

Paradise Post

News From Ojochal, Costa Rica
and Beyond

JULY 2007



Inside this issue:

New Flights to CR	1
Yale Environmental	1
Index Report	
Oro Verde	2
The Scarlet Macaw	2
Restaurant Review	3
Ceviche	3
Hotel Villas Gaia	4
IESA Del Sur	4
New Neighbors	5
News from Pacific Lots	6
Construction Update	6
Tour Pictures	7

How Does Costa Rica Rate?

According to the recently released "Environmental Performance Index", a joint study between Yale and Columbia Universities, Costa Rica is in much better environmental shape than many may have guessed. Costa Rica ranks 2nd to Canada in overall environmental performance in the Americas and first in water resources and sustainable energy. Indoor air pollution seems to be a problem with the percentage of households using solid fuels fairly high. For the full indexes visit:

<http://www.yale.edu/epi>

Updates from the Osa

Rainy season is upon us again, or shall I say "Green Season". The mornings have been breezy and clear, the sunsets spectacular and the afternoon rains refreshing. Locals typically favor the rainy months over the dry months when the air is cooler and the rivers flow steadily. July is a wonderful time to be in Costa Rica.

This is our summer edition of our quarterly newsletter and numerous people, in and outside of the Ojochal area, have expressed interest in participating and have requested copies. My secret "Ghost Connoisseur" is continuing to review local eateries and I'm amassing some writers throughout the country interested in submitting articles for future issues. I anticipate

the publication evolving a bit over the next few issues so please let me know if you have requests or suggestions.

As always I'm interested in hearing about local events, charities and businesses.

Kristina Welburn

KrisWelburn@Hotmail.com
305-295-0136

New Flights to Costa Rica

Due to the increasing desirability as a prime tourist destination additional airlines are continuing to add Costa Rica as a regular route. This additional competition allows consumers more route choices as well as lower fares. Spirit Airlines has been flying direct from Fort Lauderdale, Florida for several months now and continues to offer unbelievable bargains. Last week there was a short window in which they were offering round trip flights for only \$16! Customer service may be spotty and the midnight arrivals and departures are certainly not ideal. However, for a rate that low it's difficult to complain. According to the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT) Civil Aviation has additionally given the go ahead for Spirit Airlines to open a route between Los Angeles and San Jose.

Frontier Airlines recently announced that they'll be starting service to Costa Rica this coming

November. They'll be flying a route between Denver International Airport and Juan Santamaría International Airport, San Jose offering round-trip service scheduled on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday aboard their new fleet of Airbus A319s.

Delta Airlines has also announced new nonstop flights from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport to Costa Rica effective mid February 2008. They'll be flying direct into San Jose as well as Liberia, Costa Rica.

Also, beginning in December of this year American Airlines is adding direct service from Fort Lauderdale.

More information on fares and schedules is available at:
www.spiritair.com
www.frontierairlines.com
www.delta.com
www.aa.com



Oro Verde is dedicated to preserving the rainforest and has been family owned for more than 50 years.

Legend has it that Pepo "Macho" Duarte was told to purchase the land many years ago by a crazy black

dog who hung out at the town watering hole. Macho was small in stature but big on ambition. He originally farmed the land to provide for his family and 10 years ago his 6 sons transformed the farm into a private nature reserve.

Consisting of 150 hectares (374 acres) of primary and secondary rainforest Oro Verde (meaning Green Gold) offers guided tours, horseback riding and terrific birding. Home to more than 200 species of birds it's not uncommon to spot toucans, parrots and many other colorful species. You may encounter one of three types of monkeys; howler, white-face capuchin, and spider. Harder to spot are the sloths, ocelots, anteaters, and coatis. Trails are dotted with blue morpho butterflies as well as a myriad of interesting reptiles and insects.

Located just south of Ojochal at an elevation of 1,000 to 2,200 feet. Oro Verde overlooks Ballena Marine National Park and stunning beaches.

Oro Verde offers a variety of morning and afternoon guided hiking and birding tours as well as horseback tours through the rainforest or to the Morete River waterfalls. For more information call (506) 743-8072 or visit:

www.costarica-birding-oroverde.com



Yanán Duarte Monge – Guide Extraordinaire

The Scarlet Macaw of Costa Rica

The Scarlet Macaw, one of the most beautiful Macaws, lives high in the trees of lowland deciduous or tropical evergreen forests gracing forest canopies from Mexico to central South America.

