

# Carol & Ron's Oaxaca, Mexico Adventure: 2018



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In January of 2018 Ron and Caryl spent 9 days with our good friends Alden and Karin Mead in Oaxaca City, Mexico.



Alden is a former colleague of Ron's from the University of Minnesota. In the past, we also traveled with them to Indonesia.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



The C was for  
Caryl wasn't it?

This was our hotel, La Casona de Tita (large house of my uncle). It is a five room hotel, housed in a hundred-year-old house with 2' thick adobe walls and rooms arranged around an open courtyard.



This is our room at La Casona de Tita . All of the artwork in the hotel was original and all was for sale.





This is the open courtyard where we had breakfast in the morning and cocktails in the evening. On the days when the temperatures were in the 40s we were bundled up in our winter coats and scarves.

The hotel had canaries in the courtyard.



One of our favorite breakfasts was divorced eggs, eggs with two different mole sauces



This is Mexican eggs with chorizo.

The little dab of mashed black beans and fresh farm cheese came with every breakfast.



On January 10 we met our guide Andrea Sevilla for a walking tour of the city streets, markets and galleries.



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In the historic district most of the buildings are colorful. The walls run right along the sidewalk and most of the doors lead into interior courtyards surrounded by rooms.



January is the dry season, so skies were blue most of the time we were in Oaxaca.  
All of the streets are paved with large stones.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



There are often cafes and gardens on the rooftops. This street has a separate lane for bicycles.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

This wall are has to do with the protests by the local indigenous people against the government taking their lands on behalf of large multinational corporations.

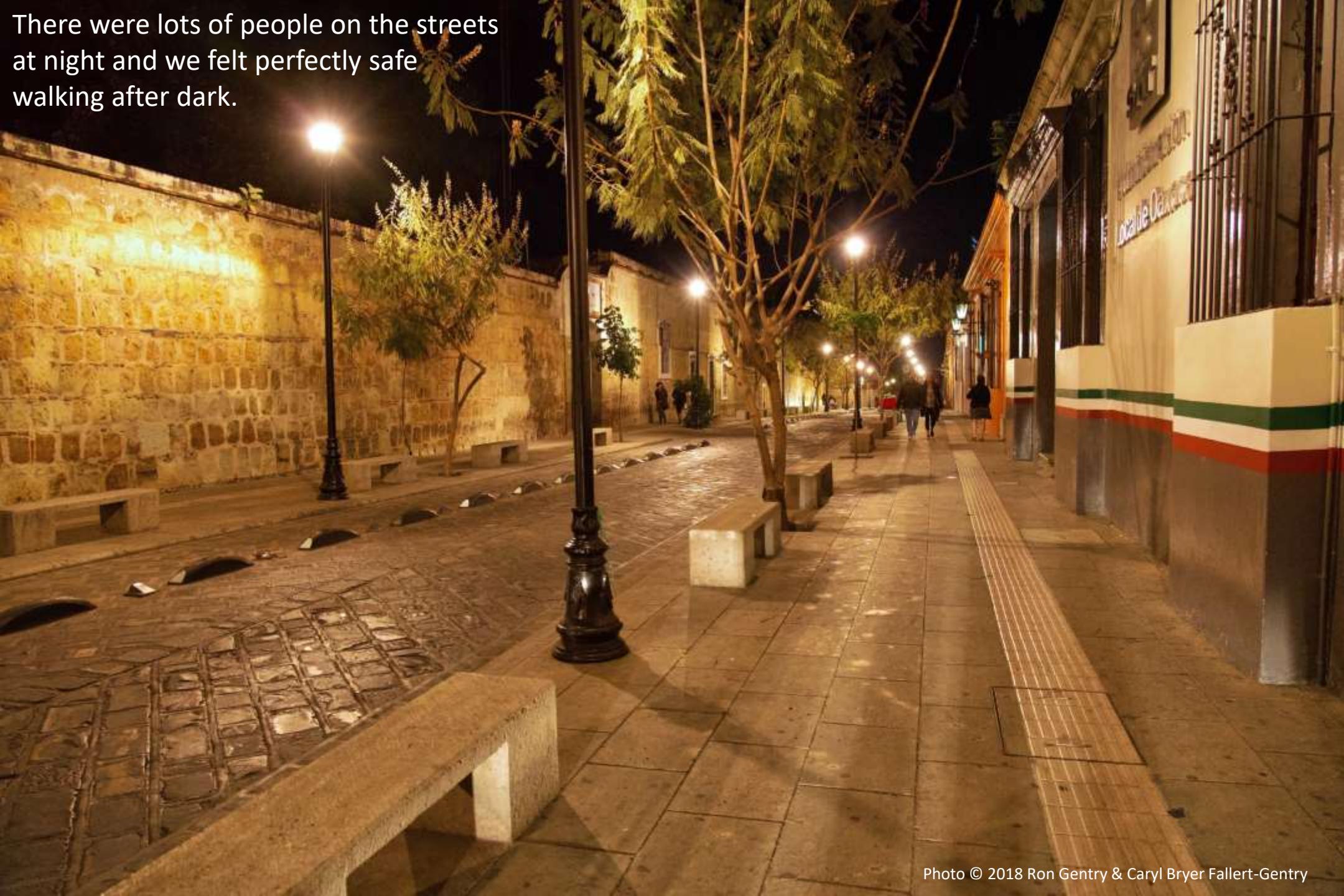




Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



There were lots of people on the streets  
at night and we felt perfectly safe  
walking after dark.





One night Alden and Karin picked up a follower.



They stopped to make friends. There were lots of stray dogs on the streets. They all seemed very mellow.

Many of the roofs have outdoor gardens and restaurants. On our last day there it finally got warm enough for us to try one of the roof-top restaurants.



Most of the time we were in Oaxaca they were having record low temperatures and a record number of days in a row of cold weather. It was usually in the 40's in the morning and evening and usually got into the high 60s or low 70s in the middle of the afternoon.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Many of the doors you see along the streets have lots of character.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

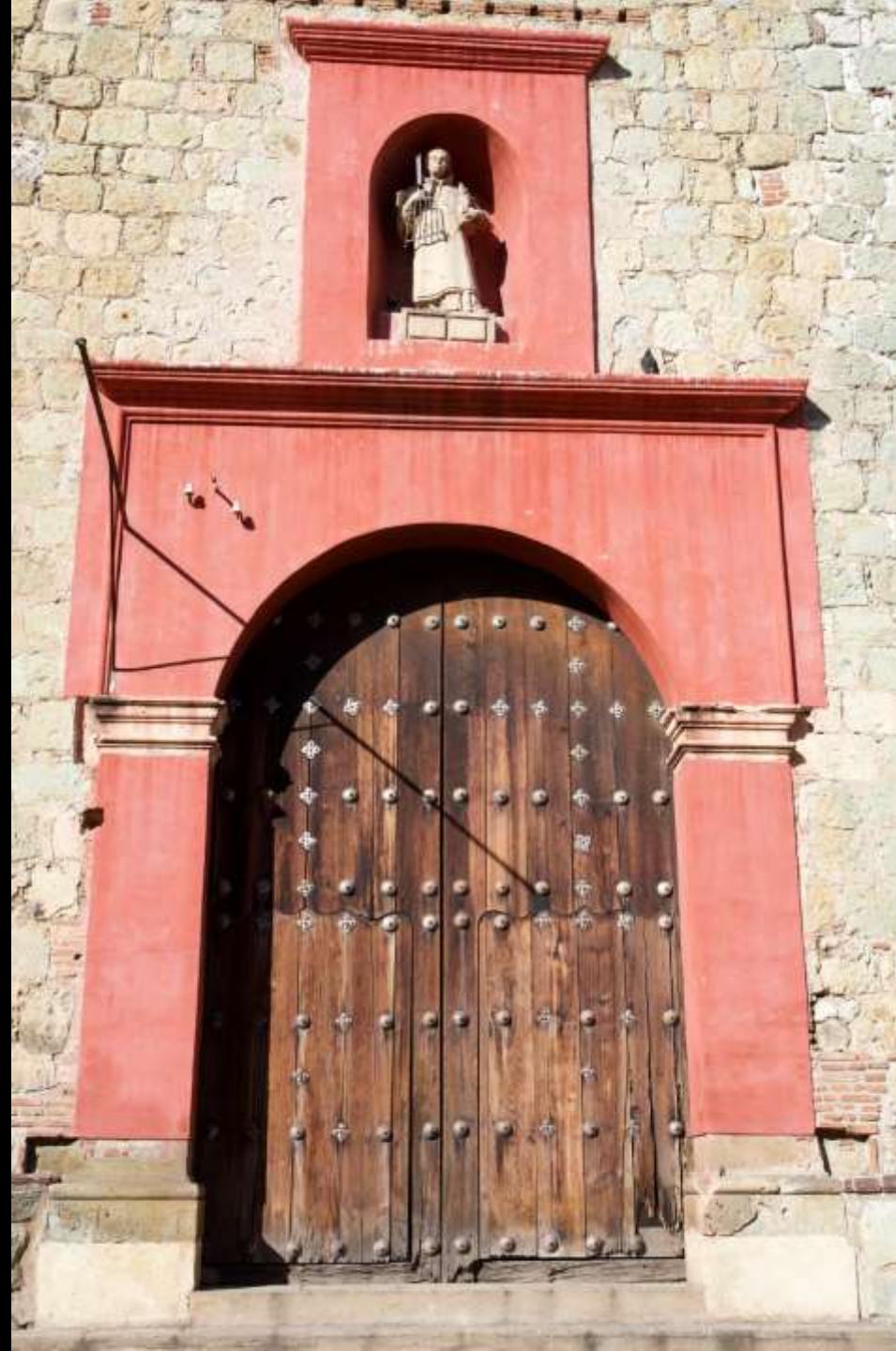


Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry &  
Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



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Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



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Some of the doors have characters in them.



Giant puppets  
like this one are  
used for various  
festivals



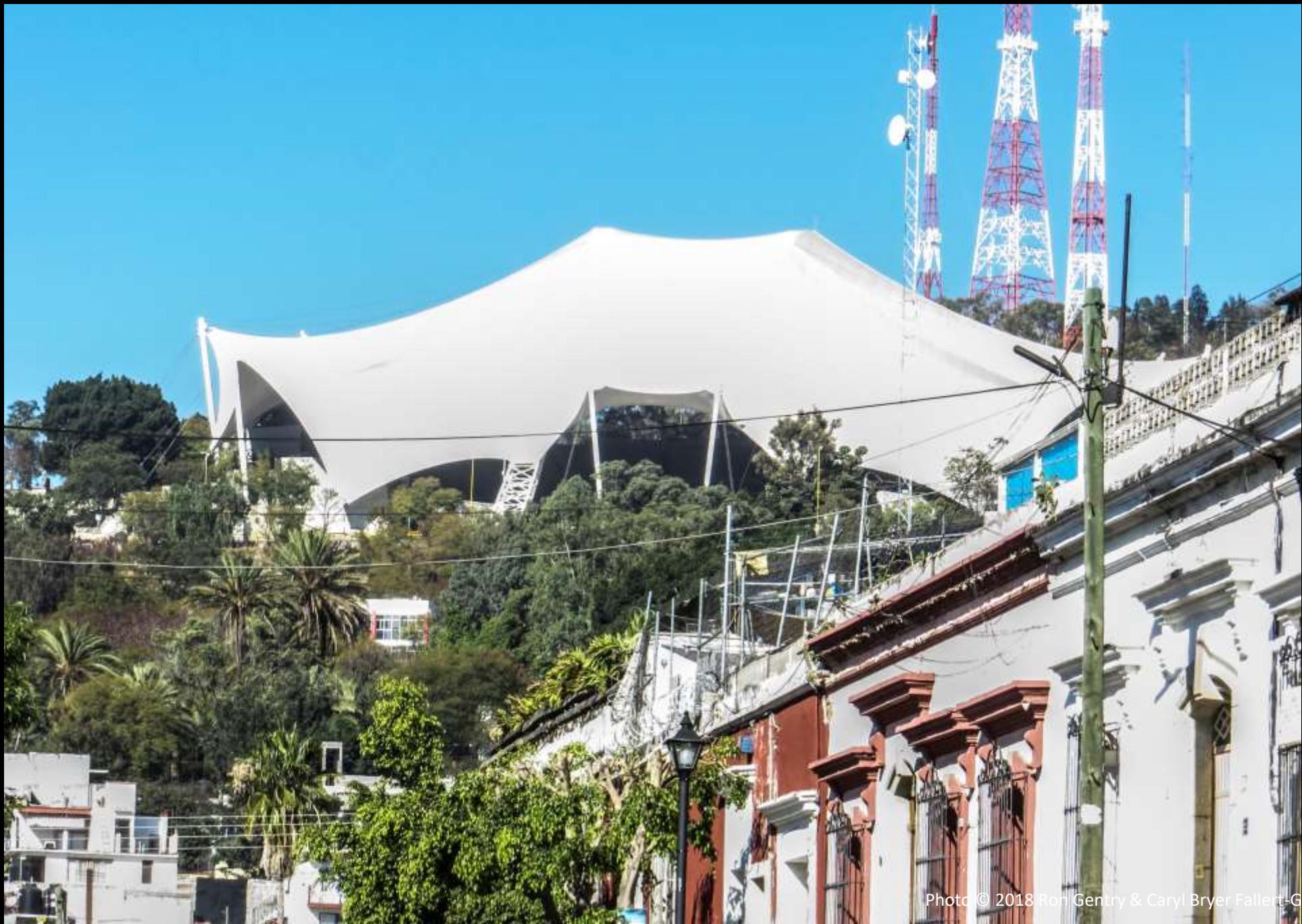


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Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

The hillside above Oaxaca is dominated by a large outdoor arena, covered by a fabric roof.



