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NO BAD NEWS

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The Whales Are Here!
Photo by Morgan Edwards.



The Little People Won!

BY DAVID FLORES

Remember when concerned Todos Santos residents staged a protest against the construction of a home on the dunes of Todos Santos four

weeks ago? Well, the Federal Attorney for Protection of the Environment Agency (PROFEPA) exercised the closure of said construction less than two

weeks after the protest. This might not be a definite closure, but rather the beginning of a lengthy legal battle. Coastal dunes provide a buffer against coastal hazards such as wind erosion, wave overtopping and tidal inundation during storm events. They also provide a source of sand to replenish the beach during periods of erosion, so touching them is a no-no. 🐦



How Fast is Los Cabos Growing?

Very, very fast. According to the Los Cabos Coordinating Council (CCC) president Julio Castillo, in 1997, when the CCC began operating, there were 42,000 inhabitants in the Los Cabos municipality and 3,500 hotel rooms. Today, Los

Cabos has 173 hotels, 20,816 hotel rooms (not counting private rental properties, Airbnb and similar apps) and over 330,000 inhabitants according to INEGI's 2020 census, which also predicts that we will be half a million people in 2050. 🐦



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Que Pasa in Cabo?

BY DAVID FLORES



Why Are There So Many Armed Guards in Los Cabos? To protect our precious tourists, both Mexicans and foreigners, the government has deployed dozens of Army, Navy, National Guard, and state and city police in the municipality's most visited touristy areas and beaches. As much as Cabo is one of the three safest destinations in Mexico, why risk our tourists?

Los Cabos to Modernize Garbage Disposal. The City Council has approved hiring an external private company

to process our trash. The company Gamamacat Logistics will set up containers in different parts of the city, then pick up the trash, transfer it to the city dump and process it to create electricity. The new deal will save the city some \$5 million USD a year.

City to Spend Millions in Infrastructure. In 2023, the city government expects to invest \$10 million USD in infrastructure throughout the Los Cabos municipality. The monies will come from the 1% lodging tax that was increased

in October this year. Hooray!

Los Cabos Breaks Records Again. The Los Cabos hotel association stated that at the end of 2022, our gorgeous tourist destination ended with the highest occupancy rate in its history, around 75 percent. It also broke the record by having the highest average room rate \$460 USD per night, also the highest in the country. Wow!

Repaired Ferry Boat Arrived in La Paz. After more than three months of waiting for parts from Europe and the lengthy time for the repairs, the San Jorge ferry boat left Mazatlan yesterday and arrived this morning in La Paz. The boat sailed fully loaded, to the relief of trucking companies that had been waiting at least 10 days to get to us. The propane supply is going back to normal soon. Hot showers! Hooray!

National Geographic Vessel Does Baja. The National Geographic's Venture ship was docked in La Paz last week, traveling up and down the Sea of Cortes with nearly 100 passengers. The Venture traces the coast of North America,

bringing travelers to Alaska and British Columbia in the summer, and heading south in the winter to navigate Baja California and the Sea of Cortez as well as Costa Rica and Panama. The ship is designed to navigate narrow inlets and wildlife-rich passageways inaccessible to larger ships. It usually docks in the San Jose del Cabo marina, so say hi if you see it!

The U.S. Comes to the Rescue of Southern Baja. U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar and his Texan hat met with our state governor Victor Castro to discuss the support of the U.S. in developing clean energy projects throughout our state. U.S. companies will invest in wind-generated, solar and natural gas energy plants with a total capacity of producing 220 megawatts before the end of 2023. Thanks, Gringos!

New International Airport Terminal Opens. This one, at the Cabo San Lucas airport, will mainly welcome private aircraft. The remodeling began in 2018 and is now finished with a food section, bar, coffee shop, commercial units, VIP area, and seasonal art exhibits. The airport will be able to serve 500 people per hour and over 1 million visitors a year. Congrats! Can't wait to go check out the new bar.

New, Paved Street to Be Built in La Paz. In another effort to reduce traffic congestion at the entrance to La Paz arriving from Cabo San Lucas, the city will invest \$3 million USD to pave and enhance a new street. This one will go from the Calafia neighborhood (just past the state university) to the whale's Tail sculpture near the airport. Ground-breaking will take place in February or March of next year. Hooray!

Buy More Tacos, Get Us Another Ambulance! Two more ambulances arrived in Southern Baja and one of them was donated by the Carnitas Los Michoacanos company, which sells thousands of delicious carnitas (fried pork) ta-

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cos around our state. This ambulance will go to La Ribera on the East Cape, where it is badly needed. The second ambulance was donated by former Canuck paramedic Paul Charbonneau to the magical town of Todos Santos. Thank you both!

Storytellers Wanted! The Todos Santos Writers Work-
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

The Shaman Way and Kratom

BY FERNANDO RODRIGUEZ

For anyone who has never heard of Kratom, we are here to educate the average person about the plant. Kratom is an herbal extract that comes from the leaves of an evergreen tree known as *Mitragyna speciosa* which is grown in Southeast Asia. Kratom leaves can be chewed, and dry kratom can be swallowed or brewed. Kratom extract can be used to make a liquid product. The liquid form is often marketed as a treatment for muscle pain, or to suppress appetite and stop cramps and diarrhea. Kratom is also sold

as a treatment for panic attack.

The Mayo Clinic reports that at low doses, kratom acts as a stimulant, making users feel more energetic. At higher doses, it reduces pain and may bring on euphoria. At very high doses, it acts as a sedative, making users quiet and sleepy. Some people who practice Asian traditional medicine consider kratom to be a substitute for opium. The leaves contain a chemical called mitragynine, which works like opioids such as morphine.

Kratom takes effect after

five to ten minutes, and its effects last two to five hours. The effects of kratom become stronger as the quantity taken increases. Kratom has a number of known side effects, including weight loss, changes in urine and constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, delusion, liver damage, muscle pain and can also affect the mind and nervous system as well as cause seizures.

The plant has been a popular energy-boosting herb among laborers working in Asian countries since the early 19th century but its traditional medical use extends much further than that.

The effects of Kratom are unique. It has some qualities that are stimulating, while also possessing other attributes that are sedative in nature or anxi-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

More Taxes! Tax Alert!

BY DAVID FLORES

Not for us Cabo residents, fortunately. The state congress is looking at the possibility of charging a special tax to cruise ship passengers this time. The state governor supports the idea, and even went too far when he said, "If they don't want to pay, they can stay on board, they don't leave that much money." He prob-

ably wasn't told that Mexico welcomed 5.1 million tourists bringing in \$390,000 USD, not including the docking fees, where Cabo is the most expensive in the country at over 50 grand per ship/night. Cruise ship passengers spend an average of \$100 each, compared to \$65 ten years ago. Helloooo Mr. Governor! 🐯





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Nonprofit Outgrows Facility as Community's Medical Needs Grow

BY KATHRYN REED

Since its inception in 2016, the Padrino Children's Foundation has outgrown its space three times. That is why the nonprofit is on a quest to raise \$750,000 for a two-story, 5,000-square-foot building in Todos Santos. As the town's population grows, so do its needs. Each month Padrino sees new patients, with about 20 percent of the local population coming through its doors. That's 21,800 medical interventions provided to 1,211 kids since January 2017.

Dr. Alejandra Peña Salguero and Jim Cardillo with the Padrino Children's Foundation at a Dec. 3 fundraiser.

In December 2019, the reported number of medical

interventions was 10,688, with 707 children served.

Mental and social health, rare genetic diseases, and helping kids with special needs are part of the services. Financial assistance for care is a big part of what Padrino does, including paying for transportation to La Paz or Cabo and even mainland Mexico. The group also offers specialized health clinics.

"Cases have gotten more complicated over time," Dr. Alejandra Peña Salguero, medical and executive director, said at a fundraiser this month. More children are coming in who need speech therapy and help with their autism.

Nancy Naigle and Nancy

Serfass founded the organization "to provide access to professional medical care for children in need and promote wellness for children in the community of Todos Santos and the surrounding region." Both remain actively involved, including being on the board of directors.

To date, \$300,000 has been raised for the new clinic. That leaves \$450,000 still to be collected. Naigle is hopeful this will be attained in the first quarter of 2023.

Todos Santos area residents this winter are opening their homes for fundraising events to benefit the Padrino Children's Foundation.

The land in the San Vicente area of Todos Santos, which is about two blocks from the current location, has been donated. The new clinic will have a room dedicated for visiting specialists. There will also be guest suites for doctors so the foundation will no longer have to pay for hotel expenses.

Padrino used to have an annual fundraising dinner which is where a huge chunk of its operating dollars came from. The pandemic put an end to the large gathering. It has been replaced

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with several dinners at private residences, where 20 or more people gather for food and drink, sometimes live enter-

tainment, with those intimately involved giving an update on the foundation

The December gathering was the first of 14 this season, with the others to take place in January and February. The foundation is in the process of securing its status as a nonprofit in Mexico, which should then enable it to tap other financial resources.

While money is needed for the structure, dollars (and pesos) are also being raised to keep the services going. Jim Cardillo, chairman of the board, said the 2022 operating budget is about \$310,000, of which 70 percent is paid for by individual donors. The rest mostly comes from grants and fundraisers.



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Mexico's Open Skies Policy is Getting Closer

Just a few days before congress left for the holidays, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) sent a proposition to congress to open the skies of Mexico to

foreign airlines that could service several destinations within the country. His proposition favors tourist destinations like Los Cabos. The Airlines' Pilot's Union spokesperson almost

immediately stated such competition would hurt national airlines big time, instead of producing cheaper airfares, which is AMLO's alleged goal. Stay tuned. ✈



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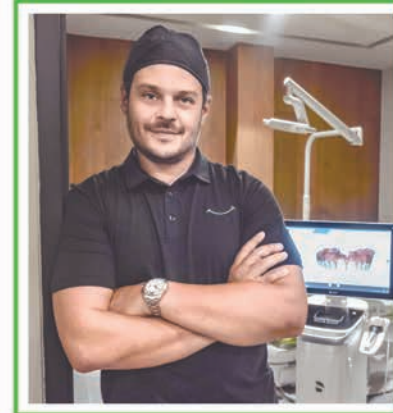
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New Fishing Tournament With a Cause Announced

BY DAVID FLORES

To honor Luis Bulnes, founder of the Solmar resorts group and pioneer of the Los Cabos hotels and fishing fleets, the Cabo San Lucas Fire Department will hold the first Bulnes fishing tournament on April 15 and 16. Signing up is \$5,000 pesos (about \$250 USD) for up to

a 4 people team. Heaviest Jurel (mackerel) wins 100,000 pesos (some 5 grand). There will be sierra and mackerel jackpots. The proceeds of the tourney go to the Cabo San Lucas Fire Department. For information: Clicerio Mercado, Cell 624-147-7559. Good luck! ✈





New Desal Plant Breaks Ground

BY DAVID FLORES

Accompanied by Victor Castro, Governor of Southern Baja, Los Cabos Mayor Oscar Leggs cemented the first cinder block of what will be our second water desalination plant. The \$62 USD million

investment will give Cabo residents 52 gallons per second of fresh, drinking water. Wait! Keep on showering with a friend! The estimated time of construction was not revealed yet. 🐦

QUE PASA IN CABO?...

continued from page 2

shop will hold its Winter 23 session from January 27 to February 4 and only has a few spots left. Don't miss your chance it you want to participate! For information and to enroll visit now <https://todosantoswritersworkshop.com>

Sportfishing Boats Are Busy! The Fund for Protection of Marine Resources (FONMAR) in La Paz reports that it has issued 169,000 fishing permits from January to November this year. That means that 15,363 boats have gone fishing per month, or 512 a day.