This brilliantly colored macaw is the only one found on the Pacific side of Costa Rica, and it rarely flies on the Caribbean side, where the Great Green Macaw lives. Macaws are the largest parrots in the Americas, and the Scarlet Macaw is distinct both in color and shape. It's bold colors include bright red, blue and yellow. It has a large powerful bill for cracking tough seed coats and nuts. Both sexes of these birds have adult plumage from a young age.

The scarlet macaw noisily flies high over the canopy and their travels may range far both daily and seasonally. Their loud, resonant, boisterous calls can often be heard as they fly, but they are usually quiet while feeding. Pairs, trios, or small family groups are often seen, but these may sometimes merge into flocks of 25 or even 50 individuals at large roosts in tall trees or mangroves.

The Scarlet Macaw nests in large holes in tall living or dead trees; they do not dig these holes, but rely

on finding cavities that are high off the ground and have vertical entrances. Finding enough of such trees can be a limiting factor for these birds to maintain populations in an area, especially because some bee species occupy the same kind of tree cavity. A macaw pair



will lay 1-2 eggs per season in such a nest and raise them together. These macaws are serially monogamous, but they may change mates after several seasons.

In 1900, these parrots could still be readily seen in forests throughout Costa Rica; by 1950, however, due to habitat destruction, they were absent from the Caribbean slope except in the Northwest. They have also suffered from the pet trade; fortunately, today they

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

~William

Shakespeare

are protected in every country in which they live. However, in Costa Rica, their populations still have been reduced by the destruction of their habitat. They are now constrained to the forests of the upper Golfo de Nicoya and the forests of the Osa Peninsula.

Their favorite food, at least in Costa Rica, is the almond sized and shaped seed of Terminalia Catappa tree. They can be rapid foragers. A flock of 10 birds can carpet the ground with three hundred of these fruits in a single hour as they look for the seeds.

Skutch, Alexander F. and F. Gary Stiles. A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica. Utica: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Stiles, F.G. in: Janzen, Daniel H. Costa Rican Natural History. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Maracatú-Tropical Natural Cuisine

Maracatú is Super Fresh and Skips the Flesh

\$7 - \$15

Dominical

Hundreds of inches of rain fall every year in the Southern Pacific Zone. One would think the area would be laden with the freshest, largest, and juiciest vegetables in existence. Well, for the most part, not so. Unless you catch the vegetables literally upon delivery, you'll be much more impressed with the fruits.

Maracatú to the rescue! At the risk of being lynched, I will call this high-end bar food with an emphasis on glorifying the many wonderful flavors that can be found in vegetarian cuisine. The quality of the ingredients that go into the plates really stand out at this Rasta-reggae-vegetarian bar/restaurant. It is also extremely evident that the chef knows his preparation.

First and foremost at Maracatú are two dishes—the fish tacos, which are the best I may ever have tasted and the super nachos, in which the lack of a meat would be apparent if it weren't for the fact that they are just so darned good without it! Start with these two, and you will walk away a believer.

Once you become addicted to Maracatú, you can go back for the Maracatú Bowl, an enormous salad with an impressive assortment of crispy colorful vegetables, to which you can add several rare toppings such as seaweed and flax seeds. Also wonderful is the Tomato Basil Eggplant, which is essentially an Eggplant Parmigiana without the breading.

The fish specials change daily and oscillate between tuna and dorado (mahi mahi) filets served in various preparations. They appear quite expensive (~\$10 U.S.) relative to the rest of the menu, but if you choose tuna, it will be the thickest and freshest filet you will get in the area. It ends up being a great value.

Oh, and if you think it will be a good compliment to your dish, order extra guacamole with everything. It's just wonderful.

As with most restaurants, Maracatú does deserve a couple of caveats. The fish specials sometimes come with an inordinate amount of sauce. You may want to ask for less sauce or have them put it on the side, especially if you find out from your server

the sauce of the day is soy based. I've had some pretty salty fish dishes there on occasion.