Lots of food is sold on the street. This is a huge rolling cart full of crisp tortillas.  
All of the tortillas in Oaxaca are made of corn.



Tortillas are cooked over an open fire in terracotta clay comals.

This is an quesadilla being prepared for our first lunch in Oaxaca, at a street market stall.



The comals are coated with lime to prevent the masa from sticking to the clay.



Every city and village has a covered market where local food products and crafts are sold





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

The specialty of Oaxaca is mole sauce, which comes in seven different varieties. Here are the spice mixtures for each of them. The wooden spindle thingies in the middle are for making froth in hot chocolate.



Chapulines (grasshoppers) are a local delicacy. They are farm-raised and sold in every market.



Chapulines (grasshoppers) are also on the menu in every restaurant, so it's a good idea to memorize the word if to prefer not to try them. Alden was the brave one in our group.





Fish was not as common as meat and poultry in the markets because it comes from the coast, which is 6 hours away on bad roads. We did have wonderful fish dishes in the restaurants.



The chickens are all very yellow because they feed them marigolds.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

# CECINA DE POLLO

Tel. 51 6 04 65  
951 235 55 96

MOLE NEGRO \* ROJO \* CONSUME



OFERTA  
OFERTA  
DEL DIA

CECINA DE POLLO  
CONSUME  
PASTA



Most of the meat is cut very thin so it can be cooked quickly on a grill. The grills (often self service) are right next to the meat stalls. People who don't have refrigeration in their homes can cook right there and eat in the market or on the street.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



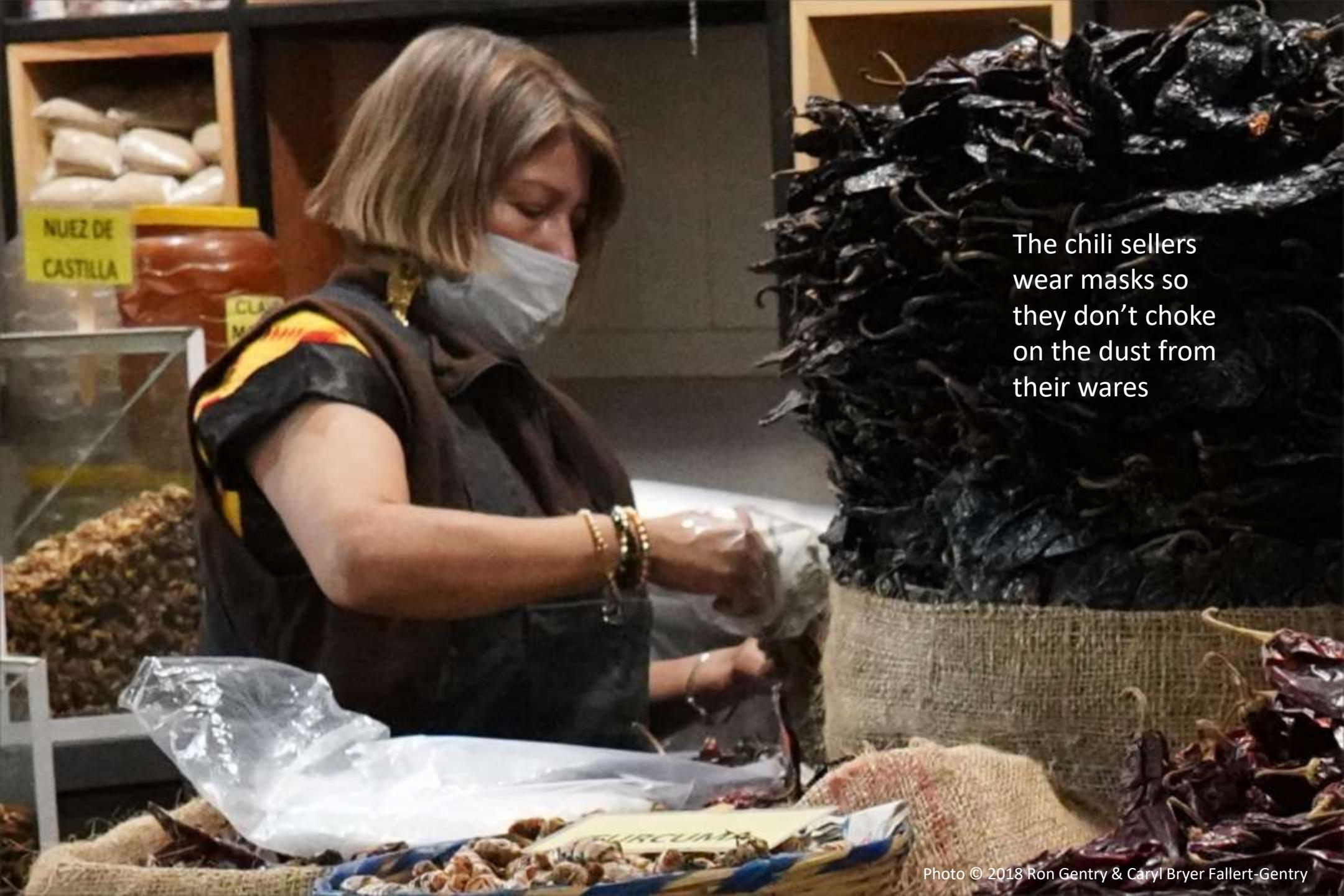
Hmmm... don't think I'll try this.



This vendor is selling fresh herbs and chilies



Dried chilies anyone?



The chili sellers wear masks so they don't choke on the dust from their wares



Although the local cuisine is not especially hot, there are lots of chili varieties to choose from.

There are also lots of varieties of beans to choose from



Nopalitos (prickly pear paddles) are eaten either raw or cooked. This woman is stripping off the spines.





Market  
cleanup  
crew



These are the traditional, embroidered dresses worn by the local people. If they look familiar, it may be because Frida Kahlo was wearing this kind of costume in many of her self portraits. Although she was from Mexico City, they say that she bought her clothes in Oaxaca.



This woman is weaving  
baskets while she tends  
her shop



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

This woman is doing hand embroidery as she sells her vegetables





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Marijuana gel. No idea what the snake is for, but it caught my eye.

Decorative castanets among the cooking utensils.



## Decorative mescal and chili sauce display





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Machine embroidered blouses



Andrea holds a bowl of cacao beans at the chocolate factory.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



The beans come in big sacks from the lower-lying, more tropical areas of Oaxaca. Many people here have hot chocolate for breakfast every morning.

The beans are poured into this machine and ground up.





The chocolate comes out of the machine as a liquid and is mixed with sugar in these big tubs. They use a small shovel to do the mixing. The mixture is sold for making hot chocolate and mole negro.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

## Guaje Seed Pods:

When the Spanish arrived in southern Mexico in 1521, this region was called *Huāxyacac*, the Nahuatl word for the red pod of the *Leucaena Leucocephala* tree. They couldn't pronounce it easily, so they renamed it Oaxaca.





### Guaje Seed Pods:

The little seeds inside the pods are edible, and are a natural cure for some stomach ailments.



This beautiful little courtyard with several small shops was behind an ordinary looking door off the street.

## Colorful, hand woven hammocks



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

# hand woven rugs from the weaving villages





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



In the main square there are dozens of craft vendors from the surrounding villages. Most of them are Zapotecs, the most numerous of the 17 ethnic minorities in the area.



Most of the older women dress in their traditional garb. Every village has a different traditional costume, so they can tell where a person is from by how they are dressed.

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Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Many of the younger women wear jeans and tights, just like their American counterparts.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Many of the younger street vendors bring their children to work with them.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

In addition to crafts and food, we found lots of musicians in the main square.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

On Sunday, this youth band was giving a televised free concert.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

They were accompanied by a professional singer with a beautiful voice.



These guys seemed to be able to play several different instruments at the same time.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

This marimba had beautiful inlaid wood designs along one side.



This group were listening to a very strident speaker, presumably protesting discrimination against local ethnic minorities.



There are  
two  
cathedrals  
in the  
historic  
district.  
This one is  
on the  
main  
square  
and the  
other is a  
few block  
north,  
nearer to  
our hotel.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Oaxaca was founded by the Dominicans in 1532, so the cathedrals in this area are in the Dominican style, i.e. they have rounded domes covered with mosaic tile.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Two different kinds of agave were growing in the courtyard of the cathedral that was closest to our hotel.

It takes thirty-five years for the agave plant to bloom, and it only blooms once.



We found these sculptures in the courtyard of the cathedral. We figured out that they were probably some kind of vine that had grown around a tree, strangled the tree, and were left standing after the tree died.





Photo © 2016 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Gallert-Gentry





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

In addition to street food, we ate at a number of wonderful restaurants in Oaxaca City.

Karin & Alden  
enjoying adult beverages



# ZANDUNGA

Sabor Istmeño



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Mescalini with pomegranate berries



Shredded  
pork tacos



Mahi Mahi with mushrooms



Can't remember what  
this was, but it was  
very decorative.



Like many of the restaurants where we ate, this one (our favorite) was in an open (unheated) courtyard. It had a retractable, canvas cover with a hole for the tree in the center. Everyone, was wearing winter coats.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Smoked marlin  
Memelas

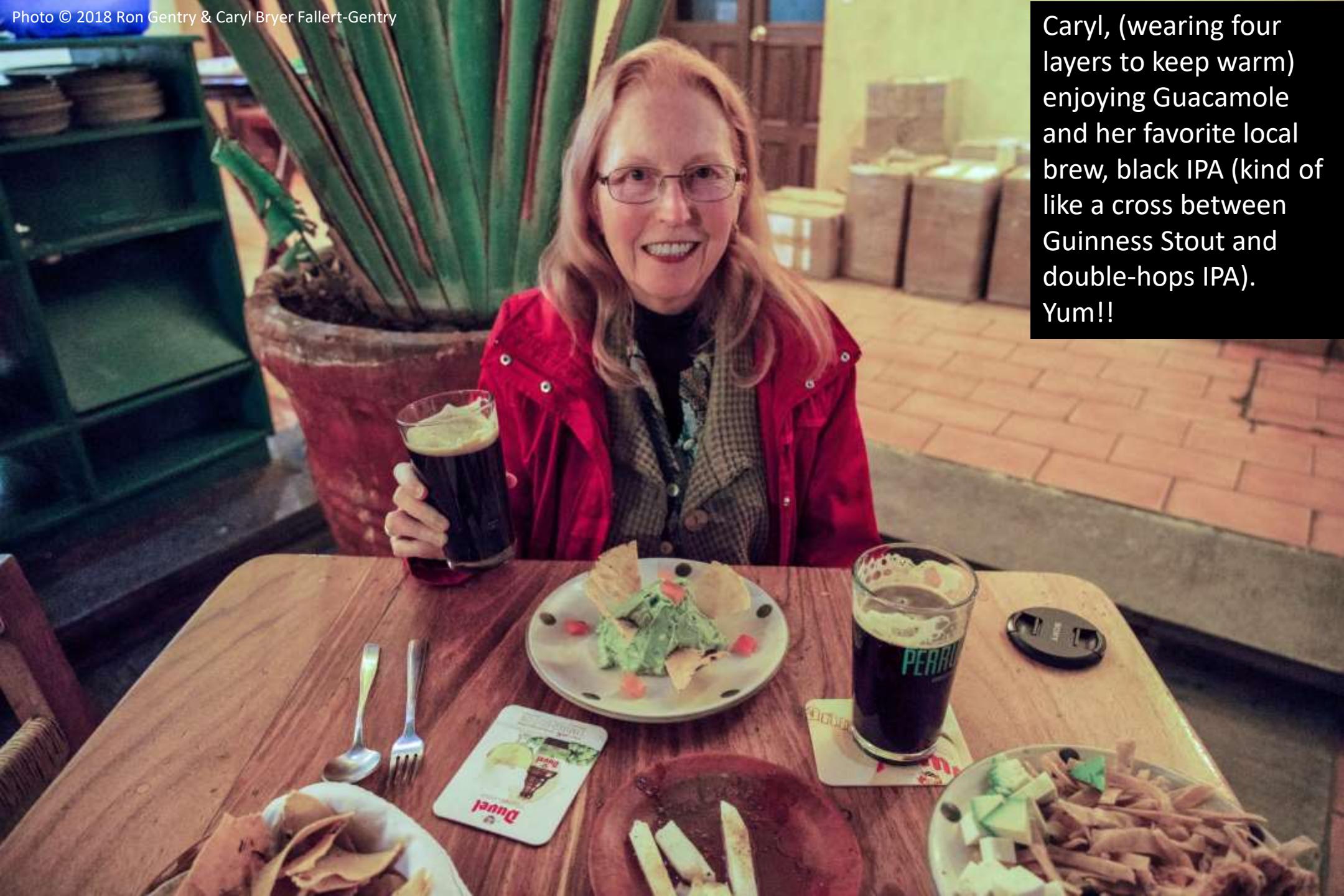


Smoked pork  
Memelas



Tortilla soup





Caryl, (wearing four layers to keep warm) enjoying Guacamole and her favorite local brew, black IPA (kind of like a cross between Guinness Stout and double-hops IPA). Yum!!

