

Paradise Post

News From Ojochal, Costa Rica
and Beyond

January 2018

Updates from the Osa

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There have been quite a few developments over the past few months. Costa Rica is celebrating 70 years without a standing army this year. It also topped the Happy Planet index again as the happiest people on the planet. National Geographic's November 2017 issue had a great article about just that.

Ojochal continues to grow as one of the most desirable locations in Costa Rica with the addition of the new Hotel 360 and Restaurant Gua Gua. Ojochal continues to add super upscale lodging and dining options that are hard to find in other parts of Costa Rica.

The 2018 Presidential elections were held February 4.

resulting in a run off election April 1.

Costa Rica was ranked as having the best healthcare in Central America by the World Health Organization once more and it ranked 36th worldwide. As a nasty flu season wages in the US, Costa Rica continues to be a great escape from a tough flu season. And lastly, for those of you who've walked the Tarcoles River bridge to see the Crocodiles, we have a story about taking a tour on the Tarcoles River.

Steve Linder

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Costa Rica's Presidential Elections

Thirteen candidates ran in the general election February 4th. Costa Rican law declares that if no candidate receives 40% or more of the vote, a runoff between the top two candidates shall take place. The top candidate was a right wing evangelic known as Fabricio Alvarado, from the conservative National Restoration Party, with 24.1% of the vote. Alvarado was a long shot candidate until about 3 weeks ago when the Inter American Court of Human Rights ruled that Costa Rica must recognize same sex marriage. Campaigning on Costa Rica's sovereign right to control its own destiny and family values, Alvarado quickly rose from 3% in the polls to nearly 25% as conservative Costa Ricans embraced his message.

Carlos Alvarado, from the progressive Citizens' Action Party is the opponent, A runoff vote will take place on April 1. A journalist by training, the opposition candidate,

Carlos Alvarado, got his start in politics as communications director for the governing Citizens' Action Party and also was labor minister under current President Luis Guillermo Solis. Voters were also voting on 57 delegates that make up the general assembly.



Here we are at another newsletter, time keeps flying by. I just hosted 5 tours in a 19 day period and the weather was great the entire time. The good news is that the stock market didn't crash while I was gone and the winter olympics have started. We've got a busy line up of shows this winter and spring, in fact I'll be exhibiting at the International Living "Fast Track Mexico" event in February offering Costa Rica as an alternative to Mexico. We're sponsoring the International Living Event in Atlanta in April, will be at the Panama International Living Event in June and of course we're sponsoring the International Living event in San Jose Costa Rica in August. We've

also got a busy tour schedule this year, averaging 3 tours a month for our 4 day Discovery Property tours and we just completed a 10 day Country and Property Tour in January 2018.

The development's construction division is busy building a variety of custom homes in our various phases and our quality and workmanship is setting new standards in Costa Rica. If you've never been on one of our Discovery Tours, winter is a great time to escape the cold weather in the northern US and Canada and come sink your toes in the sand in Costa Rica. See you soon in Costa Rica.

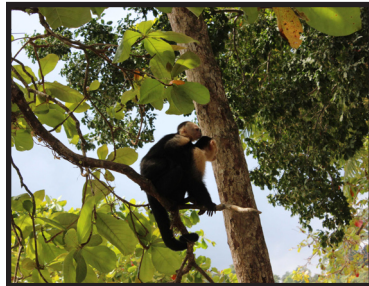
Pura Vida,



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January 10 Day Costa Rica Country & Property Tour Pictures



Hotel 360 and Restaurant Kua Kua Ojochal

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Hotel 360 - Experience a complete transformation of the usual vacations at the exclusive adult hotel 360 in Ojochal. Located on the southwest coast of Costa Rica, the exquisite destination has captured the most complete view possible of the coast, the islands, the beaches, the mountains and the jungle. Room rates range from \$400 to \$700 per night.

From all angles, you will find an amazing panoramic view of the Costa Rican nature. Whether in the outdoor reception area, the gourmet restaurant, the infinity pool or from your own terrace in your private villa. Everywhere the view is unforgettable.

