



MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

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To all our
readers and
their families

Happy
New Year

2024

Lill-Qarrejja
Taghna Kollha
u l-Familji

Is-Sena
t-Tajba

DIASPORA - THE MALTESE FAMILY IN THE WORLD



May all Maltese
in Malta and
everywhere
have a healthy
and peaceful 2024

END OF 2023
START OF 2024

FL-GHAQDA HEMM IS-SAHHA

ARCHBISHOP ALFRED XUEREB RECOGNIZED WITH A PRESTIGIOUS HONOR BY THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT

Francesco Pio Attard



Info@newsbook.com.mt Archbishop Alfred Xuereb, who in the last five years was Apostolic Nuncio in Korea and Mongolia, was recognized with the Order of Diplomatic Service Merit (Gwanghwa Medal) by the Government of the Republic of Korea. The ceremony took place on December 20 at the Korean Embassy to the Holy See. The Gwanghwa Medal is the highest order of merit awarded by the Korean Government.

The honour was given to him in recognition of his contribution to the development of good relations between South Korea and the Holy See, as part of his work in this country between May 2018 and June 2023. Photo: Info@newsbook.com.mt During his work as Apostolic Nuncio in Korea, Monsignor Xuereb not only helped to strengthen communication between the country and the Holy See, but also supported the Korean Catholic community in various ways. At the beginning of December, the Holy See announced the nomination of the Gozitan Monsignor Alfred Xuereb as Apostolic Nuncio of Morocco, and thus he will be representing the Pope diplomatically in this country in North Africa.

I thank all those who sent a small donation towards the production of this journal

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PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT

Christmas and New Year Message by the President of Malta

Greetings,

It is a pleasure to join you and your families once again on this Christmas day, through this message.

As you know, this is my last such message, as this Presidency is coming to an end.

During these years, apart from expressing Christmas wishes, this would also be an opportunity to share with you a few thoughts about the values that touch our lives, as individuals and as families.

Despite the atmosphere of celebration, many social appointments, and activities linked to this festive season, it is good to stop and reflect... in a short moment of gathering and pause.

In this season, many of us also look back at the challenges we have all faced in one way or another, and what we have gone through during the past year.

We certainly all face times of trouble. Some received bad health news, some have lost loved ones, some feel lonely or have suffered social injustice, some are going through mental health issues and some maybe even isolation. I have encountered all these in my work during the Presidency.

As and when I could, I listened and helped the sick or those going through some serious trouble in their life. I could not do this alone. I relied on you a lot, and you have always supported me.

Therefore, I would like to convey a particular thanks for the support you have given me, Miriam, and the administration and management of the MCCF, so that our work does not stop.

Even at the height of the Pandemic, we did everything possible not to say 'no' to anyone seeking our help.

As in previous years, tomorrow we will continue with this work to alleviate, as much as possible, the physical suffering of those undergoing treatment, and assist all those seeking help.

Moreover, I would also like to thank you for the encouragement that many of you gave me throughout the Presidency, to continue with the work of the Presidency in the context of various challenges.

In the numerous meetings I have had with Maltese and Gozitan people, I have always appreciated your words and gestures of support and enthusiasm, some with words of encouragement, some with a new idea, and some even with valid and valuable suggestions, even critiques.

Greetings also to the Maltese and Gozitans living abroad, and I would like to thank them for how, despite the long distances separating them from our country, they are celebrating these Holidays, maybe with some typically Maltese Christmas food, decorations, customs, and songs.

Fellow Maltese and Gozitans,

As we celebrate these holidays, I cannot help but mention that while we dwell in the shelter of our homes, surrounded by relatives and friends, thousands of people are suffering wars and are without a roof over their heads, without shelter, and facing hunger, exposed to the elements and the bombs falling on them and their children.

Thousands have become widows, or orphans... others are parents burying their children.

Many families were broken up. This is happening in Sudan, in Ukraine, and in the Holy Land itself, the very place where the feast of the Holy Nativity that we are all celebrating today originated.

There, at this moment in time, instead of the joy of birth, hundreds of babies are losing their lives indiscriminately. I am mentioning this because it is a shame that in today's advanced world, we still see such heartbreaking scenes.

I am also saying this so that we all appreciate the love and comforts surrounding us.

Appreciate the beauty of peace. And maybe also find the time to take care of those going through difficult times – even with a word of comfort and solace – which in a moment of difficulty can greatly benefit the people around us. After all, this is the true spirit of Christmas, not material achievements. May the new year be a In conclusion, my wife Miriam and I wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a New Year full of happiness, unity and, above all, health. Thank you.

Message of love and hope by Archbishop Charles Jude Scicluna



On this holy Christmas night, we remember the beautiful message delivered by the angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem: “Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on Earth” (Lk 2:14). Peace on Earth for those who God truly loves; peace on Earth for all those of good will.

This year, as we think of and gaze upon the Holy Land, let us pray eagerly for peace and mourn for the thousands of victims of man’s cruelty. It is as though Herod is still with us, waiting in ambush in the heart of every person. We wish to show our solidarity with Israel and Palestine. We pray that, through the grace of this holy Christmas Day in the year 2023, God will soften the hardness of human hearts.

We are almost at the end of this year, on the brink of the new year, 2024, which is a very important year for Malta as we commemorate two significant anniversaries. 2024 marks the 60th year since Malta became an independent state and its 50th year as a republic. Today, I wish to offer my prayer and extend my wishes for a holy Christmas by expressing thoughts inspired by the national poet Dun Karm Psaila, who chose a beautiful prayer to God as the national anthem.

Dun Karm’s prayer for our country

In the second stanza of the national anthem, Dun Karm prays to God to bless Malta with five important gifts. The verse “Grant, God Almighty,” emphasises that what we pray for is indeed a gift from God. The first message I wish to convey to my Maltese and Gozitan brothers and sisters on this holy day is that we shall receive that which we are praying for as a gift from God, but because it is a gift, it also carries responsibility. In the second stanza of the Maltese National Anthem, Dun Karm prayed for five great gifts, for five treasures, that delineate and provide the foundation of our life together as a society, as a nation. He prayed for sound judgement, mercy, health, unity, and peace.

