

## Val & Harry's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cruise

We boarded Quest in Miami on Saturday, Dec. 8, 2007, and the ship sailed at approximately 5 PM. Our first full day was at sea and we were scheduled to arrive at Port Antonio, Jamaica on Monday morning. Quest arrived on schedule Monday, however the port was closed due to high seas. Off we sailed for our next destination, Santa Marta, Columbia – another two day sail away. As it turned out, tropical storm Olga formed Monday night and eventually tracked past the north side of Jamaica where we were scheduled to be.

Our cruise itinerary was:

- ❖ December 8 - Miami
- ❖ December 9 – at sea
- ❖ December 10 – Port Antonio, Jamaica (port call canceled, at sea)
- ❖ December 11 – at sea
- ❖ December 12 – Santa Marta, Columbia
- ❖ December 13 – Cartagena, Columbia
- ❖ December 14 – at sea
- ❖ December 15 – Puerto Limon, Costa Rico
- ❖ December 16 – at sea
- ❖ December 17 – cruise through the Panama Canal
- ❖ December 18 – Puerto Caldera, Costa Rico
- ❖ December 19 – San Juan Del Sur, Nicaragua
- ❖ December 20 – at sea
- ❖ December 21 – Huatulco, Mexico
- ❖ December 22 – Acapulco, Mexico

Azamara Quest - December 8-22, 2007



# Santa Marta, Columbia

December 12, 2007



Santa Marta, Columbia. Our first port of call after leaving Miami and three days at sea. Note the beautiful mountains in the Background and the low clouds. In these mountains, and also common in Costa Rico, are the “cloud forests”.















In a gold museum, we met two local girls who were doing volunteer work on their day out of school. Diana and Kelly are in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and were very excited to practice their English. I hand drew a map of the US and showed them the approximate location of North Carolina and Beaufort.



# Cartagena, Columbia December 13, 2007







Val is greeted at Fortress of San Felipe, the largest Spanish Fort in the New World.







The Old City, surrounded by a ring of massive walls, was built by the Spanish starting in 1586. Located throughout the “walled city” were many wooden balconies hanging over the narrow streets. Live sculptures, churches and parks were common within the city.



