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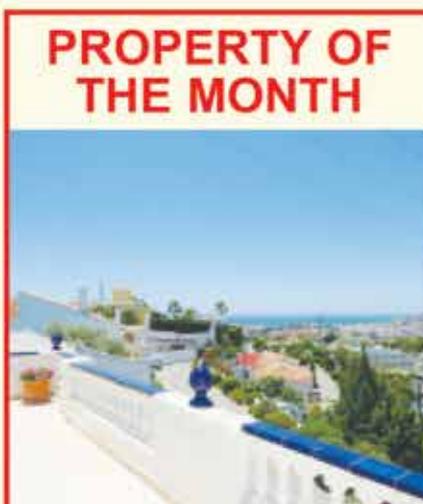
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### URB NARICHA

*Beautiful sunny villa with 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Surrounded by spacious terraces with stunning views. Private garage and storage. Communal pool and gardens.*

**Price: €335,000**  
Ref: CN48601



### CAPISTRANO VILLAGE

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**Price: €790,000**  
Ref: CN48656



### FRIGILIANA ROAD

Property with 2 separate cottages partly renovated and one bunk house. Very well kept gardens, private pool, sea and mountain views. 5 mins drive to Nerja centre.

**Price: €495,000**  
Ref: CN48426



### URB NARICHA

Villa with two separate 2 bedroom apartments. Private pool, terraces with sea views and lovely gardens. Parking Communal pool. Walking distance to the centre.

**Price: €395,000**  
Ref: CN48620



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4BR Apartment completely renovated with a private 80m2 sunny roof terrace. Located in the centre of Nerja surrounded of all amenities.

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## Townhouse of the month

**Torrox**

**Price: €149,000**

**TTH495**



style balcony. This leaving room used to be a double bedroom and can be turned into it again without any problem. The double bedroom gives access to a laundry area and up to a lovely terrace divided into various levels and mostly laid out in the style of a typical Andalusian patio.

This is a lovely property with a special care for detail, in a nice traditional rustic and original way. It's a very enjoyable home for all year round.



This pretty village house is situated in a quiet street but with car access, and in the most original and ancient part of the enchanting white village of Torrox, near the lovely village square and the old church.

This beautiful town house has been attractively refurbished respecting the old rustic style of a traditional Andalusian home. A nice staircase leads up to the second floor with a very spacious second living room with nice wooden beams and its own Juliet



**Cómputa:**

**Price: 430.000€**



- Living space: 159m<sup>2</sup>
  - Bedrooms: 3
  - Pool: Yes
  - Garage: No
  - Terrace: Yes
  - Bathrooms: 3
  - Views: Sea views
  - Area: Countryside
- Ref. CP152**

**Arenas:**

**Price: 850.000€**



- Living space: 450m<sup>2</sup>
  - Bedrooms: 4
  - Pool: Yes
  - Garage: Yes
  - Terrace: Yes
  - Bathrooms: 5
  - Views: Sea views
  - Area: Countryside
- Ref. CP509**

**Cómputa:**

**Price: 175.000€**



- Living space: 34m<sup>2</sup>
  - Bedrooms: 2
  - Pool: Yes
  - Garage: No
  - Terrace: Yes
  - Bathrooms: 1
  - Views: Mountains
  - Area: Country Side
- Ref. CP510**

**Torrox:**

**Price: 469.000€**



- Living space: 143m<sup>2</sup>
  - Bedrooms: 3
  - Pool: Yes
  - Plot: 758m<sup>2</sup>
  - Terrace: Yes
  - Bathrooms: 1
  - Views: Sea views
  - Area: Countryside
- Ref. TCP156**

**Canillas de Albaida: Price: 135.000€**



- Living space: 80m<sup>2</sup>
  - Bedrooms: 2
  - Pool: No
  - Garage: No
  - Terrace: Yes
  - Bathrooms: 2
  - Views: Sea views
  - Area: Village
- Ref. TH992**

**Torrox:**

**Price: 129.000€**



- Living space: 45m<sup>2</sup>
  - Bedrooms: 2
  - Pool: No
  - Garage: No
  - Terrace: Yes
  - Bathrooms: 1
  - Views: Mountains
  - Area: Village
- Ref. TTH491**

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*'Merry Christmas to everyone!'*  
From everyone at Streetwise



# OPINION...

EVERY WEEK BRINGS fresh proof of what a bunch of bourgeois snobs Extinction Rebellion are. The latest exhibit is their blockading of Amazon's main distribution centres. The eco-loons and their apologists are dressing this up as a principled stand against venal capitalism. Pull the other one. This is just a noisy middle-class moan about the greedy masses and all the 'crap' we were planning to buy on Black Friday. Yes, not content with irritating deliverymen, builders and other productive members of the working classes by plonking themselves on the M25 and other major roads a few weeks ago, now XR is trying to stop us from getting the things we've ordered off Amazon. First they stop people from getting to work, then they try to dictate what we're allowed to spend our hard-earned wages on. Anyone else getting the impression that they just don't like the masses very much?

XR activists have swarmed on 13 Amazon sites across the UK, including the largest Amazon distribution centre, in Fife. They're locking themselves to the gates so that those evil Amazon delivery trucks full of the tat that the brainwashed throng have bought won't be able to get out.

It's no coincidence that they've done this on Black Friday, the start of the Christmas shopping season and a day when there are loads of bargains to be had. Nothing horrifies the self-righteous middle classes more than frenzies of consumerism. XR is determined to punish us for our brainless bargain-hunting by delaying our deliveries. This will, of course, do precisely nothing for the environment, but it will cause annoyance to hard-working people, which seems to be XR's chief aim these days.

The least convincing claim being made by XR today is that it is targeting Amazon partly to draw attention to its exploitation of its workforce. Do they think we were born yesterday? You could raise awareness about the tough conditions and poor pay of Amazon staff any day of the year. All year round, in fact. But XR specifically chose Black Friday. That's because its true target is consumerism, not working conditions. Its concern is with the stuff-loving masses, not the toil of Amazon workers. It couldn't give a monkeys about how things are done inside Amazon's distribution centres - it just wants to make sure that nothing leaves and lands on the doorstep of the consumption-addicted plebs.

Anti-consumerism is rife in the upper middle classes. It's one of the ironies of the 21st century - the better-off signal their virtue by refusing to spend their money on so much 'stuff'. So Carrie Johnson gets eco brownie points for renting clothes rather than buying them. Posh leftists declare to anyone who will listen that they refuse to buy anything from monstrous Amazon. The right-on go to small food markets rather than garish mass supermarkets.

The rich once signalled their superiority over the rest of us through consumption, by being extravagant, even decadent. In more recent decades, in an extraordinary about-turn,

they've started doing the opposite. Now it is apparently their ability to resist the lure of consumerism, to avoid the trap of endless buying, that makes them better than us. Better than the Essex boys who flash their expensive watches and the young working-class women who save up for months to get a pair of Jimmy Choos (*which they'll keep forever - sorry, Carrie*).

Anti-consumerism is snobbery masquerading as radicalism. And that just about sums up XR. These eco-muppets occasionally don the garb of anti-capitalism and flirt with radical lingo. But strip that all away and you'll find well-educated, often well-off people who are hell-bent on stopping the rest of us, the little people, from driving so much, flying so much and buying so much.

Extinction Rebellion is fundamentally a movement for austerity. No wonder it is unpopular. We like our holidays, we like our comforts and we like our Black Friday bargains, so bugger off.

**THERE COMES A point when after sitting for a long period of time in one position, certain parts of your anatomy stiffen and become painful. As someone who has moderate opinions, and has been sitting on a political fence for many years (no laughing) I now find myself ailing, and so, with absolutely no wish to be indelicate, I have decided to take my painful rear end, to pastures anew.**

Not for the first time, sat in this seat, have I been referred to as a 'royal pain in the arse', well, it would be fair to say that I've now come to realise that very truth I'm going to take my old white privileged self off into the sunset and make room for a fresh bright young thing, bursting with ideas and energy. (*god help you all!*)

I don't use the word privileged lightly, in some quarters it's considered akin to murder or worse, but I consider myself to be privileged, privileged to be British, privileged to be the son of parents who loved and encouraged us to learn, privileged to have worked and contributed all my working life and privileged to have served our local community here in Spain for some twenty odd years.

Along the way, it has been my absolute pleasure to meet most of our advertisers, and a great many of our readers, and I have continually amazed at the plethora of hard working, decent, caring and fun loving people I have met here in Spain, I love you all!

So in the words of the great Oscar & Hammerstein song, sung so beautifully by the Von Trapp family...

*...So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye  
I leave and heave a sigh and say goodbye, Goodbye!!*

*It only remains for me to wish you all, readers, contributors and of course our wonderful advertisers who have been battered from every side these last years, a happy and peaceful Christmas. Let's hope for all our sakes that next year will bring with it the promise of a better time for us all!*

**Welcome to December 2021, welcome to Streetwise Magazine**

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**Price: €235.000 Ref: NV.NO21A**

Nerja Villas wish everybody,  
a Merry Christmas and very  
healthy, peaceful and happy  
2022.



Ample Town house in Maro's main street (Calle Real), very close to the square. It is in acceptable condition, and it has many possibilities due to its size. Currently it has 5 bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, 3 patios, ample terrace, mountain views. Possibility to build a roof terrace, to offer sea views.

**Price: €318.000 Ref: NV.MARO19**



Charming apartment at El Capistrano Village, comprises of spacious living-room with fireplace, fitted kitchen, bathroom, double size bedroom, lovely patio-garden with sun most of the day. Located within 1 minute walk to the swimming pools Great rental potential !

**Price: €150.000 Ref: NV.PO59**



Beautiful apartment (90m<sup>2</sup>) in Órgiva, Capital of the Alpujarras, just 30 minutes from Tírevez and Motril.

90m<sup>2</sup> built, very central, with beautiful views to the church and the mountains. Comprising 3 bedrooms, lounge/dining room, kitchen, bathroom and terrace.

**Price: €130.000 Ref: NV.ORG2**



Detached villa on 3 floors, 150m<sup>2</sup> built, in El Capistrano. Ground, patio-parking area, terrace, lovely private pool, lounge-dining room, fitted kitchen. First, 2 bedrooms with built-in wardrobes, 2 bathrooms, access to a solarium with a beautiful sea and mountains views. Basement, ample lounge-dining room, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom with built-in wardrobes.

**Price: €477.900 Ref: NV.CARP**



Lovely apartment in El Capistrano Village. Comprising: **Ground floor**, lounge, separate dining room, independent fitted kitchen, toilet, ample terrace, leading to a beautiful private garden, with access to the **Basement** with bedroom, bathroom, and a storage room. **First floor**, accessed from the living room area, comprising 2 bedrooms, with built-in wardrobes, 2 bathrooms, terrace with sea views.

**Price: €375.000 Ref: NV.RO104**



Luxury detached villa (2 x self-contained dwellings), in Capistrano Village, with private pool and communal pools, consisting of 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2 spacious outdoor & 1 indoor terrace, with sea views and BBQ area, private car garage, 2 living-dining rooms, 2 equipped kitchens, lovely private garden.

**Price: €790.000 Ref: NV.CO02**



Lovely apartment in El Capistrano Village. Comprising, private garden, terrace, south facing with sun all day, lounge/diner, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom with fitted wardrobes. Facilities include pools, restaurants, garden areas. Huge rental potential.

**Price: €169.000 Ref: NV.PO39**



Magnificent studio-apartment, within the popular "El Capistrano village". It comprises of: Full equipped kitchen, bathroom, good size living-bedroom, great outside space, with a sensational south facing terrace, with amazing sea views, and sun most of the day. Good rental potential!

**Price: €155.000 Ref: NV.PO19**



New houses on El Capistrano. Ground; ample terrace, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, cloakroom. Upstairs; spacious, bright lounge-dining room, open plan kitchen, terrace with partial sea views, bedroom, bathroom. Amazing roof terrace with private pool and 360° of stunning sea and mountains views.

**Prices from: €349.000 - €395.000 Ref: NV.BLOQ-JES**



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**Price: €160.000 Ref: NV.PO70A**

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# In Spain, luxury tourism proves resistant to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic

*Hotel occupancy rates, air taxi services and private yacht rentals continue to post excellent figures and industry leaders expect next summer to be even better*

**PRIVATE VILLAS WITH all the services of a hotel. Luxury suites in the most desirable locations. Swimming pools with fantastic views. Nights spent inside comfortable yachts moored near a beach. In Spain, the kind of exclusive tourism that only the wealthiest can afford has not been significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic: this past summer the sector returned to 2019 figures, and in some cases improved on them.**

General tourism statistics do not clearly reflect this evolution, partly because they measure aggregate arrivals and expenditure. But there are a few clues: there were 44,114 private jet and air taxi flights during July, August and September of this year, up 20% from the same period in 2019. And these flights carried 90,929 passengers, a 14% rise from 2019, according to Aena, the Spanish airport authority.

Pablo Carrington, a founding partner and CEO of Marugal, a hotel management firm that runs seven luxury establishments in Spain where rooms range from €400 to €3,500 a night, points to the Balearic Islands as an increasingly popular destination for upscale tourism.

"This summer has been excellent there. Compared with 2019, occupancy rates and prices have been somewhat higher," he says, while cautioning that "this has been an atypical year because Europeans have not taken long-range trips. There's been a lot of borrowed tourism."

Figures from Aena show a noticeable increase in luxury tourist arrivals, which are unaffected by special offers – on the contrary, these visitors either have their own planes or they can afford to rent one for themselves. And statistics show that these flights have landed overwhelmingly on the Balearic islands of Ibiza and Mallorca, as well as in Málaga and the wider Costa del Sol. Even last year, in the middle of the pandemic, these flights did not dip significantly, underscoring how even the coronavirus has been unable to make a dent in a small but strong sector in Spain.

In terms of passengers, there was a 20% fall in the numbers that arrived on private flights and air taxi services in Ibiza in the summer of 2020, but this year the figure surged 12.5% above pre-pandemic levels. It is a similar story in Málaga, where passenger numbers fell 26.5% in the summer of 2020 but rallied back by as much as 40% this year.

But the clearest case is Palma de Mallorca: the dip last summer was barely noticeable, just 0.34%, and this year there has been a nearly 62% increase, from 10,396 passengers up to 16,820 this year.



Meanwhile, the retail sector that caters to high-end visitors has also felt the improvement. Although luxury tourism represents a small portion of total visitor numbers, it pumps the most revenue into local economies. According to the travel advisor site Virtuoso, which brings together elite travel agencies, these tourists spend an average of \$20,000 per trip and household.

"Marbella is where we've seen the most relevant uptick in sales in luxury areas. As a matter of fact, the summer season has been extended there, hotel prices have gone up and it's now a hot destination," says Javier Fernández Andrino, director of the international and luxury client area at El Corte Inglés, Spain's leading department store chain. But there is still work to be done, he notes: "Spain's goal should be to promote itself better at home. It needs to show off the best version of national destinations."

Other hotel chains specializing in the luxury sector agree that figures are improving and that 2022 will likely be even better. A spokesperson for Paladium, which operates brands such as Bless and Ushuaïa Ibiza, says they exceeded their own occupancy forecast this summer, and that in some hotels there were more guests this year than in pre-pandemic years.

A similar view is held at the hotel chain Meliá, which has luxury hotels in Marbella and the Balearic Islands. "It's been a very good summer, with double-digit growth of room rates at luxury hotels," says Alfonso del Poyo, vice-president of Meliá in Spain.

"In Palma, the luxury sector has been a success," adds Natalia Seoane, director general of Hotel de Mar Gran Meliá. "Although occupancy rates have not been as high as other years, we've managed to offset that with higher average room prices that were 25% more expensive than in 2019 due to the extremely high demand for our top rooms and suites."

The situation is not quite as rosy in the Canary Islands, where industry sources point to two factors: not being as well positioned within the luxury sector and the fact that the high season starts at the end of the year due to the climate conditions of this archipelago located off the northwestern coast of Africa. One example is the Royal River complex, which offers individual villas with hotel services and priced at anywhere between €300 and €3,000 a night. "This summer we were at 75% of pre-pandemic levels, but over the winter months we expect to see this rise to 85%," says José Fernando Cabrera, president of Grupo Golf Resort, which is part of Royal River.

## Yacht fever

This trend is not unique to Spain or to the hotel and retail sectors. Other parts of Spain have experienced even bigger jumps in luxury tourism expenditure. Alejandro Reynal, CEO of travel management company Apple Leisure Group, says the pandemic has driven up demand for more sophisticated vacations across the world. "In the Caribbean region, we've been seeing exponential growth in high-end trips since June," he says. Another visible effect of the boom in luxury tourism is the spike in private yacht rentals. The trend was on display this past summer everywhere along the Mediterranean coastline, as companies rented out all their available vessels for weeks at a time despite prices that are off limits to regular tourists.

In Spain, this particular trend has been especially noticeable in the Balearics and Costa del Sol, with similar figures reported in other countries such as Italy, Greece and Croatia. "It's been incredible for the yacht sector, with more organized and higher-quality outings than in 2019," says Mitja Mirtic, CEO of the Croatia-based company Goolets. "The more luxurious boats were booked easier and faster than the standard ones."

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### TORROX

Cosy 1 bedroom apartment in the heart of the village. Walking distance to all amenities and the main plaza. Nicely renovated. Spacious terrace with great views of the village and the mountains. Great value for money.

**Price: Only €59.000 Ref. 6494 VH1**



### ALCAUCIN

Prestigious villa close to the village. 260m<sup>2</sup> built size with 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, WC, f/f kitchen, wonderful lounge with fireplace and gallery, conservatory and Andalusian patio. Air conditioned, private garage, tool shed and a lovely pool.

**Price: €419.000 Ref. 6514 VI3**



### TORROX COSTA

Urban plot of land with stunning sea views to build a detached villa on. Various floors with garage underneath and a private pool. Close to the coast, beach and amenities.

**Price: €136.000 Ref. 6510 PL**



### TORROX

Spacious country villa close to the coast of Torrox Costa. 157m<sup>2</sup>, 3 beds, 2 baths, cosy lounge with open kitchen. Glassed in pool, sauna, wine bodega, storage room, laundry room, garage and car port. Lovely sea views, fully furnished.

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# Look beyond investment p

FOR MANY PEOPLE, investing in bricks and mortar by buying second or subsequent homes makes financial sense. Property is a solid, reliable investment that holds its value, right?