The **sound judgement** that Dun Karm requested for the rulers, for those who govern, for those who have the authority to pass laws, is a gift that is also a gift from God because sound judgement is wisdom and integrity—the desire to work generously for the common good. Our prayer in the coming year shall be for sound judgement and wisdom to characterise the decisions and governing style of those who lead our society with legitimate authority.

Dun Karm prayed for **mercy** as a quality of the employer, emphasising the need for employers to be merciful, considering their responsibility for others. We are all responsible for one another. Mercy involves more than just forgiveness; it encompasses showing compassion and sympathy. Our obligation extends beyond being merciful solely to fellow Maltese and Gozitans; we must also extend mercy to those who have chosen to live among us. Approximately 20% of our islands’ population consists of people who

came here to work and build a new life. We need to show mercy and solidarity towards our brethren, regardless of their origins.

However, on this holy day, my prayer for mercy extends to God's creation. Let us care for creation, ensuring the protection of the future generations yet to be born. By caring for the environment, for creation, and preserving our beautiful heritage, we show mercy not only to ourselves but also to our children and our children's children.

Another great gift that Dun Karm prays for in the Maltese National Anthem is **health**; health for the worker, for all those engaged in the workplace, in services, and in business. Health, in this context, encompasses not only physical health but also mental, psychological, and spiritual health. It is the kind of health referred to in English as overall well-being, and it is the health that secures the future of our country.

L-INNU MALTI

Lil din l-art ħelwa, l-Omm li tatna isimha,
 Ħares, Mulej, kif dejjem Int ħarist:
 Ftakar li lilha bil-oħla dawl libbist.

Agħti, kbir Alla, id-dehen lil min jaħkimha,
 Rodd il-ħniena lis-sid, saħħa 'l-ħaddiem:
 Seddaq il-għaqda fil-Maltin u s-sliem.

When I pray to God for the gift of health, I interpret it to also mean that He will bless our society with the gift of children. Malta's future depends on our continued cherishing of the gift of children. However, brothers and sisters, we must admit that the number of babies being born has decreased significantly. This surely does not depend only on God's gift, but also on a great sense of hope and love that I invite our couples to live with generosity and deep commitment. Children are a blessing and contribute to the health of a country and its future.

As we celebrate the birth of a baby, I pray that on Malta's important anniversaries—the 60th anniversary as a sovereign state and the 50th anniversary as a Republic—we will also be blessed with new offspring, more children, and new generations of Maltese and Gozitan citizens.

Dun Karm concludes the Maltese National Anthem by praying to our almighty God to strengthen **unity** and **peace** among us. Social harmony results from a thirst for justice and honesty. Unity is fostered when we respect one another, not only in words and thought but also through our actions. Peace between us guarantees a lovely quality of life. Unity and peace are important values that we celebrate and wish each other to experience during this Christmas season.

I pray that these five blessings, which Dun Karm prayed for in the Maltese National Anthem for our country, will be blessings that we actively work toward and welcome as a great gift from God. In doing so, we realise that perhaps we cannot achieve these alone but can do so together and with the help of God.

800 years of celebrating love

This year, the Church also commemorates another important anniversary. 800 years ago, in the little village of Greccio, St Francis created the first crib. I also recall that our saint, St George Preca, used to insist that his associates were to try and ensure that there would be the Grotto of Bethlehem, the crib, in every house where children lived. How wonderful it would be if we could keep this holy tradition alive, finding the crib in all public spaces and in our homes. When we turn our gaze to the Grotto of Bethlehem, we understand that we are celebrating the love of God through this tiny baby in a manger. The greatness of the mercy of God and His love are reflected in the searching eyes of that baby.

Together with St George Preca, before the baby of Bethlehem, let us pray to God: "Lord God, I need You". I pray that Maltese society will never forget this prayer. No matter how much we develop our society, no matter how far we progress, may we continue to understand that we need God. The Christmas message is, therefore, a beautiful message, a message of hope.

As Malta begins to celebrate important anniversaries like those of Independence and the Republic with great joy, let us pray, asking for what the national poet taught us to pray: sound judgement, mercy, health, unity, and peace.

I would like to wish all of you, especially the elderly and the sick, those undergoing residential therapeutic programs, rehabilitation at the Corradino Correctional Facility and in other places, and all our families, a serene Christmas and a new year filled with good fortune and blessings.

Peace be with you.

✠ Charles Jude Scicluna Archbishop of Malta



New Year's Eve Malta Events 2023/24 Partying Around the Islands And The Capital City, Malta

Date Last Updated:
25th December 2023
Get ready to celebrate
the New Year in Malta!
MALTA INFO GUIDE

How can I spend a

memorable first night in Malta? On New Year's Eve, it's sometimes difficult to decide what to do. We have created a list of our recommendations for making this New Year in Malta the best imaginable, regardless of whether you are celebrating in a packed club, in the main squares of Malta or Gozo, or at home with friends and family.

Castille Square Valletta - First Night Malta

Kicking off the New Year at the capital is one way of doing it. A big concert is held at St. George's Square. This event draws thousands of tourists and locals. The event will have both live music and a fireworks display on the countdown to the new year.

Malta is known for its **nightlife**, but for New Year's there is no exception. Below is a list of events that are being held all around the island together with links to book your tickets online. Book now to avoid disappointment. If partying isn't your thing, then have a get-together with your friends for a memorable end of year dinner at one of our islands' many restaurants.

Maltese NYE And New Year's Day Traditions

Have A Mug Of Imbuljuta Tal-Qastan Or A Glass Of Champagne

It used to be customary to prepare and serve a traditional Maltese beverage around Christmas and New Year's Eve. Usually made with chestnuts, cocoa, cloves, citrus zest (such as orange or tangerine), sugar, and almonds, this soup is warm and comforting.

The pop of a champagne bottle at the start of every new year has become a traditional way to start the new year joyfully.

Families Meet Up For Meals

On both NYE and New Year's Day, there are many family-friendly events, such as countdowns to the new year and traditional meals.

Traditionally, New Year's Eve is marked by a lovely dinner at home, followed by dancing, champagne and music to welcome the new year.

New Year's Day is traditionally marked by a big lunch at home, where typical Maltese dishes are prepared. Around the island, most restaurants will be full on this day.

During tea time, traditional Christmas sweets such as Christmas cake, panettone, and mince pies are prepared.