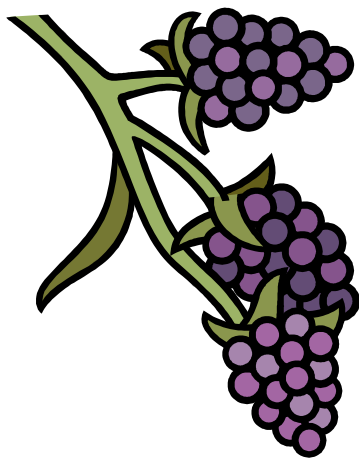
Moreover, skip the hummus.

Its more-watery-than-usual consistency makes it rather unsatisfying. There are also some flavors in it that don't belong, but it's been so long since I've ordered it that I can't readily describe them.

Finally, if you loath or even have a mild aversion to reggae music, I must warn you that it's all they play there, and the volume is higher than you might be used to when you are sitting to a meal.

For a reasonable high quality lunch, there are few eateries in the Southern Zone that beat Maracatú. Oh, by the way, I am virtually the antithesis of a vegetarian.

The Ojochal Ghost Connoisseur



Mora berries, similar to blackberries are grown in high altitude tropical zones and found throughout Costa Rica. Mora bushes can produce berries as early as 8 months from planting, and continue for approximately 20 years. The berries are commonly used in juices and blends, purees and yogurts, ice creams, bakery goods and liquors.

Ceviche - A Costa Rican Staple

If you've never had Costa Rican ceviche you're in for a treat. Locals use only the freshest seafood, marinate it in lime juice and serve it at most local restaurants and roadside stands. Shrimp, corvine (sea bass), cooked squid and conch are some of the choices available. Citric acid from the fruit causes the seafood to "cook" without heat. The result tastes more like a cooked dish than sushi. There are many variations of ceviche and in Costa Rica the preparations in addition to the seafood typically include; minced onions, cilantro, finely minced peppers with Tabasco sauce on the side. Oftentimes served with crackers, ceviche is low in calories and high in flavor. As an extra bonus it's typically only a dollar or two per cup. You can find some of the tastiest ceviche along the Costanera just before Ojochal.

Costa Rican Ceviche

1 lb firm white fish
1 small onion
1 clove garlic
4 or 5 sprigs of cilantro
1 small (¾", 2 cm) hot chili
about 8 limes (enough for at least ¾ cup of juice)
¼ teaspoon salt, and pepper to taste

Cut fish into ½" cubes. Mince the onion, garlic, and chili coarsely. Chop the cilantro very finely. Juice the limes and strain to remove the pulp and seeds.

Shrimp can be substituted for the fish.

Mix all of the ingredients and refrigerate tightly covered for at least 3 hours. Serve with corn tortillas, tortilla chips, or crackers.

A New Internet Solution Has Arrived!

CR Satellite Services Inc. now provides ICE approved low cost high speed internet satellite services for communities and individuals alike. They have the expertise to offer internet and VoIP service to individuals directly or by installation of a WAN to tie in a community of homes. For individuals desiring their own service, a single stand-alone satellite earth station can be purchased for as little as \$5800. For those located in proximity to a CR Satellite distributor (who provides the satellite earth station for others to use in combination with additional wireless network equipment installed by CR Satellite), they pay an additional monthly charge on top of the satellite internet monthly service fee thus avoiding the upfront capital cost of the earth station equipment.

They also offer a variety of individual high speed satellite internet services for as low as \$69 per month. Recommended Economy services are only \$84 per month allowing quicker download and internet surfing speed than in standard local internet cafes. Downlink capacity is 128 kbps/uplink is 64 kbps with a CR Satellite quad compression technology giving you the capability and feel of up to 512/256. They offer a range of other services from Enhanced service to Business Class Satellite Internet service for \$317 per month for power users such as day stock traders or others who require real-time data feeds at high confirmed information rates.

CR Satellite is also pleased to provide Enhanced VoIP Phone service which offers you a North American phone number and unlimited calling for \$25 per month with the purchase of internet services.

The proprietors are committed to contributing time and money to the local community donating 10% of all profits to schools and housing infrastructure in the area. For more information or inquiries on how to be a distributor check them out at www.crsatellite.com or contact: Dean at 011-506-364-6360, installations@crsatellite.com or Cliff at 1-403-875-2166, sales@crsatellite.com.



