularly true of a financial situation, so there's no sense in fussing until you understand what needs to be done. Someone who has in the past been unco-operative is more flexible. You wonder at this and try to see an ulterior motive, but it is most likely that they have seen the error of their past actions. Is it possible for you to take them on trust?

**CAPRICORN** (December 22 - January 20)

The need to plan ahead is frustrating when you know exactly what ought to be going on. Patience is something that you need to cultivate, or you risk upsetting someone close. Spending time with a colleague makes you realise how good things could be, but a lot of effort is involved.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

ENGLISH-SPANISH

Across:

- 1 Taste, 4 Screw, 10 Enter, 11 Miracle, 12 Opciones, 13 Cups, 15 Driest, 17 Museum, 19 Crew, 20 Patinaje, 23 Charlar, 24 Event, 25 Odiar, 26 Estar.

Down:

- 2 Attic, 3 Tortoise, 5 Caro, 6 Enchufe, 7 Reloj de cuco, 8 Amber, 9 Pensamiento, 14 Business, 16 Iceland, 18 Carry, 21 Arena, 22 Alba.

CRYPTIC

Across:

- 1 Steward, 5 Topic, 8 Reach, 9 Arizona, 10 Pale ale, 11 Upset, 12 Retire, 14 Tender, 17 Valet, 19 Ironing, 21 Scourge, 22 Hedge, 23 Doses, 24 Solvent.

Down:

- 1 Strip, 2 Epaulet, 3 Ash, 4 Drapes, 5 Tribune, 6 Plots, 7 Chatter, 12 Revised, 13 Retorts, 15 Dwindle, 16 Misers, 18 Lions, 20 Guest, 22 Hal.

QUICK

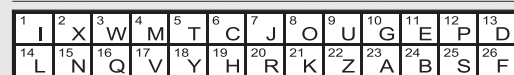
Across:

- 1 Spud, 4 Ache, 7 Miss, 8 Taps, 9 Sue, 10 Wish, 11 Roam, 12 Ohm, 13 Peru, 14 Ajar, 15/6 Set off, 16 Cede, 17 Hide.

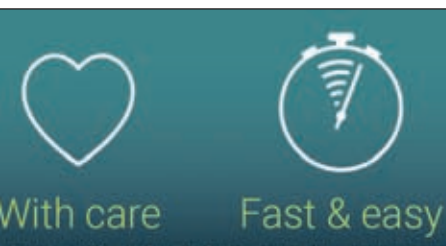
Down:

- 2 Privilege, 3 Dosshouse, 4 Aftermath, 5 Haphazard.

CODE BREAKER



KAKURO



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## So at last a merry Xmas!

**Mike Senker**

*In my opinion*

*Views of a Grumpy Old Man*



'TIS the season to be merry! I don't think so! Certainly not if you are trying to deal with multi-nationals. I'm going to the UK in January. I found a flight with Ryanair for €39 return which is a great price.

Then I go to hire a car. I might have mentioned this before but I have dealt with Hertz since the mid '90s. The best they could offer was £160. I thought that seemed a bit expensive.

I then recalled that Ryanair did car rental so I had a look at their prices and lo and behold they were offering the same car, from the same Hertz location for £55 so I booked it. Everything was the same - insurance, mileage etc.

Done deal you might think. Nah, not Mr Grumpy. I got to thinking that's not right so I tweeted Hertz and asked them how this could be. That's when the fun started. They replied that third parties are cheaper but they often sell cars Hertz don't have in stock.

'Not a good answer,' I replied, and simply said that you should never be able to get

something cheaper from a third party than going direct. I pointed out that most hotels have a price match policy otherwise what's the point joining their loyalty programmes.

Anyway, we to-and-froed for two days and they just kept sprouting some company policy BS saying that I wouldn't get loyalty points and gold member service. I replied, 'stuff your points and I'll wait in line for 10 minutes to save a £100.' I gave up with them and found a live chat option in their contact details so I went there.

Even less joy! They said, 'if you don't like the price, book it somewhere else! It's supply and demand.' They finished with, 'have a nice day and a Merry Christmas.'

Now I was steaming! I'm pretty relentless so I found a number in Oklahoma, called it and spoke to a lady called Terri. I explained the situation and two minutes later she says, 'I can match that - sorry for the inconvenience.' What? It's as simple as that? 'Yes,' she said, 'I don't know why nobody told you to call us in the first place.'

I asked to speak to her supervisor and told her how Terri had kept Hertz a customer so for once there was a happy ending. Oh and Ryanair cancelled my booking no problem so at last a Merry Xmas!

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# Sunscreen still matters

**KEEP SAFE: It's still important to wear sunscreen in winter months.**

AS THE Baz Luhrmann song goes, we all know we should wear sunscreen.

And even though it's not nearly as sunny in Spain as in the summer months, harmful UV rays still pierce clouds, reaching our skin with potentially harmful consequences.

But it's not just enough to remember to wear sun lotion, it also matters how you apply it according to dermatologist Dr Natasha Cook.

Speaking to one publication, Dr Cook explained there are several cardinal sins most of us are guilty of when apply sunscreen, beginning with not applying enough. She explained, "There is an exponential dose-protection level relation, which means if you under-apply by half, you are effectively getting only a quarter of the correct SPF protection," clarifying, "If it's a teaspoon per face and one for each limb - let alone your back - a 100mL bottle will only last you a couple of applications." She also explains we should wait at least 20 minutes after applying before going in the sun.

Next, the dermatologist says we should be applying lotion more frequently, aiming for twice every two hours as these creams are not sweat and water proof even if they are resistant. Dr Cook also warns we should not make the mistake of believing a tan will give us any sun protection, explaining this skin colouration is instead a sign of damage. She explained, "it's a warning your DNA is being damaged and not the signs of a healthy glow."

