

July 2007

News, Product & Service Updates

We love to hear from you!

Your comments and suggestions concerning our newsletters will always be highly appreciated, but most important, we love to hear from you regarding our service, our staff and what your clients say about us. Thanks for helping us to improve every day!

Upcoming local holidays

Wednesday 25th July is a public holiday in Costa Rica as we proudly celebrate the annexation of the Province of Guanacaste. Also, **Thursday 2nd August** is a religious holiday to honour The Virgin of our Lady of Los Angeles, Patroness of Costa Rica. Therefore, half of the sales staff will work on 25th July and the other half will work on 2nd August.

Wednesday August 15th is the Mother's Day in Costa Rica, part of the staff will work this day and some will work on Monday 20th August. We want to congratulate the Mothers of the Travel Excellence Team: Vanessa Cubillo, Patricia Chinchilla, Silvia Hidalgo, Ileana Riotte, Lidia Fallas, Ileana Peralta, Melba Castillo, Martha Rojas, Marcia Venegas, Agnes Avila and Monica Vargas.

News

Vienna Boys' Choir at the XVII International Music Festival

Vienna Boys' Choir, the best known boy's choir in the world, will be participating at the XVII International Music Festival that will be held from the 3rd to the 19th of August, 2007. Sixty artists from Germany, Switzerland, France, Philippines, Russia, Czech Republic, United States, and Costa Rica have confirmed 35 concerts around the country.

"Forbes": Top 10 worldwide favourite destinations

According to Forbes, an influent US magazine, Costa Rica is one of the ten favourite destinations around the world. This magazine ranked our country in three different categories: luxury adventure tours, honeymoon tours and summer adventure tours. Our country shares credits on these three categories with destinations like the Red Sea, Bahamas, Egypt, Canada, Mexico, Chile, France, Hawaii and Greece.

New highway between San Carlos - San Ramon

The future new highway between San Carlos - San Ramon will have four lanes and not three as it was originally planned. The total cost of this project is around USD \$120 millions. This will be a first class highway, much safer with fewer curves, saving time to tourists visiting the northern region, specially the imposing Arenal Volcano area.

Breakthrough with plasma engine

The team of Costa Rican researchers who work at the Ad Astra Rocket Lab in Liberia, Guanacaste, added a success to their work, when they made a plasma shot that held steadily for three hours. This vastly surpasses the 2-minute shot attained last December. Plasma, the fourth state of matter, is an ion and electron soup at some 50,000 degrees Celsius which is found naturally in stars, such as the Sun. In the lab, it is obtained by heating a gas, such as argon, with the aid of electricity and a helical antenna. "I'm very proud of them; it is an achievement of the Costa Rican team that greatly pleases me," said NASA astronaut and physicist Franklin Chang, who heads Ad Astra Rocket. A plasma engine would eventually propel a spacecraft all the way to Mars and in much less time than with current technology.

Costa Rica: Number one destination for Incentive Trips

During the Incentive Travel Exchange hold in Las Vegas last month, SITE (The Society of Incentive and Travel Executives) announced Costa Rica as the number one destination for incentive travel.

Turtle Nesting Tour, Tortuguero National Park:

Every year, from July to September, Tortuguero National Park welcomes the arrival of the Green Sea Turtles that come to lay their eggs at the beach of this National Park. Tortuguero is the most important site in the Occidental half of the Caribbean for the nesting of the Green Sea Turtles. To promote amongst the local inhabitants to stop capturing the turtles for meat and eggs, several new projects involving the local community have been created. The tracking program was created in 2004 in order to reduce the impact of visitors through the decrease in time that guides and visitors require to observe the nesting process, to enlarge the capacity of load of the public beach and Tortuguero National Park so that more visitors can observe the nesting. Also to create new sources of work for the community and to improve the quality of the service that is offered to visitors. Due to this, the turtle nesting tour rate has increased from US\$25.00 to US\$30.00 per person. Do not forget that this is an optional tour and cannot be included on any tour package at any lodge.

Golden Bean Coffee Tour, Turrialba

The Golden Bean Coffee Tour is located in Atirro, Turrialba, only 65 km from San Jose and 100 km from the Caribbean Port of Limon. On this new tour, visitors will learn all stages of a gourmet coffee production process. Hacienda Real Costa Rican Coffee is a premium quality High Grown Atlantic Coffee which is harvested, processed and roasted at origin.

Travel Excellence: Internal Vote

We have asked our team to give us their personal impressions on the best three hotels and tours based on: easy to work with, facilities, location and service to guests. Thirty executives participated and here are the top ones:

Hotels: 1. Arenal Kioro, 2. Mawamba Lodge, 3. Real InterContinental, 4. Lapa Rios

Tours: 1. La Paz, Poás & Doka, 2. Arenal & Tabacon Hot Springs, 3. The Sky Walk & Sky Trek in Monteverde, 4. Tortuga Island Cruise.

