

# CUENCA exposats

magazine

issue seven  
free - take one and enjoy!

WIN  
DINNER  
FOR 2  
See Page  
15



**Dr. Pablo Salamea**  
Award Winning Plastic Surgeon  
& Humanitarian

celebrating life together



# Mutualista Azuay

Your local savings and mortgage bank  
Since 1962

**TIME**  
deposits

**SAVING**  
account



## MUTUALISTA AZUAY BENEFITS:

- NO ID card** (passport only).
- Saving Account included with debit card.
- Service Bills automatic debit payment.
- Mobile Refill.
- Time Deposit with \$32.000,00 insurance.
- And others...

**WE SPEAK ENGLISH**

### PLAZA DE LAS AMERICAS AGENCY

Centro Comercial Plaza de las Americas.  
Schedule  
Monday to Friday 10:00 to 18:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 14:00  
Telf.: 407-4898.

### CENTRAL OFFICE

Hermano Miguel 9-19 y Simon Bolivar  
Edificio Mutualista Azuay  
Schedule  
Monday to Friday 8:30 to 17:00  
Saturday 9:00 to 13:00  
Telf.: 284-2377.

### MALL DEL RIO AGENCY

Centro Comercial Mall del Rio.  
Schedule  
Monday to Friday 10:00 to 18:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 14:00  
Telf.: 288-6766.

### EL ARENAL AGENCY

Av. de las Americas entre C. Vintimilla  
Gral. Escandon, Sector Feria Libre.  
Schedule  
Monday to Friday 8:30 to 17:00  
Saturday 9:00 to 13:00  
Telf.: 285-6624.

### EL VERGEL AGENCY

Centro Comercial El Vergel.  
Schedule  
Monday to Friday 9:00 to 17:30  
Saturday 9:00 to 13:00  
Telf.: 410-3467 • 410-3551.

### HURTADO DE MENDOZA AGENCY

Sangurima y Tomas Ordoñez (Esq.)  
Sector 9 de Octubre.  
Schedule  
Monday to Friday 8:30 to 17:00  
Saturday 9:00 to 13:00  
Telf.: 411-5167 • 411-4585.

# GETTING YOUR PERMANENT RESIDENTIAL VISA JUST GOT MORE AFFORDABLE. VISAS STARTING AT \$895\*

## New from Gringo Visas. More Options for You to Choose From.



### STANDARD VISA SERVICE. RESIDENTIAL VISAS FOR ONLY \$895\*

You have asked if there is a price reduction for Do-It-Yourselfers. Yes, is the answer. For those who have the time to gather paperwork and get it apostilled, you can earn big savings. Get all the documents you need for your Visa notarized in the US, mail them to our CT office if you are in the US, or bring them to one of our Ecuadorian offices. We'll take it from there. You pay just \$895\* for your Visa. And we'll do your Cedula (Government ID) for free.



### ALL-INCLUSIVE VISA SERVICE. RESIDENTIAL VISAS FOR \$1,550\*

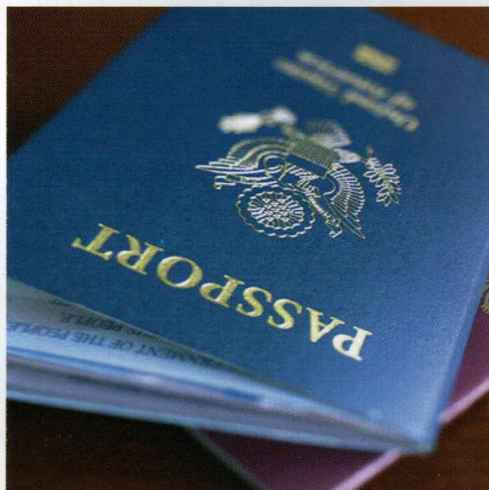
Many of you mentioned you just don't have the time, nor the inclination to go through the hassle of getting all your documents ready for Visa processing. You just want to give us your documents and know we'll take care of all the rest. No problem. Since its inception, Gringo Visas has been the leader in providing this full service customer care. From an office in the States to having knowledgeable staff at all three Ecuador Immigration Centers (Cuenca, Quito and GYE), Gringo Visas has earned an outstanding reputation for excellent customer support. Choose this option if you want hassle free Visa processing.



### VISA+ SERVICE. RESIDENTIAL VISAS, PLUS OTHER "MUST HAVE" SERVICES FOR \$2,500\*

Any new expat to Ecuador soon realizes obtaining a Residential Visa is just the first of many "must have" documents for living in your adopted country. For example, you are going to want a bank account (not as easy to open as back home). Don't forget to register your marriage (a must or you don't have any rights to jointly owned property), and you'll need to sign-up with SRI to get a sales tax monthly refund (if you're over 65). What about joining the IESS, the public health care system? Many spend thousands of dollars and countless frustrating hours trying to get all this stuff done. Well, the good news is Gringo Visas has listened to your requests and has now bundled all these services into one easy to understand, affordable package. You get your Residential Visas plus we'll help you enroll in all these programs for one money saving price. Great value for the money.

PLEASE CALL US TODAY, AND WE'LL BE HAPPY TO DISCUSS WHICH OF THESE RESIDENTIAL VISA OPTIONS IS BEST FOR YOU.



EC 098 915 3622  
US 203 648 4511  
info@gringovisas.com

More Expats Have Chosen Gringo Visas Than Anyone Else!



MAITE DURAN  
Founder

**GRINGO VISAS**  
PERMANENT RESIDENT VISAS

**ECUADOR**  
www.gringovisas.com



• Ave. Ordoñez Lasso y Los Claveles | EDIFICIO RIVER SIDE •

\*Excludes fees paid directly to the Ecuadorian Government.

- 6** PUBLISHER'S LETTER
- 7** COMMUNITY - Introducing Azuay Community Theater
- 8** COVER STORY - Dr. Pablo Salamea - Award Winning Plastic Surgeon & Humanitarian
- 12** BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT - Santorino Restaurant, Pizza and Bar
- 13** EXPAT SPORTS - Ministry of Sports' Programs Help Expats Stay Physically Active
- 14** MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS- The Briaus
- 18** BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT - The Vegetable Bar - It's Time to Start Eating Healthy
- 20** EXPAT PROFILE - Rob Annis
- 22** CITIZEN JOURNALISM - The Heirloom Tomato Man
- 24** CITIZEN JOURNALISM - Bus Ride Anyone?
- 26** DATE NIGHT - Loren and Nancy Kuehne
- 28** FRIENDLY FACES
- 30** PARTING THOUGHTS - The Simple Life

# CUENCA expats

magazine

ISSUE  
**7**

Cuenca Expats Magazine  
Published By Quteila, Inc.  
Cuenca, Ecuador

Web: [www.cuencaexpatsmag.com](http://www.cuencaexpatsmag.com)

Facebook: [cuencaexpatsmag](https://www.facebook.com/cuencaexpatsmag)

Twitter: [@cuencaexpatsmag](https://twitter.com/cuencaexpatsmag)

Instagram: [#cuencaexpatsmag](https://www.instagram.com/cuencaexpatsmag)

Cover Photo: Lorena Peña

**Contributors:**

Lynne Klippel, David Johnson,  
Sherry Johnson, Susan Herron, Sandy Schott,  
Kristen Sawyer

**Staff:**

President/Founder: David A. Johnson  
099.795.8805 | [dave@cuencaexpatsmag.com](mailto:dave@cuencaexpatsmag.com)

Publisher: George M. Forgues  
[geoforgues@msn.com](mailto:geoforgues@msn.com)

Cultural Advisor  
Ricardo José Argandoña Silvers

Editor: Sherry B. Johnson  
[sherry@asheboromagazine.com](mailto:sherry@asheboromagazine.com)

Staff Photographer: Alison Mae Weber

Proofreader: N.D. Turpin

**Sales ([sales@cuencaexpatsmag.com](mailto:sales@cuencaexpatsmag.com)):**

Yvonne Alborno - 098.389.0802

Gabby Patiño - 099.534.6050

Frank Pauta - 099.081.0294

Gabriela Ramon - 099.621.1769 | 099.703.5578

Alba Saula - 099.926.9635

Andrea Vasquez - 099.511.1773

Alison Mae Weber - 098.019.5659

**Intern:**

Carolina Jaramillo Malo

**Business Advisor:**

Ed Lindquist, Expat Marketing Group

Cuenca Expats Magazine is published by Cuenca Expats Magazine. Any reproduction or duplication of any part thereof must be done with the written permission of the Publisher. All information included herein is correct to the best of our knowledge as of the publication date. Corrections should be forwarded to the Publisher at the address above.

Disclaimer: The paid advertisements contained within Cuenca Expats Magazine are not endorsed or recommended by the Publisher. Therefore, neither party may be held liable for the business practices of these companies.

© Cuenca Expats Magazine, 2016

**f FuturEvol**

**WE SPEAK ENGLISH**

**FuturEvol**  
be technology

- Technical Support
- Computers
- Electronic Device
- Smart Security

**FREE GIFT WITH YOUR MAINTENANCE SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE**

Miguel Cordero Dávila 1-180 between Cornelio Merchán and Av. Paucarbamba  
Sales: 07 281 4011 • 099 860 0957  
[www.futurevol.com](http://www.futurevol.com) • [sales@futurevol.com](mailto:sales@futurevol.com)

**Bayou Coffee**

Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

**Bayou your southern home...**

Tel: 07 288257 / 0984-582855  
[bayoucoffee@gmail.com](mailto:bayoucoffee@gmail.com)  
Los Fresnos 2-70 entre Alesca y Arrumbá, Cuenca, Azuay, Ecuador.



Come Celebrate the Day of the Women **March 8th**  
**FREE GIFT ALL DAY FOR ALL WOMEN**

In honor of this special occasion we are donating Free to all women a choice of either Mary Kay's Satin Lips or Satin Hands.

Also, we are offering **20% DISCOUNTS** on all women's haircuts, manicures and pedicures

Mark down on your calendar this special event. Remember Tuesday, March 8th.

Sign up for Frequent Buyer Card  
 See our daily specials on Facebook

# EMBRACE YOUR BEAUTY

REVEAL YOUR ESSENCE



Hours:  
 Tues - Sat: 7am-8pm  
 Closed Sunday and Monday  
[www.esencia.com.ec](http://www.esencia.com.ec)

📍 Av. 1ro de Mayo y Fernando de Aragón. Condo building "1st of May". Local 8 📞 4124635 ✉ info@esencia.com.ec 📱 📺

## Tickle your taste buds the Japanese way...



CHEF EDDIE, AND SOUS- CHEF MARIO

Authentic Japanese

Tempura

Sushi & Bar

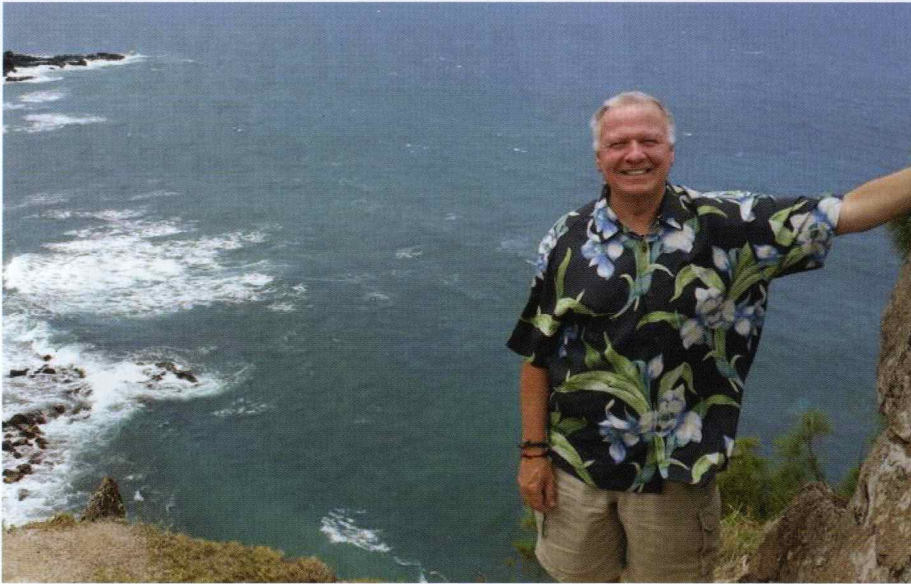
🦋 Try something new among a wide variety of our Japanese cuisine. We want to show you a full Japanese dining experience with our premium quality food. We're an extraordinary restaurant with great food, great service and fair prices.



