



Pete Nelson

New TREEHOUSES of the WORLD

FINCA BELLAVISTA

Costa Rica



Matt and Erica Hogan were traveling in Costa Rica when a dream popped into their heads: They had just taken a tour of an inspiring piece of property on Costa Rica's Southern Pacific coast one fateful day when Erica wondered aloud if a treehouse wouldn't be the perfect structure for a property like that. And then she wondered if people would be interested in living in treehouses within a community, like the Ewok village in *Return of the Jedi*. The idea struck a chord and now the world has its first planned treehouse eco-development.

Their three hundred acres of beautiful secondary forest has it all: big trees, gurgling streams, cascading waterfalls, and all the telltale noises of the jungle. Treehouse designer Roderick Romero was the first to take on a job at what is now called Finca Bellavista. They picked a prime location on which to build the first treehouse—just above a twenty-foot waterfall but far from the hustle and bustle of everyday living—which is being used as a model for potential buyers to view and stay in for a short period of time to get a feel for what it's like to live in a treehouse.

Matt and Erica sold out the thirty-lot first phase of the seventy-two-lot development quickly. A new phase is currently on the drawing boards, but in the meantime a sustainable infrastructure is being established. There is a hydroelectric power plant using water from the namesake Rio Bellavista that runs through the property, solar power, a recycling center, and a common garden area. There is even high-speed Internet via satellite and a WiFi zone. Eventually, there will be zip lines and cable systems to help navigate the hilly and rocky terrain. Otherwise, transportation is strictly by foot, as no cars will be allowed within certain boundaries.

"We wanted to bring something totally different and adventurous into people's lives," Matt says. I'm thinking of establishing a "pied-a-tree" there myself.

Above: For this tropical treehouse two platforms were constructed high in the tree, one ten feet above the other. **Right:** Cocktail hour is enhanced by a beautiful waterfall in the distance. **Opposite:** Roderick's skill in designing a treehouse in harmony with its environment is unmatched. This treehouse was but a few months old when these photographs were taken, yet it looks as if it has lived happily in these trees for decades.



