

*Costa Rica*  
**Pura  
 Vida**

Cited as one of the happiest countries in the world, Costa Rica has, on its Pacific coastline, a peninsular that offers secluded anchorages, safe havens and adventures inland that are nothing short of spectacular. Frances and Michael Howorth journey to the tiny Central American country to scope it out.





**H**ow are you? Having a good time? What do you think of Costa Rica? These are just three of the questions most commonly asked of us by the residents of this country. It matters not if the questions are asked in the native Spanish or in perfect English, the two-word answer is always the same. You simply smile and answer: "Pura Vida". It's a catchall phrase that means quite literally good or pure life, but in that simplicity it wraps up everything anyone ever needs to say about this Central American republic of some 4.8 million people.

Sandwiched between Panama and Nicaragua this happy go lucky land has coasts that offer anchorages and harbors on both the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. The Caribbean coastline is significantly shorter and offers superyachts less in the way of cruising opportunities. The Pacific side on the other hand is the complete opposite. The complex coastline is full of; indented bays, prominent peninsulas, secluded anchorages and safe havens. Chief among these is Marina Papagayo a fully featured deep-water harbor capable of handling superyachts of up to 250' (76m)

and is a good place to base a yacht to explore the North Pacific Coast of Costa Rica

Close by the international airport at Liberia, along with the marina are a cluster of upmarket hotels and luxury villas. Add in one of the world's finest golf courses and secluded helpads and it is easy to see why this high-end stomping ground is fast catching on with superyacht owners in the know.

Far from the crowds, but close to the action, the marina is located approximately 640 nautical miles northwest of the Panama Canal on the Peninsula Papagayo in the Bahía Culebra, an inner body of water in the broad swath of the Gulf of Papagayo. For vessels travelling southwards to the marina, the journey from Cabo San Lucas is approximately 1,610 nautical miles. The Bahía Culebra is one of the largest and most sheltered bodies of water in the province of Guanacaste.

Already, yachts the likes of; the Feadship Venus, Senses, Pacific, Attessa IV, Mayan Queen and Eos have used the facilities at Marina Papagayo. Deep waters, unrestricted access, wonderful crew facilities coupled with professional and helpful manage-



ment make this marina the perfect base to operate from. Captain Chris Gartner, formerly of The Maltese Falcon and now in command of Senses, rates the marina as outstanding in every respect and says, "I checked with Captain colleagues before booking and their recommendations proved to be fruitful."

**PAPAGAYO**

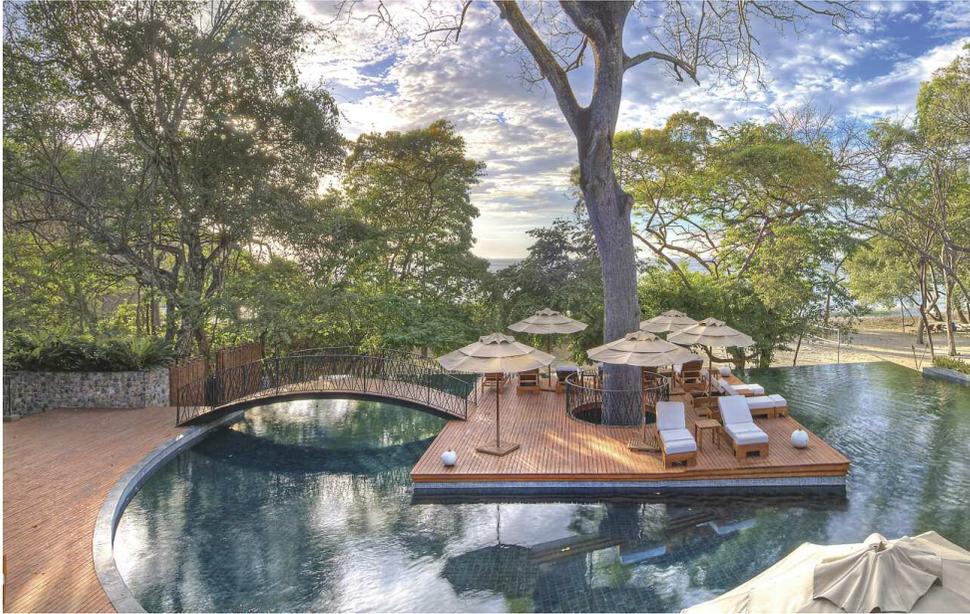
Playing the part of a sophisticated resort and, at the same time, as a primitive playground, Peninsula Papagayo fulfils the dream of the ultimate superyacht destination. Set amid a protected sanctuary, home

Postcard beaches, fantastic cruising, lush golf courses and outstanding marinas... is Costa Rica on your next passage plan?

to some of the earth's most extraordinary flora and fauna, it is a tropical wilderness almost totally surrounded by clear blue waters, spanning 1,400 acres, eleven-miles of coastline, eight miles of bluff edges and 21 spectacular, uncrowded beaches.

The peninsula is home to resorts the likes of Four Seasons and Hyatt Andaz. We sampled both and enjoyed them each for their own individual character. The Four Seasons resort is set in 87-acres of its own private parkland and located at the very tip of the peninsula has water on three sides. It boasts two of the most perfect beaches off which you can anchor.





