

## Cabanyes Decision Day

Calonge Council has now finally agreed to assume responsibility for the running of Cabanyes. The handover, brought forward to the end of 2010, means that the estate is now part of Calonge and no longer a private development. The E.U.C. will continue to function officially until the middle of this year as an interim measure to ensure that the transition is a smooth one.

As discussed at the last Annual General Meeting of the E.U.C in July and reported in our Autumn edition there are considerable concerns about the future upkeep and maintenance of Cabanyes following the adoption by the Council. The poor state of repair of other urbanisations in Calonge has been highlighted as evidence in this respect.

It is therefore proposed to establish a Residents Association with legal powers, whose principal role will be to manage the maintenance of public areas of the estate, building upon the work carried out by the EUC. It is estimated that the cost for each proprietor will be much smaller than the present E.U.C. quarterly quota of €94.71 since all the major infrastructure work will by then be in place. The new compulsory payment per owner is expected to be €25 per quarter although this has yet to be confirmed

Before forming such an Association, a majority of owners needs to be in favour. In March 2011, a letter will be sent out in

The proposed Association would ensure that Vizcondado de Cabanyes continues to be the model of a well-run estate long into the future.

the four most widely understood languages - including English - broadly outlining the options and asking for votes from proprietors. The question will require a straightforward "yes" or "no" answer to

forming a Residents Association. To make responding as simple as possible, votes may be returned by either post or e-mail. All owners are asked to respond immediately to the letter when it arrives.

In the same letter proprietors will be invited to attend a special meeting on **Saturday 23rd April 2011** and

**DECISION DAY: Saturday 23 April, 2011**

will be notified of the time and venue of the meeting at that stage. This is during the Easter holidays when the greatest number of owners is normally expected to be in residence here. It is clearly in the interests of everyone to attend the meeting, which will be conducted in the most widely understood languages, including English.

The out-going President of the E.U.C. Agustín Ambrós said: "If the proprietors vote in favour, the new Association will be made official and legally binding upon every property owner on Vizcondado de Cabanyes." He also went on to say that maximum attendance would also give it full moral legitimacy and enable a truly representative committee to be elected at the meeting.

Heavy voting by mail and email and a well attended meeting are therefore essential. It seems all too apparent from comments made to *The Perch* that the majority of Cabanyes' proprietors record of apathy and inertia must end. It is time for all concerned to stand up and be counted. The Association is a must.



Do we really want this.....



or this?

# ***iHola!***

## **Welcome to the seventh edition of *The Perch*.**

We continue to be delighted that our ‘tatty little rag,’ as Mr Morgan kindly described it in edition six, is still alive and kicking as we stagger apprehensively into the New Year. For the Chinese residents amongst us 2011 is, of course, the year of the rabbit. Does this perhaps explain why, as we relaxed after our turkey and all the trimmings on Christmas Day, a fox appeared a matter of a few feet away looking through the window for his supper? A welcome change from the ubiquitous wild boar methinks.

And in case you missed it, the United Nations has declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests so as to raise awareness on sustaining and conserving all types of forests. Important to us all, not least in and around Cabanyes. Without mentioning any names, developers please note, particularly when you next even start to think about leaving your irreversible and indelible mark across the valley.

Gosh, I feel better already!

Worth mentioning that we have back copies of most editions, that we can email each one to you when it is published if you wish and that you should be able to find current editions at the following locations: La Bodega; Quality Estates and Al Vent in Sant Antoni; Centro Rehabilitacion del Mar and Comelcat at PCCalonge in the village.

### **Elsewhere in the Perch....**

Here we go.....	3
February Blues .....	3
Mark my Word.....	4
Help Close at Hand.....	4
Feathered Friends.....	5
Ryanair News.....	5
Book, Bat, Ball and Boundary ....	6
Thanks .....	6
Brief Encounters .....	7
Community Corner.....	7
Letters .....	8
Wine of the Month.....	8
Last Word.....	8

### **CABANYES POR FAVOR**

Vizcondado de Cabanyes, I’ve been with you for ten years,  
I’ve shared some of your problems, amid laughter, also tears.

Remember how we thought one day we’d all go up in smoke?  
That forest fire across the hill was far from being a joke.

And then of course the flooding came to poor Calonge town,  
Sant Antoni was hit far worse; cars ruined, buildings down.

