

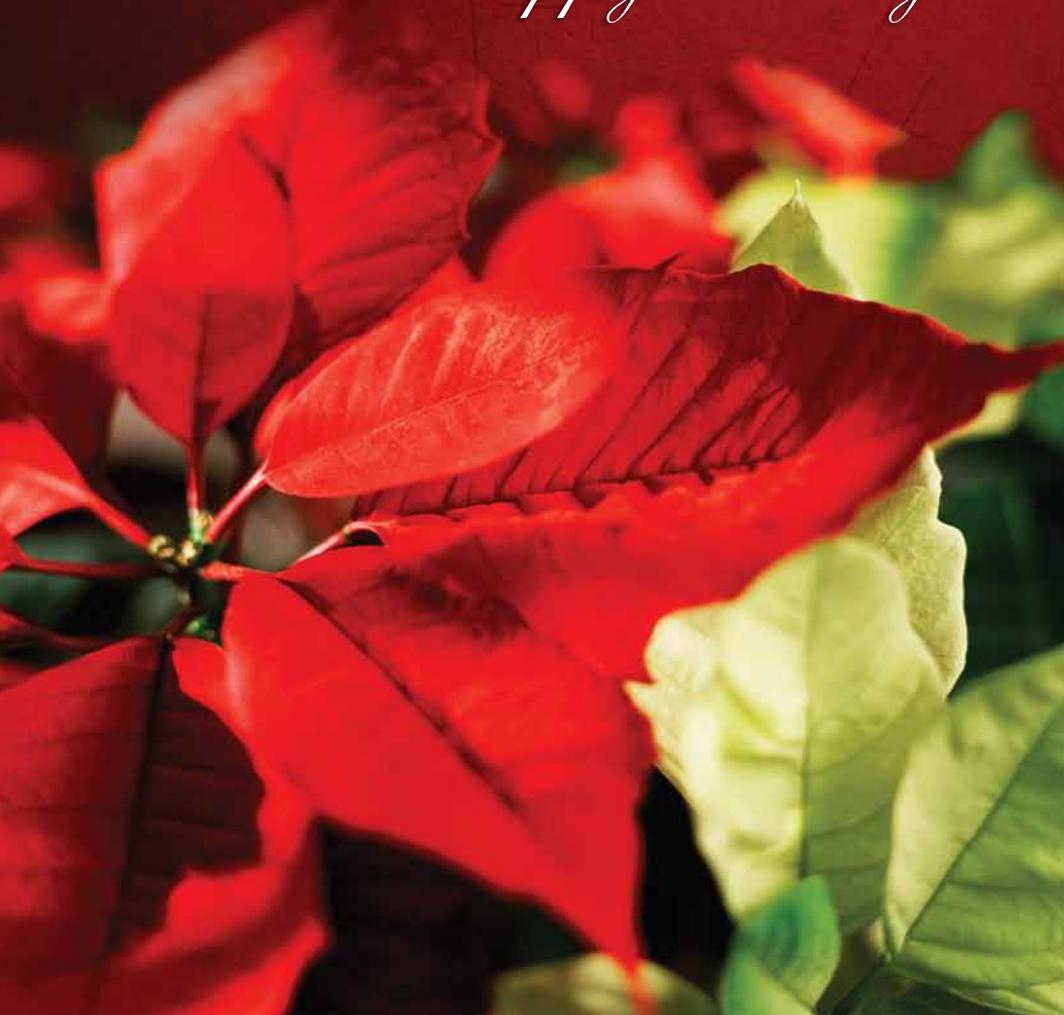
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Year 20, No. 10

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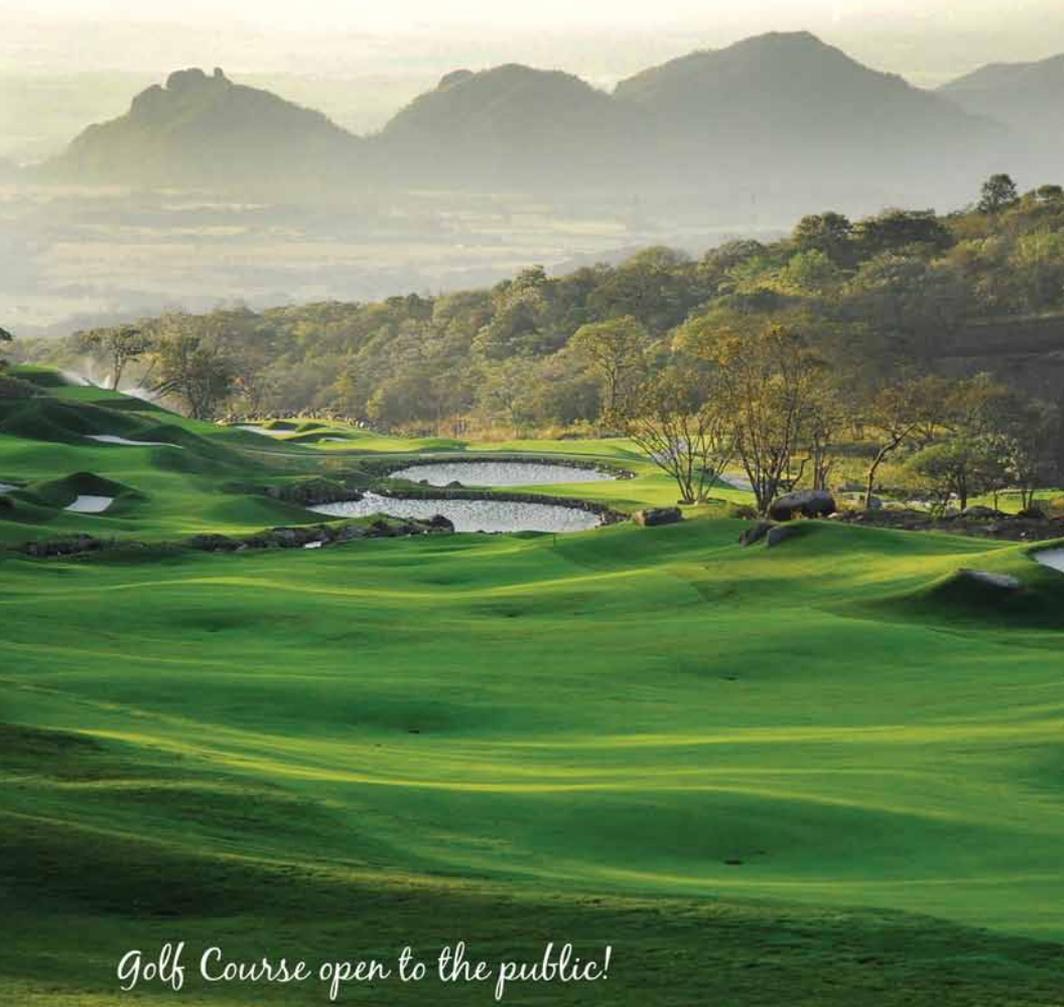
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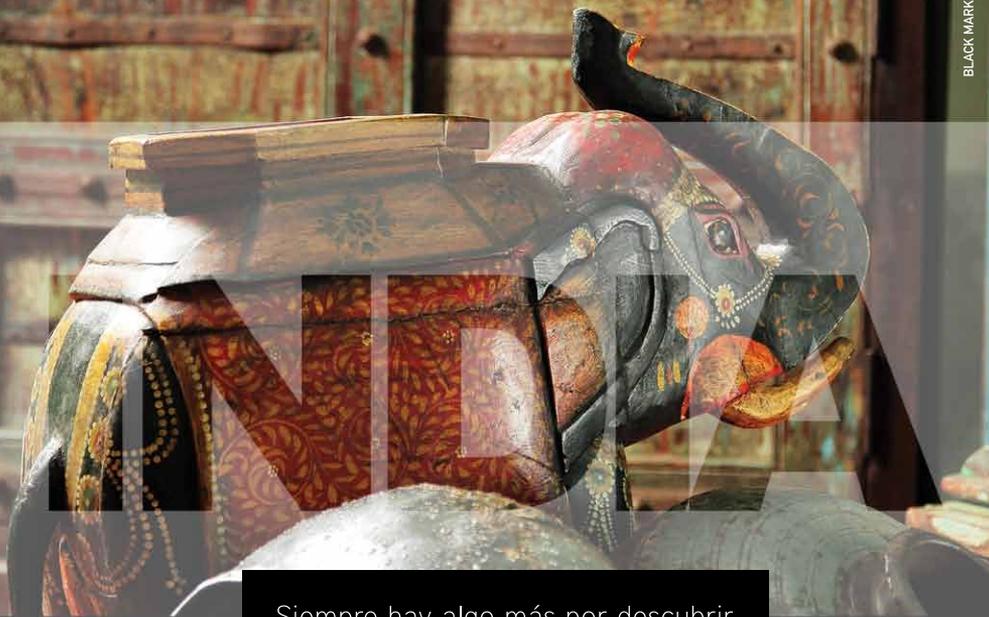
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From the Publishers

If you are not sure what to buy a loved one for Christmas, or any occasion for that matter, we have some suggestions. In the book category, turn to page 17 for Dianne Carofino's preview of *Guatemala: People and Tradition*. Photographer Santiago Albert's black and white work evokes the splendor of the human experience in a unique style that speaks as much about himself as it does of his subjects. For a fanciful gift, Anna-Claire Bevan covers the innovative work done by members of *Creamos*, a group of women whose lives have been transformed—from scavenging trash to creating one-of-a-kind jewelry. In the world of art, Jack and Joy Houston feature *What Will I Do With the Gold?* El Attico is the venue for an exhibition of Al Thompson's unique gilded, sculptured prints, any of which might be the perfect gift for someone you love.

For travel inspiration, Anna-Claire Bevan reports on swinging from the trees in *Jalapa*, writer Carla Berryhill warns that *Santa Cruz La Laguna* may be habit forming; and Blake Nelson takes us *Volcano Climbing*.

On the education front, read all about *IGA's Commitment to Culture*; Elizabeth Bell explains *What is Happening with the Palace of the Captains General*; Linda Green covers where *Sleeping Dogs* should lie, and Ken Veronda paints a picture in words about the splendor of *Spices in Sensuous Guatemala*.

Congratulations to many businesses celebrating anniversaries this month, including La Antigua Galería de Arte, La Casbah and the Centro de Formación de La Cooperación Española.

