



Manzanillo SUN

coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine

Winter 2021/2022



- On the Road
- Good Deeds
- Creative Arts
- Medical Matters
- Beauty in Nature
- Community
- RV Travel
- Helping Hands
- Food and Drink
- A Thousand Words
- Shop Local

Palapa at L'Recif
Vida del Mar
Photo by John Chalmers

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The Quest for Cuзалapa Coffee

Story and photos by
John Chalmers

Among the pleasures of escaping a Canadian winter to spend the time in Mexico are opportunities to see new places, try new foods and enjoy Mexican coffee. Each day at our home starts with a cup of coffee, whether we are in Canada or Mexico. So my wife, Linda, and I have tried many brands of coffee from the wide selection on the shelves of Mexican stores.

The coffee we have found to be a favorite is grown, harvested and processed by a co-operative of indigenous Nahua women in the small mountain town of Cuзалapa in the neighbouring state of Jalisco ([map here](#)). We had discovered Cuзалapa coffee at the [Galería Mex-Eco](#), three doors away from the popular Juanito's restaurant on Boulevard Miguel de la Madrid in the Santiago district of Manzanillo.

Among the fine array of Mexican arts and crafts available at the gallery operated by proprietor Ruth Hazlewood, is Cuзалapa coffee.

When I learned that Ruth's parent company, Mex-Eco Tours, operates a one-day tour to visit the town where the coffee is grown, it was a tour I had to take!

Having previously travelled with Mex-Eco Tours on the Chiapas tour and to the historic city of Morelia and the El Rosario Butterfly Sanctuary that is the forested winter home of migrating Monarch butterflies, and seeing small towns on that tour that are known for their arts and crafts, I was sure I would enjoy the trip.

Upon leaving the coastal Manzanillo area, our van in the hands of driver/guide/interpreter Chito, we headed inland on two-lane paved roads to our destination in the Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve of the Sierra Madre mountains. In about two and half hours on a winding road we passed several localities, some too small to be called towns, that were built along the road.



From the road bridge across the Chacala River we saw a pedestrian footbridge, but didn't try using it! But from the bridges we crossed we were able to see and enjoy scenic views in our trip.



The Chacala River originates in the Sierra de Manantlán, the area in which Cuзалapa is located, and flows southwest to the Pacific Ocean near the border of the states of Colima and Jalisco.

...The Quest for Cuzalapa Coffee



While driving through the mountain areas, crops such as this cornfield are a pleasant surprise, seen from time to time in unexpected places.

Never out of sight of mountains, our circuitous route crossed the Rio Chacala four times, providing a fine view of the river itself and the surrounding scenery. At one long bridge our group stopped not just to stretch our legs but to walk the bridge and record the scenery with our cameras - mountains, jungle, rocky river beds and clear running water.

Occasionally we would pass small and perfectly groomed fields of corn, cattle grazing at roadside, men travelling by horse or donkey, and plantations of prickly pear cactus cultivated to produce its nopales. The flat cactus pads are cut to produce nopalitos, then cooked and eaten, often diced and included in salads and soups. Trees we saw in our travels are grown for a variety of fruits and products ranging from avocado to dragon fruit to tamarind.

Upon arrival at the Café Cuzalapa on the main road of the town, 2,120 feet above sea level and in the state of Jalisco, we were welcomed by women of the Color de la Tierra (Color of the Earth) co-operative, and treated to a piping hot cup of coffee and a homemade cake made of mojote flour; the taste reminded me somewhat of banana loaf. With translation by Chito, we were given a presentation about the history of the co-operative and told about the uses of many types of trees and plants in the area that are used for sources of food or for medicinal purposes.

Next we went for a short walk to see where the organic coffee was grown, not in an orderly plantation of evenly-planted bushes, but beans grown in the shade of towering trees. From there the coffee "cherries" are picked, then dried, then de-husked to extract the coffee beans, then roasted at the Café Cuzalapa.

Packaged for sale, the coffee is available at the café's shop, as well as pastries and other products, including embroidered garments.

My purchases included liquid honey, pastries, coffee, and a souvenir mug, which had special meaning for me. The mug has an illustration of a petroglyph we saw on our walk to the coffee bushes. Presumably created by ancient people and etched into the flat surface of a huge rock, it is called juego ancestral, or ancestral game. I imagine that perhaps the game was played with pieces not unlike checkers, and moved around to reach a goal or target in the design, perhaps like a game of Snakes and Ladders. What impressed me most was thinking that the petroglyph is from prehistoric times, indicating that the area we were visiting was populated thousands of years ago.

Our tour concluded when we returned to the café, again seated in a room to ourselves and were served a truly Mexican lunch. It consisted of chicken pieces in a tasty pumpkin sauce with a hint of peanut, perhaps also used in preparation. The entrée was accompanied by pieces of squash and a delicious nopalito salad, which used tiny pieces of the type of cactus we had seen growing. A flavorful fruit drink was provided as a beverage.

One cannot help but admire the initiative of the women who started the co-operative just 20 years ago. The success of producing Cuzalapa coffee is a credit to the co-op's founders and those who have continued its operation in providing a business and industry for a small mountain town.

For further reading, there is a good story you can see when you click [here](#). For info about the Mex-Eco Tours trip to Cuzalapa, click [here](#), and visit the Galería Mex-Eco to purchase the coffee!

you can reach John at john.chalmers@manzanillosun.com

... more pics follow

...The Quest for Cuzalapa Coffee



This fine bridge across the Rio Chacala is a great place to stop and enjoy the view from the rocky riverbed to the mountains in the distance.



RIGHT
We stopped for Chito, our driver, to speak briefly with this gentleman as he travelled along the same road as our van.



ABOVE
Both four-wheel drive and four-footed transportation are seen on the highway past several small towns on the road to Cuzalapa.



LEFT
Cattle have the right of way when being moved from one area to another, a sight not uncommon in México.



Among the rocky riverbed of the Chacala River we spotted this donkey grazing in the rugged terrain.

...The Quest for Cuzalapa Coffee



The Café Cuzalapa at our destination has an appealing shop with local products, a spacious dining area, a room where we were welcomed, and facilities for drying the coffee and roasting it.



The Café Cuzalapa shop just inside the entry to the building carries a selection of pastries, other products, and of course, lots of Cuzalapa coffee on the shelves!



Fellow traveller Alain, a Québecer from Canada, receives his welcome cup of coffee served by Maria upon our arrival.



Driver/guide Chito, at left, translates the presentation by women of the Grupo Color de la Tierra, speaking about their organization and the trees, plants and products of the area. Women left to right are Lupita, one of the founders of the co-op; her daughter, Maria ; and Estrella.



Lupita explains the operation of the big coffee roaster, one of two at the Café Cuzalapa where the locally grown coffee is roasted.



Right at the town, the Arabica coffee is grown on bushes among the shade of trees.

...The Quest for Cuzalapa Coffee



LEFT
The coffee beans at this stage are called cherries, in which the coffee bean itself is found, extracted and roasted.

RIGHT
Fellow traveller Nina cast her shadow on the big rock in which a petroglyph is inscribed, to make it easier to see. Look for a row of squares from upper left to lower right.



ABOVE
A souvenir coffee mug is appropriately illustrated with images of coffee blossoms, coffee beans, and the petroglyph of squares found on the big rock among the coffee bushes.

BELOW
Ruth Hazlewood, operator of Mex-Exo Tours and the Mex-Eco Galería, supports the women's coffee co-operative by selling the excellent coffee at her gallery shop.



Sunset Support for Santiago Foundation

The Santiago Foundation will not be holding a grand fund-raising benefit event this year with a dinner, silent auction and live auction. Instead, a special occasion will be a drop-in social opportunity to support the work of the Foundation that provides a wide variety of courses and educational programs for the local community.

On Friday, January 21, from 5:30 to 8:30 pm you can enjoy the sunset from the beautiful L'Recif facility at Vida del Mar, and support a very worthwhile endeavor. Your ticket for the event includes hors d'oeuvres from the popular Oasis Ocean Club restaurant, two drinks, mini-cupcakes prepared by the cooking class at the Santiago Foundation centers, served with live music.



Offered for sale will be a boutique stocked with glass art, jewelry, designer handbags, fine tequilas and exclusive wines, all priced to sell.

A silent auction will offer three items for your bids:

- Two nights for four people at Quinta Don Jose boutique hotel in Tlaquepaque, including two rooms, welcome margaritas, complimentary breakfast and one dinner for four at Tlaquepasta Restaurant on the premises
- One round of golf for four people at El Corazon Golf Club, including carts and a \$500-peso gift certificate towards lunch
- A Koblenz Sommelier 12-bottle Dual Zone Wine Cooler

A limited number of tickets are available for this unique evening at Vida del Mar from:

Jeanne Bradner, jeannebradner@gmail.com, tel. 314-335-0875

Rita Yantorni, rjyntomi@comcast.net, tel. 314-335-0343

Dorothy Galbraith, dgalbraith1@hotmail.com, tel. 314-335-0742

Masks, hand sanitizing, and temperature taking will help ensure your safety.

Order your tickets now so you don't miss out! \$50 U.S. or \$1,000 pesos

The Santiago Foundation is a non-profit organization supporting education and trade training for young people and adults to expand their skills and opportunities. The Foundation operates two centers in the Manzanillo area, including one nearby in our local town, El Naranjo. Operation of the centers is entirely dependent upon donations. Your purchase of tickets for January 21 is an investment in the future for the children and adults who benefit from the Foundation's programs.