“At least it never snows up here,” we used to say with glee,  
That was before last March’s storm. Where did I put that tree?

We almost reached the stage that time of eating flesh quite raw,  
No water, phones, no heat or light...at last there came the thaw.

Last summer saw an influx of mass tourists; our estate  
Was almost swallowed up by them, near’ sank beneath the weight.

Cabanyes, we won’t mention here a word about the noise,  
The adults and their kids in pools screamed daily; oh, what joys!

But hark, another sound at dusk fills me with warming cheer;  
An owl is heard twit t’wooning, long and plaintive, crystal clear.

At least now we can still rejoice in nature’s presence true,  
We’ve peace, our little world’s at rest, and what about the view!

And so Cabanyes, right or wrong, a decade on we’re here,  
Now La Bodega beckons for a celebratory beer.

**CHEERS!**  
Mark Woolf

Very many thanks for your continued interest, support (particularly financially!), and editorial contributions. We still need quarterly donations to balance the books, welcome feedback and are very happy to receive ideas for future coverage. Or a ‘Here we Go’ article such as Anthony Robinson’s on a memorable excursion to Salamanca. So where have **you** been? We should be told!

On a very serious note and from a personal point of view I believe that the establishment of a Residents Association is absolutely essential if we are to continue to enjoy our homes here in the best possible setting. No one pretends that it is perfect but there seems little doubt that it would not receive EUC style care and attention if left totally in the hands of the Council. I hope that readers of *The Perch* feel the same way, will vote the right way and go out of their way to attend the 23 April meeting.

Finally, an apology. Despite my best attempts to dissuade her, my lovely wife, Helen, insisted on writing a totally promotional piece about my new book in this edition. I really did try to stop her – hid her laptop for days, tied her to the chair, called the Mossos and even offered to take her out for a tapas. But all to no avail. So what can I do but say that I am sorry. And suggest that you place your order while stocks last!

## Here we go.....

Reading about the trip to Segovia reminded me vividly of our excursion to Salamanca in March. It was to commemorate Mary's important birthday.

Years ago we had started to try and learn Castillian from Linguaphone and had been hilariously captivated by the fact that the narrator had found the Condal Bank in that city "muy bonito". Never mind that ninety per cent of the city was over 300 years old and that it was the locale for the oldest university in Europe. We thought we must go there to see 'el banco'!

We flew to Madrid and hired a car, drove straight out of the city W.N.W. and by mid-morning were parked at Avila (pictured above), a small city completely surrounded by 11<sup>th</sup> century walls, all intact, and largely walkable. An amazing sight.



Salamanca though is quite extraordinary. Another quite small city, ignoring the urban sprawl outside the self-contained ancient core, it is dominated by the twin cathedrals, an intact original (12<sup>th</sup> century) supplanted by a later building adjacent to it (16<sup>th</sup> century). Apparently the vast original was not big enough for the population of the period.

As well as the historic university, the city is also the site of one of Europe's finest squares - predictably called Plaza Major (pictured left). Built between 1730 and 1755 it provides a wonderful focus for locals and visitors.

Other famous points of interest are the Roman bridge (1<sup>st</sup> century) - fifteen arches still remaining, the widespread use of Plateresque detailing on many buildings and numerous other architectural delights.

You can spend two to three days wandering around Salamanca's enchanting streets - and you need not even bother to look for el banco!

*Footnote: If you have your own transport you can easily combine a trip to Salamanca and Avila with visits to Ciudad Rodrigo, Zamora, Segovia and the amazing palace at El Escorial.*

Anthony Robinson



### February Blues in Calella de Palafrugell

Nathan and the Blues Messengers are performing on Friday 18 February at La Bella Lola in the centre of Calella.

The gig kicks off at 23.00 and Nathan's Cabanyes based group features keyboard whizz Andy Ball and the versatile and appealing talents of singer Libbie. (Pictured below)



## Mark My Word

### DRIVING ME CRAZY – The Twelve Ways to Crash Most

I hope you will find the following annotated observations to be useful, if not a little entertaining. They fairly faithfully reflect my driving experiences in this topsy-turvy adopted homeland of ours.

