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Learning Magazine / Vol. 36

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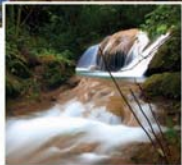
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Hola Sun
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Letter from the Publisher

Dear Readers,

Summer and the sea, they are inextricably intertwined, and that's especially true in Cuba.

In this issue of **Cubaplus**, a number of our stories, options and offers have something to do with the sea and its special relationship with the people of this beautiful Caribbean island. Here are a few highlights:

Our account of the 63rd Ernest Hemingway Billfish Fishing Tournament, one of the oldest such sporting events in the world. If you've ever dreamed of catching a marlin in the Caribbean Sea, surrounded by good friends, history and that special Cuban touch, then you need to read this article! Deep-sea fisherman Dr. Martin Arostegui is a doctor by profession who took up fishing as a hobby. Now it is a full-time passion, and he has set 420 world records in this "wholesome sport." We share a few of his insights.

Another sport enjoyed by ocean-lovers is underwater photography. Cuba was the venue this year for two great events: the 14th CMAS Underwater Photography World Championship, and the 3rd IMASUB International Underwater Photography Competition, in Cayo Largo Sur and Maria la Gorda, two spectacular locations. We have the details for you.

For boaters and divers, Cuba's marinas are at your service. In this issue, we have information about Marina Hemingway, in Havana, and Marina Marlin Cienfuegos.

As always, we have lots of information on Cuban culture. Learn about the special activities planned to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Cuba's national fine arts museum—the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. We also have interviews with the young artist Alfredo Otero, master pianist Frank Fernández, sculptor Martha Jiménez, photographer Ernesto Javier Fernández, painter Michel Mirabal and more.

When you're looking for refreshment on one of those blazing summer days, keep in mind that a Cuban classic has reopened: Sloppy Joe's. Learn a little about its history and mystique. And our restaurant review focuses on Atelier, a family-run establishment where fine dining and elegance go hand-in-hand.

Cuba is known for the quality of its health care and in this issue, you can learn about CIREN, Cuba's International Centre for Neurological Restoration, which offers innovative, successful therapy programs for neurological and general biological restoration that have won recognition and benefited thousands of patients in some 85 countries.

Tourism is flourishing in Cuba, and we have two reports on important industry events: FITCUBA 2013, the International Tourism Fair, and TURNAT 2013, the 9th International Nature Tourism Conference.

Finally, we want to thank all our friends who came to the **Cubaplus** 7th Anniversary celebration at the Hotel Nacional, which we report on in this issue. A wonderful venue, with great presentations, great entertainment, and great prospects for the future! Thank you all!

To be able to share stories about boating in Cuba and the Americas, Cubaplus has partnered with the yachting lifestyle quarterly magazine *Marinalife*. For more information visit:

www.marinalife.com



Dominic Soave
Publisher

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dominic Soave". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D'.

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TURNAT 2013

a very green perspective
on Cuba

Every two years, Cuba organizes an international conference on nature tourism in a different setting. For 2013, the eastern province of Granma and its capital, Bayamo, is the venue, in an area that is environmentally, historically and culturally different



*By Roberto F. Campos
Photos by PUBLICITUR*

One significant strategy for Cuban tourism authorities is to diversify options for recreation, going beyond the traditional sun and beach offer that characterizes this archipelago, where interest is growing in travel that focuses on nature and the environment.

In the context of these projections, the 9th International Nature Tourism Conference, TURNAT 2013, is set for September 24-27 in the eastern province of Granma, and will be centered in its capital city, Bayamo.

This biennial conference will include the presence of tourism industry experts, particularly those who specialize in nature,



conservation and the development of projects that involve the environment and its protection.

The program is loaded with attractions: participants begin at Bayamo's Hotel Sierra Maestra, where they will hear presentations on nature tourism in Granma, challenges facing Cuba's national system of protected areas, and the management of the country's cultural heritage.

The conference is complemented by a trade fair, information on conservation, and opportunities for exchange to facilitate communication among participants, as well as post-event tours to learn about the beauty of the local surroundings, where the landscape is strongly influenced by the mountains.

Tours planned for conference delegates will cover the Desembarco del Granma

National Park (a Natural World Heritage site) and a wildlife refuge. The setting for this opportunity is known for its beauty, and borders the Granma Park and the Pico Turquino National Park, both of them full of endemic flora and fauna, and major sites of biodiversity and conservation.

The Sierra Maestra is the country's most extensive mountain region, and features the highest peak nationwide, the Pico Turquino, which stands 1,974 metres above sea level.

The Desembarco del Granma park is in the westernmost part of the Sierra Maestra and covers some 25,000 hectares (about 250 square km), featuring beautiful rocky crags and vertical cliffs, and providing a dramatic landscape.

For its part, the Turquino National Park is home to rivers, forests, mountain peaks and valleys filled with lush vegetation. The



southern slopes of the Sierra Maestra Mountains are rugged and staggered, and the local ecosystem is dry.

In all, the Sierra Maestra covers three distinct settings: the Turquino National Park, the Desembarco del Granma Park, and La Gran Piedra.

Turquino National Park is mountainous, with more than 17 peaks that are over 1,300 metres above sea level. The peaks interconnect, forming a landscape like a tourism postcard par excellence for TURNAT 2013, with a treasure of flora and fauna.

The Granma Park has one extremely interesting site in particular: Marea del Portillo, a strip of well-preserved coastal mangrove forest with many endemic features, in an area near both mountains and forests.

Hiking, camping, mountain-climbing...many and diverse are the recreational and sporting specialties that can be practiced in this region.



Havana was permanently established as its capital.

As part of its historical significance, Bayamo was the place where the country's national anthem was heard for the first time, on October 20, 1868. And just a few months later, on January 12, 1869, its inhabitants preferred to burn the city down rather than surrender to the Spanish colonial troops.

It is in this special setting that TURNAT 2013 will be receiving participants from all over the world who are interested in learning—in the best way possible—about a significant area for tourism in Cuba, as they discuss the most important tendencies worldwide in nature tourism. ■

Along with its natural beauty, this region is known for its culture and tradition, which feature prominently in this year's TURNAT conference.

In fact, the capital city of Bayamo is strongly associated with national history; it was here that Cuba's patriotic sentiment is known to have originated. San Salvador de Bayamo is its original name, and it was founded as Cuba's second villa on November 5, 1513 by the Spanish conquistador Diego Velásquez.

Because of the River Bayamo's suitable conditions for navigation, the villa flourished rapidly, along with another eastern city, Santiago de Cuba, which temporarily served as the colony's capital before





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José Martí

The language of passion

By *Ciro Bianchi Ross*
Photos: *Prensa Latina Photo Archives*

His words flowed like water from a spring, irrepensible; sometimes calm and serene, sometimes inflamed, in sudden gushes.

The fluidness of his speech was impressive, as was the brilliance of his ideas, and the sumptuousness of the images transmitted by his voice, both elegant and manly. In Guatemala, when he was still a young man, he earned the nickname of "Doctor Torrent." José Martí, the Apostle of Cuba's Independence, always moved, shook, and electrified audiences. As a speaker, he excelled in dry academic forums, stern international meetings like the Monetary Conference that he attended as a delegate in Uruguay, and rallies where he called upon his compatriots to make revolution. In 1895, in the countryside of free Cuba and on the eve of his death in battle against the Spanish, he was able to address the combatants of the nascent Liberation Army, the Mambis. "I listened to him and felt that I had to take my hat off," recalled one Mambi fighter who had the privilege of seeing him. And another: "I couldn't understand him, but I felt that I was ready to die for him."

Sarmiento the Argentine said that "in Spanish, there is nothing similar to Martí's roar...After Victor Hugo, nothing presents France like his iron resonance." According to Cuban poet José Lezama Lima, Martí the speaker "occupies a place apart in the annals of Spanish eloquence. None of that facile verbal inebriation for him; his language is the language of passion. That is how he was able to move, impassion, and provoke revolution. Those who heard him remember it as a one-of-a-kind spectacle..."

In 1878, back in the country after a time in exile, he amazed his compatriots with his skills as an orator. Upon the death of the poet Alfredo Torroella, whom Martí had met in Mexico, he spoke at his burial and a subsequent event in a way that his listeners found striking. His oratory was unusual. At a time when speakers still used the terms "the country" or "the island," Martí referred to the "homeland"; "the frowning homeland with laurels in mourning." It was a nervous, brilliant, difficult, intoxicating eloquence. His melodious orator's voice vibrated with energy as suddenly as it became clouded with a suppressed elegiac tone. When his speech was over, the crowd burst into prolonged applause and Martí was led from the platform amid embraces.