The Resort's 181 guest rooms, suites and residences capture the exotic character of Costa Rica, with comfortable rattan and bamboo furnishings, local artwork and indigenous wood and stone finishes. We stayed in one of the 16 beautiful Canopy suites set among the highest reaches of the jungle canopy, like tree houses on the hillside, and they offer stunning views of the jungle canopy and Pacific Ocean below. Suites like ours have a huge bedroom, a stunning lounge area, a massive terrace with a glorious plunge pool and most importantly for those who work during their visit like ourselves, complimentary premium internet access.

Later this year the already stunning hotel will pull back the curtains on an even sexier, more modern and lighter version of its lobby, rooms and restaurants. From the first moment of their arrival guests will feel the tropical rainforest reverie. Billowing, flowing sheers and a colorful mosaic wall treatment will complement and soften the indigenous stone pillars at the hotel's entrance. The hotel is also re-designing the restaurants with Cena Sociale

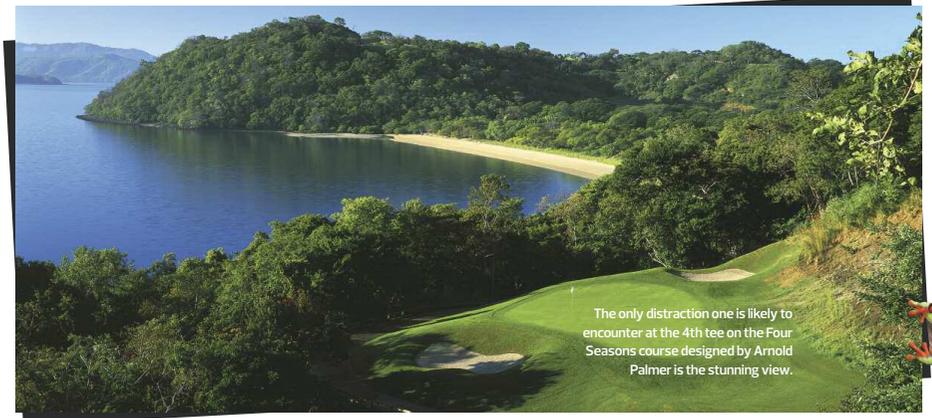


**Costa Rica's 5-star hotel offerings have won international awards, it's not difficult to see why**

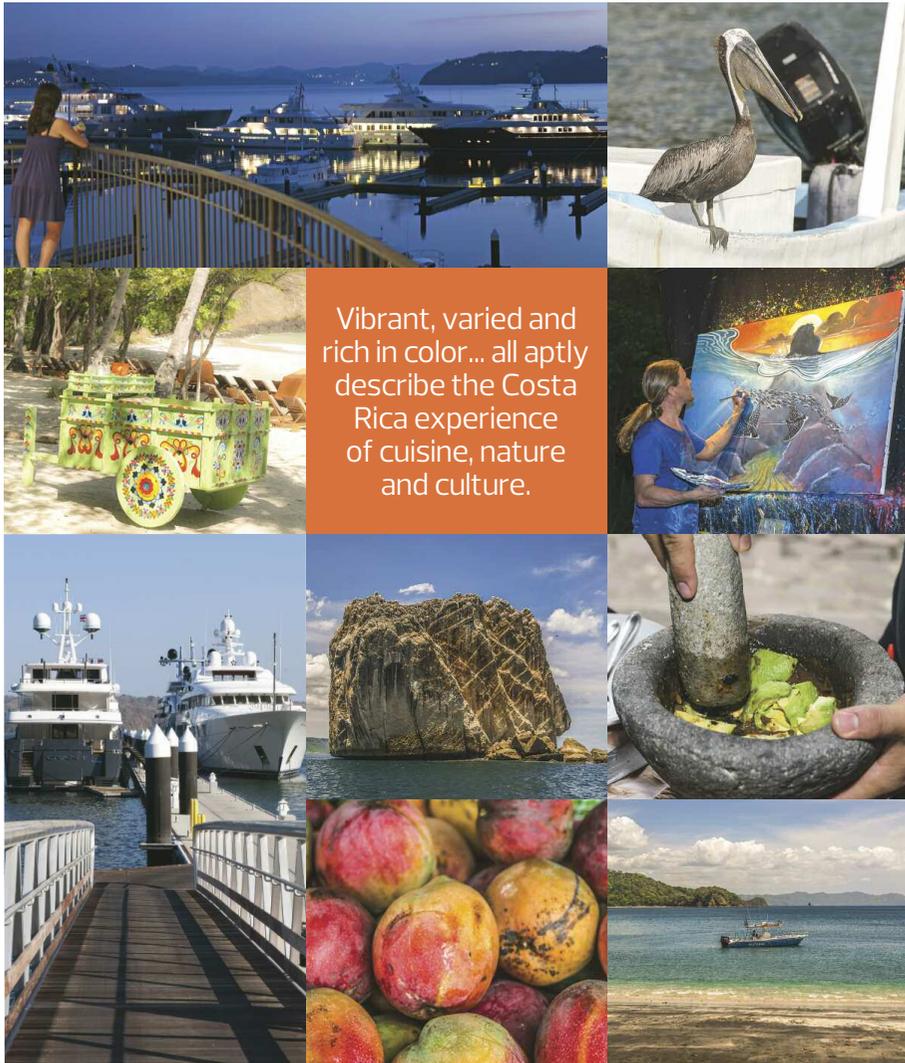
featuring a more casual ambiance and wine bar, while Sol y Sombra will include a circular center bar, Latin cuisine and live entertainment by night.

