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magazine

Cuenca

45
ISSUE



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Revolutionizing Cardio Care

CUENCA

CELEBRATING LIFE TOGETHER

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Introducing

Cuenca Expats Magazine's New Ambassadors

Lisa Jaffe and Robert Elliott!

We're thrilled to welcome Lisa and Robert as our dynamic duo of Ambassadors for the Magazine. Their mission is to keep us in the loop with the latest happenings and highlights for expats in the community. Whether you're seeking insights on the magazine or looking to share your thoughts on how we can enhance our publication, Lisa and Robert are here to lend an ear and provide assistance. Lisa Jaffe from San Diego is a multifaceted artist and holistic health practitioner, renowned for her transformative "Meditation and Martinis" experiences. With a passion for guiding others toward vibrant living, she brings 7 years of enriching life in Cuenca to her role.

Robert Wesley Elliott, known affectionately as Wes the Mentalist, brings a wealth of sales and management expertise from his diverse background. Hailing from West Virginia and having traversed cities like Memphis and New Jersey, he found his home in Cuenca in 2021. Beyond his stage performances and charitable endeavors, Wes is dedicated to making meaningful connections and giving back to the community through initiatives like the Cuenca Soup Kitchen and Social Vision. **Please join us in extending a warm welcome aboard to Lisa and Robert!**



News From

Cuenca Expats Magazine

Welcome to the latest edition of Cuenca Expats Magazine! Get ready to dive into a treasure trove of valuable information tailored just for you. Our cover story shines a spotlight on the CIMA World Class Cardio Center in Cuenca. If you rely on or are considering a pacemaker or defibrillator, this feature is a must-read. Plus, we're thrilled to unveil an exciting new partnership between CIMA and Social Vision, a local community charity.

Explore the latest insights from VISTAZO, a prominent national Ecuadorian magazine, offering intriguing observations on Cuenca's vibrant expat community. Relive the excitement of the recent Expat Open House, and mark your calendars for the upcoming fall event. Meet the remarkable Serina Maldonado, Cuenca's new Reina, and don't miss your exclusive invitation from our neighbors in Cañar to attend the IX World Congress on Quinoa, celebrating this ancient Andean grain. Are you intrigued by the world of cryptocurrency? We've got some fascinating news for you. And for our veterans, discover the vibrant community of like-minded individuals right here in Cuenca.

Introducing our new feature, EcoNews, highlighting the sustainable efforts of businesses like Whole Forrest. Learn more about their eco-friendly initiatives and join us in supporting their cause.

Congratulations to Jane Hiltbrand, honored as Cuenca's Best Photographer. Dive into her latest haciendas series article and experience her unparalleled talent firsthand. Thank you for your continued support of Cuenca Expats Magazine! Haven't signed up for your monthly FREE online copy yet? Head over to expatsmags.com and click the VIP icon to join our growing community. Just add your email address, and you're in!



SALA DE ELECTROFISIOLOGÍA INVASIVA CIMA



Revolutionizing Cardiac Care: CIMA-SINAI

Leading the Fight Against Arrhythmias in Ecuador

By: Cuenca Expat Magazine staff writers
Photos: Courtesy of CIMA



Cardiovascular diseases continue to be a global health challenge, claiming the top spot as the leading cause of illness and death. Cardiac arrhythmias, accounting for almost half of these cases, represent a significant health concern. Regrettably, Ecuador had yet to witness a corresponding surge in specialized facilities dedicated to addressing cardiac arrhythmias.

Recognizing this gap and driven by a steadfast commitment to alter this national narrative, the Comprehensive Center for Pacemakers and Cardiac Arrhythmias at Monte Sinai Hospital, known as CIMA SINAI, emerged in Cuenca in March 2023.

Addressing the Gap: The absence of a dedicated center for cardiac arrhythmias in the country spurred the establishment of CIMA SINAI.

In contrast to the global trend of industrial and hospital development to combat cardiac arrhythmias, Ecuador had not reflected this progress until now. CIMA SINAI represents the first specialized center in the country devoted to the comprehensive treatment of cardiac arrhythmias.

CIMA SINAI's Inauguration: Since March 2023, CIMA SINAI has been operational in Cuenca, positioning itself as the first specialized center for cardiac arrhythmias and pacemakers in Ecuador. The primary objective of CIMA-SINAI is to provide timely and comprehensive management of all types of cardiac arrhythmias, from prevention to definitive treatment. Equipped with state-of-the-art international technology, including the nation's inaugural and sole Invasive Electrophysiology Lab, CIMA-SINAI ensures secure and efficient procedures such as ablations or pacemaker implants.

Infrastructure Overview: CIMA-SINAI is situated in the main tower of Monte Sinai Hospital: Tower 1, which is strategically placed adjacent to modern operating rooms, the Intensive Care Unit, and the hospital's Emergency Department. This prime location enables the center to conduct both invasive and non-invasive procedures with the necessary agility, efficiency, and, most importantly, safety.

Structurally and functionally, CIMA SINAI is divided into five units:

1 Invasive Electrophysiology Unit:

Home to the country's first and only Invasive Electrophysiology Lab, designed exclusively for the definitive treatment of cardiac arrhythmias.