For more info, see the Foundation's web site at: <https://www.santiagoofoundation.net/>

Friday, January 21, 5:30 – 8:30 pm at L'Recif



The Santiago Foundation supports education and trade training for young people and adults to improve their opportunity for a better future. The Foundation operates two centers that provide after-school training programs in job related skills and training in craft skills that teach and foster the culture of the region and of Mexico. Foundation monies provide scholarships for promising students to complete secondary school or a university education. As many as 600 students may be served by the various programs in a typical year.

Community Centers

Two centers support the Santiago community, one in Francisco Villa and one in El Naranjo. Programs provide training in such skills as carpentry, hairdressing and cosmetology, cooking, and English. Also cultural skills are taught including pinata making, guitar, painting, folkloric dancing, jewelry making, and sewing skills such as clothing design, embroidery, crocheting and knitting. Our Mexican neighbors benefit from their new skills which supplement their income through home-based services or products and/or being able to qualify for jobs in the wider community.

Scholarships

Through Foundation-funded scholarships, dozens of young people have had the opportunity to complete secondary school and university education. Foundation monies are applied to fees required for books and uniforms at the high school level or



tuition and fees at the technical school or university level. Foundation-sponsored university students have graduated in subjects such as Economics, Education, Medicine, Port Management and Accounting.

Pictures: English class students.



Community

The centers are an important part of the fabric of their communities, providing social support and learning for children and adults alike. Funds dispersed by the Foundation support the two buildings, maintenance, the various educational programs and materials, 16 teachers, a coordinator and two directors. A number of programs are taught by volunteers.

The Foundation was established in 1983 and is supported by a number of Mexican, U.S. and Canadian service-organizations, private donations and memorials, and the proceeds of annual fund raising events. We appreciate your support. Be assured the Foundation's continued success depends on it.



Pictures: Corn husk crafts, Jewelry, Hair styles on parade, Knitting group, Sewing class creations



Heroes come in all shapes and sizes. Here in México some of those heroes are children who have won the fight against cancer with the help of the humble plastic cap or lid found on containers of all sizes and shapes that are used to package a variety of products.

Through the work of a volunteer organization called the Asociación Mexicana de Ayuda a Niños con Cáncer ([AMANC](#)), the Mexican Association to Help Children With Cancer, the revenue derived from recycling hard plastic caps to produce new products has been instrumental in saving lives.

The money goes to a family with a child who is a cancer patient to pay for the child's medications and medical bills. AMANC not only saves the lives of many children, but it also benefits the environment through recycling of disposable hard plastic.

In Mexico, cancer is the leading cause of death in patients between the ages of 5 and 14, with over 5,000 new pediatric cases every year. In the Manzanillo area, one of those young heroes who has overcome cancer with help from AMANC is a seven-year old girl named Jennifer.



Gustavo Sánchez, assistant manager at Vida del Mar, unloads a huge bag of caps from Karen's vehicle, and served as interpreter in the visit to present them to Jennifer.



Celia Fritz adds to the pile of caps and lids from the carload of plastic that she brought from Washington to contribute for Jennifer's care.

...How Plastic Caps Fight Cancer in Children



As Karen passes bags of plastic to Jennifer's mother, Mirella, Gustavo adds another bag to the growing pile of plastic to provide treatment for cancer.



Mirella, Karen Wilson and Celia were kept busy in building a big pile of plastic which they had collected and brought from Washington.

She started chemotherapy at age three, and received treatments for the next three years. Now she is in the five-year monitoring phase, clear of acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Her treatments are finished, but she will be checked every two months for the next five years.

More than two years ago Jennifer's teacher reached out to the local community for help. Residents of Vida del Mar and others responded by putting a lid collection program together that has been providing assistance ever since. As well, in 2021, residents brought lids they had collected when they returned to México.

While Jennifer no longer has chemo treatments, she still has her treatment port cleaned and kept clear, should she have a relapse.



When all the plastic was unloaded for pickup and recycling, Jennifer was given another bag - full of presents for the little girl.

Plastic caps continue to pay for her follow-up appointments and any further treatment, if necessary. The hospital where Jennifer has been treated and is now monitored is in Colima, so transportation costs are also covered for her.

When finally her needs are met, other children will be identified for treatment as the program expands. Donations of plastic caps of all kinds will again help battle the disease.

AMANC was founded in 1982 by María de Guadalupe Alejandre, who established the objective of helping all families who suffered from the illness of their children. The work of the Asociación for nearly 40 years has provided support to children under 21 years of age who are diagnosed with cancer.



Atop a mountain of plastic to be recycled to generate funds for her continuing care, Jennifer is also atop the disease that was treated with funds generated on her behalf.

...How Plastic Caps Fight Cancer in Children



To help celebrate Jennifer's triumph over acute lymphoblastic leukemia, both she and her 11-year old brother, Christian, were both given a large bags of gifts.



Mirella and Jennifer have good reason to smile after the success of three years of chemotherapy for Jennifer in provided treatment made possible by ordinary plastic caps and lids.

With a 0% treatment abandonment rate, AMANC covers the basic needs of patients and their family members so that they continue to receive the medical care required. AMANC aims to ensure that no child or adolescent suffering from cancer needs to stop treatment due to lack of financial resources.

Jennifer's case is a life-saving success story here in México. You can be part of the solution for future stories like hers simply by saving plastic. Those plastic caps with which we are so familiar are usually considered to be trash, but in the AMANC program they represent cash for saving children's lives.

In October 2015 the non-profit Banco de Tapitas (Bank of Caps) began as a movement founded by young Mexicans, students and professionals from Tecnológico de Monterrey, Universidad Tecmilenio, Universidad del Valle de México and Universidad Iberoamericana with the intention of supporting the fight against childhood cancer through recycling plastic. Banco de Tapitas now has four locations in México - Mexico City, Puebla, Queretaro and Guadalajara.



ABOVE AND BELOW
Children benefitting from the programs provided by AMANC (photos by AMANC)

Plastic caps and lids collected by Banco de Tapitas are sorted, then ground into pellets, flakes and granules which are then sold to manufacturers that make a variety of plastic products such as chairs, plant pots, other containers, kitchen utensils, playground equipment, etc. See <https://www.bancodetapitas.org>
Revenue generated from selling the plastic is credited to the AMANC program to support patients.



you can reach Karen at karenwilson@manzanillosun.com



FUN in February!

**5th annual Bocce Ball Tournament,
Silent Auction and "FUN"draiser to benefit Friends
of Mexican Animal Welfare-Animal Angels**

**Thursday
February 24th,
2022**

- ◆ \$700 peso (\$35 US) entry per team
- ◆ Super Silent Auction
- ◆ Booze Basket & 50/50 Raffles
- ◆ Music and Dancing to "The Voice",
Randy Dean
- ◆ 2 x1 Beers, Margaritas, House Wine
and Well Drinks
- ◆ \$150 peso entry donation (non-
players)
- ◆ Fun for Everyone on the beach at
Oasis Ocean Club!



**FRIENDS OF MEXICAN ANIMAL WELFARE (FOMAW)
Animal Angels ZLO**

For Bocce info, contact Fred, fltaylor88@yahoo.com

For Silent Auction, contact Laurie, laurie.taylor88@gmail.com



Poetry by Tommy G. Clarkson

Time

I wear upon my wrist
a watch bound by a band.
How utterly misleading
it's the clock that binds the man.

It's all perspective

How far is up?
Is there really down?
How long is far?
How big's a town?

How huge is large?
How small, petite?
How wet is damp?
How clean is neat?

To some, "Just that,"
they quickly say,
while others quibble,
debate and bray.

But, I for one,
care not a whit
to argue such -
a smidgeon bit!

Hold it

My camera takes a moment
and makes it hold its breath,
while we continue posing
'til all scenes have left.

Counting

One is a number, that is for sure.
Two is its double, simple and pure.
Three's a bit odd, with one always out
Four is much better, of that I've no doubt.
Five's more than a little, like cranky old three
With one couple, one couple—and then there is me!
Then what do we find, but numeral six—
three comfortable couples with no one to nix.
Next lucky old seven raises its head
To speak ill of it, tears would be shed.
Eight is just four—but all with fine mates—
great for a party; swell for fun dates.
Nine would be fine but it's twice four point five
No number for which, many do strive.
Finally we've reached that solid old ten
And as to my counting, in Latin, say *fin!*

Babbling

For languages, one needs a flair.
English, for some, is quite tough.
But chatting around the whole world
would be the most heady of stuff!

Let's climb the Babel Tower
complete with all of its rungs
and when atop this challenge
speak in a many tongues!

Of course, I must know Latin
along with ancient Greek.
They're both important bases
for others I need to speak.

And yes, I must speak Yiddish,
Czech, Russian and some Thai
and, perhaps some smooth Italian,
to make the ladies sigh.

Cantonese and fine Mandarin
might, in China, be of help.
*(And let me murmur Mermaid
while with them in the kelp!)*

French of course and German,
Gaelic, would be a hoot!
And when up north and chilly
t'would be nice to speak Aleut.

A chat with a Tasmanian
might really be quite fun
or, maybe a bit of Zulu,
while sweating in the sun!

Now, how about Cambodian
Portuguese and Persian,
some Turkish and some Arabic
(I'll try most any version).

Korean, yes, and Polish
and then some Japanese,
Malayan, Dutch and Saraiki
And lastly, Javanese.

This task is not an easy one
nor for the faint of heart.
So now I'd better shut up
and with this task do start!

...Poetry by Tommy G Clarkson

Little's solely simple.