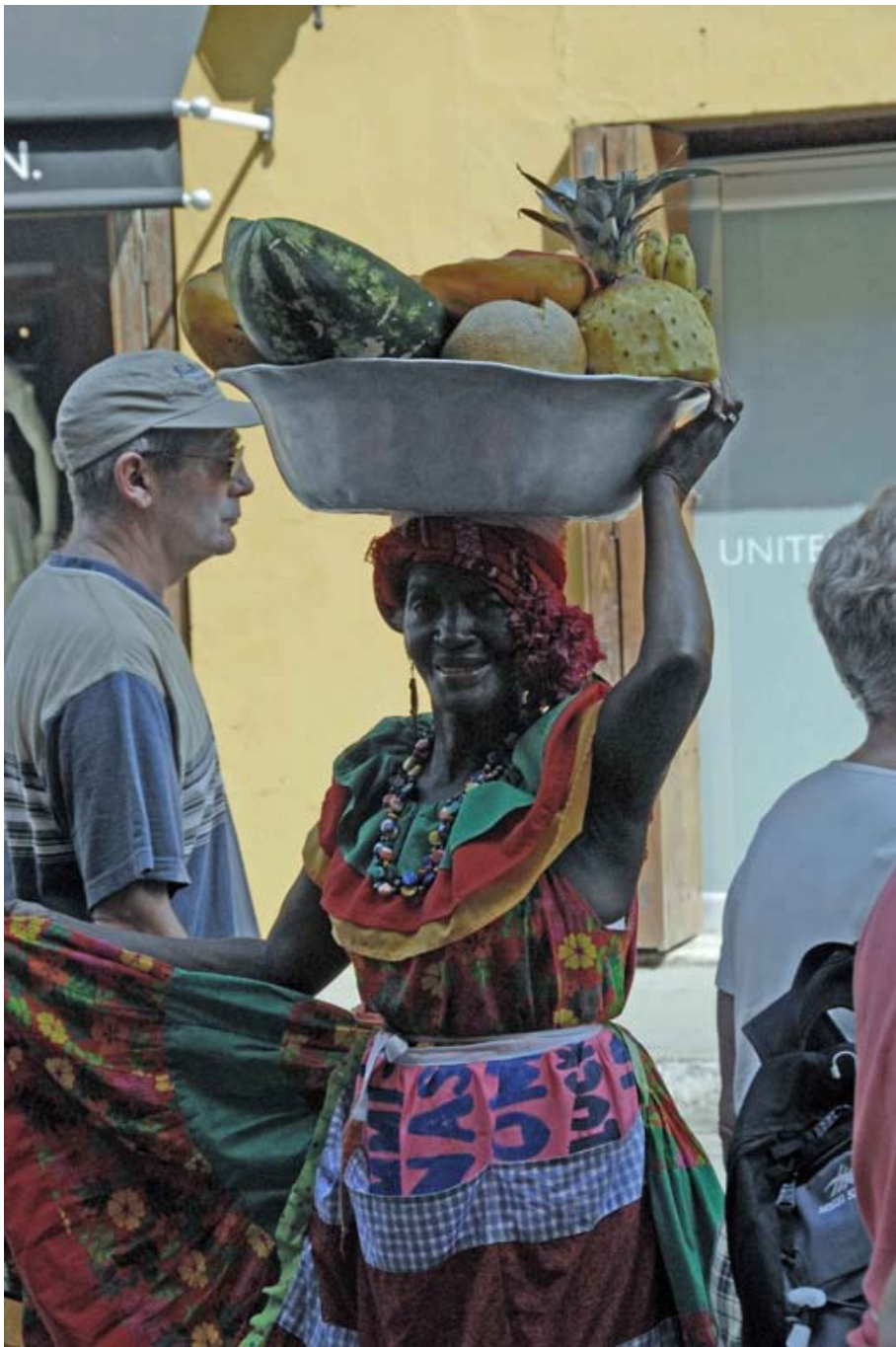




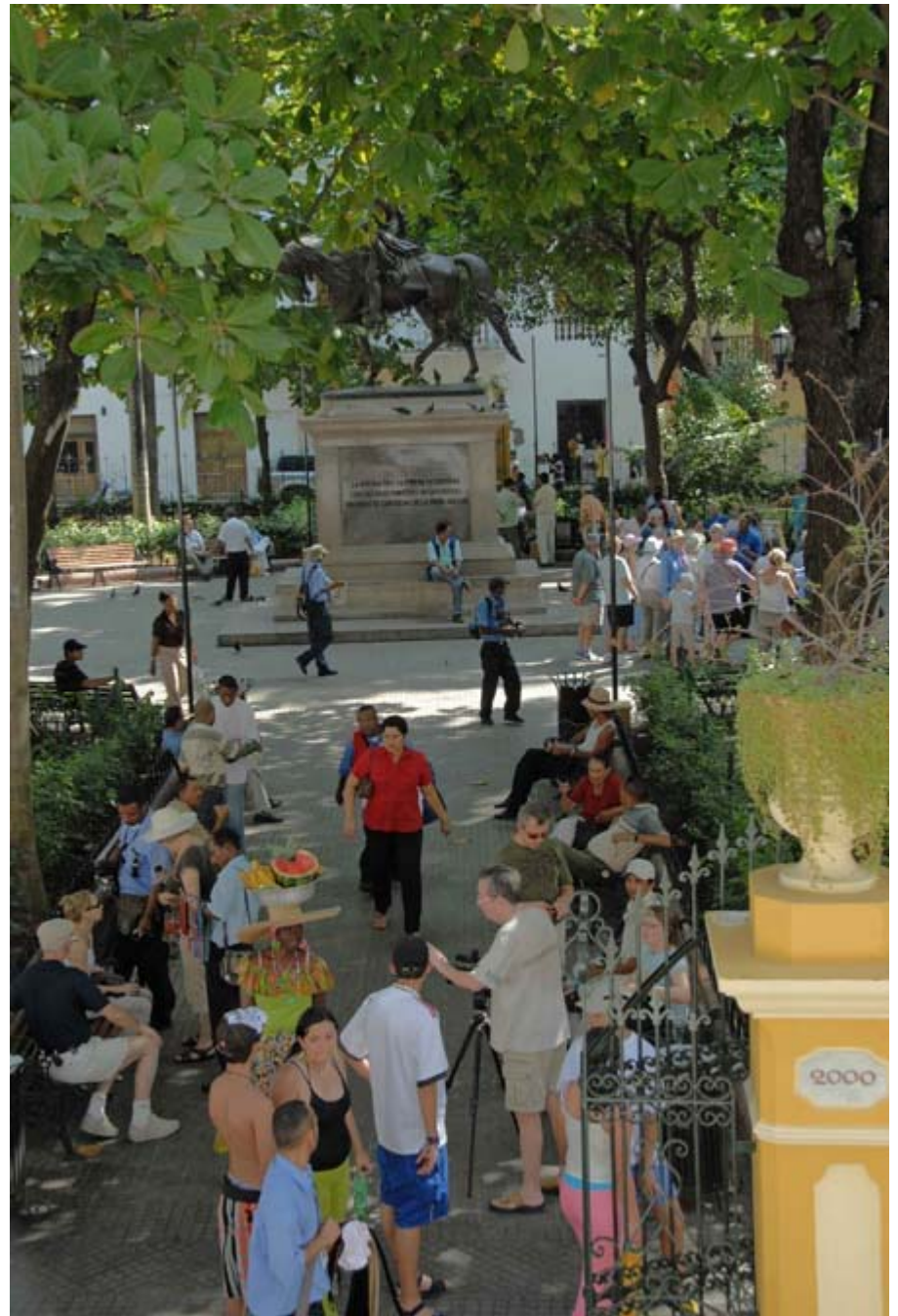
We have no idea whose bones are on permanent exhibit in the cathedral, but he must have been a VIP.

















