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Cuenca

41
ISSUE



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Cover Photo

incubic®

Staff:

Managing Partner: Ed Lindquist - +593 95 981 9747
ed@expatmarketinggroup.com

Partner: Maite Duran

General Manager: Yenis Bejas - +593 279 4098

Sales Manager: Marjorie Alvarez - +593 99 511 1773

Publisher: Melody J. Crabb

Cover Story Editor: Sarah Gunter Cañez

Travel and Entertainment: Edward Lindquist

Copy Editor/Proof Reader: Regina Weitzel

Manager of Special Sales and Videographer:
Incubic Studio - +593 96 779 5163

Magazine Layout: Incubic Studio - +593 96 779 5163

Sales

Carol Pedauga - +593 99 806 3062
Joel Sánchez - +593 99 909 8404

Intern: Marian Rios

Questions:

Email: events@expatsmags.com
Phone: - +593 99 021 4105

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Expats Magazines Group 2023®



CONTRIBUTORS



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 8 years.

Robert M. Ryerson: Certified Financial Fiduciary. A Forbes contributor and author, Robert (Bob) Ryerson entered the financial industry in 1984, and is currently Chief Economist and Planner at New Century Planning Associates. New Century Planning has open an office in Ecuador to serve the expat community. Bob welcomes all questions from the expat community and will be answering them in future article. Bob can be reach via email at rryerson@newcenturyplanning.com.



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.

Loren Hostetter: Founded The Amazonia Vanilla Company in early 2020 while meeting wonderful communities seeking sustainable livelihoods. He has extensive experience in Africa, Eastern Europe and South America in Agriculture and enterprise development through market linkages and innovative finance. He learned farming from growing up on a family livestock and grain farm in Michigan in exchange for free labor.



Special Thanks to Our Readers

Hola,

We trust everyone had an enjoyable Carnival!

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank you, our loyal readers. You made these recent awards possible:

1. Cuenca Expats Magazine was honored with a Special Entrepreneurialism Award by the Ecuadoran-American Chamber of Commerce. This was the first ever awarded to an expat business.

2. Cuenca Expats Magazine was voted the Best Magazine for 2023 in Gringo Post's annual voting.

We also want to recognize our senior writer, Jane Hiltbrand. Jane is the writer and photographer of the Cuenca Architecture and the Historic Hacienda features. She won both the Best Blog and Best Photographer categories.

In this issue, the cover story is on the new Coral at Batan Shopping. This Target-like store is taking action to make the one-stop shopping experience even better, so expats can shop more and save more. Wish for country living and a farm that grows a cash crop? Well, look no further. See Ashly Rogers' announcement for Casa de Bucay, a 20-hectare cacao farm and very large house just three hours from Cuenca and one hour from GYE. BTW, Ashley was the Gringo Post winner for six straight years as Cuenca's Best Realtor. Congratulations Ashley!

In this issue 41 (print version distributed at Coral Batan), we have some very interesting articles. Learn about Le Moulin, dining in an old mill from the 1600's, and BHkb a specialty store where you can buy quality US and other name-brand kitchen and bath accessories, plus the world's top selling spas. It makes sense to have an eye exam once a year. Here's a new, affordable, conveniently located option we found for you—Optica Colombiana. Also, these days when everyone is concerned about money, you'll want to read the latest Expats and Their Finances feature.

We mentioned Jane earlier, and in this issue is another of her articles about Cuenca's historic architecture. And, if you are still thinking about a trip to Galapagos? You'll want to read part two of our first-hand report.

There are many excellent ways expats are contributing to help the Ecuadorian people. Here's one we bet you don't know about: a non-profit group helping indigenous farmers raise and sell vanilla. Read about it here. You may have noticed the square with funny lines in our recent issues. That's a QR code, and when you click it with your smart phone you connect with more information, including videos that are not on the printed page. This is one way we are increasing the usefulness of the magazine. Never used a QR? No problem. We'll show you how in four easy steps in this issue.

Remember to get your print of Cuenca Expats Magazine FREE at Coral Batan. Hurry, they go fast. But if you want to read it online, go to expatsmags.com. Sign up for the VIP club and we'll email the monthly issue directly to you. And, be sure to follow us on social media to get the latest scoop about expat life in Cuenca.

“ Thanks again for being loyal readers for the last 7½ years! Sincerely.

Cuenca Expats Magazine Team



Shop More. Save More at the New Coral

By: Ed Lindquist

Photos: Courtesy of Coral

When expats first arrive to Cuenca, they are amazed by the variety of shopping experiences. Nothing really like this experience in North America. The hustle and bustle of Fiera Libra, the artisan shops in San Francisco Plaza, the colorful street vendors selling everything from fresh fruit and vegetables to tennis shoes around Rotary Plaza to the many large mercados spread around the city. Many a fun day can be spent in adventure and exploration. As this shopping novelty wears off, most of us begin looking for a place similar to what we had back home where we can find all we need in one modern location—somewhere familiar for our day-to-day shopping. Fortunately for us, Cuenca has this option as well: the new Coral at Batan Shopping. In one place, you can find everything you need. From a fully stocked (with over 500 US products) supermarket with fresh meat, vegetables and fruit, to home furnishings, clothes, hardware, paper goods, all things electrical (great prices on large TV's), and even their own line of bikes—one-stop shopping. Think Target in the US.



