

CUENCA expats

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See page
21



Doctors Ochoa

La Clínica De Fracturas

celebrating life together

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Paseo Tres de Noviembre (Tomebamba river),
near Remigio Crespo Toral Museum and escalinatas.



Fondue Garden



fondue_garden



Fondue Garden

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CUENCA expats magazine

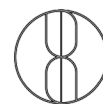
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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Hello everyone



WOW, how quickly this last month has gone by. Recently, I've been talking with many people who have congratulated me on my new position with Cuenca Expats Magazine. I must say, it's great to hear how many people appreciate all the information that CEM has to offer and are always looking forward to the arrival of the newest addition at their favorite businesses.

As the owner of FuncFit Gym, I've been impressed with how many Ecuadorian members peruse the magazine while waiting for the next class, and that several have mentioned how great the magazine is for learning about businesses they were not aware of. We are serving both the Expat community as well as the Ecuadorian community. This is more than we can ask for!

Something I want to point out in this edition of CEM is an article on page 18 that should enlighten you to a wonderful foundation that helps cancer survivors by holding events called "I Am A Warrior" here in Cuenca. This is something that CEM is very involved in, and I hope you'll be sure to read this information and help us spread the word.

Well, we survived the latest Fiestas de Cuenca. With parties, music, and vendors all over town, the city was alive with visitors coming from all over Ecuador to celebrate the foundation of Cuenca. It was also Semana Santa or Holy Week, so there were celebrations and parades all over town through Easter Sunday.

We live in a city that certainly loves to celebrate and party! It's one of the rewards of life here!

Going to sign off, but pray that everyone is surviving our more than usual rainy season and if you're like me, looking forward to a little more sun!

Blessings All!

Brian Gary / www.BrianGary.net

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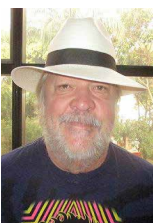


Native New Yorker **Madelaine Barry** came to Ecuador about six months ago from Chiangmai, Thailand. Before that, she taught for eight years at an international school in Shanghai, China.



Tina Paul is a retired naturopathic doctor and blogger. She along with her husband have a travel blog called www.retireearlyandtravel.com with tens of thousands of social media followers and over a million website visitors a year. She authored a weekly column for 2 Southern CA newspapers on health.

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Tom Larsen, a graduate of Rutgers University, moved from Portland, OR to Cuenca with his wife Debby in June, 2104. He is the author of five novels in the crime fiction genre — all are available as e-books on Amazon.com. Two of his short mysteries set in Cuenca will appear this spring in "Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine." Contact: tomlarsen365@hotmail.com



Keith Paul is a retired healthcare information technology executive and longtime website designer and blogger. He runs a travel blog called www.retireearlyandtravel.com with tens of thousands of social media followers and over a million website visitors a year. He is also an avid artist and photographer.

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Nancy Laughlin is a recently retired Marriage and Family Therapist from Sacramento, California. In her earlier life she served in the US Army as a reporter and editor, and later wrote feature stories for a daily newspaper in the Louisville, Kentucky area. Nancy currently enjoys creating abstract art. Contact: nancyLaughlin4change@yahoo.com



Susan Schenck has a master's degree in Chinese medicine and is the award-winning author of two nutrition books: *The Live Food Factor* and *Beyond Broccoli*, as well as *Expats in Cuenca: The Magic & the Madness*. She gives healthy food prep classes in Cuenca.

Contact: LiveFoodFactor@yahoo.com



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as Cuenca Expats Magazine



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www.clinicadefracturascuenca.com



CLÍNICA DE FRACTURAS

CENTRO DE TRAUMA Y ORTOPEDIA



La Clínica de Fracturas

U.S. Quality Care at Ecuadorian Prices

By Tom Larsen - Photographs by Ruffolo Design Photography and courtesy of Clínica de Fracturas

If you've lived in Cuenca for any amount of time, you have probably passed the three-story building on Huayna Capac, near the intersection with Simón Bolívar and You may have commented on its distinctive appearance—a curving glass front with red, white and blue accents.

Even the name on the building seems exotic to our expat eyes and ears—La Clínica de Fracturas, literally translated, the Fracture Clinic. What, you may have wondered, is this building? Wonder no more. La Clínica de Fracturas, the brainchild of Doctor Gustavo Ochoa, is a fully equipped, fully licensed and accredited private hospital, dedicated to the treatment of bone injuries and related trauma. The facility even has an emergency room, available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Doctor Ochoa, educated at the University of Cuenca and La Sapienza University in Rome, opened the clinic 33-years ago to provide his fellow Cuencanos a safer and more science-based alternative to the traditional hueseros sobadores—bone-setters—that have plied their trade in Ecuador for centuries.

Over the years, Dr. Ochoa's sons, Christian and Gustavo joined the team. All three possess impressive credentials, both in education and experience. You can view their resumes at the clinic's website: www.clinicadefracturascuenca.com. Although they are all licensed and trained as General Orthopedic surgeons, they have their individual specialties. Dr. Ochoa Senior is a generalist, treating all manners of injuries while Christian specializes in sports medicine, and the younger Gustavo primarily works with children.

We had the opportunity to tour the facility and sit down with Doctor Christian Ochoa, who speaks fluent English by the way. His knowledge as well as his extensive range of experience, and perhaps most importantly, his passion for the art of orthopedic surgery, were quickly evident. He and his brother grew up in the business, you might say. The current building stands on the site of the family home, where Doctor Ochoa Senior established a small practice nearly forty years ago. The practice grew quickly and soon outgrew the family home.

"My father would come to me," Christian told us, and say, "Go outside and play. I need to use your room to see a patient."

The Benefits

You are reading this article, most likely because you're an expat (it's right there in the title of the magazine). So, what are the benefits for expats? Why would you choose to come here as opposed to any of the other hospitals that Cuenca has to offer?