Eat Traditional Maltese Dishes

Maltese tables typically serve *dundjan fil-forn* (oven-baked turkey) with gravy, potatoes and vegetables, *imqarun* or *timpana* (Maltese baked pasta) and lasagne. For dessert, mince pies make a great choice as well as puddings like *pudina tal milied* (Christmas pudding) or *Qagħaq tal-Għasel* (honey treacle ring), and other sweets and coffee.

A Round Of Wishes All Night And Day Long

While not traditionally Maltese, everyone will wish their family and friends a Happy New Year by sending messages, hugs, and kisses all day and night.

New Year's Eve Malta Restaurants

If instead of going to a New Year's party, you prefer going to dine at a restaurant, Malta has plenty of **restaurants** where you can dine. Not all restaurants will be open, but the majority will be. Many restaurants will serve a set menu, or buffet, but you will find restaurants which will have à la carte. One thing to make sure of is that you book your table as early as possible due to the high demand of Maltese who go out for dinner. Apart from dining at restaurants, you may want to celebrate right from your hotel. A few hotels open their restaurants for dining and also for celebration. It is best to check with your hotel to avoid disappointment. **Luxury hotels** also organise a New Year's Eve ball.

Traditional Panettone

What Is The Weather Like During New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve's weather normally drops to low temperatures, with the temperature usually falling around 11°C during the evening of New Year's Eve. However, this is not always the case. If you are considering spending the night in **Valletta** and celebrating New Year's there, we recommend that you dress warmly and carry an umbrella if it seems like the weather will be cloudy on the night.

What To Do On New Year's Day In Malta

If you are looking for a restaurant to eat at, we recommend you book as early as possible since many locals like to eat out on this occasion. You will find restaurants that offer set menus or à la carte.

If it is a nice day, you can go for a coastal or countryside walk as everywhere else will be closed. Many families go for afternoon walks and then go for a coffee at a café.

If you love to party and enjoy a nice drink, you can head down to Paceville where there will be many youngsters celebrating the new year.

All shops, historical sites and other establishments will be closed. The only establishments you will find open are in St. Julian's.

Questions People Ask About NYE Malta - First Night Malta

Where can I celebrate New Year's Eve in Malta?

There are a lot of places in Malta where you can celebrate New Year's Eve, such as St. Julian's, Sliema, Valletta and anywhere else there is vibrant celebration. A variety of galas, street parties, big nightclub events, hotel celebrations, and restaurant dining are available.

Where is the best place to see the fireworks in Malta?

Fireworks are typically set off in Valletta as the new year begins, however, you may see them from anywhere near the harbour. The Grand Harbour of Valletta, the Sliema waterfront, and the Upper Barrakka Gardens are popular spots to view the fireworks.

Where is the biggest New Year's Eve party?

New Year's Eve is a time when people flock to the capital city to celebrate the new year. On that night, Valletta is the biggest party on the island with live music, street celebrations, and a lively atmosphere. Aside from Valletta, there are plenty of other parties on the island to enjoy.

From where can I purchase tickets for NYE events in Malta?

Tickets for these private events can be purchased online through event websites, ticketing platforms or even directly from the venues. To ensure availability, it is highly recommended that you book your places in advance.

How does public transport operate on New Year's Eve?

Special services are offered by the Malta Public Transport for events such as New Year's Eve. You can also take a taxi, but it is highly recommended that you reserve one in advance.

On behalf of Malta Info Guide, we wish you all a prosperous New Year!

LET'S BUILD BRIDGES NOT WALLS



Michelangelo and Friends – A taste of Christmas



This Christmas concert was held on Wednesday 27 December 2023 in the church of Franciscan Friars in Imgarr Gozo on the initiative of the young tenor Angelo Muscat with the participation of the soloists Olga (from Russia), Katrina (Ta' Sannat), Jacob Portelli on the Harp and the tenor Angelo Muscat.

It was an hour and a half full of Christmas carols and other sacred carols that thrilled the beautiful audience that attended. Fr. Marcello Ghirlando also delivered a vote of thanks. A poem 'Today the Savior was born for you' written by Chev. Joe M Attard was also read for the occasion during the evening.

The concert opened on the harp with an English folk song – 'Greensleeves' and continued right after with the song 'Mille Cherubini in Coro', followed by a song in Russian that deals with the Angels who came down from Heaven to us in -Christmas Day.

The tenor Angelo Muscat melodiously sang 'Adeste Fideles' and afterwards, on the harp, Jacob Portelli played with such sweetness, a German song – 'Lo, how a rose ever blooming'. The Russian singer Olga then gave us Bach Gounod's 'Ave Maria' and later she joined the tenor to sing 'Panis Angelicus'.

Again, the tenor gave a rendition of the 'Agnus Dei' and then Em Bugeja played the 'Sinfonia Pastorale' on the harp.

Katrina then went on to sing 'Gesù Bambin' and later joined Angelo in the singing of a 'Christmas Lullaby' followed by the tenor who sang 'God Bless us Everyone'. The last two pieces that closed the program were two other beautiful Christmas Carols, 'O Holy Night' and the 'Silent Night' which were sung by the protagonists and accompanied by Jacob Portelli on the harp.

In the same church, on Sunday 7 January 2024, the *Pope St. John Paul II Foundation* will present another concert with the participation of the popular singer Debbie Scerri and her daughter which starts at 7pm and everyone is invited to attend.

Kav Joe M Attard

Our Gozo Correspondent Dec 2023

**I WISH ALL MY READERS,
FRIENDS AND CORRESPONDENTS
FROM GOZO A VERY BLESSED
NEW YEAR 2024 AND I THANK
YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT YOU
GAVE ME IN 2023**

Traditions and Customs Only People in Malta Understand

Although many of us do not admit to it, we do believe or follow some superstition at one time or another. We may cross our fingers for good luck, wear a lucky 'dress or shoes', get married on a rainy day for a long and happy marriage or even stop a dog from howling to prevent death.

Some people grow certain plants in their homes or keep a money plant for financial success, while others avoid resting under a *peepal* tree for fear of ghosts and witches. And then, there are the mysterious superstitions about the full moon or the new moon and black cats. New Year's Eve also has its fair share of strange myths and weird superstitions that are followed by many around the world. On the eve of the new year, people sometimes carry out propitious work in order to attract lady-luck while holding back tribulations and antagonism in an effort to make sure that the coming year will be wealthy, thriving and prosperous. This is because people believe that whatever they do on December 31 and on January 1 will be like a prediction for the year ahead. And this is why people often end up talking about their strange beliefs and superstitions around the time of the New Year.

