



Free

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Oaxaca's English Tourist Newspaper

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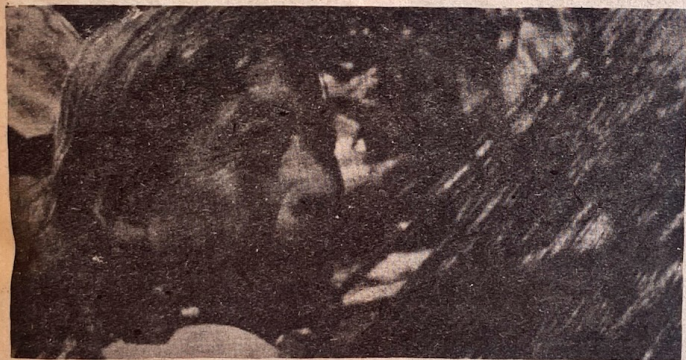
OAXACA, OAX.

JANUARY 1990

TEOTITLAN DEL VALLE

This is a unique village known for its woven goods, particularly serapes. This is hardly virgin territory; tourists are driven here in small buses and vans every day to purchase the finished, handmade products which are visible on the front doors of their shops. The vendors are so proud of their Zapotec culture that they are having a huge art show for the celebration of the 453 years that Fray Lopez de Zarate initiated the weaving activity in Teotitlan. Visiting the home/shops in this village give the visitor an opportunity to observe how the weavers work and live.

Prices of these world famous rugs are often quite reasonable and it is possible to have a rug produced from your own design. Shipping is available. The King and Queen of Spain will be in Teotitlan on January 13th as part of their official visit to Mexico. They will be guests of honor at a traditional Zapotec festival held specially for them.



ETHNIC GROUPS PART IX

CUICATECOS

We know very little about the Cuicatecos because the Spanish conquerors destroyed maps, codex and other valuable evidences about them. The Cuicatecos were powerful and numerous, about 60,000 when the Spanish first came; they were divided into minor kingdoms.

The Cuicatecos belonged to the Mixtecs, but in 1456, when the Mexicas conquered Coixtlahuaca, the Cuicatecos joined them to be free of the Mixtecs. The Mexicas called this place Cuicatlan which means "place of singing", because the villagers loved to sing.

Martin de la Mezquita conquered Cuicatlan in 1521, the Cuicatecos then went to the mountains running away from the hard work in the cane plantations.

LOCATION-The territory of the Cuicatecos is situated on the Northwestern part of the State of Oaxaca, the area is 8,400 Sq. Kilometers. It has a very varied topography because it is situated in the Sierra Madre Oriental. The volcano Prieto which rises 3,300 meters is one special attraction in that territory. Also there are valleys and canyons with 600 meters above sea level. From these places flow many rivers, the most important of them is Quiotepec.

HANDICRAFTS-In Santa Maria Papalo the villagers make overcoats, blankets and serapes of wool "huipiles" a kind of dresses embroidered with flowers, animals and other ornamental designs, are made in Santa Cruz Tutilla and San Andres Teotitlan. Cooking pans and pots are made in San Andres Papalo. The palm hats are from San Pedro Nodon, Santa Maria Tecaxitlan and San Juan Tonaltepec.

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Oaxacan Personages: RUFINO TAMAYO

Rufino Tamayo's painting is typically Mexican but, at the same time, represents modern art in the broadest sense. This characteristic of his work has made Tamayo one of the foremost contemporary artists in the world.

Born on August 26th, 1899 in Oaxaca, of Zapotec parents, he spent his childhood in the tropics, which, in the words of his generations poet, Carlos Pellicer, "gave him his 'color fingers'." Later, when he became an orphan, the future artist moved to Mexico City with his aunt. Tamayo was dazzled by the great city. This boy, who wanted to be a musician, later recalled "my eyes were opened in many ways... from the age of eleven on, I knew I wanted to be a painter."

