

HOW TO READ ATENAS TODAY

Many of the pages in Atenas Today are in two column format, and the default “view” in the *Adobe Reader* will present these pages in a large size that requires you to scroll up and down to read the whole page.

By changing the “view” to “**Full Screen**” you can fit the page to your screen and avoid the scrolling.

When in “Full Screen” view, left click to advance to the next page, or right click to go back a page.

If the text is too small for your taste, push the “escape” key to exit the “Full Screen” mode, and change the “zoom” level to get the size you want.

THE NEW YELLOW PAGES

Don't forget to download and save the latest version of the Yellow Pages. Many new businesses have been listed. This section will help you find the goods and services you need.

ATENAS TODAY



Summer Blossom of Corteza Amarilla
photograph Marina Zampieri

ATENAS TODAY is a free English language newsletter for the residents and potential residents of Atenas, Costa Rica. It contains informative articles and creative compositions submitted by our readers, and is distributed via email approximately once a month to over 500 email addresses. To get on the distribution list or to submit material, please send an email to Marietta Arce at atenastoday@gmail.com.

Compositions from back issues are archived on the Atenas Chamber of Tourism and Commerce website, www.atenascatuca.com. Click on the English version and then Atenas Today on the business page.



DIRECTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE ATENAS AREA

New names and numbers have been added to the directory. With each issue Atenas Today subscribers will receive an updated file containing the names and contact information of people who have chosen to be listed. Simply download the PDF file attached to this Atenas Today email and print it or save it on your computer.

If your name is on the list without contact information, it is because you are a subscriber to the newsletter, but have **not authorized the publication of your email address or other information**. To add or correct data please send an email to atenastoday@gmail.com

Issue No. 110

February 23, 2014

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Publisher's Note



Here we are again, just a few weeks into the new school term! I delight when hearing the laughter and exuberance that is in evidence as the streets of our town fill with students, both young and 'old'. They walk to and from school each morning and afternoon and I can sense that there is some relief that the end of the long summer vacation has finally arrived.

We are also welcoming new exchange students, volunteers and visitors who are beginning the grand adventure we are often taking for granted because we live here year-round!

February is the most popular summer month for weddings, outdoor activities and festivals. I hope you were present at the recent Chili Cook-Off which broke previous records for fundraising and attendance. There are many highlights of the activity in this issue but nothing compares to being there in person. If you didn't attend this year, make sure you make plans to come next year.

The Valentine's Day activity held at Rincón De Nana was also very successful and in the next issue we will provide more information and pictures.

Many of you have expressed concerns about the current situation with the recycling. I am following up the progress on a weekly basis and I know that the Municipality has set up meetings with companies that carry out this activity. I will keep you all posted.

As the end of the month of love and friendship draws near, I hope you and your loved ones take as many opportunities as possible to sit quietly and let the glorious colors of the sunsets envelop you. They are inspiring and breathtaking.

Whether you are living here permanently or just visiting us for a while, I urge you to make many happy memories in Atenas, today and every day.

Happy Reading!



Costa Rican Sunset – Wikipedia Image

Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

This space is available for posting community activities for the following weeks. Please provide information about your activity or event to atenastoday@gmail.com by the 15th of the month.

February 22nd – March 2nd – Atenas Film Festival -

For more information: atenascine.com

March 5th – Ash Wednesday, Lent begins

March 8th – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Discover Your Inner Diva**

To register: Contact Jan Yatsko at 2446-0970
or janyatsko@gmail.com Class size is limited
and registration deadline is March 1.

March 17th – St. Patrick's Day

March 29th – Horse Parade (Cabalgata) to benefit Hogar de Ancianos
(see flyers around town)

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

Every Sunday: Buddhist Book Discussion at Roca Verde (SEE FLYER)

Second Monday of every month: 4 p.m. Abandoned Animals of Atenas Foundation meeting at Antaños Please contact Virginia 2446-5343 or Sylvia 8868-1386 for more information. Volunteers are needed and welcome.

Every Tuesday: Atenas Bridge Club meets at Don Yayo's Restaurant . 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. No partner required.

Third Tuesday of every month: PLEIN AIR ART GROUP. Art activities as varied as the members. Contact Jan Yatsko at 2446-0970 or janyatsko@gmail.com

Every Wednesday: (Please confirm with Sara or Kay 2446-0664)

Atenas Wednesday Women
informal get together at Kay's Gringo Postres
every Wednesday afternoon at 12.30 PM

Second Wednesday of every month: Writer's Club meets at Colinas del Sol, at Noon. Contact L. Michael Rusin @ crcaseyboy@gmail.com (2451-8063) for more information. Please confirm.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED RECYCLING HAS BEEN SUSPENDED FOR THE TIME BEING. THE MUNICIPALITY OF ATENAS IS MEETING WITH SEVERAL COMPANIES TO BEGIN THE RECYCLING CAMPAIGN AGAIN SOON. DETAILS WILL BE PROVIDED AS SOON AS THEY ARE RECEIVED.



