



# March 2016 Newsletter

## BAJA NEWS

For more Baja news, see:  
[www.discoverbaja.com/baja-california-information/baja-news/](http://www.discoverbaja.com/baja-california-information/baja-news/)

### SCORE Baja Sur 500 Canceled

The Score International Baja Sur 500 that was scheduled for April 2016 has been canceled because the Baja California Sur government was not able to honor their contractual agreement. The Baja 500, Desert Challenge, and Baja 1000 will still occur as planned.



### Day at the Docks on April 17th



Come say hello to us at this year's Day at the Docks in San Diego on Sunday, April 17, 2016 from 9am-5pm at Sportfishing Landings in Point Loma. DBTC members who stop by the Discover Baja booth to say hello will get a free giveaway. For more, see page 3.

## From the DBTC Office

*Semana Santa, Holy week, is March 20-27 this year, and is always a busy time in Baja. Make sure you have advance hotel reservations and don't forget to purchase your Mexican auto insurance and prepaid FMM tourist permits.*

*Please note that our new reservations policy requires a credit card number. Initial reservations will be made for free but a \$10 fee will be assessed for any changes or cancelations.*

*See you in Baja!  
Hugh, Carol, Jen, Maythé &  
Monica*

## DBTC BAJA CAJA *All of the Baja info you need in one box!*

**PESO EXCHANGE RATE:** \$17.8 to \$1 U.S. dollar

**PEMEX PRICES:** Northern Baja: Magna: \$2.49/gal, Premium: \$2.74/gal, Diesel: \$3.06/gal  
Southern Baja: Magna: \$2.93/gal, Premium: \$3.11/gal, Diesel: \$3.06/gal

**FISHING LICENSES:** Day: \$12.25, Week: \$31.20, Month: \$42.80, Year: \$54.40 for members.  
[www.discoverbaja.com/go/fishing-licenses](http://www.discoverbaja.com/go/fishing-licenses)

**PREPAID FMMs:** \$30 DBTC members only. Advance seven-day FMMs now available for \$5 each.  
[www.discoverbaja.com/go/fmm-tourist-permits](http://www.discoverbaja.com/go/fmm-tourist-permits)

**BOAT TEMPORARY IMPORT PERMITS (TIPs):** \$45 fee for DBTC to handle processing. Service for DBTC members only. [www.discoverbaja.com/go/temporary-boat-importation/](http://www.discoverbaja.com/go/temporary-boat-importation/)

**NAUTICAL FMMs:** \$10/person fee for DBTC to process. Service for DBTC members only.  
[www.discoverbaja.com/go/nautical-sportfishing-fmm](http://www.discoverbaja.com/go/nautical-sportfishing-fmm)

**MEXICAN AUTO INSURANCE:** Special yearly rates for members. [www.discoverbajaonline.com](http://www.discoverbajaonline.com)

# ON OUR RADAR FOR MARCH

For more information about the events below and to keep up on all of the latest Baja events, see [www.discoverbaja.com/events](http://www.discoverbaja.com/events)

## MARCH 11 Rancho la Puerta Cooking Class



Take a cooking class with Chef Denise Roa at Rancho La Puerta. US\$110 covers class, food, & wine. [events@lacocinaquecanta.com](mailto:events@lacocinaquecanta.com)

## MARCH 13 Daylight Savings



The northern state of Baja California goes onto daylight savings today, so don't forget to set your clock ahead. Baja California Sur won't go onto daylight savings until April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## MARCH 15-21 Todos Santos Film Festival



The Todos Santos film festival features full-length films, shorts, documentaries, and student projects. Showings will also be in Pescadero and La Paz. [www.todossantoscine.org](http://www.todossantoscine.org)

## MARCH 18-19 San Felipe Blues & Arts Fiesta



The 10<sup>th</sup> annual San Felipe Blues and Arts festival will feature live music, art, and plenty of fun. [www.bluesandarts.com](http://www.bluesandarts.com)

## MARCH 19 Ensenada Beer Fest



Try beers from over 80 Baja craft breweries at one of the largest Baja beer festivals. [www.ensenadabeerfest.com](http://www.ensenadabeerfest.com)

## MARCH 20 First Day of Spring



Spring is one of the best season to be in Baja. The cactus are in bloom, the gray whales are friendly, and the weather is excellent. Let's Baja!

## MARCH 20-27 Semana Santa, Holy Week



### Semana Santa

Semana Santa, Holy Week, is a popular vacation week in Mexico so places will be very busy. Make sure you have advance hotel reservations if traveling this week.

## MARCH 27 Easter



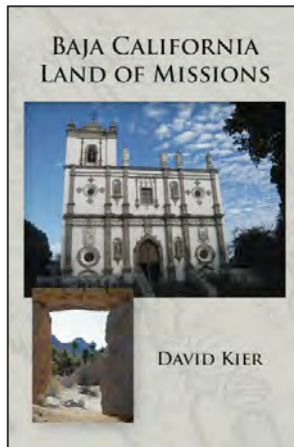
Easter Sunday (*Pascua*) is the culmination of Holy Week. We wish you a blessed holiday wherever you may be celebrating.

## MARCH 31-April 3 Festival de las Conchas y el Vino Nuevo



Shellfish and wine abound at this Ensenada culinary festival hosted by Provino. [www.provino.org](http://www.provino.org)





**NOW IN:  
"Baja  
California  
Land of  
Missions"  
Book by  
David Kier!**

We're pleased to announce the release of the new book, "Baja California Land of Missions" by missions expert David Kier. This new book covers all of the Spanish missions in Baja California with even more historical information and detail, including GPS coordinates for locating the mission sites today. This is an indispensable guide for history buffs traveling Baja.

