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PRINTING OFFICE

Imprenta Mariscal Cia. Ltda.

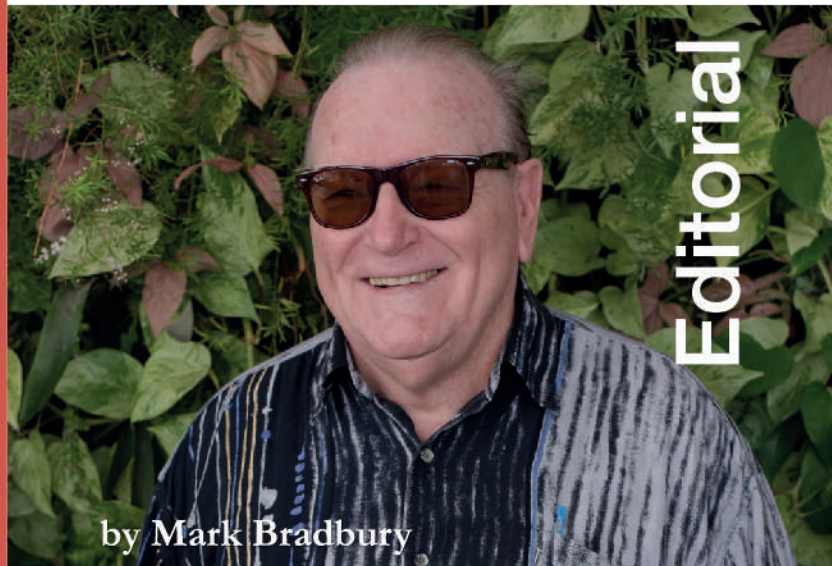
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Made in Ecuador



by Mark Bradbury

Will You Marry Me in Manabi?

At the beach, in the mountains, or maybe in a steamy jungle?

This is a question some of you may have already asked, or you may have at least been thinking about it. Perhaps you haven't discovered a special place to celebrate your wedding vows but you want a unique location that will bring great memories for years to come. If that's the case, then you should be considering the *Province of Manabi*, Ecuador!

The beaches of Manabi offer so many choices for your special event. There are 350 kilometers of oceanfront beaches. Some of them are easily accessible and are reasonably close to towns and cities along the coast. Some are much more remote and require a

hike to access them, but maybe you would love to have a venue that is not so easy to get to and requires a little extra work for a lot more view and location.

You can find just about any kind of terrain and views you could want right here. If it's flat ground you seek, with easy access to everything but still giving you a spectacular beach to tie the knot, then you will have no problem finding several places to fill your needs. Start in the south at Ayampe, and work your way north all the way to the beaches of Pedernales, Jama, and beyond. There are probably fifty great spots along the way to have your wedding, and they are all accessible from Ecuador's Highway E15, the *Ruta del Spondylus*.

But, if you want to try one of those "Extreme Weddings" you've heard about, strap on your hiking shoes and head for Machalilla National Park, where you can find seven beaches, one of them with black sand, and lots of secluded, rock-strewn places along the trail. Machalilla is home to Ecuador's most famous and most beautiful beach, Los Frailes. There is enough right there to satisfy your quota of needs without hiking over the hills along the way to get to one of the more remote locations.

Other great options for a scenic wedding are any of the overlooks scattered above the ocean along the highway. Although you might be limited in the number of guests, the overlooks offer some spectacular backdrops for your event. There is a new one in Salango, a town about ten minutes

south of Puerto Lopez, that has a gazebo and some very special scenery. There is another just before you get to Puerto Lopez on the left that is equal in beauty. There is a restaurant there that could help you plan.

San Lorenzo, Liguiqui, Santa Marianita, and La Tiñosa in the Manta area are all great places for a beach wedding. Crucita, San Clemente, and Bahia de Caraquez all offer some stunning locations. Canoa is a special place; it is a great beach town with terrific surfing and beaching, and it has a lot to offer for larger parties. There are plenty of hotels and restaurants there for extended stays, and there is a very nice private resort called Canoa Oasis which is a perfect beach venue.

Canoa Oasis has private grounds that include a large swimming pool, a social area, jungle-like plants and trees, and a gorgeous beach with its own private coconut grove, perfect for photo shoots. They have a single cabin, fully equipped, and two other rooms for guests. It is very intimate for small groups, and very well-maintained at all times.

If you need something bigger, then Canoa Suites, just up the beach, will fit the bill nicely. It is a great hotel with an outdoor restaurant serving tasty food with many options. The grounds are private and only accessible from the beach by a path that leads to the hotel. They come highly recommended!

Still looking? How about a beach wedding in front of El Arco del Amor, the Arch of Love? This incredible rock formation is in front of La Playa Tasaste, just north of the town of Jama. The site is famous for its “love vibe,” and just to the south of the arch is one of Ecuador’s secret beaches, Punta Ballena. It is a very interesting area to explore as well.

So, you like the idea of a wedding in Manabi Province, but would rather be in the mountains, with stunning views of the local scenery, and maybe even some ocean shots in the background? Not a problem! Manabi has some beautiful mountains that zigzag in and out of the province. There are some right along the coast, and there is a ridge that runs the length of the province a little further inland. These mountains will give you and your guests a terrific background for all those photos you will want to take!

Although there are so many incredible places with extraordinary views all over the Province, there are few companies that are offering their services to help people max out their potential. Like most of the tourist features here, we are strongly lacking in the facilitation of making these things happen. There is a tremendous opportunity around every corner, but we need more people to guide us through it all.

It will happen as we continue to emerge from a two-year pandemic, and Manabi Province, because of its leadership and commitment, will be a destination location for a multitude of special

events, including weddings! We are seeing some businesses in Manta, and some of the other bigger towns, start to organize events that will turn things around, and we will become the “go to” place on Ecuador’s beautiful Pacific Coast.

But for now, you can have some fun discovering the Province and finding the perfect spot for your wedding. If you already live here then drive (or take a bus adventure) along the Ruta del Spondylus and check out the venues along the way. Besides what I mentioned, there are probably a hundred more that I didn’t mention! Go out and have fun!

If you do not live here but are intrigued by the idea of having your wedding on a beach or on a tropical mountain, then start doing some research on the Province of Manabi. There is a plethora of available information on any “Search” feature, no matter the browser. And if you have not already joined some of the local Facebook groups, you should join a few and ask questions about the area. There are hundreds of expats living in many different communities along the beach, and many of them know about the things their home area has to offer and will help guide you along your path.

I am the Administrator for a Manabi-based Facebook group called *Manta and Manabi Expats and Amigos*. We are both informative and friendly and will always be available for answering any questions you might have. Please feel free to join our group and ask away! Here’s a link: **Manta and Manabi Expats and Amigos | Facebook**.

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by Rolanda Stinson-Smiley



Fiesta en La Catrina, Manta

As this month is dedicated to celebrations, what's more celebratory than Mexican cuisine? This is also a perfect topic because I hear many expats in Manta saying they miss Mexican-style food back in their home countries. In Manta, I've encountered quite a few places that sell Mexican-like cuisine, but I think one of the better ones is La Catrina, located on the 2nd floor of the La Quadra Plaza. They specialize in Tex-Mex cuisine with an Ecuadorian flair. The restaurant recently had a renovation of the decor, seating, as well as a menu upgrade, so it is a great time to visit. La Catrina is open seven days a week from 12:30pm - 10pm and occasionally has live music making it one of the many places that are part of Manta's nightlife culture.

What's great about La Catrina is its unique and colorful ambiance. The restaurant has a vibrant array of colors that immediately make me think of Mexico. The walls are painted in brightly colored murals of Dia de Los Muertos skeletons and the famous Mexican painter Frida Kahlo. They have outdoor seating from where you can see all of La Quadra. They also have a large TV on the wall that is always tuned in to different sporting events for those seeking such a venue.

The bar has been totally revamped and extends the length of the restaurant and offers seating there as well. The staff are extremely friendly, knowledgeable, attentive, and some even speak a little English.

The menu is a pretty good size, offering many options to choose from. They have plenty of the usual items you see at a Mexican restaurant, tacos, burritos, nachos, enchiladas, and quesadillas. I think the prices are reasonable for the amount of food that you receive. They have a full bar and the menu features some exciting specialty cocktails. I have seen many restaurants in Manta with a moscow mule drink on the menu. La Catrina has six different types of mules, including a pink mule and a Mexican mule. The pink mule is my favorite. I don't know the exact ingredients, I just know it was very good and very strong. Many of the drinks I tried were very strong, the La Catrina bartender does not pour with a light hand. Of course, I also couldn't come to a Mexican restaurant without trying a margarita. Their coco flavored margarita was delicioso. I've never had a coconut margarita but it was definitely one of the best margaritas I have had in quite a bit of time. It's also worth mentioning that La Catrina has their own brand of beer selection. The La Catrina beer is available in ligera (light) or regular.

If you're interested in dinner and a show, table-side guacamole is a must on their appetizer menu. The waiter will bring a giant avocado to the table, along with salt, lime, and peppers. It's all mashed and mixed in front of you and served with freshly made tortilla chips. Because I couldn't get enough of those fresh tortilla chips, I also tried the totopos clasicos (classic nachos). This is a good-sized plate of nachos, but very basic. It's really just tortilla chips, guacamole sauce, pico de gallo, and shredded cheese. I really liked that it is a nacho dish without meat and a really tasty option for vegetarians.

My absolute favorite item on the menu at La Catrina is the chicken flautas. The chicken flautas are very different from any I've had at other restaurants by the size alone. You're served three giant flautas all of which are super crispy and filled to the max with chicken. They are topped with sour cream, chopped peppers, onions, shredded cheese, and a guacamole sauce. It's a big plate of food so you might want to share it with someone.