REVUE ONLINE debuts DateBook postings, page by page magazine reading, back issues and of course updates as they happen. It's a big wide world, and we're so glad that we can stay in touch, be it in print, in RevueOnline, and on Facebook, and Twitter. From all of us to all of you, we wish you a wonderful holiday season!

—John & Terry Kovick Biskovich

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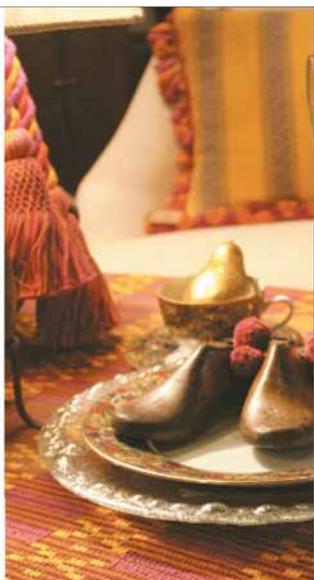
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Off the Beaten Track: Jalapa

Private Nature Preserve
Cascadas de Tatasirire

If Sacatepéquez boasts La Antigua Guatemala, Alta Verapaz offers Semuc Champey and within Petén's jungles lie the impressive ruins of Tikal, El Mirador and other ancient cities, what exactly is there to see and do in the department of Jalapa?

Answer: extreme adventure combined with biodiversity!

Just over two hours outside of Guatemala City, hidden in the subtropical mountains of Jalapa, sits Cascadas de Tatasirire, a solar-fuelled retreat in an ecological park bursting with activity. Seemingly in the middle of nowhere, the acres of beautifully preserved forest are filled with outdoor entertainment for all ages: swings, canopies, waterfalls and rappelling.

Declared a "protected area" in 2003 by

Guatemala's environmental body CONAP (Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas), the eco-park is a sanctuary of flora and fauna which uses its natural environment to fuse recreation with low-impact tourism. The innovative project champions rural development and gives a unique insight into the surrounding indigenous cultures of the Xinka people who co-exist alongside the Po-coman and Ladino communities.

The main attraction is the course of 12 swings spread throughout the forest, offering various levels of aerial exhilaration. Threading yourself through ropes and launching off each of the platforms, you feel like Tarzan swinging through the forest—just remember to hold on with both hands as some swings are 6-12 meters above the ground!

Next step is to brave the ...cont. page 84

No es solo un destino en Guatemala
es la oportunidad de viajar en el tiempo

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Origen/ Destino	Salida	Llegada	Frecuencia
Guatemala - Flores	6:30	7:40	Diario
Flores - Guatemala	8:05	9:10	Diario
Guatemala - Flores	18:20	19:30	Diario
Flores - Guatemala	19:55	21:00	Diario



Creamos

What started out as a fun crafts workshop has become a resource for entrepreneurship, enabling many of its members to escape the dangers of working in one of Central America's largest garbage dumps.

Soda cans, milk cartons and newspapers aren't at the top of most people's Christmas lists, but this year the impressive creations of Creamos should be. Using old magazines and cardboard boxes, 25 women, who used to make a living scavenging in the municipal garbage dump, have been able to start their lives over again and escape the poverty of their past.

Three years ago a group of women from an adult literacy program in Guatemala City learned how to make jewelry out of recycled materials, and since then they haven't stopped. The small crafts workshop has quickly become an independent business, which recently started exporting goods to the U.S.

Creamos, which means "let's believe" and "let's create" in Spanish, is focused on sustainable entrepreneurship and consists of a group of mothers who are all learning to read and write at Camino Seguro (Safe Passage), an NGO that works with Guatemala City's garbage-dump community.

The mothers, who all live close to the project, study for two hours a day and then create their jewelry at home—this schedule provides flexibility in caring for their children. Once a week the women come to the project for a group meeting where they turn in their work, conduct peer reviews and receive a payout from the previous week's sales.

"I worked in the garbage dump for 12 years but I much prefer ...continued page 38



People of Tradition

In *Guatemala: People of Tradition*, photographer Santiago Albert and editor Christine Wilson give us the gift of a Guatemala that reflects the contemplative aspect of this holiday season. Without the noise of vibrant color, the focus turns from the pageantry of feasts and fiestas to the quiet of inward reflection, perfectly demonstrated by black and white photographs. We see the young boy carrying the man-sized *anda* in a La Antigua Guatemala Lenten procession, and his need

to reach for inner strength. We see candlelight reflect peace in an Esquipulas cave dedicated to the Black Christ. We feel the seriousness of an Olinztepeque offering to king San Pascual, venerated by the K'iche' as holy death.

In *Guatemala: People of Tradition*, we see the depth of feeling, reverence and respect that has created the colorful outward pageantry that identifies Guatemala to the rest of the world. ...continued page 74

Historic sites in Guatemala, Belize on global watch list

Archaeological site of Quiriguá

The Mayan ruins of Quiriguá in Izabal and El Zotz in Petén, as well as the historic architecture of Belize City, have been included on the World Monuments Fund (WMF) 2012 Watch, a list of cultural heritage sites around the world at risk of damage or destruction from a variety of threats.

With a mission of preserving the world's architectural heritage of significant monuments, buildings and sites, the WMF listed 67 locations in 41 countries in its 2012 Watch. Three Central American locations were included:

Quiriguá

An archaeological site dating to the Mayan Classic period, Quiriguá is a complex of pyramids, terraces and

stairways. The site is best known for its superb sculptures, including outstanding stelae. Quiriguá was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1981.

Quiriguá's long-term

preservation is challenged by a number of factors, according to the WMF. Illegal timber extraction and deforestation from farming have greatly increased the risk of flooding, as more than 70% of the forest cover in the surrounding valley has been lost. While a man-





Archaeological site of El Zotz



agement plan has been developed to help, implementation is constrained by limited resources and encroachment of surrounding private industry.

El Zotz

Nestled in the dense forest of the Biotopo San Miguel la Palotada, the Mayan archaeological site of El Zotz features pyramids, palaces, plazas, and a ball court.

Deforestation and looting pose constant challenges, according to WMF. A pyramid is in danger of collapse from unstable trees, and the progressive erosion in a looter's trench is damaging the stucco façades of structures. Many

tourists visit El Zotz as part of tours to nearby Tikal.

Belize City

Established in the mid-17th century as a trading post for precious woods, Belize City has many colonial buildings that are quickly deteriorating, according to WMF. An inventory and protection strategies are greatly needed to ensure the preservation of these historically significant houses, the group said. 📌

For more information visit www.wmf.org

Photos courtesy of Arturo Godoy (www.arturogodoy.com) & Dirección General de Patrimonio Cultural y Natural del Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes of Guatemala.

What Will I Do with the Gold?

“My name is Thompson because da Vinci was already taken,” Al quips in his typical, quick humor. In fact, there are similarities between the 15th century artist and Al Thompson, born in 1928. Both justly claim a diversity of talents: painting, sculpting, inventing, writing, to name a few. An exhibition of Al’s most recent creations opens **December 3** at el attico, 4a. Av. 15-45, zona 14, Guatemala City. He calls his art form ‘sculpting the print’.

It all began about 20 years ago when archaeologist and La Antigua Guatemala resident Ed Shook recognized the artist in teacher/educator Al Thompson and offered to sell him six ‘books’ of 24Kt gold leaf on tissue paper pages. That sounded interesting,

so “Sure, why not?” thought Al. He bought the little books, about five inches square, stamped Made in Germany, then forgot about them for years while he painted with oils, cultivated coffee, devised equipment with which to process it and wrote books. Eventually, there they were again.

“What will I do with the gold?” he asked Antigua friend Barbara Leaver. Barbara remembered seeing the work of Gustav Klimt in Austria and brought Al a book of prints. Early in the 20th century Klimt, recognized as Vienna’s greatest painter, used gold to bring life and energy into his Byzantine-inspired mosaic style paintings. “The problem with prints is that they’re inert compared to originals,” Al and his friends agreed. He played with ideas of how



to re-energize the prints with gold. “Living in Guatemala is marvelous. If I get a yen to do something, there’s not a pile of peers to question it. No one said, ‘Don’t do that! Why are you wasting that gold?’ ”

The first challenge was how to lift the fragile gold leaf from the tissue page without disintegrating or destroying it. “Gold leaf is 3/100,000 of an inch thick!” He figured out that he could slide the gold leaf onto waxed paper, then ve-e-e-r-y carefully, but also very quickly, pat onto it a layer of tissue paper brushed with white glue. To his delight he discovered that this not only stabilized the gold leaf, but it shriveled and shrunk into attractive texture. A second layer of tissue glued to the first secured the sheet.

Next, how to use the sheets of gold leaf. Paint with enamel? Use as background or mats? Enhance prints? Yes, yes and yes. He experimented with these and “all by accident” came up with the idea of “sculpting the print. Then I fiddled with the gold idea

to float the print over gold background.”

In addition to Klimt works, “I googled icon,” he states proudly, and searched the web for non-copyrighted masterpieces and manuscripts from all over the world—Italy, Greece, Turkey—to print out and make copies. Then, with a razor knife, sensitive to the line and form intrinsic to the subject, he meticulously cut out the details to gild. “I laid the print on the glass first, because my wife doesn’t like me to cut through the table.”

Carolyn, Al’s wife and clearly valuable consultant, comments that Al is engrossed in his work before dawn. “He spends a lot of time just staring at the print, coming to the right interface between gold and picture.” Al agrees. “About three in the morning I see these pictures in my head and get ideas about how to make them come out, to actualize them.” Added adornments of flamboyant swirls and zigzag loops achieve just the right balance to enhance the subject.

...continued page 48



FAR LEFT: The artist reviews the gilded, sculpted prints. LEFT: The finished collection hangs on a wall of the Thompson home. ABOVE LEFT: Madonna and Son, Italy, 15th century. ABOVE RIGHT: Ancient Greek goddess Pallas Athena—print of Gustav Klimt original, gold-enhanced by Thompson.