Built in a rainforest reserve of approximately 23 hectares, the Three Sixty Hotel occupies less than 8% of the total land mass. At an altitude of 300 meters above sea level, the views of the rainforest and its flora and fauna, beaches lined with palm trees, distant islands and the infinite ocean are dramatic. The coastal views of 300 km also include coastal views from Manuel Antonio to the Osa Peninsula, the migratory route of many species of whales and dolphins.

The aim of the design of the Three Sixty Hotel was to optimize the existing

beauty with impressive structures made of traditional and modern materials that invoke the authentic Costa Rican styles. The views that encompass everything are intensified by the open architecture, the natural flower walls and the vaulted ceilings. In the center there is a huge fountain fed by natural rainwater on large stones of local precedence, an ode to the natural balance of water. The altitude of the complex offers a fresh breeze of fauna and flora with natural aromas.

Kua Kua Restaurant - The main building presents a kaleidoscope of views. It was designed to emphasize the environment and focus on nature. The structure imitates the fractal geometry of the jungle canopy, the most visible form in nature. You will have to decide why it is called Three Sixty. Is it the views, the culinary delights, the pleasure, the luxuries, the comfort, the relaxation or the total indulgence? The ingenious design of the resort will make your head turn. The risk is that you do not want to leave.

Kua Kua means butterfly in the local Boruca indigenous language. The restaurant follows the concept of a complete rotation and transformation

of the kitchen. The menu is adjusted reflecting the main product and protein availability of each season. The team visits local markets and fishermen every morning to ensure the freshest ingredients available to our chef.

This motto is evident on their menu and so is the authenticity. The options change daily with the ever-available freshest resources and ingredients. Fresh bread is baked every day.

The Estonian chef Jaak Toomsalu combines old and new culinary training to design celestial creations. His career began with studying pastries and culinary arts. In the Nordic countries, he studied from the famous Chef Rene Redzepi. Continuing his training, he mastered Mediterranean, Latin, and Traditional European food preparation.

The Costa Rican Chef Carlos Flores contributes with his experience from several countries and the renowned Marriot Los Suenos Resort. Together, they work to create Latin, Spanish, Japanese, Italian, Greek and other Mediterranean meals with exotic blends of sauces, spices, and flavors.



Kua Kua

DINNER MENU

APPETIZERS

Tuna Tartar with ginger and pumpkin condiment 9
Roasted beef carpaccio with cured beetroot, pickles and lemon dressing 9
Peruvian style Seabass Tiradito with avocado and aji pepper dressing 10
Grilled octopus with guacamole cannoli and lemon dressing 9
Tomato soup with selection of roasted peppers 8
French onion soup with gratinated cheese toasts 8

MAIN COURSES

Smoked and grilled Mackerel with roasted asparagus and tomato reduction 17
Slow cooked tenderloin with yucca and carrot polenta, béarnaise sauce and sautéed cucumber 17
BBQ pork ribs with chips of yucca, carrot and potato served with spuma of chili 15
Grilled shrimps with fresh pappardelle and cured leek condiment 21
Oven cooked sea bass served with gratinated Poter Anna 17

DESSERTS

Ginger and honey chocolate candies with hazelnut filling served with water cookie crust and dehydrated mint 8
Our cheese selection with chilly marmalade and flat bread 9
Lemon pie with fresh strawberry dressing 6

Three
Sixty

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Festivals in Costa Rica

January is always loaded with festivals in various parts of Costa Rica. The biggest event is the Palmares Festival, or "Carnival" which runs during the first few weeks of January each year. This mini version of "Octoberfest" is sponsored by Imperial beer and lots of the suds are poured throughout the 2 week festival. It's reputed that the only event worldwide that pours more beer is the actual Octoberfest in Germany. Palmares is located between Alajuela and San Ramon on the old highway to Guanacaste. The event is pretty new but has grown to be the most popular event in Costa Rica.