His success was even greater when he spoke at a banquet that a group of Cuban reformists had thrown for a well-known journalist. Martí's tone and intention surprised the gentlemen sponsoring the tribute, people known as cautious and reluctant to support independence. Martí praised the public integrity of the man who was being toasted and declared: "A man who demands is worth more than a man who begs...rights are taken, not asked for; they are wrested, not begged for...." And the diners were left breathless when he said that if Cuban liberal politics strove to set out and radically solve all of the country's problems, "then I drink to Cuban politics, for its pride, dignity, and vigor." But if that was not the case, if immediate, definite and concrete solutions were not reached, if instead of voices for the homeland we should be something other than ourselves, "...then I break my glass: I do not drink to Cuban politics!" An hour later, the colonial governor, Captain General Ramón Blanco y Erenas, the Marquis of Peña Plata, learned about the banquet incident and Martí's speech. Martí? Who is Martí? he asked. He was to find out shortly, because the next day, the Lyceum of Guanabacoa hosted an evening in honor of Cuban violinist Díaz Albertini, who was returning from abroad after glorious success, and Martí, "that Martí guy," was to be one of the speakers. The governor headed for Guanabacoa. After the end of the Ten Year War and amid the "incomplete liberty achieved, received from nobody," the island's top authority wanted to ingratiate himself with the Cuban intellectual crowd.

Martí cared little that the captain general was present. When he referred to the homeland and to Cuba's future, everybody listening knew what he meant. Blanco could not bear to hear the speech to the end. He stood up and, full of dignity and



covered with medals, walked out of the room. He commented: "I do not want to remember what I heard and what I never imagined would be said in front of me, a representative of the Spanish government. I am going to think that Martí is a madman, but a dangerous madman."

Many were the speeches that José Martí gave throughout his 42 years of life. His pronouncements on Cuban poet José María Heredia and Simón Bolívar were memorable, as was his tireless advocacy of unity among the émigré community and their preparation for what he called the "necessary war," as well as the Republic "with all and for the good of all" that the war would make possible. They were stirring speeches that demonstrated the extraordinary seduction of his speech and the brilliant and intoxicating eloquence that emanated from his voice, both elegant and manly. ■

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 Cuba



The 63rd Hemingway Tournament

Good fishing and a good time in Cuba

By Roberto F. Campos

One of the oldest fishing competitions in the world takes place in Cuba every year: the Ernest Hemingway Billfish Fishing Tournament, and the 63rd edition, held from May 20 to 25, 2013, was yet another opportunity for good fishing and a good time in Cuba.

This event has the distinction of having come into being when Hemingway was still alive and living in Cuba, where he maintained a home for more than 20 years. He had a particular fondness for a marina located west of Havana that was later named after him, and which is now the venue for the annual tournament: the Marina Hemingway.

In a very special turn of events, second place in this year's tournament was taken by the boat aboard which the editor of **Cubaplus**, Dominic Soave, sailed and competed.



First place was won by the U.S.-Cuban team aboard the Unclaimed. They also won the prize for the first marlin catch.



Second place was taken by the Canadian team, aboard the *Costa Azul*.



Third place was taken by South Africa aboard the *Bon Tour La Vie*.

At the end of the tournament, organizers announced next year's event: it is set for the same venue, and will be held from June 9 to 14, 2014.

Participating in this competition means being part of a time-honoured tradition, considering that its first edition took place on May 26, 1950, with 36 of the best sport yachts in the Cuban capital. In 1992, the Hemingway International Nautical Club of Cuba was founded, and it is now the organizer of the annual Hemingway tournament, along with the Cuban Ministry of Tourism, via its nautical and marina business group, Marlin S.A.

In this year's tournament, 45 anglers competed in eight teams from an equal number of countries—

Italy, France, Canada, United States, Mexico, Colombia, South Africa and Cuba. Organizers highlighted their commitment to environmental conservation by using the method of tag and release for any catches.

The president of the International Game Fish Association, Rob Kramer of the United States, participated in this year's event. He said that Cuba has a very important role in this sporting activity, given its history and natural conditions. The IGFA has members from 125 countries, including Cuba, where the tradition of sport fishing had been well-established for generations before the author of *A Farewell to Arms* sailed in these waters.

Winners at the 63rd Hemingway Tournament

First place was won by the U.S.-Cuban team aboard the *Unclaimed* (representing Havana's Hemingway International Nautical Club), which took home the Ernest Hemingway Grand Prize with three tag-and-release marlin catches. They also won the prize for the first marlin catch.

Second place was taken by the Canadian team, aboard the *Costa Azul*.

Third place was taken by South Africa aboard the *Bon Tour La Vie*.

The Cuban team, aboard the *Doris*, won the trophy for best Dorado catch.

Kramer noted that Cubans are very conscientious about environmental protection and that their fishing traditions are known around the world, particularly because of Hemingway's journeys and adventures here, which led to the tournament's creation in 1950.

As part of this year's fun, a joint crew of U.S. and Cuban anglers demonstrated that despite the political and economic barriers between Washington and Havana, the peoples of both countries are always reaching out to each other. In this case they were the winning team: No. 4, aboard the *Unclaimed*.

The *Unclaimed* was followed by the Canadian and South African teams in second and third place. However, the high point of the event's success was the demonstration of friendship between the U.S. and Cuban peoples, organizers said.



It was especially significant that this team of anglers from both sides of the Strait represented Havana's Hemingway International Nautical Club. As their trophy, the winners received a beautiful painting with an ocean theme, donated by Jorge Yuvero Balbuena—painter, expert fisherman and captain of the boat.

During the activities, representatives of the Cuban Sport Fishing Federation, the Hemingway International Nautical Club and the tourist complex Residencial Marina Hemingway highlighted the importance of environmental conservation and protection of fish species. ■

Another highlight of the Cuban fishing journey: music!

Cuban music can be found in every aspect of tourism in Cuba, and that goes for fishing too, as participants found at the 63rd Ernest Hemingway Billfish Fishing Tournament.

The general conclusion of participants was that the music livened up all of the event's activities and added to the excitement. In fact, a band of young musicians created a song just for the tournament, playing it every day as the competitors' boats left and return from the Marina Hemingway dock—a first for this event, organizers said.

"Keep the Tradition Going" ("Sigue la tradición") is the name of the song, and it was a real hit. It was composed by the band Onda Expansiva, which was founded 16 years ago, and has a repertory that includes a variety of genres, including rap, reggaeton, bachata, merengue, salsa and fusion. Their diversity is also reflected in their stage names: director/singer "Mr. Silva," "King Arthur" (El Rey Arturo), "Chicho Man," "Mario the European" and DJ Frannie!

One line of "Sigue la tradición" goes: "Keep the tradition going left by Hemingway / start your journey firmly / because you could be the king," a nice note of encouragement for participants to strive and win.

Music is a magical word in this country, with its rainbow of genres and rhythms based on the original styles of this island, like son and danzón, and their fusion with music from all over the world by talented musicians.

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With 420 world records for fishing, Dr. Martin Arostegui is a real expert in this sport, to which he has devoted some six decades of his life.

By Mercy Ramos

Photos: Courtesy of Martin Arostegui

A conversation with Martin Arostegui is extremely interesting. When he talks about fishing, he does it with an infectious passion. A doctor by profession and a fisherman by hobby, he has been around fish and the sea almost from the cradle. At the tender age of 3, he made his first catch, a tiny grunt, which of course immediately leapt out of his hands and back into the blue waters off the Havana seawall, the Malecón.

"My childhood was full of hooks and fish," he says. "In fact, I used to sneak out of the house and go down to the Malecón, where I would spend the afternoon with the fishermen, who taught me all of their tricks.

"In 1960, I moved to the United States, where I earned my medical degree, but during those years, I hardly had any time for fishing. After my graduation, though, it was easier for me to practice my number one passion: sport fishing."

In the United States, Arostegui joined a fishing club similar to Cuba's Sport Fishing Federation (in Spanish: *Federación de Pesca Deportiva de Cuba*), which is how he became very familiar with the fly fishing method.



"I hold 420 world records for fishing different species, some of them sharks," he says. "The biggest shark ever caught in the world, and which moreover is the biggest in history, was caught by me in 2006. It weighed 385 pounds, and I caught it on a 15-pound fly line."

"It was very exciting," Arostegui says, his face shining with the memory. "We took it live on the boat to Key West, where it was duly certified and then freed, so that it could keep living in its natural habitat."

Another of this seasoned angler's passions is freshwater fishing.

"I set a record in the Amazon by catching a 15-pound peacock bass—which only lives in South America—with a four-pound fly line," he explains.

For Arostegui, who has retired from the medical profession and now devotes himself full-time to sport fishing, the conservation of the species is extremely important. In fact, as a member of the International Game Fish Association (IGFA), he gives presentations on the most appropriate methods of fishing and returning a



catch to its natural habitat (a method known as catch and release).

This enthusiast has participated several times in the Ernest Hemingway Billfish Fishing Tournament, which he describes as very important. This year, he came to give talks on how to use circle hooks, which are safer for the fish because they tend to lip hook them, keeping them alive, instead of the fish swallowing the hook, which can be deadly.