I've tried the tacos at La Catrina on many occasions as well as the quesadillas and enchiladas. Everything is always super fresh and delicious. The tacos are all served on corn tortillas. The tortillas taste handmade and are very light and soft. La Catrina offers the standard meats for your tacos, steak, chicken, pork, and shrimp. I've tried all of the varieties but the shrimp and the barbacoa (barbecue shredded pork) were the best. The shrimp was very well seasoned and cooked. I mean it's Manta and seafood, so of course it's perfect! The barbacoa tacos were tasty because

of the sweet and smokey sauce the meat is flavored with. The barbacoa meat is combined with onions, cilantro, and guacamole. And since I love a little spice, I like to add La Catrina's house-made red salsa to mine. Absolutely delicious.

La Catrina's mission is to provide a space that stands out for their quality of service and experience through the mixture of Mexican and contemporary cuisine. Based on my experience, this restaurant is doing just that. The atmosphere is chill and casual, and the staff is extremely friendly. They know what they're doing and you can tell making the customers happy is their main priority.



Our Ecu- Experience

EQUADOR LIVING COLUMN | 12



by David Oriard

When my wife and I arrived in Puerto Cayo on March 7, 2020, little did we realize what was in store for us.

We had anticipated a relaxing oceanside lifestyle with sunset walks on the beach and lots of friends.

That's how it all began, at least. That first day we went to Rick & V's restaurant for dinner (I remember I ate one of Rick Piegsa's delicious stir-fry meals). A few days later we enjoyed one of Puerto Cayo's traditional trivia nights.

Then COVID-19 hit the fan.

On March 17, the day then-president Lenin Moreno implemented his plan to slow the spread of COVID, Alane and I had planned to take a bus to Manta and do some shopping. We waited a long time for that bus before an Ecuadorian driver finally stopped and exclaimed, "No bus! No bus!" We walked back home, got on the internet and saw what was happening. The country was essentially shut down and the COVID lockdown would be the first real challenge to our marriage, which was in just its second year.

No problem, we were about to ace the test.

In the coming weeks we enjoyed our meals (which included plenty of fresh shrimp) while sitting on our front deck, enjoying the warm weather and wonderful ocean views. There was plenty of Scrabble, a little gin rummy, and the occasional game of cribbage. The lockdown seemed to be a minor inconvenience. After all, it was supposed to end in a few weeks. Our container with all of our furniture and the rest of our belongings would soon arrive in Guayaquil and we would resume the exploration of our adopted country.

Wrong.

The container arrived, the lockdown didn't end, and we were stuck at our house for nearly four more months, enjoying our meals (which included plenty of fresh shrimp) while sitting on our front deck, enjoying the warm weather, and wonderful ocean views. There was plenty of Scrabble, a little gin rummy, and the occasional game of cribbage.

After five months of seclusion in which we mostly stayed home, our bond as a married couple was stronger than ever. For the most part, we managed on our own but there were several people who helped us find our way – from translation services to use of a car for shopping to a private anniversary dinner.

By the time we finally got our container out of the clutches of the shipper (paying \$100 per day demurrage that was not mentioned in any contract we signed), the country was opening up and we were beginning to make friends among the expats in Puerto Cayo, Las Palmas, and Mirador San Jose.

During the pandemic, Alane developed the idea of Ecuadorable ExpoArte, and with the help of Cayetano Canarte to get the project launched, her shows have brought numerous artisans to Puerto Cayo to display their amazing works of art. Recently, we have been working with a group of expats and local leaders on a project to improve traffic safety and visibility at the redondel in Puerto Cayo.

Throughout the two and a half years we have lived in Ecuador we have experienced numerous highs and a fair share of lows. Through it all, our love has flourished and we know we have made the best choice to live our lives together in a quaint little town in a beautiful country that we now call home.



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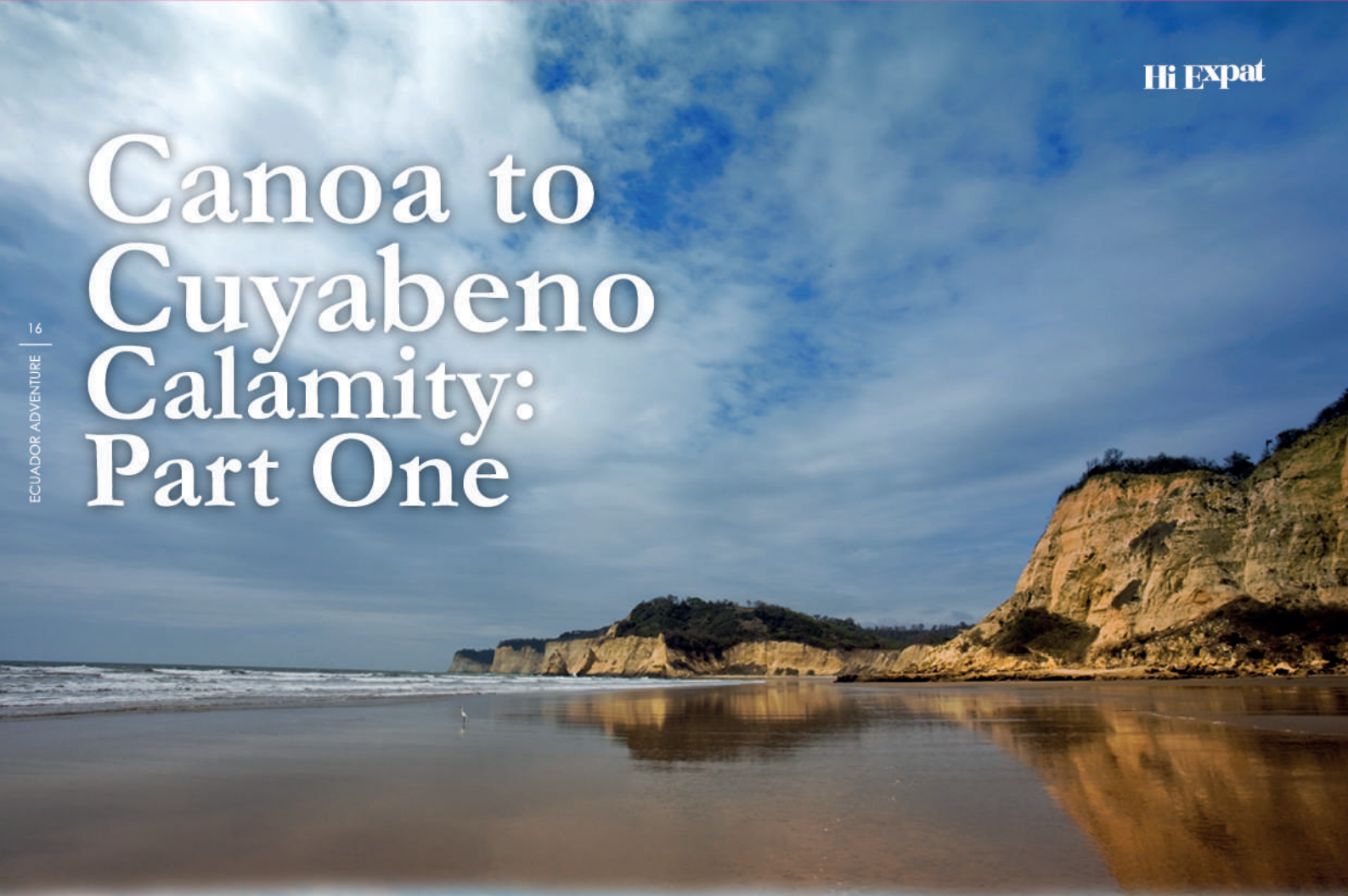
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Canoa to Cuyabeno Calamity: Part One

Ecuador Adventure | 16



by Peter Stromberg

So there I was...

We started out great, right on schedule. Left Canoa at a reasonable hour in the morning and twisted our way up the Andes to the capital of Quito. There we met up with the other part of our crew, two local chaps that were going to join us on our adventure into the Amazon. Maija and I jumped into Rodrigo's fancy new Land Rover in Quito and we started making our descent down the pass and towards our final destination of Cuyabeno, deep in the Amazon basin. About two hours out of Quito the check engine light started rearing its ugly head and there was definitely something going wrong with the engine...no oil pressure. We stopped at a mechanic in Baeza and determined that this car was going to need some special love back in Quito. In the spirit of progress we decided to catch a cab back to Quito to grab my truck and meet the group back in Baeza, get some good rest and continue in the early morning. Right on schedule.

After making the journey from Quito and back we were mounting our new steed in the pouring rain the following morning. Jungle rain...a deluge. The good thing about my truck being on the beach so long is that the salt air has taken the liberty of creating speed holes in the roof. It makes a cool whistling sound as you fly down the curvy roads. However, the speed holes do not work as well in the rain. In fact one could argue that the perforations actually help the rain get inside the truck, but mostly on the passenger side of things so it's not that bad....for the driver. In addition to our leaky ride, we've been informed that the short four hour route is closed and that we must take another road to get to where we're going, which takes seven hours. We set off with slightly soggy intentions and smiles as we kept making progress toward our final destination, deep in the Amazon.

The sun had risen but you could barely tell because the rain clouds were so dark. It was 7:30am and it was about "11:00pm light" and dumping rain. Inside and out. Rain always seems to add to the feeling of adventure and trepidation. As my mind was trying to guess how much rain was actually falling I slammed us into a good sized pot hole, a deep angry one. Bam! About a half a kilometer later the check engine light comes on and the gas pedal makes the RPM's go up but the engine won't respond. We come to a stop at a long bridge in the middle of nowhere. We are an hour out of the town we passed and an hour to the next town, right in the middle. Beautiful though, right on schedule I thought.