A Los Danzantes, another open courtyard restaurant. We had to wait several days to get a reservation here.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Mescal colored with cochineal (cactus insect used to dye red fabric)

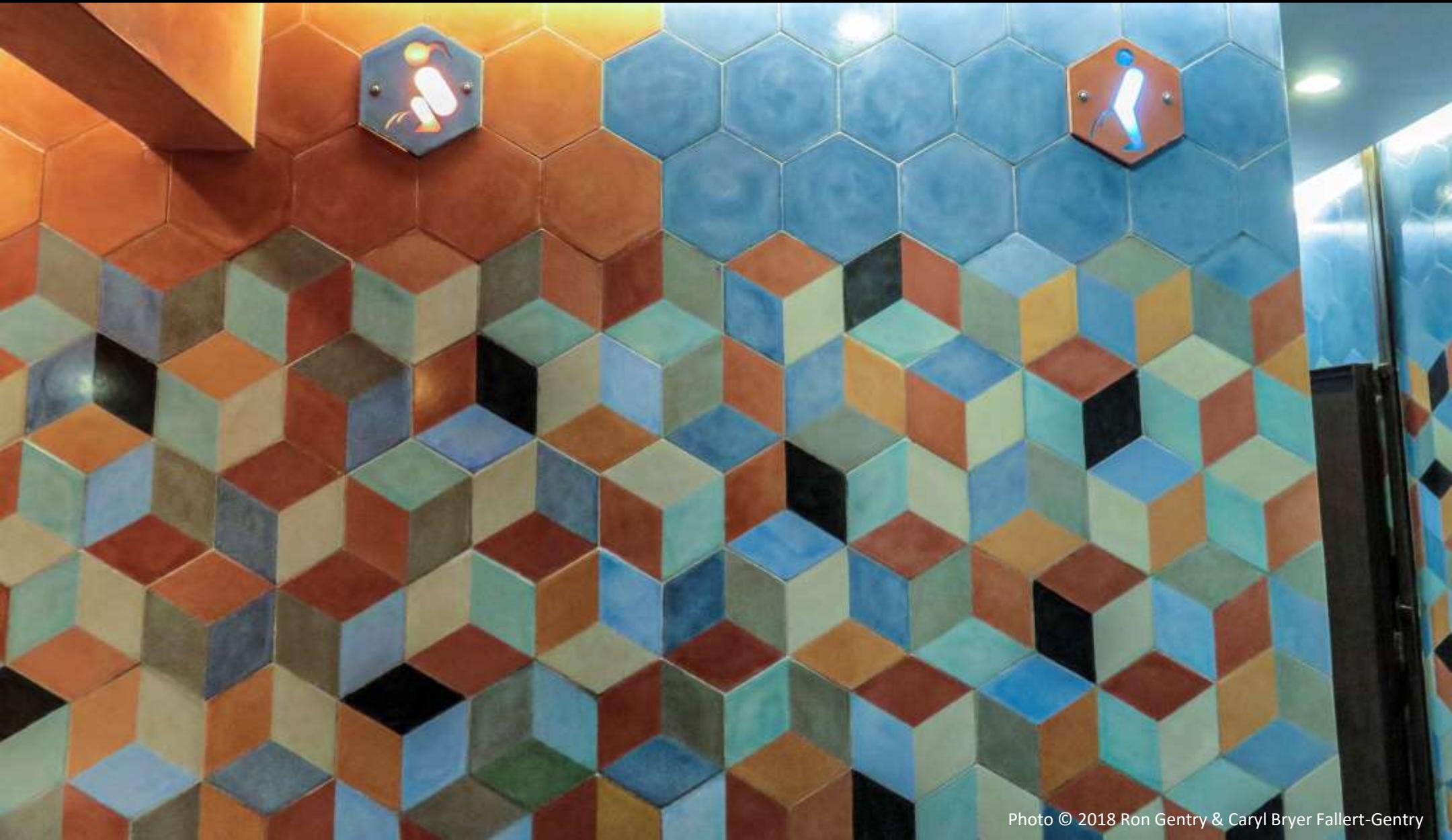
One whole side of the main square was lined with European style sidewalk cafes.



On our last day it finally got warm enough to sit outside at a roof-top restaurant.



The entrances to the banos in this restaurant seemed ambiguous at first glance, but soon became clear.



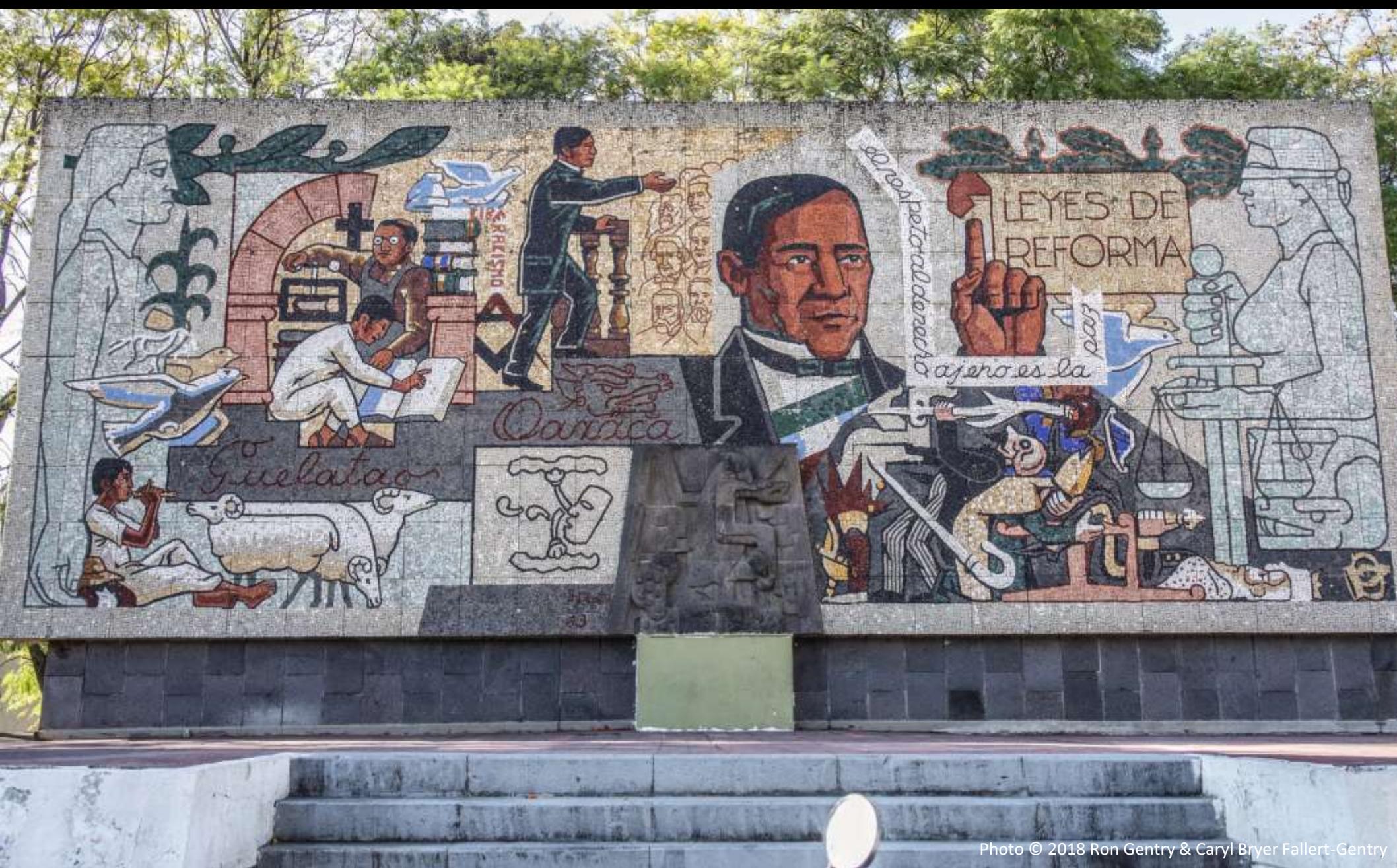
On January 11, Caryl & Ron's 5<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, we were met at 9am by Luis Ramirez Rodriguez for an all-day tour.

[www.luisramireztours.com](http://www.luisramireztours.com)  
[toursinoax@gmail.com](mailto:toursinoax@gmail.com)



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

At the edge of town we stopped at this large mosaic monument to Benito Juarez, the George Washington of Mexico. He was from the Zapotec culture.



Our tour began in the hills overlooking Oaxaca at Monte Albán, a pre-Columbian archeological site (designated as a UNESCO world heritage site).

From the UNESCO website:  
*Inhabited over a period of 1,500 years by a succession of peoples – Olmecs, Zapotecs and Mixtecs – the terraces, dams, canals, pyramids and artificial mounds of Monte Albán were literally carved out of the mountain and are the symbols of a sacred topography.*



# MONTE ALBÁN

Monte Albán, la ciudad prehispánica más grande de la región Oaxaqueña, representó la primera urbe planificada del continente americano. Tuvo una constante ocupación humana por más de trece siglos (500 a.C. hasta 150 d.C.), cuando por razones aún no establecidas, se inició su gradual abandono.

En su época dorada esta ciudad estuvo integrada por una Plaza Principal, rodeada por el centro ceremonial, una serie de conjuntos arquitectónicos monumentales (Atzompa, Cerro del Gallo, El Humají, Monte Albán Chico y El Mogolito).

Se caracterizó por tener desarrollado como sistema de gobierno un verdadero Estado, dirigido por la clase sacerdotal. Gran parte de su economía se basó en el tributo otorgado por comunidades del Valle de Oaxaca, lo que se complementaba con la producción agrícola de maíz, frijol, calabazas y otras productos de tipo local logrados en el sistema de terrazas construidas en las laderas de los cerros que rodean.

Monte Albán es uno de los pocos sitios en el mundo donde se muestra claramente el surgimiento del Estado como sistema de gobierno.

Después del dominio de los Olmecas, sus ruinas fueron siempre sagradas para los Zapotecos que las usaron y sacaron los Mictlán que arribaron al Valle de Oaxaca en época tardía. Fueron rituales que portaron los restos de algunos personajes principales en una tumba Zapoteca (Tumba 7), acompañados de una extraordinaria ofrenda.

En 1987, la UNESCO elevó a la categoría de Patrimonio Mundial esta Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos para su conservación y disfrute por todos los ciudadanos del mundo.

Monte Albán, yeli' atello, yeli' xan, yeli' chau, d' xito' chito goho' nhan  
helihegaken, to lache lao' ya' aux chitza yeli' la' karhahiguhibe, chihak' na' la',  
na' nñita' ylo' chegahitahaze. Choja bel' lla' gale yeli'  
chegahitahaze nñita' ylo' nñchonche uxale beligahaze: spura kumche che nñu' jene  
bel' nñchonche le', mta' ka' nñu' bayin' bechitah yeli' chonchite...

Uñchonche bñach' gari' ka chinco gaya ylo', ka gyeo gaya ylo' ka za' asulfe da',  
xanchio (500 a.C.-850 d.C.) mta' ka amsha gaya chijon' ylo' ka ha' uxule da',  
xanchio. Nñchon' nñchon' bechitah yeli' chonchite...

Da' xto' chito goho' katzagahigohé b' nñzce chechexe b' ylo' nñbeligahaze:  
tue' yello', bñtakage ylo' chih', mta' ka to laue' yeli' xan, d' uok' ka lñadu  
yeli', de' belkonto lla' nñ' la', ga' belts' bone' la', bene' urah' yelantah  
yela', nñ' beljio', nñ' belkonto da' bñde' chegahitahaze. Gaua' belkonto zanya' ylo', beligahaze  
Atzompa, Cerro del Gallo, El Humají, Monte Albán Chico y El Mogolito.

Bene' lai' belkonto' yeli' gari', bene' nechitah yeli' xanbá' katon' nomba' chihus  
na' la', belchoso' bene' yeli' zapch'ek' nñ' kathé, belstahigahaze b' nñ' dñsah',  
yilah', nñ' beljio', nñ' belkonto da' bñde' chegahitahaze. Ka' belgonkegake' nñ' yelo', belgaze nñ' xua', za', ylo' nñ' nñchitah dñsah',  
kakas uok' lñn che' galan' de' belgonkegake' bñtakage' lñch'ed' le' ylo' xepitas' gaua' Monte Albán nñ  
belkonto nñ' lñn chegahitah...

Lagatz ka' bñta' nñ' nñ' gake' belkonto lñn ylo' chau' (da' nñ' at' oto') xan' zan:  
kumche' yeli' chau' nñ' belkonto nñ' bñta' nñ' nñ' gake' dñ' belgonkegake' de' chau' da' bñtakage' yelchahaze nñ' nñ' nñ' gake' nñ' bñtakage' xan' zan' dñ' belkonto  
belkonto' ka', nñ' nñ' gake' (7) belkonto' belgahaze' la', dñ' zan' da' chau' bñtakage' belkonto' belkonto' ka', nñ' nñ' gake' nñ' chie', nñ' bñtakage'...

La bñtak' dñ' nñ' chito goho' belkonto' gari', bene' zola' bñtak' bñtak' yeli',  
nñ' bñtak' x'ñ' bñtak', bene' uok' yeli' yobie', yegah' belgonkegake' yegah'  
dñ' bñtak' da' nñ' chau'. Bene' lai' laññu' bñtak' bñtak' bñtak' bñtak'  
belkonto' ka', nñ' nñ' gake' (7) belkonto' belgahaze' la', dñ' zan' da' chau' bñtak' bñtak'  
belkonto' belkonto' belkonto' belkonto' belkonto' belkonto'...