Wow! Thank God our ocean is still plentiful despite of commercial fisheries catching tons of fishies. But, for how long!

Business Owners and Government Agree on Noise Levels. Bending to pressure from San Jose and Cabo San Lucas business owners, the city government has agreed to put a cap on the noise coming from bars, restaurants and discotheques. Nothing was mentioned of private parties. Starting this weekend, the highest noise level allowed will be 80 decibels. In the state of California, any noise of more than 50 decibels is considered a nuisance. Let's see how inspectors enforce this new

regulation with no noise level meters. Ha!

New Flights Landing in Cabo. The Dallas, Texas-based JSX airline is flying some of its private jet fleets to the Cabo San Lucas airport, with less hassle and less time to board. The new flights come in from Dallas and Los Angeles and it seems that is the new trend -- boarding a supposedly private jet that has become a hybrid and sells seats to different parties. Cheaper, faster to board, and more luxurious, for less or the same amount of money as a commercial airline. Hop on and come to sunny Cabo!

Cabo Stunning Golf Course
CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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Cooking Like a Mexican

BY ALEJANDRA BORBOLLA



Rosca de Reyes is a very big part of Christmas celebrations in Mexico and has been around for thousands of years. It is rooted in Europe but was adopted and embraced by us and made into the deliciousness you might know now.

To understand the story about rosca de reyes we need to know first about the Reyes Magos. Los Reyes Magos – known as the Three Wise Men, or Three Kings in English – are three men who followed the North Star to the town of Bethlehem to welcome baby Jesus into the world. Melchor, Gaspar and Baltazar travelled from a faraway place to gift the Son of God with gold (representing kingship), incense (representing worship) and myrrh (representing death and mourning). These were also products with very high

commercial value at the time. It is believed that the three wise men came from different continents, Africa, Asia and Europe, although it is likely that its source was Persia, now

The three kings were referred to as “magos” which translates to wizards but not in a sense of sorcerers, rather referring to them from the Greek word



Iran. Another version says that the Magi represent the pagan religions of Asia, Africa and Europe, who come to Jesus in recognition of Christianity.

“magoi” which means highly educated, wise. Each wise man has a lot of symbols: Melchor had white skin, a white beard and rode a horse and represented an older man from Europe carrying the gift of gold. His name roughly translates to “king of light” also making an allusion to how Europe was considered the continent of enlightenment. Gaspar had olive skin and brown reddish hair and was portrayed as a middle-aged man who rode a camel. He represented Asia carrying the gift of incense. His name comes from Persian, “treasure administrator”. Baltazar was the youngest of the three, with dark skin, dark hair and rode an elephant. He represented Babylon and brought the gift of myrrh. His name meant “God protects the king”.

The story says the three wise men were told a messiah was to be born. Being men of science and astrology, they had to see for themselves, so they followed the Bethlehem star to the middle of nowhere to find a baby who was born under a palm roof in a palm bassinet.

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They presented the gifts to him once they knew he was the real deal. Said event is qualified as an epiphany or divine manifestation since the son of God was born.

How is this relevant still today? Well for one, Mexicans love traditions and are predominantly catholic or of catholic descent, even those of us who claim not to be religious. The three wise men are placed in the nativity scenes as very important characters and the best part is... they bring gifts to us when we're kids!

The roscón de Reyes is a

ring-shaped cake or sweet bread eaten on Three Kings Day. It's usually like a sweet bread cake covered with dried and candied fruits that represent the jewels on the king's crowns but nowadays we can find rosa filled with cream, hazelnut spread, and some people make them with pop culture figures. Spending the day with the family, the roscón is eaten after arriving from the cabalgata (parade) on the evening of the 5th. Others eat it for breakfast on the morning of the 6th and some save it

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Booze-Free in Baja?

BY MARLA O'BRIEN

Is there anything more quintessentially Baja than relaxing on the beach with a cold cerveza? Or sipping a refreshing margarita with fish tacos? But ... what if you are one of the multitudes trying to reduce or eliminate alcohol intake? Is it possible to enjoy Baja sober? Are these a lot of questions?

First, why go booze-free? Maybe you're doing Dry January after holiday excess, or are pregnant, trying to lose weight, or taking medication that requires you to stay on the wagon or is finding the hangovers simply aren't worth it. Whatever your motivation, you are in good company.

The "sober curious"

trend has been growing in recent years, especially amongst younger generations who skew more health-conscious than their elders. People who don't necessarily identify as "alcoholics" are choosing to remove the mind-altering drug from their lives. In the United States and Canada, new brands of alcohol-free beer and wine that taste more like their boozy counterparts are becoming readily available. So-called "sober bars" are popping up for those who want to enjoy

great drinks in a fun setting without the toxins.

What are the options for teetotalers in Baja? Sugary pops and fruit juices are ubiquitous, but they can get repetitive and taste cloyingly sweet. There is only so much cola one can take. Fortunately, local entrepreneurs and markets can help with your next liquor-free happy hour.

The popular fermented tea beverage, kombucha, is a favorite amongst non-drinkers thanks to its fizzy, slightly tart kick. San Jose del Cabo native Vanessa Mada is a self-described kombucha connoisseur who tasted different varieties every time she visited the US.

"This was six years ago

and no one was making it locally in Baja. So, I started experimenting with recipes and then decided to turn it into a business," she explained.

Mada christened her new company Cali Kombucha in honor of her love of the Californias. She started selling at the organic market in San Jose and soon expanded; her fizzy concoctions are now available at 40 locations throughout Baja Sur including stores, coffee shops, hotels, and bars.

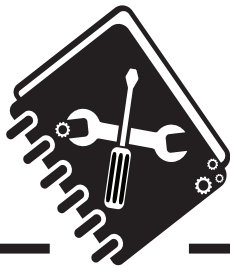
Cali Kombucha is created through a two-step brewing process, the first being a fermentation of sugar and tea with yeast and live bacteria while the second adds flavor from added fruits and herbs.

Mada uses organic assam black and sencha green loose-leaf teas, along with locally-sourced seasonal additions to create flavors such as mango, ginger, and cranberry mint. Because the fermentation process reduces 80 percent of the sugar, the resulting drink is refreshingly tangy and packed with health benefits.

"Kombucha has lots of vitamins, B, C, probiotics and antioxidants, so it helps detoxify the liver, improves the microbiome in the intestines, and strengthens the immune system," Mada said.

Cali Kombucha is sold by the bottle and is also available fresh on tap at select restaurants and shops, including

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



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Year-End Smashing Success For Los Cabos Tomatoes

Networking Spotlight Put On 'Christmas in The Colonias' For End of The Year Celebrations

BY JULIE ANDERSON

For more than 30 years, the group of English-speaking women known as the Los Cabos Tomatoes has steadily been growing from a small gathering of 8 women in the Pedregal who wanted to get to know their neighbors, to an awesome number of 650 registered women now making up the total roster. Not all of them are hardly ever here in Cabo at any one time of the year, but now meeting together approximately every two weeks for Dutch Luncheons in different restaurants, the size of their group has recently swelled to this unprecedented number of members after the Covid Pandemic during 2022.

The name "Tomatoes," as they're affectionately known,

comes from a slang expression that became popular after World War II when the U.S. sailors and soldiers came home from combat and often referred to any impressively beautiful woman as a "Hot Tomato!" So, this original group of ladies decided to adopt this nickname as a "tongue-in-cheek" title for their newborn little get-together—never dreaming that the group would last more than 30 years and grow to be 650 strong!

As a women's-only social networking group during the rest of the calendar year, everything is changed for the Holiday Season. However, each December an adventuresome outing is organized to go out around the famous Arch on the

bay of Cabo San Lucas aboard the Cabo Wave Cruiser, where husbands, partners, and/or boyfriends, are all invited out with the ladies, as well as friends in general!! This year's dinner and open-bar cruise that ventured out on December 8th was no exception, and the rousing laughter and happy exclamations of Christmas joy rippled through the crowd that celebrated the renewal of good old normal life, now that the Pandemic has practically been conquered, and life was finally getting back to what used to be regular old beach life again!!

As what felt like a happy island of rocking and dancin' people slipped out into the ocean at sunset, the baby blue sky turned bright pink as the rosy glow of the sun slipped behind the world-renowned Lover's Beach and then onto Divorcee's Beach on the other side! Everybody had rushed over to the port side of the vessel to take photos and selfies with the fabulous Arch behind them, no matter that almost everyone had taken at least dozens of that very same shot on many cruises many times before!! You just feel obligated to yourself to get just ONE more! "Maybe THIS TIME it'll



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come out even better than any of the others!!" they all seemed to be thinking to themselves! The steady beat of the Oldies but Goodies, like Michael Jackson and "Celebration", droned on as dinner was announced and the dance floor was suddenly empty as all the hungry party animals gingerly single-filed down the steep stairway to partake of the traditional Mexican specialties, perhaps to wash down all the tropical Margaritas and Pinas Coladas previously imbibed!

While the passengers arrived at the terminal and waited to board the Cabo Wave, many of the Tomatoes and their guests delivered toys and other household gifts to Donna Timmons, the long-time chairwoman of the "Christmas in the Colonias" benefit group sponsored by the Tomatoes'. These people go out into the Colonias, or mainly underdeveloped areas where the local working people who live on the outskirts around the city, on the morning of December 25th, themselves, or assisted by other community organizations, and other entities such as the Cabo San Lucas Firefight-

ers, and other individuals who simply want to give back in some small way to what they feel is the marvelous lifestyle that Cabo has given to them, and deliver toys to the children and hoodies, blankets, and basic food boxes to these underprivileged families. The people in these areas stand in long lines from 5 am in the morning waiting for their turn to receive the needed donations, and it warms a heart to see the children's eyes absolutely light up when they receive their toys and the grown-ups are so thankful to receive the hoodies and blankets and food baskets!





As you're reading this in-
CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



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That's Pretty Cool!

BY STUART GREGOR

The cooling system is one of the most important elements of your vehicle. It is responsible for circulating coolant through the engine and keeping it at a certain temperature to avoid the costly damage of overheating. Not only that, the engine is designed to also provide optimum combustion through a certain temperature range. Too cool and the fuel will not deliver maximum combustion and that relates to power, or lack thereof. Given the warm to very hot temperatures we

get in Los Cabos, this is a very important system in your car.

The cooling system is comprised of the radiator, water pump, thermostat, radiator cap, coolant reservoir and various coolant hoses. All these are subject to wear and tear and will, during the life of the car, have to be replaced. The best way to enjoy the most longevity possible is through regular maintenance. Coolant, also called antifreeze, is essential to the maximum performance of the cooling system. The coolant not only helps transfer heat but also raises the boiling point of your cooling system when under pressure provided by the radiator cap. There are various types of coolant on the market, with some vehicle manufacturers requiring a certain type of coolant. Be sure to check your manual to see which type of coolant is required! Most

manufacturers require a 50/50 mix of coolant and, now this is important ... **Distilled Water!** Distilled water is devoid of the damaging impurities of regular water. Never, unless you have no other options, put tap water in your cooling system!!!! Why? Regular tap or house water contains minerals, debris and particulates that can build up and damage your cooling system. It can actually reduce your radiator's cooling effectiveness. If you have no coolant and must add water, if possible, use distilled water. Remember to check the coolant reservoir regularly to be sure the coolant level is where it needs to be.

The water pump should last, with proper cooling system care, 100,000 miles or more. It's the water pump that circulates the coolant through the cooling system. The most common problem with the water pump is the shaft seal. If you see a slow drop in your coolant level, take a quick look at the front of the water pump to be sure it's not weeping coolant. I usually start to take a look when I find

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myself topping up the coolant more than normal. Thankfully, water pumps are not too expensive and can be replaced reasonably by a mechanic or fairly quickly, depending on the make of the car, by the do-it-yourselfer. The coolant also provides a certain amount of lubrication for the pump!