*\$29.10 for members, \$32.35 for nonmembers.*

*Buy yours now:*

***<https://squareup.com/market/discover-baja/baja-california-land-of-missions>***

*Port of San Diego's*  
**DAY  
AT THE  
DOCKS**  
*It's Fun! It's Free!*

**SUNDAY APRIL 17th 2016**  
**POINT LOMA 9am-5pm**



Fishing Tackle  
Cooking Demos  
Seminars  
FREE Kids Fishing

Bay Boat Rides  
Entertainment  
Great Prizes  
Diving & Nature Trips

 **Like Us On facebook**  
**For The Latest Updates**

**Sunday, April 17th, 2016 9 AM - 5 PM Sportfishing Landings in Point Loma**

**Come Say 'Hello' to DBTC at  
San Diego's Day at the Docks.**

Discover Baja will again be at Day at the Docks on Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup> from 9am-5pm at Sportfishing Landings in Point Loma, San Diego. The family-friendly event will feature bay boat rides, fishing tackle, seminars, free fishing for kids, live entertainment, prizes and more! DBTC members who stop to say hello at the Discover Baja booth will receive a free gift. For more information: **[www.facebook.com/DayAtTheDocks/](http://www.facebook.com/DayAtTheDocks/)**

**Wine Trips to Valle de Guadalupe:  
Off-Season Specials for Discover Baja Members**



Discover Baja is pleased to bring you a special offer for wine tasting and culinary exploration in the Valle de Guadalupe wine region through our sister company, **Baja Test Kitchen**.

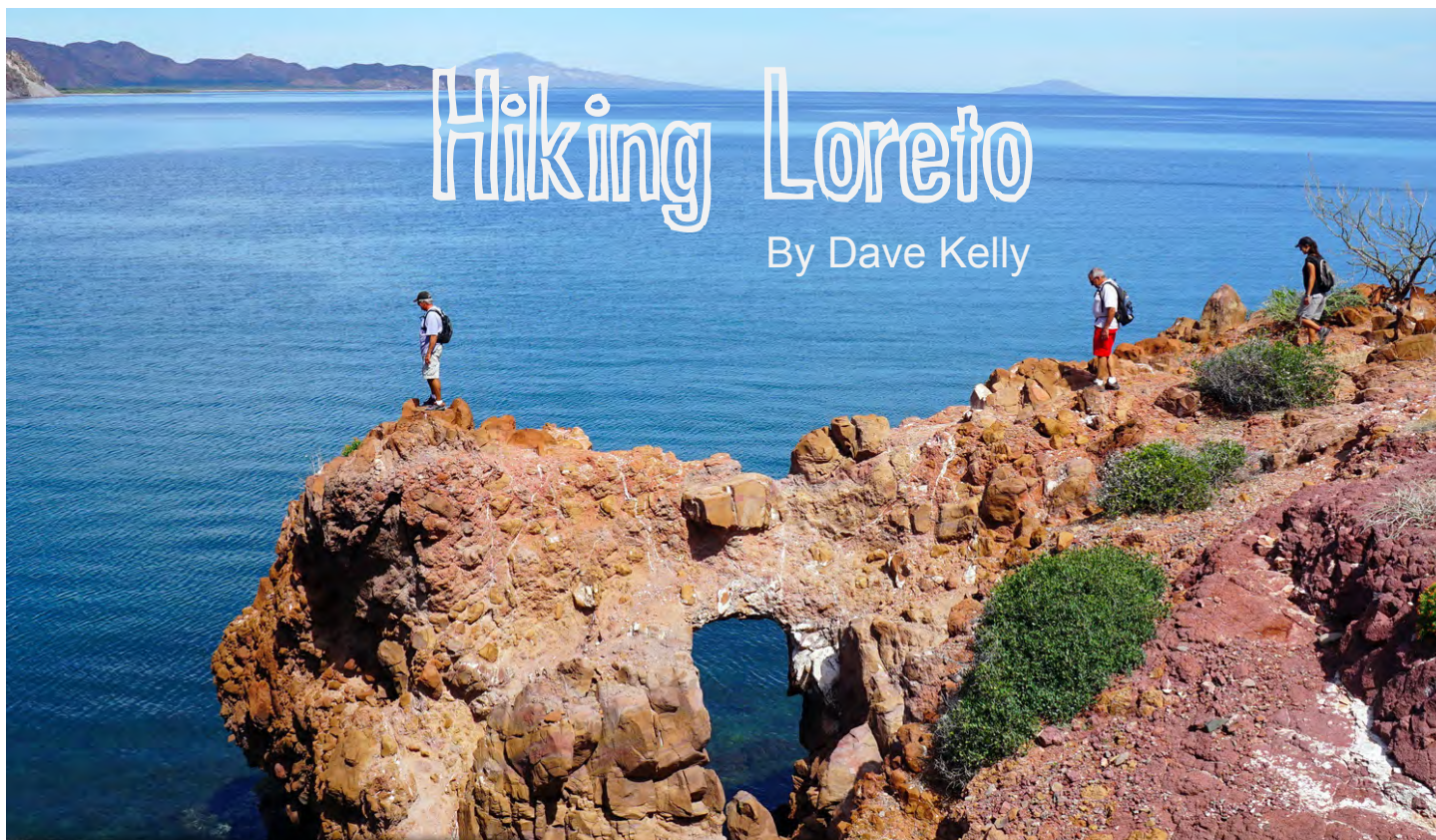
For a limited time, Baja Test Kitchen is offering an off-season, mid-week discount to Discover Baja members for private tours booked Tuesday-Thursday until April 28th, 2016. Tours depart from San Diego and locations in Northern Baja California. Experience a day of wine tasting at some of Mexico's premier boutique wineries, stopping for a gourmet lunch served "al fresco" overlooking the vineyards at one of the Valle's famous *campestre* restaurants. Your bilingual driver will guide you and your friends through Valle de Guadalupe's backroads, to off-the-beaten-path wineries, for an exciting exploration of Mexico's wine region.

