

Discover the **Costa Blanca**

Derek Workman continues his series of excursions from his book 'Inland Trips From the Costa Blanca' which features 22 detailed trips that lead you to spots you'd never find by yourself.

Decadence on a whim: El Capricho de la Portuguesa

WHEN I walk through the grand double doors of El Capricho de la Portuguesa in Benialli, a tiny village in Alicante's Val de Gallinera, I'm intrigued. By the time its proud owner, Juan José Jimeno, gives me the grand tour I'm stunned, envious, and rapidly taking photos to copy the sumptuous ideas, should I ever get a place of my own to decorate.

The house had originally been the village olive mill, but prior to Juan José and his wife Sylvia Da Silva Braga, buying it, it had been owned by a Dutch couple. "It looked very nice when we first saw it," says Juan José, "but the style was more Colonial than we wanted, and Sylvia wanted to totally change the décor to make

it very stylish but also 'acogedor', welcoming." (Something they have achieved with enormous panache).

As we walk around, I'm particularly taken with the stunning use of colour and texture; deep green, grey, and orange washes on the walls contain a hint of gold that throws out a subdued sparkle as the light catches it; artfully chosen lamps and big gaudy paintings; beautiful antiques mixed with Ikea's finest; rich striped and brocaded fabrics and delicious Moroccan rugs. Amongst her many abilities, Sylvia is a skilled upholsterer, and she carefully selected the frames and colours of sofas and chairs and with equal deliberation, chose the fabrics to upholster them.

Each corner has a surprise tucked away; the inner courtyard with its shaded arbour; the tiny wooden door that leads into yet another exquisite bedroom; the tented roof terrace with views across the village to the mountains beyond; but I'm presented with the 'piece de resistance' when we walk down a short cobbled path inside the house and I step into a hydro-jet spa, with a jacuzzi and a domed, circular underground swimming pool.

"When we bought the house we didn't know what to do with the 'pozo', the stone storage tank for the oil, or the two rooms on a slightly higher level in which the animals were kept and the oil stored. Unfortunately there was a thick wall between them, but we didn't know how thick it was until we started digging away with a jack-hammer." It turned out to be almost three metres of solid rock and back-breaking toil, but the result is stunning as you look down the arched steps to the circular pool below and the glistening water changing from green to blue to red and back again.

I'm shown to the Al-Azraq room, the name taken from the infamous Moorish leader who hailed from the nearby Val de Alcalá, and who died under the walls of Xàtiva Castle. I'm spellbound by the rich purple/brown texture of the walls that set off the silver carved sofas with their deep



The Flore de Pasion bedroom

aubergine cushions, above which is an ornately carved Moroccan mirror.

And the name, El Capricho de la Portuguesa, why? Juan José smiles as he explains.

"A 'capricho' in Spanish is a whim, a caprice – sometimes a piece of jewellery or small decoration – and as Sylvia is Portuguese and has put all her ideas, heart and design into the house, it's therefore Sylvia's 'capricho', El Capricho de la Portuguesa."

But some capricho! Even an untrained eye can tell that every single element of the design and decoration exudes quality and taste – two things that don't come cheap. I discover that just the lamp in my bedroom at El Capricho cost more than everything put together in my bedroom at home. But that isn't the

point of the exercise.

"A lot of casa rural owners say that they want their visitors to feel at home, to feel comfortable with where they are staying, so make their places as cosy as possible. Of course we want our visitors to feel comfortable, but we also want them to feel as if they are staying somewhere just a little bit outrageous, somewhere totally different from their home, somewhere to look back on with fond memories of having been different from the every-day."

And that's certainly what Sylvia and Juan José have achieved; a little spot of romantic decadence tucked away from the world.

For further information: www.elcaprichodelaportuguesa.com, Tel. 966 406 674 / 639 690 638



The indoor pool

To discover more about Spain, visit www.derekworkman-journalist.com and <http://derekworkman.wordpress.com>. <http://valpapparazzi.wordpress.com> are random notes about life in Spain. Derek Workman's books, Inland Trips from the Costa Blanca and Small Hotels and Inns of Eastern Spain are available from most good books shops or direct from the publisher, Santana Books, www.santanabooks.com or Tel. 952 485 838.

The green dream

- 1/4 White Cabbage
- Handful of Kale
- 4 florets of Broccoli
- 2 Apples
- 2 Carrots
- 1 Pear
- Ice

Struggling to get your children to eat their greens? This could be the answer - it is packed with green goodness but the apples, pears and carrots give it a lovely sweet taste. Just put all the items in the juicer and enjoy.



CABBAGE contains vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, folic acid, iron and potassium. It is a cleanser, immune builder as well as an anti-inflammatory and antiseptic.

KALE contains vitamins A and C, chlorophyll, folic acid, iron and phosphorous. Good for anti-cancer and antioxidants.

