

Club Las Calas Celebrates Refurbishment Success



■ Resort Manager Rachel Littleworth and Group RCI VP Dimitris Manikis celebrate the re-opening of Club Las Calas after its recent refurbishment. Photo by Bruno Hendriks.

On 12 July 2008, the Lanzarote sun shone, the champagne sparkled and the canapés were consumed with delight, as Members, guests and staff at Club Las Calas – Lanzarote's most popular timeshare destination – marked the completion of a major apartment upgrade programme, the Club's second in seven years. Guest of Honour Dimitris Manikis, Vice-President, Group RCI (Europe), declared the Resort fully re-opened for business and Club Las Calas was back to its Gold Crown® best.

Begun in late September 2007, the Apartment Refresh Programme, as it was known, had been completed in less than nine months. This timescale had been chosen to allow the work to be undertaken outside the Resort's period of highest occupancy: the school summer holidays. By splitting the schedule into three, it had also been possible to return the Resort to its full 145-apartment capacity during the Christmas and Easter holidays, with all work suspended

for two weeks on each occasion.

Turning back the clock, the 2007/2008 Apartment Refresh Programme had its origins some seven years earlier, when Club Las Calas had successfully undertaken its first major refurbishment. At that time, due to the scale and cost of their ambitious plans, the Club's Management Committee had been forced to make a 'cash call' on each Member, in order to fund the refurbishment work. That request had been willingly answered by over 98% of Owners and the resulting Refurbishment had been an undoubted success, with Club Las Calas achieving Gold Crown® status as a result. Nonetheless, the Committee determined that all future upgrades should be achieved without having to ask Members for an extra contribution.

To that end, in 2001, they established a thirty-year rolling refurbishment funding plan, which has been maintained ever since. This allows for the regular replacement and, where appropriate, upgrade of every single item of equipment in every apartment, together with the maintenance and enhancement of the on-site facilities, such as the bars and leisure facilities. Index-linked to take account of inflation, this money has been ring-fenced within the annual budget. The 2007/2008

Apartment Refresh Programme was the first major activity financed under the plan.

Planning for the Apartment Refresh Programme started in October 2005, when the scope of work and the budget – around £1.1 million (€1.5 million) – were agreed between the Committee and the Club's management company: Resort Solutions Limited. It was decided that the programme would replace and upgrade all of the furniture, fixtures and fittings in the bedrooms and lounges of all of the apartments, as well as introducing minor changes to the bathrooms. The only area not to be touched would be the fully-fitted kitchens, which would be renewed at a later date.

Having undertaken considerable market research, an in-depth Invitation to Tender (ITT) was drawn up and issued in mid-2006 to two firms: Britta Interiores sl and Manudecor sl, both of Malaga, Spain. The two firms each responded to the ITT with their own exhaustive proposals, supported by detailed costings, which were carefully scrutinised by the Club's Committee and management against a comprehensive set of assessment criteria.

The review process showed that both

proposals were of an exceptionally high standard – with very little to choose between them – and that they were also very close on price. The Club therefore implemented one of the provisions of the ITT, which was for each of the two firms to refurbish one apartment only, to their own design, so that these might then be compared against one-another. Both firms readily agreed and by early October 2006, the two competing apartments were ready for viewing, side-by-side at the Resort.

Once the Committee had undertaken their own, detailed comparison, they invited input from Club Las Calas Owners, by viewing the two apartments over the next two months and expressing their comments and preferences via a pair of visitors' books. At the end of this period, the Committee and management reviewed the collated comments against their own perceptions and reached a consensus.

The outcome was that, in late November 2007, Britta Interiores sl was chosen by a narrow margin to undertake the 2007/2008 Apartment Refresh Programme at Club Las Calas. However, the feedback had showed that there was a marked preference among Members, Committee and management for the sofa bed offered by Manudecor sl as part of its apartment design. It was therefore agreed during the subsequent period of contractual negotiations that Manudecor sl would become a sub-contractor to the programme, supplying its design of sofa bed to Britta Interiores sl, but with the latter's fabric and colour scheme.

The remainder of the time between December 2006 and September 2007 was taken up with the manufacture – or procurement – of the furniture, fabrics, fixtures and fittings, centred on the two firms' facilities in Malaga. Britta



■ Canapés on offer as Club Las Calas celebrates its highly successful Apartment Refresh Programme. Photo by Bruno Hendriks.

Interiores sl also drew up an implementation plan in conjunction with Resort Manager Rachel Littleworth and Maintenance Manager Lindsey Key. This proposed that the refurbishment work would be undertaken by the Resort's own staff, with advice and direction by Britta Interiores sl. The manufactured items would be delivered in ISO containers from Spain, as required to meet the schedule.

In the event, the Apartment Refresh Programme went very smoothly, although there were challenges to be overcome, including the almost inevitable delays getting ISO containers cleared through Customs. However, each of the three main elements of the schedule were completed as planned and

the whole programme was delivered on time and under budget, even though a number of other significant maintenance and upgrade tasks had been undertaken in parallel, in order to take advantage of the fact that apartments had been temporarily taken out of use.

Thus it was that, on 12 July 2008, Dimitris Manikis and over three hundred Club Las Calas Members and other guests joined Adam Johnson, the Club's Chairman, Linda Freer, the Managing Director of Resort Solutions Limited and the staff of the Club in celebrating the re-opening of the newly refurbished Resort.

Speaking at the re-opening party, Dimitris Manikis said: "The tremendous achievements of Club Las Calas show what can be done when the Committee and management of a Club work together for the benefit of Owners and guests. This is what timeshare is all about: providing memories of great times together."

For her part, Linda Freer was delighted that everything had gone so well, saying: "This is all down to hard work, thorough planning and prudent budget management, with a joint Committee and management team working together and communicating effectively to deliver what Members deserve."

The last word went to Club Las Calas Chairman Adam Johnson, who, while thanking Britta Interiores sl and Manudecor sl for their contributions to the programme, said: "The Club's Committee and the management of Resort Solutions may have set the goals, but the success of the refurbishment was due to the hard work of Rachel Littleworth and her staff – especially the maintenance team led by Lindsey Key – without whom none of it would have been possible."



■ Refurbished Lounge at Club Las Calas. Photo by Ronn Ballantyne.



■ Refurbished Bedroom at Club Las Calas. Photo by Ronn Ballantyne.

Club Las Calas is a 145-apartment RCI Gold Crown® Resort in Puerto Del Carmen, Lanzarote. The sumptuously-equipped apartments are matched by outstanding on-site facilities, including two bar/restaurants, four heated swimming pools, a gymnasium, a squash court and a well-equipped leisure centre. The Club is 100% owned by its Members and its affairs are directed by an elected Owners' Management Committee. The Club is managed on behalf of the Committee and Members by Resort Solutions Limited, of Market Harborough, England. By numbers of Home Resort Owner and RCI Exchange visitors, Club Las Calas is the most popular timeshare resort in Lanzarote.

For further information, visit www.clubascalas.com or telephone Resort Solutions Limited on +44(0)1858 431160