

San Miguel De Allende works well as part of a trip to Guanajato, Mexico. The city of 84,000 is 15 percent American. Artists, in particular, favor the splendid townsites lying along the slopes of the Sierras.

The afternoon I got there, the citizens were holding a "Pamplonada." All the major streets were blocked off and a wild melee of young boys were running to and from a couple of fighting bulls that had been turned loose.

To further assure that these velvet cheeked, machismo lads lost every modicum of their judgment, hundreds of señoritas were squealing at every turn and twist the bulls made. But the bulls would have had to climb several flights of stairs to reach them, since they were all hanging from lofty balconies.

After a policeman had given me permission to carry my bags down one of the closed off streets to the hotel, I returned to check on the situation. I found two cowboys mounted on their horses some 100 yards behind the crowd. Up closer, the smart kids in town were hanging from window grills. And a few spectators were showing enough sense to stand in the back of pickups.

Back in Guanajato I had already run some tests on my maneuverability on cobblestone streets, racing and dodging the cabs and Volkswagons there. I'd scored a 10 in forward bursts of speed and a five in full reverse.

However, at San Miguel I estimated that if those two mean fighting bulls came up in that end of town, I was not only going to have to outrun them but would also have to stay ahead of six to eight hundred head of Mexicans, plus the two cowboys on their horses.

So, as much as I wanted to give firsthand coverage of one of the blood sports, I opted for safer position up on the second floor of my hotel, some 500 bull lengths away from any danger.

Later on, a report came in that two of the boys had been seriously gored. I suspect also that some of the señoritas had to have their throats swabbed in order to be ready for the big dance at the town square.

Much, much later, I watched the young cobblestone matadors spilling out over the city with bandanas tied on as headbands and the necks of beer bottles clasped in their hands. Youth, wherever it is, is always full of folly. It hasn't been too long ago that those same boys could have been part of a country rodeo on Mertzon.