Nestled in the hills above Marina Papagayo where the Gulf of Papagayo meets the sapphire blue waters of Culebra Bay, the Andaz Peninsula Papagayo Resort captures the native spirit of the country with its distinctive Pura Vida philosophy. The breath taking setting—a relaxing ocean with a mountainous background—made us feel like we belonged in this lush natural setting. Its proximity to the superyacht facilities will make it popular with those whose yachts are berthed inside the marina. Featuring 153 deluxe rooms, this lifestyle resort is designed to poetically integrate favorite necessities with charming indigenous culture.

The open-air lobby welcomes guests into a barrier-free environment without desks or stiff formalities. Charming touches of local artistic flare help add to the authentic feel. Each of the three themed restaurants tells of the different cultures found in Costa Rica, nine spa treatment rooms offer rejuvenating



The only distraction one is likely to encounter at the 4th tee on the Four Seasons course designed by Arnold Palmer is the stunning view.



Vibrant, varied and rich in color... all aptly describe the Costa Rica experience of cuisine, nature and culture.



treatments in the tree canopy and the two cascading outdoor infinity pools offset the limited beach areas. Latin music, tennis courts, and natural trails through the coastal mountains all add to the hotels appeal. Each guest is given a hat, upon arrival; a necessary protection from the strong Costa Rican sun and a wonderful memory to take home.

**LUXURY HOMES & REAL ESTATE OPPORTUNITIES**

Steve Grubba Director of Property Sales at Peninsula Papagayo, Marina Papagayo and Four Seasons Costa Rica is kept busy with an increasing number of sales enquiries. Little wonder with both finished homes and build plots available that are attractive to investors and those seeking a second home. Building Lot 350, for example is set in 1.66 acres with a western exposure over the Pacific. The view includes three islands, a sunset and the bay in which the lot is located is also a common hangout for dolphins. The asking price is \$2.1-million (USD). Finished homes can be purchased for those who prefer not to wait for builders to complete a project. On Calle Puesta del Sol, number 550 is elegantly poised over Playa Prieta, one of the most coveted beaches. It too captures sweeping Pacific views and spectacular sunsets throughout the year across a backdrop that includes Monkey's Head rock. Nearly 6,638 square feet of under-roof living space offers four spacious bedrooms with the opportunity to ex-

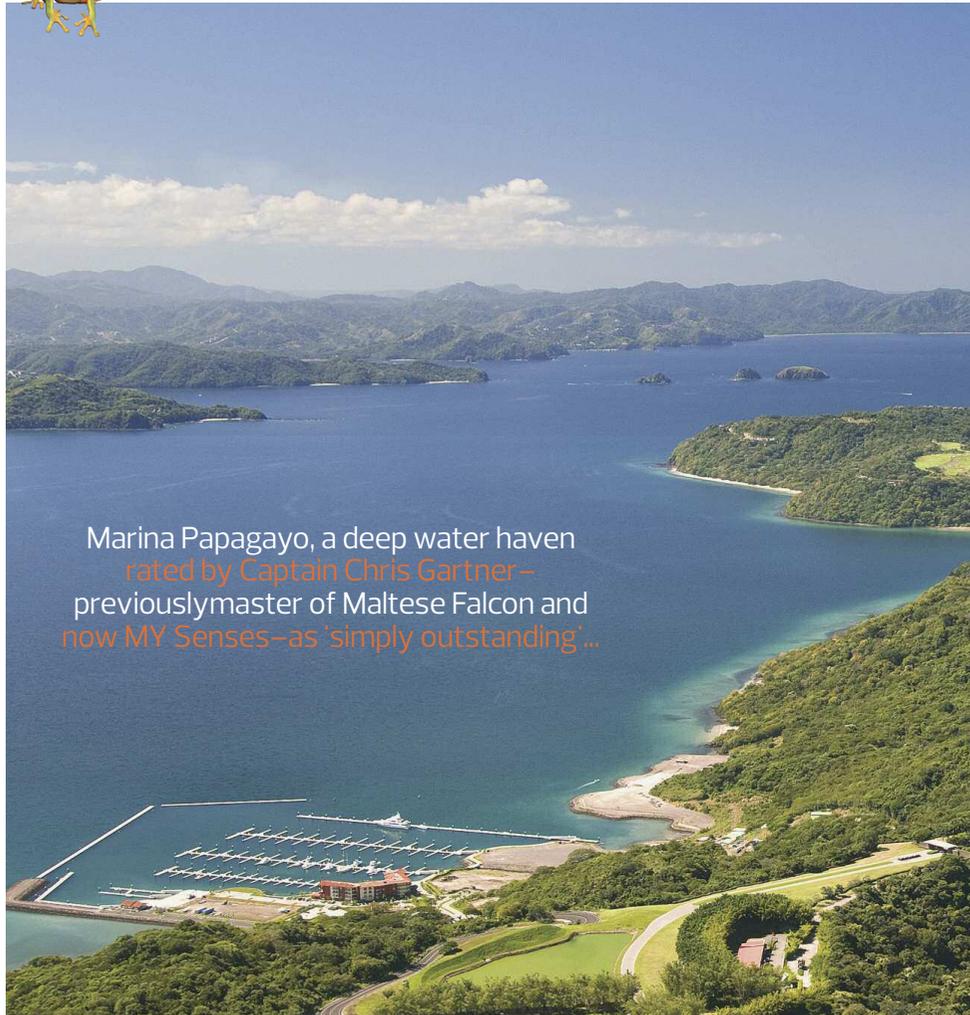
pand it to include staff quarters. Outside 5,000 square feet of usable space encompasses generous decks, outdoor kitchen and an expansive infinity-edge pool. The asking price is \$4.5-million.