Experience

If your injury involves multiple types of trauma, by all means, go to one of the general hospitals, but for anything related to fractures, La Clinica de Fracturas is the place to go. Experienced emergency room staff will ensure that you are stabilized, treat any pain you may have and quickly assess the gravity and complexity of your injury. Then one of the three surgeons will be called in, and the proposed treatment explained to you in detail. As you read earlier in this article, each doctor has their field of specialty, but rest assured that any of the three have the education and the experience to perform any procedure you may need (they each perform an average of 400 procedures per year). As in any other field, repetition is one of the keys to competency.

Safety

The equipment (imported primarily from the U.S. and Europe) is the same as you will find in any comparable facility worldwide. The clinic uses the protocol of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. Each procedure is performed with strict adherence to the academy's guidelines and using a comprehensive pre- and post-op checklist. Further, because patients are there to be treated primarily for bone trauma only, you are less likely to be exposed to the germs and infections that you might encounter in any hospital, no matter how modern.

Cost

Admit it, this is the one that caught your eye, isn't it? Because the clinic is so specialized, the doctors and their staff can perform their tasks with a maximum of efficiency. Because it is privately owned (three partners, no board of directors) they can minimize the paperwork and overhead. Costs can vary widely, depending on the complexity, and you should definitely do your own research, but a simple complete hip replacement at La Clinica de Fracturas can usually be done for \$7,000 or less, as opposed to \$35,000 in the U.S.

Source: www.health.costhelper.com

They work with all insurance companies, both Ecuadorian and international. Major credit cards are accepted, regardless of country of origin.

Convenience

The clinic has two operating theaters that are always available. You can conceivably walk (or hobble) in, have x-rays taken, consult with a surgeon and have your surgery performed the same day. The clinic offers ten rooms for overnight stays (each room contains a second bed so that your family member can stay with you). Clinic staff includes physical therapists and wound care specialists to aid you in recovery.



Other Services

You do not have to break a bone in order to utilize the clinic! They also treat sports injuries, dislocations, sprains, arthritis, osteoarthritis, etc. See their website for a complete list of services. Approximately 60% of procedures are performed arthroscopically, a minimally invasive technique.

The clinic also has the latest equipment and expertise to administer shockwave therapy, an alternative to surgery in many cases.

One of the current projects at the clinic involves expanding the use of their hyperbaric chamber, one of only two in Cuenca and perhaps a dozen in Ecuador. In the chamber, the patient breathes in pure oxygen while being subject to high pressure (more than 1.5 times standard atmospheric pressure) which helps to bring oxygen to the affected area quickly and in high concentration. The FDA has approved 13 hyperbaric medicine treatments, including carbon monoxide poisoning, diabetic neuropathy, and delayed wound healing (see the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine Society's website: www.uhms.org for a complete list). In addition, studies are underway regarding the potential to use this type of treatment for Alzheimer's and autism, AIDS and a host of other ailments. A 2013 study by the UHMS indicates that while not FDA approved yet, there is sufficient evidence to support the use of hyperbaric chambers in these treatments. The process is safe, and whatever your particular need (subject to an on-site physical exam to gauge your fitness) you can purchase a one-hour session at the clinic for as little as \$60.



Did you know?

When being transported by ambulance, Ecuadorian law gives you the absolute right to choose the facility to which you want to be delivered. The attendants may want to go to a place that is convenient for them, but stand your ground.

A recent study has shown that the rate of joint replacement surgeries for people over the age of 65 has doubled in the United States over the past 20 years. The study further states that as many as one-third of these procedures may be unnecessary. Source: CBS News.



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Vilcabamba, a Relaxing Getaway

By Keith & Tina Paul - Photographs by Keith Paul



The low hanging clouds and lush gardens

We have lived in Cuenca for over a year and we love to take short trips that give us the chance to explore this diverse country that is Ecuador. Last week we decided to visit the “Valley of Longevity” or more precisely, Vilcabamba. I (Tina) am a naturopathic doctor and visiting Vilcabamba has been on my bucket list for quite some time. We decided to drive there ourselves instead of taking a bus so that we could stop in the town of Saraguro, have lunch, and take a look around. If you are able to stop off for lunch here, we recommend the chef’s tasting menu at Shamuico Espai Gastronomic. It’s pricey, but it rivals the culinary delights of a Michelin star restaurant.

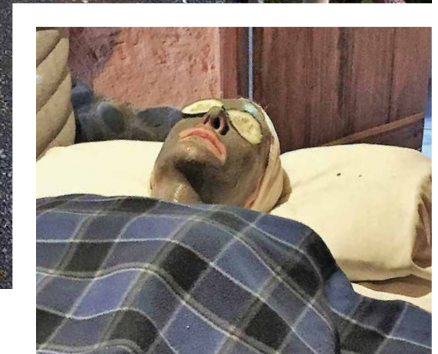
Vilcabamba is nestled in a lush green valley, that is located about 4 hours south of Cuenca or about 28 miles past Loja. It is a small, quiet, legendary town where locals claim many inhabitants live to be centenarians. When we arrived, we found it to be a little warmer than Cuenca and a bit more humid. We also found it to be much quieter. After a few days, we almost missed the neighborhood house and car alarms. The vibe is very laid back. We saw many North Americans hanging at coffee shops and bars (I read that about 20% of the residents of Vilcabamba are North American or European Expts).

Quite often, we saw backpackers and cyclists coming into town. The town itself is tiny. There are a few restaurants, bars, and coffee shops, along with various tiendas that carry all the necessities the locals may need. A square park with a fountain at its center, much like Parque Calderon, marks the center of town. Across from the park is a large colorful Catholic church.



Vilcabamba city center

One of the well manicured trails at the hostel



Massages and facials are plenty at the hostels in town



One of the most popular restaurants - United Falafel Org (UFO). They only serve locally sourced products

The real beauty of Vilcabamba lies in the lush, green land that surrounds the town. It is a backpacker and outdoor enthusiast dream. At night, you hear the crickets and their friends enjoying the darkness.

