



## DIARY OF A TRAVEL WRITER

# THE TIME WE PAINTED PICASSO'S BIRTHPLACE RED

**THURSDAY** Parents of small children take note, Port-Aventura theme park has added a €10m *Sesame Street* area, filled with small-scale rides, including a baby rollercoaster and, my favourite, Elmo's farm. It's the end of

the season and the park is refreshingly free of queues.

Dinner in Arena Restaurant with Pere Granados, Mayor of Salou and other dignitaries. Philip Airey, the new president of the Irish Tour Operators Federation, makes his speech and *The Parting Glass* is sung in honour of our hosts.

**FRIDAY** An amazing trip to Tarragona. You regularly come across cities with Roman remains – in Tarragona the Roman remains are the city.

**SATURDAY** Flight IB65631 from **Barcelona** gleaming new terminal to **Malaga**. The city looks clean and bright and Enrique, my driver, brings me to the newly opened 4km promenade. **Malaga** has seven beaches, which means you can go for a swim from a city centre hotel. And it won't get much more central than the Petit Palace Plaza.

The **Malaga** Bar in Santa Maria has hanging hams and old men discussing bull fighters. The beers come in at less



EOGHAN CORRY



**MALAGA** A blend of colour and enthusiasm

than €4 a half litre.

**SUNDAY** Kay Farrell runs a cycle tour of **Malaga** and brings us through the largely pedestrianised streets, merrily jingling our bells.

We run into some colourful medieval religious procession and a band of balladeros performing at a random streetwalk.

**Malaga** is full of colour and enthusiasm and it makes you wonder why people go to pricier **Barcelona** or treat it as a stopping point on the way to the **Costa del Sol**

**MONDAY** The Picasso museum which displays 285 of the artist's paintings is the city's highlight. Picasso left **Malaga** when he was 10 (describing his scallop-eating neighbourhood as "del chupa y tira", 'the suck and throw quarter').

Dinner in Parador de Gibralfaro is a journey through the local cuisine.

**TUESDAY** The beer in Taberna Cantera on Calle Sanchez Pastor doesn't look like it's going to run out anytime soon.

**WEDNESDAY** **Malaga** is still big business for the Irish holiday maker.

There are 160 golfers in one group lined up with golf bags in the airport.