Located on the cliffs Villa Manzu is a private villa tailored for luxury rental. Eight unique suites, a full staff, complete security and access to endless adventure, the villa is ultimate in private luxury and relaxed living. Run much along the same lines as a luxury charter yacht, Jenifer Cowles, the villa manager, along with her husband, Chris, oversee the team. Jenifer and Chris have 20-years of experience living in Costa Rica and will contribute a wealth of knowledge to your experience. Jenifer's background is as a certified natural healing therapist, yoga and meditation instructor and trainer. Chris' passion is on the water, leading paddleboard tours, fishing and surfing excursions, and snorkelling adventures. The villa staff is dedicated to creating custom adventure-filled itineraries for each guest, from individually designed menus and explorations of the jungle and sea, to language and cultural immersion.

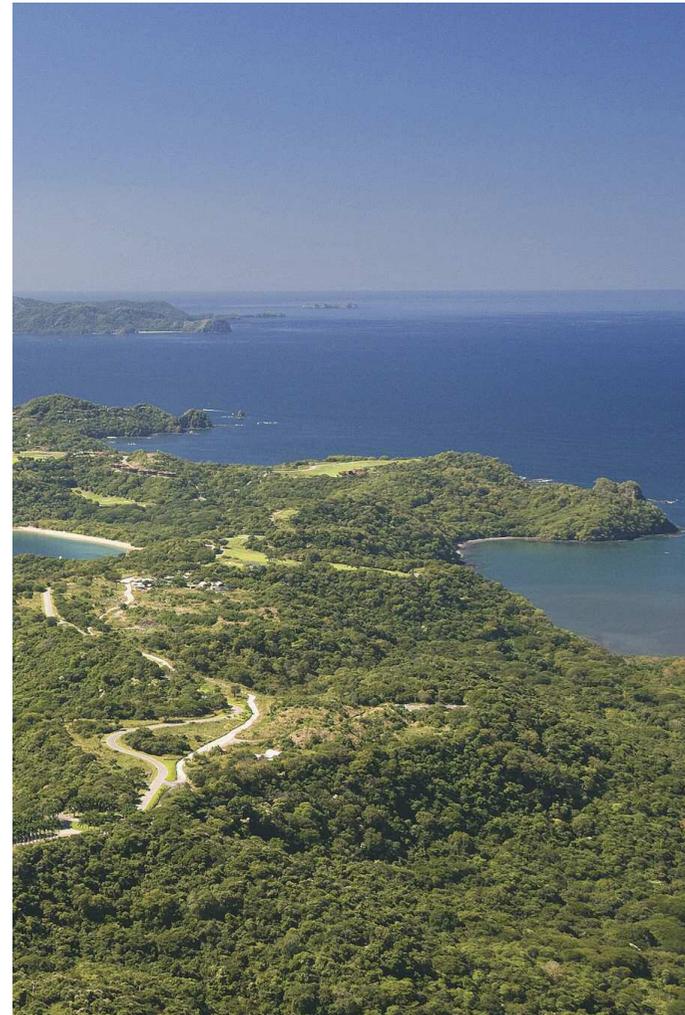
Villa Manzu is not the only source of villa rentals. Jane Moore and her husband left the corporate world behind when they moved from Los Angeles, CA to Costa Rica in 2004. Having resigned from corporate jobs, got married, and driven down to Costa Rica, they found Peninsula Papagayo and fell in love with it. Ten years later they have raised their children lo-

Investment in Costa Rica's real estate is enjoying something of a boom, spectacular plots and property are on offer for those wishing to indulge in the country's hospitality on a more regular basis.





Marina Papagayo, a deep water haven  
 rated by Captain Chris Gartner—  
 previously master of Maltese Falcon and  
 now MY Senses—as ‘simply outstanding’...



## COSTA RICA FACT FILE

### NEED TO KNOW

Costa Rica offers anchorages and harbors on both the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. The Pacific side offers more to yachts, with over 680 miles of coastline. The complex seaboard is full of indented bays, prominent peninsulas, secluded anchorages and safe havens.

### MARINAS

On Costa Rica's Pacific coast Marina Papagayo is a fully featured deep-water harbor capable of handling superyachts of up to 250', offering easy access it is a good place to base a yacht on the Peninsula Papagayo. Further south in Quepos is Marina Pez Vela and in Golfito a new 130-slip marina capable of handling yachts up to 350' (106m) is under construction. Golfito will be the first marina available to yachts on entering or exiting the Panama Canal, making it a useful stop-off point. The residential resort Marina Los Suenos in Jaco accommodates mostly sports fishing vessels from 30' to 180' in length.