Lastly, she explains using aerosol sprays or covering up with a t-shirt will probably not give us enough protection, explaining UV rays get through white fabrics while aerosols leave us with a too-thin layer of sunscreen.

Ask The

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Doctor

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## Appendicitis - symptoms vary



**SPECIALIST: Doctor Luis Perez Belmonte.**

**What is the appendix for?**

The appendix is an elongated structure found in the large intestine. Although not a vital structure, it has functions that relate to the immune system and defensive capacity of the body.

**What is appendicitis?**

Appendicitis is an inflammation of the structure which causes it to increase significantly in size and cause a potentially dangerous infection.

**When does it usually happen?**

This is variable and there is no fixed rule. In general, appendicitis occurs when the appendix is obstructed by faecal debris, which is the main reason it becomes inflamed and infected.

**How do you know if someone has appendicitis?**

Appendicitis normally causes acute abdominal pain below the navel on the right-hand side of the

body, alongside discomfort, fever and diarrhoea, although this can vary with symptoms emerging slowly over time.

It can sometimes cause an infection that is transmitted to other parts of the abdomen - known as peritonitis - or even pass to the rest of the body via the blood. The latter scenario is potentially deadly.

Surgery to remove the infected appendix and a course of intravenous antibiotics may then be necessary.

**When should I get medical help?**

If you have pain in the lower right abdomen coupled with some of the above symptoms you should go to the hospital urgently. If appendicitis is suspected they will run a series of blood tests, ultrasound, or even x-rays.

**Is there any way to prevent appendicitis?**

No, there is no clear evidence of any measure which stops appendicitis.

If you have any questions for Dr Perez Belmonte, please send them to:  
[jefemedico@helicopterosanitarios.com](mailto:jefemedico@helicopterosanitarios.com)

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## Chance to see black vultures

FREE guided tours of the Tramuntana's Ternelles estate are now available thanks to an agreement with wealthy owners, the March family.

Tours will be provided by the Fundacio Vida Silvestre (FVSM) which is dedicated to protecting Balearic wildlife, especially native vulture populations.

Tours are limited to just 20 people per day and will be accompanied by a foundation representative and biologist. Visitors will be given binoculars to help spot the rare black vultures who inhabit the area.

They will also have the chance to explore the Castell del Rei finca, which is one of just three rock castles on Mallorca.

Interested people can register for the tour at [www.visitaduiadaternelles.com](http://www.visitaduiadaternelles.com). Cars and animals are not permitted.

# Homecoming Queen Prodigal daughter returns

ONE of Mallorca's most acclaimed stars is returning to the island for a Christmas homecoming gig. Concha Buika, a self-styled nomad and hugely successful singer, is on a worldwide tour.

The Palma-born artist, aged 45, has been based in Miami since 2011. Her music ranges across flamenco, gospel, afrobeat, funk, jazz and soul, paying tribute to her unusual upbringing.

Of African heritage she is the sister of Alaro mayor Guillem Balboa Buika. Their family fled the Equatorial Guinea dictatorship in the 1970's. While Guillem went on to become Mallorca's first black mayor, his sister chose music over politics and made a name for herself in Palma's gritty gypsy bars decades ago.

Since then she has gone on to release nine studio albums. She has a Latin Grammy award and two of her songs were chosen by iconic Spanish film director Pedro Almodovar for his 'La piel que habito' (*The skin I live in*), which starred Antonio Banderas.

Buika sings in Spanish,

English and Italian. She has chosen Palma's Trui Teatre as the location for her first gig on Mallorca in years.

The one-night-only performance takes place tomorrow (Friday) evening at 9pm with tickets available online. The doors open at 8pm and tickets range from €25 to €45 depending on seats.

Buika usually performs with a small band and is also a renowned poet and producer. She has been compared favourably with Nina Simone and Edith Piaf.

**SHE'S BACK:**  
Mallorca's musical icon plays Palma tomorrow.



## Frozen fun

THE Port Adriano ice rink opens tomorrow (Friday) from 11am. Admission and skate rental is free and available for adults and children over four-years-old.

The rink will be open everyday until January 8, usually from 11am until 9pm, but from 12pm to 8pm on Christmas Day and New Year's Eve.

The huge rink is 300

square metres, twice the size of last year's. There is a slide and a separate exhibition rink where professional Spanish and Russian skaters will be performing daredevil tricks and stunts.

There will be Christmas visits for children from Santa and the Three Kings and live music, plenty of food and festive atmosphere for adults.

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## Christmas church

MIDNIGHT mass will be held at La Seu Cathedral on Christmas Eve. The mass is one of Mallorca's best known Christmas traditions and worth witnessing at least once.

It actually begins at 11pm and includes *the Song of the Sibyl*, a Gregorian chant that has been part of Mallorca's spiritual tradition for centuries.

A quieter more intimate ceremony will be held at the Lluç Monastery. *The Song of the Sibyl* will also be performed and the mass begins at 10pm.

Worshippers can also opt for the beach, with mass being offered at the Riu Centre on the Playa de Palma from Christmas Eve through to Boxing Day.

# Super music schedule

## Beating the January blues

A FANTASTIC New Year's programme awaits music fans of all stripes in Palma. Upcoming performances include Pink Floyd and Supertramp tributes, a swing and boogie night, ballet and Portuguese fado.

It's all happening at the Palma Auditorium. Christmas will be put to bed by the Moscow Ballet who are to perform *Swan Lake* on Wednesday January 3 and *The Nutcracker* the following day.

Both shows begin at 8pm and tickets range from €29 to €39.

On Friday January 5, the Alabama Gospel Choir return to Palma for the ninth time to perform spiritual southern classics. The choir comprises 20 artists who will infuse old time gospel tunes with modern funk and blues.

Saturday sees Portuguese fado singer Carla Pires perform songs from her latest album. The show begins at 9pm and tickets for her Lisbon-inspired melodies begin at €30.