10% discount for groups of two or three\* 20% discount for groups of four or more\*

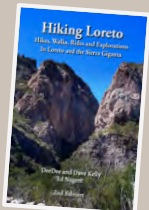
*\*Discount is applied to BTK's standard prices for wine tours*

**Book now to secure your reservation - Mention off-season discount when booking  
[www.bajatestkitchen.com](http://www.bajatestkitchen.com)**





Dave Kelly is co-author of the book, "Hiking Loreto." The guidebook describes hikes in the Loreto region and is an indispensable guide for exploring the Sierra Giganta mountain range, canyons, arroyos, and the shoreline of the Sea of Cortez.



The **Hiking Loreto** guidebook is available in Loreto at these fine establishments:

**The Richard Jackson Photo Galeria**  
On the Plaza next to Mita Gourmet

**Gecko' Curios**  
Located on the south side of Miguel Hidalgo

**El Caballo Blanco, Baja Books**  
Across from Mike's Bar

**El Gavilan En Loreto**  
Located on Miguel Hidalgo across from The Pescador

**New Deli, The Delicatesson**  
Located on Benito Juarez

**New Deli at Loreto Bay  
Dos Lobos Art Gallery**  
The west side of Hi-way One South, about a km past the airport

The book is also available on-line in the U.S. and Canada at <http://hikingloreto.com>

Having been a hiker all my life and a climbing guide for a good part of it as well, I was naturally drawn to the majestic Sierra Giganta the first time I passed through Loreto 15 or so years ago. When my wife, DeeDee and I decided to try and make Loreto our winter home, we imagined that hiking would be a big part of our lives here. Being from the mountains of the Northeast, our first thoughts were, 'there must be tracks and trails going up a number of these incredible peaks.' So we searched for any information about trails and hiking in the area. There was none, just a few paragraphs in the *Baja Adventure Guide* about an ascent up Pilon Las Parras. The only other hike anyone knew of, it seemed, was Tabor Canyon.

So we decided to start exploring. We thought we'd start on something easy, so we headed just north of town to climb Cerro San Bruno, the large rolling massive between Loreto and Playa San Bruno. The ridgeline looked straightforward enough, so up we went. Three hours of

bush whacking later in 90-degree heat we turned around, bloody, dehydrated, and defeated. We had barely reached maybe a quarter of the way up when we were thwarted by several deep gulleys.

Now, realizing that these mountains were not as friendly as they appeared, we set our sights on the canyons. To our amazement, the canyons and arroyos were full of pleasant surprises. What would start out as a dry unassuming arroyo, slowly evolved into a spectacular canyon, with beautiful rock formations, cascades, and waterfalls. We logged each exploration, notated mileages and landmarks, and eventually thought about writing a guidebook. Fifty hikes later (and yes, we did find a way to the top of Cerro San Bruno), the "**Hiking Loreto**" guidebook is a reality and continues to evolve. We have also included over 20 mountain bike rides in the area. Hikes range from short, easy strolls, to serious all day adventures.

*Continued on next page 4*





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### **About Hiking in the Desert:**

First and foremost, you are in a wilderness, there are no trail markers or signs, there is no 911 or Search and Rescue here. A misstep, an injury, losing your way, or any other mishap, can have much more serious consequences than you are used to.

Desert driving skills will be handy for reaching some of the trail heads.

Hike in small groups, as you are likely to see more and disturb less.

Hike early in the day or later in the afternoon when temperatures are cooler.

Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Sandals and flip-flops are fine for a walk on the beach, but not for hiking. Wear good, sturdy, lightweight hiking shoes. On the mountain hikes, long pants and long sleeve shirts are recommended. Wear a hat for sun protection. Wear sunscreen.

Water is essential, plan on one liter per person for each 90 minutes of hiking time, more for hotter days. A hydration pack is the best way to stay hydrated. Bring food. Fruit is always good and contains water. Don't bring things that will melt in the hot sun.

Someone in the group should carry a first aid kit and snake bite kit and know how to use them.

Watch out for desert dwellers! Most people are afraid of snakes, but the poisonous variety, rattlesnakes, are almost never seen in the winter months. They only appear when the days get hotter and spring moves into summer. They are active in the evening and morning hours and after a rain shower. They will find the warm surface of a rock or roadway and blend into the color of the rocks. Even then, common sense and caution can help you avoid an encounter. Human accidents occur when you don't see or hear the snake, when you step on them, or when you walk too close to them. Follow these simple rules to reduce the chance of an accidental snakebite: *Be sure to look at eye level as well as down and ahead,*

*as snakes may be sunning on a rock. **Don't** put your hands into dark places, such as rock crevices, heavy brush, or hollow logs, without first investigating. **Don't** step over a fallen tree. Step on the log and look to see if there is a snake resting on the other side. **Don't** walk through heavy brush or tall grass without looking down. Look where you are walking. **Don't** pick up any snake unless you are absolutely positive it is not venomous. **Don't** pick up freshly killed snakes without first severing the head. The nervous system may still be active and a dead snake can still deliver a bite!*

If the trail wanders, build a small rock cairn or make a mark with chalk to mark the way for your return. Never use any permanent marking system.

