

# The View from the Perch



***An occasional light-hearted look at life in and around Cabanyes***

*Number one: May 2009*

## ***Hola!***

**Welcome to The Perch**, as she may in time be known by those that come to love, or even just read her.

This is a pilot issue and, as we all know, not all pilots get to fly. Just ask Derek Farley or Ian Wallace. OK. We know that they both used to fly with great distinction and, presumably, picked up stacks of AIRMILES while doing so. But that's not the point that we're trying to make.

We aren't trying to be the late lamented Costa Brava Resident or Catalonia Today. That's far too difficult. But we do want to be readable, to be entertaining & amusing. We want to poke fun without being malicious or vindictive. And to get on our soapbox in 'Whine of the Month' if we are feeling irritable. Just a gentle read with a sundowner in one hand & The Perch in the other.

So, a modest free publication, available only erratically when we have enough copy or illustrations to fill the pages.

### ***Now for the two-way communication bit.***

On the negative front, if you would prefer not to have this stuffed in your caseta, alongside the ever increasing piles of junk, please email us & give your caseta number. We will do our very best to comply.

On the other hand, please tell us what you think, what you like & what you want. Also, whether you could contribute (unpaid & non-attributable) or offer stories or ideas. All subject to our editorial whims of course. But no gossip please – we won't go there. And if it takes off (sorry Derek) we might need translators.

We hope that you will enjoy this first edition and will email us at [viewfromtheperch@googlemail.com](mailto:viewfromtheperch@googlemail.com) with anything we ought to know and may have been too frightened to ask.

### ***Time for a name change?***

Property Company Imisa is faced with challenges in the current economic climate like most of the rest of us.

A disastrous property market, coupled with a banking crisis, is not a healthy place to be. With 34 years business experience, however, it knows only too well that when the going gets tough, the tough gets going. Or are gone.

So apart from a proven track record in construction, extensions & renovations now come wide ranging & competitively priced new services including cleaning, airing & paperwork. And, I quote "We believe in a personal service and are therefore very customer-friendly."

Quite.

Let us hope, if not pray, that all of this diversification is a success. So that **Imisa** becomes **Imensa** rather than **Imersa**.



## Mark my Word

### *A music lover's paradise*

“¡Quiriquiriquirí!” You must have noticed that our local cockerel can't get his beak around “cock-a-doodle-do,” and so he lustily sings the Spanish equivalent. Ah, the sounds of nature here on Cabanyes!

I have long yearned to conduct a symphony orchestra, and I now have an inkling of where Beethoven found some of his inspiration; in countryside sounds to gladden the heart.

But since our arrival in this outpost of Calonge, my ambition has subtly changed. No longer am I satisfied with listening to our morning wake-up call, but after our years here I now harbour ambitions to compose a symphony in three movements, entitled Earth, Fire and Water.

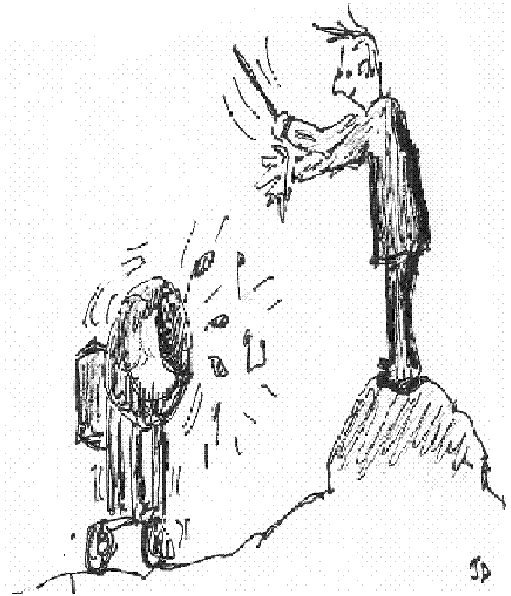
*I now harbour ambitions to compose a symphony in three movements, entitled **Earth, Fire and Water.***

Earth will comprise a chamber group of cement mixers, shovels and petrol-driven leaf blowers, all operating together in complete harmony. Fire will be based on the crackling sound made by piles of burning rubbish, created so thoughtfully by contractors,

especially on washing day mornings. And Water will be composed of that refreshing tinkling sound emanating from storm drain covers and burst pipes as they distribute their thousands of litres unselfishly throughout the estate.

But even symphonic music does not have to produce sound at every moment. So I tap my baton on the conductor's stand. All noise stops, and I hear nothing but the rock thrush's mellifluous notes. (He never was very well disciplined.)

I can hardly believe it. Was that really total silence? Indeed it was, but such bliss lasted a mere second before the brassy bass of the concrete lorry entered the sound spectrum... two bars early, of course.



## Up Close & Personal

If you have internet access and are proud of being a Cabanyesian, then try <http://www.zazzle.co.uk/cabanyes+gifts> where you will find offerings to lust for.

The site is a marketplace for a variety of producers offering a variety of products from t-shirts to key rings and mugs to aprons. And they are all personalised with a logo or coat of arms of Cabanyes.