2 Clinical Unit for Cardiac Stimulation and Pacemakers:

Specialized in the placement and management of pacemakers.

3 Holter and Remote Monitoring Unit:

Focused on long-term electrocardiographic monitoring using external Holter monitors for 24-hour observations and subcutaneously implanted monitors for up to two years.

4 Syncope and Complementary Methods Unit:

The first and only unit in the country dedicated to diagnosing and treating fainting episodes, utilizing methods such as the tilt table test and continuous monitoring through implantable loop recorders.

5 Clinical Arrhythmias Unit:

Equipped with three clinical consultation rooms, ensuring accurate electrocardiographic analysis.

Human Team at CIMA-SINAI: CIMA SINAI distinguishes itself by maintaining a complete team of seven cardio electrophysiologists ensuring a high success rate and minimal complications. In addition to providing comprehensive care, the team includes clinical cardiologists, echocardiologists, internists, nutritionists, and psychologists. All staff undergo training in the management of cardiac emergencies through official courses from the American Heart Association (AHA).

CIMA SINAI's commitment to holistic patient care is further exemplified by the inclusion of a clinical cardiologist, two echocardiologists, an internist, a nutritionist, and a psychologist. The collaborative efforts of the medical, nursing, and administrative staff—all trained in the management of cardiac emergencies—ensure a well-rounded approach to patient care.

Mission and Vision of CIMA-SINAI:

Mission: To provide comprehensive and subspecialized medical care through a team of individuals for whom ethics and solidarity are primary values. The mission is to seek timely management of all types of cardiac arrhythmias, from prevention to definitive treatment.

Vision: To achieve leadership and become the national and international reference site for addressing and treating cardiac arrhythmias, relying on qualified personnel to meet the needs of our users.





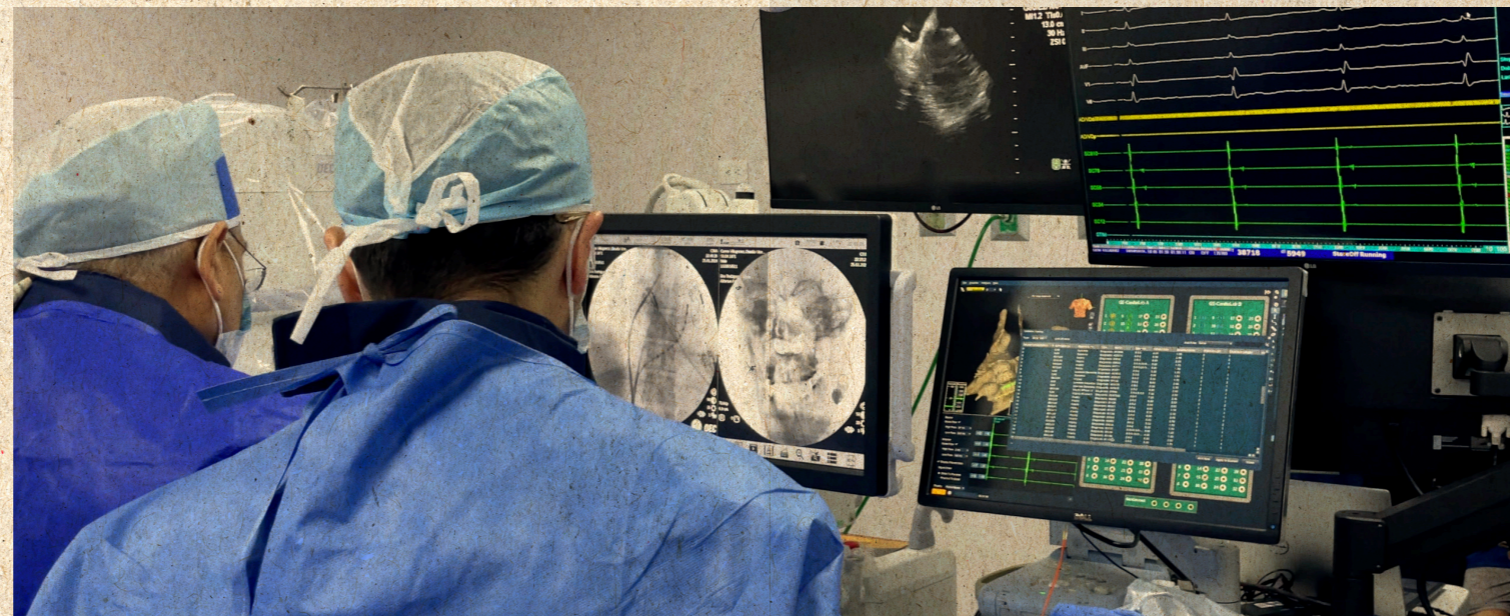
CIMA-SINAI's Academic/Scientific Commitment: Monte Sinai Hospital, serving as an AHA Training Center, aligns with CIMA-SINAI's commitment to training in cardiovascular emergencies and CPR. This commitment contributes significantly to the "Cuenca Cardioprotected City" program, initiated in 2021 by Dr. Diego Serrano, founder of CIMA-SINAI and then-ex-president of the Sociedad Ecuatoriana de Cardiología.

