

# Paradise Post

News From Ojochal, Costa Rica  
and Beyond

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APRIL 2007

## Updates from the Osa

Welcome to this edition of Paradise Post. Our goal is to quarterly update and educate neighbors living in the Ojochal area as well as those considering making the move to a more relaxed and fulfilling way of life. Our plan is to highlight new and existing businesses, describe excursions available in our area as well as learn a bit about the nature and beauty that surrounds us. If you have any suggestions or news to share please don't hesitate to contact us.

The Tres Rios school has started a new recycling program. The children are currently collecting recyclables from restaurants in the Ojochal area and will soon be providing drop off points throughout the town. In the interim

residents can deliver their recyclables to either the Yamaha dealer in the Cinco Ventanas shopping center or at the salon communal (the building at the old soccer field) in Tres Rios.

At present they are collecting all aluminum cans, as well as plastic and glass bottles. All recyclables should be sorted and placed in bags. This project is run in conjunction with the Municipality of Osa as well as the University of Costa Rica. The main objective being not only to preserve the environment but to educate both the children and the adults on the value of recycling.

We're also happy to report that we've gotten our own pharmacy located in the Maison Tropicale Commercial Center. Their hours are Monday through Saturday from 8am until 6pm. You can

also reach them at 506-743-6810.

The new international airport is a step closer to becoming a reality. The site has been selected and the process is moving along. Viviana Martin, the President of the Technical Council of Civil Aviation is expecting that the master plan will be complete by the end of 2007 and is aiming to have the airport into operation by the year 2010.

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## Costa Rica Aims to Be First “Carbon Neutral” Country

The Costa Rican government is developing plans to begin offsetting all of the country's carbon dioxide emissions, the news service La Nación reported on February 21.

Environment and Energy Minister Roberto Dobles said Costa Rica aims to reach this goal using budgeting, laws, and incentives, including measures to promote biofuels, hybrid vehicles, and clean energy. Another key component of the national strategy will be a “C-Neutral” label to certify that tourism and certain industrial practices mitigate all of the carbon dioxide they emit.

Under the new certification system, tourists and businesses will be charged a voluntary “tax” to offset their carbon emissions, with one ton

of carbon valued at \$10, according to La Nación. The money will be used to fund conservation, reforestation, and research in protected areas. To augment the development of C-Neutral, the country is cultivating a carbon certificate market that aims to not only boost carbon capture and storage in the nation's forests, but also help maintain their scenic beauty.

In 2002, Costa Rica's carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels totaled 5.8 million metric tons, according to the Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center, ranking it 108th in the world. Delegates at a recent United Nations meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, noted that they were watching Costa Rica's initiative and hope to replicate it in other regions.



## Hacienda Baru: National Wildlife Refuge



What initially was a cattle ranch has evolved into a private wildlife refuge of over 800 acres of rainforest, mangrove swamps and sandy beaches reputed to be one of the best bird watching locations in the world. Jack Ewing and his wife Diane relocated from Colorado to Costa Rica thirty seven years ago with the initial plan to raise cattle and horses and quickly adjusted their plans to preserve and restore the flora and fauna native to the area.

The trails provide close encounters with white faced monkeys, coatis, sloths, armadillos, anteaters

and more. If you're very lucky you may catch a glimpse of a Jaguarundi (a wild cat in danger of extinction). You'll spot a kaleidoscope of butterflies as well as a myriad of birds including toucans, parrots, hawks and bats (oh wait... those aren't birds).

They offer guided hikes and canopy tours and also have an orchid and butterfly garden. They also have six guest cabins available for those who would like to spend the night. The cabins are equipped with a kitchenette, bathroom with hot water shower, fans, lock-box and refrigerator. They have a restaurant serving pasta, seafood and chicken dishes as well as breakfast.

You can reach them at 506-787-0003 or find more information at [www.haciendabaru.com](http://www.haciendabaru.com). If you happen to run into Jack while you're visiting ask

him about his unairconditioned flight from Miami with 37 very sweaty and irritable cows and bulls. And, be sure to say hello to Shirley and Pedro at the front desk.



*Researchers have shown that humpback whales traveling between breeding grounds off the west coast of Costa Rica and feeding grounds off Antarctica clocked up more than 8,000km on one leg of their journey - the largest recorded journey by any individual mammal.*

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## The Highly Unusual Life of a Sloth

Sloths (locally called perezoso which means lazy) are relatively long-lived, sometimes living for more than twenty years. They spend their entire existence hanging suspended from the boughs of trees. Their limbs are long and well developed, and terminate in long curved claws that hook over and grasp the supporting bough. The animal moves by advancing one limb at a time in a slow, deliberate fashion.