On Sunday January 7, British music lovers are in for a treat with a tribute to Supertramp. The two-hour long act has been acclaimed by critics in both the UK and around Europe. The show starts at 7pm and tickets cost €42.

Finally, on Saturday January 13, the definitive Pink Floyd experience arrives in Palma with Think Floyd. This band have been playing the Floyd's classic albums around the world for more than 20 years and are accompanied by a kaleidoscopic laser lights show. Tickets are €42.

**MELODIC:**  
Fado star  
Carla Pires in  
top January  
lineup.



Photo credit Twitter

## Living history

A PHOTO exhibit stretching back deep into Palma's seafaring history is open for another week. The collection from 91-one-year-old Andreu Muntaner can be viewed at the city's Museu Krekovic until next Thursday.

The former geologist has amassed countless photos over the course of his life. They aren't taken by him but have been painstakingly collected over the decades from different resources.

Muntaner has spent serious time analysing the photos, identifying locations and providing context to viewers. They cover the period from 1860 to 1960, when much of Mallorca would be barely recognisable to modern residents.

His exhibition is divided into two parts. Some capture the churches and palaces from above, while others focus on the seafront and port.

The exhibit can be viewed between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday.



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RIOJA may be the most famous national wine region, but Ribera del Duero is no slouch.

A Spanish Denominacion de Origen (DO) located within Castile and León, Ribera del Duero is one of several wine-producing regions along the Duero river where the mainly flat and rocky terrain undulates between 750 and 911 metres above sea level.

The rainfall is moderate with long dry summers and temperatures of up to 40c, followed by harsh winters.

Viticulture arrived in the region with Benedictine monks in the 12th century although wine was produced locally 2,000 years ago.

Ribera del Duero DO wine is derived almost exclusively from red grapes, in particular Tinto Fino (local name for Tempranillo), and often complemented with Cabernet Sauvignon, Mal-



RIBERA DEL DUERO: Intense, long-lived wines.

## Serious fame seeker

### BACCHUS CELLAR

by Lorenzo Barbareschi



bec and Merlot. These well-ageing, full-bodied and deep ruby colour wines with aromas of strawberries, fresh tobacco, leather and often highly oaked are excellent with grilled vegetables and red meats.

Whereas Rioja and Ribera del Duero are distinctive as a result of the different terrains, both regions produce wines selected for long ageing with complex vinification procedures.

These lead to intense, ex-

tremely long-lived wines. The ageing requirements for Ribera del Duero are the same used in Rioja. Wines labelled as Crianza must age two years with 12 months in oak; Reserva for at least three years with at least 12 months in oak while Gran Reserva must spend five years ageing prior to release, including two in oak.

Famous regional producers are Viña Sastre, Vega Sicilia, Bodegas Arzuaga Navarra and Dominio de Pingus, with the British Royal family among customers.

Happy tasting!

# Buy in the sky

## Drones debut in 2018



**SPY CAM:** Drones offer buyers new perspective.

DRONES are set to transform Spain's real estate market. New legislation due to take effect in 2018 will relax tight regulations on their use in urban areas.

That will enable real estate agents and property developers to use aerial cameras to show potential buyers detailed video footage of every angle of the home.

It will also be able to

show the local environment, aspects of neighbouring homes, and drones can even fly inside to film different rooms.

With a bit of technological wizardry companies will be able to generate high definition video montages of each property, even throwing in a soundtrack if it suits the mood.

Legislation has prevented drones taking off properly

until now. They are severely restricted in urban areas, near airports and over crowds.

But they are already being used to help sell industrial buildings and rural properties. Once the rules relax in 2018, residential real estate is the next big

frontier. Drone footage of properties is set to gel

with the growing demand for virtual reality tours of potential homes. Properties which embrace video technology have been proven to outperform homes relying solely on photos when it comes to both sale price and speed of finding a buyer.

## Market red hot

HOME prices took a slight dip but sales volume registered a strong increase. Data from October is now in from the Spanish General Council of Notaries.

It shows that the number of homes sold rose by 15.6 per cent compared to October last year. Prices, however, are 1 per cent lower, which puts October at odds with the rest of the calendar.

There were 43,504 transactions and 10 per cent more mortgages taken out than last year.

The average amount loaned was €127,850, which paid for an average of 75 per cent of mortgage-acquired properties.

With the strong sales figures, October kept alive the promise of 2017's third quarter. There were 121,561 sales from July to September, making it the best quarter since 2008.

In the 12 months from October 2016 to September 2017, 516,643 homes were sold. By contrast, the yearly record, set in 2006, is 916,000 sales.

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Ever heard of Lluçmajor? Nice town in the south eastern part of Mallorca, very well communicated with Palma and offering some of the most interesting coast sites on the island.

### Ref 3117, Vallgornera, 170,000€

Apartment with 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, living room, kitchen, laundry room, large balcony, garage, community pool, aircon  
Living area 73m<sup>2</sup>.



### Ref 3059, La Rapita, 189,000€

Semi-detached house with 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, lounge with American kitchen, garden and roof terrace. 75m<sup>2</sup> living area.



### Ref 3115, Son Bielo, 268,000€

Terraced house near the sea with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room, kitchen, laundry room, private garage, garden, aircon



### Ref 3112, Campos, 1,060,000€

Large finca perfect for keeping horses: main house 4 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, kitchen/diner, garage. Guest house for total reform, large stables, own well, mains electricity. Totally constructed 750m<sup>2</sup>, plot 70,500m<sup>2</sup>



### Ref 3118, Lluçmajor, 106,500€

Apartment in good state of repair, 3rd floor. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, lounge, kitchen, 2 balconies. No lift. Living area 90m<sup>2</sup> plus terraces.



