September 2026 (10th issue)

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2. What Teachers Wish Parents Knew About September
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Simply SANT CUGAT®

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EDITORIAL

Back to the grind?

September always feels like a fresh start.

After weeks of holidays, late nights and relaxed routines, Sant Cugat gradually comes back to life. Schools reopen, clubs restart, diaries begin to fill, and many of us find ourselves wondering where the summer disappeared.

That's what makes this edition. Whether you're a parent preparing for the new school year, someone returning to work, or simply looking for a fresh challenge, we've packed this issue with ideas to help you reconnect with the community around you.

From **Ruth Sale's thoughtful advice for parents** and **our simple guide to La Diada**, to discovering why Sant Cugat is such an exceptional place to learn, we hope you'll find something that informs, surprises and inspires.

This month also sees the launch of two new regular features. Our **English-speaking Services Directory** makes it easier to discover trusted local businesses that can help you settle into life here, while **In Case You Missed It** offers a quick roundup of the local news that may have passed you by while you were enjoying a well-earned summer break.

As always, our aim is simple: to help make Sant Cugat feel a little smaller, a little friendlier and a little easier to navigate.

Welcome back, and here's to a fantastic September!

Ian & Aston

Scan this link to join our WhatsApp announcement group and get up-to-date information about events, meet-ups, and relevant news.

No chat, just useful info.

A Letter to the Editors

Dear Simply Sant Cugat,

We were disappointed to read the review of Santa Quitèria in your July/August edition.

The restaurant occupies the premises formerly occupied by Brevet, which closed some time ago. Since reopening as Santa Quitèria, it has established itself as a busy restaurant serving excellent food at fair prices with impeccable service. The fact that it is full most days speaks for itself.

One point in particular surprised us. The reviewer appeared to ridicule a dish called 'Sam de Pop'. In fact, Ssam is a genuine Korean dish, with pop being the Catalan word for octopus.

We also disagree with the suggestion that the restaurant is "pretentious". We've lived beside Pl. Can Quitèria for more than fifty years and have been delighted to see the square come alive again.

Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but we felt readers deserved to hear another perspective.

Anne Burton (novelist), Judith Holme Burton and Clare Geoghegan Byrne

Editor's note: Restaurant reviews are, by their nature, subjective. We welcome respectful responses from readers with different experiences, and we're pleased to publish this alternative viewpoint.

SIMPLE GUIDES

A Simple Guide to *La Diada*

And why 1714 is a year worth remembering

Imagine you live in a rented flat where your landlord (who is fairly easy-going) owns all the flats in the building. Each family is free to run their own home. They decide how to decorate the living room, what language they can speak, what religious feast days to celebrate, and what house-rules to follow.

That set-up is roughly how Spain worked before **1714** under the rule of **Habsburg king - Charles II**.

Historians often describe it as **"one king, many kingdoms."** The kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, Valencia and Mallorca, together with the Principality of Catalonia, all recognised the same monarch, but each had its own laws, institutions and traditions.

Then along came a royal succession crisis.

In 1700, Spain's king, **Charles II (aka Charles the Bewitched)** inconveniently died at the age of just 38. The last Spanish ruler of the **Habsburg dynasty**, he had been sickly throughout his whole life (hence 'bewitched') and, more importantly, left no children.

This was a problem – a big problem. In fact, it was a problem on a huge European scale.

At the time, Spain was not just Spain. It controlled territories in Italy, the Spanish Netherlands (roughly modern Belgium and Luxembourg), and a vast empire stretching across the Americas. Whoever inherited the Spanish throne would become one of the most powerful rulers in the world.

Two young men stepped (or, more likely, were pushed) forward with claims.

The first was **Philip of Anjou**, a somewhat shy 16-year-old French prince and grandson of the **Bourbon King Louis XIV** of France. **Charles the Bewitched** had named **Philip** as his heir in his will (much to the umbrage of the rest of Europe), believing that a single successor offered the best chance of keeping the Spanish Empire together.



The second was **Archduke Charles of Austria**, a studious 15-year-old member of the **Habsburg family**. His supporters argued that the **Habsburgs** had the stronger hereditary claim and that the throne should remain within the dynasty that had ruled Spain for generations.

The two teenagers were quite overwhelmed by the situation. The real battle was between the powerful nations backing them.

France supported **Philip**. Austria supported **Archduke Charles**. Britain and the Dutch Republic also sided with **Charles** because they feared that a Bourbon king in Madrid would make France and Spain too powerful together.

What followed became known as the **War of the Spanish Succession** (1701 to 1714)

After a bit of dithering, Catalonia eventually joined the side supporting **Archduke Charles**. Many people believed he would be more likely to preserve their traditional laws and institutions.

For years, the war raged across Europe. But then something unexpected happened.

In **1711**, **Archduke Charles** inherited the position of **Holy Roman Emperor**. Suddenly, the prospect of Charles ruling both Austria and Spain looked almost as threatening to Britain as a Bourbon ruler had done before.

The politics changed. Britain and several other allies began negotiating peace with Bourbon France.

In **1713**, Britain signed the **Treaty of Utrecht** where Britain recognised Philip as king of Spain in exchange for Spain reluctantly ceding them **Gibraltar**, **Menorca** and a bunch of other things they weren't overjoyed with. Nevertheless, it got British troops to withdraw from the conflict, leaving **Catalonia** and a few remaining allies to continue trying (in vain) to resist the French forces.

This part of the story is still remembered in Catalonia. Some view Britain's withdrawal as a betrayal, while British historians generally see it as a government pursuing its national interests. Either way, Catalonia found itself increasingly isolated.

Barcelona held out for more than a year under siege. Finally, on the fateful day of **11th September 1714**, the city fell.

Philip of Anjou officially became **King Philip V of Spain.** After his victory, he introduced a series of reforms known as the ***´Nueva Planta´*** decrees. These abolished many of the traditional institutions not only of Catalonia but also of Aragon, Valencia and Mallorca. Government became more centralised under the Bourbon monarchy.

Returning to our apartment-building analogy, now imagine the new landlord announcing that all the flats would now follow much the same rulebook. The families could still live in their homes, but many decisions that had once been made by each family would now be made by the landlord.

This is why **1714** remains such a significant date.

For many Catalans, it symbolises the loss of historic self-government. For others, it represents an important step towards the creation of a more unified Spanish state.

Happily, today, **Catalonia** once again has its own **parliament**, **government** and substantial powers over areas such as **education**, **health** and **culture**. Yet the events of **1714** continue to shape conversations about identity, autonomy and history.

So, the next time you see the number **1714** on a banner, a monument or a museum display, you'll know it isn't simply a date. It's the story of a sickly bewitched king, two teenage claimants, a European power struggle, the fall of Barcelona, and a debate that (more than three centuries later) still hasn't entirely gone away.

How Is La Diada Celebrated Today?

Every year on 11th September, Catalonia marks La Diada, its National Day. Unusually, it commemorates a defeat rather than a victory - **the fall of Barcelona in 1714**.

The day includes official ceremonies and floral tributes at monuments linked to the city's defenders. Many people display the **Senyera** (Catalan flag) on their balconies, while others fly the **Estelada**, associated with the independence movement.

La Diada is also a celebration of Catalan culture. Across the region, you may find **concerts**, **sardana** dancing, **castells** (human towers), **parades** and community events.

For some, it is primarily a day of remembrance and cultural identity. For others, it is an opportunity to express views about Catalonia's political future. Large demonstrations have become a feature of many Diada celebrations in recent years.

Whatever your perspective, La Diada remains one of the most important dates in the Catalan calendar - a day when history, culture and identity come together across Catalonia.

BACK TO SCHOOL

What Teachers Wish Parents Knew About September

An inside look at those first few weeks back at school by Ruth Sale

September always looks so clean and hopeful from the pavement outside the school gates. Here in Sant Cugat, you see the new school bags, the organised timetables, the pencils sharpened to perfect points, as families across the city return to familiar routines after the long summer break.

