



November 26 2011, sunny 20°

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### Painting on Monte do Casarão 2012

On April 19-26 and October 4-11 you can once again attend the painting week on Monte do Casarão.



Further information:

[http://www.montedocasaraao.com/En/e\\_painting.html](http://www.montedocasaraao.com/En/e_painting.html)

[www.a-hill-of-your-own.com](http://www.a-hill-of-your-own.com)  
[info@montedocasaraao.com](mailto:info@montedocasaraao.com)

### Early bird discount

The 2012 rates have been established. If you book before January 1st 2012, you can book your cottage at the 2011 rates. As the prices in winter, early and late season have remained the same, you can earn a 5 percent discount until December 31st. The early bird discount applies to the painting weeks as well.

## 1. JORIS HAS DIED

Joris has died. He has been poisoned. He died on the car, on our way to the vet. Thank goodness, Wammes was let off relatively lightly. After an hour or so on a drip and a number of injections he was back on his feet. It's likely that he got down less of the stuff. Either he simply didn't like it, or Joris had eaten most of it by then.

It's been a month now, but we are still distressed by it. Not just us, but the other dogs as well. Lotte most of all, she misses her frisky, enterprising brother.



The vet told us this happens quite often in this area. The farmers blame the hunters; the hunters blame the farmers. Foxes are the intended victims, says the one. Birds of prey, says the other. Rats, says a third. It is still a disgusting and despicable act, justly punishable by high prison sentences. Unfortunately the manufacturers of poisons go scot-free (so far). They merely profit.

## 2. WINTER-READY

Thus, we all have our sorrows and misery at some point. Depending on the extent and the intensity of it, most of us manage to resume the thread. After all, life goes on. We are preparing for winter. The olives have been picked, enough wood has been sawn, the stoves are in working order (after nearly a year of inactivity, they sometimes need a little kick-start), the gutters are clean and the deck chairs have been put in storage. We are ready for the winter season (November, December, January), if you can call it winter here. Actually, it is only winterish at night, when below-zero temperatures occur. But during the day, it quickly rises to between 15° and 23°, depending on the cloudiness. November is the rain month par excellence and in December and January (occasionally heavy) showers occur.

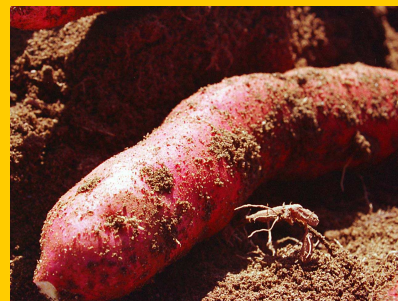


The storks, too, are preparing for winter, for crossing to Africa. Last week dozens of them were gathering over Casa Basta, rising on the up draughts. Spectacular. I cannot show you, for I was watching so intently that I forgot to take any pictures.

## 3. BATATA DOCE DE ALJEZUR

Aljezur is preparing for its four-day Festival da Batata Doce, the festival of the sweet potato. They are proud of their potato, and justly so. It doesn't merely taste wonderful - a bit sweet, as the name suggests - it is also quite versatile. Its uses range from simply boiling them to making biscuits and flans.

Two years ago, the rather unsightly, knobbly red tuber was given the protected geographical status, a European registration of authentic regional products. It is the only potato in Europe that is allowed to be called Batata Doce de Aljezur. Did you know that 1003 regional products of European origin have been registered? Portugal takes fourth place with 114 products (the majority of which originates in the Alentejo), after Italy, France and Spain. We have Mel da Serra de Monchique, Azeite de Moura, Carne de Porco Alentejano, Paio de Beja, Presunto do Alentejo. Britain takes seventh place with 32 registered products, including the Jersey Royal Potato, Bonchester Cheese and Arbroth Smokie.



*Festival da Batata Doce de Aljezur Dec.1 through 4.*

## 4. STARGAZING

Everybody agrees that the evenings and nights on Monte do Casarão are pitch dark. You cannot see your hand before your face (unless it's a full moon, but that's not under discussion now). What you can see is countless stars. One of our guests, a keen amateur astronomer, had brought his telescope and invited us to enjoy the sight of Saturn and its rings, star clusters, the Triffid Nebula (see photo) and the Milky Way. He even made a webpage for us (Dutch-language only, so far). Owning a telescope was already on our priority list, but it has now moved up in the ranking.



[http://www.montedocasaraao.com/Nl/n\\_universe.html](http://www.montedocasaraao.com/Nl/n_universe.html)

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