In my opinion, you go to Vilcabamba to relax and enjoy the peace and quiet, or you go there to hike or do some horseback riding. If you are looking for more than relaxation, or a chance to be one with nature then you will be disappointed.

We stayed at the very popular Hosteria Izhcayluma and could not have been happier. The entire place is built to complement the natural setting that is its home. We opted for the best they had, a private cottage at \$59. Our cottage had a stone floor, lots of big windows, a large terrace and an open stone shower. It is a treat just to walk the flower filled paths inside the resort. One evening on the way back to our cottage, we saw our first lemur in the wild climbing a tree. The hostel offers free yoga for every level at seven in the morning in a beautiful yoga studio with incredible views of the valley. Izhcayluma also has a fantastic spa. While we were there we each had a 75-minute massage for \$22 per person and

a facial for \$16. Izhcayluma now offers a daily van service departing El Centro in Cuenca at 1:30 pm and Izhcayluma at 8 am for \$15 per person each way. Izhcayluma makes it very easy to visit.

We went to Vilcabamba to enjoy the natural beauty, spend some quality time with good friends and possibly have some of that magical longevity wear off on us.



Our cottage terrace overlooking the valley

Matthew Hart

Born in 1973 in Sagamihara, Japan Matthew Hart lived the greater portion of his life in Oklahoma City, OK, and for short periods in Oakland, CA and Richmond, VA. He has worked in retail sales and management, in bars and kitchens, owned a photography business for several years and worked as a land man in Oklahoma and surrounding states. All of his work, however, was to support his music. As a singer/songwriter and musician, he has had several bands over the last 25 years. Now, in Cuenca for almost 4 years, he and his beautiful and talented partner started a business called Bone-ito. They prepare organic beef bone broth and other assorted delicious savory and sweet items.



Where was the last place you lived before moving to Cuenca?

Oklahoma City

Why Cuenca?

My family lives here, but I did a fair amount of research into several locations all over Central and South America several years ago in anticipation of a move outside of the States.

What do you like most about living in Cuenca?

Almost everything. No place is perfect, but, unlike many gringos here, I don't like to complain. I love it here.

If you could go back in time, would you do something different and if so, what?

I assume you mean if I could go back in MY OWN history. I wouldn't change anything. It brought me to this time and place and I am happy to be here. Regret is a waste of time and emotion.

Who is your hero(s) and why?

I don't tend to have heroes.

What's the magic formula for success?

Ask me again when I am successful.

Do you make friends easily?

I believe that I do.

If you could star in a re-make of a classic film, who would you want to play?

Hmmm... Nosferatu? Just off the top of my head...

How do you maintain a good mental attitude?

I suppose I will it. Isn't that how we do anything?

What are you most passionate about?

Whatever strikes me that day.

If you hadn't been born in this century, when and where would you like to have lived?

Wherever, whenever I could live with the greatest degree of liberty.

What accomplishment in your life are you most proud of?

Eh... Pride is overrated.

What is your favorite daily wear attire?

Sarong? I don't know. Odd question...

If someone wrote a biography about you, what do you think the title should be?

Hmmm... How about Stuff Nobody in His Right Mind Would Read

What do you do for exercise?

I tame lions...

If you were president, what is the first thing you would do?

Quit being president.

What are you reading lately?

Eudora Welty



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Ecuador USA Roses Direct
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Rose of the Month

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• WINE - CHEESE & BREAD •

presents
Cheese of the Month

“ *Gorgonzola* ”



Gorgonzola cheese is produced in Italy with raw whole milk. It can be either hard or soft. Originally produced from the province of Milan, Gorgonzola takes its name from that region. The green color in the interior of the cheese is the product of the cheese making process.

Filippo Wine - Cheese & Bread can advise you on how to best serve this cheese, with a wide variety of breads and wine paring (especially a sweet white wine) all in stock for ready sale.

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(2nd floor inside courtyard San Luis Seminary)
- 🍷 Filippo's La Sorrentina Artisan Italian
Cheese & Breads