The thermostat is responsible for helping maintain a somewhat constant temperature in the cooling system. These are usually very reliable, but they can fail from time to time. They are usually rated

from 180 to 190 degrees F depending on vehicle manufacturer requirements. Whenever I have replaced a water pump, I always replace the thermostat. It's relatively inexpensive, and if you're doing the pump, replace the thermostat. It's cheap insurance!

The hoses distribute the coolant throughout the cooling system. They will need to be replaced from time to time. When my wife and I moved to Cabo, we brought down our 2006 Chevy Tahoe. In preparation for our journey down the Baja, I replaced the water pump, the thermostat, the upper and lower hoses and a couple of heater hoses....so far, so good!

Lastly, coolant can be purchased at pretty much all auto parts stores in the Los Cabos area. I've even seen it at Walmart! Just be sure to check your manual for the type required. I do hope this has been helpful for you and I wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year. Until next time, drive on and be safe! 🚗

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Michael Movie Moments

BY MICHAEL YOUNG



Cruella is a wonderful origin story for the notorious villain in the 101 Dalmatian movies. I found it witty and fun with a stunning array of costumes, mostly for the two leading ladies (47 different costumes for Cruella alone!). Played by Emma Stone, she narrates about half-way through the movie that "The thing is, I was born brilliant, born bad, and a little bit mad. I'm Cruella." After a brief, but important lesson on her early childhood, the bulk of the story relates her development as a fashion designer who learns much from The Baroness, the pinnacle of London fashion royalty, delivered with wit and



panache by Emma Thompson. The two Emmas engage their performances with such infectious enthusiasm that you can't

help but love their terrific chemistry. There is much I could write about how the critics are wrong about this film and that it is an intriguing, humorous, and delightful tale of two women exploring their relationship while it also helps us understand the Cruella we know from earlier (later) movies. Although it may be a bit too dense for kids, it is a delightful diversion for us older folks who have seen quite enough Dalmatian spots! Oh, and the costumes and hair-styling are over-the-top!

But I want to focus the rest of this review on another story about the movie industry that this film tells that I find very interesting because it reveals how the connections between different people determine how the movie develops.

The idea for a movie usually begins in the minds of one or more producers, the people who put the project together and organize the financing. In the case of this film, there are multiple producers, but the main three were Andrew Gunn, Marc Platt, and Kristin Burr. It was during Burr's tenure at Disney, in 2013, that the first idea for an origin story of the famous Dalmatians villainess was generated. Disney, of course, owned the produc-

tion rights to the Dalmatians' storyline, and so they became the main production company for this film and the primary distributor. Platt, meanwhile was one of the key producers for an important Best Picture winner, *La La Land* (and that's relevant).

Producers, though, are usually business people, not creative types, so they normally are unable, and somewhat unwilling, to actually define the movie's content. For that, they hire a director and one or more writers to take a basic idea and turn it into something approaching

a story and a vision. In this case, they had the basic novel "One Hundred and One Dalmatians!" By Dodie Smith, but the Smith book does not detail the early history of Cruella DeVil - she enters the story fully developed.

That means that people have to first develop "the Story". Steve Zissis, Kelly Marcel, and Aline Brosh McKenna were charged with this work. Two of them have relevant resumes to the rest of this narration: McKenna was a BAFTA nominee for her screenplay for *The Devil Wears Prada*. There are more than a few parallels between the Miranda Priestley/Andy Sachs relationship, in the earlier film, and the Baroness/Estella "partnership" in this film - in fact, the Baroness and the Meryl Streep character are remarkably similar. Then there is the fact that Marcel is a British writer and wrote the script for *Saving Mr. Banks* (13) - another relevant

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THE SHAMAN WAY AND...

continued from page 3

iolytic, which means it can be included with a class of medications that are used to prevent or treat anxiety symptoms and disorders. Those Kratom-based meds are sometimes called anti-anxiety medications or minor tranquilizers. Anxiolytic medications are also considered habit-forming and can lead to dependency and substance use disorders.

The different doses of kratom determine its effects. High-dose kratom is a powerful painkiller and euphoria similar to opiate pain medications. In lower doses, the kratom plant only offers mild pain relief but activates the central nervous system to make users feel more alert and energized.

The leaves contain a chemical called mitragynine, which works like opioids such as morphine. The powder takes about 20 minutes to get into your system and the capsules around 40 minutes.

Kratom is not a drug, not

an opiate, and not a synthetic substance. Natural Kratom is a safe herbal supplement that is used by millions for pain management or an energy boost. Despite coming under attack by the FDA because it's not a prescription drug, many Americans are turning to kratom to help them eliminate chronic pain, drug dependency, or as an energy boost. They say kratom gives them relief from constant pain, and many say it has actually saved their lives.

"I was fortunate enough through my Mexican Corporation to offer quality Kratom here in Mexico to consumers and stores," said Eric Gausepohl from Finmex Solutions "We offer three strains of kratom and it comes in powder form and capsules. I recommend capsules for first-time users since the powder has a hearty taste."

The Finmex Solutions Red vein kratom strains are the most popular among people using the herb to promote sleep and reduce pain. They're particularly high in the alkaloid 7-hydroxymitragynine, which is one of the primary mu-opioid

receptor agonists in the plant. "These strains are fast-acting and powerful — so make sure to start with a smaller dose when using these strains for the first time," added Eric. "The strongest kratom currently available for managing pain is the red maeng da strain."

The most popular, green vein kratom strain is considered more balanced than its other strain types. Their effects are somewhere in the middle between stimulating and relaxing — but there are exceptions. Some green kratom strains are much more stimulating than the rest.

The green vein kratom is considered well-rounded and can be used for both energy and sleep support, depending on the dose. They're a great option for beginners looking to experience kratom for the first time. The white vein kratom is the direct opposite of the red vein extract. They're only mildly sedative and analgesic but offer excellent stimulating and euphoric qualities instead. They induce a feeling of clear-headedness and a positive attitude which makes them excellent options for people using kratom in small doses to enhance memory or other cognitive issues. Many individuals use white vein kratom first thing in the morning in place of coffee or in microdoses to promote focus and concentration.

The red vein kratom is reserved for use in the evening when the stimulating effects of white kratom start to wear off. Of course, a person's weight

and tolerance are different but a normal dosage of two grams is a good way to start low and add as you go to get the required result.

Kratom is not an FDA-approved medication, so everyone who uses it does so at their own risk, and a person has to be at least 18 years or older to obtain the drug, in much the same way as alcohol and cigarettes. Like anything out on the market, kratom is safe so long as one uses it responsibly and it is best to obtain kratom from a reputable and trustworthy source.

Using kratom responsibly refers to following the general dosage guidelines, not going overboard with doses, and not using kratom constantly. Using too much kratom or taking high doses every day could potentially lead to addiction. Also do not take with a high volume of alcohol or any other drugs without consulting a doctor.

"Kratom is not an opiate

and is good at helping people ween off opioid addiction," said Carlos Diaz, originally from El Paso, Texas, who works in property management.

"In Cabo, we are currently selling at Cabo Cannabis Company, which is near Rips bar and Jungle Bar," said Gausepohl, who resides in Cozumel, but has lived in Cabo for the past 10 years. "And it will soon be sold in El Pescadero, San Jose, and La Paz, very soon. If any store or pharmacy would like to carry our product email us at info@solutionsfinmex.com." Kratom is also available at the following Cabo San Lucas location -- The Shaman Way Holistic Healing Shop directly behind Solomons Landing. 951-514-1004.

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How Vacation Rentals Have Changed In Cabo

BY NICK FONG

The popularity of using homes and condos as vacation rentals in Cabo has been high for decades and the market has been evolving as well over the last couple of years. Although obvious factors like COVID-19 have certainly contributed to this dramatic market evolution, the cultural changes that occurred in its aftermath have made the largest impact. That, combined with the growing popularity of Cabo has created the "perfect storm", in a good way. In this article, uncover

how the market has changed for the better and how Cabo has responded to those changes to better accommodate tourists and homeowners alike.

Vacation-rental homeowners now have a new approach

After the COVID situation had calmed back in 2021, people have been vacationing in Cabo in droves and for longer stays. In fact, now that more people work from home, many of them enjoy renting a home in Cabo for two to three

months at a time.

Today, many new developments are focusing their attention on vacation rentals due to this much higher demand. On top of that, vacation rentals have become the new normal for property owners throughout Cabo. Over the last year, many investors have come to Cabo to buy homes and use them as vacation rentals. And since property values are always rising throughout the area, their investments are quite sound while providing amazing income at the same time. As such, that vacation-rental income not only covers their mortgage, but it also provides great profit every month.

There's a stand-out local example of how the vacation rental industry has changed recently. In Vista Vela, located in one of Cabos' best residential zones, there were only four vacation rental condos in that community just a few years ago. Now there are 40 vacation rental condos to date. But despite being a popular vacation location, Vista Vela is still an ideal place to find great rest and relaxation.

Community responses to the vacation-rental industry explosion

Since more and more houses and condos are being used as vacation rentals, communities are certainly affected by that. Each week, different families spend time there, in the pools, and around the area – people that residents do not know. And in Cabo, visitors enjoy having a great time with various tourist activities. As such, HOAs and city ordinances have been updated to increase control and limitations. Normally, the limits and controls imposed on communities regarding vacation rentals have a negative effect on the vacation-rental

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industry. But when handled properly, both sides win, which has been the case throughout Cabo.

How to pick a great vacation-rental agency/property management company

When looking for an amazing vacation rental in Cabo, make sure you choose a vacation-rental agency that provides great hospitality services. When renting through someone who really cares about the quality of your vacation and the quality of your vacation rental, your time in Cabo will leave you with the best memories that only Cabo can offer.

It's also important that your vacation rental is clean and well-maintained. You don't want to deal with issues while you're on vacation. Also, personal touches like a welcome basket make all the difference. It is good to know you're in great hands while on your vacation, and a great vacation-rental agency/property management company will provide all of that and more.

Are you thinking of owning a vacation rental in Cabo?

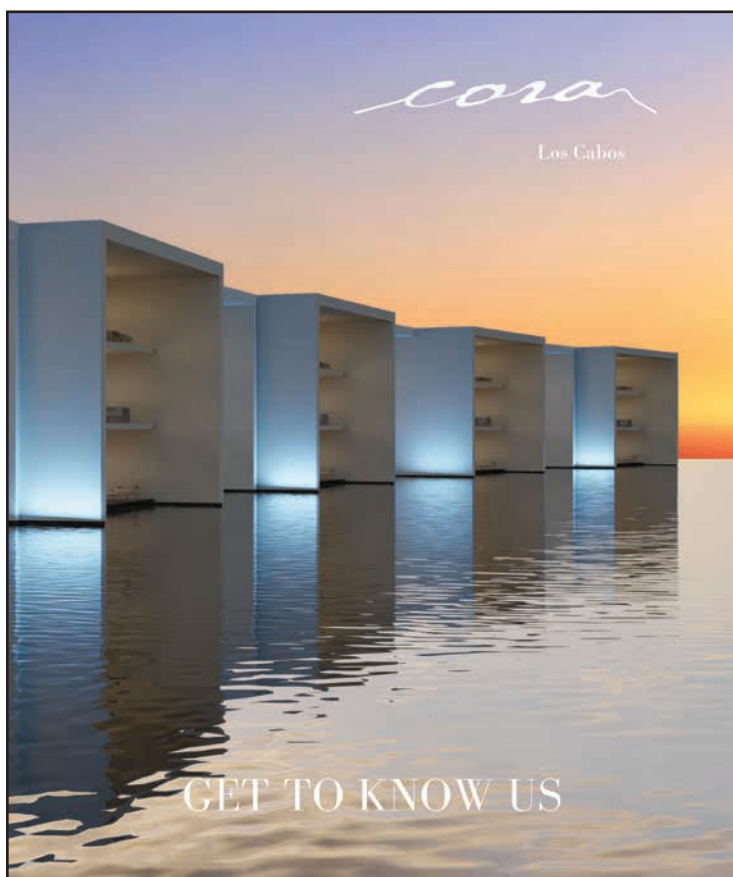
Unless you already own a home in Cabo, consider some recent statistics before making your real estate purchase. First, the largest proportion of vacation-rental properties is

two-bedroom homes, which boast the most booked nights throughout the year. Regarding the current annual revenue by bedroom, 32% of all properties have an annual revenue of the market median that is \$42,802 or more. Last year, the market median was \$17,192 and 30% of properties earned at or above that value.