As 2024 draws to a close, we could not help but think of some of the strange yet, interesting age-old superstitions that have become associated with the New Year over time. Some of these which we have heard, are given below:

No sweeping on New Year's day Some people staunchly believe that one should not do any cleaning or dusting in the house on New Year's Eve. They say that it is an ominous act and can sweep away the good luck of the entire family.

Well, why not? Anything that keeps you from the nasty chore of cleaning is welcome, right?

Wearing new clothes Others ensure that they wear new clothes on New Year's Eve since they believe that it ensures a constant supply of new clothes for the whole year to jazz up the wardrobe. Again, I see no harm in wanting new clothes, do you?

For health Many people actually make an effort and eat lots of smoked sausages with boiled cabbage on the first day of the year to remain healthy for the entire year. So, eat heartily (and healthy) tonight for good health all the year through!

Say no to chicken Another interesting superstition I heard was that if you cook any chicken dish on New Year's day, you will have monetary troubles for the rest of the year. So now you know who is responsible for all your financial troubles this year...the chicken. Beware!

Don't do laundry They say that if you do your laundry, you will certainly wash off your luck or will face a year of hard work. Even more ominous, doing laundry on this day is also associated with facing a family member's death. What can I say now? These myths sound more and more like fun to me!

Eating greens for fortune I have even heard some say that eating green, leafy vegetables such as cabbage, collard greens, mint, mustard greens, kale, spinach or coriander leaves is likely to bring wealth for the entire year. There are even those who suggest that eating only cornbread brings instant cash.

Hmmm, green leafy vegetables? Sounds like a 'mom' came up with this one!

Crying cats They say that if you hear a cat crying, you should run in the opposite direction because it brings a bad omen. I say you should do that New Year's Eve or not, because it is the most horrifying sound in the world.

Don't weep The wise men (and women) say that one should not be miserable on this day and neither should one cry because that depression will follow you in the year to come. So, wipe away those tears and be happy! After all, it is a new beginning.

No precious stuff should leave the home I have even heard people say that you should not give your cash, ornaments, precious items or other valuable things to anyone on the first day of the year because it may be a sign that wealth will be flowing out in the entire year. So, hang on to your cash until day after tomorrow. Otherwise, do not come running to me...I warned you.

Make noise and hang a lemon Have you ever wondered why there are fireworks on New Year's Eve? Or why the bells are rung so loudly? It is to scare away the evil spirits and evil thoughts. Even hanging a lemon in the doorway helps in warding off bad spirits. The way I see it, this just gives you permission to party hard (and loud) tonight!

First visitor in the house People even predict marriage outcomes on the last day of the year. They say that the first visitor to enter the house on the first of January signifies the balance of marriage in the next 365 days. If a man enters your door then the husband will have more authority for the whole year and if a woman enters, then the wife will have complete control. So, now you know exactly whom to invite over for breakfast tomorrow (and who to not).

Sharleen Spiteri: My family values



The Scottish singer talks about her family THE GUARDIAN

Sharleen Spiteri is a Scottish singer and songwriter. She is known as the frontwoman of the band *Texas*. She was born in Glasgow, to Eddie and Vilma Spiteri. Spiteri is a Maltese last name.

She has stated that her grandmother was from Bordeaux, France.

My dad plays guitar and my mother was a singer. My whole family is very musical – pianos, accordions. We had big sing-songs at my gran's home in Glasgow. That's how I grew up. The first song I sang was an Olivia Newton-John number. My cousin used to sing this song that would have everyone in tears and I'd do Olivia Newton-John, and no one would give a toss.

I'm a real mongrel – my dad's Maltese/Italian and my mum's side is Irish/German. Thanks to the European mix it felt classless in our family, which wasn't the norm in working-class Glasgow as I was growing up. On my dad's side, every two weeks or so we'd go to my nonna's, starting at lunchtime, and it would be big tables – you'd sit and eat lots of food and start conversations and arguments and fights.

Dad was a merchant seaman and he'd be three months away and a month home. When he was home, he'd be there every day, every night, and we'd go out and buy records. When I was 12 or so and wanting to sleep in, my dad would be blasting music and I'd be wishing he'd go back to sleep.

My mum was a window-dresser. In the evenings, my sister Corinne and I would help her put together things for the windows, or she'd teach us to jive. We had a real female-bonding thing going on when my dad wasn't there. When he was, all the attention was on him.

My dad's crewed for me and done tours for my band, Texas. He's painfully proud of me. He's a very proud man and he enjoys his daughters and granddaughters. He's been surrounded by women

all his life and he likes to grumble about it but really he loves it.

I love being a mum. I laugh my head off; the funniest things happen. It's great to have such a lovely time with my daughter, Misty Kyd. I always thought I'd have more children, but the way my life panned out, I've got one.

It's not until you have children that what you've been brought up with comes into your life. My thing is manners. They were drummed into me as a child, and I can't stand bad manners. I like to be able to sit at my table without kids jumping around. I want them to respect their elders. If an adult tells you to do something, you do it.

The way I bring up my daughter is about balance. As soon as I step off that stage, my life is very normal. Sometimes it all goes a bit fantasy world, but I tell her that it's real to us, it's just not how everyone lives their lives.

My parents created that kind of determination and independence, and it's helped me navigate the last 30 years in the music industry, and being a woman in general. My mum was always creative, which inspired me completely, while my dad, who was a bit of an alpha male, was intent on ensuring his girls could do anything that boys were taught. As a result, I'm amazing at DIY. With the help of a YouTube video I can do pretty much anything: put up shelves, do electrical work or make a table from scratch.

Since that photo was taken, I've barely changed. That four-year-old was lying in a nightie like a good little girl, but there's so much going on inside her head: I was thinking about pirates and how I couldn't wait to go into my dad's office in the coal bunker so I could practise naming all of the flags and buoys that my dad had to know off by heart for his job. Today, I'm in the dress again, and I'd still like to be somewhere else. I'm smiling but inside I'm thinking: "This is all of my nightmares in one place: I'm in a big frock and I'm lying down even though I have a bad back. I hate every minute of this, and I'm dying inside. Get me back to the bunker!"