Miss Ecuador's Ruta de la Belleza

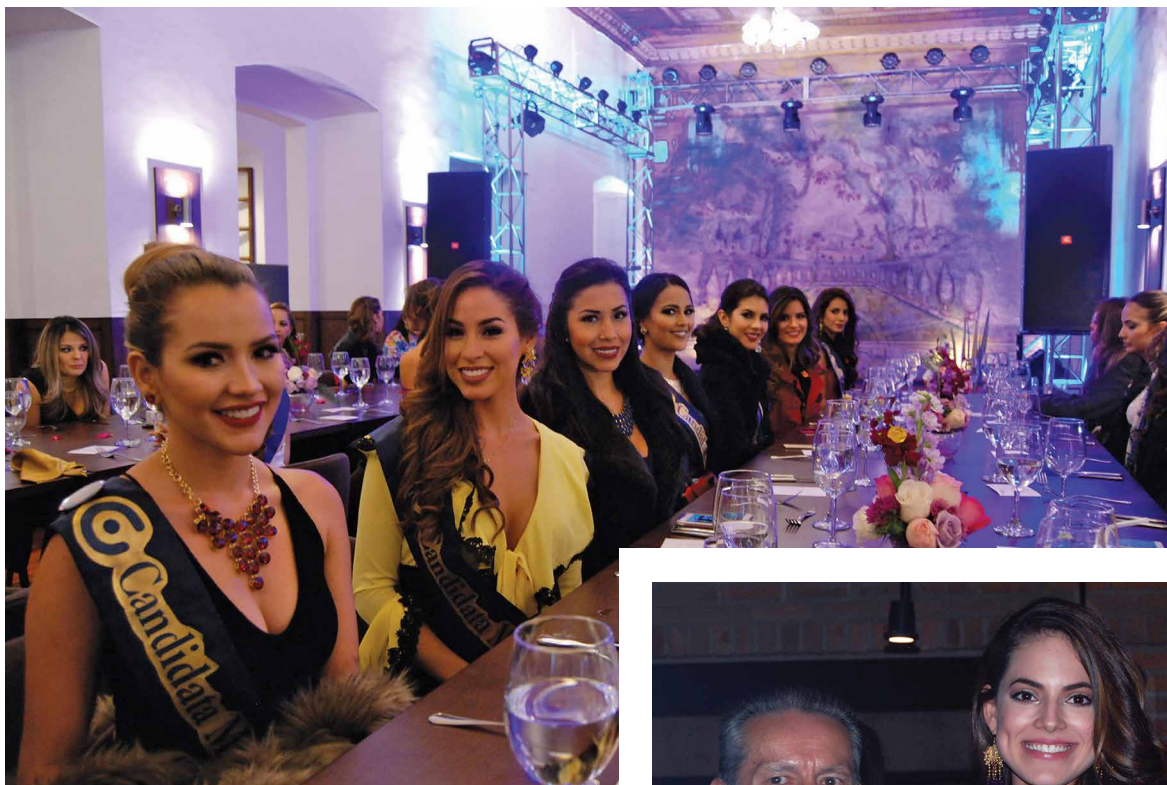
Photographs by Juan Diego Durán



Cuenca Expats Magazine was there to document Miss Ecuador's Ruta De La Belleza featuring the 22 Miss Ecuador finalists. They were in the Cuenca area supporting the Warrior Project, visiting more than 26 Cuenca area businesses. The Warrior Project, founded by Marcia Mejia has a mission to help cancer survivors stay positive by enhancing their physical appearances. Cuenca Expats which hosted the Magazine is a proud supporter of this charity.

Businesses supporting this event included: Estancia del Angel Hotel (Gualaceo), Buffalo Restaurant (Gualaceo), Malena Perfumes (Gualaceo), Litarg Mode Shoes (Gualaceo), Joyería García Jewelry Store (Chordeleg), Corvel Restaurant (Paute), Hotel Pumapungo (Cuenca), Fujifilm Photo Studio (Cuenca), Subway Sandwich (Cuenca), Creta Restaurant (Cuenca), San Miguel Rum Factory (Cuenca), Tierra de Fuego Restaurant (Cuenca), Atelier Shoes (Cuenca), Vera Vasquez Furniture Store (Cuenca), Aldanny Boutique (Cuenca), Magnolia Restaurant (Cuenca), El Mercurio (Cuenca), Mega Tienda del Sur Supermarket (Cuenca), Tacanijo Restaurant (Cuenca), Persa Flor Flowers (Cuenca), Cristal Boutique (Cuenca), Marcia Mejía Spa (Cuenca), Om Dental (Cuenca), Cristo del Consuelo Restaurant (Cuenca), Portal Center Tech Store (Cuenca), and Sajsana Restaurant (Cuenca).



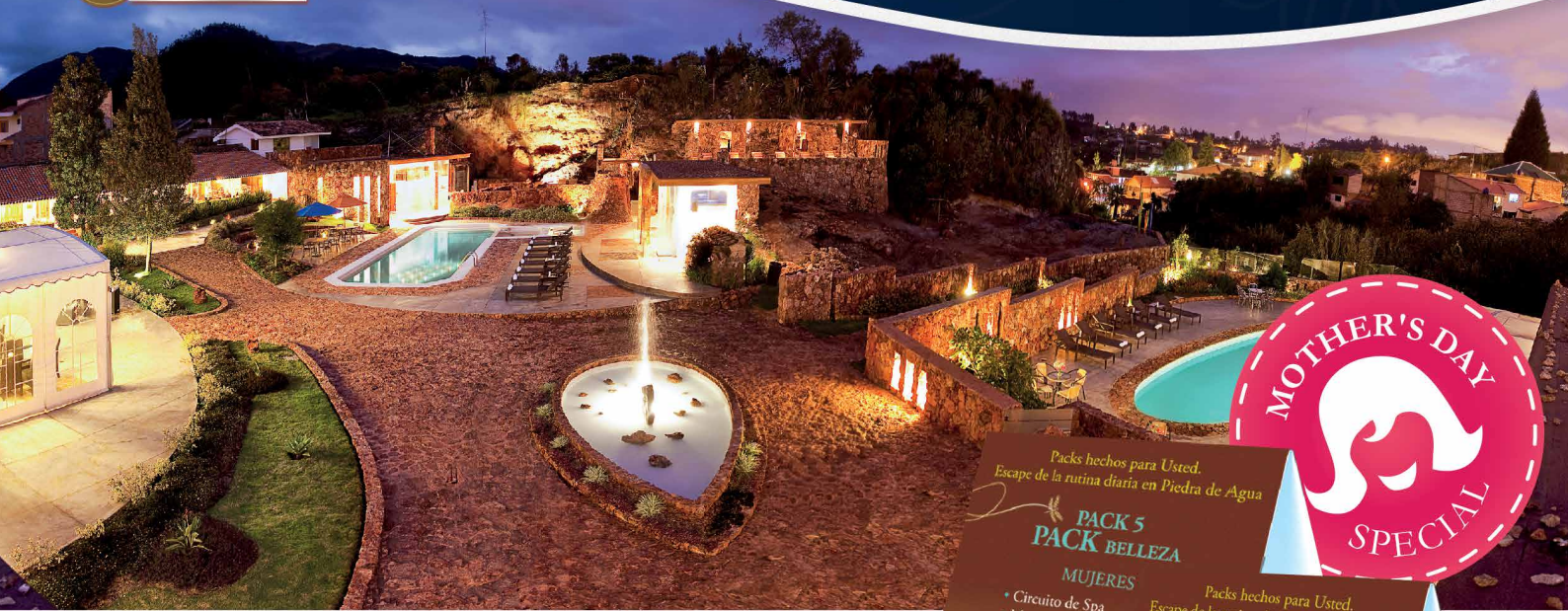




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A gift for the body and the senses



atyco: for all your accounting needs!

By Madelaine Barry - Photographs courtesy of atyco

Imagine showing up in the accounting office of "atyco" with a paper bag of facturas dating back three years, hoping to get your IVA rebates. Likely, the accountants there would not even blink an eye, since servicing individuals and small and medium business is their specialty!

