The Eye

Beach, Village + Urban Living in Mexico
Huatulco · Issue 154
January 2026
FREE

In this Issue

Year of the Fire Horse

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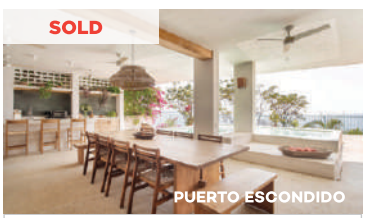

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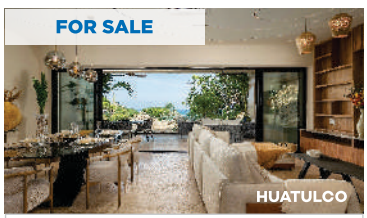

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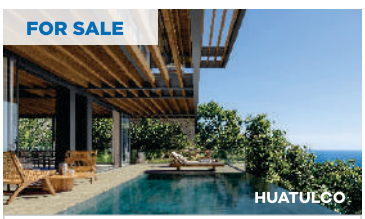

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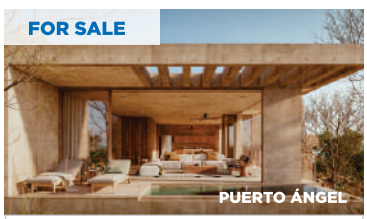

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Editor's Letter

"We did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves."— Chief Seattle

It's the New Year… again.

Suddenly it is 2026, and at times I feel as though I'm living in a science-fiction film. The kind where a woman goes to sleep and wakes up to find that ten or twenty years have passed. Everyone looks a little older, the world is a little less shiny, yet the headlines remain stubbornly familiar. Immigration crises. War. Corporate takeovers. The looming threat of environmental collapse. Will we ever learn?

As humans, we try to make sense of the world by dividing it into fragments. We divide the vastness of space into time — years, months, days, minutes, seconds. We divide land into countries and cities, drawing imaginary lines that we then defend and fight over. We separate ourselves by identity, ideology, belief. And in all this dividing, we search for meaning: Who are we? What is our purpose? Why does harmony feel so elusive?

There is no shortage of resources on this planet for all of us to live well. And yet, as a species, we continue to make decisions from a frequency of lack. We are taught, explicitly and implicitly, that things are limited, that if someone else has more, there will be inevitably less for us. I believe scarcity is something we have learned, reinforced by systems that benefit from fear and competition rather than trust and cooperation.

This year, according to Chinese astrology, is the Year of the Fire Horse, a cycle that comes around only once every sixty years. Rare, not quite a Halley's Comet moment, but close. The Fire Horse (Bing-Wu) is associated with vitality, momentum, and spiritual transformation. It represents a powerful alignment of motion and illumination, a time when people feel called to take bold steps, to embark on pilgrimages, and to pursue both outer and inner journeys. So what does this mean for us?

Perhaps it means that speed is no longer the answer. That moving faster, consuming more, and fragmenting the world into ever-smaller pieces has not brought us closer but only further from one another. The Fire Horse does not ask us to escape what feels difficult, but to meet it with courage, clarity, and movement that has direction, not reaction, but intention.

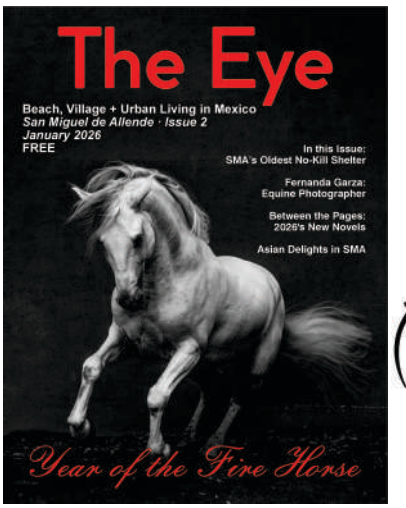
Fire does not simply destroy; it illuminates. Let us step out of patterns rooted in fear and into a different way of being, one where there is enough when we move in alignment rather than competition.

Let us choose presence over paralysis, connection over fragmentation, and curiosity over certainty. To take our own quiet pilgrimages, inward or outward, and to participate more consciously in the systems we belong to. Not to fix the world all at once, but to move differently within it. Sometimes, that is where real change begins.

See you next month,

Jane

The horse featured on our January cover was photographed by Fernanda Garza, whose work explores the relationship between presence, trust, and the animal world. Read our in-depth interview with Fernanda in the San Miguel de Allende issue — scan the QR code to continue the story.



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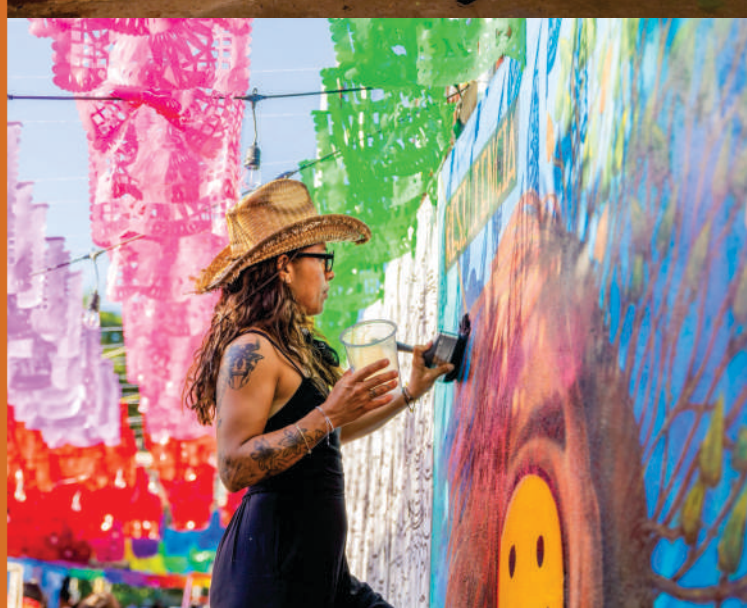

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Growing Up Escaramuza: My Path Through Charrería

By Ana Domínguez

My story as a rider began at age nine. I first learned to ride astride, using a standard saddle, and did not belong to any *escaramuza*—I simply enjoyed being around horses and riding.

Escaramuza means "skirmish" in Spanish, referring to a small fight or brief combat, but in a Mexican cultural context, it specifically describes a team of women performing synchronized, choreographed maneuvers on horseback, riding side-saddle in traditional attire, as part of the national sport of *charrería* (charro horsemanship). More than an equestrian ballet, it is a tradition that gallops with strength and color at the heart of charreria.

Charrería is considered one of the most complete sports, as it is practiced outdoors and engages every muscle in the body—from the moment the horse begins to move to the application of strength in direct interaction with the animals involved.

This equestrian discipline, unique in the world, represents the feminine expression of Mexico's national sport: charrería. It is a visual spectacle that blends athletic discipline with the richness of Mexican folklore and history.

I had experience in multiple equestrian disciplines before becoming a high-performance escaramuza rider. I practiced show jumping and barrel racing. However, escaramuza fully met my expectations and became my sport.

Before the term escaramuza existed, there were women known as Adelitas or Soldaderas who participated during the Mexican Revolution—not only as nurses and followers, but also as brave combatants. They rode horses, led troops, and carried out heroic acts, showing strength and courage on horseback in both battle and military life. Alongside the charros, they were a fundamental part of the Revolution's identity.

On the haciendas of that era, many women rode horses sidesaddle. This was not a sporting choice, but a social imposition: long dresses, etiquette, and the norms of the time required women to ride this way. However, this style of riding became the first expression of feminine horsemanship. Despite its limitations, many women developed remarkable skill in controlling their horses, maneuvering difficult terrain, and executing agile movements while maintaining the rigid posture society demanded. Unknowingly, they were laying the foundations of what would later become a formal discipline.

In 1921, the first formal charro associations were founded, and throughout the 1920s and 1930s, events and regulations were consolidated, giving rise to modern charrería. Although women did not yet participate officially, they began appearing in exhibitions during patriotic celebrations and regional festivities. The true starting point of the discipline came in 1953, when the first organized female groups began to be documented—groups that trained and performed mounted routines at charro events. These were exhibition performances, but for the first time, there was systematic work: uniforms, defined formations, regular training, and a shared objective.

During the 1960s, these groups multiplied and began to be called escaramuzas. By the end of that decade, it was common to see them included in the programs of state charro associations, although still without a formal rulebook.

Growth accelerated during the 1970s and 1980s, when escaramuza evolved from a purely visual spectacle into a competitive discipline. Teams from different states began training more rigorously, developing more complex maneuvers and seeking their own identity within charrería. This led to a decisive milestone: the publication of the first *Official Escaramuza Rulebook* in 1992 by the Mexican Federation of Charrería. This document formally established the rules still in effect today, including team size, required maneuvers, scoring system, penalties, attire, and the importance of puntas as a scored element. With this regulation, escaramuza transitioned from stylized performances to a formal sport.

From the 2000s onward, the discipline entered a phase of professionalization. Riding schools, specialized trainers, and youth and junior categories emerged. State, regional, and national championships— and the National Olympiads — incorporated escaramuzas as a core part of their programs. International recognition also grew, particularly within Mexican communities in the United States.

Finally, in 2016, with the recognition of charrería as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, escaramuza gained a new level of significance. It represents not only a sport, but a living symbol of Mexican identity and the only space within charrería where women hold a leading role—affirming their strength, discipline, and historical participation.

Escaramuza charra is the only charrería discipline performed exclusively by women. It combines equestrian precision, group synchronization, and a profound sense of tradition. While it may appear visually like a dance on horseback, it is in fact a highly technical routine that demands absolute concentration, mastery of the horse, and perfect coordination among the eight riders that make up the team. Each team consists of eight riders, one substitute, a trainer, and staff responsible for supervising the horses' welfare and needs to keep them in optimal condition, as they are high-performance athletes.