Buddhist Book Discussion

Every Sunday
Meditation (optional) 1:30pm
Book Discussion 2:00pm
218 Roca Verde, Atenas

A gathering for those interested
in Buddhism and Buddhist writings.

ALL ARE WELCOME,
from non-Buddhists to
experienced Buddhist practitioners

If you wish to know what book we're currently reading,
or if you need directions or any other information,
please feel free to telephone or email:

Adrienne and Richard Baksa
2446-8509
adriennebaksa@me.com
rbaksa@mac.com

Solar Electric – Getting the most from the Sun – a follow-up workshop – February 27, 2014



Do to the request of several people who attended last year's workshop, I am once again hosting Pierre of the company Purasol to do a follow-up of last year's presentation. This year's workshop will focus less on equipment and more on packages and costs allowing most of the time for attendee's questions. Purasol completed 160 projects in 2013 and already had 30 scheduled for 2014 as of the end of January so Pierre has a lot more experience to call on.

Couldn't be a better time as it looks like electricity rates are going up again in Costa Rica according to this article published recently in the centralamericadata website. http://www.centralamericadata.com/en/article/main/Costa_Rica_Cost_of_Electricity_is_Doubles_That_of_US?u=273956d48ea04e446acecc083baed183&s=n&e=3&mid=

The workshop is scheduled for February 27th from noon to 3 and will again be held at the Linda Vista Bar and Restaurant in Alto del Monte, Atenas – on the road to Jaco about 6 miles west of Atenas Central. The presenters will be me and Pierre Lambot from Purasol, a company specializing in solar domestic hot water and solar electric. By the time of the workshop, I will have had my solar electric system functioning for a full year and I will be speaking in the workshop about the performance of my system. I was concerned about the clouds here in Alto del Monte and particularly worried about the rainy months not generating any power. I am please to say that the system has beat my expectation and my power bill is now \$30 a month instead of \$300.

I am putting this workshop together simply because there are many people in the Atenas area that can really benefit from using more solar. The presentations will be shorter this year, allowing more time to analyze your electric bills and answer your questions. I expect the presentations, question period and site visitation to be finished by 3pm. The presentations, and any handouts, will be made in English and Spanish depending on the audience. Bring copies of your most recent electric bills from ICE.

Solar heating for swimming pools and houses has always been very cost effect but solar electric was expensive with an expected payback of 18-20 years – hardly reasonable. But several things have happened in the past two years to change this picture. First, the price on solar panels has dropped by 50% in the past five years second, the Costa Rica government has stopped charging the 13% tax on all solar products and third, the ICE grid tied system eliminates the need for batteries which have always been a major cost of the system. Not to mention the ever increasing rates for electricity. These things taken together have reduced the system payback from 18-20 years to 7-8 years. In fact, I expect a return of 10-12% on my solar system investment over the next 8 years followed by many years of free electricity regardless of ICE rate increases.

I have selected the Linda Vista Bar Restaurant for the location of the workshop because my house is just a short walk away and participants will be able to view all three of my solar systems in operation. Also, lunch and drinks will be available for purchase so you can enjoy your lunch along with the information if you wish.

For planning purposes, I would like to know how many of you plan to attend, so please drop me a line, also with any questions, to my email at ralph_carlson@earthlink.net or give me a call at 8779-2344

Ralph Carlson
Alto del Monte, Atenas



A Winning Day Atenas Charity Chili Cook-Off

Mission Statement:

"Volunteers working in partnership with our community to seek funding that will provide for the needs of the children of Hogar de Vida in Atenas, Costa Rica"

By Judy Timson
Committee Member



Koins 4 Kids Campaign - A Success!

It was a great day, February 9th, 2014 at the beautiful Quinta Roma Vista Parque, for all those that attended, participated in, volunteered, or sponsored at the Atenas Charity Chili Cook-Off. Every record was broken this year....we set high expectations and met every single goal we set! With a 68% increase over last year's efforts, this event raised almost \$34,000!!! And as best as we can determine, we had over 1,500 attendees! What was exciting to see was the increase in Tico participation – our goal has always been to make this a “community” event, not just an ex-pat event! This is just the beginning!

In addition to day of event money that was raised (entrance, food, drink, Koins 4 Kids, raffles, etc.), we had two important elements that allowed us to do as well as we did. 1) We offered sponsorship level opportunities to the business leaders (and some individuals) in and outside of Atenas – the purpose of these funds is to cover all the expenses that are incurred thru the event process (venue rental, tents/tables/chairs rental, electrical, signage, printing, food, office supplies, etc.) - and we exceeded

our \$12,000 sponsorship goal. And 2) the Committee solicited friends and family inside and outside of Costa Rica to make personal donations – we exceeded our goal of \$12,000 in this effort. With the sponsorship dollars covering the cost of the expenses, we could comfortably say that 100% of funds raised thru personal donations and day of event income would go directly to Hogar de Vida – and it did!