CALLE LARGA, 4-100 AND ALFONSO JERVES  
 098 722 6797  
 MONDAY THRU SATURDAY FROM 11 AM TO 9 PM



ORIGAMI-JAPANESE-KITCHEN-SUSHI-BAR-1156649934363426



Last night a friend told all of us that he loved us.

He just stopped the game we were playing, and for a few minutes, looked us all in the eyes, and told us that he really valued these friendships, and that this very moment is what he felt life was all about.

Fun, good friendships, trust, laughter, and he said that the frequency of these types of joyful moments were at an all-time high in his life.

And what a wonderful group of friends these are. Everyone listened, took in these wonderful words, and just smiled. And he was right, these are special friendships,

and it was nice to hear someone say that out loud. Wouldn't it be great if this was done more often?

Because this was spoken out loud, I will remember it for the rest of my life. Just think about that, a short 2 minute break where kind words are spoken, can mark a memory for a lifetime.

You can do this. What a perfect time of the year to tell your friends you love them. Valentine's Day in Ecuador is an occasion that is made especially for this.

It is not only a day to celebrate lovers, but it is also a special day to celebrate friendships. It is often referred as "El dia del amor y de la Amistad," or "The day of love and friendship."

So send a message, give out those hugs, and tell anyone and everyone that you love how you feel.

How could this do anything but make you and the ones you care for have the best Valentine's Day ever.

Happy Valentine's Day Everyone.

George

www.ecuadorgeorge.com

ENJOY YOUR MOMENT!

**RANCHOS**  
Cafe  
Breakfast Served All Day Long

YOU'LL FIND A WIDE VARIETY OF FAVORITE DISHES

French Toast      Steak and Eggs

AV. REMIGIO CRESPO Y RICARDO MUÑOZ CORNER / RESERVATIONS: 2 810921.

**f RANCHOSCAFE**

# Introducing Azuay Community Theater

Azuay Community Theater (A.C.T.) produces and presents local theatrical performances to enrich, educate, and entertain the bilingual cross-cultural community of the Azuay Province. A.C.T. is a self-sustaining community theater operating through the generosity of its community members, and all participation in any capacity is voluntary.

A.C.T. was introduced to Cuenca through the original work and determination of its founders, Juanita Ruth One and Christine Eide. The first performance of A.C.T. was a festival of four one-act plays, followed by the Melodrama "Shootout at Sadie's Saloon," in February 2015. To celebrate Women's month in March, they performed SEVEN, a powerful documentary play that has been performed in several countries in over 20 languages. With two different casts the play was performed five times in English and three times in Spanish, and was completely sold out. They performed "Greater Tuna" in October, and have more performances planned

for the future.

A.C.T. is introducing a new project, along with the existing performances, A.C.T. NAKED, a readers theater. Readers Theater is a dramatic presentation of a written work in script form. Actors use vocal expression to help the audience understand the story rather than visual storytelling such as sets, costumes, intricate blocking, or movement. This allows performers who want to be on stage but are uncomfortable memorizing lines to become involved. Auditions were held for the first ACT NAKED performance of "Deathtrap" on February 5 and 6. The performance is on March 13.

A.C.T. turned two in January, and held a birthday party celebration at Cafe Eucalyptus on Saturday, January 23, 2016 to say 'Thank You' to all who have contributed in some way to the Azuay Community Theater. As you can imagine, the production of a performance takes months to prepare, and we look forward to many more presentations in the near future.

The next event is the 2nd Annual Poker Walk on February 20. Watch for details in Gringo Post and on A.C.T.'s Facebook page.

A.C.T. also sponsors a community service project where funds received from performances of SEVEN or SIETE are donated to the Casa Maria Amor Women's Shelter in Cuenca. Due to the generosity of the Cuenca audiences who attended the performances of "SEVEN" and "SIETE", Azuay Community Theater's community service outreach program donated \$2,400 to the Casa Maria Amor. Any proceeds from future performances of "SEVEN" and/or "SIETE" will continue to be donated to the Casa Maria Amor.

If you have an interest in community theater, you are encouraged to get involved; either on stage or behind the scenes. Anyone in the Cuenca community who is interested in directing, acting, joining the crew, or any other volunteer help, please contact [info@actcuenca.com](mailto:info@actcuenca.com)



## #1 IN CUENCA EXPAT REAL ESTATE SALES!



Kathy Gonzalez  
Owner

### CuencaRealEstate

CALL CUENCA REAL ESTATE TODAY FOR  
BUYING OR RENTING

421-3732 | 099-450-0325

**NEW OFFICE LOCATION**

Rafael Fajardo y Victor Albornoz  
(Next to Terracota Building)

[Kathy@CuencaRealEstate.com](mailto:Kathy@CuencaRealEstate.com)

Skype: [kathy.gonzalez2](https://www.skype.com/user/kathy.gonzalez2)

[www.cuencarealestate.com](http://www.cuencarealestate.com)

[www.cuencabienesraices.com](http://www.cuencabienesraices.com)

# Dr. Pablo Salamea

## Award Winning Plastic Surgeon & Humanitarian

By Lynne Klippel  
Photos Courtesy of Dr. Salamea




Photo By Lorena Peña



**M**ore than 3,000 people have put their trust in Dr. Pablo Salamea's skillful hands over the last six years. Dr. Salamea is one of the foremost plastic surgeons in Cuenca, not only because of his extensive training and ability but also because of his humanitarian work. In fact, he was the only physician from South America honored by Stanford University and ReSurge International in 2015 for his work providing surgery to needy children in Ecuador.

Tod and Mary Freeman of Helping Kids in Ecuador (HKIE) call Dr. Salamea, Saint Pablo. He's performed fifty surgeries for needy children in the past year and is the medical director of the volunteer medical organization. The Freemans have been an integral part of every case Dr. Salamea's done for HKIE, which includes cleft palate repair, reconstruction after burns, correction of birth defects, and even building ears for a child who was born without them.

One example is the case of a 14-year-old girl from a rural area who is the only child of a needy single mother. The young lady was born with a facial deformity and subjected to bullying and teasing on a daily basis. By the time she was 14, she felt so ugly that she wanted to quit school and hide away from the world. Her situation was brought to HKIE, and Dr. Salamea was able to repair her face in less than 90 minutes. "He is Picasso with a scalpel," says Tod Freeman. "We see the parents of Dr. Salamea's patients' cry when they see the results of his work. Sometimes they hardly recognize the child. It is truly a miracle."

Dr. Salamea grew up in Cuenca and spent 12 years training to become a plastic surgeon, including study and training in Guayaquil, Brazil, and the United States. He specializes in both reconstructive and aesthetic surgery for patients of all ages. Dr. Salamea is an officer of the prestigious Plastic Surgery Society and was honored by the Cuenca Chamber of Commerce for his service to the community. He also provides aesthetic procedures to Miss Cuenca and Miss Ecuador contestants.

He chose plastic surgery because each patient presents a challenge and an opportunity to change lives. Dr. Salamea enjoys seeing fast results from his work. Instead of waiting months to see how a medication treats an illness, he can go in and repair a birth defect, injury, or cosmetic issue and his patient enjoys the immediate improvement.



Unfortunately, it is possible to purchase a certification in Plastic Surgery without the proper training. Dr. Salamea urges all expats considering plastic surgery to ensure the physician they are considering is not only a certified plastic surgeon but is a member of the Plastic Surgery Society, which reviews all applicants and ensures they are properly trained and perform surgery with high levels of safety. Go to [www.secpre.ec](http://www.secpre.ec) for more information. There are just sixteen plastic surgeons in Cuenca who are vetted and active in the Plastic Surgery Society. Dr. Salamea was elected the secretary of that organization for this year.

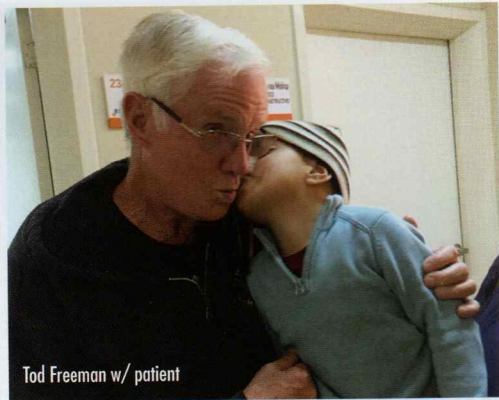
A typical day for Dr. Salamea includes time spent at Hospital Del Rio, where he is the Head of the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Department, and at Hospital Vincent Corral Moscoso, the government hospital which provides care without payment to all patients. Only reconstructive surgery is provided at Hospital Moscoso, such as repairing a face after a car accident, or skin grafts after severe burns. Hospital De Rio provides a modern, safe, and high-tech surgical environment for cosmetic procedures as well as reconstruction.

According to Dr. Salamea, his expat patients are delighted with the care they receive at Hospital Del Rio because of the strong focus on patient safety. When he does a surgical procedure, there are two plastic surgeons, two anesthesiologists, a general surgeon, and a nurse in the operating room. Dr. Salamea's two brothers are physicians, one a general and trauma surgeon and one an anesthesiologist. He enjoys working with them on his surgical team because all three brothers share the same high regard for patient safety and satisfaction.

Many expats turn to Dr. Salamea for cosmetic procedures. In the United States, cosmetic procedures are very costly. These surgical procedures are less expensive in Ecuador. In addition, working with Hospital Del Rio, Dr. Salamea notes expats undergoing these procedures are as safe as in the States. In December and July, Dr. Salamea treats many people from the United States, who come to Cuenca just for surgery. They stay in Cuenca for a couple of weeks and then return home. Dr. Salamea and his staff help coordinate recovery at a hotel which provides meals and other care to aid in an easy recuperation.

Expats who live in Ecuador make up about 15 percent of Dr. Salamea's current case load. He anticipates serving forty to fifty expats this year and finds the number growing annually. "When expats find they can enhance their appearance safely and affordably here in Cuenca, many have procedures they've always wished for but never felt they could afford," says Dr. Salamea. Both male and female expats turn to plastic surgery to enhance their appearances.

The most popular aesthetic surgeries for expats include face lifts, eye lifts, tummy tucks, liposuction, Botox injections, and chemical peels. Dr. Salamea performs all these procedures at Hospital Del Rio. It is important to ensure that all patients have general good health before undergoing a surgical procedure. Dr. Salamea begins each new patient with an interview, which includes a thorough health history and consultation on the desired



Tod Freeman w/ patient



Helping Kids in Ecuador Representatives and Dr. Salamea



Dr. Salamea w/patient



Dr. Salamea teaching residents from US



Dr. Salamea w/ patient's happy family



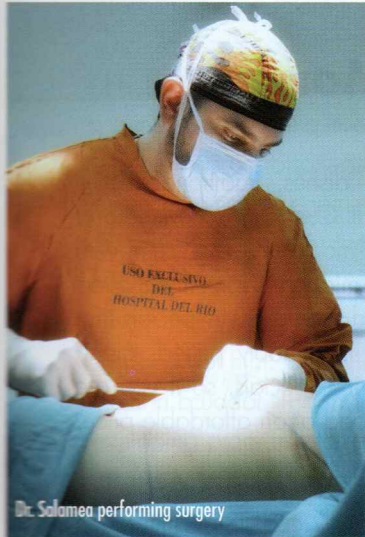
Dr. Salamea receiving the Cuenca Chamber of



Dr. Salamea w/ patient



Mary Freeman w/ patient



Dr. Salamea performing surgery



Dr. Salamea receiving award in US



Dr. Salamea and fellow mission surgeons



Dr. Salamea and family

outcomes of the procedure. Then, Dr. Salamea orders tests and lab work including blood work and an echocardiogram. Once he has reviewed these test results, the surgery is scheduled. "Sixty percent of my expat patients can go home the same day as their surgery," says Dr. Salamea. "The others stay one or two nights at Hospital Del Rio and then complete their recovery at home." Hospital Del Rio has some English speaking nurses and a special English-speaking liaison who is available to assist expats with less-than-fluent Spanish.