### GETTING THERE

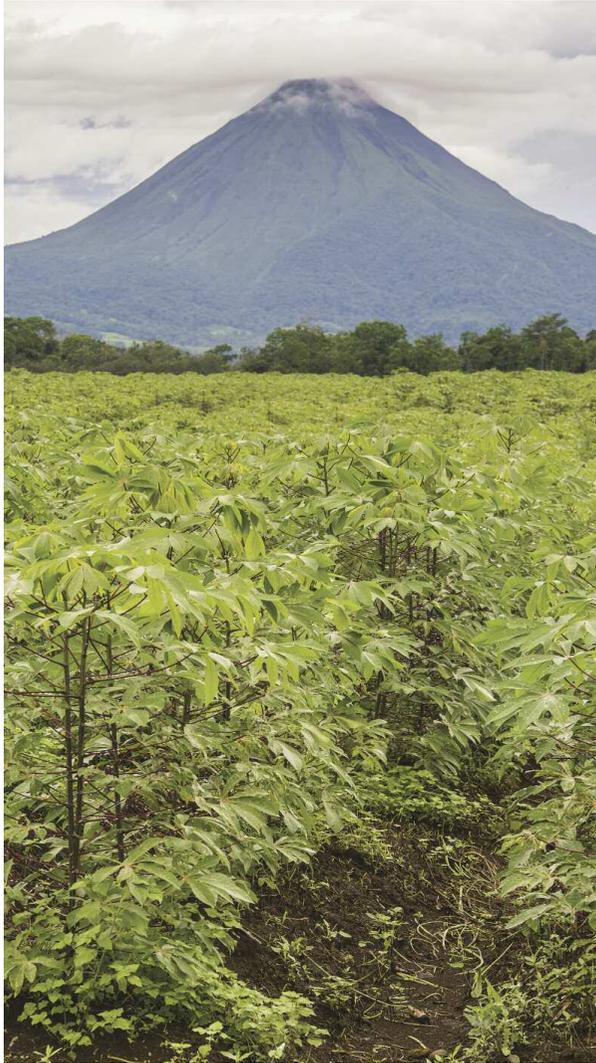
Costa Rica is well served by international airlines and US-based carriers fly into many of the country's regional airports. Jet Blue, for example, offers a 5-hour direct flight from New York to Liberia. Once in the country, there is a good selection of frequent internal flights that connect the country's capital San Jose with regional airports. Travellers from other central and South American country's are likewise spoiled for choice for carrier, but from Europe the direct choice is limited. Iberia the second cousin to the more reliable and comfortable British Airways offers direct flights from Madrid into San Jose.

### WHY VISIT?

Aside of the many attributes an offer on the Peninsula Papagayo referred to in our feature, Marina Papagayo is the perfect jumping off points for further ventures offshore including:

- Panama
- Cocos
- Galapagos
- South Pacific
- West Coast of USA and Mexico

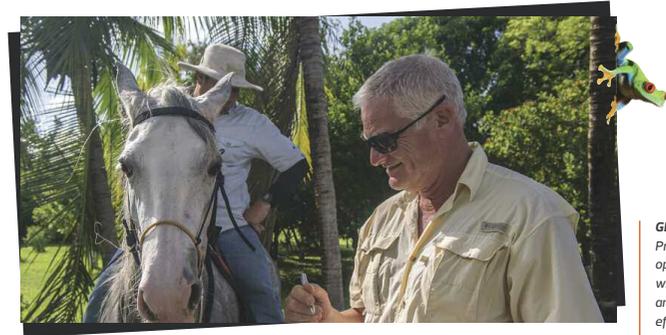
DESTINATION



Inland Costa Rica continues to reveal delights, especially for active pursuits. From volcano trekking to white water rafting and zip lining, both guests and crew are sure to be entertained.

cally and created Papagayo Luxury, a trusted source for vacation rentals within the resort development. She says, "As an insider, I am not merely a rental director, but a homeowner that brings a different set of sensibilities to the mix as one who knows what guests are looking for and expect." Rental rates range from \$1,250/night in low season up to \$6,500/night depending on season and the specific condo or villa. Taxes and fees are extra. While for many, the art of vacationing is to spend time chilling beside a pool, for others discovery is the must do pastime. Papagayo and Guanacaste the state in which it sits, never fails to deliver when activity is called for. For those on the water there are a myriad of anchorages, bays and islands that are just calling out to be explored. We particularly enjoyed seeing Monkey's Head Rock, a strangely shaped islet that rises from the sea, which from certain angles, does indeed look like the head of a giant monkey. Game fishing is popular and at Witches Rock and inside the Santa Rosa National Park there is one of the world's most celebrated surfing spots. Back on shore there is the wild life sanctuary of the Palo Verde National Park through which flows the Tempisque River. Scientists from all over the world come here to study the rich eco system that flourishes here. It combines rivers, marshland mangroves and dry forest where crocodiles, monkeys, iguana and thousands of birds make their home. Too tame? Then head off into the Rincon de la Vieja Volcano National Park and hike through the forest to see bubbling mud pots, steaming sulphur pits and fumaroles. Even golfers can get a close encounter with the jungle wildlife. Players on the award winning Golf Course run by Four Seasons often enjoy the company of Capuchin White Faced or loud Howler monkeys who live in the trees that surround it. Designed by Arnold Palmer, this 18-hole, par-72 championship course was designed with the resort golfer in mind and is ranked among the "Top 100 Courses Outside the USA" by Golf Digest. Not only is