After flagging down a semi-truck driver we stuffed Rodrigo in the cab and sent him off to get us a tow-truck to haul us to the mechanics shop in the lovely town of Loreto. Trying to make the best of the free time we broke out the binoculars and did some solid bird watching. After about three hours Rodrigo came back in a yellow taxi cab. My heart sank. It wasn't an ideal tow truck. Rodi jumped out of the car with a mechanic, a fuel pump in his hand and a smile from ear to ear; in the pouring, POURING down rain. Well to say that he put all of our eggs in one basket wasn't going to move anything forward, so right there on that bridge in the middle of the damn Amazon we dropped the fuel tank in a tropical downpour and replaced the fuel pump. Everyone that didn't have a hand on a wrench was holding a tarp to try and keep the water out of the muddy fuel tank. We did it and I'd have to say that the mechanic was a bit of a hero that day and the days that followed. Right on schedule.

So you're probably thinking about now that it worked, changing the fuel pump worked and we'd be charging down the road. Yay, Rodi is our hero! Well you'd be wrong. It did not work, the same problem continued and as hard as we'd tried we couldn't get 'er to go. So, now we were much closer to dark, still in the middle of nowhere, and we had to make the three hour round trip to find a (fu@#\$%) truck that could pull us back to the mechanic.

We waited with the hobbled vehicle to be rescued. Every headlight that passed would get the extra peer through the window to see if it was "our" truck. Time slowed right down. Just when the snoring was about to reach its crescendo our saviors arrived. There was only one problem. The towing apparatus was a chain the size of my bike lock. The good thing was that the chain was just long enough that if it snapped in just the right spot it would shatter my windshield. We pushed on through the night. Winding through the slippery roads in the pouring rain. One of the delights of driving at night in South America is that you don't have to be bothered flicking your high-beam headlights on and off. You just leave them on and so does mostly everyone else. We were cruising along at a good speed when we encountered a speed bump, while flying through the air I heard the chain snap in an awful "Twink" sound. Luckily there was enough left of the chain after it snapped to still be of some use. We carried on through the dark night, making our way to town and bringing the truck to the shop. Back at the hotel we arranged a taxi to pick us up in the morning so that we could continue on our mission of making it to Cuyabeno, leaving the broken down trunk in the hands of the mechanic to fix in the four days we'd be gone. Sounds like a good plan, right?

To be continued.....



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A True Ecuadorian Legend Guayasamín

by Juan Francisco Carrasco



Recently I had the opportunity to visit The Man's Chapel Museum. This place houses the most important artworks of Oswaldo Guayasamín, an Ecuadorian indigenous artist that was known around the world for his humanist and expressionist art. In this article I will tell you more about his history, his trajectory as an artist, and his legacy which has formed the biggest heritage of contemporary art in Ecuador.

Oswaldo Guayasamín was born on July 6, 1919. He started painting and drawing at the age of eight and sold his art to tourists to economically help his family. His mother was the only one that believed he would succeed as an artist but sadly died at a young age and never saw her son become an established artist. Even though his father didn't support him in becoming an artist, Guayasamín studied at the Quito School of Fine Arts where he stayed for nine years and finally graduated as a painter and sculptor in 1941. His love for art allowed him to save enough money to pay for his studies.

At the age of 23 he had his first exhibition in Quito and sold many paintings. This gave him enough money to travel to the United States where he studied and traveled to many museums learning

about different types of art. Afterward, he traveled to many Latin American countries, from Mexico to Argentina, where he gathered ideas and drawings for what would be his first collection of 103 paintings called Huacayñan, which in Kichwa means "the crying path." This first collection of paintings reflected the social struggles of many indigenous communities of South America and their fight for rights, equality, and freedom. Guayasamín's first collection also allowed him to connect with his own indigenous heritage, since his father was indigenous. This first collection represented a political criticism about the oppression of minority groups, a reality that he saw through his journey around South America.

In 1964 Guayasamín started his second and best known collection, "La Edad de la Ira" (The Age of Anger). This collection took him 20 years to finish and reflected on the cruelties that the human beings have done to other humans. From World War II to the Spanish Civil War and the genocides of the Chilean dictatorships, Guayasamín covers and protests against all the pain and suffering that our own society has created while calling for peace.

The Age of Anger collection was very important to him because he had a very difficult life and endured many harsh realities that we usually ignore as a society. For Guayasamín, this collection was the perfect opportunity to show people the tough truths of our society and protest against them through art. Paintings like *Los Mutilados*, *Lagrimas de Sangre*, *Los Torturados*, *Manos de la Protesta*, *Potosí*, *El Guitarrista* and *Los Niños Muertos* are examples of the agony and grief that he embodied in his art.

All the paintings of this collection brought Guayasamín strong emotions and often he needed to disconnect from all the pain and suffering he painted. Because of this Guayasamín designed jewelry, painted flowers and portrayed the city of Quito more than 200 times in different colors and perspectives to clear his mind.

After “La Edad de la Ira” Guayasamín made a last collection called “Mientras Viva Siempre Te Recuerdo” (As I Live I Always Remember You), better known as “Ternura” (Tenderness). This last collection was dedicated to his mother and all the mothers of the world, including Pacha Mama (Mother Earth). He dedicated it to the mothers because as mentioned above his mother was the only one that believed in his art at the beginning but she died at a young age without seeing her son succeed as an artist. This collection contrasts a lot with the previous one because we can

clearly see the change in the color pallets. In “La Edad de la Ira” the colors went from darker colors such as gray, black, and red, colors that symbolized the pain of the social injustices, to lighter ones, like blue and yellow, symbolizing the love of the mothers and kids innocence. Guayasamín started painting this collection in 1996 and dedicated his time to it until he died in 1999. Some paintings of this collection include *Familia*, *Meditación I*, *Meditación II*, and *Ternura*.

Last but not least, in 1995 Guayasamín started his most important work, an architectural work called “La Capilla del Hombre” (The Chapel of the Man). This place, located in the neighborhood of Bellavista in Quito, was built next to the artist's house and now, along with his house, is a museum open for everyone that wants to learn and see Guayasamín’s artwork. He started this project as a tribute to human beings and especially to the history, fights, and accomplishments of the Latin American people. Sadly, Guayasamín died before finishing his works, but his family decided to display everything as he left it, including some of his incomplete works.



Before he died, Guayasamín realized that most of his artwork was located outside of Ecuador and when he passed his sons would be gifted everything, leaving nothing to his country. This convinced him to create the Guayasamín Foundation through which he donated all his paintings, drawings, his pieces of colonial and pre-Columbian art, and even his house (which included The Man's Chapel) to the country of Ecuador. By doing this he assured that his legacy would be preserved and displayed to the citizens of Ecuador and the world.

After his death UNESCO declared The Man's Chapel as "priority for the culture" and posthumously he was recognized as an "Ibero-American Painter" by the International José Martí Prize. Also, in 1991 the Ecuadorian government

gave him the Eugenio Espejo prize, a recognition given to people that stand out in Ecuadorian culture. Now, by his request, Guayasamín rests in the Tree of Life, a tree that he planted in his house where he wanted to be buried. His best friend, the Ecuadorian writer and politician Jorge Enrique Adoum, was also buried there.

If you visit Quito I highly recommend that you visit the Guayasamin Foundation and The Man's Chapel to learn more about the life of this wonderful Ecuadorian artist.



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by Marcos Chituisa

The Rights and Obligations of Marriage and Partnership in Ecuador

Ecuador is a country in development and is also consistently adapting to the constant changes in society. The Ecuadorian civil code was created in 1861 and at that time society and culture in Ecuador were very different from what they are now. Ecuador has gone from being an eminently agricultural country to a country where there is a growing middle class of young professionals who, for 30 years, have been guiding advancements socially, culturally, technologically, and politically in the country.

During the last 10 years Ecuador has gone from being a country of emigrants to an attractive country for migrants. Since 2009, Ecuador has become a prominent destination for North American expatriates, and in just the last 5 years Ecuador has also become a destination to those living in other Latin American countries.

This movement of people has generated new commercial, investment, and business opportunities while also inviting new families into the country. This has generated many questions regarding laws surrounding partnership and marriage. We hope that this article will address some of the questions regarding marriages between foreigners residing in Ecuador, marriages with Ecuadorians, domestic partnerships, and same-sex marriage. In order to have a better understanding of these terms and the laws surrounding them we must define the terminology used within Ecuadorian legislation.

1.- Marriage Civil Code

As defined in actuality within the Ecuadorian civil code, marriage is a solemn contract by which two people join together with the aim of living together and supporting each other.

For 150 years, the legal concept of marriage in Ecuador was this: "Marriage is a solemn contract by which a man and a woman are united with the purpose of living together, procreation, and mutual assistance." This concept was changed by a resolution from the Constitutional Court No. 10, published in the Official Register Supplement 96 on July 8, 2019, in which the expression "un hombre y una mujer" (a man and a woman) and the term "to procrear" (to procreate) was declared unconstitutional.

The constitutional court is the governing body in charge of reviewing the legality and constitutional obligations of laws passed by Ecuadorian legislation. Regarding the recognition of marriages in Ecuador between same-sex couples, this governing body released the following message: "there is no contradiction between the constitutional text and the conventional one, but well complemented, the right of marriage recognized to heterosexual couples is complemented with the equal right of marriage to same-sex couples."

2.- Marriage celebrated abroad must be registered in Ecuador in order to retain all legal rights. It can also be celebrated abroad before an Ecuadorian consular authority.

One of the rights that is awarded to couples who get married in Ecuador is that a partnership of property is provided for both spouses. This means that any couple who registers their marriage at the civil registry of Ecuador or Ecuadorian consular officer abroad will be awarded conjugal partnership to any property acquired by either spouse. In other words if either spouse buys real estate the two will equally own the property 50/50.

Those who have been married in a foreign nation and become domiciled in Ecuador will be regarded as holding separate property provided that, in accordance with the laws under which they were married, there has been no property partnership between them. This means that it is necessary to have a prenup agreement which addresses ownership of all their assets as part of the marital partnership. The heritage such as assets and liabilities, will then belong to the spouses in equal parts.