Between his work at the two hospitals and his volunteer service with Heling Kids in Ecuador, Dr. Salamea also travels around Ecuador doing medical missions for remote areas with the Fundation Rostros Felices. These medical trips are offered in conjunction with medical schools in Ecuador as well as in the United States and give Dr. Salamea the opportunity to train residents and provide much needed surgical services to those with few monetary resources.

Additionally, Dr. Salamea became the medical director of a brand new volunteer organization, BRAINS (Brigada de Atencion Integral de Salud). BRAINS is a organization of volunteer doctors, dentists and medical students from Cuenca that will go on medical missions offering medical care to less fortunate children throughout Ecuador. Many of the families in the remote areas of Ecuador have very limited availability to proper medical care.

During these medical missions, any child needing medical care will be treated by the BRAINS volunteers. Any child needing a surgery will come under the care of Dr. Salamea who will access each child and determine the proper surgeon on a case by case basis.

BRAINS did a medical and dental screening at the Cuenca orphanage Hogar Miguel Leon in late January in conjunction with Ecuador Cares and HKIE.

When asked why he does so much charity work and serves as the medical director for HKIE, BRAINS, and Fundation Rostros Felices, Dr. Salamea credits Tod and Mary Freeman as well as the other expat volunteers who do so much good in Ecuador. He says, "I see many expats come to Ecuador who could just retire and enjoy life. Instead, they do so much to help others. These expats inspire me to do more for my community. I'm so delighted to work with HKIE and the other volunteer organizations that I have persuaded my physician colleagues, both at Hospital Del Rio and other hospitals, to save more lives by providing medical care to those who need it but lack funds."

If you are interested in shaving a few years off of your appearance or correcting a physical problem, contact Dr. Salamea for an initial consultation at Hospital Del Rio. His email address is [psalameam@gmail.com](mailto:psalameam@gmail.com). You may also contact his office by calling (+593 7) 459 555 Ext. 2243 or reach him via cell at 0958828579.

*Lynne Klippel is a best-selling author, ghostwriter and publisher who specializes in non-fiction books and information products. She's lived in rural Paute since 2012. To learn more about Lynne visit [www.SageMountainBooks.com](http://www.SageMountainBooks.com).*



# Santorino's Restaurant, Pizza & Bar

## A Good Value for the Money

By Sherry B. Johnson

Santorino's Restaurant, Pizza & Bar, located on the corner of Calle Larga and Mariano Cueva, has recently introduced New York style pizza to Cuenca, hand-tossed dough, cooked so the crust is crisp along the edge, yet soft and pliable enough beneath its fresh toppings. With melting mozzarella cheese and the freshest ingredients, including some of the best pepperoni I have tasted in Ecuador, this pizza is sure to please your palate. Offering three sizes, small (12"), medium (14") and large (16"), the pizza is piping hot and definitely a great value for the money. The chef and owner, Edgar Montaleza spent many years in the United States, where he learned to make exceptional pizza and most of his restaurant management skills. In addition to the New York style pizza, Edgar is also planning to add gourmet pizzas to the menu.

Edgar's wife, Veronica Vele, is General Manager for the restaurant and works hard to create a family friendly atmosphere. She recognizes the need to offer a good meal at a great price and Santorino's delivers on that promise. With locally themed artwork, you get a great feel for Cuenca while enjoying the comfortable ambiance of a casual dining establishment. Santorino's is a great place to stop for a pizza and a beer with friends. With a mixture of old and new Cuenca décor, you will feel more like you are part of the family than dining out at a restaurant. Comfortable and charming styles welcome you, and make you feel very comfortable.

In addition to their pizza menu, they also

offer many Italian dishes, traditional dishes like churrasco, pernil Cuencano, ceviche and much more, and a mouth-watering "cut it with a butter knife" filet mignon. Santorino's offers generous lunch and dinner daily specials that are delicious and reasonably priced, along with an all day drink specials, so if you are looking for good food at an affordable price, look no further.

Many of the people who have written reviews on Trip Advisor can say it better than I...

*"Good quality food for a good value"*

We ate here on a Sunday ... The waitress was very attentive, answering several questions we had about ingredients used, all with a smile. She is fluent in English and the Chef worked for 3 1/2 years in a restaurant in the States. We both had the Filet Mignon in mushroom sauce (Lomo con salsa de champiñones). It started with bread and warm, herb-garlic-infused olive oil. Then came a nice dinner salad with a light vinaigrette. The main dish came with crispy potatoes and steamed broccoli, cauliflower and carrots. It was filling and good quality. ... The atmosphere was nice and relaxing. Will come here again and recommend to friends!

*"Nice retreat and food"*

We went in because we were hot and hungry. We split a chicken club and a salad and were happy with both. [The Restaurant] was clean, nice music and just a chill atmosphere. We went back for dinner and had pasta and chicken marsala and were once again happy with our meal. ... everything was fresh.

On the corner of Calle Larga and Mariano Cueva  
(Across from Todos Santos) | 283 6974 | 097 998 1179

Hours: Sun - Thur 11:00 am - 11:00 pm | Fri - Sat 11 am - Midnight

[www.facebook.com/SantorinoRestaurantAndBar](http://www.facebook.com/SantorinoRestaurantAndBar)



# Ministry of Sports' Programs Help Expats Stay Physically Active

By Sherry B. Johnson

The Ministry of Sport in Ecuador is responsible for coordinating and directing the policy of the physical education, sports and recreational activities in individuals and professional athletes.

Cuenca's own Xavier Endrica is Ecuador's new Minister of Sport. Endrica's objective is to promote quality of life through physical fitness, and the detection of new talent for the professional teams representing Ecuador on the world stage.

He is a world class athlete, with 25 years as a competitive swimmer and five as a triathlete, winning over 350 medals and 68 trophies during his career. His three brothers are also world class swimmers. In addition to his athletic prowess; he is a commercial engineer, and previously worked as regional coordinator for the Ministry of Sport in the Morona, Azuay, and Cañar providences (otherwise known as Area 6).

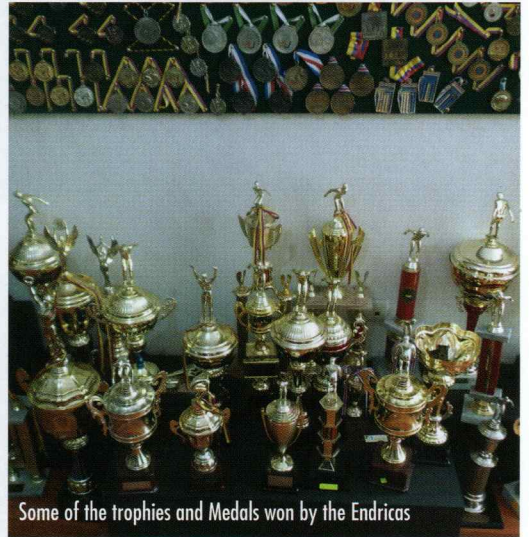
In an interview with Cuenca Expats Magazine, Endrica noted he has a big job ahead of him. The Ministry of Sport oversees everything related to physical fitness in Ecuador. This includes physical education programs for school children, developing programs for all Ecuadoreans to become physically fit, making sure that the country's elite athletes have the resources they need to compete on a global level, and everything in between.

One of the Endrica's biggest challenges is Ecuador's aging population. While remaining physically active in our senior years is becoming more and more popular in the United States, it has not been part of Ecuador's culture. While this task seems like it would require its own Ministry, Endrica's focus is on the "Big Picture" and he will approach solving this problem as he does everything, pragmatically. One of his first initiatives is to sponsor a survey to clearly understand and define the mindset of the aging population. This survey will include expats as Endrica wants to meet the physical fitness needs of this group as well. On top of that, he plans to increase awareness of the programs that are already available, understanding that sometimes creating a new program is superfluous if there is already something in place that will accomplish the same goal.

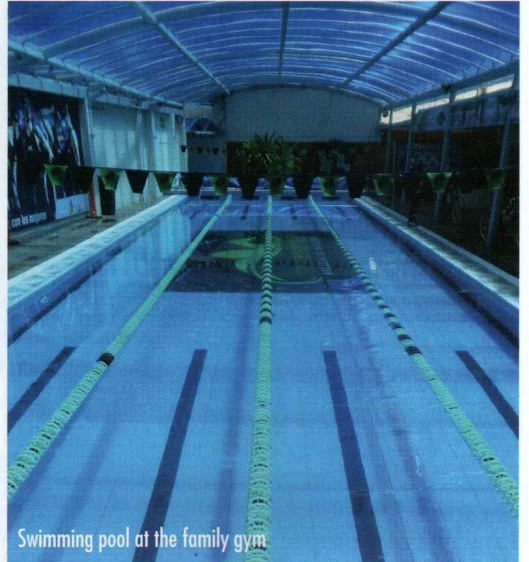
Currently available and free of charge to all expats is "Train Yourself Ecuador," a program promoting recreational activities like rumbaterapia, a Zumba-like dance program, where you dance different rhythms for 45 minutes at your own pace. See the schedule below for times and locations in Azuay - join in and get fit.



Xavier (middle), two brothers (on the ends), Ed Lindquist & Dave Johnson



Some of the trophies and Medals won by the Endricas



Swimming pool at the family gym

NAME SPOT	ADDRESS		SCHEDULE	CANTÓN	ACTIVITY
Trigales Bajos	La Compañía y Gaspar de Gallegos	Monday to Friday	20H00 A 21H00	Cuenca	Dance Therapy
Parque Corazón de María	Calle Eloy Alfaro y Oto Arocemena Gomez	Monday to Friday	20H00 A 21H00	Cuenca	Dance Therapy
Parque Huagrauma	Paseo Huagrauma y Río Cutucú	Monday to Friday	20H00 A 21H00	Cuenca	Dance Therapy
Santa Mariana El Arenal	Antonio Lloret Bastidas y Manuel Quiroga	Monday to Friday	20H00 A 21H00	Cuenca	Dance Therapy
La Isla	Paseo Río Yanuncay y Pasoe Río Tomebamba	Monday to Friday	20H00 A 21H00	Cuenca	Dance Therapy
Coliseo Raúl Baca Carbo	Av, Jaime Roldos y Luis Cordero	Monday to Friday	19H30 a 20H30	Gualaceo	Dance Therapy
Centro de Sigsig	Francisco Moscoso y Corral	Monday to Friday	06H30 a 07H30	Sigsig	Dance Therapy
Zhimbrug		Monday to Friday	08h00 a 09h00	Sigsig	Dance Therapy
Complejo Deportivo	Av. Interoceanica	Monday to Friday	17h00 a 18H00	Guachapala	Dance Therapy
Salón Municipal	Av. 24 de Mayo y Sixto Durán Ballen	Monday to Friday	19H30 a 20H30	Guachapala	Dance Therapy

# The Briaus



**W**e are a French Canadian family from Montreal. We moved to Cuenca 3 years ago and never looked back. We love our new life in Cuenca. We actually love it so much that Mathieu's parents also decided to try it out and have been living here for over a year now.

Our kids, Marianne and Jérémie, keep us busy; and so does our new baby: our brewery- Nordica! When we are not brewing, we like to play board games, enjoy Cuenca's parks, and hike in Cajas. When the sitters (read: my in-laws) are available, we hit the town to discover new restaurants.

**Introduce to us to your family.**

Mathieu and Deborah both work as brewers at Nordica, the craft brewery we founded a few months ago. Mathieu is also a programmer.