However, if you step through the classroom door and the picture shifts.

As an educator, I have watched hundreds of children navigate the first month of school, and every year September reveals itself not simply as a fresh start, but as a delicate recalibration of getting back to normal. From where I stand within the school gates, routines, emotions, friendships, expectations, confidence - everything wobbles a little before it steadies.

From the outside, it is easy to imagine that children simply slot back into school life like jigsaw-puzzle pieces returning to their place. Inside the classroom, I see the truth: September is a transition, and transitions are messy in the most human way.

The first thing I notice as an educator is rhythm - or rather should I say, the absence of it. Summer frees everything. Bedtimes drift, mornings stretch, and the structure that subtly supports children's behaviour dissolves.

Then September arrives with its early alarms and long days, and suddenly even the most capable children look tired around the edges. Their emotional resilience dips. Small frustrations swell into big ones.

When routines return - sleep, predictable mornings, calm evenings - I see children begin to settle. They learn better, cope better and connect better. Rhythm is the real back-to-school supply.

Friendships, too, need time to find their footing. Every September, I hear worried parents tell us, "She said she had no one to play with today." But inside the classroom and on the playground, we see the



The tone you set becomes the tone they live

natural reshuffling that happens every year. Children drift, reconnect, test boundaries and discover new peers. Social confidence warms up slowly, and one lonely lunchtime does not define a year. Friendships are fluid, and they need space to breathe before they take shape.

Independence is another September issue that parents rarely see. After weeks of adults smoothing the path - tying shoelaces, settling arguments, packing bags - children often arrive expecting the same level of intervention. As teachers, we spend those first weeks gently reminding them that they are

The 3 Questions to Ask After School

Instead of "How was school?", try asking...

✓Did anything make you smile today?

✓What was the hardest part of your day?

✓Tell me one thing that surprised you

capable of doing things by themselves. Try first, then ask for help. Speak to me directly. Organise your own things. Independence is not a switch – it's a skill that strengthens only when adults step back just enough.

There are also the inevitable emotional wobbles. I see them every year, even among the most confident children. Tears in the first week, irritability after school, behaviour that looks like mischief but is really fatigue. September asks a lot of children - new teachers, new classmates, new expectations, new everything.

> *"September is a transition, and transitions are messy in the most human way"*

After-school meltdowns are not failures - they are release valves. Empathy goes further than solutions in these moments. Children are carrying a huge cognitive and social load, and their behaviour is often simply communication.

Parents often want immediate feedback, but September is a month primarily for observation for those of us in the classroom. We are learning who your child is this year – how they think, what they need, where they shine and where they struggle. We are building trust, assessing levels and watching closely, even if we have not reached out yet. A strong partnership grows from patience and shared understanding.

And while children adjust, they also feel pressure - sometimes from school, sometimes from home, and sometimes from themselves.

One thing I wish more parents could see is just how much confidence matters in these early weeks. September is not the moment to worry about grades or speed. It is the moment to celebrate small wins - remembering homework, asking a question, trying something new.

Habits matter more than outcomes. A child who feels safe to try will learn far more than a child who feels rushed to perform.

Perhaps the most powerful force in September is something parents rarely notice - their own attitude. Children absorb adult emotions with astonishing accuracy. When parents speak positively about school, children arrive more confident. When adults worry aloud, children carry that worry with them. When parents trust teachers, children do too. The tone you set becomes the tone they live.

Across Sant Cugat, September brings thousands of children and families back into the rhythm of school life. But inside the classroom, teachers are not trying to "get ahead". We are laying foundations - routines, relationships, expectations, culture and curiosity. These are the fundamental building blocks of a successful year. A strong September makes everything smoother, calmer and a lot more joyful.

So here is the final truth I wish parents understood - September is a transition for everyone. Behind every child is a family also adjusting - new schedules, new logistics, new hopes, new worries. The classroom door is where all these worlds meet.

As an educator, I ultimately want exactly what every parent wants - a child who feels safe, confident, curious and capable. When parents and teachers pull in the same direction, children feel anchored.

With patience, partnership and a little grace, September stops being a hurdle and becomes what it was always meant to be - a beginning.

A Teacher's September Wish List

1. Give them time.
2. Let them try before stepping in.
3. Keep mornings calm.
4. Don't panic over one difficult day.
5. Speak positively about school.
6. Celebrate the small wins.

MEET-UP

Our evening at the Penya Blaugrana

More than just a fan club!



June's heat may have kept a few people at home, but 20 readers, contributors and local business partners still joined us for our latest Simply Sant Cugat Meet-up at the **Bar Penya Blaugrana**. It was certainly quieter than previous gatherings, although the smaller group made it easy to catch up with familiar faces, welcome newcomers and enjoy some longer conversations.

The highlight of the evening was a private talk and tour given by **Josep Maria Félez i Torregrosa**, president of the Penya Blaugrana Sant Cugat. From the simple bar downstairs, with its tables, terrace and a few Barça decorations, there is little indication of the treasure trove hidden in the private rooms above.

We heard how the Penya was founded in 1979, and how the organisation later purchased its historic headquarters after 21 members contributed money towards the cost. Reconstruction of the then-dilapidated building began at the end of 1980.

The headquarters itself is a remarkable 16th-century building with Gothic elements, now protected as a site of local cultural interest. Upstairs, the story of the organisation comes alive. The rooms are packed with trophies won by its children's teams, photographs and memorabilia donated by visiting players, managers and other guests. It feels like an Aladdin's cave dedicated to FC Barcelona.

Yet this is far more than a supporters' club. Today, the Penya runs around 30 football teams involving more than 450 players and forms part of the wider international network of Barça supporters' associations. What may appear from outside to be a neighbourhood bar is, in fact, a major sporting and community organisation with deep roots in Sant Cugat.

The visit was a genuine eye-opener, and a short meet-up report cannot possibly do the Penya justice. We will therefore be returning soon to prepare a fuller article about its history, its building and the extraordinary work it carries out.

The evening also reminded us why smaller meet-ups still matter. They help us discover hidden local institutions, strengthen existing relationships and meet people we might otherwise never encounter. Sometimes, the quietest evenings produce the biggest surprises.

*To receive announcements of where & when the next one is, join our WhatsApp Group (see page 3) or check online at www.simplysantcugat.com.

BONS MOTS

Fent i desfent aprèn l'aprenent

Learning the local language, one phrase at a time!

With September being our Back to School edition, this month's Bons Mots seems particularly appropriate:

Fent i desfent aprèn l'aprenent.

Literally, "By doing and undoing, the learner learns." Or, in less poetic English: we learn by trying things, getting some of them wrong, changing them and trying again.

It's something we tend to accept quite happily in children. Nobody expects their child to get on a bicycle for the first time and immediately cycle elegantly off over the horizon. Wobbles, wrong turns and the occasional encounter with a tree are all part of the process.

And when you're new to a country and its culture, *fent i desfent* happens almost every day. You use the wrong word in Catalan. You queue at the wrong desk. You misunderstand how some piece of bureaucracy works. You discover that the perfectly normal thing you've been doing all your life is apparently not how things are done here.

You try. You get it wrong. You adjust.

In fact, that's pretty much how we learnt to produce this magazine. When we started Simply Sant Cugat, we certainly didn't have everything worked out. We tried different types of articles, different ways of distributing copies, different ways of working together, different ideas for attracting advertisers. Some worked. Some didn't. Some seemed like brilliant ideas until we actually tried them.

And each time something didn't work, we knew a little more than we did before.

That's the important part of this Catalan expression. Desfent (undoing) isn't failure. It's part of the learning. Sometimes you have to go backwards, rethink something and have another go before you can move forward.

We talk a lot about "trial and error", but perhaps we attach too much stigma to the error. Without



the error, there often isn't much of a trial.

So whether you're learning Catalan, starting a new job, raising children, launching a project, finding your feet in Sant Cugat or simply trying something you've never done before, getting things wrong is inevitable.

Don't beat yourself up about it.