"I think it is essential to pass on my passion for fishing to children and young people, because it is a very wholesome recreational activity. But it should always include saving the lives of the fish, because the most important aspect of fishing today is contributing to conservation of these species, as a legacy to the future generations," Arostegui said. ■



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capturing the underwater world on camera

By Dominic Soave
www.cubaplusmagazine.com

They require the skills of swimmers, divers, biologists, photographers and artists; they are visitors to another world, a world with its own flora, fauna and magic.

They are underwater photographers, and they converged in Cuba twice this year to enjoy the archipelago's beautiful sea bottoms and to learn about and document, with their photographs, its biodiversity, conservation and natural beauty. Even beginners at these events have done well; they're not just for the pros.

A world-class event in Cayo Largo

Underwater photography is a competitive sport, and every year, diver/photographers make their bid to be the best in the world at presenting the underwater landscape in all of its beauty. At the same time, they follow established regulations to ensure that they protect the environment.

For 2013, Cuba was chosen to host the 14th CMAS Underwater Photography World Championship, sponsored by the CMAS,

the Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatique, in coordination with the Cuban Federation of Underwater Activities (FCAS for its letters in Spanish), and the Marlin Nautical and Marinas business group.

Divers came from 18 countries to participate in the event at Cayo Largo, from Apr. 8-14, after being selected by their respective national member federations of the CMAS. The countries represented were: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, France, Germany, Korea, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey.

Many teams arrived early to practice their training dives. Once the championship was underway, teams competed in the categories of Fish, Close-Up, Close-Up with Theme (the theme was sponges/spongia), Wide Angle, and Wide Angle with Diver.

Spain and Italy dominated the event, and the host country, Cuba, came in fourth place in the world ranking.

The top three winners were: David Barrio/Spain, world champion (winner of the gold medal); Stefano Proakis/Italy (silver medal),





and Michele Davino/Italy (bronze). Fourth place went to Daniel G. Pérez Hernández, from the host team, Cuba.

"This World Championship was a great success for the CMAS and for the organizers of the FCAS. It shows that even small federations can plan and perform a successful event, when the water and the infrastructure equally stand on their side," the CMAS website reported in its account of the event.

Guanahacabibes Natural Park: a great place for underwater photography

A couple of months after the CMAS World Championship, Cuba hosted another international underwater photography event: IMASUB 2013, the 3rd International Underwater Photography Competition, June 10-13, in Maria la Gorda, a beach in Guanahacabibes Natural Park, organized by the Gaviota S.A. tourism group.

Caves, caverns and tunnels, long expanses of white sand, large colonies of black coral, and all kinds of fish, plants, gorgonians

and crustaceans make up an interesting underwater landscape in this beautiful natural park. The transparency of its waters makes it possible to have visibility of up to 30 meters in depths of 25 to 30 meters.

The IMASUB event was open to underwater photographers from all over the world, and the only requirement was to comply with the event's regulations. This year's 110 participants were from Argentina, Mexico, United States, Slovakia, Canada, and Cuba.

Competition categories were: fauna (invertebrates, mammals, tortoises, birds, etc.); macro; environment (general landscape); and environment with model.

Each participant was able to submit three photos in each category, and 13 prizes were awarded, as well as a Special Prize, granting the winner the right to three nights at Maria la Gorda for two people, with five immersions each. One of the Cuban competitors, Manuel Pedro Carmentate Martínez, won the grand prize. ■





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Remembering the first Key West-Havana flight, ears ago

A bust of the Cuban pilot Domingo Rosillo del Toro, who piloted the first successful flight between Key West, Florida and Havana, Cuba, was unveiled at the Key West international airport to mark the 100th anniversary of that feat of aviation. In his one-seat Morane-Saulnier, Rosillo made the 145 km (90 mile) trip across the Florida Strait in two hours and eight minutes on May 17, 1913, setting a world record both for distance flown over water and for altitude attained.

His son, Alberto Rosillo, unveiled the bust in bronze, a well-deserved tribute to his father.

"I'm very happy to see that my father's achievement has finally been recognized," he said.

The historic feat by Domingo Rosillo (1878-1957) was also honoured at the Miami International Airport, where a plaque with his name was hung on a wall in Concourse E, where other outstanding aviators are commemorated, including Charles Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart.

Also in Key West, the museum of the San Carlos Institute honoured the date of Rosillo's flight with a stamp exhibition.

That first flight between Key West and Havana took place just 10 years after the Wright brothers made the first flight

in history, in 1903, and just five years after Louis Blériot was the first person to cross the English Channel, in 1908, also in a one-seater.

For his flight across the Strait, Rosillo's plane had an open cockpit, weighed less than 500 kg, and had a navigation system that consisted of a compass. He had nothing to protect him if his plane had to go down in the Strait's waters.

About 50,000 people assembled in Havana to receive Rosillo when he flew in, and he was celebrated as a hero by the people and national authorities.

Two days later, on May 19, 1913, another Cuban pilot, Agustín Parlá Orduña, followed Rosillo's footsteps and repeated the feat. He was blown off course by heavy winds, but he managed to splash down in Havana's Bay of Mariel.

Both Rosillo and Parlá Orduña are considered Cuban aviation pioneers. In Cuba, the centennial was celebrated with a ceremony and the unveiling of a plaque at the El Morro fortress on Havana Bay. The fortress's lighthouse guided Rosillo during his flight, and two cannon shots were fired there to announce the beginning of his flight in Key West. ■

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Marina Hemingway is among the safest in the Caribbean

By Mercy Ramos

Photos: José (Tito) Meriño



The Marina Hemingway, a leader among marinas and nautical activities, is an important venue for many different events, including international regattas and other competitions, such as the recent Ernest Hemingway Billfish Fishing Tournament

Roberto Salinas Ortiz, general director of the Residential Marina Hemingway

Built in the early 1950s, the Marina Hemingway is located west of the Cuban capital and is considered the safest in the Caribbean, because it was designed to withstand heavy winds, swells, and even hurricanes.

In an interview with **Cubaplus**, Roberto Salinas Ortiz, general director of the Residential Marina Hemingway complex, explained that tidal highs and lows were taken into account for the marina's construction, and it was built parallel to the coast. This means that even when there are heavy swells outside the marina—including storms and

hurricanes—the waters of its canals are calm, preventing any threat to docked vessels.

Moreover, the entrance to the marina is protected by a bend, so that the movement of the waves does not affect boats as they come and go.

"It's often been the case that vessels sailing north of Cuba with other destinations have had to stay here because of bad weather or a breakdown, and we have received them and provided them with help," Salinas said.

The marina has 404 berths in its four canals, which are five to six metres deep. They all have potable water,



electricity, fuel, and communications services, making it possible to enjoy life on board 200 crafts. Yachtsmen and women are also provided with the possibility of accommodations in comfortable bungalows or hotels of their choice.

The marina has several restaurants serving Cuban and international cuisine, shopping centers, a Casa del Habano, medical services, a naval supply shop, and a pharmacy, along with other facilities.

"We have just opened an aquatic park, and we have plans to increase the services and options available there,"

Salinas said. These include reactivating its tennis and beach volleyball courts, soccer on the beach and everything else for enjoying the summer.

"The marina's *raison d'être* is providing detailed services for yachtsmen and women, and we are engrossed in a number of projects to meet that objective, such as restoring our docks and modernizing our naval repair and maintenance shops and services in general, to provide our customers with an increasingly better-quality product. That way they will always have a safe port to put in when needed," Salinas said. ■

A decorative arrangement on a light-colored wooden board. It features a piece of dark, gnarled driftwood in the center. To the left is a brown ceramic vase with a textured surface. Several seashells are scattered around, including a large scallop with a reddish-brown pattern, a smaller scallop, and a spiral shell. The board is secured with light-colored twine at the top and bottom. In the background, a colorful map of a marina is visible, with a sign that reads 'CONSTITUTION PRIZE MARINA' and 'TOTAL ENERGY'.

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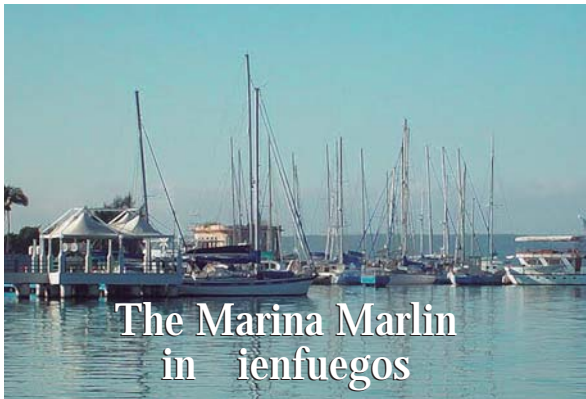
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The Marina Marlin in Cienfuegos

Discovered by Columbus during one of his first journeys to Cuba, the Bay of Cienfuegos on Cuba's central-southern coast is one of the most beautiful, welcoming bays in the country, covering 34 square miles (88 km). In the city of Cienfuegos, the historic quarter was declared a Cultural World Heritage site by UNESCO.