Jérémie (7) and Marianne (5) love Cuenca life. They are both French-Spanish bilingual, and have adapted to their new life quite easily thanks to their school.

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



Our hometown, Montreal.

**What were your family and friends reactions when you told them you were moving to South America?**

They were both excited for us and sad to see us leave. They were really happy when we said that the plan also included a visit to Montreal every summer - Montreal is an awesome city in the summer!!

And Mathieu's parents joined us one year ago - they were able to retire earlier, thanks to coming to Cuenca.

**Pardon me for saying so, but you look too young to be retired. Are you doing anything for work down here in Ecuador? If so what?**

Oh we are far from retired!! After brewing at home for over 2 years, we started Nordica, our micro-brewery, in September. It takes up most of our time; but Mathieu is also a programmer, and works for a New-York based NGO.

What is nice about Cuenca is that, even as entrepreneurs, we can take it slowly and still have time to play and see our kids grow.

**Why Ecuador and why Cuenca specifically?**

We wanted to escape winter and the fast-paced lifestyle. We had been shopping for a new country for a few years when we came to Ecuador on vacation, 5 years ago. We mostly toured the coast before coming to Cuenca at the very end of our 3 month journey. It was June then, cloudy and cold, and after 9 weeks of coastal weather, the thermic shock was hard on us ;)

However, we found out that Cuenca has a French school, and because that is the language we speak at home, coming here was a no-brainer. At first we thought we'd be going back to the coast as soon as the kids had learned Spanish, but the truth is Cuenca is such a nice city and it has made the transition to Ecuador so easy for us that we are staying here for sure!

**Where do you live in the City, and what do you like most**



**about living there?**

We are on the Camino del Tejar, near Rio Amarillo. Love it because we have a garden to enjoy the outdoors, it's near the river, less than 15 minutes away from the center, and close to the brewery as well!

**What do you and your family do for fun?**

We go to the park, play board games, and cook together.

**What is your biggest challenge living in Cuenca and/or your neighborhood specifically?**

Well, our street was the alternative road to Ordonez Lasso while they were repairing it - but all the work stopped, so we are now living on the makeshift highway into and out of Cuenca. It is noisy and dusty but we hope that will be fixed by the end of the year.

**Do you have any pets?**

Yes and no. We share our backyard with our neighbors and they have 2 small dogs. So the kids can enjoy playing with the dogs, but we don't have to take care of them. It's pretty cool that way.

**Do you speak Spanish? If so, how important is it to your day-to-day life. If not, would your day-to-day life be easier if you did? Thoughts about speaking the native tongue?**

Yes. Deborah spoke little Spanish before coming to live here. Mathieu learned it the hard way: dealing with local red tape. It was a very good (and free) way to learn actually... The kids learned it very fast at school.

We feel it's very important to make an effort to learn the language when you move to another country. Not only is it easier on a day-to-day basis, but it also allows you to better understand and integrate into the local culture.



*Cuenca Expats*

We appreciate the support of our loyal readers. To give you a little something extra (YAPA), each month we will be giving away free prizes. All you need to do to win is continue reading the magazine. It's that simple!

**MAGAZINE**

Thanks for reading!  
Please check again next month!

If there is a sticker above, you are a winner! To claim your prize (dinner for 2), send an e-mail to [info@cuencaexpatsmag.com](mailto:info@cuencaexpatsmag.com)

If you didn't win this month, keep reading Cuenca Expats Magazine and check page 15 next month! You could be the next winner!

**YAPA**

**LA BRASSERIE**  
RESTAURANTE

Generous dishes with a French touch!

Antonio Borrero 10-91 y Mariscal Lamar  
Reservations: (07) 2828801  
[labrasseriecuenca@gmail.com](mailto:labrasseriecuenca@gmail.com)

Hours - Every Day  
7am - 10am (Breakfast) and  
12pm - 9:30pm  
3-Course Lunch Specials at \$5.80 (Monday - Friday)  
Main Courses \$10-14  
All prices include taxes and service charge



LUXURY DESTINATIONS ECUADOR

## EXPLORE ULTIMATE LUXURY AND PAMPER YOURSELF IN THREE OF ECUADOR'S MOST ELEGANT BOUTIQUE HOTELS

**Luxury Destinations Ecuador** (LDE) member of the Condé Nast Group of hotels, offers luxury First Class Boutique Hotels with old-world charm, combined with modern amenities in three of Ecuador's most unique and sought-after destinations: Cotacachi (La Mirage Garden Hotel and Spa), Cuenca (Mansión Alcázar Boutique Hotel), and Quito (Mansión del Angel).

Set amidst dizzying beauty and culture, inspired by Haciendas and Mansions of old, these properties are steeped in history and tradition, and are the perfect choice for sophisticated travelers, seeking European-style luxury, tranquility, personalized service, and a memorable world-class experience. And, although every LDE Boutique Hotel is unique, each shares a signature appreciation for nourishing the body, mind and spirit.



### LA MIRAGE Garden Hotel & Spa

Tucked beneath snow-capped volcanoes and set amidst rolling hills, rose plantations, colorful Indigenous markets and artisan villages, La Mirage Garden Hotel and Spa offers a privileged, scenic and cultural experience in the idyllic mountains of the Andes. Perched on a hillside, less than three hours from Quito, this beautifully restored and refurbished, palatial hacienda combines the native flavor of the Andes with 21st-century flair and sensibilities.

An oasis of calm in the small Andean village of Cotacachi (the leather capital of Ecuador), this secluded retreat is set amongst a paradise of plant life, filled with thousands of fragrances from its bougainvilleas, hibiscus, and roses, to orchids and freshly cut bouquets that guests will find in their rooms or suites.

La Mirage is distinctive for its elegant fusion of traditions, cuisines, decor and services. Its 23 rooms and suites are centered around majestic garden and mountain views, each with complete privacy. The majority of the accommodations also have fireplaces and seating areas.

Luxury Destinations Ecuador offers guests an unforgettable dining experience in all of its hotel restaurants. Utilizing high quality, modern, traditional and ancient ingredients, the extensive menus provide something for every taste palette, served with exquisite attention to detail, impeccable service, and extensive wine lists and bar offerings.

All of the LDE hotels offer exclusive, high-end spa services and anti-aging stem cells therapy.

Most prominently featured in La Mirage in Cotacachi, where guests can be pampered and choose from more than 20 treatments and an inviting solar-heated pool set in a Roman Greco bath complex.







ROUQTUE HOTEL & SPA

A completely restored and refurbished, turn of the century mansion, Mansion Alcázar satisfies the most discriminating traveler.

The boutique hotel is located in the heart of the city of Cuenca – selected as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage in 1999, and said by many to be the most beautiful city in Ecuador. Mansion Alcázar is set within the historical down town of Cuenca City on Simón Bolívar, a culturally prominent and upscale street that traverses the many shops and restaurants in the downtown area. Nineteen rooms with an old world charm and modern amenities join forces in this beautiful, colonial gem, and it is a much sought-after venue for special events, weddings, and formal dinners and parties.

The jewel of Mansion Alcázar is its lush gardens, where you can get away from the city noise and the hustle and bustle, enjoying an al fresco meal, cup of tea, or an afternoon glass of wine. The tranquil surrounds and gardens, filled with hummingbirds, glorious plants and flowers, lead to the newer part of the hotel and its spa, where rejuvenating and relaxing treatments are provided upon request and where you can also take a private, outdoor jacuzzi.



## MANSION DEL ANGEL

An old mansion, built at the turn of the last Century, Boutique Hotel Mansion del Angel has been completely restored in order to achieve the former splendor of the Ecuadorian Republican era. The mansion used to be the home of an Ecuadorian Tobacco Tycoon, who entertained his guests and buyers lavishly in the large spaces on the Ground Floor, while he and his family utilized the First Floor as their private residence.

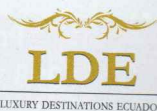
The property is part of the Architectural Historic Society of the downtown area of Quito, according to the World Heritage Foundation, which considered the capital city to be the first city of the organization according to UNESCO.

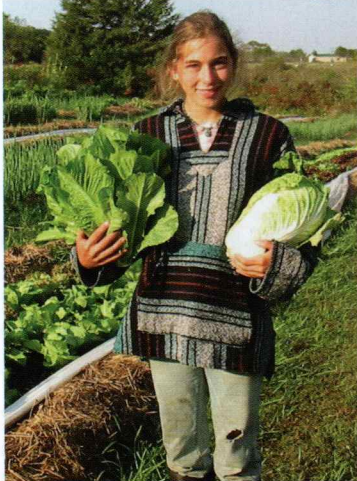
The building itself houses fourteen large, spacious and luxurious rooms and suites. No two are alike, each one different in size, color scheme and decoration.

In addition to an inviting Reception Area, a beautiful and comfortable Salon for relaxation is available, where complimentary Afternoon High Tea is served. Guests may enjoy Breakfast on the Ground Floor, even those who must depart in the very early morning hours.

Text: courtesy of Ashley Rogers

Website: [www.lde.com.ec](http://www.lde.com.ec)





## The Vegetable Bar It's Time to Start Eating Healthy

By David Johnson

Most nutrition professionals believe our food choices affect our health — how you feel today, tomorrow, and in the future. Good nutrition is, arguably, the most important part of a healthy lifestyle. Combined with physical activity, your diet can help you to reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of chronic diseases (like heart disease and cancer), and promote good health. The challenge is, and always has been, eating healthy. Let's face it there aren't a lot of choices when it comes to food that is good for you. You can attempt to eat healthy at home, but if you have a busy schedule, that is next to impossible. And the proliferation of fast food chains makes choosing to eat well even more difficult. It is for these reasons that Mike and Cody also owners of Eucalyptus Café, decided to open a second restaurant, The Vegetable Bar, that makes eating healthy convenient and affordable. As a long-time healthcare professional, Mike understands that the link between good nutrition and healthy weight, with the benefit of reduced chronic disease risk is too important to ignore.

Located in the old Villa Nova site across the river from Parque de la Madre, The Vegetable Bar boasts an incredible view of the river from a shaded outdoor patio and is arguably now Cuenca's best outdoor dining venue. They have three menus to choose from, one

for salads, one for soups and Paninis and another for their fresh vegetable and fruit juices - in short, a veritable smorgasbord of delicious healthy food.

There are eight salads to choose from and they come in two sizes, 7 and 12 oz. During my first visit, I tried the "Popeye" which has a spinach base and is topped with cherry tomatoes, grilled onions and mozzarella cheese. While you can choose your own dressing, it is best served with their "slow as molasses vinaigrette". With my salad I had a "Cool Cucumber" juice which was absolutely refreshing and, I was told, loaded with antioxidants. It is a mixture of cucumber, pineapple, lemon juice, mint and honey. The best part of my meal was the price which was far less than one would spend at a fast-food joint with infinitely more benefits to your health.

The food was so outstanding I decided to eat at The Vegetable Bar two days in a row. My second visit started with a juice called "Beet Me Up" which contained beets, carrots, apple, lime and ginger. Beets are considered a "Superfood" and have been shown to lower blood pressure, increase stamina and fight inflammation. I was more interested in the taste which was fantastic with the health benefits being "icing on the cake." For lunch I had the "Green with Envy" soup, made with split peas, kale, white onions, garlic and carrots. I was particularly hungry

Paseo 3 de Noviembre, Villa Nova Inn Terrace  
098 935 8169 | Hours: Mon - Sun 8:00 am - 3:00 pm  
FB - [www.facebook.com/TheVegetableBar](http://www.facebook.com/TheVegetableBar)  
[www.thevegetablebar.com/](http://www.thevegetablebar.com/)

so I ordered "The Caprese" Panini, white bread with tomato, mozzarella, basil and pesto. In my opinion, it paired perfectly with the soup. Because the portions are so generous, the challenge of this day was eating all the food I had ordered.

One of the predominant reasons people move to Cuenca is to get healthier. Because The Vegetable Bar uses as much organic produce and fruits as possible and everything is prepared fresh, there is no excuse for not eating healthy while you are out and about. And, if you are on a budget like I am, the prices are so reasonable that you could almost eat there every day. If you are ready to start feeling better, it's time to start eating healthy and the place to do it is The Vegetable Bar.