Yes, and no. While investing in real estate has its advantages, there are also significant drawbacks to this approach. Here we compare property to other investment options in relation to some key cornerstones of successful investing: liquidity, risk and returns, diversification and tax efficiency.

## Liquidity

A key question to ask before investing is: how easy will it be to retrieve your capital? This is known as liquidity.

There are various reasons why you may want to 'cash in' an investment. You may be unhappy with performance or have found a more attractive opportunity elsewhere. And if your circumstances change, you may need to access your money fairly quickly.

Liquidity is not just about how easy it is to sell up, it is also whether you can do so without taking a loss. Generally, the more illiquid an asset, the higher the risk and potential returns, as you are likely to be rewarded for locking your money away over the longer term.

On one end of the spectrum you have cash and bank deposits, which are easy to access but offer the lowest risk and expected returns. Property sits at the other end. If you are playing the long game, you could find your investment grows substantially over the years. However, it may take time to find a buyer and you could invite a significant loss if you sell at the wrong time.

Investment funds, on the other hand, enable you to invest in a suite of different assets that may include property (or shares in property companies) alongside equities, bonds, etc. Because there is an established market for the underlying assets, it is much easier to find an instant buyer. Also, unlike property, if you require small amounts of cash you can just sell the amount you need, not the whole investment.

## Risk and returns

Generally, low risk means settling for low returns, while taking on more risk brings potentially higher rewards.

For bank deposits, the risk/return factor is low – you have a high certainty of receiving a set amount at the end of the term. However, with today's interest rates still being close to zero, this may struggle to keep pace with inflation.

Property offers less certainty and therefore greater potential for higher long-term returns. However, there is no guarantee that the property will appreciate in value, especially when you want to sell. You also need to consider the ongoing costs of maintaining and renting out property – as well as the tax implications – to work out what you get back compared to what you have put in.

Other investment options offer the flexibility to change strategy in line with market developments. For example, although the underlying assets in an investment fund are linked to market movements, the fund manager is able to fine tune the fund's portfolio according to what is or is not performing well and where they see risks or opportunities.

## Diversification

It is important not to be over exposed to any asset,

# property to unlock potential

*by Kelman Chambers,  
Partner,  
Blevins Franks*

including property. A good portfolio spreads risk across different asset types, regions and market sectors to limit exposure in any one area.

If you already own a house, buying a second property may make you overweight in this one asset class, especially if you don't own many equity or bond holdings. When property prices drop, both your properties will probably fall in value, while other asset classes may be performing well.

Holding a range of different investments within each asset class helps reduce risk further. You could, for example, own shares from a range of completely different companies and sectors across the world. However, most people can only afford to

buy one or two investment properties, giving them little or no diversification.

British expatriates also need to consider exchange currency risk. Rather than tying up your capital in either sterling or euros, some investment structures allow flexibility to hold investments in multiple currencies and convert when it suits you.

### Tax efficiency

Wherever your property is, you are likely to face some sort of council tax, stamp duty and capital gains tax charges. Those with UK property may have felt the burden of recent tax increases on residential properties.

Real estate can also push you over the threshold for wealth taxes in Spain and significantly increase your tax bill here. Spanish succession tax can also be punitive and it is generally easier structure capital investments tax efficiently than immovable property.

Consider all the assets you already own, including the house you live in, to determine the best approach for you. There may be Portugal-compliant opportunities that offer much better tax advantages and returns than property. Ultimately, you should aim for a balanced portfolio that will suit your unique aims and circumstances, today and tomorrow.

*Tax rates, scope and reliefs may change. Any statements concerning taxation are based upon our understanding of current taxation laws and practices which are subject to change. Tax information has been summarised; individuals should seek personalised advice.*

*Keep up to date on the financial issues that may affect you on the Blevins Franks news page at [www.blevinsfranks.com](http://www.blevinsfranks.com)*

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# How saffron turned a Spanish grandmother into a viral hit

A photo shared on Twitter of María Jiménez removing strands of the spice has received 10,800 retweets and more than 60,700 likes

IN 1962, WHEN she was 18 years old, María Jiménez worked as an assistant in a house in Munera, a small village in the province of Albacete, in Spain's Castilla-La Mancha region. José Martínez, who was 20 at the time, would drop by to greet her in the hope of catching her eye. When they started dating, he had a very noisy bicycle, and to avoid attracting attention he would take the quieter Santana street rather than the principal Mayor street. But Santana street was more isolated and the lighting wasn't good, and María was terri-

fied that José would try and kiss her there. "But given the dreadful racket that that bicycle made in the end he convinced me to change streets," she explains. "But he behaved like a perfect gentleman with me."



María Jiménez with saffron flowers at her home in Munera.

Six years later they were married, but there was no honeymoon due to a lack of money and time, and three days later they bought the house they still live in "for 55,000 pesetas" – about €330 today. María, 77, is telling her story sitting in the parlor of her home, located on San José street in Munera, which is home to some 3,500 people. The property, which counts on an interior garden, has grown over the years and now covers some 600 square meters, including a small plot of land. With her is José, now 79, a retired builder but active gardener.

Just like in thousands of other houses in Castilla-La Mancha, on the television is the show *En compañía* (or, *In company*). It's a regional production, presented by Ramón García, and according to its website is aimed at "helping to end the loneliness of residents of Castilla-La Mancha. A problem that right now affects thousands of people and is a major concern for society in the 21st century."

Every afternoon the show travels to homes in the region "so that people who are alone can rid themselves of loneliness." *En compañía* is a religion for many people, particularly in the winter when the cold weather arrives and night falls at 6pm, and there is no more company than the television or radio.

In this house, which is dotted with photos of the couple's two children

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María Jiménez tending to her garden.

and four grandchildren, Ramón García is invited in every day to make life a little less abrasive. “I’m going to be on that show the day after tomorrow,” says María suddenly. José and María greeted the visiting journalists from EL PAÍS with the most beautiful phrase they have ever heard, one that could be the start of a novel: “You are the ones who want to know everything about the crocus.” And it’s true: the two journalists who are on their doorstep want to know everything there is to know about the saffron flowers, the plant that María grows in her home. Everything began on November 5 at 8pm, when María’s grandson Pedro Varea posted a photo on Twitter of her removing the strands of saffron from the flower. It became an instant viral hit. “My grandmother is handpicking crocus flowers to get saffron and a woman said to her, ‘Give them to my grandson, who’s a journalist and will put them in some newspaper.’ And I’m sad because I don’t have that power and I’m looking for a newspaper who wants to put my grandma on the cover for free and make her happy,” wrote Varea, who works with the digital publication El Salto. More than 10,800 retweets and 60,700 likes later, Varea can now say that not only does he have the power to get his grandma in the newspaper, but has also managed to get her on one of her favorite TV shows. “The whole world has been calling the house,” María explains. “Even from outside Spain. I don’t even know what Twitter is, but what a shock I got. So many people have written to us on the internet! Family, neighbors, journalists...”



María Jiménez removes the strands of saffron from the flower.

“When we got married, my father gave us a saffron garden as a gift,” explains María. Back then, it would yield as much as 20 kilos of saffron. “My father would sell it of course, he was a saffron salesman,” she explains. “Some gentlemen from Albacete would come and buy it, as

...to page 14

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...from page 13.

would Moors to use it for clothes dye.”

Once the saffron has been extracted, it has to be toasted. María crushes it with a pestle and mortar and usually uses it in her paellas, cocidos and stews. José removes the crocus flowers from their garden carefully. The plant, which has six large purple petals, yields the so-called “red gold” – the saffron is known as such thanks to its beauty and of course its price. A gram of the strands can be sold for between €8 and €10, and as much as €8,000 to €10,000 when sold wholesale.

The sun is setting in Munera and a windmill located next to two sculptures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are visible against the orange sky. Earlier this year, an attorney named Francisco José Valera and cartographer Álvaro Anguix published an essay in which they argued that Munera is the place in La Mancha “whose name I do not care to remember,” according to the opening lines of Miguel Cervantes’ novel, the most famous and influential in history. The apparent revelation caused widespread debate and left just one conclusion: the setting of Don Quixote remains a mystery. It could be Munera, it could not.

These days, Munera is just another village that is trying to cope with the unstoppable advance of the so-called “empty Spain,” a phenomenon whereby rural areas suffer from increasing depopulation and the problems it brings with it. But María and José, who have seen their siblings, children and grandchildren all leave to seek “another life,” are not going anywhere. They were born, will live and will die here. They spent the coronavirus lockdown here, saved by the interior courtyard, the phone and the television. This is a place where a cherry tree, a rose bush, a pomegranate tree and a medlar tree all grow, and where the saffron emits a hypnotic smell.

For family reunions, such as those planned for the upcoming holiday season, José uses an oven that he built to bake bread, roast lamb or prepare desserts. Before she says goodbye, she shows some of the last coal collected by her father, who became a coalman after his time selling saffron. She has held on to it, as a memory of a world that is slowly disappearing. José, meanwhile, opens up a huge garage in which he keeps all kinds of machines, tools, contraptions, old motorbikes... Does he still have that noisy bicycle, the one that 60 years ago prompted the couple to take a darker, quieter street? The man starts to laugh.



Saffron.



Author Montserrat Iglesias looks out over Linares reservoir.

## The drowning of Spain’s villages

*A handful of books are recreating the cruel and little-known history of the communities that were flooded to make reservoirs in the 20th century*

**A ROAD SNAKES down to the foot of a man-made lake. It’s overlooked by Peña del Reloj mountain, whose shadow clocks the passing of the hours as it presides over a silent liquid landscape. The only thing to suggest that the lake is not natural is a circular construction crowned with greenery where the bell of a Romanic church once tolled. Crushed by thousands of tons of water, the centuries-old village of Linares del Arroyo lies beneath the surface. Its origins date back to the 10th century but in the 1950s it was submerged under a colossal dam that formed part of the reservoir of Riaza River.**

Five hundred villages across Spain were similarly devastated in the name of progress during the second half of the 20th century. In the depths of the Linares reservoir lie the skeletons of humble dwellings, as well as the belongings and the graves of the loved ones of those who once made their home in this corner of Segovia, in Spain’s Castilla y León region, now populated by vultures.

Montserrat Iglesias, a high school teacher and a descendant of the town’s last inhabitants, has recounted the stories she heard throughout her childhood and youth in her book *La Marca de Agua* (or, *The Water Mark*). In the novel, Iglesias seeks to “give voice” to the villagers, more than 200 in Linares and 50,000 in the whole of Spain, who were not only forced to relocate and lose their way of life but to forfeit any trace of it. The book depicts the journey her ancestors made from Linares to La Vid in Burgos, 20 kilometers away. La Vid was one of the 300 villages of identical white houses that the Francisco Franco regime constructed to house the exiles of the flooded land.

With one foot in their new home but their hearts in the old one, they worked the land assigned to them. As Iglesias says, despite their circumstances, they were labeled intruders. Basically, they had lost their place on Earth.

Iglesias is not the first author to write about submerged Spain, although there are only a handful of books that deal with it from the literary point of view. Novelist and civil engineer Juan Benet wrote the legendary *Volverás a Región* (or, *Return to Region*) while he was working on the Porma reservoir; Ana María Matute penned *El Río* (or, *The River*); while Jesús Moncada wrote *Mequinenza* and Julio Llamazares authored *Distintas Formas de Mirar el Agua* (or, *A Different Way to View Water*).

Llamazares, who was born in the village of Vegamián in Castilla y León, an area drowned by Benet’s reservoir, called his book “the novel of his life,” a return to the origins of Spain

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View of La Vid. In the new villages, all the homes were practically identical, generally consisting of a house, a corral and a courtyard.

that, like Iglesias' novel, examines the themes of family and death, but also the uprooting of lives, identity and oblivion. "The history of the reservoir is in itself buried," he says. "During Franco's regime, the inauguration of the reservoir was highly publicised, but not the human drama behind it."

The pain of the Spanish Civil War and the agony of the postwar period still survive in the depths of those reservoirs that multiplied during the dictatorship, although they had been conceived of decades earlier. The pain, betrayal and submission are captured in *The Water Mark*, which brings to life the seven dead who still lie in a lost grave in Linares. Similar themes appear in the book, *Detendrán Mi Río* (or, *They Will Stop My River*) by Virginia Mendoza. This novel, was published on November 15, is about the village of Caspe, in Zaragoza province, and a nearby orchard called Cauvaca, which was flooded by the Mequinenza reservoir.

In addition to the 500 villages that were submerged, there is an undetermined number of inhabited orchards that perished too and which, as Mendoza points out, are not included when it comes to calculating the number of victims. "We should be aware that basic things like taking a shower or turning on the light are due to the sacrifice of people who are not counted," says Mendoza, whose story is based on interviews with survivors from that period.

The full economic, social, geographical and anthropological implications of what happened with the construction of the reservoirs in Spain may not have resonated with most of society but in the towns where the locals were resettled, there is usually "at least one person," according to Mendoza, who has dedicated themselves to collecting testimonies, photos and accounts.

Iglesias, meanwhile, speaks of the "mythification" of those places, transformed by oral tradition into dreamlike spaces that only exist in the imagination of men and women who have never stopped longing for them. "The fact of not being able to return creates that myth, and nostalgia magnifies the place," says Iglesias, whose fiction has drawn on anecdotes and real names. "With the move, some won and others lost," she says. "And there were also those who decided to forget."



Tower of the Romanic church of Linares, the town's only building that was not submerged under the water.

While wanting to bury this chapter of history in a country "that has always had a very bad relationship with its past," probably accounts for the fact this piece of history has been forgotten, as Llamazares points out, the truth is that more recent events such as the construction of the Riaño reservoir in Castilla y León in 1987 and the Lindoso dam in Portugal in 1992, documented in the 2015 film *The Drowned Days*, did not make headlines in the press either. "There were big protests and two people committed suicide in Riaño," recalls Llamazares. "But the item did not appear until the end of the news."

As Mendoza writes, the fate of those places was sealed with concrete: the one used for both the reservoirs and the towns the locals were moved to; but also the one that covered the cemeteries to prevent the dead from surfacing. "For people to leave the dead behind with the knowledge that they would not be buried with their parents was a sorrow that weighed heavily on them," she says.

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# Blevins Franks Charitable Foundation's recent donation to support APAA Nerja.



*APAA Nerja is an association which protects abandoned and abused dogs and cats in the Nerja, Maro, Frigiliana area on the Costa Del Sol, Spain. This year has been a particularly bad, as the dog refuge has been closed down, they now rely on private kennels and fostering when possible. The Charitable Foundation's donation has helped with the monthly bills for accommodation, food and Veterinary costs. APAA rehome the animals in Spain, Germany, Holland, Sweden and the UK.*

## Don't get caught napping...



### **PILLOW FIGHTING IS moving out of the bedroom and into the boxing ring when Pillow Fight Championship (PFC) holds its first live, pay-per-view event in Florida on Jan. 29.**

Steve Williams, the man with the dream of turning childhood horseplay into a professional combat sport, said PFC delivers all the drama of hand-to-hand combat without the gore of mixed martial arts or boxing. "It's not something where you sit there and laugh and feathers are flying," Williams, CEO of PFC, said. "It's serious. It's hardcore swinging with specialised pillows."

Although the male and female competitors in January's event mostly hail from the cutthroat worlds of MMA and boxing, children will still sleep soundly after seeing the bouts. "The only difference between our fights and MMA fights is that nobody gets hurt," he said. "The fighters don't like to get hurt, and there's a lot of people who don't want to see the blood. They want to see good competition, they just don't want to see the violence."

The fact that so many people grew up bashing their siblings, friends and parents with pillows makes the sport relatable, which he hopes will help tap into a new audience.

"You can call it an alternative sport, but we think it's going to have mainstream appeal," he said. "Think about how they mixed country music with rap music and brought these diverse audiences together. That's what we're doing, and we hope it brings in a different kind of viewer."

The three-round bouts will be available to view on sports streaming platform FITE.

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**THE THREE WISE Men have something extra to carry along with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh when they travel to visit Baby Jesus this year: their COVID-19 health pass.**

Craftsmen along San Gregorio Armeno street in the historical centre of Naples, Italy, are famous for using art to adapt their nativity scenes to the times they are living in. "Last year was the year of the masks, so the figurines of Mary, Joseph and the Three Wise Men were wearing masks ... This year it seemed like the right thing to keep following this direction," said craftsman Marco Ferrigno.

The Green Pass, which shows someone has received at least one vaccine dose, tested negative or recently recovered from the virus, is a requirement in Italy for travel on much inter-city transport and to access a range of cultural and leisure venues. "Because the Three Wise Men have to take a long journey to the crib, I gave them all their own Green Pass so that they have the proper documents for travelling," said Ferrigno.

The Neapolitan nativity scenes developed into an art form in the Baroque period. Many Italian families have a scene on display in their homes at Christmas time.

Reaction among tourists to the Wise Men being given passes - complete with QR code - in order to be able to follow the star without problems, was mostly positive. "We all have the Green Pass. Why shouldn't the

Three Wise Men? They are coming from so far away and crossing so many countries ... It's a good message for the people.

We should all have the Green Pass," said tourist Massimiliano Giangrossi.



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On 26th October 2021 the Constitutional Court decided to annul this tax that sellers were required to pay and therefore opened the possibility of avoiding this abusive tax, for those transfer operations signed before the beginning of November 2021, where this tax has not yet been paid.

The Constitutional Tribunal has declared the method used to calculate the base rate for this tax as unconstitutional, so we recommend that all sellers who recently transferred their property, or who have received the demand for this tax, to contact a lawyer who can study the case and the possibility of not paying it.

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# 12 Christmas festive plants

**CHRISTMAS TREES, HOLLY and Ivy wreaths and Poinsettias might be the first plants we think of at Christmas, but they're not the only way to add colour and life to your home on chilly December days.**

Here are some of the best plants and flowers for decorating homes throughout the festive season, from traditional winter Poinsettia, to big, blooming Azaleas and even the Christmas cactus. Think of Christmas decorations, and you'll likely think of the traditional tree in all its glory, some tinsel, baubles and ornaments, and maybe a garland or two. But behind all the artificial glitz and sparkles are some fantastic plants and flowers which are not only easy to care for throughout the chillier months, but they really add to the spirit of Christmas and festivities. 'With growing concerns about plastic use, they're much more eco-friendly options too. Many of them also make fantastic presents, so are worth bearing in mind when buying for green-fingered friends or family members.'