The bay is home to the Marina Marlin, the place to go for a wide array of nautical sports and activities, such

as excursions and rides around the bay that include visits to two small fishermen's enclaves and an ancient colonial fortress, Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de Jagua, which dates back to 1745.

Two vessels are used for these activities, a monohull with capacity for 30 people, and a catamaran with capacity for 100. Their tour packages include lunch and a well-stocked bar.

Another option for nautical life here combines fishing with diving, in the Gulf of Cazones, Banco de Jagua,





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or Jardines de la Reina archipelago, depending on which direction the visitor is interested in exploring, east or west. Twenty-two boats are available for this service, two of them monohulls and the rest catamaran-type vessels. In either case, they can be rented with or without a crew.

The marina's installations have the capacity for accommodating up to 36 vessels with a draft of up to 13 feet (four metres). Facilities include water, electricity, fuel, a naval supply store, and minor repair services. Taxis and services

for excursions to local places of interest are also available. Underwater activities are organized at the Rancho Luna dive center, just 16 km from the marina. It covers an area of about 3.5 nautical miles, with more than 40 dive sites less than 10 minutes from the center. The richness of the local marine flora and fauna—where average horizontal visibility in its clear, tranquil waters is up to 65 feet (more than 20 meters)—and an average year-round temperature of 25 degrees Celsius makes diving here a wonderful, unforgettable experience. ■



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The visual arts, music, and fashion were all part of an enjoyable evening to celebrate the seventh anniversary of **Cubaplus** magazine at Havana's emblematic Hotel Nacional, with a full house of tourist industry representatives, businesspeople, artists, diplomats, journalists, and other friends.

It was also the occasion for launching **Cubaplus** issue No.25, an English-language quarterly aimed at the Canadian and U.S. tourist markets, and **55 Minutos**, its Spanish-language supplement.

The Canadian ambassador to Cuba, Matthew Levin, praised the magazine's quality and its helpful information, for providing "a look at and a perspective on the country by people with in-depth knowledge who understand what is interesting for tourists—its unique features, its quirks."

Cubaplus publisher Dominique Soave thanked everyone who has collaborated with this project for the last seven years, and especially Prensa Latina, the news agency that oversees its editorial process, and whose assistant general director, Alfredo Garcia Pierrat, said that the agency looked forward to strengthening that partnership.



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Domínio Soa e, Cubaplus publisher, and Alfredo Arc a, rensa atina emeral mana er of sales

The Hotel Nacional's 1930 Compay Segundo salon was the venue for an exhibition of 40 pieces by major Cuban artists whose histories and work have appeared in the pages of **Cubaplus** and **55 Minutos**.

From the imagination of designer Ismael de la Caridad, who turns fashion into art, those present were treated to a performance and fashion show by models who brought elegance, traditional Cuban motifs and religious elements to the fore.



Sin er son writer escemer ueno



Alina Orraca and Schola Cantorum Coralina choir



ayda Tirado, Cubaplus cultural coordinator



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The Schola Cantorum Coralina choir, conducted by Alina Orraca, opened the musical part of the evening, followed by the duo Cubanitos 2002, who shared the stage with Swedish audiovisual producer Michel Miglis, a promoter of reggaeton projects.

The Havana All Star band played all-time Cuban favorites, and the popular singer-songwriter Descemer Bueno and his group got everyone to their feet, singing and dancing, to end a memorable night. ■



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Frank Fernández

a life devoted to the piano

By Mercy Ramos / Photos courtesy of the artist

Fifty-four is just a number, but when it refers to a lifetime devoted to playing the piano with virtuosity at the world's most important venues, we can safely say that we are in the presence of a great maestro, or better yet, a musical genius: Frank Fernández, an award-winning Cuban pianist who is now part of the history of Latin American and world culture.

Our chat with Frank Fernández began at his studio in Havana's Miramar neighbourhood, with the renowned artist seated at his piano.

"I played the piano for the first time when I was 5 years old," he recalled. "My mother was a major influence, because she ran a music academy. She was my first mentor.

"When I was just six, I lost my mother. On her deathbed, she told me, 'Son, don't ever abandon the piano. You are talented.' So, in a certain way, my

entire artistic career has been an eternal tribute to the memory of the person who gave me life."

During his interview with **Cubaplus**, Frank Fernández talked about his student years, when he won a scholarship to the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, the most challenging school in the world for piano and strings.

"I won that scholarship in a contest sponsored by the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba in 1966; I was the only contestant who didn't have a piano. Nevertheless, I was able to win, and I got the scholarship."

Going to that school was the fulfillment of a dream for Fernández: his teacher was the excellent Víctor Marzhanov, who passed on his knowledge and played the piano until the last days of his life (he died in December 2012).



"The first time I heard a lecture by Marzhanov, I said to myself, 'If I could only take a class by this man.' It was the scholarship contest that made that and much more possible, because I studied at that conservatory for five years and a half under his aegis, a great teacher and a great man."

Throughout his career, Fernández has performed in some 40 countries, and in many he has played more than 15 times, a reflection of the universal appreciation for his virtuoso skills.

Reflecting on some of the highlights of his artistic life, Fernández said that he played for the first time with Cuba's National Symphonic Orchestra at the age of 19, at the Teatro Amadeo Roldán in Havana's Vedado neighbourhood. He played Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy."

"When we were finished, the audience got to their feet and applauded long and hard, and at that moment, I remembered many important artists who had performed on that stage, people like Rubinstein,



Caruso and Alicia Alonso. It was an incredible emotion.

"Another unforgettable moment was when they asked me to play Rachmaninov's Concerto No. 2 at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory Great Hall, one of the six best halls for acoustics in the world.

"That was an exceptional gesture, for the Russians to ask a Latino, a Cuban, to play that concert there, in their house. I was very proud."

Fernández's work includes 29 concert albums and more than 650 compositions of all kinds. He is currently working on a project that he says holds special importance.

"For the first time, Beethoven's five concertos have been recorded, and that CD should be ready by the end of this year. I think that it is my most important accomplishment of the year, because it will make it possible to listen to the rhythmic evolution of the work of that wonderful musician."

For the rest of the year, Fernández is planning a number of national and international performances, and he noted that one of these will be at the national fine arts museum in Havana—the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes—to celebrate the centennial year of that prestigious cultural institution.

When asked what kind of advice he might have for young pianists who are just starting out, Fernández said

that it is extremely important for them to always feel like students, to always feel like they are learning from music, contact with other artists, and life.

"The piano is nothing but an instrument; it is a means, a bridge for expressing states of mind that human beings can transmit. That is why being able to or trying to convey the state of mind of that wonderful machine, the human being, is a titanic task, and it is the only way to come a little closer to the goal of becoming a useful person for art," he said. ■





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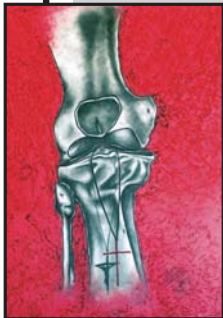
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Michel Mirabal

et een s olis an ru e realit

By Nancy Lescaille



WIn my series with Cuban flags, flowers and barbed wire, the barbed wire represents things that hurt us, that are unresolved, and the flowers can be good things but also the people who leave (Cuba). I would love to do a series of these same flags with flowers that return, to build a more beautiful country, like the one that (José) Martí dreamed of."

That was an explanation by Cuban painter Michel Mirabal, in an interview with **Cubaplus**, of his most recent series, which he described as "sharp social criticism, with a lot of respect, about life experiences."

Pieces from his successful series on Cuban flags can be found in the private collections of Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez, actor Danny Glover, producer Quincy Jones,

eft, asta en los huesos

the Rockefeller Museum, the Cuban Council of State, former Haitian President Rene Preval, legendary boxer Muhammad Ali and businessman Donald Trump, among others.

In visiting Mirabal—one of the best-known artists of his generation—and touring his studio, it is fascinating to look at his other creations, such as pieces from the series *Las manos* (Hands), which have been turned into persons, independent characters that cry, laugh, kill, love, and are born, like human beings.

Under a window, we spot the installation *Quejas y sugerencias* (Complaints and suggestions), which was on display at the 11th Havana Biennial: an ordinary mailbox like the kind found on any street corner, but with teeth and fangs that insinuate an unwillingness to have anything dropped inside.

In addition to painting, Mirabal's work includes installations and sculptures using materials such as grains of rice, beans, and, of course, barbed wire. Feverish is a good word for his imagination, which he describes by saying, "Wherever I see something that will give me art, I use it."



Abo e, é ate e arre ato lu ha
pa tu ulato



Michel Mirabal (Havana, 1974) is a graduate of the Institute of Design and the San Alejandro Academy of Art. He started out as a set painter for the National Ballet (BNC), decorating enormous backdrops, 10 to 15 meters long, for ballets like *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*.

"The company still has the backdrops I made and they are restored every year. One day I'm going to go help them," he predicted.

Perhaps that was the beginning of his love for large-format art. He also works with other sizes, "but in reality, I like working with large format."