The administration of the conjugal property can fall on either of the spouses. This means that for the purchase of property, either of the two spouses can acquire and/or sign, but at the time of sale or in case of acquiring a debt, the signature of the two is required.

3.- Since 2019 marriage between same-sex couples has been recognized by the Ecuadorian state. This recognition provides same-sex couples with the right to marriage as well as patrimonial and hereditary rights.

4.- Domestic partnership or “Union de Hecho” has been celebrated in Ecuador since 1982. This Ecuadorian legislation recognizes those people who are not married but are living together, and grants them the same rights that couples have with a marital bond.

This means that any Ecuadorian or foreign person will be governed by the same rights and obligations as those recognized within marriage.

In order to legally recognize a de facto union in Ecuador the couple will have to declare their partnership in front of a notary in Ecuadorian territory. The appropriate way to recognize a de facto union abroad will depend on the laws of the country of origin of the foreigners. For example, in the very particular case of Canada and under Canadian law, the de facto union is recognized by tax law. This means that a couple must have been cohabiting in a stable manner for at least the last 12 months before submitting a tax return. This is a very specific case and each country will have their own specific laws regarding domestic partnership.

5.- Rights regarding real estate purchases and sales

In Ecuador, when a person of civil status buys a property, it is not necessary for the spouse (spouse or common law partner) to sign the deed. In my 15 years of real estate practice I ask the following question every single time we close on a property, “If a married person signs the deed, does this mean that they are the sole owner of the property?” The answer is no. If a married person

signs the deed of a property it signifies that both the married signer and the spouse of the signer are equal owners of the property. When it is time to sell the house both of the spouses will be required to sign the sale. Thus it should be made very clear at the signing of the deed if the signer has a spouse so that there are no complications when completing the sale of the property.

6.- Hereditary rights.

The inheritance laws of Ecuador are very strict with hereditary rights and the order in which people are called to be beneficiaries. The first beneficiaries will always be the children, second the parents of the deceased person, and in third place the spouses or the common law partner. Having the marriage or de facto union registered in Ecuador will be of great help when transferring possessions (Ecuadorian probate process). Regardless of beneficiary rights, a good practice recommended in law is to register the de facto union or the marriage celebrated abroad in the country of residence. This will guarantee that the rights of the surviving spouse are recognized by

Ecuadorian law. I want to make it clear that the only way a marriage is registered in Ecuador is directly through the civil registry and by bringing an updated copy of the marriage certificate that is no older than six months. There are people who have their spouse listed on their cedula, but this is not a marriage record. The information on the cedula is only informative, but does not provide hereditary rights.

NOTE: The reason why the marriage certificate should not be older than 6 months is because in Ecuador a divorce process takes approximately 6 months and as a general rule the country's authorities want to be sure that people are still married or in a de facto union at the time of the registration.

Within the current Ecuadorian legislation there are usually solutions for specific scenarios such as those named above, but there are also unique cases that are not addressed within the laws of Ecuador. So it is highly recommended that one consults a trusted lawyer in order to prevent inconveniences in the future.



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Familial Health Insurance, When and Why?



by Carlos Ramírez

In Ecuador, family insurance is available for both heterosexual and same-sex couples/families. I felt this was important to note since not all countries recognize the marriage of same-sex couples and this recognition was only recently made in Ecuador in 2019. Currently same-sex marriages are totally legal in our country and are protected by law.

If you are thinking about starting or adding to your family we recommend that you get a health insurance plan as soon as possible before taking that next step. This is recommended because in the event that you or your wife becomes pregnant immediately and you contract a health plan after, this pregnancy will be considered a pre-existing condition and will not be covered by your health insurance. In order to ensure coverage, insurance must be contracted three months before you plan to conceive a baby in Ecuador. If contracted at least three months before, the mother and the unborn child will definitely have coverage before, during, and after the pregnancy. In the event of complications at birth, thermal cribs, surgeries, or immediate care for catastrophic illnesses is needed, this will also be covered by the company.

As for vaccines for newborns, these vaccines are covered by the Ecuadorian public health system. Additionally, preventive vaccines against influenza, HPV, yellow fever, and more... If you are

looking for affordable health insurance for your family, IESS is also an option to consider. In order to get familial insurance you will have to notify IESS of your familial affiliation. There is no additional charge for dependents under 18 years old and spouses will make a contribution that is less than the monthly payment. This contribution is determined at the IESS offices once you notify them of your familial status. Remember that if you join IESS, medical care will only be available to you and your family at authorized IESS offices and specialist appointments will only be made after visiting a general practitioner.

Another benefit of familial health insurance is the ease of routine exams and preventative care. Within a health plan you have access to annual exams such as pap tests, prostatic antigen tests, mammograms, ecograms, vasectomies, and others that are useful before forming your healthy and well-planned family.

In regards to transgender and gender-affirming care, unfortunately, most medical procedures and treatments are not covered. Hormonal treatments, aesthetic surgical procedures, implants, or any procedure that is related to modifications through aesthetic surgeries or hormones is not currently covered.

A health policy also includes exclusionary clauses for certain medical expenses. Any type of preventive

treatment, vitamins, hormonal treatments, excess medical fees, unreported pre-existing conditions, discarded medical tests or tests not related to the diagnosis presented in the insurance are not covered. Documentation is also very important when getting reimbursed. Most health insurance will not cover invoices or reimbursement documents that are stained, altered, corrected, or made by the client and not by the doctor. Lastly, and most importantly, in Ecuador the policyholder is in charge of the reimbursement, rather than the insurance company, which is typical in most other countries. In Ecuador the private insurance regulation laws protect companies in their request that the client be the one responsible for all documentation of their reimbursement. For this reason, many clients choose to take out health insurance through a broker, which is an agent specialized in insurance that can guide you throughout the reimbursement process. If you already have a broker and they have not managed your reimbursements as you expected, you can always change brokers. If you believe your broker has harmed you or not acted with your best interest in mind you can report them to the SUPERINTENDENCE OF SECURITIES, INSURANCE AND COMPANIES, which protects the affiliate and the insurance company, in addition to regulating active brokers in Ecuador and their work licenses.

There are a few things to remember and consider if you opt for family insurance through IESS. Medical services through IESS are not always available

and one of the requirements of IESS is that the member first goes to a general doctor before seeing a specialist. Getting appointments with specialists could take up to six months. Additionally, exams, ultrasounds, MRIs, and x-rays are sometimes rescheduled or pushed back due to damaged equipment, lack of resources, or lack of workers. We believe that IESS is a good option when it comes to healthy families or for pre-existing conditions that are not covered by private insurance.

Starting a new family involves considering a number of options. From the most basic options to the most complex, one has to consider the best insurance for their family, their family budget, and what is included in that insurance. Our base recommendation will always be the combination of an IESS health plan and a private insurance plan which averages the cost of \$39.20 per month, per person. Another option is two private insurances with full coverage up to \$500,000 for a price of less than \$100 per month per person for the insured family group. The options are varied, and it is always better to get several quotes and choose the most appropriate for your family. Lastly we always recommend that you get insurance through a broker since the price will be the same but your broker will guarantee that your claims will be reimbursed.

by Carolina Segarra



Ecuador: The New Wedding Destination

Ecuador has become the new wedding destination for foreigners around the world because of its beautiful ‘four worlds.’ Ecuador, as I have described before, is a country full of natural wonder, and choosing Ecuador as a destination for a wedding can be somewhat stressful due to the great variety available. An international wedding implies additional expenses since not only the wedding reception must be planned, but also the hotel for each guest, and any additional activities.

Weddings in Ecuador are full of mysticism and tradition. Since Ecuador is a Catholic country there are usually certain customs that are done prior to the big wedding, but this will always depend on the culture and traditions of the couple being married. An indigenous wedding is characterized by the amount of food and drink that the parents of the bride and groom and their relatives can offer. This is in addition to the fact that their celebrations last an average of seven days.

Additional days are added to the wedding for family reunions in which everyone lives together as one family. In the Sierra region of Ecuador, a long white dress and being married in one of the cathedrals is inevitable. In addition to their bridesmaids, groomsmen, and guests of honor, one of the most important rituals in these events

includes bringing an old accessory, a new one, something borrowed, and something blue. This is supposed to ensure luck and love for your marriage. Another tradition is that the groom cannot see the bride in her white dress before the ceremony, and that they must fix the groom's tie before entering the church. Throwing rice at the married couple while they exit from the church will guarantee prosperity and getting married on a Friday or Sunday is also said to be the best day if you want a long, united marriage. Lastly, a marriage under the full moon ensures fertility. Bridal showers and bachelor parties are also thrown to signify that the couple is taking a new step forward into their lives together.

Now that you know a few of the traditions that Ecuadorians have, I want to give you some reasons why you should get married in Ecuador. The first, and main reason, is because the beauty of the landscapes gives you the most amazing photos to look back on forever. In addition to this you can count on delicious banquets for your guests, extensive prenuptial activities, and a great wedding for a much lower price than in your country of origin.

A wedding in Ecuador is around \$12,000 including the banquet, catering, music, and photography. On top of all that you can also add an unforgettable honeymoon in the Galapagos or in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Choosing a place for your wedding is a big decision and commitment. The place you choose also affects the type of food you'll serve, the clothing you choose, the makeup you will wear on the big day, and the form of transportation for your guests.

Some of the haciendas that we recommend for weddings are the following:

- Hacienda Nápoles
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- Quinta Santa Fé
- Hacienda San Diego

- Quinta Lucrecia
- Quinta Pomelé
- Finca Lucciana
- Villa Elizabeth
- Villa San Andrés

Among other locations that will leave you breathless, there are many beautiful haciendas known for their colonial architecture in Quito. With their large gardens, buildings made of adobe, and exposed brick, some celebrities of international stature have chosen Ecuador as their destination wedding for this reason. The most recent famous wedding held in Ecuador was with the son of the vice president of Ecuador who married the Victoria's Secret model, Jasmine Tookes. They held a luxury wedding in Quito with some high demands that were met by their wedding planner.

