

SM Confidential

By Gregory R. Gunter

Shari Alexander,
Ópera San Miguel

My friends all think I moved here from: Sag Harbor, New York via central Massachusetts. There I was—well, I still am—the Editor-at-Large for a Massachusetts based magazine where I write a monthly column on food, wine, travel or just about anything that inspires me. I'm also an Executive Chef and co-owner of The Red Maple Inn (TheRedMapleInn.com). Once we return to Massachusetts in May, I'll grab a sauté pan to do Mother's Day Brunch and all the other special events we are now booking from our home here in Atascadero for May through November at the inn.

In San Miguel, I wanted to reinvent myself as: Catherine Zeta Jones...oh, wait, that's not a reinvention, that's a fantasy. The truth is I don't want to reinvent myself; I love my life and all the twists and turns and opportunities that present themselves. My life is reward-



ing, and most of all, fun.

In reality, here's what keeps me busy all day: I'm very involved with Ópera San Miguel. Last year I started the Ángeles de la Ópera membership program which presents many ways to connect and involve people who love opera to truly help the finest opera singers in

Mexico. These young singers compete to become finalists and then prize winners at the annual Concurso, held this year on March 13 at Teatro Ángela Peralta. Not only do the finalists have the chance to win scholarships to study internationally, but they also enjoy a fantastic week of master classes with Ópera San Miguel's Artistic Director, Joseph McClain. The finalists also study language diction with my husband, former Metropolitan Opera tenor and Concurso Judge, John Bills and musical coaching with Mario Alberto Hernández, one of the top opera coaches in Mexico.

This intense professional atmosphere is mixed with the hospitality of the "Ángeles" and the extraordinary opportunity to meet important judges and establish lifelong relationships with this entirely volunteer group of wonderful donors whom I have grown to love dearly.

And, stick with me here, I love to

talk! last year, along with my partner Alberto Pacheco, I started a business in San Miguel called "Flavors and Magic" Culinary Adventure Tours (FlavorsAndMagic.com). Alberto and I conducted three successful tours with guests who enjoyed our introduction to San Miguel de Allende—the culture, the beauty, the energy, the drama, and of course, the eating.

Here's how I'd describe the perfect night on the town in San Miguel: Last night was actually a perfect night for me—a strong cappuccino at Café Monte Negro, strolling in and out of galleries, bumping into friends, meeting artists and walking to the Jardín. Once more, I was astonished by the beauty of the Parroquia illuminated by the moon with its special pink glow that always captivates me.

Let me share a recent "peak" experience here in San Miguel: After we bought our house in Atascadero and were hunting for furniture, I went to a yard sale at a very elegant house in the Centro. I was looking through the shelves of sale items and saw a photo of the elegant lady of the house with my oldest and dearest friend in the world. I just could not believe it, I was shocked. Could this be "The Countess," one of the great personalities of New York City and fashion queen? When I inquired about the photo, the "Grande Dame" of the sale and a resident of San Miguel for more than 30 years, informed me of their long and close friendship. Right then and there she handed me her telephone and I called "The Countess" in New York City to tell her where I was and with whom. She laughed hysterically and then told me, "pay her half of what she is asking, she's had that stuff forever and don't fall for any of that 'they're antiques' bull." Can you make this stuff up? Only in San Miguel de Allende.



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Cactus House This gorgeous property is full of architectural details made of natural stone, mostly cantera. The basement is turned in to an amazing guest or entertainment room, it has a full bathroom and a connection for a kitchen, and the best part is that it has a separate entrance. The roof top terrace even has a fountain and the views of the sunset are really incredible. The floor to ceiling windows in most of the house make it warm and sunny all day long. The light fixtures throughout the house make it a real beauty at night.

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San Miguel

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