In 1917, he enrolled in the San Carlos Academy and for quite a while he alternated his studies with a job in a city market where he looked after a fruit business. In fact, tropical fruits accompanied him from his birthplace to the high planes.

They have been oft-repeated themes in his painting, as well as the geometry of their shapes and magic of their colors also ever present. In his stilllife and figurative paintings, he includes more of his favorite things: clocks, goblets, bottles, balloons and guitars. The influence of the work of Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Joan Miro only matured and refined Rufino Tamayo's style—a firm and wilfully rigid style of figures with mostly bold harmonious colors. His achievements in blending warm tones is extraordinary. His predominant colors are reds, crimsons, withes, blacks and greens, although he went through an almost colorless period, he went back to where he first started, with the tropical fruits that first awakened his interest in painting: blues, purples (blues emerging from purples as Pellicer would say), fiery reds, the unmistakable Tamayo pink and lacker-shiny blacks and withes. This can be seen also in latest easel paintings and recent murals. He dedicates nearly every painting to Olga, his wife of 54 years, which explains why he signs his works with his own surname and a letter O.



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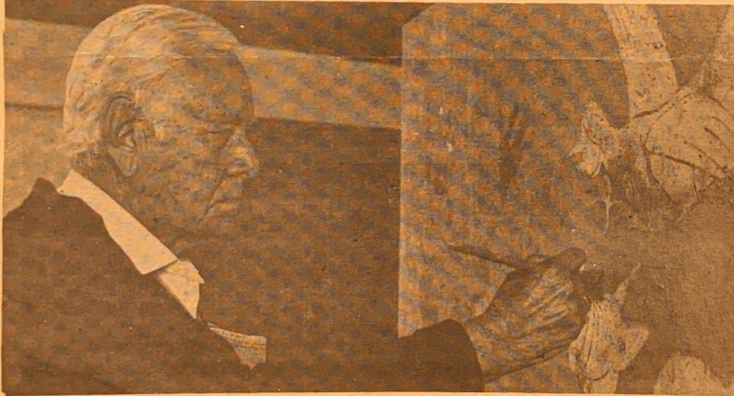
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Rufino Tamayo held his first exhibition in Mexico in 1926 and then in New York. From 1938 on, he divided his time regularly between these two cities. In 1950 he traveled to Europe where he awoke the critics' interest on the Biennial of Venice. He has 35 personal exhibitions to his credit and more than 10 international prizes. He is the favorite son of Oaxaca, official of the French Legion of Honor and doctor Honoris Causa of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, among other titles. His exhibition "70 years of creation" with 209 of his works, was held last year in the Rufino Tamayo Museum in Mexico City. But how does this artist define painting? In 1948 Rufino Tamayo wrote, "A product whose value is based only on its plastic qualities, qualities that have been obtained through a cleansing process until the essence is reached. It is a plastic essence with poetic overtones within the limits set by the canvas, this is what I call painting. Having one's feet firmly planted on the ground or if necessary, even embedded in it, but, at the same time, with eyes and mind wide open, scrutinizing every horizon is, in my opinion, the correct attitude." He is a disciplined painter who is more creative through constant hard work than by inspiration. He considers that painting should be a purely plastic affair that combines forms, space and colors, all within due order of the elements which can be interpreted through the senses. His easel work—which he prefers "because he finds it to be a sort of laboratory or experimental field"—has been exhibited all over the world. Nevertheless after 71 years of creativity and at 89 years of age, Rufino Tamayo thinks he will never be satisfied, "because I believe one never reaches the end: there is still so much to learn that there is not enough time to say I did it all!"