Each rider uses a sidesaddle charro saddle (*albarda charra*), — the traditional feminine style inherited from the 19th century. Despite this seemingly restrictive position, riders perform tight crossings, rapid turns, and complex formations that require leg strength, lateral balance, and constant communication between horse and rider. During the approximately three-minute routine, the team executes a sequence of twelve pre-designed maneuvers (suertes). These include emblematic figures such as the fan (abanico), the flower (flor), the strainer (coladera), the ladder (escalera), and spins, all performed at high speed and with minimal distance between horses.

The routine begins with the *puntas*, a controlled sliding stop that leaves a straight mark in the arena and demonstrates the horse's responsiveness, often contributing crucial points to the final score.

Riders wear long dresses in the Adelita style or traditional *charra de faena* attire, and on gala occasions, *china poblana* or formal charra dresses. Each outfit is crafted in accordance with Mexican traditions while honoring the style of our roots. All costumes are unique, handmade pieces with intricate embroidery, sometimes using gold and silver thread, and distinctive designs that set each one apart.

These garments are designed to allow mobility without compromising safety. Although visually striking, they are strictly regulated: they must not include elements that could catch, must cover the legs, and must coordinate with the team's colors. The charro hat—rigid and decorated within specific guidelines—not only completes the attire but serves as the most important piece, functioning as a helmet. Along with it, a single ponytail adorned with a matching bow represents the group's identity. Boots, made of suede or leather, are designed to withstand the lateral pressure of the foot when riding sidesaddle.

The horse also plays both a visual and functional role. Quarter Horses are commonly used, breeds known for their speed, agility, and ability to execute tight turns. Their presentation is sober and elegant, with carefully groomed manes and tails to ensure a uniform team appearance. Saddles and tack (reins, headstall, bit, protective gear, saddle) are identical across the eight riders, reinforcing uniformity. Beyond aesthetics, the true value lies in training: the horse must respond smoothly, remain steady during long stops, and maintain a consistent rhythm while the rider performs technical movements.

While the rulebook is detailed, the most important scoring elements include puntas, suertes, synchronization, and presentation and discipline. The final score is calculated by adding earned points and subtracting penalties. While details may vary annually according to the current regulations of the Mexican Federation of Charrería, the essence remains the same: to reward impeccable technique and group harmony.

Today, escaramuza has national and international presence. In Mexico, teams compete in state and regional championships and in the National Charro Championship—the country's most important event—where the best escaramuzas from each state face off to determine the national champions.

There are also competitions and special exhibitions outside the Mexican Federation of Charrería. Although not officially affiliated, these events have had a significant impact on the discipline's development, pushing teams to pursue greater difficulty and higher performance levels. The growth of children's and youth categories has allowed girls as young as four or five years old to begin training, ensuring the continuity of the tradition.

At twelve, I had the opportunity to join the Tuitán team in Querétaro, where I was trained by Miguel Ángel García Castro, a key figure in my development as a rider. I learned the true art of riding and became a high-performance athlete. With Tuitán, we won several tournaments in our category, and a particularly meaningful achievement for me was winning the 2019 National Olympiads, where we earned one gold medal and one silver medal, with me serving as team captain.

Later, I was invited to join the Chiapas charra team—an organization with a strong trajectory that allowed me to continue growing. Eventually, I received another call to join Escaramuza Charra del Pedregal in Mexico City, trained by Heriberto Sáenz Romero, an outstanding coach who plays a crucial role in the continuation of my career. It is a team rich in tradition, history, and presence within the discipline, where I continue to develop my craft and my passion. Being part of maintaining the competitive and athletic level of this team is a great responsibility for me as a rider.

Charrería has given me incredible fulfillment and unforgettable moments both inside and outside the arena—sensations that are impossible to describe, filled with adrenaline, emotion, and joy. I would not trade it for anything. For me, the bond you form with your horse is deeply special. Being in contact with horses is the greatest feeling that exists, it is absolute peace and an unparalleled connection. A horse embodies nobility, strength, empathy and is simply unique.

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Chinese New Year and Mexico's Forgotten Past

By Kary Vannice

The presence of Chinese New Year in Mexico is not a new-age novelty or recent cultural appropriation. It's steeped in history and honors the tens of thousands of Chinese immigrants and their descendants' migration story that started over a century ago. A story that unfolded through cheap labor recruitment, entrepreneurship, discrimination, expulsion, adaptation, and survival. To understand why Chinese New Year has a place in Mexico's public calendar, it's important to understand the impact that Chinese immigrants have had upon Mexican history.

Chinese immigration to Mexico began during the presidency of Porfirio Díaz. Railroads were expanding, mining operations were growing, and agricultural production was increasing, and like many countries undergoing rapid development, Mexico faced a labor shortage.

Chinese workers, primarily from Guangdong province in southern China, began arriving in Mexico in the 1880s and 1890s. Most didn't come directly from China, they were already working in countries like United States, Canada, and Southeast Asia. Because of this, they were actively sought out by labor recruiters to work in northern Mexico.

By the early 1900s, it was estimated that there were between 13,000 and 20,000 Chinese immigrants living in Mexico, with the highest concentrations in northern states such as Sonora, Baja California, Sinaloa, and Coahuila. These numbers were small relative to Mexico's total population, but their presence was highly visible in certain northern regions.

Chinese immigrants tended to settle where economic opportunity was most accessible, working in agriculture, railroad construction, mining, and commerce. Mexicali, in northern Baja California, became one of the most significant centers of Chinese settlement. Over time, Mexicali developed La Chinesca, a neighborhood that became home to Chinese businesses, associations, and families. At its peak, Chinese residents made up the majority of Mexicali's population, and La Chinesca was considered one of the largest Chinese communities in Latin America.

Many Chinese men married Mexican women, forming families that blended language, customs, and traditions. Chinese businesses became permanent fixtures of local economies. This transition from laborers to neighbors marked a turning point in Chinese-Mexican history, and not a positive one.

What had been tolerated, even welcomed, began to be seen as a social and economic threat. Anti-Chinese sentiment began to grow, in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution.

By the 1920s, anti-Chinese movements had gained momentum, particularly in Sonora. Chinese immigrants were accused of unfair business practices, economic exploitation, and moral corruption. Propaganda portrayed them as unclean, dangerous, and incompatible with Mexican identity. Because of this, women who had married Chinese men were also targeted and portrayed as immoral, corrupted, or disloyal to their nation. These women were publicly shamed, pressured to dissolve marriages, and stripped of all social standing.

Several Mexican states passed laws that banned marriages between Chinese men and Mexican women, restricted where Chinese people could live, and limited the types of businesses they could operate. And these laws named the Chinese immigrants explicitly.

The same Mexican government that once encouraged Chinese immigration to help modernize Mexico, just a few decades later, labeled Chinese migrants as undesirable and even dangerous. And between the late 1920s and early 1930s, thousands of Chinese immigrants were expelled from Mexico, often with little warning and minimal legal protection. Entire families were affected. Mexican wives were forced to choose between remaining in Mexico or following their husbands to China. Children born in Mexico were deported to a country they had never known.

The Chinese population in Mexico dropped sharply. Thriving communities that had taken decades to build were dismantled in a matter of years. By the mid twentieth century, the once visible Chinese presence in many parts of Mexico had almost disappeared. Some families returned decades later. Others assimilated quietly into the local culture, and their histories and stories were lost…or deliberately forgotten.

And yet, not everything disappeared.

In Mexicali, Chinese-Mexican cuisine continued to evolve, becoming a defining feature of that city's identity. Old world Chinese recipes were adapted to regional tastes and ingredients. What began as a way for families to survive became local tradition. Today, Mexicali is known nationally for its Chinese food, even by people who know little about how or why it came to be.

In recent years, Chinese migration to Mexico has increased again, though under very different circumstances. According to Mexico's 2020 census, there are just over 10,000 Chinese-born residents living in the country today. Migration authorities report a steady rise in temporary and permanent residency permits issued to Chinese nationals since 2019.

This contemporary migration is driven by trade, manufacturing, education, and globalization rather than labor recruitment. Some arrive to work in Chinese-owned factories tied to North American supply chains. Others come seeking opportunity, stability, or a jumping off point to countries like the United States or Canada.

Alongside this renewed presence has come a renewed visibility. Chinese New Year celebrations in Mexico today are not just cultural performances. They are acts of recognition. Chinese immigrants are part of the history that shaped this nation, and their story, like so many migration stories, includes welcome and rejection, contribution and contention, loss and renewal.

The red lanterns and dragon dances seen in communities around Mexico are not a new chapter in that story, they're what remains visible after more than a century of perseverance, persecution and integration.

Kary Vannice is a writer and energetic healer who explores the intersections of culture, consciousness, and daily life in Mexico.

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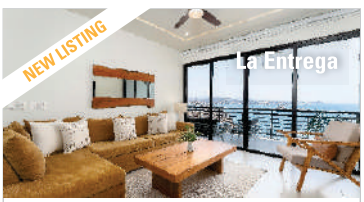

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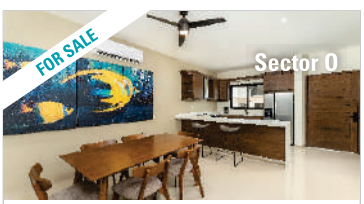

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Un Nuevo Amanecer:
A Community Lifting Children Toward Their Full Potential

By Dan Thompson

Starting their 31st year, Un Nuevo Amanecer (UNA) has been one of Huatulco's most essential community organizations, dedicated to providing therapy, education, and support to children and adolescents with disabilities. What began as a modest local initiative has grown into a respected center offering physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychological support, early stimulation, and inclusive education programs.