#### Part 1. Motorists

- 1 ALWAYS drive in the middle of the road straddling any white or yellow lines. This applies particularly to blind bends.
- 2 NEVER obey speed limits; ALWAYS exceed them by at least 100%.
- 3 ALWAYS overtake when it is dangerous to do so, preferably forcing any oncoming traffic off the road.
- 4 NEVER leave more than 10 cms between you and the car in front, unless you are driving at high speed, in which case the required distance is 5 cms.
- 5 NEVER use your indicators since there is a danger of letting other road users know your intentions.
- 6 ALWAYS use your horn, particularly to greet your friends whilst driving.
- 7 In a stationery or slow-moving traffic queue, ALWAYS decide suddenly to take an alternative route by doing a “U-turn, especially on motorways.
- 8 On roundabouts, ALWAYS use the most inappropriate lane and NEVER give a clue to others where you intend to exit.
- 9 ALWAYS park on blind bends, pedestrian crossings, roundabouts and road junctions. Note that the use of your hazard flashers gives you total dispensation to do any of these.
- 10 ONLY use your lights during daytime. If you really must do so at night, your main beam is much more effective at blinding oncoming traffic.
- 11 NEVER look ahead or pay any attention to other road users, especially if you have passengers. They will think it rude if you don't maintain eye contact with them at all times.
- 12 In car parks, NEVER allow enough room for neighbouring cars to open their doors sufficiently to get in or out. What do you think sun roofs are for?



**Footnote:** You may see “solo veïns” on a traffic sign. Do not panic! Far from requiring you to carry out a delicate medical extraction procedure, this is simply an indication that the way is closed to all except local traffic for access to their properties. Veïn, by the way, means neighbour. It is not, as you might assume, in any way connected with an “arterial” road!

Mark Woolf

### Help is Close at Hand

Creu Costa Catalana, based in Sant Antoni, has a solid track record in providing a wide range of home help and care services to those living here permanently or on holiday. Residents in Cabanyes are already using its services which include:

Personal care such as dressing and showering; help with shopping, cleaning and meal preparation; a nurse to help with health issues, such as care of wounds, checking blood pressure plus specialist care for more complex illnesses. They can also offer psycho-social support and help for Alzheimer and Dementia sufferers and their families. In addition they can provide translation and support when visiting hospitals and doctors, a situation that can be very frightening and bewildering for many. They can offer these services in English, Dutch, German and Spanish.

They also now provide Meals on Wheels at very reasonable rates, with the food delivered to your home for heating at your convenience.

Orthopaedic equipment such as wheelchairs and hoists can be hired from as little as 40 euros a week while some services are charged for on an hourly basis. For some visitors, costs may be covered by insurance.

From time to time, they organise outings for their clients with the support of carers and nurses to enable people to meet and enjoy a social occasion that they might otherwise find difficult to attend.

In addition, this Dutch-owned company has established a not-for-profit organisation to improve the flow of information and facilitate holiday travel to our area for those that are disabled or chronically sick. They run occasional events to raise money to support this initiative.

The caring team at Creu Costa Catalana can advise you on the best approach to meet your individual and personal requirements particularly for friends or relatives who have become old or infirm. For more information call Finny (a Cabanyes resident) on 972 653 008 or email [info@adcc.cat](mailto:info@adcc.cat). Their website is [www.adcc.cat](http://www.adcc.cat)

HD



## Feathered Friends

### The Sardinian Warbler

Winter is here and our warm weather visitors have flown the nest so it's now time to appreciate some of our resident feathered friends. The Sardinian warbler is one of the few of its kind not to migrate to Africa; it is very much a Mediterranean bird, living here all year round.

The female is rather dull and brownish with a grey cap; by contrast, the male is a very distinctive and smart little bird. About sparrow sized, he has a well-defined black hood that contrasts with a clean, white throat and offsets the bright red ring around the eye. The back and wings are a soft grey with pale under parts.

The black crown feathers are often held erect, especially during song giving him a rather endearing Bart Simpson look.

They nest and forage for insects in dense bushes and are not as shy as the rest of their rather elusive family members often emerging to perch quite conspicuously – albeit for a brief but tantalising moment! These warblers are very vocal; their song fast and rattling with a few whistles thrown in. Their alarm call can be mimicked by clicking your tongue against the roof of your mouth; this will often lure them out of cover. All in all, a very bright and chirpy addition to our winter garden.