1. Juego de Pelota
2. La Capilla
3. Sistema IV o Edificio K
4. Edificio L o de los Danzantes
5. Galería de los Danzantes
6. Sistema II
7. Estela suriente
8. Edificio II
9. Monolito Suriente
10. Muro defensivo
11. Estela suriente
12. Edificio J (El Observatorio)
13. Edificio I
14. Edificio IV
15. Edificio O
16. Monolito Q
17. El Palacio
18. Edificio P
19. Adoratorio
20. Edificio II
21. Estela II
22. Pórtico
23. Plaza Hundida
24. Edificio A
25. Edificio B
26. Edificio I
27. Edificio D
28. Edificio E
29. Edificio VG
30. Complejo Vierito Gobernación
31. Edificio Engaño
32. Palacio del Oso
33. Edificio X
34. Residencia y Tumba 56
35. Hacia la Tumba 104
36. Hacia la Tumba 105
37. Hacia la Tumba 7



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Ball court. No one knows what the rules were, but it is thought that the game was used to settle civil/legal disputes. The sloping walls on the side would have been smooth originally. This is not like the coliseum in Rome. There is very little room here for spectators.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Most of the structures were temples, alters, or tombs. They sacrificed their conquered enemies here.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Naturally we had to climb to the top of those stairs.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

The view was worth it, once we got up there.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Caryl & Ron enjoying our 5<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at Mounte Alban



Karin & Alden  
enjoying  
Mounte Alban





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Many of these carvings represent conquered enemies.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Big tree: Monte Alban



Big tree: Monte Alban





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Cotton tree  
Monte Alban



After lunch we visited two different studios where Alebrijes were being carved and painted.





Alebrijes are imaginary creatures that have elements from different animals such as dragon bodies, bat wings, wolf teeth and dog eyes. Colorfully painted, they were originally made with papier mache but nowadays they are carved from wood.

Caryl began collecting alebrijes (lizards only) in 2008 and her original collection of 10 covers the soffit above our kitchen island. We added 13 more lizards during this trip.

Most of the carving is done by the men. This is the master carver at the first studio we visited. The figures are carved and then left to dry for several months. After they are dry, they are immersed in gasoline to kill any resident insect larvae that may remain in the wood.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



We loved this figure of the lizard and the jaguar, however there was nothing like this in the showroom at this studio.

We suspect that all of the really complex figures are snapped up by the galleries in the larger cities



As the wood dries, it tends to crack or develop small insect holes. After the gasoline immersion, this fellow fills all of the holes and cracks with wood chips and wood filler. The figures are then sanded and given a base coat of solid colored paint.



The figures are then painted with intricate, decorative patterns, using very small brushes.





The popular trend among the artists in most of the studios and galleries we visited was this very busy patterning, reminiscent of [zentangle.com](http://zentangle.com). While the work is mind-bogglingly intricate, Caryl doesn't feel that it complements the shape of the creatures as well as the more traditional pattern in the lizards she has collected in the past.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry





Each figure is a one-of-a-kind design created by the individual painter. They do however work under the supervision of the master artists/studio owners, and many of the designs are repeated again and again.

Some of the patterns are traditional Zapotec designs, found in their pre-Columbian architecture, and some are just made up from the artists' imaginations as the figures develop.



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Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Another popular Oaxacan craft is black pottery. Most of this is purely decorative and has a lot of beautiful, cut-through designs. We were not allowed to take photos of the individual pieces in this gallery.

When we arrived in Oaxaca, we were met at the airport by Roberto Gavidia, who was also our guide on January 12. Roberto charges by the hour, and will arrange a custom tour to the places you most want to see and a few other places along the way that he thinks you will be interested in seeing.

At the end of our trip, Roberto picked up all four of us and our luggage at 5:15am in his commodious SUV and transferred us back to the airport. His charge was the same as a local taxi.

[roberto\\_gavidia@yahoo.com](mailto:roberto_gavidia@yahoo.com)



Our first visit of the day was to the studio of Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez/ Arriero Zapotec Rugs. He is known locally as the “Plastic Man” because he works in so many different mediums.



In addition to painting large canvases, Pantaleon is a master weaver and sculptor. He has a large extended family, all of whom work in the business, mainly as dyers and weavers.



Here are a few of his smaller bronzes. These seem to be a cross between the ancient, Zapotec ball players and modern baseball players.



Bronze sculpture by Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez



Painting by Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez



# Scratchboard art by Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez



# Painting by Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

# Painting by Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

# Painting by Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez: Here are some of the natural materials he grinds to make his paints.



Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez:  
Here he wets his finger and draws on heavy paper.



Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez: Here sprinkles pigment or cochineal dye on the paper.



Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez: Here the wet areas have picked up the color to show a face.



Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez: He creates other colors by adding other substances to the original color.



# Painting by Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez



Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: Wool for the weaving is imported from New Zealand and hand carded.



Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: The women in the family do all of the dyeing and spinning.



Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: All of the yarns for the weaving are colored with natural dyes.



Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: This is one of many looms in the studio.



Martinez demonstrates his tapestry technique in a traditional rug pattern.



## Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: Another tapestry in progress.



Pantaleon Ruiz  
Martinez & Family:  
A similar tapestry,  
completed.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Pantaleon Ruiz  
Martinez & Family:  
Tapestry





Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: We loved this original, contemporary tapestry and considered buying it, however at 82" wide we couldn't find a place for it.

# Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: Bronze sculpture





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: Bronze sculpture



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: Bronze sculpture

# Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: Whimsical bronze sculpture



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

# Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: Bronze sculpture



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

# Pantaleon Ruiz Martinez & Family: Whimsical bronze sculpture



On our way to the Martinez studio in the morning, we stopped by a Mezcal brewery.



Mezcal is made from every kind of agave except blue agave (that's made into tequila). The brewery owner shows us several different kinds of agave plants.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



The agaves used in this brewery are very large. Once the leaves are chopped off, the cores, which look like pineapples and have a sweet pulp are hacked into smaller chunks with axes.



Agave cores being hacked into smaller chunks with axes.

Agave cores being hacked into smaller chunks with axes.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Agave cores being hacked into smaller chunks with axes.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



We returned to the brewery at lunch time and the agave was all cut into chunks. The workers have built a big fire in a pit. When the fire dies down to embers, the coals are covered with the wet pulp that remains after distillation. You can see a little of it in the lower right corner.



After the wet pulp, the whole pit is covered with canvas tarps which seal in the steam. The agave cooks for five days.



After five days the cooked agave is placed into this masher, and the big round grinding stone is dragged around the circle by a horse.



The liquid that is squeezed out and the mashed up pulp are transferred to fermentation tanks where they are mixed with water.



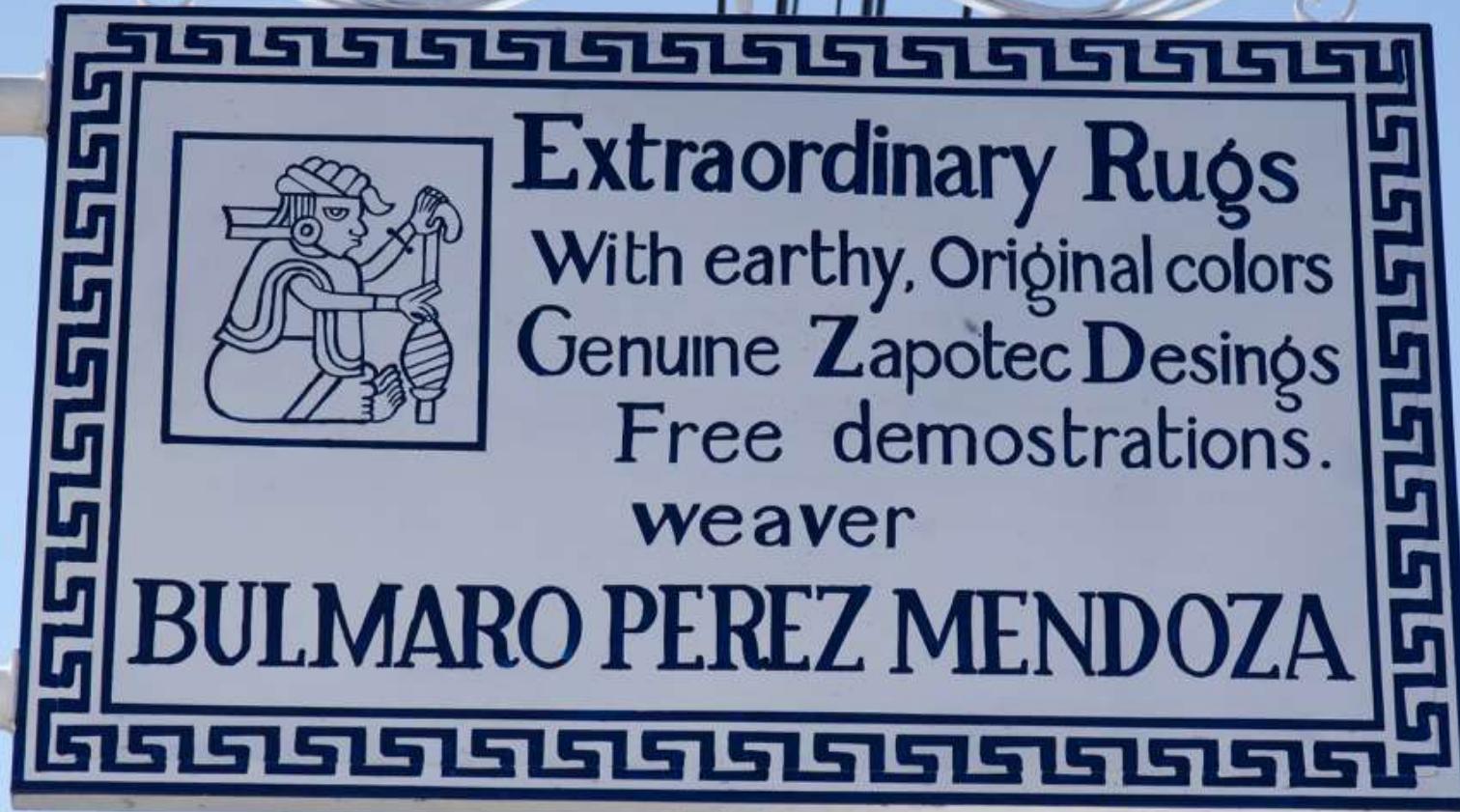
The liquid Mezcal is distilled out of these tanks, and the pulp is used to cover the next batch of agave chunks.



We had lunch at the brewery and were offered samples of six different kinds of Mezcal.



Our next stop was the studio of master weaver (and family) Bulmaro Perez Mendoza.



Bulmaro Perez Mendoza  
(and family)  
oramlub@prodigy.net.mx

We were immediately taken with this beautiful fish tapestry in the entryway.





Bulmaro Perez  
Mendoza  
(and family):

As in the previous studio, the whole family is involved. Generally the women do all of the spinning and dyeing, and most of the weaving is done by the men.

This is a display of many of the different colors that can be achieved using the natural dyes that you see in these various pots.

Bulmaro  
Perez  
Mendoza  
prepares to  
demonstrate  
some of the  
natural dyes  
that are used  
by his family  
in their rugs.



Bulmaro Perez Mendoza  
(and family):

This is a pomegranate.  
The seeds make a red  
color, but when a paste  
of crushed limestone is  
added, it turns green.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Bulmaro Perez  
Mendoza  
(and family):

The white dots on  
this prickly pear  
cactus paddle are  
cochineal insects.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Bulmaro holds a  
cochineal insect in  
the palm of his hand.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Crushing  
the bug  
reveals  
the red  
dye.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



By adding various acids and bases (crushed limestone or lemon juice), many different colors can be achieved.

This would be a great demo in a chemistry 101 class.



Bulmaro demonstrates one of his tapestry looms.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Here is a more complex tapestry design. Bulmaro shows the design drawn on brown paper. This is attached below the warp, and the outline of the design is drawn on the warp with markers.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Bulmaro Perez Mendoza (and family): Finished tapestry design.



Bulmaro Perez  
Mendoza  
(and family):

Finished tapestry  
design.



Bulmaro Perez  
Mendoza  
(and family):

Finished tapestry  
design.



Bulmaro Perez  
Mendoza  
(and family):

Geometric rug.



Bulmaro Perez  
Mendoza  
(and family):

Geometric rug.



Bulmaro Perez  
Mendoza  
(and family):

We commissioned a  
rendition of this  
design 24" wide and  
12' long for the two  
story elevator wall  
just inside our front  
entry.



## Mitla (a Mixtec archeological site)

Many of the geometric patterns we found in the weavings, embroideries, and paintings come from traditional designs that date back 4000 years. They are found at many of the pre-historic archeological sites.