### 1. Rosemary

Rosemary has been associated with the Christmas period long before Poinsettia became the poster child, as the herb is believed to have been one of the plants in baby Jesus' manger. In the Middle Ages, people believed that if they smelled rosemary on Christmas Eve, they would be healthy and happy throughout the new year. So, they walked on Rosemary spread across the floor, starting a tradition of Rosemary in Christmas decorations that we continue today, with the table top Rosemary Christmas trees, wreaths, festive swags, and evergreen bouquets.



### 2. Holly

Holly has long been a symbol of eternal life and fertility. People believed that hanging the plant in their homes would bring good luck and protection all year round. Christians continued the Holly tradition from Druid, Celtic and Roman traditions, changing its symbolism to reflect Christian beliefs. Today, Hol-

ly is symbolic of Jesus Christ in two ways: its red berries represent the blood that Jesus shed on the cross, and the pointed leaves refer to the crown of thorns Jesus was wearing when he died.

### 3. Ivy

Although it has a bit of a reputation for covering the floors and walls of gardens with its creeping vines, Ivy is actually a very popular plant during the Christmas period. Its distinctively-shaped, rich green leaves are often a key component of floral wreaths and other festive decorations. They're also said to represent the shape of Christ's crown of thorns.



### 4. Christmas Cactus

Despite its name, and the fact it flowers over the Christmas period, the Christmas cactus actually has nothing to do with either the Christmas tradition or the story of Christ's birth! But, these succulents do make for a great Christmas gift. They're affordable, long-lived, easy to maintain in the cooler months, and look great.



### 5. Mistletoe

Having long been a symbol of love, peace, and goodwill, the custom of using Mistletoe to decorate houses at Christmas is a Druid tradition. Yet, despite its pretty appearance and associated affectionate gesture, Mistletoe berries are actually toxic to humans!



### 6. Poinsettia

Instantly recognisable due to its pointed red bracts and rich red and green leaves, Poinsettia has become a symbol of the festive season due to a Mexican legend. The story goes, a poor girl's present to Jesus (*a bouquet of weeds*) was transformed into the bright red flowers we now call Poinsettia.



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**7. White Chrysanthemums**

As the Chrysanthemum symbolises optimism and joy, it comes as no surprise that it's now synonymous with 'the most wonderful time of the year'.

However, White Chrysanthemums also have another sweet link to the

festive season. German homes are filled with the flowers on Christmas Eve because of an old legend in which a peasant family ushers a beggar man in from the cold. Claiming to be the Christ Child, he then fled, leaving two of the flowers behind.



**8. Cyclamen**

Cyclamen thrives in cooler temperatures, so its bright blooms and beautiful heart-shaped leaves are a great choice if you want to add some colour to your home over the winter.



**9. Azaleas**

Often overlooked in favour of other festive plants and flowers, Azaleas' bright colours and big, open blooms make them the perfect addition to indoor planting displays at Christmas.

**10. Christmas Rose**

The Christmas Rose is revered during the festive season for the deep green foliage and delicate white flowers it brings to cold, dark winters. But, despite the resemblance it bears to wild roses and the fact that it's known as the Christmas Rose, this delicate evergreen perennial is actually quite deceptive as it is, in fact, a member of the buttercup family, Ranunculacea.



**11. Amaryllis**

The massive, six-pointed Amaryllis bloom makes an impressive festive decoration on grey days. If you want to have a blooming amaryllis for Christmas, you should plant the bulbs no later than the beginning of November, although it's always safer to just buy one already in bloom.



**12. Christmas Tree**

Although the evergreen fir tree has traditionally been used to celebrate winter festivals for thousands of years, the pivotal Christmas tree is a relatively modern addition to British Christmas traditions. Bringing a tree inside and decorating it in the way we know today first happened in 16th century Germany, and became popular elsewhere in the 19th century. The first Christmas trees came to Britain sometime in the 1830s and became an annual fixture almost a decade later, when Queen Victoria and her German husband Albert had a Christmas tree set up in Windsor Castle.

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**Competa New this month!**  
 A great 3 bed, 2 bath townhouse (146m<sup>2</sup>) with a large garden and roof terrace. Located on the edge of village but still within easy walking distance of all amenities.  
 EPC: E  
 Price: 149,000 euros ref: t1434



**Benamargosa Lake views!**  
 Superb 4 bed, 3 bath (127m<sup>2</sup>) countryside villa with lounge and separate kitchen, sunroom, surface pool set in raised decking, outside kitchen/BBQ area, hot tub, detached garage and great Lake Viñuela views.  
 EPC: in process  
 Price: 395,000 euros ref: v1397



**Competa Price reduced!**  
 Stylish fully modernised 2 bed 1 bath village house (84m<sup>2</sup>) with superb living accommodation and roof terrace with spectacular countryside and mountain views.  
 EPC: G  
 Price: 95,000 euros ref: t1148



**Alcaucin Fantastic views!**  
 Beautiful modern 3 bed 2 bath villa (169m<sup>2</sup>) located on the edge of the village with private pool and the option of having separate guest accom. Beautiful views to the surrounding countryside, lake and mountains.  
 EPC: E  
 Price: 235,000 euros ref: v1377



**Canillas de Aceituno Price reduced!**  
 Quirky 2 bed, 1 bath fully furnished house (77.26m<sup>2</sup>), open plan living/dining/kitchen with a cosy feel, many unique features, quaint front terrace, a place where modern and quirky mix perfectly, successful rental business, a unique must see property.  
 EPC: E  
 Price: 145,000 euros ref: t1317

# Why England players won't take the knee against Qatar

*They're happy to bash America and Britain. But criticise an Islamic country? ...No way.*

**SO, WE FINALLY** have an answer to the largely rhetorical question of whether England's oh-so-woke football players will take the knee against Qatar during the World Cup there next year. Whether these hyper-aware, rainbow laces-wearing, injustice-hating sportsmen will make some kind of physical gesture to register their concern about Qatar's institutionalised misogyny, homophobia and mistreatment of migrant workers. The answer, in essence, is: 'Maybe. We're not sure. It's complicated. And also the UK does a lot of business with Qatar, so we don't want to piss them off too much.' ...So principled! Yes, it seems that England players who've spent the past 18 months kneeling down at the start of every game to 'raise awareness' about racism won't do very much to raise awareness about the crushing of women's rights, gay rights and migrants' rights in an Islamist state where they'll be playing football next year. At least that's what we can fairly deduce from the tortured answer England manager Gareth Southgate gave to the question of whether players would be permitted to stage protests against Qatar's repressive and discriminatory form of government. '[It's] a very complicated situation for us', he said. We will have to take some time to 'educate ourselves', he continued, cleverly deploying woke parlance to deflect attention from what seem to be staggering double standards on the part of the England team.

Gone is Southgate's old bombast on why it is essential that his players stand up, or kneel down, against injustice. 'We feel more than ever that we are determined to take the knee throughout this tournament', he said in June, frankly and directly, after some England fans had the temerity to boo the knee-taking during a Euro 2020 warm-up game. And yet now Mr Conscience of the Nation, the manager who got Guardianistas all hot under the collar with his enthusiastic endorsement of woke politics on the pitch, has gone curiously cagey. It's 'hugely complex', he says of Qatar. And there are 'cultural differences' between Britain and Qatar to factor in, too. What's more, '[We], as a nation, do a lot of business with Qatar... I was reading about Rolls Royce [working with Qatar], 10,000 new jobs', Southgate says. Never mind gay rights, we need cars for rich people! Some are even wondering if we pesky West-erners have any right to criticise a country like Qatar. There's a hint of that in Southgate's comment on 'cultural differences'. Mark Bullingham, the chief exec of the FA, put it more plainly. 'The first point we always make is we are not perfect ourselves as a country and we have to establish that early on when we talk about other countries', he said. So it's all guns blazing and all knees bending when it comes to criticising the US and the UK, knee-taking is entirely aimed at the racism that is allegedly endemic in these two nations, but it's all meek, self-doubting utterances of 'Who are we to criticise?' when it comes to potentially taking a stand against a country with an Islamic system of government. The cockiness of wokeness is washed away by a wave of moral relativism the minute anyone mentions the i-word, what a sign of the times. It shouldn't take long for Mr Southgate to 'educate himself' about Qatar. After all, he's already found out, presumably via Google, about the Rolls Royce / Qatar partnership for business, education and the development of climate technology. If he digs a little deeper he might discover that it is illegal in Qatar to have same-



sex relations. Homosexual men can be jailed for up to three years. He might also find out how few rights women have. That, as a result of the male guardianship law, women are denied the right to 'make many key decisions about their lives', in the words of Human Rights Watch. He might even happen upon an article or two spelling out why these things happen in Qatar, it's because in Qatar, as in Saudi Arabia, Salafi Islam is the state religion and the underpinner of political life. Cultural differences, indeed. Unless we are to disappear entirely up the fundament of moral relativism, we must surely say that Qatar is a less free, more discriminatory and more socially unjust country than the US. And yet England players were more than happy to bend the knee for George Floyd, that's how it all started, and to join in the woke bashing of America as a white supremacist country. But when it comes to Qatar? 'It's complicated...' This is 21st-century woke preening summed up. It's anti-American, sniffy about the West, and obsessed with the idea that everyone's racist, but it will stare at its feet if someone points out that an Islamic country is locking up same-sex lovers and forcing women to ask permission from a man before they get married or travel abroad. What message does it send to Qatar's beleaguered gay community or its migrants who work in punishing conditions that famous footballers will take the knee for Floyd but not for them? The problem here is not Southgate. He's only realising that, even under woke capitalism, there are limits to how far you can go with virtue-signalling. Sure, you can take the knee as a 'screw you' to working-class fans who dare to boo your players, but you can't rock the boat with a super-rich friendly nation, and you certainly can't say: 'Maybe government by Islam is not a great idea?' No, the problem is the double standards, the shallowness and the outright annoyingness of virtue-signalling. The woke will lecture us inhabitants of Brexit Britain, Neanderthals that we are, but they'll stay schtum in Qatar. They'll wear rainbow laces to show how cool they are with same-sex relationships, but they'll say 'It's complicated' about a country where a same-sex relationship could land you in the slammer. It's amazing people still believe there is any real virtue behind all this signalling. It seems pretty clear that the knee-bending in the Euros was less about drawing attention to injustice and more about hectoring the football-watching masses for being insufficiently socially aware, insufficiently 'like us'. Here's my preference: footballers should stop taking the knee altogether. I don't want them protesting in Qatar any more than I want them gesturing on pitches in England. I don't want them to boycott Qatar, either. Just play football for God's sake. Give us goals, not thin, boring, hypocritical lectures.

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A happy and peaceful Christmas to all our clients and friends!



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Spacious apartment 140m<sup>2</sup>, 3 bedrooms, lounge/dining room, air conditioning, kitchen, breakfast room, 2 bathrooms, large private terrace, private garage. Must be viewed, lovely apartment.

## The Cost Of Saving A Life

WHEN MOST PEOPLE find a lost dog or cat their first instinct is to leave the rescue at the door of a local animal charity thinking their good deed is done. Frequently though they do not consider the cost of caring for the animal going forward. The charity first must arrange shelter for the dog or cat and if no foster home is available then they have no choice but to put the stray into kennels. However, before this a responsible charity will have the waif checked by a vet, treated for worms and have it fully vaccinated.

The cost of initial vet care alone, including neutering, is between €150-200 depending on what is done and even though the kennelling fees are greatly reduce for charities they still come to around €100 per month. Needless to say, each time a charity takes in a stray their financial burden increases by hundreds of Euros and groups such as the Costa Animal Society (CAS) can receive several calls a week so the costs run into the thousands each month.

One way to mitigate the financial impact is to ask the rescuer to contribute to the vet bills and kennelling expenses but this is usually a one-off donation that only covers a portion of the animals' care. In addition, charities usually require the people who adopt a dog or cat to pay a set adoption fee but again this is a one-time payment that often just pays part of the costs involved. If, however, the rescuer and adopter both give generously than the vet bills might just be covered.

This highlights the importance for animal societies to constantly increase their foster care network in order to minimise their kennel costs. Also fosterers are a big part of preparing the dog or cat for living in a household which then makes finding a permanent home that much easier. Unfortunately, our local animal societies receive little or no government funding so they rely solely on donations from the public and support from volunteers who contribute their time. Donations often come in the form money but equally important, people often give unwanted clothing and bric-a-brac to sell in the charities' second-hand shops.

In many ways the time volunteers give is more valuable than money because their efforts help the charities run on a daily basis. If someone organises a fundraising event on their own they can make much more money than can be found in a single pocket.

Therefore, during the upcoming holidays please remember to give to local charities and even

consider volunteering as part of your New Year's resolutions. Money is always welcome but also sort through your closet and storage for clothing and items that can be sold. A good rule of thumb is if you did not use the item in 2021 give it away to charity. Enjoy the holidays but please share your good fortune with local groups doing volunteer work for the abandoned, homeless or abused animals near you. Thank you for all of your support in 2021 and best wishes to everyone this holiday season and in the coming year. The Costa Animal Society will continue on as we have for over 30 years, hopefully with more in-person events where we can meet up with all of our supporters and business sponsors.

**Happy Holidays, we hope to see you soon.**

## Available for Adoption

BUZZ IS A YOUNG Border Collie type dog who was found on the San Juan de Capistrano urbanisation in Nerja last month after wandering the streets near the tower for a few days. His photos and story have been shared on social media as a found dog but no owner has come forward. The Costa Animal Society (CAS) is now advertising Buzz for rehoming.



He is an 18 month-old male who has the coat, colouring and size of a smooth Collie with the temperament and a good nature to match. Buzz is a sweet boy who loves to please people and he gets along well with other dogs. He would make a wonderful companion for a single person or a family of two or more and he will be easily trained.

PATCH WAS RESCUED by the Costa Animal Society (CAS) just before lockdown last year along with her brother and two sisters. At the time they were five month-old pups who were living rough in a field on the Frigiliana border and had very little human contact early in their lives. All four were a bit shy, lacking the socialisation which is so important for their future interaction in a domestic environment. After a few months of learning to trust people her siblings all found their forever homes in the Netherlands last year

## The Costa Animal Society...

as each was chosen by a family looking to adopt a dog from Spain.

Unfortunately, Patch has proven to be special case because her initial reaction to being touched was to snap out of fear and she needed much more time to be socialised. After more than a year in kennels with daily human interaction and bi-weekly sessions with a dog therapist, Patch is now ready for the next step in her development. She needs to live with a single person or couple who have the patience, time and love to show her how wonderful living in a home can be. Patch is a very sweet little, playful dog that enjoys her cuddles and gets along well with other dogs and cats.

If you would like to meet one of the animals under the care of the Costa Animal Society (CAS), and are looking to adopt or are willing to foster a pet please contact Kurt and Laura at 95 252 1426 or view the CAS website or Facebook page.

## CAS Cat Appeal

LORD HAVE MERCY! The Costa Animal Society (CAS) has been inundated with calls regarding cats "living rough" and litters of kittens found beside dumpsters, sometimes having been thrown inside, or abandoned alongside a country road. Despite our years' long campaign to catch (not easy), neuter and return "wild" cats to their original environs, calling them "feral" to me seems unfair, there apparently are a horde of tomcats around now who skip the wining and dining and go directly to starting a family.

Certainly some cat owners will disagree, but a few years ago we hosted a lecture by an animal behaviour expert from the Irish Kennel Club. The subject of his talk was about the training and rehabilitating of rescued dogs.



During the question and answer session, someone asked him for his advise about cats in similar situations. His response was that the only thing he knew for sure was that you should never look at a cat eye-to-eye, for them it's a sign of aggression. Despite the occasional Youtube video of a cat using a toilet, he considered them as singular in their independence.

Before you send off a belligerent response, I should say that I have had cats in my house or garden, or for that matter on my sofa all my life; I currently have four. Two are couch potatoes, happily cuddling up with our four dogs. Another one comes and goes as she pleases, but is always there at dinner time and late evening cuddles. The fourth is a wild one feasting, we suppose on rodents in the small plot of avocados and custard apples. We see her every few days and she looks great, but I have the scars to prove she's untouchable.

I shouldn't interject my personnel life into what is supposed to be journalism, but my point here is that at CAS we give as much consideration to cats as we do to dogs. Especially with kittens, where fostering is essential for their domestication. Given our current situation, we are desperately seeking cat-lovers to help with fostering to bring levels of the homeless feline population into a manageable state.

We will provide you with all the help you need and the good news is that cats are in general easier to home than for example large dogs where licences are required and the cost of caring for them is much higher. And, you never know, you may end up falling in love with one. Or in our case four.

**For more local information about cats in need of fostering and rehoming, contact CAS on 601 629 938, visit the shop, or see us online at [www.casnerja.webs.com](http://www.casnerja.webs.com) or our Facebook page \casnerja. We are also now on Instagram at: [cats\\_dogs29780](https://www.instagram.com/cats_dogs29780), and you can find us on Twitter by searching for Costa Animal Society Nerja.**

**For more information regarding cats available for fostering or adoption see the Facebook page \East of Malaga kittens or cats/Gatitos de la Axarquia.**

## Christmas Fayre

THANK YOU TO all who attended the first

**Mon. to Sat. 9am till 2pm & 5.30pm till 9pm**



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Christmas Fayre held by the Costa Animal Society (CAS), hopefully to become an annual tradition. The event, hosted by Fitzgeralds Bar & Restaurant in Nerja, was a success raising over €500 despite early morning rain.

Thank you as well to all the artisans who displayed their wares, great Christmas gifts were to be had, and to the volunteers who baked their hearts out and provided delicious sweets and cakes on what felt like the first day of winter. Well done all!

Upcoming events are always announced via our social media accounts. Our contact information is as follows: 601 629 938, visit the shop, or see us online at [www.casnerja.webs.com](http://www.casnerja.webs.com) on our Facebook page \casnerja. We are also now on Instagram at: [cats\\_dogs29780](https://www.instagram.com/cats_dogs29780), and you can find us on Twitter by searching for Costa Animal Society Nerja.



### CAS Shop

THE COSTA ANIMAL Society (CAS) shop has restocked with all the clothing you'll need to keep you warm this winter. Also, we have many items that would make great stocking stuffers so please stop by, you'll be pleasantly surprised at the variety of goods on offer.

The shop's large inventory is clean and well-presented, updated daily, with a friendly staff of volunteers on hand to help. Donations are always welcome - please help us to restock our shelves. Of course all shop proceeds go directly towards helping our animal friends in need, primarily for vet bills, food and kennelling costs.