There are SO many people to thank in this effort – it was so exciting to see so many supporters join us in our promotion “It’s all about the kids”.

We wish to express gratitude to each of our cash sponsors that helped to underwrite these expenses. And every product and/or service that was provided as an in-kind gift (trips, hotel stays, food, tours, etc.) has helped to lay the foundation for making our event successful. Thank you!



We Thank ALL Sponsors!

We wish to express gratitude to all the donors that gave to a cause that we believed in, even though you may not have been in Costa Rica or even knew who Hogar de Vida was. We thank you for giving because we asked.

We wish to express gratitude to the 100+ volunteers that helped make this event day so special. With set-up beginning early on Saturday morning, the day before the event, I witnessed amazing individuals work until late in the day getting ready for the next day. First time ever, we held a training session on Saturday and there were over 75 people there to “learn the ropes” to serve as a volunteer on Sunday. Thank you!



Thank You Volunteers

We wish to thank the 24 Chili Teams that participated and served some delicious chili to the attendees. This committed group worked for days to prepare and master their chili in hopes of winning top honors. Because our event is a Chili Cook-Off, we recognize and value the importance of their role. We congratulate everyone – here's a listing of those that won top honors – and special congrats to our first Tico Team to win (Costa Rica Chicas):

Judges first place - Costa Rica Chicas
Judges second place - Atenas Bridge Club
Judges third place - Carne Rico Chili
Judges fourth place - El Fuego Del Volcan
Judges fifth place - Texas Chili Fuego
Judges sixth place - Vamos Gourmet Catering and International Cuisine
Showmanship first place - Pirate Island Chili
Showmanship second place - Texas Chili Fuego
Showmanship third place - Dixie Chili
Peoples Choice - Dragonfly Thai Restaurant, Manuel Antonio
Vegetarian - Discovering Pura Vida



Top Honor Winners: Costa Rica Chicas (Katia & Mercedes) with Kay & Tom Costella

And to the 18 Judges that came from inside/outside Costa Rica to be a Judge at this year's competition. Thank you all!

A personal thank you to Kay & Tom Costello, owners of Kay's Gringos Postres who, just a short seven years ago organized a small gathering based on "who made the best chili in town". Kay decided to have it be a little fundraiser for Hogar de Vida. And that's when it all began! Kay and I sat for a few minutes after the event had closed on Sunday, and we both got teary-eyed thinking about the progress of this event in such a short period of time. Thank you Kay and Tom for your vision!

A special thanks to the dedicated 15 Committee members that have supported this event. We accomplished so much – we had a strong vision, set challenging but reachable goals, and stayed focused....for 6+ months! As Margaret Mead once quoted: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

We thank the following Committee members for their role in making a difference: Stef Bogatinoff (Chair), Bill Cook (Food & Beverage, Set-Up), Howard Patterson (Judges), Mary Cook (Chili Teams), Roxi Dixon (Finance), Larry Felder (Parking), Jeanmarie Estabrook (Printing), Howard Purdy (Communications), Rigo Alvarado (Advertising), Salo Ponchner (Member-at-large), Jack Crook (Entertainment), Sherri Brown (Raffle), Dina Duffy (Volunteers), Dian Duddear (Ticket Sales), and Judy Timson (PR).

In a future newsletter we'll post the check award presentation to Hogar de Vida and provide additional detail on how these funds are helping to make a difference for the 35 children living at Hogar de Vida.



Thank you community – Tico's and ex-pats – for supporting this great cause!



Sweet Charity

Paul Furlong

Alms for the poor come in many flavors. One of my teachers said the perfect form of giving was to do something for someone without them knowing. This way, he said, we add sparkle to our karma without confusing our motives.

Government pays its somber charities with *our* money, a karmic no-no that keeps on taking. In this cheerless vacuum, true private charities fail from lack of funds as they struggle for relevance amid vote-getting giveaways. Quasi-good charity still humps along on IRS breaks, corporate protection schemes and mad ministers gazing into their cups.

So it's hard to grasp the significance of a 100% volunteer effort that gets all the money to the beneficiaries. That's what the Atenas Chili Cook Off is; clean and pure, no one gets it but the kids at Hogar de Vida. Fancy a cool breezy day with lines of people, money in hand, waiting to get in. Beer tents, businesses showing their wares and the music, yeah the music, good and clean and all day long. People danced, drank, played 50-50 and tasted Chili till the price of natural gas took a nose dive in world trading.

Roma Vista was star-lit like a thin slice of Woodstock. There was passion in the air that you could see and feel; a great human outpouring of love and laughing for the pure joy of it; and yes, for the children and the people who run Hogar de Vida. Ticos and foreigners working together in the natural Spirit of a day like this, with each doing his or her part; suddenly it all comes together with a look, smell and taste for all the world; *just like the hand of God.*

Fuzzlong@gmail.com

7/15/2004

It's A Dogs Life...REALLY!!