The sloth's body temperature drops almost to the temperature of its surroundings at night, and much like cold-blooded reptiles, the sloth needs to take in the sun's rays to bring its temperature back to normal. Sloths descend to the ground only about once each week in order to defecate. When placed on the ground they lie on their backs or crawl with the greatest difficulty.

The sloth sleeps up to 18 hours a day, curled up with the feet drawn close together and the head placed between the forelimbs. In this position the animal resembles a stump of a bough and is relatively well camouflaged from the assault of natural enemies such as the harpy eagle. An incrustation of a green alga, which forms in the hair of some species and makes them indistinguishable from the surrounding foliage and moss, affords additional protection.

The animal is habitually silent but sometimes utters a low, plaintive call. It feeds chiefly on foliage and shoots, which are pulled within reach of the mouth with typical slow movements.

Females screech to attract males, which have a bare orange patch on their back. Actual copulation has been observed to last as long as 48 hours. Females spend half of their adult lives pregnant and each year the female produces a single offspring.

Female sloths aren't very sentimental. If a baby tumbles out of the tree its calls will go unheeded. When a juvenile reaches six months of age the mother simply turns her tail on her youngster which inherits her home range of trees. You can find sloths in the Cecropia trees which form one of their favorite food staples.



## Exotica – Gastronomie Dans la Jungle

The culinary scene on Coast Ballena is what you would expect it to be—that is, a bit of a mixed bag with great local food at cheap prices and expatriate chefs renowned in their homeland who can't get good ingredients. There are several restaurants that indeed deliver great quality food, and you will be reading about them in future issues of the *Paradise Post*.

Ojochal is known along Coast Ballena for having the best restaurants. In fact, it is not uncommon to find people making the drive from Dominical to Ojochal to sample the best cuisine around. One restaurant in Ojochal clearly stands out. Lucy and Robert Levesque's Exotica Restaurante would set a mark of culinary excellence and personal grace anywhere on the globe.

As you drive up to Exotica on the main Ojochal road, don't be discouraged by the traditional Pilsen beer sign that bears the Exotica name. When you enter the dining area, you will see that it does have the traditional outdoor configuration of the Costa Rican soda. However, what is also clear is that Lucy and Robert have gone to such great lengths to dress up the atmosphere in elegance that this is a restaurant for quiet chic dining. The candles, centerpieces, and music—among other things—give a comfortable flair that comforts the soul.

The grace of the restaurant

*“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.”*

*Virginia Woolf*

is further accentuated when you meet Lucy, who lives life to smile and serve her clientele. If you make a late reservation you may even be able to sit down with Lucy to talk with her about the positive jolly perspectives she has on living after having been in Costa Rica for over 10 years.

Upon opening the menu, you will peruse quite an extensive assortment of world cuisine with a slight bias toward Costa Rican ingredients. For starters, try the generous blue cheese salad, with the best assortment of greens around. The pâté is also to die for. Finally, the Vietnamese chicken soup will make you feel like you are in a jungle in Laos and not in Ojochal.

There are about 20 main courses that grace the pages of the menu, and all of them are worth a try. However, there is a consensus assortment of preferred dishes. The duck loin with orange sauce is a standout, cooked to perfection to order with an always delightfully crispy skin. The most popular dish in the restaurant is the filet mignon, the best cut of beef to be found for at least 100 kilometers. The bourguignon sauce is the popular choice for the filet mignon, but the other sauces (green pepper and mustard) are fantastic as well. Seafood is all wonderful with choices of such delightful sauces as garlic butter and banana curry. A sleeper on the menu

is the stroganoff. This heavy cream-based dish with fresh tomatoes and extremely openhanded use of basil make this one a real treat.



On to the desserts—Lucy has a catering business on the side called Dulce Lucy (Sweet Lucy), and the name is well deserved. Desserts are Lucy's personal passion. The thick and rich brownie with ice cream is the popular choice. The mint velvet pie is an extremely refreshing frozen treat with a chocolate crust. Lucy's specialty sugar pie with a sweet custard filling and traditional pie crust is another delight.

A separate lunch menu is served and is of equal quality and value. Highlights are a warm goat cheese salad, lasagna, and a creamy seafood soup in a flakey bread bowl.