The Costa Animal Society (CAS) Shop is located next door to the Good Stuff Café in Nerja at No. 2 Calle Castilla Perez. Our opening hours are Monday to Saturday from 10.00am until 2.00pm.

CAS is always eager to hear from people who are interested in becoming shop volunteers. One four-hour shift once a week makes a big difference. There are always two volunteers per shift making for a safe, relaxed, congenial environment. For more information please stop by the shop or feel free to call our shop manager May Delaney on 601629938.

### The Costa Animal Society needs you!

THE COSTA ANIMAL Society (CAS) is

seeking animal-loving, energetic, social media savvy persons to come on board. If you're a compassionate person who respects the lives of unfortunate animals who live a treacherous life in the wild, hop aboard. There is an occasional heartache, but the rewards in homing animals and receiving videos of these rescue dogs and cats romping about in their forever homes is something to behold.

We are a small, voluntary charity organisation, that has been successfully rehoming and assisting abandoned animals in the Nerja, Frigiliana and Maro for over 30 years. We are presently looking for enthusiastic people to join our committee, continuing the work started by the sitting committee, some of whom have recently stepped down after many, many (some, decades) of years of service. Most importantly, the official posts of President and Secretary need to be filled. For more information, please contact acting President Mae Delaney on 601 629 938. (It should be noted that these are voluntary, unpaid positions.) If interested, there will be a long-standing cadre of volunteers to provide all the necessary details and assist you along the way. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

### CAS News - Sponsorship Programme

THE COSTA ANIMAL Society (CAS) would like to make you aware of our recent initiative of sponsoring a specific animal in our care. Given the restrictions due to Covid, fundraising has been extremely difficult.

Now, however, you can sponsor one of our dogs or cats directly for €25 for six months or €45 for a year. You will receive Ecards on their birthdays and at Christmas, and there will be options via our website and Facebook page for sponsors to contact us to check in on their chosen animal. If your sponsored dog or cat is adopted before the time limit, you can choose another animal to be informed about. Sponsorships can also be purchased as gifts.



**For more information you can contact CAS on 601 629 938, visit the shop, or see us online at [www.casnerja.webs.com](http://www.casnerja.webs.com) on our Facebook page \casnerja. We are also now on Instagram at: [cats\\_dogs29780](https://www.instagram.com/cats_dogs29780), and you can find us on Twitter by searching for Costa Animal Society Nerja.**

### Can you help CAS?

THE COSTA ANIMAL Society (CAS) is always in need of more volunteer helpers in a number of areas so if you have spare time to fill, please make contact! In particular, we are currently seeking someone or ones who can help with

fundraising and social media promotion.

In addition, fosterers are always required to take short-term care of animals until a permanent home can be found. CAS will provide fosterers with all they need: food, medicine, bedding, leads, etc., as well as advice at any time. Even if you are only here for few months a year, CAS would appreciate your help.

**For general enquiries and a no-obligation chat, feel free to contact Mae on 601 629 938.**

Despite the horrors of the pandemic, the Brexit chaos, etc, CAS relies exclusively on donations to cope with the continuous flow of abandoned dogs and cats requiring our attention. If you could chip in a little to help, or consider becoming a member of CAS, we and the animals would be most grateful.

**For more information you can contact CAS on 601 629 938, visit the shop, or see us online at [www.casnerja.webs.com](http://www.casnerja.webs.com) on our Facebook page \casnerja. We are also now on Instagram at: [cats\\_dogs29780](https://www.instagram.com/cats_dogs29780), and you can find us on Twitter by searching for Costa Animal Society Nerja.**

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*\*PayPal donations are also accepted through our website [www.casnerja.webs.com](http://www.casnerja.webs.com), under the "Donate" tab.*

## VETERINARY CLINIC

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# Axarquia Animal Rescue

## ROCKY - THE ROCK STAR! (AAR 2449)

ON THE 14TH AUGUST Axarquia Animal Rescue (AAR) were made aware of a emaciated, injured large Mastin dog collapsed on a terrace in Riogordo. His finders rushed to help him and instantly realised that this was extremely serious and he was losing a lot of blood. A dash to the vet and it was discovered that, as well as being malnourished and infested with fleas and worms, he had been shot in the back at close quarters by a shotgun.

### ...ROCKY UPDATE... ROCKY UPDATE...ROCKY UPDATE...

You may remember Rocky, he was found with over 100 pellets in his back end.. After a lot of vet visits and round the clock cleaning of wounds etc, he is doing well in



his foster home, and his last major wound is healing so well now that it is very small. He has another vet visit soon, and hopefully if the vet is satisfied with his wound healing, we will get the thumbs up for him to go to his new forever home. We are delighted to say that Rocky will be adopted to a lovely home in Competa.

**Cooper 2457 and Boo 2458 are a beautiful bonded pair still looking for their forever home.**

*Can anyone take these two on together?*

**BOO IS A NERVOUS dog who needs someone with the patience to gain her trust so she can give them all the love and cuddles they could imagine, Cooper is a totally chilled out golden retriever. They both love playing with other dogs.**

They've been in kennels for a couple of months and really need to be back in a loving home environment.



<https://axarquiaanimalrescue.com/meetme.php?id=2457>  
<https://axarquiaanimalrescue.com/meetme.php?id=2458>  
Register your interest by emailing - [axarquia-rescue@hotmail.com](mailto:axarquia-rescue@hotmail.com)

## Hi, my name is Flash (AAR1329) Born 31.10.14.

**AT THE END** of June my life was turned upside down. I had spent the previous 5 years enjoying my life with my owner. Sadly she became unwell and was no longer able to care for me. I am now living in kennels and after 5 years of living in a home I can tell you I would much rather be back in a home again.

I love people, other dogs and nice long walks. I don't like cats and will chase them away.

I am hoping someone will offer me a foster home or even better my forever home, I'm not looking forward to

**FLASH - AAR1329**  
**Born 31.10.2014**  
email: [axarquia-rescue@hotmail.com](mailto:axarquia-rescue@hotmail.com)



Hi,  
My name is Flash. I am living in kennels but would much prefer a foster or forever home



spending the winter months in the kennels, would much prefer to cuddle up with you, all nice and snuggly. If you can offer me a foster home it needs to be within the Axarquia region of Spain.

If you can offer me a forever home it can be in Spain or, as I have my passport, I am ready to travel to the UK or other European Countries.

[www.axarquiaanimalrescue.com/meetme.php?id=1329](http://www.axarquiaanimalrescue.com/meetme.php?id=1329)  
email: [axarquia-rescue@hotmail.com](mailto:axarquia-rescue@hotmail.com)

## Buddy AAR 2453

**BEAUTIFUL BUDDY, OUR brave little trooper who was found in the most horrendous state, totally hairless and so severely emaciated that we didn't think he'd make it, WELL just look at him now!**



Buddy is thriving under the care of his foster angel. His hair is growing back, he is gaining weight everyday and

he is looking really rather gorgeous, and don't even get me started on those ears! Just precious! Buddy is a playful and happy puppy who loves living with his other fur buddies. His tail is always wagging and he is such a friendly and sociable boy. He loves his toys; he didn't know what they were before. Buddy is learning to be the much loved puppy that he always should have been! All Buddy needs now



**Axarquia Animal Rescue**  
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# Christmas is great...

LOTS OF LOVELY food, presents, parties and Christmas movies on TV, but it can also be a stressful time for your pets so we need to make sure it's a happy time for them too. If you're entertaining, you may wish to keep your pets in a quiet room away from the noise and activity. Although pets are naturally social creatures, they can be overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle of celebrations and parties. Making sure there's a space where they can go to relax and enjoy some quiet time will help them remain calm and well-rested.



Did you know that some of the food that we eat at Christmas can be toxic to dogs? Many common treats and snacks we humans enjoy at Christmas can be dangerous to our pets. Animals digest and metabolise food differently to

humans, so what might be perfectly fine for us can be poisonous to them. Most people know that chocolate is dangerous for dogs, but there are lots of popular festive ingredients and foods that your pets' bodies are simply not designed to eat. Pets can get into food they're not supposed to eat very quickly, so we have to be extra vigilant at this time of year. Handbags, gifts under the tree, food left on tables and in rubbish bags are common places where pets will often steal foods that can make them sick.

### Christmas Foods that are Toxic for pets:

**Fruit cake and Christmas pudding:** raisins (and grapes) are toxic to cats and dogs. They are toxic to their kidneys and can cause lethargy, excessive thirst, vomiting and in serious cases can be fatal.

**Alcohol and caffeine:** these are both toxic for pets.

**Avocados:** these contain persin which causes symptoms ranging from vomiting and diarrhoea to cardiac arrest and death.

**Chocolate:** for cats and dogs, chocolate can cause elevated heart rate, seizures, vomiting and diarrhoea. **Dark chocolate** in particular contains much greater amounts of theobromine which is the ingredient that's toxic and if your dog eats any of this, then a visit to the vet will be necessary.

**Macadamia nuts:** can cause vomiting, weakness and tremors if eaten by dogs.

**Onions and leeks:** these contain disulphides and sulfoxides, which can damage red blood cells if eaten by cats and dogs.

**Pits and seeds of peaches, plums, persimmons, and apples:** these contain a substance that degrades to cyanide, which is toxic. The pits of peaches are also choking hazards that can cause blockages and damage to the intestine.

**Xylitol (a common ingredient in sugarless treats**

**and sugarless gum):** causes hypoglycaemia in dogs, which can lead to seizures and liver failure in severe cases.

**Sweet-corn cobs:** these can cause blockages in the small intestine that may need to be removed surgically. Don't let your dog chew on the cob.

**Why not make your dog some festive cookies as a treat that's just for them? This is a really easy recipe to make and your dog will love them!**

**Here's a simple recipe for you to try:-**

- 2/3 cup water
- 2 bananas, mashed
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 egg
- 4 1/2 cups whole wheat or all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 175°
2. In a large bowl, combine water, mashed bananas, honey, and egg.
3. As you're stirring, mix in the flour oats and baking powder.
4. Place the dough onto a floured surface and knead 5 to 8 minutes or until it's not sticky.
5. Roll out dough to 1/4-inch thickness and cut into shapes with a cookie cutter.
6. Place cut outs onto non-stick baking sheets and place in oven.
7. Bake for 20 minutes or until lightly browned.
8. Turn oven off and leave cookies in the oven for 30 more minutes to ensure they are dry and crisp.
9. Let biscuits cool on rack.



### Choose your decorations wisely

The foods listed above are not the only thing your pets might try to eat this Christmas. When decorating your home for the festivities, ensure your decorations are not a hazard for your pets. Make sure your tree is safe, avoid toxic plants, keep your animals from chewing on power cords or lights, be careful of sharp and delicate ornaments, monitor lit candles, and, if you own cats, skip the tinsel to avoid accidental ingestion and costly surgery!

**Try these animal friendly decorating tips instead:**

- Make sure your Christmas tree is safely secured to the floor, wall or ceiling and cannot easily topple over.
- Switch to battery or solar operated candles.
- Decorate with shatterproof ornaments such as those made from plastic, wood or paper.
- Keep lights and small decorations out of reach of animals.
- Use plastic LED lights, they are cool to the touch, durable, and energy efficient.

**Keep your pets safe and enjoy every moment of the festive season! Merry Christmas and a very Happy 2022 from everyone at Dog School Nerja!**

For more tips and ideas, or any other questions you might have, feel free to get in touch by dropping me a message on social media or sending me a quick email at [karen@dogschoolnerja.com](mailto:karen@dogschoolnerja.com).



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### ACROSS

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- 16 Variety of agate
- 17 Material for some keys
- 18 Ancient invader
- 19 German film director Riefenstahl
- 20 Rowdy of "Rawhide"
- 21 Attacker
- 23 \_\_\_ Fein
- 25 Aristocrats
- 26 Gambler's haunt
- 29 City near Venice
- 31 "All \_\_\_ Great and \_\_\_ Small"
- 33 Charlie Brown expletive
- 37 Chess opening?
- 38 Hot
- 41 A couple in Scotland
- 42 Sharp ache
- 44 Futilely
- 46 No longer asleep
- 49 Connecting passage
- 50 North African

### DOWN

- 1 Do as directed
- 2 Embargoed country
- 3 Jogging gait
- 4 Loss of memory
- 5 Attacks
- 6 Body part
- 7 "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" author
- 8 Plenty
- 9 Nearby
- 10 Jeep feature
- 11 Ryan or Tatum
- 12 Novelist ..... Reid Banks
- 13 Departures

- 22 Debtor's letters
- 24 It may be common or proper
- 26 Soviet inits.
- 27 Math measurement
- 28 Observed
- 29 Victim of a 1955 coup
- 30 "For unto us ..... is given"
- 32 Hourly fee, e.g.
- 34 Not very much
- 35 Small offshoot
- 36 Store's special event
- 39 Gray wolf
- 40 Generous giving
- 43 Actress Paltrow
- 45 Called on
- 47 Meal starter
- 48 Lancelot, e.g.
- 50 Evans or Gray
- 51 Spoken language
- 52 Italian's word of approval
- 53 Sanctify
- 55 Hello or goodbye
- 56 With proficiency
- 58 The Jets, for one
- 59 Art Deco artist
- 60 Raise



# Could one shot kill the Flu?

A 'universal' flu vaccine could bring one of the world's longest pandemics to an end

by Matthew Hutson



**IN 2009, GLOBAL health officials started tracking a new kind of flu. It appeared first in Mexico, in March, and quickly infected thousands. Influenza tends to kill the very young and the very old, but this flu was different. It seemed to be severely affecting otherwise healthy young adults.**

American epidemiologists soon learned of cases in California, Texas, and Kansas. By the end of April, the virus had reached a high school in Queens, where a few kids, returning from a trip to Mexico, had infected a third of the student body. The Mexican government closed its schools and banned large gatherings, and the U.S. considered doing the same. 'It was a very scary situation,' Richard Besser, who was then the acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told me. Early estimates suggested that the 'swine flu,' as the new strain became known, killed as many as fourteen per cent of those it infected, a case fatality rate more than two hundred times higher than typical seasonal flu. The virus soon spread to more than a hundred and fifty countries, and the Obama Administration considered delaying the start of school until after Thanksgiving, when a second wave could be under way. Manufacturers worried about vaccine supplies. Like most flu vaccines, the one for the swine flu was grown in chicken eggs. 'Even if you yell at them, they don't grow faster,' Tom Frieden, who replaced Besser as the director of the C.D.C., said, at a press conference.

In the end, the world got lucky. The early stats were misleading: although swine flu was extremely contagious, it wasn't especially deadly. Sometimes the reverse is true. Avian flu, which spread across the world during the winter of 2005-06, is not particularly transmissible but is highly lethal, killing more than half of those it

infects. Each flu virus has its own epidemiological profile, determined by its genetic makeup, and flu genes shift every year. Howard Markel, a physician and historian of epidemics who, in the early two-thousands, helped invent the concept of 'flattening the curve,' compared influenza's swappable genetic components to 'two wheels of fortune.' A double whammy, ease of spread combined with lethality, could make covid-19, or even the 1918 flu, which killed between forty million and a hundred million people, look like a twenty-four-hour bug. After the swine flu's relatively harmless nature became apparent, many people asked if the alarm it provoked had been warranted. A Swiss survey found that trust in institutions had decreased. Some scientists and officials accused the World Health Organization of stirring up a 'faked' pandemic to justify its budget. But most drew the opposite conclusion from the experience. Trying to prepare for a deadly flu pandemic had left them more alarmed. 'There was just a sense of overwhelming relief,' Besser said. 'If this had been like 1918, we sure weren't ready.'

In truth, we're never fully ready for the flu. We know it's coming, like the first fall leaf, and yet three times in the past century, in 1918, 1957, and 1968, it has flattened us, killing a million or more each time. Even in ordinary years, the disease infects a billion people around the world, killing hundreds of thousands; one study estimated that it costs the United States economy close to a hundred billion dollars annually. Our primary weapon against the virus, the flu vaccine, is woefully inadequate. Over the last decade and a half in the United States, flu vaccines have prevented illness only forty per cent of the time; in particularly bad years, when vaccines were less fine-tuned to the strains that were circulating, they were only ten-per-cent protective. Today, the coronavirus pandemic is rightfully the object of our most strenuous efforts. And yet, as the infectious-disease specialists David Morens, Jeffrey Taubenberger, and Anthony Fauci wrote, in a 2009 article in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, that 'we are living in a pandemic era that began around 1918,' when the flu used shipping networks to traverse the world. Since the 1918 pandemic, this century-long, multi-wave pandemic has killed roughly the same number of people. We've controlled a vast number of diseases with vaccination, chicken pox, diphtheria, measles, mumps, polio, rabies, rubella, smallpox, tetanus, typhoid, whooping cough, yellow fever, and, to some degree, we've added covid-19 to the list. But the pathogens behind those diseases tend to be relatively static compared with the flu, which returns each year in a vexingly different form. For decades, scientists have dreamed of what some call a 'universal' flu vaccine, one that could target many strains of the virus. A universal vaccine would save countless lives not just this year but every year; as those numbers add up, it would become one of the greatest medical breakthroughs in history. Until recently, it's been beyond the reach of molecular biology.

But new technologies are extending our abilities, and researchers are learning how to see through the flu's disguises. Without knowing it, we're living on the cusp of a remarkable scientific achievement. One of the world's longest pandemics could soon be coming to an end.

What we call 'the flu' is really plural. Every season, several strains circulate. When it's summer in one hemisphere, flu infections surge in the other. Virologists at the W.H.O. investigate the viruses and share what they learn with pharmaceutical companies; pharmaceutical researchers then often develop quadrivalent vaccines, which target four separate strains simultaneously. It's the shotgun approach.

It takes more than six months to design, test, and manufacture a season's worth of flu vaccine. In that time, a lot can change. Out in the world, strains mutate, jostling for dominance; prevalent varieties fade away, and sleepers come to the fore. Arnold Monto, an epidemiologist at the University of Michigan who has advised the Food and Drug Administration on flu-vaccine targeting, told me that choosing strains to target requires 'science and a little bit of art.' The selected flu viruses mutate further as a result of vaccine manufacturing. By the time a needle reaches your arm, there's a good chance that the vaccine might be off target or obsolete.