Stories from Mr. BudBud, Primero Perro of Lighthouse Animal Rescue. They were written almost 10 years ago when he first came to Costa Rica for a house sitting job.

Hola!!!! Everyone!!

Hope all of you are doing great! We are still looking for a house and still meeting nice people.

Yesterday we went to Mary Ellen and Fernando's house in San Ramon!! They are just now moving in. They had the house built and it is REALLY pretty!!! They have a really nice view from three sides of the house!! There is plenty of room for their dogs to run and play!!

Then we went to look at cars!! That was fun too.

Of course, after we had lunch at the Oasis, Mom and Dad took me to the ice cream place to get our chocolate milk shakes. We were sitting there minding our own business when BOOM!!!!!!!!!!!! BOOM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! It sounded like two cannons going off!!!! I jumped out of my stroller straight into Mom's arms!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I HATE LOUD NOISES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Then the sirens started!!!! Fire trucks went by with flashing lights, blowing their horns!!! Police cars went by with flashing lights and sirens!!! People were SHOUTING!!!! Car horns were blowing!!!! Even the church bells, which is across the street, started ringing!!!! N-O-I-S-Y!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Mom and Dad were trying to figure out what all the commotion was about and at the same time trying to

comfort me!! I was NOT a happy perro!!!!!!

Well the cannons went off again....BOOM BOOM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!....and again....BOOM BOOM!!!!!! and again...BOOM BOOM!!!!!! All around the church square and park they went!!!!

I am SURE you folks probably heard it all the way over there!!!!!!

It just RUINED my whole "milk shake experience."

Come to find out....Costa Rica had won a soccer game against some other country and it put them in the championships!!!

**You want to see people CELEBRATE?????????????????
COME to Costa Rica!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Boy!!!! I want to be safe at home if they win the championships!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
UNDER THE BED!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! LOL!!!!!!**

Anyway....after I calmed down a little Mom and Dad took me strolling around and let people pet me. That always makes me feel good.

**OH!!!!!! I almost forgot!!!! Mom went to a doctor today!!! Mom says he is a dermatologist. (I don't know if I spelled that right)
She had a lot of what she calls "age moles" on her torso and she wanted to get them removed. She never could really afford to have it done in the US. Well she was only in the doctors office for about thirty minutes. When she came out she said he had frozen 30 to 40 of the mole thingy's and had lazered about 20 or 30 tiny "RED" spots that she says she has had for about twenty years. He also lazered a small mole that was on her eyelid.**

**Guess how much he charged.20,000 colones!!!!!!!!!!
In "American" money that comes to \$45.00.**

**Also, I don't remember if I told you about our friend here named Don. He fell out of bed and broke his hip. The doctor at the hospital did a hip replacement that night.
The total doctor bill was \$1,000.00.**

**Another friend had to have an emergency appendectomy.
The entire bill including doctor, hospital, etc. was \$3,800.00.**

**Tailwags!!!
BudBud the noise hating perro**



Sensoria thrills the senses at Rincon de la Vieja

By Shannon Farley

There is a place, north of the Rincon de la Vieja Volcano in Guanacaste, where the dry brown rolling plains give way to tall, lush, green forest. Suddenly you are in an enchanted paradise of gushing waterfalls, sky blue streams, warm thermal springs and bright orchids. This is a place where jaguars, pumas and tapirs roam free. Listen for the call of howler monkeys and the symphony of tropical birdsong with cicadas whirring in tempo. This is Sensoria, Land of Senses. (<http://www.sensoria.cr/en/>)



Sensoria is a private nature reserve that provides extraordinary hiking tours through untrammelled forest to hidden waterfalls and volcanic thermal springs on the northeast side of the Rincon de la Vieja National Park in Guanacaste. The goal of owners G2 Developments is to “preserve the untamed beauty of the rainforest, and provide its visitors with a striking, deep reconnection with the Costa Rican jungle, its lush vegetation and its wild, crystal-clear waterfalls.” Their

philosophy of reconnecting with nature is simple: be immersed in it.

The unique Guanacaste tour is located on the Atlantic slope of the north Pacific’s largest active volcano – Rincon de la Vieja – where frequent rains keep the jungle green and dense. Part of the Guanacaste Conservation Area, the region holds 2.6% of the world’s biodiversity and has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Wild animals like pacas, ocelots, pumas, tapirs and jaguars have been captured on film by Sensoria’s camera traps.



Sensoria is described as being a place that appeals to all of the senses. Their website reads like pure poetry: “Blue is Sensoria’s color. Our smell that of wild orchids and rain evaporating from rainforest soil. Our music is the drumming of many waterfalls, the roaring call of the howler monkeys and the everlasting song of the cicadas. Our touch is the smooth river stone and the warmth of volcanic spring water. Our taste is sweet reconnection with nature.”