Come to either the office on Remigio Crespo Toral across from SRI or Hernán Cordero y Víctor G. Aguilar and meet owner/manager Geovanna Gallardo and see how she can help you. She has owned "atyco," which stands for asesores tributarios y contables since she opened it fifteen years ago. She holds master's degrees in tax administration, management and international studies and ten of her employees hold accounting degrees as well.

You might think that Geovanna was always a whiz with numbers, but you would be wrong. She is good at managing people and understanding tax laws. She knows the software to work out the calculations, so that's why accounting appeals to her. Her clients include expats and local business professionals.

I wondered if Ecuador has the annual tax deadline like April 15 in the United States and Geovanna said there is: March for individuals and April for businesses, so their busy cycle has just ended.

Geovanna explains her business plan was to spend the first five years building the company's reputation, the second five on refining their infrastructure and the last five increasing their technology and social media presence. She proudly admits all three goals have been met. When asked if she envisions building additional offices, she does not see the need as technology allows clients to scan their paperwork and they can Skype or Facetime if needed. Future plans do include adding more English and even Kichwa speakers to their staff.

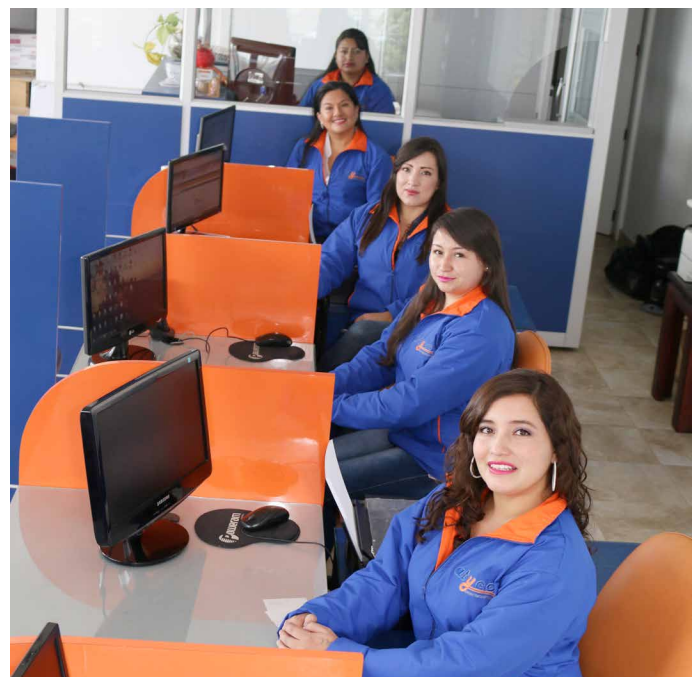
What makes "atyco" stand out from other accounting firms? Geovanna clarifies that employees take the confidentiality of their clients very seriously, that they all support each other and enjoy what they do. Are they all math geeks? Maybe not, but for those of us who need to pay people to handle accounting issues for ourselves and/or our business, see what "atyco" can do for you!



Owner/Manager Geovanna Gallardo



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educational feature



presents
Recipe of the Month



Father & Son RIBS

Bake 350 grams of Pork Ribs seasoned with salt and pepper (to taste) and beer of choice (to taste) for 5-hours at 120°C. until the meat is soft and tender. Cover the Ribs with heated BBQ sauce.

BBQ Sauce Ingredients:

- 100ml Tomato sauce
- 80gr Molasses or Panela
- 4gr Tamarindo (local Ecuador fruit)
- Pinch of Cinnamon
- 20 ml Vinegar
- 80gr Water
- 5gr Instant coffee (add last)

Stir ingredients to combine, bringing the sauce to a boil. Reduce heat to low, add instant coffee last and simmer until slightly thickened.

educational feature



Luzan Trading Ecuador
presents
Wines of Portugal

Portugal is the 11th largest wine producer in the world. There is more to Portuguese wine than just port. While port is what put Portugal on the world wine map, today there are many winemakers producing dry wines — red, white, rose, and even sparkling wine. Look to Portugal for variety. Most grapes for wine grown in Portugal are native, and you've probably never heard of them. Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, Touriga Franca and Baga for reds. Encruzado, Alvarinho, Maria Gomes for whites. Blending is very common in Portugal. Each wine region in the country is known for a particular blend.
Saude!

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Raw Organic Honey

The Sweet Treat That's Not a Cheat!

By Susan Schenck - Photographs by Ruffolo Design Photography



Who does not love honey? "Raw honey is heavenly nectar that's healthy, healing, and divine!" says expat Mimi Phoebe of Vancouver, Canada.

Crude raw (not processed with heat) honey is truly a superfood — very rich in enzymes, antioxidants, probiotics, and minerals. Studies show that this liquid gold (in contrast to sugar) can lower your triglycerides and lower your blood sugar, thereby assisting with weight loss. It is always best to eat LOCAL raw honey, which contains some bee pollen and propolis that can ease allergies to local plant pollen.

"I love raw honey because if I get a sugar craving, I can just have a half teaspoon of it, and that is all I want. It always tastes better than any other sweet thing. I also use it to heal small cuts or burns. I buy organic, so no chemicals!" says Kristine Duke from the USA.

She's right! Honey's antibiotic properties make it ideal for topical use in healing wounds, abrasions, abscesses, burns, ulcers, bedsores, cuts, and more. Several Mumbai hospitals have used a combination of honey and ghee as dressing for infected wounds since 1991. Traditionally, it has also been used internally for its antibiotic and antiviral benefits for various infections. Furthermore, it is an effective cough syrup and is used for specific digestive ailments like GERD and acid reflux. There are no side effects at all with this natural medicine.

The shelf life of raw honey has been proven to be thousands of years, and probably longer! Honey found in ancient Egyptian tombs was still good to eat because it contains hydrogen peroxide and has no water.