BROCCOLI contains vitamins A, B, C and E, folic acid, iron, potassium, riboflavin. A good antioxidant and promotes healing. **APPLES** contain Vitamins A, B and C, potassium, pectin, boron, ellagic acid, and carotenes. They are great system cleansers full of dietary fibre, a laxative and lowers cholesterol.

CARROTS contain Beta-carotene, vitamins A, B and C, folic acid, magnesium, potassium, iron and calcium. They help to cleanse the liver and digestive systems. Great antioxidants: anti-cancer, antiseptic, diuretic, immune booster, anti-bacterial, help to lower cholesterol and aid eye and skin problems.

PEARS contain Vitamin C, potassium and fibre. Their juice helps protect the colon.

These recipes are supplied by The Kamala Centre. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us at The Kamala Centre on office@thekamalacentre.com or call us on 965 985 869. If you would like a copy of any of these recipes you can download them at our website www.thekamalacentre.com

Andy and Carol, The Kamala Centre

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COLONICS • BEAUTY • WELLBEING



PCN get ready to dive in!



THE EMPHASIS is on fun at Los Arcos Mind Body Soul and Leisure Exhibition on Sunday 28th November at mid-day when everyone has the chance to win a free sea dive!

Tony from Max Scuba Diving will bring along several different sizes of wet suits so everyone can have a try at breathing under water! Tony even has a 'dry suit' - in one of these you can dive in and be ready to party or go shopping when you re-emerge!

The Gold Centre from Quesada will value any gold or silver you want to sell, with information on their new venture into antiques valuations. And Footloose Dance Group will be there to entertain! Entrance on Sunday 28th November is just €1 and includes a special raffle ticket!

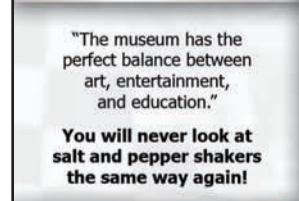
Proceeds from the event go to Paul Cunningham Nurses: www.paulcunninghamnurses.com



The new attraction in Guadalest is the fascinating Museum of Salt and Pepper Shakers. The collection consists of more than 20,000 Salt and Pepper Shakers from all over the world.

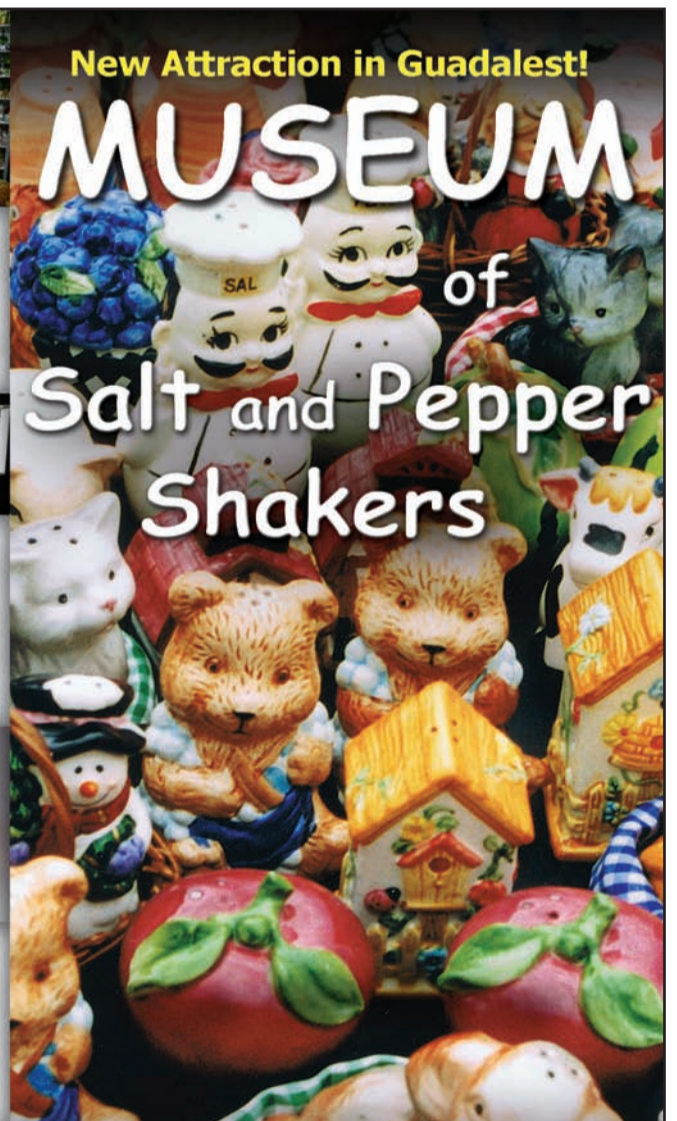


Come and see the amazing variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. From dogs, cats, pigs, and chickens; to cars, TVs and lawn mowers, you will surely find a shaker that will take your fancy.



"The museum has the perfect balance between art, entertainment, and education."

You will never look at salt and pepper shakers the same way again!



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Next to Tourist Info office

www.MuseoDeSalerosYPimenteros.es