## BERENICE

THE ART OF HAIR DESIGN

We speak English. Specializing in U.S, Venezuela and Dominica Republic hair cut designs, hair colors and hairstyles. Over 20 years experience.



Call or email for an appointment.  
4097767 · 0992735378  
berelopez68@hotmail.com



ARTE EN CUERO  
**D 'Kariel**

**HAND CRAFTED LEATHER GOODS**

**JACKETS - BELTS - HATS - HADBAGS - WALLETS  
BRIEFCASES - PURSES - WALLETS AND MORE**

ADDRESS: GENERAL TORRES 10-91 Y MARISCAL LAMAR  
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 099 436 1084 | 098 451 7365  
EMAIL: dikariel\_4@hotmail.com



CUEROS DKARIEL

AUGUSTO VILLA  
OWNER

# STATUS GALERIA

MUEBLES & COMPLEMENTOS

## EVERYTHING FOR YOUR HOME

FURNITURE, INTERIORS & MORE



**18** months without  
interest  
with payment by credit card



More than  
2000 m<sup>2</sup> of  
Showroom



AV. HUAYNA-CAPAC Y VIRACOCABAMBA (CORNER)  
411 0230 / 411 0201  
statusga@hotmail.es

www.statusgaleria.com

# Rob Annis

**R**ob has had many occupations in his life. He was a miner in Sudbury, Ontario; a policeman in Toronto; worked for the railroad as a policeman; was a tour guide for a mining company; a chiropractor; a chiropractic consultant; an insurance and mutual sales person; a real estate agent; a national/international Australian company Marketing manager; a post university instructor at a chiropractic college; a researcher, and a father.

**WHERE WAS THE LAST PLACE YOU LIVED BEFORE MOVING TO CUENCA?**

The last place I lived was Vancouver for two years and Melbourne Australia for two years before that.

**WHY CUENCA?**

It was by accident. My son was attending an international school and one of the cities he could visit was Cuenca. When I booked him a ticket to I realized it included an overnight at LAX. I didn't feel right about leaving my 14-year-old overnight at the airport so instead of rebooking his flight and losing the money I decided to come with him and that is how I came to Cuenca.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT CUENCA?**

I like Cuenca because it is a slower pace and the people are generally kind and friendly

**IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME, WOULD YOU DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT, AND IF SO, WHAT?**

If I could go back in time, I would do everything I have already done, only better.

**WHAT'S THE MAGIC FORMULA FOR SUCCESS?**

To be successful I adhere to 4 principles: 1. think big 2. have the right mental attitude 3. realize that your attitude determines your altitude and 4. help enough other people get what they want in life.

**DO YOU MAKE FRIENDS EASILY?**

I make friends very easily, but not all people like my forwardness or assertiveness. I have heard that some feel that I want to be the center of attention. I take these comments into consideration.

**DO YOU THINK TELEVISION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ILLITERACY?**

Television may be responsible for abnormal mental development in children according to some studies, however, I feel that texting certainly may contribute to illiteracy as well as social alienation. I know from experience with my children in Canada, that the school system does not teach spelling or cursive writing. My son cannot sign his name or write: Only text and type.

**WHAT'S THE MEANING OF LIFE?**

The meaning of life is to give with joy, love with all your heart, do what you want in life not what someone wants you to do, and always think of the other person first. Your joy comes from giving and thus makes your life meaningful.

**WHAT DO YOU SEE WHEN YOU TURN OFF THE LIGHTS?**

When I turn off the lights I try to see beauty in my dreams and in the day that has past. I reference any negative and put a positive spin on it because it is now a memory and no longer a reality.

**WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?**

I am most passionate about chiropractic and helping others get what they want: health and a pain free existence.

**IF YOU INHERITED AN ACRE OF LAND WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH IT?**

If I inherited an acre of land here in this land I would look for a family that needed some land and have them work it and live on it and I would see if they could spare some vegetables for my consumption when I needed them.

**WHAT SONG BEST DESCRIBES YOU?**

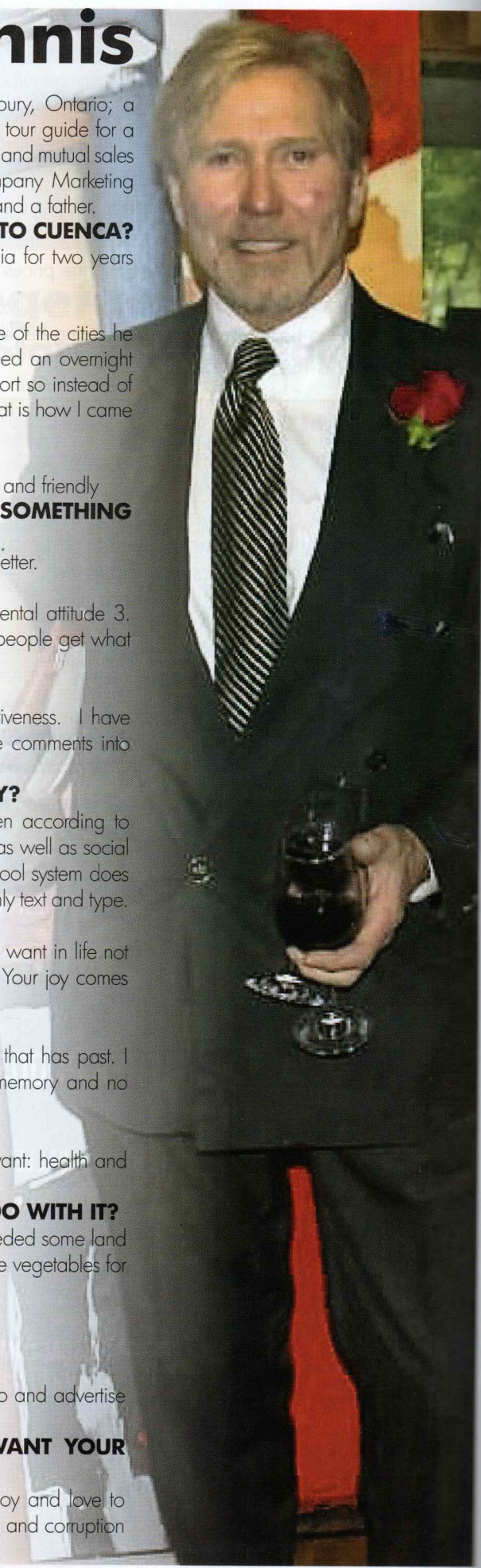
The song I feel best describes me is "Like a Rock" by Bob Seger

**IF I GAVE YOU AN ELEPHANT WHERE WOULD YOU HIDE IT?**

If you gave me an elephant I would not hide it. I would ride it down el centro and advertise chiropractic with it.

**IF YOU COULD BE A SUPERHERO, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT YOUR SUPERPOWERS TO BE?**

If I were a super hero, my super power(s) would be to be able to restore joy and love to people's lives. Through that alone I would be instrumental in eliminating greed and corruption from this world.



**animall** Find us: 

All Products and Services for Dogs and Cats

**OPERATING HOURS**  
M-F  
8AM-7PM  
(CLOSED SUNDAYS)

Address: Av. Primero de Mayo y Fernando de Aragón  
Telephone: 098 330 9392 • 098 330 9393



**NEW PRODUCTS FOR EXPATS**

If you are looking to contract Insurance Policies in Cuenca, Ecuador, you are in the right place

 **Blue Box**  
ASESORES

We work with the best Insurance Companies not only locally but worldwide

Call Us Today!  
098-395-8876 | 074-049-039  
lcastro@blueboxinsurance.com | www.blueboxinsurance.com

 **099 474 4879**  
Alfonso Morena Mora and Solano Avenue  
Edificio Fragata #002 (next door to Ital Deli)

**Active Adults 55+ Classes**  
M-W-F at 10:00 AM **FIRST CLASS FREE!**  
Owned and operated by expats Brian Gary and Aaron Williams

Learn more at [www.FuncFitec.com](http://www.FuncFitec.com)  
Bring this ad for 10% off your first month membership!

**MR. CLEAN**

PROFESSIONAL GRADE CLEANING

CARPET CLEANING, FURNITURE, MATTRESSES, CAR INTERIOR AND HOUSE CLEANING



Address: Yaguarcocha & Totoracocho (Corner)  
Telephone Numbers: 417 3125 | 099 885 0468 | 098 720 6010  
Email: [mr.cleancuenca@hotmail.com](mailto:mr.cleancuenca@hotmail.com)

 Mr. Clean Cuenca  
 @mr\_clean service

**The CHALUPA**  
Mediterranean Restaurant

**MEDITERRANEAN FUSION**  
NEW MENU OFFERINGS

**OPERATING HOURS**  
TUE-SAT 12 PM - 11 PM  
SUNDAY 12 PM - 4 PM

 /lachelupacuenca

Cuenca's best Mediterranean Restaurant and Tapas Bar just got better. New menu offerings and daily specials. Come taste the difference.

**PAELLA**



**HYPNO SAPO**



**Daily Specials**

**WEDNESDAY**  
Choose your sandwich and get a free drink

**THURSDAY**  
2x1 Cocktails  
Happy Hour 8PM to 10PM

**FRIDAY**  
Celebrating International Nights  
2x1 Cocktails, chef's stage buffet, live music.

**SATURDAY**  
Paella for everyone

**SUNDAY**  
Paella for everyone

Address: Calle Larga 4-108 and Mariano Cueva (Across from Todos Santos)  
Telephone Numbers: 284 4915 | 099 288 9600 | 099 288 9761  
Email: [lachelupacuenca@gmail.com](mailto:lachelupacuenca@gmail.com)

**FEBRUARY 26**  
WILL BE CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL MEXICAN NIGHT

# The Heirloom Tomato Man

By Kristen Sawyer  
Photos By Zach Cashero

*"Follow the purple arrow. You'll find a purple gate. Above the entrance, you will see, "The Oasis for Conscious Living."*

"Five dollars! It's a bad road." When we decline the price, the taxi driver shakes his head and zooms off. Five dollars is quite the exorbitant taxi ride for Cuenca. Zach, my boyfriend and Spanish guru, insists we wait to find a better deal. However, when two more drivers tell us the same thing, we forfeit our money and begin the journey. Our driver zigzags through oncoming traffic, abandons the streets for the dusty roads, passes the splayed-open carcass of a pig, and deposits us thirty minutes later into a small village square. Soon after, we find the purple arrow, the purple gate, and the welcoming sign. The entire compound is protected by pieces of shells that served two purposes: aesthetic decoration and an anti-burglar system. "Hello?!" We call towards the windows above. A grunt escapes the window overhead along with a bellow, "Coming!" A minute later, a short man wearing a green, tightly stretched t-shirt comes to the door. Frayed jean shorts, a big, sleepy smile, and sun-leathered skin. He kisses my cheek, shakes Zach's hand, and exclaims, "Hello! Welcome to the Oasis!"

Later this afternoon, we will find out that "The Oasis" is more than just the name of a retirement paradise. When Louis first put up a sign on the road and hired a Colombian woman to help with the farming, car after car of young men slowly drove by his home, calling out, "¿Dónde están las mujeres?" Thwarting a neighborhood revolt, his landlord came to the rescue and informed him that "The Oasis" also happened to

be the name of a popular brothel in Guayaquil. But now, the sign appears simple and welcoming; it is also confined to his patio. We cross the threshold and purple walls beckon us inside.

We walk through the rainbow home and emerge in the garden. We are here, after all, to purchase some tomato seeds. Guinea pig, known as cuy in South America, scurry across the uneven wooden slabs of their hay-hairy cages. Aggressive male ducks prance around the yard and flop-eared rabbits lounge in sunshine. To our right leans the green house made of eucalyptus branches and tarp. We step inside the tomato tent and the pungent scent of fertilizer, overturned earth, and baby seedlings greets us warmly. This whole time, Louis has been explaining how he wound up here. His retirement dream has always included tomatoes.