### Ref: 3104, Algaida, 160,000€

Plot with building permission, mains electricity and mains water possible. Nice views.



## Classy cribs on the Costa

ALMOST one in four luxury properties in Spain can be found on the Costa Blanca. A new report from Luxury Estate, which offers 400,000 properties across 120 countries, provides some unique insight into Spain's luxury market.

It notes that Spain has more luxury homes, valued at more than €700,000 and meeting certain aesthetic criteria, than anywhere else in Europe.

There are around 60,000 luxury properties on sale right now across Spain. Twenty two per cent of them can be found on the Costa Blanca. The average price paid for a luxury home in Spain is €3 million. Prices range all the way up to €80 million for the most glamorous estates in Mallorca. The average luxury villa costs €2.1 million.



**LUXURY:** Plush modern villas are hot stuff.

Buyers of luxury properties in Spain unsurprisingly have particular tastes. Seven in 10 want a villa, while just one in 10 are looking for a plush apartment. The rest opt for spectacular countryside retreats.

Newly built homes are favoured and the most in-demand features are a panoramic view, swimming pool and beach access. For those with a little extra to spend, private beaches are highly sought-after.



EASY PEASY: Home buyers have no need for bank queues.

## Men are from Mars...

A POLL of Spanish nationals found that one in three consider buying property in Spain as an entirely risk-free investment. Pollsters from Rastreator also found that the tradition of home ownership, as opposed to renting, remains strongly rooted in Spain.

Women are more likely than men to consider a home a safe investment. But when alone they are the least able to afford it.

Men on the other hand are keen to secure a property to rent out for profit, but also reluctant to be bogged down to one place by buying a home.

Those aged between 55 and 65 considered home purchases an important long term investment. People aged 35 to 44 would buy a property to rent it out, while those aged 18-24 largely saw home ownership as a distant dream.

Less than 30 per cent had no interest in buying a property soon. The vast majority of them said financial reasons were the only obstacle, with only 6 per cent preferring flat hopping from place to place.

# Digital mortgage

A SPANISH bank has launched the country's first mortgage loan available entirely online. The new Bankinter mortgage also doesn't require customers to have accounts or any other business with the bank.

The entire loan process is conducted on a computer, or smart phone, and there is no need to see or even speak with a Bankinter employee or hired mortgage guru.

Clients will only see a notary to sign the contract when it is prepared.

It is offered through Bankinter's digital financial services platform, Coinc.

"The launch of this new mortgage is part of an ecosystem designed to provide a comprehensive solution to all questions associated with the purchase of a home and its financing, without leaving the Co-

inc website," read a statement from the bank.

The initial rate offered on a Coinc mortgage is 0.99 per cent on the first year. This is later revisable against the value of the Euribor, plus 0.99 per cent. There is no bonus system for using other Coinc or Bankinter services to get a mortgage discount.

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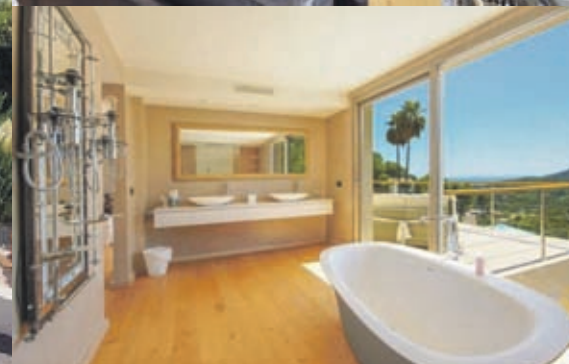
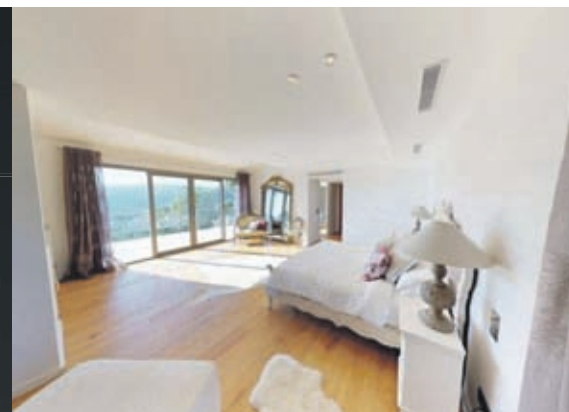
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# Celebrating the festive season with your own decorated garden plants

**GRAEME TYRRELL**

IT is always a challenge to prepare for the festive season with all the available decorations in the market place to complement the way you wish to celebrate the Christmas/New Year season.

If you have pot plants on your balcony, terrace or indoors, you have the opportunity to infuse the festive spirit into your home simply by adding decorations to the plants and pots that you already have.

Just adding some ribbons or decorative paper around the pots gives a new perspective and interest in the plants that you may have been caring for all year.

A sprinkle of glitter and some interesting objects to dangle from the plants that suit your preferences can inspire a new admiration for your plants and provide a festive environment for the home.

Larger plants can have Christmas lights added in proportion to the size of the tree or plant. There are so many different forms of coloured lights available, both solar and mains power, to suit the location of the plants.

If you have a larger tree in your garden, adding lights really does change the ambience of the long, cold, dark winter nights into a brighter display to add the cheer that the festive season can bring.

The traditional Christmas tree is not always suitable for everyone's lifestyle. The type of Christmas tree used to celebrate the festive season varies in different countries according to the species of trees that are available in the region.

The most popular traditional trees are conifer

plants such as fir, spruce and pine but concern for harvesting any of the trees for only a few weeks use has an environmental impact that is well worth considering.

If space in your home is an issue then such large species of Christmas trees can be difficult to accommodate in a flat or apartment. It makes sense to look at local traditions.

In the Mediterranean the nativity scenes with miniature landscapes and figures has a stronger tradition than the Christmas trees which is a tradition that evolved in the more northern regions of Europe.

