



## The Natalie Slater interview

Missing that summer sun? One couple did, so they moved out to Portugal. Now they want to help you do the same

**W**AKING up to the sound of lapping waves and taking lunch at a seaside taverna is how many of us love to spend our summer holidays. But some yearn for more: those 14 days of sun, sea and sangria just aren't enough.

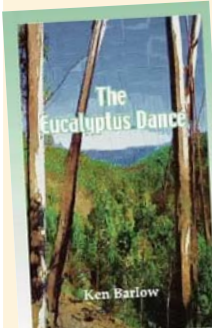
Moving abroad can be a daunting prospect, with enough barriers caused by language and cultural differences to put people off.

But the dream can become a reality – and to prove it, a couple have written a book to tell you how.

Ken Barlow and his partner Sue Cooper found love and a new life when they took their first holiday together in a rural Portugal, against the backdrop of a mountain. Now, almost 10 years down the line, the couple are enjoying life in their home that they built from scratch despite the trials and tribulations of living abroad.

The Eucalyptus Tree is a heart-warming tale of the journey that Ken and Sue underwent to find their ideal plot of land in Alombada, to build their perfect home, and to create the ideal life they both dreamed of.

## info



The Eucalyptus Dance is available from Trafford Publishing at [www.Trafford.com](http://www.Trafford.com), and all good bookstores, for £11.50, ISBN: 978-1425156947

It can also be bought direct from the authors at [www.casasulo.com](http://www.casasulo.com), or emailing [ken@casasulo.com](mailto:ken@casasulo.com).

Their tale starts when they first met at a Newbury social group, and tells of their first holiday to Portugal when, on just their second day, they took a drive down a coastal road and had a vision of the future.

Speaking from their idyllic home on a sunny August afternoon, Ken said: "We were driving down and I got down to the first corner and stopped, it was like a thunderbolt.

"We looked across the valley and I looked at Sue and I said, 'I could do it, could you?' and she said, 'If you are thinking what I am thinking, then yes, I could.'

"And now, here we are. And this book, which we have both co-written, is like a little diary of the experiences we had moving out here."

The couple fell in love with Alombada on that second day of their very first holiday back in 2000. But it took another four years before they could finally move in to their new home – and, they say, they have been there living every day with a smile on their face ever since.

The book is about packing up and moving to a different country when you are over 50, the challenges you face, the bureaucracies of foreign countries, and the cultural change of moving into a rural, village community.

Ken says: "We had no reason to leave England behind, we were both very happy with our lives and our jobs, but we fell in love with Alombada and we decided this was the life we wanted.

"The transition was not without its challenges. At every corner we seemed to face a battle with the legalities of moving to a foreign country and buying the land to do it, but through those difficulties we made good friends and we laughed about it.

"Everything we have done has been a challenge, yes, but it has been great fun and the life we have now is just perfect."

## Ken Barlow and Sue Cooper built their own home in Portugal



The book brings to life the characters whom Ken and Sue have met along the way – it inspires colour and laughter and it makes you want to live abroad.

As it is written like a diary, you experience the journey with Ken and Sue and you learn not only about the formalities of a move abroad, but of the dinners and dances and social experiences they enjoyed every day.

Ken and Sue left family and friends back in England, they were both living in Basingstoke before they left and in years gone by, Ken had spent time working as a machine manager at the *Evening Post*.

Speaking of leaving behind their life in England, Ken said: "Do I miss it? Not at all. We have everything we want here, and our friends and family come and visit us in this beautiful place.

"We get to spend quality time with the people we love, rather than a snatched coffee

here and there, the odd lunch meeting or a fleeting moment on the street.

"Our life here really is wonderful, we wake up and deal with our press business back in the UK which we have kept going for the income, then we go for lunch at one of our local tavernas, we eat the meal of the day and have a litre of wine, all for around £4, and then we enjoy the rest of the afternoon.

"What more could you possibly ask for? My advice to other people who are considering it, would be just to do it.

"If you read our book, you will get some useful information on how to deal with the bureaucracies of living in Europe, and I hope people will take the step to do it. Life is fantastic, make the most of it."

Speaking of the title, *The Eucalyptus Dance*, Ken said: "You have to read it to understand it."