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There is a new generation of the Ortiz family in Coral's management. And, they are looking to make Coral the best one-stop shopping experience for Cuenca's expat community.

"We are working to offer a better shopping experience, making our stores a friendly space for expats who visit us," comments Juan Pablo Ortiz, president of retail, vice president of GO Corp and grandson of the founder.

"We are working on placing signage in both English and Spanish, adding English shelf talkers so expats can easily recognize where to find all the products in the store.

We are also optimizing the layouts to be able offer expats a shopping map so they will be able to find the aisle that contains the products they want.

And, we are in the hiring process to have bilingual staff who can provide support to expats in a timely manner."

The new Coral Batan has over 8,000 different products on two floors. On the first floor you will find the entire supermarket, plus kitchen and hardware areas. On the first floor you will also find white lines (appliances) and furniture.

Upstairs you will find clothing, footwear (ladies, men, and children), furniture, household linen, decoration items, stationery, toys, music items, technology (computers and cell phones), hardware, sports equipment (bicycles, gym, etc.) and accessories for vehicles and motorcycle sales.



Coral offers daily discounts, as well as monthly and holiday specials. They even have their own customer loyalty card offering you a 3% discount on your purchases.

You don't need to wait until Black Friday to save big!

Other benefits of the new Coral's location in Batan Shopping are the handy ATM's, banks, cooperatives, cinema, optics, the food court for snacking, clothing and footwear stores, pharmacy, and other specialty stores for hard-to-find items. Of course, the proximity to expats' residential areas, underground parking, and ease of getting a taxi are a big plus.

In addition to the location at Batan Shopping, there are six other Coral Hypermarket locations in Cuenca, a total of 18 nationally in Ecuador. Coral (named after Coral Avenue in Miami) was founded in 1973 with the first store in the historic center of the city on Calle Tarqui and Presidente Córdova. It was a small store selling grocery products.

Coral Hipermercados belong to GO Corp (Ortiz business group) which currently has more than 40 companies and a workforce of around 9,000 people nationwide.



CONTACT INFORMATION:

 <https://www.facebook.com/Coralhipermercados/>

<https://www.coralhipermercados.com/>

LOCATIONS:

- **CORAL HIPERMERCADO EL BATÁN:** Remigio Crespo Toral Avenue and Brasil Street, Cuenca, Azuay
- **CORAL HIPERMERCADO SAN BLAS:** presidente Cordova and Miguel Angel Estrella Street, Cuenca, Azuay
- **CORAL HIPERMERCADO MONAY:** Emiliano Zapata and Omar Torrijos Street, Cuenca, Azuay
- **CORAL HIPERMERCADO MALL DEL RIO:** Mall del Rio, Felipe II Avenue, Cuenca, Azuay
- **CORAL HIPERMERCADO CALLE TARQUI:** Tarqui Street, between Presidente Cordova and Mariscal Sucre, Cuenca, Azuay
- **CORAL CENTRO:** De Las Américas Avenue 6-118 and Nicolás de Rocha Street, Cuenca, Azuay
- **CORAL HIPERMERCADO RACAR:** Camino a San Pedro Street, Racar Plaza, Cuenca, Azuay

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Some expats have trouble breathing in Cuenca. It may be just the high altitude or signs of something else. Be safe. It's best to be checked out by a specialist. Expats recommend seeing Dr. Danny Alvarado.



Dr. Danny, with specialist training in Spain, can administer all the respiratory tests necessary (Lung Eco Scan, bronchoscopy, spirometry, walking test for 6-minute monitoring - apnea diagnostic test, pleural biopsy, bronchoscopy techniques for sampling, echo bronchoscopy, respiratory functional tests, and chest ultrasounds).



Dr. Danny also offers these treatments: clinical pulmonology (bronchopneumonia pulmonary), CPAP BIPAP Non-invasive ventilation, COVID and post-COVID treatment, and pulmonary Interventionist with bronchoscopy techniques. So, if you have (or think you might have) COVID, lung cancer, asthma, thromboembolic diseases, tuberculosis, respiratory illness in general—make an appointment today. You'll be glad you did.

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✉ neumologo.01@gmail.com

📍 Neumólogo-Danny Alvarado

📷 [neumologo_danny_alvarado](#)

SANDWICH OF THE MONTH

Chicken Salad ON A BAGEL



Where can you find terrific deli sandwiches in Cuenca? You guessed it—Matthew Bagel Store. And, what's the most popular sandwich of all? The chicken salad on a bagel with lettuce and tomato. Plus, a salad.

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Cuenca Expats Magazine Explores Galápagos.

By: Ed Lindquist and Yenis Bejas
Photos: Courtesy of Metropolitan Touring and Cuenca Expats Magazine

Visiting the Galapagos Islands is on almost every “bucket list.” It’s also high on the wish list for every fellow expat we have talked with, especially now that they live in Ecuador.