**A ladies t-shirt with 'our' coat of arms, like this one, costs around €15.50 plus postage & packing.**

Similarly, but more expensively, a man's t-shirt can be purchased expressing true love for 'a Cabanyes.' So an amazing opportunity to buy something different, something special, something unique.

But not quite. Because if you search on the Zazzle site you find one or two other coats of arms are also available. We picked a few names at random such as Brown, Jones, Connolly, Weare, Martinez, Lee, Warden, Rodriguez & Holt. All also able to flash their own personalized key rings.

Should, of course, they choose to do so.



## Here we go.....

**Little more than an hour's drive from Cabanyes is a time warp. Beautifully preserved, painstakingly restored, Besalu is a true gem.**

As you cross over the medieval bridge you enter into a world of cobbled streets, hidden alleyways and medieval arches – each step takes you back in time.

Tuesday is market day when there is a wonderful Catalan hubbub – happy chatter amongst friends, market traders selling all sorts of local delicacies alongside the ubiquitous shoe stall - the sounds and sights of a living, thriving community.

Tucked into a corner of Place Libertat, the central square, is a real surprise. A museum, not of medieval gems, as you might expect, but a wonderful childlike world of miniature art. So very small, the exhibits fit on the head of a pin, you need to look at them through magnifiers – quite unbelievable. You have to wonder how they do it – but marvel at the results.

Eager to lunch in the square, we chose one of the few restaurants open – a less than edifying experience, except for the location. I am sure Besalu holds many gastronomic treasures, if one knows where to find them. This was not one.

And regardless of your religious persuasion, don't miss the marvellously preserved and wonderfully serene Jewish quarter that includes a fine example of a ritual bath, known as a mikvah, dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Besalu in high season could well be a different proposition but on a quiet Tuesday off-season it was bliss.



## WRY ON AIR



**'Departing from a field near you'**

A frequent moan, particularly from infrequent travellers, is Ryanair's description of the local airport as Barcelona Girona. There is a shock horror moment when they discover that Barcelona is an hour or more away.

This, of course the airline's standard practice, at least, where they are allowed to get away with it. For example, the airport it uses 120 kilometres from Frankfurt is called "Frankfurt-Hahn". Brussels (Charleroi), is over an hour and a half's bus journey from the city itself and Brescia-Verona airport, is 70 kilometres or so away from Verona. And London Stansted is hardly walking distance from Trafalgar Square.

But this is how the self-effacing Michael O'Leary runs his wondrous airline, so there. Take it or leave it. Or, as one wag suggested in response to a string of complaints on Ryanair's airport naming policy, "There are wonderful bits of coloured paper you can buy to find out where you're going - they're called maps."

*P.S. As we get close to press day, Ryanair has made the name switch to Girona (Barcelona). We wanted to ask them why but they don't do media relations, it seems, any more than they do customer relations.*

### Sell, buy, beg, borrow or barter

This will be the corner where you can sell that unwanted umbrella, seek out a window-cleaner of offer to do some decorating in return for a few hours dog-sitting.

Anything legal accepted at no charge. Entries must be no more than 25 words, including a contact number or email address.

Email them, please, to [viewfromtheperch@googlemail.com](mailto:viewfromtheperch@googlemail.com)

## Wine of the Month

While gliding down the aisles of Aldi recently, hidden between the bright blue gardening shoes and the support bras, we came across an Albariño for under five euros! As a great fan of Albariño wine and normally expecting to pay a good deal more, we couldn't wait to try it.

The verdict? Nicely chilled it was a very pleasant, fresh quaffing wine with enough fruit and body to keep it interesting.

Would we buy it again? Yes, although we continue my search for a really good white wine for under 6 euros.

Want to try it? Then look for Maria Balteira Albariño 2007.  
D.O Rias Baixas.



### Want to write about wine?

We are not wine experts, so we would like a contributor to write Wine of the Month. Something that tickles your palate? Then please email your piece to [viewfromtheperch@googlemail.com](mailto:viewfromtheperch@googlemail.com) Not more than 120 words. Editor's decision final. Payment? Absolutely none, not even a glass a wine – just the satisfaction of passing on pleasure to others!



**"I just didn't see it!"**

## Whine of the Month

The dreaded speed bump, speed hump, road hump or sleeping policeman is now widespread around the world, and, inevitably we are now blessed with the little beauties in Cabanyes. They are said to be very effective in keeping vehicle speed down but their use is often controversial. They cause noise and vehicle damage and also pose serious hazards to motorcyclists and bicyclists if not easily noticed.

So why is it that whoever holds the purse strings for white paint supplies around these parts, has only authorised some of the humps to be painted and not all of them?

**We should be told.**

## Thanks

*We may, in the past, have been inadvertently involved with the odd non-profit making enterprise but this time, it is quite deliberate! There was, however, still the cost of printing & paper to absorb and we are very grateful to **Quality Estates** who, apart from being pretty damn good builders, estate agents and all purpose property experts, let us loose in its Sant Antoni premises to produce what you are reading now. So our thanks to Danny, Arjan & all at <http://www.quality-estates.com>*

### The Last Word

Dr. Ned Calonge is the Chief Medical Officer of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. He is also the State Epidemiologist and the Executive Director of State Bioterrorism Preparedness.

Not a lot of people know that.