The three- to four-hour Costa Rica eco-tour takes you hiking through the rainforest to waterfalls and pools where you can swim, like the electric blue Aguilar Waterfall and Pool, the 20-meter-high Buenos Aires Waterfall, La Jícara Waterfall, and the warm thermal spring Dantas Waterfall and Pool. At Pilón pool – a still, crystal-clear thermal pool in the middle of tall forest – you will want to soak forever. Enjoy a sense of adventure in the narrow, moss-covered stone walls of Madrigal Canyon that enclose a double waterfall. Along your journey, hopefully you will see some of Costa Rica’s famed wildlife. The guided tour includes lunch. (<http://www.sensoria.cr/en/the-tour.html>)

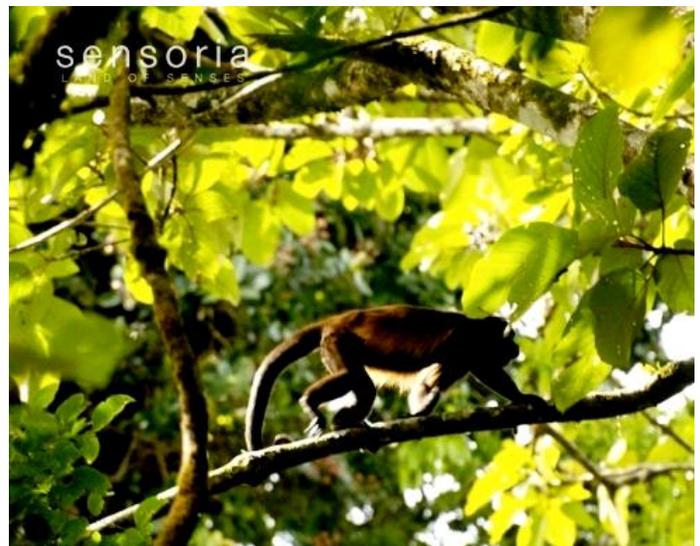
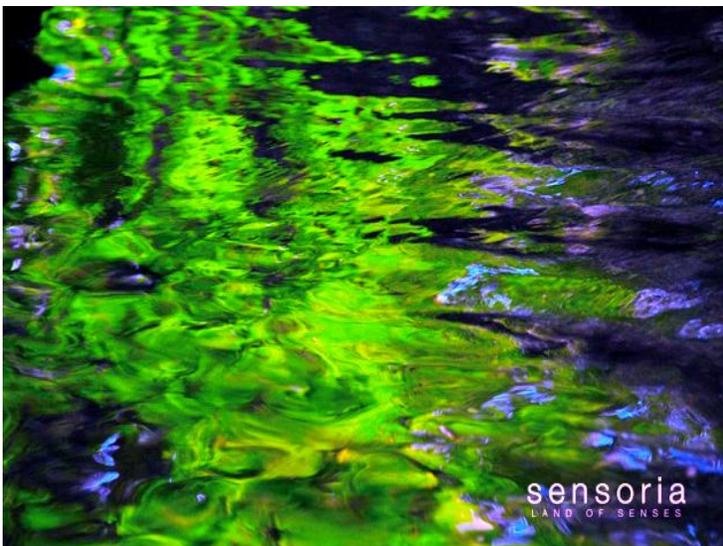
Sensoria’s tour is available by prior reservation only, to limit the number of visitors at one time on the reserve. You can stay at Sensoria overnight, renting out rustic accommodations at “La Casona” for private groups between six and 20 persons.

How to get there

Sensoria is located north of Liberia and Rincon de la Vieja Volcano in Guanacaste. You need a 4x4 vehicle to drive there. (<http://www.sensoria.cr/en/location.html>)

Where to stay near Sensoria

An excellent Rincon de la Vieja hotel is Hacienda Guachipelin. Day trips to Sensoria are easy from the hotel, which has 54 comfortable ranch-style rooms, a full restaurant, and an adventure park. (<http://www.guachipelin.com/>)



A FRENCH FAMILY LIVING IN PARADISE...



by **Dennis Easters** easters3@msn.com

Since an early age, I have been a self-proclaimed Francophile. I have always had an affinity to and love for everything French. In high school, when everyone was choosing Spanish as their second language, I chose French. As the years passed, my love of travel developed and by the time I was 18, I made my first pilgrimage to the mecca of everything French...Paris. Needless to say, it was everything I imagined it would be and more. Over the years, I have been to France many times and still have a true love for its beautiful language, rich culture, gastronomic delights, and diverse people. In all honesty, I thought one day I would find myself living in the South of France, but destiny brought me to my beautiful home in Costa Rica.

Over the past few years the world has changed and, in some cases, changed dramatically due to the economic shifts that many countries have experienced. This is especially true in many French speaking countries like France and Belgium. The governments in these countries, as well in others, have tightened their belts. Tax codes have changed, increasing taxes across the board which has not necessarily been to the benefit of the tax paying citizens. Several big name football (soccer) players

and celebrities have left France and become citizens of other countries to avoid the absurd tax reforms that have hit their country. Gerard Depardieu made headlines when he denounced his French citizenship and became a citizen of Russia. As of December 29, 2013, the French high court has approved a 75% tax on the highest earners in the country (1 million Euros and above) that will be levied for the 2013 and 2014 tax years.