# Puerto Limo, Costa Rica

December 15, 2007



Active volcano seen from our bus on the way to the coffee plantation.





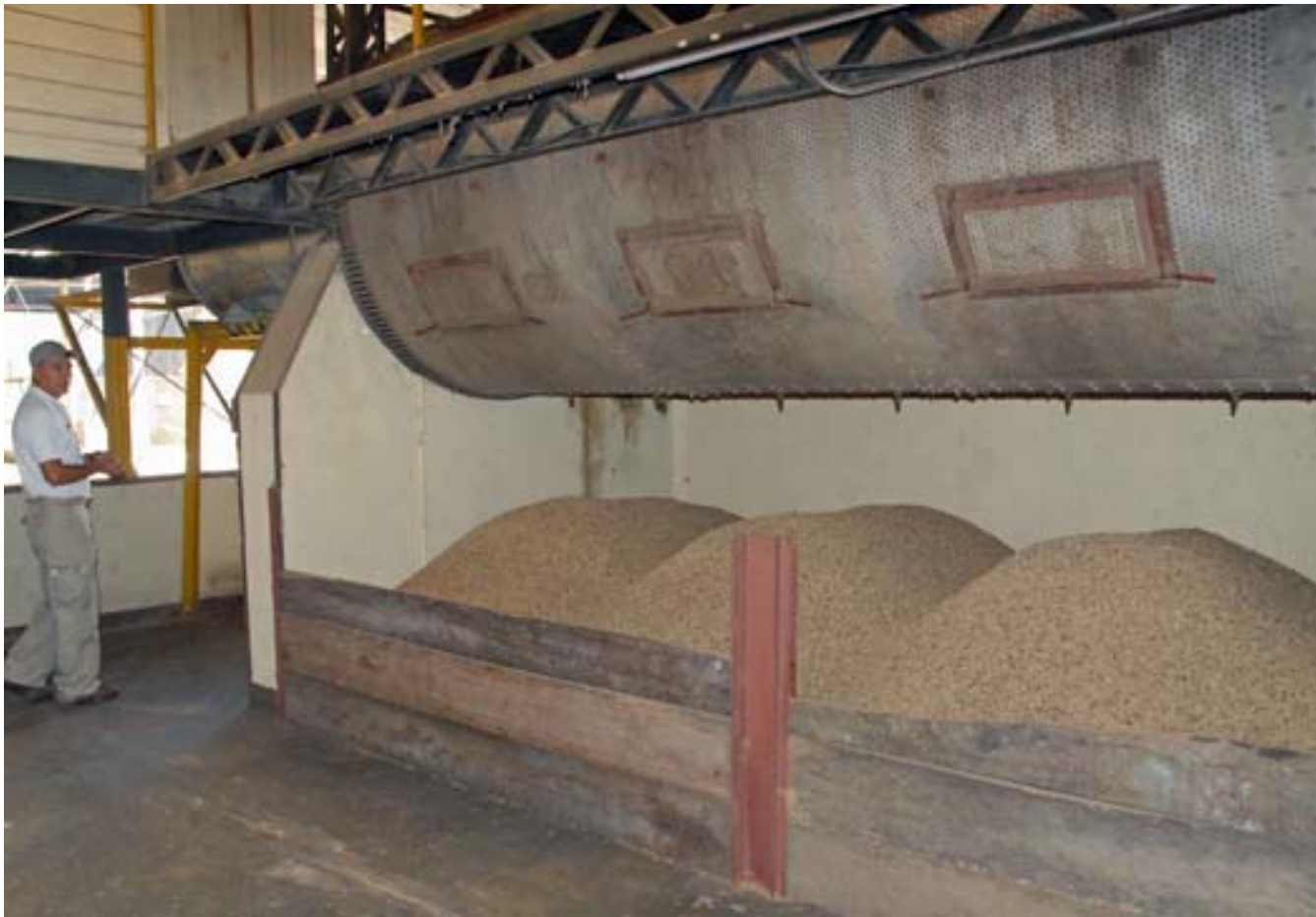








The coffee bean peeler (left) is used to remove the coffee bean from the skin. Above is the holding tank that serves the purpose of washing the beans and as a means of sorting for quality. The highest quality beans go to the bottom while the lesser quality float to the top.



Two methods of drying the coffee beans. Above is a mechanical drum dryer. At left, the beans are spread out on a pad in the sun, and hand turned until dry.







Golden Bean ships most of its beans dried but not roasted. They do have the very old, German built roaster at the left that has the capacity of roasting 20 pounds of coffee at the time. Each batch takes approximately 20 minutes. A difference of just one to two minutes of roasting time makes the difference between light and dark roast. The darker the roast, the less the content on caffeine.

Below the ladies are “tasting”, the method used to determine the quality of the coffee.





Casa Turire Hotel in Turrialba, Costa Rico has beautiful grounds and 12 deluxe rooms from about \$120 - \$300 per day, including breakfast. We enjoyed a great lunch.





A three toed sloth spotted in a tree along the side of the road on our return bus trip to Quest.