Marsovin CEO Jeremy Cassar presented a donation to H.E. The Noble Daniel de Petri Testaferrata president of the Maltese Association Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

Marsovin donates a sum of money from the production of each vintage of Grand Maitre to the Maltese Association Sovereign Military Order of Malta, which the order uses for charitable purposes. This is a commitment which Marsovin has maintained towards the order since the first vintage in 1998.

Grand Maitre is a collectable boutique wine produced by appointment to the MASMOM. Every year, the label of this wine is dedicated to a different Grand Master in chronological order of succession, the first one being Fra Philippe Villiers de L'Isle Adam for the 1998 vintage. The Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes used to produce Grand Maitre come from a privately owned single estate, Ghajn Rihana, which is in the same area where the last battle of the Great Siege between the Knights of the Order of St John was fought against the Turks in 1565.

This wine continues to forge Marsovin's reputation with red wine drinkers by combining the intense fruit

MARSOVIN AND THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA

character of the Merlot with the structure of the Cabernet Sauvignon. A wine with an elegant mouthfeel, rich graceful tannins, and a long lingering finish.

MARSOVIN - The Winery

Mention winemaking in Malta, and the name Marsovin immediately springs to mind. Marsovin has today achieved renown not only among the Maltese people for the quality and variety of its range of wines, but also for its pioneering success on both local and international fronts.

Over 100 years have passed since Chevalier Anthony Cassar first started out as a small wine producer collecting grapes from local farmers and producing wine which was then sold and distributed to shops using horse-drawn carts, one of which may still be seen today in Marsovin's Wine Museum at the Marsovin Cellars. Throughout successive generations, technology and standards were developed into a more modern and superior quality winery, adapting the business to the demands of more modern times. Today, the

tradition continues with Marsovin holding a leading place as a modern winery producing premium wines, with Jeremy Cassar, the founder's great grandson, at its helm.

Estates & Cellars

Today, Marsovin owns over 199 tumuli of land which make up five private estates in Malta and Gozo, specifically intended for the production of premium quality, single-estate wines. The wine cellars are situated in a building dating to the Order of St. John, home to over 220 oak barrels used for premium red wine ageing. The Marsovin estates and cellars are a testimony to Marsovin's commitment to the culture of wine.

Marsovin welcomes you to visit our cellars and experience this truly idyllic setting, while sampling our premium wines. Our staff will guide you through a wine tasting session where you can learn how to truly appreciate, enjoy and taste wine. Bookings need to be made in advance on +356 7923 1919 or

email cellars@marsovinwinery.com



WOW - Bread with Oil (Hobz biz-Zejt)

Hobz biz zejt (translated to meaning bread with oil) is a simple food tradition that the Maltese love. The simplicity and at the same time complexity of Maltese bread (known as hobz tal Malti) is what makes the wonderful Maltese bread so special and unique.

Maltese bread, especially the large round crusty loaf bread known simply as hobz is incredibly difficult to imitate. It is a sourdough, as is ftira (another type of commonly known Maltese bread) but its hard crust and soft centre full of many air holes has not been repeated anywhere outside Malta. The distinct taste and look of our hobz I believe may have something to do with a few factors. This easy and ultra-delicious snack is Malta's answer to Italian bruschetta. Slices of sourdough bread are shallow-fried then topped with tomato pesto, basil, capers and a crumbling of ricotta.

Serves 6 **Preparation** 10min **Cooking** 10min **Skill level** Easy

- vegetable oil, to shallow-fry
- ½ sourdough loaf, sliced
- **70 g** (¼ cup) tomato pesto
- ½ red onion, finely chopped
- **50 g** (¼ cup) salted capers, rinsed, drained
- ½ **cup** basil leaves
- **75 g** (½ cup) pitted black olives, sliced
- **200 g** fresh ricotta, crumbled
- **60 ml** (¼ cup) olive oil

Cook's notes Oven temperatures are for conventional; if using fan-forced (convection), reduce the temperature by 20°C. We use Australian tablespoons and cups: 1 teaspoon equals 5 ml; 1 tablespoon equals 20 ml; 1 cup equals 250 ml. All herbs are fresh (unless specified) and cups are lightly packed. All vegetables are medium size and peeled, unless specified. | All eggs are 55-60 g, unless specified.

Instructions Heat 1 cm oil in a large, deep-frying pan over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add bread slices and cook, turning once, for 4 minutes or until crisp and golden. Remove using a slotted spoon, drain and cool on paper towel.

Spread bread slices with pesto. Top with onion, caper, basil, olive and ricotta, drizzle with oil and season with salt and pepper. *Photography by Brett Stevens. Food preparation by Phoebe Wood-*



MALTESE PEOPLE SCATTERED ALL OVER AUSTRALIA

This journal keeps me updated what is happening in the communities around the world. I was pleased to learn that the Maltese in Australia do not live only in Melbourne and Sydney but Maltese people are also found in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Adelaide, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton, Canberra, Perth and in many other regions and even in Tasmania. I never miss an edition and I keep them all on a USB and every now and then I go through them again. A legacy to our future generations. C. Degabriele Western Australia



Consulate General of Malta in Toronto

The Maltese-Canadian Museum is currently seeking support for an all-important project to digitise the wealth of information held within its collections.

Project: Magna Żmien


We encourage those who are in a position to provide such assistance to give a helping hand.

The Maltese-Canadian Museum, with Magna Żmien, is preserving Maltese-Canadian memories

Seeking donations

To digitise Maltese-Canadian memories
in collaboration with Magna Żmien



through digitisation and we need your support! 

We're seeking out monetary and equipment donations. We hope to raise over \$5,000 to support this project and to purchase equipment and supplies. If you're able to help, please deliver cash donations to St. Paul the Apostle Church (3224 Dundas St W, Toronto) in an envelope addressed to the Maltese-Canadian Museum or to a member of the Museum team.

Donations over \$20 are eligible to receive a receipt for income tax purposes.

Equipment Needed:

1. Flatbed scanners
2. Negative and Slide Scanners
3. Super 8/8mm Film Scanners
4. Cameras - DSLR with detachable lenses - Tripod
5. Book Scanner

Help us safeguard our heritage for future generations. Message us if you have questions or for more info. You can also email us at maltesecanadianmuseum@gmail.com



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THE GAMES WE USED TO PLAY

Do you remember when we played with dolls, splashing in puddles and climbing trees when we were a children?