Why? What’s so special about an out of the way volcanic archipelago? We wanted to find out for ourselves. So, thanks to our friends at LATAM and Metropolitan Touring, we are off on our first exploration of the Enchanted Islands. Most of us schooled in North America had a biology class in high school on natural selection. We probably learned about Charles Darwin being influenced by observing in the Galapagos Islands the same species adapting to different environments on the various islands. Other than the long-ago classroom, I never really focused on knowing anything more about the islands—until now.



Galapagos's enchanted islands.



Galapagos-Airports-Populated-Islands

The Galapagos Archipelago consists of 20 islands, 42 islets, and over 250 named rocks. Five islands are inhabited (Santa Cruz, San Cristóbal, Isabela, Floreana, and Baltra which is just a military base/airport/naval station). The Galapagos Islands are a province of Ecuador, situated directly on the equator. One would think that means very hot year-round temperatures. Not true. The warmest month of the year is March (only 87°), coolest is August (75°). There are two seasons: dry (June - November), and hot (December - May). The temperature and rainfall are determined by the Humboldt and Peru oceanic currents that pass by the islands for most of the year, but also the warm northern currents that come down during the first three months of the year.

	MAX. AIR TEMP.		MIN. AIR TEMP.		HRS. CLEAR SKIES	SEA TEMP.		WIND -(1-10)+	NAVIGATION -(1-10)+
	°C	°F	°C	°F		°C	°F		
January	28.0	82.4	22.8	73.0	5.3	24.4	75.9	3	2
February	29.6	85.2	23.2	73.7	7.5	25.2	77.3	2	1
March	30.6	87.0	22.7	72.8	6.0	24.9	76.8	1	1
April	29.5	85.1	22.7	72.8	7.5	25.0	77.0	2	1
May	27.9	82.2	22.1	71.7	5.2	24.5	76.1	3	2
June	26.0	78.8	19.1	66.3	4.4	23.1	73.5	4	2
July	24.6	76.2	19.8	67.6	2.8	22.0	71.6	5	3
August	24.2	75.5	19.1	66.3	3.3	21.5	70.7	6	4
September	24.3	75.7	19.6	67.2	2.9	21.8	71.2	7	4
October	25.3	77.5	19.5	67.1	3.8	22.3	72.1	6	3
November	25.8	78.4	20.4	68.7	3.5	23.0	73.4	5	3
December	26.7	80.0	20.9	69.6	4.0	23.3	73.9	4	2

Weather changes Galapagos island



During the 17th century, pirates came to the islands

Only one of the islands has any fresh water: San Cristóbal Island has a real fresh water lagoon (called El Junco) and it is the source of water for that island.

Galapagos also sits right on a global “hot spot” of volcanic activity. Actually, all the islands are volcanically formed but at different times (like the Hawaiian Islands). All are young in geological terms (3–5 million years), and there are still active volcanos. In fact, there’s ongoing volcanic activity now on Wolf Volcano in the northern portion of Isabela Island.

It surprises everyone that the islands are 53,000 square miles in size—ninety seven percent water. And, they are far off the mainland—over 600 miles—like flying from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Only 3% of the Galapagos are open to tourism. Unlike the famous Easter Islands off Chile, there was no indigenous culture on the islands.

The first European discoverer was Fray Tomás de Berlanga, bishop of Panama, arriving on March 10, 1535. Currents drove his ship toward Galapagos after setting out from Panama on his way to Peru. In 1574 the Galapagos Islands were included in a world atlas by a Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius in his work *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. He named the islands “*Insulae de los de Galapagos*.” The shells of the giant tortoises reminded early Spanish visitors of horse saddles, and Galapagos comes from the old Spanish word for saddle.

During the 17th century, pirates came to the islands and became the first to use them as a base. The islands were strategically convenient because they were sufficiently distant from the mainland to permit escape, yet close enough to the trade routes and coastal cities for raids. The islands were also useful as a source of food in giant tortoises. And, there was enough water for the pirates to replenish their supplies. As far as anyone knows, there was never any buried treasure on the islands.

As piracy began to wane, the next to use the islands were the whaling ships. The Galapagos were a key whaling area because of the breeding grounds for sperm whales and the deep-water feeding areas of the species to the west of the islands. Whalers called these areas the “Galapagos Grounds.” The Galapagos Islands served as the main Pacific base for whalers until the discovery, in 1819, of the rich whaling grounds to the northwest of Japan.

Surprisingly, the first recorded full-time resident of the islands was not Spanish, but a marooned Irish sailor named Patrick Watkins. Due to misbehavior, and possibly related to his ability to get drunk quite regularly, the ship’s captain decided to abandon him on Floreana Island. He lived on the island (1806–09) trading vegetables with whalers.



*Darwin the Young Adventurer.
From National Endowments for the Humanities*

Galapagos has been an Ecuadorian province since 1832 (two years after the republic was founded). In those days, it was called Archipelago de Colón (Columbus Archipelago). Obviously, Columbus was never anywhere close to the islands.

The archipelago was given its official name in 1892 by the Ecuadorian government on the 400th anniversary of the voyage of Columbus. Over the years, many attempts to colonize the islands had little or no success. There were even prisons established for political prisoners in the 1830s on Floreana and San Cristóbal Islands. As recent as 1944, the Ecuadorian government established a third colony on Isabela Island. Here, the prisoners built the infamous “Wall of Tears” between 1945 and 1959.