In 2024, UNA delivered more than 1,700 individual therapy sessions, and its 2026 plan includes increasing its reach by at least 15%, serving more families who depend on specialized services not available elsewhere in the region.

A Growing Network of Support

For many years, the annual Blues on the Beach concerts provided nearly 60% of UNA's annual funding, establishing a strong foundation for the organization's growth. As awareness has increased, UNA's support base has broadened significantly.

Donors include local residents as well as members of Huatulco's international community, demonstrating the shared commitment behind UNA's mission. Additional support now comes from local businesses, community events such as Vamos Huatulco, and long-time private donors from Mexico, Canada, and the United States. This diversification has strengthened UNA's financial stability and expanded its ability to meet increasing demand.

Support From Across Borders

Canadian donors may contribute to UNA through Amistad Canada, a registered Canadian charity that partners with vetted nonprofit organizations in Mexico. This partnership ensures transparency and allows Canadians to make tax-deductible donations, further supporting UNA's long-term sustainability.

Impact With Measurable Results

Each year, more children learn to walk, speak, develop independence, and gain confidence through UNA's programs. Families receive guidance, emotional support, and the tools needed to help their children reach their full potential. Behind every therapy session is a story of progress—sometimes small, sometimes life-changing, always meaningful.

Looking Ahead

UNA's goals for the coming years focus on expanding therapy services, strengthening professional staff development, improving equipment and facilities, and ensuring that every family seeking help can receive it. Continued community support—local, national, and international—is essential to achieving these goals.

Un Nuevo Amanecer stands as a testament to what a dedicated community can accomplish. Through ongoing generosity, the children and families of Huatulco can continue to look forward to a future filled with dignity, opportunity, and hope.

Friday, January 16, 2026
Casa Bocana, Huatulco

Artists Lineup:
Emiliano Juárez with Dai Gallo and the WestCoasters

Special Guest: Cat Wells — powerhouse Canadian rhythm, soul, and blues vocalist

Donation: 5,000 pesos per person (goes directly to UNA)

Via Paypal:
www.paypal.com/paypalme/unnuevoamanecerhux

or for Canadian donors, receive a CRS receipt via AMISTAD Canada www.AmistadCanada.org/donate Select Un Nuevo Amanecer as beneficiary

Your support funds therapy and education for children with disabilities in our community.

Can't Attend? You Can Still Help:
Sponsor a child: 15,000 pesos provides one full year of therapy and educational support.

Learn more: www.facebook.com/huatulcobluesonthebeach

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Huatulco Snowbird Survey

By Randy Jackson

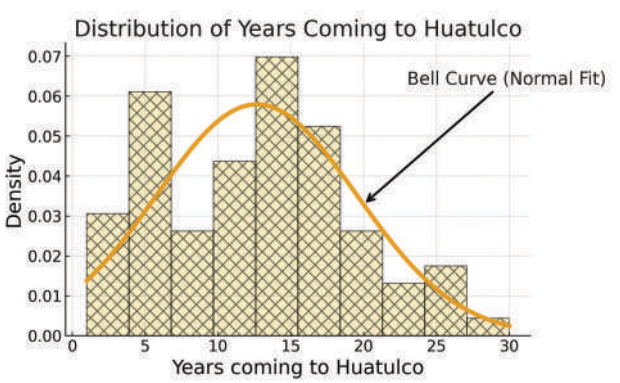
In another time, long ago, I owned a travel bookstore. This was before the internet, back when the world was still big and filled with foreign places. Mostly, my bookstore attracted adventurers bound for faraway lands, and I shared their excitement from behind the counter. But one pattern was persistent: Long-term travellers often returned early, cutting their trips short and citing a need for belonging, for Home.

As a long-time seasonal resident of Huatulco, I remain interested in the paradox of the impulse to explore versus the need for belonging: Have Huatulco snowbirds solved this conundrum, or are they simply seeking tropical warmth and companionship over margaritas? This question led me to conduct the *Huatulco Snowbird Survey*. Presented here are some of the key findings from that effort; the full results can be found on the website www.seasonedhuatulco.com.

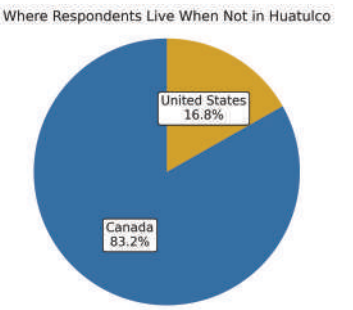
I've tabulated anonymous results from 106 seasonal and long-term visitors of Canadian and American origin. While the actual size of the snowbird population is unknown (likely between 2,000 and 5,000), these responses offer an intriguing snapshot of the attributes and lifestyle choices of Huatulco's seasonal residents. It's not a scientific survey, given the small sample size, but it still provides a unique window into this community.

Longevity and Loyalty

Snowbirds have been consistently returning to Huatulco for several years. The bar graph shows two main humps. Almost 20% of respondents fall into the 4–6 year range, while the larger cluster, of nearly 30%, is in the 12 to 16 year range. When applying the results to a standard distribution curve (for any statistical nerds), it tells us the overall average number of years snowbirds have been returning to Huatulco is thirteen.

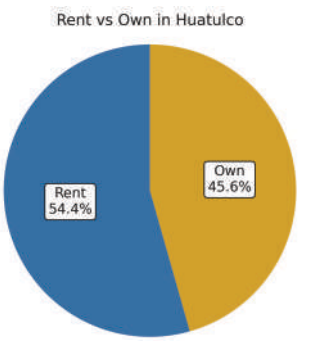


Where Winter Ends



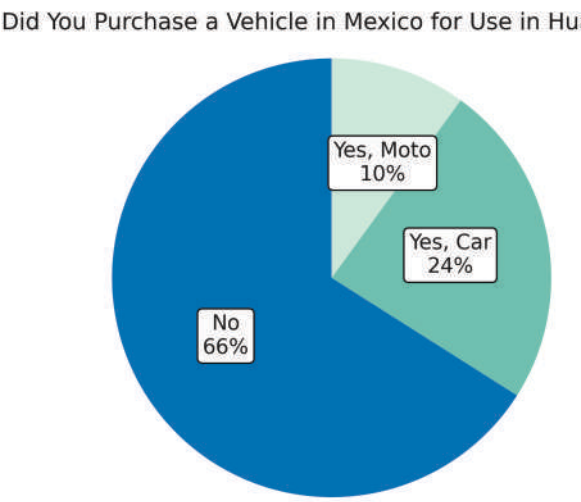
Predictably, the geographical origin of Huatulco's seasonal residents tells the story of escaping the deepest winter cold. The survey data were insufficient to provide a breakdown of the home states of the US snowbirds, but for Canada, the top three home provinces are Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia. The complete breakdown by province is in the full survey results on www.seasonedhuatulco.com.

Staying and Mobility - The Mechanics of Huatulco Snowbird Life



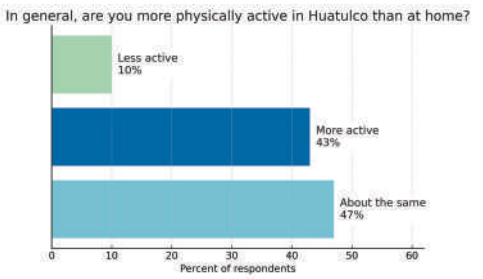
The survey reveals a near-perfect split between accommodation choices: 55% of respondents rent their properties, many of whom are consistent year-over-year renters, while 45% have chosen to purchase their own homes, indicating a long-term investment in a second home.

While the vast majority, 97% of respondents (survey says), choose the convenience of flying to and from Huatulco each season rather than drive, once here, their local transportation options are varied. 24% of those surveyed have purchased a car, and another 10% own a motorcycle or scooter, illustrating a desire for greater independence beyond taxis and local buses.



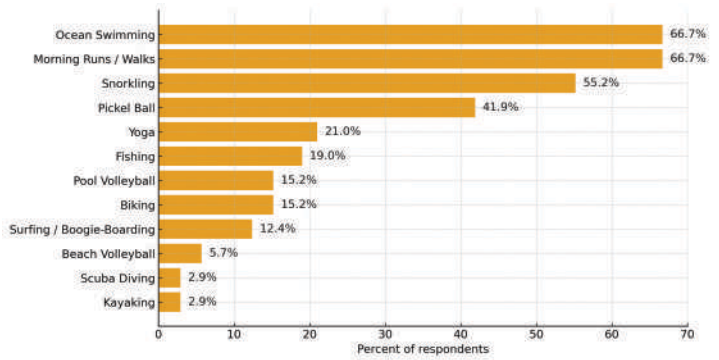
More than Margaritas: Activities and Engagement

It seems like a truism that trading cold weather for the tropics encourages a more active lifestyle, and our survey results for Huatulco snowbirds support this assumption. Forty-three percent (43%) of respondents report being more physically active in Huatulco than at home, compared to only 10% who are less active.



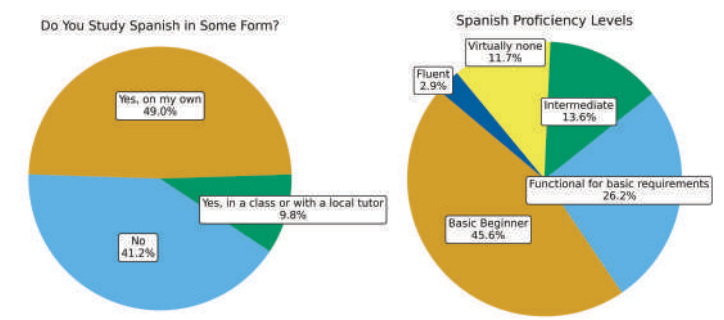
The survey responses show a commitment to activity, often driven by Huatulco's best asset: the warm Pacific Ocean. When asked about regular activities, water-based activities dominate the list. While Huatulco also attracts dedicated participants in Pickleball, Yoga and other activities, where the primary driver of physical activity is the surrounding natural environment.