The simple pleasures that defined childhood for generations in Malta appear to be dying out as an increasing number of kids stay indoors and surf the internet instead.

A series of nostalgic photographs commissioned for a Bank of Valletta calendar highlight some of the traditional Maltese games that are dying out.

Photographer Joe P Smith staged the photos in narrow alleys and open fields in Zejtun, Vittoriosa, Marsascala and Gozo before traffic became a worry.

GAMES CHILDREN USED TO PLAY BEFORE THE TV, INTERNET, THE IPAD AND THE MOBILE PHONE

Two little girls sit on the ground in a Żejtun alleyway and, with a look of concentration on their faces, flick marbles into a small depression in the road.

An old lady watches them, reminiscing about her childhood days when she played the same game, called žibeġ, with her friends.

This is one of the scenes captured in the 2013 Bank of Valletta calendar that focuses on past childhoods.

The calendar turns back time to those days when children played with simple toys, like marbles, dolls and wooden carts – a huge contrast to today's 'digital childhood'.

This is the third calendar in the BOV series that captures times past.

The bank, working in collaboration with JP Advertising, commissioned historian Guido Lanfranco to provide details of the toys.

"Some of the toys came from private collections or from people who had been treasuring them since their childhood. The toys were very simple – pieces of rope, wooden slats, stones and beads – but there is a lot more to toys than just the item itself. For example, hopscotch represents the nine months of pregnancy," Mr Lanfranco explained.

"In spite of the simplicity of the toys, we could not find everything we needed and had to improvise in some cases. For example, children used to blow bubbles through a length of macaroni but you don't get long pasta tubes, so we used rolled up copybooks," he added.

Photographer Joe P. Smith staged the photos in locations that could easily have come out of post-war Malta: unspoiled alleys in village cores and open air fields, all of which captured the times when children could play outdoors without the fear of traffic and without the distractions of computers.

"For me, the look on the face of the elderly people we used for the photos (see cover) say so much about the memories they had of those times," Mr Smith said.

For details about the calendar and to watch a video about its making visit BOV's YouTube channel, accessible via www.bov.com or the BOV Club Facebook page.

Past amusements

- **Žibeġ** – Various games could be played, where children would compete for beads dealt out by every player. The most common involved making a shallow depression in the ground into which beads were flicked. Sometimes the beads' colours had different values.

- **Boċċi** – Before the advent of glass marbles, children made do with hazelnuts. Pre-war Codd-Stopper ginger bottles had a plain glass marble as a stopper and children often broke bottles to get it out.

- **Passju** – The rough diagram with nine, numbered compartments scratched on the ground represented the nine months of pregnancy, with the ninth-month section drawn with a bulge. Girls cast a stone from the starting point, hop towards it, to trip it on to the next number. Completing the set results in 'having a baby'.

- **Žugruga** – To spin a wooden top, children wound a string several times around it and learned to throw it sharply while holding on to the end of the string. This made the top spin for a short while.

- **Bombos** – This popular game could be played in several styles but all involved a boy at the front, well bent forward, while the other vaults over him, using his hands, in leap frog fashion.

- **Xixu** – A small length of wood was placed on a rigid edge on the ground and with a stick or rod was hit sharply on one end to make it fly as high as possible into the air.

- **Ara gejjja L-Mewt Ghalik**: The child has to guess which of the kids touched him/her while they sing..... "Ara gejjja l-mewt ghalik, biex tixwik, biex taqlik. Ara gejjja, ara waslet, din id-daqqa min tahielek?"

PERSONALITY OF THE WEEK



Joseph Muscat graduated from the **Ontario College of Art** in 1981, and since then has exhibited his work extensively in solo and in group exhibitions in Canada, USA, Europe and South America. His work is widely collected in many Public, Corporate and Private collections. He has received numerous Ontario Arts Council grants and his work has been included in art textbooks and reproduced on book and magazine

covers. He has lectured at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Architecture and has taught Visual Arts part-time with the Toronto District School Board. Joseph Muscat is a member of several Professional Artists Associations. He was Chair of Propeller Gallery, Toronto between 2010 and 2015, a founding member of Le Labo d'art and a past board director of the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition and BRAVOart. He has sat on a number of arts' juries locally and nationally and is a member of Padejo, a three-artist working collective. Mr. Muscat is represented by David Kaye Gallery, Toronto, Danielle Wohl Fine Arts, Palo Alto, California and Guildworks in Bloomfield Ontario.



Dr. Marie Gatt – First Maltese woman to hold Maltese bird-ringing licence - GOZO NEWS

Marie Gatt is making history and looking forward, by becoming the first Maltese woman to hold a Maltese bird-ringing licence. Dr Marie Claire Gatt has become the first Maltese woman to hold a bird-ringing licence issued by the Maltese Bird Ringing Scheme in its 47-year history.

Scientific bird ringing is a research method in ornithology whereby wild birds are temporarily caught to be fitted with a uniquely numbered, lightweight, metal ring on their leg.

Skilled bird ringers are not only able to determine the species of bird they are dealing with, but also accurately measure the birds, as well as establish age and sex from the plumage of the bird in species where this is possible, all in a couple of minutes and without causing the bird any harm. All this information is linked to the ring number of the individual bird and subsequent captures of the same individual are recorded to create its history.

Scientific bird ringing has been carried out throughout Europe for over a hundred years. The practice has allowed researchers to acquire information on bird movements across habitats, countries, and continents over the annual cycle. Bird ringing also provides information on the lifespan of birds and their population sizes, a critical tool for bird monitoring in a changing world.

Bird ringing in Malta is run by BirdLife Malta and licenced by the Wild Birds Regulation Unit (WBRU). Dr Gatt explained that locally, ringing has exposed the incredible longevity of our seabirds, with the sparrow-sized Mediterranean Storm-petrel (Kangu ta' Filfla, *Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis*) living for over 30 years.

