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*Wedding
Belles*



NOW THAT YOU'VE MADE IT TO THE WEDDINGS, LET'S TALK HONEYMOON. SO MANY OPTIONS! IF YOU CAN'T GET AWAY OR SIMPLY DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, WE'VE GOT TWO OPTIONS. ONE STATESIDE AND ANOTHER DOWN SOUTH. SO WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE, GET READY TO RELAX, UNWIND AND START THE NEXT CHAPTER IN YOUR LIFE!

destination

■ ESPERANZA, CABO SAN LUCAS MEXICO

By Carla Valencia de Martinez

As I sit in the back of the Escalade that swooped me up at the Cabo airport, I am captivated, as I am every time I visit Cabo, by the desert drive that leads to the beaches and resorts. The climate is perfection, warm enough days to soak up the sun beachside followed by cool evening dinners outside among fire pits. It's one of the few locations that captures the best of both worlds, miles of cacti and dry terrain dead-ending at mountain scapes or endless ocean.

I arrive at hope (Esperanza in Spanish) and am received by Victoria, my personal concierge, and led on a quick orientation tour to my *casita* #58 which is well appointed and boasts a beautiful beach view through the interlocking sliding doors that bring the terrace into my bedroom. Moments later, I am made a delicious margarita on the rocks...ay, ay, ay...I'm going to like it here...

Day one is gone and so far Esperanza exceeds. Thursday nights sees *Mexicanísimo*, a popular Mexican themed night dinner overlooking the beach with Mexican décor, a beautiful spread of buffets featuring tacos al pastor, enchiladas, a seafood medley with the most delicious octopus and fresh red snapper, a desserts station and more. There's also a Mercado featuring local artisan work. There is a variety of guests, from families on Spring Break, a few honeymooners, older couples getting away, as well as a fair share of couples expecting a baby relaxing before their big day.

The "relax, unwind and disconnect" part is easy to achieve. I wake every day rested between 5:30-6am to catch the sunrise sitting on the generous sized day bed with aforementioned sliding doors completely open listening to the ocean and my iPod gently crooning in the *casita's* docking station while sipping my freshly brewed Keurig dark roast.

The gym is perfectly appointed with treadmills, elliptical, bicycles and a separate weight room. Next door, the spa merges interior spaces exterior spaces flawlessly and there are plunge pools and steam room areas that lead into an exterior relaxing area with large beds off of which are various treatment rooms each with their own outside shower. Connie, my masseuse, is a

dream targeting trigger points and kneading my terribly stubborn knots. I am ready to lie on the beach giving my sore muscles a well-deserved break.

Although the ocean itself in Cabo is more surfer friendly than anything, there really isn't anything more majestic than the view of huge waves crashing on massive rocks that line the beach. They are the perfect backdrop to catch up on a book while sipping a delicious margarita on the rocks.

For lunch, try the grilled sea bass tacos, which are absolutely delicioso! At random moments, the staff comes by with a refreshing treat. Think coconut popsicles or smoothie mojitos in shot glasses.

Some tips to remember: Whale watching season runs January thru March, I highly recommend this season. You can take out a boat and no doubt the whale sightings will be vast. Take a light sweater, pashmina or lightweight jacket as evenings are cool and you can't pass up dinners beachside. Esperanza offers larger vil-

Weather: sunny each day, with highs around 80 and lows around 60
Attire: Resort Casual



spa quiet area at dusk



hotel entrance at dusk



residence club pool and palapa bar at night



villa interior

las and other options for the perfect family vacation. You can stay in one with your own kitchen and have it stocked with your favorite items.

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marriott new orleans

■ NOLA By Alejandro Martinez

Don't have time (or the budget) to get away for the honeymoon? Don't give up altogether. You can get away to the Big Easy quickly and discover a whole new world. Located in the French Quarter, The **Marriott New Orleans** is hands down one of the best-located properties in NO. A mere steps from Bourbon Street, the Convention Center, downtown business district and iconic Big Easy attractions – you'll be able to walk everywhere (and save on cab fare!). The property most recently underwent a \$38 million renovation and features over 1,300 guest rooms and suites, a fully equipped fitness center, updated Concierge Lounge and on-site business center. Dine at the award-winning 5 Fifty 5 and you won't have to even leave your suite for too long. Check out **Capdeville** in the warehouse district. An old law firm revamped to house this hot spot restaurant. Swing over to **La Phare**, this lounge is perfect for a drink. Then head to **Acme Oyster Bar** in the French Quarter as well. The first time we went the line was crazy long, but we headed the next day for lunch and honestly the line is worth the wait. The gumbo and jambalaya are a dream. There's so much to see, eat and drink in NOLA – make it your honeymoon and take in the city's culture.

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WHERE TO GO:
CAPEDEVILLE | www.capdevillenola.com
LA PHARE | www.lepharenola.com
ACME OYSTER BAR | www.acmeoyster.com

MIKE'S EAST-WEST | www.mikeseastwest.com
DICKIE BRENNAN STEAK HOUSE
www.dickiebrennanssteakhouse.com



capdeville

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