Before you head out, be sure to leave your itinerary with someone.

Keep the party together at all times.

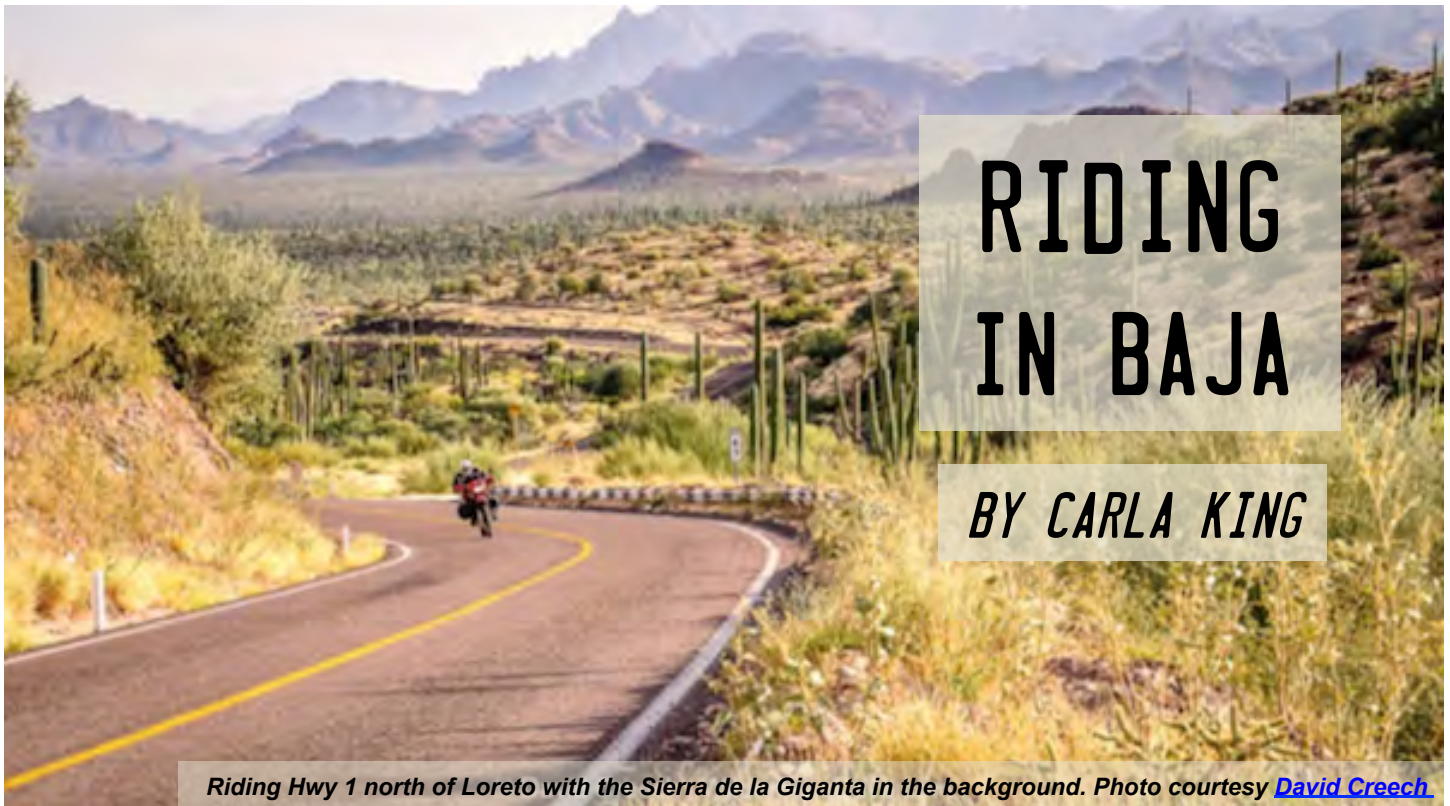
Turn back if you get lost or when someone in the party is tired or ill. The goal should not be the summit, but to get everyone back safely.

There are several well-informed local guides who can lead you on any number of exciting hikes. By hiring a local guide, you will see more and learn more about this fascinating place, and you will be helping our local economy. Find a guide here: **<http://hikingloreto.com/guided.htm>**

Leave no trace, take only photos and hike safely, and have fun!







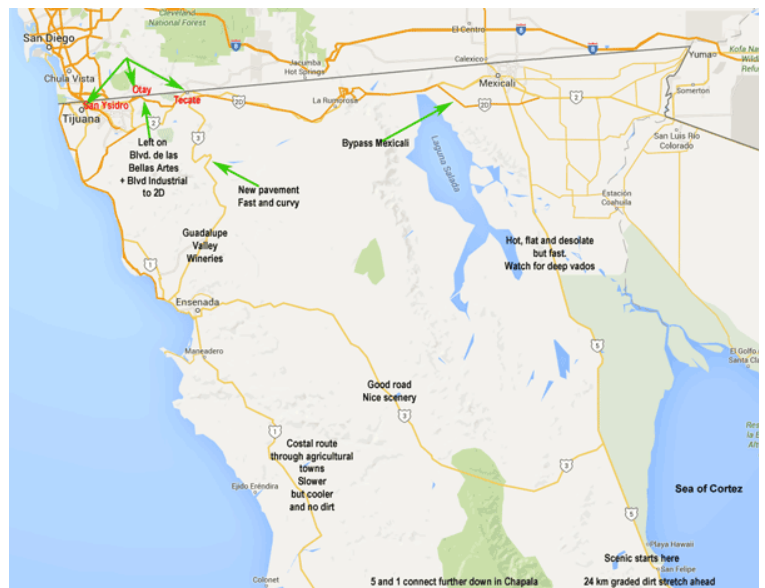
# RIDING IN BAJA

BY CARLA KING

Riding Hwy 1 north of Loreto with the Sierra de la Giganta in the background. Photo courtesy [David Creech](#).