Mirabal aspires to an immediate impact on the viewer of the main message in his work. "I don't work for people to like my work; in fact, I make pieces that, when you see them, you might say, 'Man, that is ugly,' and it might or might not please you. It might be aesthetically crude, but you get the message."

Regarding his favourite pieces, he told us: "From my flag series, the most popular that I have right now, is

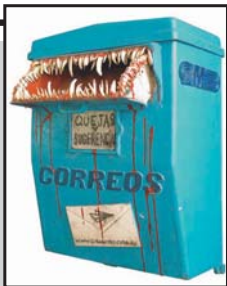
Identidad (Identity), which Gabriel García Márquez

has, and which was the first flag with flowers and barbed wire. It's very well-known. From the series *Las manos*, it's "La rumba prohibida" (The forbidden rumba); and from the series on Havana streets, it's "La esperanza herida" (Wounded hope), the most important work that I've ever done, the one that I've sold for the highest price, and the one that I miss the most, as well. It is a wall on La Esperanza street, with three embedded arrows that wound it and make it bleed."

From his grandmother, Marta Jean-Claude, a great Haitian singer, Mirabal inherited his love of music, and when he paints, he is almost always listening to rap or jazz. He likes other genres, too, but "I listen to a lot of rap because the directness of its discourse inspires me; it is a form of expression similar to what I'm trying to do with my work."

"I know there are people who would like to use art to escape from reality, but that is not my case. I take





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you reflectively into reality, because you have to keep your feet on the ground. I think it's great that there are things that decorate your surroundings, but I decorate with reality. I think that the most interesting beauty is whatever is natural. I try to do art by talking with reality, and if it is Cuba's reality, even more so, because it is where I live and where I am and where I decided to live."

In May 2012, Mirabal staged a performance at Havana's Acapulco movie theatre, an interaction of painting and music called "Créme" (Believe Me), from the song by singer-songwriter Vicente Feliu, who also participated in the program featuring young hip hop artists. Mirabal announced that a DVD/CD of the show by award-winning director Ian Padrón is now being produced by the Cuban label Colibrí.

For this artist, music is essential to the act of painting, whether he is alone in his studio or in a theatre with other artists. "I think that at that moment I am an actor, and I am on a film set, but acting out my real life. I get into the song and I make like I'm the character in the song. I try to have the expression of what I am forming in a state of ecstasy flow from my hands."

His passion for colour comes from the influence of colourist Amelia Peláez, and he admires Roberto Fabelo's talent for drawing and composition, and Jean Michel Basquiat's social critique. "For me, a mixture of those three gifts in a single person would make a great artist."

Mirabal says his plans include "a series involving more matter painting, for which I am working with the theme of bombs made out of nails; continuing to work with installation, which I really enjoy; and for the not-too-distant future, I would like to do a project that fuses all of my series—a monumental series that fuses all seven series. The one on hands, on Christs, cups, Cuban flags, Havana streets, installations and the monumental, which I still don't know what to call it. All in a single work." ■

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Presented at this year's Havana International Tourism Fair: o8ooCuba.com, a new prepaid telephone service that allows tourists in Cuba to buy a package of services for while they

are in the country. With o8ooCuba.com, visitors can call any cell phone or landline number anywhere with major savings, increasing their budget for experiencing Cuba!

With this package, callers can use phone booths at hotels and other tourist locations, and dial [080020202](tel:080020202), a toll-free number, and then enter the PIN number they received with their package. This makes communication available at a considerably lower cost for anyone visiting Cuba.

Bantel S.A., a public telecommunications operator in Argentina, provides and markets this service, and Cuba's telecommunications company, ETECSA (Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Cuba S.A.), operates the phone booths, supplies the service and channels the calls (www.etcসা.com).



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- **Linea Pais Directo**, oriented to immigrant markets throughout the world, providing benefits in telecommunications, "Top Up" and associated services.

- **o8oo20202 and o8ooCUBA**, for tourists and visitors in Cuba to be able to communicate at a reasonable and accessible tariff.

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This service makes it possible to call worldwide using the Cuban [080020202](tel:080020202) number.

The service is sold worldwide together with tourism packages to Cuba.



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*Photos by Julio Alvite and Wilfredo Hernández
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Photos by Julio Alvite and Wilfredo Hernández
Model: Elizabeth Wong



Contact
Mayelin Guevara
Cel: +535 294 9053
Telf.: +537 202 7695



Mayelin Guevara

guevaramayelin@yahoo.com

Jewellery-maker Mayelin Guevara Dominguez works with artistic jewellery and fashion accessories; she won an award for Craftsmanship at the 2010 International Arts and Crafts Fair in Havana, and in 2012 she was the winner of the prize for Fashion and Complements at the 3rd Ibero-American Design Biennial, which was held in Spain and throughout Europe as "Emerging Design, Innovation and Future."

Guevara Dominguez's style is contemporary jewellery-making, and she is inspired by Art Deco architecture and the visual arts in general. She works with silver, semi-precious stones and precious woods.



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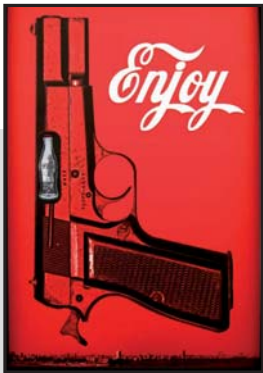
He tries to tell stories with his photos, often resorting to journalistic or even publicity-type methods to do so. He captures the same reality that his contemporaries see, but he insists on using a different angle, to highlight aspects that others fail to notice. And he does so with a good dose of humour and the conviction that life, at which he also laughs, does not have just one interpretation. His photos don't always have to be framed, either. Sometimes he places them "screen-style" in empty boxes that call to mind a TV set, or he inserts them in openings that he makes in what look like drain pipes or ventilation shafts. The spectator then does not see the photos; through those holes, he or she follows the details of the life that breathes behind them.

The winner of a number of major awards, including one from Harvard University, Ernesto Javier



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Shot the messen er,



Fernández Zalacain, 50, is now an essential Cuban photographer and one of the most sought-after. As the son of a well-known photographer who won Cuba's National Visual Arts Award a few years ago, he had the good fortune to grow up rubbing elbows with other outstanding photographers on the island, people who were able to capture the experiences of their times, *Life*-magazine style, and who were less interested in being part of history and more interested in arriving on time to document it.

With the exception of his father, Ernesto Fernández, all of these great photographers are now dead. Their legacy, which marks a certain period in the history of this country's photography, can be found in the pages of magazines and newspapers. The days of major photo essays and two-page spreads are over. As Ernesto Javier says, it was like a farewell to the camera. He says there are many good Cuban photos from the 1960s, but few if any from the Mariel exodus in 1980 or the early years of the economic crisis that



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we Cubans know as the "special period." Therefore, since the mid-1990s, Ernest Javier Fernández has sought to capture everything he can with his lens.

Before that, he wrote stories—which didn't go very far—and chronicles for youth magazines, which he later compiled into a book. One person who was decisive to his efforts was Guillermo Cabrera Álvarez, a cutting, irreverent journalist who infused every single page that he wrote with his battle against insensitivity, prejudice, apathy, lack of motivation, selfishness, vanity and intolerance.

Years of many films and lots of reading went by until Ernesto Javier realized that, in the end, photography was his destiny. It is an art that has allowed him to live comfortably and that has provided him with quite a few satisfactions, as well as the opportunity to have fun. ■



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Pedro Yoan Batista

Work from his series "BASTA"

Photos by Juan de Dios



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Culture and tourism, hand in hand



Anyone interested in learning Spanish now has a new option for reaching that goal: in the south-central Cuban city of Cienfuegos, a program has been designed by the Cultural Paradiso tourism company, part of the ARTex, S.A. business group's provincial office, with the collaboration of the

Canadian company Rondeau. The Academia Cienfuegos teaches Spanish by combining it with recreational and cultural activities. This academy is located in the Hotel Faro de Luna, a tranquil establishment on the shores of the Caribbean with all of the necessary facilities.

For two weeks, participants in this program, *Learning Spanish and Discovering a Country*,

Cuba, will discover the many treasures of Cuban culture through the Spanish language.

The program has five levels, from beginner to advanced, according to each student's knowledge, and includes 30 hours of training and 25 hours of cultural activities.

As participants in this program, visitors will be able to see many sites of interest that they might have otherwise missed. These include the magnificent Teatro Thomas Terry, the city's main theater, where students will be able to



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View of the Cienfuegos seafront

enjoy a cultural gala with outstanding Cuban musicians; the Benny More Art School; and the Graphic Arts Association of Cienfuegos, home to permanent exhibitions of the work of local visual artists and to a workshop where you can watch them in action.

The program also includes lectures and discussions, conversation practice, Cuban film screenings, and many other activities in

which participants can apply the knowledge that they are acquiring. The certificates presented to those who complete the course are endorsed by the Cienfuegos Provincial Center for Continuing Cultural Education.