Fent i desfent aprèn l'aprenent.

Getting it wrong isn't a sign of bad learning. Very often, it's how good learning happens.


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ASSOCIATION SPOTLIGHT

Fundació Federica Cerdá

The unique bond between people and horses that builds confidence, connection and wellbeing



Foundation's director, Gloria Cano (centre), with the foundation's vet, Cristina (left) and teacher, Monica (right), daughters of the Foundation's President: Federico González Cerdá.

"We are more than a service. We are a refuge for families."

It is a simple phrase, but after spending an idyllic morning at Fundació Federica Cerdá, it became clear what it means.

Tucked away in a peaceful corner of Sant Cugat, the foundation is home to six horses and a dedicated team of professionals and volunteers. At first glance, it looks like a riding centre. In reality, it is something very different.

Founded fifteen years ago by a local family with a lifelong passion for horses, the organisation provides horse-assisted therapy for children and adults with a wide range of physical, cognitive and emotional challenges. Yet the impact often extends far beyond the person taking part in the therapy.

"When families come here, they realise they are not alone," explains director Gloria Cano. "They meet other families facing similar challenges. They feel understood and accepted."

That sense of belonging was one of the reasons the foundation was created. Having spent years around conventional riding centres, the family wanted to build something different: a place focused entirely on inclusion, accessibility and wellbeing.

The centre itself had to be transformed. Ramps were installed, access improved and facilities adapted for wheelchair users. Just as importantly, the welfare of the horses became a priority. Unlike many traditional riding centres, the horses live outdoors together, enjoying daily social interaction and carefully managed routines.

The therapy sessions are tailored to each individual. Goals are agreed with families and healthcare professionals, and activities are designed to support physical, cognitive or emotional development.

Sometimes the progress is physical. The team recalls one young woman with tetraplegia who gradually developed greater strength and posture, reducing some of the difficulties she faced in everyday life.

Sometimes the changes are less visible but equally powerful. One child with selective mutism struggled to communicate with adults. Through the presence of the horse, communication became easier. Instead of speaking directly to a therapist, he began by talking to the animal. Slowly, his confidence grew until he was able to communicate more freely.

The horses themselves play a unique role. For some participants, they provide motivation. For others, calmness, confidence or emotional security. The movement of the horse can also offer important physical benefits, particularly for people with mobility difficulties.

The foundation has even participated in research projects, including a study with children recovering from cancer treatment. While physical rehabilitation was one aspect, the team observed that many participants also benefited emotionally, rebuilding confidence and rediscovering a sense of normality after a difficult period in their lives.

Yet perhaps the most striking thing about Fundació Federica Cerdá is that it is no longer thinking only about therapy.

As the team looks to the future, they are developing new projects aimed at groups who may not traditionally be associated with horse-assisted activities at all. One focus is on older people, particularly those experiencing loneliness or social isolation.

“We’ve realised that not all vulnerability is physical,” explains the team. “Sometimes the challenge is emotional.”

The foundation hopes to work with care homes and community groups, offering small-group sessions where participants can spend time outdoors, interact with the horses, connect with other people and enjoy a change of environment. The goal is not simply treatment, but wellbeing, companionship and meaningful experiences.

Another initiative aims to welcome local school groups. Through visits to the centre, children can learn about disability, inclusion and diversity in a practical and engaging way. The hope is that these experiences will help build empathy and understanding from an early age.

Throughout the interview, one message surfaced again and again: connection matters.

Connection between people and animals. Connection between families facing similar challenges. Connection between generations. Connection with nature and with the wider community.

The foundation itself is named after Federica Cerdá, a much-loved grandmother whose kindness, generosity and positive outlook inspired the family. Although she only saw the project in its earliest days, her spirit still seems present in everything the organisation does.

After fifteen years, Fundació Federica Cerdá continues to help people build confidence, develop skills and overcome challenges. But perhaps its greatest achievement is creating a place where people feel welcomed, valued and understood.

In a world that often moves too fast, that may be every bit as important as therapy itself.



How You Can Help Support the Foundation

Fundació Federica Cerdá welcomes support from:

- Individual donors
- Local businesses
- Volunteers with relevant skills
- Community groups interested in collaboration

Contributions help fund therapy sessions, horse care and future community projects.

For more information, visit:

www.fundacionfc.org
Instagram: @fundacionfedericacerda

EDUCATION

Is Sant Cugat a Good Place to Learn?

Looking at the town's educational ecosystem with Education Councillor, Carme Ardid

For many international families arriving in Sant Cugat, education is one of the biggest considerations. And at first glance, the choice can be bewildering: public schools, *concertades*, private schools, international schools, vocational training and universities.

So, how much control does the *Ajuntament* have over local schools?

"Control? None," laughs Carme Ardid, Sant Cugat's Councillor for Education.

The answer highlights something many international residents may not realise. Responsibility for teachers, curriculum, timetables and educational quality lies primarily with the Generalitat de Catalunya. The role of the *Ajuntament* is largely to complement that system and adapt additional educational opportunities to the needs of the city.

And Carme knows the local education system from the inside. Before entering politics, she had already been an entrepreneur twice, first running an academy offering tutoring, IT and English classes in Barcelona and later an online retail business.

Wanting to work closer to home, she eventually joined what is now the *Institut FP Sant Cugat,* where she worked in administration and watched the new vocational training centre grow from a team of around 30 people to more than 100.

Her move into politics came, she admits, somewhat unexpectedly. When the election results eventually meant taking on political responsibility, her excitement was accompanied by another feeling: "Where have I got myself into?"

However, three years later, education is very much her world.

More than maintaining schools

While the Generalitat runs the education system itself, the *Ajuntament* works around it.

Through the city's *Pla de Dinamització Educativa*, schools can access activities from different municipal departments covering areas such as culture, equality, heritage and other subjects connected to the curriculum.



Carme Ardid: Sant Cugat's Education Councillor

The city also collaborates with organisations including the Creu Roja and the CPNL. One example Carme gives is summer programmes for recently arrived children, helping them become familiar with the city and the language before starting in Sept.

The municipality also has educational institutions of its own, including seven *escoles bressol* for young children, as well as art and design, music and conservatory provision.

There is another area where the city can play an important role: preventing young people from dropping out of education altogether.

When absenteeism risks becoming permanent abandonment, municipal professionals can help young people find another route, perhaps towards vocational or pre-employment training.

"Sometimes you can redirect them towards a different resource," Carme explains. The traditional academic path, in other words, does not have to be the only one.

A system under pressure

When asked about the biggest challenges facing education today, Carme is remarkably candid. Her greatest concern is inclusive education.

The principle is that children with different educational needs should, wherever possible, learn together. Carme makes it clear that she supports the idea. Her concern is that implementation has not been accompanied by sufficient resources, particularly additional staff.

She recounts a conversation with a teacher struggling to manage a classroom containing numerous pupils requiring additional attention.

“How do I teach?” was the teacher’s question.

For Carme, the consequences affect everyone: children who need additional support may not receive enough of it, while other pupils may find themselves unable to progress as quickly as they could. Meanwhile, teachers themselves face increasing stress and pressure.

Her conclusion is refreshingly direct for a politician: “I think our level of quality has gone down,” she says.

Given a magic wand, her wish would be to restore the level of educational quality she believes existed 15 or 20 years ago - while, of course, adapting what children learn to the realities of today’s world.

Preparing children for a world of fake information

And that world is changing rapidly. Artificial intelligence presents perhaps the most obvious challenge, requiring schools to rethink both what children learn and how they learn it.

While changing the curriculum is beyond the Ajuntament’s powers, Sant Cugat is taking action in an area that has become increasingly important: helping young people navigate the information they encounter online.

The city is working with *Verificat* on *Desfake*, an educational initiative focused on media and information literacy. Teachers learn to develop the skills needed to help their students critically evaluate what they see and read.

It is a reminder that being educated in 2026 means more than knowing facts. Increasingly, it means knowing which “facts” to trust.