Hotel Villas Gaia

If you're looking for a comfortable place to stay close to nature yet not too far off the beaten track Hotel Villas Gaia may be just what you're looking for. They offer 14 separate, spacious casitas (cabins) nestled in the jungle. The casitas are furnished with orthopedic queen and single beds, reading lamps, night tables, ceiling fans, and bathrooms with solar hot water. Most of the casitas are additionally equipped with air-conditioning. Sitting on your private terrace you may catch sight of sloths, toucans and monkeys as one hotel guest attests.

Casitas accommodate up to 3 people with one two-bedroom casita which can comfortably accommodate up to 7 people. The hotel is equipped with a beautiful ocean view swimming pool, private jungle trail to the beach of Playa Tortuga and a restaurant serving tasty breakfast, lunch and dinner with a full bar. They're located just off the Costanera before the entrance to the town of Ojochal with easy access to Oro Verde, Hacienda Barú, Ballena Marine National Park, Caño Island Biological Reserve, Corcovado National Park, the mangroves of Terraba-Sierpe rivers, waterfalls, rainforest, beaches, villages and much more. They're happy to coordinate excursions to fit your interests at the front desk. It's a beautiful place for both couples or families.

The congenial proprietor, Luuc, is originally from Holland had has recently celebrated his 10th year with Villas Gaia. Be sure to say hello if you see him.

"I loved the cabins being tucked privately into the rain-forest. It was a true Costa Rican experience (with air conditioning!!). We really enjoyed sitting out on the porch in the mornings and watching the white face monkeys play. It seemed as if they were performing just for us. We had a great time." Nan



Standard rates range from \$75 (\$85 for air conditioning) with a \$15 per night charge for an additional single bed. The two bedroom casita is \$135 per night. Rates include tax and there are also package rates available.

You can find more information on their website at www.villasgaia.com or at (506) 786-5044.

IESA Del SUR

Electrical Solutions for Your Building or Remodeling Project.

Due to growing demand in the Ojochal area a new business has sprung up. IESA Del SUR sells quality wholesale and retail electrical products and equipment including lighting, wiring, control devices and much more. They are a distributor of several major brands such as Square D, Phelps Dodge, Sylvania, Eaton and Siemens. The company has grown to 10 locations and reports that business in

the Ojochal area has been steady and growing rapidly. They're located in the Ventanas de Osa plaza on the Costanera. For more information contact Esteban Gutiérrez E. at e.gutierrez@iesacr.com



Welcome to the Neighborhood

We'd like to welcome new owners Kevin, Jeanne and Jackson. Kevin is originally from Connecticut and Jeanne grew up in Florida. They were married in New York City and lived there for three years. They opened and operated an indoor miniature golf course in Manhattan. In 1991, they sold their business and moved to St. Petersburg, Florida where Jeanne worked as a Trust Administrator and Kevin entered the insurance business. Jeanne eventually quit working to stay home with their son, Jackson, who is now 12 years old. Kevin is currently an Executive Vice President for American Strategic Insurance.



Kevin, Jeanne and Jackson love to travel and experience new places. They visited Costa Rica for the first time this past March and fell in love with it. They love the beauty, the tranquility, the wildlife and the kindness of its people. They knew they wanted to own a home in Costa Rica for a place to vacation and, eventually, live for part of the year. They hope to begin building on their lot in Phase 9 next year.

“We all take different paths in life, but no matter where we go, we take a little of each other everywhere.”

~Tim McGraw

We'd also like to welcome Dave and Jackie. They both grew up in Western New York and were high school sweethearts marrying shortly after graduation (25 years in November). They currently reside in Florida and have three great kids, Dave Jr who is in the AirForce and is getting married in February, Stephanie who is married and has two children of her own, and Mike who works with Dave in the family business.

Dave owns his own business and Jackie is a teacher. They're "empty nesters" right now although the nest isn't always empty. They wanted to look for a place to have a vacation home as well as a place to retire that is both beautiful and serene. Dave always wanted to live on an island. He loves the ocean and beaches and such. Jackie, on the other hand, loves the mountains and rivers. They found that Costa Rica gives each of them the elements of nature that they love. They've also found that the people in Costa Rica are gracious and kind.