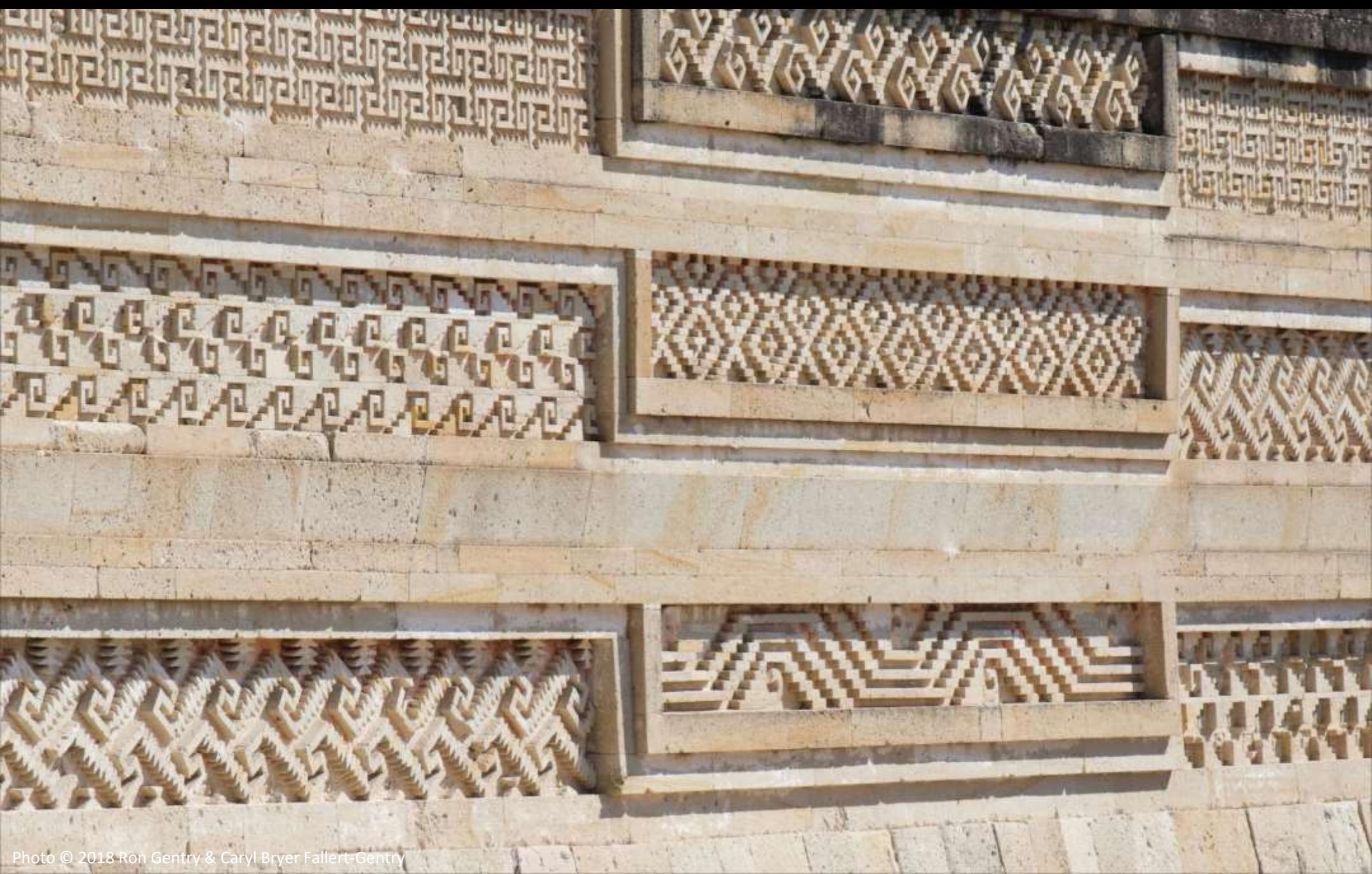
We were told that each design had a symbolic meaning in nature.



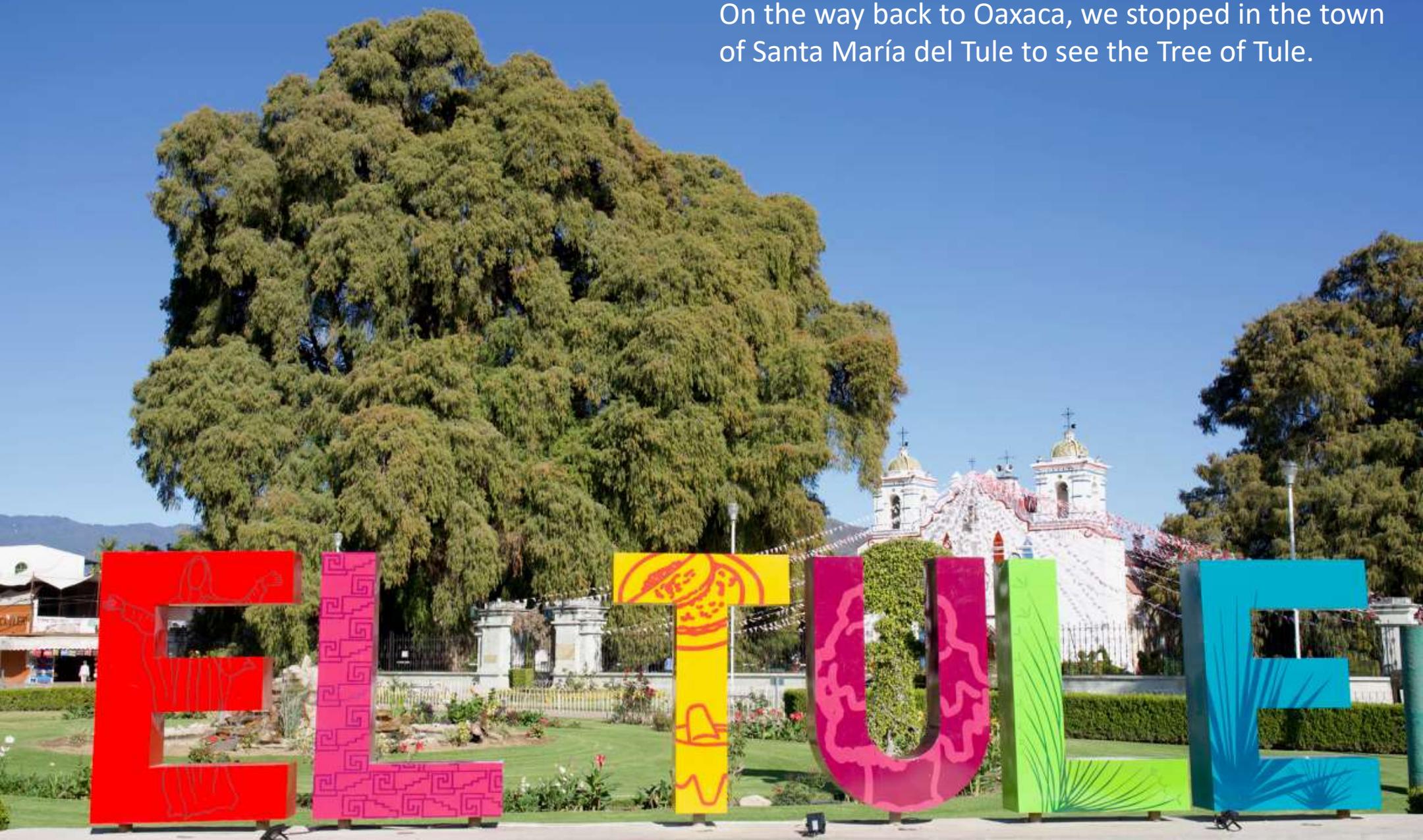
# Mitla (a Mixtec archeological site).



Traditional patterns carved in stone at Mitla (a Mixtec archeological site).



On the way back to Oaxaca, we stopped in the town of Santa María del Tule to see the Tree of Tule.



It has the largest circumference trunk of any tree in the world. In 2001, it was placed on a UNESCO tentative list of World Heritage Sites

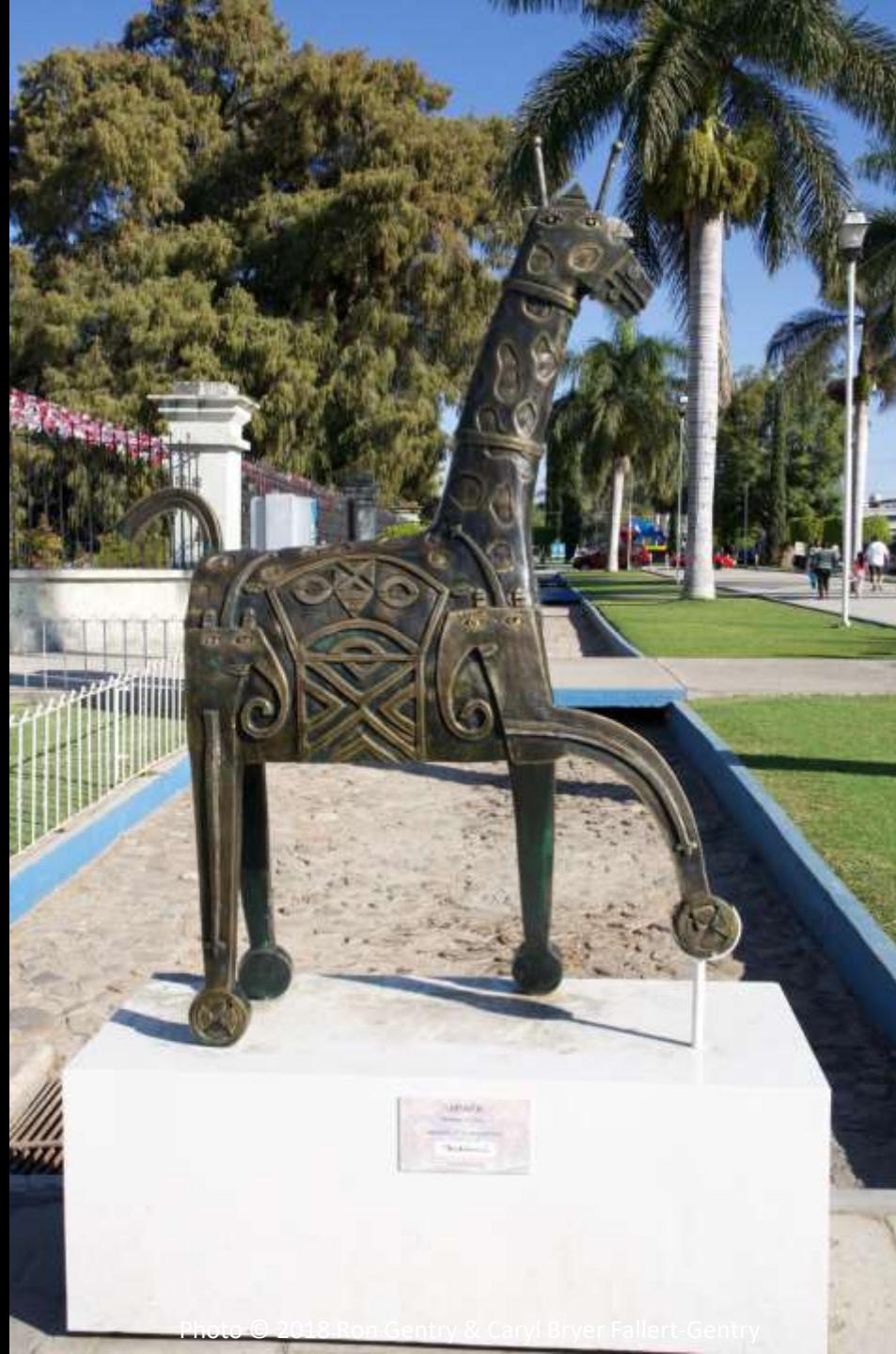




Its trunk has a circumference of 42.0 m (137.8 ft), and a diameter of 14.05 m (46.1 ft)

Santa María del Tule

Sculpture in town  
square.



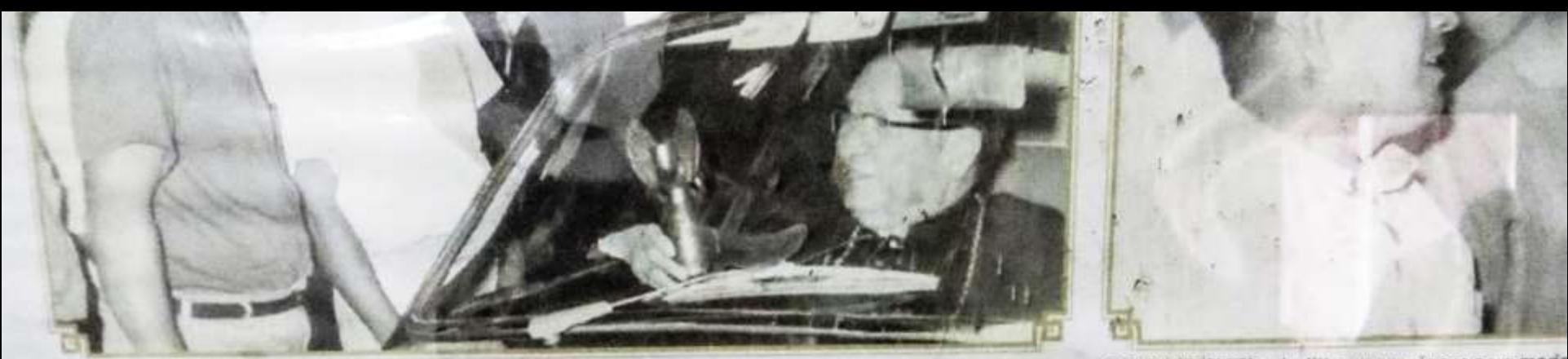
On June 13 we were met at 9am by Antonio Recamier Elvira for a **Master Artists Tour**. We were joined by another couple from British Columbia. The woman was a weaver, so she fit right in with our group.