An educational ecosystem

Education in Sant Cugat, however, doesn’t end when the school bell rings.

The city has an unusually concentrated educational and professional ecosystem. Alongside its schools and vocational training, Sant Cugat is home to five university-level centres, including the Sant Cugat campuses of institutions such as ESADE, UIC Barcelona, *Escoles Universitàries Gimbernat*, ETSAV and the *Escola Superior de Negocis (ESN)*.

Combine this academic presence with more than 3,000 businesses and a significant startup community, and the boundaries between education, research, innovation and employment begin to overlap.

Carme also points us towards the Barcelona Innovation Valley Alliance (BIVA), an initiative bringing together businesses, academic institutions, research and the public sector to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship as well as attracting and retaining talent. That, she quickly adds, is a subject worthy of an article of its own. We agree.

There is also a broader philosophy behind the city’s approach. Sant Cugat is part of the International Association of Educating Cities, a global network based on the idea that education does not happen exclusively inside schools. A city itself (through its culture, public spaces, associations, sports, institutions and community) can help people learn throughout their lives.

Perhaps that is ultimately Sant Cugat’s greatest educational strength. It isn’t one particular school, university or programme. It is the concentration of opportunities surrounding them.

As Carme puts it: “Sant Cugat is a city of opportunities. It offers resources in education, culture, sport, quality of life and health, and we work to maintain this level so that everyone can find their opportunity.”

And perhaps that’s the best answer to our original question. Yes, Sant Cugat is a good place to learn.

But there is still plenty of homework to do!



September Food Special

September's Sant Cugat Tapas Route

One town. Forty flavours.

This page is where we normally recommend a single restaurant. But every September, Sant Cugat gives us a unique opportunity to try not just one new restaurant but over forty… or however many your metabolism can cope with!

From 17th to 27th September, ***´Sant Cugat va de Tapes´*** returns, inviting us to sample more than 40 specially created tapas from restaurants across the city. For just 4.50€, each includes a tapa and a beer, making it one of the best-value culinary experiences of the year.

But this isn't really just about the food. It's about discovering the places you've walked past a hundred times without ever going in. And it's about realising that some of the best meals aren't necessarily found in the places you already know.





So, why not make it your own food adventure?

Rather than trying to visit as many restaurants as possible, slow down and enjoy the journey.

Choose three or four venues in one part of town. Share the tapas with friends. Chat to the staff. Compare your favourites. Then vote for the one that surprised you most.

You don't need to be a foodie to enjoy it. All you need is a little curiosity.

From the participant list, several names will be familiar to Simply Sant Cugat readers, including:

Casa Parra, Fermenteria Smakelig, Papitu Coll Favà, RK Café, Telefèric, Brau, Bodega Tomàs, Café Belgrado, La Ponderosa, and many more.

You can get the full printed list from any of the participating establishments.

So this month, we're not recommending one restaurant. We're recommending over forty!

Enjoy the adventure, and don't be surprised if you discover your new favourite along the way.

´Sant Cugat Va de Tapes' **info:**

www.gastronosfera.com/agenda

ASSOCIATION NOTICE BOARD

Language Exchange Group

Practise speaking English, Spanish and Catalan

every Tuesday evening, 18:30 to 20:00

outside Abat, Plaça Octavià 8.

You'll find a welcoming atmosphere, interesting conversations and people from a variety of backgrounds. No pressure - just real conversation practice and new connections.

Info: WhatsApp 664 788 806

Everyone is welcome.

Interested in learning Catalan for *free*?

Registration: 14th to 21st September

10:00 to 12:00, Mon to Fri

16:00 to 18:00 Tue & Thurs

CPNL Sant Cugat del Vallès

Casa de Cultura

C. de Castellví, 8, 2nd floor

Attention

All U.S.A. citizens living abroad can make a difference in the November midterm elections!

Register at **votefromabroad.org** immediately & request email delivery to get your ballot in time.

Sant Cugat Toastmasters Club

Mondays: 7th & 21st September
19:15 - 21:00 · Casa de Cultura

Want to improve your public speaking skills?

Join us for a guest session and discover our friendly international community.

Optional social meet-up afterwards.

Info: toastmasterssantcugat@gmail.com

A Multicultural Space to Talk

24th September at 18:45h

The Sant Cugat City Council invites you to participate in an open meeting with people from different countries of Pan-America and other communities.

Casa de Cultura, C. de Castellví, 8

There is no agenda and no speeches. Just a space for free dialogue, to share experiences, ask questions, propose ideas and establish new relationships between people and diverse cultures.

We look forward to seeing you there!

September Quiz Evening!

Thursday, 24th September, 19:30h

Join one of Sant Cugat's most fun and friendly quiz nights. Expect laughs, lively competition and a great social atmosphere in English at...

Frankfurt Hessen

Av. Pla del Vinyet, 57

Teams of four are ideal, but solo players and couples are warmly welcomed, too.

Entry is just 5€ per person which covers prizes.

Book via WhatsApp 680 85 26 57

Shut Up & Write - New Start Date

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the launch of our Shut Up & Write sessions has been sadly postponed until October.

We're looking forward to bringing together local writers, students and anyone who simply wants a quiet, motivating space to get things done.

We'll announce the first date in our October edition and online. We can't wait to see you!

Our free announcements are reserved for non-commercial community activities that are free to attend or involve only a small contribution to cover costs. Commercial activities, including paid courses, classes, and business services, should be promoted through our advertising options.

SIMPLY FOR KIDS

FIND GIMBY

Hello again!

This month, little Gimby has heard a rumour that it's time to go back to school. But he's not keen on the idea. So, he's decided to hide until the school gates have closed.

Can you find him hiding in this month's magazine?

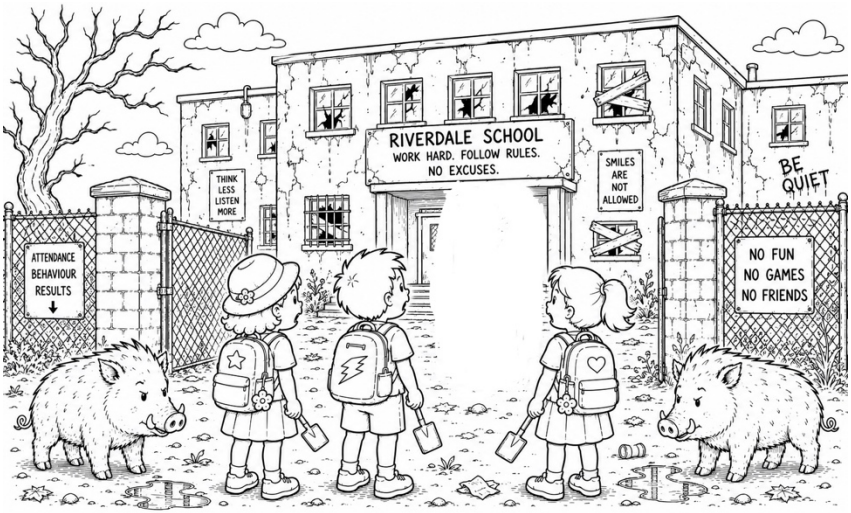


Gimby

(answer on page 31)

SIMPLY COLOUR

It's the first day at their new school for Pau, Anna and Maria. But it's not what they were expecting. Their new teacher is a bit strange, too.
Can you finish the picture by drawing her/him/it and then adding some colour?



SEPTEMBER WORD SEARCH

Welcome to our September Trilingual Word Search! Hidden in the grid are four things many of us associate with **a classroom**. Each one appears **3** times: once in English, once in Catalan and once in Spanish.

Can you find all 12 words?

No word list. No extra clues. Just your powers of language and observation. Happy hunting!

	ENG	CAT	ESP
Word 1	GAME		
Word 2		LLIBRE	
Word 3			LAPIZ
Mystery word			

K E C K O J L K
O C S O O B E E
J P Z C R O R S
U E O I U B B C
E N L J P E I O
G C S I P A L L
O I G A M E L A
L L O O H C S E

SIMPLY JOKES

Can you match the questions with the answers?

