Alqueria, the jewel in the Iberian crown?

The Minister of tourism for the Madrid Government wasn't losing any sleep over Alqueria's new initiative. Alquerian tourist drives have come and gone. They have never attracted more than a handful of holidaymakers and were certainly no match for Spain's wonderful Costas. The number that have returned to the Pueblo is virtually non-existent and being a member of the Alquerian Frequent Visitors Club is a very lonely experience. Their new tourist initiative was based on the unscrupulous leading the gullible.

It all started at a meeting of the Alquerian Parliament, held in a Remitroot smoke filled room on a scorching August afternoon. Rodriquez, always on the make suggested they turned Alqueria into the 'ultimate bordello experience'. Enrique, minister for flora and fauna said he thought it already was while staring meaningfully at Manuela. Manuela floored him with a left-hook.

A list of reasons why anyone would want to spend their valuable free time in Alqueria was draughted. It was a very short list. In fact the only item concerned the healing effects of the spa water and this was a complete fabrication. The only water that emanated from the ground was due to the bad drainage and could turn the stomach of any Port Said sanitary inspector. But it demonstrated a principle. When one buys a house or car one can see the ruddy thing beforehand, with a holiday it is different. By the time the visitors had realised they had been conned, they would have already had their wallets emptied. Deception was to be the byword.

It is said that British seaside landladies based their hospitality on the Alquerian model. As a tourist destination Alqueria ranks somewhere between Chernobyl and down-town Baghdad. The only recent tourists have been from the Dangerous Sports Club. Eating Alquerian food is listed as one of their more hazardous pastimes. People have waxed lyrical about the sparkling cities of the world. New York, the Big Apple. Prague, The City of Hundred Spires. Budapest, Pearl of the Danube. One disgruntled

tourist suggested an apt epithet for Alqueria. The 'cleftal horizon' of Iberia. So one can see that much work was needed in the reinvention of Alqueria. Albeit a reinvention on paper only.

The first ploy was to write a cast iron contract to be displayed on the back of each travel document. This small print would be extremely small and in the ancient tongue of the 'Sodemalls', not spoken since biblical times. Alqueria will be depicted as a place of fun and laughter, warm lapping seas and enchanting moonlit evenings.

Will tourists even come? Will tourists stay? Will tourists sue?

We shall see.