



February 18 2015, sunny 24°

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Gijs



On 18 November 2014, **Gijs** was born, our third grandchild, the son of Mark and Anne, brother to Teun. It's wonderful that's he's there and that all is well.

New year's lottery 2015

Liesbeth, Job and Sarah Prijt are the winners of a week at Monte do Casarão. Congrats! Great! See you soon.



Painting weeks 2015

Do you feel like painting outdoors for a week (again)? On your own mountain? Working hard, but getting pampered as well? You can, from **Monday 13 - Monday 20 April** and from **Wednesday 7 - Wednesday 14 October**.
www.montedocasarao.com/En/e_painting.html



1. TRADE FAIR

In January, we always travel to the Netherlands. Would not miss it. By the middle of that month, the city of Utrecht hosts a huge five-day travel fair, and there we make ourselves useful as promoters of the Alentejo. The Alentejo is a relatively unknown holiday destination. Portugal itself does not make it to the top five of Euro-



pean holiday spots. That is not something to feel too sorry about. You don't run into fellow countrymen all the time, which makes a nice change. However, everyone who has ever been to Portugal is bound to return. That is a given: friendly, hospitable people, a rich history, overwhelming nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the sun, and – not importantly – it is affordable. The Tuesday preceding the fair is reserved for the travel sector. Lectures, awards, press contacts, colleagues, the entire day is oriented towards to the professional. It offers a great opportunity to renew contacts and keep yourself informed of trends and developments in the world of travel. From Wednesday through Sunday, the real holidaymakers are welcome. This year, the fair attracted approximately 117,000 visitors. Another increase compared to other years.

2. SLOW TRAVEL

The trend for 2015, we learned at the trade fair, is *Staying with the locals*. Authenticity, local expertise, allowing yourself to be guided by the habits and the rhythms of your location, ownership, that is what today's traveller wants, rather than a room containing a bed. The term connects to the broader concept of Slow Travel, a term that has been on the rise in the British travel sector for some years. Spending a week at the same location, sitting on your patio and allowing your surrounding to sink in, drinking your coffee and reading your newspaper in the village square, walking the same road three or four times and seeing something new every time, buying your vegetables, cheese and fish at the local market, not allowing yourself to be rushed: that is slow travel, and Monte do Casarão is a good place to start practising.



3. SÃO TEOTÓNIO

We have started counting the days until June, when São Teotónio will be decorated for three

weeks and every night there will be live music at some venue. It is the time of the Mastros, a huge biennial village fête. Boasting 6,500 inhabitants and extending 350 square kilometres, São Teotónio is the largest and richest village in the municipality of Odemira. It has a regional function and is a pleasant, lively town. Its income comes mainly from agriculture. A number of large international companies have established themselves here, such as Vitacress, Frupor and Sudoberry. The secondary school supplies sufficient young people and the elderly can move to the old people's home or spend time in the day care centre. There is a kindergarten, a pre-school, a police station, a cultural centre, dentist, pharmacy, supermarket, a health centre, a village hall with a mayor, in short: everything is geared to the local population. As a tourist, you simply blend in.



São Teotónio has been around since the 15th century. In due course various neighbouring villages came under its rule, most recently, in 2013 Zambujeira do Mar by the Atlantic Ocean. And so São Teotónio also acquired a boulevard, three beaches, a few good restaurants, a carnival procession and a pop festival.

4. IT AIN'T HALF HOT... part 2

At least as interesting as the summer weather (newsletter 35) is the weather in the other seasons. According to the statisticians, most rain falls in November and January. for what it's worth, that is. It is true that downpours happen. However, these winter months, we had great weather. On the other hand, it rained quite a lot in early October, which meant that everything looked green during the painting week. And – unlike the April painting week – that is quite unusual. During the summer, hardly a drop falls. The rest of the year is mostly dry as well. During the winter, the average temperature is about 15°. When the sky is clear, the temperature tends to rise quickly, to 25°, sometimes 30°. On clear nights, it can be quite frosty in the early morning hours.

In February, the mimosa and the almond trees are in bloom. From April till June, the landscape has another colour scheme: first, everything is white, then yellow, then purple. During the spring, the weather is less stable than in autumn. Reason: the ocean has not yet warmed up. On the other hand, the days are longer than in autumn, while autumn nights are better for being outdoors. All things considered, the weather is *always* nice. Once in a while you need to find shelter indoors, but there's nothing wrong with that.



Nel