

EXPLORING COSTA RICA

Agua Dulce: A Sweet Place on the Sweet Gulf

By Mike McDonald

Tico Times Staff

The fresh morning air rolls through the mesh screen toward the bed, drying the tiny sweat beads off your chest like a gentle wave would wash away grains of sand stuck to your tummy.

You wake up and peek off the second-story balcony toward the ocean. There, the sun rises in yellow and orange hues, glistens off the calm sea and illuminates the assorted greens in each of the hundreds of palm fronds that brighten the landscape's foreground.

Downstairs, just to the left of the pool, breakfast simmers. A hot plate of that Costa Rican rice-and-beans staple, *gallo pinto*, awaits, along with scrambled eggs, toast and a cup of fresh coffee.

The day will likely begin with a fishing trip, or perhaps a walk through the tropical jungle. Maybe you'll take a stroll along the miles of undisturbed, sandy shoreline, where brilliant red-blue-and-yellow scarlet macaws nest in the trees lining the beach.

At Agua Dulce Lodge and Resort on southwestern Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula, you can plan a day around just about any outdoor activity.

Sitting just meters from the treasured



On the Gulf: Agua Dulce Lodge and Resort, on southwestern Costa Rica's Golfo Dulce, offers one- or two-bedroom villas suited to couples, families or groups of sportfishers. **Photos by Francesco Vicenzi | Tico Times**



and largely undeveloped Golfo Dulce, this new hotel combines nature and luxury as though they were born twins.

Rooms are modest but elegant in the resort's 21 villas, perfect for couples, families or groups of anglers. The two air-conditioned bedrooms in each villa, each with two queen beds and private bath, share a common area in the middle. Guests from both sides can meet and enjoy the Osa's pleasant weather in the rustic wood and leather rock-

ing chairs or take in the breeze from the wooden wraparound balcony.

For all you anglers, deep-sea sportfishing is among the Golfo Dulce's greatest attractions. The waters in the calm gulf are stocked with corvina, grouper and snapper, among many other fish, and boast dozens of world-record catches.

For those off-the-water days, Agua Dulce has connections with various ecotour operators to provide 29 different day

trips. Excursions include visits to nearby Corcovado National Park, world-famous for its biodiversity. Guests can also opt to take a kayak tour through the gulf's vivid mangrove swamps or take scuba diving certification classes, among other options.

Agua Dulce is about a 15-minute drive from Puerto Jiménez, the nearest town to this remote getaway. Though a small fishing village, the community offers an array of different restaurants offering local and foreign fare (TT, Feb. 27, 2009). This reporter recommends the wood-fired pizzas at Il Giardino.

Finally, when night has fallen and you return to the lodge, grab a cold Imperial beer or a margarita from the in-house bar. Relax alongside the pool or head back to your room for a soak in the Jacuzzi tub. ■



Roy Arguedas Arias | Tico Times

Going There

The quickest way to get to Agua Dulce Lodge and Resort is to take a Nature Air (www.natureair.com) or Sansa (www.flysansa.com) flight from San José to Puerto Jiménez. Flights last about 45 minutes, and a shuttle service can take you from the airport to Agua Dulce.

The more affordable route is via bus from San José. Buses to Puerto Jiménez leave from the Transportes Blanco-Lobo bus stop (Ca. 12, Av. 7/9, 2771-4744), and the trip takes roughly eight hours. The lodge can arrange to pick up guests from town.

Rates for half a villa (one bedroom) are \$125 in

the green season and \$150 during high season; a full two-bedroom villa is \$250/\$300.

For anglers, the lodge offers a variety of packages that include accommodations at Agua Dulce, two nights in San José, transportation to the lodge, all meals and a boat with captain and amenities.

All-inclusive packages for eco-tours are also offered that buy you eco-tour credits to use with local operators. A la carte options are also available.

For more information, call 8817-2850 in Costa Rica or 1-800-958-8681 in the U.S., or visit www.aguadulcelodge.com.

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