The survey asked; What activities do you regularly participate in while in Huatulco? (Select all that apply to you)



Beyond physical activity, many Huatulco snowbirds demonstrate an evident dedication to cultural engagement, particularly through language acquisition. The majority of survey respondents are actively attempting to improve their Spanish communication skills.

The motivation to learn Spanish is rooted in both personal enrichment and respect for the local culture. However, proficiency levels indicate the journey is ongoing for most:



Beyond Activities: Why Snowbirds Return To Huatulco

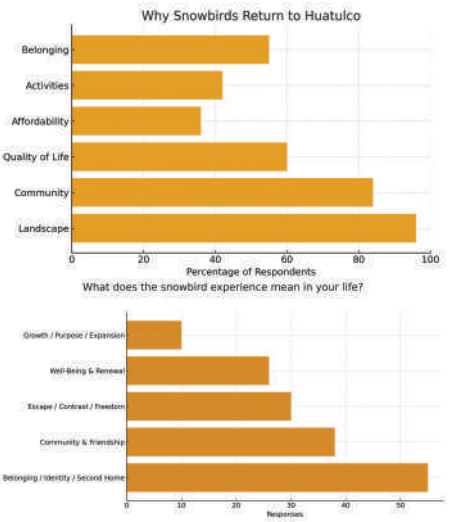
Back in our northern homes, our personal history shapes who we know and what we do. Here, strangers become companions without any of those usual ties. The survey results show that Snowbirds return to Huatulco for more than the activities they enjoy here; they return for how this place makes them feel, and how that unexpected community of strangers forms each winter.

For an explanation of how these results were tabulated, and for results on suggested improvements in Huatulco, why snowbirds would stop coming, and the travel experience of Huatulco snowbirds, check out the full results at seasonedhuatulco.com.

Have Snowbirds Solved The Travellers' Paradox?

Has the snowbird lifestyle solved the paradox of the impulse to explore versus the need for belonging?

In those conversations with my bookstore customers who cut their travels short, I always assumed their impulse to explore wasn't exhausted; it just needed a rest. Travel has long been linked with personal growth; as a quote often attributed to Saint Augustine puts it, "*The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.*" The survey offers us facts about who we are as a snowbird community in Huatulco, but it also echoes an observation I once read in a study: snowbirds seem to be looking for something. And that "something" may well be reflected in the top categories used to group the responses to the question: What does the snowbird experience mean in your life? These include Growth, Freedom, Friendship, Community, Identity, and Belonging. In the end, these may be the real coordinates of the Huatulco snowbird experience.



Randy Jackson blends local reporting from the perspective of a seasonal Huatulco resident with explorations of life and change in Huatulco, Oaxaca and Mexico. Email, box95jackson@gmail.com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The Dream Festival: Celebrating, Sharing, and Transforming

By Britt Jarnryd

Each year, on a Saturday in January, Huatulco comes alive with music, color, and hope during the Dream Festival—a fundraising event that celebrates a shared commitment to education and the development of Oaxaca's most vulnerable rural communities. Organized by Sueño Zapoteco A.C. / Bacaanda Foundation, the festival highlights the foundation's projects, shares its achievements, and raises funds to continue its mission: reducing poverty through dignified, high-quality education.

The Dream Festival is more than a cultural celebration; it is the result of months of collaborative, volunteer-driven work. Beginning in July, a dedicated group of international volunteers plans every detail with enthusiasm and deep respect for the communities the foundation serves. Their commitment creates a space where solidarity knows no borders. Each year, local businesses, hotels, and members of the Huatulco community contribute by donating food, beverages, raffle prizes, and auction items, turning the festival into a true example of community collaboration. Every contribution—large or small—becomes a real opportunity for children and young people in rural areas.

At the heart of the Dream Festival are the rural schools it supports, which take center stage in the celebration. Weeks in advance, students prepare traditional dances from different regions of Oaxaca, accompanied by live bands and the iconic monos de calenda, filling the atmosphere with joy, identity, and cultural pride. Through their performances, students thank attendees for their support and invite them to continue being part of the transformation of rural education.

The Dream Festival is a celebration of achievement, culture, and hope—but above all, it is an invitation to be part of meaningful change.

Every ticket purchased and every donation made translates into dignified classrooms, educational materials, technological tools, academic support, and stronger opportunities for the future.

Come experience this extraordinary festival and be part of transforming lives.

Saturday, January 24, 2026
Starting at 5:00 p.m.
Parque Guelaguetza, Huatulco
Tickets available at the Bacaanda Foundation office

Live the magic, celebrate culture, and help transform lives.

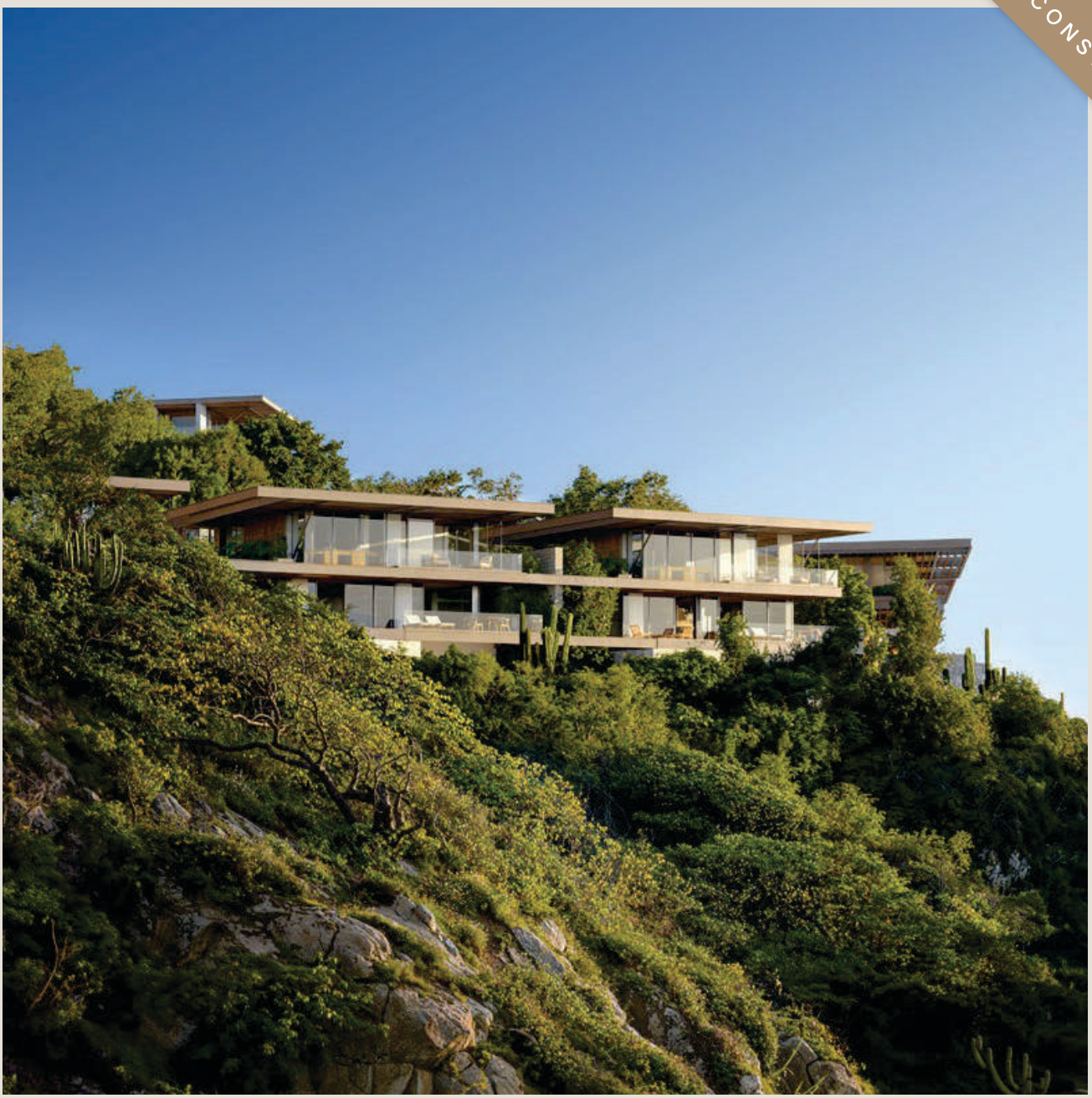
Transform a Child's Future in Rural Oaxaca

For nearly 17 years, El Sueño Zapoteco A.C. / Bacaanda Foundation has been creating Smart Rural Schools—equipping classrooms with technology, training teachers, and connecting communities through education.Your donation helps provide satellite internet, digital tools, and ongoing support for rural teachers—giving hundreds of children access to opportunity.

