



### Log Entry # 13 – Jungle Adventures and tropical punch

Aaahhhh ahhaaaa aaa ahh. Isn't this what Tarzan yelled when swinging from jungle vines. So let me tell, ever been "zip lining" through a tropical forest? Here we pick up with our intrepid sailors as they welcome aboard family .

#### We could get used to this

Upon arrival in Los Suenos Costa Rica we are greeted with a note on the boat to present ourselves properly dressed for dinner at Villa Caletis, a five star resort with dining room and wine list to match. Suzan's stepmother had come to visit. Having presented ourselves we were treated to a fabulous dinner followed with a massive room with huge balcony, ironed sheets on a king sized bed and Air Conditioning! The bathroom alone with it huge tub, long counter separate shower and toilet was larger than MaaMa! In addition to Tish, we were joined by 3 other siblings and respective spouses. On the agenda for the family get together was Zip-lining, Canopy adventure, Jungle stay, the Robinson Caruso week and a Volcano tour. First up, the volcano tour which necessitated a flight from the "local" airport to the mountain top.



Villa Caletis - Gorgeous balcony and views

#### Let the games begin

Costa Rica is a wonderful country - having eliminated their military and related defense services in the 1940's, the country has invested in its people (one of the world's highest literacy rates) and preserving the natural resources. 28% of the country has been set aside as National Parks and Reserves...so "Eco-Tourism" is very big. But the country's road system is only now being 'modernized'. The trip to the local airport, a mere 30 miles took 2 hours. Along the way were two bridges that would only had a single lane, so this required a traffic cop to survey and determine the traffic flow. A serious bottleneck when in a time crunch to make your plane! In looking at them, it appeared that they were being held together just by rust. Directly in front of us was a large truck filled with heavy supplies. Watching the bridge's cross beams deflect as the truck and we creep along gave cause for celebration once we reached the other side. We were sure the bridge was going to collapse! It was then pedal to the metal and we pulled into the airfield just as the airplane's cargo door was closed! Nope, we weren't allowed on, once the door is closed, they leave. Drats!



Great beaches and few people



Pool on the edge of a cliff!

We had reservations for a fabulous new seaside resort, but they were for 2 day later. Hhhmmm, let's show up early and look pitiful, maybe they will take us in. They scramble, we smiled and we once again had a 5-star resort for the night with air conditioning. Now this new resort, Arenas del Mar had been opened a mere 3 months and was fully booked for the next year, but we managed to get lovely suites perched on a cliff adjacent to a National Park that has a private beach and 2 swimming pool. Woo hoo, life doesn't get any better than this. A sunrise swim in the surf and cocktails by the pool where cocktails are delivered by men in white coats and then there were the adventures during the day... we were in heaven.



Cocktails on the beach too!

Next tour up - the Canopy Walk through the rain forest. You've seen the brochures and those suspension walks made of ladders and rope a mere 300 feet above the forest floor... sure it looks fun! doesn't it? It is quite another thing walking carefully, foot in front of foot trying to minimize the harmonics on the "bridge" so you are not tossed up and out, trying not to look down but focusing on the other end - deep breath - "yes, I can make it". It was making the previous day's bridge and truck incident look lame by comparison. After getting all sweating, we were able to swim in a river pool of refreshingly cool water and jungle vines with thorns, but it was the cooling off that counted.



The canopy walks are high!



Into the zip suit!



### Have you zipped yet?

The next day we went off to the zip line. If this wasn't a family adventure, we would never have gone, but following in line with the others, we trekked some 35 miles into the primordial rain forest and disembark into a lovely base camp where we met up with 30 other intrepid souls. After be fully briefed in the techniques of zip lining and its hazards, each participant was fitted with climbing harness, helmet and leather gloves. Oh, the things you do for family. So we all lined up like paratroopers to jump out of the airplane, one at a time. Our guides clip 2 carabiners onto the high wire and then its *Geronimo* time. You simply bend your knees and step off the platform and then zip into the waiting arms of a guide on another platform.



As the day progresses each zip line becomes longer and a bit steeper. You are often careening through the forest canopy a mere 500 feet above the jungle floor. No, we didn't see Cheetah or Jane, but each one of us did our best to feel like Tarzan!