Prehospital Care at CIMA-SINAI: Recognizing the critical importance of prompt attention to cardiovascular pathologies, especially cardiac arrhythmias, CIMA-SINAI operates a 24/7 ambulance service. The ambulance is equipped with electrocardiography and a cardiac laboratory, ensuring early treatment and preventing complications. The medical and paramedical staff of the CIMA-SINAI ambulance, in addition to being trained for these treatments, are mostly instructors in cardiovascular emergency training courses. This extensive training instills confidence and ensures the highest level of care, both locally and nationally.

Community Partnerships: In its first year of operation, CIMA-SINAI forged partnerships with institutions that share its ethical and solidary philosophy. Key collaborators include the Humanitarian Hospital Pablo Jaramillo Foundation, Social Vision Foundation, and the Physio-Gym Physical Rehabilitation Center.

These collaborations, along with contributions from individuals and doctors across the country, enabled the treatment of patients with limited resources. CIMA-SINAI's commitment to the community extends to its contribution to the "Cuenca Cardioprotected City" program.


Through the training of both medical and non-medical personnel in cardiovascular emergencies and CPR, the center actively participates in building a cardioprotected environment within the city. Additionally, CIMA-SINAI has recently signed a partnership agreement with Social Vision, a local community charity dedicated to aiding Cuenca's medically vulnerable, in collaboration with Asistencia en Emergencias Médicas (ASSISTEM).



CIMA SINAI's First Year: Since its foundation, CIMA SINAI has attended to 3148 patients, conducting 1273 non-invasive procedures and 116 invasive procedures with excellent results and zero complications. This track record underscores the center's dedication to providing high-quality care while minimizing potential risks associated with complex procedures. In essence, CIMA-SINAI stands as a beacon of hope, revolutionizing cardiac care in Ecuador and paving the way towards a future where cardiac arrhythmias are met with the expertise and resources they demand, sparing countless lives from the clutches of this formidable ailment. Cuenca expats are fortunate to have this world-class cardo center near them.



TESTIMONIAL

 "I would not go anywhere else!"
Ed L. Cuenca Expat

Contributors



Alan Adams was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cañar from 1967 to 1969, during the time of the Ecuadorian Agrarian Reform. He has been actively volunteering with Mushuk Yuyay since 2013. Alan is a retired teacher in New Jersey where he lives with his wife, Paulette.



Jane Hiltbrand. Moved to Cuenca from Santa Fe, NM in April 2017 after a career in real estate specializing in historic adobe homes. She fell in love with the history and architecture in Cuenca and found herself wishing she could get inside every building! In an effort to accomplish that, she started a blog, "A Guide to Cuenca Architecture." She has a goal of photographing and visiting all of the buildings and sites in Cuenca, which make it a UNESCO World Heritage Site. She also enjoys singing in the Cuenca International Choir.



Edward Lindquist. Successful California-born businessman, Ed is Managing Partner of Expats Magazines Group, parent company of Cuenca Expats Magazine, Coastal Expats Magazine, Quito Expats Magazine, REDBOOK, the Directory of English-Speaking Businesses and Services, and YAPA On-Line. Ed has called beautiful Cuenca his home for the last 10 years.



Dylan, a former US Marine Corps Corporal, brings 30 years of coaching and leadership experience. An English major with teaching certification, his servant leader principles, rooted in a love for helping others, guide individuals, families, and players to their fullest potential. His ethos embodies service, character, and sacrifice. Semper Fi!



In addition to an economics degree from Rutgers, **Mr. Ryerson** holds several professional designations including Retirement Income Certified Professional (RICP)®, Certified In Long Term Care (CLTC)®, Certified Financial Fiduciary (CFF)®, and Certified Identity Theft Risk Management Specialist (CITRMS)®. He also authored the book "What's The Deal with Identity Theft? A Plain-English Look at Our Fastest Growing Crime."



Jennifer Cory and her husband Jim have been living in the beautiful city of Cuenca for seven years. They've been married almost forty years and their adventures in South America started twenty years ago. They raised three children and have five grandchildren. Their retirement path led them to a fulfilling life helping others in Cuenca by founding Social Vision. This charity aids Cuenca's medically vulnerable.

Whole Forest: Pioneering

A Carbon-Negative Approach to Climate Change through Sustainable Forestry

By: Cuenca Expats Magazine Staff Writer
Photos: Courtesy of Whole Forrest

Specializing in sustainable forestry, Whole Forest operates as a hardwood surfaces company, offering an array of carbon-negative wood products, including tables, countertops, wall tiles, and flooring. Recognizing a substantial opportunity to mitigate carbon emissions, the company connects two causes responsible for nearly half of global climate emissions: tropical deforestation and the building construction industry.