The weekends are the main events, with opening weekend featuring an amazing horse parade, bull riding, headliner music events and lots of great food, carnival rides and a great chance to cowboy up. The event brings nearly a million revelers to Palmares over the event and hotel rooms and parking spaces are hard to come by. Much of the event is televised live, everything from parades full of marching bands and Mardi Gras type costumes and traditional floats. I was fortunate to have a few days off during this year's festivities and was amazed at the change from the

day crowd to the night crowd. Palmares has set up a dedicated festival grounds but the opening parade and horse parade (topes) runs right through the middle of town. The event features about a half dozen internationally acclaimed music acts with the main headliners appearing on the two Sundays of the event. There are fireworks and comedians as well as impromptu parties in tents set up just for the occasion, many lasting into the wee hours.

January also brings festivals to Coco Beach, with a fireworks, food vendors, music acts and a dance troupe that was simply amazing. My favorite part of the festival was the dance troupe that performed in a new permanent half shell stage set along the new boardwalk. Candidly in all my travels, I thought it was one of the most impressive dance productions I'd ever seen, even on Broadway. The kids were amazing, with choreographed moves that I was surprised they could learn with such precision. The boardwalk runs the main length of the beach and is adorned with pavers and benches along the route. As the evening progressed, live music acts played, sprinkled in with clowns onstage doing slapstick comedy. The crowd was mostly families, with lots of kids that stayed out late the

night I was there.

Lastly I visited the town of Santa Cruz, declared the National Folklore City of Costa Rica, located inland about midway across Guanacaste. A noted area for cattle production, the town fills with tourist's mid-January for the Santa Cruz Festival, in honor of the patron saint Santo Cristo de Esquipulas who brought an image of Christ from Guatemala in 1840. Much of the festival is pure cowboy, with topes, bull riding and horsemanship but the best part from my perspective was the food. I had some of the best churrasco steak I'd ever had. There's also a great display of traditional Costa Rican dance, known as Punto Guanacasteco and some great locally made pottery for sale from the nearby town of Guaitil. I also enjoyed music being played on large Marimbas, some 12 feet long and played by two or three musicians at once. The marimbas were works of art, with hardwood keys and bamboo tubes of graduated lengths as the keys got larger. There are two main areas for the festival, the Plaza de los Mangos that is the main plaza stage and bull ring and the Park Bernabela Ramos, which houses the cultural activities and crafts. Santa Cruz is kind of the crossroads if traveling around Guanacaste but not a destination other than in Festival season.

Working with a Property

The development represented by Pacific Lots is one of the largest property development and home construction companies in Costa Rica. It is exciting to tour the area around Ojochal de Osa, in the Southern Zone, with one of their representatives in search for the perfect spot for your dream home. While it is exhilarating to sign on the dotted line for your piece of paradise, that is really just the beginning. With over 300 homes to their credit, Ventana del Pacifico (Ventana) has a home design process that is the perfect balance of science and art!

The DESIGN PHASE of any project is the most important. It is critical in combining the property purchased with the owner's ideas for a home and outdoor space. It is all about putting those concepts on paper so that builders can bring it to life! The first thing an Owner is asked to do is complete the Owner's Project Requirements. This document is really a guide to help communicate what Ventana needs to know about the finished product and how it will be used. It will provide everyone with a document to return to throughout the work to make sure the project is still on track for the best possible outcome. The clearer and more complete these requirements are stated, the easier it will be for the rest of the process to focus on the right outcome, but there is time for review, clarification and fine tuning of these requirements throughout.

While the Owner is completing Project Requirements document, Ventana commissions a Topographical Survey.

This technical drawing ensures the property boundaries are clear and that the contours of the land are understood. This information is necessary to inform the next phases of design. With the topographical survey in hand, Site Planning can begin. This marries the Owner's requirements with the reality of the land. Where is it best to place the building site to allow for the size of home required, maximize views and optimize air flow? How is it best to access the site? How can the natural slopes be used to advantage or where will grading, and slope retention strategies be necessary?

The next phase is Building Design. This is the architectural part of the project. What is the layout of the building? How does it flow and function? What does it look like from the outside? Most of this information will come from the Owner's Project Requirements, but this process will flesh out those concepts into tangible drawings.