Some general recommendations for getting married in Ecuador include choosing the venue at least three months in advance to avoid it being reserved for the day and time you desire, and sending your wedding invitations six months beforehand so your guests can plan for the trip. The couple should also think about the activities prior to the wedding, choose the color that will represent their big day, and finally choose a wedding planner. I recommend waiting until after you have made some decisions about your wedding to find a wedding planner.

The most important thing about a wedding is meeting the needs and desires of the couple. A wedding planner will help you with the essentials, the planning and hiring of people to set up the tablecloths, buffet, and flowers. They will also help you choose different activities to do before your wedding such as walks through the forest, the beach or the Amazon, horseback riding, or an afternoon at sea. Another thing that we recommend is that the food be light and as familiar as possible so that those with sensitive stomachs don't have any complications.

A wedding in Ecuador will leave you with the best memories of such a long-awaited day, but when you say “yes,” I am sure that the beauty of the place and how well planned everything is will not even be of interest to you.

We hope that you only have to focus on taking the next step with the partner of your dreams. The decorations, venue, food, and more are only the exterior manifestation of what has been cultivated and built internally by two beautiful people who are ready to commit to one another for a lifetime.



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by Liz Marcillo

Liz Marcillo: The Wedding Guru of Manta

HiExpat: Thank you very much Liz, we have heard about your work planning events and weddings and it is so great to have you as a guest in this edition of HiExpat. We know that Manta is one of the main tourist destinations in Ecuador and that it is chosen by many couples to celebrate their special day. Could you tell us a bit about how you started your career in the field of event planning?

Liz Marcillo: Liz Marcillo: Hello! I am delighted to take part in this interview and grateful for the opportunity to talk about the most special day of a couples story! And, in turn, that it can be celebrated in a city as magical as Manta. My wonderful journey in planning began in 2011, when I was still studying at the Universidad Católica De Santiago de Guayaquil.

One day a wedding expert came to tell us about the work that goes into “making” a wedding. For me, it was an awakening because I was able to see this industry as an opportunity to exploit my creativity and learn so much. And so it was, I began to do internships with experts in the field, work many weddings where I learned a lot, and was able to consolidate my knowledge, which is currently a fundamental tenant in my work.

In 2017 I obtained an international certification in Lima-Peru, as a Wedding Planner. In the same year I started my own business in my hometown

of Manta. I did this because I realized that many couples had this city as their first option, since the beautiful beaches of the coastal profile that this city offers are very attractive for both Ecuadorians and foreigners.

HiExpat: The organization of events, such as a wedding, entails a lot of responsibility, discipline, and creativity to meet and exceed the expectations of the couple and guests. What do you think has been your greatest challenge when organizing a “dream wedding?”

Liz Marcillo: I think that the greatest challenge is to meet the expectations of the couples. I always want to ensure that I have met all their requirements and that they are reflected in all the little details on their wedding day.

Prior to their big day they are provided ample time to plan. All the couple’s desires are aligned with their budget and the suppliers are evaluated based on their schedule and quality and then chosen.

Yes, it is true that as a Wedding Planner our role is to help them fulfill their wishes for the long-awaited day. However, we must not forget that behind the dream is the logistics of it all. Finding that balance and synergy throughout the process is definitely very challenging.

HiExpat: Manta, being a tourist city, attracts a large number of foreigners and locals who choose this coastal city to hold their most important events. What recommendations would you give to all those who want to come and celebrate their wedding on the beach? Where do you think is the best place to do it?

Liz Marcillo: Manta is a tourist city that is home to wonderful places where one can make the best memories on their special day. Likewise, this city is very diverse and has a wide variety of delicious gastronomy. The weather helps a lot for events, since most of the year it is very warm and cool.

Without a doubt, I recommend Manta as a city to get married in and enjoy everything that it can offer.

HiExpat: Similarly, Ecuador is considered one of the best destinations to live, retire, and invest for expats. Could you tell us what your experience has been working with this community of expats?

Liz Marcillo: In my experience, I would say that the foreigners I have worked with highly value being able to get married in front of the sea while having abundant local resources at an affordable cost. Many other coastal cities do not offer the benefits or low cost that Manta does.

Manta offers the full package, beautiful beaches, good food, affordable costs, and good weather. There are natural reserves such as the Pacoche forest, haciendas, and farms all around.

It is a great responsibility and commitment to offer an enriching and unique experience to the relatives and guests of my foreign couples. I work hard to be aware of all the details that will make them feel comfortable, calm, and at home.

HiExpat: Planning an event requires a lot of dedication, effort and organization. One must take care of every detail perfectly and let the results speak for themselves. For an event/wedding planner this is paramount. Based on your experience what message would you give to our readers who are planning an event or what would be the main recommendation you would give to someone before planning?

Liz Marcillo: For a day as special as a wedding, planning and reviewing every detail is a very important part of the process. Therefore, my recommendation for all couples is to hire trained professionals! As a wedding and event planner we continually get better at our craft and always work to give our clients the “Wow” effect. We strive to make sure everything takes place between the line of tranquility and spectacularity, which makes a wedding unique and special.



by Diana Cano

Never Let Time Pass in Vain

HiExpat: Thank you Diana for collaborating with HiExpat. It is a pleasure for us to learn more about you and share your story. We know that you are an empowered woman, finance professional, athlete, and activist. Could you tell us a bit about how the DCBright Foundation started?

Diane: Thanks for the interview. I always liked philanthropy from a very young age and when I moved to the United States I felt the need to share all the knowledge that I have gained over the years and give back over time. I felt this especially each time I returned to my beloved Ecuador for Christmas.

HiExpat: What does the foundation do? What are its areas of work?

Diana: The foundation helps find solutions to many social problems throughout a variety of sectors. During the last decade I have studied the causes and problems related to the lack of education, opportunities, the increase in poverty in communities, the lack of inclusion for women in finance, banking, technology, and the lack of access to sports in childhood, specifically related to cycling which is something that

I am passionate about. Throughout this work I have come to believe that with our mitigation strategies we can change the lives of many and transform communities into more prosperous ones. Right now I have my eye on a project with low-income children from the Ecuadorian Sierra who want to start cycling but can't due to lack of materials

HiExpat: Female empowerment and the inclusion of women socially continues to be a constant struggle for women in different parts of society where machismo still stands out. What would be your message for our readers regarding these issues that are of great social interest worldwide?

Diane: Keep fighting, raise your voices, and do not be silent. We have been working to achieve fair, free, and inclusive equality in all areas, especially those still occupied predominantly by men. Inequality is still a matter of great concern, however I think we've made a lot of progress in the last few years. For example in the US women still earn 0.83 cents for every \$1 a man earns and on average, the board of directors in the U.S. and the EU are only 29% occupied by women.

These statistics are worrying but we continue to fight the constant struggle.

HiExpat: In addition to being the founder of the DCano Foundation and a dedicated finance professional, you are also dedicated to sports, specifically cycling. Nowadays, this is a very popular sport in Ecuador and we would like to share with our readers some recommendations if they want to start practicing this beautiful sport.

Diane: I believe the main thing is to have a love for the sport. Every morning that I wake up I am very grateful for a new opportunity and happy to be able to do something that I like. I recommend readers to pursue what they are passionate about no matter what sport it is. Don't let time pass in vain. Make the most of it and live as if it were the last day of your life. Many times when we try new things, and things that scare us, these can be therapeutic moments for us.

HiExpat: We know that you have close ties to the North American community since you are Ecuadorian but have resided in the United States.

From your point of view, as an activist and athlete who knows both cultures, what advice would you give to expats who want to come to visit or reside in Ecuador?

Diane: I lived in Ecuador until I was 18 years old and after my studies I decided to move to the Big Apple, New York, to start my professional career.

For many years I wasn't able to return to my beloved Ecuador because I dedicated myself to my education and work. Recently though, with the pandemic, I learned that you can have it all, nature, beaches, an organic and sustainable life, and calmness while at the same time performing as a professional. Moreover, having the possibility of being able to explore other lands/cultures is

the most beautiful thing that a human being can give themselves as a gift. Sometimes we fear not knowing the people or not speaking the language, however I think that's the beauty of migrating to other countries. Staying in one place for a lifetime and not exploring would be self-harm.





Hi Expat

HiExpat is a magazine that specializes in informing and inspiring the North American community residing in Ecuador, which currently contributes approximately 600M USD to the local economy.

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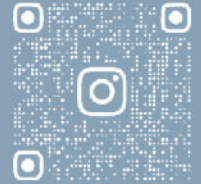
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**Kika Uribe:
An Iconic
Ecuadorian
Wedding Planner**

HiExpat: Thank you very much Kika, it is a true honor for us to have you as a guest in this edition, your career as an event planner specializing in weddings is impressive. We know that Ecuador is a country with magical landscapes and that it is a destination chosen by many when taking "the big step" in marriage. Could you tell us a bit about how you started your career in this beautiful and exciting area of event planning?

Kika: My career in the events industry began more than 15 years ago as the director of my BTL agency.

I am a publicist and designer by profession and this allowed me to manage corporate events, brand activations, and product launches for very important people in the country.

In 2009 I decided to turn my business around and into what I discovered I was more passionate about. I decided to pursue more training and in 2010 I started my destination wedding organization and event design company, and launched my new brand Kika Wedding Planning.

Along the way, this wonderful world has taught me about many spectacular places, cultures, and couples.

Together with my team we have carried out hundreds of successful destination weddings, thus achieving the interest of couples who not only want Ecuador as a destination but also countries like Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and the U.S.

Using all my experience I was able to open my own school of wedding and event planning called "Eventistas." I have been able to teach what I know and have had the honor of being a speaker at international conferences and sharing the stage with greats from the industry such as David Tintera, Bodas de Cuento, Sasha Souza, Ceci New York, and others.