Another factor to consider when making a real estate purchase is the demand by property type. Taking up almost all the market share, standalone homes receive 95% of bookings and they make up 95% of the supply in Cabo San Lucas. That means multiunit homes make up only 5%. The average occupancy for this market is currently 64%. For this time period last year, that number was 48%, meaning there has been a 33% increase in just one year.

To see the Vacation Rental Market Report for 2022, just visit ronival.com/ronival-property-management-group-in-cabo/ to see an article containing the download link.

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Acquisition Of Properties In Mexico

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Foreigners may lease and own real estate and other properties in Mexico. However, several guidelines must be taken into account before purchasing real estate:

Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution grants the Mexican Nation ownership of the land and water within the territory and provides that the Nation shall oversee the transfer of ownership rights to individuals, by creating private property.

Although Section I of the aforementioned article, grants the right to acquire the dominion of land and water only by Mexican individuals and companies, it also gives the State the power to grant the same right to foreigners, subject to the condition that these foreigners agree before the Ministry of Foreign

Relations to consider themselves as Mexican nationals regarding the acquired property and not to invoke the protection of their country of origin with respect to the same. If the covenant is breached, all rights to such property shall be reverted to the Nation.

A foreign individual or company may directly own land in Mexico except in what is described by Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution as the "restricted zone." A zone within one hundred kilometers (sixty-one miles) of the international border and fifty kilometers (thirty-one miles) of the seacoast.

Foreign individuals or companies and Mexican companies 100% owned by foreigners may purchase of real estate for residential purposes within this "re-

stricted zone" has to be through a trust fund for fifty years. In this kind of trust fund the bank will retain the property title but the foreigner is the beneficiary and may use and enjoy such premises and may sell or even inherit the rights to it. However, all operations regarding the property must be notified and approved by the bank.

Note: Mexican companies with 100% foreign capital may own property directly in the "restricted zone" for other non-residential purposes.

There are other restrictions to be aware of when trying to acquire property for agrarian, livestock, and forestry purposes: Foreign companies could not own property for this objective and foreign individuals should observe the land size limitations.

The acquisition of real estate must be conducted before a public notary, judge or property registrar officer and two witnesses when its value does not exceed the equivalent of 365 times the daily minimum wage. For higher values, the transaction must be conducted by a Public Notary and registered in a deed. The parties should pay taxes in a real estate purchase.

The acquisition may be done personally or through an agent with representation (power of attorney valid according to Mexican laws).

Even if there is no restriction for any migrant status to acquire property, except by transmigrates after buying property of getting rights to a property in the "restricted zone," foreigners are compelled to get a visitor visa.

A permit must be obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Flores Magon 1 anexo, Tlatelolco, México, D.F.) or any of its delegations in the States of the Republic. This will be an agreement to be considered a Mexican citizen in connection with the property, meaning that diplomatic protection from a foreign government will not be invoked and that the alien will submit to the jurisdiction of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Introducing Atrium Plaza

Last month, the upscale Atrium Plaza residential and retail project was officially inaugurated in a fitting festive holiday atmosphere. The Atrium Plaza project consists of 20 units that make up the residential portion which includes twelve 3 bedroom units, four 4 bedroom units and four 2 bedroom units. This modern architectural design is juxtaposed by the historic cultural vibe of downtown San Jose del Cabo.

The Atrium Plaza has quietly been under construction for the last year and a half. If not for the Pandemic, it would have been up and running for the better part of two years.

The marvelous catering was fitting with the occasion and was the clear choice given the two restaurants (Es Por Ti and Simaruba) existed on site before the Atrium Plaza apartments became their permanent neighbor.

project. "I saw it as a great opportunity to provide upscale, modern and safe housing for professionals with families. Because of the culture, history and the plethora of amazing dining options. Not to mention the proximity to the airport," Vargas explains. "There has been a need for a unique project like this that checks all the right boxes."

With downtown San Jose del Cabo determined as the ideal location for this endeavor, it couldn't go wrong. And then it went completely wrong when Covid-19 ground construction of the project to a halt. To be sure, Vargas was disappointed by that unforeseen development, but understood this was no reason to become dismayed, as construction timelines being delayed are a constant reality in his line of work.

"It was a big, big disappointment but I knew in my heart that as soon as we could get back to work the project would be completed by 2023 if not



The apartments are nestled neatly behind the aptly named Es Por Ti Bakery (It's For You Bakery). If you hail from Canada and/or the U.S. and are feeling homesick, stop by and sample a chocolate croissant or cinnamon roll. I'm not sure what their secret sauce is or if it is all about their baking techniques. After a mouthwatering first bite of the cinnamon roll, I was in heaven. I love the bakeries in Mexico, especially those in Guadalajara. I can't quite pinpoint why, but the baked goods here have a very different flavor and texture to my over sensitive palate.

Not to be outdone, the hors d'oeuvres were provided by Simaruba and did not disappoint. I thought I was nibbling on a crab cake, which is not my go to on such occasions. I discovered that these delectable appetizers were fish croquettes much to my pleasant surprise.

Pedro Vargas is the architect/developer behind this ambitious project. Vargas struck me as a hands-on individual. My first impression of the man is lasting. He introduced himself to me with a firm handshake and warm smile as if I was on the guest list, unaware that I was there in the role of a reporter.

I was curious to know why Vargas felt downtown San Jose del Cabo was the ideal location for his latest

before," Vargas said.

Be that as it may, Vargas is delighted that the project is moving full speed ahead with his plan to make the Atrium Plaza the premiere upscale residential rental option in Los Cabos.

The decision to make Atrium Plaza appealing to discerning renters and more prominent in the public eye is precisely why retail businesses that cater to providing the highest quality home furnishings are such a sound fit.

The Atrium Plaza apartments, with their stellar location, modern design, underground parking, elevators and conveniences are set up swimmingly to serve a growing number of professionals with families.

It's projected that the complex will be completed by the end of February or March at the latest. Retail stores have already been open and conveniently provide suitable accoutrements for renters in need of cookery, artwork, and essential furnishings including but not limited to tables, chairs, couches, flatware and bedding.

As for the future, Pedro Vargas is eagerly anticipating the completion of the residential phase of his project and the good tidings it will bring. That would be befitting for a man who has worked so hard and steadily at his craft. 🐦

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January 2, 2023

Buying Presale Property in Mexico

Congratulations! You have decided to purchase a new property in Mexico, and you have seen quite a few advertisements regarding presale properties. The prices are very attractive, you are being offered the first choice of units, and perhaps they have even offered to include other incentives like upgrades and furnishing packages. But what is a presale property? And what are the steps in purchasing one?

What is a Presale Property?

A property is considered presale if it is still under construction or a property in which the condominium regime has not been completed. The condominium regime is a document granted by a Notario Publico and recorded in the Public Property Registry.

What are the Steps for Selecting & Purchasing a Presale Property?

First, you will want to select a real estate broker who will help you find the right property. Once you have found a property you are interested in, you should ask your broker to find out the following information from the developer:

Will the property be subject to a rental plan?

What are the average HOA fees?

What is the developer's experience?

If possible, ask your broker to show you other properties completed by the developer.

When you are ready, your broker will help you make an offer. Since an accepted offer will generally require a deposit, it is highly recommended that you review all documents with a lawyer before you sign them. A lawyer will be sure the deposit is refundable if issues arise during the due diligence process and you do not wish to continue.

Once your offer is accepted, a Promise of Sale Contract will be drawn up. Again, it is critical that the contract is reviewed by

a lawyer to be sure your interests are being represented. Your lawyer will also complete a due diligence process during which the following documents will be requested and reviewed against the public record registered with the municipal and state governments:

- Title of the property and tax information
- What kind of structure the developer has and who owns the company
- Construction licenses
- Condominium regimen, if available
- The Promise of Sale Contract will include:
- Developer's legal background
- Purchase amount & installments
- Terms of the sale
- Penalties in case of non-compliance by either party
- Construction start and completion dates & delivery date

Any other offers or promises made by the developer

Once the review is complete, the Promise of Sale contract will be revised, and you will review the contract with your broker and your lawyer before you sign. Remember, once it is signed, it is the absolute proof between the buyer and developer that a legal agreement has been entered into.

Remember, the Promise of Sale Contract is the only claim and evidence of purchase. It is not a title of the property. The property title can only be issued when the developer obtains its Condominium Property Regime.

For more information about presale properties or any questions related to purchasing real estate in Mexico, please contact our experienced team of real estate attorneys.

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Pickleball Popularity Grows

BY FERNANDO RODRIGUEZ

According to a 2022 report from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, pickleball is America's fastest-growing sport with over 4.8 million "picklers" and growing interest in Mexico and other parts of the planet. Pickleball is often described as a combination of tennis, Ping-Pong, and badminton. The sport has grown by 40% between 2019 and 2021.

The game was invented in 1965 on Bainbridge Island, which is a very short ferry ride from Seattle, Washington. Three fathers, whose children were bored with their usual summer-time activities, are credited with creating the game.

In Cabo San Lucas, players enjoy the sport at the Del Mar International School Tennis Center. New players are welcome to join the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday group from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Other pickleball games can be enjoyed at the one court offered at the Four Seasons Resort Los Cabos at Costa Palmas, while Hacienda Encantada Resort & Residences has two pickleball courts on their premises. Secrets Puerto Los Cabos Golf & Spa Resort also has one court but can easily set up courts for at least three more groups.

Villas de Palmar offers a few outdoor pickleball courts

as well, and so does Esperanza Resort which charges players \$35 an hour for up to four guests. Esperanza also offers a beginner's clinic which covers the fundamentals of the game from safety, grip, paddle positioning, dinking, serve/return, and scoring explanations every Wednesday and Friday from 9 to 10 a.m.

Half of all serious pickleball players in North America, who play eight or more times a year, were 55 years of age and older, according to the USA Pickleball Association. But the vast majority of casual players are under 55, and the fastest-growing segment of all pickleball players are under 24.

Oviel Godines, better known in Southern Baja California pickleball circles as Oviel Chaparro, is a 28-year-old star of the sport, who won the silver trophy at the Los Cabos Open Pickleball Tournament in the mixed doubles division with his teammate, Lizzy Coghill. The

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dynamic duo lost in the October 27-29 pro doubles final against Americans Katie LaFrance and Josh Gilmour.

Godines has given private tennis lessons over the years and is the owner and operator of Baja Calisthenics, which is located along the Arroyo service road near the Fed Ex warehouse under the bridge off Highway 19 by the toll road. Oviel's tennis background is what has led to the success he has enjoyed as a top-flight pickleball player.

"I feel lucky, proud and blessed with what I've accomplished in this sport the last four years, which has included going to Dallas, Texas for their International Tournament," said Oviel.