1. What's mushy between a shark's teeth?
2. Why are maths books depressed?
3. Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher?
4. If you have 12 apples in one hand and 15 in the other, what do you have?
5. Who's the Queen of the class?
6. What did the pencil say to the pencil sharpener?
7. Where do scientists study magic?
8. Why didn't the bicycle want to go to school?
9. What award do dentistry graduates receive?
10. What do you call a furry bird?

A. Big hands
B. The ruler
C. Stop going round in circles and get to the point!
D. In a labracadabratory
E. A plaque
F. A slow swimmer
G. A hairy canary
H. She couldn't control her pupils!
I. It was two-tyred
J. Because they are full of problems

1 = F, 2 = J, 3 = H, 4 = A, 5 = B, 6 = C, 7 = D, 8 = I, 9 = E, 10 = G

If you have a joke you'd like to see in next month's edition, please send it to **info@simply**sant**cugat**.com

CULTURE CORNER

Money for (Almost) Nothing

'Sultans of Swing Band' play at the Teatre-Auditori – by Sharon Biggar

If you remember the '80s like I'm slightly ashamed to say I do, then not only do you know what MTV is (unlike my kids!) but the words "I want my MTV" immediately transport you to simpler days of big hair and shoulder pads. On the 19th of September, the '80s arrives at our Sant Cugat theatre, courtesy of "Sultans of Swing", one of the finest Catalan Dire Straits tribute bands (and those are not three words I ever thought I'd write in one sentence).

A confession first. Ask most of us to name more than three Dire Straits songs and we begin to sweat. But here's the lovely thing, I bet you know far more than you think. "Sultans of Swing." "Romeo and Juliet." "Walk of Life." "Brothers in Arms." Remember that one cassette your Dad would play on your mono speakers in the car as you headed off on holiday? The moment the band strikes up, forty years will fall away, and you'll be suddenly word-perfect on choruses you'd forgotten you knew.

That's the quiet genius of a great tribute night. Nobody is pretending to be Mark Knopfler. What's on offer is a time machine, 90 minutes to be a teenager again, to feel that guitar tone in your chest rather than through a tinny phone speaker.

And the best part? You don't have to travel to get it. No Wembley, no Palau prices, no midnight trek home, just a short stroll, bike or bus ride to our own local auditorium, for a bit more than the price of a decent dinner.



Brothers in Arms sold over 30 million copies

Bring your partner. Bring the teenager who thinks Dire Straits is a weather warning, and watch them slowly, reluctantly fall for it too.

So "that's the way you do it" on 19th September, at Sant Cugat theatre. See you there!

"Sultans of Swing Band"
(Dire Straits tribute)

Saturday, 19th September 2026, 20:00h.
(duration approx. 90 minutes).

Teatre-Auditori Emma Vilarasau

Tickets 38€ + 1€ management fee, at www.taemmavilarasau.cat.

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SCAN TO DISCOVER MORE



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Clare Geoghegan
Business English Instructor

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LANGUAGE LEARNING

SER or ESTAR? BIEN Has Already Decided

by Cristina de Muller and Nuria Coderch - Spanish Fast & Fun

If there's one phrase that makes every Spanish teacher wince, it's "*es bien.*"

Don't feel bad if you've said it - almost everyone has. SER and BIEN are sworn enemies. They never go together. Why? Let's sort out SER and ESTAR, and then solve the mystery.

SER has one job: permanent description - or, more realistically, "*something that won't change in the next two hours*". Talking about María: *es* española, *es* profesora. Physical: *es* morena, alta, delgada. Personality: *es* simpática, generosa. And *es* rica (unless she's in Las Vegas!). A restaurant? *Es* bonito, grande, famoso, caro. One reason, one rule. Catalan works the same way - *la María és catalana, és morena... el restaurant és famós i car.*

ESTAR, everyone knows, is the opposite: the variable description. *Estoy* contenta, nerviosa, segura. El restaurante *está* lleno, vacío, limpio. Same in Catalan: *estic contenta, el restaurant està ple.* But here's what most people never remember: that's only reason number one. Two more exist.

Reason two: **position** - permanent or not. *París está en Francia*, permanent but still ESTAR. *El móvil está en tu cuarto.* Position is always ESTAR. Same in Catalan: *París està a França.* Though Catalan adds a twist: for a short while, SER + position also works - *sóc a casa, en Joan és al gimnàs.* Both are fine, something Spanish would never allow is perfectly normal in Catalan.

Reason three, the sneaky one: **ESTAR + verb** - gerund (*estoy comiendo*) or participle: *Juan está casado.* The participle takes gender and number, like an adjective: *la farmacia está cerrada, las tiendas están cerradas.* Catalan matches: *en Joan està casat, la farmàcia està tancada.*

So: one reason for SER, three for ESTAR (variable, position, ESTAR + verb).



Now, BIEN. One rule: BIEN never accepts ES. To value something, say *está bien* (or *es bueno/a*). For "*works*" say *va bien* - "*para aprender español va bien ver películas".*

And "*works for you*" is *te va bien - ¿te va bien mañana a las 10h?* - but never "*es bien para ti*" - never say this please. Catalan: never "*és bé*" - say *l'hotel està molt bé* (o *és molt bo*), o *et va bé demà a les 10h?*

If this made things click, you know where to find us. We're Spanish Fast & Fun, your online academy in Sant Cugat, teaching you the tricks in Spanish and Catalan that make everyday life easier and help you feel a little more like a local.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

CPNL: More Than a Language Class

Helping international residents discover Catalan and feel more at home in Sant Cugat



For many international residents, learning Catalan begins with a simple question: If I'm already learning Spanish, do I really need another language?

According to Mar Oñate, the answer isn't really about language at all.

Mar heads the local office of the *Consorci per a la Normalització Lingüística* (CPNL) in Sant Cugat, based at the Casa de Cultura. Her mission isn't simply to organise Catalan classes - it's to help people become part of the community around them.

Ironically, Mar never planned this career. She originally hoped to study translation but, after missing the required grade, chose Catalan Philology instead. It proved to be the perfect fit. After working in proofreading, translation and adult education, she joined the CPNL and has been helping learners across Catalonia ever since. She has now spent more than a decade leading the Sant Cugat service.

"We don't just teach a language," she explains. "We help people use it."

That philosophy runs through everything the CPNL does.

Of course, it offers courses at different levels, teaching grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. But Mar believes that languages are really learnt outside the classroom.

That's why the CPNL works closely with local organisations, encouraging students to practise Catalan in real situations-through cultural activities, sports clubs, neighbourhood associations and initiatives such as *Voluntariat per la Llengua,* where learners meet Catalan-speaking volunteers for informal conversation over coffee or a walk.

"It's often those real conversations that build confidence," she says.

Many learners share the same frustration.

They finally summon the courage to speak Catalan in a shop or café, only for the other person to reply in Spanish.

Usually, the intention is kind. People think they're making life easier. But for someone trying to learn, it can make practising surprisingly difficult.

Rather than criticising this habit, the CPNL encourages Catalan speakers to support learners by continuing the conversation in Catalan whenever possible.

“It’s about creating opportunities,” Mar says. “Not imposing the language.”

So why learn Catalan at all?

Mar doesn’t see it as a choice between Catalan and Spanish. Both are valuable, and many newcomers learn both.

Thinking of Learning Catalan?

- ✓ **Basic courses are FREE**
- ✓ **Higher levels are greatly subsidised**
- ✓ **Morning, afternoon and evening options**
- ✓ **Face-to-face, online and blended courses**
- ✓ **Conversation programme with local volunteers (Voluntariat per la Llengua)**

Next enrolment: 14th to 21st September 2026.

Before enrolling: New students do a simple level assessment or provide an existing Catalan qualification.

CPNL Sant Cugat del Vallès
Casa de Cultura, C. de Castellví, 8, 2a
677 255 034
santcugat@cpnl.cat

But Catalan offers something different.