Be part of the change.
Sponsor a school.
Support a teacher.
Keep kids connected.
Donate today at www.bacaanda.org

El Sueño Zapoteco A.C. Bacaanda Foundation
Authorized nonprofit in Mexico, the U.S., and Canada

UNDER CONSTRUCTION



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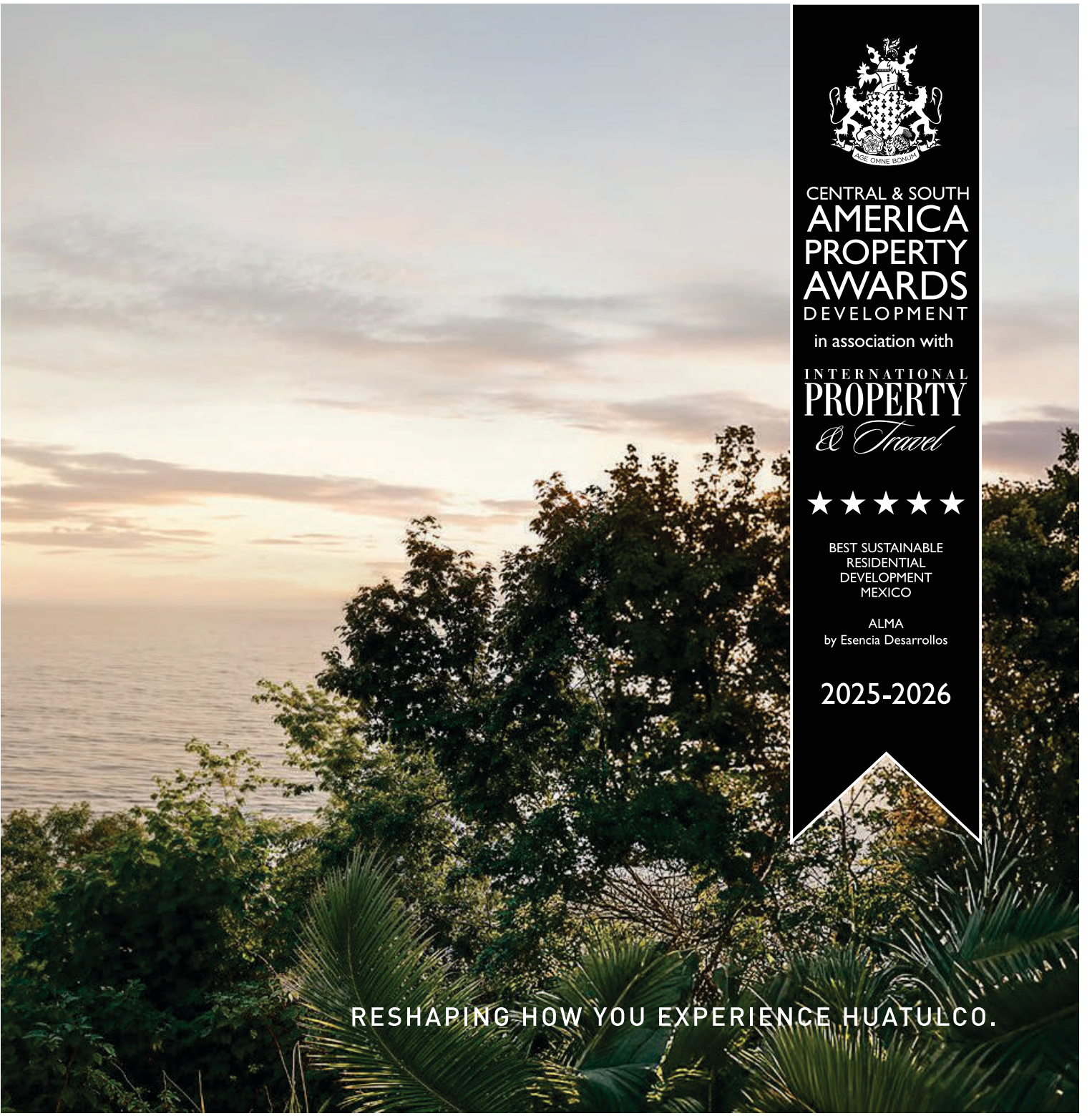

Set amongst the lush landscape of Huatulco, ALMA embraces visual integration, low height, low density, sustainable design, and an elevated living experience.

With perfectly framed ocean views, ALMA calls to those in search of a balance of nature and architecture.

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ALMA is **embraced by Playa Órgano** and **Playa Violín**, nestled between the National Park and the Lighthouse. **It boasts jungle trails to virgin beaches**, impressive sea views, **300 meters of oceanfront** (1,000ft), along with miles of biking lanes, sunrises and sunsets.

While **feeling completely secluded**, enjoy a short **4-minute nature drive** to the conveniences of **Santa Cruz**, and an **8-minute drive to La Crucecita**.

Huatulco's first sector dedicated to **modern architecture integrated into nature** will **forever remain quiet and preserved** thanks to the presence of the **National Park,** as well as **low density** and **low height** regulations. Bike, walk, jog or drive into town easily via a scenic road in perfect condition, all while relishing the silence of a **one-of-a-kind neighbor: Huatulco's National Park**.

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The ALMA experience, chapter 2: Sustainability

An interview with the creators of ALMA, Frédéric Baron and Noémie Bourdin-Habert

In this interview, we continue the conversation with Frédéric Baron and Noémie Bourdin-Habert, the developers behind ALMA, an architectural project in Huatulco that blends design, sustainability, and community. They share what sustainability really means behind the scenes—beyond labels, and beyond marketing.

Where does the sustainability commitment behind ALMA come from?

Noémie: Sustainability is deeply rooted in the genesis of ALMA and closely tied to my own professional background. I spent much of my career working in renewable energy and environmental solutions, so seeking out responsible and ecological approaches has always felt quite natural to me.

I moved from France to China at 23 and began working in the photovoltaic sector. Over the following twelve years, across China, Europe, and California, I met many innovators developing sustainable solutions with real impact.

What fascinates me is how unknown or underestimated many of these solutions still are when it comes to reducing the environmental footprint of both construction and the daily operation of a home. Bringing these cutting-edge innovations to a place like Huatulco feels both meaningful and necessary.

Why choose Huatulco to create and develop ALMA?

Frédéric: Before deciding to live in Mexico, we spent eighteen months traveling extensively throughout Asia. Time and again, we encountered places that were saturated, polluted, or developed without restraint.

We've felt despair on beaches covered in plastic, frustration in resorts built in tropical climates with no consideration for shade or natural airflow. We've witnessed deforestation for palm oil, untreated sewage flowing into pristine rivers, and absurd contradictions like indoor skiing in the desert. All of this pushed us to look for a place with a genuinely sustainable DNA — not just on paper, but reflected in daily decisions.

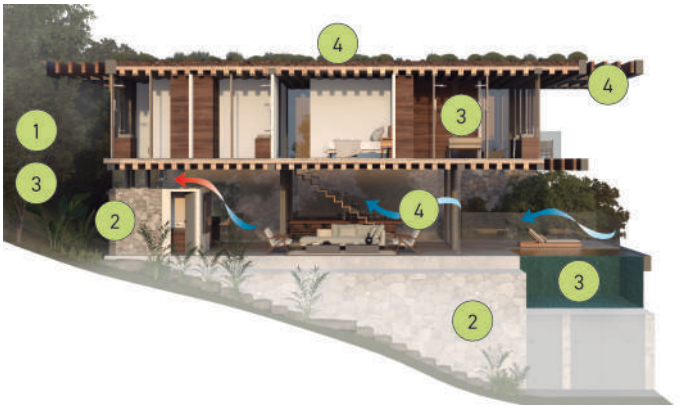
When we discovered Huatulco in 2020, along with the long-term federal vision behind its development beginning in the 1980s, it felt different. In many ways, Huatulco was ahead of its time.

And while continued investment in innovation will be necessary for Huatulco to maintain its commitments, we genuinely want to be part of this positive movement.

With so many developments claiming to be sustainable, how do you recognize sustainability in real estate?

Noémie: I spent fifteen years as an international director working in both marketing and sustainability — two fields that, unfortunately, still often share the same budget because sustainability is too frequently treated as part of the storytelling.

In reality, sustainability is much more than that. It is about *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."* It requires understanding, measuring, reducing, mitigating, and compensating for all of our impact. Solar panels or certifications can help, but they mean very little if a project relies heavily on air conditioning, wastes natural resources, or completely erases native biodiversity.



Some of the most impactful initiatives implemented at ALMA:

1. Low density: ALMA includes 47 properties where FONATUR permits 83, building at just over half the allowed density. This is the most meaningful sustainability decision a developer can make, as it directly impacts profitability.

2. Material reuse: All stone excavated on site is reused for walls and landscaping, avoiding quarry extraction and significantly reducing construction impact.

3. Water management: ALMA built a 300,000-liter potable water cistern, providing greater flexibility for municipal distribution, and treats 100% of the residences' wastewater on site — even during construction. Treated water is fully reused for irrigation and green roofs. ALMA is the first private residential project in Huatulco to refrain from sending wastewater to the municipal sewage system, and the only one to use treated water for all irrigation, reducing its overall water footprint by 35–40%.

4. Bioclimatic design: Homes are naturally cooled to minimize air-conditioning use — the primary source of energy consumption in high-end residences. Green roofs reduce temperatures by up to 4°C (7°F), wide overhangs provide cooling shade, and cross-ventilation enhances natural airflow. Inverter fan-and-coil air-conditioning systems further reduce energy use by at least 30%.

Many other initiatives coexist as well — from waste management to sustainable material and supplier selection — and we're always happy to share details.

Does sustainability make a real difference for your clients?

Frédéric: Absolutely. Sustainability translates into very tangible benefits for ALMA residents.

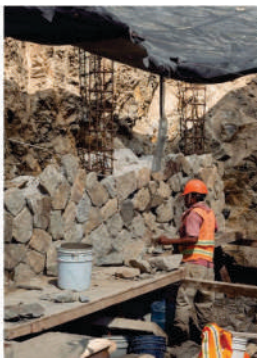
Forever-preserved views: Strict low density and height limits ensure long-term views and tranquility while green roofs of the lower properties benefit higher-line property owners by blending seamlessly into the landscape.

Lower utility costs: Natural cooling strategies and water reuse drastically reduce electricity and water consumption.

