

Mazatlán, Mexico:

Still lovin' the life. . .30 years later

By Donelle Manton



I am a better person for having come to Mexico, and especially, to Mazatlán.

My wise and adventurous father raised me with this sage advice, “Don’t be afraid to go. . .be afraid not to go.. .”

Thanks to that adage – and after reading an article in National Geographic magazine about a man named Daniel Garrison who helped bring life back to the nearby village of Copala – my parents made their way to Mazatlán and onto Copala. After hearing their enthusiastic praises, I soon followed and became as enamored as they.

Thirty years ago this past October, we first stood together on the beach at the Oceano Palace Hotel and marveled at the beauty of the “Pearl of the Pacific.” Three decades later, I’m still smitten with that same appreciation.

From the moment we arrived, Mazatlán felt like home. Its vast beauty coupled with its historic architecture, impressive art and wares by talented Mexican artisans,

variety of outdoor activities, availability of fresh fruit, vegetables and seafood made it not only an interesting and fun destination but a healthy – and tasty! – one, as well.

The friendliness of Mazatlecos – Mazatlán residents – made our visits even more meaningful. The same friendships we forged that first visit and in subsequent trips remain the dearest of our friends to this day.

Although Mazatlán has grown and added additional activities and conveniences over the years, the basic core of the city – its kind and helpful people, atmosphere and amenities – remain the same and beckon me back – even moments after the plane I’m departing on has just taken flight.

Four years after my initial visit, my life changed forever when I was given the opportunity to visit Mazatlán’s first orphanage, Orfanatorio Mazatlán, and learned of the great blessing to help its children. Twenty-seven years later, thanks to wonderful donors – most who learned of the opportunity to help reading the Pacific Pearl – the charitable foundation I began: the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund – www.orphanagefunds.org – has grown to be able to help 131 youngsters in five Mazatlán orphanages year-round.

The municipality of Mazatlán has many opportunities to become involved and help those less fortunate than we. From children to senior citizens, to those in need of hospice, abandoned and abused animals, wildlife and environmental causes, there are opportunities to make a positive difference along the Sea of Cortez. In exchange for seeking ways to help, you’ll make new friends and be rewarded with the satisfaction of realizing the joy and comfort others know because you offered your assistance.

While the lull of the ever-present Sea of Cortez’ waves is relaxing, peaceful and mesmerizing as it “skirts” its way along the western edge of the city, Mazatlán is a busy with bountiful activities for everyone – many, which take place on the Malecon – Mazatlán’s impressive seaside sidewalk.

From dawn through well-past midnight, people – including families – are active jogging, rollerblading, leisurely strolling or working-out on the Malecon – often times as they’re watching the sun rise or set – and also throughout Mazatlán’s charming, historic downtown area, parks, beaches, neighborhoods, restaurants and shopping centers.

My husband and I are fortunate to live – part of the year for now – on the same beach where my parents and I first stood when we arrived in Mazatlán and where my mother and I made countless treks and memories in the sand.

We plan to continue that tradition the rest of our lives. The phrase, “There’s no place like home!” really is true. And for us, home. . .is Mazatlán. . . 