Belgium also has steep income tax rates. Belgium has the highest income tax rates in Europe at 57.3% for a single earner (2013). Additionally, Belgians pay regional taxes that range from 0-8.5%. Given these staggering numbers, depressed economic climates and long, cold winters, is it any wonder that the citizens of these countries are fleeing to find a safe haven in paradise? It is easy to understand why our business has seen a dramatic increase in the number of French speaking clients that are making their way to our doors. We are currently working with clients from France, Corsica, Belgium, and Canada.

About two and a half years ago, Didier Vergez, his lovely wife Myriam, and their beautiful daughter Maëlys walked into our office confused and frustrated. After having looked at real estate with several Realtors in our area, Didier explained that it seemed no one had listened to what they were looking for and that they had not seen one single property that would meet their needs. After a few minutes conversation with Didier and Myriam, I felt that what they were looking for could not be found in their price range. Gerardo and I explained to them that if they could keep an open mind and would listen to our ideas and suggestions, we had a few properties that

we felt would be perfect for their project of creating a bed and breakfast.

After spending one morning looking at only four properties, the Vergez family found a property that would work perfectly for their family and business venture. Ironically, when they saw the property it was exactly what they were looking for, but it did not meet all the criteria that they had put on their checklist. However, with an open mind and a few simple modifications, it could become all they were looking for and more! Fast forward 2.5 years and Didier and Myriam have turned their little piece of paradise into Tiriguro Lodge, a thriving bed and breakfast that they have geared toward French speaking people from around the world (that said, of course EVERYONE is welcome!).



Didier, Myriam and Maëlys

Didier and Myriam were very happy with the service and assistance that we provided, helping them to realize their dream of moving to Costa Rica. Didier and Myriam have supported our business, telling everyone they come into contact with about us. They have also been a big source of where we get our French speaking clients. In addition, they are always on hand if we need anything translated or need assistance in communicating with our clients. My French is quite rusty now,

however slowly but surely it is coming back and soon I will be taking a refresher course to brush up on my speaking skills!

Due to the recent changes in our clientele, I was curious about the reasons behind Didier and Myriam moving their family to Costa Rica. I ask them to give me two or three factors in their decision to leave France and move to Costa Rica. Didier responded by saying, "The weather of course. You can live year around in a t-shirt and shorts. It's very nice not to have to deal with cold weather. Also, taxes. In Costa Rica it is possible to quickly and relatively easily create a business. You can work without being stifled by excessive charges and taxes. Freedom is another reason we came to Costa Rica. You can really choose what type of insurance you want or if you want to pay one. It's not mandatory."

DE: Why did you choose Costa Rica?

DV: Didier says, "Number one, security. Costa Rica is really safe and the people are non-aggressive unlike in France. Costa Rica is the oldest democratic country in Latin America. Secondly, nature. The incredible beauty and variety of nature and spectacular wildlife that exist are amazing. Third, green energy. No more nuclear power with its disastrous effects leaving big risks for the next generation. Fourth, no army. The state promotes education and health. It does not seek to conquer other countries, but rather it seeks to promote foreign trade. "

DE: Tell me about your project here in San Mateo.

DV: Didier continues, "We decided to create a little bed and breakfast in the

countryside of Costa Rica where you don't find mass tourism. People can appreciate real Costa Rican life, enjoy the surroundings and also enjoy having a lot of activities nearby (paragliding, horseback riding, beaches, coffee plantation, parks, etc...). The climate here is also really great and appreciated by our guests; not too cold like in the mountains, not too hot like at the coast."



Tiriguro Lodge

DE: Has living in Costa Rica been a big adjustment for you and your family?

DV: "It was quite easy for us to get used to our new life, even for our daughter who was five when we arrived. The experience is very rich on a human level. You must learn to live as an immigrant, to respect your host country. You discover another culture, where people are much more open than we are used to in France. You learn to change some habits in your everyday life."

DE: Why do you think so many French people are moving to Costa Rica?

DV: "I think the situation in France today is really difficult. A lot of people are out of work, and the people who have the chance to have a job are paying too

much in taxes. Also there's a real feeling of insecurity. I think that French people are choosing Costa Rica because of its climate, nature, and political stability."

DE: What would you say to anyone who is thinking about moving from Europe to Costa Rica?

DV: "You must take time to analyze if you're able to change your life. You have to come and visit the country several times before you decide to move. You have to prepare your project. What are you going to do? What kind of status (immigration) can you obtain regarding to your particular situation? Then, it's important to find an honest real estate agent and a good lawyer."



A welcoming respite at Tiriguro Lodge

So, whether you are coming from France, Belgium, or any other country of the world, Costa Rica could be the paradise you are looking for. Without question, Costa Rica is a dynamic country with friendly locals and beautiful surroundings. No matter where you are from, Costa Rica will welcome you with open arms. Pura Vida!