Each strain of the flu can be seen as plural, too. Morrens, Taubenberger, and Fauci explain that 'it is helpful to think of influenza viruses not as distinct entities but as eight-member 'gene teams.' 'A flu virus, they write, 'must sometimes trade away one or more team members to make way for new gene 'players' with unique skills.' The surface of a virus is covered by a forest of proteins; as the virus's genes change, the proteins change along with them. From a vaccine perspective, two proteins are of preëminent importance. The first, hemagglutinin (HA), helps the virus break into cells; the second, neuraminidase (NA), helps it break out of them. The cryptic code names given to flu viruses, H1N1, H3N2, and so on, reflect the dozens of numbered variations in which these proteins come. The variations themselves mutate when the virus reproduces, making vaccine targeting even more difficult: flu vaccines focus on the more vulnerable HA proteins, and must be tailored to fit the newest version of the virus.

Some viruses are siloed within a single species. But the flu migrates easily among several species, and this adds to its recombinatory range. 'There are hundreds of warm-blooded animals that are routinely infected with flu virus,' Taubenberger, who is the chief of the Viral Pathogenesis and Evolution Section at *niaid*, told me. 'It can move from birds to horses to pigs to humans.' If a bird is infected with two strains of the flu at once, those strains may combine to create a new virus; that virus, in turn, may enter another animal. In 1918, H1N1 infected humans, who passed the disease on to pigs; the swine flu that so alarmed epidemiologists in 2009 emerged when two of the pig strains converged, then returned to humans. The

existence of so-called animal reservoirs for the flu makes it more likely that, in any given year, virologists will confront a radically altered opponent. It also means that herd immunity is nearly impossible to achieve. 'Viruses like smallpox or measles or polio that are specifically adapted to humans ...if you vaccinate enough people to generate herd immunity, you can actually eliminate the virus,' Taubenberger said. 'But flu can never be eliminated, because it's in hundreds of species of animals, and it's constantly moving around. So, we need a better strategy.' Vaccines contain antigens, complex molecules that prime our immune systems to produce effective antibodies. Sometimes, antigens are synthetic molecules designed to mimic parts of the target virus; in other cases, they are actually real parts of the virus that have been cleaved off. The antigen in the covid-19 vaccines is a version of the spike-shaped protein that sars-CoV-2 uses to enter our cells. The flu's equivalent, the HA protein, looks like a mushroom. Since the nineteen-forties, we've made flu vaccines in more or less the same way: researchers grow the virus in eggs, then split it open using chemicals which deactivate the virus but leave the mushroom proteins intact. Unfortunately, when our immune systems build antibodies in response to those proteins, they tend to target the cap of the mushroom, where its most mutable elements reside. Researchers don't yet understand why our antibodies aim for the most changeable part of our adversary. But

it's not the best outcome, a more effective antibody would attach to and disable the less mutable stem. Börries Brandenburg, a scientific director at Janssen Vaccines, which is part of Johnson & Johnson, told me about how the company has approached the cap problem: 'We say, O.K., if the immune system keeps getting fooled by the head of the HA, we're just going to use the French solution and take off the head. We present the immune system with a molecule that is headless.' Creating a capless mushroom, what the Janssen researchers call a 'mini-HA', is harder than it sounds. Proteins, such as HA, are actually combinations of hundreds of smaller molecules called amino acids; these acids emerge linked together in sequence, like pearls on a necklace, from factories within our cells. Eventually, the necklace twists and curls in on itself, forming a 3-D shape. The mushroom, therefore, can't be sliced and diced; decapitate it, and the pearls go tumbling. A protein designer who severs its loops must find ways to close them off. When we spoke, Brandenburg's video-chat backdrop was an Escher illustration of staircases going every which way. As the call ended, I commented that the recursive pathways behind him were reminiscent of looping chains of amino acids. He saw them differently: 'This illustrates how research goes,' he said. In 2019, researchers at the Vaccine Research Center, which is part of niad, began a clinical trial for a universal vaccine that

used another approach. On the surface of a nanoparticle called ferritin, a naturally occurring, spherical assemblage of proteins, used by the body to transport iron in the bloodstream, they arranged a number of mushroom stems in a regular geometric pattern. The immune system responds with special alacrity to orderly arrays of foreign particles; it seems to be more alarmed by soldiers marching in formation than by individuals shambling along. Barney Graham, then the deputy director of the Vaccine Research Center, told me that 'one of the keys to solving the universal flu problem' might be 'finding new ways of displaying the protein to make it more immunogenic.' (He retired in August.) It's also possible to stud a nanoparticle not with identical stems but with a variety of caps, the 'mosaic' approach. In 2019, scientists at the Vaccine Research Center reported that they'd tested a mosaic flu vaccine on mice; each nanoparticle of the vaccine featured the heads of up to eight different flu strains. It successfully teed up the production of antibodies capable of neutralizing a range of flu viruses that had appeared between 1918 and 2009. This year, the same group reported a mosaic vaccine that could also protect people against avian flu variants that are especially dangerous to humans. A version of the vaccine has entered clinical trials. Other researchers have eschewed decapitation: instead of cutting off the mushroom caps, they replace them. In 2019, niad

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## Could one shot kill the Flu?

A 'universal' flu vaccine could bring one of the world's longest pandemics to an end  
by Matthew Hutson



...continued

a common stem with an 'exotic' cap derived from a bird flu. The exotic cap is useful, oddly, because it elicits a smaller antibody response. The immune system responds strongly to things it's seen before. Presented with a completely unfamiliar head, it mounts a more vigorous response to the more familiar stem.

What unites all of these approaches is the idea that it might be possible to design a perfect antigen, a single entity that inspires universal immunity. Jacob Glanville, a forty-year-old computational 'immuno-engineer' who studies antibody targeting, has come up with an alternative path. In 2012, Glanville left Pfizer, where he was a principal scientist, to start an immunology Ph.D. at Stanford and launch an antibody-discovery company called Distributed Bio. Several years earlier, researchers at the biotechnology company Crucell had shown that a few fortunate people already have antibodies that work against many different strains of the flu; Glanville took notice. Somehow, the immune systems of those flu-resistant people had solved most of the universal-immunity problem on their own, without access to designer antigens. Glanville wanted to understand how this was possible, and why it happened so rarely.

Every HA protein is different. Any single antibody that works against multiple versions, therefore, must have found a way to attack a shared weak spot. Ideally, our immune systems, when faced with a range of related foes, would seek out their common Achilles' heel. And yet they do not seem to be very good at identifying areas on proteins that are 'conserved' across many variations. Immunologists have offered a few explanations for this weakness. Some have argued that conserved sites too closely resemble our own cellular structures: it would be risky for the immune system to start attacking them with antibodies.

Glanville thought that the story might be simpler. Using cloud computing, he ran hun-

distributed fifty million dollars in grant money to launch the Collaborative Influenza Vaccine Innovation Centers, or civics. A team of grant recipients at Mount Sinai, led by the virologist Florian Krammer, used their money to combine

dreds of millions of simulations of antibodies attaching to HA proteins. He found that only one in a million antibodies successfully docked to a universally conserved site. The problem, it turned out, was that each viral strain contains many more sites that mutate than conserved sites. This was true even for the stems of the HA mushrooms. The stems may be less mutable than the caps, but they, too, differ more than they are alike. This, Glanville thought, did not bode well for attempts to create stem-based universal vaccines.

Still, some people's immune systems had managed to create near-universal flu antibodies; this suggested that the problem was solvable. Glanville and his team started asking how more immune systems could be persuaded to solve it. They studied every HA protein they had on file from 1918 to 2007, and tried to analyze the differences between them. HA proteins are so complex that assessing their differences is essentially impossible for most human minds. Instead, the team used artificial intelligence to tackle the problem. The A.I. identified the thirty most diverse HA proteins of the past hundred years; afterward, the researchers created an HA cocktail vaccine containing mushroom caps from all of these viruses. Their theory is that, across so many diverse strains, no single mutable part will be consistent. Instead, it's the conserved features that will stand out. A fugitive in disguise might evade capture, but arrange thirty photos of him in thirty different disguises on a detective's pinboard, and persistent, identifying features might reveal themselves: one shoulder that's a little higher than the other, or a nose that's tilted by half a degree. During the coronavirus pandemic, Operation Warp Speed has funnelled billions of government dollars into vaccine development. The pursuit of a new flu vaccine is a smaller affair. Glanville grew up in a small town in Guatemala, his father owned a bed-and-breakfast, and his mother worked as an artist, and Centivax, the company spun out from Distributed Bio to focus on the flu vaccine and other efforts, does some of its research there, to save on costs. Glanville's brother, a construction worker, helped the company build a testing facility for the animal trials its researchers conduct on pigs. In 2019, after administering its vaccine to the pigs, Glanville's team tested the resulting antibodies against influenza strains from 2009 to 2015. The antibodies neutralized all six seasons of the flu, even though the vaccine had been designed using HA proteins that were only as recent as 2007: its immunity was predictive. Two independent labs, funded by the Gates Foundation, have since replicated their results in pigs and ferrets. Centivax is now conducting so-called live-challenge trials, in which scientists vaccinate pigs and ferrets and then deliberately expose them to flu viruses. So far, the results are promising, with some groups of protected animals showing no symptoms and some groups of unprotected animals losing more than ten per cent of their body weight. If more studies go according to plan, human clinical trials will follow. Mean-

while, they're also developing a universal flu vaccine for the pig market. 'There's financial reasons to do it,' Glanville said. 'But also, pigs are your major recombination species. It would probably be a requirement for eradication of influenza. Otherwise, it just keeps popping up.'

At one point last year, there were dozens of coronavirus vaccines in development; not all of them have panned out. With vaccines, it's best to bet on all the horses. Last year, the horse closest to the finish line was Multimeric-001 (M-001), a universal flu vaccine made by the Israeli company BiondVax. That summer, BiondVax's C.O.O., Elad Mark, gave me a FaceTime tour of the site's twenty-thousand-square-foot manufacturing facility, in the Jerusalem BioPark. The trials for M-001 were in Phase III, when researchers give a vaccine to thousands of people and perform tests to see if it's safe and effective. Wearing white protective garb head to foot, Mark walked me through the space, which was crowded with shiny metal machinery for protein production, purification, dilution, and syringe-filling crowded the labs. Most of the action was in the first room, where one white-suited researcher sat at a computer workstation and another collected samples from a tank. 'This is Haya,' Mark said, gesturing to the sample collector. 'She is our singer. She has an amazing voice, a beautiful voice.'

BiondVax and several other promising vaccine companies have taken the approach of targeting T cells, which are another line of immune defense, alongside antibodies. If a virus gets past a host's antibodies and infects a cell, the immune system attempts to kill that cell, ripping up the viruses it finds and ingesting their particles, called peptides; it then shows these bits to other parts of the immune system as a kind of heads-up. T cells attend to the warnings; the next time they see those peptides, they attack the cells that contain them. T cells are an appealing object for flu-vaccine research because, unlike antibodies, which target proteins on the surfaces of viruses, T cells identify bits of proteins from the viral interior, which tend to remain constant from one strain of flu to another. They look beneath the mushroom. Whereas Glanville, at forty, is committed to studying the flu's past, Ruth Armon, the longtime chair of BiondVax's scientific advisory board, has lived it. Now eighty-eight, she began her research in 1957. At first, she studied the manufacture of synthetic peptides. She and her doctoral adviser were curious about whether these artificial bits could elicit antibodies against entire natural proteins, and found that they could. Focusing on T cells, she successfully developed a universal flu vaccine, tested successfully on mice, in the nineteen-eighties, before launching into human research with her colleague Tamar Ben-Yedidia, in the nineties. For two decades, they surveyed the genetic sequences of many strains of flu, and created synthetic peptides that evoked nine conserved regions from three proteins: HA and internal proteins called NP (nucleoprotein) and M1 (matrix 1).

The resultant vaccine, M-001, had been

through five Phase II trials with promising results. In one study, the antibodies of elderly participants who'd received the vaccine in 2011 and 2012 were found to neutralize the strains of the flu that struck during the winter of 2014-15. In Phase III, medical professionals administered the vaccine to thousands of participants, age fifty and older, across Eastern Europe in 2018 and 2019. Arnon has become accustomed to sitting on the edge of her seat. Still, last year, as the trial was wrapping up, and as covid was bearing down across Europe, she was in an agony of anticipation. 'The tension is dramatic,' she told me. If the results from the trials showed that M-001 offered greater than seventy-per-cent protection against that year's flu strains, then the F.D.A. and European Medicines Agency could approve it for commercial use within two years, perhaps even sooner, given the risk of a coronavirus-influenza 'twindemic.'

Haya's singing ability aside, the real star of my BiondVax tour was a three-hundred-litre cylindrical fermentation tank. It was about the size of a home fridge, and, inside, genetically engineered bacteria produced the vaccine, a string of peptides. The fermentation process was not much different from making a microbrew; from start to syringe, Mark explained, production took about two days, allowing the facility to produce ten to forty million doses a year. Building it, Mark said, had cost about fifteen million dollars, a risky investment before the vaccine had been approved. He argued that the jump

start would avoid a delay to market: 'If we waited to get approval, and only then designed, constructed, and validated the facility, it would take us at least three years.' In 2020, people in South America, Africa, Asia, and Australia showed up at their doctors' offices with flu-like symptoms. They subjected their nasal cavities to cotton swabs; medical personnel chilled the samples and sent them to National Influenza Centres in Melbourne, São Paulo, Cape Town, and elsewhere. Researchers at those centers genetically sequenced the flu viruses that they found, and sent a selection of samples on to the W.H.O., which performed further testing. From these data, the W.H.O. selected, in February of this year, the flu strains to target with the Northern Hemisphere flu shots. Those shots are available now; perhaps you got one. Meanwhile, the same process unfolded on a staggered schedule in the Global North. In September, the W.H.O. recommended targets for the Southern Hemisphere's next flu season. Every six months, it's the same gamble. The virus turns its wheels of fortune, rearranging its genes; we make our preparations and hope for the best. Arnon, Glanville, and other researchers look to change the game. (Researchers at several companies, including Pfizer and Moderna, are pursuing mRNA flu vaccines, but it's early days.) The flu, for its part, threatens to mutate in ways for which we're unprepared.

For now, we remain on the cusp of a breakthrough that could neutralize our foe. A few

months after my tour, BiondVax announced the results of its Phase III trial.

The researchers found that, in a randomized, double-blind test involving more than twelve thousand people, M-001 did not significantly reduce the incidence or severity of the flu. 'For now, the M-001 vaccine candidate remains on the shelf, and we may return to it in the future,' Joshua Phillipson, the company's director of business development and investor relations, told me. A new C.E.O. has been appointed; in a recent letter to shareholders, he promises to diversify the company's risk 'along several axes' in the future. It has begun a new collaboration with the Max Planck Society, in Germany, focussed on new immune molecules called nanobodies. Arnon, needless to say, was disappointed. On the other hand, she knows from experience how slow the going can be right up until the finish line. In 1996, the F.D.A. approved Copaxone, a drug Arnon developed, for the treatment of multiple sclerosis. It was a huge leap forward in treatment for the disease, and ushered in what felt like an instant transformation for patients all across the world. For Arnon, however, the approval was the culmination of a long and arduous process; developing the drug had taken twenty-nine years. 'The first time that you see that you can prevent infection with something that you synthesize by your own hands, there is an excitement that can't be really explained in words,' she said. Still, 'you have to be patient. And you have to live long.'

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## Southern Pecan Cheese Wafers

SERVINGS: 60  
 PREP TIME: 15 MINS  
 COOK TIME: 18 MINS  
 CHILL TIME: 2 HRS  
 TOTAL TIME: 2 HRS 33 MINS

If you have never had Southern Pecan Cheese Wafers you are missing out! This cheese crackers recipe is nothing like you have ever bought at the shop. It is a really fun cocktail appetizer and goes great with drinks and a cheese plate!

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter, softened (2 sticks)
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 cups flour, spooned and leveled
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika, optional
- 1 pound sharp cheddar cheese, freshly shredded\*
- 60-70 pecan halves

### Instructions:

1. In a large bowl or stand mixer, beat the butter and 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce until smooth and creamy.
2. Add 2 cups flour, 1/2 teaspoon salt, cayenne pepper, and smoked



3. paprika, if you're using it. Beat well, scraping the sides.
3. Add the cheddar cheese and beat well, scraping the sides and bottom of the bowl.
4. Cover the dough and chill well, at least 2 or 3 hours or up to 3 days.
5. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
6. Roll the dough into 1-inch balls and place on the baking sheet 1 inch apart. Press the top of each ball with a fork (if the fork sticks, coat with flour).
7. Place a pecan half on top of each wafer.
8. Bake at 350 degrees for 18-20 minutes, until the edges are quite brown.
9. Let cool on the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Store covered on the counter. Best served within 2 days.
10. Re-heating: I made these a day in advance as Thanksgiving appetizers. They lose a bit of their crunch by day 2, so I spread them out on baking sheets and baked at 350 for about 5 minutes until they get crispy again. Worked great!

### Notes:

\*This comes out to about 3 cups, very well packed. You can also make these cookies as slice-and-bakes. Once the dough has come together split in half and shape each half into a log about 12-14 inches long. Wrap in plastic and chill for 2-3 hours. When you are ready to bake, use a sharp knife to cut into 1/2 inch slices. Place on a baking sheet and top each wafer with a pecan half, gently pressing down (It won't go in to the cold dough very far, but once it's baked it will stick.) Bake as directed. It would be fun to package up a roll of chilled dough and gift it to someone with a bag of pecans and instructions to go with it. A nice holiday gift that is not so sugary.



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I also tried making these with chopped pecans in the dough. Add about 3-4 cups chopped pecans to the dough and stir until incorporated. Shape into logs, chill, and bake as directed. If you are short on pecans, this is a good way to make sure every wafer gets some pecan.

## Goat Cheese, Pesto, and Sun-Dried Tomato Terrine

SERVINGS: 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 15 MINS

CHILL TIME: 30 MINS

TOTAL TIME: 45 MINS

Goat Cheese, Pesto, and Sun Dried Tomatoes come together to make this impressively tall terrine. Serve this at Christmas or New Years Eve (or at any party where you need a showstopper appetizer). Serve it with toasted baguettes!