In fact, what's hot?
What's cold?
What is the age
of being young.
And really,
what is old?

So life is not
just black and white.
It's assorted
shades of gray,
which we discern
these tints and hues
every single day.

Journey

Like a leashed man,
bound to a strong-minded dog,
too often,
my life has been led by my heart.

It's taken me to,
and through,
puddles, brambles
and the occasional piles
of human refuse.

How much of this path
has been of my choice?
How often
that of others?

Does one take credit
for the joys,
ignoring trips and falls
as mere caprice,
or happenstance,
of life?

Was this tripping trek,
actually
of my choice . . .
or that of others?

Distraction

When we're depressed, down in the dumps
or simply just plain blue.
The question is, "What's right? What's wrong?
Just what, then, should we do?

To others, these - our feelings-
we simply shouldn't show 'em.
So what's our course of action?
I'll think I'll write a poem!!!!

Stormy

I heard the
pitter
patter
plunk
of the
numbing
drumming
rain.

With the same incessant
sounding
of its pounding
on the pane.

I stared at
drops
that
smeared
and
steered
around a long stuck
stain
and watched world
distorted
with my muddled
puddled
brain.

Happy who we are

Chicken cackle.
scratch and cluck.
Be yourself
not a duck.

Home is where the wall is

A door is a wall that isn't there.
A window's a hole in the wall in the air.
A floor is a ceiling of walls on the ground.
A corner's a pile of walls in a mound.

My Hero

He spit in the eye of convention
and scoffed at the world's "absolutes."
When "expected" he then took contention
with structure and thinking minute.

He's not be a pawn of committee
nor yes man to some oligarch.
Life's for seeing and doing and feeling.
Not settled or scheduled or stark.

Reality

Raggedy wings had
the motley old crow
but two more they were
than man'd ever grow!

Fate I

You stand so calm with big brown eyes.
They took your only coat.
The price you pay to be a sheep.
You should have been a goat.

FATE II

The plight of the humble pea,
is super sad, you see.
He and his peers.
in their pod group,
know that at best,
they'll end up soup.

you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com



SkyMed
TAKES YOU HOME

In A Medical Emergency, Do You Have A Plan To:

Return you to your Medicare or VA health care?
Return you to your Canadian health care?
Return you home to your family?



John & Catherine Gonzales

SkyMed Seminars

Manzanillo

Friday, January 14 and Friday, January 28
at **Santiago Beach Club** (next to Oasis) at 10 am

Barra de Navidad

Saturday, January 15 and Saturday, January 29
at **Cabo Blanco** at 10 am

Seating will be 1 person
or couple per table with
social distancing in place.

Consider SkyMed As Your Plan.

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their trust in SkyMed

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experience counts!

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catherine.gonzales@skymed.com

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Stories of Survival of SkyMed Clients

Murray and Diane Melrose



In April of 2019, my wife Diane became very sick with pneumonia in Barra de Navidad, Mexico and went into a coma. The doctors in Manzanillo said she had a massive stroke and would not survive.

Having flown in, my daughters took over and contacted SkyMed. SkyMed dispatched a medically equipped Learjet to Manzanillo to return Diane home to Canada.

In Saskatoon, our doctors took x-rays and discovered a growth on Diane's lungs. The spot was removed the next day and chemo was not required. Had we not returned to our Canadian doctors, the growth might not have been discovered.

We are back in Mexico eight months after surgery and both Jim Edwards, Sr. VP and Will Klein, CEO from SkyMed have called several times to follow up on her condition. So, I have to ask you how, many companies would go that EXTRA MILE?

Thank you SkyMed for saving my wife's life.

Stories of Survival of SkyMed Clients

John & Anne Neville

Anne and I had been traveling to Melaque for several years when, in February of 2020, we both came down with Dengue fever. I was recovering nicely but Anne's sickness was complicated by her underlying Addison's disease. Anne's condition was getting worse with our local doctor only prescribing Tylenol. After five days, her oxygen levels became so critical that the doctor instructed that she be hospitalized in Manzanillo.



The doctors at Hospital Echaury in Manzanillo assured us that they could treat her and I was instructed to return home to Melaque. As the days passed, Anne's condition worsened and, after five days, the attending physician told me that they could not do anything further with Anne's condition and he suggested that Anne be returned home to Canada where they could better treat her Addison's disease. I left the hospital in complete frustration at trying to figure out how I was going to accomplish getting Anne home.

As I was contemplating my situation, the word "SkyMed" popped into my mind. I rushed home to Melaque and after finding my membership card, I was shortly on the phone with the reassuring voice of Jim Edwards from SkyMed. Jim said, "we've got this". What transpired was a series of phone calls and emails, one of which was a "Fit to Fly" form that needed to be signed by Anne's attending doctor. In another call, Jim said, "I have some people who want to say hi." Jim had my children on a conference call because he wanted the entire family to be on the same page as to what was going to transpire in the coming hours as SkyMed returned Anne home to our family. I was overwhelmed by emotion during that phone call. How thoughtful of Jim to know that I needed my family's love and support at this time.

Shortly after, I was instructed to be at Anne's bedside at 11:00 the next morning when a doctor and nurse would arrive to begin the journey home. Arriving by ambulance at the Manzanillo airport, we were soon loaded into a waiting Learjet. When we left the runway, I remember thinking that it felt like I was being launched by a rocket into the sky.

After a fuel and lunch stop in Scottsdale, Arizona, we were soon flying over Oregon when the pilot informed us that we were being diverted to Abbotsford, Canada because of heavy snow at our home city of Kamloops, BC. Arriving in Abbotsford, we were met by a waiting ambulance and we began our 4 hour trip over a snowy mountain pass to our home and destination.

At home in our hospital, with our doctors, our family and our language, Anne was soon recovering. I remember, after getting home after the long travel day, sitting at my bed and contemplating all that had transpired in getting Anne home. The logistics in coordinating such a trip were absolutely perfect. Jim and SkyMed had committed to get Anne home and they did as was assured by Catherine Gonzales, our SkyMed representative in Barra de Navidad. "SkyMed Takes You Home."

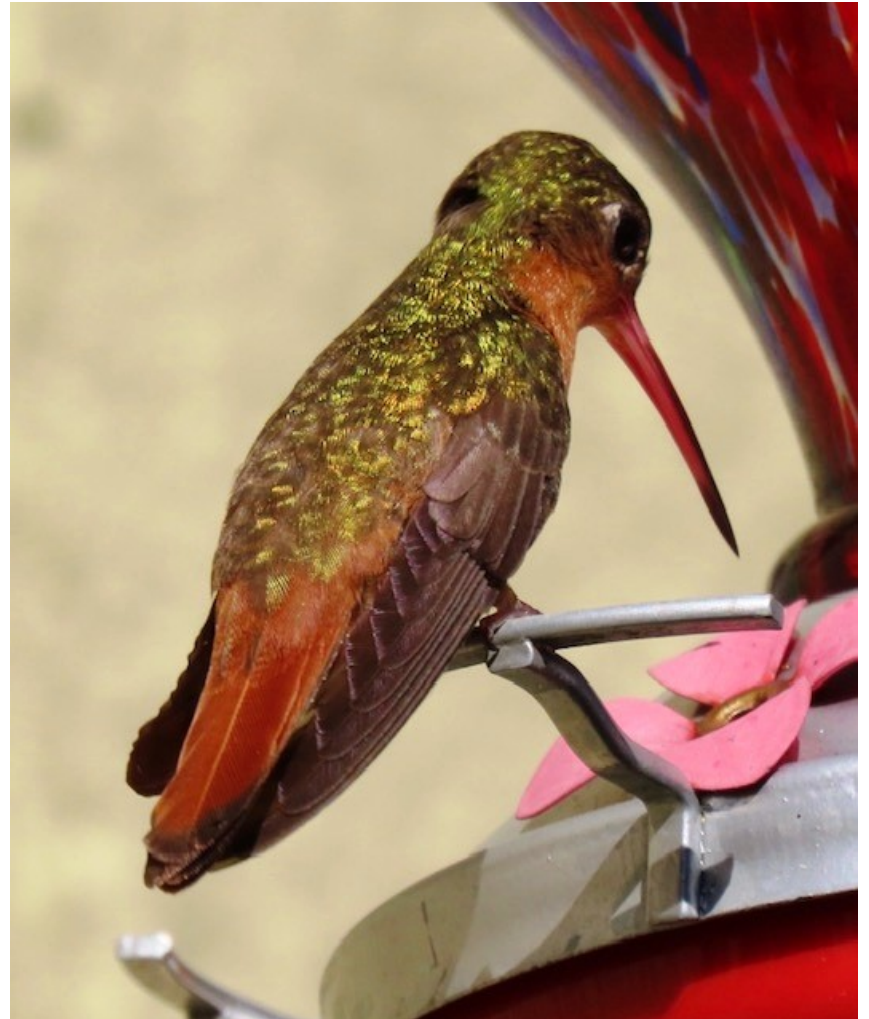
"Thank you SkyMed and Jim Edwards, I truly believe that you saved Anne's life."