In the heart of Cristobal Colón Province of Esmeraldas, Ecuador, a visionary company named Whole Forest has emerged as a beacon of hope in the fight against climate change. Established two decades ago by Peter Pinchot and Garrett Siegers, Whole Forest is on a mission to intertwine tropical forest conservation with green construction, presenting an innovative strategy to combat the pressing global issue of climate change. Tropical deforestation alone contributes to 10% of carbon emissions, while the construction and operation of buildings release an additional 40%. Whole Forest tackles this dual challenge by preventing deforestation in Ecuador's endangered rainforests, where illegal logging and clear-cutting pose imminent threats. By doing so, the company not only averts the release of massive CO2 emissions but also provides local communities with a sustainable alternative to exploitative practices.



A core strategy employed by Whole Forest involves transforming the economic dynamics of local communities. Members of these communities, now employed by Whole Forest, experience improved financial prospects, eliminating the need to exploit their forestland for livelihoods. This shift not only protects the rainforest but also addresses the root causes of deforestation. The furniture and wood products crafted by Whole Forest carry the carbon value of the preserved rainforest, rendering them truly carbon-negative. For instance, a dining table from Whole Forest can reduce an individual's carbon footprint by 40% for a year. The company's commitment extends to the installation of its products, preventing 2.4 tons of CO2 from entering the atmosphere for every standard countertop slab.

Whole Forest collaborates with architects, designers, and sustainability professionals in commercial, hospitality, and residential projects, offering high-quality solid wood flooring, countertops, tables, and designer wall coverings. With a unique carbon-negative footprint stemming from planet-positive forestry practices, Whole Forest contributes to a more sustainable future.

For more information, contact one of Whole Forest's design specialists to receive catalogs, samples, and design support:

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National Magazine Writes About Cuenca's Expats

Reprinted and translated by permission of Vistazo magazine

The allure of Ecuador for retirees is undeniable: its spring-like climate, quality of life, peaceful ambiance, colonial charm, and vibrant cultural scene have all enchanted foreigners seeking a tranquil retirement.

Among these, Cuenca stands out as the preferred destination, with approximately 10,000 retired expats from the U.S., Canada, and other countries calling it home.

This influx injects around \$360 million annually into the local economy, with the average pensioner receiving \$3,000 monthly.

Edward Lindquist, a former advertising executive from Houston, Texas, and co-founder of Cuenca Expats Magazine, notes that Ecuador, particularly Cuenca, consistently ranks among the top retirement spots globally.

Many retirees, like Terry Trimble, a 68-year-old electrical engineer from Washington, are drawn to Cuenca's clean, safe environment, accessible public services, and vibrant community life.

Moreover, the city's appeal extends beyond its amenities; expats also contribute significantly to local charities such as **Fundación FAAN** and **GRACE (Give Refugees a Chance)**.

Despite receiving relatively modest pensions by U.S. standards, expats find that their funds stretch much further in Cuenca, where a couple can comfortably live on \$2,000 a month.

This contrasts starkly with the steep costs of living in American cities like Houston, New York, or San Francisco. Expats in Cuenca typically do not strain local resources, as they predominantly use private healthcare and do not add to the student population. Consequently, they have a minimal negative impact on the city's finances. Overall, Cuenca offers retirees an attractive combination of affordability, comfort, and community, making it a dream retirement destination for many foreigners.



Commemorating Veterans Day in Cuenca, Ecuador: A Unifying Celebration

By: Dylan Glad

Photos: Courtesy of Military Veterans of Cuenca

On November 10, 2023, San Sebastian Park in Cuenca, Ecuador became a hub of reflection and gratitude for over 400 attendees as it played host to a Veterans Day celebration honoring not only the United States Veterans, but also those from Ecuador, Canada, the Netherlands, Colombia, and Britain. The event, skillfully orchestrated by a dedicated coordination team, brought together a diverse group of attendees, each contributing to the commemoration in their unique way. Organizing this event were the Military Veterans of Cuenca, whose mission is to provide an enriching environment for Veterans from all branches and nationalities to gather for the purpose of camaraderie and service, and to give back to the Cuenca community in which they live.



The Master of Ceremonies, Scott Mack, set the tone for the event with a robust welcome, emphasizing the core principle of military service—servant leadership. This theme resonated throughout the ceremony, reminding attendees of the selflessness and dedication of those who have served in the armed forces. Reverend Will Gibson's heartfelt prayer stir the emotions of many participants, emphasizing a universal call for peace. Providing a historical context to Veterans Day, Brigadier General John Miño, the commanding officer of the Third Military Zone, shared insights into the significance of the day and the importance of recognizing the sacrifices made by Veterans.

His address illuminated the shared values that bind nations in the pursuit of peace and freedom. The event was further enriched by the Third Military Zone's Army Band. Consular Chief Mrs. Mary Fisk-Ridder, representing the United States of America, delivered a bilingual address emphasizing the importance of unilateral partnerships between the U.S. and Ecuador. Her words underscored the diplomatic ties that contribute to global stability.