Antonio is a professional artist and graphic designer as well as a tour guide and he spent six years at the San Francisco Institute of Art.



[antonio.recamier@gmail.com](mailto:antonio.recamier@gmail.com)

Our first stop was the studio of Antonio Eleazar Pedro Carreno, another maker of black pottery.



HACEN ENTREGA de un angelito al obispo de Guadalajara.

OBSEQUIAN UN caballito y un cenicero a un mari

# Antonio Eleazar Pedro Carreño

## “Tío Eleazar Pedro”

HOMBRE VISIONARIO. PRECURSOR EN LA DIFUSIÓN DE LA ARTESANÍA DEL BARRO NEGRO DE SAN BARTOLO COYOTEPEC A NIVEL ESTATAL, NACIONAL E INTERNACIONAL

- » Estudió hasta el 4º grado de educación primaria en la Escuela "Constancia y Progreso" de su tierra natal
- » A temprana edad se inicia en la artesanía de la cerámica
- » En 1959 participa en su primera exposición en



## Antonio Eleazar Pedro Carreno

Unlike the previous black pottery studio, where almost everything was very ornate and decorative, this artist's work was full of religious symbolism and images related to the day of the dead.



Antonio Eleazar Pedro Carreno:

The pieces are unglazed and polished with a smooth quartz stone to produce a shiny finish. The black color comes from pit firing. The metallic looking finish on some of the pieces comes from a coating of graphite.



Antonio Eleazar  
Pedro Carreno



Antonio Eleazar  
Pedro Carreno





Antonio Eleazar Pedro Carreno

Antonio Eleazar Pedro Carreno  
The artist brought us into his studio and explained his process.



# Antonio Eleazar Pedro Carreno



Antonio Eleazar Pedro Carreno

As he talked he began forming a small lump of clay in his hands.



Antonio Eleazar Pedro Carreno

Before he had finished talking he had formed a small chicken that will eventually become a whistle.



Our next stop was the home of Crispina Navarro Gomez (and family). This is a group of four sisters, who are back-strap weavers, and a brother, who is a painter, all living and working together in a rural village about 45 minutes from Oaxaca City. Their hacienda consisted of a large central courtyard with gardens, livestock, and everything else needed for subsistence living, surrounded by both residential and agricultural buildings.



The four sisters tie their warp to a tree on a patio in their courtyard. Each finds a position that is comfortable for her, kneeling, sitting on the ground or sitting on a chair.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

The part of the weaving that is complete is wound around a bar in front of the weaver, and a strap is wrapped around her back. By leaning back, she puts tension on the warp.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

She lifts  
the  
strands of  
the warp  
with her  
hands to  
create the  
pattern.

These  
women  
have been  
doing this  
since they  
were  
children,  
and the  
patterns  
are all in  
their  
heads.





Each of the patterns has a traditional meaning. Most of the patterns in this weaving represent various animals.

Zapotec women like to braid ribbons into their hair.



Here she has unwound the completed part of her project to show us the various patterns.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Here she hooks the back-strap into the front tension bar.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Virtually every mature woman we saw in the rural villages wore a dress or skirt and a hand embroidered apron like the ones these two women are wearing. A few of the young women do wear jeans.



The pattern comes from the different colors in the warp. They are using a single color of yarn in the weft.







Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



The daughter of one of the weavers arrived home from school while we were there.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

The family had recently harvested their corn, from which they will make the masa for their tortillas.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Most of the people in rural villages like this speak Zapotec or one of the 16 other ethnic languages spoken in the state of Oaxaca. They learn Spanish as a second language when they go to school.





This hacienda was directly across the lane from the weavers.

Our third stop of the day was a visit to the Jose Garcia family, makers of decorative ceramics.



We were greeted by Senora Garcia, wearing the classic hand embroidered apron, worn by all of the village women. She works on the sculptures along with her husband and their son. Their studio, through a door to the right had been damaged by the recent earthquake and was under repair when we were there.



Next we met Jose Garcia, who was sitting in the sculpture-filled open courtyard



Jose Garcia, lost his sight to glaucoma but still works on the ceramics by feel, having done this his whole life.



The Garcia's were by far the most photogenic people we met on our trip.





Jose Garcia family: This is an installation of life-size figures of local village people dressed in the costumes that are unique to each village.

While their studio is being repaired, the Garcias are working in their bedrooms.



Jose Garcia scrapes the inside of a pot to reduce its thickness before firing.



Hundreds of finished sculptures are lined up in the open courtyard.



Since Jose is famous, apparently people come to his studio to buy his work. They also take their work to Santa Fe, NM once a year to sell at the international folk-art festival.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry &  
Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Jose Garcia family  
sculpture



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry &  
Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Jose Garcia scrapes the inside of a pot to reduce its thickness before firing.



Jose Garcia  
family  
sculpture



Senora  
Garcia with  
sculpture



# Jose Garcia family sculpture

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Jose Garcia  
family  
sculpture



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry &  
Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Jose Garcia  
family  
sculpture

This is a  
merman



Jose Garcia  
family  
sculpture



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry &  
Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

At lunchtime we found ourselves in another big, busy village market.



Lunch was at Frida's place



Sharing tables with strangers seems to be the local custom.



Every day this woman dresses and does her makeup like Frida Kahlo.

She is wearing the traditional, hand-embroidered apron.



# Caryl poses with Frida impersonator

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer-Faust-Gentry



A cute stranger sharing our lunch table



Karin poses with Frida impersonator



What's for lunch



Antonio poses with chilis





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

This woman offered us a free sample of her fried grasshoppers. We declined.



Many people shop here and eat here every day because they don't have refrigeration at home.





More yellow chickens

Final view of the market as we head for the exit.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

The local pharmacy

After lunch we visited a store-front where master embroiderers work and sell their wares, mostly clothing.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry





This master embroiderer demonstrated how the patterns are marked on the fabric panels and embroidered by hand for including in traditional dresses and blouses.



Most of the panels are square or rectangular when they are being embroidered. Several square panels are joined to make a dress or blouse.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

This dress in the typical traditional style shows four different kinds of hand embroidery.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Traditional hand  
embroidered dress



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry &  
Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Our last stop of the day was in a relatively new suburb of Oaxaca, with more modern houses, and virtually no paving of streets. The local neighborhood watch greeted us from the roof of the house next door.

Our last stop of the day was in the studio of master wood carver Agustin Cruz Prudencio. Agustin learned wood carving from his father when he was a young child, and is now teaching the next generation.



Agustin makes alebrijes from copal wood like most other traditional wood carvers, but his designs are quite unique and whimsical.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



One of his specialties seems to be crèches in which the holy family and friends are presented in unlikely settings.



Here he is  
carving one of  
the magi.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Voila!



His  
assistant,  
whom he  
is training  
sits right  
next to  
him as he  
works.



Agustin's  
wife and  
her  
assistants  
do all of the  
painting.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry





This is part of their  
showroom full of fantasy  
figures.

Agustin Cruz  
Prudencio

He had lots of  
jaguar heads on  
hand, so we have  
to assume that  
they are kind of  
bread and butter  
work.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Agustín Cruz  
Prudencio



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Work by Agustín Cruz Prudencio and family.



Work by Agustin Cruz Prudencio and family: Holy family in a helicopter.

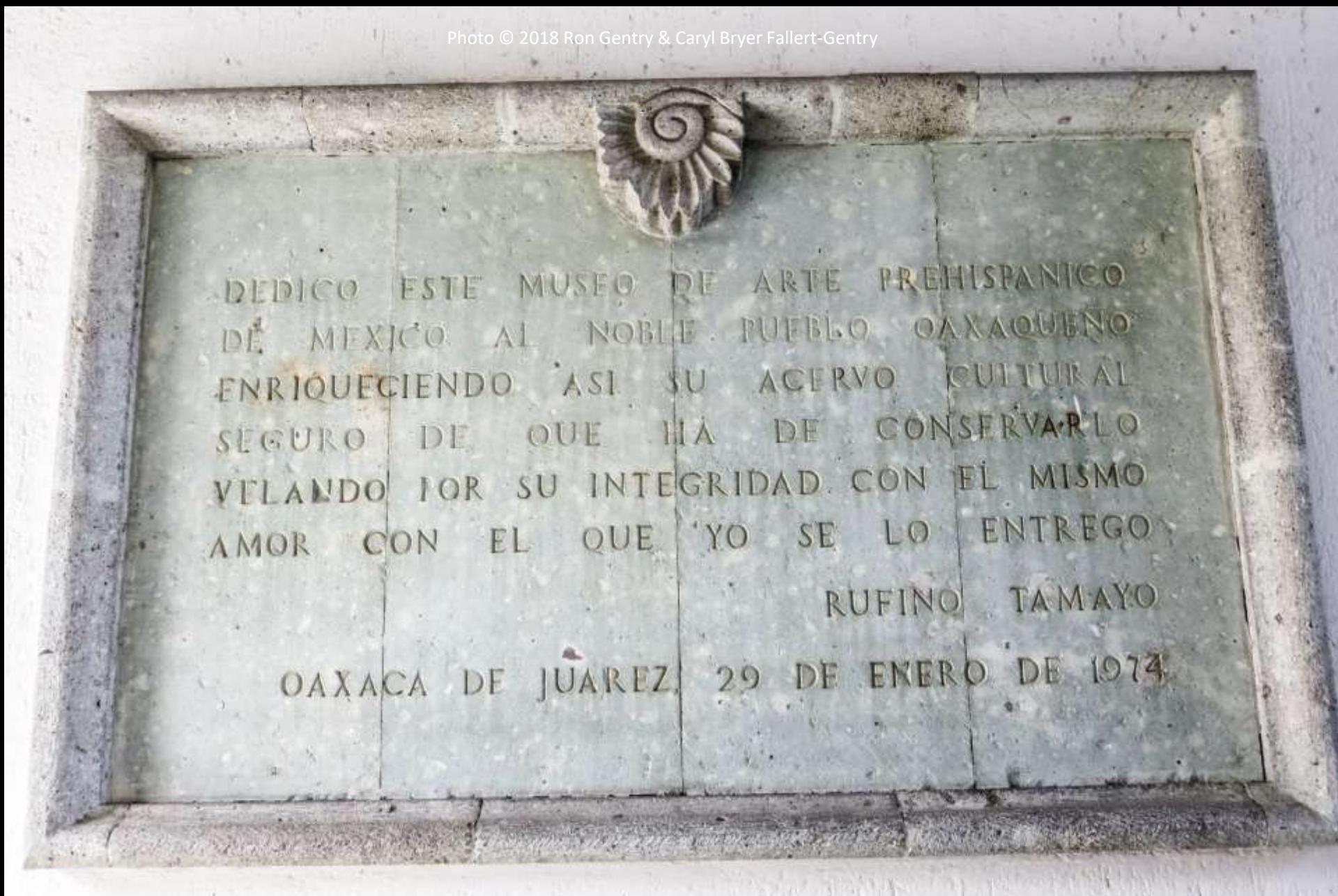


# Work by Agustín Cruz Prudencio and family



On January 14, we explored Oaxaca City on our own. We began our day at the Museum of Pre-Spanish Art

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Objects in this museum date from as early as 2000 BC to 750 AD and most were part of a private collection.

Caryl poses with another giant puppet at the entrance to the museum. As with everything else in Oaxaca, the museum's rooms are arranged around a large open courtyard.





Most of the work in this museum was figurative, and most was made of clay. The few stone pieces seemed much cruder than the clay figures. We loved that the people were depicted doing ordinary daily activities, and many were smiling.











FIGURAS DEL PERÍODO PRECLÁSICO TARDÍO DE COLIMA 1250 A. C. - 200 D. C.  
PERSONAJES QUE LLÉVAN UN CASCO ESPECIAL CON UN CUERNO AL FRENTE ATADO CON CORREAS. A ESTAS FIGURAS SE LES HA DADO DIVERSAS INTERPRETACIONES. PERO, POR LA ESPLÉNDIDA FIGURA EN LA REPIÑA, PUEDE VERSE QUE SE TRATA DE GUERREROS.







Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry





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Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

This was the courtyard of the museum with contemporary sculptural pieces.



Our second stop of the day was the textile museum.

This was a very fine, embroidered piece of linen mounted on a circular light fixture. It is only about 8"-10" tall.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



This piece was also miniature in scale, no more than 10" tall.

This is  
miniature  
embroidery on  
the yoke, collar,  
and cuffs of a  
traditional style  
blouse.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

There was an extensive exhibition of both traditional and contemporary design Molas from Panama.





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Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



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Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

The big surprise of the day was an exhibition of contemporary quilts by an American who moved from Chicago to Oaxaca when he retired.

# A TRAIL OF QUILTS

THE LEGACY OF BILL STECHER

Quilts are padded bedspreads composed of two pieces of fabric with a stuffing of cotton, wool, down or some other fiber in between the two layers. The fluffy filling makes the quilt warmer, at the same time that it allows designs to be shaped by adding relief and contrast to the stitches that attach the external layer to the ground cloth. The English term 'quilt' derives from the Latin *culcita*, the same root that gave rise to *colcha* ('bedspread' in Spanish). The history of quilts goes back to antiquity: archaeological explorations have yielded examples made out of silk in China during the period from 700 to 200 years before Christ, and a carpet of padded linen dating from the years 100 to 200 of our era was found in Mongolia. In Europe the earliest quilts that have been preserved were made around 1395 in Sicily, showing scenes from the legend of Tristan and Isolde with long inscriptions of text worked in a padded white fabric.