There was no reason to build this wall (20’ high X 10’ wide and 328’ long) other than to make the prisoners suffer. It’s rumored thousands of prisoners died building the wall. There are no longer penal colonies on the islands.

The largest colonization of the islands happened in WW II. Up to this time, only 800 or so people resided full time on the islands. In order to help defend the Panama Channel, the US Army built an airfield on the small island of Baltra. Around 3,000 service personal and contractors called the islands home during the war years. BTW, this airfield (refurbished many times) is still in use today as one of the two airports on the islands. Today, four of the islands hold an estimated 30,000 full-time residents, the majority of which live on Santa Cruz Island around the port city of Puerto Ayora, followed by San Cristobal, which contains the islands capital of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno.

To protect the delicate balance of eco-systems on the islands and to better regulate tourism, a National Park was established in 1959 covering 98% of the islands. In 1978 the islands were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, and in 1986 the Galapagos Marine Resources Reserve was created to protect the surrounding waters (expanded in 2022). There have been many famous visitors to the islands. In 1841, the American writer Herman Melville (Moby Dick) visited the islands on a whaler. Maybe the best-known visitor was Charles Darwin in 1835 (more about him later).

Interestingly, for a man whose name will forever be tied to the islands, he was there for only five weeks and visited just four islands. When you go to explore Galapagos, you’ll join an exclusive club of a relatively small number who have gone before you. Each year (pre-COVID) the islands have under 220,000 visitors, less than a day’s worth at Disneyworld. We are ready to see what’s so special about Galapagos. Please join us in the next article as we explore the Enchanted Islands. We will show you the ins and outs of how to travel to the islands, what to wear, what to do and see, plus a few important travel tips we learned along the way. Good winds to all.

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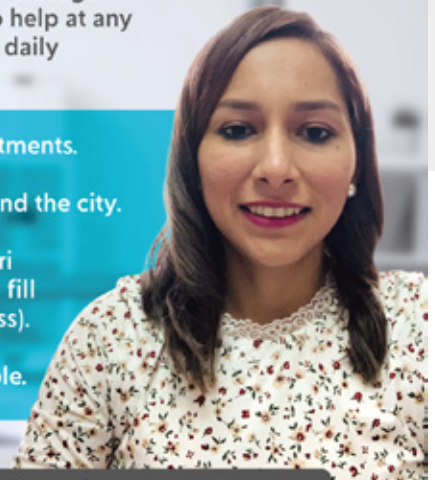
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Old Cathedral Of Cuenca /Catedral Vieja

By: Jane Hiltbrand

Calles Luis Cordero y Mariscal Sucre The construction of the “Old Cathedral” commenced immediately after the Spanish foundation of Cuenca on April 12, 1557 when Captain-Governor Gil Ramirez Davalos designated a block of land on the east side of the main square (present day Plaza Calderon) for the construction of a shrine. The walls are made of adobe, with Inca stone foundations, which were extracted from the ruins at Pumapungo.

By 1573 the church, with its altars and chapels was finished. The master builder was the carpenter, Francisco de San Miguel; although, other builders also participated. The present-day church is the result of a series of alterations, extensions and renovations.

On the right aisle, accessed by their own archways, are three private chapels, which were built and belonged to wealthy families of the time. It was believed this would bring them closer to heaven when they died. It was the custom of churches in the 16th century to sell graves inside the church so that important and religious people could be closer to God. In the sixteenth century, the church sold tombs to citizens for a price of 25 or 30 pesos. You could also own one of these tombs through services rendered to the church. The glass window that was installed in the floor of the cathedral allows visitors to peer down into the catacombs below the building where skulls and bones have been carefully arranged. It is possible to take tours of the catacombs in the Old Cathedral.

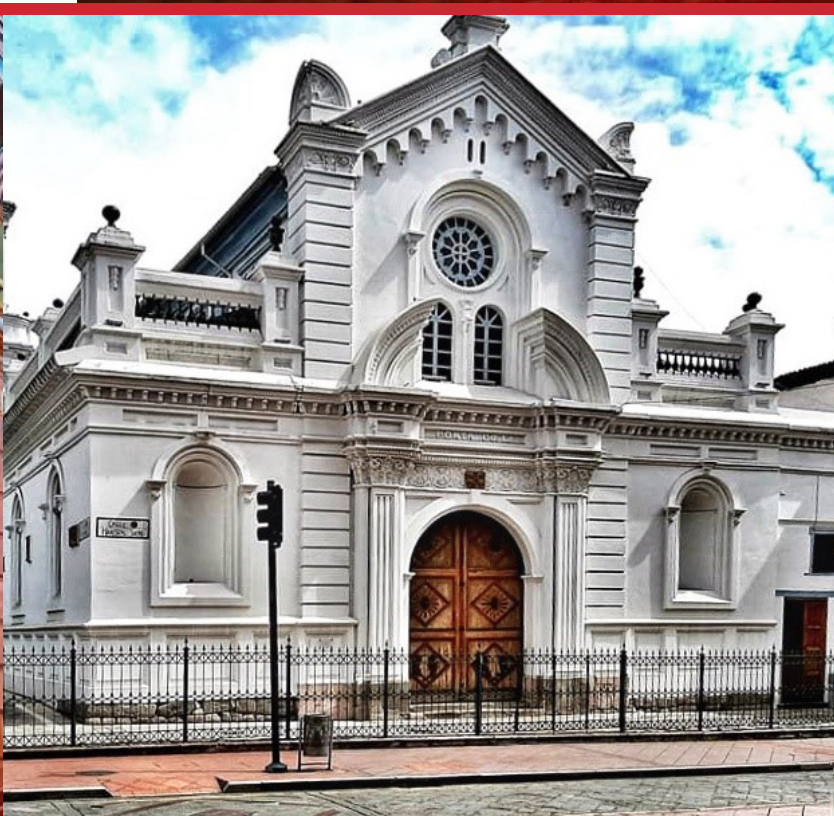
The Old Cathedral of Cuenca is remembered for its use by the French Geodesic Expedition in 1739. These men used the spire on the cathedral for a point of reference to establish the arc of the earth. The marble plaque over the south door of the cathedral reads, “This tower is more famous than the Egyptian pyramids” because of this famous part of history. The tower standing today was designed by Colonel Francisco Eugenio Tamariz in 1867 and is of brick construction.