MEXICANA

Por/By Leticia Roa
Fotos de/Photos by Oscar Pugliese
Translated into English by Carole Castelli

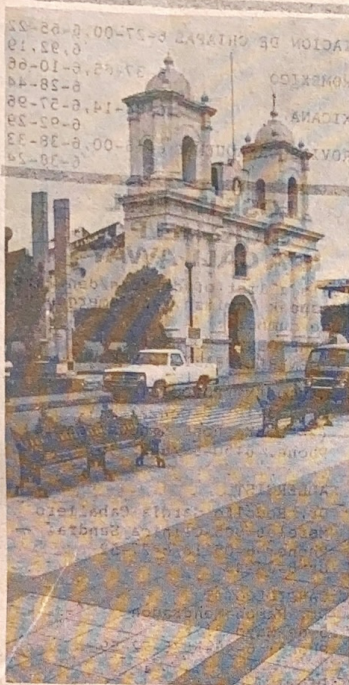
ON THE ROAD AGAIN: TAPACHULA

Most travel books barely mention Tapachula; some not at all. It's as if this town didn't exist, as big as it is. Everytime I asked someone about it, the replies would run from "ugh", "Hot and dirty" to "not worth the trip". I was pleasantly surprised.

Located in the state of Chiapas, Tapachula is Mexico's southern most city, about ten miles from the Pacific Ocean and an equal distance from the Guatemalan border. A comfortable 45 min. flight from Oaxaca(US\$112 R.T.) it can also be reached by bus (17,000 pesos O.W.). However at this writing the roads are bad due to excessive rain and dangerous due to political turmoil and bus hold-ups.

Though no one could tell me precisely, I would guess the population to be in the 300-400,000 range. The streets are quite narrow and heavily congested with traffic and pedestrians. Since it is tropical, the weather is hot and humid during the day, but surprisingly cool and breezy at night(at least in Oct.). probably due to it's proximity to the ocean. It is also very commercial with lots of consumer goods for sale(VCRs, televisions, radios, perfumes, etc.) at surprisingly low prices, although a beer at an outside cafe costs 4,000 pesos(vs 2800 in Oaxaca). You know this is a border town, since most all restaurants, stores and hotels accept U.S. dollars and Guatemalan quetzales.

What is called the Zocalo in most Mexican towns, is called "El Centro" here. One part is



lined with closely planted trees cut in topiary fashion to resemble a giant hedge under which are wrought iron benches. There are also several outside cafes with umbrella shaded tables. The architecture is a mixture of old and new with several buildings of 6-7 stories. The most desirable hotel in town is the Hotel Don Miguel, la Calle Poniente #18, only a short distance from El

Centro. Though nondescript from the outside, this 3 story(no elevator) hostelry offers exceptionally clean and modern rooms(37,000 single, 47,000 dbl) with satellite color TV, air conditioning, lots of hot water and towels, mineral water and room and laundry service. They have a strange policy, however, of charging an 'extra' night as a refundable deposit.

Puerto Madero, a small town on the ocean is about 10 miles away and I've had mixed reports on the beach and accommodations. The airport which is about 20 min. out of town is fully airconditioned but lacks restaurant and bar facilities. Both foreigners and Mexican nationals are required to pass through both customs and immigration before boarding any plane, even though these are all domestic flights.

My trip was very brief, so this is just my overall impression of the city. I doubt if Tapachula is worth a special visit, but I found it to be an attractive, vibrant city.

The weather in January

Warm sunny days in the 70's. Cool nights. Wear a light jacket or sweater.



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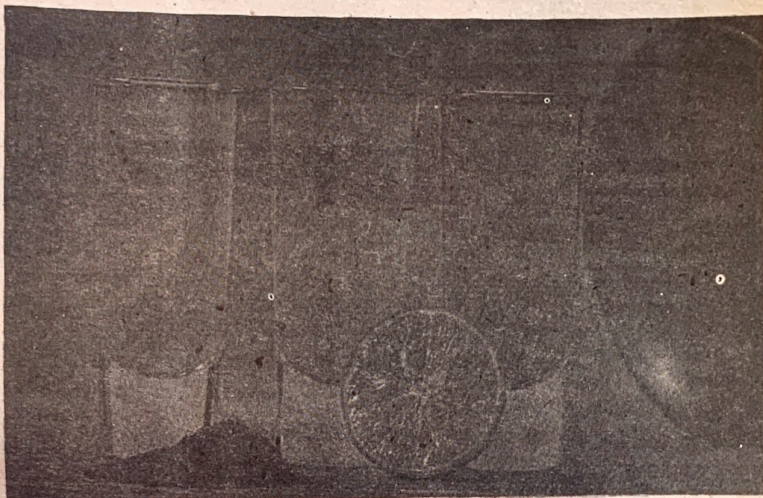
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HOLD THE WORM PLEASE!

