

**Tuesday 20 February 2007**

**Press Release...**

**Ryanair renames Faro Airport - What difference a name makes...**

Lowcost carrier Ryanair has made a minor amendment to its online booking system that could make a major difference to the western Costa de la Luz. Faro Airport, recognised as being the gateway to the Portuguese Algarve, is now known by Ryanair as Faro-Huelva Airport, appending the name of the adjacent Spanish province across the border. This could have an enormous psychological impact on the number of passengers who will now contemplate entering Spain from outside of, rather than within, its borders. 4.7 million Northern Europeans flew into Faro Airport in 2006 and inevitably a large chunk of passengers in 2007 will now head east out of the airport and straight into the Costa de la Luz.

Andrew Benitz, Director of Titan Properties, a real estate agency based in El Rompido, Huelva, comments, "It has always been more convenient to fly into Faro for travel to the western Costa de la Luz. The AA confirms that it's 69.2km from Faro Airport to Ayamonte in Huelva, nearest town for such resorts as Costa Esuri and Mirador del Guadiana, but over double the distance at 155.1km from Seville Airport to Ayamonte. Yet most people will still opt for Seville Airport, probably subconsciously because of the fact that it's in Spain. Even the city of Huelva itself, the capital of the province of the same name, is equidistant from both airports (111.5km from Seville Airport and 115.9km from Faro Airport), so holiday home owners and tourists alike should always remember that they can make price comparisons between flights to the two airports. Before Ryanair made the decision to change the name of the airport, only 3% of passengers flying with Ryanair to Faro Airport stayed in Spain for their holiday. We expect this figure to now shoot up dramatically."

EU members are free to cross borders without checks; in fact you zip across the suspension bridge over the River Guadiana from Portugal to Spain without so much as flashing a passport. And, it's not just Ryanair that's making an attempt to break down the psychological barrier of an international border between the two countries. Portugal and Spain have recently come to an unprecedented agreement whereby, since mid-2006, there is a direct bus service from Faro Airport across the border into

Spain and stopping at Ayamonte and on to Nuevo Portil, El Rompido and so on. This service is due to be expanded in 2007 to add Seville and Jerez Airports to its route. It takes only 40 minutes from Faro Airport to Ayamonte and the bus runs twice an hour. It's unusual for the Portuguese to be supporting the Spanish markets like that and the service provider even has their own stand in arrivals at Faro Airport.

Andrew Benitz concludes, "The last piece of good news for would-be second home owners in western Costa de la Luz is that, despite its proximity to the popular Algarve, a three bedroom golf villa with private pool costs as little as 420,000 euros, on average 40 – 50% less than the than the equivalent across the border into Portugal."

NB – Seville and Faro International Airports are also served by EasyJet, BMI Baby, Monarch and British Airways to name but a few, from major UK and Irish Airports. 20 out of 26 UK International Airports have flight routes into Faro.

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