Eucalyptus honey, prevalent in Ecuador, has an almost medicinal taste. This type, however, would be the best for antiseptic topical use or coughs.

Although honey in the traditional markets may seem like a bargain, an Ecuadorian friend of mine warned me that they usually cut it with sugar (up to 25%).

Unfortunately, honey is produced by an endangered species. Colony collapse disorder (CCD) is rampant and thought to be caused by pesticides, high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) fed to bees, and Wi-Fi from cell phones and wireless devices. It has been said, "If bees go, humans have only about four years left to live," because nearly all of our food depends on bee pollination.

Pacha Kuna has a varied collection of honey and unique honey products, including 'Miel de Oro' (containing honey, curcumin, and propolis) and Elixir El Secreto Real (honey, Jalea Real, pollen, and propolis (to stimulate the immune system) and Pan de Abeja (a unique food containing 16 amino acids.)

Honey can be eaten plain or put into a smoothie or dessert. I mix a tablespoon of honey with a tablespoon of raw jungle peanut butter, or I mix it with coconut butter, a handful of nuts, and/or a teaspoon of raw cacao powder. I consider it a guilt-free indulgence for my sweet tooth when kept within a tablespoon or so a day. I use it in nearly all raw desserts that I teach in my classes because unlike sugar and dates, raw honey will not stimulate excess insulin (which causes fatigue and weight gain).

Honey can also be used in homemade, non-toxic personal care products; moisturizers, face masks, conditioners, exfoliants and body scrubs.

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“I Am A Warrior” Project’s Marcia Mejía

Changing Cancer Survivors’ Lives One Makeover at a Time

By Nancy Laughlin - Photographs by Juan Diego Durán



Must one be a warrior to help create a warrior? Marcia Mejía proves it certainly helps. The three-time cancer survivor and self-made entrepreneur created the “I Am A Warrior” Foundation to help cancer survivors stay positive by enhancing their physical appearance with makeovers, which include a handmade wig.

Marcia’s struggles with cancer made her a business woman who understands the emotional, and financial needs of a woman receiving cancer treatments. Sitting in her spa/hair salon, Marcia described herself looking in a mirror after she had lost her own hair during various cancer treatments, and spoke of her feelings of hopelessness and being unattractive. But, Marcia is also a self-described warrior who found ways to make herself feel beautiful again. Marcia now uses her talents to help other women in the community feel attractive during their journeys.

First, she collects hair donations at her salon to have wigs made for these women. Throughout the year, anyone (male or female) is welcome to make an appointment to donate hair if they meet these requirements: Hair must be at least 12 inches

(30 centimeters) in length and be clean, dry, and healthy. Dyed hair is also accepted.

Next, Marcia arranges to have the donated hair made into wigs by a specialist in Quito. She said the quality of wigs, especially the wig cap, is of great importance.

Finally, Marcia holds an “I Am A Warrior” event for the women who will receive a wig and makeover in front of an audience of their families, cancer survivors, and the hair donors. Hair donors are an important part of the ceremony because of the emotional experience of both parties.

These wigs take time and money. Women must often wait for them, so Marcia provides hats and scarves, as well as makeovers to help the women feel more beautiful while they wait. These services are available year round at her spa. Anyone going through cancer treatments and needing a wig can sign up for one, expats included.

Finally, Marcia holds an annual Gala Fundraiser to attract donors. This year’s gala is planned for June or July.

Word of her foundation has spread. Currently, about 150 women are on a wig waiting list. Helping these women takes

action and money. With the cost of each wig between \$70 and \$120, this means a goal of \$18,000 for the wigs. It also takes an average of four hair donors to make one wig. To provide a wig for everyone on the list, there is a need for 600 hair donors.

Marcia personally donated wigs to survivors at each of the "I Am A Warrior" events last year.



How can you help?

- Donate cash, scarves or hats.
- Visit Marcia Mejia Spa/Salon, located at Zamora Chinchipe 001 y Unidad Nacional.
- Donate hair, or host a fundraiser.
- *Contact the spa for an appointment:* Spanish speakers call 2886274 or 098 716 5244. English speakers call Andrea Moreno 098 377 8549. Email: spamarciamejia@hotmail.com
- Spread the word. Tell your friends, families and neighbors how to help through personal contact and social media. Don't have the hair to donate? Then suggest to someone with healthy hair how and why to donate.

Our challenge to you - We're looking to the help of our generous readers to reach this \$18,000 goal, as well as 600 people who will donate hair. Cuenca Expats Magazine made the first \$100 donation.

A Hair Donor's Unexpected Experience

By Nancy Laughlin - Photographs provided by Mauricio Bernal

We think of women donating hair for cancer survivors, but that's not always the case. Mauricio Bernal, owner of the popular "gringo hang-out" Sabatino's Restaurante, emotionally described his experience. Up to the time of donating his hair he had worn it long, adding that his last hair cut prior to the one for donation was eight



years ago. Mauricio says that two events had led to his decision to cut his hair.

First, accompanying his mother to SOLCA for an exam, he noticed the cancer patients and admitted it was the first time he had felt such compassion for people going through these hardships.

The second was when visiting a friend of his mother who was receiving cancer treatments and she admired his long hair. At that moment, he felt guilty as he noticed her wig, and then thought about her comments about his hair. As Mauricio retold the story, he said he felt the same lump in his throat that he did that day.

Mauricio laughed when he talked about actually getting the haircut. The stylist asked him three times, "Are you sure?" When Mauricio said "yes" for the third time, the big scissors came out and it was the point of no return.



Would he do it all over again? Mauricio smiled as he said he has never regretted the decision for obvious reasons, but added that with long hair it took him 45 minutes to get ready, whereas now it takes 3-minutes.