The First Los Cabos Pickleball Tournament was held at the Spa Resort Buenavista Hotel in East Cape, attracted 136 contestants, and \$10,000 pesos in prizes were awarded to winners in the male, female and mixed pairs double elimination competition categories.

"We will continue working together with the municipal tourism department, headed

by Donna Jeffries, in order to promote sports tourism, which although we know it leaves an economic benefit for our community, is equally important for promoting physical activity throughout our municipality," said Ricardo Manríquez Castillo of the Mayor's office.

In San Jose del Cabo, there are pickleball courts located near the Farmers Market at the Punta Azul Sports Club, and in Los Barriles at the Playa del Sol hotel, while Tres Palapas Baja Pickleball Resort held their own tournament in August. 🐦

ACQUISITION OF PROPERTIES...

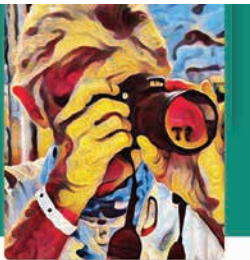
continued from page 14

the Mexican courts in all cases, under the penalty of losing said property.

Note: Please verify that the property you would like to buy has no mortgage and that the seller has paid the real estate property tax and water contribution fees. For further assistance regarding this matter please contact a lawyer. 🐦

Fish Report

BY GARY GRAHAM
THAT BAJA GUY



Cabo

Cabo is experiencing fabulous fishing for anglers targeting billfish in what should traditionally be a slow time. Boats were fully booked for many days – no more slow season in Cabo! Not only do we have fish, but we also have a nature show out there. While fishing, anglers often see whales, dolphins, turtles, and sea lions.

Striped marlin has been the predominant species recently, with no signs of the fishing slowing down if the bait stays in the area. There were three areas boats on day trips fished recently. The first spot was the Old Lighthouse, close to Cabo, maybe just over a mile from the port. Marlin could be caught here by dropping bait with a lead weight towards the bottom. Because

the fish were found in deep water, boats sat and drifted, letting their live mackerel swim.

This can be a frustrating way to fish though it yields results if you are patient. A few of our boats fished this way before heading up to the Golden Gate, about 15 miles from Cabo.

The action was much more exciting at the Golden Gate; the fish were eager and easier to catch, and the hookups were fast and furious, with plenty of catches in the 90 to 130-pound class.

Doubles were common, and the fish were extraordinarily feisty and robust – a real challenge on lighter tackle. In addition, the bait was plentiful.

Most of our guys headed there early in the day. Then

they tried for tuna farther north, looping back along the shoreline towards Cabo to see if they could pick up some table fish.

The third spot the boats headed to was the Finger Bank – located 50 miles from Cabo and at the geographical limit for day charters.

Sensational fishing at this spot for those willing to pay the required fuel surcharge. However, many anglers enjoyed the best day of their lives catching multiple marlin. ... Pisces Sportfishing Fleet

Puerto Los Cabos

Only moderate numbers of anglers are in town now. However, quite a few vacationing families are arriving – taking advantage of the ideal wintertime climate with its clear sunny skies and temperatures

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Fish Killer Of The Week





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Keaton Lesnik came to La Paz for the first time with his dad from Utah. They had just one day to fish, and it happened to be one of the few days that it wasn't quite so windy and rough. So, they fished with Tailhunter Sportfishing, and he got a few dorado like this one. He had it cooked up at Tailhunter Restaurant on the Malecon. These were his first-ever dorado (Mahi-Mahi)!

**QUE PASA IN CABO?...**

continued from page 6

Changes Routing. To accommodate ongoing projects, like the recently inaugurated Beach Club, the Quivira Golf Club is changing some of its fairway routings. Already belonging to the prestigious Golf Digest's list of the "World's 100 Greatest Golf Courses" the routing changes will just enhance the dramatic views such as the one on the 5th hole, shown here. Fooore!

San Jose Resort Changes Hands. The Viceroy luxurious and multi-awarded resort located in the hotel zone of San Jose del Cabo has been sold for the second time, this one to real estate investment and hospitality management Highgate. The Viceroy was designed and built by the awarded Mexican architect Miguel Angel Aragon, who sold it a few years back to the L.A.-based, ultra-luxury Viceroy 10-hotel chain. The amount of the transaction will be disclosed at a later date.

COOKING LIKE A MEXICAN...

continued from page 7

as a snack or for dessert after lunch. The roscón holds a secret: a small figurine of a king or a baby Jesus. Whoever finds the small figurine is obligated to buy or make tamales for Candelaria or Candlemas on February 2.

Ingredients:

2.2 lbs. of flour

1 ¼ cups of sugar

1 cup vegetable shortening

1 cup of butter

14 eggs

2 ounces of yeast dissolved in ½ cup warm water and rested for 10 minutes

1 tablespoon orange blossom water (If you can't find this don't worry. You can always use a little bit of liquor with water.)

1 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon of icing sugar

Now, the following ingredients are not very easy to find, but they are just to make it look like the jewels of the crown so they can be easily replaced by any caramelized fruit.

Crystallized and diced ate (can be bought at any Mexican supermarket)

8 crystallized figs into wedges

1 orange, cut into strips crystallized

Plastic babies (as many as you want, depending on how many parties you want to go to in February. These can't be ANY plastic babies. They have to be the ones specifically sold for this purpose at bakery stores and similar or they will not be food safe.)

Procedure:

1. Make a dry well of flour and put in the center the sugar, the butter in pieces, 1 cup of shortening, 11 eggs, the orange blossom water or liquor, the yeast and salt. Mix all this very well.

2. Knead until dough no longer sticks to the table and becomes elastic.

3. Place in a high-walled bowl, cover with a damp cloth and let stand in a warm place until it doubles in size.

4. Form a hard paste with remaining shortening, icing sugar and egg yolks.

5. When the dough has increased in size, knead again.

6. Form a round, elongated strip, from 5 to 8 cm, and shape the ring.

7. Place the plastic babies in random. This also depends in how much fun you want to have.

8. Afterwards, place on a baking sheet, greased and floured. Let stand until doubled in size again.

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9. Preheat oven to 200° C.

10. Beat eggs and varnish.

11. Lightly moisten your fingers and the dough made of butter, icing sugar and egg yolk, and decorate with crystallized fruit. The idea is to have a sugar strip about two inches wide followed by strips of fruit in a pattern.

12. Finally, bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown.

The original Roscas were characterized by their round shape, however, in Mexico, possibly because more and more were invited to the party, the Rosca de Reyes was gradually gaining size. With this, the round shape turned into an oval shape, so it was bigger and enough for all the guests.

For the hot chocolate:

The amount may vary depending on how many people you are having but for six cups of chocolate you need:

4 cups of milk

1 disk of traditional Mexican chocolate

Boil the milk in a pan big enough to fill only ¾ of it. Be sure that while you boil it, you

must stir it all the time. When it is boiling, just drop the chocolate tablet and whisk until it is completely dissolved, and you get some foam at the top.

Serve it really hot. 🍴

BOOZE-FREE IN BAJA...

continued from page 8

Baja Brewing and Chula Vegans in Cabo and Mini Super Munchies in Pescadero. For a complete list of locations, visit cali-kombucha.com.

"I'm really proud of people that stop drinking and am happy that there are these non-alcoholic alternatives for them," added Mada.

Providing booze-free options for guests was also a priority for entrepreneurs Ted and Liz Mitchell when they founded Todos Santos Brewing in 2017.

"We made a very conscious decision to dedicate taps to non-alcoholic offerings. We didn't want people to be limited because they don't

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



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YEAR-END SMASHING...

continued from page 9

formation, December 25th will already have come to pass, but the work of 'Christmas in the Colonias' just begins to start all over again saving up donations all year long for Christmas in 2023! Donations of any kind for December 2023 are very much appreciated. And donations can also be delivered at the elegant Holiday Dinner Party organized every December by the 'Tomatoes' to celebrate the fun and success that the group has enjoyed all during the different seasons of the previous year.

This time again repeating the glamorous event in the gastronomic wonderland that is the '12 Tribes Restaurant' in the Casa Dorada Hotel on Medano Beach in the heart of Cabo San Lucas.

As soon as dinner was served, the star-studded sky went even more ablaze with torrents of fireworks from hotels all around the bay of San Lucas, giving a definite festive atmosphere to the gathering! And then the dancing began: Cha-cha-cha', Kool and the Gang, The Rolling Stones, Ricky Martin, all the famous dance numbers from the '50s, '60s and '70s!!

With the announcement of a raffle of gift donations from the Casa Dorada Hotel, finally everybody stopped to

catch their breath and went back to sit down at their tables raffle tickets in hand. The first drawing was for a "Special Romantic Dinner for 2 with a bottle of wine down in a specially- decorated tropical setting on a secluded area on the beach in front the hotel", and there was a great heavy sigh throughout the room because everybody seemed to want to win this one!! Galileo Vega, the Food and Beverage Manager of the hotel, made the announcement of this item, and Tina Kenner breathlessly ran up to receive her prize. The second item to be raffled off was a one-hour Ritual Holistic Saltwater Massage in the Casa Dorada Saltwater Spa, and was enthusiastically received with her winning number by Tomato Member Angela Conner.

After that, the dancers couldn't be kept off the floor and the party finally ended with big warm Christmas hugs and best wishes for an even better 2023!!

For information on the Los Cabos Tomatoes contact Sandra Berry on +52 624 143 4469 loscabostomatoes@gmail.com ✉

MICHAEL MOVIE MOMENTS...

continued from page 11

connection! Once the story is developed, then you have to turn it into a screenplay with scenes, settings, and dialog, and that was done by Dana Fox and Tony McNamara. McNamara received an Oscar nomination for his screenplay of *The Favourite* - yet another relevant connection.

The director is the third key role in the development of a film. In 2018 - after the original director, Alex Timbers, left due to scheduling conflicts - Disney put Craig Gillespie in the director's chair. Gillespie is an Australian director who directed two key movies to Oscar nominations, *Lars and the Real Girl* (07) and *I, Tonya* (17), both well-received

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

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FISH REPORT...

continued from page 17

in the high 80s.

With ocean-water temperatures ranging from 75 to 77 degrees, there is still excellent action for some of the most popular pelagic gamefish species. The main targeted species are dorado, yellowfin tuna,

and wahoo. Some fortunate anglers are catching a Grand Slam of all three of these fish during one morning's outing.

The activity center has been from Cardon, La Fortuna, to Punta Gorda. Live bait has become scarce in this area, with ballyhoo or squid being the primary bait used. Some anglers have been able to obtain chihuil, but as usual,

there is never a guarantee.

The yellowfin tuna mostly come from the Cardon area, drift fishing with strips of squid within a mile or two of the shore. The sizes ranged from 20 to 70 pounds. Some charters accounted for up to four tuna. The bite varied a bit from day to day, depending on currents, etc. Overall, this was the best yellowfin action we

have seen in the past month.

Dorado continue to be the most common fish being hooked, with limits and additional releases being typical. The sizes were mostly under ten pounds, but some exceptions were larger bulls up to 15 pounds, striking mainly on trolled ballyhoo. Wahoo are still around in large quantities but are more finicky, as there continues to be an unprecedented number of spearfishermen chasing these same fish on the grounds where rod and reel anglers are also concentrated. The best chance for the wahoo was on slow-trolled, trap-hooked, live bait, but the bait has been tougher to find recently. A percentage of wahoo was striking on Rapalas and ballyhoo, as well as on cast and retrieved yo-yo style jigs. Again, like the tuna, some of the more fortunate anglers landed up to four wahoo on one trip, with other hookups lost as well. The average size for the wahoo was 20 to 30 pounds, but we saw fish over 40 pounds.