Mezcal, the local firewater, is Oaxaca's contribution to the world of booze.

Unlike tequila which is made from the agave tequiliana, mezcal is made from the maguay espadin.

I visited the new, yet to be completed, Casa Chagoya Distillery on MEX 190, a few miles before the Tlacolula turnoff and was given a tour and an explanation of how mezcal is made (they conduct free tours and have rest rooms, food service on weekends, handicrafts and naturally, mezcal for tasting and sale. the process is like something out of the past century. The maguay plant is trimmed of it's long, spikey leaves leaving a huge pineapple-looking heart called a "pina" each of which can weigh up to 50 lbs. These are cut up into large pieces and put in a large stone-lined pit thusly; ignited wood on the bottom, then a layer of large, flat black stones, then the maguay, then plastic sheeting to cover, and the whole pit is sealed with sand and steamed for 3 days, much like a Hawaiian luau. The result is a brown, sticky, very sweet mess. This is then crushed by a horse-pulled, huge round stone and transferred to big covered wood-



en vats where it is left to ferment naturally for approximately 5 days.

It is interesting to note that it takes a maguay plant 8 years to mature and that 8 kilos of "pina" are needed to produce one liter of mezcal.

Casa Chagoya has it's own maguay plantations which gives them a steady supply of plants.

The next step are the heated copper stills which produce pure mezcal drop by drop. This is the traditional way, however nowadays, modern, automated plants are the norm.

most mezcal produced in Oaxaca is consumed while still young, and not much is left to age. It is sold in clear or eathern ware bottles and can be clear, gold in color (anejo) or flavored (orange is very popular, kind of a poor man's Cointreau). The insertion of a gusano de maguay (worm) into the bottle just before capping gives some mezcal an earthy flavor and aroma which is very popular with some customers. The small bag attached to the eathern

ware bottles is a mixture of dried and ground worms, chile and salt.

You will find many mezcal outlets (expendios) in Oaxaca. It's inexpensive and potentially dangerous stuff!

CHEERS!
tod

Bienvenidos amigos

Welcome, reader, to the OAXACA, TIMES. Oaxaca, is a beautiful, clean, colonial city with friendly people and a nearly perfect climate. OAXACA TIMES aims to provide you, the English-speaking visitor, with valuable information which will enhance and enrich your stay. Write, call (6-34-43), or come by our office (Guerrero 311) with your tips and recommendations about Oaxaca. Our office is 2 1/2 blocks east of the Zocalo at the Institute of Communication and culture, A.C. Come by and get acquainted. But, above all, enjoy our beautiful Oaxaca.

Yolanda Garcia C.
Publisher

THE PANTEON

Unlike most Americans, Mexicans tend to be very affectionate with one another in public, absolutely adore their children and seem to be closer to their dead, which the celebrations of the Day of the Dead clearly show. Like their Catholic European counterparts, Mexican cemeteries tend to be very ornate.

Located at the end of the Calzada del Panteon, about 14 blocks from the zocalo, Oaxaca's main cemetery is well worth a visit.

The older section is surrounded by portals whose walls are lined with crypts, some dated as far back as 1802. The grave sites are very close together and no simple white crosses are to be found. Huge marble tombs with sculpted virgins and soaring angels are everywhere; some with etched glass doors and windows. Some interiors have ornate displays of religious figures, candelabra and carved urns and many have seating for meditation. The most impressive thing though, is the abundance of fresh cut flowers everywhere. Gone but not forgotten.
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