Los Patios
(Part Three)

The largest and grandest patio in the village is by far that of Fernando Rodriguez, owner of the Olive Mill and the village's most prominent Recién Llegados. One tenth of a hectare of flower beds paving stones and Romanesque columns surrounded by a marble veneered wall some three metres high. The central display is a relief map of Alqueria. The Recién Llegados area is ablaze with colour and detail while the area of Los Gente del Cerro is depicted as dull flat and desperate. A Cypress tree pruned to the unmistakable rotund profile of Rodriquez stands nearby. An Extended arm and hand protrude benevolently over the floral village. He was fooling no one.

The bank manager known by his epithet of Cartera Frederico, has tried for years to produce a patio up to completion standard. Unfortunately, he was implicated in the great Río Almanzora Whale Farm and Kamchatka Flounder Hatchery scam of 2006. Although nothing was proven, he is under constant surveillance. He tends his patio during the day and at night the *Brigada Anticorrupción* dig it up again looking for evidence. In the morning his backyard looks as if it has been freshly shelled by a 155mm howitzer battery.

The day of judging arrived and a crowd gathered for the unveiling of the final patio, that of the Bar La Casa Devante. When the door to the patio was swung open it was obvious that an Intelligence sortie by elements of El Gente del Cerro had been at work. The tree sculpture was almost identical to the one in Rodriquez's patio. It differed by the addition of a rampant goat carved from a Spanish Lavender bush. The position of the horns implied something very nasty was happening to the olive mill owner. Fairy lights supplied a suitably surprised look to the face on the main sculpture. This apparition brought waves of uncontrolled laughter and shouts of outrage, depending on where one's loyalties lay.

Fist fights broke out in the square. The assembled dignitaries enthusiastically joined in, showing at least that they were not afraid to participate in the local pastimes. The winner of the competition had already been decided. Antonio Poyato, who although didn't have a patio he had a plentiful supply of Remitroot wine. From the effects of which some of the judging panel had still not recovered.

Wellington said that two and two don't always make four in Spain. One wonders what mathematical formulae he would have applied to Alqueria.