

Sunday Morning in La Paz



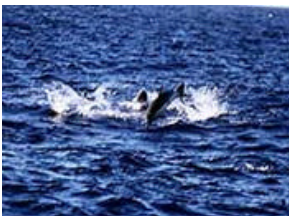
The morning breeze carries the early call of the church bells across the ensenada to the open hatch of my boat in the Mogote anchorage. Warm fairies of reflected light dance on the ceiling and slowly down the wall as the sun climbs over the hills to the east. The mornings are still cool enough to tolerate the soft comforts of a thin blanket. This in turn encourages a turn to starboard and a few extra minutes to wake up.

Towns in Mexico wake up slowly on Sundays. The roar of the departing bus, the garbled voice on a cheap PA speaker and the inane cry of the faulty shop alarm have all taken the day off. The powerful fingers of sizzling bacon and fresh coffee, however, have not. They sneak through my open porthole, tearing off the covers and prodding me toward my own galley.

The boat rocks gently as the fading [Coromuel's](#) paint their last ripples across the bay before they run to hide in the desert by day. A full moon has just past and the water carried into the bay by the tide of night now turns to run frantically back to the Sea. It makes the boat dance against the rode as if she were in a hurry to get somewhere. But today we are going nowhere fast.

The crunch of cereal newly introduced to cold milk nearly hides their first breath, but in seconds my feet have me amid ship. Milk and cereal carefully leveled in one hand, running backstay in the other, I balance and look for the next blow. Despite the number of times they have shared my mornings, I more eagerly stand to watch dolphins loll by than stand for humans that polite protocol might dictate.

They are accustomed to me and it seems they alter course to pass closer to the boat. There is a spiritual connection, between them and me, as I know a departed friend swims forever with them. I always talk to them in our meetings, but I never understand the answers. Maybe, it is because our temporal world has separated us too far from the rhythms of nature for us to hear. Perhaps they do not answer, denying us their serenity in retribution for the wounds we inflict on the planet that carries us all.



Our commune is interrupted by the labored song of a small outboard pushing too large a burden. A small open boat delivers me from my dolphin revelry onto a new story. The little engine propels an extended family of locals and their quantities of beach necessities toward a base camp already established on the sands of the Mogote. A pretty girl in her mid-teens sits tediously erect on the bow facing aft. She is removed by age and distance from the other passengers as her hands clutch tightly to the gunnels of the smartly painted red and white boat.

As the boat nudges into the sand, she springs free of her trepidations. She executes a graceful leap and a pirouette across the yellow sands, her long black hair radiating outward as she spins. Perhaps she celebrates returning to terra firma from the tiny, tippy craft which has safely made this voyage many summer Sundays since her mother was a child. Maybe she dances with the shiny joy of a summer day that has been worn away by time in the other passengers, who dolefully unload the blankets and beer.

The crackle of the VHF radio reminds me there are dishes to be done and things to do, even on a Sunday. The sun too prods me along, as our affectionate early morning relationship will soon pass as she climbs higher and angrier into the Baja sky.

The dawn waves are but a ripple as my dingy skims across bay to the dock. The full moon low tide shows the sand bar as a coffee stain down the middle of the fabric of the bay and I slow slightly. I turn and check the release on the outboard, smiling slightly at my own joke, that this might save my prop if my luck and the water are too thin. Whether the weather, I enjoy this three-quarter mile race across the bay as my dingy cuts tight around a mooring ball and through a few unnecessary S turns. The dry desert wind styles my dampened hair to the style of the day.

The dingy dock is devoid of the spring press of cruiser's launches. now, no need to climb over one dingy to get to another. They swing short painters, each in one of three classes. There are hard bottom who would drive a sports car back "in reality". For those who have patch, fiberglass and aluminum hulls wait dutifully by the pier. and underpowered cling to the dock. Sometimes observed as to reality by their skippers, they swing cautiously in groups, avoiding from larger craft that would render them finally useless.



Just the full timers with wide berth and inflatables, for those patched their last Finally, the bearded unwelcome links back the mortal wound

At the Dock Restaurant, I interrupt a single couple with morning greetings as the waiter brings their breakfast, garnished with several strips of the bacon which had tormented me earlier. In season, this same verandah is teeming with cruisers and ex-pats, conversations and yarns being spun without deference to time. The trip down, the night before, and plans for the day are all conversations that wait in the wind with the waiter's dreams of grand tips. Today the waiters and I leave them to a quiet conversation as I move on to my car.

I pass unchallenged though stop signs up the hill toward the office. Two preschoolers walk hand in hand from the corner store. A newly purchased bag of eggs proudly held, tells of their mother's nearly completed assignment. I take a moment for this "Rockwellian" scene that vented fear has swept from American streets like unprofitable rubbish.



A barrel of mops blooms on the sidewalk in front of a hardware store, open uncommonly early for a Sunday. A young man rolls a second barrel of brooms into place under the bright red awning. The brooms swat at his face and try to leap from the barrel, an obvious penalty for his over-exuberance on Saturday night.

At the one major intersection I cross, I am held by the changing of the traffic light. On the far corner a middle aged man acknowledges my existence and that of the car across from me with a slight lift of his left hand. He holds the Sunday papers he is half heartedly trying to sell. With little interest from either party, he returns to the shade of the corner.

Farther down the residential streets the activity increases. Some teenage boys play basketball in the street against a new portable backboard. I interrupt their game as they scurry for the "sidelines." In my rearview mirror I watch them argue for possession of the ball caused by the time out of my passing. Some things transcend international boundaries.

As I turn the key on the gate of the office you might think I would bemoan going to work on a Sunday, but it's just not so. As I walk across the courtyard I compare my commute with that of a few short years ago. Here, there were no delays, no accidents and no frantic lane changes. I haven't needed my second finger to operate a motor vehicle since I left San Diego! This morning I saw nothing, yet witnessed everything.

So, working on Sunday? Sure, I'd rather be at the beach. But I wouldn't trade you my Monday through Saturday on a bet. Besides, I had a story to tell.

Tomassiado 

This story and photographs are property and copyright 2004, BajaInsider.com and can not be republished without written permission from the BajaInsider