Magister Felipe Ochoa, the international relations director for Cuenca, represented Mayor Dr. Cristian Zamora. He highlighted the city's infrastructure, making it an inviting place for expats, emphasizing the welcoming atmosphere that Cuenca provides to residents and visitors alike. Miss Cuenca, Serina Maldonado, graced the occasion, symbolizing the unity and diversity of the community. The eloquent Veteran Ed O'Connor shared poignant memories of his service, expressing gratitude to fellow Veterans for their sacrifices in preserving civil liberties. A crucial element of the event was the dedicated coordination team, led by Clarke E. Brown, Pat Vintimilla, David McDevitt, Hector Munoz, Steve Waxman, Terry Bennett, and Ernesto Loucel. The ceremony concluded with two presentations of flowers, warmly received by Consular Chief Mrs. Fisk-Ridder and Serina Maldonado.

In summary, the Veterans Day celebration in Cuenca, Ecuador, was a testament to the power of unity, gratitude, and reflection. The event successfully brought together diverse voices, emphasizing the shared values that transcend borders and cultures. As attendees left the ceremony, they carried with them a renewed appreciation for the sacrifices made by Veterans and a sense of solidarity that transcends national boundaries.

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CITIZEN JOURNALISM

IX World Quinoa Congress in Cañar

By: Al Adams

Photos: Courtesy of globalgiving.org

We want to invite the Cuenca expats to participate in the IX World Quinoa Congress in Cañar in March of 2025. This event will be a significant step forward for the Quinoa producers and marketers of southern Ecuador. Quinoa is truly an Andean food. The indigenous people of the Andes have been cultivating and consuming Quinoa for thousands of years. The Cañari people of southern Ecuador have depended on this food throughout history. They kept the secrets of its cultivation, preparation, and consumption alive during the centuries when colonial and national powers tried to discourage its use.

Now Cañar is the site of this next "Olympics of Quinoa." The Cañari people have been consistently building toward this moment since liberating themselves from the haciendas of the area during the Agrarian Reform in the 1960s. In just a generation, they have gone from unpaid and abused hacienda workers to owners of their own small family farms, their own processing plant, and their own marketing system. Slowly and patiently, they achieved these goals through their determination, innovation, and relentless hard work. One of these innovations came in the form of an agricultural association, Mushuk Yuyay, to help farmers with seed and marketing.

The association has worked relentlessly to promote cultivation on local farms. They built a processing plant to prepare, package and market these crops under their brand name of Allí Mikuna or Good Food. Allí Mikuna is offered as healthy foods for the local population in stores across southern Ecuador. "Health is the best business," is the Mushuk Yuyay motto.



While participating in the VIII World Quinoa Congress in Potosí, Bolivia, Mushuk Yuyay was chosen to host the next Congress on March of 2025. Mushuk Yuyay wants to share with the world their cultivation in various mountain communities, showcase their new products such as Quinoa pasta, Quinoa bread and other traditional foods, share results from variety trials developed in collaboration with Washington State University, and—not to be downplayed—artistic and cultural events. Scientists from around the world will present their findings and join in conversations. Producers, marketers, and consumers will also be there. This World Quinoa Congress will give Mushuk Yuyay a chance to increase their impact in Ecuador and in the world.

This is an opportunity to invest in the future by making a difference in the local economy, in supplies of healthy food products, in stemming immigration, in mitigating climate change, and in other related areas. Contributing to this endeavor is your way to the change the world.

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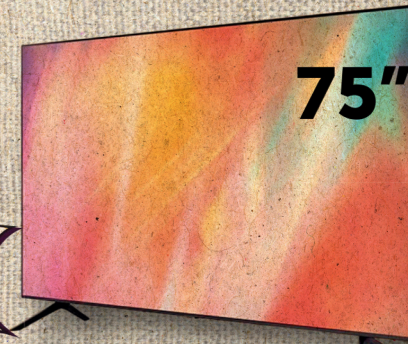
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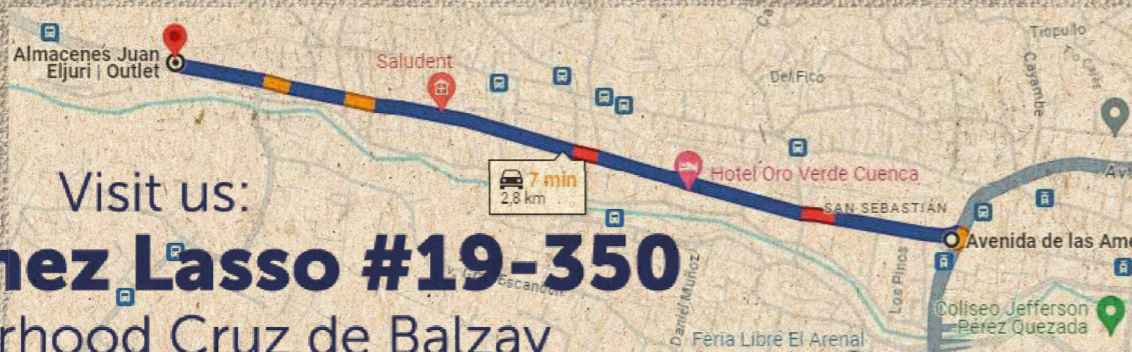
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Introducing Serina Maldonado: Reigning as Cuenca's Queen on Its 100-Year Anniversary

By: Cuenca Expats Magazine Staff Writer
 Photos: Courtesy of Reina de Cuenca Foundation

We had the privilege of sitting down with Serina Maldonado, the newly crowned Queen of Cuenca, and were immediately struck by her poise and grace, remarkable qualities for an 18-year-old woman. Born in Miami, Serina is the first Miss Cuenca to hail from outside the country. Despite this, she meets the pageant's residency requirements, having lived in the country for 15 years.