He specifies, "I actually don't much like the taste. Never have. But there's something about tomato plants. I love helping them grow."

He is on his way to becoming Cuenca's Heirloom Tomato Man. Tomatoes actually originated in South America, but Louis claims Ecuadorians do not particularly savor the delicate taste of tomatoes. Heirloom tomatoes especially are a rarity here. He grows over thirty varieties of tomato, both heirloom and mixed breeds. Their wooden sticks introduce their names: Golden Girl, Jolly Elf, Oxheart Pink.

"You know," he says with a smile, finally taking a minute to breathe, "Sometimes I just like plants more than people."

I understand what he means. He pats the tendrils of his baby tomatoes, little seedlings just opening up to the world. He speaks about giving them love and care, taking the time to stroke their leaves. The sun is their caretaker, and Henry rises



Cuy cages



Heirloom Tomatoes

every morning at 3:30 to welcome the dawn with a bonfire and offer his praise. He even named his street "La Calle del Rey Sol," the Street of the Sun King. Who is this man?

As conversation flows, I sit in the dirt and look around the Sun King's green palace. Two adult tomato plants, over six feet tall, stare down at me. Beside me, a glass pot of honey colored liquid bubbles and gurgles.

"What is that?" I interject.

"Manure tea!" Louis proclaims proudly. He's been researching natural ways to nourish his tomatoes, and he began harvesting the poop of his cuy for this particular purpose. It looks eerily delicious, golden bubbles and honey consistency. Thankfully, my tendencies to touch everything didn't overpower social etiquette: Don't touch what isn't yours! While I get lost staring at the gooey concoction, Louis and Zach maneuver the conversation to the wiles of South American women. Louis, shy smile and egg-top head, shares that even with all his years of experience in Latin America, he remains forever susceptible to the charms of Latina women. In fact, they are often the cause of his most dangerous stories: losing \$20 to women at night and refusing to leave until his cash is returned; a bus rider blowing some sort of fairy dust towards his nose, causing him to lose all sense of orientation and ownership over his possessions; Louis and Latina women seem, at times, to have an adoration-exploitation relationship.

However, he shares that he just found out he is about to become a father for the first time. He is sixty-three. On our next visit, I will learn the tale of his girlfriend's request, her desire to become a mother. But for now, I listen, entranced, as he tells us that the father of his future wife prepares the best cuy in the neighborhood. The secret? Slathering the cuy hide with a generous coating of pork fat...pig on guinea pig equals perfection.

Time lulls in the greenhouse. Soft conversation comforts the growing seedlings. Soon, two hours pass outside our enclosed walls. As we walk away from our newly purchased seedlings, with the promise to collect them in two weeks, Louis divulges one more love: river walking.

"To properly walk a river, you submerge your legs above the knees in the water and pick a direction. Often, you can find

paths that have never been traveled before. It's not as hard as you might think," he explains, "to find yourself in territory never before explored."


New lands wait beyond the river's tug. We promise a session of river walking, as well as a return for a morning bonfire worshipping service.

"You like to drink?" We nod. "Excellent, we'll roast some cuy and drink some rum, turn it into a party." Smiles are exchanged, kisses on the right cheek, and we leave the purple arrows behind us.

A few days removed, I now let my mind wander back to when we first arrived at The Oasis, and how I started down the slippery path of judgmental labeling. Without realizing it, I had tried to pin this guy down: Why was he here? What was up with all the women? Is he a good guy? Trustworthy? How will things work out for him as a father and husband? What was his story back in the States?

Lesson one of Ecuador and life in general: Stop labeling. Who am I to judge anyway? Humans transcend categories. Louis is a flirt and a friend, a plant lover and people pleaser, a retired soul and an eager boy, a Latina culture enthusiast and a Minnesotan man, a sun worshipper and a rum drinker. He is The Heirloom Tomato Man. He is a river walker. Perhaps, after spending more time with him, I too can learn how to take care of the tender and growing. To treat people as well as plants, or plants as well as people. Maybe he will be one of the guides on this path down which I am wandering, a person placed here, for a moment, to show me that some people choose to walk down rivers. Some people choose getting lost instead of becoming found.

Louis Bourgeois lives in the town San Jose del Balzay, a dusty-road town overlooking Cuenca. He is the co-founder of the Cuenca Social Club and Cuenca Tomato. His farm features heirloom and cherry tomatoes, as well as a variety of other delicacies: Margherita pizza, sweet and spicy salsa, and crispy eggplant/tomato salad. To visit The Oasis, sample his products, plant your own tomatoes seeds or join his clubs, you can email him at: [cuencatomato@gmail.com](mailto:cuencatomato@gmail.com) or call him at: 418-5335



**VEGGIE HEALTHY, VEGGIE DELICIOUS.**

*"Let your food be your medicine,  
and your medicine your food"*

**- Hippocrates**

Tomás Ordóñez 10-40 and Gran Colombia Phone #284 3397  
 Hermano Miguel 11-37 and Sangurima Phone #284 1772  
 Bolívar 2-52 between Manuel Vega and Tomás Ordóñez Phone #283 8666  
 José Peralta 3-105 and Avenida del Estadio (Corner) Phone #410 3406  
 Email: [azuparaiso@hotmail.com](mailto:azuparaiso@hotmail.com)

[www.paraisovegetariano.com](http://www.paraisovegetariano.com)

# Bus Ride Anyone?

By Sandy Schott

One of the things I love most about living in Cuenca is being carless. I adore the ideas of reducing my carbon footprint, as well as my overall expenses. I feel free! While others are stuck in traffic, I move about without restraint. I am completely void of common car ownership frustrations like road rage, the worries over gas prices, vehicle maintenance, and increases in insurance rates. The vacancy left behind, in the place of all that headache, is flooded with the joys of the increased health benefits that come from walking; the intimate acquaintance with each city sidewalk, tree, roadside restaurant, dog, and person I meet as I amble through the streets. The additional fabulous news is that, if need be, for longer journeys, there are always alternative forms of transportation. My favorite? The buses, of course!

For 25 cents, the buses will take me anywhere I want to go! I can hop on and hop off anytime, anywhere. I love it! I have taken buses just for the sheer pleasure of seeing where they go, and learning more about this fair city. I have been everywhere! Everyday is a new adventure! The excitement begins before I even step one foot on the bus, wondering if it will even actually stop for me. Sometimes they don't, for whatever reason. I always build in more time for this, just in case. The real thrill lies in the actual embarkation. I have my coins ready in hand, step up, grab a firm hold of anything steady (i.e. railing, pole, or person), and deliver my coins to the machine, all while smiling at and greeting the driver. Then, as soon as I'm able, I make my way towards the back of the bus, sitting or standing, as sense, ability, and the crowd allow. This is all most challenging, since the bus is usually lurching aggressively forward, as I try to maneuver this entire procedure. This is NOT, I repeat, NOT an endeavor for sissies! But, IT'S FUN!

The driver waits for no man, woman, child, or elderly passenger. There are no seatbelts, there are no enforced rules of maximum occupancy, standing while driving, passenger cargo loads, open doors or windows, etc. It's a carnival ride

without the over-constricted dogma of legislation. I personally love standing for my ride. I see more, it's more adventurous for me, since I would never be allowed in the US to do such a thing, and it helps me avoid motion sickness. This will test my metal! I have to buffer my stance, use isometrics in my legs to stand strong, so that I avoid falling on the person next to me. I have to hold on for dear life with my arms, wrists, and hands to steady my self against the sudden starts, stops, and erratic braking. I keep my feet heavily anchored, my head and neck strong, and I glide along as I can, strong but flexible like a mighty oak tree. During my time in Ecuador, my bus rides have increased my strength, balance, and agility, enhanced the muscles in my arms and legs, and entertained and delighted me- and probably others -immensely!

I watch, contemplatively, the people and sights around me, as I ride through the city. I have seen the strength and tolerance of my fellow passengers. These people are not pampered. They are strong and agile, as I am becoming. The children hold on tight, adapt, and move quickly. The elderly are tough, sound, and sure-footed - often carrying large loads. No one is using walkers, motorized chairs, and rarely a cane. These people are fit! They are active, and a continual vital part of their families and the community. I see humor, and verve for life. I see a sparkle and vivacity in their faces and mannerisms that I hope to possess in my own golden years. I watch as I see the families visit and snack, as they make their way to their stop. The school kids, clad in their uniforms, giggle and chat copiously like cackling hens. Vendors hop on and hop off trying to sell their wares, ideas, and religions. All the while, I am there, with a stupid grin on my face, happy in the moment to be here in Cuenca, having this enriching cultural experience.

For me, the buses have been an adventurous, fun way to learn more of Cuenca and its inhabitants. I feel as though the brotherhood of passengers - I include myself in this- have a small, unspoken bond - albeit possibly obscure to them; a bond



**Chef David**  
place for shop. Conveniently located in the heart of El Centro on Calle Larga, open 6 days a week.

Now Cuenca has a place for all your sugar-free deserts and other specialties. For those on a sugar-free diet or those wanting a more healthy lifestyle, Libre de Culpa is the



Come and sample all the delicacies from the kitchen of Chef David.



**Cuenca's Only Sugar-Free Headquarters**

Introducing Libre de Culpa



Libre de Culpa Reposteria Bistro

**OPERATING HOURS**  
MONDAY - SATURDAY  
10 AM - 7 PM



**Variety of Energetic Juices with Special Additives**

- Weight Loss
- Digestive Improvement
- Stress Free
- And more

**Address:** Calle Larga 4-116 and Mariano Cueva  
**Email:** libredeculpa.ec@gmail.com  
**Take out orders:** 096 978 5403



that, nonetheless, does unite us in the understanding of what it is to ride a Cuenca city bus. It is here and now that I am once again reminded of the beauty of this place and its people. I am fortunate to be in Cuenca, and to be a small part of its richness.  
 PS. Author's footnote:

The most fortunate bonus to riding the buses is that, while on them, one is not subjugated to the noxious assault of fumes coming out of their hind ends! Three cheers to that!



- Haircuts for Men and Women
- Manicures
- Pedicures
- Up Do's
- Make-Up
- And More

**Address:** Los Pinos and Ordoñez Lasso  
**Telephone Numbers:** 410 2725 • 099 110 9223

**Perruquería Dog and Cat Grooming Specialists**

We make our own products  
 Dog & Cat Beds, Houses & Accessories

**PERRUQUERIA DOG GROOMING**

f Perruqueria 10% OFF GROOMING

Instagram perruqueria\_cuenca 20% OFF ACCESSORIES

**OPERATING HOURS**  
 M-S  
 8AM - 1PM  
 2:30 PM TO 6:30 PM

Address: Ordoñez Lasso and Los Alamos (near Eloy Alfaro gas station)  
 Phone Numbers: 098 430 3431 245 9412 099 843 3718  
 Email: productosbetovengerencia@gmail.com

[www.productosbetoven.com](http://www.productosbetoven.com)

**Sabatino's**

Your Favorite Italian-American Cuisine and Ecuadorian Dishes

Great Place to Eat and Relax at Otorongo Plaza

Sabatino's Specialties

- Fettucini Sea Devil
- Fried Calamari
- Chicken Parmigiana
- Spinach Ravioli

Like us on facebook

Come try our NEW Menu!

Open Tuesday-Saturday, NOON to 10:00PM

Chef and owner Mauricio has created a delightful restaurant with a growing reputation for great food in a relaxing atmosphere. So come by today and treat yourself to a great meal.

Mauricio Bernal

Plazoleta del Otorongo | Sector Puente del Vado  
 098 704 2538 | [www.sabatinosrestaurant.com](http://www.sabatinosrestaurant.com)

**TRAJES LETOMM**

CUSTOM-MADE MEN'S CLOTHES BY LEONARDO

SUITS, SHIRTS AND PANTS.  
 ALTERATIONS DONE QUICKLY AND WELL.