Hon Ian Borg MP
Minister

I congratulate the Editor and the Staff of THE MALTESE JOURNAL for this wonderful achievement

Żewg serati muzikali f'temp ta' ftit sghat

Kav Joe M Attard
Rabat - Ghawdex



Propju f'Boxing Day, kelli ċ-ċans li nipprezenta

żewg serati muzikali f'temp ta' ftit sghat. L-ewwel waħda kienet bis-sehem tal-'Virgo Childrens' Choir' flimkien mal-'Chorus Urbanus Junior Choir' taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Maureen Zerafa u bl-akkumpanjament fuq il-pjanu ta' Mro Dr John Galea. It-tfal kantaw għadd sabiħ ta' Christmas Carols fosthom 'Ninni la tibkix iżjed' bis-sehem ta' Nyann Vella fuq il-flawt u Hayley Joy Demicoli fuq il-vjolin miktuba mill-Gizwita Indri' Schembri, 'Milied Qaddis' ta' Andrew Żammit, 'Look at the World' bis-sehem ta' Amy Agius u Kristine Buhagiar, ta' John Rutter, 'Ding Dong Merrily on High' li tmur lura lejn is-sena 1588, 'Caro Gesu' Bambino' miz-Zecchino d'Oro tal-1960 bis-sehem ta' Amea Jo Refalo, 'Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer' li nstemgħet għall-ewwel darba fl-1939, 'Forza Gesu' mill-istess festival Taljan għat-tfal tas-sena 2010 bis-sehem ta' Faith Buttigieg. L-attendenza kienet waħda ferm sabiħa fosthom l-Arcipriet tar-raħal u s-Sindku t'Għajnsielem. It-tfal kantaw ukoll 'Jingle Bells' ta' James Lord Pierpont tas-sena 1857, 'The Little Drummer Boy' miktuba fl-1941 bis-sehem tač-čkejken Francesco Pio, 'Born on Christmas Day' bis-sehem ta' Jennifer Sammut u kompożizzjoni ta' Kristin Chenoweth, 'Silent Night' li nqalbet f'bosta lingwi, miktuba minn Franz Gruber fl-1818, 'When love was Born' bis-sehem ta' Krista Mercieca, 'Somewhere in my memory' mill-film Home Alone, 'Holy Night' bil-vuči sabiħa ta' Kurt Theuma Xerri, u fl-aħħarnett

'Adeste Fideles' miktuba minn Francis Wade fl-1711 u interpretata minn Hayley Jo Demicoli u Nyann Vella flimkien mal-Kor.

Ftit hin wara, eżatt fit-8pm kont ninsab fis-sala tal-Lukanda Kempinsky f'San Lawrenz biex nipprezenta kunċert ieħor din id-darba mill-Banda 'Viżitazzjoni' tal-Għarb taħt id-direzzjoni tas-Surmast żagħżuġh Jason Camilleri. Il-kunċert ta' madwar siegħa u nofs, 'Dreams of Vienna 2023' fetaħ bil-marċ 'A Continental Christmas' fuq arrangament ta' Elliot del Borgo, u dritt wara 'Strauss Bonbons' ta' Johann Strauss u ibnu - silta minn għadd ta' marċijiet ferrieħa ta' dawn iż-żewġ kompożituri magħrufa. Billi l-Banda 'Viżitazzjoni' din is-sena għalqet 20 sena minn twelidha, allura tatna l-marċ 'A joyful Journey' ta' Robert Sheldom opus 83. 'Siltiet minn 'Emperor Waltz' u 'Barcarole Waltz' rajthom li nizlu ferm tajjeb mal-udjenza li kienet preżenti fis-sala u wara l-Banda għaddiet biex iddoqq 'Annen Polka' u 'In Rose Garden'. Kif juri l-isem 'Straussiana Waltz Selection', hija gabra muzikali ta' Johann Strauss li tant paxxiet lil dawk preżenti. 'The Blue Danube' ma għandha bżonn tal-ebda introduzzjoni kif ukoll ir-'Radetzky March' Op 228 għadu fi tmiem dan il-kunċert li issa daħal fil-kalendarju kulturali tal-Banda Viżitazzjoni. Hassejtni ferm sodisfatt għal din l-istedina li mhux la kemm ninsiha.

New Fund Dedicates Support to Malta Community



The DeKalb County Community Foundation is excited to announce the first endowment fund created for the community of Malta, IL. Built through tax-deductible contributions from friends, neighbors, businesses, and community members, the Malta Community Endowment Fund will provide support for projects and services dedicated to improving the quality of life in Malta.

The idea for the Malta Community Endowment Fund came during the expansion of the Malta Public

Library. At that time, the building campaign for the library was the talk of the town, bringing in a great deal of support from the people of Malta. Seeing the pride and dedication that arose from this project, local resident Kevin McArtor began to conceptualize a way for the people of Malta to invest in their community for years to come. After pitching the idea to his mom, Mary Lynn McArtor, the Malta Community Fund was on its way to fruition with a lead gift.

Over the last year, support for the fund has grown continually through meetings in the community. The fund became official on December 13, 2016 through generous support from twelve community members. "We are grateful to those who have given generously, understanding the vision and long-term impact of a fund like this," said Kevin. "Like so many in Malta, this is our community and our family's community, and we want to do all we can to create a better tomorrow."

Support from the community is greatly encouraged to grow the fund. Donations to the Malta Community Endowment Fund can be made at dekalbccf.org/donate or DeKalb County Community Foundation, 475 DeKalb Ave., Sycamore, IL 60178. For questions or additional information, please contact Executive Director Dan Templin at 815-748-5383 or dan@dekalbccf.org.



Weekend FunScape Old School Pizza in Malta, ILLINOIS USA

Illinois is one state that's known for its pizza and, while there are many incredible places to grab a slice or a pie, Old School Pizza in Malta offers a bit more than just great food. Located in the building of a former elementary school, the unique decor featuring iconic pop culture memorabilia adds a fun atmosphere to

those who dine here. If you haven't heard of this pizza place located in a former school, you should make plans to go.

While some restaurants are known for great food and others for great atmosphere, Old School Pizza in Malta is known for both. Not only is this pizza joint located in an old school, but it's also filled with old-school pop culture memorabilia from over the past few decades.

If you're there without kids, feel free to pull up a seat at the bar and order a beer, wine, or cocktail and look at all of the mesmerizing lava lamps behind the bar. There's no other place quite like this in the state. Not only does the decor create an incredibly fun and exciting atmosphere, but customers also love the pizza! The extensive pizza menu has something for everyone.