An accomplished athlete, Serina dedicated nine years to competitive swimming, earning herself a national championship title and recent recognition in the Pacific Cup. Her passion for volunteer work led her to participate in the pageant, seeing it as an avenue to amplify her social impact. As Queen, her primary focus is on aiding families in need, particularly those with disabilities, in addition to fulfilling the ceremonial duties synonymous with representing Cuenca.

Upon completing her reign, Serina plans to further her education with advanced studies in English, with aspirations for a master's degree in either aerospace or civil engineering. Being crowned during the 100th anniversary of the pageant holds special significance for Serina, marking a milestone in her journey as Cuenca's reigning queen.



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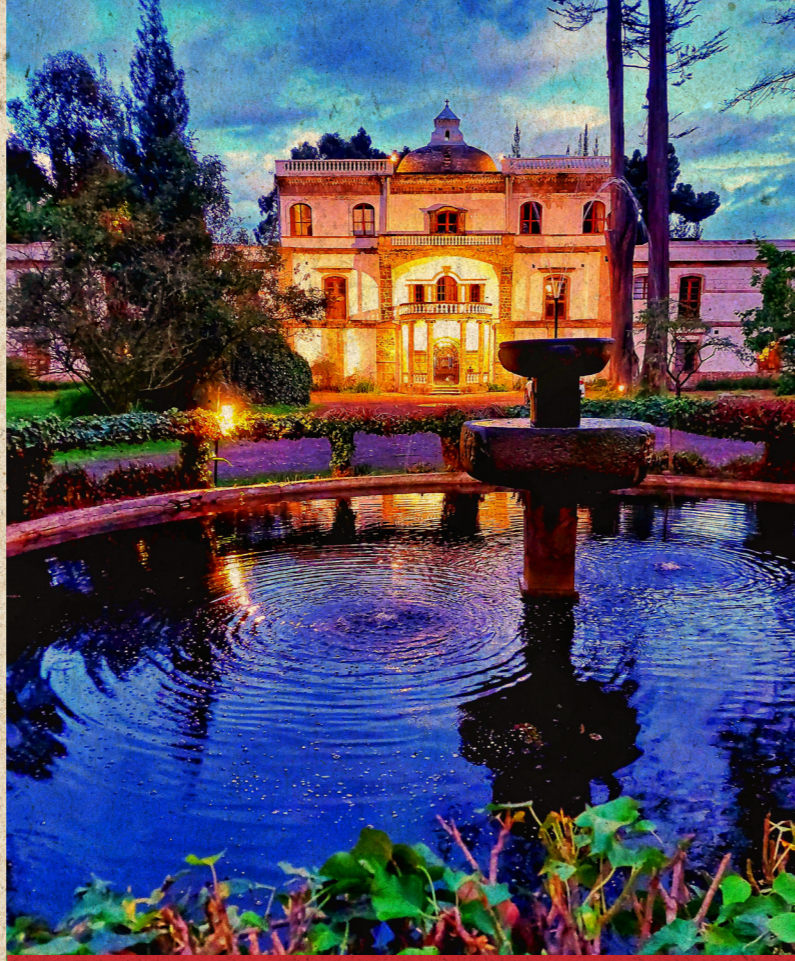
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Hacienda La Cienega

By: Jane Hiltbrand
 Photos: Courtesy of of Jane Hiltbrand

This just might be the most romantic hacienda to visit in all of Ecuador. The construction of the hacienda began in 1695 when Matheo de la Escalera y Velasco started building the walls with volcanic stones. The dramatic entry to the hacienda was planted with a long row of eucalyptus trees. This lovely row of eucalyptus trees will still greet you today. In 1735 Gregorio Eugenio de Matheu y De la Escalera took over the inheritance of the hacienda with his wife Mariana de Arand Guzman y Ayesa, who was the Marquisa of Maenza—true Spanish royalty. It is said that he fell in love with Mariana in Lima after seeing her outside a church service, kidnapped her and brought her to the Province of Quito escorted by one hundred servants. Once married, they made La Cienega their residence.

The hacienda is lovely. The front entrance greets you with a large arrangement of roses and a view through to the gardens. This area of Ecuador is full of rose farms, so there are roses everywhere in the Hacienda. You can sit and relax in one of the many long corridors and look out at the gardens. Warm fires welcome you in the fireplaces within the various salons. And, there are many choice period pieces of furniture. Of interest are the hallways lined with family genealogy charts and portraits, and photos of famous persons who have stayed here.