This month I want to share some blogs and forum posts from other riders that will give you a good idea about what to expect when you ride independently in Baja. I've included reports from bloggers who ride different kinds of bikes. I can't stress enough that you can bring any bike—whether it's a 250 dual-sport or your big road cruiser and anything in between. Speeds are slower here, and so is life. You can hurry up again when you get home. That would be *mañana*, or maybe the day after.

But before we start, I want to address border crossings. Where to cross is the number one question riders ask me. There are three crossings in the San Diego area. Which to choose?



## Borders

**San Ysidro:** If you're planning a ride down Hwy 1, it's easy and fairly quick to cross from the US into Baja at San Ysidro, but please don't come back this way as there are long lines and no room between cars to get to the front. Aim to re-enter the US at Otay or, for an even more relaxing re-entry, Tecate.

**Otay:** Otay is the better choice for getting south of the border if you're headed east (and for re-entering the US). When you're clear, turn left onto Blvd. de las Bellas Artes and then left again onto Blvd. Industrial to hook up with Hwy 2D south of Mexicali. From there you'll see the turnoffs for Hwy 3 to the Guadalupe Valley and Hwy 1, or continue east to Hwy 5 and San Felipe. Come home this way and pass all the cars to head to the front of the line.

**Tecate:** Another great alternative to Tijuana. Coming from San Diego, take the beautiful Hwy 94 through rolling hills and forests to the crossing. Re-entering the US, ride to the head of the line. The guard will move the orange cone for you and wave you in next. I love that.

Don't forget to get your [Mexican motorcycle insurance](#) and [FMM tourist permits](#) from Discover Baja in advance of your trip.

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## Rides

*Continued from previous page*

Now, on to the rides.

**[Todo Bien](#)** by J. Brandon

*On a lack of cash, pannier tortillas and an existential crisis about gasoline.*

My friend J. Brandon and his buddy Dave rode down the peninsula last year on their two Kawasaki KLR650s, the "Swiss Army Knife of Motorcycles." I love this post because it captures the spirit of Baja in both the outer and inner journey. Plus, I ride a KLR, too. *Todo bien.* Enjoy the post: <http://overlandjunction.com/features/es-todo-bien/>



Photo by HadesOmega on [BayAreaRidersForum.org](http://BayAreaRidersForum.org)

**[Getting Technical](#)** by HadesOmega on BARF (Bay Area Riders Forum)

*On the state of the bike, the road and the riders*

The DR650 is a great bike for a Baja adventure and any rugged rides anywhere in the world. You can modify it endlessly... or not. I like this post because the riders seek to ride as much dirt track as they can on their 950 mile journey crisscrossing the peninsula between the border and Loreto. The author includes photos of his bike prep, including tire recommendations, maps, videos with commentary, and a post-mortem. This post focuses on dirt riding. Marvin rides his DR, dubbed the "Cactus Puncher," and some of the bikes his friends ride include a KTM 690, XR400s, XR650s, a Beta, a KLX, and a big GS adventure bike. They fall down, get up, get flats, get fixed, and keep going. He documents it all in this two-page post and a few videos on [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com). Yep. This is as close as I've seen to what it's like in the Baja outback. Read the story: <http://www.bayarearidersforum.com/forums/showthread.php?t=491743>

**[A Chinese Adventure Import Goes South](#)** by Joe Berk

*From East to West: Then South to North*

My buddy Joe Berk imports adventure motorcycles from China called CSC RX3s. He took a bunch of new owners on a trip to Baja. I randomly met them in El Rosario, having dinner at Mama Espinoza's, and they were having a great time. He posted all five days of the short trip, but this post is on the search for a countershaft sprocket nut. It's a funny and typical account of the adventures, friendships, and memorable moments that occur when things go wrong, as well as a valuable lesson about obstacles and persistence. Enjoy the post: <http://californiascooterco.com/blog/?p=16498>



***[Livin' it up at the Hotel California, Todos Santos](#)** - Photo by Angela Murray*

**[Slabbin' it on American Steel](#)**

*Big American Bikes Cruising Baja*

A Canadian group led by [Ride Stop 'n Go](http://RideStop'nGo.com) that flies to Vegas for a 1,100-mile ride to Cabo says it all about big American bikes cruising Baja. They prep for the trip with some trepidation, and ride happily on "roads that are in better shape than in Alberta," in the words of one rider. Enjoy the prep post and then watch the [post-trip videos](http://www.ridestopngo.com/tours/scenic-motorcycle-ride-down-the-baja/) interviewing the riders on the state of the roads, the gas station experience, and more. Here's the post: [www.ridestopngo.com/tours/scenic-motorcycle-ride-down-the-baja/](http://www.ridestopngo.com/tours/scenic-motorcycle-ride-down-the-baja/)

## What's Your Story?

Proving once again that even if we travel the same roads, we never get the same trip twice. Got a Baja bike blog post? Send me yours ([click to email](#)) or post it in the comments section on the web version of this newsletter. See you on the road!

