



December 1th 2013, sunny 17°

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Painting weeks 2014

17 - 24 of April
02 - 09 of October

In April 2014 we are organising our painting week for the 10th time and we would like to celebrate this anniversary with you. If you book one of our painting weeks this year we will give you a 10 percent discount, in addition to the early bird discount.

www.montedocasarao.com/En/e_painting.html



The reactions we received to the deaths of our dogs were heartwarming. It really meant a lot to us. Let's just hope that a change of mentality will take place here at some point.

1. TWO STUDENTS CALLED NIELS

While I described our electricity supply in newsletter 31, with respect to water management we are self-supporting as well.

Water is even more important than electricity, which makes it is our most vital necessity of life.

Our water comes from two wells; the one is 40 metres deep, the other measures 180 metres. The deepest well supplies by far the most water, the amount we need during the summer. The water is about a hundred years old and contains various minerals. It doesn't taste very nice and feels a bit oily. We contacted the Delft

University of Technology to find out if and how it might be purified. Result: a top quality report containing recommendations. Last year it was started by a bachelor student and this year, two other students completed it, receiving technological support from the Netherlands and Portugal. It should be noted that it took some time for everyone to realize that the Netherlands uses the German measuring system, whereas Portugal deploys the French system, which resulted in entirely different readings. However, *soit. Peanuts.*

The necessary equipment has by now been ordered from the local dealership and will soon be fitted. 'Niels *with*' (who takes sugar in his coffee) and 'Niels *without*' won't be there. They're taking a rain check on that. By the way, they had 8 out of 10 for their bachelor thesis.



2. UNADULTERATED NATURE

Figs, quinces, grapes, blackberries, olives... everything grows in the wild here. We do lots of picking. It makes me very greedy, especially since anything that is left hanging will dry out or rot. It feels good to replenish your stocks with what nature provides. Very basic.

I make jams out of everything: grapes with wine, figs with honey, quinces with apple, figs



with nuts, blackberries, feijoa. This year, I made chutney for the first time. Fig chutney. We still have a piece of boar in the freezer (donated by the hunting association) and a partridge (that Bas gave us). Combines really well with the chutney, I should think. Soon the oranges will be harvested and after that we shall have to show patience for a while. The medronho, the fruits of the strawberry tree, we leave for our neighbour. He makes them into liquor.

3. SAINT BARBARA

On various road-maps, the name of Santa Bárbara is indicated, situated between João de Riberras and Pomba. In real life, no nameplate can be found. Nothing to give you a clue that you have arrived at Santa Bárbara.

On a faraway hill, a tiny chapel has been erected. There is never anyone in sight. Only on the second Sunday in October, it is packed. Saint Barbara, to whom the chapel was dedicated, leaves her shrine and is carried around in full devotion and in full regalia.



Originally, the chapel housed John the Baptist. However, a rich and influential lady who lived in these parts around 1750, Juliana Reposa, had more affection for and dedicated the shrine to Santa Bárbara, who offers protection from sudden death, thunder and lightning.

The official anniversary is 4 December, but the date has been moved forward for practical reasons: it is the third local procession in a row – which makes it easier to remember – and more importantly, as a rule, the weather is better in October. And who would begrudge the small saint a bit of sunshine? The rest of the year, she has to stay indoors, together with John the Baptist who – honour where honour is due – is always taken along in the procession.

4. ANOTHER BARBARA

By that I mean the Spanish Bárbara Mateos, director and documentary maker. She fell in love with the serra between Pomba and Ribeira do Ruivo. Obsessed with the country and its inhabitants. What are those people like? What does everyday life look like? Not just for the one who have always lived here, but also for the newcomers and foreigners.

Being foreigners, we were given a space in the film. The camera crew followed us for three days, from early in the morning until late in the evening. It was very labour-intensive (everything had to be filmed again three or four times), but really exciting and great fun. The film is due next year.

As soon as it's on show, I'll let you know. *Nel*