DATEBOOK

DECEMBER GUIDE TO CULTURE AND UPCOMING EVENTS COMPILED BY MERCEDES MEJICANOS

1 Thurs., 7pm — ART: Inauguration of *24 manzanas* (24 apples), 24 artificial apples beautifully painted by 24 different artists including Dulce María, Ingrid Klussmann, Héctor Sitán, Doniel Espinoza, Manuel Barrientos, Pascual Monroy, and emerging artists Jhony Cruz, Jimmy Yess, Sabas Espinoza, among others. Exposition and sale. Cocktail. Andante Galería de Arte (tel: 4360-7840) 8a av. 12-19, z. 1, Centro Histórico, **Guatemala City**. ▼



1 Thurs., 7-9pm, through Fri., 23 — ART: *Objetos Intervenidos*, by Sergio Valenzuela. El Attico (tel: 2368-0853), 4a av. 15-45, z. 14, **Guatemala City**.

2-3 & 4 Dec., 11am-10pm — FESTIVAL: Celebrating the renovation at the Museo Lacustre. The museum features pottery and stone works brought up from a sunken Mayan ceremonial center that existed on a now-submerged island in Lake Atitlán. The festival will include daily activities, conferences on underwater archaeology, also multi-media presentations, and more. Info: www.eventosantiguaguatemala.com. Calle Santander (Posada de Don Rodrigo), **Panajachel, Lake Atitlán**.

3 Sat., 10am-12pm, through Fri., 23 — ART: *Íconos Religiosos* by Al Thompson. El Attico (tel: 2368-0853), 4a av. 15-45, z. 14, **Guatemala City**. See related article on page 20. ▼



REVUE is not responsible for event cancellations or date/time changes.



From the exhibit "24 manzanas" starting Dec. 1

2 Fri., 7pm — MUSIC: *Gran Concierto de Los Altos* by Orquesta Sinfónica de Los Altos and Luca Fanfoni (violin). Municipal theater, **Huehuetenango**.

2 Fri., 8pm — MUSIC: *Christmas recital*, violin and piano, presented by Mónica Sarmientos and Deline Menes. Q60/Q40 children.

El Sitio, 5a calle poniente #15, **La Antigua**.



3 Sat., 10am-5pm — ART: *Festival de las Artes Casasito*, paintings, music, dance and theater by more than 100 children and teenagers. Free. Cooperación Española (tel: 7932-3838), 6a av. norte between 3a & 4a calle poniente, **La Antigua**. See related article on page 64. ▼



3 Sat., 4pm — (Spanish/English) CONFERENCE: *¿El Fin del Mundo o El Quinto Sol en la Cultura Maya?* (The End of the World or the Fifth Sun in the Mayan Culture?) by Lic. Eduardo Mendoza. Simultaneous translation to English. Q100, includes dinner. Limited seating. La Peña de Sol Latino (tel: 7882-4468), 5a calle poniente #15-C, **La Antigua**.

3 Sat., 7pm — MUSIC: *Oh Holy Night... Night Divine When Christ was Born*, three opera and operetta acts by Academia de Canto & Centro Cultural del Mónaco. \$20, includes a glass of wine. El Sitio, 5a calle poniente #15, **La Antigua**.

4 Sun., 5pm — MUSIC: *Gran Concierto de Los Altos* by Orquesta Sinfónica de Los Altos and Luca Fanfoni (violin). Municipal theater, **Quetzaltenango**.

5 Mon., 7pm — MUSIC: XI Concierto de la IV Temporada de Música de Cámara de la Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Guatemala, presents Christmas music. Free. Cooperación Española (tel: 7932-3838), 6a av. norte between 3a & 4a calle poniente, **La Antigua**.

6 Tues., 5:30pm — TALK: Niños de Guatemala works toward a better future for Guatemala through education. In 2009 NDG opened a school in Ciudad Vieja; some of its students are the first in their families to achieve literacy. Q25. Rainbow Café (tel: 7832-1919), 7a av. sur #8, **La Antigua**.

7 Wed., 2pm — CULTURAL EVENT: A celebration honoring the Virgen de Concepción with a parade of floats (convite) leaves the cathedral and travels through **Ciudad Vieja**.



Datebook online at www.revuemag.com



(RUDY GIRON)

7 Wed., 6pm — CULTURAL EVENT: *Quema del Diablo* (Burn the Devil), a ceremony that eliminates evil spirits and clears the way for Christmas celebrations. Live music. Barrio de la Concepción, 4a calle oriente, **La Antigua & countrywide.**

8 Thurs. — FERIA: Cultural and religious events to honor the Virgen de Concepción, Génova and San Carlos Sija, **Quetzaltenango.**

8 Thurs., 1pm — CULTURAL EVENT: *Rezado*, a procession of the Virgen de Concepción with fireworks and folkloric dances and dramas performed along the route, **Ciudad Vieja.**

8 Thurs., 7:30pm — MUSIC: Christmas concert by Orquesta Sinfónica Municipal and Luca Fonfoni (violin). Auditorium Juan Bautista Gutiérrez, Universidad Francisco Marroquín, 6a calle final z. 10, **Guatemala City.**

9 Fri., 8pm — MUSIC: *Grooving Night* by Cuarteto Imox Jazz. Q60. El Sitio, 5a calle poniente #15, **La Antigua.**

10 Sat., 10am-10pm — CELEBRATION: *XV Anniversary of Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española.* Activities include workshops, shows for kids, live music and the theater presentation *Mi Pueblo y Yo.* Free. Cooperación Española (tel: 7932-3838), 6a av. norte between 3a & 4a calle poniente, **La Antigua.**

10 Sat., 1pm — BENEFIT DANCE: The *Niños de San Antonio Aguas Calientes* dance and play the marimba, flutes and bombas. Donations benefit educational pursuits. Free. La Peña de Sol Latino (tel: 7882-4468), **La Antigua.**

10 Sat., 6:30pm — MUSIC: Baroque music concert, presented by Fundación G&T and Arte Antiqua. Ensemble Antiqua and guest musicians Israel Castillo (viola de gamba) and Marduk Serrano (baritone), both are members



of the renowned European groups Les Arts Florissants and Concert d'Astree. Hot chocolate after the concert. Donation Q100 benefits the restoration of the church of San Juan el Obispo. Pre-sale tickets: Guatemala City, tiendas de Museo - in Antigua: Cargo Room, corner of 6a calle and 7a av., & Apasionarte, 7a av. norte #2. Additional info: arteantiqua@yahoo.com San Juan del Obispo Church. **San Juan del Obispo, La Antigua.**

11 Sun., 11:30am — MUSIC: *Serenísima Una Noche*, cultural Christmas music from colonial Guatemala performed by the Early music ensemble Capilla del Valle de la Asunción, organized by Mosaico Cultural and Arte Antiqua Project. Hotel Casa Santo Domingo, Teatro Guillermo Monsanto. Donation Q75. Advance tickets: Apasionarte (tel: 5297-5481), 7a av. norte #2, **La Antigua.** ▼





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Fridays — Latin Trio, featuring Denis Medina on Cubano Tres and Coloso Gudierre on congas

Saturdays — Classical Piano, featuring Seth Montfort or guest artist.

La Peña de Sol Latino

tel: 7882-4468 5a calle poniente #15-C, La Antigua

Mondays — 7-10pm: The magic guitar of Carlos Trujillo, Latin Jazz/Salsa, with Bill on congas. Free.

Tuesdays — 7-10pm: Ramiro plays Trova Cubana, with Bill on congas. Free.

Wednesdays thru Sundays — 7-10pm: Sol Latino plays Andean music (pan flutes). Free. ▼



Sundays — 12:30-3pm: Ramiro plays Trova Cubana, with Bill on congas. Free.

Gaia Restaurante

tel: 7832-3670 Calle del Arco #35-A, La Antigua

Thursdays — 7pm: Live music.

Fridays and Saturdays — Belly dancing.

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tel: 7832-0478 6 calle poniente #6, La Antigua

Wednesdays — 8pm: Accordion music by Jorge Herrera.

Rainbow Café

tel: 7832-1919 7a av. sur #8, La Antigua

Mondays — 7:30pm: Don Ramiro will serenade you with some beautiful Latin folk music. Free.

Tuesdays — 7:30pm: Gustavo plays Latino classics, western tunes with some harmonica.

Wednesdays — 7:30pm: *Open Mike Night*: come along and show your skills. Free drink for anyone who performs!

Thursdays — 7:30pm: Kenny and Friends, some of Antigua's best loved local musicians will amaze you with some great music.

Fridays — 7:30pm: Segio, this talented local plays a mix of music including lots of reggae!

Saturdays — 7:30pm: A variety of bands!

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Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays — 8pm: Live music, featuring a variety of artists.

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Wednesdays — 8pm: Bossa, soft rock and blues.

Saturdays — 8pm: American folk music.



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Music



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tel: 5658-9028 4a avenida norte #3, La Antigua

Thursdays — 7-9pm: Mike MCarthy plays some mean blues.

9pm: Mike & Moriah, piano & vocals.

Fridays — 7-9pm: Ron Fortin saxophone; 9:30-11:30pm: Nelson Lunding New Orleans piano.

Saturdays — 7-9pm: Malcolm Oakley sings and plays guitar.

9:30pm: Mercedes, guitar blues/rock/folk.



Pub Quiz hosted by Brendan Byrne; **Sundays** at 6:30pm

Fridas

tel: 7832-1296 Calle del Arco #29, La Antigua

Wednesdays — 7:30pm: Latin music.

Thursdays — Ishto Juevez, swing & Mexican.

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Mondays — 7pm: Chris Jarnach, classic music, jazz and rock.

8pm: Marco Solo and friends, Pana's Carlos Santana. Rock, blues and jazz.

9pm: Norte, contemporary trova.

Tuesdays — 7pm: Chris Jarnach, classic music, jazz and rock.

8pm: Rockiris, alternative rock.

9pm: Latin ensemble.

Wednesdays — 7pm: Chris Jarnach, classic music, jazz and rock.

8pm: Latin ensemble.

9pm: Carlos Rangel and son, swing, Cuban and rock.

Thursdays — 7pm: Chris Jarnach, classic music, jazz and rock.

8pm: Latin ensemble.

9pm: Norte, contemporary trova.

Fridays — 7pm: Flamenco by Marco El Messina.

8pm: Latin ensemble.

9pm: Trova del Lago.

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Sundays — Latin ensemble.

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Wednesdays — 8:30pm: Victor Arriaza on piano, Alejandro Alvarez, bass and Julio García on drums.



12 Mon. — **DÍA DE LA VIRGEN DE GUADALUPE:** Throughout the country children dress in typical clothing paying homage to the Virgen de Guadalupe. One such procession begins at La Merced Church at 3pm. Typical food for sale outside the church, *La Antigua*.