In fairness, we must mention that on occasion, there is quite a bit of noise coming from the cars speeding down the Ojochal road, and if there is a hard rain on the metal roof, your quiet evening could end up being anything but quiet. However, the culinary experience at Exotica is not to be missed. You will feel warmed by the positive atmosphere and filled with the exquisite food. The quality is unparalleled and compulsively consistent. On Costa Ballena, nothing could be better. (Closed Sundays)

## Thinking of Thatch?



Love the look of thatch but not crazy about the expense, the bugs and upkeep? A product that's been on the market for almost 10 years may be your perfect solution. Artificial thatching with guaranteed durability that's water-tight

and UV protected.

A company based out of Canada has developed a unique patented product to use as an alternative to the fragile and endangered leaves typically used in thatch roofing. This polymer roofing material is suitable for a simple bungalow or a hotel complex and the product needs virtually no upkeep.

To hear testimonials from customers all over Costa Rica or for more information on a solution that is both beautiful and affordable contact Robert at the Ojochal internet café or at [costarica@palmex-international.com](mailto:costarica@palmex-international.com)

More information is also available at [www.Palmex-CostaRica.com](http://www.Palmex-CostaRica.com) or at [www.Palmex-International.com](http://www.Palmex-International.com).

## El Buena Vista

If you're looking for a beautiful and relaxing place to stay you should consider a new guest house in Ojochal. "El Buena Vista" is located on the Perezoso road only a couple of minutes from the center of town. Each studio has a private bathroom, kitchenette and dining room while the standard rooms come equipped with private bathrooms and refrigerators. Some rooms are air conditioned and all have a private sunset terrace with spectacular sunset views over the Pacific Ocean.

The proprietors Josée and Marco are originally from Montreal and relocated to Costa Rica with their two



young boys two years ago. Josée spent several years as a school teacher and Marco was the manager for the National Electric Company. They've since found their new life is quite rewarding and are happy to share their experiences with newcomers.

If you'd like to get your adrenaline surging, their business partner, Maxime, is an expert paraglider who offers tandem flights over the tropical canopy. He's happy to coordinate an adventure trip for you. Rates run from \$65 to \$75 per night and include a continental breakfast. You can find more information on their website at [www.elbuenvista.com](http://www.elbuenvista.com) or contact them at 506-786-5295.

## A Mango Tree for under \$5?

Dreaming of a tropical garden? Viveros La Bonita, a full service nursery has sprung up on the Costanera to fulfill the growing needs of residents moving in to the area. Owned by a local Tico family Viveros La Bonita has been offering an abundance of tropical plants, palms and trees since 1973 (and yes, they do have mango trees for under \$5). The staff is friendly and accommodating and in addition to providing low cost tropical foliage they offer an entire landscaping packing including design and installation. They're based out of San Isidro de Perez Zelodón and are located throughout Costa Rica. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> retail outlet for Viveros La Bonita. You can find more information at [www.viveroslabonita.net](http://www.viveroslabonita.net).



Commute Before Costa Rica



Commute After

## The Papaya

Papayas – Also known as PawPaw, Mamao or Tree Melon

There's nothing like a tree ripened Papaya, though many of us have never tasted one. Most supermarket Papayas were picked before they'd had a chance to ripen. Until you have experienced a tree ripe Papaya, you won't really know how great a Papaya can taste.

Papayas are one of the easiest tropical fruits to grow. The plants grow well in almost any soil and add a tropical look to any garden. To grow Papaya, take the seed from a Papaya and remove the small gelatin sack that surrounds the seed. Allow the seed to dry for a few days and then plant in soil. Water as needed but do not over water. Papayas will reach a height of 10-12 feet within two years of planting. You need both male and female plants to set fruit. Papayas originated in southern Mexico or northern Central America but are now grown in tropical climates worldwide.

Papayas aid digestion and are high in Vitamin A and C. They also

contain high amounts of potassium, calcium, iron, thiamine, niacin and riboflavin. Pick fruit when it begins to yellow, store fruit for up to 3 weeks if refrigerated but only refrigerate fruit that is ripe. The flesh and leaves contain papain, an enzyme that digests protein. It is used in meat tenderizers as well as to clarify beer. The yellow fiber-less flesh is creamy and firm. Seeds from Papaya may be dried and ground and have a peppercorn like flavor. Papayas are great in smoothies, salsas or chutneys. Green Papayas may also be steamed and eaten like squash.

### Papaya and Pineapple Juice

- Makes 2 (12 ounce) servings
- 2 cups of pineapple juice
- 2 cups of papaya
- 2 tbsp of honey
- 1 tbsp of lemon juice

Combine all the ingredients in a blender. Cover and blend on high until smooth.

