

Rancho Mastatal Updates

September 2006

Here we are in our final days in Mastatal before flying into Binghamton, NY to begin our annual 2-month hiatus from Costa Rica. As happens every year, we're torn emotionally between seeing all of our friends and family in the United States and staying at the Ranch to continue working on our projects. This fall we're scheduled for eye surgery and a few talks and other events around the Northeast. We'll be participating as exhibitors in the Bioneers by the Bay Conference put on by the Marion Institute while visiting with ALAN,



Winging our way over San Jose

photo by Delfino Cornali

SPARKY, GEOFF, DESA, STACEY, CAREY, ELINOR, MAXINE and possibly others. Soon after that, we'll be giving a short talk about the Ranch to a group of interested folks in Montclair, NJ, home of Alan. He's been an amazing ambassador for the Ranch during the last few years. His moving and shaking has resulted in an influx of Jerseyites to our once quiet little community and a flood of jokes about the Garden State and their inhabitants. Such an easy target.

I pick this back up on Interstate 95 heading towards Richmond, VA on our way to Wilmington, NC where I'll be getting my new eye. We arrived back home to the world of abundant SUVs, paved roads, processed foods, fat dogs, colorful leaves, clean streets and strip malls the day before yesterday and as is normal, we're going through a bit of a transition period. Our turnaround after arriving to Binghamton after a 30-hour itinerary was a bit quicker than we had hoped but a pre-op appointment in NC didn't allow us the luxury to do much more than unpack, see some family, check a few emails, and repack before beginning our 3-week journey up and down the Eastern seaboard. November should be a bit less busy at which time we're hoping to spend a bit more quality time with family and get prepared for the upcoming year.

I know it's almost November and this is the September edition. Save your wiseass comments. We should simply number our newsletters instead of naming them by month. Regardless, we'll soon have Sparky back at the helm to get this little publication back on course. Thanks for helping us write the history of the Ranch using this format. And thanks to TYLER, KATIE, NATE, BRUCE, BARBA ROJA, ASHLEY, ANNA, STEHPEN, CORI, AMBER and PHOEBE for keeping the Ranch standing while we're gone.

This month's update includes:

[RM Program News](#): Have Heart

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Fútbol Follies: This Just In, September Soccer Sloppy
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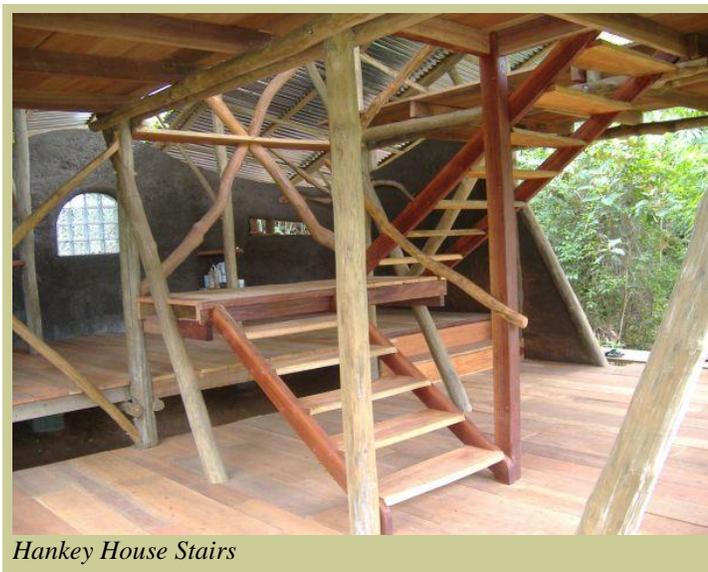
Conservation Update: Getting Better

Due to the fact that our local MINAE office is responsible for monitoring actions against the Mother Earth in our locale, they make for an easy topic when it comes to the Conservation Update. Over the past few months, especially these last few weeks, we've gotten to know Leo, the head of the local office, on a bit more intimate level. He's a jolly young man who seems motivated to improve the local reputation of our MINAE office and to enforce the country's environmental laws. He's outgoing, speaks English pretty well, and gives a shit about our forests and its friends.

We've done our best in recent days to give him and the rest of the MINAE office our utmost support, especially after their recent good work in the park and on our private wildlife refuge. Please help them feel at home on your next visit to Mastatal.



