

June 7 2011, cloudy 24°

CONTENTS

1. New spelling
2. Toll collection
3. Women and cutlets
4. Tailor-made relaxation

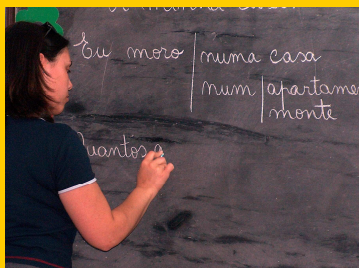
www.a-hill-of-your-own.com
info@montedocasarao.com

To note in your diary

June 10 through 30: Festival de Mastros São Teotónio
July 22 through 30: Festival Músicas do Mundo Sines
August 4 through 8: Festival Sud-oest Zambujeira do Mar
August 7 through 15: Feira Medieval Silves
October 6 through 13 Painting week Monte do Casarão

1. NEW SPELLING

While I was trying to master the Portuguese language I never realised that Portuguese is liable to change as much as Dutch is. The discussions about spelling are comparable to the ones in the Netherlands. Moreover, there's a growing body of opinion in Portugal that Brazil-



ian Portuguese should be granted the official status in all the Portuguese speaking countries. This has largely to do with economic

motives, but that is beside the point.

It is really awkward, though. By now, I have grasped at long last which words are accented (they do love accenting words in this country!) or hyphenated, and which words begin with a capital. And now I can just forget about it all. With the exception of the words to which the old spelling rules continue to apply. Oh well, we have until 2015 to cram up all the new ones. What makes the new spelling agreeable to us is that three letters are being introduced to the Portuguese language: the K, the W and the Y. After these many years, my husband's name will no longer evoke distraught faces: Wynand!

2. TOLL COLLECTION

Further discussion and especially protests have erupted over the intended levying of tolls on the A23, A24 and A25 in the North of Portugal and on the A22 in the Algarve. The introduction (which was planned for 15 April) has been postponed until after the election of 5 June. It's up to the new PSD government to decide on this unpopular measure, among many others. How the tolls are to be levied is not entirely clear. Paying in cash is not an option and toll



booths there are not. Registration takes place electronically. The transponder needed for that purpose can be bought or leased. Probably at a post office, or a collecting agency. Toll can be paid in advance, using a direct debit. Alternatively, it can be paid behindhand (within 5 days), in which case service charges apply. The car rental companies in the Algarve take a gloomy view of the tolls, especially since no-one as yet knows what the procedure will be for the holidaymaker who rents a car.

We'll keep you posted. We want to know for ourselves too. There is one consolation: according to the authorities 'all information will be made available in the first week the toll collection is introduced'. Phew, that is a relief!

3. WOMEN AND CUTLETS

Language never ceases to fascinate me. On International Women's day, the 2011 Culinary Calendar was dedicated to proverbs about women. We all know what Thatcher said about women*, but a less well-known one is *Women and cutlets, the more you beat them, the better they become*. Mineke Schipper, an emeritus professor at Leiden University, collected 15,000 (!!!) proverbs about women from all over the world. Only seldom does a proverb say something nice, including the Portuguese proverbs. How do you like: *A woman is an animal with long hair and short-sighted ideas? A man of straw is worth more than a woman of gold? A woman on her own does everything, two women do little and three do nothing at all?* Okay, another one, just for kicks: *A woman and a paved road are made for trampling on*.

This is the kindest proverb I found in Portuguese: *A good woman is worth a crown*. Isn't that sweet?

*Margaret Thatcher: If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman.

4. TAILOR-MADE RELAXATION

After a few days on Monte do Casarão, many of our guests lose track of what day or time it is. Doing as you please, when it pleases you, playing along with what presents itself, walking, swimming, painting, reading a book: relaxation *pur sang*.

Monte do Casarão offers a wide range of options. The immensely beautiful nature, the infinite silence and the sense of freedom likewise add an extra dimension to meditation, yoga and qi gong. Only recently, a small riding stables opened its gates a few miles down the road. Obviously, exploring nature on horseback is a wonderful experience. Canoeing down river Mira is tremendous as well. Or surfing at Malhão. Thus, everyone can find the relaxation or thrill (s)he seeks.



Nel