OPERATING HOURS:  
 MON-FRI: 11AM - 6PM  
 SAT: 9AM - 1PM  
 CLOSED SUNDAY

PICK-UP AND DELIVERY.  
 ALL WORK GUARANTEED.

EMAIL: [leltommtrajes@hotmail.com](mailto:leltommtrajes@hotmail.com)  
 PHONE: 098 508 9546

AVE. RICARDO DURÁN AND AVE. DE LAS AMÉRICAS  
 (LOCATED IN THE FIRST BUILDING AFTER THE HOUSE ON THE FIRST FLOOR)

Free mattress vacuum with every house cleaning

**Multi-Service GB WE DO IT ALL**

U.S. TRAINED

House cleaning, rug shampooing, window washing and more

2 de Agosto and Juan de Senierguez (Corner)  
 099 745 3975 • 409 2996  
[gloriabenenuala@hotmail.com](mailto:gloriabenenuala@hotmail.com)

fb GB MULTISERVICE



# Loren and Nancy Kuehne

By Susan Herron

**It seems like there is love at "first sight," tell me about it.**

L: I was the president of a small community bank in Alamogordo, New Mexico and

N: I worked for a local Red Cross Chapter.

L: We didn't know each other but drove together to a Red Cross Board of Director's training in Albuquerque.

N: With the drive and all that time together in the car talking, after 2½ days we knew we should be married.

**After your 3-week honeymoon in Europe, what did life look like?**

L: We got married in 1981 and lived in Alamogordo, NM for several years.

N: We then moved to Visalia, California for four years and then back to Las Cruces, NM.

L: I retired as a community bank CEO in 1995 and then started a small company to help small businesses become financially stable.

N: Loren was quite involved with Rotary International. He was President of the Rotary Club of Las Cruces (Rio Grande) in 1995-96. He worked as both the board secretary of the club from 1998-2015 and as the Executive Secretary of Rotary District 5520 from 2004-2015. He was named the District 5520

Rotarian of the Year for 2005-2006.

**You moved down in March of 2015, were there any other countries on your list?**

L: Yes, Panama, Costa Rica and France.

N: We visited the Galapagos and Peru for 3 weeks in 2004 and liked Ecuador. I think that is when we started thinking about living overseas.

L: We visited Ecuador again in October 2014.

N: Then went home and began making arrangements to move.

**What made you decide on Cuenca?**

L: The economy is based on the dollar and the less expensive lifestyle would allow us to save for travel. We wanted to travel before our age caught up with us.

N: And medical services are important to us.

L: We also were looking for a vibrant expat community.

N: And we wanted the ability to have an active social life.

**What are your favorite things about Cuenca?**

L: I love all the rivers and the wonderful views.

N: I love the temperature and the people.

**What are your least favorite things about Cuenca?**

L: I would have to say the bus exhaust.

N: I like the sunshine so it would have to be the cloudy days.

**Now that you are here, do you have any special activities you enjoy?**

L: As I mentioned, I had been very involved with Rotary International for almost 40 years, and since moving to Cuenca I have been working hard with a core group of people to start an English-speaking chapter of Rotary International here. It would be called the Rotary Club of Cuenca - International. I am still an honorary member of the Rotary Club of Las Cruces (Rio Grande). I still offer support to my club secretary and District 5520 executive secretary who both took my place when we moved.

N: Rotary has been a big part of our lives for many years so we both are involved with trying to start the new chapter here in Cuenca.

**What does Date Night look like for you?**


L: We don't go out much so we don't have date nights, but we love having friends over.

N: Well, sometimes we go out. We enjoy going to Joe's Secret Garden with friends and meeting and making new friends. Some of our best new friends in Cuenca were made at Joe's over a delicious dinner.

L: Nancy is such great cook we would rather stay in with friends. And nothing beats her chocolate chip cookies and apple pies for desert.

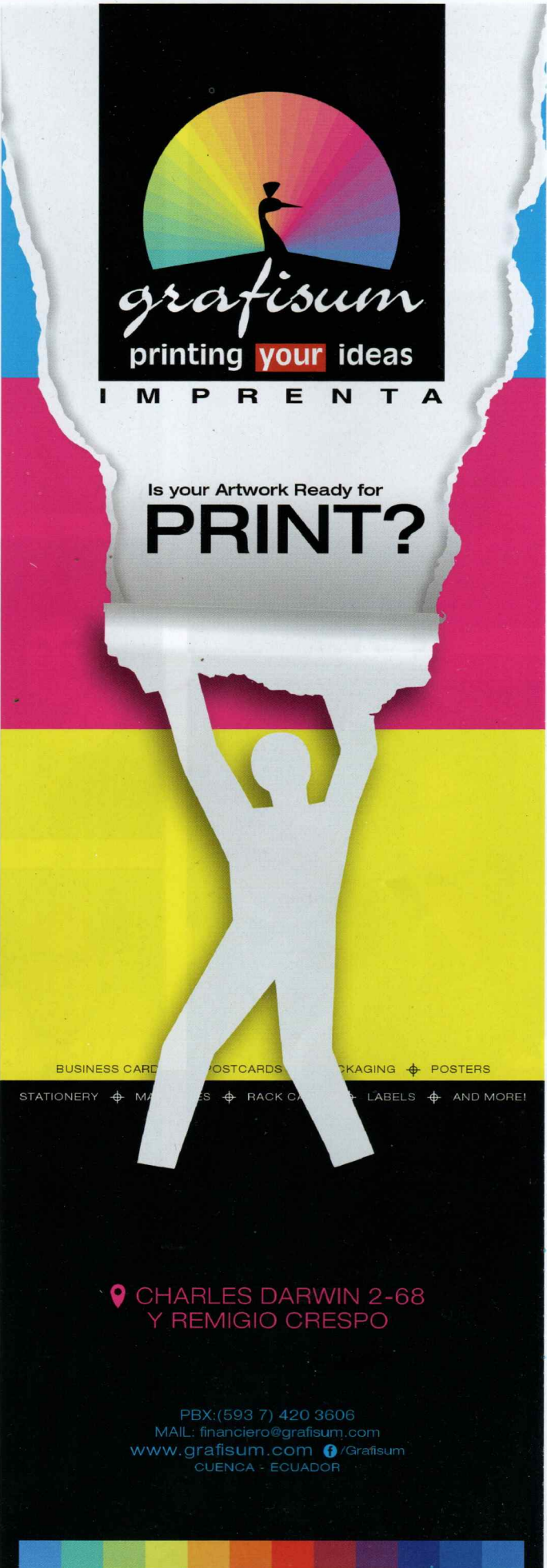
N: Yes, I do love cooking and having people over.

**FOR RENT**  
**BEAUTIFUL FURNISHED HOME IN YUNGUILLA**



On 1 acre of land with fruit trees, 2 Bedrooms, 2 Living Rooms, 3 Full Bathrooms with Stove, Refrigerator. Internet, Alarm & Hot Water included. ONLY \$600 per mo.

**This house will not last long - Call Today!**  
**098.915.3622**



**grafisum**  
 printing your ideas  
 I M P R E S A

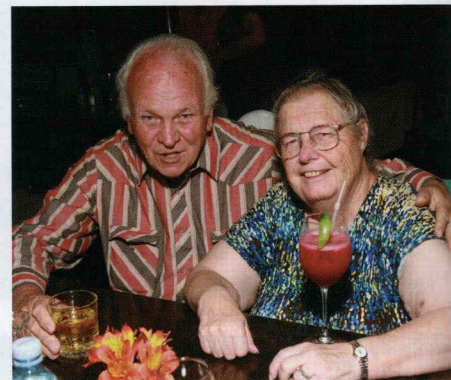
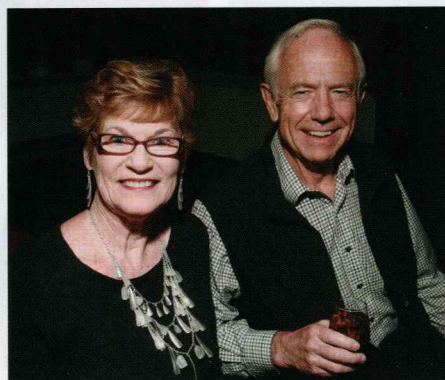
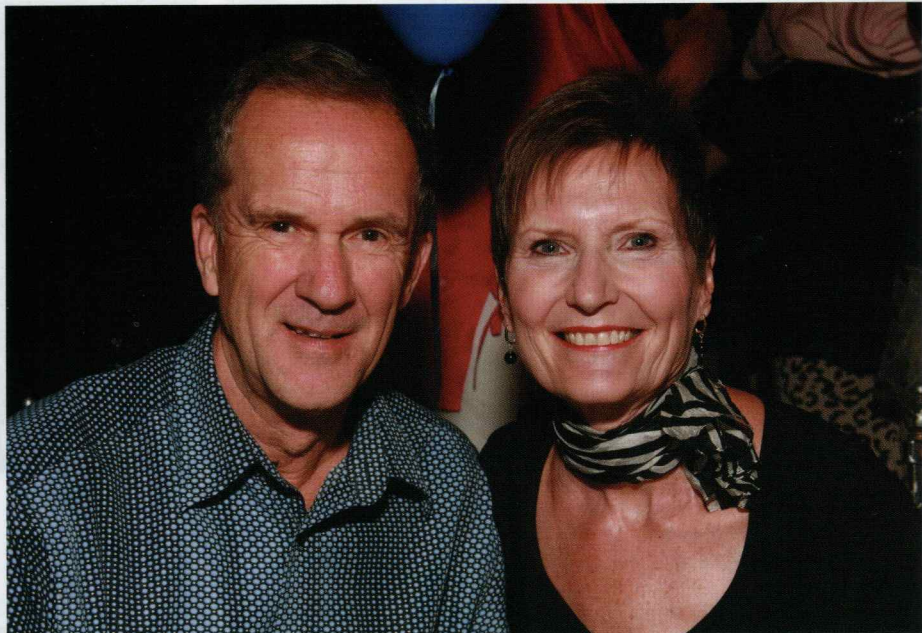
Is your Artwork Ready for  
**PRINT?**

BUSINESS CARDS POSTCARDS PACKAGING POSTERS  
 STATIONERY MAGAZINES RACK CARDS LABELS AND MORE!

CHARLES DARWIN 2-68  
 Y REMIGIO CRESPO

PBX: (593 7) 420 3606  
 MAIL: financiero@grafisum.com  
 www.grafisum.com /Grafisum  
 CUENCA - ECUADOR

All pictures in this month's Friendly Faces were taken at the Azuay Community Theater "Turns 2" event, which was held on Saturday January 23 at Café Eucalyptus.



