

TOURIST GUIDES

Loss of professionalism

A new law ratified on December 28th seriously threatens the quality of the tourist guide service in the islands.

In an age which is increasingly competitive in the tourism market, the only way ahead is to concentrate on the traits which differentiate us from other destinations, on value for money and quality service. We have every reason to be proud of the official Canarian tourist guides. They have obtained their qualifications after a great deal of study and a rigorous and complex series of exams



Farewell to the professional guides

on their knowledge of the islands and their linguistic abilities. Unfortunately, the new law threatens that level of professionalism. All that

will be needed henceforth for anybody from another EU country to be accepted as an official tourist guide in the Canaries will be a letter

confirming that they have worked as a tourist guide in their own countries at least two years out of the for a letter which they can easily write themselves. Nobody in the islands will be checking on their qualifications, or evaluating their abilities or specific knowledge.

Those who are currently working without the official title, and it has to be said offering a far inferior service, will no longer have to dodge the inspections as they will be handed their permission on a plate merely by asking for it. In the defence of the new law, the Tourism Department of the Canarian government says that guides qualified here will also be able to work elsewhere in the EU, however many capital cities, museums and National Parks require specific qualifications.

It is doubtful if the newcomers will respect the established rates and it has become increasingly obvious that the tour operators are price driven, so the quality of the service will be ruined and of course the reputation of the resorts with it.

WELCOMING TOURISM

Fáilte Ireland

According to marketing services specialists, FutureBrand, in the 2009 Country Brand Index Ireland is the only European country in the top ten friendly destinations.

The attitude of the locals is one of the most important aspects of any holiday. The smiles, welcoming attitude and willingness to help of the

local population can make or break a holiday and a destination. FutureBrand have just published their third and latest index on the friendliness of locals across the globe.

Top spot was taken by Fiji, the third time they have made the top ten. Second, with their 100,000 welcomes and the craic, is Ireland for the second consecutive year.

The conversation and sense of community remains one of Ireland's most charming attractions for visitors according to the survey. The remaining places were taken by Aruba, Thailand, Bermuda, Tahiti, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, Canada and New Zealand. Ireland also came second in the ranking as the best country for ease of travel. The overall

UK brand was rated eighth and they were second in the nightlife category, fifth in the best shopping league, fourth in political freedom, fifth for advanced technology, fourth for ease of doing business, fifth as a conference centre and third as a place to set up new businesses. Spain, despite having the 10th most recognisable brand, does not rate anywhere.

Business in Brief

Souvenir shopping

Trash or treat

Tourists spend over 1.5 billion US dollars on souvenirs each year.

What to do we buy to advertise to friends and family where we've been or to help us remember our visits? The top seller is apparently the t-shirt. However there are those who have the t-shirt and haven't actually visited a particular destination, those who have and wear the t-shirt to prove it and those who have and are too cool to wear the t-shirt. Ashtrays are another popular pick-up, but whether bought or 'borrowed' is a different matter. There is even a book on Casino ashtrays across the world. However, last year's kitsch could be next year's collectors' item. Early German porcelain plates with views are fetching good prices now and if you were one of the tourists who purchased a Virgen de Candelaria snowstorm in the early 80s, you could well be sitting on a small fortune.

UK economy

British tourism

Good news from British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling, for businesses here that target British tourists and for the UK.

In declarations in the House of Commons, Darling announced that the UK economy will shrink 4.75 per cent in 2009 but will recover next year with an expected growth of one to one and a half per cent. Britain is the largest tourist market for Spain and the Canaries.

However according to the Minister, unemployment will continue to grow and getting people back to work will be a priority for his government. From January, nobody under 24 will be unemployed for over six months without a guarantee of work or training.

Winter 2010

Book ahead

Jet2.com and Monarch have already announced their winter flight schedule for next year. Jet2.com were first off the blocks and have included new flights to Tenerife from East Midlands airport for the 2010-2011 Winter season.

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Power FM schedule

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08.00 Bigger Breakfast with Rick Porter
11.00 Big Fat Lunch with Val Richardson
14.00 Alex in the Afternoon with Alex Mcrae
14.00 (Weds) Rock 'n Roll Years with Dion
17.00 Drivetime with Fred Dudman
20.00 (Fri) Battle of the Bars with Katy Kennedy
23.00 Into the Midnight Hour with Maggie Porter
02.00 Early Hours - Virtual Power
05.00 Daybreak - Virtual Power

Saturdays

08.00 Breakfast Show with Gordon King
12.00 The Golden Oldies with Katy Kennedy
15.00 Saturday Scene with Pete Quilty
18.00 Saturday Night with Saturday Power
21.00 Love Show with Bernie Simmons
23.00 In the Midnight Hour with Virtual Power
02.00 Early Hours - Virtual Power
05.00 Daybreak - Virtual Power

Sundays

08.00 Breakfast Show with Gordon King
12.00 Sunday Roast with Katy Kennedy
15.00 Love in the Afternoon with Pete Quilty
18.00 Ex-Pat Show with Spencer James
21.00 BBC Top of the Pops
22.00 The Love Show with Bernie Simmons
02.00 Early Hours - Virtual Power
05.00 Daybreak - Virtual Power

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