13 Tues., 5:30pm — **TALK:** The Riecken Foundation establishes and supports community libraries in Guatemala and Honduras with dynamic programming for all ages and free access to information resources, including internet. Q25. Rainbow Café (tel: 7832-1919), 7a av. sur #8, *La Antigua*.

14 Wed., 5pm — **ART:** Inauguration of *Gota a Gota*, by Lucía Morán Giracca. Acrylics and watercolors in which water is the protagonist. Mesón Panza Verde (tel: 7832-2925), 5a av. sur #19, *La Antigua*. ▼



15 Thurs., 4pm — **CHRISTMAS POSADA:** Enjoy an authentic posada with Christmas music; typical food for sale. Q35/Q15 children. Museo Ixchel (tel: 2361-8081), 6a calle final, z. 10, *Guatemala City*.

15 Thurs., 8-10pm — **PARTY:** XVII Anniversary Party. Invitation required. After 10pm cover Q30. La Casbah (tel: 7832-2640), Calle del Arco #30, *La Antigua*.

16 Fri., 7pm — **PHOTOGRAPHY:** *Miradas*, presented by Art Corps. Cocktail. Free. El Sitio, *La Antigua*.



17 Sat., 5pm — **MUSIC:** *Navidad Jazz*, presented by Karin Rademann and the Luis Fernando Quijivix Q-Jazz Quartet. El Sitio, 5a calle poniente #15, *La Antigua*. ▲

17 Sat., 11am — **MUSIC:** *Espectáculo Musical Navideño*, Christmas musical show by Raúl López Colibrí and guest artists, featuring music, theater and puppets. Free. Cooperación Española (tel: 7932-3838), 6a av. norte between 3a & 4a calle poniente, *La Antigua*.

17 Sat. & Sun., 18, 10:30am-8:30pm — **RENAISSANCE FAIR:** *Winter Fest*. Tickets: todoticket.com, La Peña de Sol Latino and Hotel Casa del Parque. Q55/ Q25 kids. Centro Los Luteranos (tel: 5802-8082), 1a av. norte #35, *La Antigua*. ▼



20 Tues., 5:30pm — **TALK:** *Microloans: Myths and Management*, presented by Franklin Voorhes of As Green As It Gets, an NGO focusing on economic development & environmentally sustainable agriculture in Guatemala. Q25. Rainbow Café (tel: 7832-1919), 7a av. sur #8, *La Antigua*.



24 Sat. — CHRISTMAS EVE: Last-minute holiday preparations, gift wrapping & cooking traditional food and beverages, including tamales & ponche; **10pm** — *Christmas Mass* (Misa de Gallo); **Midnight** — Fireworks, families gather to celebrate the birth of Christ. A reminder: banks and some businesses close at noon and reopen Dec. 26.

24 Sat., evening — DINNER: *Noche Buena*, a very special family & friends night. Live Christmas music by Sol Latino. La Peña de Sol Latino (tel: 7882-4468), 5a calle poniente #15-C, **La Antigua**.

25 Sun. — CHRISTMAS DAY: Traditionally a quiet day, with the exception of firecrackers & *bombas* booming at noon.

25 Sun. — FERIA: Cultural and religious events to honor La Natividad (the Nativity), Huitán, **Quetzaltenango**.

27 Tues., 5:30pm — DANCE: Mayan dances by indigenous children. K'a k'a' Saqarik-Nuevo Amencer/New Dawn helps more than 30 indigenous children in San Andrés Itzapa. Q25. Rainbow Café (tel: 7832-1919), 7a av. sur #8, **La Antigua**.

31 Sat., dinner — CELEBRATION: New Year's Eve, chef's special 3-course menu, champagne, music and dancing! Q175 per person. Reservation suggested. La Peña de Sol Latino (tel: 7882-4468), 5a calle poniente #15-C, **La Antigua**.

31 Sat. — NEW YEAR'S EVE: Parties and celebrations everywhere with firecrackers and fireworks galore!



DATEBOOK

All month — ANNIVERSARY: Celebrating its 15th year anniversary, La Antigua Galería de Arte invites you to come and view an amazing collection of artworks by established artists from Latin and Central America, the U.S. and the Caribbean. La Antigua Galería de Arte (tel: 7832-2124), 4a calle oriente #15, *La Antigua*. ▼



DATEBOOK continues on page 32

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THROUGHOUT THE MONTH

ART: Mercado de Arte Contemporáneo, paintings, drawings, sketches, photo and jewelry. Part of the proceeds will be donated to the Nuevas Raíces Foundation. For more information call 5297-5481. Calle de los Pasos #36, *La Antigua*.

Through Fri., 9 — ART: *Guatecolor*, exposition and sale of ostrich eggs and canvas painted as Guatemalan textiles by Rosana Lagos. Museo Ixchel (tel: 2361-8081), 6a calle final, z. 10, *Guatemala City*.

Through Wed., 14 — ART: *Ludivine*, by Karla Higueros. Mesón Panza Verde (tel: 7832-2925), 5a av. sur #19, *La Antigua*. ▼



Through Jan. 10 — ART: *Fantasmagorías Ontíricas*, paintings by Fautisno Pablo Bautista. El Sitio (tel: 7832-3037), *La Antigua*.



Tuesdays, 6th & 13th-6pm — PHOTO TOUR: *Antigua Behind the Walls*, a one-hour presentation of Antigua and its heritage through vintage and contemporary photographs collected over the past 30 years accompanied by Elizabeth Bell's expert narration. Q30 per person, tickets available at the door. Proceeds benefit educational programs in Antigua. El Sitio, 5a calle poniente #15, *La Antigua*.

Tuesdays, 7pm — FILM: International films. Donation entrance. Café Q'anil, *Panajachel, Lake Atitlán*.

Wednesdays, 5pm (Spanish) FILMS: A different film every week. Cooperación Española (tel: 7932-3838), 6a av. norte between 3a & 4a calle poniente, *La Antigua*.

Wednesdays, 9:30am-12:30pm — WORKSHOP: *Primeros Cinceles* by artist Beverley Rowley. Q900 (5 classes), limited seating. Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, 6a calle final, z.10, Centro Cultural UFM, *Guatemala City*.

Saturdays, 2-4pm — RUGBY CLUB: Workouts every week, come and join us. Q15. Visit <http://rugby.com.gt/antigua> for more information. Centro Los Luteros, 1a av. norte final, *La Antigua*.

Saturdays 4pm — (Spanish) CHILDREN'S MOVIES: Cine infantil. Cooperación Española, (tel: 7932-3838), 6a av. norte between 3a & 4a calle poniente, *La Antigua*.

You can also find our
DATEBOOK
 Calendar of Events
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JOHANNES BLIDENSTEIN

“We have a commitment to culture in Guatemala and want to make it accessible to all,” said Adriana Recinos Matheu, cultural director of IGA (Instituto Guatemalteco Americano). “We need to educate our audience and for that we have to start with the kids.”

Since 1945, IGA has been providing individuals of all ages, from all corners of the globe, with the largest array of educational development programs in Guatemala.

From teaching courses for international

students, to middle and high school for local students, the center has seen thousands upon thousands of pupils graduate from its building in Guatemala City and branches throughout the country. This year the school is even working with Gallaudet University from the U.S. to implement a new course to teach English to deaf pupils.

However, there is more to IGA than providing its students with a strong bilingual syllabus; it’s also working on enriching its curriculum with an increased range of cultural programs too.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Joselyn Aguilar: “I love English, it’s my favorite subject and this school opens doors. I want to study abroad, perhaps medicine at Cambridge University.”

Oscar Garanza: “We have the chance to go into great jobs from here. One day I’d like to be a teacher and work in public schools in Guatemala.”

Helen Ávila: “For me, the main reason to come here was for the English. My sister also studies here, and I heard how her English was improving. The classes are dynamic, and I love the U.S. culture. I want to be an accountant and work at the Bank of Guatemala.”



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“We need to start viewing culture as a serious part of education. It’s important to be creative; kids are hungry for different things, and we want to give them a platform on which to discover themselves,” said Recinos Matheu.

In September IGA held a photography program, which featured award-winning Guatemalan photographer Andrés Asturias working with students to produce an exhibition within *Foto >30*.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen teenagers so enthused. They were desperate to stay behind on a Friday to work on their displays,” laughed Recinos Matheu.

“When students participate in these kinds of activities their self-esteem goes up and consequently they become better citizens,” which is essentially what IGA is working toward. ...continued on following page



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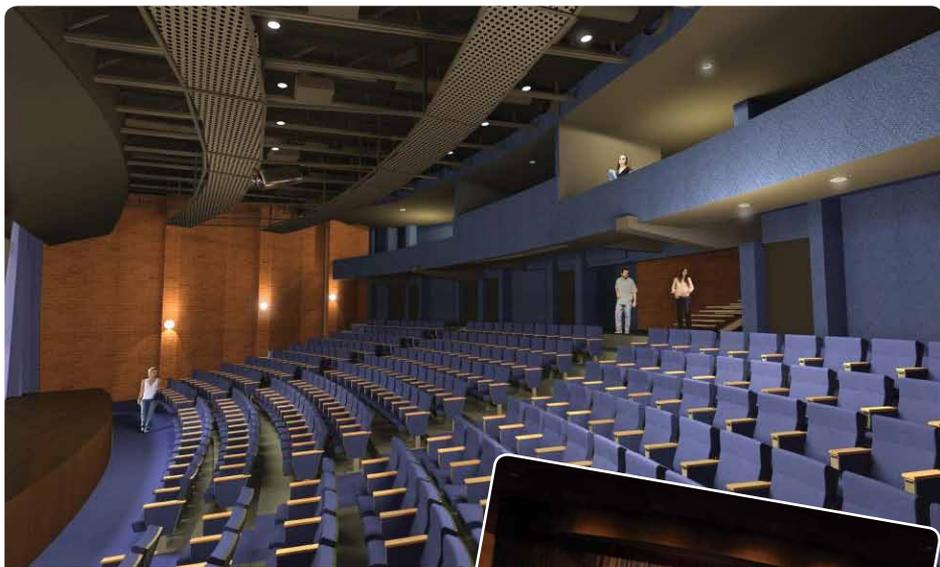


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The remodeled IGA auditorium by Arq. Adolfo Lau (COURTESY OF IGA)



IGA cont. from previous page

Theater Refurbishment

In the past, IGA's theater has shone a light upon home-grown talent and January's inauguration of the newly refurbished auditorium promises to showcase even more star performances.

