

RESCUING CABO BLANCO

Cabo Blanco became a legend since Ernest Hemingway's visit. 58 years later, it goes in search of lost time and charm.

Since his arrival to Piura on the morning of April 16th 1956, Hemingway walked out of room N°5 –first floor, marine lullaby during the night– at the luxurious Cabo Blanco Fishing Club for a rendezvous with the ‘Miss Texas’ at the shore. The diligent fishing boat named as a beauty queen would have on board, for each hours a day, the dreams of the author of ‘The Old Man and the Sea’, who had recently been awarded with the 1954 Nobel Prize for Literature.

The objective was catching a Black Marlin, after Alfred Glassell got a 1560lb catch from these waters in 1954, establishing a world record that remains undefeated until today.

During the 36 days that Hemingway spent in Piura, eight times he waved the blue flag from the Miss Texas deck, announcing the locals that “Ernesto” had caught the wanted marlin. Back to land, the traditional photo was taken, sometimes using camera tricks to help the fish look fearsome. 58 years later, the Miss Texas has recovered its splendor. The beauty queen majestically outshines between colorful artisanal boats that escort her like pretenders. Restoration has been achieved by Inkaterra, a hotel enterprise with a policy of ecotourism and sustainability conceived by its founder José Koechlin. Along with building a hotel in the area, Inkaterra has designed a sustainable business model to bring back Cabo Blanco's much remembered glory.

Captain Norm Isaacs is no ordinary man. New York Yankees baseball player for three years and host of a fishing show in ESPN during sixteen seasons, Isaacs is a fishing expert who holds a personal record: an 1100-lb black marlin. Still looking for a good Peruvian cigar, he arrived to Cabo Blanco invited by Inkaterra, to lead the remodeled Miss Texas and teach the main notions of sport fishing to his deckhand Juan and Carlos. Silver-haired and charming as Hemingway, he has managed to earn his friendship with the locals. He was invited last Saturday to Cabo Blanco's artisanal boat contest, where Isaacs participated as head of jury. The awards ceremony took place at the Ernest Hemingway seafront. While he was awarding the winners, a statue of the writer seemed to be staring at the event in this cove that became his sentimental property for the rest of his days.

Gone with El Niño

In 1982, El Niño phenomenon made one of its worst appearances. It took with it the water and sewage systems from El Alto, Talara. The town has not yet recovered from the loss. Almost 32 years later, false promises still hurt in El Alto. Now, a light of hope can be noticed at the end of the water pipe. Directed by Carlos Alva, Service Entity Grau S.A. has developed along with the town hall a project with an investment of more than \$20 million and around 90 kilometers of pipeline, which will allow the 10 thousand locals from El Alto have water and sewage supply and end with more than 30 years of inadmissible drought.

Problems and Future

The encounter of two ocean currents, Humboldt and El Niño, occurs in front of Cabo Blanco. This factor turned it into a legendary sport fishing paradise. However, this blessing from nature has brought in the last years fishing practices that have devastated the sea. Now drastic measures are required to avoid worse damages against sea life. The paving of El Alto streets, developing projects like the one being worked by Inkaterra, money from the Canon and tourism, can bring back the charm to Cabo Blanco. According to Mayor Johnny Zárata, and other authorities from the area, tourism is the future source of income for their community. If we want Cabo Blanco to reborn, visiting it is a good start. In Hemingway's beach, good weather and fun times are guaranteed. (Ricardo Sarria)