2007 has been a very exciting year so far for us at Pacific Lots of Costa Rica. We've had quite a busy show schedule. We're just publishing our first newsletter and are now offering escorted tours to the guesthouse. We still offer 3 tours to the guesthouse per week but we'd found that some clients were interested in participating in a group tour, rather than heading down to Costa Rica on their own. Our next escorted tour heads down in the second week in June, with another group arriving during the third week in June. If you are interested in joining us please let us know. Our last tour was very informative as well as fun and we've made some great new friends.

We've nearly completed our latest development at Ventana del Pacifico, known as Chontales. This will be our largest development to date and encompasses nearly 2200 contiguous acres. Phases 9B and 10 are nearly sold out and Sun Radiant Valley is quickly being gobbled up by clients. We also have two new 12 passenger vans to help with our property tours.

We've built some major sales alliances over the past year as well. We were recently joined by staff of International Living, to tour our developments; [www.internationalliving.com](http://www.internationalliving.com) and have been selected as a featured development for their Costa Rica Discovery Conference scheduled for November 2007. They anticipate close to 200 participants and we will be presenting to their group during their conference in San Jose on Costa Rica Living and Investing. We are also organizing a number of tours for their members to come to visit our developments. Our development was cited as one of the best values of all they had seen in Costa Rica.

We're also working on alliances with two of the largest real estate firms in the United States and anticipate strong sales through the rest of the year and even stronger sales in 2008. We've included some lower priced properties in our latest developments to make entry level more attainable. Lots of over an acre, with roads, water and electric and within a few miles of the ocean, start at roughly \$60,000. With the 5%

cash discount we offer, they can cost even less than that.

Our show schedule for the fall of 2007 is quickly booking up. We will be in Massachusetts for the summer, with shows throughout New England and New York. We're scheduled to exhibit in the AARP National Convention, in Boston, MA, September 6th through the 8th. AARP is the largest association on the planet and again we will be presenting to their members at the show, "Life @ 50". [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).



The recent update about the location for the new International Airport being located just 20 miles south of us is great news. The road improvements from Quepos are coming along nicely as well. The new 80,000 sq. ft Hospital De Osa, located within a few minutes of our property, should be complete before the year is out.

We've also had a great upsurge in our bird population in town. We've had regular sightings of Macaws and have had huge flocks of Parrots visiting Ojochal daily. We continue to be grateful that we are so fortunate to live in such a wonderful area of the country. We hope to see you there!

Pura Vida

Stephen Linder – Pacific Lots of Costa Rica  
[Steve@PacificLots.com](mailto:Steve@PacificLots.com)

*Stephen Linder*

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## Meet Patrick Langille



Patrick, the General Sales Manager for Ventana del Pacifico, has a Masters Unlimited Tonnage Captain's license and is also a commercial airline pilot. He's lived all over the Caribbean for about 12-years, has captained numerous mega-yachts and flew briefly for Air BVI out of Tortola. His switch to land development happened when he was hired as a marine consultant on large marina projects by Dynamman Enterprises (Miami) in Barbados, St. Lucia, Antigua and St. Martin/St. Maarten. The project in St. Martin ended in his partnering in a 1400 unit housing development called Mary's Fancy Plantation. He then built and ran his own marina in St. Maarten called La Palapa. He was also the general manager of both The Moorings and Go Vacation Yacht Charter companies. Before coming to Costa Rica, he was working for Hughes Aero Structures as Quality Assurance Manager for Bombardier Aerospace in Scandinavia, living in Stockholm Sweden. He's been with VDP now for 5-years and came to CR as his fiancé Sheila was one of the original buyer's and purchased 12-years ago in Phase 1. They moved into their own house in Phase 5 last June and currently own 5 properties with VDP. His hobbies are anything to do with the water and or boats!

## Welcome to the Neighborhood

We'd like to offer a warm welcome to Dick and Linda of Connecticut, new owners in Phase 10.

Both Dick and Linda grew up in the Jamestown/Chautauqua Lake area of NY. Linda taught elementary school for several years which included gifted and special needs students. Dick spent virtually all of his professional life at universities and institutions whose focus is scientific research (wildlife conservation and marine and atmospheric pollution). He retired early from Columbia University in 2002 having served as Assoc Dean of the Law School and then for as VP and then signed on at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center as VP for Development where he remains today. Dick has this to say about their Costa Rica experience:

"Our family has always had a love of the ocean and at one point was fortunate to live in Bermuda. Looking back it was a special time for our family. We were exposed to a unique lifestyle

and way of life that harkens back to a time when life was simpler and family and community were important. A former colleague built a home in Costa Rica and encouraged me to check it out. Having spent time working in conservation I was impressed about what I learned about Ventana and the importance placed on responsible development and the environment. We did some homework and became convinced that the Ojochal area, because of the proximity to the mountains and ocean coupled with tremendous bio diversity and an enlightened development perspective, was the place to be. When I visited I had a chance to meet several members of the Ventana staff as well as other members of the greater Ojochal community and was impressed by their sincerity and friendliness and

***"I was impressed about what I learned about Ventana and the importance placed on responsible development and the environment."***

overall sense of community. It reminded me of our life in Bermuda. Finally, I had heard enough stories about the pitfalls of trying to oversee construction of a vacation home in absentia that made the "one stop shopping" offered by Ventana very attractive. Our expectation is that our new home will be a family retreat to be enjoyed by the entire family for years to come."

Dick and Linda are a terrific addition to the community and we are very fortunate that they'll be joining us. If you'd like to hear more from them please contact us at Pacific Lots.

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## The Sweet Aroma of Ylang-Ylang (the Perfume Tree)

If you've ever been fortunate enough to be lounging poolside at the Ventana del Pacifico guest house you've probably caught a whiff of the intoxicating scent of one of our ylang-ylang trees. These trees are among the most celebrated flowering trees in the world. Easy to propagate and grow in our fertile Costa Rican soil the ylang-ylang (pronounced ee-lang ee-lang) produces the oil which is said to be one of the primary ingredients of Chanel 5.

The tall and willowy tropical tree, native to Asia, displays clusters of large star-shaped flowers on downward-drooping branches. These unusual flowers range in color from white to pink to yellow to yellowish green. Their fragrance is fresh and floral, sweet and seductive, exciting and exotic. This refreshing scent is relaxing, almost intoxicating.

The Philippine origin of the word comes from *alang ilang*, which means "flowers that flutter in the wind." People



have used ylang ylang in a variety of ways throughout history. In China the fragrance was used to purify the robes of the mandarin (a member of an elite or powerful group or class). The purified robes were then placed into a chest made from fragrant wood. Only when a special occasion required their use did the robes come out from the chest. When they were removed, the scent was still strong, in fact, some of these chests have been found in modern times, and the scent, although faint, can still be detected centuries later.

Ylang-ylang has long been

considered an aphrodisiac. In Indonesia there is an ancient tradition that continues today of spreading the ylang ylang flowers across the beds of newlywed couples. The oil is used frequently in perfumes as well as in aromatherapy and many people use the oil to help with a number of ailments. It is said to help reduce high blood pressure, alleviate anxiety and tension, and help with heart palpitations. It also can help against depression, impotence, insomnia and insect bites.

Interested in joining us  
on our trip to  
Ojochal in June? Find  
out more at  
[www.PacificLots.com](http://www.PacificLots.com)

# New International Airport expected to open by 2010

According to an article in *La Nation* on March 29<sup>th</sup> the government has chosen land five kilometers from Sierpe to construct the new international airport. A study done by the Director of Civil Aviation and the international consultant Guillermo Alvarez confirmed that the property is free of obstacles and has suitable terrain for supporting an airport. The investigation confirmed other analysis that had been carried out in 2005 when the Department of Airport Civil Aviation chose that particular property over several alternative sites.

Viviana Martin, President of the Technical Council of Civil Aviation (CTAC), said that the land belongs to the Institute of Agrarian Development and that they've prepared an agreement to relinquish the property. Martin affirmed that after the appropriation of the land and the airspace the Organization of International Civil Aviation will prepare the master plan and further evaluate the ecological impact of the new terminal.



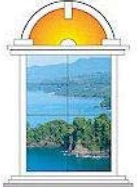
***“Our objective is that the airport will be in operation by the year 2010”, said Martin.***

Martin expects that at the end of this year the master plan will be complete and they will be ready to begin to plan the construction process. The government still has yet to decide if they will fund the airport or solicit a private company to construct and administer the project. “Our objective is that the airport will be in operation by the year 2010”, said Martin.

Current Exchange Rate  
\$1 US = 518 Costa Rica  
Colones

## The April Property Tour:





**W**e're continuously fine-tuning our message and services. If there is something you'd like to hear more about in our newsletter or have any suggestions please don't hesitate to let us know. As always we welcome referrals and recommend that folks take the time to see the community that we're so proud of.

To schedule a complementary tour please contact us at 877-481-0300 or at [info@PacificLots.com](mailto:info@PacificLots.com)

"Pura Vida"

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**PACIFIC LOTS OF COSTA RICA  
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*It's not too late  
to own a slice of  
Paradise!*