



***Bryan Townsend's
March 2010 Newsletter***

- **I'm Back!** Welcome everyone to the new version of my newsletter. Each issue will feature a mix of photos, short commentaries on restaurants, cultural events and information on life in San Miguel and real estate. We have an excellent new website and I hope everyone will take a look at it whether you are currently in the market either to buy or sell a home. Here is the url:

<http://www.realtysanmiguel.com/>



- **This Month's Photo** shows a popular local recreation: hot air balloon rides.
- **Restaurants in San Miguel**
Just opened recently is **Pescau** on Jesus near Hospicio. This is a seafood restaurant and bar and it has two menus, one focusing on ceviches (Mexico's answer to sushi) and the other on hot dishes. It is well worth a try. An old favorite is **Olé Olé** on Loreto about a block south of Calzada de la Luz. The décor is devoted to bullfighting and the specialty is fajitas with really large portions. Try the mixed fajitas with chicken, beef and shrimp.

- **Links about San Miguel**

Everyone has been talking about crime lately because there have been a few break-ins and purse-snatchings. These things do happen from time to time, but I have lived here for eleven years and I feel safer than I did in any of the Canadian cities where I lived: Victoria, Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. The problem with news coverage of Mexico is that it is so unfair because it is so narrow. The *only* coverage you are likely to see in the mass media is of some violent crime. So everyone gets an unrealistic picture of life in Mexico. For some reason, when the papers and tv report violent crime in Australia, or Germany or Canada, we don't let it skew our perceptions of those countries. The truth is that there is less violent crime in large cities in Mexico than in a number of American cities. And the difference when you compare San Miguel with similar sized places in the US or Canada is probably even greater. I just ran across an Associated Press story that puts it in perspective:

<http://www.statesman.com/news/texas/amid-drug-war-mexico-less-deadly-than-decade-219272.html>

Here are some quotes from the article:

“Mexico City's homicide rate today is about on par with Los Angeles and is less than a third of that for Washington, D.C.”

“Mexico City's rate was about 9 per 100,000 in 2008, while Washington, D.C. was more than 30 that year.”

“Mexico's homicide rate has fallen steadily from a high in 1997 of 17 per 100,000 people to 14 per 100,000 in 2009...”

“De la Barra attributes the downward trend to a general improvement in Mexico's quality of life. More Mexicans have joined the ranks of the middle class in the past two decades, while education levels and life expectancy have also risen.”

If you read the whole article you will indeed encounter some scary things, but all of those incidents are in border or coastal cities and usually involve the ongoing battle between the drug traffickers and law enforcement. San Miguel remains a very tranquil place, on the whole.

NBC ran a two-hour program recently about a kidnapping that took place in San Miguel in 2007 that seemed to put all this in doubt. While I heard a lot about this at the time, I certainly don't know all the details. What seems clear is that this was a confrontation between two powerful families and related to a large land deal that went sour. If you were a member of one of these families or had close connections with them, then it would pay to be wary. But as a visitor to San Miguel, or a foreign resident, I really don't see any reason to worry.

- **All About the Weather**

The unusually long winter is over now and spring has sprung: the jacarandas are in bloom, the peach and plum blossoms are almost gone and summer is just around the corner.

- **Real Estate Market Trends**

There have been several sales each week lately and the price range has been extending upward. Recent sales included a property in the seven-figure range and others in the \$400,000 to \$600,000 area. Centro is very popular as is San Antonio.

- **Cultural Events**

The Pro Musica series was a huge success this year with many sold out concerts—the new season is currently being planned, so keep in mind the advantage of becoming a patron is that you will always get seats at the concert. I gave a solo recital, the first one in quite a while, at the Teatro Santa Ana on March 9 and judging by the audience response, it was a success. The program included Spanish Renaissance, French Baroque, and modern music from Spain and Latin America. The Baroque Music Festival was also a big success with a spectacular performance of the Bach Magnificat with baroque instruments.

- **Real Estate Links**

We have seen more Canadian buyers lately and the reason might be that the Canadian economy and real estate market are both quite healthy right now. The first chart at this link shows the great contrast between the Canadian and Australian markets and the US and European ones.

http://www.scotiacapital.com/English/bns_econ/retrends.pdf

- **Featured Properties:**

- Under \$200,000 USD –Cozy Retreat in Centro



For everyone who thought that there were no properties left in Centro for under \$200,000. This is a new remodel with 2 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, small office and rooftop solarium/studio with 360 views of San Miguel. A superb job of interior design, this home features all-mahogany woodwork (including the studio floor), good natural light, absolutely amazing tile work and loads of charm. Set off the street this is a quiet retreat, but only minutes from the Jardin. Each room is a masterpiece of interior design and careful execution from colors to tiles to lighting. There simply are no equivalent properties in Centro at any where near this price.

http://www.realtysanmiguel.com/MLS/search_property746.html

- Under \$500,000 USD –Modern Masterpiece in Guadalupe



Unique modern design sets this house apart. Created with a European sensibility with contrasting textures of stone and concrete, imaginative lighting design with edge-lit stairways, Italian design kitchen, huge entertainment terrace with bugambiglia planters, views of the churches, fireplace, outdoor kitchen, bath and outdoor shower—this is a property that needs to be seen.

http://www.realtysanmiguel.com/MLS/search_property434.html

- Under \$600,000 USD –Gorgeous Home and Gardens in Balcones



Brand new listing, not even on the website yet, this property is located on Revueltas in Balcones, surrounded by other beautiful homes. The lot is large and there is lots of outdoor space including terraces and patios for entertaining and a lovingly-cared-for garden filled with flowers. The house has a separate casita, garage and entrances on each level. Everything is included: furniture, artwork, linens and kitchenware. Call for an appointment.

- Under \$800,000 USD –The Ultimate View Property



Newly completed, this 6000 sq ft home with separate casita, two-car garage, spa/Jacuzzi, granite counters in the state of the art kitchen, wine cellar, office, four bedrooms, four full and two half baths is an amazing value. With all the latest technology including water purification and pressure systems, Category 5 wiring and gas log fireplaces in every bedroom and both terraces, this is a great property. What makes it perfect is the view of the churches of Centro. Be sure to go to the website for lots more pictures.

http://www.realtysanmiguel.com/MLS/search_property501.html

- Under \$120,000 USD –Perfect View Lot in San Rafael



The sellers have reduced the price of this very large view lot in San Rafael. At 344 sq mt of land, you have room for a large house and garden. The street already has a number of high-quality homes.

http://www.realtysanmiguel.com/MLS/search_property438.html

- **Realty San Miguel** is a newer company that specializes in a high level of personal service. We have many testimonials from happy clients that you can read on our website:

<http://www.realtysanmiguel.com/testimonials.html>

- If you want to know more about available properties, just email me at bryan@realtysanmiguel.com

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