Enhanced privacy: Low density and abundant vegetation to ensure greater privacy.

Biodiversity at home: Native vegetation and green roofs attract birds, butterflies, and squirrels year-round.

Resilient value: Well-designed, climate-adapted properties tend to appreciate more over time, much like well-insulated homes in colder regions outperform poorly insulated ones.



Is there a cost to sustainability, and are buyers ready to pay for it?

Noémie: Yes — the cost is actually significant. Green roofs versus conventional roofs, low density versus high density, full water treatment versus standard sewage systems — all of this represents a substantial investment. In reality, sustainability is still often seen by many clients as simply the cherry on the cake.

Now, I can already hear you wonder: "So why do it?". Actually, for the same reason you choose a reusable bottle over plastic, sort your waste, or bring your own grocery bag—**it's simply the right thing to do.**

For our clients. For our legacy. For future generations. For biodiversity, landscapes, resources, and the quality of life that makes Huatulco so special.

ALMA aims to make architecture and sustainability inseparable. It is no coincidence that the project was recently awarded **Best Sustainable Project in Mexico**, and named **Best Sustainable Project in the Americas**, from Canada to Argentina, at the **International Property Awards** — one of the most respected distinctions in the industry.

All of us here found something extraordinary in Huatulco. We believe preserving it is a shared responsibility.

For more information: www.alma-huatulco.com

If you've missed the first chapter on ALMA, its architecture and finishes, you can scan and catch up here :

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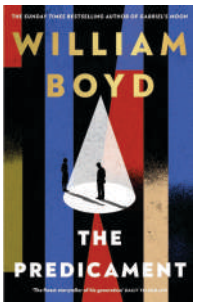
Sneak Peek Between the Pages: 2026's New Novels

By Carole Reedy

The new year ignites excitement for passionate readers, but too often novels published at the year's end don't receive proper publicity. So first let's look at a few scintillating novels that hit the shelves late in 2025.

The Predicament by William Boyd (November 2025)

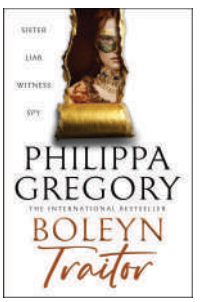


Although I'm not typically drawn to spy novels, this book was a delightful exception.

William Boyd's novels seldom disappoint. His range is broad, characterizations diverse, and plots compelling. This one takes the reader around the globe from London and Guatemala to Berlin and Dallas (not to worry, it's a leisurely adventure). Gabriel Dax isn't your stereotypical spy, making his experiences unpredictable.

Boyd's collection of work is diverse in subject, but always focused and pristine in pace and local color. I'm a recent fan of his and eager to read anything he writes.

The Boleyn Traitor by Philippa Gregory (October 2025)



In 2001 I read *The Other Boleyn Girl*, at the time Gregory's popular (with readers and critics alike) and well-researched novel about Anne Boleyn's sister, Mary. In the ensuing years, readers have been ensconced in the Tudor and Plantagenet series, which has brought critical accolades. Gregory has more than 100 books to her credit.

Now, 24 years later we find ourselves still fascinated by the 16th century and the age of kings and queens. Praise from critics always focuses on Gregory's detailed research and ability to bring to the 21st century an understanding of this distinct past.

The Boleyn Traitor tells the tale of Jane Boleyn, the wife of Anne Boleyn's infamous brother George. The reviews tell us the magic endures, so it looks like another bestseller.

Queen Ester by John Irving (November 2025)

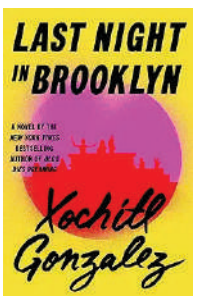
Many of us look back to 1978 and the publication of John Irving's popular breakout fourth novel, *The World According to Garp* stands out. To date, Irving has published 16 novels, among them the popular *The Cider House Rules, A Prayer for Owen Meany,* and *Avenue of Mysteries*, set in Oaxaca, Mexico.

In his latest, you will recognize the town of Penacook, New Hampshire, and nearby St. Cloud Orphanage from *The Cider House Rules*.

The time is the early 20th century, and a young Jewish girl is adopted by a non-Jewish couple who wonder how they will handle this responsibility. We follow one of the characters to Israel and her political involvement there.

Irving recently stated: "The construction of this novel long predates the events of Oct. 7, 2023, and everything that's happened in Israel since those terrorist attacks and the hostage-taking. With hindsight, it's easy to say that what I saw and heard in Israel in the early 1980s serves as a precursor to what has developed since that time, but this is what historical fiction is for."

Last Night in Brooklyn by Xóchitl Gonzalez (April 2026)



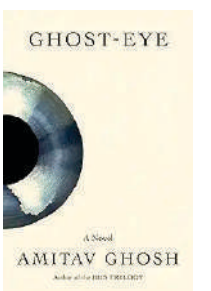
Two unforgettable novels by Gonzalez (also a staff writer at The Atlantic), published in 2022 and 2024, captured my mind and heart: *Olga Dies Dreaming* and *Anita de Monte Laughs Last.*

Both focus on women's role in society and within their own lives. Gonzalez draws us deep into the characters' worlds, exploring the psychological and philosophical forces that shape their way of living. These novels are unforgettable and beautifully rendered, the first delving into the lives of a Puerto Rican family in New York and the second centered on an aspiring artist.

Gonzalez describes her latest book as a retelling of the Gatsby story. It takes place in a rapidly changing Brooklyn neighborhood in the midst of a financial crisis and a significant presidential election.

Undoubtedly, she'll be gracing us again with her finely tuned characters and intriguing plot, including lots of surprises in this novel about class, color, and gentrification.

Ghost-Eye by Amitav Ghosh (January 2026)



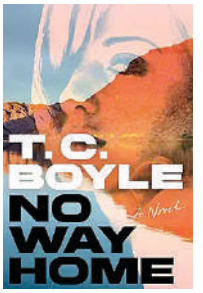
The captivating subject of reincarnation forms the backbone of this novel by the beloved author of *The Hungary Tide* and the Ibis Trilogy *(Sea of Poppies, River of Smoke*, and *Flood of Fire*).

From late 1960s Calcutta to present-day Brooklyn, Ghosh takes us on a reincarnation journey. It starts with a young girl, Varsha Gupta, who seems to remember other lives she's lived. Her concerned parents take her to a psychologist, who investigates "cases of the reincarnation type."

Jump to a half century later when Vasha's case file is unearthed by a group of environmental activists who want to investigate more about Varsha's memories.

Thus begins one of the long, luscious tales for which Ghosh is famous.

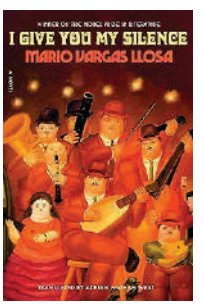
No Way Home by T C Boyle (April 2026)



In the early years of the 21st century I read a novel that to this day remains in the corners of my mind, occasionally sneaking into present consciousness. That book is *The Tortilla Curtain*, a powerful novel about the juxtaposition of poor Mexican immigrants and wealthy Los Angeles homeowners and the space they share. It takes a grand writer to engender in the reader a variety of emotions simultaneously. I've now read most of the fiction of T C Boyle, an author who has blessed us with novels and short stories to entertain and remind.

Pre-publication praise is no surprise to Boyle fans. This book is already receiving sparkling reviews. Set in the Nevada desert, it focuses on a Los Angeles physician, whose mother has just died, in the midst of a desiccating city in a remote desert. It is described as a "compulsive, obsessive, psychologically disturbing" novel.

I Give You My Silence by Mario Vargas Llosa (February 2026)



The latest and final novel of Mario Vargas Llosa (1936-2025) is appropriately a love song to his native Peru as well as a statement about the power of art.

His was a life dedicated to writing. In 2010 he won the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature for "his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat."

The main character in his final novel is an expert in the vals, a genre of music descended from the European waltz but also rooted in Creole culture. He views the music as having a social function, as a means of uniting the people of Peru through their culture.

The book is dedicated to Llosa's ex-wife of 50 years.

There's much more to come in the eleven remaining months of 2026.

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The Evolution of the Charro Mexicano

By Julie Etra

The word *charro* first appeared in Spain, most likely linked to the Basque word *txar*, meaning "bad" or "unimportant." It was originally a derogatory term used to describe unsophisticated people from the Salamanca region of northern Spain. The modern Mexican *charro*, however, is an elite horseman of the distinctly Mexican equestrian sport known as *charrería*, which embodies gallantry, tradition, and national heritage—a stark contrast to the term's humble origins.

Horses originated in North America approximately 55 million years ago, but this early, dog-sized mammal—barely resembling the modern horse—became extinct around 10,000 years ago, likely due to a combination of climate change and human hunting.

Christopher Columbus's second voyage, when he established the first settlement at La Isabela on Hispaniola (present-day Dominican Republic). Hernán Cortés later brought around 16 horses from Cuba to the Yucatán Peninsula in February 1519—a seemingly small number that nevertheless proved critical to the conquest of Tenochtitlan.

Cortés most likely introduced a small, hardy breed known as the Garraño, which can still be found today among the few remaining breeders in northern Portugal, where the horses still run free. Measuring between 123 and 135 centimeters at the wither (the ridge where the neck meets the back), there are approximately 2,000 Garrаños left. They are prized for their calm temperament, sure-footedness in rough terrain, and endurance. These horses were bred in Mexico and became the foundation of the Mexican Galiceño breed, also known for its intelligence, stamina, and smooth gaits.