Alexander Von Humboldt stayed here in 1802, and you can stay in the Von Humboldt Suite. Von Humboldt was a German naturalist and explorer. In 1800, and again in 1831, he described scientifically on the basis of observations made during his travels, the effects of human development on climate changes. Humboldt is seen as “the father of ecology” and “the father of environmentalism.” In 1742, the French Condamine mission stayed in the hacienda. They were on a mission to determine the location, curvature, and size of the equator.

There is also a beautiful chapel in the gardens. The 10ft doors were hand-carved featuring the symbol of the marquisate of Maenza—a two headed eagle. The earthquake of 1797, which mostly leveled Riobamba, also destroyed La Cienega, leaving only these doors. In the present day, the chapel may be used for weddings.

Hacienda La Cienega was converted into a hotel in 1981. The bedrooms in the main house have two-foot-thick adobe and rock walls, and the rooms are very authentic and historic. A newer section has been more recently built, and those rooms all have fireplaces and surround the gardens.

There is a wonderful restaurant, which is always open and visitors who are not guests of the hacienda can enjoy meals there as well. Tables are set up overlooking the gorgeous gardens, or in another room with a roaring walk-in fireplace. Traditional Ecuadorian cuisine is served in appetizing and innovative dishes. I happen to be very fond of the coffee.

For a perfect end to your day, go up the stairs to the third-floor cupola where the Humboldt suite is located. Here you might be treated to a stunning and dramatic view of the magnificent volcano Cotapaxi at sunset.

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CIMA-SINAI and Social Vision

Aiding Cuenca's Medically Vulnerable

By: Jennifer Cory
Photo By: Cuenca Expats Magazine

SOCIAL VISION is delighted to announce a partnership with CIMA SINAI—Centro Integral de Marcapasos y Arritmias (Pacemakers and Arrhythmias.) CIMA is a specialized comprehensive pacemaker and arrhythmia center in Ecuador. CIMA is the only facility of its kind in the country and was inaugurated in Cuenca. CIMA offers ethical professionals passionate about serving their community. Social Vision's mission is to improve the health and well-being of the people of Cuenca by providing necessary medical treatment to disadvantaged citizens who need it most. CIMA wanted to offer their services to underprivileged residents, and partner with a foundation that had a reputation for getting things done. Ed Lindquist at Cuenca Expats Magazine thought that a partnership with Social Vision would be the best way to achieve these dual goals.

Within one week of the new partnership, Social Vision took a patient to CIMA for an EKG. Social Vision's patient was scheduled for cataract surgery at Exilaser and had a history of high blood pressure. It was prudent to make sure that she was healthy enough for surgery. As it turns out, she had such high blood pressure that she was at high risk. Dr. Diego Serrano prescribed her a much stronger medication than she had previously been taking.

Within two weeks, her numbers were improved and she was cleared for surgery. As she has a very low income, Dr. Serrano said that he would put in a special request from the pharmaceutical company to obtain samples to keep her in her best heart health. This is the type of caring partnership that best serves the people of Cuenca.

Social Vision specializes in helping those who have fallen through the cracks. More than one hundred patients have been served, from children to senior citizens, since Social Vision was founded two years ago. The medical director, Dr. Ivan Vallejo is a passionate and caring doctor of orthopedics and traumatology at Monte Sinai.

And, they have a distinct board of directors from both Ecuador and the United States to bring a range of perspectives, expertise, and experiences to better serve the community. Social Vision has partnered with some of the best healthcare facilities throughout Cuenca. These facilities include Monte Sinai, Exilaser, CIMA, Clinica Latino, PhysioGym, Aqua (Comprehensive Center for Health and Aesthetics) and Hospital Del Rio.

Services include orthopedic and traumatology, vision services, cardiac care, gastroenterology, physical therapy, dermatology, pediatric and adult neurology, geriatrics, pharmacy, dental, neurosurgery and pain management.

Continuously monitoring the needs of medical services within the community, Social Vision is able to assess effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. They are continually adding medical and social service specialists to their care team to reassess priorities and adjust strategies accordingly. Social Vision is a registered nonprofit in both Ecuador and the United States. For additional information, you can find Social Vision on the internet.



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Your Mountain Top Weekend Getaway

By: Ed Lindquist
 Photos: Courtesy of Happy Life

Looking for a quick escape without the hassle of a long drive? Look no further than Happy Life, a serene mountain retreat about an hour south of Cuenca. Nestled atop a picturesque mountain, Happy Life offers an idyllic setting for those seeking a peaceful and affordable getaway. Owned and operated by David and Sabrina Bushnell, Happy Life is more than just a retreat—it's a dream turned reality. David, a successful restaurateur from the US, and Sabrina, a licensed real estate broker, envisioned creating a private mountain community where residents could enjoy a simple yet fulfilling lifestyle.

The journey to Happy Life is as delightful as the destination itself. Heading south towards Loja is a breeze, thanks to well-maintained roads. In less than ninety minutes, you'll find yourself at the gates of Happy Life, surrounded by towering pine trees and the occasional glimpse of wildlife, such as the resident deer.