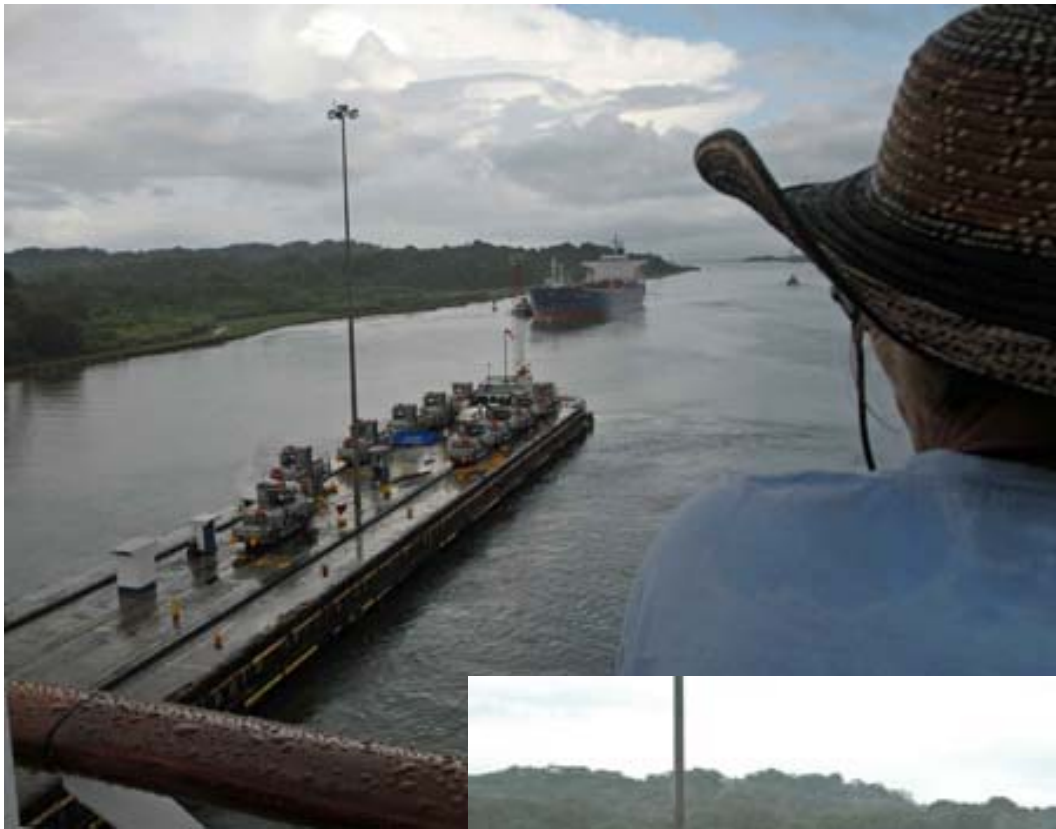
# Panama Canal Passage December 16, 2007







Early morning coffee is enjoyed on the fantail of Quest. Val & Harry secured a table in the shade at sunrise as “base camp” for the day. We are approaching the first loading on the East side of the Panama Canal. The complete passage was sunrise to sunset.







Gates close in our first lock.



The gear driven locomotives (left) that are used to move the ships through the lock are called “mules”.











Great Frigate (above)









Cave-ins are one of the major maintenance issues for the canal. Some areas have been terraced apparently in an effort to control the erosion.



Locking through on the Pacific side.







Passing under the Bridge of the Americas.



Panama City, Panama





# Puerto Caldera, Costa Rica

December 18, 2007

## Selvatura Park

We had a 2 ½ hour bus ride from Puerto Caldera to the park that featured a “cloud forest” at an elevation of approximately 6,000 ft. Selvatura also featured a hummingbird garden and an insect museum.







A colony of monkeys was spotted on our trip to the park along the side of the road. We made a 10 minute stop to take a look.







Almost every tree was a garden unto itself with hundreds of varieties of living plants and animals calling the tree home. This tree had an impressive collection of orchids, unfortunately they were not in bloom.

It was explained by our guide that all residents of a cloud forest compete for sunlight.