Not much billfish action on the San Jose del Cabo grounds now, as the principal mass of striped marlin is still on the Pacific grounds. In addition, there is not much inshore or bottom action either. However, more and more whales are arriving, besides porpoises, sea lions, and turtles, all providing extra entertainment for boat travelers. ...Eric Bricton, Gordo Banks Pangas

East Cape

Breezy conditions recently dictated that boats remain close to shore in case the notorious North Wind made a fuss. The toothy sierra dominated the catch for the few willing to forgo last-minute Christmas shopping chores.

Throw in some early morning bottom fishing that produced a few yellowtail, grouper, and red snapper providing tasty filets for the upcoming New Year's Fiesta welcoming in 2023! ...Happy New Year!

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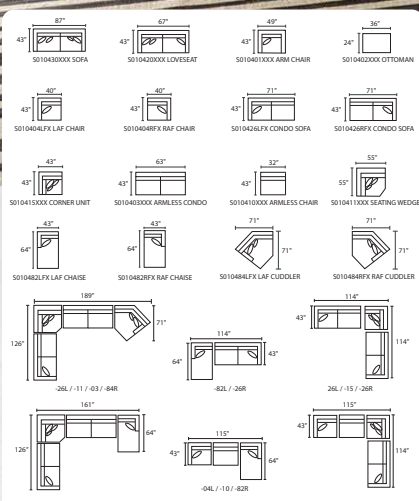
La Paz

Not much to report. The only boats on the water seem to be commercial guys working to catch fish to sell. Or they were captains feeding their families or catching fish for the holidays or a few locals. But the thing with all of them is that they can pick and choose which days are better to be on the water. Or they know they can get out for just a few hours, then come back in with whatever they can catch if the winds kick up, which they often did.

For most, the winds were just too strong and the waters too rough, with too few windows of opportunity. In fact, it was so windy the city of La Paz canceled the Christmas Boat Parade. And that was INSIDE the harbor and bay!

But there were some exciting catches. Still, strangely, some dorado are swimming around, despite the weather and the fact that dorado season pretty much ended over two months ago, in October. Some excellent 20 to 25-pound fish are still getting hooked, but most are the fun 10-pound class fish. There are also sierra, white bonito (good eating), jack crevalle, snapper, and cabrilla reported caught. But, again, few reports are coming off the water since few folks are fishing, and everyone is getting ready for the holidays ... Jonathan Roldan, Tailhunter International. 🦈

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Ask a Mexican

In the last few years, Mexican Christmas traditions have shaped and shifted to accommodate more U.S.-centric ideas. One of the biggest ones is how Christmas is celebrated and who brings gifts to the children.

How did you celebrate Christmas this year? Who was the magical character that brought the gifts to the children? Do you celebrate Mexican traditional Christmas or have you adopted foreign traditions?



Illustration by danjazzia

Sandra Ramirez, 29, government secretary. We had turkey for dinner and I guess that is an American tradition but we also make romeritos which are Mexican traditional. This year we had all the cousins home and it was a huge racket all the time. We made a game

about stealing presents which is also not traditional Mexican but very, very fun. At midnight on Christmas Eve, we lull baby Jesus in a fine handkerchief and put him on the nativity scene. He was kept aside until the day he was born. Baby Jesus, once placed on the nativity

scene, brings gifts to all the kids. There is no Santa Claus in my family.

Lucas Bricio, 40, programmer. We did not have kids around this year but my mom and I cooked dinner and made pasta, a nice cut of meat and had some wine. I guess that is not Mexican but not American either. We just treated this year as a special occasion, and had gifts but not too much like Christmas. We have lost a lot of family this year. We were not feeling too jolly.

Naomi Navarro, 24, trainer. This year we went all out for the kids. My dad dressed up as Santa Claus and made them all games and activities. It was really fun. We don't think of traditions as being from one place or another, but what we make them in our family. This year we saw a bunch of Christmas party activities which are mainly from people from foreign countries but so fun! I think Christmas is really about family and friends, no matter where the traditions originated.

Roberto Matías, 22, assistant. Our Christmas this year was really fun and all the young cousins had lots of ideas about games and drinking games since we had no kids around, and even my grandparents had so much fun

and a little extra to drink. For dinner, we make a potluck and the aunts and sisters all plan to have a full-course meal. There were some Mexican dishes and some international ones. Since we are all in our twenties, there was no need for magical characters, but grandma gave us money saying baby Jesus gave it to her for us.

Jasmin Valdes, 61, shop bagger. I had a really nice Christmas with all my baby grandchildren and they all love special activities so we made some games you would see at a regular party. Not Mexican traditionally but also not foreign. We have been doing those games since my kids were small children so I guess they are our tradition. For food, my daughters and sons made a whole pig on a grill and it was delicious, but I think not very Christmassy. The three wise men will bring gifts to the kids, but all in their homes, not mine.

Sara Gomez, 37, stay-at-home mom. I was in charge of Christmas this year since my

parents are gone and it was only my husband, kids, and me. We watched Christmas movies in the morning and baked some cookies for dessert altogether which is not very Mexican but did Mexican cookie recipes. I made a big lasagna because my kids are too young to enjoy Christmas food, and that was pretty much it. Santa and baby Jesus worked together in my home, so they brought the kids presents and candy. 🐷

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What to do in Cerritos, Pescadero and Todos Santos

BY RANDALL C. NORTHRUP

Here in Mexico, we celebrate any reason for getting together to enjoy family and friends. If that day happens to be declared a national holiday and fall mid-week, we'll just close up shop. I'm talking about pretty much everyone, even the banks. Shoot, why not take the rest of the week off. We'll just call it a "Puente" (bridge) and party on to the following Monday. Well, that won't happen on this holiday but the U.S's Independence Day from bloody old Britain is coming soon. Let's see where

the parties will be going on at this Fourth of July. We will start south of the town of El Pescadero at Km 69 heading northwest ending with the town of Todos Santos. I will also cover establishments that will be open through the summer. Shall we begin?

Cerritos Beach Inn

Head north; at Km 67 you will see the sign for Cerritos Beach Inn. You will have to go past 2 clicks and make a U-turn at Km 65. You'll see the sign to turn right towards the beach and Cerritos Beach

Inn. As you enter the property you will be greeted by the lush tropical pool with its own waterfall and waterslide for the kids. Move on into the restaurant/bar for a cocktail or a cold beer and order up some traditional Fourth of July BBQ burgers, hot dogs, coleslaw and potato salad. Enjoy the live music while you take in the amazing view of the Pacific Ocean and Cerritos beach. You can enjoy the beach, take a dip in the Pacific and then warm back up in their large jacuzzi. If you make it till the evening, there will be a fireworks show to boot. Mr. Colson puts on a great party every year.

Back to the highway and another U-turn to Km 65; make a left back down to the beach. I call this the 2nd entrance to Cerritos, a much better road than what I call the first or main entrance

close to Km 64. Don't worry, you will come out Km 64 to visit a relatively new bar called "Shaka's Delicious Wood Cantina" to wrap up the Cerritos food scene.

Cerritos Surf Town

Follow the signs to the beach-side resort, Hotel Cerritos Surf Town, previously the Mayan Village and originally the old Ejido trailer park. Boy how things have changed. A few years back the Portus Group purchased the development from Roger Pollock. Portus is the outfit that has delivered Las Ventanas above Costco in Cabo. One of the Group's latest projects is Soleado in San Jose, right on the beach in front of world famous surf at Costa Azul. They recently acquired property next to Cerritos Surf Town. As we speak, Portus is building their second Soleado right in front of Cerritos world

famous surf. Busy, Busy, these guys, I had a great conversation with General Manager, Ulyses Mejia. Surf Town is open all year and Ulyses is planning for the Fourth of July. Surf Town is open to the public for breakfast, lunch and dinner. They serve traditional Mexican food, specializing in shrimp, scallops and octopus cocktails and great sashimi plates. Spend your day on the beach or by the pool. Surf Town offers plenty of activities. Surf and volleyball right out front. If you're a beginner with no equipment just stop by the surf shack and ask for Tona. He will set you up with everything you need for a day on the beach. Tona is an excellent surfer and instructor. He will have you surfing in no time. The resort boasts the largest pools in the area and is the center of activity. Take

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



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MICHAEL MOVIE MOMENTS...

continued from page 19

films. At this point, five years after the original idea, the script was pretty much done so Gillespie was, mostly, in charge of filming and guiding it to completion. To do that, he brought with him a team of people who had been of special help in his previous films. Cinematographer Nicolas Karakatsanis had worked with Gillespie on *I, Tonya*. And film editor, Tatiana S. Riegel, had worked with him on *Lars and The Real Girl* and received an Oscar nomination for her work on *I, Tonya*. Furthermore, Gillespie had worked with actor Paul Walter Hauser in *I, Tonya*, and he ends up in an important supporting role in *Cruella*. Importantly, then, when you hire a director, you also, usually, get a bunch of other people who are used to working with the director and sharing his/her vision.

And what about the actors? Can't have a movie without them. Not only is Emma Stone eminently qualified to fill the role, but she has some very important connections. Producer Marc Platt played a key production role in *La La Land*, which earned 14 Oscar nominations and six Wins, including Leading Actress for, yes, Emma Stone. And, to put the nail in the coffin, Emma Stone played a wonderful character in *The Favourite* which won an Oscar nomination for Tony McNamara's screenplay, who was one of the writers for *Cruella*! With connections to both the producers and the writers, it isn't surprising that Stone was cast in the title role early in 2016, two years before filming started.

The casting for *The Baroness*, the other key role in this film, was more difficult. Several top actresses were considered but I suspect the desire to have a genuine British actress eventually swayed the decision. It probably helped that *Cruella* writer Kelly Marcel

wrote the script for *Saving Mr. Banks* which starred, guess who, in the leading role - Emma Thompson! Thompson was added to the cast list in 2019, just before principal filming began.

But the connections don't end there. When Emma Stone was cast as Cruella, she insisted that her hairdresser from *The Favourite* be assigned the role of creating her wigs for *Cruella*. Nadia Stacey ended up sharing an Oscar nomination for her work. Production Designer Fiona Crombie also worked with Emma Stone on both movies. Costume Designer Jenny Beavan - who deservedly won the Oscar for her work in *Cruella* - has 11 other Oscar nominations and two additional Oscar Wins for *A Room with a View* (85) and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (15). It isn't clear from my research when Beavan joined the *Cruella* team, but she was involved with at least two other movies with Emma Thompson for which she received Oscar nominations, *Sense and Sensibility* (95) and *Howards End* (92) so that might have had something to do with it.

I'm sure there are other professional relationships that helped decide who worked on *Cruella* - the film community is, like many businesses, tightly connected. Although the Academy attempts to portray the industry as a meritocracy, it is very clear that it is also who you know that gets you the jobs. A Wonderful movie, with an interesting history, well worth a viewing. (4*) **Stream on Disney + or rent from multiple sources, or wherever you get your discs!** 🐦

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Hiking Adventures in Los Cabos

BY RICK CASTAGNER

Most of these hikes are near the ocean thus can be taken all year. The ocean breeze is cooling off and the views are awesome.

The best time to hike the interior hikes is during the months directly following the rainy season, which usually ends in October.

At this time of year, you'll be offered an incredible sight of the desert in bloom. Plants turn green and bloom in all possible colors, attracting insects, birds, and bats. The desert becomes a buzzing site of the fight for survival. Most of the waterfalls are usually dry by around April.

The landscape is entirely transformed by the middle of the dry season, between April and July, when the desert's cruel domain turns every drop

of moisture into a life-saving blessing.