However there were more thrills to come. On several platforms, in order to get from one platform to the next, it required a repel. That is a mountain climbing term wherein you wrap a line through another caribineer and drop down.... its like riding a department store elevator - Did you say you wanted ladies lingerie or electronics Ma'am? After two and a half hours we zipped into the base camp where cool drink awaited us. Now until you have been strapped into a climbing harness, you haven't known the true meaning of 'crotch relief' when it comes off. Michael reported that he was sure that there were parts of his anatomy that had turned blue. Would we do it again? Yeah! Do we need to do the canopy walk again - no. So... if you ever get a chance to zip ... and we are not talking about your fly - go for it!



Everybody had fun!

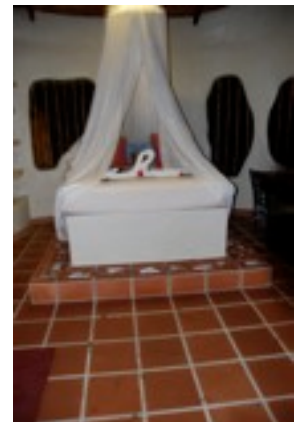
## Its a jungle out there

The next adventure was to be a night in a truly remote jungle resort... a mere 130 miles south, but this necessitated that we give up the 5-star hotel room and return to the boat for a sweltering overnight passage to the Golfito section of Costa Rica. The family stayed in that 5 star hotel for yet another night and then drove to meet us in Puerto Jimenez. None of us had nary a clue as to where exactly where this 5-star "wilderness" (read - primitive) resort was, the lodge guide having already left the area, so we stopped at a local hostel and internet cafe for directions and were given the typical cartoon type tourist map of the area. With this we headed into the jungle in the rented 4 wheel drive Rav4. An hour and twenty minutes later after fording 2 rivers and following a road that was little than an improved horse trail we arrived just in time for cocktails and sunset. The evening meal was a single seating with a simple and interesting bill of affair of local foodstuffs.

The family was assigned a jungle villa of various open air rooms with breathtaking views about a half mile through the jungle from the main building. Each of the vast "bedrooms" had a platform bed with abundant mosquito netting surround and lots of candles for light. What electricity available is provided by solar panels and inverter, very similar to MaaMa. The morning was greeted with screams from Howler Monkeys and Cocka-



Information to be found



Morning coffee by ATV

And a beautiful pool



toos followed by a swim in our private pool. Morning coffee was delivered by ATV when requested by VHF radio. Regretfully we had only a single night at this lovely destination and retraced our steps back to Puerto Jimenez and MaaMa where family boarded the boat and Suzan took the local panga ferry to Golfito to arrange for our exit visas.



Suzan arrived in Golfito with 3 1/2 hours to obtain the Salida Internacional or Zarpe... should be a piece of cake. She advised the ferry captain that she would return for the last boat back at 4:00. So off to the Port Captain's office only to find that he had taken part of the afternoon off - yikes. While sitting on his step, numerous other people came by. It seems that in Costa Rica, every fishing boat, charter boat, pleasure boat, etc has to have permission to go out of the port before they go. We were told that was to insure our safety, it seems more like a full employment act. When the Port Captain finally arrived he explained that Suzan would have to go to all of the various agencies for their permission to leave, have copies made, go to the bank to pay and then return...but there was only one small problem... the Customs office was closed on Mondays as they worked on Sunday in the local markets (The Port Captain is closed on weekends)... but was Suzan willing to pay \$20 to get an official to come from home to stamp the paperwork? Absolutely! So off to Immigration, the local grocery store for copies, back to immigration, find the Customs office (located in the center of the main market - everything has a tax on it), race to the bank, which was to close @ 3:45, wait... wait, pay and then race to the Port Captain's office and then back to the dock where the ferry captain was waving to me to run, he had to leave on time! Phew - another photo finish and we are allowed to leave the country! It onto to Panama and new adventures... but you will just have to wait for that... this is getting way too long.

### A final note

Our final night before coming into Los Suenos we had a bit of a blow. Winds to 36 knots and decent seas. After surviving the Christmas Night passage, Linda knew she wasn't going to die on MaaMa, so this latest bit of blow produced yelps of delight from Linda and a huge "Yahoo" could be heard. We were delighted with the turnaround and she departed us with memories of a great trip! We will miss her. Her departing remark was that we sure knew how give a girl a good time and we always arrived in classy spots...with really big boats!

Fair Winds \_/) Suzan and Michael (suffering from 5 Star Resort Syndrome)



See the itty bitty mast in the middle - That's MaaMa and we are really small in comparison to the other boats in this part of the world