Interior Design follows, with decisions about finishes— wood stain, countertops, paint color, floor tile — the things that turn a house into a reflection of the Owner's taste and style. Beyond this, Ventana offers full interior services that will outfit the house with appliances, furnishings and all the bits and pieces to turn the finished product into a fully functional home.

The last phase is Landscape Design. This is where the connection between the indoors (the building) and outdoors (patios, plantings, etc.) happens.

Hardscape and plants create outdoor rooms — from a kitchen to a quiet shady space for contemplation. Again, the Owner's Project Requirements have offered information on this, which will now be brought to life in a tangible plan.

Very often, Site Planning, Building Design and Landscape Design happen together and inform each other. This is especially important where building requirements are unique, or the site is particularly challenging. Using this time-tested process, Ventana continues to bring peoples' dreams of a tropical home, for vacation, retirement or investment, to life.



Welcome to the Neighborhood



Kathi and Jan

Kathi and Jan met at Syracuse University and have been married for 40 years. For many of those years, they lived just outside of Washington, DC in Fairfax, VA and recently in Kathi's hometown, Beaver, PA. Their eldest son, Josh, is married to Jeanne with 2 sons, ages 11 and 8, works for Apple and lives in Austin, TX. Lucas is married to Scarlett with a son and a daughter, ages 4 and 2, owns a property preservation business and lives in Beaver.

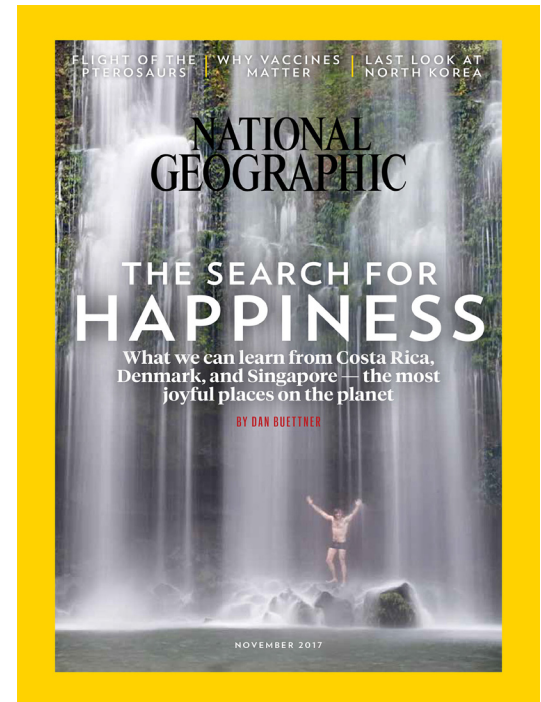
Kathi retired after 30 years as a Nurse Practitioner and Jan previously managed the US environmental consulting business for a large

global engineering company. Having traveled to Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean Islands, they first visited Costa Rica in 2008. They were so impressed with everything the country offered that they began to investigate the possibilities of retiring there. After participating in the Pacific Lots/Ventana del Pacifico Discovery Property Tour in August 2013, they were convinced the Southern Pacific region would be the perfect place for their next adventure.

In 2014, they purchased property in Eternal Life in the Tropics (Phase 11) with a magnificent 360 degree view of the mountains and ocean. The house design phase began in 2016 with construction beginning in January 2017. The entire process with the VDP Design/Construction Team was managed mostly from their US home via electronic media with periodic strategic site visits. Kathi and Jan moved into their new home on December 15 and could not be more pleased with the outcome. As the name implies, they are planning "eternal life" as year-round residents of Ojochal. Within a few weeks of moving into their home, they adopted Emma, a 2-year old dog who had been abandoned and was being cared for by the local shelter, El Refugio. During their short time in Costa Rica they are enjoying the

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Costa Rica Tops Happiest People List in National Geographic



local wildlife, hiking in the mountains and exploring the beaches. Everyone they encounter, Ticos and Expats, have been so helpful and welcoming, confirming the Pura Vida culture of Costa Rica!

