

What's Haute: Mexico

Resorts, spas, restaurants, and more

HAUTE LIVING



By Christina Bohnstengel

RESORTS

La Casa Que Canta



The house that sings has left many guests with a song in their heart. The accolades received by La Casa Que Canta are endless, including consecutive first-place prizes from Travel + Leisure and Conde Nast Traveler. Is it the freshwater infinity pool seemingly dripping into Zihuatanejo Bay, the personal butlers and chefs, or the private plunge pools outside of the four-suite villas that keep La Casa Que Canta on the pages of all the travel glossies? Located in Zihuatanejo (between Puerto Vallarta and Acapulco), La Casa Que Canta features 25 guest suites in three cliff-side buildings dubbed Sol, Mar, and Luna. The architecture of the estate is traditional Mexican-style with terracotta “adobe” walls crafted entirely from natural materials. A saltwater pool with an adjoining Jacuzzi, located on the edge of the cliff rocks with the Pacific Ocean as the backdrop, serves as the serene setting for a 75-minute yoga class. With this kind of detailing, it’s easy to understand why the romantic and relaxing ambiance of La Casa Que Canta is often described as intoxicating.

RESORTS

Las Ventanas al Paraiso



Claiming the title as the only Five Diamond resort in Los Cabos, Las Ventanas al Paraiso is redefining our understanding of pampering. Complimentary tequila awaits the patrons upon entering their suites, which are designed with marble showers, Conchuela limestone floors, and terracotta fireplaces. Private patios are equipped with personal telescopes for viewing the twinkling nighttime constellations. Las Ventanas al Paraiso indulges the fancies of the fancy set, including the whims of their posh furry friends. The Pets' Luxury Program includes a full menu of animal spa services and exotic dining options like albacore tuna, poached salmon, and shredded braised beef. As its name implies, "the windows to paradise" affords the most picturesque views, and while there is much to see and do in the surrounding area of the Mexican landscape, most guests find themselves retreating back to resort. Las Ventanas al Paraiso is well on its way to turning luxury hotel aficionados into Rosewood Resort converts.



In the 1990s we balanced our “chi.” Today we are unlocking our “kinan.” Best to go about such an important task at a world-renowned spa that bears the same name. Depending on whom you ask, the Mayan term “kinan” either means “the source of life,” or “healing energy of the sun.” Regardless, the mission at Kinan Spa at Maroma Resort is to tend to your spirit. Private gardens, outdoor pavilion rooms, a Zen garden, and a rooftop tower treatment room with 360-degree views are the design specs to help you transform. At sunset, enter the spa’s traditional Mayan sweat lodge for chanting and meditation. For something less traditional in Mayan cultures and more in line with our own traditions of enjoying a spa day, the Lomi Lomi treatment combined with a deep tissue massage receives rave reviews. And for those guests interested in tending to outer beauty, botox, fillers, meso-lift treatment, cellulite treatment, and body contouring techniques are also available.

SPAS
Spa Itza



While many spas are spending their resources inventing and marketing trendy new treatments, Spa Itza is grounded in healing philosophies from a bona fide professional. The founder and director, Sharon Sedgwick, is armed with a 20-year background in the healing arts and nine years studying Mayan medicinal plants. She is a certified teacher of therapeutic massage and rehabilitation therapy, specialist in ergonomics, traditional midwife, and graduate of an intensive, three-year acupuncture program. Tucked away in a secluded garden in the “Calle Corazon” district of Playa del Carmen, her tri-level, 4,000-square-foot holistic spa has been recognized by Forbes Traveler for its sensory flotation room and organic tea and oxygen bar. Sedgwick is a hands-on director, personally overseeing the training of each spa therapy provider. She was also directly involved in all the design features, including customizing much of the equipment. The spa menu covers all realms of inner and outer beauty with massages, facials, healing baths, body antidotes, and salon services.

RESTAURANTS
Marquis Reforma Dining



Marquis Reforma is the only privately owned five-star luxury hotel in the rising cosmopolitan metropolis of Mexico City, promising all of the pampering that our sophisticated travelers would expect on their glamorous globe-trekking adventures, including delectable treats at one of the property's three dining venues. Clad in Chanel and Blahnik, our readers will toast to the excellence of Bar Caviar, equipped with a walk-in humidor stocked with the finest imports and domestic cigars. The Mexican-Spanish cuisine and ambiance of Los Canarios restaurant has earned it recognition as the prestigious place for power players to lunch and close deals. And finally, La Jolla, with its executive chef honored at the illustrious Beard House in New York, is the signature fine dining restaurant of the resort, serving international cuisine with the flavors and colors of Mexico. With Art Deco-inspired architecture infused with a post-modern flair, it's easy to understand why Marquis Reforma earned the spot as one of Mexico's top 15 hotels from Conde Nast Traveler in 2008.

RESORTS

Esencia



Forget taking home a sombrero or bottle of tequila. After vacationing at the 50-acre private estate, Esencia, the best souvenir will be your newfound culinary skills. One-on-one, four-hour classes with the on-site gourmet chef yield more than just a plate of tamales. You will learn the essentials in Mexican cooking through six different recipes, including chile relleno, mole sauce, Tikin Xik, salsas, and two of the estate's signature cocktails. Classes are also available for groups of six. Located 20 minutes south of Playa del Carmen, Esencia's two-story cottages, designed by Mexican architect Ramiro Alatorre, were once the tropical retreat for an Italian duchess, punctuating the fact that this is not your cliché Mexican beach resort. In fact, Esencia is the antithesis of the party scene or the place to "see and be seen." It is a quiet refuge, enveloped in luxury and the foliage of bamboo and banana trees. Hand-stitched, 600-thread-count, Egyptian cotton sheets are just one example of the royal touches outfitting the estate and one of the reasons it is consistently described as a hidden gem.