HiExpat: Wedding planners have the responsibility of making the ideas of their clients come true for their dream wedding. What are the most important parts when planning a "dream wedding?"

Kika: The most important thing to be able to plan a dream wedding for a couple is having a true connection with the couple. It is necessary to try and put yourself in the shoes of the couple and feel the same emotion that they feel. At the same time I have to remember that I am there to advise and guide them through tough decisions as well.

HiExpat: Ecuador is the country of the four worlds, full of beautiful and magical places that fit perfectly into the dreams of a couple planning their wedding. Sometimes locations can be a challenge for a wedding planner though, what has been your most memorable experience using unusual locations?

Kika: For me all my weddings are memorable experiences, each one leaves me with a lesson and allows me to get to know the country more. I am convinced that every part of the country is a paradise that deserves to be known. Ecuador has all the magic that a couple looks for to really live the experience of a destination wedding.

HiExpat: Currently, Ecuador is one of the top countries considered by foreigners to live, retire, and invest. How has your experience been working with foreigners when planning a wedding?

Kika: 90% of my clients are foreign couples, each of them has different cultures and customs and sometimes it can be a challenge. One time I had to certify myself as a minister to be able to officiate a wedding since the person who was planning to do it could not attend. We had 120 guests and everything was ready, so the wedding planner solved it and the show had to go on.

HiExpat: Finally, based on your great experience, what recommendations would you give to our readers, who are mostly foreigners from North America, if they are planning to get married in Ecuador?

Kika: It can be very difficult to plan a wedding in a destination that is far from home and be 100% sure that everything will be perfect. If you hire and trust a wedding planner, this person really becomes your eyes, your support, and your ally which ensures that everything will go as planned.

Ecuador is a wonderful destination, the location is a dream, and it is worth making it the setting for one of your most important days.



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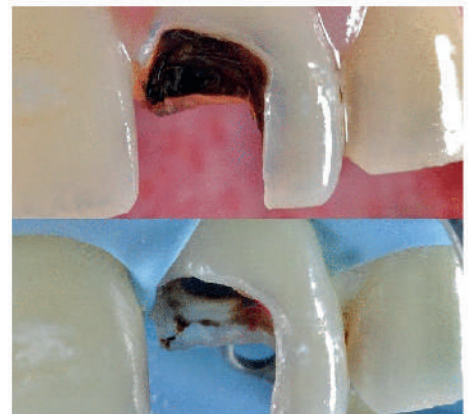
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When Dreams Come True

by Finca Paraíso Verde
Ivana Moreira



HiExpat: Thank you Ivanna for being part of the 8th edition of HiExpat magazine. This edition is focused on weddings and marriages in Ecuador and everybody knows that Finca Paraíso Verde is one of the most renowned places for weddings in Manabi. We can't wait to tell our readers more about this magical place! So what is Green Paradise Farm?

Ivana: It is a pleasure for me to be part of this edition and to be able to use this platform to highlight our space and the things we offer.

Finca Paraíso Verde is a private farm located in the Bajo Las Palmas sector of the Montecristi canton. Some of the activities we carry out on the farm are reservations for social and corporate events, although our main focus is on weddings.

We have a chapel named the Virgen de Guadalupe, where many wonderful love stories have been sealed and begun. Additionally, the Cerro Vista Area, which is our reception space, dawns a majestic view of the Cerro de Montecristi.

HiExpat: Planning an event is not an easy task, it takes a lot of effort and organization. Could you tell us a bit about your experience in this field? What motivated you to pursue a career as a wedding/event planner?

Ivana: I really like to organize, plan, and above all take care of little details. For me holding an event is not just part of a job, but it is also a reflection of the person I am. I believe that principles and values are important, so I take on the responsibility of planning each event with love, respect, and quality.

Our entire team works and abides by these values as well, along with any providers that we work with. Quality and excellent service are our priority.

Every dream, desire, and wish of our clients are placed with great trust in us.

HiExpat: We know that there are many places in Manabí where wonderful events can be held. However we believe that Finca Paraíso Verde is a place with unparalleled magic, the perfect combination of nature and luxury events, which, of course, only you know how to develop. What have been your biggest challenges when planning an event at the Farm?

Ivana: Initially, our biggest challenge was changing the traditional ideas of what an event space should look like or have when promoting ourselves to clientele. Many people are simply accustomed to four walls and a roof as an event space. At the Farm though, we are able to differentiate ourselves through little details which add special meaning such as with our catering or decorations. Nowadays this is what we are known for and it is our strength as a company. People

use us because they know we provide authentic and personalized events.

Of course there are external situations, such as the pandemic, that undoubtedly destabilized us at the beginning. We took advantage of this time in order to review and reconstruct our business and in a few months we were stronger than ever. In fact, we were able to hold more events than before after this down time.

The challenges are and will always be present, such as a national strike, but we have been able to manage these conflicts thanks to the good relationship we maintain with our allied suppliers. We know that in these situations the most important thing is to remain calm and remember that there is always a plan B.

HiExpat: Our readers are mostly foreigners from North America, retirees, and investors who have come to Ecuador for all the wonderful things our country has to offer. What recommendations would you give to this community if they plan to hold an outdoor event? Why is it important to hire a person specialized in organizing events?

Ivana: Outdoor events are magical. Nature itself is in charge of creating the scene and we use this to our advantage.

It is extremely important to be able to count on an event planner who can give you the confidence and assurance that your event will go as planned.

Event planners know the local market and are able to make sure that all suppliers are offering fair prices and quality services.

An event planner saves time, money and above all provides the security that no detail will be overlooked so that the special couple feels like just another guest, free from worry and enjoying their big day.

HiExpat: Finally, we are curious to know, in your opinion, is an event organizer born or made? What have been some of the best experiences you have had while doing this job?

Ivana: I believe that everything we do with love is noticeable, therefore in my opinion an event organizer is born. It is a vocation of service, and little by little one discovers the skills that they did not know they ever had.

The best experience of doing my job has been, without a doubt, being able to see satisfaction from our clients. This motivates us to always continue giving our best, knowing that when great challenges come we will be able to overcome them. One event that I was very proud of was the CAF event for the First National Meeting of Diversities in Ecuador. We were able to bring in professional weavers to create the famous straw hat made of toquilla (Panama hat). This was a very important international event and once again our culture was present here due to the details we orchestrated.









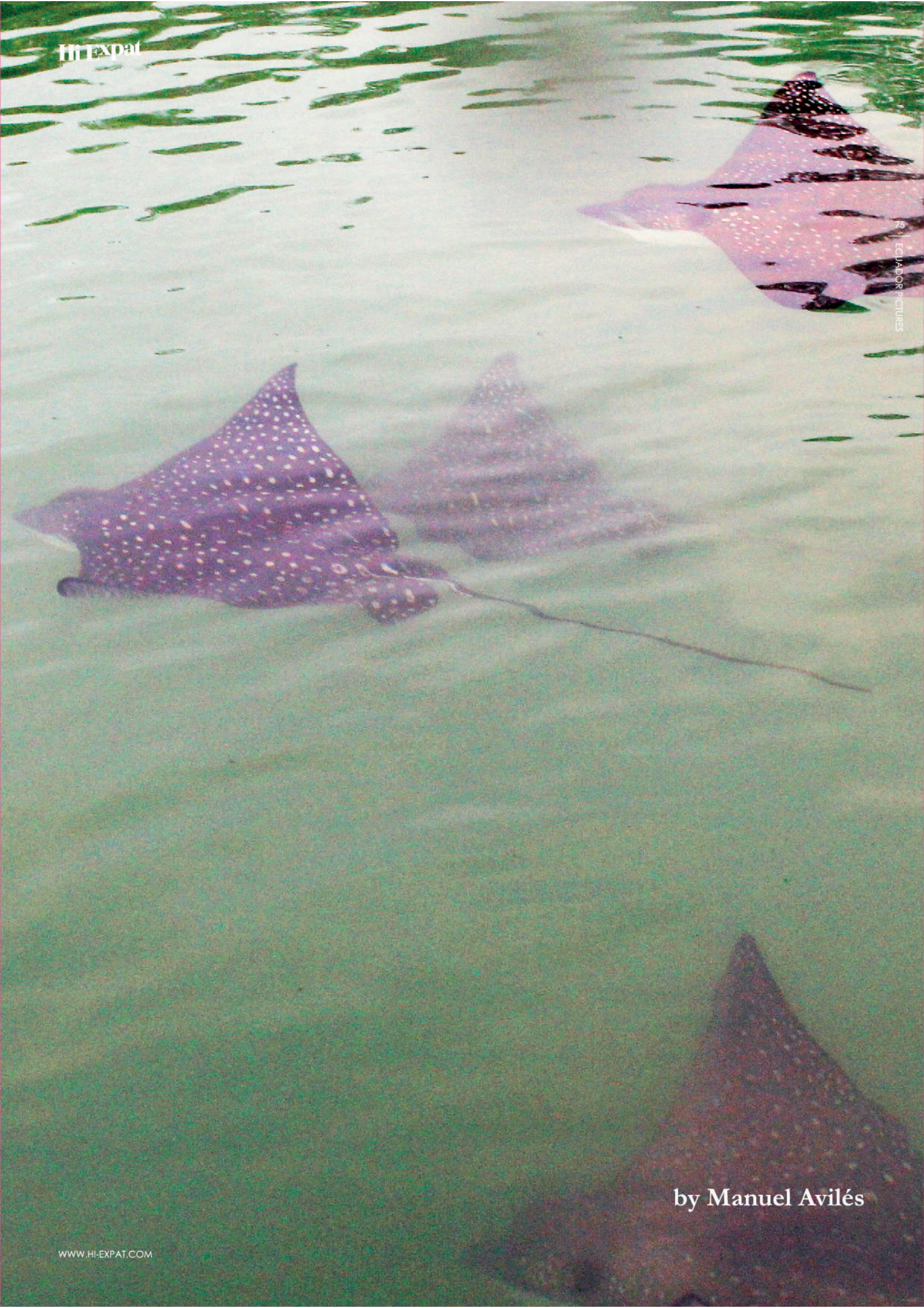
by Manuel Avilés



by Manuel Avilés



by Manuel Avilés



by Manuel Avilés



Dr.
Craig Penny,
The Vital
Connection

What is the connection between the spinal column and nervous system?

