

food & home

SANTA BARBARA

Dine Out!

27 TASTY
HOUSE FAVORITES
FROM THE
KITCHENS OF SB

PLUS
CHEESE
SURFING
PICKLE ROOM
OPENS
TINY HOUSES
DESIGN
PROFILES
DINING GUIDE
AND MORE

The beautiful Pulpo
is a favorite from Delfino.
Photo by Shelly Vannoy



Cruising the Amazing Amazon River

By LESLIE A. WESTBROOK

I certainly am glad that I finished reading "The River of Doubt", a fascinating account of President Teddy Roosevelt's frightening explorations along an uncharted part of the (Brazilian) Amazon River in 1914, after embarking on a cruise and exploration of a northern Peruvian section of the mighty Amazon and the Ucayali tributary. The New York Times best-selling tome included tales of hair-raising encounters with a piranha that possessed the head and arm of a monkey inside its stomach; bugaboos that travel up your urethra, worms that enter a person's system via the soles of their feet and other things that go bump in the night, not to mention deadly waterfalls that had to be bravely forded (lives were lost). They even had to re-route the ex-

pedition via land, where blood thirsty natives lurked in the dark fringes of the jungle with poison dart guns!

My recent trip aboard the 24-passenger vessel Aqua Amazon— with the exception of a piranha fishing expedition along with briefly, and carefully, I might add, holding a caiman (a river alligator) captured by one of our remarkable guides — was nothing like that trip of a century ago. It was safe, luxurious, and infinitely more civilized, thanks to not only excursions on small skiffs led by knowledgeable guides, but delicious Peruvian cuisine, spacious staterooms with huge picture windows and showers big enough for two.

The Aqua Amazon adventures provide comfort (no seasickness here, just gentle float-

ing) and excitement with just enough surprises, amidst breathtaking scenery and unique wildlife viewing, especially through the magnificent Pacaya Samiria National Reserve via skiffs. From pink dolphin and bountiful birdlife sightings and a relaxing dugout canoe ride to delicious food (I am still dreaming of the hearts of palm "spaghetti" salad) and libation including Peru's famous, deliciously tangy, Pisco sours, this cruise ranks as one of the top trips of my well-traveled life. I will cherish the memories of my Amazonian sojourn for the rest of my living days — and be grateful for living in the 21st century!

For information go to www.aquaexpeditions.com; call toll-free: 1 866 603 3687