Local photographer **Marg McKenna** shares a gift of these incredible nature photos with the Manzanillo Sun e-Magazine readers



LEFT
1 Egret, 2 Turtles, Las Hadas

RIGHT
Cinnamon Hummingbird

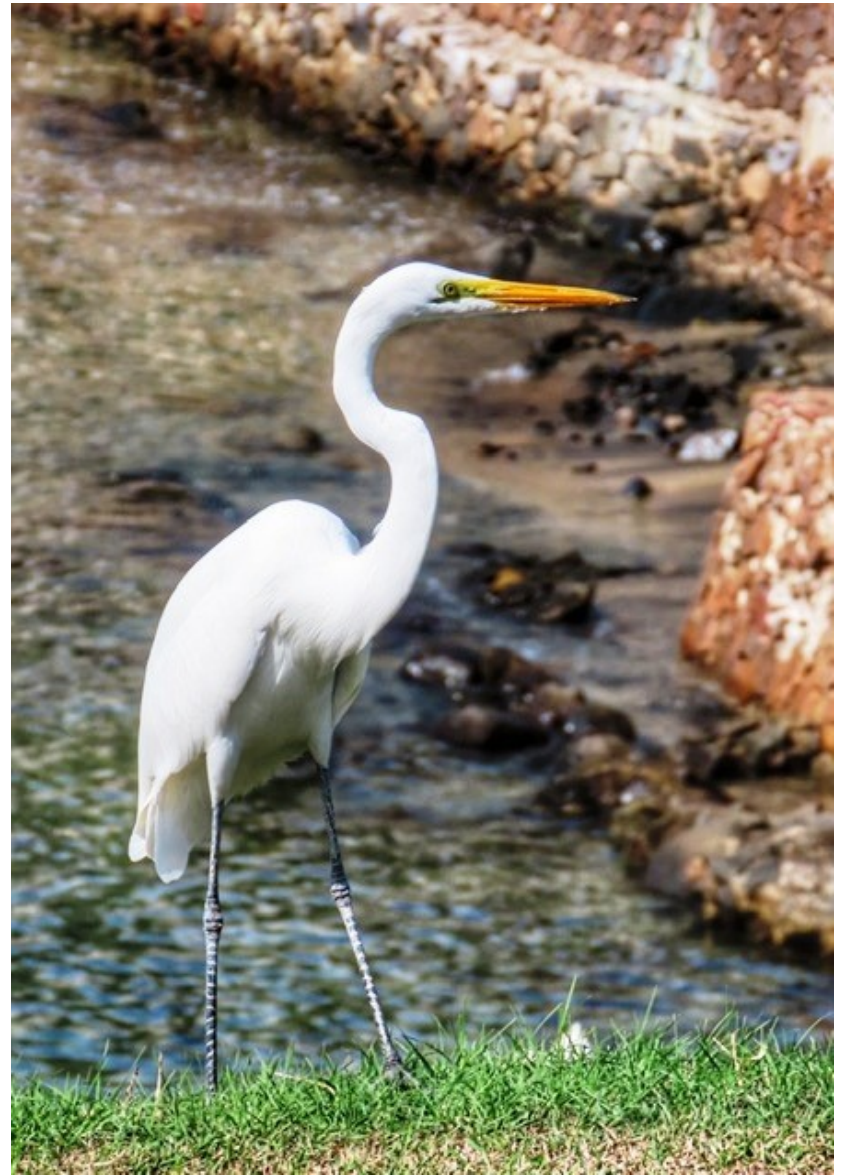


RIGHT
Great Egret, Las Hadas

BELOW
Golden Cheeked Woodpecker,
Real de Santiago



...Beautiful nature photos from around Manzanillo



LEFT and RIGHT
Great Egret
Las Hadas



LEFT and RIGHT
Roadside Hawk

...Beautiful nature photos from around Manzanillo



ABOVE
La Boquita Rooster

RIGHT
Kisadee at Real Santiago

BELOW
Miramar beach sunrise





Vivero Viveplants Orchid Farm



For the past year and a half, COVID-19 and its variants have raged around the world causing illness, death and harsh effects on many aspects of our lives. The tourism industry has been devastated. Businesses large and small, ranging from mom-and-pop operations to huge companies like airlines have all suffered from lack of income. The four charitable not-for-profit organizations with which I am associated have also experienced similar circumstances.

For non-profit operations that depend on revenue such as donations and attendance at special functions, revenue has dropped dramatically. Charitable organizations have experienced cancellation of major fundraising activities and events, with consequent loss of funding. As well, charities have seen a drop in regular financial support, donations and non-renewal of memberships.

Coping with a difficult fiscal situation has been a serious challenge. In the case of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos (CHLA), a residential home for young boys and girls in the Manzanillo area, CHLA has fought back, rebounding with a vigorous program of events in spite of the pandemic.

Don Carstensen, a former member of the board of directors for The Children's Foundation, the parent organization of CHLA, has seen the effect of the pandemic. "COVID has affected our lives in different ways, yet some of us are in a position to navigate its challenges," he says. "But this is not the case for many non-profit organizations committed to serving the less fortunate in our communities. For CHLA, donations for the children have decreased, while operating costs have remained essentially the same."



Dr. Guiber Núñez, a physician and the Director of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos, served as Master of Ceremonies for the Christmas performance.



Marisol González, left, is Director of Ballet Folklórico Los Angelitos, the performance troupe of Casa Hogar. At right is CHLA founder, Nancy Nystrom

...Coping with COVID at Christmas



Some of the youngest girls and boys were featured in the opening number of the Christmas show.

The annual fundraiser on January 27, 2022, will help address this issue. One good news story is that not one CHLA child has yet contracted COVID."

For some 70 children ranging in age from toddlers to university students, CHLA provides a loving home for boys and girls who would not otherwise have such care. Some are orphans and others have come from abusive situations or have even been abandoned. At Casa Hogar they receive full-time food and shelter, medical and dental care, education and a chance to participate in the home's amazing and successful Expressive Arts Program.

Nancy Nystrom co-founded Casa Hogar Los Angelitos in 1996 with her husband, Dave, whom she lost during this difficult year. She has noted the adverse results of the pandemic, but still remains positive in her outlook on life. "When I examine this past year through the eyes of Casa Hogar, I am filled with hope," she says. "We were able to protect our children from COVID and they have come through this season healthy and ready to move forward. We had students graduate from college and more entering it. What a blessing for the future of these young lives! We have just received five new little ones that were lost and wandering the streets and who now have a whole life of hope ahead of them."



Poise and grace were characteristic of every number in the program.



Confidence and character are clearly evident in the young performers.

The Program provides opportunity for dance, music and song that reflects Mexican culture and heritage. By staging special performances that highlight skill and talent, CHLA has showcased what the results of love, instruction, dedication and practice can do in providing splendid and meaningful entertainment.

The busier-than-ever schedule for Casa Hogar began on November 20, 2021, with a celebration of the Mexican revolution. It was followed on December 18, 2021, with a dinner and performance at the Centro de Artes Los Angelitos (CALA). On the very appropriate theme of "A Christmas Night Under the

...Coping with COVID at Christmas



Precision, perfection and smiling faces all contribute to the presentation.

Stars,” the cast of Casa Hogar’s Ballet Folklórico Los Angelitos presented the story of Christmas through pageantry, dance, music and song in a dinner event at the facility which is perfect for showcasing young talent.

With splendid costumes and flawless footwork in the dances, it was more than simply a fine show. It was a Christmas gift of a timeless story for all who attended. The classic characters of the Christmas story were all there – shepherds, angels, the Three Magi, and of course, Mary and Joseph, the parents of baby Jesus.

In the months ahead, CHLA will offer more spectacular productions. Coming up on January 27, 2022, is the Annual Casa Hogar Los Angelitos Gala Dinner and Show. The performance for that event always leaves me in awe and admiration of the kids, the costumes and the quality of instruction they receive.

The poster for that event follows this story. It is always a sell-out and tickets should be booked early.

A Celebrity Golf Tournament will be held on February 11 and on February 12, a Valentine’s Day celebration will feature dinner and entertainment with a “Welcome to Spring” show on March 12. All events will be held at the CALA facility except for the golf tournament. It will be held at the beautiful El Corazón Golf Club near the town of El Naranjo, just north of Manzanillo. For more info and to order tickets, [click here](#).

Attending any or all of those events is more than just a fine experience! It is an opportunity to contribute to making a better community. As Nancy Nystrom has said, “What I know for certain is that regardless of pandemics, storms, or personal loss, we cannot let our project fail.”



Karina García Magaña was the featured soloist in the program.



Mary, played by Mia Preciado, and Joseph, played by Raziél Hernán, are seen here with the children’s choir.

you can reach John at john.chalmers@manzanillosun.com

... more pics follow

...Coping with COVID at Christmas



The holy couple, Joseph and Mary, are seen at the manger, flanked left and right by sheep and shepherds, with the children's choir at the right.



The Expressive Arts Program of Casa Hogar provides opportunity for younger children such as those in the choir to become involved in productions. At left, older boys are the shepherds.



Among the magical moments of the show was the participation of 20 angels, whose appearance added to the wonder of the evening.



Among the liveliest dances of the show was that of the shepherds.



The Three Magi appeared, bringing gifts for the Christ child.

...Coping with COVID at Christmas



The finale of the program saw José and María surrounded by the Three Magi, angels and the children's choir.



LEFT
The annual golf tournament for the benefit of Casa Hogar will be held at the El Corazón Golf Club this year, the only fundraising event for CHLA not held at CALA.



RIGHT
Left to right, Don Carstensen, Nancy Nystrom and writer John Chalmers had lots of reasons to smile during the Christmas presentation by Casa Hogar Los Angelitos.



With stars above and below them on this star-filled evening, the cast came on stage for their final bows and well-deserved applause from an appreciative audience.

SHATTERING EXPECTATIONS

TOGETHER - WE WILL SUCCEED!