### Ingredients:

- 10 oz. goat cheese
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- black pepper, freshly ground
- 3 tablespoons basil pesto, homemade or store-bought
- 5 oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and finely chopped
- 1/4 cup pine nuts, + 1 tablespoon, toasted, coarsely chopped, and divided
- Extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling
- 1 small baguettes, sliced

### Instructions:

1. Line the inside of a 2-cup sharply sloping bowl (about 4 inches across the top) with plastic. A 2-cup glass measuring cup works great. Let the ends of the plastic extend over the sides a few inches.
2. In a mixing bowl, mash the goat cheese and 1/4 cup of the cream with the paddle attachment of a stand mixer, or use a fork. Add 1/4 teaspoon salt and freshly ground pepper to taste; add more cream if the cheese hasn't softened. The cheese should be sticking to itself and not super crumbly.
3. Spoon about one-third of the cheese into the plastic-lined bowl and pack it into an even layer with the bottom of a glass or a spoon. Spread the pesto almost completely to the sides of the first layer of cheese. Top with another third of the cheese, then add the sun-dried tomatoes.
4. In a small dry pan, add the pine nuts and turn the heat to medium. Toast until the nuts have browned just slightly and have become aromatic. Remove from pan immediately, then chop roughly. Set aside about a tablespoon of the nuts.
5. Add all but 1 tablespoon of the pine nuts on top of the sun dried tomatoes. Top with the remaining goat cheese. Pack down, fold the plastic over, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or up to 2 days.
6. About half an hour before serving, take the bowl out of the refrigerator. Pull on the edges of the plastic to loosen the terrine from the bowl. Invert the terrine onto a plate and carefully remove the plastic. Drizzle with a little olive oil, and let sit for 1/2 hour to reach room temperature. Sprinkle with the remaining pine nuts, add a few more grinds of pepper, and serve with sliced baguettes.



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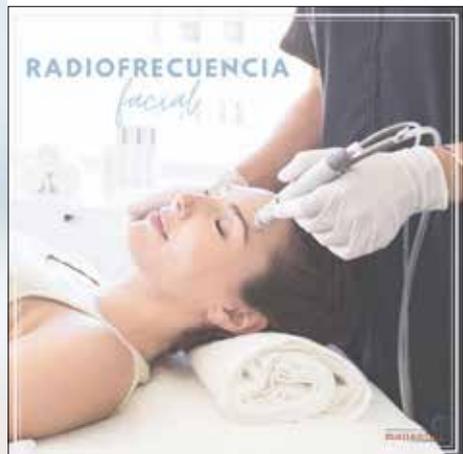
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# healthwise

## Man arrested in Barcelona after partner makes domestic abuse signal to healthcare worker

*The member of staff called the authorities when the victim used the gesture to call for help. The suspect was detained after the pair had been interviewed separately*

**POLICE OFFICERS IN the Catalonia region have arrested a man on suspicion of domestic abuse after his partner made the international signal for sexist violence – showing the palm of your hand, tucking in your thumb and closing your fingers – at a healthcare center.**

The incident took place on November 11 at a private clinic in the Barcelona district of Sarrià-Sant Gervasi. The couple in question were in the waiting room when the woman made the gesture to one of the staff mem-

bers. The healthcare worker called the emergency services and two officers from the regional police force, the Mossos d'Esquadra, arrived on the scene and interviewed the couple separately. The woman confirmed to officers that, for some time, she had been subject to "insults, disrespect and violent attitudes such as pushing." After taking his statement, the officers arrested the man on suspicion of mistreatment in the home.

Last month, the Mossos d'Esquadra published a tweet explaining how the use of the symbol – which has been promoted by organizations such as the Canadian Women's Foundation and the Women's Funding Network in the United States – can help victims of domestic abuse. Similar tweets have been published by other law-enforcement agencies.

This signal, designed to be used without the abuser noticing, has gone viral on social networks, in particular TikTok. Several weeks ago, a teenager who had been kidnapped in North Carolina was located after a motorcyclist realized that the youngster had made the symbol while she was a passenger in a car being driven by her kidnapper.

Meanwhile, Barcelona City Hall has put a campaign in place aimed at detecting and preventing domestic abuse, as well as attending to victims who have not reported their situation or who are subject to practices and behavior that is not punishable under Spanish law.

The team led by Barcelona Mayor Ada Colau has called the program Te acompañamos (or, We are with you), which involves a protocol for local police officers and a guide with a series of indications for the detection of possible domestic abuse victims.

### "Seven domestic violence reports"

City Hall pointed out that 84% of such victims murdered in Spain at the hands of their partners and ex-partners had not reported their abuser. The councillor in charge of social and feminist rights, Laura Pérez, said that the new protocol would improve the prevention and detection of such situations, improving the efficiency of the response and attention to the victims and improving municipal coordination with the Mossos.

"Last month there were seven reports of domestic violence," explained local police chief Sergi Amposta earlier this week. "Of these seven, four were clear-cut cases and ended up with the arrest of the assailant. For the other three, when officers arrived the man had left and the woman did not want to file a complaint." Amposta added that the new protocol will help to establish the facts in this kind of situation.

LUNES	MARTES	MIÉRCOLES	JUEVES	VIERNES
PILATES 9:15H	TORROX PILATES 9:15H NERJA: PILATES 9:15H	PILATES 9:15H	TORROX PILATES 9:15H NERJA: PILATES 9:15H	CLASES INDIVIDUALES
	PILATES 10:30H		PILATES 10:30H	CLASES INDIVIDUALES
FITNESS PARA MAYORES 12:00H	YOGA 11:30H	FITNESS PARA MAYORES 12:00H	YOGA 11:30H	CLASES INDIVIDUALES
PILATES + HIPOPRESIVOS 16:00H		PILATES + HIPOPRESIVOS 16:00H		
PILATES 17:00H	YOGA 17:00H	PILATES 17:00H	YOGA 17:00H	TALLER TEATRO INFANTIL 16:00H RESERVE SU PLAZA
ENTRENAMIENTO FUNCIONAL GRUPO 1 18:00H	YOGA AÉREO 18:30H	ENTRENAMIENTO FUNCIONAL GRUPO 1 18:00H	YOGA AÉREO 18:30H	COLUMPIO ACROBÁTICO ADOLESCENTES 17:30H DEL 24 SEP. AL 12 DIC.
ENTRENAMIENTO FUNCIONAL GRUPO 2 18:45H	PILATES 20:00H	ENTRENAMIENTO FUNCIONAL GRUPO 2 18:45H	PILATES 20:00H	DANZA DEL VIENTRE FUSIÓN 19:00H-21:00H RESERVE SU PLAZA
NERJA: PILATES 19:30H		NERJA: PILATES 19:30H		



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# healthwise

## Why the Covid-19 vaccines do not stop the virus from circulating

*Spain is seeing an uptick in coronavirus contagions among the vaccinated. While this is to be expected, it is not likely to lead to more serious cases of the disease*

**COVID-19 VACCINES PREVENT hospitalizations and death from the disease in more than 90% of cases, but they do not stop the transmission of the virus. That's why cases among the vaccinated are to be expected: a person who has been fully immunized can still contract SARS-CoV-2 and spread it to others, even if they too are vaccinated.**

In Spain, contagions have been rising despite the fact that 79% of the population is fully vaccinated against Covid-19. According to the latest Health Ministry report, released Thursday evening, the 14-day incidence rate has jumped to 104 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, up eight points since Wednesday. This is the first time the data point has risen above 100 cases in two months.

Meanwhile, in the regions of Navarre and the Basque Country the incidence rate is more than double the national average, coming in at 278 cases and 221 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively. The Health Ministry reported 6,315 new infections on Wednesday and added 29 deaths to the official toll, which now stands at 87,804.

Pressure on hospitals is also rising. According to the latest figures, 2,308 Covid-19 patients are in hospital, equating to an occupancy rate of 1.86%, up from 1.82% on Wednesday. In intensive care units (ICUs), 5% of beds are occupied by Covid-19 patients, who number 457. According to the Health Ministry's proposed traffic light system, a situation can be considered under control if the occupancy rate for hospital wards and ICUs is below 2% and 5%, respectively.

With infections rising, we look at the role of Covid-19 vaccines in preventing contagion and serious cases of the disease.

### **Do vaccines help prevent infection?**

Yes, although it is not known to what degree. Initial clinical trials on the effectiveness of the vaccines were not able to investigate this issue in depth given the conditions of the studies. To properly assess whether the vaccines prevent infection, researchers had to wait until vaccines were rolled out in the real world.

A study carried out in April on this subject, which looked at vaccine



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# Skin ...our largest organ!

**HUMAN SKIN HAS** a size of almost two square metres and it is the largest organ of the human body. Hair, nails, sebaceous glands and sweat glands all are part of the skin.

Our skin covers almost our entire body and therefore has a lot of jobs to master:

- Protection against all kinds of injuries
- Regulation of our body temperature
- Protection from UV radiation
- Defence against all kinds of infections from outside micro-organisms coming from outside such as viruses, bacterias, and fungi.

Besides its defensive role, the skin also serves as the border between the inside of our body and our environment.

We can call it an organ of communication; we explore our surroundings with our sense of touch, we feel temperatures, and skin receptors give off painful warning signals when we are in danger.

Communication also means that our appearance also gives signals to other people: the length, structure, and colour of our hair; the colour and texture of our skin; the wrinkles of our face; our smell and much more leads almost instinctively others to form a definitive picture of us.

Many phrases show the bond between the skin and the psyche:

- the skin is the mirror of the soul
- to jump out of one's skin
- to have thick skin
- to have thin skin
- to get under one's skin
- 'I've Got You Under My Skin' (Thank you Cole Porter and Frank Sinatra)
- Beauty is only skin deep
- and many others.

Of course, everybody is able to make a personal assessment of their skin condition. We normally feel very early if something is wrong because of burning, itching, pain, or change of appearance.

But there are a number of dermatoses and other skin dis-

**by Dr. Christoph Kuhn, Dermatology specialist at Clinica Santa Cecilia, Nerja.**

eases that are very important to have an early consultation with a qualified dermatologist. In the case of melanoma with metastasis, your very survival can depend on an early consultation with a skin medical specialist.

Over the years, we have seen an enormous increase in the

incidence of skin cancers, so it is important to have a periodic and professional skin check.

In the case of British, Irish, and all Northern Europeans that have come to live on the Costa del Sol, they should be checked twice per year as the increased exposure to the intense Iberian sun raised the skin cancer rates



to the the same as those living in New Zealand and Australia - which statistically have the highest skin cancer rates in the world.

Skin cancer does not burn. It does not itch or cause pain. It just grows and spreads in its pathologic way.

The prognosis is highly related to how early it has been diagnosed and removed.

Dr Kuhn is a specialist in dermatology. Originally from Germany, Dr Kuhn was the senior consultant at the Department of Dermatology at the University of Ulm and also the head of a large association of dermatologists in Bavaria.

Dr Kuhn treats all diseases of the skin, hair, and nails: infections, inflammatory disease like psoriasis or eczema, benign and malignant skin tumours, allergic disorders like food allergy, contact dermatitis or allergic rhinitis, varicose veins, and diseases of the anal region.

Dr Kuhn is also a specialist in UV radiation damaged skin.

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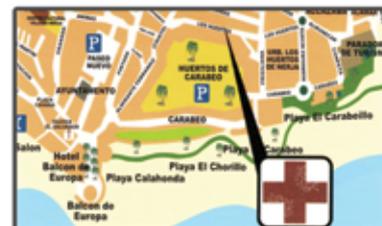
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# healthwise

effectiveness among 4,000 healthcare personnel and essential workers in the United States, found that the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines prevented 90% of coronavirus cases. Another study, which was carried out when the more-contagious delta variant had become dominant, found that the vaccines' effectiveness at preventing infections had dropped significantly – to 51% in the case of Pfizer and 73% for Moderna. In Spain, vaccines are between 70 and 90% effective at stopping contagions, according to the latest Health Ministry report on the issue, which was published October 3. "High global effectiveness is maintained even after several months have passed since vaccination and after the arrival and expansion of the delta variant at the end of June," the study states.

**Can you contract a serious case of Covid-19 if you are vaccinated?**

The vaccines approved for use in Spain – Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Janssen – are not 100% effective, meaning it is possible for vaccinated people to develop a serious case of Covid-19. But the large majority of serious cases are being recorded among the unvaccinated. According to data from the regions, six in 10 coronavirus patients in intensive care in Spain are unvaccinated. People who are immunized have 10 times more protection against developing serious illness.

**What percentage of the vaccinated develop serious cases of Covid-19?**

This is very difficult to determine and depends on the situation in each country. In all cases, however, the figure is extremely low. In the US, the infection rate among the vaccinated is between 0.01% and 0.54%, according to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, published at the end of June. The rate of hospitalization and death is also very low: 0.06% and 0.01%, respectively. A similar incidence for Covid-19 deaths was recorded in Israel.

**What is happening in Spain?**

The Spanish Health Ministry does not provide data on the vaccination status of new coronavirus infections nor of the Covid-19 patients in ICUs, despite repeated requests from this newspaper. What is known is that

most of the patients with serious cases of Covid-19 are unvaccinated. The vaccines are 90% effective at preventing hospitalizations among the under-80s, and 87% effective for those over the age of 80, according to the Health Ministry report from October 3. This study also found that although vaccine effectiveness falls slightly after five or more months, for the over-80 population the shots remain "considerably" effective at preventing infection and hospitalization.

**Will everyone need a vaccine booster shot?**

There is so far no data that supports giving a booster shot to healthy people under the age of 80, says Marcos López-Hoyos, the president of the Spanish Immunology Society. The expert indicates that the serious Covid-19 cases among the vaccinated are only being recorded among patients with existing health conditions and those over the age of 80. It is not clear why, but part of the explanation may be due to the impact of age on the immune system and because the over-80 population tends to have the most additional health conditions. "This is the collective that must receive a third dose. Right now, there is no reliable data that indicates it is needed for anyone else," says López-Hoyos.

**Can vaccines stop the virus from spreading?**

The available vaccines alone cannot stop the spread of the virus. But vaccination, combined with basic preventive measures such as proper hygiene, face masks and social distancing where needed, lowers transmission significantly. Simply wearing a face mask reduces the incidence of the coronavirus by more than 50%, according to a study based on data from 200 countries and published in the medical journal BMJ. For López-Hoyos, this is clearly the reason why countries such as Austria and Germany are seeing such a sharp rise in infections. "In these countries, fewer people are vaccinated, and despite this, they relaxed basic protection measures earlier. This should make us think that we need to maintain the use of face masks and the rest of the basic hygiene measures, because right now, it is the only way we have to curb the transmission of the virus," he says.

**What will happen with the coronavirus?**

In January of this year, a group of experts in viral evolution predicted that Covid-19 will become an asymptomatic infection, or at worst, a minor cold, between one and 10 years. But SARS-CoV-2 will never disappear, they said. Right now, this is the most plausible scenario for countries with high vaccination rates such as Spain, says López-Hoyos. Like many other infections, including the flu, there will be the odd serious case among vulnerable people and some deaths will be inevitable. But in general, the population will be protected by the vaccine and preventive measures.

**Could a more lethal variant of the coronavirus emerge?**

It's possible, but unlikely. So far, the variants that are more resistant to the body's immune system, and therefore, can lead to more serious illness – the gamma first detected in Brazil and the beta first identified in South Africa – have not become dominant. Instead, it is the strains of the coronavirus that are more transmissible – the delta first detected in India and the alpha first detected in England – that account for most cases.

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# PHYSIOTHERAPY INCEREBROVASCULAR ACCIDENTS

**NOWADAYS THE RELEVANCE of stroke or ictus is that it has become a major cause of death, disability, dependency, and hospital stays.** Rehabilitation plays a key role in the course of this disease. Initial physical examination is key to establishing a correct prognosis and we will speak of the "urgent treatment of physiotherapy" as the immediate intervention of physiotherapeutic measures aimed at treating the clinic caused by stroke.

The neurological physiotherapist will intervene during the first 24 hours of the accident, in the same hospital room, to assess upper limb function, trunk function, walking ability, spasticity or flaccidity, as well as emotional, cognitive and communication deficits.

In the acute phase these therapeutic interventions can modify the evolutionary course of the VCA and achieve a neuronal reactivation. This improvement is justified by two phenomena: the existence of an area of penumbra at the periphery of the ischemic zone, the damage of which is reversible, although for a short and variable period of about 3-6 hours if tissue reperfusion is achieved, and the resolution of the diaschisis (transynaptic distance failure in connected neurons in the damaged area).

In the subacute phase there could be an improvement in the medium and long term. There is a brain reorganization that can be modulated by rehabilitation techniques through a phenomenon of neuronal plasticity. That is why we must insist on early or urgent treatment within the field of physiotherapy. The process of relearning the movement

will have better results the less time it has passed since the patient did it normally until the moment of therapeutic intervention after the infarction, participating in memory and learning by repetition in the formation of new neural connections. This favors the predisposition of the brain for the acquisition of new motor skills.

Considering the above as a fundamental and important factor in the recovery of the stroke, we can also talk about other factors that will influence the treatment time of each session because, after experiences in clinical practice, I can say that in sessions of one hour daily results are very favorable in a short period of time, while sessions of less time and continuity do not achieve the same achievements.

Another influential factor is the patient's collaboration and motivation during treatment for the long-awaited return to normal. The patient often presents disorientation and lack of information about his illness, in some cases by doctors and sometimes by the limitations caused by stroke. In this context, it is appropriate to carry out an objective approach that we should do together with the patient, as well as to use positive incentive strategies, because in the end, physiotherapists are a guide on how each movement sequence should be carried out, but those who take the lead role and do it in practice are they.

As a conclusion we can say that neurological physiotherapy, indeed, has very positive short-term and long-term effects in patients with stroke during the whole course of the disease, being very important at the beginning, being able to reach in a large percentage of affected to the total recovery of the lesion. For during the same we must take into account the three key factors: precocity in the beginning of treatment, motivation of the patient and regularity in the time of dedication.

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# healthwise

## What is Argireline and why is it beneficial in skin care?

WITH SO MANY different ingredients in use in skin care products, it can be really easy to lose track of each of them individually.

However, here at all about beauty, we believe that knowledge is power. Really learning about the ingredients that are in your skin care products can help you shop smart, and invest in products that you know have proven, scientific benefits.

One of the ingredients most often talked about, especially when it comes to dealing with fine lines and wrinkles, is Argireline. How is it beneficial in a skin care routine, though, and does it really work?

### What is Argireline in Chemical Terms?

Argireline is the brand name for a product known chemically as acetyl hexapeptide-3 or acetyl hexapeptide-8. It is a synthetic six amino acid peptide, meaning it was created in a lab to look and perform exactly like the peptides that naturally occur inside the body.

Peptides, as a quick reminder, are made up of amino acids, often referred to as the 'building blocks' of protein. That makes them the foundation for being able to form other, essential proteins in the body, like collagen and elastin, which are an incredibly important part of understanding any skin care routine that focuses on anti-aging.