If you would like to learn Spanish in a suitable environment, and in a fun, pleasant way, then reserve a spot in this exciting new program, and you will never regret it. ■





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another success for Cuban tourism



Above, Manuel Marrero, Cuban Minister of Tourism, right, and his Brazilian counterpart, Astasio Teixeira, at the opening of FITCuba 2013, the International Tourism Fair, in Varadero



By Mercy Ramos / Photos José Meriño

The delightful beach resort of Varadero, about 150 km east of Havana, was decked out in its finest for the first week of May to welcome some 1,400 people from 58 countries for FITCUBA 2013, the International Tourism Fair, declared a resounding success by Cuban Tourism Minister Manuel Marrero.

For almost a week, participants engaged in a busy schedule of activities, including master's conferences and opportunities for professional exchange at the Plaza America fairground, where numerous exhibitors displayed their products and services, both for conventional tourism and for specialty options featuring health and nature, among others.

In opening remarks at FITCUBA 2013, Marrero referred extensively to tourism development plans in Cuba, which include increasing hotel room capacity by 40 percent as of 2020, representing 20,500 rooms more than current capacity.

Marrero also announced that there would be more flights to and from the island, and that five of Cuba's airports will be modernized and expanded for that purpose: Havana, Santa Clara (central region), Holguín (east), Cayo Coco (north coast) and Cayo Largo (south coast).

This year's FITCUBA fair was dedicated to Varadero, the main sun and beach destination in Cuba, and the guest country of honor was Brazil, with which Cuba expects to have increased relations in the tourism industry in the coming years.

A broad array of products were presented during the fair, such as those of the Gaviota S.A. tourism group, including a modern marina in Varadero with more than 1,300 berths and all of the facilities needed for serving boaters. Close by is the fabulous Hotel Meliá Marina Varadero, with 423 rooms, and set to open this summer.

Another outstanding presentation was undoubtedly that of the new AN 158 airliner, which will allow Cuba to operate more domestic flights. In addition, as of July, there will be two flights daily to the Mexican beach resort of Cancun, and four weekly to Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic.



presentation of the new aircraft AN 158, purchased by Cubana de Aviación



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A gastronomy festival, *Comer a lo cubano* (Eating Cuban-style), was another star attraction for participants at FITCUBA 2013, with prizes awarded to top specialists in the culinary arts nationwide. For traditional cooking, the honors went to the national hotel chain Islazul; for stylized cooking, to professionals from the Gaviota Group; artistic cooking, the Cubanacan company; and for buffet, the winners were professionals from the Hotel Iberostar Varadero. In the bartenders' contest, the prize went to the Yahiti bar, at the Hotel Ocean Varadero El Patriarca, which is part of the R10 chain.

The next edition of FITCUBA (2014) will take place in the Cuban capital, the island's top tourist destination, to which the fair will be dedicated. The guest country of honour will be France, the No. 5 country for visitors to Cuba, with close to 100,000 visitors annually. ■

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Martha Jiménez

sculpturing life
in Camagüey

By Mercedes Ramos
Photos: Courtesy of the artist



from the **his osas** series



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It's impossible to talk about the eastern Cuban city of Camagüey without mentioning the talented sculptor Martha Jiménez, because her work is an intrinsic part of the surroundings of the Plaza del Carmen in the downtown historic district, an obligatory stop when visiting these parts.

In the plaza stands the Iglesia de Nuestra Señora del Carmen, a beautiful church with two bell towers and seven ceramic sculptures depicting local residents.

It is one of Martha's most cherished projects, part of her work recreating the human figure in different forms with her hands. "I get very inspired when I see people gathered in the street, waiting to do their shopping. It allows me to observe them. That's where I got the idea for this project, creating characters with their own psychology and characteristics," she said in an interview with **Cubaplus**.

With her slow, deliberate speech, Martha emanates that special quality known as "Cuban-ness" from every pore; her comments about her work reflect her love for her country and for what she does. "My work has received recognition in many nations because it truly reflects our Cuban identity, especially when you consider that local customs are an aspect of every single one of my pieces," she said.

"What inspires me is the human figure, above all, but also volumes and sharp contrasts between light and shadow."

Her work spans various visual arts, especially ceramics and clay, and "I really enjoy painting and making engravings and sculptures, all at the same time. I like to alternate what I'm doing; it makes my work more pleasant, and it comforts and stimulates me," she said.

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Cabe a blanca



"I started out in this life (the visual arts) from a very early age. Art was born with me, and as a child, I always loved being creative, and therefore I devoted a lot of my time to painting."

Her first connection with sculpture came while she was studying at the School of Art Instructors, from which she graduated with the specialty of Visual Arts. "It was there that I first touched clay and potter's clay and began modeling, and I've never stopped since," she said.

Martha has devoted herself to the visual arts full-time since the early 1980s, at first with small-format sculptures in ceramics. Subsequently, she has worked with many techniques and materials: terracotta, bronze, marble, marblite, ceramics and wood.

She has held many solo and collective exhibitions in Cuba, in cities including Camagüey, Cienfuegos and Havana, and abroad, in the Dominican Republic, United States, Canada, Turkey, France and Chile. Her



from the series on uro el e



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from the series *a uar*
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art has won a number of major awards, including the 1997 UNESCO Regional Prize at FIART, Cuba's International Arts and Crafts Fair, and honors at the Amelia Peláez Biennial, the 2nd International Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary Teapot Art in Shanghai, and the 2011 Terracotta Biennial in Turkey.

Presently, Martha is immersed in a project that has special personal significance because it is a tribute to her mother. She is working on a sculpture of a sewing machine with very sui generis characteristics and symbolism, a real reflection of the human psyche.

"I find sculpture to be very gratifying, because it is three-dimensional. It allows me to express my ideas the way I like on all sides. It is difficult, but I love it, even though I'm never totally convinced about what I've done." ■



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In 2014, when the centre turns 25, the 4th International Conference on Neurological Restoration will be held. This one-of-a-kind scientific event is a convergence of all specialties associated with restorative neurology, from the basic neurosciences to neuro-rehabilitation, and including neurology, neurosurgery, and cutting-edge applied technologies, with the participation of prestigious representatives of all of these disciplines.

The medical and human qualities of CIREN are recognized worldwide and enriched by the centre's ongoing research for providing increased knowledge and introducing and developing technology in the world of the neurosciences.

The centre's excellence is due principally to the dedication of its specialists, technicians and auxiliary staff, who focus all of their energies on the humane work of serving patients who are affected by the consequences of severe injuries or who have debilitating chronic diseases of the nervous system. Their goal is to improve these patients' quality of life and to reintegrate them into society. The centre's medical services are certified by ISO 9001 international standards.

CIREN's revitalized experience of more than 25 years has shown that when a neurological patient is subjected to intense activity as part of a program of multifactorial treatments applied by highly-skilled, neurologist-led multidisciplinary teams, divided into four specialized clinics according to pathology, with custom-designed, comprehensive therapeutic actions for each patient seven hours daily, excellent results are obtained for improving functions that had been lost, based on the principle of neuroplasticity for achieving structural and functional recovery of the injured nervous system.

CIREN is known around the world for the quality of its rehabilitation services, which, based on a comprehensive psycho-motor assessment, combines diverse therapeutic techniques and procedures in a systematic, adequately dosified way.

Possibilities for preventive action and anti-aging treatment are also available at CIREN, with its General Biological Restoration program, REBIOGER, in different forms and for inpatients or outpatients. This is a totally innovative therapeutic program with actions that are based on cellular damage caused by free radicals, or oxidative stress.

The program includes an evaluation of neurological, cardiovascular, and other general effects of this damage, stimulating rehabilitation through intensive potentiation methods.

In a single project, CIREN incorporates its area for



clinical services and its experimental research. The scientists at this centre have the mission of developing pre-clinical investigations of treatments, perfecting diagnoses, and evaluating the evolution of neurological diseases.

CIREN has a top-notch neurosurgery service and modern surgical instruments associated for neurological restoration program, providing coverage to its four clinics, including treatment for Parkinson's disease, dystonias, drug-

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•(Services for children from the age of 1, principally with cerebral paralysis, autism, epilepsy, and mental retardation, among others)





resistant epilepsy, and others. Stereotactic techniques are applied using the Estereoflex stereotactic system, a Cuban system designed for implementing procedures involving minimally invasive surgery with macro automated surgical planning, and neurophysiologic diagnostic verification using micro-electrode recording of neural activity, com-

binning the simplicity, exactness, and versatility of those applications.

CIREN provides specialized medical services with the dedication and prestige of its doctors, scientists, and health workers, using cutting-edge technology applied to medicine. ■



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The Rodeo

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in u a

*By Neisa Mesa del Toro
Photos by Prensa Latina*



Rodeo, viewed by many in Cuba as a sport and spectacle of the countryside, has grown in popularity in recent times, especially in ranching communities.

A rodeo, which means "roundup" in Spanish, features events that are based on different activities involved in cattle ranching, and rodeos can now be found in every one of Cuba's 14 provinces. Cuba has official institutions for this sport and rings that meet all of the international standards for carrying out these types of events.