The nervous system and spinal column provide a connection to every organ in the human body. The spinal cord, a crucial component of the central nervous system, is located within the spinal column (CNS).

According to Grey's Anatomy, "the nervous system controls and coordinates all organs and structures of the human body." This includes things like heart rate, blood vessel activity, gland activity, and other organs. The brain and spinal cord are the only organs in the body completely protected by bone because of their critical importance.

The spine is made up of 24 movable vertebrae with the sacrum and pelvic bones forming the base. The spine has discs that act as cushions between each vertebra. There are also "neural foramen" openings between each vertebra where nerves exit the spine.

What should your spine look like when it's in correct alignment?

The spine should have an S shape from the side or lateral view. This shape provides the spine with movement flexibility, strength, and even weight distribution. The cervical and lumbar curves form a slightly inward or lordotic C-shape. The thoracic spine curves outward, opposite the cervical and lumbar spines.

The spine from the front view should be straight from the pelvis up to the skull.

What happens when a vertebrae is misaligned?

A vertebral subluxation is a misalignment of one or more vertebrae which causes pressure on the spinal cord. It causes the nerves that emerge from the spine to interfere with their ability to function.

The curves of the spine will alter because of structural imbalance, and the muscles that run along it will tension, spasm, or weaken and atrophy.

Subluxation is the most common bodily issue that is ignored. One problem is that a subluxation can be asymptomatic, known as "the silent killer," going unnoticed for a long time before causing a variety of health problems.

A misaligned cervical vertebra results in the loss of the cervical curve. Military neck, sometimes known as "text neck," has become very common, especially for kids.

The human head weighs about a dozen pounds. But as the neck bends forward and down, the weight on the cervical spine begins to increase. That's the burden that comes with staring at a smartphone — the way millions do for hours every day.

Causes of Spinal Misalignment "Vertebral Subluxation"

The spine develops and forms healthy spinal curves during the first 15 years of life. However, several childhood activities can cause spinal misalignments. Even a difficult birth can result in cervical spine subluxation. Many adult spine problems are developed at a young age.

Here are six common causes of spinal misalignment.

- **Accidents:** One of the most common causes of spinal misalignment.
- **Poor form during exercise:** Incorrect lifting technique puts strain on the spine.
- **Stress:** Tension in spinal muscles can lead to vertebrae misaligning.
- **Constant falls:** Occasionally, this is seen in children learning to walk.
- **Bad posture:** Sitting at a computer for many hours.
- **Cell phone use:** Looking down for prolonged periods, also known as “text neck.”

Some recognizable symptoms of spine misalignment include fatigue, numbness or tingling in the hands and feet, headaches, and frequent illnesses.

A fuse box in your home is a good analogy of a subluxation with the nervous system. A fuse will blow if there is too much “stress” running through the wires. Adjusting a vertebra is like resetting the fuse. Once more, energy is flowing!

What to expect at your first consultation in my office?

After taking your case history, my first step is getting an assessment of your spine by using a full spine x-ray. The assessment will show if you have proper spine curves, determine where the subluxation is in your spine, and how it is affecting your health.

The next step would be to use an instrument called the “Nervo-scope” that measures the temperature along the spine. When a vertebra interferes with the nerve system, the temperature of the spine changes.

The third step is to examine your posture and tone of the muscles that run along the spine. I use all this information to decide where I need to make a specific and safe spinal adjustment. It will also assist me in determining how many visits you will need to correct your problem. Simple cases will be between 12 or 15 visits, while others may need 18 or more.

As a practicing chiropractor, I use the Gonstead technique, which is regarded as the “gold standard” because of its effectiveness and safety. Gonstead spinal adjustments are gentle and precise. Chiropractic care for children is becoming more popular among parents, and children enjoy being adjusted. Adjusting a child's spine helps to ensure that the spine is developing correctly.

Benefits of Chiropractic Care for Children and Adults

- Improves posture, concentration, headaches/migraines, digestion, and athletic performance.
- Improves the immune system functions, aids in breathing, anxiety, back pain and muscle tension.

Your general health depends on having your spine examined and adjusted on a regular basis. Living a long and healthy life is all about prevention.

About Dr. Craig Penny

I graduated from Life University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, with a Doctor of Chiropractic degree in September 2000. For 20 years, I worked as a Doctor in Buenos Aires, where I met my Ecuadorian-born wife. My wife and I, with our daughter, decided to move to Manta, Ecuador in April 2021 to be closer to family and enjoy the beautiful lifestyle Manabi has to offer.





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The Latest Advancements in Stem Cell Treatmen in Ecuador



by Dr. Adolfo Andrade



1.- Stem cell research has come a long way and now we are talking about state-of-the-art techniques for stem cell treatment. What does this technique consist of?

Stem cell autotransfusion is a very modern technique that we do in peripheral blood. A blood sample is taken from the vein, we prepare it with transfer and cell growth factors, and it returns to your bloodstream. It is painless and personalized.

The treatment is valuable for many different reasons. For example, arthritis, osteoarthritis, and hair loss are among some of the most common diseases and conditions that have been scientifically proven to improve with stem cell treatment. Also within the field of aesthetic medicine autotransfusion of stem cells has served to renew old facial cells and give greater lusciousness to the face.

2.- How do I know if I should get stem cell treatment?

All human beings have a cell cycle in which cells divide, grow, age, and die. According to a study carried out by the National University of Colombia, they reported that this cycle in the face happens every three days. Stem cells are also suggested treatment for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes, fibromyalgia, cancer, and many more diseases.

If you have any discomfort in your body, it is appropriate to consult a specialist doctor on the issue to see if the treatment is right for you.

3.- Are there any other types of therapies used to strengthen the use of stem cells?

There are other methods but they are usually very expensive, such as a bone marrow transfusion. Ecuador is a developing country and this treatment is exclusive for a certain group of people, that it is not commonly seen in Ecuador. In any case, the autotransfusion of stem cells is a highly successful treatment, has measurable results, and has a low risk at less than .1% of complications.

4.- When do you start to see the results of stem cell treatments?

The results of the autotransfusion of stem cells is fast. In two or three days joint and muscular pain decreases and in about 10 days a very notable improvement of the skin on the face can be seen, but it generally depends on the type of treatment.

5.- How long does stem cell treatment take?

For the benefit to be sustained and to receive excellent effects it is recommended that treatment be done on average once every two or three weeks for three to four times a week. If it is for chronic diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, neurological diseases, Parkinson's, senile dementia, or diabetes, the treatment may take a little longer, but in any case the results are measurable and both patients and family members will notice the improvements.

6. Does stem cell autotransfusion have any side effects?

The benefit of stem cell autotransfusion is that they are your own stem cells that return to your body, so they do not cause allergies, anaphylactic shock, intolerance, or poisoning. The risk is much less compared to other treatments and is considered a non-invasive method of treatment.

7. How is the autotransfusion of stem cells different from those obtained from bone marrow or from an umbilical cord?

The stem cells within our system are extracted from the venous blood. It is prepared, centrifuged, and then immediately returned to the bloodstream through your own vein. This procedure takes about 20 to 30 minutes.

Stem cells from marrow require an operating room, anesthesiologist, hospitalization, and significant recovery time.

Umbilical cord stem cells need to be rehydrated with hydrogen and stored in a blood bank.

Both methods also require a special test (immunohistocompatibility) if they are to be donated to another person.

The Big Day

by Fiancee
Ma. Fernanda Cueva

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ECUADOR LIVING COLUMN



Ph: Enrique Calero

HiExpat: Thank you very much María Fernanda for collaborating with us on this eighth edition of HiExpat magazine. This edition is focused on weddings and marriages in Ecuador, and who better than you as the owner of “Fiancee,” to tell us a little more about the world of brides and the perfect dresses for this big day. Could you start by telling our readers how Fiancee was born?

Ma. Fernanda: Fiancée was born 16 years ago due to the need for a physical space when planning for Ecuadorian brides. We want to make women happy on one of the most important days of their lives so we have different designs, exclusive models, and a priority to make brides feel their best when choosing their dress.

My mother Lucía Cevallos thought of the idea which has now turned into our full time jobs. We feel a true sense of pride when Fiancée's designs are seen at parties and weddings through our dresses. I joined my mother's dream and began to learn about fashion, thus leading me to develop this passion for design.

HiExpat: Carrying out a wedding involves excellent planning and one of the most important steps in this planning is choosing the bride's dress. Could you tell us a little about the process that takes place with a bride when she arrives at Fiancee looking for her dream dress?

Ma. Fernanda: Normally this process is carried out between 6 and 8 months before the wedding. This time is prudent and necessary for brides, since many wedding decisions are made based on the style of the dress.

When a client is already in the atelier, the most important thing for me is to listen to her wishes and draw a mental picture of the design that the bride could wear. Then talk about how she would like to look that day, what designs she would like, or what parts of her body she would like accentuated. This part of the process is all about respecting her wishes and putting her personality into the dress.

I like to advise and recommend styles that we have available, but I want to be clear about something, there is a fine line that must be walked to ensure the essence of the bride is seen in her dress. Each bride is unique, different and beautiful. It is the magic of her essence that must prevail over all design decisions.

After choosing the dress, we select the accessories and complements that go hand in hand with the hairstyle, and then makeup begins. Throughout this journey we are in contact with the bride responding to her needs and concerns. I like to be part of the pre-wedding process, so I essentially become her style advisor and that is precisely part of our service when we work for each bride.