"Many of the country's artists have a piece of themselves in this theater—it's almost a second home to them. We don't have many theaters in Guatemala so we want to bring quality shows to this one," stated Recinos Matheu.

As well as in-house photography exhibitions, theater productions and art displays, IGA is dedicated to opening up a selection of events to the public.

Plans are in progress for a live transmission of the MET Opera in HD, the free

three-week-long International Jazz Festival returns to the central park in zone 1 of the capital next year, and the theater will open with a Dick Smith play in the New Year.

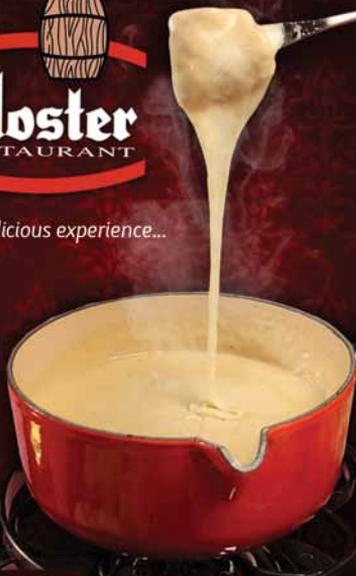
IGA, which started off with around 300 pupils and now boasts 1,300, prides itself on offering its students and the general public "the best of both cultures." It wants to make a positive change to the lives of Guatemalans and allow them to develop a better standard of living – through a combination of academic and cultural programs. 

Visit their website at: www.iga.edu



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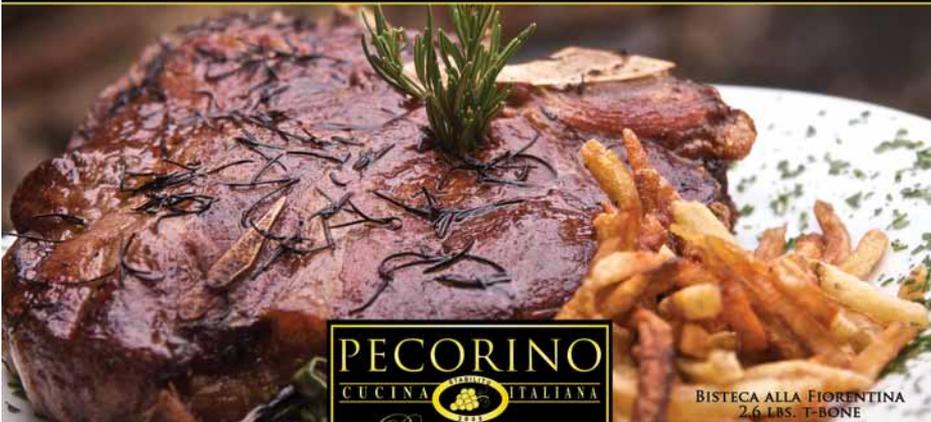
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Creamos cont. from page 16

it here,” says Rosa Cristina Aguirre Marroquín. “I feel more confident, I can support my children better, and I trust all the people I work with.”

Each unique piece of jewelry is made from recycled materials donated by local schools and businesses, or collected by the women themselves, and finished off with shop-bought beads and clasps. The final products are then sold at events, in participating stores and Creamos’ own shop, which is staffed by members of the project.

With its emphasis on applied education, Creamos is an application of the math and literacy that the group learns in the classroom: Each woman prices her product, calculating materials and labor.

“The women make an average of 65% more selling their jewelry than they did working in the garbage dump,” ...cont, page 40

The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings. —Eric Hoffer



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Christmas is a time when you get homesick —even when you're home. —Carol Nelson

Nothing's as mean as giving a little child something useful for Christmas. —Kin Hubbard

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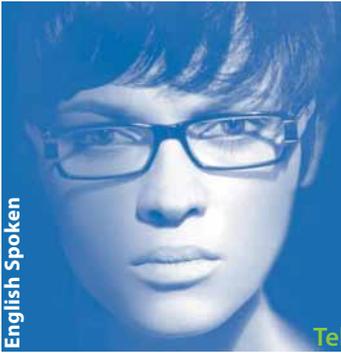
Creamos creations using recycled materials

Creamos cont. from page 38

says Emily Coffin, one of two volunteers working at Creamos. “There they would start work as early as possible and finish as late as possible, or until they had earned enough money to feed their kids. But here it’s lucrative—they have flexible working hours, it’s safe and they can work from home.”

Through the project, the women also receive free day care for their children, access to a medical clinic, two meals a day and classes on nutrition and financial planning.

Predatory lending, combined with low adult literacy, is a big problem in Guatemala and often people sign contracts without understanding them. Many of the women in Creamos have fallen victim to this fraudulent practice; co-signing on a friend’s purchase on credit and then finding themselves responsible for paying it. Bad ...cont, page 60



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I ask not for a lighter burden, but for broader shoulders. —Jewish Proverb

I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. —Charles Dickens

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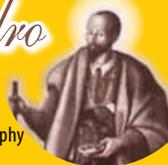
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If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other. —Mother Teresa

Were I a philosopher, I should write a philosophy of toys, showing that nothing else in life need to be taken seriously, and that Christmas Day in the company of children is one of the few occasions on which men become entirely alive. —Robert Lynd

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Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fire-side and his quiet home! —Charles Dickens

There is a remarkable breakdown of taste and intelligence at Christmastime. Mature, responsible grown men wear neckties made of holly leaves and drink alcoholic beverages with raw egg yolks and cottage cheese in them. —P.J. O'Rourke

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PET Q's & A's
 by Cynthia Burski, DVM



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As well, excessive fat in the chest cavity stresses the heart and decreases its ability to effectively pump oxygenated blood to all of the body tissues, including the brain. It also decreases your pet's ability to breathe and pant and doesn't allow the lungs to inflate adequately.

In order to help Oscar reduce the extra poundage, you can start by switching him to a low-calorie diet, which gives him volume to fill him up without adding more weight to his body. Begin and gradually increase an exercise program and importantly, drastically reduce or cut out treats (a major source of extra calories). Ideally, Oscar should be consuming 30 calories per pound a day (calculated on using his ideal weight).

Because a dog's metabolism slows with age, and spaying and neutering decrease energy expenditure by almost 40 percent, calorie requirements change throughout his lifetime. Work with your veterinarian to figure out the quantity and type of food Oscar should be eating.

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As long as we know in our hearts what Christmas ought to be, Christmas is. —Eric Sevareid

It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air. —W.T. Ellis



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Remember this December, that love weighs more than gold!
—Josephine Dodge Daskam Bacon

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Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we're here for something else besides ourselves. —Eric Sevareid

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Al Thompson cont. from page 21

The three-dimensional finished work of four-layers—gold leaf, glass, print, glass—breaches the barrier between illusion and reality. The gold background catches the light through the sculpting, and the print comes alive. “It’s a reincarnation! Then it gets even more exciting with a frame.” The final touch, the signature: A. Gray Thompson. Gray captained the ship on which Al’s great-grandparents sailed back and forth between Britain and Australia with supplies during gold rush days, perhaps planting Al’s history with gold.

Al developed useful skills in his previous hobbies of crafting jewelry, icons, nativity scenes and chess sets with silver. That ended, also by accident, when a priest friend slammed Al’s finger in a car door and, “I couldn’t hammer anymore.” Ever the optimist, Al only saw that as opportunity to move on. After retirement in Antigua in 1989, he started to paint with oils. “These were stepping stones,” he says, toward this latest achievement.

Like da Vinci and Klimt, Al Thompson comes from a simple background. Da Vinci’s mother was a peasant; Klimt’s father was a goldsmith, Al’s a welder. Also like Klimt, Al is good-natured and sociable but enjoys the solace of his studio. He’s a Fulbright scholar with a Ed.D. from Berkeley. Friends would argue his description as a ‘self-perceived failure’, but maybe that comes with the territory of genius. In Barbara Leaver’s words, “Al has out-Klimted Klimt.”

The gold is almost all gone, now in the 26 framed works of the exhibit. There will not be more. Why? “Because I’ve finished this,” says Al. “I feel a sense of accomplishment.” 

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What I don't like about office Christmas parties is looking for a job the next day. —Phyllis Diller

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 Untie the ribbons. —Ruth Ann Schabacker

The darkness of the whole world cannot swallow
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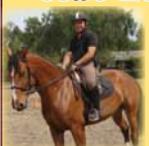
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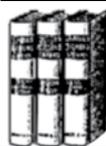
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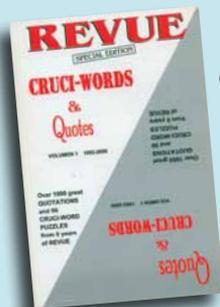
One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly. —Andy Rooney

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SPICES



Spices are important in Guatemalan cooking, especially in many sweets and drinks around the holidays. Spice colors are rich in the landscape this month also, which seems fitting as spices were what the Europeans sought when they first sailed west to bump into these shores. Guatemala produces some spices, but joins the rest of the world in adding clove, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and other spice flavorings and aromas to holiday cooking. Meanwhile, Highland hillsides and gardens are brushed this month with such spice colors as tans, golden yellows, browns, reds and greens.

Doña Catalina puts handfuls of cloves and ginger into her Christmas fruit punch. Doña Audrey makes a savory midnight cake with fresh vanilla extract from local beans. Doña Amanda always adds sticks of cinnamon to cups of her thick, hot chocolate. And of course many Guatemalans serve black, smoky cardamom seeds with their brewed coffee.

Cardamom is a major Guatemalan export. This country edged out Nepal a few years ago to be the world's leading producer of cardamom seeds, pods and powder to flavor Indian, Nordic, Middle Eastern and other worldwide cuisines. Cumin is also a big export, and is used in many Guatemalan recipes. Mayan tradition says eating

some cumin each day keeps both chickens and lovers from straying. We've not tested that, but if the Maya say so, it must be true.

Fenugreek grows here too. Maybe you don't recognize this spice growing wild along the roads, but you'd know the flavor in many dishes. Fenugreek aroma is like maple, as people in New York City learned when a fenugreek extract processor across the Hudson spread the scent throughout the city, just as fenugreek added to Guatemalan recipes fills the kitchen with that pungent maple-syrup odor.