In 1779 the diocese of Cuenca was created, but after some time the Old Cathedral was not large enough to accommodate all of the parishioners. The local clergy started to become interested in building a new cathedral. New funding was allocated to building a new cathedral. The New Cathedral took almost 100 years to complete, and was finally finished in 1975. As a result, the Old Cathedral fell into a state of neglect on several occasions, but thankfully was not demolished.

The pulpit inside the cathedral is the work of the local sculptor Gaspar Sangurima and was made in 1817. The choir is accessed via a spiral staircase built in 1823, while the actual bellows organ in the choir dates to 1737.

After a major renovation that started in 1999 the Old Cathedral serves today as a museum for religious art and a venue for concerts and cultural events. It is no longer a consecrated church. The acoustics in the Old Cathedral, when it is used for concerts, are truly heavenly!



Amazonia Vanilla Company

By: Loren Hostetter

Photos: Ivan Castaneira

We are passionate about food and growing it sustainably with small-scale producers. We emphasize growing vanilla in a natural setting to promote natural infusions of the aromas of the amazon. We join communities that have international experience with the traditions and cultures of indigenous people and their secrets of forest herbs, spices and medicinal products. The Amazon is an irreplaceable treasure. We include those whom can grow jobs, and they in turn enrich us with diversity. We grow our shareholders among those producers who care for the plants of the earth and produce with pride.

The Amazonia Vanilla Company seeks to involve producers in “the value chain,” i.e., they become owners in the full enterprise to include processing and marketing. This is our way of sharing aspirations as entrepreneurs and equals. They are not just “providers.” Our peers encouraged us to offer communities an alternative to destructive farming and mineral exploitation by incorporating vanilla in their small farms. We chose to work in the Amazon with indigenous producers and not source from massive greenhouse complexes along the coast. We are indebted to friends who have introduced us to small scale producers who had few markets and lacked techniques to grow vanilla even though vanilla is a native plant of the Amazon. We then invested in peer training and in their plantations, and we guaranteed we would buy their crop so they could reinvest in improvements.

Why Vanilla? Vanilla is wonderful and rewarding to work with, smell, and craft into exotic recipes. Sampling all of those recipes is at the top of my motivation. It has a role in conservation as well. The vanilla plant is a complex orchid that requires sensitive care, but it is a much more efficient use of land than almost any other agricultural practice. Vanilla is ideal for a conservation crop as it requires



shade, so vanilla can be grown under the forest canopy. One head of cattle needs approximately 2.5 acres of pasture in the Amazon and can provide a maximum annual income of \$400. However, the same income can come from 10 vanilla plants on a space of 30 square feet. Lastly, vanilla products are small and light, meaning the environmental impact of distribution is also very low. And, there are additional benefits. Vanilla byproducts can be used to make various artisan crafts and can be incorporated into volunteer and tourism projects.

Guayusa Runa and Amazanga are two Kichwa communities located in the Pastaza province. In recent decades communities like these have relied on farming, running cattle, artisan crafts, petroleum jobs, or government projects to make a living. These communities are from the Llanganates-Sangay Ecological Corridor, an area considered a priority for conservation efforts due to its strategic location, diversity of fauna and flora, and its variety of habitats and ecosystems. It was designated recently a “Gift of the Earth” and sits above the largest watershed in the world—the Amazon. The region is extremely biodiverse due to its proximity to the equator, high levels of precipitation, and geological and topographical variation. For example, the continent of Europe is 19,500 times larger than the Mera region but has 2.2 times less species of trees. (Mera is located where the Andes meet the Amazon. It borders the Pastaza River Valley between the national parks Sangay and Llanganates.) Further, the 55 square kilometers of the Río Anzu headwaters contain 150% of the amphibian diversity in all of Canada, which is an area 180,000 times larger. The corridor is home to five species of big cats, representing perhaps the greatest localized diversity of felines in the world. Yes, this region provides us with “a gift of the earth.”