Argireline is a small fragment of a larger complex known as SNAP-25 (Synaptosomal-Associated Protein 25kDa), which works on the nervous system. SNAP-25 is also part of botulinum toxin, more commonly referred to as Botox, which is part of why the two products work so similarly.

However, although it does share some of the chemical components of botulinum toxin, it is important to note that Argireline is not a toxin, which is an important advantage that it has.

The ingredient is a larger, more complex molecule, which means it doesn't absorb thoroughly into the skin. That allows it to act on the top layer more readily. As the signs of wrinkles and fine lines occur on the epidermis, or outside layer, this can be a huge benefit.

### What is Argireline Used For?

The number one benefit of Argireline is its ability to help reduce the appearance of both fine lines and wrinkles on the face.

It is specifically good for helping to improve the appearance of areas on the face that are prone to developing what are known as 'dynamic' folds, which are the folds that are directly related to repetitive muscle movements. These are most common around the eyes, mouth, and on the forehead area. Argireline is also said to be able to optimize the function of collagen, which can not only help to smooth out the skin but also keep it moisturized. In general, Argireline is best when used for anti-aging concerns. It isn't quite as beneficial for younger, healthier skin, but it is still safe to use.

### How Does Argireline Work?

Argireline works on the face by reducing the ability of certain neurotransmitters to be able to activate movement in the muscles on the face, both big and small. While we don't often think about the fact that there is so much more going on under the surface of our skin to create the facial gestures that we take for granted, like smiling and frowning, the truth is that it actually involves a complex series of events that starts in the brain.

With less active neurotransmitters triggering the nerves in the face, those small muscle movements are limited. This means that they contract less, causing less wrinkles



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by taking away some of the repetitive motions that cause them. In addition, Argireline is said to be able to help promote the production of collagen. Collagen, as we briefly touched on earlier, is perhaps the most important protein involved in anti-aging skin care products. When we have enough collagen, our skin appears firm, strong, and youthful in appearance. This continues through our early 20s. Unfortunately, after that, our collagen production naturally decreases at a rate of around 1% a year. Once the body reaches menopause, that rate can increase to around 30% total for the five year period surrounding that change. That's why the face naturally appears thinner the more that we age.

**Why is Argireline Beneficial in Skin Care?**

Argireline is an incredible ingredient to use in any skin care product that focuses on anti-aging concerns.

A good example of one of these products is our Age-bye 24 hour Cream. The Argireline helps to prevent the muscle movement that leads to the formation of wrinkles, much like a gentle non-invasive botox equivalent that can be done at home, while the other two ingredients help to further boost lost collagen and stop the skin from aging further.

All it takes is just a quarter-sized amount of the cream rubbed gently into the face after cleansing, and serums if you're using them. It can be used both morning and evening. If using before applying makeup, allow at least 15 minutes for full absorption before you start.

Argireline is also great when combined with any other skin care ingredient, so you don't have to worry about other ingredients neutralizing its positive benefits. For instance, it's great when combined with Vitamin A (*Retinol*). As the eye area is one of the most common places people start to see the development of fine lines and wrinkles first (*'crow's feet' is a good example*), paying specific attention to this area is a good idea.

Also, in addition to choosing anti-aging skin care products that have proven ingredients, one of the best things that you can do for your skin is to make sure to wear sunscreen. This can't be stressed enough.

Many of the common complaints women have about their aging skin can actually be attributed not to the natural aging process but to the result of a lifetime of sun exposure. The more that the sun is able to impact your face, and the more that the UVA rays specifically are able to reach your skin without having to go through sunscreen, the quicker the collagen is broken down. This means your skin develops that aged, thinning, saggy look often much quicker than it naturally would have.

Applying sunscreen over your moisturizer before you leave the house is a quick and easy way to fight off the impact the sun can have on your face and how quickly it ages.

Developing a quality skin care routine from start to finish is the best way to work to counteract the signs of aging skin. Always cleanse your skin thoroughly, use gentle pressure when drying (*no rubbing, only patting*), and cater your skin care products to be buildable and to target exactly the skin related concerns that you have.

When you have a team of products working for you, instead of just one, you'll notice more results in a smaller amount of time. You'll also have the best opportunity to reveal exactly the skin you're looking for.

**In Conclusion**

Argireline is one of the most sought after ingredients in anti aging skin care products, and for good reason. Because its formulation works similarly to botox without the need for expensive doctor's appointments or painful procedures, it can help you reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles at far less of a cost.

Consider adding a product with Argireline into your skin care routine, and see its age defying benefits for yourself.

*To find out wmore about Argireline, please telephone us 621 210 467 or 952 967 968 or send us an email [www.allaboutbeauty.eu](http://www.allaboutbeauty.eu)*



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# healthwise

## Suicide Prevention - Listening with Compassion

**THE RISE IN SUICIDES** worldwide has left numerous families, friends and the wider community bereft and struggling to cope with the heartbreak that follows. But despite the rising figures, we are often reluctant to talk about concerns around suicide with our nearest and dearest. To be more open to conversations and to continue to raise awareness and understanding can only help to dispel the feelings of isolation felt by those at risk. Often there is no one single cause but rather it tends to occur when stressors and health issues converge to create feelings of hopelessness, despair and isolation. Sadly, some of the signs are subtle and hard to detect until it is too late. However, there are both risk factors and warning signs that can alert us. Researchers have identified hundreds of risk factors. These are characteristics that increase the risk of a person dying by suicide and below are some of the most important.

### Psychosocial risks include:

- Prior suicide attempts; ● Psychiatric illness; ● Substance abuse;
- Trauma; ● Grief and loss; ● Social isolation; ● Health problems;
- Family history of suicide

### Environmental risks include:

- Homelessness; ● Unemployment; ● Poverty

These risks are important to explore as they can alert you to ask about possible suicidal thoughts. However, it is important to remember that most people experiencing these risks, even when they have multiple risk factors, do not die by suicide. Far more relevant when assessing current risks are warning signs. Risk factors tend to be static and long-standing, whereas warning signs are dynamic, temporary and indicate higher risk of suicide in the immediate or near future.

### Warning signs include:

- Frequent, intense suicidal thoughts; ● Talking or writing about suicide;
- Making preparations for suicide; ● Hopelessness or feeling trapped;
- Agitation or dramatic mood changes; ● Increased anxiety or anger;
- Withdrawal, disconnection from others or becoming very quiet;
- Recklessness, impulsivity or an increase in high risk activities;
- Lacking a sense of purpose or a reason to live, or feeling like a burden;
- Sleep disturbance

By itself, one warning sign is not especially meaningful, but the more warning signs that are present, the higher the level of concern. However, you can also have many of the warning signs but lack suicidal intent. Warning signs essentially alert you to the need to discuss with someone whether they may be on the verge of ending their own life.

Many people, including some professionals, are nervous of bringing up such a conversation in case it instigates or increases suicidal thoughts. But research has shown this is not the case. Those who experience feelings of hopelessness and helplessness around their situation are well aware that taking their own life is an option. Discussing whether they have these thoughts can validate their feelings and make them aware someone else cares and is interested in how they feel. If you are not sure that someone is feeling suicidal ask a direct question such as 'Are you thinking about suicide?' or 'Are you having thoughts about ending your own life?' It is better to address the person's feelings directly rather than avoiding the issue. Talk to them without judgement and with compassion.

Many vulnerable people try to seek help by attempting to talk to others about their feelings. If someone tells you how they are feeling don't ignore them. You may find such conversations uncomfortable. This is a normal reaction but there are ways in which you can help. Let them know they are not alone, empathise with them, repeat back what they are saying in your own words to show you are listening and understand them and try to reassure them that they will not feel this way forever. You can also encourage them to focus solely on today rather than the future, ask about their reasons for both living and dying and try to find out any plans they have for ending their own life. You don't need to find answers or even completely understand why they feel this way but listening will help to show you care.

Some responses to their feelings and disclosures may be unhelpful and make them feel rejected, guilty, criticised or unheard. These include telling them to cheer up, that they have no reason to feel like this, that they should be grateful for the life they have or that they are being silly. Try to provide reassurance, respect and support instead.

If they are actively talking about suicide and you feel they are in immediate danger do not leave them alone. Get them to speak to a professional (*helplines below*). Even if there is not an immediate risk it is helpful to speak to a doctor, hotline or therapist to help assess any future risk and provide prevention strategies. Do not ignore your gut feeling if you are concerned about someone.

If you or anyone close to you is experiencing suicidal thoughts or intent please contact one of the helplines below or speak to a doctor, therapist or counsellor.

**Katrina Jones** (BA Hons, Cert Hyp.)

**Licensed Rapid Transformational Practitioner, Life Coach, Certified Hypnotherapist**

**English Speaking Helplines:** ● Samaritans Spain **900 525 100**; ● Spain Suicide 24/7 Hotline **914 590 050**; ● Crisis SOS helpline **0033 146 214 646**; ● Narcotics Anonymous **638 888 296**; ● Domestic & Sexual Violence (Women's 24/7 Helpline) **016**; ● Medical emergency **061**.

**Useful Websites:** Emotional support to prevent suicide - [www.befrienders.org](http://www.befrienders.org);

- AA Online [www.aa-intergroup.org](http://www.aa-intergroup.org);
- Alcoholics Anon [www.aaSpain.org](http://www.aaSpain.org);
- The Grief Centre [www.mabf.org.uk](http://www.mabf.org.uk)



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# NEWS & What's ON

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Fire Brigade 080

National Police 091

Sea Rescue 900 202 202

Emergency Helpline

in English 902 102 112

### Guardia Civil

Frigiliana 952 533 003

La Herradura 958 640 015

Nerja 952 520 091

Torrox

Costa & Pueblo 952 538 008

### Local Police

Frigiliana 952 533 126

Nerja 952 521 545

Torrox 952 539 828

Torre del Mar 952 549 238

### Bus Stations

Almuñécar 958 630 140

Málaga 952 350 061

Nerja 952 521 504

Torre del Mar 952 540 936

Veléz Málaga 952 501 731

### Taxis

Frigiliana 952 533 231

Nerja 952 524 519

La Herradura

958 630 017/670 995 257

Torrox 952 531 030

### Airports

Granada 958 245 200

Málaga 952 048 804

### Train Stations

Granada 958 271 272

Málaga 952 329 261

### Consulates

Belgium 952 599 159

Denmark 952 211 797

France 952 226 590

Germany 952 363 591

Ireland 952 475 108

Netherlands 952 380 8884

Sweden 952 604 383

UK 902 109 356/913 342 194

### Tourist Offices

Frigiliana 952 534 261

La Herradura 958 610 314

Nerja 952 521 531

Torrox Costa 952 532 155

### Street Markets

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Tuesday Nerja, Salobreña

Wednesday Algarrobo Costa, Rincon de la Victoria

Thursday Frigiliana, Torre del Mar, Velez Malaga,

Friday Almuñécar, La Herradura (summer only), Salobreña

Saturday Competa

Sunday Nerja (car boot), Torre del Mar, Velez Malaga

## What's On information is published FREE!

Details should reach us by the 18th of the month previous.

Contact details are on page 6

## Church Services

### Anglican Church of Nerja & Almuñécar

Iglesia de San Miguel (St. Michaels Church), Nerja.

Tel: 952 521 339. [www.nerjaalmunecaranglican-church.co.uk](http://www.nerjaalmunecaranglican-church.co.uk). Sundays at 12 noon and Capilla de Nuestra Señora del Carmen (Fishermen's Chapel),

Chinasol, Almuñécar, Sundays at 9.30am. Chaplain:- Fr. Nigel Thomas.

### Community Bible Fellowship

Calle Pintada 35, 2nd floor, Nerja. Tel: 952 521

776. English/Spanish service Sundays at 10am. El Salvador, Balcon de Europa, Nerja. Tel: 952 520 291.

Mass times, English and Spanish Sundays 10.30am, 12 noon and 8pm. Parish priest: Father José María.

### Presbyterian Church, Torre del Mar

We now meet at Legends Bar, Calle Pintor Cipriano Maldonado 9, Torre del Mar. The contact is Bill Bedford, tel no 694 471 005. On the first Sunday of the month we meet at 10.30 a.m. for Communion/Breakfast, on the other Sundays we meet at 11.00 a.m.

### New Life Church

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Veléz Málaga, Holy Communion or Morning Prayer.

Sunday mornings at 10.30am in the Antigua Capella de San José, Calle Linares 7, Veléz Málaga

Chaplain: Fr. Louis Durrant, Tel: 630 909 131

Email: [info@stgeorgemalaga.org](mailto:info@stgeorgemalaga.org) or contact one of the chaplaincy wardens. More information can be found at: [www.stgeorgemalaga.org](http://www.stgeorgemalaga.org)

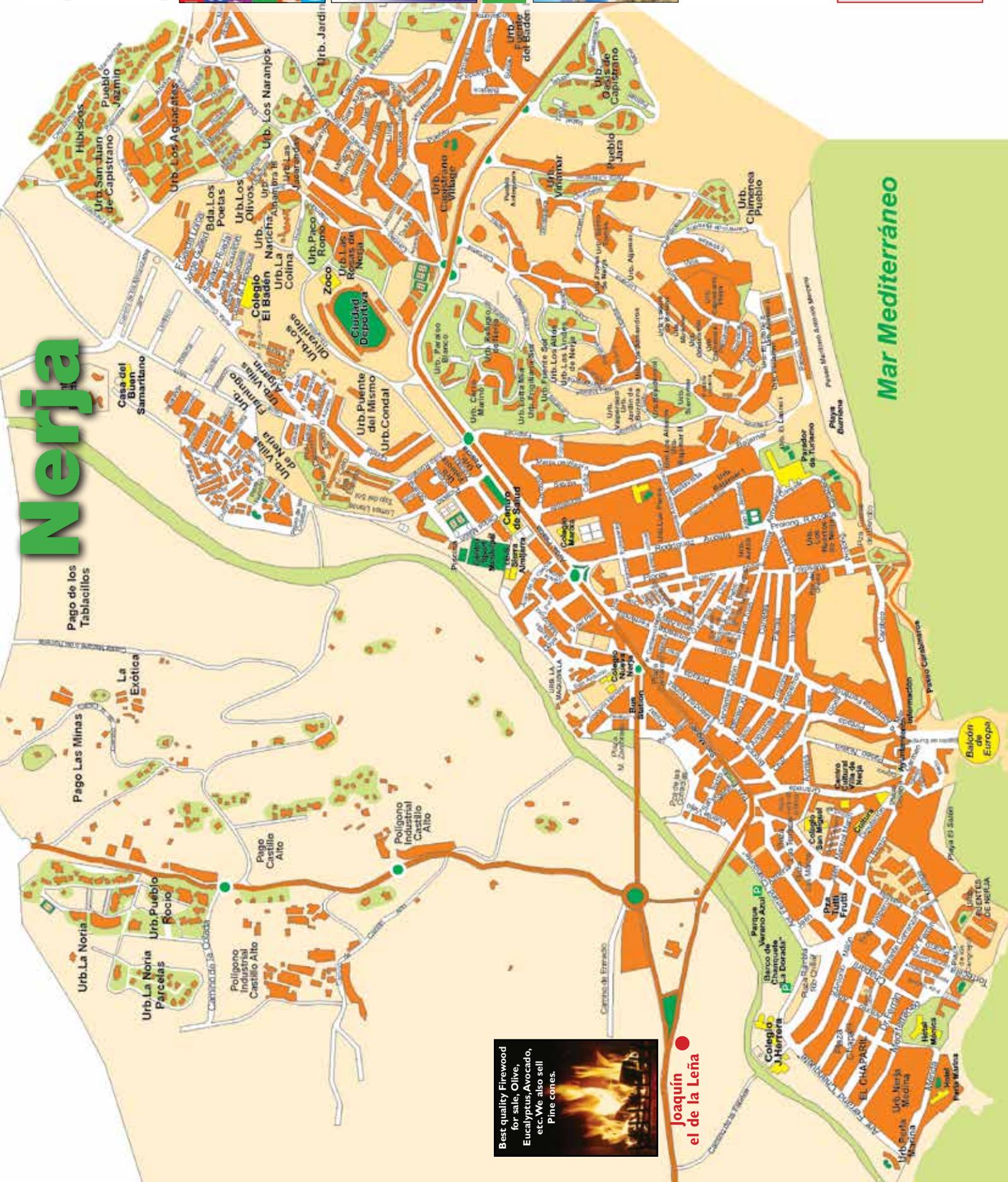
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# NEWS & What's ON

## Lux Mundi Ecumenical Centre

Torre del Mar, Avda. Moscatel 1ª, (Jardines Viña Málaga/Antigua Casa de la Viña), Torre del Mar, 29740. Open mornings only Monday and Wednesday 10.00 till 13.00 and Fridays as usual 11.00 - 13.00. We would like to assure you that we are complying with all the Covid regulations to make your visits to our centre as safe as possible. For further information please contact the Centre, Torre del Mar Tel. 952 543 334 E-mail: luxmundi@lux-mundi.org

### DECEMBER AND JANUARY COMING EVENTS & EXCURSIONS

**December & January** - Centre Closing Times. December closed on Monday the 6th and Wednesday the 8th and will then be closing again on Wednesday the 22nd of December at 13:00 and reopening for the coffee morning on the 31st of December. Also closed on January the 1st thru to re-opening on Friday 7th January.

**Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday** - "Our Shop" is open with the winter season good quality garments, for Christmas and the holidays also household goods. Time 11.00 to 13.00.

**Every Monday** - Craft Group. Time 10.00 to 13.00

**Every Wednesday** - Art Group. Time 10.00 - 13.00 at the Centre. 5€ or with Friends of Lux Mundi Card 4€. Proceeds for fundraising.

**Fridays** - Coffee Morning. Boutique, books and much more. Time 11.00 to 13.00.

### CORAXALIA INTERNATIONAL CHOIR

We invite you to three Christmas choir concerts which will be directed by their choir leader, Eusebio Pita.

**Saturday 11 December - 20.00**  
Coraxalia international choir,  
Convento de San Francisco  
Vélez Málaga

**Friday 17 December - 20.00**  
Coro cuidada de Almuñécar  
Iglesia de la encarnación  
Almuñécar

**Saturday 18 December - 20.00**  
Coral Villa de Salobreña  
Iglesia de Ntra Señora del Rosario  
Salobreña

For more information please contact  
eucorax@hotmail.es Tfn: 689.111.352

**ROYAL BRITISH LEGION, NERJA BRANCH** meets twice a month for lunch - on the 3rd Thursday at the Al Andalus Hotel, Maro and on the 1st Friday at the Nuevo Arenas Restaurant, La Herradura. Everyone is welcome to join us. Booking is essential.