Atenas Today Interviews
 Mario Villatoro, Owner &
 Esteban Vega, General Manager
 of



AT: We were recently invited to visit Aero Caribe at Hangar #82 in the Tobias Bolaños International Airport in Pavas. We were welcomed warmly and treated to a tour of the offices, which included a hot cup of recently brewed coffee! Our interview follows.

AT: **Good morning, thank you very much for welcoming us to your offices.**

AC: On the contrary, thank you for taking the time to come here from Atenas. We thought it would be best that you saw our operation in person because talking about it isn't quite the same. As we mentioned when we met at the Chili Cook-Off last week, we are very eager to introduce ourselves to your readers and thank you for the opportunity to have a presence in this issue of *Atenas Today*.



Reception Area/Lobby Aero Caribe

AT: **It was very nice to see you at the Chili Cook-Off and on behalf of everyone involved with the event, thank you for being a part of the event with your gift of the surprise basket.**

AC: We were very impressed with everything and we were happy to be included in an

event that is raising money for a worthwhile cause.

AT: **Your business cards have the phrase “Somos diferentes” (We are different), and you also mention that often. Tell us a little more about this “motto”.**

AC: Aero Caribe is different most importantly because our goal is to exceed all expectations with regards to the customer service we provide. We are a charter service (air taxi) rather than one that is restricted to particular destinations and timetables. When a customer ‘rents’ our planes, we are committed to providing them with an unforgettable experience that they will want to share with their friends. Our pampering begins the minute our customers arrive at the reception area where we offer refreshments and a chance to just relax in the eager anticipation of the wonderful event that awaits them. We have set aside a small area that we are going to transform into a shop that will stock items like sunblock, batteries, snacks and souvenirs.



Mario and Esteban at Chili Cook Off

AT: **That’s commendable. A lot of people are hesitant about flying in small planes. Can you tell us a bit about your fleet, your pilots, etc.?**

AC: Apart from customer service, we also devote a great deal of energy and time making sure that our fleet is properly maintained, after all our customers’ safety (and our own) is a priority. We have selected personnel who understand and uphold the philosophy of our

company. We are relatively new and young, but we have the combined experience of many years and we are confident that we are providing the service we advertise.

We currently have four captains. Our fleet has been updated for comfort and safety. Our crew has received First Aid training; constantly attend refresher courses on dealing with emergency situations, stress, etc. In addition, we feel that we are not just a mode of transportation from one destination to another but rather a full-service company that handles all aspects of a trip so that our clients can relax and enjoy themselves.



Comfort , Safety and Style

In addition to making our customers feel comfortable, we also want their flight to be interesting, informative and entertaining. We have become aware that a lot of people fly over our country but have no idea what they are observing. We make an effort to provide a kind of 'air tour' by pointing out interesting landmarks and giving a little bit of history. We think this adds value to our offer and it is another way in which we distinguish ourselves from others in the field.



C206 in Flight

AT: You have a very extensive destination list (both national and international) and options about the types of 'events' that can be planned. Can you expand a little bit on that?

AC: Our philosophy of providing optimum customer satisfaction means we are willing and able to work with our client and really pay attention to the exact requirements and wishes. We can handle anything from a recreational, photography flight to a serious medical emergency to an exhilarating skydiving adventure! We handle all the details are confident that our alliances with other reputable companies allows us to offer this personalized service. We are very optimistic we will be able to work with your many readers and provide them with a customized experience.

AT: Your enthusiasm is refreshing! This was a wonderful opportunity to see your operation in person and we wish you every success in this venture. We are sure that our readers will be contacting you to arrange the first of their many air adventures!

AC: Thank you again for your time and space in the magazine. We look forward to hearing from your readers and helping them plan that adventure!



Hangar #82 Tobias Bolaños International Air port

CONTACT US AT:

TEL: 2231-1994

EMAIL: info@aero-caribe.com

WEBSITE: www.aero-caribe.com

"The Craftswoman"



*by Marietta Arce
marietta.arce@gmail.com*

Her posture is erect and her face solemn as she arranges the products on her small table. Every beautiful article has been the focus of her attention when it was being crafted. The vibrant colors of the embroidered flowers were chosen carefully to reproduce as closely as possible the colors of nature.

Hours pass by but it is the slow season, no tourists are in town, and the empty restaurant tables are a testament to this fact. It doesn't matter to her: low season and high season find her at work on another gem and in the end everything will work out as it is supposed to.

Evening comes and the sun in the sky begins to set, an indication that the lovingly crafted articles must be carefully stored to protect them from the elements until the next opportunity to display them comes.

She rubs her neck absently, noticing for the first time that she is tired and that her fingers are stiff. She looks around to make sure nothing is forgotten.

As I watch her fade away in the distance, I hope that someone somewhere awaits her with a welcoming smile and a nice, warm meal.