Carla King is an adventure travel journalist, [author](#), and publisher specializing in [motorcycle misadventures](#). She lives in San Diego and Baja, on the Sea of Cortez near Mulegé. Read more of her writing at [CarlaKing.com](http://CarlaKing.com).



***[Carla King](#)** on the 24km dirt stretch between Hwy 1 and 5 with two great Baja bikes, the KLR650 and the R100GS. Photo by Jonathan Ehly*



# BAJA FISHING REPORT

with Gary Graham



Dates announced for 2016 Pesca la Baja Sport Fishing Tournaments:

1. San Felipe, May 13 and 14
2. San Luis Gonzaga, June 10 and 11
3. Bahía de los Ángeles, July 15 and 16
4. San Quintín, August 19 and 20
5. GRAND FINALE, Ensenada, September 23 and 24

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

These grassroots events which are held throughout Baja are really more community fiestas wrapped around sportfishing tournaments. They offer unique opportunities for participants to explore unfamiliar waters, some in remote areas, while competing with locals from all walks of life who share a common interest in fishing. First-timers are amazed at the camaraderie and many become regulars on the circuit.

As storms drenched northern California with much needed rain and snow, February seemed like a bad hangover; while anglers fishing off the Pacific coast of northern Baja last year enjoyed a spectacular finish there and in Southern California attributed to El Nino – there they only caught the strong winds and huge swells on the outer edges of the system.

The Sea of Cortez endured what many locals are calling the strongest North Winds in years roaring down from San Felipe to Baja's tip.

From Coronado Islands to Ensenada and farther down past Colonet to San Quintin, the weather dictated not only the quality but the style of fishing as well.

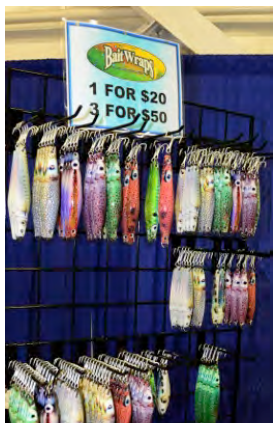
Suddenly surface action gave way to fishing deeper in the water column as surface bait disappeared. Yellowtail joined

rockfish taking up residence down deep and yo-yoing jigs became the technique of choice along with dead bait.

Jig choices seem endless. Style, size, color and performance are all important. Size and weight are dictated basically by the depths fished. The deeper the fish, the heavier the lure. Color usually is determined by the bait the fish are feeding on. Sardine, squid, mackerel and red crab are among the bait that guides color choice. One of the most important attributes is performance. Depending on weight and shape, jigs swim differently. Look for one that darts from side-to-side, regardless of speed . . . like a baitfish fleeing. Or if yo-yoing, one that flutters down as it sinks. When you locate one, cherish it.

If you are like me, you have a bucket somewhere full of old iron jigs that swim perfectly; in fact so perfectly that the paint has been chewed off.

Rich Whitaker, Bait Wraps, will refurb old jigs with new wraps in any color combination you like for a very reasonable price. Turnaround time is about six weeks. Just remove the rings and hooks and sand them down before sending to him; he includes new hooks and rings. Just search his name on Facebook.



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**LEFT: Mulege Yellowtail Tournament Winneres: 1<sup>st</sup> John Lawson, 30.1-pound yellowtail; 2<sup>nd</sup> Chris Johnson, 26.5-pound; 3<sup>rd</sup> Stephen Och, 26.3-pound yellowtail; John Adams, 30.1-pound grouper (other). CENTER: Fishermen in Loreto. RIGHT: Wahoo and Yellowtail caught in La Paz.**

*Continued from previous page*

Over on the other side of the peninsula, from Mulegé down on the Sea of Cortez, between days that the North Wind blows, the fishing picks up nicely.

In Mulegé their recent yellowtail tournament produced a great turnout and the gang had nice catches of yellowtail, grouper and even an amberjack.

Continuing the theme down Loreto way, it was mostly yellowtail at the

Islands with a few cabrilla mixed in.

At Magdalena Bay, whale-watching remains in full swing at Lopez Mateos.

Farther down at La Paz, the El Niño continues to confound as one group scored an unusual catch of both wahoo and yellowtail on the same day aboard one boat.

The East Cape had a little flurry of striped marlin and a smattering of

dorado that was covered over before it really got going by the North Wind.

Seemed that the beach made some sense for locals who managed to catch a mix of sierra and jacks near the jetty at La Ribera.

All the way to the tip, action seemed slow as only a handful of marlin were reported along with an occasional dorado and wahoo. The most encouraging news was that the first swordfish of the year was caught.

Just as this report was being written, *Pacific Queen*, running weekend trips down the beach for the ongoing yellowtail snap, managed to land the first bluefin of the season -- a 50-pound brute.

Based on the February bluefin and swordfish, maybe the El Nino just took a breather and March madness will reign.

Good Luck and Tight Lines...

