



Around the world with 52 cards

by Migry Zur Campanile

Later this month the bridge circus will be setting up its tents in Tenerife for the second edition of the European Open Championship, a two-week bridge bonanza open to everyone, European or not, and including a wide selection of events: Mixed Teams, Mixed pairs, Open and Ladies Teams and Open and Ladies Pairs. The venue is the Mare Nostrum complex, a huge resort at the Southwestern edge of the island, which was also the venue for the 2001 European Championships, when I came to Tenerife for the first time.

Tenerife is the largest of the Canary Islands, and according to an ancient legend mentioned in Plato's Dialogues, the archipelago is all that remains of the mythical continent of Atlantis, brought down by an enormous cataclysm. Known in classical times with several exotic names like "Garden of the Hesperides," "Elysian Fields" and "Island of Fortune," the Canary islands were only colonized by Spanish settlers during the Renaissance.

Tenerife itself is a place of sharp contrasts: the weather for a start is dramatically different in the Northeast from the Southwest due to the dominant 10,000ft of *Mount Teide*, grandmother of all volcanoes in this neck of the woods, which stops rain and clouds from getting to the southern coast. That means that it generally remains hot and sunny in the south while passing clouds may hunch around the mountain to the north. Such a difference in climate

has affected the development of the island, which has become like two different countries: for sun, sea, pub and club, go to the South; for green, scene, Spain and rain, go to the North. Unfortunately, we were located in the South and the mix of purpose-built beaches, purpose-built apartments, purpose-built hotels, the purpose being to spend sunshine hours on the beach and nightlight hours getting drunk and wild in the clubs, might be your average twenty-something's dream, but it most surely is not my cup of tea.

Luckily I had a lot to keep me busy: The schedule of a European championship and its seemingly endless round-robin matches is a grueling one and there was not a lot of time left to regret the crimes perpetrated by mass tourism to what must have been once a paradise of an island.

The Ladies competition was won by England (Dhondy, Smith, Goldenfield, Brunner, Courtney, Brock) with 393 VPs, 15 in front of second place Netherlands, with Israel finishing in seventh place just outside of the last qualifying place for the Venice Cup.

The Open teams saw another Italian victory, the fourth in a row and a record for the event (little did I know at the time that Italy would win the next two as well!). The Italian domination is all the more startling because, unlike what was happening in the sixties when their first Blue Team was defeating everyone in sight, international