Spread across 26.5 acres, Happy Life boasts a community center and charming cabins that blend seamlessly with the natural beauty of the surroundings. Currently operating like a bed and breakfast, the community center offers cozy accommodations and modern amenities, including a spacious fireplace, indoor and outdoor seating, and a fully equipped kitchen.

Guests also have access to laundry facilities, ensuring a comfortable and convenient stay. Accommodations at Happy Life cater to various preferences and budgets. From intimate one-room cabins to spacious two-bedroom retreats, there's something for everyone. There is even a small private cabin (our favorite).



The "all-inclusive" package ensures that guests enjoy three meals a day, each offering a diverse selection of dishes to tantalize the taste buds. Whether you crave a hearty breakfast, a satisfying lunch, or a gourmet dinner, Happy Life has you covered. Vegetarian options are also available, ensuring that every guest's dietary needs are met. Beyond dining, Happy Life offers a plethora of activities to suit every interest.

Whether you prefer leisurely pursuits like reading against the backdrop of breathtaking mountain views or more adventurous endeavors like hiking, fishing, or horseback riding, there's no shortage of ways to unwind and reconnect with nature.

For those seeking relaxation, indulging in a massage is the perfect way to unwind after a day of exploration. If your visit to Happy Life leaves you enchanted, you'll be delighted to know that permanent or part-time residency is within reach. David and Sabrina welcome guests to explore the available lots and view ongoing construction projects, with no pressure to commit. For more information, visit their website or consult with our friend Ashley Rogers, voted Best Realtor in Cuenca (<https://ecuadoratoyourservice.com/listing/307>)

So why wait? Escape the hustle and bustle of city life and embark on a journey to Happy Life. Whether it's for a weekend retreat or a long-term stay, the tranquility and the beauty of this mountain sanctuary await. Book your reservation today and experience the joy of Happy Life firsthand.

For reservations and inquiries, contact Happy Life using the information below: Discover the joy of Happy Life—a mountain top retreat like no other.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Contacts: David y Sabrina Bushnell

📞 098 795 7134

✉ info@happylifeec.com

🌐 www.hapylifeec.com

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TESTIMONIAL 1



"What an experience! We went hiking, fishing, and pampering massages at the end of the day. We don't speak Spanish. But Sabrina and David organized it all. I can't wait to go again."
Dorinne D.

TESTIMONIAL 2



We enjoyed ourselves. Especially the food! The restaurant is amazing. Chef David and his wife were wonderful. My husband loved fishing at the lake and caught some Rainbow Trout! 5 stars.
Ray and Vic C.

Bitcoin Blastoff?

Why it is still possible to earn huge returns in Bitcoin

(January 21, 2024)

By: Robert Ryerson

On January 3, 2024, Bitcoin turned 15. Today, in the 60,000 range in early March of 2024, it is the single best investment (in terms of growth or return) in history! Per the original protocol, when it is all said and done, there will be a total 21 million Bitcoins in existence, period. We are at approximately 19.6 million today, and it's estimated that about 15-16 million are held in tight strong hands, so there is very little supply of Bitcoin and the supply of new Bitcoins is about to be reduced again soon.

Despite this absolutely amazing record of growth, the majority (perhaps the vast majority) of people do not regard it as a legitimate investment or financial vehicle. In fact, many people still call it a scam, which is "backed by nothing," and which is a crazy, rank speculation, akin to a roll of the dice at a casino. And this, after the most magnificent run-up in the history of investments! There is a confluence of 3-4 large and very positive events occurring at this time for Bitcoin. Let's take a look at why Bitcoin still can give you an opportunity for superior growth, and possibly help you survive any inflation that may come along.

1. The next "halving event" will occur on 4/25/24. This means that the number of Bitcoins awarded to the people who "mine" Bitcoin will fall in half, from 6.25 BTC per block reward, to 3.125.

2. On 9/6/23 the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) approved its cryptocurrency asset standards in terms of accounting and disclosure requirements for corporations. This will make it easier and more likely that corporations holding large amounts of cash will convert some of that cash to Bitcoin, or other cryptos.

3. On 1/10/24, the SEC approved 11 new cash BITCOIN ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds). As we might expect, after only 7-8 weeks, there is a torrent of money flowing into these new ETF's every day. In fact, by some estimates, there is 10 times the money rushing into the Bitcoin ETF's as there is in the value of new Bitcoins being moved end day!



4. Finally, the 4th catalyst on the near-term horizon that could cause the price of Bitcoin to skyrocket by maybe a factor of 10-20 times from here, is the possibility of one or two or more countries deciding to adopt Bitcoin as an alternative currency and a strategic national asset. There have been persistent rumors that 2-3 nations in South America and 2-3 nations in the Middle East (Qatar? UAE? Saudi Arabia?) are considering very substantial purchases of Bitcoin.

In summary, it appears that there is a confluence of very positive events occurring right now in the Bitcoin world that should lead all open-minded people to consider adding some BTC to their overall portfolios while it is still available at these price levels. As the governments continue to print more worthless paper, or as geopolitical conditions worsen, there will be more people seeking refuge in Bitcoin.



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