

VareseNews

“I’m going to pack it all in and go and live in the Canaries.” And they are actually doing it

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“I’m going to pack it all in and go and live in the Canaries.” How many times have you heard friends in a bar, at the market, or over dinner, say this? **The Canaries, Portugal, Bulgaria and the South of France are destinations that, in the last few years, have become very desirable for a lot of Italian pensioners** in search of milder climates and, above all, somewhere where the cost of living is decidedly lower than in Italy.

Husband and wife, Salvatore and Orietta, are 58 and 57, respectively; he retired a year ago, and she is a housewife. They have always lived in Valceresio, but have now decided to pack up everything and move: **their flight for Gran Canaria leaves on 6 May, and their ticket is one way.**

But they are not going alone; with them, there will also be the family of their daughter Alessandra, 31, who, with her husband Luca, 36, and their daughters Amelia and Elide, 5, and 5 months, have decided to pack it all in and set off in search of a new life.

SALVATORE AND ORIETTA, OFF TO GRAN CANARIA TO ENJOY THEIR RETIREMENTS

Salvatore, a former bank employee, who retired a year ago, talks about their decision to leave. **“We’re going to enjoy our retirements by the sea.** I suffer from asthma and here, the climate doesn’t help. My wife and I have often said, jokingly, but not too much, ‘When I retire, let’s go away.’ We thought about Sicily, or the South of France. Then I began to read about the favourable tax regulations for pensioners in Portugal, although Portugal didn’t appeal to me particularly. A former colleague of mine told me about the Canaries, I had a look and fell in love with them. We went there last June, for an initial inspection; **the climate’s fantastic, it’s 20/25°C all year round, they don’t know what winter is, there’s the sea, huge beaches, the people are polite, and the services of an extremely high level.** They have a huge influx of tourists from Northern Europe, so they’ve adapted to their standards. The pace is different, more relaxed, less chaotic. And then, **the cost of living is extremely low,** VAT is 7%, electricity costs little, so does petrol, and heating doesn’t exist. It reminds me of Italy 30/40 years ago.”

Salvatore’s wife, Orietta, listens and nods. She becomes gloomy for a moment, only when they speak about the many things they will leave behind, in Arcisate. “We built the house we live in, just as we wanted it, it’s not easy to leave everything behind. **We’ve gathered our things and we’re going to send them shortly before we leave, then we’ll find everything we need there,**” she says as her smile returns and she thinks about her grandchildren. “I’ll be grandma on the beach; it’s not so bad after all.”

For the paperwork, they turned to an agency created by Marco Misto, an Italian who moved to Gran Canaria several years ago, who set up **a company called “Trasferirsi alle Canarie”** (Moving to the Canaries), which has its own website and blog where people describe their experiences and talk about the mistakes to avoid. **“The idea is to buy a house quickly.** For the time being, we’re renting one from 1 May, then we’ll see; we’ve also found people to help us with this, ‘Case alle Canarie’ (Homes in the Canaries), who are specialised in these things. The same is true for the car; we’ll rent one first, then buy one there, where the prices are affordable.”

ALESSANDRA AND LUCA, A CHANGE OF LIFE FOR TWO THIRTY-YEAR-OLDS

The other side of the story is that of **Alessandra and Luca**, the mummy and daddy of Amelia and Elide, two gorgeous little girls aged 5, and 5 months. Alessandra and Luca met 5 years ago, they have been married for 3, and **on 6 May, they too are setting off for Gran Canaria.** “We’d been thinking of leaving for some time. Before Amelia was born, we were on the point of going to Tenerife, but then, with a little baby, and alone, we decided to stay here,” Alessandra explains. **“In Italy, we’re at breaking point, we can’t handle the very high costs anymore; it’s a battle to get to the end of the month,** we’re terrified of an unexpected expense that uses up our savings. We’re going to live by the sea, starting out with nothing.” Alessandra is on maternity leave, and has been looking after her daughters. **“I’m going to build something of my own,” she explains, “I’ve got lots of ideas, and on Gran Canaria, I’ll have the chance to put them into practice.** Getting a VAT number costs €50 ...”

Luca has made a clean break also from his job, **he had a permanent contract in a large aeronautical company, he resigned and now he is starting out with nothing.** “Lots of people think I’m crazy, my dad wasn’t exactly pleased when I told him,” he says. “I’m doing it for my family, for a better life. **Instead of gasping for breath here, I’m going to gasp for breath by the sea.** I’m going to look for something in the catering business; so, before going to the Canaries, **I’m going to Germany for a**

while, to learn German, as it's in great demand over there, because of the large influx of tourists, particularly from October to Easter. Then I'll try to look for a job in my field, IT, or maybe I'll follow my passions, cooking and photography."

Amelia, the eldest daughter, welcomed her parents' idea enthusiastically. "We asked her if she liked the place we took her on holiday in October," Alessandra says, "and if she'd like to go and live there. She immediately said 'Yes!'.

"On Gran Canaria, the schools have extremely high standards, those of Northern Europe; the children immediately learn 3 languages, they use computers and technology; the health service is public, and the services are efficient. We've only got a one-way ticket; everything we had here has been sold, given away, or thrown away; we're sending 47 big boxes, plus a child's car seat and Amelia's new bike. We're going to start a new life. Some people have wished us the best, some are envious, and some expect us to fail; I tell everyone we look forward to seeing them **at our tenth wedding anniversary, when we'll have a big party on the beach.**"

di [Translated by Prof. Rolf Cook](#)