Surely the spiciest addition to Guatemalan holidays is the cobanero chili from Alta Verapaz, hotter than many poor gringo mouths can tolerate, but forming a perfect color combination when woven into holiday wreaths. Cobanero is a shiny green pepper when young, turning into a finger of deep red when mature, colors blending into a perfect holiday decoration as well as chili adding an unforgettable flavor to spicy dishes, if you're up to the heat.

Spice flavors and spice colors are all around you to enjoy as you wait to hear spicy salsa music at holiday celebrations. Take it all in with your taste buds, eyes and ears. Just be careful with even a touch of cobanero chili should you have a little cut! 🌶

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ASK ELIZABETH

by Elizabeth Bell
AUTHOR/HISTORIAN

What is happening with the Palace of the Captains General?

A year ago we reported on the backstory of the restoration of the Palace of the Captains General in La Antigua Guatemala. The project met all restoration standards with a Q16 million budget and a projected two-plus years worth of work. I have been trained in architectural conservation (ICCROM/Rome), and I am very picky about restoration projects. The palace restoration is absolutely great!

Then the story became too good to be true! It's one thing to restore this 1764 structure to its original magnificence, adding 21st-century technology, particularly in lighting and internet. It is another issue to designate an appropriate use for it.

After moving 14 government offices out of the palace in order for the restoration project to begin, the building was put under the Ministry of Culture and Sports, which made sense since the National Council for the Protection of La Antigua Guatemala (CONSEJO) is part of that ministry. This decision seems to have backfired.

The ministry, under the direction of architect Blanca Niño, held a workshop some four years ago to establish a "use" for the palace. Very few Antigua residents were invited. There was no follow up information or outcome from this workshop until recently. And, under UNESCO guidelines,

it is essential to take into consideration the local residents' wishes for the use of their monumental heritage. Add that to the fact that Antigua residents do not want the Ministry of Culture and Sports' staff to tell them what to do.

News had it that the ministry was going to rent the space for three months to a clothing store from Guatemala City, a well-respected private museum and ANACAFE (coffee association), among others that were arbitrarily chosen. Local participants? Zero. While shops may work very well on the piazza in Venice, Antigua's residents do not want a shopping mall in their palace. The palace is one of *the* most important buildings in the city.

Remember that Antigua was abandoned by those who moved to Guatemala City after 1773, and it is the Antigua residents who have created the wonderful city that we see today, particularly since 1969. It has been through Antiguan residents' painstaking efforts that we all enjoy the city today.

So what do Antiguans want? A meeting was held with local representatives from a number of associations and distinguished residents who drafted a very well-written complaint based on the legislative agreements (397-2007 and 249-2008) calling for an Inter-institutional Commission for the Palace of the Captains General.

...continued page 58

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Ask Elizabeth cont. from page 56

More than 250 residents attended the Oct. 13 meeting with the City Council, who unanimously joined in our efforts to establish an appropriate use of the palace. The document was also sent to the National Council for the Protection of La Antigua Guatemala.

What I enjoy about this process is the number of qualified residents who developed a well-organized plan of deciding the use of their cultural heritage. This is done through a democratic process with open meetings and by e-mailing anyone who is interested so everyone may participate.

In November, the Agrupación de la Sociedad Civil de Sacatepéquez (ASOCIS), Asociación de Arquitectos e Ingenieros Colegiados Diego de Porres, Asociación de Mujeres Profesionales de Sacatepéquez (AMPRODES), Asociación de Vecinos Salvemos Antigua, Cámara Empresarial de Comercio y Servicios (CECOMS), Coalición de Instituciones Vecinos, Cocodes y Asociaciones (CIVICA), Comité de Autogestión Turística (CAT), Consejo Cívico de Vecinos de La Antigua Guatemala (CONCIVE) and Vecinos Organizados de la Calle del Espíritu Santo (VOCES) conducted a peaceful protest in front of the palace to show that Antiguans do not want a *centro comercial*.

Within the palace they want the governor's office (out of tradition), a small National Civil Police office for assistance to crime victims, and the remainder of the space to be decided by the commission. Everyone is invited to participate. This is a BIG step for the preservation of Antigua's cultural heritage. 

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Through the project, the women also receive free day care for their children, access to a medical clinic, two meals a day and classes on nutrition and financial planning.

Creamos cont. from page 40

credit ratings mean it is difficult for them to open up bank accounts, so consequently it is difficult for them to save. On payday most of the members used to hide their wages in their houses, which regularly got broken into, or they spent it before neighboring gangs could steal it.

To combat this problem, Creamos set up an internal saving plan, which allows members to deposit any amount from their paycheck and draw upon it when needed.

“It’s been really exciting to see. One woman was even able to save up enough money to pay off her debts and open up a real bank account,” says Coffin.

Offering more than just financial security, Creamos also supports personal development through peer reviews, where the women evaluate each other’s work and implement the first round of quality-control measures.

“Almost all of these women are survivors of domestic violence and aren’t used to voic-

ing their opinions, so it’s great to see them feeling confident enough to say what they think,” states Coffin.

From earrings to key rings, bracelets to bags and photo frames to wallets, the women are becoming experts at targeting their goods toward their clientele—Guatemalans like detail and want the items to look “mall bought,” whereas U.S. customers prefer to show off the recycled element of the designs.

“I get my inspiration from magazines,” says Irma Rodriguez, one of Creamos’ designers. “When I see something in there that I haven’t designed before I think: ‘I must try that.’”

What started out as a fun crafts workshop has become a resource for entrepreneurship, enabling many of its members to escape the dangers of working in one of Central America’s largest garbage dumps.

“It’s exciting to see how successful the project has become, and it’s up to the women where we go from here,” Coffin says. 



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The art exhibition begins at 10 a.m. and will showcase works of art by children from

local educational centers including Educarte, El Plan Infinito, Los Patojos, LAVOSI, Semilla de Esperanza y Amor y Brillo de Sol. You will be impressed by the talents of these children and will rejoice in sharing in their emotions, ideas and dreams. The best artwork in the various categories will receive prizes.

Beginning at 2 p.m., the festivities will really get going with a variety show featuring music, dancing and theatre. In addition, throughout the afternoon, visitors will have the opportunity to participate in interactive activities that offer them the chance to not only appreciate art but also to create it. The event is free and open to the public, so bring your family and friends! 



For more information, contact Paulo Monteiro at paulo@casasito.org or 5045-9097. For general information about CasaSito, visit the website: www.casasito.org

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Since 1985 Guatemala's festive season has been given a kick start with the illumination of el Árbol Gallo. For 26 years the Central American brewery has assembled giant Christmas trees in each department and accompanied the inauguration with impressive fireworks displays and musical shows.

The tradition started after the beer company was due to record a seasonal advertisement, involving people assembling a Christmas tree, and Gallo saw it as an opportunity to give back to its customers and thank them for their brand loyalty.

It has now become an annual family event, with crowds gathering around midday in the capital to secure the best place from which to watch the show.

In the past, the trees were adorned with pine leaves, but after catching fire on more than one occasion, they are now decorated with artificial materials.

This year the company has invested \$3.2 million creating public Christmas celebrations. 



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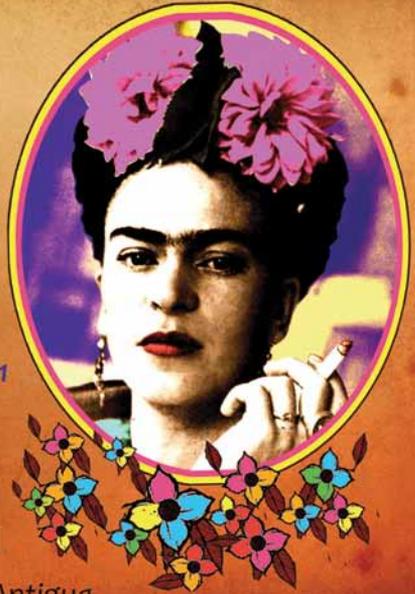


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Sacred Animals and Exotic Tropical Plants

by Dr. Nicholas M. Hellmuth

Sharing our knowledge of flora and fauna in Mayan utilitarian use, hieroglyphics, iconography, religion, diet, and mythology is one of the projects of the FLAAR Reports. We hope this introduction to insects in Mayan culture is a topic that is completely new to you.

The Niij

Domesticated insects were part of the Mayan civilization



(GUSTAVO GALLEGOS)

It is so often said that the Maya had few domesticated animals except for the dog and the Muscovy duck. The turkey was domesticated before the time the Spanish arrived. Yet the Maya had several forms of domesticated insects, with the lacquer insects the most obviously domesticated. You can still see the Maya raising *Llaveia axin* today.

A few months ago I saw my first lacquer insect. I have long known that lacquer in Asia comes from a tree or from the lac insect. But I had no idea there was a lacquer insect in Guatemala. In Mayan languages, this insect is called *niij*.

The lacquer insect is also called *cochinilla* in local Spanish and cochineal in English. The same word, *cochinilla*, is used for the smaller related insect, which is a primary source of red dye (for some lipstick and rouge, among other uses). *Cochinilla* insects are tiny (the size of the head of a pin) and are found on opuntia cactus plants. The environs around La Antigua Guatemala were once a major production zone of this red dye after the Spanish conquest. But today most *cochinilla* insects are bred in Oaxaca, Mexico and in the Canary Islands. ...continued page 70

In Rabinal we found the niij clinging to jocote trees, living under a 'tent' of white powder-like material.



(SOFÍA MONZÓN)

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Next to a circus there ain't nothing that packs up and tears out faster than the Christmas spirit.
—Kin Hubbard

The one thing women don't want to find in their stockings on Christmas morning is their husband.
—Joan Rivers



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The lacquer created from the Niij is used in traditional Mayan handicrafts. (PHOTOS GUSTAVO GALLEGOS)



The lacquer insect is called cochinitilla in Spanish and cochineal in English. (PHOTOS GUSTAVO GALLEGOS)



Nicholas Hellmuth with a handful of *Llaveia axin* (lacquer insects). (PHOTO GUSTAVO GALLEGOS)

The Niij cont. from page 68

In Rabinal we found the niij primarily clinging to jocote trees. But biologists indicate that this insect can also live on *Jatropha curcas* trees (physic nut) and various species of acacia.