A Benefit Dinner and Event for CASA HOGAR LOS ANGELETOS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022

DINNER and SPECTACULAR SHOW with

"Ballet Folklorico Los Angelitos"

EXCITING LIVE AUCTION

With professional auctioneer Jim Berz!

Bid on fantastic and unique international trips and activities:

**ATV ADVENTURE FOR UP TO 12 / PRIVATE COOKING CLASS
MEXICO ADVENTURE / GOLF AND RESORT PACKAGE
SONOMA WINE ADVENTURE / BURGUNDY FRANCE OPPORTUNITY.
BEAUTIFUL TUSCANY (CORONA) ITALY 6 FABULOUS DAYS FOR UP TO 4 PEOPLE.
EXCITING BELIZE ADVENTURE FOR UP TO 8 PEOPLE.**

TICKETS AVAILABLE:

\$900 pesos p p (\$45 US \$50 CA)

\$7000 pesos (\$325 US \$400 CA) table of 8

Purchase on line: www.tcfcare.org/donations

Mark: Jan. 27 EVENT; # of tickets or table for 8



SCAN ME

**6:00 pm Cash Bar & Silent Auction
7:00 pm Dinner and Show**

LOCATION:

"CALA"

Centro de Artes Los Angelitos

OCTAVIO PAZ - NUEVO SALAGUA

**Information; 314-33-4-0878,
info@tcfcare.org mexico@tcfcare.org**

Fab Food Finds Baja California Sur

by Dan and Lisa Goy

We have been traveling Baja regularly for more than 20 years and, as you can imagine, made many regular stops along the way for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Some were taco stands, others more-developed restaurants. Over time, we shared these stops with friends and incorporated them into our RV tours. We selected these 3 in Baja California Sur (BCS) because of their ambience, reasonable prices, unique atmosphere and personalities.

Malarrimo Restaurant in Guerrero Negro, BCS

Malarrimo beach is on the north-facing shore of a conspicuous "horn" about halfway down the Baja Peninsula on the Pacific Coast side. This mysterious and lonely place was called by the famous Spanish Explorer Sebastián Vizcaíno, the beach of Malarrimo. The land juts sharply westward into the waters of the California current, generating an intense upwelling along the coast but also carries riches of different sort: boat wreckage, clothing, first-aid kits, military gear, toys, preserved foods and many other curios.

The town of Guerrero Negro was founded in 1957 when Daniel Ludwig built a salt works there to supply the demand of salt in the western United States, now the greatest salt mine in the world. The towns claim to fame also includes whale watching when Grey Whales congregate to breed and give birth every winter in the coastal lagoon, Ojo de Liebre.



Malarrimo's outside patio

In 1974, the same year Highway 1 was inaugurated, Enrique Achoy López dared to build a restaurant in a town that barely existed outside the company town, now a going concern and family affair. Enrique opened a gourmet kitchen and built a discotheque that became the meeting place for locals and tourists alike. Over the years, Enrique filled the place with items found on the Malarrimo beach that now serve as decoration and a small museum. Malarrimo, the restaurant, has been visited by personalities from around the world and has a well-deserved recognition for the freshness and delicacy of its seafood. When the President of Mexico visits to see the whales, which they all do once during their term, they eat at Malarrimo.



Seafood platter at Malarrimo

In addition to the restaurant, Enrique built an RV Park in 1978 and the hotel in 1986. Enrique Jr. started Malarrimo Eco-Tours in 1989. Daughter Nena opened the Casa el Viejo Cactus gift shop soon after. Daughter Monica then opened the Malarrimo Convenience Store and, finally, youngest son Tony joined Malarrimo with a degree in marketing and advertising.

...Fab Food Finds, Baja California Sur

We first ate at Malarrimo in the early 2000s and have been taking our groups there for dinner since our first season in 2009/2010. 50+ tours later, we can count the number of complaints about dinner on one hand, about the same number of folks who complain about too much sand when we are beach camping. People love the atmosphere, ambience and mostly the food, including a great wine selection. Our recommendation to couples is always the seafood platter; delicious and reasonably priced, a menu item only found at an upscale restaurant in the US or Canada. When our groups go for whale watching the following morning, the Wagon Masters go for breakfast. Lisa's orders "Huevos Albañil". She looks forward to this meal every tour.

There is no doubt that Malarrimo has put Guerrero Negro on the map, a favorite place of travelers and visitors, from the novice traveler to celebrities, dignitaries and Mexican political leaders, all thanks to the cuisine of Don Enrique.

Los Magueyes in La Paz, BCS

La Paz (The Peace) is the capital city of Baja California Sur and the only large colonial city in all Baja. Hernán Cortés arrived in 1534 and founded Santa Cruz, which later became La Paz. A couple of interesting, little-known facts; The Americans occupied La Paz during the American/Mexican War from April 15, 1847 to February 2, 1848. From January 10, 1854, to May 8, 1854, La Paz served as the capital of American William Walker's "Republic of Sonora". The project collapsed due to lack of US support and pressure from the Mexican government to retake the region.



Los Magueyes is always entertaining



Los Magueyes restaurant

La Paz boasts over 300 restaurants. We have frequented many of them. Mexican friends who live in La Paz introduced us to Los Magueyes in 2008. The restaurant is named after the magueyes, a species of agave plant, from which tequila is made. When it matures, the plant's pineapple-like base fills with a sweet sap, called aguamiel (honey water), which is fermented, then distilled twice.

Established in the center of the city in 2004, Los Magueyes has become one of the most traditional restaurants in the city of La Paz, celebrating traditional and authentic Mexican food in a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere. We now host our Baja Fiesta dinners here with a menu that features typical dishes of Mexican cuisine, as well as barbecues, arracheras, soups, salads, an extensive bar of drinks and its delicious desserts. Our favorite waiter is Ricardo, a personality everyone enjoys, whose specialty is Flaming Flan. A local band often drops in and is very entertaining. Our Baja Amigos are always well looked after and the reviews from this evening very positive. This restaurant epitomizes the friendly nature of the Mexican people and will stay on our itinerary for years to come.



Baja Amigos dining at Los Magueyes

...Fab Food Finds, Baja California Sur



Ricardo making Flaming Flan at Los Magueyes



Baja Amigos caravan parked at El Triunfo

Café El Triunfo in El Triunfo, BCS

Café El Triunfo is located in the former mining town of El Triunfo on Highway 1 between La Paz and Los Barriles. In 1878, the mine was taken over by the British El Progreso Mining Company and was once the largest city in Baja California Sur, home to more than 10,000 miners. El Triunfo was the first town in the region to install electricity and telephones. Pianos and other instruments were brought to El Triunfo from around the world and a piano museum still exists. A notable feature of the town is the 47-meter-high smokestack constructed in 1890 called La Ramona, designed by Gustave Eiffel.

When the mines shut down in 1926, the town quickly became a village with a population of 300. Before we started Baja Amigos, we would just drive through El Triunfo, just another wide spot on Mex 1. Then came along Mark Spahr who opened Café El Triunfo in 2008 looking for new challenges, better food, a better setting, and room to build a wood-burning oven. Mark was born in Oakland, grew up in Ventura County, and spent many years living in California before moving to Todos Santos, opening Café Todos Santos in 1993, later making the move to El Triunfo.

It was during the 2012/2013 season that our tours stopped regularly for brunch at Café El Triunfo, a real treat after a couple of days on the beach at Playa Tecolote. Fortunately, there is just enough parking available, using both sides of the road, arriving about 10:30 am, our reservations set for 11:00 am. Mark has spent years renovating the café, both indoors and out, laying new brickwork, adding stone slab tables and planting cacti on ledges. Often we sit on the lower patio, sometimes as a group on the upper patio, listening to all the sounds of a Mexican village, with La Ramona towering in the distance.