Cabo San Lucas

The Capes (Mt Solmar) hike

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Come explore the best views in all of Cabo by taking a hiking adventure over to Lover's Beach from the Pacific side or the Marina. You will climb an uphill mountain, don't worry it's not that difficult if you're an active person. The time it takes to climb all the way up is about 15-20 minutes, but once up there you will rest and enjoy awesome views of Cabo San Lucas! You will be able to see the Marina, Medano Beach, and the Pacific side from the very top, and take fabulous pictures and videos.

You will see the most amazing views of Cabo San Lucas

because you will be at the very top of a mountain, overlooking the Sea of Cortez and the Pacific Ocean at the same time; you will see the town of Cabo San Lucas, the Marina, Medano Beach, and Lovers and Divorce Beach. This is a must-do hike, you will get your exercise in, and have fun exploring on this adventurous hiking journey.

My favorite hike!

Satellite towers are generally situated at the highest elevation levels available. That's certainly the case in Los Cabos, where two of the area's most satisfying hikes wind toward the bases of these high-altitude landmarks.

Corridor Satellite Tower Hike

Difficulty Level: Moderate

This tower trail can be reached by a road next to the Santa Carmelo Market just before Home Depot on the four-lane frontage road. Park near the Mexicana Resort at the top of the hill and hike up the dirt road which is the service road for the tower. An easy, gradual ascension and unforgettable views that extend for miles and miles at the tower.

Pacific Satellite Tower Hike

Difficulty Level: Moderate

The satellite tower hike starts near the entrance to the Pueblo Bonito Sunset Beach Resort and it ends atop the ConAgra Mountain with magnificent views of the city, Cabo San Lucas Bay and the Sea of Cortez, the Pacific Ocean, and the wealthy hillside enclave of Pedregal. This is a popular trail with hikers, dog walkers, and of course photographers since the panoramic vistas are awesome.

The hike's trailhead can be found by driving out of downtown Cabo toward Pueblo Bonito Sunset; take the third road to the left after the traffic circle and drive in as far as you can go. The road ends at a locked tower service gate and has plenty of parking. The hike has switchbacks that are sort of paved and is the highest point

in Cabo.

Beach Hike: Tabasco Beach to the Misiones/Thompson Resorts

This is a very peaceful beach hike. You can start at either end. Bring a beach towel; enjoy the tranquility of the beach halfway thru the hike. Be careful, do not swim if a heavy surf.

San Jose Del Cabo

Estero San Jose: The Historic San Jose Estuary

Difficulty Level: Easy

This protected wildlife sanctuary can be easily accessed from the hotel zone—the beachfront area in San Jose del Cabo that hosts many of the city's best hotels—or from the downtown area via the palm-lined Paso Del Estero. The estuary offers a serene and frequently shady stroll. It is a favorite of visiting birdwatchers, with an array of colorful residents that include frigate birds, red-tailed hawks, sparrow hawks, and white herons.

Camino Cabo Este

Difficulty Level: Easy

This is an out and back option for a hike on a dirt road that follows the coast. This path runs through a couple of towns populated sparsely with tourist-type villas for folks really wanting to get away. The road follows the coastline making for pleasant views.

Starts at Buzzards Restau-

rant then goes east on a coastal oceanfront road. Hike as far as you want and you may run into some wild burros.

The food at Buzzards is great.

Cabo Pulmo

Difficulty Level: Easy

The best San Jose Del Cabo beach hike you find anywhere is right here at Cabo Pulmo. The hike to the south from Cabo Pulmo village takes you through a series of small coves, separated by rocky points underneath sandstone cliffs. The hike is difficult at high tide, so wait until you see the first reef poking up from the water. Then you know the tide is low enough to walk all the way to the south end of the bay. There are two points you usually need to scramble over. Follow where others have gone for the easiest way over. It's about three miles one-way to Corral Los Frailes, the inside cove just north of Los Frailes Point.

When you are at the south end of the bay, you can also walk out to Mermaid Beach (my name for it) which is located toward the eastern point of land. The hike is about another mile via a hillside trail. There are two wonderful coves to snorkel. The area is called a variety of names; Iguana Beach, Dinosaur Egg Beach, Mermaid Lagoon, but my favorite name is Mermaid Beach because there is a rock structure that looks just like a mermaid when viewed from the proper angle.

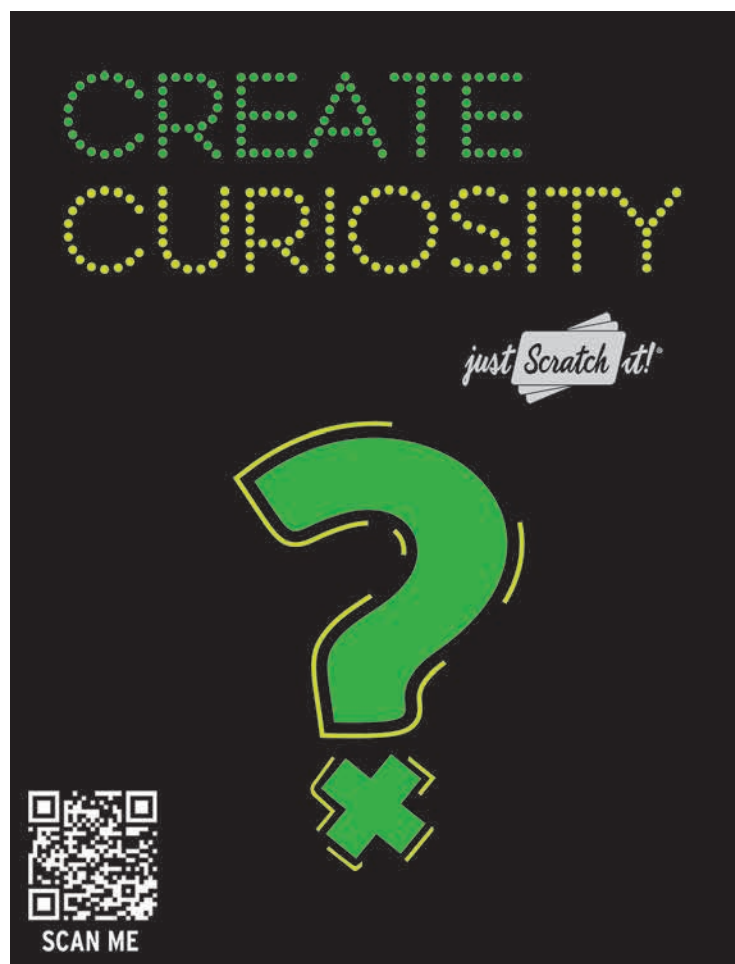
You can also have someone drive to Corral Los Frailes and pick you up if you only wish to hike one way.

Then for a treat you can drive another three miles south and take the left-hand dirt road just before the big point of Los Frailes. The road will take you down a rutted hill, past a rancho and to the beach. Great beach for a picnic.

Sierra de la Lagunas (Mountain Range of the lakes)

Not many people know that our Sierra de la Laguna

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BOOZE-FREE IN BAJA...

continued from page 18

drink," Liz shared. "This way they can have the full experience of an artisanal beverage in hand."

They create three flavors of craft sodas in-house -- ginger beer, sparkling limonada, and jamaica fizz -- using natural ingredients, a hint of agave syrup, and carbonation. You can also get these delicious drinks poured fresh to take home in your own empty wine bottles or 64-ounce growlers. Learn more at todossantos-brewing.mx.

Liz has noticed an uptick in the number of people taking a break from alcohol and a corresponding increase in their soda sales.

"On days when I'm not drinking beer, a mix of half limonada and half ginger beer is my go-to," she added.

Getting creative with mixology can actually be a fun part of ditching liquor. Visit organic and health food specialty stores such as California Ranch Markets (locations in San Jose and Cabo) and Agricole in Pescadero for unique fruit juices, bitters, and teas. Add tart cherry or beet juice to Martinelli's sparkling apple juice for a rose champagne. A splash of flavored vinegar, such as

apple cider or balsamic can add complexity and tartness to juice or club soda. Enjoy local aqua frescas from the roadside.

For lager lovers, Heineken 0.0% is now carried at most Oxxo stores and many supermarkets in Baja. As the name implies, it doesn't contain a drop of alcohol yet has enough flavor to earn second place honors in a recent "best of" poll conducted by After Magazine, a new lifestyle resource for non-drinkers. Mexican brands Sol and Corona have also created non-alcoholic versions but ironically can be harder to find here.

If you are concerned that your drinking has become a problem and you need help, there are several Alcoholics Anonymous groups throughout Baja Sur; check the pages of this Gringo Gazette for days and times in your area. Another great resource for those looking to cut back is "The Alcohol Experiment" group on Facebook, managed by "This Naked Mind" author Annie Grace. Her program is based on taking a 30-day booze break so you can truly assess how much better you feel without its numbing effects.

Becoming a teetotaler in Baja is deliciously doable and doesn't mean an end to "salud!" 🍷

WHAT TO DO IN CERRITOS...

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a yoga class, play some water volleyball or just plain lounge around the pool. Surf Town offers a day pass during the summer for \$30, which \$20 of it goes towards consumption.

Barracudas Cantina

Fifth on the list, Barracudas Cantina will be closed July 1 thru the 8. They deserve an honorable mention because they will open back up after July 8th and will stay open through the summer. Owners, Dano & Carla will be on a well-deserved vacation. Check the place out when they get back. Younger crowd but mellow. They serve delicious ceviche tostadas, fish tacos, and my personal favorite, smoked fish quesadillas, plus other tasty dishes. Dano is the purveyor of Farm-to-glass cocktails, a real Michael Angelo of mixology. You'll find him behind the bar unless the surf's up. No worries, Dano's well-trained staff will take great care of you. I met Dano a few years back. He was managing the bar at Rancho Pescadero. He served me a Mango, Passion fruit Margarita with Chili salt on the rim, mint leaf garnish and a drop of Damiana. We have been good friends ever since. OK enough reminiscing. Make a



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right, down around the corner, follow the signs past the Barefoot Luxury development to Free Souls Restaurant & Sky pool.

With beautiful ocean and mountain views, rooftop heated pool this is truly a culinary experience. Wood fired specialties include pizza, fish, lamb, steaks and homemade desserts. There will be no Fourth of July celebration here but it is open for the summer and the quality is worth the price. They have a huge delicious rib eye steak that is to die for, a great place to take the honey for dinner. Hit it at sunset, very romantic open

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Hacienda Cerritos

Next we will head to Hacienda Cerritos or as the locals call it, "The RogMahal" after Roger Polluck. Mr. Polluck is a developer from Oregon who built the Hacienda to be his home. He changed his mind and turned it into the now iconic 10-room Boutique Hotel, Hacienda Cerritos.

The Hacienda is located on the point at the very northwest end of Cerritos beach. You can see the yellow turret from practically anywhere. The view alone is worth the trip up. The bar and restaurant, "La Mision" are practi-

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**HIKING ADVENTURES...**

continued from page 24

mountain range, along with the southern tip of the Baja Peninsula, was once an island! Due to its incredible beauty and biodiversity, UNESCO has designated the Sierra de la Laguna a global biosphere reserve.

The Sierra de la Laguna range also hosts several endemic species including 108 species of arthropods, 2 amphibian, 27 reptile, 74 birds and 30 mammal species. Incredible diversity!

Hike to the Canyon of the Fox, Canon de La Zorra, and The Desert's Hidden Treasure

Difficulty Level: Moderate

The Canyon de la Zorra has become a year-round destination for hikers to refresh themselves physically and spiritually and a great way to explore the natural beauty of our local mountain range, the Sierra de la Lagunas. At Canyon de la Zorra, freshwater flows over huge granite boulders creating beautiful pools of water perfect for swimming. It's hard to believe this oasis exists in the middle of the desert!