Pacific Lots Upcoming Tours

February 21 - 24 SOLD OUT
February 24 - 28 just Added
February 28 - March 3 RETA only
March 7 - 10
March 10 - 13
March 17 - 20
March 23 - 26
April 11 - 14
April 22 - 25
May 2 - 5
May 9 - 12
June 10 - 13 After the International Living Panama event
July 4 - 7

August 12 - 15 Before the International Living Costa Rica event
August 19 - 22 After the International Living Costa Rica event
August 21 - 24 After the International Living Costa Rica event

[Sign Up Here](#)
[All Inclusive 4 Day Tours](#)

Tarcoles River Tours

A great activity is a river tour on the Tarcoles River. There are 4 tour operators that offer 2 hour guided river tours. Take the exit into Tarcoles after passing the Tarcoles River bridge and expect the tours to cost about \$45 per person. You'll see lots of great birds as well as a number of crocodiles.



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The Duran Sanatorium - The Casa Abandonada

If you ever want to take a nice day trip out of San Jose to a semi scary but lovely spot, look up directions to the Duran Sanatorium. Ghost Hunters International did a story on the final episode of season two from this remote location. The Sanatorium was founded by Doctor Carlos Duran Cartin in 1918 in Tierra Blanca, Cartago. Located in a remote area on the flank of Irazu volcano, the hospital was built to house highly contagious tuberculosis and leprosy victims in an area noted for clean air and healthy surroundings. The facility was later used to house the mentally ill and insane. After the discovery of antibiotics, the facility was no longer of use and was closed in 1963. It was later used as a

prison and an orphanage but the building was abandoned in 1973 after the eruption of Irazu Volcano. When you enter the property, there are no signs or maps. You are free to wander, though expect to come to dead ends, eerie staircases and rooms with no apparent exit. There are long narrow hallways and bathrooms with pit toilets lined up like rows of toll booths facing each other. The toilet seats were on the floor and there were no doors on the stalls. Around the property are abandoned housing for the doctors and nurses who worked there. I read that The Sisters of the Charity of Santa Ana were the nuns that lived and worked there. They'd come from Venezuela in 1925 to help God's

children in need. The building is now reported to be haunted by both nuns and the daughter of Doctor Carlos Duran, who died of Tuberculosis. It's a great place for an afternoon picnic and to take pictures. Many a Costa Rican has been dared to spend the night there but few have accepted the challenge. I could feel the presence of something there, but was not afraid but some of the empty hallways were creepy. Now the location is popular for filming music videos but the primary use is as a tourist destination.



The Resplendent Quetzal- *God of the Air*

The Resplendent Quetzal is a spectacular bird of the trogon family. It's found from southern Mexico to Western Panama and lives in the mountain cloud forests. The bird is approximately 14 inches long with a tail streamer (in the male) of up to 25 inches. Resplendent Quetzals have an iridescent green body with a red breast.

The skin of the quetzal is very thin and easily torn so it has evolved to have thick plumage for protection. They are primarily fruit eaters, however they will on occasion include insects and frogs in their diet. These birds love wild avocados swallowing the fruit whole and then spitting out the pits (they really regurgitate the pits but spitting sounded more tasteful to me).

Both parents take turns incubating two or three eggs at a time

and both take care of the hatchlings. Toward the end of the rearing period the female will abandon the young and the male is left to continue caring for the offspring until they can survive on their own.

The Resplendent Quetzal was considered divine by Pre-Columbian civilizations. Their beautiful green tail feathers were considered to be symbols for plant growth and were venerated by ancient Aztecs and Maya. They called the quetzal the "god of the air". Royalty and priests wore the tail feathers in ceremonies. Since it was a crime to kill a quetzal the



bird was captured, its tail feathers plucked and it was set free (with a sore rear end no doubt).

It's been thought that the Resplendent Quetzal could not be bred or held in captivity as it was known for killing itself soon after being captured or caged, however successful breeding programs have begun in Mexico. Their current status is "Threatened".