However, this area is under significant threat as mining and oil exploitation are driving out indigenous residents. Once roads are cut into the forest, homesteaders arrive and cut timber for cash and then pasture cattle. With very fragile tropical soils, these pastures are not sustainable beyond a few years. As always, and as it always will be, people are looking for a way to make a living. Some people have settled for “easy” work with petroleum companies. Meanwhile, the land and water therein have been contaminated, and the people who truly belong to this place have been disenfranchised



from it. Vanilla, on the other hand, is a very labor and time-consuming product. The vanilla flower must be pollinated by hand. It takes nine months for the vanilla beans to form. It takes two months to carefully cure and dry the beans. And, it takes another six months for us to produce the rich vanilla extract. But it is much more sustainable and beneficial to the conservation of the Amazon. Our model of business is to empower and benefit everyone from our Amazonian communities and connect them with conscientious consumers all over the world.

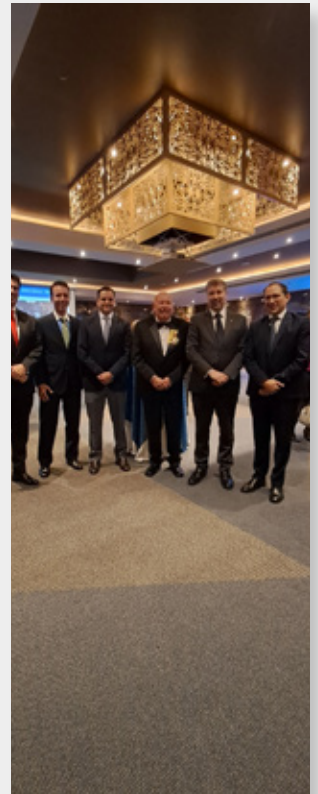
The Amazonian Vanilla Company is doing our part to bring equity back to the people and restore a sacred connection with the land with integrative sustainable agriculture.

Check us out at www.amazoniavanilla.com and we'd appreciate your purchases and in helping us spread awareness. Thank you!

Loren Hostetter founded The Amazonia Vanilla Company in early 2020 while meeting wonderful communities seeking sustainable livelihoods.

Honored with Special Entrepreneurialism Award.

Ecuadoran-American Chamber of Commerce First Ever to an Expat Business



What's a QR Code?

And, What Does It Do?

By: Cuenca Expats Magazine Staff Writer

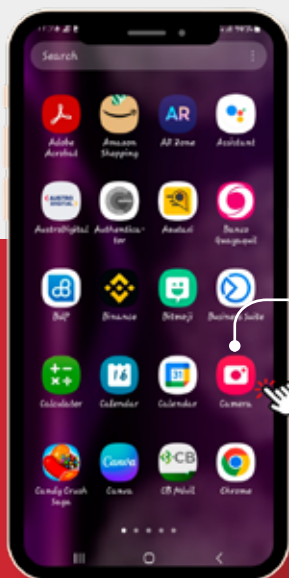
In the last few Cuenca Expats Magazine, you will have noticed on some pages a square box with funny lines in it. That's a QR ("quick response") code. It is a machine-scannable image that can instantly be read using a Smartphone camera.

Every QR code consists of a number of black squares and dots which represent certain pieces of information.

When your Smartphone scans this code, it translates that information into something that you can read.

So, we are using the QR code to make your copy of Cuenca Expats Magazine even more useful by allowing you to access videos and other additional information from the printed page to your phone.

If you have never used a QR code before, here are 4 simple steps:



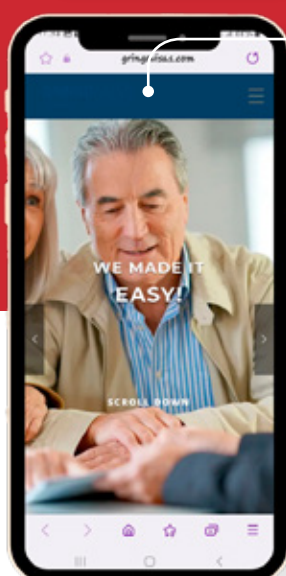
Step 1.
On your compatible phone or tablet (Android or iPhone), open the built-in camera app.



Step 2.
Point the camera at the QR code.



Step 3.
Tap the banner that appears on your Android phone or tablet.



Step 4.
Follow the instructions on the screen to complete the process of accessing the address that the QR code is linked to.

LE MOULIN Restaurant

French-Italian and Ecuadorian Cuisine in a 1563 Flour Mill

**By: Cuenca Expats Magazine Staff Writer
Photos: Courtesy of Le Moulin and Cuenca Expats Magazine.**

Looking for a unique setting for your next meal? Look no further than Le Moulin Restaurant. French-Italian and Ecuadorian cuisine served in a 1563 flour mill.

Le Moulin (French for mill) is a national heritage site, and may be the most interesting place to eat in Cuenca. It is located in a restored flour mill originally built in 1563 under orders from the king of Spain, and the construction was supervised by General Gil Ramírez Dávalos (founder of Cuenca). The mill was actually in operation until 1962. In the beautifully restored building, you can still see some of the original equipment and grinding stones.