You have arrived - Mastatal



Hankey House Stairs

Building Report: Back to the Hankey

After a number of month hiatus from the Hankey House, it's time once again to make this project the focus of our building world so as to prepare for the upcoming season. It's going to be a jam-packed year kicking off with our yearly Wilderness First Responder Certification Course in January. After that, it's one group after the other and we'll be needing the new volunteer house more than ever, and fast. Space is already getting tight for the first half of next year, so if you know anyone that's thinking about volunteering or visiting, let them know that it would be best for them to contact us sooner rather than later. So, what

do we have on tap for the Hankey? Well, one of our main jobs will be to get some walls, both interior and exterior, onto and into the building. Even though the structure's designed to be open and airy, we will build some measure of privacy into the many rooms. Brainstorming sessions led to tentative plans for bamboo slated half walls upstairs. Bamboo just arrived for the walls, so we

are currently cleaning and prepping it. A bamboo curtain reaching from the floor of the first floor to the ceiling of the second floor behind the stairs will serve as both a visual boundary and aesthetically complement the structure and theme of the building. A miniature practice version of the bamboo curtain is well under way and will serve as a doorway into the composting toilet at Jeanne's. This project has required the work of many hands joining together to cure the bamboo, cut it, drill holes, and attach the pieces into long strands.

In related news, as part of a woodworking course put on by TIMO and TYLER, volunteers used their new knowledge of the woodshop and tools to construct a double bed for the Hankey. Plans are being formulated for more furniture for both the Hanky and the classroom. The slated projects will take us well into the New Year, meaning that Hankeyites will most likely be living in a construction site for a while. Thanks in advance for our understanding and patience.

Volunteer/Guest Gossip: Rancho Mastatal

Ever since STEPHEN STROUD has joined the gang, the Ranch has been singin' a new tune. From morning till night you will find him playing, singing and most importantly teaching his love of music. His enthusiasm for guitar strumming and singing has infected all. His poetic expressions of common life events (like compost) has us all stomping our feet and clapping our hands. This was a song he wrote for our farewell. Thanks Stephen. You truly do [ROCK!!](#)

A7 - - -
E7 - - A7

E - B E

Verse 1

Terciopelo Lluvia
Ginger flowers Catarata
Pejibayes Cangreja
Poison dart from Sweat

First day we'll all be baking
Loaves and bagels we're making
Some might say
Thank God it's Monday

Next day, get up and haul teak
Don't let Mario make you feel weak
You've only got
A kilometer to go!

Verse 2

Jeanne's Hanky
The Hooch The Classroom
Taller Back porch
Bodega El Banco

In the Main House we hear everything
The beat of the Pulp, beginner guitars
Nate's voice
And the morning toot

Movie night out on the back porch
Circle time, feel that group force
Somehow I know
I'm in the right place

Verse 3

The Elmer Hohl Campo de Pitching The Debutante
Chinita, Woodpile The Banker
Danielsan, Big Red Brother Nate, Putt Mossman
The Styler, Maverick Take a break!

Imperial, keep it flowing
Make your plan and keep it growing
In all you do
Have flowers on your shoes

Timo's got them buildings
Into shape, and oh, by the way
Save your shit
We'll use it someday

Verse 4

Kitchen Crew Villanova
Buying veggies Hanky Curtains
Paying the bills Roaches
Checking the mail Cleaning toad poo

Here's a tip, chili in your chocolate
Seeds in your pan, wipe your stove hot
And if you're at the Hohl
Keep your eyes on the pole

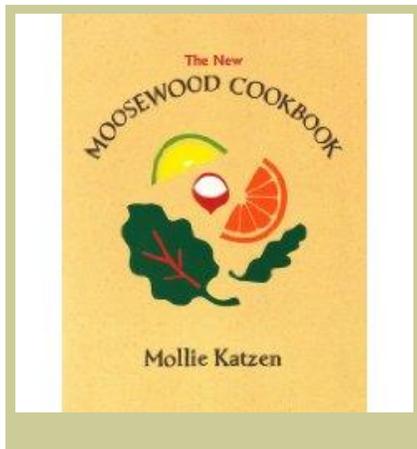
Maverick makes it all happen
Keeps the kitchen crew rockin'
Bills paid
And her beer is still cold

Verse 5

(Open the floor to words that come to mind during A groove)

Farewell Timo and Robin
Be well Timo and Robin
We'll miss you
And hold down the fort

Farewell Timo and Robin
Be well Timo and Robin
Thank you
Come back soon!



Comida Corner: Cauliflower-Cheese Pie with Grated Potato Crust

This is another one from Molly Katzen's Moosewood Cookbook. It's basically a quiche with a crust made from grated potatoes and onions. Imagine: quichey goodness with a layer of hashbrowns underneath. What could be better? For the filling we did a mix of cauliflower and broccoli – you could also include cabbage or any other veggies you'd like. The potato crust is delicious and could be a flourless base for any kind of quiche. Just remember: OIL THE PAN or you may be chipping potato off your Pyrex until the wee hours. Enjoy!

Convenience Tips:

- You can use a food processor with a grating attachment to grate the cheese, potato, and onion in that order. You don't need to clean the blade in between.
- Prepare the filling while the crust bakes.