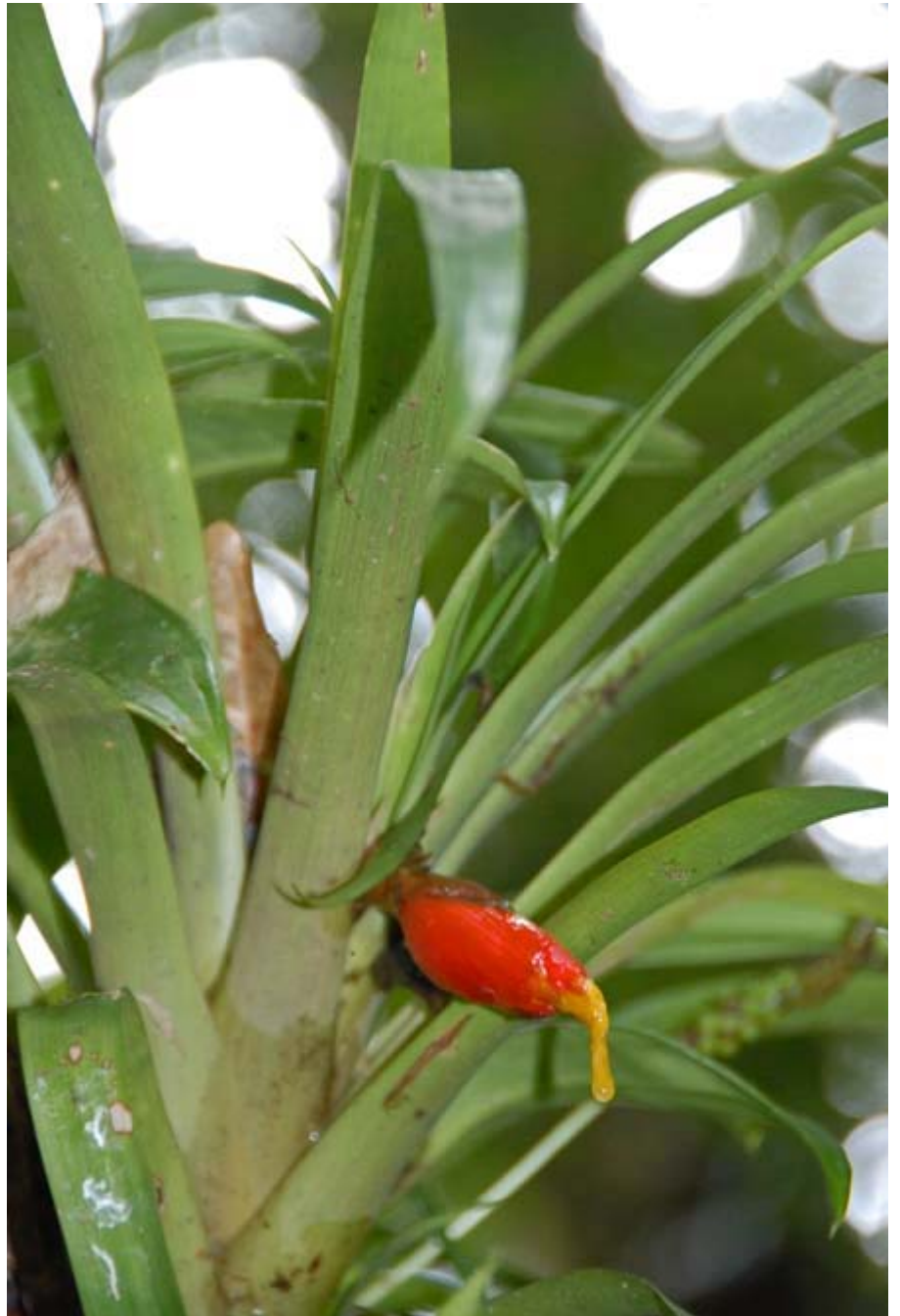
Carlos, our guide, was extremely knowledgeable and eager to show us the wonders of the cloud forest. As he explained it, all nature guides in Costa Rica are required to have college degrees in one of the natural sciences.

























Hummingbird  
Garden







The restaurant at the Selvatura Park, beautifully landscaped.





After a very long day in the cloud forest, and both suffering through a bout of altitude sickness, we enjoyed our anniversary dinner. We dined that night in one of two specialty restaurants on board, the Prime C. The crew of the Quest had our anniversary down for the next day, so our special day passed quietly into the night. In an effort to make amends, we were given another evening meal in the other specialty restaurant. On the last night on board the wait staff sang "Happy Anniversary To You" in the main dining room (just a bit much).

# San Juan Del Sur, Nicaragua December 19, 2007







Some locals greet us from a beach club.









Nicaragua has the largest expanse of rain forest north of the Amazon basin. With 84 nature reserves that cover 8,100 square miles and more than 17% of its land mass, Nicaragua has surpassed Costa Rica by 2,500 square miles of protected land.

























Only the main roads in the town were paved.



This pretty little girl was helping out her grandmother at a beachfront café. We were chased in under their tarp by a shower, and ended up trying several local beers and making friends.





I don't believe the hopes for a white Christmas at exhibited at the church were fulfilled.



Making and selling mats appeared to be a local trade.





# Huatulco, Mexico

December 21, 2007





































# Acapulco, Mexico December 22, 2007