If you have the time and plants it can be an interesting occupation to create your own miniature landscape no matter how small or large.

To make use of the plants that you have and perhaps obtaining a few additional, traditional plants, such as the poinsettia or other favourites for the creation of a decorative zone on the



Photo by Chris Forsyth flickr

**EXTRAVAGANT:**  
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FREQUENTLY starting in Christmas displays, poinsettias in red or white are a festive favourite when it comes to decorating your home.

But while they may look great for a couple of weeks these pretty plants can often die quickly, however much attention we give them.

Native to Mexico, poinsettias like warm, dry conditions and can thrive in Spain given the right circumstances.

Jamie Downes, Nursery Manager at Wyevale Garden Centres, told one publication the first thing to do is to ensure you get your plant home from the store without allowing it to get cold in your car by leaving it for hours in the shade.

Once home, he advises putting



the poinsettia in a position with good light but not direct sunlight and away from draughts.

Downes says it is important to keep its environment constant, ex-

plaining, “the biggest mistake people make is moving them between hot and cold temperatures too quickly.”

Place the plant on a pebble tray to increase humidity and allow it to dry out before watering thoroughly alongside using a fertiliser once a week.

If the plant does start to wilt though, Downes suggests soaking the root ball in warm water before considering throwing it away as this may revive it.

Prune your poinsettia in March and reduce watering, you should then increase watering in May.

With care, the plant will reach a total height of around 32 centimetres and will turn from green to red in eight weeks.

**POINSETTIA:** Cared for correctly can last beyond Christmas.

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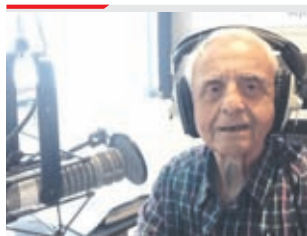
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# Secrets to feeding your dog



**HUNGRY HOUND:** What you feed your dog could impact his behaviour.

DOG foods do vary in quality. So do the companies that make the foods. To some companies quality is only a word. To others, it's a way of life.

Ultimately, the quality of a dog food is best measured by your dog. How your dog performs on the food, how he looks, feels and acts are the best measures of the quality of any food. At least 80 per cent of my clients that report behavioural problems find that a change of food changes the unwanted behaviour.

No matter what a food company claims, unless your dog has bright eyes, silky hair and supple skin, and is not overweight, then the food is not

right for him.

Not all dogs do well on a particular brand of food some dogs simply do better than others.

Most foods are categorised as economy, regular, premium, super premium and performance. Regular and premi-

um foods are not formulated like a super premium or performance food.

Dogs have simple stomachs and short digestive tracts for digesting meat. They also lack the saliva enzyme amylase, which is necessary for pre-digesting starch. Dogs have adapted to

foods with high vegetable protein levels, however they perform better when fed foods high in meat protein and animal fats.

Checking the label of a super premium or performance food, an animal protein will be listed as the first or sec-

ond major ingredient. These should include chicken, turkey meat, or poultry.

A least two sources of fat or oil should be included for adequate energy, as well as carbohydrates. Simple carbohydrates in dog food come from quality sources like rice, oatmeal, corn or wheat. These are easily digested when properly cooked.

Fibre, a complex carbohydrate is essential for proper digestion and stool formation. Beetroot and tomatoes are both high in fibre.

Vitamin and mineral fortification is an absolute necessity in nutritionally balancing any food for dogs. While the vitamins and minerals generally make up less than 2 per cent of the total food by weight, they provide some of the most crucial nutrients. These include 12 to 16 vitamins and 15 to 25 minerals. Super premium usually features more than one source for each vitamin and mineral. The ingredient list will be longer compared to non-premium foods.

It is not recommended that you add anything by way of a food supplement or vitamin to super premium foods.

## Festive ideas for furry ones

WHILE your pets may not understand why a big tree appears in the living room every December or why the same cheesy songs play on repeat for days on end, they can still get swept up in the excitement of Christmas nonetheless.

There's no better way to get animals involved than treating them like any other member of the family and spoiling them rotten.

The popularity of Christmas presents for pets has increased tenfold in recent years. From dog cologne to advent calendars for animals, the list is seemingly endless.

Perhaps the most unusual new offering on the shelves, however, is Pawsecco, pro-secco especially for cats and dogs.

While the fizz is non-alcoholic, it would certainly add an extra sparkle to festivities.

The special bubbly is made with elderflower, linden blossom and ginseng and can be poured over their food, or in a bowl on its own.



Credit: Be That Dog/Twitter

**FIZZTASTIC:** Add some sparkle to your pet's Christmas this year.

If your pet isn't really into wine, Woof and Brew (the company behind Pawsecco) also has a 'beer' for dogs on offer called Bottom Sniffer.

Some other good gift ideas for pets include special seat harnesses so your dog can travel safely in the car, an animal selfie stick or even an elf costume, which may not be much fun for your pooch but will provide you with hours of entertainment.

Whatever you choose, make sure the toy is suited to the size of your dog or cat and doesn't contain any parts that could cause harm if swallowed.



**HOUSESITMATCH:** Enjoy the festivities.

## Happy holidays from Housesitmatch!

FROM all of us at HouseSitMatch to all of you, we wish you a very merry holiday season!

At this time of year, we love to reflect on all the wonderful friends we have made through our special relationship with the Euro

Weekly News and David the Dogman (our hero and inspiration!).

We especially want to send a huge thank you to all of the readers of this column, and our customers in Spain who have helped to make this a very

special year for us.

We look forward to helping you again in 2018!

Our very best wishes of the season from Lamia, Wendy, David, Alex and Deborah the HouseSitMatch team.

Register as either house-sitter or homeowner now with a special holiday offer of 50 per cent off introductory offer using coupon code SPECIAL50.