It helps you understand local traditions, festivals and culture. It opens the door to clubs, associations and community life. Parents often find it easier to follow school communications, while professionals may discover additional employment opportunities.

Sometimes the benefits are much simpler.

You understand the conversation happening around you. You recognise the jokes. You stop feeling like a visitor and begin to feel part of the place where you live.

Making the effort to speak Catalan also tends to be warmly received. Even a few words often generate smiles, encouragement and appreciation from local people.

Perhaps the biggest surprise for many newcomers is that the CPNL classrooms are themselves incredibly international. Students come from across Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, all sharing the same goal of building a life in Catalonia.

Many arrive expecting to learn a language.

Instead, they leave with new friends, greater confidence and a stronger connection to the community around them.

Asked what motivates her after so many years, Mar’s answer is immediate.

“I feel that I’m helping people, and for me that’s the most important thing.”

After spending time with her, it’s easy to understand why so many people walk through the doors of the CPNL looking for a language-and discover something much bigger.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Welcome to our new monthly feature!

Life gets busy. Whether you've been away on holiday, immersed in work or simply haven't had time to follow the local news, we've done the hard work for you. Each month we'll pick a handful of stories that could affect life in and around Sant Cugat, explain them in a nutshell, and most importantly, tell you why they matter. Think of it as your five-minute catch-up on everything worth knowing.

Possible Teachers' Strike to Disrupt Start of School

IN A NUTSHELL: Several Catalan education unions have announced plans for a strike on 8th September, the first day of the new school year, unless negotiations with the Generalitat produce an agreement. The dispute centres on staffing levels, workload, working conditions and previous education reforms. Not every school will necessarily be affected, and participation may vary depending on the area and the school.

WHY IT MATTERS: If your children attend a public or state-funded school, keep an eye on messages from the school during the first week of September. Start-of-term arrangements could change at short notice.

Sant Cugat Prepares for Hotter Summers

IN A NUTSHELL: The City Council has approved new measures to help the city adapt to increasingly frequent heatwaves. Plans include expanding "climate refuges" where residents can cool down, identifying neighbourhoods that lack shade, planting more trees where possible and improving emergency planning for periods of extreme heat. The strategy also considers the increased risk of drought and wildfires.

WHY IT MATTERS: This isn't just about this summer. These changes will influence how Sant Cugat's streets, parks and public spaces develop over the coming years.

Hot Enough For You?

IN A NUTSHELL: July 2026 was the hottest July recorded at Sant Cugat's CAR weather station since complete records began in 2014. Temperatures reached a scorching 40°C on 8th July, while tropical nights (when temperatures never fall below 20°C) became increasingly common.

WHY IT MATTERS: Climate projections for Catalonia point to hotter summers, more very hot days and considerably more tropical nights over the coming decades. In other words, this July may have been exceptional… but summers like it are expected to become less exceptional.

More Tourist Tax Money to Stay in Sant Cugat

IN A NUTSHELL: The City Council has approved arrangements allowing Sant Cugat to benefit more directly from the municipal surcharge on Catalonia's tourist tax. Money raised from visitors can be invested in local services, facilities and projects that support tourism and improve the city. As Sant Cugat attracts increasing numbers of business visitors and tourists, this provides an additional source of funding.

WHY IT MATTERS: Visitors help contribute towards local improvements without increasing residents' taxes.



Sant Cugat and Rubí Finally Connected by Cycle Route

IN A NUTSHELL: After more than seven years of planning and construction, the final section of the cycle route between Sant Cugat and Rubí has been completed. The new 630-metre stretch links Avinguda Països Catalans with Plaça dels Carreters, completing a continuous 1.8 km cycle lane along the Carretera de Rubí. The project cost around 946,000€ and forms part of the Metropolitan Area's Bicivia network. It also includes new pedestrian paths, 35 LED streetlights, more than 70 trees and 12,000 drought-resistant shrubs to improve safety and the surrounding environment.

WHY IT MATTERS: If you cycle, walk or commute between Sant Cugat and Rubí, the journey is now safer and more pleasant. Even if you don't use the route yourself, it's another step towards reducing traffic and encouraging greener transport between the two neighbouring towns.

Firefighting Donkeys Gain Ground in Collserola

IN A NUTSHELL: You may soon see more donkeys grazing in and around Collserola… and they're there for a reason. Instead of using machinery to clear dense undergrowth, these "firefighting donkeys" naturally eat the vegetation that can fuel wildfires. The project began at Can Domènech in Valldoreix and has proved so successful that local landowners have now created an association to expand the initiative across more of the natural park. The animals also help improve biodiversity and maintain traditional grazing landscapes.

WHY IT MATTERS: Collserola is right on Sant Cugat's doorstep. Every hectare cleared naturally helps reduce wildfire risk while protecting one of the area's greatest natural assets. And let's be honest…it also gives us one of the most charming firefighting teams you'll ever meet. Will they get helmets?



OUT & ABOUT

Via Blava Anoia

A New Way to Discover a River



The Via Blava Anoia… electric bikes not included

There's something rather appealing about being among the first to explore somewhere new. The recently opened Via Blava Anoia is the first completed section of an ambitious project that will eventually create more than 250 km of walking and cycling routes following the *Llobregat*, *Anoia* and *Cardener* rivers. For now, the first 19-kilometre stretch links *Jorba* with *La Pobla de Claramunt*, passing through *Santa Margarida de Montbui*, *Igualada* and *Vilanova del Camí*. It officially opened in late 2025 after a 5.8 million € investment, much of it funded by the EU's NextGeneration programme.

Our original cunning plan was to hire a couple of electric bikes and cycle the whole route. We had never been on an e-bike before, and it sounded like a great idea. The information we'd found online suggested this was one of the best ways to experience it. Unfortunately, reality had other plans.

When we phoned to reserve the bikes, a rather weary (but genuinely helpful) young gentleman explained that they no longer hired e-bikes and that the nearest rental was now in Calaf, some 20 kilometres away. That rather put an end to Plan A.

Instead, on Sunday morning we headed for Kilometre Zero in Jorba by car.

Finding it proved to be the first challenge of the day. Despite modern sat-navs and plenty of enthusiasm, we somehow managed to drive past the starting point twice before eventually locating it. Perhaps the original sign had disappeared, perhaps we simply weren't paying enough attention. Either way, once we'd finally parked, we were ready to explore.

The opening few hundred metres aren't exactly spectacular. The path begins beside a fairly ordinary main road before passing beneath an equally ordinary motorway bridge. Thankfully that's soon forgotten.

Beyond that, the atmosphere changes completely.

The route settles into pleasant countryside, shaded woodland and riverside paths that make for easy walking even on a warm summer morning. The Anoia River here is still relatively modest (a gentle stream rather than a dramatic torrent) and if you're expecting the jaw-dropping scenery of *Gorg del Pare* or *Sant Miquel del Fai*, you may come away slightly disappointed.

But that's not really the point.

The attraction of the *Via Blava* is the journey itself.

Information panels and signposts encourage you to stop and discover local history, geology and points of interest along the way. For example, the first is the

modest hermitage of *Mare de Déu de Sala*. The route has been designed as much for leisurely exploration as for exercise, and the plentiful shade provided by riverside trees makes frequent pauses particularly enjoyable during the hotter months.

The walking itself couldn't be easier. The surface is new, smooth and well maintained, with virtually no steep climbs, making it suitable for families, casual walkers and cyclists alike. The constant sound of trickling water is extremely pleasant (unless you're in need of a 'comfort break'). We wandered for about an hour and a half before deciding to retrace our steps.

Then came the highlight of the day.

Rounding a bend, we suddenly found ourselves face to face with a young deer standing alone in a nearby field. It was a picture postcard moment.

Its copper-coloured summer coat almost glowed in the morning sunshine. Instinctively we froze.

For several silent seconds we simply watched each other. Time seemed to stop before, almost visibly, its neurons connected and its instinct finally took over. With a sudden, graceful leap it disappeared into the trees.