Cranberry Walnut Sourdough Rounds at Café El Triunfo



Marcus Spahr - Café El Triunfo

...Fab Food Finds, Baja California Sur

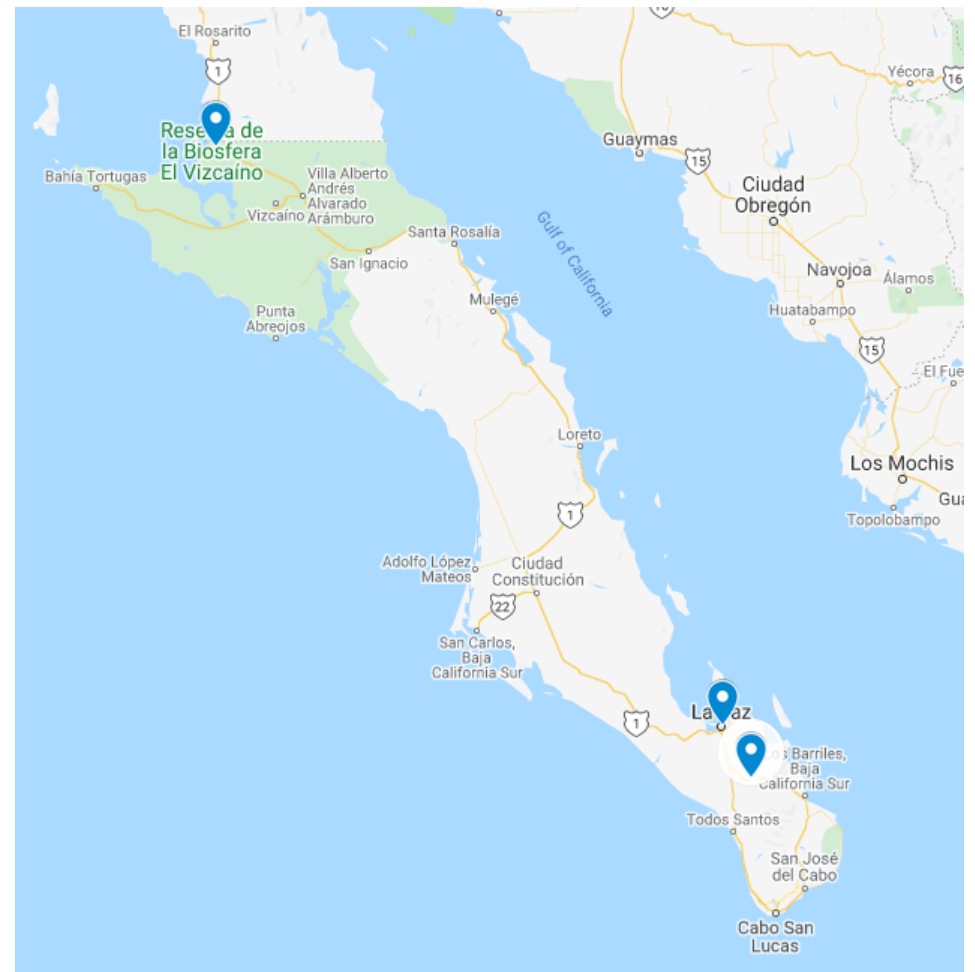


Mark has put together a spectacular menu. Lisa always orders the chicken enchilada omelet which comes with fried potatoes, fresh fruit, oven-baked sourdough bread, sliced avocado and crema. Folks love the fish tacos made with Ahi tuna, others the pizza cooked in the mesquite-fired oven.



The gang enjoying brunch at Café El Triunfo

I have had the house salad with goat cheese, baby lettuce, cherry tomatoes, pecans and dried cranberry many times... always delicious. After putting in their order their brunch, folks have time to make their purchases of freshly made sourdough bread and sticky buns before they are gone. The prices are not unreasonable given the quality of the food and the unique ambience offered by the Café El Triunfo.



Mark's development of Café El Triunfo over the years has led to a total makeover, redevelopment and revitalization of the entire village. There is no doubt his hard work and vision are responsible for the restoration of many of the original buildings that have been converted into restaurants, museums, boutiques and El Triunfo is now a tourist hot spot.

The transformation is nothing less than remarkable.

Submitted by
 Dan and Lisa Goy
 Baja Amigos RV
 Caravan Tours
www.BajaAmigos.net

11, 12 y 13 de Febrero



2022

GARNAVAL

Manzanillo

Nuestras Raíces





by Tommy Clarkson

Hibiscus

Family *Malvaceae*

Also known as *Rose Mallows*

(Regular readers of my weekly column, "Planting Roots in Mexico," or those who've perused the first two volumes of our "The Civilized Jungle" series, are aware that, generally, I strive to write about specific species, not general genera – somehow that sounds redundant! However, as a result of there being so many varieties in the Hibiscus genus whole - plus numerous wonderful cultivars - I wish, herein, to make an exception.)

In "Tropical Plants for Home and Garden", William Warren succinctly encapsulates a description of Hibiscus by saying, "If any special plant had to be selected as emblematic of the tropics, it would very likely be Hibiscus, the flowers of which brighten gardens from Bali to Florida."

Well, bright our outdoor environs are in that we've a diverse array of these tropical beauties growing around Ola Brisa Gardens. So keen on them I am, it is not uncommon to hear me enthusiastically greeting them, early each morning, with a hearty "Hi-biscus!" (Ok, I may have to acknowledge that I just possibly might be one flower short of a full bouquet - but what self-respecting gardener doesn't talk to his or her plants?)

All told, there are somewhere between 200 to 300 different species of hibiscus plants around the world, each - well, duh - differing in flora size, shape, and color.



Perhaps the most commonly known of this spectacular genus of tropical flowering plants is the *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*.

While most are grown and sought for their nicely sized and quite showy flowers, some tropical tree species have stunningly attractive leaves with – what Robert Lee Riffle calls – a "noble stature." Such, of the former "flora foremost" sort, are represented in the specimens of Ola Brisa Gardens, with some classics, while others are rather intriguing hybrids. But let's commence with a bit of an overview of their greater whole. And, what need is there to re-write information when someone else has already said it very well?

Accordingly, I wish to quote Mary Ellen, from her discussion included in "Gardening Know How," as follows: "Among the various kinds of hibiscus plants are hardy and tropical specimens, native plants, annuals, and perennials.

There are also related plants, like hollyhock, common mallow, and even okra. Some of the main categories of hibiscus include: "Native hibiscus: (T)here are about 35 species of hibiscus native to parts of the southeastern US. A popular native variety is the Scarlet Rose Mallow, common in Florida, which can grow to 4 to 8 feet tall (1 to 2.5 m.). Rose Mallows are also called Marsh Hibiscus and, although they naturally grow in wetlands, they will tolerate drier areas.

...Hibiscus



Forget not the doubles!

"Hardy hibiscus: These cold-tolerant, perennial shrubs can be just as beautiful as their tropical counterparts, with big showy blooms in a range of colors. A popular hardy hibiscus variety is Rose of Sharon, with pink, white, or purple flowers.

"Tropical hibiscus: (*Obviously, those with which I am most familiar and which are pictured here.*) These types of hibiscus have some overlap with the native species that grow in Florida and southern Louisiana. The most common tropical hibiscus found in nurseries is *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*. Different cultivars will give you a choice of flower color and size. They can be very large and showy, with bright and rich colors.

"Perennial hibiscus: These are shrubs, which can range from smaller, dwarf varieties to large, tree-like bushes. The perennial hibiscus may be hardy or tropical, and include Rose of Sharon, Scarlet Swamp Hibiscus, Rose Mallow, and Confederate Roses.

"Annual hibiscus: These are not true annuals, but they are tropical and can be grown as annuals in slightly cooler climates. They are often grown in containers and include Chinese and Red Leaf Hibiscus.

The former comes with a variety of colors, while Red Leaf is grown mainly for its deep red foliage. With so many options

for growing hibiscus, every gardener in every setting can find something that will grow and thrive while adding beauty to the garden."

Generally speaking, Hibiscus plants – of the sort we would more generally see - may grow to around fifteen feet (4.58 meters) in height in well-draining soil. They like bright sun to light shade.



And then there are those of the multi-color sort that make one simply roll back on their heels and say "wow"!

While capable of tolerating heat and alkaline soil, they are moderately able to handle salt and drought – but a bit begrudgingly!

While each - single or double - flower lasts but a single day, a healthy plant will bloom year around. Beyond the obvious simple enjoyment of their somewhat exotic looking flowers, they may be employed as an accent, hedge, screen or attractive background plant.

Get your copy of *The Civilized Jungle: Tropical Plants Facts and Fun From Ola Brisa Gardens* [Volume I](#), and now [Volume II](#) is here!!

For back issues of "Roots", gardening tips, tropical plant book reviews and videos of numerous, highly unique eco/adventure/nature tours, as well as memorable "Ultimate Experiences" such as Tropical Garden Brunches

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you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com



Despensas on a Mission

Story and photos by John Chalmers

México never ceases to impress me with amazing experiences and giving me cause to admire the generosity of folks who care for those who are less fortunate. On January 2, I had the opportunity to learn more about this country and see community support at work for people in need.

With Bob Strynadka, a friend from our home in Canada, my car was put into service as the last of a three-vehicle convoy to delivery large *despensas* (food bags) of non-perishable food to residents of Chacala, a small mountain town of about 1,100 residents located at 400 meters above sea level. Reached by a good two-lane paved road, even though Chacala is only some 50 km inland from Manzanillo, it is about a 90-minute scenic drive, as the road is a winding and hilly route with *topes* frequently encountered that keep driving speed to a safe level!

Our little convoy was led by Thomas Martinez, a family physician best known in the Manzanillo area as Dr. Tom. His four-door Jeep was so packed with *despensas* that there was barely enough room left for his wife, Reyna, and eight-year old daughter, Mila. Between my car and the Jeep was the one of Bev and Jim Woods, fellow residents at Vida del Mar, whose SUV was likewise loaded with *despensas*.



In Chacala ready to start deliveries, at left are Dr. Tom with his wife, Reyna, and daughter, Mila. At right with their vehicle full of *despensas* are Ben and Jim Woods.

Upon arriving at Chacala, we were met by Lorena, a pharmacy manager in Manzanillo, who directed us throughout the town to hand out donated food. She also served as driver of the truck owned by her and her husband into which we loaded all the *despensas* for distribution.

Staples included were oatmeal, rice, beans, corn flour, animal crackers, canned tuna, sugar, salt and chiles. Each bag weighed over 12 kilograms, or about 27 pounds, at a cost of 281 pesos each. A list of goods to be provided had been given to the supplier, who then prepared the bags for distribution.



With his Jeep totally full of bags of non-perishable food, Dr. Tom starts unloading to place the items in a truck that will be used to deliver the bags.

The food is provided by Manzanillo Migrant Mission, a 100% volunteer group of American and Canadian snowbirds and people from the Manzanillo area. It is 100% supported by donations. This year, for the first time, a Rotary Club helped out, with generous financial support. The Crossroads Rotary Club of Kitsap County in Washington state contributed \$3,500. It was matched by the club's regional organization for a total of \$7,000 to support the operation.

...*Despensas* on a Mission



Isidro helps fill the truck for delivery while Dr. Tom and Jim unload a vehicle.