The restaurant is under the direction of well-trained Mario Avecillas, the general manager with a degree in tourism. He states the vision of the restaurant is “to create a culinary, gastronomic and cultural experience of haute cuisine fusing international techniques without losing the importance of our gastronomy and local products.” Additionally, Chef Willy won’t disappoint. He has extensive knowledge in terms of gastronomy and mixology—experience obtained from his travels around the world. He uses his knowledge and wisdom to capture the best recipes in his kitchen and reflect them in his dishes. Chef Willy is highly academically prepared, obtaining his degree in international food. His forte is Italian, French and Ecuadorian food. Mario and Willy are the perfect team to create this culinary experience. Le Moulin, beside the main restaurant area, also offers two additional eating options—one is the River Terrace. Le Moulin is the only restaurant in Cuenca with a platform on the riverbank.



An exclusive space where you can enjoy nature, the breeze, the sound of water and a wonderful landscape creating the ideal ambiance to enjoy a great meal. Special occasion coming up? You’ll want to reserve the VIP Cave. They have two private “caves”—spaces where the original blades of the old mills were located. In these areas they have created a romantic space where “La mesa del Chef” is served: a three-course menu exclusive to this place, accompanied by a tasting and pairing with a seasonal wine. Looking for something to do? Le Moulin offers special music entertainment during the week. Thursday night is expat night with popular international music. Friday night is “Music between Wines,” something Latin and traditional like Bolero, ballads, pasillos, etc., and “Saturdays for Them” is ladies’ night. Guests are treated to music and special promotions. For all these events, Le Moulin offers promotions such as 3x2 in cocktails, and with groups of six, a free bottle of wine. And, during the events, they have contests and many more surprises.

LE MOULIN’S HOURS OF OPERATION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Tuesday and Wednesday
11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday
11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Sundays
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Le Moulin is easy to find. (You may have passed it many times without realizing it.)

 @lemoulincuenca
 Le Moulin Restaurante

Had Your Eyes Checked Lately? Over 60? You Need to Once a Year.

Free Check-up for Cuenca Expats Magazine Readers

By: Cuenca Expats Magazine Staff Writer
Photos: Courtesy of OPTICA COLOMBIANA

The American Optometric Association recommends annual eye examinations for everyone over age 60. As you get older, your eyesight normally changes. Some changes are more serious than others, but for many of these problems, there are things you can do to protect your vision.

The key is to get your eyes examined regularly so that problems can be caught early. The step to protect your vision is simple: have your eyes examined regularly by an eye care professional, either an ophthalmologist or an optometrist.

A fifteen-year professional, Dr. Ana Milena Osorio at OPTICA COLOMBIANA states, "During this exam, we'll put drops in your eyes to enlarge (dilate) your pupils so we can check the inside of your eyes. That is the only way to detect the presence of some common eye diseases that have no signs or symptoms in their early stages. If the person wears glasses, we also verify if the graduation of these is correct."

Dr. Ana also recommends you see a professional immediately if you have any of the following problems: you suddenly can't see or everything looks black, you see flashes of light, have eye pain, have double vision, have redness, or have swelling in your eyes or eyelids. Because of Cuenca's high levels of ultraviolet radiation (UV), another recommendation from Dr. Ana is to protect your eyes in very sunny weather by wearing sunglasses that block UV and wearing a wide-brimmed hat when outside.



OPTICA COLOMBIANA
Los mejores modelos colombianos en Cuenca

The most common eye problems can be easily treated. But sometimes these problems can be a sign of a more serious illness including presbyopia, floating spots, tearing (or excess tears) and eyelid problems.

To help expats protect their vision, OPTICA COLOMBIANA is offering readers of Cuenca Expats Magazine a FREE eye exam, plus a

50% DISCOUNT ON ANY LENSES!

► Protect your eyes. Make an appointment for your FREE eye exam today.



Roberto Crespo Ordoñez and Eduardo Arias, Pichincha Bank building, (the entrance is in the middle of Cruz Azul Pharmacy and Solidarity Pharmacy), 3rd floor. Near the Feria Libre Tranvia stop.

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Bermeo Hermanos Kitchen And Bath

**Enhance Your Kitchen's Functions.
Make Your Bathroom Amazing.
Pamper Yourself in a Spa.**

**By: Cuenca Expats Magazine Staff Writer
Photos: Courtesy of BHkb**

Ever have the need to replace a kitchen or bathroom fixture? You're looking around the store but don't recognize any of the brands. You ask for help (if you can find someone), but the sales people don't seem to know any more than you do. It can be frustrating being an expat shopper. Well, no more. Bermeo Hermanos Kitchen and Bath has world class brands, a knowledgeable English-speaking staff, competitive pricing, and they stand behind all the warranties on products purchased. In Cuenca? Too good to be true? Read on. Bermeo Hermanos was founded in 1948 by Luis Bermeo. In the late 80's the second-generation management decided to concentrate the business in two main lines: sporting goods with emphasis on fitness equipment, and kitchen and bath accessories. BHkb is the division selling kitchen and bath accessories, plus spas.