It was absolutely fascinating to see the insects; most live under a “tent” of white powder-like material. When you harvest the insects, you clean off the white surface layer, and you then see that the insects are a nice light orange color. They do not bite or sting, nor are they otherwise aggressive.

While we were in Rabinal, Gustavo Gallegos produced a video about the insects and preparation of the varnish. Camila Morales wrote a report on the trip, with comments on preparing the insect fat and then applying it to the gourds. Both the video and this report will be available at www.maya-ethnozoology.org. 

Dr. Nicholas M. Hellmuth is director of FLAAR Reports (Foundation for Latin American Anthropological Research). To view the list of sacred animals visit www.maya-archaeology.org or contact Dr. Hellmuth at frontdesk@flaar.org

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A holiday cocktail party is where some stranger will learn more about you in an hour than your spouse has learned in a lifetime. —Robert Brault

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Guatemala: People of Tradition cont. from page 17

Santiago Albert, Spanish by birth and adopted by Guatemala 15 years ago, brings us this uniquely intimate view of his fellow citizens. His photographs are taken with a small Leica M with standard lenses, which necessitates that he be within a few feet of his subject. This actual physical closeness intensifies the sense of intimacy felt by the viewer.

The collaboration between Santiago and Christine began several years ago when they produced *Portraits of Quality* for Anacafe, the Guatemalan coffee growers' association. Santiago's black and white photographs show the viewer the men and women, often worn from sun and work, who farm the fields and run the coffee mills. Christine's

written descriptions of the subjects and the coffee-growing process fill out the picture.

Other Latin American photojournalism by Santiago has included his documentation of the Warao tribe in the Orinoco River delta, as well as the lives of Guatemalan refugees returning home from Mexico. An exhibit of selected images from *Guatemala: People of Tradition* has been shown at the Museo Ixchel del traje indigena and is scheduled for exhibition at Hotel Casa Santo Domingo, La Antigua Guatemala, in 2012. Watch Revue's Datebook for this upcoming event.

Christine Wilson is Guatemalan by birth, and her love of her country and its

...continued page 78




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I've been shopping all my life and still have nothing to wear. —Leslie Burns

Only one shopping day left 'til tomorrow. —Joan Rivers

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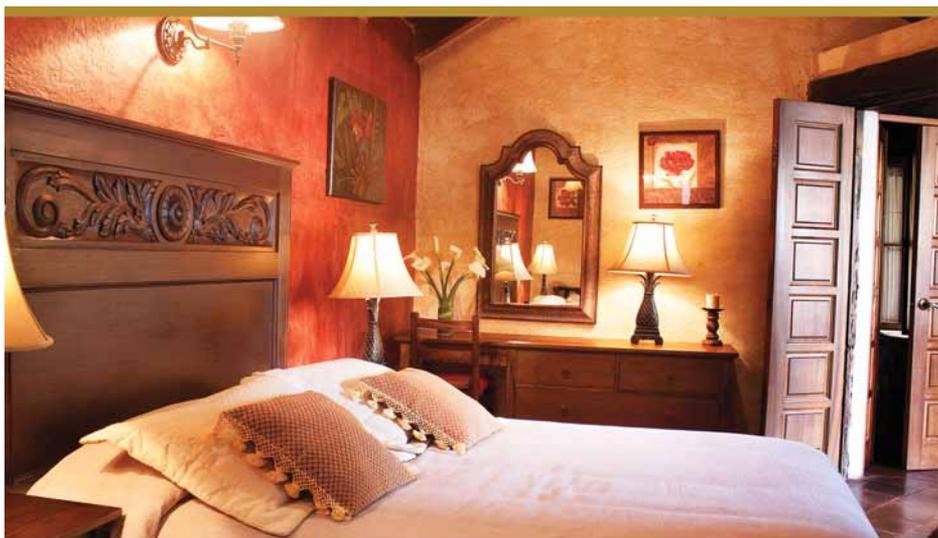
If instead of a gem, or even a flower, we should cast the gift of a loving thought into the heart of a friend, that would be giving as the angels give.
—George MacDonald

Cocktail party: A gathering held to enable forty people to talk about themselves at the same time. The man who remains after the liquor is gone is the host. —Fred Allen

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No matter how carefully you stored the lights last year, they will be snarled again this Christmas.
—Robert Kirby



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Guatemala: People of Tradition cont. from page 74

traditions are reflected in *Guatemala: People of Tradition*. A member of the founding board of the Antigua International School, Christine is donating her proceeds from the book to the scholarship fund of AIS. Christine is married to Phillip Wilson, director of Ecofiltro, a sustainable water purification solution with the goal of providing abundant clean water at low cost.

Guatemala: People of Tradition, available

in both English and Spanish editions, is a hardcover book of 280 pages, with 100 images. It may be purchased at La Casa del Conde, 5a avenida norte #4, and at Colibri, 4a calle oriente #3-B, both in Antigua; in Guatemala City the book is available at the Museo Ixchel, 6ta calle final z. 10.

You can also buy copies online by going to www.peopleoftradition.com. The website is available in English and Spanish. 





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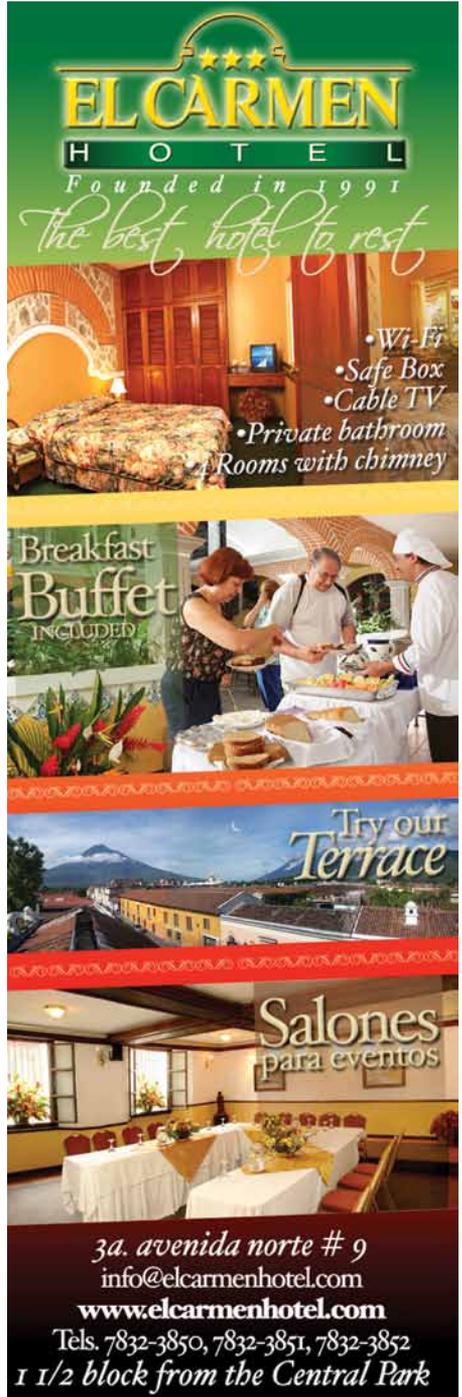
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Where Should Sleeping Dogs Lie?



I highly recommend that your dog sleep inside the house at night. No matter what your reasons for wanting your dog outside at night, I believe there are many more good reasons for keeping him inside with you.

The usual logic cited for keeping a dog outside is security. Dogs are considered to be useful as an early warning system by barking and thereby announcing that thieves are attempting to trespass on your property. In Guatemala, most neighborhoods have a lot of noise at night. Unfortunately, your dog has no idea that you only want him to bark at intruders, and lacking a common language, you will find it quite difficult to explain this to him. Thus, your dog will bark at pretty much any sound or movement at night. This includes cats or rodents on a roof or wall (or on a neighbor's roof or wall), fireworks, a siren, any passing person, car, bicycle, dog, bird, bat, clouds drifting over the moon, wind rustling tree branches—you get the idea.

This random barking generally achieves several things. Usually, the barking dog sets

off a chain reaction, and the whole area is subjected to a bunch of dogs barking at other dogs barking. Over time, you learn to ignore the barking. So if an intruder actually does come over the wall, you are most likely not to pay attention to your dog's warning. Few people can really sleep soundly when a dog is barking outside their window (and the dog, obviously, is not sleeping much either), so you end up tired and sleep deprived. If you don't respond by coming out to see what the ruckus is about, your dog may escalate the barking in pure frustration; he is trying to warn you about something he perceives is dangerous, and you are not listening to him! The barking is probably keeping your neighbors up, too.

An even more persuasive reason to keep your dog inside with you is that an intruder can silence your dog in the yard very quickly by tossing poisoned bait to it. Don't kid yourself that you can poison-proof your dog to ignore food tossed into the yard. You can't. You could end up with a dead dog *and* a break-in.

If you are really interested in security, keep the dog inside with you ...cont. page 108



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INAUGURATION



The grand sala of Casa Quinta and (RIGHT) creator Arq. Franklin Contreras

The magnificent Casa Quinta Boutique Hotel in La Antigua Guatemala (5a avenida sur #45) recently hosted its official inauguration with an evening press conference that included Walter Fischer, regional director of INGUAT (Instituto Guatemalteco de Turismo); Ana Lucía Fernández, representing Conde Naste Johansens for the Americas, the Pacific and Caribbean; and Licenciado Luis Méndez, who highlighted the services, comfort and exclusivity provided by Casa Quinta. As well, highly-regarded architect Franklin Contreras, designer and creator of Casa Quinta, shared a historical overview of the hotel.

The guests were given a guided tour, moving from one suite to the next (eight in all), which have been designed with authentic Spanish-colonial ambiance, grace and elegance in mind. Stunning common areas include furnished corridors, a spacious *sala*—with breakfast service in dining areas and the roof-top terrace.

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*Casa Quinta is recommended by Condé Nast Johansens (2012)



Guests at the inauguration and (RIGHT) one of the beautifully appointed rooms



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I am thankful for the mess to clean after a party because it means I have been surrounded by friends. —Nancie J. Carmody

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it. —William A. Ward



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Cascadas de Tatasirire from page 14

canopies: Strap on your harness and weave through the various types of trees on a zipline, which gives you a unique view of the nature, complete with six waterfalls and rivers that enhance the beauty of this park. There is even a mini-canopy specially designed for children. And if you still want more, try rappelling down Tatasirire's waterfalls—be prepared to get wet!