DESTINATION



it set overlooking some stunning anchorages, but it also features deep green forests and has labelled important trees, that turn the cart path into a botanical garden. Hole to hole, the course offers a chance to see and appreciate a diversity of colorful plant, tree, bird and animal species. Spectacular water views await you at 14 of the 18 holes. The signature hole, number 6, El Bajo, features a dramatic 446-yard par-4 with a tee shot that plays 200-feet downhill to a receptive valley-shaped fairway. The green is perched out on a cliff with the ocean behind it. Your round will culminate on the scenic 18th green, with views of the Pacific Ocean and Bahía de Culebra. If you get hungry while working your way around the course, a take away food menu is in the buggy. Just call and your refreshments will be delivered to the next hole.

HEADING INLAND

Having voyaged by yacht to Papagayo it does make sense to see the most of Costa Rica while you are

there. Even our hosts who looked after us so well on our adventure to the peninsular world, we hope, agree that you must take time out to venture inland. Cristiano Paoli of Seamasters organized a helicopter to whisk us away into the hills. As one of the country's most scenic and easily accessible areas, the Arenal Volcano has an unavoidable presence while traveling within this part of the country. It is tall and imposing and has a reputation that precedes itself. Arenal's perfectly symmetrical shape makes it a sightseer's dream, while its abundance of well-marked trails makes it a great place to go hiking. At 5,436 feet above sea level the volcano looms large and ominous over the pastured green hillsides that surround its base. Although currently in a resting phase, for 43-years Arenal was the country's most active volcano. Its storied history is charged with eruptions—both major and minor. Until recently, and much to the enjoyment of its visitors, it spewed enormous amounts of lava, gas and ash on a regular



GETTING AROUND

Private jets and helicopters receive the full co-operation of the country's airport operators along with the use of the airport VIP lounges at San Jose and most of the larger regional airports. An efficient network of light aircraft and helicopter transfers and can be tailored to fit any schedule and these are best organized when handled by experience superyacht agents the likes of Seamasters. The company is also able to provide limousine and luxury 4x4 vehicles for road transfers which, on well paved roads between major urbanized conurbations, can be quite comfortable and speedy

PORTS OF ENTRY

Limon, Puntarenas, and Caldera are all commercial ports and not really geared towards handling yachting traffic. The marinas at the other ports will handle yachts. It is more likely that yachts will clear in using the ports of Golfito, Quespos, Puntarenas and Playa del Coco. Companies such as Seamasters are best contacted for information regarding this undertaking

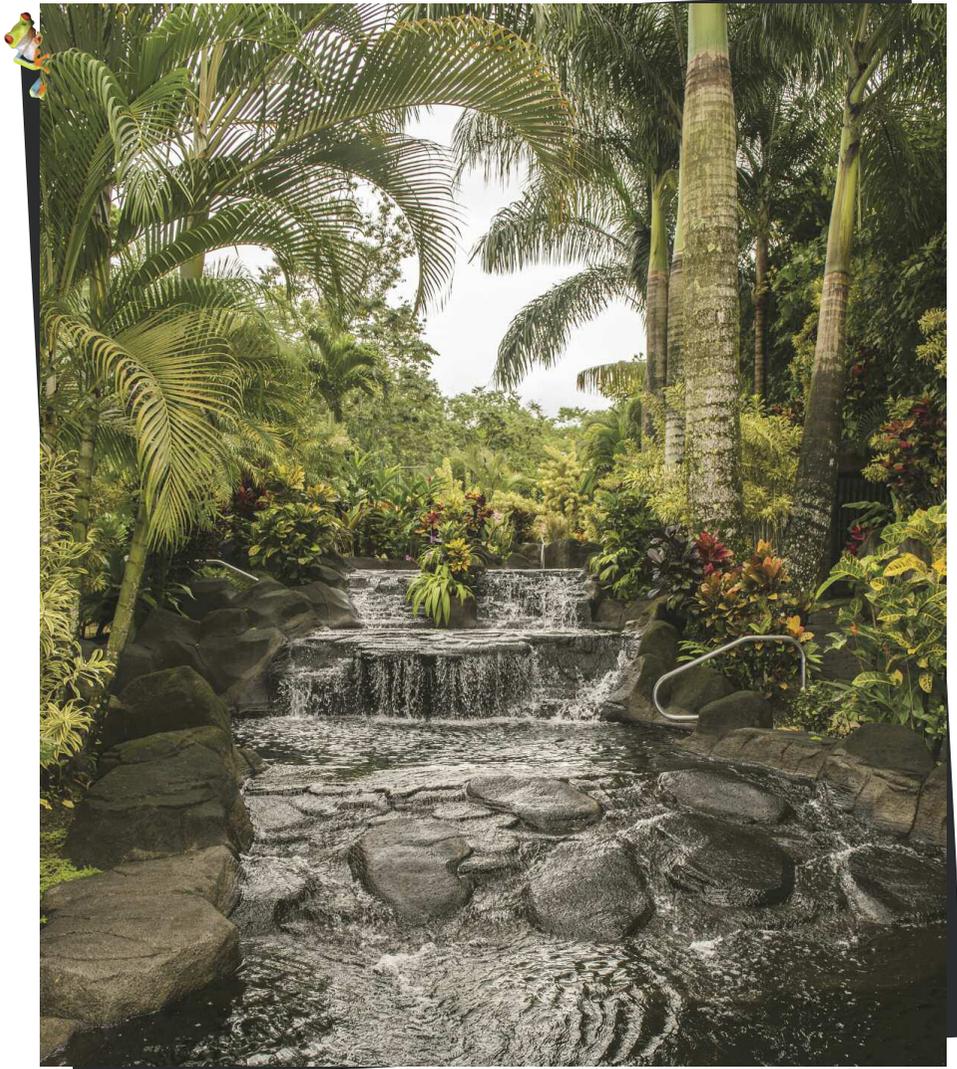
WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Costa Rica has just two seasons. The Dry, or Gold season, between December and May and the Rainy, or Green, season from June to December. December to April is considered to be the high season and is typically the dry season and the one most frequented by tourists. For those seeking to venture underwater, the dry season offers calmer seas and higher visibility.

