

Gold Country Living

Pura Vida only in Costa Rica

By Jane Haworth
Staff Writer

'Pura Vida' literally means Pure Life but to Costa Ricans and those travelers who have visited and fallen in love with the country, the expression is more personal. It can be used as a greeting, as a goodbye or as an expression that means 'life is enjoyed leisurely and to the full'. Our vacation this summer to visit Costa Rica was 'Pure Vida'.

Having recently heard a lot about Costa Rica, I decided it would be an ideal destination for my family of five to visit. With tourism now the country's major industry, 25 national parks to visit, 5% of the world's plant and animal species and 34,000 insect species to find, how could this not be fun for kids? Costa Rica is a country for the outdoor adventurer and the birthplace of zip lining. Now you can zip line, hike on hanging bridges, bird-watch, rappel, horseback ride and kayak, much of which is suitable for all ages.

To fully experience the bio-diversity of Costa Rica's landscape, you need to tour around to visit the cloud forest, rainforest, volcanoes, beaches, wetlands and the plantations. I decided to arrange our own tour so we could travel at our own pace to the popular destinations and still have time to relax on the beach. So for this flexibility, we decided to rent a car, a 4WD SUV, to get around in.

During my research, I kept reading that the roads are notoriously bad in Costa Rica, and it is one of the most dangerous countries for driving. Writing this from personal experience, safely back in the USA, the roads aren't as bad as they say. They are definitely unique. We did see potholes the size of bathtubs and driving on the smoothest side of the road is a necessary and common practice. Once you turn off a major highway, most of the roads are unpaved so you have no choice but to go with the bumps!

Our tour of Costa Rica included Playa Samara, which is on the Nicoya Peninsula on the northern side of the Pacific Coast. This sleepy, non-commercialized surf town was an ideal destination to spend our first six days whilst we acclimatized to the Costa Rican way of life. We experienced waking up to howler monkeys grunting nearby, a tropical garden full of butterflies, birds, noisy frogs and unique bugs everywhere.

Our second destination took us to the Monteverde Cloud Forest. We headed inland towards the Trans-Continental Divide and climbed 5,000 feet on unpaved roads to Santa Elena. The contrast was incredible, having spent nearly two hours on this winding, track of a road to emerge into a bustling, mountain town, population 20,000, with many stores, restaurants, and tourist activities. Here we took full advantage of our three day's stay. We hiked the hanging bridges, took a zip line canopy tour, a nature guide led us around the cloud forest, we visited the Hummingbird Gallery and even then barely scratched the surface of activities available.

Next, we drove the mountain road between Santa Elena and Arenal Volcano. This infamous road is not recommended during rainy season but is a fraction of the distance of using the highway. It was a beautiful, scenic drive despite the bumpy terrain, through coffee plantations, small Costa Rican towns, skirting Arenal Lake to our first vista of the volcano. We arrived at Tabacon Thermal Resort and Hot Springs for our night of indulgence, a chance to experience one of the world's most renowned natural hot springs.

Imagine sitting in a pool of 100' water as it cascades down a series of steps, over waterfalls surrounded by beautiful, tropical gardens and all in the shadow of one of the world's most active volcanoes. We spent a couple more days in the area mesmerized by the closeness of the volcano. Occasionally, we would see and hear Arenal's sporadic activity but we saw no lava flow. Since the mid 90's the little town of La Fortuna has grown due to the growth of Tabacon Hot-Springs and is a bustling town of resorts, hot springs and activity centers. *Continued on page 16*

Fashion Satire *Continued from page 1*

...Maxim who is also the designer, Alotta Detritus. This ensemble included a cascading white ruffle comprised of pill cups, boots made of bicycle inner tubes and Ipod ear phones, a lovely plastic red bow in the back and a top hat. Umbrella Trio, modeled by Maria, Felicia and Jenny was designed by Prima Debris (Kathi Griffis); three unique outfits fashioned from old umbrellas! These are just a sampling of the one-of-a-kind apparel created from items that would be sitting in a landfill for eons. The largest gown with the most disturbing environmental message was, Gyres of the World, a tossed out plastic swimming pool, mapping the gyres of the earth which made me dizzy just looking at it while our model and designer, Robin Worley, aka Rayona Visqueen, twirled and spun, pointing out all the oceans' vortexes of trash.

If you are concerned about the environment and want to help protect the future of our world, please email prima-debris@hautetrash.org, write to Haute Trash Artists Collaborative, P.O. Box 622, Nevada City, CA 95959 or visit the Haute Trash website at www.hautetrash.org for a list of past and future events as well as other information about their organization.

COMPUTER SAVVY



WiFi We've talked about it before. What is WiFi? It is the trade name of a popular wireless networking technology that uses radio waves to provide wireless high-speed Internet and email connections -- on your computer it's called WLAN (Wireless Local Area Network).

You can have a simple version of it in your home if your broadband ethernet cable is connected to a device called a router and if your computer is equipped with either a built-in WiFi circuit or a USB WiFi adapter.

You can also receive wireless Internet from businesses that provide WiFi broadcasting. Places like McDonald's and Panera Bread among others provide this free service. Most modern laptops have built in WiFi receiver circuits. If yours doesn't have it built in, there are any number of USB plug-in adapters for the purpose. You can buy a wireless router for as little as \$29. You can buy a USB wireless adapter for as little as \$18.

Why would you want a wireless router for your home? Because, with it, you can move your laptop to any part of your home and receive the Internet and email without being connected with a wire. You can't lose -- it's the greatest! If your computer is old, you can get an Ethernet to USB adapter.

Nothing can go wrong today that a little chocolate can't fix.



Glitter Gatsby & Gangsters

A brand new fundraiser for the Calaveras County Arts Council is planned for October 23rd. The first annual event, a Speakeasy Rendezvous, will be held at The Metropolitan in San Andreas. Gangsters and gals alike are invited to this Speakeasy themed prohibition party.

Wear your finest glad rags, and enjoy a sit-down dinner, and dancing to a live band, no host bar, auctions, raffles and prizes. The Speakeasy starts at 5:30, with an opportunity to have your photo snapped (with or without a Gangster) in one of several vintage cars on display.

The PASSWORD on your ticket affords you side door entry into this exclusive party. Lavish décor, decadent dining, music by the 12-member Speakeasy Jazz Orchestra, bootleg booze and surprises. Stylish attire of the era is encouraged.

Proceeds from this event benefit the Calaveras County Arts Council and their programs

such as Arts in Education, the Ovarions Series, and free Music in the Parks. The Arts Council serves to support, nourish and awaken the arts in our community.

Tickets are \$90 per person, and are expected to sell out, since seating is limited. For information and reservations, please visit the Arts Council website, www.calaverasarts.org. Or phone the Arts Council at 209.754.1774. *Photo courtesy of the Arts Council*

Cancer Prevention and Survival Cooking Course

A national nonprofit dedicated to advancing cancer prevention through education and research, is offering a free cooking class designed to help Elk Grove residents prevent and survive cancer through proper diet and nutrition. The Rx for better health? It's a low-fat vegetarian diet. Load up on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. October 19, 6 to 8 p.m., Elk Grove Library, 8900 Elk Grove Library, Elk Grove, CA.

NYF

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