Bar La Casa Devante

From the Río Verde, walking west along the Calla Generalissimo one passes the bar La Casa Devante. It differs little from thousands of others in southern Spain. An outside seating area which encroaches into the town plaza, covered with a rather ancient awning advertising Dubonnet in faded letters. The internal bar proper has its walls covered with photographs of footballers. These range from the sepia handlebar moustached version through to the coloured designer stubbled images of today. The pride and joy of the landlord was the dining room. Comfortable, intimate and decorated in a convincing pseudo Moorish style.

La Casa Devante is a meeting place of El Gente del Cerro, the Hill People. It is in the bar that Manuela and her confederates drink and plot. The Landlord Horacio Stranglardeganso is a large man of Sydney Greenstreet proportions. To complement him is his waiter, Jengibre Tomás. Tomás is a tall thin man with a very prominent nose. This gives him the appearance of a tower crane when viewed side-on. He is also dentally challenged with only a single tooth in his head. This solitary piece of enamel is unfortunately at the front and top of his mouth, like a lonely tombstone. If his profile, seen from a distance is bizarre then up close and face on he is somewhat of a shock.

Both men deem it their duty to recommend dishes from the varied menu. Unfortunately where their choices do not agree they have come to blows on several occasions. These fist fights are one of the highlights of Alquerian night-life and if one can be engineered it rarely disappoints. Horacio has been a bar-keeper all of his working life as have his forbears. It shows what can be achieved with a low IQ and a liquor license. Anything or anyone that doesn't deliver, dispense or consume alcohol is a complete mystery to him. Tomás however was tea-total before he worked at La Casa Devante, he then turned to drink. It was the making of him and he never looked back.

An evening at La Casa Devante is usually a leisurely and pleasant affair. The food is well prepared and interesting and the drink, if one avoids the Remitroot liquor is mellow and satisfying. The evening breeze brings the scent of wild Honeysuckle and Bougainvillea. It caresses the diners, relieving the intense heat of the day and brings an almost spiritual calm.

Remember however to leave by one.

At that hour Antonio Poyato is usually horizontal along the bar-top singing about an extremely sporting young lady and elements of the Second Spanish Legion based at Viator.