With the passing of the years, the rodeo has become an opportunity for healthy entertainment, and is visited every year by a growing number of children, young people and adults from cities and towns.

Stadiums fill up with spectators who cheer on cowboys and cowgirls as they compete in steer wrestling (bull dogging), bull riding, "wild cow milking," calf roping, *cofeo* ("steer tailing), team roping and barrel racing, the latter an event especially for women. Acrobatics on horseback and a women's precision equestrian event called *escaramuza* complete the show.

The *coleo*, or steer tailing, event—where men or women on horseback take a bull by its tail—was introduced more recently so that Cuban cowboys (and cowgirls) would be able to train and compete with rodeo teams from Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay and others where that event has a long tradition. In fact, in Venezuela, it is considered the national sport.

The rodeo tradition first came to Cuba in the 1940s from Mexico, having been practiced as a spectator sport for centuries throughout the American continent after first arising in what is now the U.S. state of Texas.

Courage, skill, dexterity, and lots of discipline are what a cowboy or girl needs to compete in this dangerous sport, a confrontation between human beings and animals, including horses, cattle and others.

In Cuba, there are 146 rodeo teams and more than 250 rings where athletes train and compete. Starting at the community level, team members accumulate points to be able to gain a spot on the provincial or national team.

The best teams from each province participate in the international tournament held every year at the Rancho Boyeros Agricultural Fair in Havana. Top teams of “jinetes” (male riders) and “amazonas” (women riders) have come from Mexico, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Venezuela and other countries to compete with their Cuban counterparts.

The Rancho Boyeros fairground opened in 1933, and is prestigious throughout the region for the quality of its ring and the events held there, which follow international regulations.



Tradition and identity in Ciego de Ávila

While rodeo is a major attraction in some parts of the country, in the eastern province of de Ávila it is especially significant to tradition and identity, given the scope of cattle ranching in the area, and the size and number of farming communities.

The province has 10 rodeo rings, most of them in very good condition, and all meet the standards needed for holding international events.

According to Mario Pérez, president of the provincial Cowboys' Association (*Sociedad de Vaqueros*), rodeo has been part of local community life for many years, and became especially popular in the 1970s.

“At that time several very talented people rose to the national level, and the new generations of cattle ranchers have continued that tradition, making rodeo a very popular activity among our ranchers,” he said. The Ciego de Ávila team has won the national championship five times, and its members include an international champion and a national team that holds the record for bull riding.

“Our local team members—18 cowboys and three cowgirls—are very skillful at handling their horses and cattle, which is what makes them among the best on the island,” he said.

Women compete in almost every event, and depending on their qualifications in the categories of equestrian skill, dexterity, posture, and esthetics, they are selected to be part of the “Amazonas de Cuba.” The top Amazona is the one who accumulates the most points. ■



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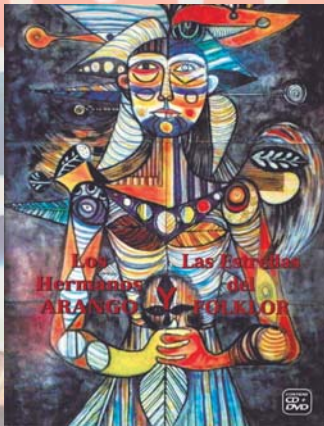
By Michel Hernández

The Afro-Cuban music DVD *Los hermanos Arango y las estrellas del folclor* was born with the blessings of the great Yoruba deities. Or, as we Cubans say, it has enjoyed plenty of “aché” (luck) since its release two years ago by the Bis Music label.

Evidence of that: three Cubadisco awards in the categories of Folklore, Testimony, and Album Liner Notes; praise from local critics for its contributions to the recovery and promotion of Cuba’s authentic roots; and a well-received concert for its launching at the Sala Che Guevara of Havana’s Casa de las Américas cultural center. Moreover, the DVD has been lauded outside of Cuba: it was selected to be part of the Arizona International Film Festival in the United States, a prestigious event in the world of film in that country because of its rigorous selection process.

During the festival, *Los hermanos Arango* easily won over spectators and critics alike, and was screened on one of the days devoted to showing the most artistic audiovisual productions. And for good reason. The DVD pays tribute to Cuban folkloric music by featuring a selection of its most representative figures: Zenaida Armenteros, founder of the Conjunto Folclórico Nacional (National Folkloric Ensemble); Gregorio “El Goyo” Hernández; Ángel Mesa; Luis Chacón; and Mario Jáuregui (from the legendary Aspirinas).

With music direction by the expert double-bass player Feliciano Arango and produced by Enrique Carballea, the DVD endorses and expands musical awareness about *Los Hermanos Arango*, an Afro-Cuban band founded in February 2003. Their musical arsenal expertly fuses many of the different currents that came to Cuba’s



coasts from the African continent. It is no surprise that they benefited from the knowledge of eminent researcher and ethnologist Natalia Bolívar, and the group is completing work on a project called *El Barracón del Puerto*.

The *Los Hermanos* DVD, with photography by Luis Najmias and sound by Maykel Bárzaga Jr., recreates four

songs that pure expressions of Cuba's roots, such as the *yambú*, a *toque de palo*, a song to Oshún and a *guaguancó*. These are folkloric genres that the band performed with notable fidelity to their original characteristics.

"It was a very special opportunity for this album to participate in the Arizona International Film Festival, because it allowed the U.S. and Latin American publics to appreciate the creative richness of Cuba's folkloric music and its great figures, such as Zenaida Armenteros, El "Goyo" Hernández and the Aspirinas," said Enrique Carballea, one of the creative minds behind the project, in an interview with **Cubaplus**.



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"With its release, we want to maintain and foster our country's heritage without the need for somebody from another part of the world to come here and do that. We are the ones who are going to preserve our heritage. We already are."

Feliciano Arango is also very clear about why he is involved in this project. "We've known who these artists are since we were kids. Now they're almost all in their 80s and some have retired, which might be why they're out of the limelight somewhat. So with this album, we are trying to keep their legacy alive," he said.

Arango said these veteran performers amazed him when he began producing the album. "We have made the work of these maestros very much a part of our own, but at first we really thought that some of them would have a hard time because of their age. For example, Miguel Ángel, at the age of 90, gave an incredible performance singing a columbia. I didn't think he'd be able to do it, but I was completely wrong."



enaida Armenteros

Without question, *Los hermanos Arango y las estrellas del folclor* has been blessed by the great Yoruba saints. And because you never know exactly what might happen when it comes to orishas, this album very well may continue winning accolades that attest to its value as a point of reference in Cuba's folkloric discography. For now, let's offer a shot of strong rum to keep the orishas happy! ■



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A low-angle photograph of two business people shaking hands in front of several modern skyscrapers. The buildings are made of glass and steel, and the sky is bright and slightly cloudy. The handshake is the central focus, with the hands clasped together in a firm grip. The suits are dark, and the overall scene conveys a sense of professional agreement and partnership.

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aluting u a s

ine rts Museu on its centennial

With a collection of some 45,000 pieces, Cuba's national museum of fine arts, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, is the country's largest gallery for the Cuban and universal visual arts, and it is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

As part of these centennial festivities, the museum is sponsoring a range of different activities throughout the year with a program designed to look back at the institution's history, bring us closer to the present, and peer into the future.

To start things off: an imaginary journey back in time. An exhibition featuring the main pieces shown during the early days of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes is part of this program. "Origins of the Collection" is the title of this show, which includes various antiquities, such as the death mask of General Máximo Gómez (1836-1905), a Dominican who was one of the leaders of Cuba's Independence War in the late 19th century, and a master of the machete charge.

And there is the first movie: *El parque de Palatino* (Palatino Park, 1906), filmed by one of the precursors of that industry in Cuba, Enrique Díaz Quesada, during the exciting early days of that incipient technology created by the Lumiere brothers.

A liturgical drum studied by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, 18th century Spanish paintings,

By Ana Laura Arbesú
Photos by Miguel Guzmán Ruiz



indigenous objects, Afro-Cuban ethnology pieces, and stocks that were used as punishment for slaves are all part of the exhibition. According to its curators, this exhibition represents a real feat in archeological recovery.

Another part of the centennial program is an exhibition of 45 works by the late Cuban painter Ernesto González Puig (1913-1988), focusing on his first creative period, when drawing prevailed as his form of artistic expression. This is an artist whose work has tended to be overlooked, according to Elsa Vega, the exhibition's curator, in comments to **Cubaplus**.

Beginning with his early work, González Puig showed himself to be of the avant-garde, and "in this show, we are trying to return him to that visual arts movement," Vega explained.



The works selected are from the 1932-1937 period, and most were part of the artist's first solo show in 1934 in the former Liceo de La Habana, a cultural institution. Many of these pieces are part of the museum's collection, while others were donated to the museum by the artist himself and by family members, while one piece belongs to a private collector.

