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Kristin & Her Husband Building Their Own Home in Costa Rica.

Kristin Knowles

My husband and I made our first trip to Costa Rica in the spring of 2001 and we both fell in love with the country.

We went to Arenal, drove around the north shore of the lake, went to Monteverde and Rincon de La Vieja, and spent the last few days on the beach near Malpais on the Nicoya Peninsula.



Costa Rica Real Estate - Build Your Own Home

Having traveled a fair amount in Central America, **it was refreshing** to be in a country where I was not subjected to a constant barrage of people trying to sell me something or hustle me, where I did not feel like a walking dollar sign, and where **I felt relatively safe.**

I was very taken with the **openness and positivity of the Ticos' attitudes** and the relaxed sense of time and space that one experiences here. The people exude a **quiet dignity** and sense of **true pride** in their country and families. Compared to our contemporary US experience, it was a real eye-opener.

Over the next couple of years we tossed around the idea of buying land in Costa Rica, but it was more of a "*wouldn't that be nice*" kind of fantasy than anything else. We checked out all kinds of real estate online but never made any moves...

On our second trip we went south, to Manuel Antonio, Dominical, and Ojochal. One day we were going out on a diving trip and the boat broke down, so there we were with a whole unplanned day. My husband said "*Why don't we go talk to some real estate agents?*" I balked at the idea, but figured "*why not?*"

We went around and talked to a bunch of different real estate agents and ended up spending the rest of our vacation exploring the area. We discovered that going out with real estate agents to look at land is a great way to get a free guided hiking tour!*

We really liked the area around Playa Uvita because it is not yet developed and there is a great deal of **protected land** there, as well as wildlife. The mountains come right down to the shoreline and there are **amazing waterfalls and rivers**. There is also a pretty cool international community in the Dominical/Uvita region which seems to be growing and thriving.

The piece of property we bought is more incredible than anything we could have ever imagined - or thought we could afford! (I work in human services and am a potter, and my husband is a tile contractor and surfer, and **Holy Smokes! - What have we done?**)

"Originally we didn't care about having a view or anything, and we wanted a larger parcel of land than 2 acres - to keep undeveloped and possibly to plant trees. But that view and that waterfall... It was too good to pass up.



Costa Rica Real Estate - Waterfall nearby...

Now, having seen a lot of other properties in the area since then, **we are quite happy with our decision**. We especially like the fact that there is so much land around us that will never be developed. We have met the Tico family that owns Oro Verde and they were incredibly **gracious, welcoming, and helpful**.

We feel incredibly lucky to have such wonderful neighbors and we feel like it is the right place for us to be. We can't wait to **share it with our family and friends!**

At first we thought we would wait to build something on it, but the prices all over are creeping up ever-steadily, and we thought "*If we don't do this now, we probably won't be able to do it for quite a long time.*" We surfed the internet and gathered information and finally settled on an architectural firm in San Jose called Neo Arquitectos.

Their designs are very contemporary, yet simple, which appealed to us. They have done an incredible job thus far and we are **very happy** with them. They have really **impressed us with their professionalism** and follow-through. **They took care of everything**, from the surveys to the permits to hiring a building crew to the details of the finish work.

All in all, I would say the building costs averaged out to about \$45 a square foot, which is amazing considering that we just built a home in the US that cost about \$100 per square foot - and we did a lot of the work ourselves.

The house should be completed within the next month and we will be down there this Spring to furnish it. **It is quite the dream come true.**

Puravida!

Kristin Knowles lives in Cape Cod, Massachusetts

(Editor's Note: Kristin is of course joking about using real estate agents as tour 'guides' but you would be surprised to know how many people actually do that... Unless you wish to be featured in one of our articles, we would advise against that...)

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