At first glance, that amount may seem as a large sum. However, the rising cost of food brought about by rising costs of production, transportation and processing, as well as a large and growing need, means that donations remain vital. Last year, 1,697 food bags, weighing a total of about 42,000 pounds, were donated. To see how you can contribute and support, visit the very informative web site of the Manzanillo Migrant Mission at <https://www.manzanillomigrantmission.org/>

As we drove at a walking pace through Chacala on cobblestone roads, dispensing parcels from the truck, residents came out to receive their gifts of food. Many of the some 240 homes there are very modest in structure and appearance, an obvious indication of the situation in which residents live. Not all have "sanitary installations," but most have electricity and are connected to a public water supply.

Located in the state of Jalisco, the Chacala we visited is not to be confused with the town of the same name, located on the Pacific coast in the state of Nayarit, about 100 km north of Puerto Vallarta. "Our" Chacala is not a tourist destination!

When handing out the parcels, young Mila was the hardest working member of the crew! She was eager to deliver the heavy bags, which weigh about half as much she does! As she speaks English at home with her father, she was fluent in my language and thus was easy to talk to as we got to know each other. Another hard-working youngster in the crew, who is from Chacala, was 10-year old Isidro, a nephew of our guide and truck driver, Lorena. He, too, was very helpful with the deliveries, keen to be at work with us.

Following deliveries in the morning, we were welcomed to the home of Lorena's parents, where we were served a truly Mexican lunch. On trips like this, Bob and I always travel with *cerveza fria* in our coolers, which went down well with the *tortillas, frijoles, salsa* and *cerdo*!

A delivery day like this to small towns is not the only work made possible by the efforts of the Manzanillo Migrant Mission. It was formed seven years ago when volunteers became aware of the plight of migrant Mexican workers in the planted fields between Highway 200 and Manzanillo airport, where a number of crops are grown.

Most of the workers are indigenous people from the states of Chiapas and Guerrero, living on site in shelters at the fields during the growing season. An immediate response was made to the needs of those low-paid workers and thus the Manzanillo Migrant Mission began its support, providing food and other items such as blankets.

During the afternoon, our deliveries in Chacala were completed for the 160 bags of carefully packaged and generously donated food staples. To finish our trip, we adjourned to the nearby Rio Chacala, which flows beneath a huge bridge, winding its way among the gigantic granite rocks of the river valley. A swimming area at a wide stillwater area of the river was the perfect place to conclude our work with a refreshing dip or swim.

Chacala was not the only town to be helped early this year. To date this season, 684 *despensas* have been provided to Tecoman, El Naranjo and Santiago. Others to receive assistance soon are Melaque, Cihautlan, El Chavarin, Centinela, El Rebalse, Miramar, Marabasco, Chandiablo, and La Cienega. The Manzanillo Migrant Mission expects about 1,000 more *despensas* will be provided to families in need at those locations.

Overall, the day at Chacala was another experience that has enriched my life with a look at how other people live, and a chance to see the compassion and humanity that people exhibit when embracing and caring for others.



Reyna, Mila and Tom are seen on the tailgate of the truck as it goes through Chacala to distribute the *despensas*.

you can reach John at john.chalmers@manzanillosun.com

... more pics follow

...Despensas on a Mission



Undaunted by the weight of the food bags, Mila kept busy in handling them out to residents to take back to their homes.



Isidro is seen here after completing a delivery to a woman at her home. Recipients of the donations had no objection to being photographed.



ABOVE and LEFT

Chacala is not a prosperous town and many of the homes receiving the food donations are very modest in nature.

For work, some men in the town come to Manzanillo for their jobs.

...Despensas on a Mission



Like many other recipients, this woman was very appreciative when Bob delivered her gift of food staples.



Isidro and Mila saw that this man, whose both legs are amputated above the knee, received his donated bag of basic foods.



ABOVE

After delivering about half of the 160 *despensas* brought to Chacala, our crew took a welcome break for lunch and a chance to relax and visit.

RIGHT

Even though Bob is handy in the kitchen at preparing meals, he got a few tips from Lorena on how to cook over an open fire.



Many of the recipients who received the food are elderly and after receiving theirs, this grateful woman and a man posed with Mila for a photo.



Writer John Chalmers says he had the easiest job, not delivering heavy bags of food, but taking photos of the event, including this selfie with a woman who was happy to receive a bag of food.

...Despensas on a Mission



LEFT

For this elderly man, apparently living by himself, the food delivered by Bob was very welcome.

RIGHT

Many smiles were seen when the deliveries were made, brightening the day for residents of a small Mexican town.



LEFT

The Chacala River flows in its rocky path under a huge bridge near the town and has a wide spot there that is a popular swimming hole for folks in the area.



RIGHT

After a productive day of dispensing *despensas*, before returning home our crew took advantage of a chance to enjoy a refreshing dip in the water of Rio Chacala.



The Lighter Side of the Margarita

For those looking to enjoy a margarita, but without the sugar, read on. This tested recipe delivers delightful, refreshing flavor.

Ingredients

Yields 1 serving

- ✓ 3 cups ice
- ✓ 2 fluid ounces tequila
- ✓ 1 fluid ounce lime juice
- ✓ 2 ½ teaspoons low-calorie natural sweetener (such as Swerve®)
- ✓ 1 tablespoon coarse salt
- ✓ 2 lime wedges
- ✓ 1 pint-sized Mason jar
- ✓ 2 fluid ounces orange-flavored sparkling water (such as La Croix®)

This recipe is just waiting for your imagination to turn it into your new favorite drink. You can use a different flavor of sparkling water, add hibiscus or other natural flavors and so much more!



Directions

Step 1

Fill a shaker half-full with ice. Add tequila, lime juice, and sweetener to the shaker. Seal and shake vigorously until outside is frosted, 10 to 15 seconds.

Step 2

Place salt on a plate. Run 1 lime wedge along the rim of the Mason jar. Press the jar down into the salt. Fill the jar with ice cubes.

Step 3

Strain margarita into the jar. Top with sparkling water and stir. Garnish with remaining lime wedge.

Image and recipe source: [All Recipes](#)

Local photographer **John Chalmers** shares a collection of photos most representative of life in Mexico and Manzanillo for the Manzanillo Sun e-Magazine readers



Fruit vendors at La Boquita



Coconuts



Clothing stall at La Boquita

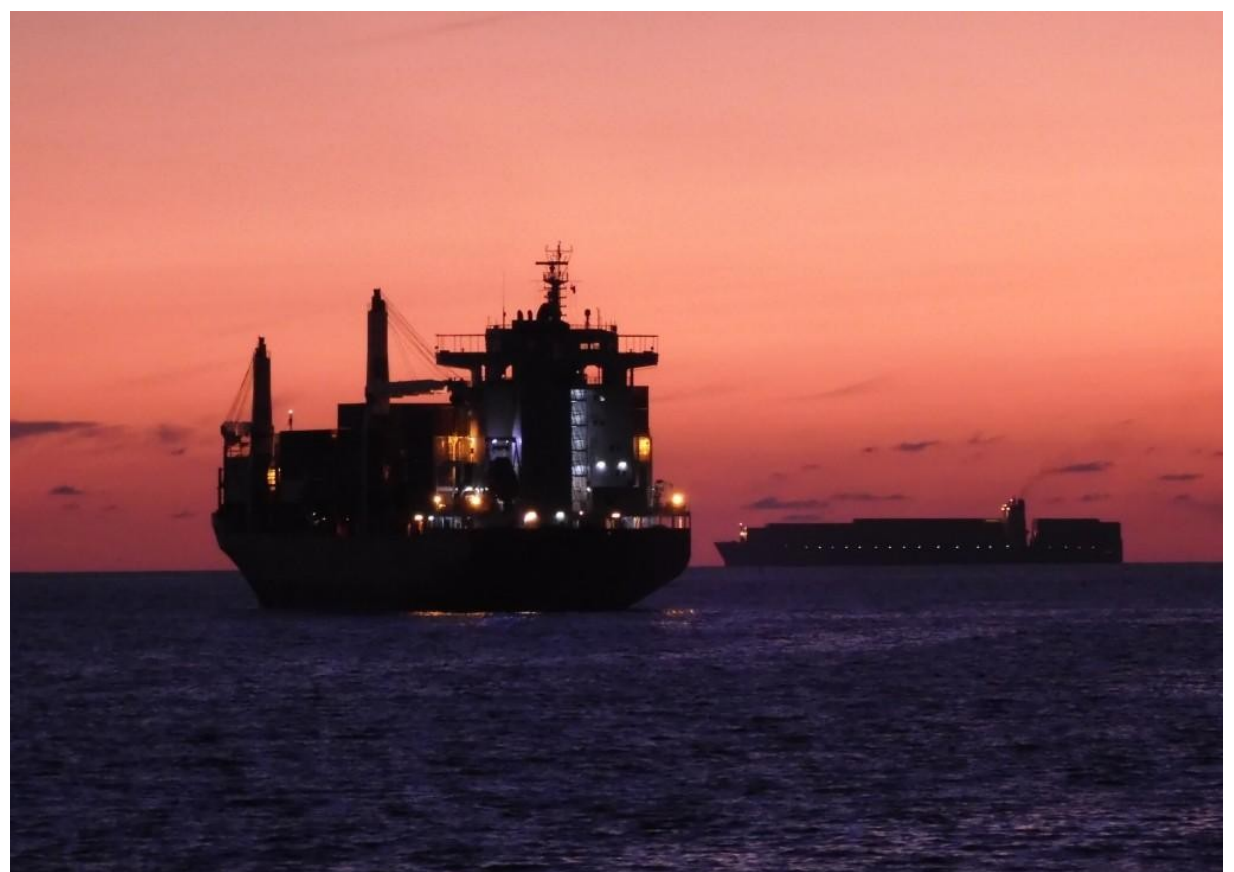
...A Collection of Photos of Life in Mexico and Manzanillo

Fishing in the lagoon



Inflatables at La Boquita

Seen at sunset in Manzanillo Bay are a ship at anchor and a container ship heading into the Port of Manzanillo, México's largest port, which sees ships coming and going 24 hours a day.



