



Marina in Santa Rosalia, Baja California Sur is Open

Staff of the new Santa Rosalia with author (dark blue)

Those of us who have recently stayed in marinas in the Sea of Cortez and Mexico mainland know that the prices of moorage continue to climb while in some cases the services and facilities are in disrepair. This is my second trip to Mexico after eleven years and I was surprised at the changes. As a boater I've never having been a fan of Cabo San Lucas, but was appalled that it would have cost over \$100 per day for my Island Packet 32. But Cabo certainly is the exception.

Almost all the marinas now have reliable electricity, water, and reasonable access to internet. The new standard from my experience is Marina Costa Baja in La Paz. Their services include cable internet and TV to the boat, a cruiser's lounge with wireless access and wide-screen TV, pump outs at your slip with one day notice, shuttle to and from town, good restaurants surrounding the inner harbor, three pools (infinity, wading, and lap at the nearby Fiesta Inn with a new cruiser's pool and palapa to be finished this summer), workout facilities, good security, frequent live music, free outdoor movies, and otherwise top of the line facilities. And I've never felt like I'm a bother when contacting the marina office ... even after calling security when I mistook an employee emptying the basuras at 4AM for an intruder. Their staff and their customer service is top notch.

That being said, my experience at Singlar has been less than satisfactory; for example, being charged a 22% "docking" fee for fuel when I topped off my tanks at Puerto Escondito. They were also were not embarrassed to tell me that their fees for a mooring buoy were more than I'm paying for a slip in [Marina Costa Baja](#) and there are virtually no services available. It was no wonder that there were only three boats in the inner harbor when I was there. When I entered Santa Rosalia Harbor, I was surprised to see a brand new Singlar marina just after entering the breakwater. In fact, there were two Singlar employees waving me in and to help me with docking. They were very quick to tell me their fees: 10 pesos/foot/night or 40 pesos/foot/week. I decided to stay for a week in spite of the fee since it wasn't as outrageous as those charged in Puerto Escondito for the services offered.



My first impression of this new Singlar facility was very favorable and my experience with the staff during my week there continued to be. Singlar still has a long way to go to be competitive with other marinas, however. There was no hot water in the showers even though their facilities were even better than Costa Baja. The laundry was only semi-operational; washers worked, dryers didn't. The lap pool had no water in it, but was supposed to be operational in June. The planned mercado and restaurant were vacant; internet access and other services were absent. I quickly found out that this marina was so new that I was somewhere between the 11th and 19th boat to use these facilities.

What was most impressive was the level of customer service by the administrative, operational, cleaning, and security staff. Every day I was greeted warmly and asked if I needed anything (they would take me to get fuel, food, laundry). During my week stay, the newly appointed Director

General of Singlar, M.C. Gerardo Ferrando Bravo also visited. He was appointed on Tuesday and appeared on Friday and was interested in what we yachties had to say about Singlar. He got an earful from us and later from the folks in the Puerto Escondito “waiting room” about fees and services. Nonetheless, I am hopeful that the new Stanford-grad Director General will take some of the suggestions offered and make the changes needed to ensure Singlar’s near-term and long-term success. He certainly has the opportunity to make Santa Rosalia a viable option for cruisers by learning from the mistakes made in La Paz and Puerto Escondito.

I can heartily recommend Singlar Santa Rosalia for those heading north or as a jumping off spot for those heading to San Carlos. The staff is friendly, services are being implemented, and the town close by. Be sure to stop at the museum, the church that Eiffel designed, and the 100 year old “French” bakery.

Jack Hamilton
SV Barbara Ann
Island Packet 32