Other horse breeds popular in Mexico include:
Creole (Criollo): A native horse bred for hardiness and adaptability
American Quarter Horse: Highly valued for its power, short-burst speed, and musculature—essential traits for ranch work and competition.
Azteca: Developed beginning in 1972, this official Mexican breed was created specifically for *charrería*. Azteca horses consist of three breeds—Andalusian, Criollo, and Quarter Horse—combining the elegance and classical dressage ability of the Andalusian with the strength and speed of the Quarter Horse and the toughness of the Criollo.
Spanish: Pure Spanish (*Pura Raza Española*) and Lusitano horses are known for their elegance, agility, and suitability for classical dressage maneuvers, which are showcased in the *charreada* event known as the *Cala de Caballo*.
Arabian: Arabians, famed for their endurance and commonly used in long-distance races, are also favorites among charros.

Origin of el Charro Mexicano
The origins of the *Charro Mexicano* date back to the colonial era of large cattle ranches, or *haciendas*, which were later broken up after the Mexican Revolution. Initially, Spaniards prohibited the local population from herding cattle on horseback. As ranching operations expanded, this restriction proved impractical, and eventually both mestizos (people of mixed Spanish and Indigenous descent) and Indigenous workers were permitted to manage cattle from horseback.

Charros adopted a distinct saddle to differentiate themselves from the military and learned Spanish riding and herding techniques such as lassoing and roping. What began as protective leather clothing worn by ranch workers in harsh landscapes gradually evolved into a recognizable form of dress. After the Mexican Revolution, the charro became a powerful symbol of national identity.

By the 1930s, *charrería* had been formally recognized as Mexico's national rodeo sport, further institutionalizing the charro and popularizing the attire. Mariachi music, which originated in the state of Jalisco, along with the Golden Age of Mexican cinema (1936–1956), frequently featured charros, cementing their image in Mexican cultural identity.

Female charros are known as *charras*. Historically, they did not work cattle, but in 1953 they began participating in traditional equestrian competitions known as *escaramuzas*, initially as children's teams. By the 1960s, women were formally competing in *charrerías*. *(see the article by Ana Dominguez on page 6)*

The *Cala de Caballo* is one of the most prestigious competitions in *charrería*, testing the refined skills of both horse and rider. The event evaluates the horse's ability to run, stop abruptly, and turn within a confined space, highlighting responsiveness to the reins and the rider's control. Judging, conducted by a panel of three, is based on posture, precision, and overall execution.

Evolution of the Attire
The elaborate outfits worn today evolved gradually from the leather garments of early vaqueros to softer chamois and eventually to the Traje de Charro. According to the Mexican Federation of Charrería, there are five categories of attire: Work, Semi-Gala, Gala, Grand Gala, and Formal. Work attire is the simplest, while Formal attire—typically black—is reserved for the most ceremonial occasions.

Charros (the beans)
Charros also refers to a traditional preparation of pinto or bayo beans, originally cooked in camp by charros using whatever ingredients were available. Today, the dish often includes bacon or other meats, chiles, onions, garlic, and tomatoes—*cada chef tiene su propio toque*: every cook adds their own personal touch.

Visit the Museum of Charrería, CDMX
The Charrería Museum in Mexico City houses unique artifacts from different historical periods of Mexico's most emblematic cultural tradition. It is located in the historic center of the city, in a former monastery on Izazaga Street. Isabel La Católica 108, Centro, Cuauhtémoc, 06080 Ciudad de México, CDMX
www.museodelacharreria.org.mx

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Oaxaca Avanza:

How Art, Youth, and Community are Transforming Huatulco

By Bianca Corona

In Huatulco, a place known for its natural beauty and strong sense of community, a group of young locals is quietly, but now very visibly, reshaping what collective action and true sense of community can look like in a small town like this. Oaxaca Avanza is a civil association formed by young people from Huatulco with a shared goal: to build alliances, create access to tools and strategies, and actively contribute to making their municipality and Oaxaca state as a whole, a better place for everyone to live in, enjoy, and prosper.

Their official public launch came to life through a project that blended art, urban renewal, and community involvement: the Corredor Mural, a once neglected pedestrian walkway located near a school close to La Crucecita, now reborn as a vibrant, colorful, and meaningful public space.

From a Forgotten Space to a Living Corridor

The inauguration of Oaxaca Avanza and the *Corredor Mural* was a celebration filled with energy, creativity, and gratitude. Behind that moment, however, were months of planning and a full week of intense community work. Artists, neighbors, musicians, vendors, and volunteers came together to transform a space that had long been associated with neglect, insecurity, and disuse.

What was once a grey, deteriorated corridor is now a place filled with color, intention, and life. It's now transformed into a space where people feel invited to walk, gather, and connect directly to Huatulco's culture, through art.

The decision to start with this corridor was deeply intentional. Oaxaca Avanza's newly opened office is located at one end of the space, and for the team, the daily reality of seeing the area's challenges became a call to action. The corridor borders a kindergarten, children's play areas, and residential homes, yet had become a site for trash accumulation, vandalism, and unsafe activity.

Rather than approaching the problem through exclusion or enforcement, the group chose a different path and use artistic expression as a tool for transformation.

Art as a Collective Act

The Corredor Mural was conceived as an inclusive, collaborative project. Led artistically by renowned Oaxacan muralist Irving Cano, the initiative brought together mostly Huatulco-based artists, along with a small number from other parts of Oaxaca. Each artist worked within a shared theme, **Huatulco and the Coast**, while maintaining complete creative freedom within their assigned space.

The murals collectively tell a story: from marine life and coastal landscapes to human presence and local identity. Each piece reflects a personal vision of Huatulco, shaped by the artist's own experience of growing up, living, or creating in the region.

Importantly, no artist was paid. Every participant joined voluntarily, contributing their time and talent from the heart. In return, artists were given visibility, a public platform for their work, and the opportunity to exhibit and sell their art during the week-long activation of the corridor.

Seven Days of Community in Motion

For seven consecutive days, the corridor became a living cultural space. Visitors were invited not only to see the finished murals, but to witness the creative process itself. Watching blank walls evolve day by day into powerful and colorful works of art. To encourage participation, Oaxaca Avanza organized daily pop-up markets, live music, and small community gatherings down the walkway. Local musicians performed voluntarily, artisans set up booths without fees, and food vendors rotated throughout the week, creating a dynamic and ever-changing atmosphere. Each day felt different. Some days drew families and children, others brought students, artists, or athletes. What remained constant was the sense of shared ownership and collective pride. That's what I'd call, “Orgullo Huatulqueño.”

No Logos, No Branding, Just Purpose

One of the most striking aspects of the project is what isn't visible on the walls… logos. The entire project was funded through personal resources and outsourced support, deliberately avoiding corporate branding or sponsorship recognition on the murals themselves. For Oaxaca Avanza, this decision was essential. The murals belong to the community, not to any brand, institution, or organization…including their own.

Beyond Art: A Broader Vision for Huatulco
While the Corredor Mural is Oaxaca Avanza's first official public project, it is far from their first community effort. The group has been active for several years, supporting vulnerable individuals, local initiatives, sports teams, and animal protection efforts. Often executing these outreaches informally and without public visibility.

The formalization of the association and the opening of a physical office mark a new chapter. The long-term goal is to become an authorized donation recipient, allowing individuals, businesses, and institutions to support future projects transparently and at a larger scale.

Looking ahead, Oaxaca Avanza envisions initiatives in culture, sports, animal welfare, public space rehabilitation, and community development, always guided by collaboration rather than politics, and inclusion rather than division.

A Space That Invites Participation
The Corredor Mural is not meant to be a static art installation. It is envisioned as a living space in which one can host markets, performances, bicycle tours, community gatherings, and cultural events. By bringing the corridor back to life, the project adds not only beauty, but also a new point of interest for residents and visitors alike.

It also serves as a reminder that improving quality of life is not limited to infrastructure or policy. Beauty, creativity, and shared spaces play a powerful role in how people experience safety, belonging, and pride in where they live.

An Open Door Forward
At its core, Oaxaca Avanza is an invitation. An invitation to participate, to propose ideas, to collaborate, and to contribute. Whether through time, creativity, resources, or simply presence. As Huatulco continues to grow and evolve, initiatives like this demonstrate what is possible when young people take ownership of their community and choose cooperation over division. The Corredor Mural is just the beginning.

Artist Recognition:
1.- Joel Montes
2.- Alejandra Elizabeth Aguilar Aguiar
3.- Lianne Aranza León Sánchez
4.- Edgar Ares Moscosa Bazar
5.- Marina Valdepeña
6.- Judith Martínez Caballero
7.- Janette Santiago Antonio
8.- María Eugenia Valle
9.- Alma Drew
10.- Diego Uriel González
11.- Odette Carolina Cabrera1
12.- Fernanda Butista
13.- José García López
14.- Yuri Enríquez
15.- Grisel Adriana
16.- Alina Sofía Reboredo Damasco
17.- Ariel Núñez Zabaleta
18.- Corina Lucio Olvera
19.- Alma Montero
20.- Fefo Loya Gartol
21.- Betina
22.- Carlo Sérbulo Alducin
23.- Michelle López García
24.- Roberto Hernández
25.- Julio César García Rodríguez
26.- Fernando
27.- Ángel Ernesto Rivera López
28.- Edwin Fierros
29.- Luis Antonio Ortiz Enríquez
30.- Roberto Domínguez
31.- José Martínez Adolfo
32.- Valois Prieto Alvarado
33.- Carlos Mendoza Salina

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Orange French Toast

Tuesday, January 20
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Goat Cheese and Herb Salad
Beef Bourguignon
Vanilla Cake

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The Role of Horses in the Spanish Conquest of Mexico

By Jan Chaiken and Marcia Chaiken

When Hernán Cortés and his expeditionary force first arrived near present-day Veracruz in 1519, the ships from Spain carried about 500 soldiers, along with horses, cannons, and other military supplies. At that time, horses had been extinct in Mesoamerica for thousands of years. As a result, the Indigenous Aztecs—who had never seen similar animals—experienced awe, fear, and confusion, with some early accounts suggesting that the horse and rider were perceived as a single, unfamiliar being. Some Indigenous communities reportedly made offerings to horses or used captured horses as sacrifices to their gods.