CHARTS

US NOAA charts provide good coverage of the Pacific coast area. The two primary charts are: #21540 Corinto to Punta Guiones #21560 Punta Guiones to Punta Burica

For the more specific areas mentioned in this report the flowing charts should be consulted: - 21543 Plan A Bahía Brasilito and Bahía Potrero - 21544 Bay of Nicoya - 21543 Plan B Bahía Salinas to San Juan Del Sur



Nature and beauty combine in everything from the waterfall pools of the Nayara Springs Hotel to the wildlife in the surrounding countryside. The interior should be part of any itinerary.

basis, but that eruptive cycle ended in 2010. Travelers to the area will however still be able to enjoy its bountiful sights, sounds and activities, there are mountains to be hiked, lakes to be fished and rivers to be floated.

The towns of Arenal and Tondadora, which were originally sited on the spot where the lake now rests prior to the construction of a hydroelectric dam, were relocated to the northeastern side of the lake and the new town was called Nuevo Arenal. The area surrounding the lake is as inspiring as the water itself. Hills of pastured and forested land roll into the distance, while the summit of the volcano dominates the horizon from the first moment you see it on the journey by road from Tilaran.

Possessing a total national territory of just under 20,000 square miles, Costa Rica is one of the smallest countries in Latin America. What makes this country so remarkable and awe-inspiring is the amazing diversity of what it has to offer. This tropical paradise is packed with more than a dozen volcanoes, of which Arenal is just one, verdant jungles that span to every border, countless rivers with wonderful waterfalls, expansive mountains ranges, and over 755 miles of spectacular shoreline along two oceans.

**HIGH ADVENTURE**

The area surrounding Arenal is an adventure playground for adults. Given its close proximity to the superyachts docked in Marina Papagayo, it is a great place for crew who might have a weekend to spare and are seeking that ever-important adrenaline rush. Zip Lining was originally conceived in Costa Rica and has since grown to become a staple part of almost every adventure itinerary. It is certainly the most thrilling and imaginative way of observing the beauty of the rain forest. Well-run canopy tours allow visitors to move through a system of pulleys, suspension bridges, platforms, zip lines and harnesses in order to explore the habitats of species high above the ground.

Waterfall rappelling, canyoning and exploring underground caves are just some of the other high adven-



**SUPERYACHT AGENTS**

Seamasters specialize in the handling of superyachts and are able to offer the services of ships agent alongside the many more specialized services. Ernesto Andrade Conejo with Paramares S.A is the only other superyacht agent in Costa Rica that will cover all of the ports of entry. Ernesto and his family have been the primary clearing agent for yachts in Costa Rica since 192. There are other agents but they mostly specialize in cruise ships or commercial traffic.

**DOCUMENTATION**

**ADVANCED NOTICE OF ARRIVAL**

Customs and Immigration must be notified 48-hours in advance of arrival by reporting a firm arrival location and ETA. It is very important to comply with this regulation, so as not to experience delays when clearing customs and immigration. Prior to arriving in Marina Papagayo Captains are advised to send the Harbor Master and their agent at Seamasters the following pre-alert documents:

- Copy of the Certificate of Vessel Documentation
- Crew and Guest List
- Passports each crew and guest (information page only)
- ETA Papagayo:
- ETD Papagayo:
- Name of the last 5 ports visited prior arrival to Papagayo

**DOCUMENTATION**

Where original documents are required as indicated below, they must be handed over to the officials for inspection on arrival and these will be returned to the vessel's Captain once inspection has been completed. Copies of all documents should be transmitted electronically in advance of arrival to ensure a streamlined entry.

- Original and copy of the Certificate of Registry (4 copies)
- Original Crew list, duly signed by the captain of the vessel (4 copies)
- Original Zarpe International – International clearance issued by customs from last port of call (4 copies)
- Original List of last five ports visited prior to arrival in Costa Rica, duly signed by the captain of the vessel (4 copies)
- Original Maritime letter of authorization or Power of Attorney issued by the vessel owner to the Captain, legalized by Notary Public (1 copy)
- Original Passports of the crew.