Early on, the company acquired a cultured marble plant, PLASMADE, and later completed the line with Delta Faucet American faucets, Toto toilets, Villeroy and Boch sanitary ware and the best-selling Hot Spring spas. Bermeo Hermanos has direct representation of these brands for Ecuador, insuring a proper supply of products, warranty and the necessary technical support. Third generation management led by Thomas Bermeo, a USA Marquette University graduate, is bringing the business to a new level to meet the challenges of the new century. Bermeo says, our 75-year experience and thousands of satisfied clients is our best advertisement." Cuenca is a great location to have a spa. Used regularly, research shows a hot tub can help improve physical health and emotional well-being.



BHkb carries the number one selling spa in the world—Hot Spring. Most products are delivered free of charge. There is also help getting them installed. Some installation is done by BHkb employees, while other more technical processes are done by professionals they have trained and recommend. There are two Cuenca locations to view products and get any and all questions answered. The BHkb showroom at Av. Paucarbamba specializes in bath and kitchen with a full working display that will allow you to choose the best products to meet your needs. The central locale offers a more limited display of kitchen and bath products. (While there, you may want to see a complete floor of sporting goods and fitness equipment to try out). When shopping at BHkb what can an expat expect? Bermeo answers, "we listen and then suggest the best products. We have the ability and knowledge to provide exceptional service in the areas our customers need. The customer benefits from our experience, which assures they are getting the best products to meet their needs."

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www.bhkb.com.ec



Always Wanted to Retire and Own Some Land?

Income Producing Organic Cacao Farm and New Home for Sale

Everyone's dream: Owning a piece of land and living in the peace and quiet of the countryside, while having a cash crop producing extra income for you. Well, dream no more. **Casa de Bucay is a 20-hectare cacao farm (50 acres).** There are 12 hectares under cultivation, 8 for expansion. The farm harvests three times a year producing around 1,400 kilos of cacao beans. The farm is located three hours from Cuenca and a little over one hour from Guayaquil. It can be reached via a new four-lane paved road. In addition to the cacao trees, there are also lots of fruit trees like zapote, papaya, orange, tangerine, banana, and lemon. Plus, vegetables like yuca, verde, and platano maduro. The farm has its own river water supply for irrigation. Sale includes equipment necessary to operate the farm, and a 2-story out building with guest quarters.

The sale also includes a new, large (2,000 sq. ft.) fully furnished brick home. This 2-story brick house has a living room, master bedroom and bath, and a large kitchen on the first floor. Also, downstairs is a maid's quarters with its own entrance, bathroom and kitchenette. Upstairs are 4 bedrooms, a family room and bath. And, there is a large L-shaped terrace to enjoy morning coffee or evening cocktails. The home has gas and electricity. The home also has WIFI, a security system and hot water (normally not found in houses on the coast).

Ecuador has the reputation of producing the best cacao in the world. Ecuadorian cacao is always in demand. **Be a part of this growth market. Sales price is \$450k; owner financing available to qualified buyer.**



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This Is How to Avoid Problems When Passing Digital Assets to Your Heirs

(Passing digital assets to heirs can be unnecessarily complicated and time consuming unless you do some of the legwork upfront.)

Not long ago, digital assets played virtually no role in estate planning. Today, however, leaving an electronic mess can be one of the most costly mistakes in the process. Failing to account for digital assets and electronic lives can result in a long list of problems for your heirs to deal with before they receive their inheritance. Nowadays, this can be easily avoided since, for the time being, estate planning law has finally caught up to technological developments. Most states have enacted the Uniform Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act or something similar. This law makes it possible for executors to manage virtual currencies, web domains, computer files, and more unless a document specifically prohibits access. However, the law has its limits. Here's how you can facilitate the process of passing digital assets to your heirs:



Create a Basic Strategic Digital Inheritance Plan.

It makes sense to give the executor unhindered access to financial accounts and assets necessary for settling the estate. Some people find it easier giving an executor who has authority to log into every account, since that will avoid any potential confusion and make the transition as simple as possible.

This entails finding someone you trust and with whom you are extremely comfortable.



Create a Thorough Inventory of All Digital Assets

There is more to the digital inheritance process than selecting who has access to your various accounts.

Take account of your digital life and create an inventory of assets, which means any account or service protected by a password. This could mean anything from your smartphone to medical records stored online. Remember automated payments, as these will also need to be accounted for to avoid interruptions in service.



Streamline the Process of Granting Account Access to Heirs

Many online service providers let you designate who has access to the services after you pass away. This includes Google, Apple, and Facebook. Using these features will make it easier to transition ownership, so make sure you have your heirs identified—both with service providers and on your own legal documents.



Another best practice to consider is using a password manager to save access to your various digital assets. This way, you just need to grant access to the manager, rather than each individual asset. However, you should still have directions for accessing the assets saved somewhere in case something happens with the password manager. For more information, please contact one of the experts at **New Century Planning Associates: rryerson@newcenturyplanning.com**

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New Century Planning Associates is a full-service financial planning firm comprised of several experienced professionals who came together many years ago to work as a team. New Century Planning's team of CPAs, CFPs, attorneys and insurance and investment pros are independent and can, therefore, "shop the market" for their clients in order to provide first class, comprehensive services.



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📱 La Nostra Pizza Napoletana





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Primary Care

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