**Dr. Hugo Alvarez Toral**  
 Homeopathy • Quantum Medicine • Psychotherapy  
 Re-establishing Health in a holistic environment

MONDAY - FRIDAY  
 8:30AM - 12PM  
 3:30PM - 8PM

SATURDAY  
 8:30AM - 12 Noon

Av. Paucarbamba 5-16 and Tomillos • 099 9631 202 / 409 8478  
 hugovinicio@yahoo.ca

**Hand Made Artisan Candles**

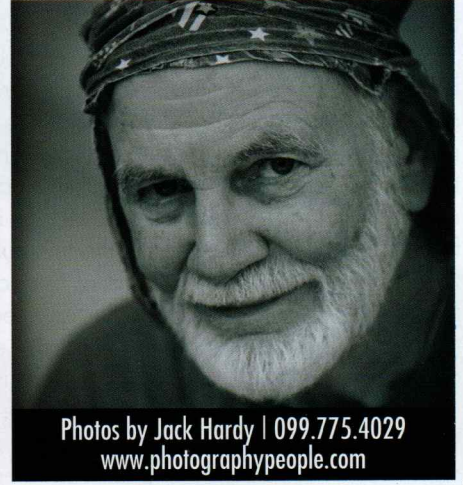
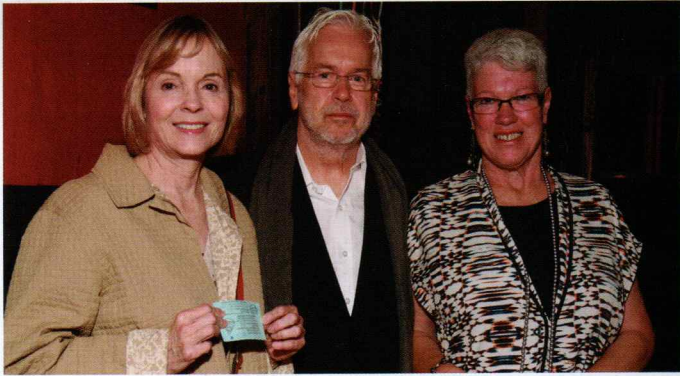
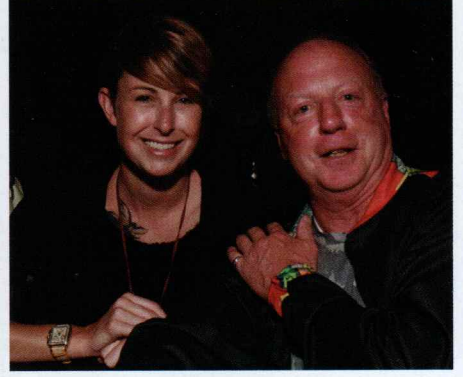
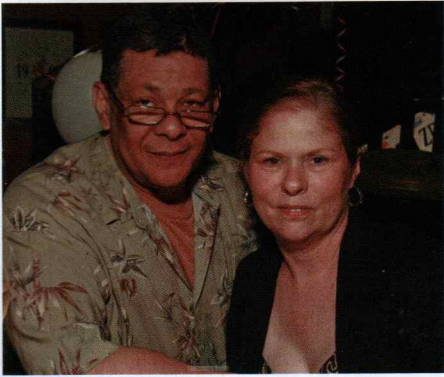
Operating Hours  
 MON - SAT  
 8AM - 8PM

20% OFF OFFER

Order Today By Phone

Follow Us

Address: Av. 12 de Octubre and Via a Turi.  
 Phone Numbers: 099 256 7042 095 962 6379



Photos by Jack Hardy | 099.775.4029  
www.photographypeople.com



It's **Breakfast time!**

Always **Open**

Presidente Borrero 4-11 y Calle Larga

\*Get a free coffee with every purchase by mentioning this AD



# The Simple Life

By David Johnson

By the time most people read this, I will have been here in Cuenca for a year. In that year, my life has changed drastically, mostly for the better. In fact, aside from not being together with my wife full-time, I can't think of another negative thing about living here. The most profound thing that has happened is my life has become much simpler. I have always struggled with the thought that there is a certain point in life where it goes from relatively simple to insanely complicated. This crossroad in life confuses me because I have always believed that there is beauty in simplicity.



One of my favorite "simple" days was spending time in the Cajas at Rancho Hermanos Prado.

As most adults do, I adjusted to the more complicated life and, because of my competitive personality, I even thrived. "Bring it on" has always been my motto and it has served me well from my days as a competitive cyclist to the long hours I committed to building my career. Then something magical happened; I came to Ecuador where the philosophy is much more about family, friends, and building meaningful relationships, and less about conquering the wilds of the corporate jungle. Life here is much simpler, and a smile isn't second guessed for its authenticity. People stop on the streets, embrace and spend quality time with one another as if there is nothing else in the Universe at that particular time. While the rest of the "civilized" world speeds through life at breakneck speeds, time seems almost suspended here, and the cavalier attitude that many business people have here (which is very frustrating to many expats) is, if you put things in perspective, charming – business appears more about making a living than about making a profit, arguably, the way it should be.

I am not retired and doing business here has been a real

"eye opener." I have come to realize that I am not going to change the atmosphere regardless of how badly I want to. I can, continually swim against the tide, become frustrated, and most likely, move back to the United States; or the choice I prefer, I can adapt. Adapting means change and, for most, change is not welcome. Approached with the right attitude, change can be good; even, as I have discovered, cathartic. While it means stepping out of your comfort zone, most of the time you become aware of how things you've become accustomed to doing are, in

many cases, completely unnecessary.

For me, a great example of this is, having a routine. As a business person in the US, having a routine is so engrained that when you meet people that are "free spirited" you tend to look at their lifestyle as unusual. From the minute you wake up in the morning to the minute you go to bed, everything is preordained. And, God forbid a monkey wrench gets thrown into the works – chaos ensues. While the regimented way of moving through life seems logical, I have found I have missed a tremendous amount of opportunity by not stopping and "smelling the flowers".

I have made a concerted effort to simplify my life since I moved here. Because I have responsibilities to my business, partners, and those on my team, it isn't always easy. Being here, being aware, and wanting desperately to lead a less complicated life, keeps me focused on the prize. If you see me in Parque Calderon, just sitting and watching the world go by, please stop by for a conversation. Life is entirely too short not to take advantage of simple things.

**IRANIAN ART**  
**FLORIST WITH PERSIAN DETAILS**

**Persa Flor**

**DELIVERY**

**OPERATING HOURS**  
**MON-SAT**  
**8AM-10PM**  
**SUN**  
**9AM-8PM**

**ADDRESS:** AV. REMIGIO GRESPO Y AV. SOLANO CORNER  
**TELEPHONE NUMERS:** 099 950 2878 / 281 5796 / 288 1491  
**EMAIL:** quitoamini@yahoo.com

[WWW.PERSAFLOR.COM.EC](http://WWW.PERSAFLOR.COM.EC)

**S A \* J O**  
**WE SPEAK ENGLISH**

**GALLERY - WORKSHOP**  
ESTABLISHED 1989

**10% DISCOUNT**

**OPERATING HOURS**  
**MON-FRI**  
**9AM - 7PM**  
**SAT**  
**9AM - 6PM**

**ADDRESS:** HONORATO VÁSQUEZ 5-89 Y HERMANO MIGUEL  
**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 099 598 3041



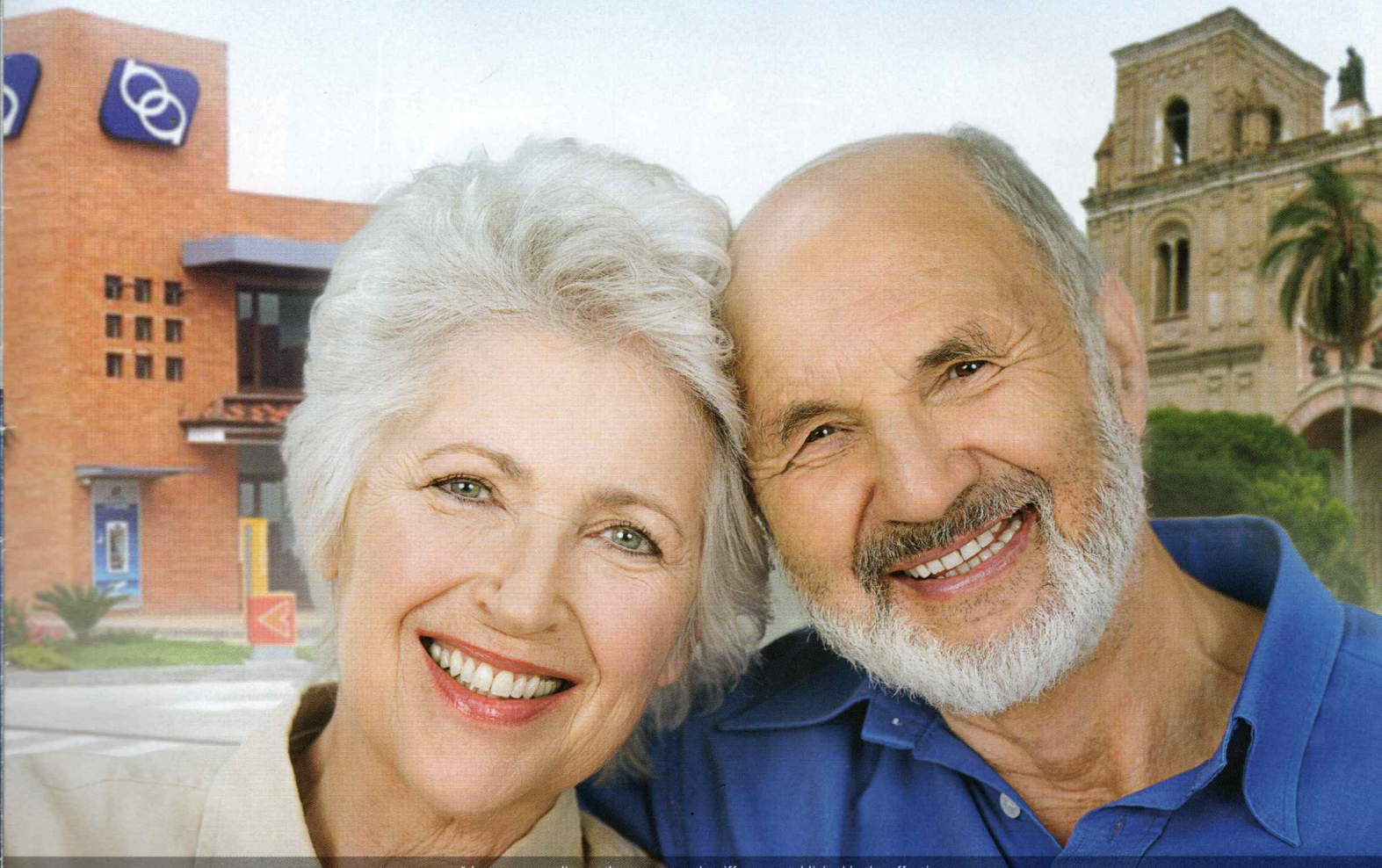
**BANCO DEL AUSTRO**

*Investment accounts*

*Enjoy Living  
in Cuenca*

***The best performance %***

*Your money in a safe and  
reliable institution*



\* Interest according to the amount and tariff term established in the effective one.

[www.bancodelaustro.com](http://www.bancodelaustro.com)

1800 22 87 87



**+ ágil + seguro**

# The Big Red Bus



**VanService**  
INTERNACIONAL  
TRANSPORTE Y TURISMO

*Sight-Seeing in Style*



## Schedule

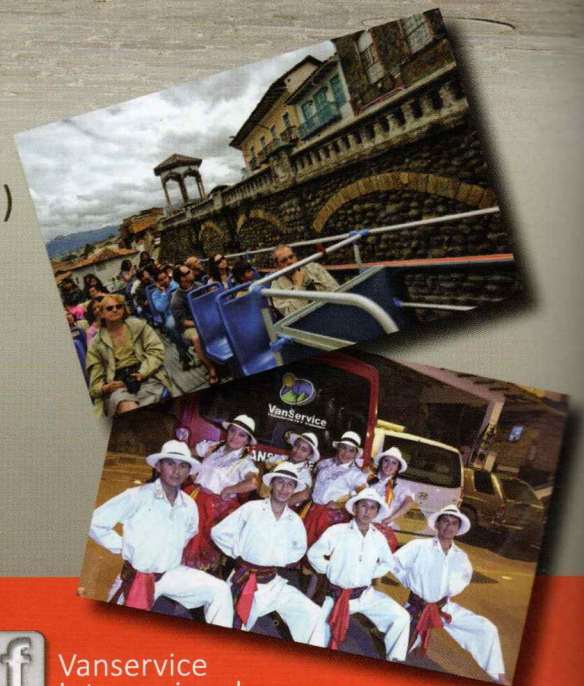
Pick up Red Bus in front of Old Cathedral at Parque Calderon (make sure it's the BIG RED BUS)

### Cuenca South Tour

09h00 · 10h00 · 11h00 · 12h00 · 14h00  
15h00 · 16h00 · 17h00 · 18h00 · 19h00

### Cuenca North Tour

09h45 · 11h45 · 15h45



0998303981 · (07) 2816409 · (07) 2888298  
ventas@vanservice.com.ec  
www.vanservice.com.ec



Vanservice  
Internacional