Dr. Jose Acosta, daughter Dr. Pamela Acosta, and son-in-law Dr. Andres Vega

Ecuador Dental Care

The Best Dental Care in Cuenca is a Long Family Tradition

By Carol A. Boe - Photograph by Nathalie Duffau

Make an appointment at the Ecuador Dental Clinic and experience the best and most state-of-the-art dental care in Cuenca. Dr. José Domingo Acosta and his family have now been treating dental patients in this city for four generations. Dr. Acosta's grandfather came here from Colombia to practice in 1910. He was the very first dentist in Cuenca. His son, Dr. Acosta's father, was both a practicing dentist and a professor at the University of Cuenca's Dental School when it was still called the School of Medicine. In fact, he was young José Domingo's teacher. Today, Dr. Acosta works as part of a highly-specialized team that includes his daughter, Dr. Pamela Acosta, and her husband Dr. Andrés Vega.

The senior Dr. Acosta, who speaks excellent English, first decided to follow in his father's and grandfather's footsteps because he loved making things with his hand and liked spending time at the office. After he graduated from the University of Cuenca, he completed a post-graduate course in implants in Mexico City. He has now been practicing dentistry for 35 years. Always wanting to improve his skills, Dr. Acosta has attended many professional congresses in the United States, Peru, Colombia and other countries. He says he enjoys what he's doing every day.

Dr. José Acosta still does general dentistry. However, he has specialized in oral rehabilitation, including ceramic crowns, bridges, and veneers, as well as implantology for more than 23 years. Dr. Pamela Acosta is a specialist in oral rehabilitation and prosthetic implantology, while Dr. Andrés Vega specializes in periodontics, implantology and endodontics.

The Acosta-Vega team has been working with expats for the last 10 years. In fact, 50-60% of their patients are from

the United States and Canada. They have also treated people from Europe, New Zealand, Russia, and Australia. In addition to providing excellent dental care, they keep in touch with patients to monitor their progress.

Most of the expat patients tend to live in the vicinity of the Ecuador Dental Clinic. They have been referring others to Dr. Acosta throughout his years of practice. With so many on-going referrals it's clear that expats and other patients are happy with the care they receive. Dr. Acosta believes that this tells his team members that they are doing things the correct way. When their patients need orthodontics or major surgery, they will refer them to other hospitals or clinics.

Dr. Acosta and his colleagues love helping people anyway they can. For example, when new patients are also new to Cuenca they will help them find other types of medical professionals and resources in the city.

The Ecuador Dental Care clinic has been in the same building on Calle Eduardo Muñoz and Avenida Gran Colombia for 14 years. It's an ideal location for their practice. There's plenty of parking as the Immigration Office is across the street and banks are close by.

Dr. Acosta gave me a tour of their modern, clean and fully equipped clinic. There are different consultation rooms and even a full-service laboratory on the premises. The laboratory is managed by a German gentleman who makes all of the clinic's porcelain crowns, bridgework and removables for them. The clinic is also staffed by two assistants who take care of the equipment and appliances. Their secretary handles patients' business.

HOURS: Mon to Fri: 8am - 1pm / 3pm - 7pm
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Marcia Mejia was given the proprietary formula for 5 different juice mixes during her cancer illness. She tried the program and it became part of her recovery process. Within 9 days, she felt better both physically and mentally.


Here is what Marcia recommends:

1. Look at your calendar for a time when you can make a seven-day commitment to this plan
2. Make an appointment with Marcia, and she will introduce you to her nutritionist who will recommend an individual plan for you to follow during the seven-day treatment. (or you can consultate your own)
3. Drink 5 different juices per day (or 35 bottles in total)
4. At the end of 7 days, meet with the nutritionist again for evaluation and follow-up

The total price is \$150 that includes the 35 juices and recommended herbal teas. The cost of consultation with nutritionist is extra.

Editor's Note: While interviewing Marcia Mejia for the Warriors Project, page 16 of this Issue, Cuenca Expats Magazines heard about some juices she had taken during her cancer illness that helped to improve her health. We encouraged Marcia to tell our readers about it. While no health claims can be independently documented, this may be something readers would want to investigate.

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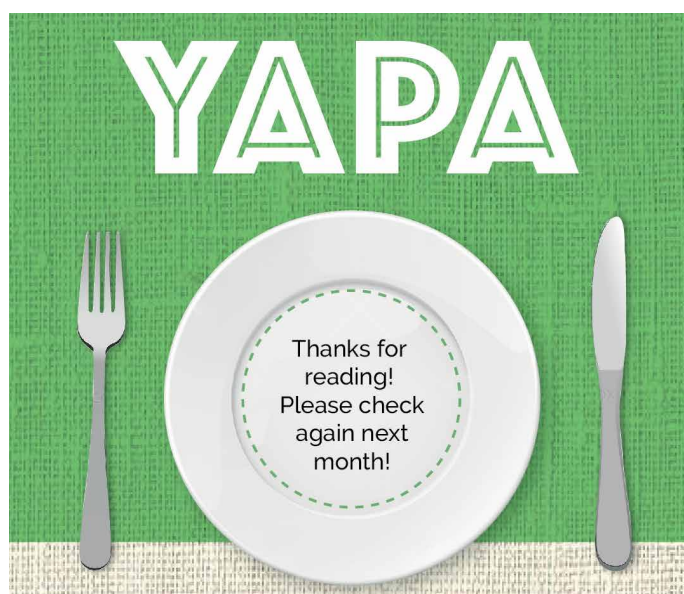


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KEEP READING, YOU COULD BE THE NEXT WINNER!

KatieCat & Cain

By Nancy Laughlin



It seems fitting that local singers Katie and John's first kiss was in the parking lot of a La Jolla hotel where they were performing together. Years later the couple says, the song that best describes their life together is "I've Got You Babe."

Where did you live before moving to Cuenca?

J: We lived in San Diego California for many years, but due to the nature of our work, we traveled around. Katie is from Napa, California and I'm from Seattle.

What did you do before moving to Cuenca?

K: We were working musicians in San Diego and beyond.

J: We are professional musicians. Katie is a singer and guitarist. I'm a pianist, guitarist, singer, conductor, composer, and orchestrator. We are both Artists in Residence with the SoCal Jazz Society, teaching jazz history, and I was doing educational seminars for the San Diego Symphony. We performed a lot in nightclubs and occasional jazz festivals.