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Hotel News

Finca Rosa Blanca Country Inn - Heredia

The hotel announced the complete interior renovation. The Inn will offer 11 Junior Suites and two Master Suites; four of these Junior Suites can be combined to form two spacious Villas. A private full-service restaurant and bar as well as new reception area, store, spa and conference rooms are planned to be opened by September 1st, 2007. At this point vehicles cannot enter the grounds, but there is a separate guarded parking area across the street where the guests will be transported to the reception and on to their rooms by electric car. Four additional suites designed and constructed in the famous Rosa Blanca style are also planned for the expansion, bringing the total room count from nine to 13 by December 2007.

Si Como No Hotel - Manuel Antonio

The hotel is doing some maintenance to its restaurants and swimming pools as follows: Rico Tico Restaurant and the family swimming pool will be closed from September 17th to October 3rd, 2007. Claro Que Si Restaurant, Mogotes Bar and the swimming pool for adults will be closed from the 3rd to the 18th of October, 2007.

Latitude 10 Resort - Santa Teresa, Nicoya

This resort lies in the southern tip of the Nicoya Peninsula, one of the most diverse and attractive areas of Costa Rica. Each beach front master suite integrates its sleeping quarters with a lounge area, table setting for four, porch and unforgettable sky-open bathroom. Each of the three junior suites has a decor of its own, giving special personality to each area. Whether tropical, arabesque, classical or eclectic decor, each suite offers genuine comfort in the remoteness of this paradise.

Real InterContinental Hotel - San Jose

The new swimming pool is ready! The hotel is still doing some construction of the new tower with more than 100 rooms that will be added next year to the existing 261.

Whales and Dolphins Ecolodge - Puntarenas

The lodge will be under major construction from July 16th to the end of August 2007. They are building a new swimming pool, fixing the road and the retaining walls.

Flamingo Beach Hotel - Flamingo

The swimming pool is ready; however, the hotel is under major renovations and construction. Clients will find some other inconveniences until September 2007.

Tryp Corobici Hotel - San Jose

The hotel is under major renovations and construction on the last five floors. Clients will find some other inconveniences until January 2008.

Rancho Pacífico Villas, Lodge and Spa - Uvita de Osa

Rancho Pacifico is a Boutique Hotel & Spa that offers three villas, three deluxe lodge suites and two spa suites all of them with ocean and jungle view. The hotel features private dining room, full bar, four swimming pools (one main and one at each of three villas), laundry and ironing service, full spa menu and full time security.

Villas Sol Hotel & Beach Resort - Guanacaste

Villas Sol is doing some renovations as well as constructing 14 new ocean view villas. The new villas will be ready at the beginning of 2008 and the hotel includes the renovations of bathrooms, tiles, furniture, lighting, beds, decoration and television sets.

Timarai Bamboo Resort - Central Pacific

I had the pleasure to visit this lovely property last week. I was impressed with the wide range of activities offered and the amazing Palo Seco beach. Since last month, Oliver joined the team as the executive chef. I truly enjoyed his strawberry pasta, Mahi Mahi ceviche, Marlin fish on mango sauce, BBQ shrimp and pineapple, etc, etc.

Hotel Development

Cascadas del Mar: Cascades by the Sea is surrounded by Ballena Marine National Park and wildlife refuges in Osa Peninsula. Cascadas del Mar will be ready by 2009.

Canto Ballena: Whale Song is located in Ballena Marine National Park. This project will be ready by 2009 and will feature three two-story buildings, 20 condos, two penthouses and 14 villas.

Kiana Resorts: It is in the coastal town of Dominical on the main Playa Dominical beach. The hotel will feature four types of villas with 1,500 square feet of living and entertainment areas. Each villa has an open floor plan with full kitchens, decks and covered terraces to enjoy indoor and outdoor living; 26 individual king or twin guestrooms, 26 one bedroom suites with full kitchen and 26 two bedroom villas. Opening May 2008!

Air Transportation

Daily non-stop flights to Madrid

Spanish airline Iberia now links Madrid and Costa Rica daily. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, besides the flights stopping in Guatemala City, there is an additional direct flight to San Jose, for a total of 10 weekly flights.

Nature Air: New Aircrafts!

Bombardier Dash 8: The Dash 8 is the latest addition to Nature Air fleet. It is ideal for high-frequency, short-haul routes that serve small community airports. It features all-leather seating, large overhead compartments, air conditioning, and comfortably pressurized cabins. It is designed for 30 to 40 passengers.

Beechcraft King Air-E 90: The King Air E 90 is perfect for short to medium haul trips. The comfortable pressurized cabin allows you to fly smoothly over most inclement weather and includes adjustable seating form seven, convenient hot and cold refreshment storage, and in-flight accessible baggage.

Sansa: New Service Center!

This new Sansa Service Center is located in Puerto Jimenez in front of the airstrip. It has a pre check-in area, boarding area, air conditioning, snacks and drinks for sale and restrooms.

For additional news visit our web site: www.travelexcellence.com/news.htm

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Travel Excellence contribuye con la protección y conservación de la naturaleza

Costa Rica

...beyond senses ...más allá de los sentidos ...au-delà des sensations ...jenseits der Sinne ...oltre i tuoi sensi