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Becky, Jessica, John, Stephanie.

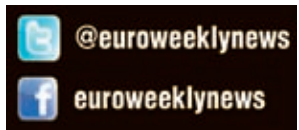
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# Santa Claus all at sea

THERE were dramatic scenes at Porthcawl Marina in the UK last Saturday evening when hundreds of children gathered to see Santa do a practice fly over of the town.

Unfortunately he fell from his sleigh just as his reindeer turned sharply when passing the lighthouse.

Porthcawl lifeboat volunteers were alerted to reports of Santa's accident and within minutes the Atlantic 85, Rose of the Shires was launched in darkness to search for Santa.

The local Coastguard Unit arrived on scene to assist in the search around the harbour area. Fortunately Santa was found clinging to the 'green marker pole' at the entrance to the harbour area and was quickly brought aboard the lifeboat.

Unhurt following his accident, he showed his magical talents by taking the helm and steering the lifeboat into the marina where the crew helped him onto one of the pontoons. He then stood admiring all the boats that had Christmas lights, each one helping to guide him around when he comes back to Porthcawl with his



Porthcawl Coastguards Facebook

## Santa and Mrs Clause with Porthcawl Coastguards.

sleigh loaded with presents.

From the marina he walked to the lifeboat station where Mrs Clause was waiting to see him. They both then wel-

comed the children who had waited to see Santa and his reindeer fly over Porthcawl and promised to be back on Christmas morning.

## Pollution test in Sotogrande



Marinas de Andalucía

### The successful operation in Sotogrande.

MARINAS across Spain are very aware of the dangers of pollution caused by spills and the Puerto de Sotogrande has carried out a simulated operation to test readiness.

A German company Soul Oil Free which specialises in this sort of problem was brought in to undertake the operation and an area of 25 square metres in the marina was cordoned off to allow for the check to take place.

During the day, all of those who would be involved in a real life emergency including the marina control tower, port captain, maritime rescue and local council were present and the result showed that Sotogrande is not only ready but able to deal with any such a catastrophe.

## GC32 World Championship

NOW that the GC32 class has received World Sailing recognition it has announced that its first World Championship will take place in Riva del Garda, Italy in May next year.

This will see the fleets of the GC32 Racing Tour and Extreme Sailing Series competing on the same race track and will be the pinnacle event in the GC32 season.

Venues on the GC32 Racing Tour are chosen to provide optimum conditions to go foiling for the maximum amount of time,

while providing teams with an enjoyable experience both on and off the water.

At each, the GC32 Racing Tour brings in its own professional race management team, including race officials, international umpires and safety personnel. Typically up to five races per day are sailed on windward-leeward courses.

So far the only two other venues announced are Villasímus, Sardinia in June and Palma de Mallorca in August which sees the teams competing for the 37th Copa del Rey.



Jen Edney/Volvo Ocean Race

Onboard  
MAPFRE.

## Two yachts battle it out for lead in Ocean Race

BY day 11 of the third leg of the Volvo Ocean Race, the Spanish yacht MAPFRE had caught and passed temporary leader Dongfeng.

Thanks to some strong winds and sensible steering, Spanish skipper Xabi Fernan-

dez kept close to the leader knowing that there were still more than 1,600 nautical miles to the finish at Melbourne.

"The last hours have been very good for us, a front has passed and although we

were about 10 miles behind the Dongfeng we have been able to jibe a little before and shorten the route a bit, now we have them in our stern about seven miles and happy be in front," Fernandez explained over the

yacht's radio.

He had taken 10 days of patient pursuit before he had managed to overtake the leader and the forecast now is for favourable winds and a fast journey time to the finish line.



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**Clarkson  
Quote of the Week**

“You can't have this car with diesel. It's like saying 'I won't go to Stringfellows tonight, I'll get my mum to give me a lap dance instead'.”  
Some might say...



## Swede success

JAPAN has declared the Volvo XC60 its official 2018 Car of the Year. It is the first time in the 38 year history of the contest that the Swedish brand has scooped one of the most prestigious awards in the Far East.

In a tight decision from 60 motoring experts, Volvo edged the BMW 5 Series and Toyota Camry into second and third place respectively.

Toyota performed well in other awards, with the Prius PHEV winning Best Innovation, and the Prius being celebrated for selling its 10 millionth model.

Other cars in the Japanese top 10 included the Suzuki Swift, Honda N-Box, and Lexus LC. The Volvo XC60 is also in the running for the 2018 World Car of the Year award.

# Hall of Fame

## Choose your racing icon

TWELVE motorcycle legends have been shortlisted for inclusion in the Motor Sport Hall of Fame. Voting is now open to the general public which one among them is next to be immortalised in motoring lore.

It is the seventh year the Hall of Fame has been running a public vote on inductees. The 2018 winner will join the likes of Valentino Rossi, John Surtees, and Barry Sheene.

The nominees include Casey Stoner, the Australian racer with two world titles to his name with Ducati and Honda.

Icon from the 1960's and 1970's Mike Hailwood MBE is in the running. He won nine Grand Prix championships.

Fellow Brit Geoff Duke who won six Isle of Man TT races and was famed for his one-piece race suits is up in 2018, as is Honda founder and Japanese icon Soichiro Honda.