In our continent, four quilts are quoted among the personal goods listed in the inventory of the belongings of two captains in the late 1600s in Massachusetts and New York. After that date, quilts flourished remarkably in New England and later on in other regions of the United States and Canada from the 1700s until today, giving rise to the development of various regional and ethnic styles, among them the outstanding quilts of the black women of the South, the Amish communities in Pennsylvania and the Polynesian women in Hawaii. According to the Wall Street Journal, it is estimated that there are over twenty million people who practice quilting in the US today. No other craft appears to have so many adherents in North America.

This is the context within which we should regard the artistic trajectory of Bill Stecher, who was born in Indiana in 1942 and died tragically in a car accident on the road from Oaxaca to Cuacnopalan in 2015. After finishing college, Bill volunteered with the Peace Corps in Bolivia, an experience which sealed his commitment to communal work, to which he would return decades later in Oaxaca. Upon his

return to the US from Bolivia, he began a successful career as an architect in Chicago, where he specialized in designing complex buildings for companies demanding multimodal work centers. His ability to visualize, organize and rearrange minutely parceled spaces surely facilitated his capacity to conceive laborious patterns once he decided to sew quilts, inspired by his sister. He would take advantage of the long commute on the train from the suburbs to his office in downtown Chicago to cut out and stitch together the fabrics with which he began to express himself as an artist.

Initially, Bill followed the traditional format of North American quilts, with modular compositions which are repeated in an orderly fashion, composed of rectilinear cuttings of printed cloth. His visit to a show of quilts created by Afro-American women in Gee's Bend, Alabama, had such a great impact on him that he modified his style completely, liberating himself from the conventional scheme. He began to use curvilinear cuttings to create designs which break the geometric rigidity of the old Anglo-Saxon quilts and flow gracefully. Once he retired from architecture, Bill and his wife Mary left Chicago and settled in San Pablo Etla. The colors of Oaxaca meant a new watershed in his path as an artist: it was here that he created most of his pieces and it was here that he achieved the most stunning examples.

Bill appreciated deeply the work we do in this museum, as he let us know repeatedly. He mentioned that some of his quilts had been inspired by textiles he had seen on exhibit on these same walls. When we selected these particular pieces, among many others that he made, we sought to highlight the links between his designs and weavings from Oaxaca and other regions in Mexico, and from other areas of the world. The show we offer here is a tribute to his memory, in recognition of his talent and in gratitude for his solidarity, which sadly we could not present while he was alive. But we feel fortunate that his kind spirit lives on in his work.

## Alejandro de Ávila – Curator

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: WE ARE INDEBTED TO MARY STECHER FOR LENDING US THE QUILTS ON DISPLAY AND PROVIDING THE INFORMATION ON EACH PIECE. WE THANK RAY WARBURTON FOR SHARING WITH US BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND HEARTFELT ANECDOTES ABOUT BILL.

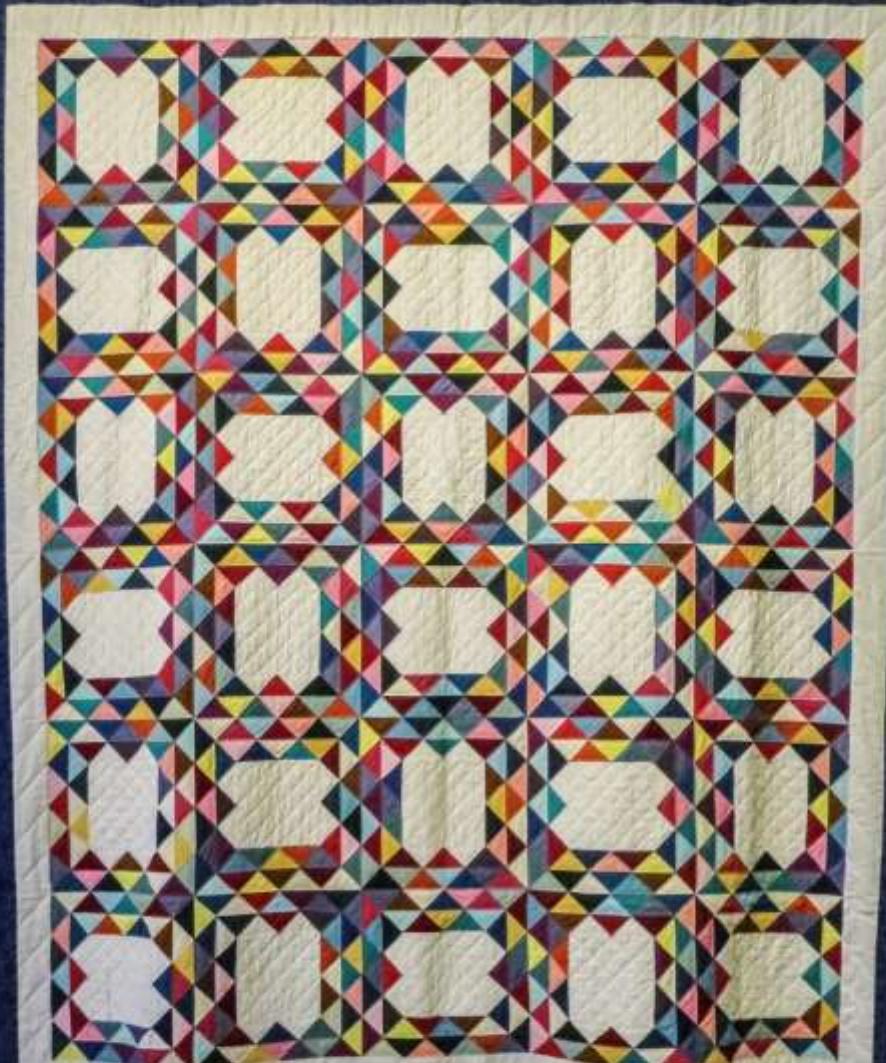


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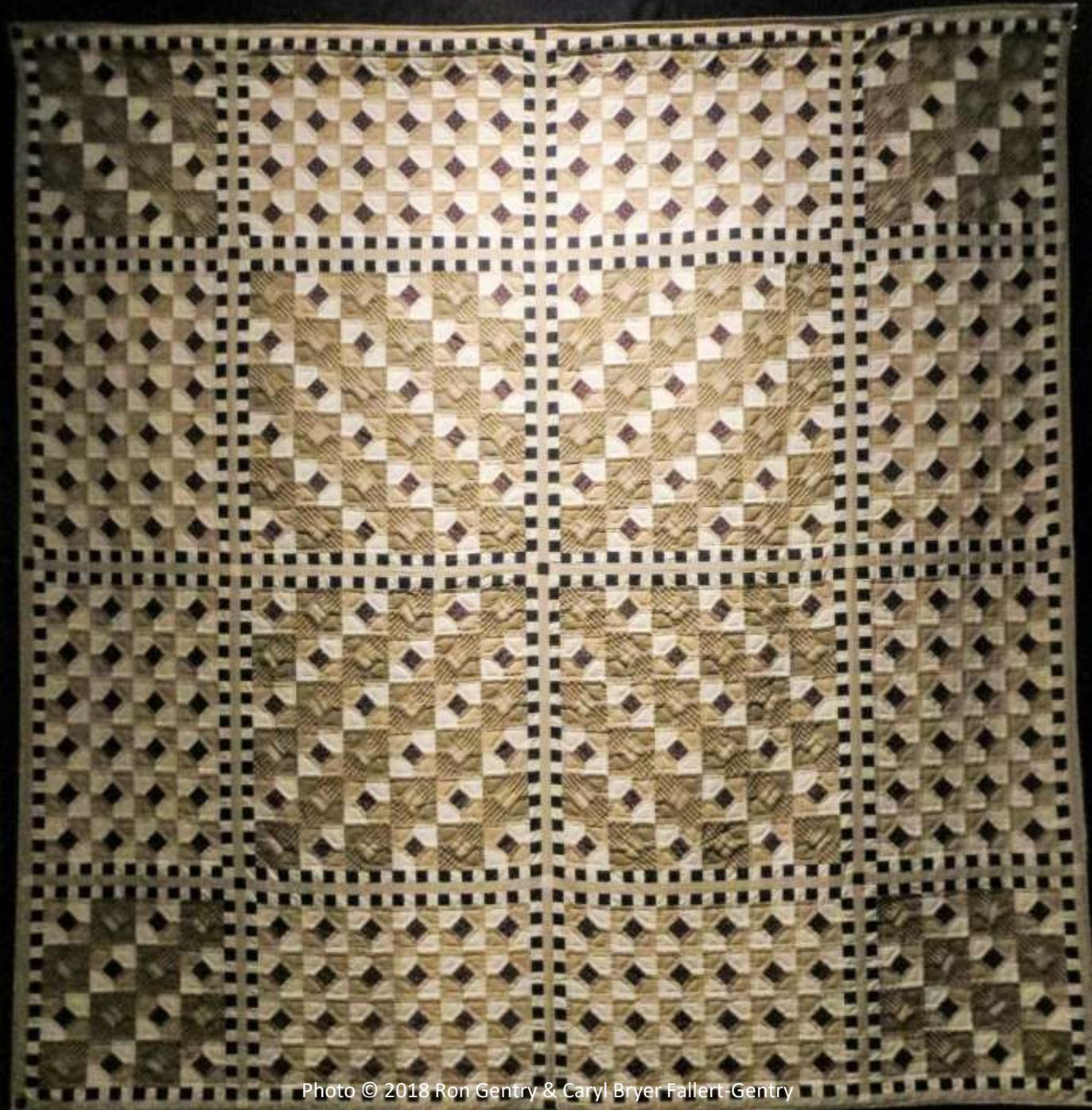


Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

A baby with blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a grey t-shirt and jeans, is crawling on a set of light-colored wooden steps. The baby is looking towards the camera. A dark wooden railing is visible on the right side of the steps.

We  
discovered  
this  
budding  
textile  
artist as we  
exited the  
museum.

Our next stop  
was a gallery of  
high end craft.

We suspect that  
galleries like this  
snap up all of  
the best pieces  
from the artists  
in the villages,  
which would  
explain why  
most of them  
had very little of  
their best work  
on display in  
their own  
studios.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



This piece  
was almost  
life size.



This piece  
was almost  
life size  
too.



They also had spectacular examples of hand embroidery. These were all 30"-48" wide.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

This artist is  
working on some of  
those big puppets.





One of our favorite galleries was right next door to our hotel.

If we could have fit some of these large pieces into our suitcase, we would have brought them home



Ron was especially fond of this huge terra cotta vessel.



We both loved these blond  
cutwork vases.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry &  
Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



On January we met Alejandra Munuzurl at 9am for an all-day cuisine tour.  
[connect@traditionsmexico.com](mailto:connect@traditionsmexico.com)

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



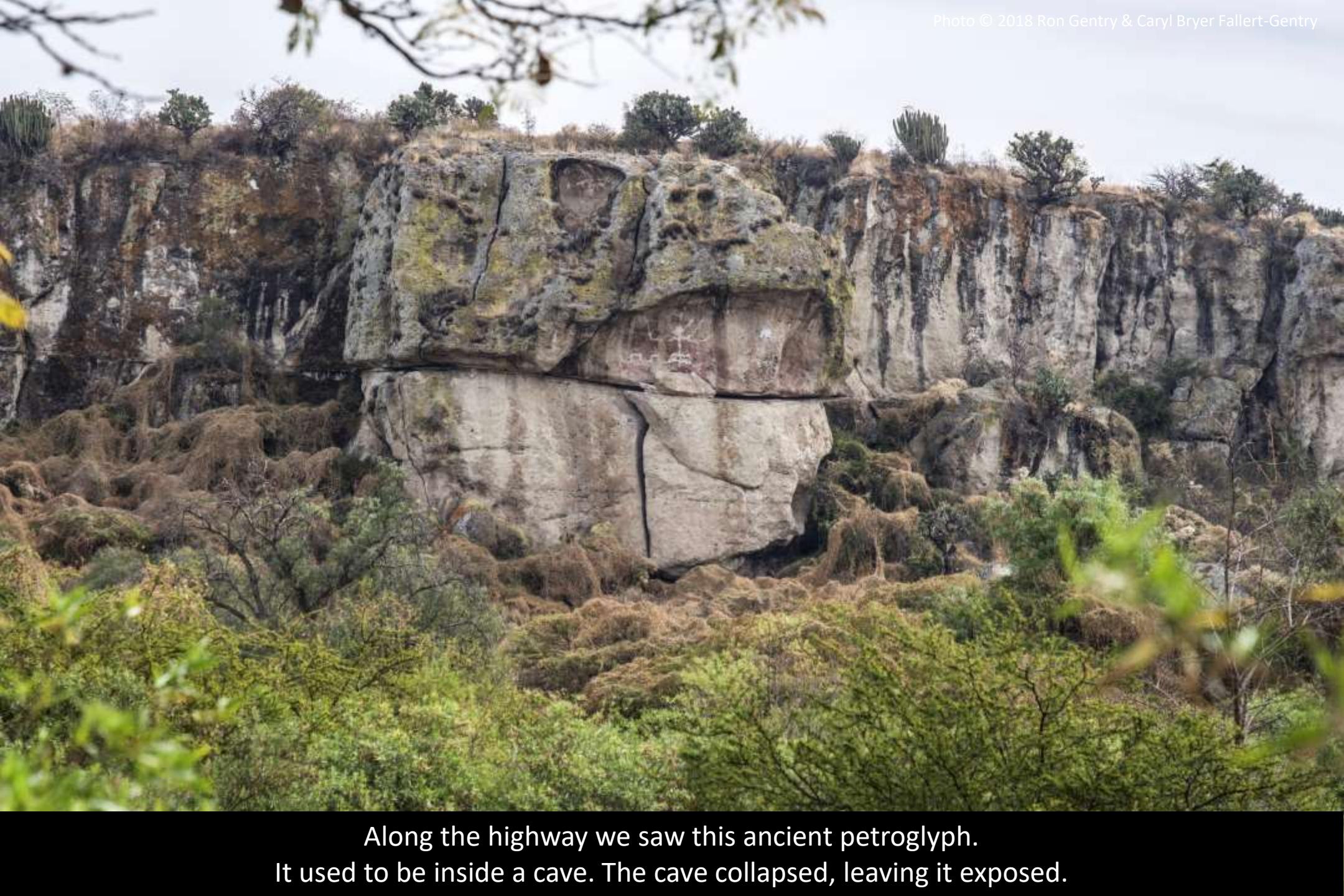
**Alejandra Muñúzuri**

52+1 951 209 0090

[labuenamano@gmail.com](mailto:labuenamano@gmail.com)

Tour Guide

Oaxaca, Mexico



Along the highway we saw this ancient petroglyph.  
It used to be inside a cave. The cave collapsed, leaving it exposed.