Moments like that are impossible to plan and impossible to forget. I honestly can't understand how anyone could take pleasure in blowing the brains out of such beautiful creatures. Seriously.

After returning to what had become an oven on wheels, we decided to drive and investigate the opposite end of the route at *La Pobla de Claramunt*, where the river has become considerably larger.

Our intention had been to visit the impressive 10th-century *Castell de Claramunt*, one of the area's best-known landmarks. However, there's one important detail worth knowing before you go.

You can't drive up to the castle.

Visitors must park below and then face an optimistic 25-minute uphill walk in full scorching sunshine. Having already spent the morning walking, and with temperatures climbing steadily, we decided that discretion was the better part of valour.

Instead, we found a shady spot beside the river and rewarded ourselves with an extremely welcome cold beer.

The river itself was slightly disappointing. Although much wider than upstream, the water had taken on a curious rusty-brown colour that looked more like something flowing out of an old factory than a mountain river. Whether it's caused by the local geology, iron-rich sediments or someone dumping an old car somewhere upstream, I have no idea, but it certainly caught our attention.



The km 0 point - not easy to find.

On the drive home we made one final discovery almost by accident.

Can Bonastre, on the B-224, turned out to be a wonderful place for lunch. The food was excellent, the service genuinely friendly, but the real surprise was the building itself. Massive stone arches reveal its previous life as a 15th-century farmhouse, later converted into a coaching inn where horses occupied the ground floor while travellers did whatever travellers do upstairs.

Sometimes the best discoveries are the ones you never planned.

The *Via Blava Anoia* may not offer dramatic waterfalls or mountain scenery, but that's not what it promises. Instead, it provides an easy, accessible day out where nature, history and gentle exercise combine to create a thoroughly enjoyable escape from the city.

And if you're lucky, you might even meet a deer.

At a Glance

Distance: 19 km (Jorba - La Pobla de Claramunt).

Suitable for: Walking, cycling and families.

Difficulty: Easy.

Surface: Wide, well-maintained paths with gentle gradients.

Opened: September/November 2025 (Phase 1).

Part of: The future 250 km Vies Blaves Barcelona network following the Anoia, Llobregat and Cardener rivers.

Simply Bilingual Crossword

Time to test your vocabulary!

One of the joys of living in Sant Cugat is hearing different languages every day. This crossword celebrates three of them.

Across (Horitzontals): Catalan clues, English answers.

Down (Verticals): English clues, Catalan answers.

Whether you're a native speaker, a newcomer, or somewhere in between, it's a chance to learn, revise and discover a few useful words in a fun way.

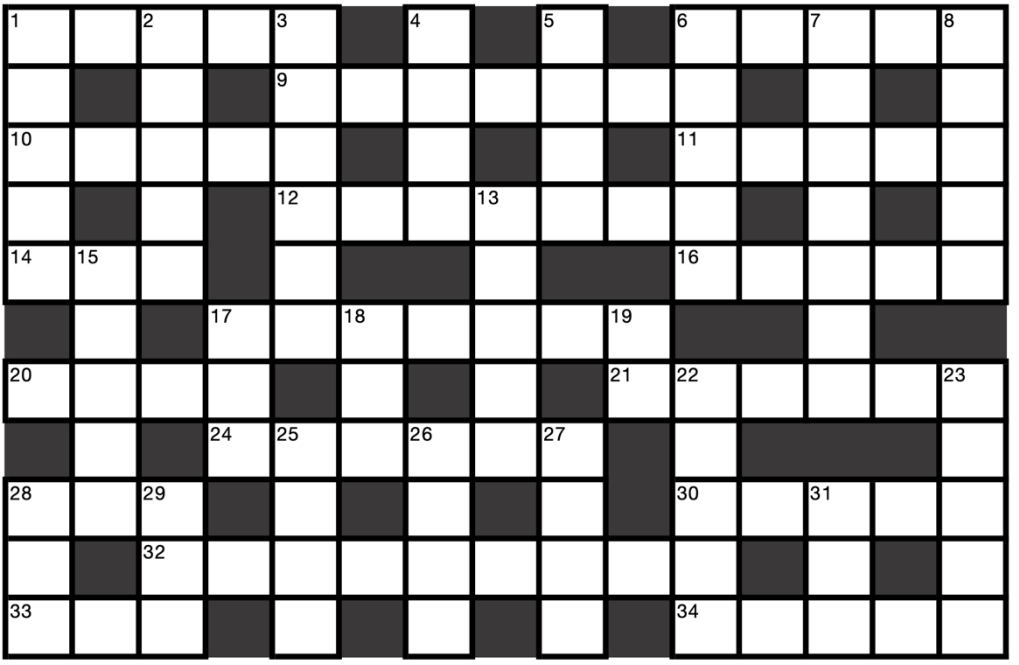
Happy puzzling!

Horitzontals (Across):

1: Lletrejar
6: Ratolí
9: Millorar
10: No afilat
11: Flor Holandesa
12: Lectura
14: Descansa en pau
16: Guanya
17: Utilitzables
20: Rei de la selva
21: Tancat
24: La dona del cunyat
28: Potes d'una formiga
30: El germà del pare
32: Instruccions de l´ordinador
33: Força vital oriental
34: Dansa Llatinoamericana

Down (Verticals):

1: To know
2: Team
3: They fill the tank?
4: Suitable
5: Pen
6: Doctor
7: Glasses
8: Thick or dense
13: Tithe
15: Start
17: More than one
18: Birds
19: A brief Sant Cugat
22: Lights
23: Right
25: Mind-body discipline
26: Late
27: Big cheese lover
28: I think, therefore...
29: Baby sheep
31: Sky



Apologies for 13 down, but it was the only word that would fit!

Answers on page 31

HAIRY HENRY'S (TOTALLY RELIABLE) HOROSCOPE

100% September... 95% accurate... 100% Hairy Henry

♈ Aries (21st Mar – 19th Apr)

September arrives carrying three unfinished plans. One of them is serious destiny. Before unpacking your suitcase, check all your pockets and reconnect with your neighbours. Time to accept an uncomfortable truth. Do less and achieve more.

♉ Taurus (20th April - 20th May)

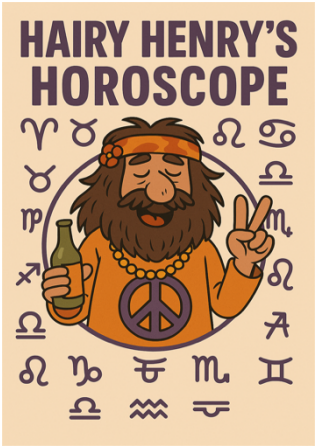
The universe rewards patience, but not this month. An outside seat will reveal an important detail about your lifestyle. Write down the first strange thing you hear for 4 days and use it to your advantage.

♊ Gemini (21st May – 21st Jun)

You'll spend half the month looking for something that was in your possession all along. A wise old 'bird' will be of help. Buy a colourful notebook today. Clean the fridge.

♋ Cancer (22nd Jun – 22nd Jul)

Back-to-work energy hits hard when a forgotten holiday souvenir starts annoying you. Ignore it. Rearrange one shelf and declare yourself emotionally organised. Your number this month is 17½.



♌ Leo (23rd Jul – 22nd Aug)

Someone will ask for your opinion and then wish they hadn't. Your charisma peaks near an ice-cream shop. Be the first to say hello! There's an important 'W' you need to focus on this month. Compliment a stranger before next Wednesday.

♍ Virgo (23rd Aug – 22nd Sep)

A spreadsheet, a potato and a missed date are somehow connected. Give names to three random objects in your house and await enlightenment. Avoid making key decisions before 9am or 3pm or, better still, just avoid them for the whole month.

♎ Libra (23rd Sep – 23rd Oct)

September presents two attractive opportunities and one terrible one disguised as a bargain. Choose wisely. Do more digging. Burn calories by practising dramatic exits from rooms.