Questions or comments are welcome.  
garyg@garycgraham.com



**LEFT: Sierra and Jacks caught in La Ribera. RIGHT: The first Bluefin of the season.**



# PENINSULA PICKS: 5 BUDGET-FRIENDLY HOTELS

*There's nothing we love more than a good Baja bargain. We've put together some of our favorite budget accommodations on the peninsula where you'll get the value you deserve without breaking the bank (all of our picks are under US\$40/night for double occupancy). Read more about some of our favorite picks below and why we think they're worth the mention.*



## Jardines, San Quintin

**Price:** \$600 pesos **Contact:** [www.hotel-jardinesbaja.com](http://www.hotel-jardinesbaja.com)

**Why We Love It:** As the name suggests, the rooms are set into cozy lush gardens and grounds. This stop makes the perfect first or last night of a Baja road trip with its proximity to the border and serene setting. They do allow pets in certain rooms, but make sure to call in advance. **DBTC Insider Tip:** Just next door is the Jardines restaurant serving Mexican and American food and with a bar with happy hour from 4-6pm Wed-Sun.

## Baja Cactus, El Rosario

**Price:** \$450 pesos **Contact:** [www.bajacactus.com](http://www.bajacactus.com)

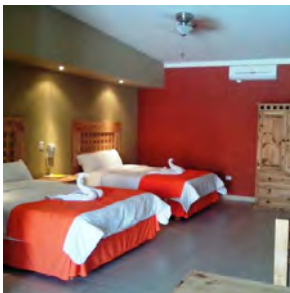
**Why We Love It:** We'd be remiss not to mention the beloved Baja Cactus where visitors stop to fill up on gas at the Pemex and to stay in luxury accommodations for just a few pesos. Mama Espinoza's is right next door so you don't even have to worry about driving back to your hotel after too many lobster burritos and margaritas. It's no secret that this is one of the best deals in Baja, so make sure you call ahead to reserve a room. DBTC members receive a 10% discount! **DBTC Insider Tip:** The rooms in the back of the hotel are newer and get less road noise since they're set back farther from the highway.



## Terra Sal, Guerrero Negro

**Price:** \$550 pesos **Contact:** 011-52-615-157-0133, [hotelterrasal@hotmail.com](mailto:hotelterrasal@hotmail.com)

**Why We Love It:** We know that there's no shortage of cheap accommodations in Guerrero Negro, but what sets Terra Sal apart from the rest is the quality of your stay. The large and spacious rooms are up to modern standards with wifi, air conditioning, and key card entry. There's an on-site restaurant, BajaTerra, with good food and cheap prices. They'll even deliver to your room if you're tired. **DBTC Insider Tip:** This is a prime overnight spot for road trippers with a large parking lot, plenty big enough for trailers, with 24/7 security. The property is also pet friendly (for an extra \$100 pesos per dog).



## La Huerta, San Ignacio

**Price:** \$550 pesos **Contact:** 011-52-615-154-0116, [hotel.lahuertabcs@outlook.es](mailto:hotel.lahuertabcs@outlook.es)

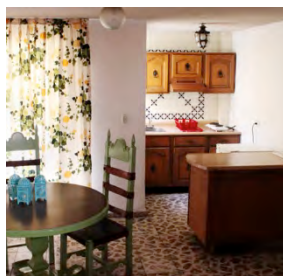
**Why We Love It:** Unlike most accommodations around San Ignacio, the new La Huerta hotel has a great location right in town. You can walk to the town square and the San Ignacio mission, the famous Tortilleria La Mision, and other restaurants and cafes in town. There are 21 rooms that are nicely appointed and up to modern standards. There's currently a market on the property and they're in the process of building a restaurant. **DBTC Insider Tip:** If visiting in winter (peak season is Jan-April for gray whale watching), only the rooms on the second floor have heating.



## Posada de la Misión, La Paz

**Price:** \$595 pesos **Contact:** [www.posadadelamision.com](http://www.posadadelamision.com)

**Why We Love It:** This hotel is set right in the center of La Paz and on the *malecón*, walking distance to restaurants, shops, and the excitement of the city. The rooms are designed more like mini apartments so you get kitchenettes and living spaces. **DBTC Insider Tip:** With room balconies that overlook the *malecón*, accommodations here can provide some of the best views in town for La Paz's annual Carnaval parade each February.







## BUEN PROVECHO: Vinos Pijoan, Valle de Guadalupe

By Jennifer Kramer

Over the past number of years I've watched the rapid growth of the Valle de Guadalupe as the region's popularity draws more and more visitors, and as new wineries, restaurants, and hotels are opening every week. The growth is exciting for the region, but with all of the large wineries and giant tour bus groups, it can be easy to lose sight of the quaint, rustic charm and the relaxed, intimate feel that is the true soul of this unique wine region. These days it feels like a breath of fresh air to arrive at a cozy boutique winery at the end of an unmarked dirt road—a place where the quality of the wines takes precedence over quantity, and where I'm hopeful that no tour bus will find me. Vinos Pijoan has easily become that serene winery for me.

Before my first visit to Pijoan, I had heard good things about their drinkable wines, but didn't know what to expect in terms of ambience and setting. The fact that many places in the valle are relatively new, and there isn't much information published on individual wineries (especially in English), means that you can never be certain of what you'll find when checking out a new winery. This element of the unknown makes surprising discoveries as special as finding buried treasure. What we found at Pijoan was one

of those pleasant surprises. In addition to great wine, there's also a lovely atmosphere with a nice little tasting room and an outdoor covered patio with tables that look out over the vineyards.

There's a genuine feels-like-home, family vibe here. The owner and winemaker, Pau Pijoan, has his house just up from the tasting room. Stray dogs that have been rescued over the years roam the property. The wines are named after Pau's family members. Even the staff members comment about how they feel like part of the family and they often go above and beyond to stay late or come in early to accommodate customers.