Jackie had this to say about their experience "We had a wonderful time and cannot wait to go back again. We had a great time before we went to the guest house. We stayed a few days at El Buena Vista. They truly do have a beautiful view. The company and accommodations were great. We went on a "guided tour" with Kristina and Steve and they are great guides. We didn't exactly do the touristy stuff, which was our goal. We wanted to see the area where we were contemplating a purchase to see if it was for us. The more of Costa Rica we saw before going to the guest house, the more excited we were to see what kinds of lots were available that would suit both our tastes and desires (we didn't need it but we did want it). We had a good time at the guest house; plenty of good food, wine and company. Our intention was to buy just one lot however the more we saw the more we liked. We ended up buying two lots. One was akin to a trek into the jungle and up a mountain and you couldn't see the whole thing but Dave just had to have it. "My" lot was a no brainer. It is a 9 ocean view and a 10 mountain view. Breathtaking no matter which direction you choose to look. I am very excited about getting into the building process. We are extremely pleased that we now have a vested interest in such a special place. The whole process was fun and exciting. The journey isn't over yet. We have only just begun."



If you'd like to contact a new owner or would like to be introduced in an upcoming newsletter please contact us at info@PacificLots.com or at 305-295-0137.



Common Bird in Costa Rica



Common Bird in the USA

The second quarter was a busy one as we led another group of guests on a tour of Costa Rica. In June we escorted new friends throughout the central and southern Pacific Region of Costa Rica, from San Jose through Manuel Antonio, Dominical and onto Ojochal. We rode horses, swam in waterfalls, surfed, hiked in national parks and spent plenty of leisure time in lush tropical settings. Some in our group were lucky enough to witness a sloth crossing the road (a rarity if you recall from our last newsletter). You can find pictures from our trip on the following page. If you would like to join an upcoming tour please let us know. The spots do tend to fill up quickly.

Ventana del Pacifico is busy constructing multiple new homes as Robert can attest. We've also begun utilizing a new construction technique involving ICF Foam, wire lathing and poured concrete in order to allow more flexibility in designing multiple floors. More will follow in a later issue.

ICE has continued to install DSL in Costa Rica and it's moving into our area. Those without a satellite system are quite excited at the prospect of high speed internet.

We have also received final approval from AARP and are fully endorsed to advertise and exhibit with them. Visit us in booth #1932

on September 6-8th at the Boston Convention and Expo Center. The Life@50+, National Convention, consists of three days and nights of entertainment, speakers and concerts and features numerous celebrity presentations. You can find more information at www.aarp.org.



We've continued working with International Living and are hosting a property tour as part of their "Live and Prosper in Costa Rica" seminar November 5th - 7th to be held at the Marriot Los Suenos Resort just outside of Jaco, Costa Rica. If you would be interested in attending the convention please let us know and we will give you the details.

We're also currently hiring additional sales representatives and if you or someone you know of is interested in learning about a lucrative and fun career please let us know.

Pura Vida,

Stephen Linder

Construction Update from Ventana del Pacifico

For those of you curious about what homes have been built and what's on tap for Ventana del Pacifico Robert Laroche, from our design and building department, has thoughtfully compiled an update for us.

Phase 1 has 2 existing homes.

Phase 2 has 8 existing homes.

Phase 3 has 5 existing homes plus 7 condos.

Phase 4 has 7 existing homes.

Phase 5 has 11 existing homes with 2 designs in process.

Phase 6 has 6 existing homes, 3 homes virtually complete, 3 more at the roof line, 4 ready to begin construction and 4 in the design stage.

Phase 8 has 2 homes almost complete, 1 home at the roof line and 5 in construction.

Phase 9 has 5 homes waiting for a building permit and 8 homes being designed.

Phase 10 has 12 homes in the design stage.

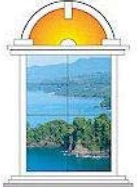
Phase 11 has 4 homes in the design stage.

Radiant Sun Valley has 6 homes in the design stage.





The June 2007 Tour Group



We'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

Our newsletter is also available via email. Please contact us if someone you know would like to be on our mailing list.

"Pura Vida"

**PACIFIC LOTS OF COSTA RICA
P.O. BOX 6283
KEY WEST, FL 33041
WWW.PACIFICLOTS.COM
877-481-0300**

*It's not too late
to own a slice of
Paradise!*