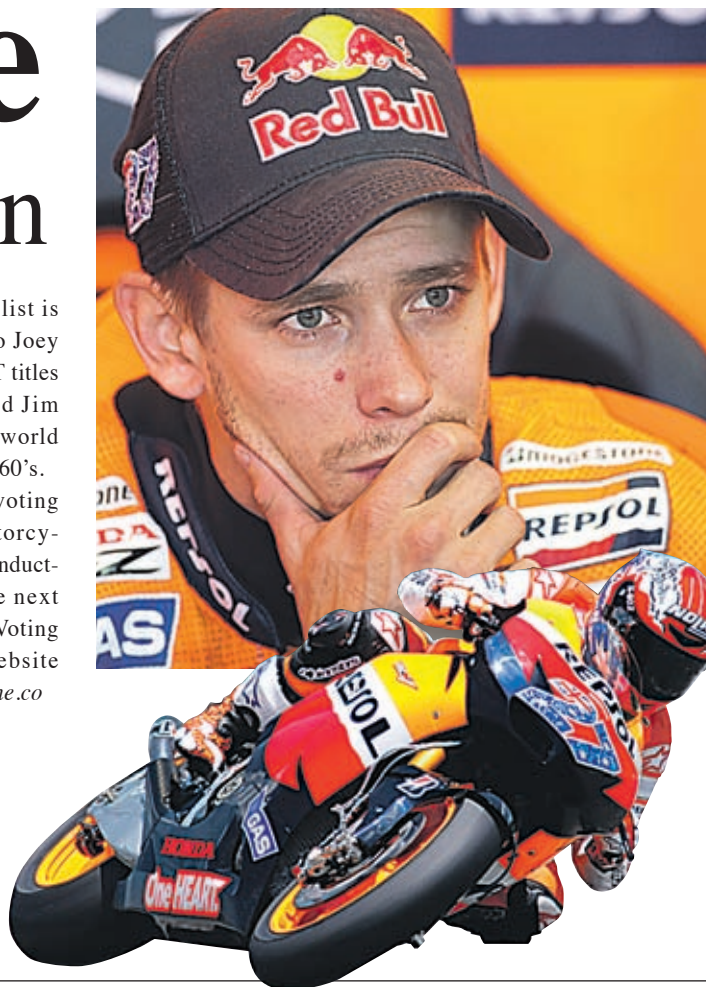
Americans, 500cc champion Kevin Schwantz, triple winner Wayne Rainey, Kenny Roberts, and Fast Freddie Spencer who made by history by winning both the 250cc and 500cc races in 1985 are on the list. They are joined by fellow American Eddie Lawson, who has four world championships in the 500cc category to his name.

He is bettered by Australian Mick Doohan, who won five consecutive titles in the

1990s. The rest of the list is made up by British duo Joey Dunlop, who won 26 TT titles in a historic reign, and Jim Redman, who won six world championships in the 1960's.

Those interested in voting for which of their motorcycle heroes should be inducted to the Hall of Fame next year can do so online. Voting is open through the website [www.motorsportmagazine.com](http://www.motorsportmagazine.com).

**VOTE: Stoner is most recent racer of Hall of Fame list.**



**ROAD TEST** by Nick Fletcher

# Honda Jazz SE

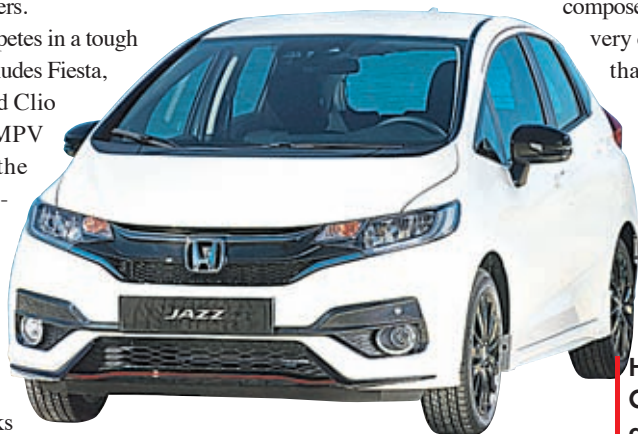
WHEN Honda created the current Jazz model, it aimed to make it much more appealing to younger buyers while retaining the loyalty of its older customers - and its designers have achieved this.

The Jazz now has smoother, more youthful styling, more connectivity features and more personalisation options, all of which should help lower the age profile of its buyers.

The Jazz competes in a tough sector which includes Fiesta, Corsa, Polo, and Clio but the micro-MPV character of the Jazz gives it specific appeal - its cabin is more spacious than most and its easy-move 'Magic Seats' score it top marks

for day-to-day practicality.

Prices start at €16,009 (£14,115) for an S version but my test model, the better-equipped SE, is the popular choice, featuring cruise control, auto lights and wipers, alloy wheels, touchscreen infotainment, parking sensors, DAB radio, Bluetooth and connectivity on its kit-list. It costs €17,708 (£15,615).



**HONDA JAZZ:**  
Offers a smooth civilised drive.

The Jazz uses a 1.3 litre 101 hp petrol engine with standard six-speed manual gearbox (a CVT auto version is available). The 0-100 kph time is a modest 11.5 seconds, top speed is 190 kph (118 mph).

Fuel economy is very respectable at 19.6 kpl (55.4 mpg).

Underway, the Jazz offers a smooth civilised drive, with composed handling and a very comfortable ride thanks to a revised suspension set-up. It is nimble in traffic and when parking, and has good all-round visibility.

Inside, the dashboard is logically laid out, with a centre touch-screen which is easy to operate and quick to respond.

Seating is supportive and there is good headroom even in the rear. The large boot capacity - 354 litres - can be enlarged to a massive 1,314 litres with drop-down rear seats which form a flat load floor.

Such space and practicality are ace cards for the Jazz, which also benefits from Honda's outstanding record for reliability.

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PREMIER LEAGUE run-away leaders Manchester City are looking to pick up another three points against The Cherries of Bournemouth this weekend.

"People say the way we played in Barcelona, it is not possible in England," said City gaffer Pep Guardiola, in charge at Barcelona during 2008-12.

"It is possible. Always it is possible to play football, to keep the ball and to have the courage to play in England," said Guardiola.

On Saturday Everton meet Chelsea, Burnley host Spurs, Manchester United travel to Leicester, Brighton host Watford, Southampton host Huddersfield, Stoke host West Brom and Crystal Palace travel to Swansea.