Our first stop was at the hacienda of a cheese maker in one of the rural villages. She puts the milk in a big five-gallon bucket then adds pieces of dried cow's stomach and lets it sit over night, where it curdles.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



She pours the curds into a cloth bag  
and squeezes out the liquid.



Here she adds salt and  
mixes it in with her hands.

These are rings for shaping the cheese. Some are bamboo and some are PVC pipe slices.





Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

A photograph of a woman with short, curly grey hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a yellow ribbed scarf and a brown patterned shawl. She is holding a clear plastic bag containing a white, crumbly substance, likely cheese, in her right hand. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

She wraps it in plastic, and it's ready to go to the local market. Almost every meal we had in Oaxaca included some of this kind of cheese.



The family's recent harvest of corn was in the back of this pickup truck.



They had an old fashioned well and bucket in the middle of their central courtyard.



Since we had already see Mescal being made, Alejandra took us to see another archeological site instead.



This site was generally not as well preserved at Monte Alban. The walls were crumbling, so the excavators put boulders on top of the walls to prevent further deterioration.





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Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

What this site is especially known for is one of the largest and best preserved ball courts in all of Mexico.





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All of the signs are written in Spanish, Zapotec, and English.



Construcción de viviendas privadas y comunales, sobre terrazas escalonadas que siguen las pendientes naturales. Las áreas habitacionales y de cultivo de la población común de Yagul se encontraban en los laderas bajas y las partes planas del extenso valle que rodea la ciudad, que se abastecía de agua del Río Seco, cuyo curso delimitaba el sitio. En este sector habitacional, hay evidencias de ocupación por diferentes clases sociales.

Entre los edificios más notables se encuentran los Patios 1 y 4, el Juego de Pelota, la Sala de Consejo, el Palacio de los Seis Patios, La Fortaleza y el Sector Habitacional.

*Evidence of human settlement at this site dates back to the year 3000 A. D. although the city was constructed and reached its age of splendor between 750 and 950 A. D.*

*The buildings discovered as of now formed part of a civic-religious center from which the city's activities were directed. Palaces and temples are recognizable, as well as administrative and defensive areas, apparently marked off as exclusive spaces within the city.*

*From the high point of the city, there is a magnificent view of structures at different levels, with graded terraces following the natural contours of the mesa. Residential areas and cropland used by the common people of Yagul spread out over the lower mountain slopes and the flatland in the extensive valley surrounding the city. The waters of the Río Seco fed the area and its bed defined the boundaries of the site.*

*Among the most outstanding buildings are Patio 1, Patio 2, the Ball Court, the Council Chamber, the Palace of Six Patios, the Fort, and the Residential Sector.*

*Gasho guyuu bejni nen is 3000 a.C. per che gunibereni che gujcsa shurení guslo 750 al 950 d.C.*

*Re yuu ni sobni lo dche naí gujcreni shu re gashis ne re bejn ni gujc sic bishos rocli ruirení cayunga bejn dzun re yuuga gujc yulejí, yuu cat sojb re gulal, yuu cat sojb bejn ni rusquish, yuu cat rsied re bejn ni gaap guedch che chepni yejc dajn ruini sho sob re yuuga shcuia shcuani, yuuni sojb yejc re loomee, cue dajnnee, nen re bazaj roc goonreni. Lo latzga ni tree guideb gabii cadro raje ruladzreni nis ni sied gueu biidz..*

*Guiralo' cua bejn gure lo guedchliuiga re yuu ni gusacru gujc ni sob lo lee 1 y 4, cat gudzutreni pelot, cat gure re bejn gool, yuu ni rajp shop lo lee, cat guyuu guishag ni gojp guedch, ne saj cat gusojb shiu guira bejn guech.*



# Patio 4

Este patio se encuentra ubicado al sureste del sitio y fue uno de los principales complejos arquitectónicos de la Acrópolis. Tiene forma cuadrangular y está rodeado por cuatro montículos, que fueron usados como templos; uno de ellos es el más alto de Yagul. Al centro del patio se encuentra una plataforma de poca altura, considerada como un adoratorio, bajo la que se encuentra una tumba triple. El acceso a la tumba consiste en unas escaleras que parten de la antecámara situada en el lado occidental del adoratorio. El adoratorio tiene una planta arquitectónica cuadrada, sus muros laterales presentan una decoración a base de tabletas adoradas con grecas. Se trata de una de las construcciones más antiguas del sitio; se calcula que se construyó desde la época de Monte Albán I y que se continuó utilizando hasta la época V (600 a.C. - 950 d.C.).

Layndé' rée' nōa nées kwé' lāod gét, lāo'nināanii māasru' sée'ny ngān byú'lōonii'. Tiform kwādāad nāoni dítē'ni ryéeyni tāp dāany blin' nii gukrā gido' tyémgi; tii rō dāanyrēe' nōa dāanyrō' dāany syū'lsocab Yagul. Lāay layndé' rée' nōa lii rū'nyé' py kity gyāaduxdi' nō'ni', ée' guk Lōo pkuu'g xién rā biny ni bñirée', ni pkuu' gree' nōa lii bāo' chan. Par tii'd myéty lān bāa' rée' lōoñiskalyéergyétymyéty, lāa' skalyéerée' syée'd lā'nyú' nisāob kwe' rū'nyé' rée' néeslāad tyād's wbiix.

tii lāo' bñaa' kwādāad nō rū'nyé' pyrée' lāo mūr nii nō' kwé'ni' nisā' súchée' lōorānii' kún gyée' nōa' libloosirāfigüre'. Ndée' nōa' nii

This patio is found in the southeast of the site and was one of the principal architectural complexes of the Acrópolis. It has a quadrangular shape and is surrounded by four mounds which were used as temples, one of them is the highest at Yagul. A low platform in the center was considered a shrine, under which a triple tomb is found. The entrance to the tomb consists of a stairway which starts from the anteroom located on the western side of the shrine. The shrine has a square architectural floorplan and its walls are decorated with panels adorned with fretwork. This is one of the oldest constructions at the site; it is thought to have been constructed since the Monte Albán I period and was continued to be used until period V (600 B.C. - 950 A.D.).



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The next village we visited was especially proud of their cathedral because of all the ornate gold leaf.







It was a food tour, so naturally we visited yet another local market.



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Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

This woman is stirring a popular local drink with her hands





Another vendor offered us a sample.



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Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



If boiling water is poured on top of the local farmers cheese, it turns into string cheese.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



The colorful bowls are a soup mix made from every part of the squash plant, the blossoms, fruit, stems, and leaves. Everything is eaten

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



Our last stop of the day was at the home of three women who showed us how to make their traditional Zapotec food and served us lunch. This is their kitchen with the traditional comal.



Here she kneads the masa on a grinding stone to make tortillas.



She makes balls of the masa  
and then flattens them



Using this metal press and some recycled plastic bags, she flattens the tortillas.



She uses her hands to turn the tortillas on the comal.

She said “don’t try this at home”.



These are quesadillas that we will eat for lunch.



This is the corn the tortillas are made from.



The dried corn is removed from the cob by hand.



There are many different colors of corn. When they are all mixed together, the tortillas are gray.



This is a blossom that was falling off all of the trees in the courtyard at our hotel.  
We were served a delicious soup made from it.



This woman is showing us all of the ingredients that go into mole negro, one of the seven mole sauces that Oaxaca is famous for.



These are raw cocoa beans. They come from the more tropical regions of Oaxaca State.



Cinnamon bark is added to the chocolate.



She sorts out any that don't meet her standards.



The beans are roasted on the comal. After roasting, we helped remove the hulls.



The roasted and hulled beans are pored onto a grinding stone. There are hot coals under the grinding stone.



Cocoa beans are ground until they turn into a soft paste.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



The chocolate is mixed with sugar and boiling water and whipped up with a Molinillo to make it frothy.



We were told that most of the people here drink hot chocolate for breakfast every day.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

This family also had a well in the middle of their open courtyard.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Here is their supply of corn.



This family didn't have anywhere on their private property for their animals to graze, so they take them for a walk in the surrounding fields every day. Apparently the fields are owned by the community.



On the way back to town we were shocked to find this recently-built apartment complex out in the middle of nowhere. These are low-cost housing for people who can't afford other dwellings. Some of the people here are from other parts of Oaxaca State, where their homes were destroyed by the recent earthquake. Others were homeless for other reasons. It is not within easy reach of Oaxaca City for people without cars, and there are no industries or other apparent sources of jobs anywhere nearby. We were saddened and mystified.

Many of the people we met on our tours were living in very primitive conditions (by our standards), however most of them were part of large families and larger communities, many of which choose to retain their traditional lifestyles. This housing project was in stark contrast to everything else we saw in Oaxaca.

Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry



On January 17 we paid our last visits to downtown Oaxaca City and a couple of our favorite restaurants.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

It was the warmest day of our trip, and we enjoyed sitting outside on one of the rooftops.



We made some last-minute purchases from a street vendor and revisited some of our favorite galleries.



Photo © 2018 Ron Gentry & Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry

Our big purchase of the trip was a Pegasus by Noel Martine Villanueva. Naturally this had to be shipped. He now lives in the niche halfway up our entry stairs.





## NOEL *Martínez Villanueva*

Barna  
Madera

Especialidad  
Talla

L localidad  
Oaxaca de Juárez

Clan  
Oaxaca

¿CÓMO SE LOGRA CONVERTIR UN TRONCO DE ÁRBOL EN UN COLORIDO PAVO REAL QUE despliega sus plumas o en una escamiosa lagartija que parece asustada y a punto de correr? A base de un proceso difícil y prolongado en el que interviene la imaginación, la creatividad, la destreza manual y el tiempo.

Para Noel Martínez Villanueva, originario de Ayutla Mixe, y vecino de Oaxaca, crear estos fantásticos animales es su ocupación diaria desde hace 25 años, en la que destaca por su técnica de tallado y pintado en alto relieve, con grecas, motivos geométricos, difuminación de colores y estilización de figuras como pavo real, serpientes, iguanas, mantis religiosas, leones, pericos, tucanes, guacamayas, búhos, gacelas, jirafas, colibríes, garzas, en un desfile sin fin.

Para hacer sus piezas emplea ramas de distintos grosor, de árboles como pino, aguacatillo, cedro, cedrillo y encino de los montes del bosque templado de la zona alta de la Sierra Mixe. Explica que deben cortarse en luna llena. Por ser maderas muy duras, los cortes de las tablas deben hacerse con máquinas de carpintería. En ellas se dibujan las figuras a elaborar para continuar con el acabado manual y hacer los cortes más finos con pequeñas seguetas.

El terminado de la textura escamosa lo consigue aplicando una capa de pintura que deja secar hasta lograr un ablandamiento; el efecto de la decoración difuminada se hace mezclando los colores y usando pinceles muy finos.

El maestro Martínez Villanueva es promotor de un grupo de jóvenes llamado Tribu Mixe, fundado por él hace 30 años, y con el cual transforma las maderas en estilizadas figuras. El hace la muestra, desde el tallado hasta el decorado final, y cada etapa del proceso es dividida entre los colaboradores, pero la decoración es individual. Actualmente vive en el poblado de Trinidad de Vigueras, muy cercano a la capital del estado, donde tiene su taller y trabaja con más de cuarenta jóvenes de diferentes partes del estado, a quienes capacita y apoya para que continúen sus estudios profesionales. En 2009, con este grupo obtuvo el segundo lugar nacional en el Tercer Desfile de Alebrijes Monumentales organizado por el Museo de Arte Popular de la ciudad de México con la figura denominada "Pocglemong", dragón-lagartija de tres cabezas y ocho patas, realizado con cartón y periódico que representa los colores de la tierra oaxaqueña.♦

EL PAVO, 2010  
Madera tallada, policromada  
y difuminada  
60 x 120 cm



On January 18 we boarded a plane for Houston and said goodbye to Oaxaca... at least for now.

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