

Buying Spanish back home

Back home for a well earned break from the sun, sand and sangria you see a Spanish registered car for sale. The dealer gives you the registration document and ITV card and off you go on the long drive back to your villa or 'urb

“What could be simpler than buying a Spanish registered car?” you are thinking. “It must be easier and cheaper than re-registering a UK car here” Maybe, maybe not as recent events have uncovered. The clampdown by Trafico is not confined to foreign registered vehicles but also those that want to come back home

Before you buy

So what should you do? Firstly, before you buy you need a background check (Informe de Cargas) obtained via a gestor or specialist in this field. This will show, amongst other things, the details of the last registered keeper in Spain, the date that the ITV is or was due and whether there are any debts or sanctions on the car. Now this is where the fun starts because if there are any debts, these may have to be cleared before the car can be registered in your name. If the car has been declared exported, another can of worms is opened

The ITV is overdue so it was a good job that those lovely boys in green didn't have some sport with you on the way down. At the ITV station the clerk says “Perdon senior” or “scuse me pal” if he knows colloquial English “this car should not be on the road as it has been declared exported from Spain and until it has been rehabilitated it cannot be driven”. “Rehabilitated? It is an alcohol-free car!” So now you need to ask Trafico for permission to rehabilitate the car. You would think that this would be a no-brainer, but no, not all cars are allowed back into the country, but let's assume that the man behind the desk “he say yes!”

So the car passes the ITV and if by now you have time, energy and sanity left you will need to pay the road tax via SUMA in Alicante or at your Town Hall in other provinces. A visit to the tax office (Hacienda) to pay further taxes may also be necessary. Armed with this rucksack full of paper, you go back to Trafico

Proof of ownership and taxes

As the car is not registered to you, Trafico will ask you to prove that you own the car, so you provide the invoice from the dealer. The invoice doesn't show the VAT registration number of the company nor that VAT has been paid. It is assumed by the authorities here that IVA (VAT) has been paid as this is the norm when buying a second hand car in Spain so it is prudent to have a VAT invoice or you may be liable for this tax. Also missing is a declaration from the dealer that the vehicle has never been registered in another country. You contact the dealer who is busy trying to sell

cars to make a living and doesn't need interruptions from someone that has paid up and is now asking him daft questions. Everyone is just so helpful!

You may have purchased the car privately and hopefully from the last registered keeper; in which case you will need a contract of buying and selling. In these cases, you will pay a transfer of ownership tax which varies between autonomous regions from 4% to 8% of the value

The documents that are always required are the registration document (Permiso de Circulacion), ITV card (Ficha Tecnica), proof of payment of last road tax and either a VAT invoice from a dealer or a contract of selling/buying accompanied by copies of the passport and NIE certificate of the registered keeper

Piece of cake eh?

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