



**For this year's Sant Jaume awards, the Formentera Council celebrates Esperanza Riera Riera, Vicent Serra Ferrer and la Mola business Can Pep Xomeu, plus bestows Antoni Taulé i Pujol with honorary 'adoptive son' title**

This morning the Formentera Council convened a special plenary assembly to consider the candidates for the administration's honorary distinctions in 2018. The winners will be announced July 24 at 8.30pm in the local cinema (Sala de Cultura, Sant Francesc) as part of Diada de Formentera celebrations.

The assembly voted unanimously to award Formentera's gold medal, the Medalla d'Or, to two groups: the Eivissa-Formentera association for individuals with special needs (**APNEEF**) and the Pau Mayans association for the integration of people with autism spectrum disorder (**APMIPTEA**

). In doing so they praised the efforts of “all those involved who have volunteered time and resources for people with special needs and those on the autism spectrum”, making extra mention of efforts in support of children and young people, including recognition of the key role such support plays in improving peoples' quality of life and —through care, education, rehabilitation and training— promoting integration. The importance of outreach was also highlighted.

Assembly members were united in their picks for recipients of the Sant Jaume premis: Esperanza Riera Riera, Vicent Serra Ferrer and Can Pep Xomeu.

Riera was applauded for her years in education, namely at la Mola's primary school, and for her efforts “to enrich and consolidate the public school system”. Special attention was focused on her work promoting one model in particular, the so-called “rural school”, with the assembly pointing to Formentera's geographical situation, and palpable “human side”, as some of the aspects making escoles rurals “snug fits for the island”, and ones which create “ample opportunities to explore values like tolerance, respect, solidarity and friendship”.

With a trajectory encompassing education and social work, and professional experience as an author, collaborator and consultant for multiple publications, Vicent Serra Ferrer was hailed as an “advocate of culture for the people” and celebrated for a laundry list of other titles, from committed champion of local history and early stakeholder in the project to build the island's secondary school, to founding member and sitting chairman of the Formentera chapter of Obra Cultural Balear and the municipal board of culture's first chairman.

In naming the island outfit to receive the Premi Sant Jaume, the honorary distinctions committee underscored the commercial entrepreneurialism of Can Pep Xomeu, describing them as “a presence on the local landscape, across the island and in la Mola in particular, going back more than a century”. “Can Pep Xomeu have watched as our island's society has evolved. They have done everything from transporting sundries and other material between Formentera and Eivissa to operating as grocers. They have witnessed the progression of Formentera's tourism boom, and lobbied for the creation of the island's first artisan market”.

The assembly also voted to give Antoni Taulé i Pujol the title of Formentera's fill adoptiu, that is, its honorary “adoptive son”. Born in Sabadell in 1945, Taulé i Pujol has kept the closest of ties with the island since the seventies, when the island was a mill of inspired artistic creation. Taulé i Pujol ultimately chose Formentera to launch himself fully into art, and it was here he developed an immensely personal pictorial language, one that was initially characterised by still lifes and imagery extending from the hyperrealistic to the oneiric, but that ensuing years would find delving into “space as the unclothed protagonist”, the light of the Mediterranean and mythology.

The individuals and groups honoured by the Formentera Council where picked by an “Honorary Distinctions Committee” made up of representatives from each of the local groups with seats in the plenary.

Formentera's Medalla d'Or and the Sant Jaume premis represent the administration's highest honour. They are celebrations of special achievements and the unique qualities embodied by people or groups who have helped improve island life or lend Formentera prestige on a distinctly human level.