Please contact Kim on tel: +44 7988029001 or email: kim\_bowe1@hotmail.com.

For any other information about the Branch contact Eddie, our Chairman, on tel: (+44 7590 717384) or email: eddiebowe1@hotmail.com.

**Thursday 2nd December** - Excursion to Mijas and Iceland/Miramar Centre. Ticket price 15€ or with a Friends of Lux Mundi card 13€. (Proceeds for fundraising). Departure Times: La Viñuela (Football Pitch) 08.20, Algarrobo (Lidl) 08.45, Caleta (Vets) 08.50, Torre del Mar (Coach Station) 09.00.

**Saturday 11th December** - Ecumenical Christmas Carol Service at the Parish Church of San Andrés, Torre del Mar. All welcome. Time 17.30.

**Wednesday 15th & Thursday 16th December** - Excursion to Puente Genil "Get to know the town that lights up Spain at Christmas". We still have a few places left on this 2 day trip.

**Friday 17th December** - Taizé Prayer at the San Andrés Parish Church in Torre del Mar. Time 19.45.

**Tuesday 21st December** - Coach Excursion to the Christmas Illuminations in La Concepcion Gardens and Malaga. Please come and join friends to see the new Christmas illuminations in the botanical gardens. The show is based on the history of the gardens which date back to the mid-19th century. You will arrive in time to see the presentation at 6.30 with its own special soundtrack will pinpoint

the best botanical specimens, buildings and ornaments. You can purchase refreshments in the cafeteria. After the visit you will re-join the coach for the short journey into Malaga to see the Christmas lights and there will be time for dinner. You will then re-join the coach for the homeward journey Ticket Price: 25 Euros or with Friends of Lux Mundi card 20 Euros. (Proceeds for fundraising) Departure times: Viñuela (Football Pitch) 16:30, Algarrobo (Lidl) 17:00, Caleta (Vets) 17:05, Torre del Mar (Coach Station) 17:15.

**Friday 31st December** - Old Year 2021 & New Year 2022. We are going to celebrate the years that end & the new one that begins with a toast and the traditional grapes, so that in 2022 we can recover everything that confinement and the pandemic delayed in our lives!! Tickets available at reception. Limited space!! Time 12.00

**Excursion to the botanical Gardens of La Concepcion, Malaga to see the Christmas lights and show. To be planned between 27th of December and 10th January. To be announced once details are available.**

### THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

As the Royal British Legion celebrates its 100th anniversary, this year's Remembrance events started with the Poppy Walk on Sunday 17 October. 19 walkers (and 2 dogs!) took part walking from the Al Andalus Hotel in Maro to the Chapel Bar in Nerja. Over 2,000 euro was raised on the day. Many thanks to all the walkers and to Sharon and Fred at the Chapel Bar for hosting a fun afternoon.



Thank you to all those involved in organising this wonderful evening which raised 2067 euro for the Poppy Appeal.

It was in a more sombre frame of mind that members and friends gathered on Sunday 14 for the annual Remembrance Day service. This was held in the garden of the Al Andalus hotel. Wreaths were laid and we joined millions in the UK and beyond in observing the 2 minute silence in memory of the fallen  
Lest we forget.  
RBL Nerja Branch



After being sadly cancelled last year due to Covid restrictions the annual Poppy Ball returned in style to the Caves restaurant Maro on Friday 12 November! The event was sold out with 115 guests attending in their finery. A splendid dinner was followed by entertainment and dancing with Ricky Lavazza and Laura Elen.



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# The Arts Society Nerja

has the pleasure to invite you to two exciting lectures at the Centro Cultural, Calle Granada, Nerja, or via zoom to your living room. Guests are welcome: €10.

**Tuesday, 7 December at 18.00**, Jane Choy-Thurlow will speak about Rembrandt, "Rembrandt: Bohemian or Businessman, Romantic or Rebel? In the lecture, the person Rembrandt will be in focus using



his many self-portraits as a thread through his life. It will explore the man and what, why and how he painted. Jane Choy-Thurlow lives in the Netherlands. She is a docent and gives lectures at various Dutch museums. She is an expert in 15th to 17th century Dutch and Flemish art. The

lecture will be on the big screen at the Centro Cultural and at the same time be available on zoom.

**Tuesday, 14 December at 18.00**, Lucy Hughes-Hallet will speak about the Egyptian queen Cleopatra, Cleopatra: Images of a Dream Woman". For over 2000 years Cleopatra has inspired artists, poets and film makers. The way she has been depicted offers insights into changing concepts of beauty. It will show how Cleopatra became a screen onto which artists have projected their widely differing



fantasies about exotic danger and erotic bliss. The lecturer, Lucy Hughes-Hallet is a cultural historian and biographer. She is the author of several books and a regular contributor to a number of British publications. She is chair of the judges for the 2021 International Booker Prize. Lucy Hughes-Hallet will be in Nerja for her lecture, but the lecture will also be available on zoom.

**For more information:**  
[www.theartsocietynerja.com](http://www.theartsocietynerja.com)

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## Record 2-tonne sunfish found off the coast of Ceuta

MARINE BIOLOGIST ENRIQUE Ostale could not believe his eyes when he saw the enormous sunfish tangled in the nets of a tuna-fishing boat off the Mediterranean coast of Ceuta earlier last month.

The mammoth sunfish, a species classed as vulnerable and not eaten in Europe, was 3.2 metres (10.5 feet) long, 2.9 metres (9.5 feet) wide, Enrique Ostale said in an interview. The find, which he was called to assess, was a record for the area which, due to tides and sunfish migratory patterns, has no shortage of such encounters. "We tried to put it on the 1,000-kg (2,204.6-lb) scale but it was too heavy. It would've broken it," said Ostale, who heads Seville University's Marine Biology Lab in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on the north coast of Africa. "Based off its corpulence and compared with other catches, it must've weighed around 2 tonnes (4,409 lb)."

The fish was first isolated in an underwater chamber attached to the boat before being lifted aboard using a crane, where it stayed for a few minutes while Ostale and his fellow biologists took measurements, photographs and DNA samples. With dark grey skin, rounded grooves in its flanks and a large, prehistoric-looking head, this particular specimen was likely a mola alexandrini, one sub-species of the mola sunfish genus, which sports a distinctively stub, scalloped back fin. "I was stunned. We'd read about such individuals ... but never thought we'd actually touch one day," Ostale said. "But it was also stressful: you're on a boat in the middle of the water, there's a crane moving huge weight, a live animal. We couldn't waste a moment and had to avoid accidents."

But the fish was removed and returned to the water smoothly, both on Oct. 4, to the relief of fishermen and scientists aboard, who watched as the creature vanished swiftly into the 700-metre depths of its home.



**Cudeca Nerja Support Group to help people who are living with the difficult situation of cancer or other life limiting illnesses, or those who care for them.**

**We meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 11.30a.m. in Hermes Cafe, Plaza Espana (top of underground car park).**

**We can also assist by telephone 952 564 910 or e-mail [cudeca@cudeca.org](mailto:cudeca@cudeca.org).**



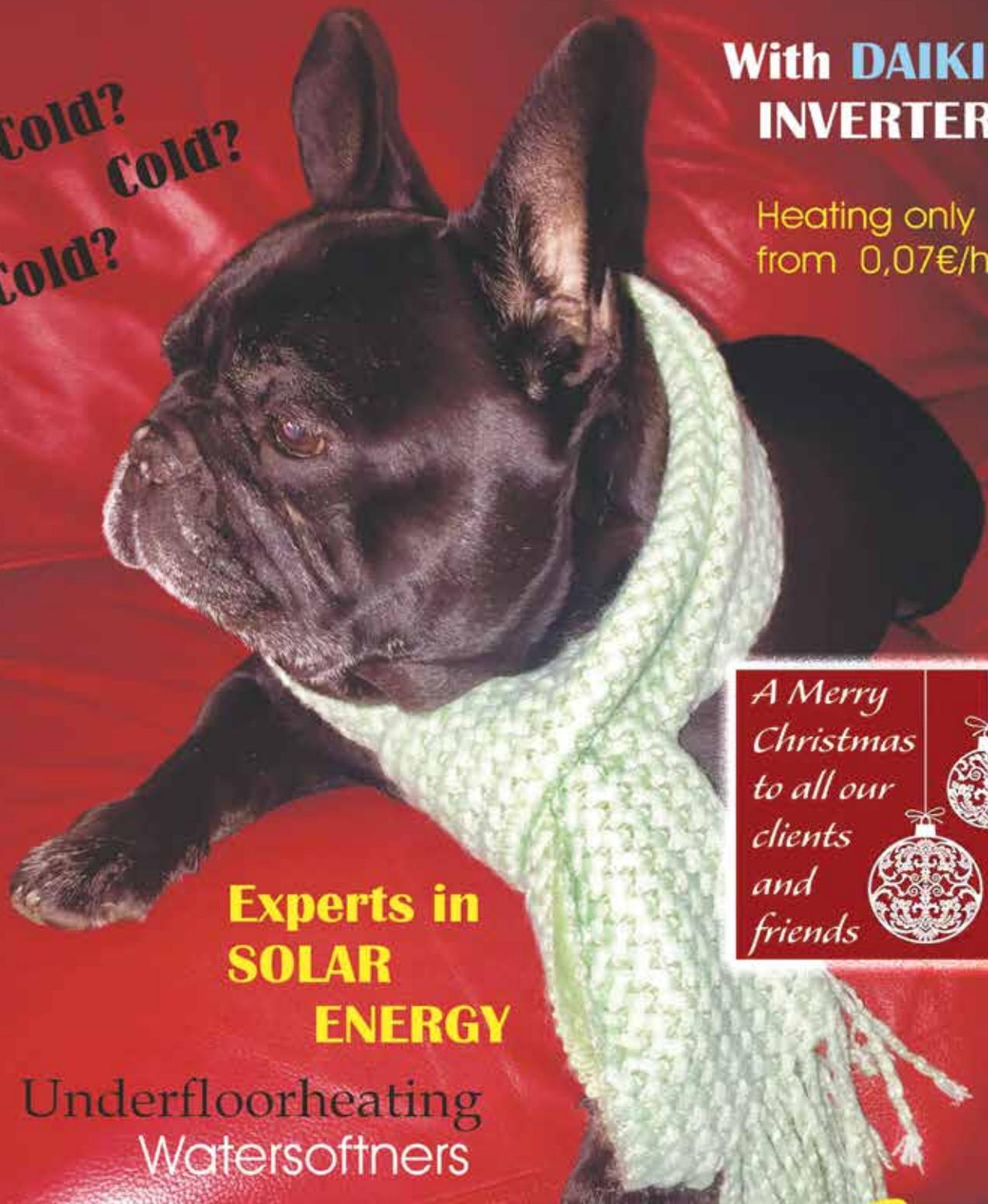
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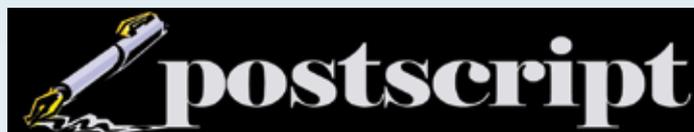


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# postscript

# The making of a modern folk devil!

**HOW ON EARTH did JK Rowling become the most controversial cultural figure of our times? Had you told someone this 10 years ago they'd have wondered what the hell you were going on about. What could this once beloved children's author, whose Harry Potter books inculcated a generation of young people with a love for reading, well, Harry Potter books, possibly have done to fall so far in the estimations of the great and good? Pulled a Mel Gibson? Killed some kids? Joined the BNP? That the answer would turn out to be expressing her belief that biological sex is real would have struck someone in 2011 as even more implausible than Rowling suddenly going full fash.**

The demented rage against Rowling shows no signs of abating. It was reported last Month that she has been left out of an upcoming HBO Max retrospective on the Harry Potter films. Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and Rupert Grint will all be involved, but the woman whose work catapulted these unknown child actors, turned dreadful adult actors, into global mega stardom will not. She'll be confined to clips from archive footage. Last month, her name was removed from a house of a London primary school, along with that of Winston Churchill, to be replaced by

*The never-ending rage against Rowling speaks to the hysteria of our times.*

Mary Seacole and Marcus Rashford respectively. And last month things took a more pitchfork and torches kind of turn when a group of trans activists staged a protest outside her home, and posted a picture of themselves online which Rowling says purposefully displayed part of her home address.

Rowling has become a veritable folk devil, whose menacing portrayal by influential sections of society bears almost no resemblance to what she actually says or does. Ask any right-thinking person about Rowling and they'll tell you she is some fire-breathing transphobe. Ask them for one single example of her saying or doing something transphobic and they'll stare glassy-eyed into the distance. For all the demonisation of Rowling, her actual public statements on the

issue of transgenderism are remarkably few and incredibly reasonable. She once tweeted her objection to the replacement of the word woman with dehumanising, ungainly phrases like 'people who menstruate'. She has publicly supported Maya Forstater, the gender-critical researcher who was sacked over her beliefs. The most Rowling has ever said on the subject of transgenderism is a thoughtful, measured essay she published in June 2020. In it, she says that trans people should be afforded all the dignity and rights possible, but that she feels biological males should not be admitted to women's spaces simply because they declare themselves to be women. That's genuinely it. But such is the stranglehold that extreme gender ideology has over public discussion this is enough to mark her out as some moral leper. For this she is treated to a constant bombardment of social-media abuse that would put Mark Francois into a coma. In that essay, Rowling said she feels 'nothing but empathy and solidarity with trans women who've been abused by men'. As a 'survivor' of domestic abuse and sexual assault, she said, she feels a genuine 'kinship' with them. For her trouble Rowling is regularly confronted with the most vile abuse, with a cascade of violent sexual insults.

Yet the woman on the receiving end of this misogyny, not from trans people, we should be clear, but from the unhinged activists who claim to represent them, is apparently undeserving of any solidarity in return, even as lunatics threaten her with pipe bombs and rape. The left and the cultural elite have completely failed to stand by her.

This isn't the first time Rowling has been portrayed as essentially evil. In 2001, hardline Christians in New Mexico burned Harry Potter books, denouncing them as Satanic. Fast forward two decades and it is so-called trans allies who can be seen burning their own well-thumbed copies on TikTok. But where that old form of religious intolerance elicited mockery from the liberal elite, the newer form at best elicits stony silence. This is a grim sign of how few defenders of liberal values there are today. Rowling may well be uncancelable, but the millions of people who share her perfectly reasonable concerns about the drift of gender politics are not. While she cannot conceivably be deprived of her livelihood, less successful authors have been, merely for expressing their support for her. The demonisation of Rowling is intended to send a signal to everyone else. To tell them to shut up or else.

JK Rowling is perhaps as unlikely a free-speech cause célèbre as she is a modern-day folk devil. But that's where we are. And it is the abject cowardice of those who like to call themselves liberal that has got us here.

## Lockdown resentment is growing in Europe

**'TRAITORS TO THE NATION', read placards carried by protestors in Prague last month, depicting government figures who have imposed new lockdown restrictions on the unvaccinated. Anger has been bubbling under the surface in eastern and central Europe. But as new lockdowns are imposed and governments consider making vaccines compulsory, this resentment is now threatening to burst out into the open.**

Czech protests have been mild compared to the unrest seen in other European countries. Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte described recent riots in Rotterdam as 'pure violence', with police firing warning shots at protestors and inflicting multiple injuries. In Brussels, tear gas and water cannons were used to contain a 35,000-strong protest which turned violent. Further protests are taking place this weekend throughout Europe, as well as further afield from Australia to the Caribbean. It's clear that the prospect of a return to tough Covid measures is proving the final straw for many. Austria has been rocked by particularly large protests against its return to lockdown and controversial move to consider making vaccines compulsory.

Nearby countries such as Germany and the Czech Republic look increasingly likely to follow suit on both lockdown and vaccines – and with feelings already running high, more protests can be expected if they choose to go down the Austrian path. The divisive atmosphere is a far cry from the praise heaped on central European countries for much of the pandemic, for their supposed success in getting populations onside by communicating the scientific basis for lockdown measures.

A new cynicism is instead taking hold. And although resentment appears to be greatest among the unvaccinated, anger is growing among the jabbed too. As in the UK, governments in Europe have held up vaccination as the golden ticket out of the Covid crisis; yet once again leaders are hitting the panic button. Austrian chancellor Alexander Schallenberg has said the country's current lockdown will last no more than 20 days, while a lockdown now imposed in neighbouring Slovakia will supposedly last only two weeks. But bitter experience has

made people wary about these promises, and with winter approaching it's hard to believe that restrictions, once imposed, will be lifted anytime soon.

Anger is exacerbated by the example set in the UK, where, despite high numbers of cases, full lockdown measures haven't yet been reintroduced. The arrival of the new Omicron variant is complicating matters, but many on the Continent have been left wondering why the UK has so far been able to ride out its latest Covid wave while their countries haven't.

The answer lies partly in the fact that daily death rates are already higher in countries with relatively low vaccine uptake, like the Czech Republic and Slovakia, than they are in Britain. But it's also important to remember that, in many cases, European governments never clearly handed back responsibility on Covid to the people. Not all of these countries had a 'Freedom Day', when control over the lives of citizens was relinquished. And by continuing to mandate rules such as mask wearing and the requirement to show Covid documentation as part of day-to-day life throughout the summer, European governments kept the lives of citizens in their hands.

This has made the reintroduction of tougher restrictions far less of a leap for these countries than it would be in Britain. While the UK fiercely debates new measures, including the return of mandatory face masks in shops and on trains as announced by Boris Johnson yesterday, this amounts to little more than what many in Europe have faced throughout the summer.

In this context, it's clear that there was a deep symbolic significance in the shedding of restrictions on 'Freedom Day' – decried at the time by many on the other side of the Channel as dangerous, ridiculous or both. The event marked a fundamental shift in attitudes towards state intervention on Covid in the UK; a vital step which governments in mainland Europe never took.

In the absence of any such covenant between the state and the people on a return to the principle of individual self-determination, European countries are now slipping all too easily back into the rut of tough lockdown restrictions. Having refused to hand back responsibility to the people when they could, governments will find it difficult to avoid the path of ever tighter state controls in the months ahead. And as another winter of discontent looms, recent examples of civil unrest in Europe could be just the tip of the iceberg.

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