



With the main season over, it's time for the Handyman France annual awards again. Awards are made to the countries sending the most/least difficult, demanding, clean/dirty and in some cases downright stupid tourists to France. The awards can be viewed in the trophy room at the United Nations Headquarters.

A few countries withdrew from the contest this year, notably Italy, but there was also a new contestant, Luxembourg, which came close to a couple of awards in its' first appearance. As an aside, did you know that they have their own language (Luxembourgish) which is spoken by less than half the population of 580,000?

So here we go...

The *I'm Alright Jack* award to the most selfish guests is for the group who arbitrarily changed their arrival and departure days to Sundays instead of Saturdays. Even the owner wasn't told about this until a few days before they arrived. British.

The Australia *'No Worries Mate'* award for not caring what went wrong goes to the family who were on holiday and were going to enjoy themselves no matter what. Three consecutive days of severe storms unleashed several problems, none of which resulted in any demands or complaints. British.

The *Derek & Clive 'I'm Going to Complain'* award is shared this year. The first recipient is the French woman who complained bitterly, repeatedly and at considerable length about the amount of cleaning she did. If it had been cleaning that was necessary when she arrived, I would have understood, but this was before she left. The other recipient is the Irish family who complained about leaves falling from a tree. I think it must have been the noise...?

The *Einstein* award is for the tourist who, during the meet and greet, asked which bedroom was served by the en suite he was standing in. British.

The *Clean & Tidy* award goes to – UK! This is, I think, a first. And what's more, it's shared between two families in different properties at different times.

*Dirtiest/untidiest* – UK. Waste bins were destroyed in what was probably a last minute attempt to clean up by scrubbing them with Brillo pads. However, bedding was left outside on the terrace; sinks were heavily stained and obviously not even wiped over for the entire two-week holiday; and they couldn't even be bothered to put their 27 empty beer bottles in the glass bank at the end of the road, dumping some, but not all, of them in the recycling bin.

The *House of the Rising Sun* award. This is, I would hope, a unique award. Earlier this year, there were dozens of electricians from all over Europe working on a single project near Carcassonne. Two properties we manage were occupied by the Germans (if you'll excuse the phrase). After several weeks, one of them asked me where he could find a house of ill-repute. At first I was flattered that he felt able to ask me. Then I thought, why does he think I would know? One phone call to a colleague who obviously does know and he was on his way. I believe he got his money's worth.

The *Lost in Space* award goes to an American who couldn't find the apartment he was renting. He had a map and detailed directions from the owner, but didn't look up to see the names of the shops or post office to see that he had in fact arrived. He walked up and down the same road for over an hour pulling suitcases.

The *Quoi Fur* award is for the American who asked where he could find a very good hairdresser, not just a run of the mill type. I asked if it was for male or female. Looking slightly puzzled by the question, he replied it was for him. I replied there are several in Carcassonne, though I suspect I looked even more puzzled because he was completely bald.

What a year for the British! Indeed, the trophy cabinet at the UN is so full extra space is needed. I believe there may some room in Old Trafford...?