**Italian newspaper
Corriere Della Sera
has listed the President
of the European
Parliament Roberta Metsola
among the Women of the Year.
Journalists chose
102 women who
have left their mark
during a year
characterised by
international events.**



LE DONNE DEL 2023 Secondo il Corriere Della Sera - Italia

A cura di Chiara Severgnini

Cosa ricorderemo del 2023? Guerre, attentati, alluvioni. Ma anche moti di solidarietà, grandi innovazioni, primati. E poi romanzi, film, concerti. E tante, tante donne.

I giornalisti e le giornaliste del Corriere ne hanno scelte 102: quelle (viventi o mancate nel corso dell'anno) che più hanno lasciato il segno negli ultimi dodici mesi.

Non potevano mancare la presidente del Consiglio Giorgia Meloni, quarta donna più potente al mondo secondo Forbes, e la segretaria del Pd Elly Schlein: con loro al vertice, nel 2023, per la prima volta in Italia sia la maggioranza, sia l'opposizione sono a guida femminile. Né potevano mancare le leader europee: Ursula von der Leyen, presidente della Commissione Europea, Christine Lagarde, prima donna a presiedere la Bce, e Roberta Metsola, presidente del Parlamento europeo.

Ma ad aver segnato l'anno sono state anche intellettuali come Michela Murgia, sindacaliste come Fran Drescher, attiviste come Narges Mohammadi, premio Nobel per la pace imprigionata in Iran. E, a proposito di Nobel, indispensabile citare l'economista Claudia Goldin, che ha studiato gli svantaggi sistemici che penalizzano le donne sul lavoro, e la biochimica Katalin Kariko, madre dei vaccini a mRNA.

E poi atlete come Sofia Goggia e Federica Brignone, campionesse in competizione che sono da stimolo l'una per l'altra, e registe come Paola Cortellesi, che con C'è ancora domani ha riportato l'Italia al cinema con un'emozionante storia di forza femminile.

In questo 2023, però, hanno fatto notizia anche le donne costrette a subire atrocità.

Quelle brutalizzate dai terroristi il 7 ottobre, quelle ostaggio di Hamas, quelle costrette a partorire sotto le bombe a Gaza.

E quelle uccise da chi non rispetta la loro libertà, come Giulia Cecchettin.

Per questo tra le donne del 2023, secondo noi, c'è anche lei. Non da sola, ma con la sorella Elena, che con le sue parole ha acceso un'ondata di indignazione — anche maschile — che nel nostro Paese non ha precedenti.



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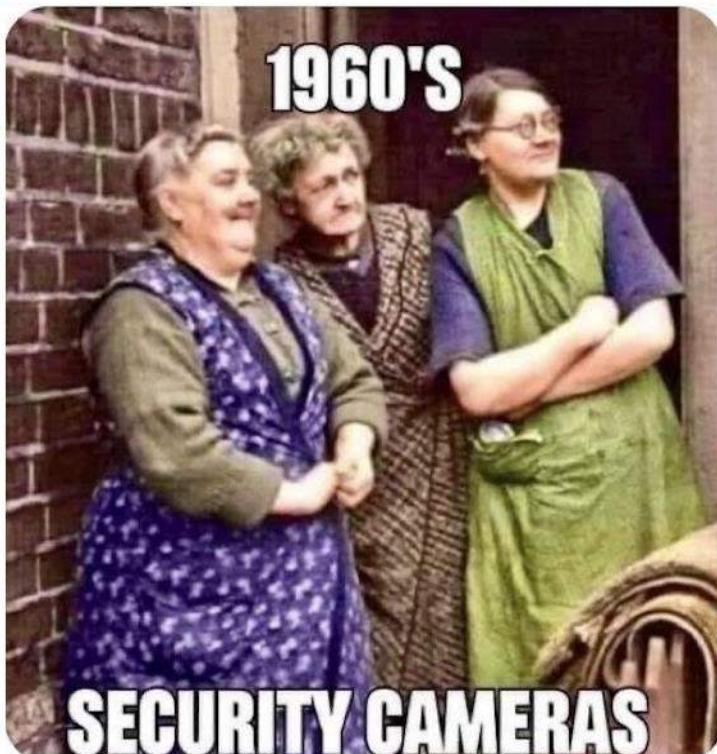


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We had Road Maps.

1960'S



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Looters have it easy today. It was a lot harder to run with a Color TV in 1968.



Jacqueline Mifsud is going

THE FULL MIFSUD

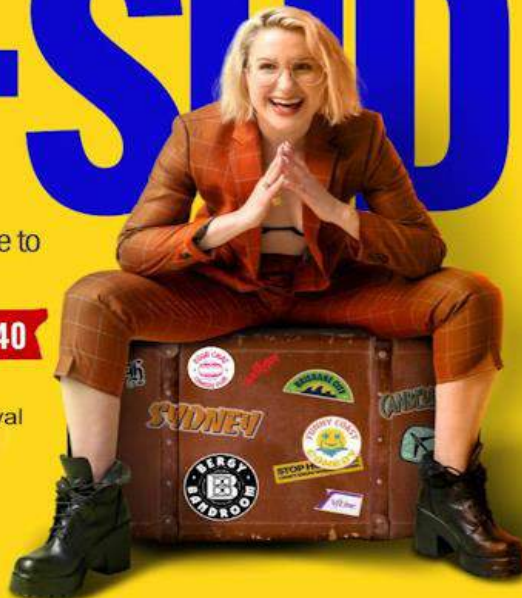
She's packed her life into a suitcase to tell jokes around Australia.

Her mission: **40 SHOWS BEFORE 40**

Melbourne International Comedy Festival

The Full Mifsud 2024 tour list!
9 shows ONLY from April 8-19
at The Catfish
30 Gertrude St, Fitzroy, VIC,
Australia,

Jacqueline Mifsud is a French speaking
Maltese-Australian comedian who has
entertained audiences all over Australia
and Internationally at the Edinburgh
and New Zealand Fringe festivals



During 2023
**THE MALTESE
JOURNAL**
reached many
milestones

Including

**The publication
of the 500th
Edition**

**The 10th
anniversary of
the first
publication**

**The number of
the regular
readers
(according to
our survey)
reached 10,000**

PIGEON HOLES - SLIEMA