Arsenal host Liverpool tomorrow (Friday) at The Emirates Stadium.

## Burnley to KO United on Boxing Day

BURNLEY are out to KO Manchester United at Old Trafford on Boxing Day - with the minnows punching above their weight - in the Premier League.

"It's not easy to win games in the Premier League," said Clarets manager Sean Dyche, who took Burnley into fourth

# Pep's Cherry pick



## UK SPORTSCENE

with Andrew Atkinson

place this month.

"We're written off every year - we're used to that - so when you do have such a strong start people will find surprise in that," said Dyche.

Dyche, 46, who took charge at Turf Moor in 2012, led Burnley to the Premier League in 2013, and after relegation, returned to the top flight in the 2015-16 season.

"I think we're in a very healthy position, probably more so than I thought," said Dyche.

Underfire Mark Hughes takes his Stoke side to Huddersfield, in what can be described as a 'six-pointer': "When teams get beat a manager will come under pressure," said Hughes.

"When you win, the pressure goes away. That's the reality," said ex-Wales, Blackburn, Manchester City, Fulham and QPR boss Hughes, 54, at Stoke since 2013.

Cold turkey is on the menu this Christmas for Manchester United players and staff, after boss Jose

Mourinho told them of a training session on Christmas Day!

With games against Leicester on December 23; Burnley on December 26 and Southampton on December 30, Mourinho doesn't think the festive schedule is fair.

Mourinho points the finger at Arsenal's fixture list, saying: "I wish them a Happy Christmas - they are going to have a Christmas - while others play December 23-26."

Arsenal play Liverpool on December 22 and Crystal Palace on December 28. Manchester City play Bournemouth on December 23 and Newcastle on December 27.

Boxing Day fixtures: Spurs v Southampton, Watford v Leicester, Manchester United v Burnley, Huddersfield v Stoke, West Brom v Everton, Chelsea v Brighton, Bournemouth v West Ham and Liverpool v Swansea. Newcastle v Manchester City (December 27).



ON THE MARCH: Pep Guardiola and Manchester City.

## Party poopers

CHRISTMAS parties have hit the headlines, one being Spurs when managed by Harry Redknapp, who banned players from having a Christmas party in 2009.

Spurs players drummed up a Christmas party collection, allegedly paying £2,000 each, and hired a private jet for an all-day Christmas booze-filled 'bender' in Dublin.

Sir Alex Ferguson was left fuming, after his Manchester United players arranged a Christmas party in a hotel, with an alleged plethora of women invited in a 15-hour drinking binge.

## Football stocking fillers

IN 1957 a full schedule of 38 matches were played on December 25. The final English league match played on Christmas Day was Blackpool against Blackburn Rovers in 1965.

## Champions League

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE draw last 16: Juventus v Tottenham; Basel v Manchester City; FC Porto v Liverpool; Sevilla v Manchester United; Real Madrid v

PSG; Shakhtar Donetsk v Roma; Chelsea v Barcelona; Bayern Munich v Besiktas.

## RACING: King George VI Christmas cracker

MIGHT BITE, Thistlecrack and Sizing John are set to go head-to-head in the King George VI chase over three miles ½ furlong at Kempton on Boxing Day.

"We'll try and win the King George," said Might Bite trainer Nicky Henderson.

Thistlecrack, winner of the King George in 2016, returned at Newbury this month after suffering a tendon injury.

"Before the race at Newbury he did look as though he was burly. He's a big, heavy horse and needed the run," said trainer Colin Tizzard.

Sizing John's options remain open, with the March Cheltenham Festival in mind, having been backed down to 4-1 in the King George, with Might Bite best priced at 7-4.

"Sizing John has all the qualities for the King George - loads of speed, stays and gears - stamina in abundance," said jockey Robbie Power.

# Rafa awaits transfer purse as Newcastle takeover talks continue

## SPORTSCENE SPAIN

with Andrew Atkinson

MADRID-born Rafa Benitez is facing Christmas as manager of struggling Newcastle United as takeover talks with Magpies' owner Mike Ashley continue.

"I need to know how much money we will have for January as soon as possible, we have to improve the team," said Benitez, ahead of the January transfer window.

Benitez, the only manager in history to have won the UEFA Europa League, UEFA Super Cup, UEFA Champions League and the FIFA Club World Cup, was always cautious about results this season.

Former Liverpool and Real Madrid manager Benitez, 57, bounced straight back into the Premier League following relegation last season.

Newcastle are facing relegation again



WAITING GAME: Rafa Benitez.

after a woeful season, and Benitez rued: "I said it could be like this."

Ex-Real Valladolid, Osasuna, Valencia, Inter Milan, Chelsea and Napoli boss Benitez, who left Napoli to coach Real Madrid in 2015, joined Newcastle United in 2016.

Having failed in his attempt to save Newcastle from relegation, Benitez remained loyal, taking the club back into the Premier League, when winning the Championship last season.

Ashley who invested £134.4m in buying Newcastle a decade ago and has since put

£129m into the club, reportedly turned down Amanda Staveley and PCP Capital Partners Ltd's initial formal offer of nearly £300m.

PCP Capital Partners has access to around £28bn of Middle Eastern wealth.

A facilitator of football takeovers Staveley helped broker the agreement, which saw Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan take control of Manchester City in 2009.

Benitez who has met Newcastle managing director Lee Charnley to discuss the transfer budget, said: "We're monitoring and talking to players."

Newcastle play West Ham on December 23; Manchester City on December 27; Brighton on December 30 and Stoke on New Year's Day, fixtures deemed crucial.

"I can only concentrate on preparing the team. We know what we need, can we get that? I don't know," said Benitez, linked to signing Liverpool's Danny Ings and Manchester United's Luke Shaw on loan.

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