Crust:

- 2 cups packed grated raw potato (with skin is fine, we have even used sweet potato)
- ¼ cup grated onion
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten
- Flour for your fingers
- A little oil

Filling:

- 1 Tbs olive oil or butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 medium cloves of garlic, minced
- ½ tsp salt
- Black pepper, to taste
- ½ tsp basil
- ¼ tsp thyme
- 1 medium cauliflower in small pieces (other veggies may be used as well)
- 2 eggs (I put in the yolk left over from the crust as well)

- ¼ cup milk
- 1 cup grated cheese (a little less is okay)
- Paprika

Directions:

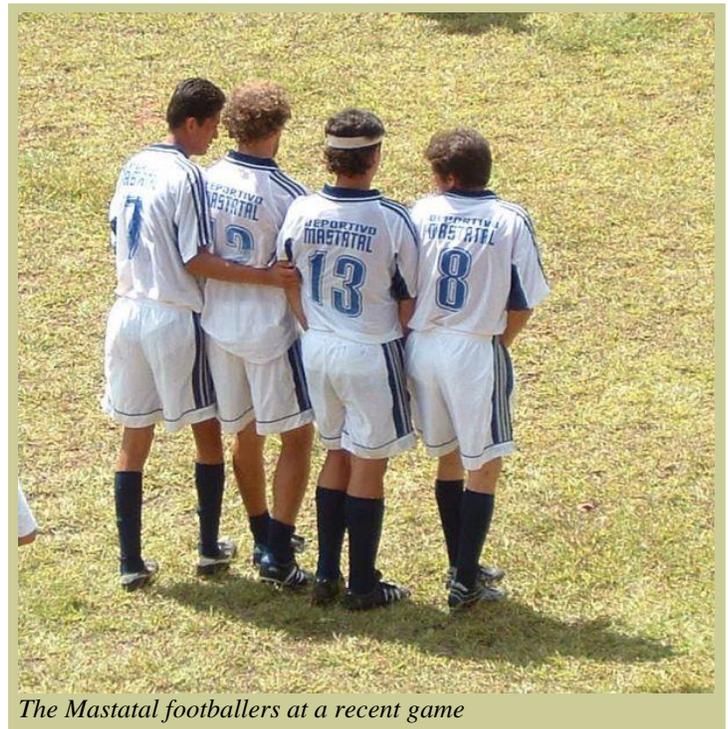
- 1) Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Oil a 9-inch pie pan.
- 2) Combine grated potato and onion, salt, and egg white in a small bowl and mix well. Transfer to the pie pan and pat into place with lightly floured fingers, building up the sides into a handsome, like Pico, edge.
- 3) Bake for 30 minutes, then brush the crust with a little oil and bake it 10 more minutes. Remove from oven and turn the temperature down to 375 degrees F.
- 4) Heat the olive oil or butter in a large skillet. Add onion, garlic, salt, pepper and herbs, and sauté over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Add cauliflower (and other veggies), stir, and cover. Cook until tender, stirring occasionally (about 8-10 minutes).
- 5) Spread half the cheese onto the baked crust (OK if it's still hot). Spoon the sautéed vegetables on top, and then sprinkle on the remaining cheese. Beat the eggs and milk together, and pour this over the top. Dust lightly with paprika.
- 6) Bake 35 to 40 minutes, or until set. Serve hot or warm.

Buen Provecho!

Futbol Follies: This Just In, September Soccer Sloppy

A slow month on the pitch for sure, but we certainly can't let this go by without an update. Mastatal was one of three teams to participate in the annual Zapatón tournament, though not all the usual suspects were on hand to suit up the yellow jerseys. Yet with a hodge podge squad the Galacticos were able to defeat the hosts and bring home this year's trophy. A subdued celebration ensued, not much beyond the typical Sunday scene at the pulp, and everyone went on their merry ways. But you can never discount a W, especially round these parts.

Next up was an invitation to our good ol' neighbor San Miguel for fútbol and bingo. Yet with apenas seven players, the Galacticos were unable to form a competitive squad, and while some joined the ranks of San Vicente for the day, for most it was a bit of a wash. Not to be denied their exercise, some gamers took advantage of a free afternoon to heat up the salon with a little four on four. A couple jammed fingers and twisted ankles later, the proper sweat had been achieved.



The Mastatal footballers at a recent game

As for the Mastatal plaza, it's gotten some decent use of late, including the first full field mejenga

in months. It was a heavily gringoed scene, with a strong female presence and just the right kind of friendly competitive spirit. With any luck we could get another dry spell in the coming months, facilitating another local outing. In the meantime, we might be seeing more fútbol action on the tele – welcome back Champions League.

Inspirational Impressions: Pales

"You come away from the great factory saddened, as if the chief end of man were to make pails; but in the case of the country man who makes a few pails now and then, rainy days, the relative importance of human life and of pails is preserved, and you come away thinking of the simple and helpful life of the man – and would fain go to making pails yourself".

---- Henry David Thoreau

Abrazos,

The Ranch Crew