Handmade products crafted with pride

The Atenas Today Art Gallery

The Art Gallery is a regular feature of Atenas Today. Local artists are encouraged to submit photographs of their works to be included in the gallery, and to send a new picture each month. The artists may be contacted via the email addresses shown.



"A Paris Fruit Stand"

15" x 22"

Oil on Canvas

Al Alexander

jeanandal@gmail.com

Artist's Statement: When I saw this fruit stand in a busy Paris neighborhood I was immediately taken with rich variety of textures. The color varied from the bright warm red orange range to the subtle tones of blue green hues. I tried to make a still life that was visually alive.



"Cowifornia Dreamin'"
Pen and Ink

Diana F. Miskell
Horse and Cattle Art: www.dianamiskell.com
Costa Rica Blog: <http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com>

Artist's Statement: "Cowifornia Dreamin'" was done on a small watercolor card. It was one of my contributions to a silent auction for cancer research in Surrey, British Columbia. It was a popular item and helped raised some money for an important cause.

For the bloggers...



We are providing a list of *blogs* that might be of interest to our to our readers. By providing this information, we are not endorsing or accepting responsibility for any content found therein. Please contact us if you have any other blogs of interest that you would like to share. These are alphabetized for your easy reference. **Please advise if you find that some blogs no longer exist.**

Biolley Buzz	bcrcoffee.com
Carole Connolly	http://carolejeanscostaricacapers.com
Claudia Leon	http://photoleraclaudinha.smugmug.com/ http://straightline-cmkl.blogspot.com/
Costa Rica: Sisters in Transition (Judy & Roxi)	http://costaricasistersintransition.blogspot.com
De La Pura Vida Costa Rica	delapuravida.com
Dennis Easters/Pure Life Development	http://www.atenasrealestate.cr/index.php/blog
Diane Miskell	http://dianascostaricablog.blogspot.com
Fabulista De Costa Rica	fabulistadecr.blogspot.com (leaving Costa Rica soon)
Fred Ball	http://natureboy70.blogspot.com/
G. Martin Lively	fishinginandaroundcostarica.blogspot.com
Going Like Sixty	goinglikesixty.com
Julie and Rick in Costa Rica	http://julieandrickincostarica.blogspot.com/
Lois and Jim Craft	adventurecraft.blogspot.com (seems to be inactive)
Marietta Arce	http://marisundays.wordpress.com
Mi Chunche	michunche.com
Nadine Hays Pisani	happierthanabillionaire.com
New Life in Costa Rica	http://www.anewlifeincostarica.com/nuevo_vida/
Paul Furlong	http://shootingcr.wordpress.com/
Paul Furlong motorcycle blog	http://eyeneo.com/
Pura Vida Mommy	puravidamommy.blogspot.com
Rubiatica	rubiatica.blogspot.com
Shannon Farley	http://enchanted-costarica.com/
Somewhere In Costa Rica	http://somerwhereincostarica.com
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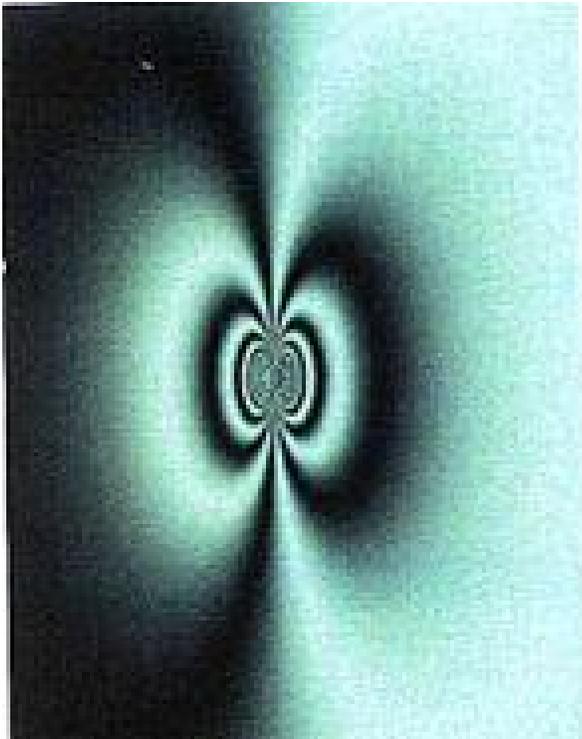
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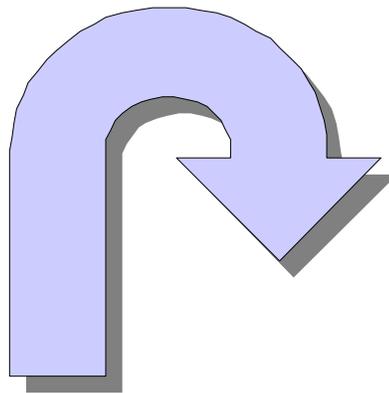
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