

## DID YOU KNOW?

# The “Haunted Castle” Hiding in Bajo Mono

Deep in a roughly **100-hectare** coffee finca in **Bajo Mono** sits a two-story structure known across Chiriquí as **El Castillo Embrujado de Pepe** — Pepe’s haunted castle. The land was inherited by **José Domingo Serracín**, known as “Pepe,” from his Italian-born father. An earlier house on the property was destroyed when the **Río Caldera** flooded in **1970**.

It wasn’t until the 1990s that Pepe rebuilt — this time in an unusual **clover-leaf (trébol) floor plan**, which is where the “castle” name comes from. Construction took about eight years. Still owned by the Serracín-Landau family, the structure now stands deteriorated and partly vandalized, drawing curious visitors from across the province who come to see the architecture — and to test the local legend that strange voices and sounds can be heard inside. Caretaker **Elba Landau** has said she believes the noises trace back to the land’s earlier use by indigenous residents for huacas and santería rituals, though she also notes that an empty structure that size carries its own echo. The family has floated restoring the castle rather than letting it stand as a ruin, but as of the last report, the cost and scope of the work had kept those plans on hold.

**Sources:** “Castillo ‘embrujado’,” *Crítica / La Voz del Interior* (11 Jan 2015); “El conocido castillo ‘embrujado’ de Bajo Mono,” *A Lo Panameño* (Facebook); “El Castillo embrujado de Pepe,” *ArcGIS StoryMaps* (2021).