♏ Scorpio (24th Oct – 21st Nov)

You are being watched. Not by people… but by 'them´, and you know whom I'm talking about. It's time to question your commitments. Feed your curiosity by taking a different route home. Try sneezing inwardly.

♐ Sagittarius (22nd Nov - 21st Dec)

The spirit of adventure returns just as everyone else goes back to work. Typical. A map you don't need becomes important. Open it and point randomly. Your colour this month is coquelicot.

♑ Capricorn (22nd Dec – 19th Jan)

An administrative task you have avoided since June develops feelings and refuses to leave. Face it bravely. Favour light over darkness. Take advantage of your wiggle room and spread.

♒ Aquarius (20th Jan – 18th Feb)

A bizarre idea arrives while standing in a queue. It might be genius. It might just be indigestion. Sketch it on the nearest piece of paper anyway. Buy the weirdest fruit in the market and turn imperfection into social potential. Hug someone.

♓ Pisces (19th Feb – 20th Mar)

September brings unexpected luck involving numbers, sandwiches or bones. Say 'yes' to small invitations. Things will happen around 11. Don't shave for a month and see who notices. Make more of mint.

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🍽️🍷 RESTAURANTS

Casa Parra
(featured in Jun 26)
Peruvian-European Fusion Cuisine, offering speciality coffee and cocktails.
📞 609 156 352
📍 rbla. Ribatallada, 4,

Fermentaría Smakelig
(featured in Dec 25)
Delicious Kombuchas, Kvass and authentic sourdough pizzas.
📞 640 552 784
📍 c. Josefina Mascareñas, 15
🌐 fermentaria.es

El jardinet del Kombu
(reviewed in Dec 25)
Organic macrobiotic vegan restaurant in Valldoreix.
📞 932 809 906
📍 pl. Mas Roig, 2 (Valldoreix)

Porco Rosso
(featured in Jan 26)
Italian focacceria serving great, freshly made gourmet sandwiches.
📍 c. Valldoreix, 10

Masala Indian Cuisine
(reviewed in Nov 25)
Authentic Indian cuisine near Coll Fava station.
📞 935 300 910
📍 pg. Francesc Macià, 84

Hungry Eyes
(reviewed Feb 26)
Authentic North Indian restaurant serving curries and tandoori near Parc Central
📞 +34 931 624 928
📍 pg. Josep Puig i Cadafalanch, 42

Carlitos
(reviewed in Apr 26)
Creative Mediterranean tapas and fresh-market dishes of sharing.
📞 934 350 794
📍 av. Torre Blanca, 2

Cal Guasac
(reviewed in May 26)
Traditional Catalan tavern and lively cultural hub.
📞 936 242 855
📍 c. Sant Bonaventura, 17

Casa Mushiki
(reviewed in Jun 26)
All-day Asian restaurant serving fresh sushi in Mira-sol centre.
📞 930 044 690
📍 pl. d'Ausiàs March, 1 (Mira-sol)

Santa Quitèria
(reviewed in July/Aug 26)
All-day Mediterranean market dining featuring charcoal grilling.
📞 610 124 050
📍 rbla. Can Móra, 5

History Nugget

Who Was Rafael Casanova?

If you looked at this month's cover and wondered "Rafael Casanova? Who's he?", you're probably not alone. His name appears on streets and squares across Catalonia - including the Plaça de Rafael Casanova, where this month's photo was taken.

Born around 1660, **Rafael Casanova i Comes** was a lawyer who rose to become ***conseller en cap*** - effectively Barcelona's chief councillor. Unfortunately for him, he got the job at one of the worst possible moments in the city's history.

Barcelona was under siege during the **War of the Spanish Succession**, and on 11th September 1714 Bourbon forces launched their final assault.

However, Casanova didn't spend the battle safely behind his desk. Carrying the banner of Santa Eulàlia (one of Barcelona's patron saints) he joined the city's defenders and got shot in the leg. Seriously wounded, he was carried from the battlefield.



Just like Casanova's banner, Barcelona fell shortly afterwards and Casanova was stripped of his position and property and was forced into hiding, reportedly disguised as a friar.

But his story didn't end there. He was eventually pardoned, recovered his possessions and returned to practising law. Amazingly, he lived for almost another 30 years, dying in 1743 at around 83.

So, the man behind the name wasn't just a political symbol. He was a lawyer who found himself in the middle of a bloody battle but survived to tell the tale.

The statue of Casanova carrying his banner while injured is instantly recognisable and copies exist in many Catalan towns.

Our 'How Much Do You Remember?' Quiz

Time to see if you were paying attention!

A light-hearted challenge to see what you picked up while flicking through this month's magazine. No prizes, no awards… just the smug satisfaction of having got the maximum from this month's issue! Answers on next page.

1. What event does La Diada commemorate? pp4-5

a) The signing of the Catalan constitution?
b) Catalonia becoming independent
c) The crowning of king Alfons I
d) The fall of Barcelona

2. According to Ruth Sale, what is the most important "back-to-school supply"? pp6-7

a) A good dose of confidence
b) A positive & patient teacher
c) A regular routine
d) A new curriculum

3. How many football teams does the Penya Blaugrana run? p8

a) 1
b) 3
c) 9
d) Around 30

4. What was this month's Bons Mots about?

a) Making mistakes
b) Being polite
c) Getting things done more quickly
d) Making the best of the weather

5. What is one of the Foundation Federica Cerdà's future projects? pp10-11

a) Opening a riding school
b) Buying more horses
c) Working with older people experiencing loneliness
d) Raising 500,000€ for new infrastructure

6. Who is mainly responsible for running schools in Sant Cugat? pp12-13

a) The Mayor
b) Carme Ardid
c) Sant Cugat Town Hall
d) The Generalitat de Catalunya

7. Approximately how long does the '*Sant Cugat va de Tapes*' run for? p14

a) One day
b) Ten days
c) The whole of September
d) Until the town runs out of beer

8. What postponed event will begin in October? p15

a) Shut Up & Write
b) Toastmasters
c) Quiz Night
d) Our September Meet-up

9. What was the mystery word in the wordsearch? p17

a) September
b) School
c) Sant Cugat
d) Syzygy

10. According to Cristina, which state is NOT expressed using ESTAR p19

a) To be famous
b) To be closed
c) To be eating
d) To be married

11. According to Mar Oñate, how much does a CPNL beginner course in Catalan cost? pp20-21

a) 0 €
b) 25 € per month
c) 25 € per trimester
d) 25 € for the whole year

12. What transport was used to travel along the Via Blava? pp24-25

a) On foot
b) Mountain bike
c) e-bike
d) Donkey

Scoring:

10–12 correct: You've earned your SSC black belt.
7–9: Excellent. You actually read the magazine.
4–6: Not bad… but we caught you skimming.
0–3: Be honest, you mainly looked at the pictures!

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080 Fire Brigade

900 900 120 Support for women experiencing gender violence.

116 111 Help and protection for children and adolescents



Answers to Quiz:

1 = d, **2** = c, **3** = d, **4** = a, **5** = c, **6** = d, **7** = b, **8** = a, **9** = b, **10** = a, **11** = a, **12** = a

Crossword answers (from page 26)

Across/Horizontals: 1: Spell, 6: Mouse, 9: Improve, 10: Blunt, 11: Tulip, 12: Reading, 14: Rip, 16: Earns, 17: Usables, 20: Lion, 21: Closed, 24: Sister, 28: Six, 30: Uncle, 32: Algorithm, 33: Chi, 34: Salsa.

Down/Verticals: 1: Saber, 2: Equip, 3: Litres, 4: Apta, 5: Boli, 6: Metge, 7: Ulleres, 8: Espes, 13: Delme, 15: Inici, 17: Uns, 18: Aus, 19: Sc, 22: Llums, 23: Dreta, 25: Ioga, 26: Tard, 27: Rata, 28: Soc, 29: Xai, 31: Cel.

If you still haven't spotted Gimby, try reading your horoscopes again.



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