

26 February 2009

Our day began with a beautiful sunrise glowing on the snow capped volcano across the highway from where we were camped. We were in the parking lot of a hotel created from a hacienda built in 1555, where no less than Simón Bolívar, liberator of South America, once stayed during the revolution.



The project started with removing the raw water tank. Long time readers will quickly guess my feelings about doing this. Again.

There are times during the raw tank removal process where you must become one with the Fuso.



It is but one of the many steps required to become a true Fuso Master. I'll let you know if I ever get to the end of that path.

Fuso Frame Saga Update

But, in the end, I again triumphed over the raw water tank.



I'm actually getting very efficient at it. If they ever add this event to the Olympics, I'm a shoe-in for a podium finish.

Once I had the tank out, I finally got a look at what we were dealing with. It didn't look good.



Our Fuso frame is shaped like a C. The vertical portion of the C is called the web. The top and bottom horizontal portions are called the flanges.

Our top flange broke about 4 inches / 10.1 centimeters aft of where the web broke. Our broken top flange is the piece of metal in the photo that is bent up at ~60 degrees and is against the white label on the water line insulation. That piece of bent metal is all that kept the frame from completely separating while we were on the road coming over the 12,700 feet / 3,871 meters high pass. In the rain. And fog. And dark. Along the cliffs. Count your blessings. Every day.

Fuso Frame Saga Update

While I was under the truck and I could fully see everything, I checked the passenger side of the frame. It was cracked.



That ended all debate about whether we'd try to nurse the Fuso back into town to get it fixed. If both sides of the frame broke it would be Game Over. In Ecuador.



Some days, you just have to persevere.

Fuso Frame Saga Update

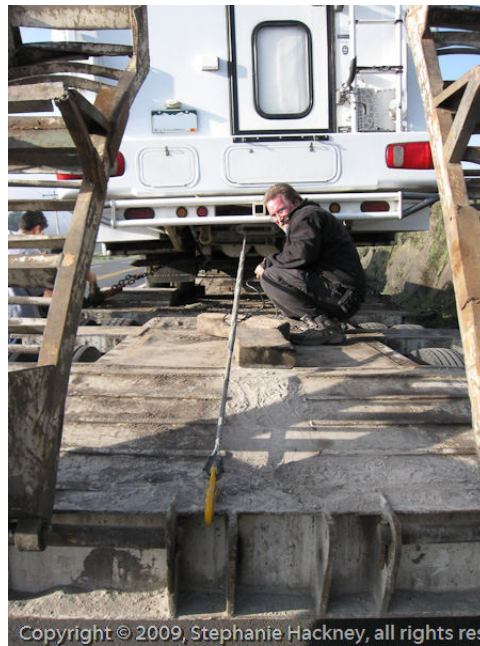
So, the next step was to locate a suitable truck to haul the Fuso the 15 kilometers / 10 miles into Riobamba, where we'd located a mechanic/welder who said he could fix the truck.

We located a suitable truck, but first had to wait out the four day Carnival holiday when the entire country comes to a halt for festivities.

Bright and early Wednesday morning, we loaded up the Fuso.



Fuso Frame Saga Update



Some days, you just have to believe.

Fuso Frame Saga Update

So, off we went. The semi, the Fuso,



and the three young Ecuadorians who were our rescue crew.



The Fuso followed us closely, all the way to town.



Fuso Frame Saga Update

Our destination was the mechanic's yard, where we'd booked the work before the holiday. Unfortunately, when we arrived at 7:30 AM, just as he'd told us to, he was nowhere to be found.



So, after an hour of fruitless waiting for the mechanic to appear from his post-Carnival stupor, we set out to find alternatives. Fortunately, just up the street, almost directly across from the new hotel we were booked into during the repairs, we located another shop where the owner and his workers were there—and working.

So, we unloaded the Fuso,



Fuso Frame Saga Update



got her nestled into her new home for repairs,



and the work began.



Fuso Frame Saga Update



Fuso Frame Saga Update



Some days, you just have to hope.

Fuso Frame Saga Update

The Hostería Andaluza was created from the Hacienda Chuquipoggio of Don Hernando de la Parra, which at its peak of influence contained 151,700 hectares / 374,859 acres of land spread across four provinces. Famous Andaluza hams, available for retail sale, are slowly cured in sea salt as they have been for centuries. The Hosteria has 55 rooms, many in the historic hacienda section. Most rooms are ~\$50 USD, including breakfast. Hostería Andaluza, Panamericana Norte Km. 16, Riobamba, Ecuador; Phone +593 (0)3 294-9370; admin@hosterialaandaluza.com; <http://www.hosterialaandaluza.com> Tell them Douglas & Stephanie Hackney, the two Norte Americanos with the broken casa rodante, sent you.



Photo by Jorge Valdes

Douglas and Stephanie Hackney, along with their formerly broken truck frame, are on a two to three year global overland expedition.

You can learn more about their travels at: <http://www.hackneys.com/travel>