The Spaniards capitalized on this reaction by staging carefully choreographed military demonstrations to intimidate the population. Mounted conquistadores proved to be a highly effective military force against native foot soldiers. They were deployed in formations now known as cavalry—large mounted units capable of pursuing and overtaking enemies on foot. Horses were also used to transport cargo and supplies, as well as to control and move captured Aztecs. As soon as new territory was secured, the Spanish established horse-breeding farms in preparation for future expeditions.

Cortés quickly recognized that the ruling Aztec Triple Alliance was deeply resented by many of its subjects and that other Indigenous groups were long-standing enemies of the Aztecs. He formalized alliances first with the Totonacs near the Gulf Coast and later, inland, with the Tlaxcaltecs. The Tlaxcaltecs became loyal and indispensable allies, supplying tens of thousands of warriors. In return, they were granted key privileges, including the right to ride Spanish horses, carry Spanish weapons, and continue governing their own settlements autonomously.

When the Spanish first entered the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, the Tlaxcaltecs accompanied them on horseback and helped take hostages, including the ruler Moctezuma II. The Aztecs revolted and rapidly adopted tactics and technology to counter the horses' advantages. They lured cavalry into narrow causeways, mountain trails, or swampy areas, fired stones and arrows at horses as well as riders, and developed specific shouts and whistles to signal tactical opportunities.

After the eventual Spanish conquest, Indigenous people incorporated horses into their cultures, using them for transportation and labor. Even today, in Mayan communities such as Todos Santos in Guatemala, residents maintain elaborate—and sometimes dangerous—traditions of drunken horse racing, which they consider an important cultural expression.

While the conquistadors' use of horses in war against the Aztecs is highly dramatic and graphically portrayed in films and books, horses and other livestock brought by the Spanish may also have introduced a far more lethal, invisible agent—Salmonella enterica. Some historians argue that Europeans brought fatal diseases to the New World, including smallpox. Recent DNA analysis has shown that one of the most widespread diseases to wipe out vast numbers of Aztecs and other Indigenous people in Mexico was caused by the bacterium Salmonella enterica. The disease wreaked havoc on the digestive systems of those infected and was often lethal among populations with no prior exposure. The bacteria spread through food and water contaminated with fecal matter—often originating from livestock, including horses. It may be that horses themselves were among the most powerful, if unwitting, agents of conquest in Mexico.

Image: Hernán Cortés received by emissaries of Tlaxcala, Codex Duran, 1579, Biblioteca Nacional de de España. Source: Noticonquista Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)

Drs. Marcia and Jan Chaiken have been married for 62 years and have published many justice system research reports together.

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November 9 - 14, 2026

Huatulco, Mexico
Women only

5 nights luxury accommodation
Gourmet Vegetarian Meals
Daily Yoga and Meditation Ceremonial
Temazcal and Transformational workshops
Cooking Class
Nature adventure and more

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The Eye
Call for Submissions

Are you a storyteller, writer, or photographer?

We're always looking for creative voices and new perspectives that explore life in Mexico — its people, culture, cuisine, travel, and ideas.

Each issue follows a theme.
Upcoming topics include:

February – Spiritual Pilgrimages and Religion in Mexico
March – Healthcare
April – The French–Mexico Connection

If you have an idea, photo essay, or finished story that connects to one of these themes, we'd love to hear from you.

theeyemexico@gmail.com
Guidelines: theeyemex.com/faq

Tell your story. Share your Mexico.

Huatulco English-language AA meeting

Please join us every Monday at 6:30 pm and Thursday at 9 a.m. for a wonderful English speaking meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous at
Hotel Gran Juquila Huatulco.

Pulse of Life in Polychromy: Abdías García

By José Palacios y Román

In every corner of Oaxaca State, we find characters who, in their fullness, weave their stories onto canvases imbued with sweet colors and ancestral references. The earthly force of ancestral roots, and connections with influences from other cultures, African, Eastern, and European, that impact our culture give us a unique cosmogonic vision that is manifested in art.

Creators express this wealth of emotions and feelings through the art of painting to remember our primordial origin: that of the tlacuilos who translated philosophy, thoughts, and history into aesthetic language in pre-Hispanic codices.

Painter Abdías García Gabriel was born on a ranch called El Paraíso, near Santa María Huatulco. The exuberant tropical aroma overcomes the daily limitations of coexistence and austerity, a lesson for life. Since childhood, he has drawn on paper and also with his imagination. This is where his dedication to painting begins, with effort, dedication, and determination.

First a path, then a trail, and finally the path to academic training at a university in the fine arts. Abdías studied drawing, various techniques, and painting. Discipline and determination have earned him recognition as an artist.

His other source of inspiration has been teaching: teaching in order to learn. He has been teaching classes since 2005 to children, youth, and adults. This activity relieves his students, who release frustrations by expressing their emotions.

Abdías is consistent with his journey in pictorial art, having found his own language and style, one that goes beyond joy, pleasure, and aesthetic enjoyment: these are creations that have filtered through his veins, sensitivity, and good taste.In front of his canvases, he provokes, recreates, nourishes, and encourages the spaces where his work is found.

I invite you to collect works by this artist who inspires taste and enjoyment with art as a creation and expression of the tropics in the Mexican Pacific the Oaxaca coast.

The opening of the exhibition will be on January 23, 2026 at 06.00 pm. Abdias will be presenting his most recent artwork "Nocturnal Dreams", with music and wine. Entrance is free.

Copalli Art Gallery

Boulevard Benito Juarez, Tangolunda
Tel.: 958 124 7493

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Check out our
Huatulco Restaurant Guide
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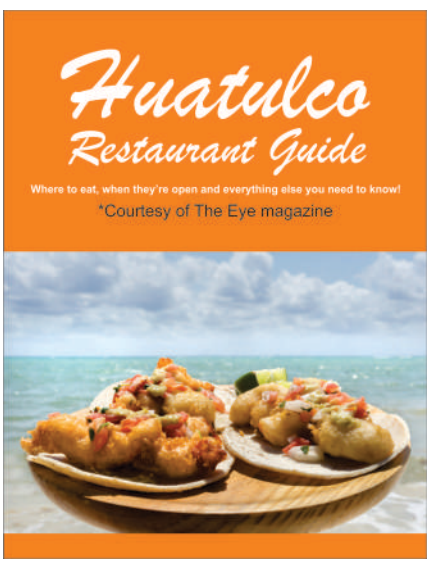
www.theeyehuatulco.com/huatulco-guides/



Restaurant owner? Contact us
to make sure we have your up to date info.

Poem: Parrot's Roost

By Julie Sullivan

Who made the world
Who made the mango trees and the parrots
Who made this mango tree

Whose branches bend under the heavy weight of green mangoes that hang heavily above my head like big green teardrops ready to fall.

Who made the parrots
the ones who arrive each morning squawking about the new day to roost in the mango tree I see from my bedroom window.

The green ones who leave each evening flapping and squawking their warning about evening.

Their wings flapping and showing a flash of red under their wings as they soar above my head
I get a glimpse. like a little girl showing off her red underwear on the swing.

I don't know exactly what prayer is, but I do know how to face the sun as it rises and feel the cool breeze caress my face.

I know how to be still and notice.

How to admire all of creation and be hopeful and patient as life unfolds before me like a mango slowly turning from green to yellow.

I know how to listen to the ocean crashing on the rocks and imagine the colors of the fish swimming over the coral reef. I know how to watch the baby turtle make its journey across the sand only to be swept away by the next wave. Doesn't everything ripen and fall too soon.

Tell me what will you do with your one wild and precious life.

Julie Sullivan is from Baltimore, Maryland where she taught reading at a private school for many years. Before moving to Huatulco in 2022, she lead a poetry and creative writing group called Women With A Story. This poem was inspired by Mary Oliver's Summer Day.

ESTD 2024

HUATULCO COUNTRY FESTIVAL

2026

3RD ANNUAL

SATURDAY, FEB 7TH

KICK OFF 6PM

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VIP TICKETS AVAILABLE

SUPPORTING BACAANDA FOUNDATION
QUEEN BEACH CLUB

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- **-Hands-on**
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- **-Food and Drinks Included**
- **-Transportation Included**

Cost:
115 USD adults,
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Pick up 9am
Return 1pm

"We had amazing food, learned a lot about the region … HIGHLY RECOMMEND!"
— Lisa R., UK

"Street Food class is a gem! … we experienced an anthropological cooking class with Jane … in a small town."
— Tom D., Canada

"Hands down the best cooking class I've ever taken — everything was delicious!"
— John M., USA

WEDNESDAYS
Mama's Kitchen-
-Black Mole and Yellow Mole
-served with Rice and Chicken
-Handmade Tortillas
-Mezcal Margarita

THURSDAYS
Fiesta-
-Beef Picadillo Tamales
-Poblano & Nopal Empanadas
-Guacamole
-Jicama, Cucumber, and Orange Salad
-Ancho Reyes Margarita

FRIDAYS
Street Food-
-Red and Green Salsas
-Pico de Gallo
-Handmade Tortillas and Sopes
-2 types of Taco Fillings
-Tlayudas
-Jamaica Margaritas

SATURDAYS
Seafood-
-Fish Ceviche with Totopos
-Rosemary Shrimp
-Shrimp Mousse
-Baja-style Fish Tacos
-Beer Micheladas

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