...A Collection of Photos of Life in Mexico and Manzanillo



Fishermen at sunrise



Land crab



Whimbrel

...A Collection of Photos of Life in Mexico and Manzanillo



Common Blackhawk



ABOVE
Cerro del Torro, biggest mountain in the Manzanillo area, provides a fine challenge for those who hike up the roadway to the communications towers at the top to enjoy a commanding view of the entire Manzanillo area.

LEFT
Black Vulture

...A Collection of Photos of Life in Mexico and Manzanillo



Black-Crowned Night Heron

RIGHT
Lineated Woodpecker

BELOW
Yellow-Crowned Night Heron



...A Collection of Photos of Life in Mexico and Manzanillo

This sculpture at the Manzanillo waterfront walk is one of a dozen abstract sculptures of the Zodiac symbols in a splendid display worth seeing that is called Paseo Del Zodiaco, the work of an artist known as Sebastián.



LEFT
This large mural in Centro Manzanillo is part of the color to be enjoyed in a walk around the city's waterfront to see the sights and ships.

BELOW
The La Boquita beach on Santiago Bay is always popular with its many ramadas, especially during holiday times like Christmas, New Year's and Easter.



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Galería Mex-ECO Mexico in Images and Artisan Crafts

by Ruth Hazlewood

November 2020 saw the opening of Galería Mex-ECO in Santiago, Manzanillo. So, what is it all about?

One of my roles as the owner of Experience Mex-ECO Tours, is to travel Mexico and scout out new places for our tour groups each season. Over the past 17 years, this has given me the opportunity to see some amazing places and meet some very interesting people.

During this time, I have acquired a collection of traditional Mexican artisan crafts, and a significant collection of photographs of said people and places. It had been a goal of mine for some time to integrate these two things into the Mex-ECO concept.

The time appeared to be right when the COVID pandemic indicated that we were facing a season of very few tours; it meant that we would still be able to purchase from the local artisans we usually visit on our trips, as well as providing the opportunity for people to see and purchase these pieces without having to travel.

And so it began - in October 2020 I headed off to Michoacán, visiting several of the towns included in our 'Morelia & Monarch Butterflies', 'La Ruta de Don Vasco', and 'Guadalajara' itineraries, purchasing an array of Mexican folk art and other traditional pieces, including catrinas and unique ceramic creations from Capula and Zinapécuaro, wooden masks and clay figures from Ocumicho, Cocuchas (large clay vases), embroidered blouses and dresses from Cocucho, leather shoes and wooden toys from Quiroga, glass vases, wine glasses and water jugs from Guadalajara, and many more items.

Other items were shipped to us, such as some beautiful copper work from our friends in Santa Clara del Cobre and Zapotec rugs of varying sizes and designs from Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca.

As well as the hours of enjoyment I got out of selecting these incredible pieces of artwork, I began selecting some of the photographs I have taken over the years and creating a display for sale in the gallery. For those who have traveled with Mex-ECO Tours, these images may remind you of some of the spectacular scenery you came across, or some of the local people you met along the way.

Meet some of the talented artisans whose work we regularly display for sale in Galería Mex-ECO...

Bernaldina

From the town of Cocucho in Michoacán, Bernaldina makes large clay vases, known as cocuchas - named after the town they come from. Bernaldina is one of approximately 60 artisans in her town who make cocuchas and similar pieces, such as ovens and plant pots. As I could not fit more than a couple of small Cocuchas in my car, Bernaldina and her family drove an old pick-up truck, full, from Cocucho to Manzanillo for the gallery opening. I had pre-ordered these pieces during my visit and, six weeks later, I was delighted to see Bernaldina and her family in Manzanillo.



Bernaldina in Galería Mex-Eco

...Galería Mex-ECO, Mexico in Images and Artisan Crafts

Fernando

I first saw Fernando and his father Martin's work on display in the Casa de las Artesanías, Morelia. Award winning artisans, Fernando and Martin were a father-son team who have taken many first-place certificates for their ceramics. Their work represents a long-lived tradition in the town of Zinapécuaro, but Fernando and Martin frequently came up with new ideas to create unique pieces that can't help but catch your eye. Sadly, Martin recently passed away, and despite Fernando and his family being devastated, they are proud to continue with his work.



Fernando and Martin



Martin

Rodolfo

Rodolfo is a talented artist from Puerto Vallarta, who loves to paint wildlife and people of Mexico. Rodolfo sells his work in various galleries in the Puerto Vallarta and Nayarit area, and we are proud to have some of his work in Galería Mex-ECO, as well as taking requests.

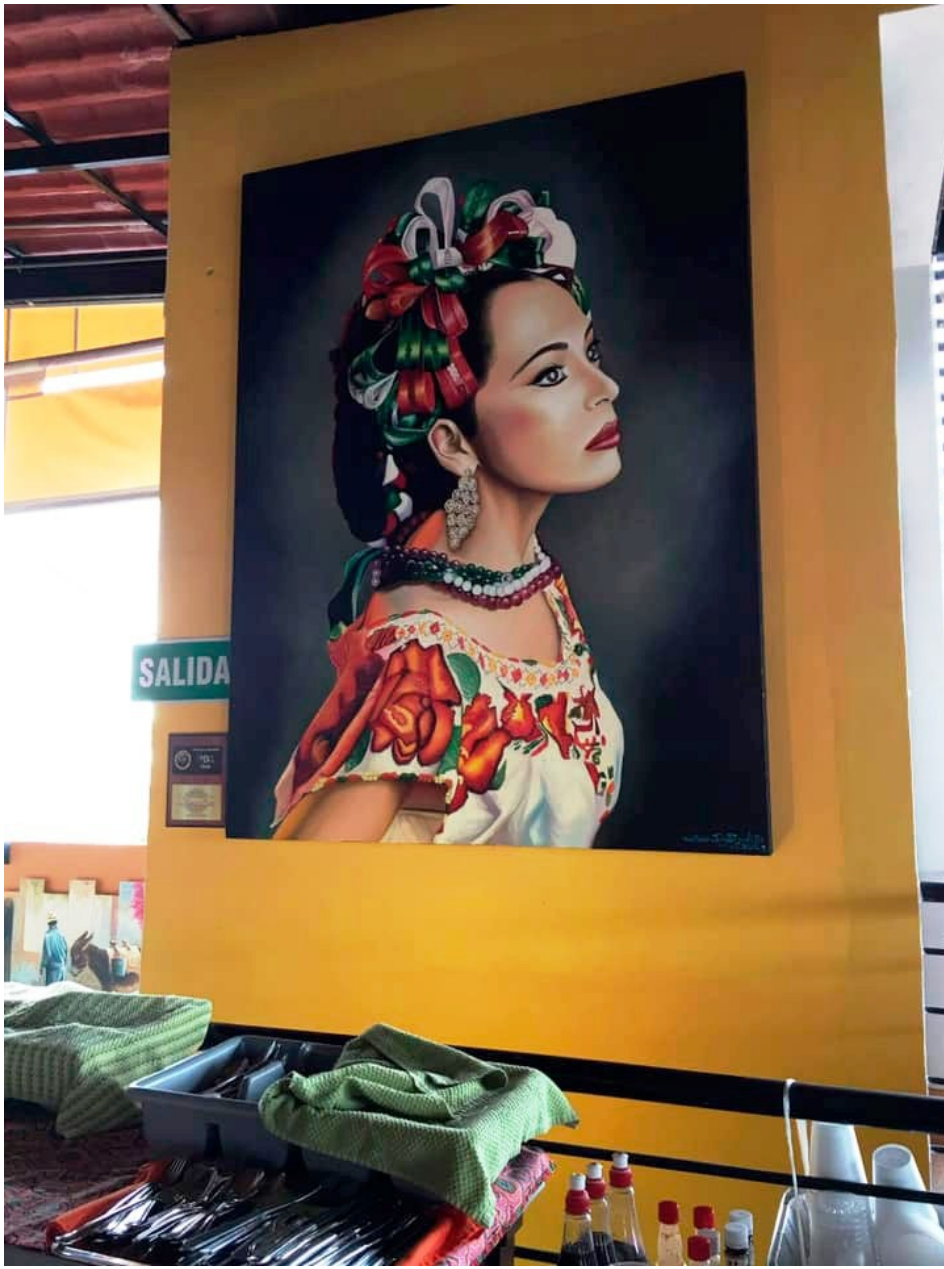


Rodolfo



Fernando
First Prize Winner

...Galería Mex-ECO, Mexico in Images and Artisan Crafts



A painting by Rodolfo



Rodolfo, painting boats

Galería Mex-ECO is located on Boulevard Miguel de La Madrid #14 (at the stop light by Juanito's Restaurant), Santiago, and is currently open from Monday to Friday, from 10 am - 2 pm. Stop by and visit myself or Laura to check out our collection of art work and other locally produced products such as Cuzalapa Coffee, from the Color de la Tierra indigenous women's Cooperative. You can also follow us on Facebook: @galeriamexeco ([facebook.com/galeriamexeco](https://www.facebook.com/galeriamexeco)).



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