Miraflores and Santiago (30 minutes north of San Jose Del Cabo) are two quiet craft/farming villages that border the canyon, exploring past either village will unearth natural freshwater pools, streams, waterfalls, and even hot springs!

The hike is moderate because of all the boulders you have to climb over. A totally off-the-beaten-track hike in Cabo!

Enjoy the canyon ecology of beautiful flora and fauna, cacti, flowering trees, and clear mountain streams and pools with plenty of swimming holes to enjoy.

The hike into Canyon de la Zorra is a great way to explore the base of our mountain range, the Sierra Lagunas. It's around an hour drive from Cabo, through the small agricultural town of Santiago, out to the canyon where freshwater

flows over huge granite boulders making gorgeous pools. We end up at a waterfall that cascades into a large pool where you stop for a swim.

The final destination on this hike is an ethereal cascading 15-meter high waterfall that will enrapture and seduce your eyes and soul like nothing you have ever seen. Surrounded by a granite rock oasis, the shimmering freshwater falls into a small pond miraculously cooling down the burning surface of the desert. Dive in and refresh yourself, swimming with the Gods amid the greatest treasure that nature has ever dreamt. This is a lovely Oasis and swimming hole with fresh clean water fed by a lagoon. You can hike to the bottom of the waterfall and enjoy the view and swim in the falls. You can also hike to the top of the falls and check out the lagoon. The hike down from the falls, be careful, it's very steep but there are ropes and handrails.

If you are in this canyon area, you also have to check out Santa Rita Hot Springs! Get defoliated by hundreds of little fish in these springs. Find out where you are ticklish.

Open your eyes to the amazing nuances of the desert landscape. In the autumn after the rainy season, you'll see the desert flora in bloom, filling the valleys with color. Keep an eye out for lizards, road-runners and maybe a coyote, along with many species of indigenous birds.

The waterfall is a perfect picnic spot but those who prefer a sit-down restaurant service can choose the Palomar Hotel and Restaurant (624-130-2019), which is worth visiting. The kitchen prepares the best food in Santiago, and the Palomar was once the haunt of Hollywood stars like John Wayne and Bing Crosby, who flew down for the area's superb white-winged dove hunting.

La Poza Oscura: The Dark Pool

Moderate to difficult

For the brave adventurer, this is the ultimate hike in Baja.

Explore the nature and culture of beautiful Baja California Sur on this adventure (guide recommended). A hotel pickup, ascend giant mountain rocks, marvel at ancient cave paintings, and leap into the cool waters of La Poza Oscura for a refreshing swim. Enjoy a delicious lunch served in a family-style ranch setting in the small mountain town of San Dionisio (St Denis).

San Dionisio is a rural community located north of San Jose Del Cabo, an inarguably well-developed tourist municipality. About 50 people, mostly families, inhabit the land on 14 ranches.

Most ranches are ready to welcome tourists and locals who enjoy this type of activity. Trails take you to where you can climb mountains, rappel and identify the main regional flora. Ranch hosts are native to the area; they have a big spirit and share their food and culture.

Whether you want to climb a mountain, spot a bird, dive into a lake or relax, you'll encounter what you're looking for in the wilds of the region's countryside. The surrounding area boasts many hidden delights.

Granted, a visit to the cave paintings of San Dionisio is not the easiest thing to accomplish, but the reward is certainly worth the effort. There are cave paintings and rock art in many locations in Baja. Some locations are relatively easy to get to and others are more difficult.

Originally, the paintings were thought to be somewhere around 2,000 years old. Recent carbon dating tests have suggested that some of the paintings may have been painted as many as 7,500 years ago.

La Poza Oscura (The Dark Pool) hike is quite a feat. You have to climb giant rocks and journey through the mountains to reach this Baja California Sur wonder that is 50 feet deep and can purify your spirit by jumping in its refreshing, calm waters.

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Todo Santos

Cerritos Beach Hike

Difficulty Level: Easy

A 13.4 kilometer lightly trafficked out beach trail that starts at Cerritos Beach and ends at Boca del Refugio, Baja California Sur, Mexico and offers the chance to see wildlife and is good for all skill levels. The beach hike offers a number of activity options and is accessible year-round.

This has always been my favorite beach hike. On the south end of Cerritos Beach, the combination of black and beige sand creates some awesome visual displays on the beach at low tide.

To make the hike one-way, bring two cars. Leave one at Boca del Refugia, and then start the hike from Cerritos Beach.

Hike this beach while you can, development is on the way on the Cerritos end of the hike.

Playa la Cachora Beach Walk

Difficulty Level: Easy

A 2.4 kilometer trail located near Todos los Santos, Baja California Sur, Mexico that features a lake and is good for all

skill levels. The trail is primarily used for hiking, walking, nature trips, and bird watching and is accessible year-round.

Palm Beach Trail

Difficulty Level: Easy

A 2.6 kilometer trail located near El Pescadero, Baja California Sur, Mexico that features a great forest setting and is good for all skill levels. The trail is primarily used for hiking, walking, nature trips, and fishing and is accessible year-round.

Todos Santos Sugar Port Trail

Difficulty Level: Moderate

A 6.9 kilometer trail located near Todos los Santos, Baja California Sur, Mexico that offers scenic views. The trail is primarily used for hiking, trail running, and mountain biking and is accessible year-round.

This is a great hike up and over the coastal hills down to the walls of the old port used to ship out sugar. The walls in the Port itself were built in the late 1800s. At one time there were 8 sugar mills loading their product here and sending it out to sea. They lasted until the area ran out of water in the 1950s. Hurricanes have ravaged the road but it is still hikeable, a rocky scramble in some areas. Glad I finally got down and walked the ancient walls next to the beautiful little protected bay they were built in.

The Los Cabos area is very beautiful and fun to explore. I hope I have given you some ideas about hikes you must try. 🌿

WHAT TO DO IN CERRITOS...

continued from page 25

cally built hanging over the ocean making the Pacific sunsets extraordinary. The "La Mision" is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The reviews are outstanding. No special celebration going on here for the fourth. Although they do have an incredible pool out by the bar, if you would like to feel like a celebrity for the day, they will sell you a Day Pass for \$50 bucks and \$20 goes to food and beverage. Not a bad deal. It's quite a place. Talk to Rachel at the office on the left as you walk in, or shop in their small boutique on the right.

The Hacienda Cerritos is the perfect spot for a wedding or event. They will rent the whole place out for special events, your very own Hacienda!

Ok let's wrap it up and get out of here, will check out the newest kid on the block "Shaka's Cantina" on the way out. They are located about a mile from the beach on the main road back to the highway. Remember the first entrance, km 64? I told you we would come

out this way. When you come back down from the Hacienda Cerritos you will hit a T. Make a left and stay on the road back to Hwy. 19. Shaka's Cantina will be on the right-hand side about a mile up.

Shaka's Delicious Wood Cantina

The owners are Edgar from Mexico City and Brandon from Texas. Thus the big Texas flag flying out front, along with the Mexican flag of course. They partnered up and recently celebrated their one-year anniversary. I spoke to Edgar briefly as he had a good crowd at the bar watching game 1 of the NBA finals. They will be open on the Fourth and through the summer. When I asked about anything special? Entertainment?, Edgar paused, and then stated, "Entertainment! There's always entertainment! There for sure will be a party." I know they have horseshoes, that's pretty Fourth of July.

They will be serving their regular menu, tortilla soup, tacos, fajitas, beef, chicken and their signature Shaka's shrimp nachos. Chile rellenos as well as sandwiches, bagels and to top it off, baby back ribs. Great atmosphere, great place to party.



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That's about it for Cerritos Beach. Let's see what Todos Santos has to offer. Head east and back to the highway, make a left and in about 15 minutes will be in Todos Santos. There's two local dive bars on the way. A few miles up the road you will be in El Pescadero. The first bar, "Bottoms Up" is pretty new. They claim to have the coldest beer in town. It's cold. You'll find it on the right, before the main entrance to the town. Don't blink or you'll miss it. Not the bar but the whole town.

A quarter mile from Bottoms Up on the same side of the street and across from the gas station you find Sugar Shack Dive Bar & Grill. Cool little bar, say hello to Jimmy the owner, really nice guy. Both bars are open for the long hall, that's right, year round.

Once you hit the speed bump you are now entering Todos Santos. Look left, on the wall, a big brand-new sign pointing down the street to **Shut Up Franks**. That's where we're headed. The local's hangout for over 24 years, Bikers and sports fans favorite. Frank has all the sports streaming live. Everyone is welcome. Vegetarians, kids, you name it. You'll enjoy all the vintage sports memorabilia, photos and old newspaper clippings hanging on the walls. The bar has been owned

and operated by the same character the whole time. Yep, you guessed it. That would be Frank. Shut Up Frank's is open from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Closed on Tuesdays. Happy Hour weekdays from 4 to 6 p.m., two-for-one bottle beer, well drinks, and margaritas. Frank's special for the Fourth of July will be one hotdog, potato salad and a beer for a \$100 pesos. The food on the regular menu will also be available.

Make a right at the only light in town. Go up five blocks and make a right on to calle Alvarado Obregon, T.S. Brewery will be on your right.

Todos Santos Brewery

These guys are the real deal when it comes to craft beer. They have 22 taps of brew that are all made on site, including some artisanal soda for the non-drinker. They will be open all summer long, six days a week (closed Tuesdays). Their regular weekly events include Friday Night Trivia and Sunday Sessions live music both 6 p.m.).

They have super cool air conditioning, keeps everyone chilled through the summer. For those that want to dig a little deeper into the craft beers, they offer a "Crafternoon" experience, where you can 'Taste the TapWall' of brewers and also do a tour

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**WHAT TO DO IN CERRITOS...**

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of the Brewery (these are via booking). In addition, they also have a kitchen onsite serving up the best gourmet hamburgers and schnitzels. Great place to spend some

time on the Fourth or any time you find your way to Todos Santos. Stop by, have a beer and stay for the trivia, Cheers.

The Journey through Todos Santos will continue in the next issue. We will be visiting the remaining restaurants and bars that will be open during

the summer time.

I am quite surprised at how many establishments there are and just how diverse they are. The area is really changing and growing dramatically. The word is out. As the weather turns hot in Cabo and La Paz this area is generally 20 degrees cooler. Get out the

heat. Come and enjoy Cerritos Beach, El Pescadero and Todos Santos.

Miguel's Restaurant.

Miguel serves traditional authentic Mexican meals with a special focus on fresh seafood. Scallop or shrimp chile rellenos are the house specialty. He offers many other

delicious traditional plates as well.

I think it was the New York Times, if my memory serves me well, that gave Miguel's Restaurant quite a nice write-up. Always a friendly place, Miguel will be more than happy to cater any of your events, large or small. Call ahead for To-Go orders if you feel like dining at home.

Make a left before the gas station, go all the way down the street, make a right across from the baseball stadium and there it is on your left.

Chill n Grill

Another local's favorite. Open Monday through Saturday all year long. Happy hour is 2 for 1 adult beverages from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Taco Tuesdays and pizza night on Thursdays, great burgers, salads and mouthwatering ribs. Live music every week and they have a pool table! Steve Keys and friends! That's the crew that will be playing great classic Rock 'n Roll for the Fourth of July.

It's an awesome place. Owned and operated since 2014 by great people, local boys Gabe and Cary Corado. If you want to chill, listen or dance to great music and have a good time, this is the place to go. Great customer service!

Back out the way we entered. Make a left. Go through the stop sign, stop first! It used to be our only stop light in town and I just noticed it's been removed. That's strange. OK, you're going to run into Todos Santos' main street, Benito Juarez, make a right. On your right-hand side just past Zaragoza Street you will find a delightful Restaurant.



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