Pijoan winery got its start in 1999 when Pau Pijoan took a class at La Escuelita, the beloved winemaking school in the Valle de Guadalupe. He immersed himself into winemaking with help of his mentor Hugo D'Acosta (who is considered to be the grandfather of the modern Valle de Guadalupe with his contributions to the growth of region and the founding of La Escuelita).

The Pijoan basic wine tasting (\$150 pesos) includes one white wine and three reds. All of the wines are named after Pau's family members and the personalities of the wines match the personalities of the respective family members. Capicua, a red blend (the grapes that comprise the wine change frequently), has

become my new go-to table wine for its easy drinkability.

The premium wine tasting (\$230 pesos) features five wines and includes tastings of some very special and spectacular creations. One of which is *Coordenadas*, a special collaboration between Pau and Hugo D'Acosta, made of grapes from a property they have in France, mixed with Mexican grapes from the Valle de Guadalupe. The tasting finishes up with *Manel*, a port wine made of zinfandel and petit syrah. At 19 percent alcohol content, it's strong, sweet, spicy, and completely delicious. You'll definitely want to take home a bottle of this special concoction.

Pijoan also sells olive oils and chutneys that they make (if you order a cheese plate to accompany your tasting, they'll serve it with some of the chutney).

Sharon works in the tasting room on the weekends and Arturo works during the week. They both speak excellent English and are wonderful ambassadors for the winery. If it's not too busy, ask them to show you the wine cave which was uniquely carved out underground around large boulders.

### Vinos Pijoan

[www.vinospijoan.com](http://www.vinospijoan.com)

011-52-646-127-1251

10am-4pm Monday-Friday

11am-5pm Saturday-Sunday



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# Help Us Build a Home for the Kids at Rancho de los Niños Orphanage!

*In the continuing partnership between Discover Baja and Corazón de Vida, we ask for your support as we help to build the children at Rancho de los Niños a new dorm to call home. Donate and learn more at: [www.classy.org/rdndorm](http://www.classy.org/rdndorm)*



In January of 2016, a Valle de Guadalupe orphanage that Corazon de Vida supported had to shut its doors. This was a home for teen girls, a tough age group since most orphanages don't take kids older than 12. Fearing that the girls would be sent to various orphanages and possibly even rehab centers, another Corazon de Vida orphanage, Rancho de los Niños, took in the 20 displaced girls, even though they didn't have the space for them. The girls are temporarily housed in the volunteer dorms, which are one step above a camping site. As difficult as this move has been for the girls, they are settling in, glad to be together and able to attend the same schools and be around their friends.

**Rancho de los Niños has one empty dorm (an empty shell) that needs to be completely rebuilt to house the girls. The estimate to rebuild this dorm is \$25,000.**

Rancho de los Niños (formerly Casa de Paz) is an orphanage located in the Valle de Guadalupe, about 90 minutes from the San Diego border. The home is located on several acres of open land. They now have 85 children in their care. Jorge and Ely Fonseca, who were both raised in the orphanage, now run the home as the directors.

**You can donate and learn more about the project at the link below. Please join us in helping to support this project. Any amount will help! [www.classy.org/rdndorm](http://www.classy.org/rdndorm)**



corazón de vida

## **About Corazon de Vida:**

Corazon de Vida (CDV) is a 20+ year U.S. 501c3 non-profit organization providing life-changing support for orphaned and abandoned children in Baja, Mexico by funding local orphanages, providing quality of life improvement services and investing in the children's future by funding higher education. Through their life-sustaining program they provide monthly funding for the orphanages under their care. These orphanages give abandoned children security, nutrition, shelter and access to a reliable education.



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There are many places to enjoy in the beautiful Mexican Baja, but why not change a life while you enjoy your vacation? Staying at Casa Corazon is unique because every dollar spent at Casa Corazon is used to improve the lives of orphans in 12 different orphanages in the Baja. Casa Corazon was generously donated to **Corazon de Vida** ([www.corazondevida.org](http://www.corazondevida.org)), a non-profit foundation which has been supporting orphanages in Baja for twenty years. If you are interested in adding humanitarian service to your leisure and bringing food or assistance to an orphanage, we are more than happy to assist you. House rental includes daily cleaning services from 10 a.m. to noon.

Casa Corazon is located in the upscale marina community of La Salina just 45 minutes south of San Diego. At km 73, it offers the very best of BC located midway between Rosario and Ensenada. It's secure and 24 hour guard gated community provides a peace of mind while providing some of the most beautiful coastal vistas of Baja California. The Mexican Craftsman Villa is ideally set up for 2 families with 2 masters and 2 additional rooms with multiple beds for children or other guests. All bedrooms have ensuite bathrooms. Enjoy ocean views and panoramic ocean vista from the expansive rooftop terrace, perfect for dining and entertaining or quietly enjoying a majestic sunset. Each level of the home has a beautiful covered terrace complete with artisan Mexican tile floor and stunning ocean views. Enjoy cooking in the gourmet kitchen, or hire a local personal chef to delight your culinary desire. A welcome dinner is provided upon request by a local chef.

Enjoy the beautiful and serene private white sand beach just steps away from the villa. Soak in the sun, snorkel, rent a sailboat or fish just in your backyard. Just a 3 min. drive up the scenic highway, you can ride horses on the beach. A little further you can rent ATVs for a exhilarating experience with the dramatic backdrop of the Pacific Ocean. Try a famous lobster dinner at Puerto Nuevo, or go whale watching in Ensenada. Enjoy a tour of the nearby wine county in Valle de Guadalupe.





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**Contact: [www.elangelazul.com](http://www.elangelazul.com)**