#### Feathered Feeds

Don't forget to clean out your bird-baths and keep the feeding going. Agro-Aliment in Palafrugell (across the big roundabout, opposite side to Lidl) stock a good range of food and feeders. Loose wild bird food is €1.55 a kilo, kilo bags of peanuts are €4 and sturdy nut feeders are €10.28. Well worth a visit though we didn't find fat balls (our birds' winter favourite) but you can buy them in Mag Dog in Sant Antoni for 50c each.

Photo by Jim Weare      Words by Helen Saker

### Ryanair Still Flies in Girona's Skies

Enormous sighs of relief are likely to be heard across Cabanyes following the announcement on Christmas Eve eve that Ryanair has signed a deal for a five year extension of its commitment to Girona Airport. The airline will base ten aircraft there during the summer and six during the winter.

Next summer, the company will operate 64 routes out of Girona including nine new ones to Cochstedt (Germany), Karlstad (Sweden), Kristianstad (Norway), Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Rzeszow (Poland), Szczecin (Poland), Skelleftea (Sweden), Tallinn (Estonia) and Zadar (Croatia).

It is already possible to book flights in June, July and beyond to all key destinations including the UK, Netherlands and Germany as the threat of having to return to the Barcelona airways is removed from the agenda.



**Ryanair: Ready for take-off**

## Book, Bat, Ball and Boundary

Apart from his part in producing *The Perch*, the editor, my husband or JD, as he is often known, has also been writing a book. In September, 2009, at 3 o'clock one morning, he sat bolt upright in bed, shouted 'eureka' or words to that effect and has been scribbling frantically ever since.

What followed has been almost another story in itself as people were approached, interviews arranged, information gathered, written and edited until *Cricket Wonderful Cricket* became a reality. It already appears on the websites of Amazon, W H Smith, Waterstones and others and will be published on 4 April.

JD has talked to a disparate group of 20 prominent people united by a single thread; a love of cricket. They all share that love which glues ears to Test Match Special, eyes to television sets, bums to seats near the boundary and, increasingly, surfers to cricket websites. It is the eccentric and magnetic allure of cricket.

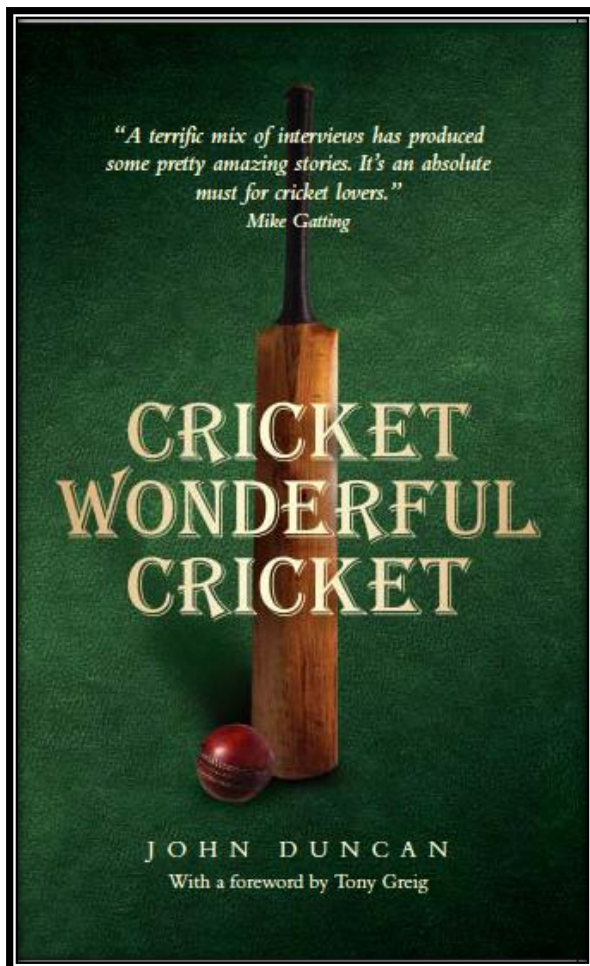
So who are these people? Well, they include Michael Parkinson, Rory Bremner, John Major, Chris Tarrant, Nicholas Parsons, Alan Davies, John Alderton, Richard Stilgoe, Lorraine Chase, Graham Taylor, Tim Rice, Bill Wyman and, nearly forgot, the Duke of Edinburgh. For more than 24 hours spread over nearly 12 months, JD talked cricket in palaces and offices, in clubs and homes, in bars and hotels, in cricket grounds and restaurants.