The last month before the big day is when the final adjustments of the dress are made. This is my favorite stage because the bond with my client is stronger and there are many emotions and feelings, so on some occasions I have cried with them and I have celebrated with them as if we were family.

HiExpat: We know that each wedding and each bride is unique, in tastes and preferences, all with one idea in common: to get the dress of their dreams for the most important day of their lives. Based on your experience creating beautiful wedding dresses, what do you think has been the biggest challenge when making a dress? What do you consider to be the challenges, in general, in Ecuador when making a wedding dress?

Ma. Fernanda: In all these years, the biggest challenge has been design. We have to take something intangible that a bride has, an idea that can be captured just the way she imagines it, and turn it into something tangible, her wedding dress.

To achieve that desired design, it is necessary to connect with the bride and understand the specifics of what the bride wants to wear on her big day. We then translate her heart's dreams into a dress, and, above all, make sure that she can see herself in what we've created.

I don't consider my job to be challenging in Ecuador. I do not see making wedding dresses as a challenge since we are and we have what is necessary to fulfill dreams. We have great potential and our work is of top quality to brides. I have had the pleasure of traveling and working for international people, and that is what I find to be more challenging. We try to publicize our excellent work at a national level and we have seen the response from our clients and wedding suppliers.

HiExpat: Finally, what recommendations would you give our readers if they are looking for that iconic and unique dress that will accompany them on their dream wedding day?

Ma. Fernanda: For me, time is one of the most important things. Time allows us to understand what is being desired in a dress. It takes time to think about and form the design of the dress. We want to make sure that a bride loves their dress with all their heart and without a doubt know it is the one for them.

We hope that choosing a dress will be an unforgettable experience and not something that brings stress or hardship. Wedding planning was made to be enjoyable.

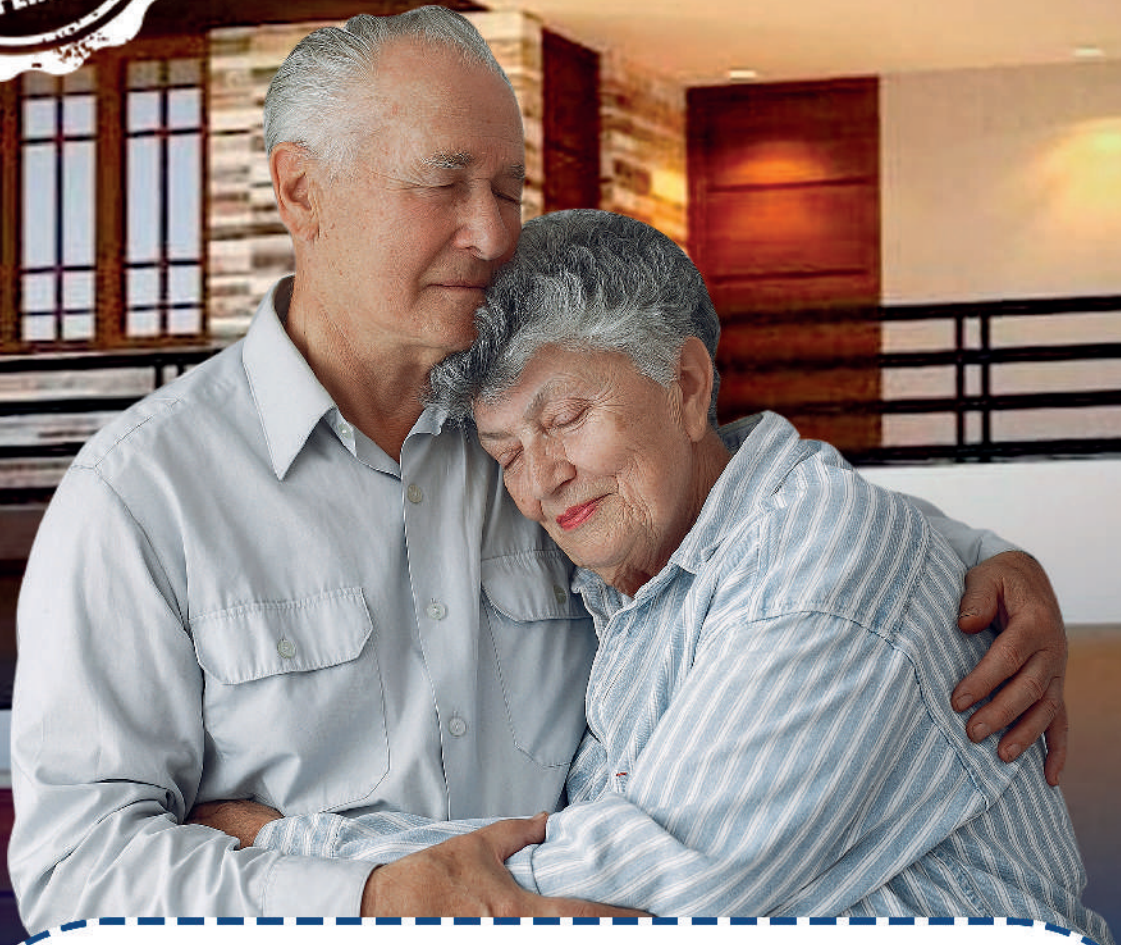
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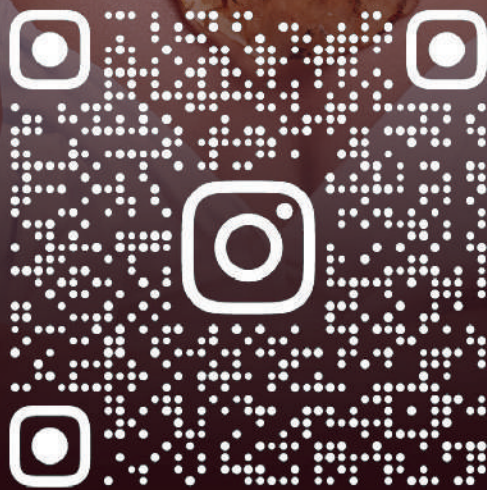
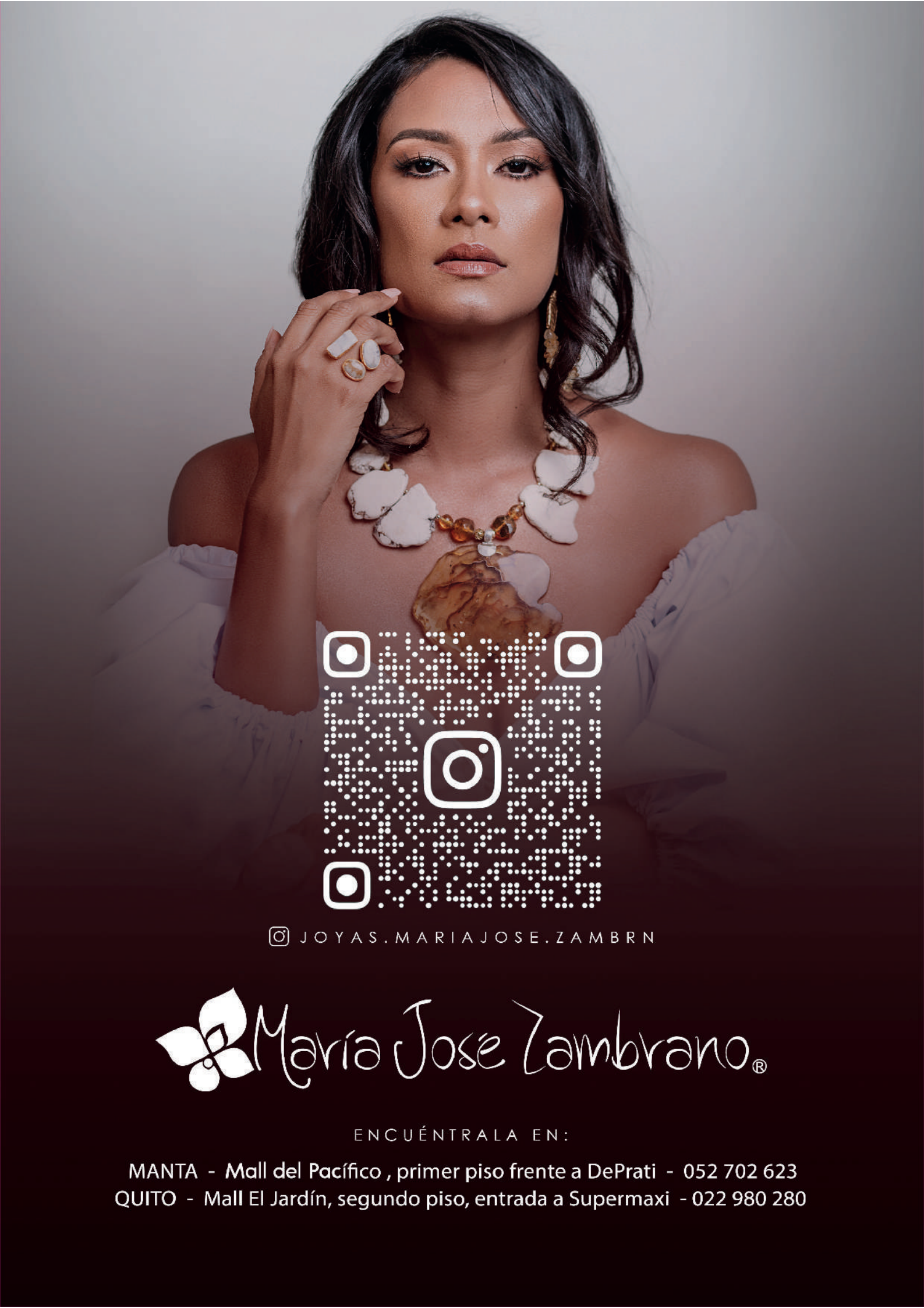
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