What were your family and friend's reaction when you told them you were moving to Ecuador?

K: There were a variety of reactions from wonder and joyfulness to shock and concern.

J: We got two kinds of reactions; many were supportive and others thought we're nuts. We were surprised how otherwise smart people knew nothing about geography. Some people asked, "Is Ecuador in Mexico?" The USA is such a huge

automobile culture, so some asked if we'd drive there. When we told them we were not going to have a car there they asked, "How are you going to get around?" I told them, "Burros."

How long have you been here?

K: 7-1/2 months.

When and why did you start thinking about living overseas?

K: We came to visit a friend who was living in Cuenca in 2014 and the idea occurred to us then.

J: Katie had lived in Norway for a year and had already had a taste of the expat experience. I started thinking about it about 10 years ago.

Why Ecuador and specifically Cuenca?

K: Cuenca is a kind of utopia. It is not perfect but the quality of life is so beautiful here. I love the people, the climate, the low cost of living, the historic buildings, the healthy food, and the ability to walk everywhere.

J: As a musician, I've worked a lot in Latin music genres and with Hispanic musicians. I've travelled somewhat in Latin America and Spain and always had an affinity for the Hispanic culture.

We visited a gringo musician friend who lives in Cuenca about 3 years ago and we liked it. We came back the next year to see if moving to Cuenca would be something we'd really like to do. On the second day of that visit, we decided that Cuenca is for us.

What do you like to do for fun?

K: I like to have friends over for dinner, play my guitar, work in my garden, read, take yoga classes, walk around the city, and discover new things about it, shop for fruits and vegetables in the indigenous markets, and enjoy a cappuccino in an outdoor cafe.

J: We love just walking round the city. Sunday nights we like to go to Parque Calderon, stroll, and people watch. We like to watch the kids who do break dancing in the gazebo. We've dubbed them "the twirly boys." We also have a social life with fellow expats that is wonderful.

What are your favorite things about Cuenca?

K: The people are happy and relaxed, the rivers are beautiful, and it is a historic city with so much character.

J: We love the Cuencano people. I love the artistic, Bohemian vibe. Cuenca is what I imagine Paris was like for the lost generation in the 1920s, or Greenwich Village for jazz musicians and artists in the 1950s. You can do your thing artistically with a very low overhead. Although we were very successful in the music business back in the states it was a constant effort and hustle. Here we can relax and create at our own pace.

What, if anything, do you miss most from "back home"?

K: Family. Sometimes I wish I could order something from Amazon.com and have it delivered.

J: Maybe, good Mexican food.

Are you completely retired? Do you work from here? If so, what type of work?

K: No, I'm too young to be retired. John and I work as musicians here in Cuenca and occasionally tour in the US.

J: I'm retired from the rat race of the music business, but as a musician and artist, I continue to perform and create. We have occasional house concerts and create events at different venues around Cuenca.

Do you have anything to share with newcomers to Cuenca?

K: Look for volunteer opportunities to engage with and uplift the local community.

J: Yes. I'd like to share the joy that we've found with new friendships in the expat community. Any person who decides to leave the USA and move to Ecuador is kind of automatically "an interesting person." Every expat here has a story, and there's a special bonding and fellowship among us.





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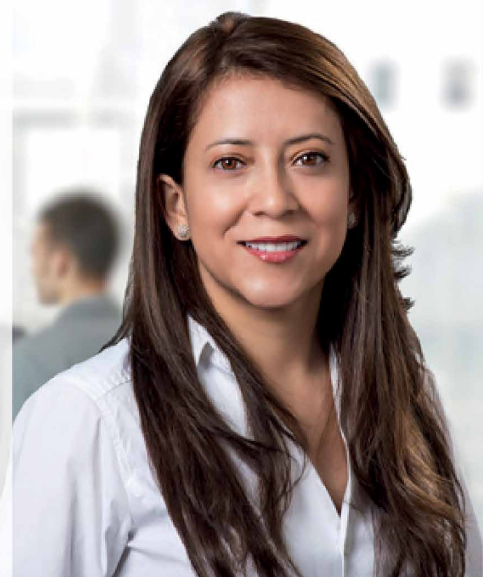
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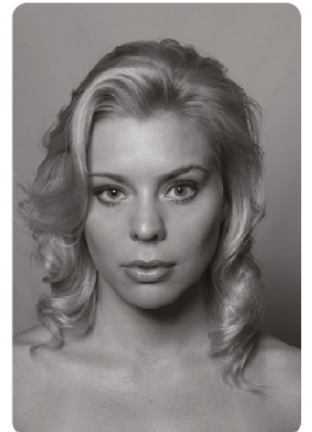
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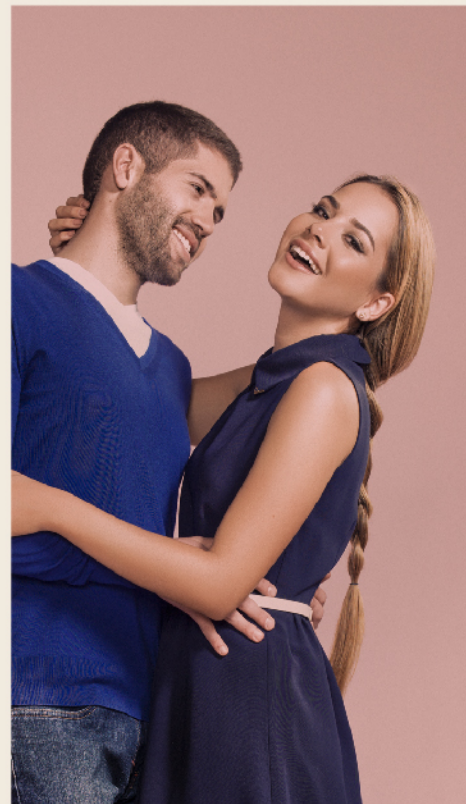
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