And learned how Hitler put an early end to a budding Yorkshire career, enthralled at a team called Dusty Fleming's International Hair Stylists, shuddered at the thought of watching cricket while sitting next to Robert Mugabe, was in awe of an innings of 1,792 not out, and much, much more.

*Cricket Wonderful Cricket* is a unique opportunity to relive memorable matches, triumphs and occasional disasters, to hear amazing anecdotes and share in so much laughter. Most of the book was written and edited by JD here in Cabanyes, aided by the occasional glass of Rioja. Profits from sales will go to the Lord's Taverners charity, primarily to help youngsters with special needs.

If you are interested in people, cricket or both, then I am sure that you will enjoy the book.

HD



## Thanks

Quality Estates, our main sponsor, offers the widest possible range of property services from buying to letting, development to renovation and much more and has done so for more than 30 years. You can contact them on 972 653 955, by email at [info@quality-estates.com](mailto:info@quality-estates.com) or visit the website at [www.quality-estates.com](http://www.quality-estates.com)



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Thanks to our two corporate sponsors and those special owners who contribute towards the cost of printing *The Perch*. If you would like to join them and help to keep us solvent please let us know.

## Brief Encounters

*What's happening in the world around Cabanyes.*

### Drivers Beware

800 new mobile radar vehicles are on the road so watch out when you see a Citroen C3, C4 or C5 with a deformed rear door; it's carrying radar.

In addition, the Guardia Civil has modified the scale used by radar vehicles and will now begin to fine drivers exceeding 133 kph. on motorways (autopistas). Until recently, police radar began its scale of fines at 141 kph.

Driving at speeds of between 133 and 152 kph. on autopistas will not result in deductions of points [puntos del carné], but it is considered to be a serious infraction of the law and is penalised with fines of between €100 and €120 according to the type of vehicle being driven.

Drivers exceeding 152 kph. will lose points. On urban roads with a speed limit of 50 kph, drivers exceeding 70 kph will also lose points. They will lose 6 points if they exceed 199 kph on autopistas or 90 kph. in areas with a speed limit of 50 kph.

Pat and Denis Hartley

### ENDESA to improve power supply

The electricity utility company, ENDESA, plans to invest a total of 60,000 euros to install electronic devices at three substations in the Baix Empordà region, to enable it to operate several power lines centrally by remote control. This will avoid the need for equipment on the ground to restore power in the case of an incident and will save time in locating faults. It will improve electricity supply quality and continuity for a total of 11 000 customers in a number of municipalities, including Calonge, Castell-Platja d'Aro, Sant Feliu de Guixols and Santa Cristina d'Aro.

### Violent burglars arrested

The Catalan police have arrested eight burglars who had been robbing villas on residential estates in Castell d'Aro, Platja d'Aro and Calonge after dark. Four have already been sent to prison. The eight arrested men, aged between 20 and 32, are all of Albanian origin and had no prior police record. In the five days prior to their arrest, travelling in a stolen car, the group had robbed ten houses. They made away with goods worth more than 120,000 euros, including money, jewellery, laptops and mobile phones.

(Ed: In addition, we understand that a group of robbers working in Cabanyes has also been arrested. They had targeted a number of houses and carried out their burglaries in broad daylight. Police have said that the best deterrent is a burglar alarm and/or dogs. If you notice anything suspicious, you are asked to call the Sant Feliu police on 972 18 23 80).

### Swimming pool planned to open late 2011

Construction on the joint municipal swimming pool for Palamos, Calonge and Vall-llobrega will finally begin in early 2011, with completion expected in late 2011 or early 2012. This is Catalunya's first ever joint municipal pool. It will be situated in Calonge, at the boundary with Palamos, and not far from Vall-llobrega. The new sports facility, with a six-lane, 25 x 12 metre pool, will also feature a spa pool, saunas, jacuzzi, gym, fitness rooms and service area as well as a skate park for young people from the three municipalities.