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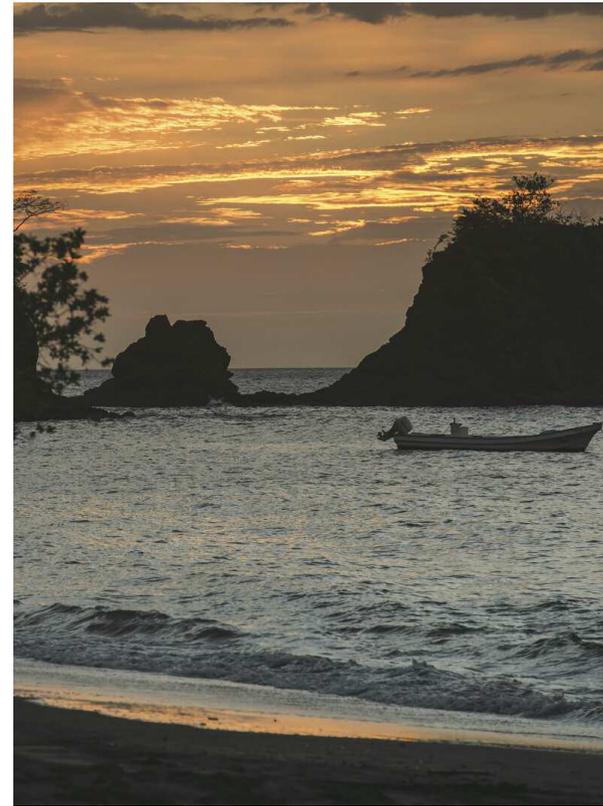
ture activities that can be considered. Offering avid thrill-seekers an opportunity to take to the water, the area also has white water rafting rivers. Older, and some would say wiser, folk might opt for hiking and horseback riding which are equally well catered for. When the outdoor adventures all become too much, there is nothing better than a spot of pampering. We got our dose of heavy spoiling when we were hosted by The Nayara Springs Hotel. Connected by a bridge leading from its sister property, the Nayara Hotel, it is a beautiful, adults-only, boutique hotel surrounded by tropical rainforest. Each overly large and spacious luxury suite features its own private thermal outdoor spa pool. The contemporary décor of the room is seductively romantic and makes the perfect 'couples only' hideaway, especially as the well-stocked minibar is replenished daily, without charge. Laundry

Costa Rica's progressive social reform includes a goal to become the world's first carbon-neutral country.

services are included in the room rate, and guests also enjoy a the organizing services of a personal host and free WiFi throughout the property. The Nayara Springs includes a fitness center, the most wonderful spa, restaurant, bar and large outdoor pool. Guests have total freedom of both resorts and this gives them the option of several different restaurants from which to choose from. A sanctuary of serenity, beauty and indulgence perched above the majestic rainforest, the spa is made up of private open-air treatment pavilions that look to the rainforest and come with Jacuzzis and outdoor showers. In addition to classic massages and facials, treatments include scrubs and wraps with organic coffee, volcanic mud, and chocolate clay. The spa also has a steam and sauna room, and offers hand and feet treatments, signature rituals, and combination packages.



DESTINATION



A RICHER WAY OF LIFE

Once a backwater colony under Spanish rule, Costa Rica attained independence in 1821 and has since become one of the most, prosperous, and progressive nations in Latin America. With an uninterrupted democracy dating back to 1948, the country is the most stable in the region and inspirationally it permanently abolished its military in 1949, becoming the first of a few sovereign nations to do without a standing army. Rather than waste funds on war and training for such a horror, it has ploughed budget into things that matter, like the environment, education

and health care. As a result the country has consistently been among the top-ranking Latin American countries in the Human Development Index (HDI). Costa Rica is known for its progressive environmental policies and, as one of the greenest countries in the world, has plans to become the first carbon-neutral country by 2021. In 2012, it became the first country in the Americas to ban recreational hunting after the country's legislature approved the popular measure by a wide margin. In 2014 it hit the top of our own list of most pleasurable visits. You really should try and sample pura vida for yourselves.



REGULATIONS

Yachts arriving in the country should hoist the yellow international code "Quebec" flag. No crew member or passenger may be landed ashore until first duly inspected by immigration of Costa Rica, violating this regulation will result in a fine of \$10,000 to the captain of the vessel. No exceptions for this regulation.

Health Declaration forms should be completed and sent to the yachts 48-hours before their arrival date.

Every member of crew must fill out a separate customs declaration form and have it ready for customs inspection, it is not necessary that these forms be sent prior to boarding by customs officials

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writers are grateful to the Peninsula Papagayo and in particular to Francesca Poddie for her help with the supply of facts and figures, and Cristiano Paoli of Seamasters who masterminded the entire adventure.

Useful Websites

- Four Seasons Resort www.fourseasons.com/CostaRica
Father Rooster www.fatherrooster.com
Golfito Marina www.golfitomarinavillage.com
Marina Los Suenos www.lsm.com/marina.php
Marina Papagayo www.marinapapagayo.com
Marina Pez Vela www.marinapezvela.com
Papagayo Residential Property Sales www.PeninsulaPapagayo.com
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Paramares S.A. www.paramares.net
Seamasters www.seamasterscr.com