More than just an adventure park, Cascadas de Tatasirire is a place to rest, recharge your batteries and try your hand at something new. Although you'll need your own car or private shuttle to get there, since there's no direct access by bus, the journey to Jalapa is serene: meandering through pueblos as you climb up through the mountains to the Natural Reserve in Cerro Miramundo.

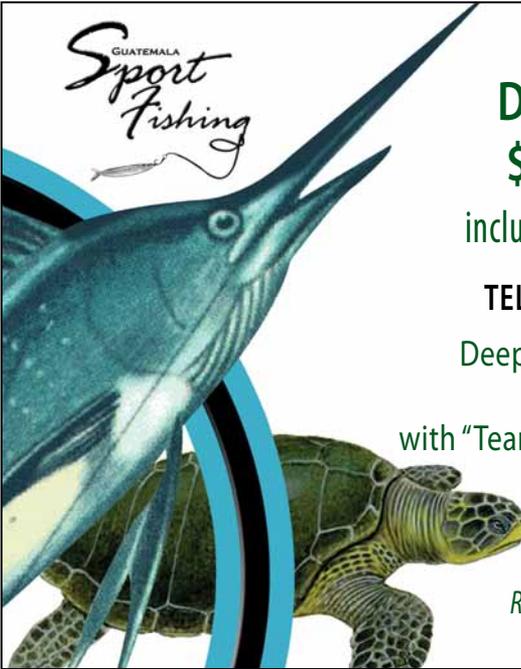
With a five-story log cabin for lodging and plenty of ground for keen campers, it's a haven for city dwellers or backpackers looking to escape the beaten track. Just don't ex-

pect the Ritz—this is basic accommodation, utilizing waterfalls for showering, that puts you right at the heart of nature. While the *tienda* stocks basics like soup and biscuits, it's best to bring your own food and ask for the camping stove to cook it on.

At 2,300 meters above sea level, temperatures plummet at night so bring a sleeping bag and a thick pair of socks. The communal space offers hammocks and an eating area where you can sit out late into the night and listen to the sounds of the forest. However, since the lodge runs on solar energy, it is advisable to pack some candles as it gets dark between 6 and 7 p.m.

Prices are very reasonable and vary on the type of package you choose. You can pay anywhere from Q60, which includes entrance fee and access to the swings, to Q300, which includes entrance fee, all the activities and a couple of nights' accommodation (note payments in cash only). 

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In creating the human brain, evolution has wildly overshot the mark. —Arthur Koestler

The average man's judgment is so poor, he runs a risk every time he uses it. —E.W. Howe

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Santa Cruz La Laguna

I have been to Lake Atitlán several times since moving to Guatemala. For me, there really is no one town or village on the lake that stands out more than the other because I think they are all interesting, beautiful and unique—but, my personal favorite is Santa Cruz La Laguna. There are no roads to Santa Cruz so visitors must hop in a *lancha*, (water taxi) from one of Lake Atitlán's larger towns.

The little *municipalidad* of Santa Cruz sits high above the lake, tranquil and picturesque. After walking up the steep *calle* to reach the town, visitors will be wowed by the most amazing views. ...continued on following page

ABOVE: View from Santa Cruz with evening rain over Lake Atitlán BELOW: Faces of the lake



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Man is rated the highest animal, at least among all animals who returned the questionnaire.
—Robert Brault

Man is a strange animal, he doesn't like to read the handwriting on the wall until his back is up against it. —Adlai Stevenson

Santa Cruz La Laguna from previous page

Every time I visit Santa Cruz, I marvel at all there is to do: relax, swim, follow the trail to Jaibalito for lunch or go all the way to San Marcos, hike up to a waterfall, take a back-strap weaving course from one of the local women, or hop on a lancha to San Pedro and go horseback riding, visit the town of Santiago Atitlán, cruise the streets of San Juan de la Laguna and see the array of women's co-ops that keep traditional weaving and dyeing skills alive—the list goes on.

Traveler Beware: Santa Cruz La Laguna may be habit forming! 

View from Santa Cruz La Laguna



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—Betsy Cañas Garmon

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Quetzaltenango's Mount Olympus

Volcano climbing up Santa María

View of Quetzaltenango from the summit of Volcán Santa María

From many viewpoints in Guatemala's western Highlands, the *Volcán Santa María* stands like a sentinel overlooking its kingdom. Wrapped in a vortex of clouds, the volcano is a constant reminder to the population of Quetzaltenango and environs of its eruption a century ago that almost completely destroyed Guatemala's second largest city. Yet today, *Santa María* stands as one of the most rewarding—and difficult—climbs in all of Central America.

Soon after moving to Guatemala, I signed up to climb Quetzaltenango's Mount Olympus. The ascent was brutal, less "leisurely hike" and more "clawing your way up a cliff face." The task is complicated by how high you're going: Quetzaltenango alone sits at 7,500 ft., and over the next three to five

hours you'll be scaling another 5,000 ft.

It doesn't help that you will probably be passed by lines of Maya women wearing plastic sandals, balancing packages on their heads. This happened a few times while I was bent over sucking air, and was reminded of getting passed years earlier by a Girl Scout troop while climbing Half Dome in Yosemite National Park. Neither were my proudest moments.

Those same women will most likely be heading to the summit for a religious ceremony combining ancient Mayan traditions, Roman Catholicism or Pentecostal worship into a unique combination often called *costumbre*. The circles of chanting women form part of Guatemala's incredible cultural tapestry, and are unforgettable to witness.

But upon reaching the top ...cont. page 98



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Anyone who lives within their means suffers from a lack of imagination. —Oscar Wilde

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A crowd gathers on the beach in Monterrico during sea turtle nesting season to make sure the hatchlings make it to the sea.





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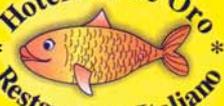
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Three phrases that sum up Christmas are:
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Batteries not Included. —Bill Farmer

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Volcán Santa María cont. from page 94

yourself, you will at least momentarily forget about them, because there are few places on Earth that can compare to this view. The 360 degree panorama lets you see the bottom of the *Sierra Madre* in Mexico, the border of Belize, and the flickering waves of the Pacific. Even on an overcast day, you'll be so far above the clouds you'll feel like Zeus, presiding over your distant subjects below.

Many will argue you haven't truly done *Santa María* until you've completed the midnight hike, which is exactly what it sounds like: choose a full moon night, begin climbing at one in the morning, and watch the sunrise light up the continent from the best box seats around. Just prepare for a freezing hike up.

After reaching the top I fell asleep on my back. This was a mistake, since at over 12,000 ft. the peak of *Santa María* and the surface of the sun are old buddies. I woke up with the front of my neck so red that one of my students would later remark, "Mister, you look like a quetzal." ...continued page 100

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Beyond passion...

I do like Christmas on the whole.... In its clumsy way, it does approach Peace and Goodwill. But it is clumsier every year. —E.M. Forster

Oh, for the good old days when people would stop Christmas shopping when they ran out of money. —Nick Vrdojak



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If you reveal your secrets to the wind,
you should not blame the wind for revealing
them to the trees. —Kahlil Gibran

Volcán Santa María cont. from page 98

The hike down, while considerably shorter, can be pretty brutal on your knees. Wear good shoes, and be prepared with a poncho (if it's the rainy season) or warm clothes if you've picked anytime during the dry season. There's no entrance fee, but since the path can be a bit unclear an organization like Quetzaltrekkers is a good idea for a first timer. Never try it alone, especially since there have been sporadic reports of hikers being robbed near the base.

Guatemala offers tons of hiking options, including the larger *Volcán Tajumulco* farther north. But nothing compares to *Santa María's* proximity to a great city at the bottom and breathtaking view at the top. Pack lots of water, a good camera, and remember sun screen on your neck. 

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In memory of Johnny Long
 And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more. —Dr Seuss

What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace. —Agnes M. Pahren

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Sleeping Dogs cont. from page 80

at night, preferably in the same room you sleep in. If the dog is inside the house, he can't be poisoned. Your dog's hearing is incredibly sensitive. He will hear the sound of a break in and begin barking. The intruder will be left with the doubt as to where the barker is and how big it is. He will also know that he has lost any element of surprise. This is a much bigger deterrent than a dog loose in a yard.

Another benefit is that although your dog hears so much more than you do, when he is inside the house he is much less likely to hear or see the cat on the fence and bark at it. Dogs also watch our body language and take cues from us. If they see that we are not interested in or alarmed by the bell on the bicycle passing outside, they quickly learn to ignore the sound and not bark. So you will both sleep better, and if your dog does bark and wake you, it is probably worth getting up and checking.

Finally, from the dog's point of view, being inside with you only strengthens his bond to you and your family and increases his feeling of belonging and his desire to protect you. Dogs are not solitary animals. They gravitate to other dogs and to people. Especially if you only have one dog, sleeping alone outside and away from you is very hard for him. Some of the best time I spend with my dogs is with them curled up at my feet while I watch TV, read a book, or work on the computer. Knowing that my dog is near my bed at night makes me feel secure, and being close to me makes my dog feel secure, too.

Given his own free choice, your dog would choose to sleep on a mat or pad near you—why not try it? I bet you will never put your dog outside for the night again. ◀

ALERT

submitted by M.L and W.T

Debit Cards Compromised, AGAIN



This past year, there were many reports of bank fraud in Guatemala involving ATM debit cards. Locals and visitors alike were victimized. The result: Computer-savvy thieves garnered millions of dollars from bank accounts worldwide.

In November the Banco de América Central ATM in La Antigua Guatemala was struck again. We were among the victims; our account was cleaned out in a day. BAC officials are pledging to investigate and reimburse account holders—but only after 35 business days!

Until thief-proof safeguards are instituted, please avoid using BAC ATM machines!

Money may be the husk of many things but not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintance, but not friends; servants, but not loyalty; days of joy, but not peace or happiness. —Henrik Ibsen



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Decaffeinated coffee
is kind of like
kissing your sister.
—Bob Irwin

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**Police: 120 Fire: 122 and 123
Tourist Police (Antigua)
7832-4131**

**La Antigua Bomberos (Fire)
Voluntarios: 7832-0234**

**Guatemala City
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dial 1500 (24-hour)**

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if you have to work
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