Researched and translated by Andrea Broom



**Lose those extra Christmas kilos and get fit with Kay** Every Monday and Friday, 12.00 to 1.00, Kay is running her "Lady Fit" classes in Teatre Mundet in Sant Antoni (men welcome as well!). Sessions are not high impact so they are suitable for all ages and levels of fitness. They include stretching, gentle aerobics and that all important toning. You will need to wear comfortable clothing and trainers - also (optional) light hand weights (500g) - or two tins of beans would do! Sessions cost 4 euros. For further information, contact Kay at baileconkay@yahoo.es

**Goods for Sale:** Isabel and Steven are moving from Cabanyes in January and their household goods are available: linen, crockery, cutlery, glassware, pots, pans, toaster, DVD/CD player, highchair, travel cot, sun loungers, garden tools, patio furniture, inflatable beach toys, etc. Please e-mail them to arrange a date for viewing: isabel.steven@tiscali.co.uk or call 0044 (0) 78 1544 1961

**Amazon deliver free to Spain:** Amazon will deliver free to your door, based on the following conditions: goods must be purchased directly from Amazon, not a third party on their website; value of order must be over £25.00; goods must be delivered to one address; you **must** choose goods that are eligible for Super Saver Delivery (select this option when ordering and also choose "Group items into as few deliveries as possible"). Some goods are exempt so check the small print!

**Calling all regulars.** Highly recommended by one of our regular contributors, the Sant Antoni beachfront bar/restaurant (formerly called CAZADOR, recently renamed CAN ROSARI when new Catalan owners took over) is inviting friends and regulars for a free drink at the bar between 12.30 hrs and 13.00 hrs on Saturday, 15 January 2011 when the restaurant re-opens for the season.





# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am seriously concerned that, on the rare occasions that vegetables are on the menu here they are, frankly, far from edible. Why do restauranteurs feel that they can compensate for cold plates by serving overcooked vegetables? It's just the sort of thing that makes me bubble and squeak.

Yours

Al Dente

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Sir,

I would in no way wish to jump on the bandwagon or try to out-do someone else's experiences but I find it very easy to empathise and sympathise with your previous correspondents, Avis Ford and Mr Van Hire. My problem lies with a whole series of men – builders, decorators, plumbers, electricians – who keep phoning me looking for a temporary replacement whenever their aged vehicles are off the road.

How do I put a stop to this? And what makes these men think that I, of all people, might possibly have a fleet of white vans?

Yours,

Carte, Blanche (Miss)

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Dear Sir or Madam,

I am absolutely delighted to see that the street lights across the valley have been switched off. Whoever organised this deserves a lengthy round of applause.

Let's hope that it will encourage people living on the urbanisation, who would clearly feel more at home on Blackpool seafront judging by their dazzling level of external illuminations, to follow suit.

Then we will once again be able to enjoy viewing the starry starry nights.

Yours hopefully,

C U Rayners



## Wine of the Month

Unfortunately not many of us can enjoy a great Burgundy on daily basis. But if you are among those few lucky ones, could you please contact me as soon as possible, I would like to become your best friend. Thank you.

For the rest of us who still love a beautiful Pinot Noir but don't want to pay the through the nose, we just have to find other ways to enjoy it.

One of my favourites, and believe me, it has taken years of experience to find one (oh, poor me!) comes from Chile. Unfortunately it can only be purchased in Grau in Palafrugell but it is worth the trip. It is called Cono Sur Pinot Noir and costs 5,92 Euros. Cono Sur belongs to the biggest winery in Chile, Concha y Toro, and is considered to be one of Chile's most reliable brands. The wine in question comes from the Bicycle range, made from the younger vines.

Typically Pinot, it is extremely light and bright in colour with all the red fruit notes: strawberries, cherries, plums and raspberries. It is without a doubt New World in style, very silky, easy to drink, simple, with soft tannins yet is well balanced, pure and for the price represents the ultimate bliss! It is a great choice for all sorts of food - pasta, poultry, fish and seafood. Serve it slightly chilled as this is the best way to appreciate Pinot Noir. Happy drinking!



Alyona Strange

## The Last Word

To all you lovely people, wherever you are perched, we wish you  
**Bon Any Nou, Feliz Año Nuevo and/or a Happy New Year**

but always remember that  
a New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

Enjoy 2011.

**Helen & JD**

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