

# Oooh La La!

Text: Mandy van Zuydam  
Photos John Hinde

WHEN THE MOULIN ROUGE CAME TO PORTO PETRO IT WAS FEATHERS AND FINERY FROM HERE TO LA GAIE PARIS.

It was a head-turning, jaw dropping experience. Tall, beautiful dancers, with perfectly tuned bodies were gliding like peacocks through the grounds of the 5-star Blau Porto Petro, preparing for one of the most spectacular events of the year.

There were photo shoots, TV cameras, interviews, rehearsals and publicity visits – not to mention a tangible sense of excitement as the girls of the Moulin Rouge, or the Dorris Girls, as they are known, danced for the first time in Spain.

Although the girls are used to travelling to various parts of the world once or twice a year for special one-off events, the excitement of performing at a new venue is always combined with apprehension that everything will go according to plan.

In Paris there are 21 dressers to help the girls in and out of their tight, bright dresses, but on tour there are just two. The stage and lighting is different and, in the case in Mallorca, so is the climate. The girls would like nothing more than to lie on the beach and swim in the warm Mediterranean water, but they can not risk sunburn and, in between PR activities and photos shoots, need to rehearse, rest, and drink plenty of water.

The girl most in the spotlight is Moulin Rouge's lead dancer Jolene Slaterb from

Australia. The other two principals are Gillian Anderson from Scotland and Scandinavian Karen Alemarck, which proves just how international the cast is.

In the Paris-based cast of 70 there is a total of 14 different nationalities, although at the moment there are no Spaniards in the show. But, despite this cosmopolitan mix, the show remains a great French institution and transports the audience to Paris of the 1890s where "workers, artists, middle-classes and aristocrats gathered at the same table, in a joyful atmosphere of feast and frivolity".

The famous high-kicking French cancan has its roots in this era and started out as a dance called the Quadrille, which made a revolutionary statement by insulting the church (two women lifting their legs to meet in a steeple) and the military (one woman lifting her leg up to her shoulder like a soldier presenting arms).

If you are kicking yourself that you missed this spectacle that combines music, dance and variety with an unadulterated celebration of the female form, then you best look into a few nights in Paris. The Dorris' girls visit to Mallorca was a one-off – like all beautiful women they are hard to get!

WEBSITE [www.moulinrouge.fr](http://www.moulinrouge.fr)



## shortcuts



**To join the Moulin Rouge** you need to be at least 17 years old. 1m72m, good looking and preferably classically trained in ballet. Auditions are held annually in the major cities around the world, but at the moment it seems Australian girls are in hot demand. In return for the honour of dancing for one of the crème de la crème of the cabaret world you will be expected to keep in peak physical condition and do two shows a night, six nights a week.

### Can't wait to see the real thing?



The 2001 Hollywood hit of the same name, starring Australian beauty Nicole Kidman won two Oscars and did much to boost the popularity of Moulin Rouge.