

Sept. 22th 2018, sun, 34°



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## Painting 2019

The dates of the 2019 painting weeks have been arranged.

**Thursday 11 - Thursday 18  
April 2019**  
and

**Thursday 3 - Thursday 10  
October 2019**

*In the 2018 October painting week (4 to 11 Oct. ) there is still one single room available.*

[https://  
www.montedocasarao.com/en/  
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## SOMEWHAT LATER THAN INTENDED

By the end of June, this newsletter was all but written when I travelled to the Netherlands to help my son Mark and daughter-in-law Anne move from Rijkswijk to Wageningen. My main job was to keep Teun and Gijs pleasantly occupied (I recommend 'Professor Plons' at the Maritime Museum Rotterdam). It was great fun, but all in all, I didn't manage to complete the newsletter.

The exact date of my return was the 3rd of August. It was the day before the fire broke out in the Monchique. It raged for a full week. The first two days were anxious for us as well. The flames reached above the Monchique hills and could be seen from where we are. In the directions of Nave Redonda, south-east from the petrol station – about 10 kilometres as the crow flies, some twenty houses had to be vacated. Then, the fire moved the other way, in the direction of Silves.



Photo made from Casa Marcanta

The fire lasted for seven days. The damages are huge. Fortunately, nobody was killed, but one person was seriously injured and thirty people, mainly fire fighters sustained slight injuries. At the peak of the fire, 1500 firefighters, 400 vehicles and 15 firefighter planes were at work. 21,000 hectares have been incinerated. How could it get so badly out of hand once again, even though the Monchique was known to be a major risk? It's up to the politicians to answer that question. They are feeling the heat now.

## LISBON FOR A DAY

Every year, we spend a couple of days in Lisbon. There is always a reason: renewing a passport, going to the opera or, like this time, the presentation of the Green Key Awards at the Marriot Hotel. Yes, the big hotels participate too.



When in Lisbon, we never miss having lunch at the Casa do Alentejo, originally (1939) an association for Alentejans who have moved to Lisbon. From the outside, it doesn't look that special, but once you're indoors, it's majestic. Decorative ceilings, murals, tile pictures, chandeliers, you just can't stop looking round. And the food is lovely. Alentejan, of course. Anyone can go in. Lisbon is becoming prettier all the time. Many old buildings are being restored. Actually, they are being bought up by project developers – which hardly benefits the housing market or the

Lisboans themselves – but it does mean an upgrade for the city. The ministries flanking the Praça do Comércio are slowly but surely being revamped for hospitality purposes. Thus, the famous Martinho da Arcada, the 1778 café that Fernando Pessoa used to frequent, no longer reigns supreme in the square.

If you are in the Praça do Comércio, you simply must visit the Story Centre. In an hour or so, the entire Lisbon history comes to life. If you're facing the Tagus, it's to your left.

## GREEN CAPITAL OF EUROPE

As if it was meant to be: a few days after we collected our Green Key Award, Lisbon was acclaimed Green Capital of Europe for the year 2020. This took place in the Dutch city of Nijmegen, Green Capital of Europe for 2018. And just like us, a city needs to have a green plan. More green spaces (200 hectares), more trees, water and energy savings, quiet areas, renovation of the Praça de Espanha and the water quality of the Tagus are only some of the items included in the ambitious programme.



Lisbon is already being green. It wants its inhabitants and the tourists to ride bikes more. To this end, 90 kilometres of cycle track was constructed (a large part of which skirts the Tagus) and 60 more kilometres are to be added. In many places, you can rent a bike for a few euros, using a special mobile phone app. Also, cycling tours are being organised for tourists, if so desired under the direction of a English (speaking) guide. The clever bit is that the tour goes downhill all the way. No bruising battle, no climbing steep hills. This way, you'll gain a different perspective on Lisbon than from the city bus.

## ULTIMATE RELAXATION

She came by to introduce herself, our new neighbour, and immediately offered her services. Margaux is a holistic massage professional. Aromatherapy, thermotherapy, reflexology, Reiki, she does it all. And – not unimportantly – she has lovely firm hands.



The great thing is that she offers a mobile service. She will massage you in your own environment, i.e. on your own mountain. Try and imagine? A pleasant light breeze across your back? The humming of bees in your ears? The smell of eucalyptus in your nose? So beneficent! Go on, indulge!

Nel