Along with exhibitions that will reflect different periods in the history of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, a number of centennial activities are aimed specifically at young people, and bringing them closer to all aspects of the visual arts. One of the most important of these are community art



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workshops for elementary-school children, and they will once again take over summer mornings.

A wide-ranging academic program is also underway, designed to focus on preservation work, and an international colloquium featuring specialists from different parts of the world will center on new challenges for art museums, their collections, and the restoration and conservation of their patrimony.

Founded on April 28, 1913 by the architect Emilio Herrera, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes was initially located in several different spaces in Havana, none of which were appropriate for holding its growing collection.

Years later, the Cuban art collection was put on display in a building near the Paseo del Prado, the site of the old Colón market, located a few steps away from the Hotel Sevilla.

Today its expansive galleries hold more than 300 years of Cuban art in all of its magnitude, beginning with 16th century colonial pieces and ranging to contemporary work.

From the earliest period, viewers can see "La santísima Trinidad" (The Holy Trinity), by José Nicolás de la Escalera, and, closer to the 19th century, "El embarque de Colón por Bobadilla" (Columbus's Embarkation at Bobadilla), by Armando Menocal.

And from the early 20th century avant-garde artists, works include "Flores amarillas" (Yellow Flowers), by Amelia Peláez, "El rapto de las mulatas" (The Abduction of the Mulatto Women), by Carlos Enríquez,



"Paisaje de La Habana" (Landscape of Havana), by René Portocarrero, and more.

From the post-revolutionary period, the public can enjoy works by Servando Cabrera, Antonia Eiriz, Raúl Martínez, Manuel Mendive, Ever Fonseca, Roberto Fabelo, Tomás Sánchez, Nelson Domínguez, Zaida del Río, Belkis Ayón and Kcho.

In the late 20th century, the museum opened a second location to house its vast collection of universal art. The former Asturian Center of Havana became a huge gallery for displaying drawings, paintings, engravings and the visual arts in general, including ancient art from Egypt, Greece and Rome. The collection features art from Japan and from the European schools, including Spain, Italy, Flanders, Holland, and Germany, among others.

Considered by many as one of the most important museums in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes has preserved the history of the Cuban and other visual arts for a century now, for the enjoyment of Cubans and visitors alike. ■





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estaurante atelier

place for artistic recreation and satisfaction

By Lucía Arbolóez / Photos by: Albite and Vladimir Molina

This is a restaurant where painstaking work on the ambience is ongoing, producing a unique, personalized and significant outcome, and it may be the reason why its owners decided to name it *Atelier*. That French word for artist's studio or workshop, understood internationally, reflects the essence of this simple but elegant establishment, located in a beautiful old house in the centrally-located Havana neighbourhood of Vedado.

The house's reconstruction and decoration was very much influenced by the good taste of Niury Ysabel

Higuera Martínez and her brother, Herdy, who preserved the best of this mansion in a beautiful combination of contemporary style and antiques. While the building's state of conservation merits praise, so does its crockery and furniture, and even its lighting.

Customers may choose between the comfortable, sedate main dining room or either of two other dining rooms located on each of the buildings two terraces.

According to Niury, the restaurant is a family-run establishment: she and her brother are the owners, and all of the staff members are related in one way or another.





Inaugurated on December 27, 2010, Atelier is open from Monday to Sunday, from noon until the last customer leaves.

While the dishes on its menu seem simple, the restaurant's head chef has vast experience in the art of cooking, and is able to satisfy the most demanding gourmet tastes.

Proof of that can be seen in a sampling of Atelier's appetizers: malanga (tarot) fritters; asparagus au gratin, and other prepared with salmon and octopus.



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Main dishes include Chicken or Lamb Supreme, and a variety of meat specialties and seafood.

We would like to take this opportunity to provide our readers with the recipe for the tasty **Lamb in Chocolate Sauce** dish:

Ingredients:

230 grams of lamb meat; 30 grams of unsweetened chocolate; 30 grams of fresh celery leaves; 15 grams of pepper and an equal amount of salt; and 20 millilitres of red wine

Its preparation involves seasoning the meat with salt and pepper and covering with celery leaves. Add red wine and unsweetened chocolate, allowing the whole mixture to reduce until the sauce attains a proper thickness.

In serving the dish, the chef uses a roasting pan, then cuts the meat into normal-sized strips, garnishing with rice noodles and sprinkling with capers.



A simple, refreshing and delicious bar

The Atelier restaurant's bar is a beautiful piece of furniture in and of itself, made of precious dark woods, just like the ceiling and a number of original, high-backed chairs that complement the well-stocked barroom.

And we now offer you the secret of the official Atelier cocktail, its signature drink, made with mango juice.

It is a combination of 30 ml of rum; one ounce of mango juice; 15 ml of almond liqueur; and crushed iced. Place all ingredients in a blender and serve in a cocktail glass.

Located near Havana's seafront boardwalk, the Malecón, and several luxury hotels, such as the Meliá Cohiba and the Riviera, the Atelier is on Calle 5ta, No. 511, Altos (upstairs). It has a smoking area, a wine list, food to go, recorded music and parking. ■

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curator: Alejandro de la Fuente

Provincial Center for Arts and Design

Santiago de Cuba, April 2013

Visual Arts Development Center

Havana, August 2013

organizer and sponsor: Caguayo Foundation



Sloppy Joe's

Sloppy Joe's stands on a centrally-located street corner in Havana: just 100 meters from the legendary Paseo del Prado promenade, 200 meters from the Parque Central, very close to the *Granma* yacht monument and the Museum of the Revolution, and surrounded by major hotels. It was one of the best-known and popular bars of the era when celebrities like Ava Gardner, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Rod Hudson, Babe Ruth and Ted Williams pulled up their chairs to enjoy a Sloppy Joe's cocktail—a mix of brandy, Cointreau, port wine, and pineapple juice—or to order the emblematic Sloppy



is a in business

By *Ciro Bianchi Ross*
Photos by *Prensa Latina*



Joe's sandwich: ground beef and tomato sauce garnished with olives.

After a hiatus of nearly half a century, Sloppy Joe's is back in business. It earned a place in the imagination of Havana's residents with its 18-meter long black mahogany bar, considered the longest in Latin America in its time, and which mysteriously disappeared in 1965.

"Not only was a Havana corner restored, but also the extensive documentation preserved made it possible to save the bar's cocktail tradition and its sandwiches and other light fare from oblivion," says Luis Sotolongo, president of Habaguanex Tourist Company, which oversaw the bar's long restoration in coordination with the Havana City Historian's Office, and which now operates it. Ernesto Iznaga Coldwell, the bar's manager, said that the revival of a place with so much history and international fame was "a real satisfaction." And the disappearance of its bar was actually not a mystery at all, he said.



"We found this place in ruins. Its wood floors rotted from humidity and neglect and collapsed into the basement, causing the bar to splinter into three." One of those pieces is now in the Museum of Rum in the historic Habana Vieja district, he explained. Sloppy Joe's is open from 12 noon to 3 a.m., unusual in a city where the after-hours nightlife had been shrinking, Iznaga Coldwell said.

"Havana needed something like this. I hope that places full of history and tradition like this will proliferate; we're not afraid of the competition," said Andrés E. Arencibia Mohar, manager of the celebrated El Floridita bar/restaurant. And Donna Edwards, brand manager at the Key West Joe's in southern Florida, which recently celebrated its 75th anniversary, described the reopening of Havana's Sloppy Joe's as "exciting, because obviously our history is tied into their history." "[Ernest] Hemingway and [Joe] Russell (founder and original owner of the Key West bar), they would frequent Sloppy Joe's when they were in Havana. It's a piece of history, and our history is now coming to life again," she said.

The Key West Sloppy Joe's first opened its doors in 1934, some years after the Havana Joe's opened, in 1918. The Havana bar's founder was José Abeal Otero, a Galician immigrant. After learning English and working as a bartender in New Orleans and Miami, he returned to Cuba



with enough money to buy an old grocery store on the corner of Zulueta and Animas streets. It was rough going at first, but things changed for the better when he decided to go from being a grocer to a bartender. He made José into Joe, and because his establishment had a reputation for being unkempt, he added an appropriate adjective: sloppy. It soon became a favorite spot for visitors from North America. Until 1959, few Cubans frequented Sloppy Joe's, and it was not necessarily a favorite among the northerners who lived on the island, who preferred the now-defunct bar Mes Amis, on the corner of Séptima and 42 in the Miramar district.

A wide range of cocktails is available at Sloppy Joe's, which also serves 40 brands of whiskey; 17 brands of rum; 50 of liqueurs and creams, and nearly 20 brandies and cognacs, and an appetizing list of tapas. As a place that gained its popularity for sandwiches, its version of the authentic Cuban sandwich is commendable.

The air conditioning is a real novelty at Sloppy Joe's, which traditionally was a saloon with open doors and windows. The original mahogany bar was not recovered, but the new one is wonderfully alike, and all around it, history meshes with the present as celebrities and visitors in general enjoy a drink in this clean, tranquil and well-lighted place. ■

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