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LUXURY

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DESTINATIONS

A Las Vegas Jaunt
Frankfurt, Germany

HOTELS

The Regent Bordeaux
One&Only Ocean Club
Florida's Golf Resorts

CRUISE

Sailing to Marseille

SPAS

Thai Escapes





The pool at Esperanza (here) in Cabo San Lucas

The St. Regis Mexico City (opposite) suite living room

LUXURY IN MEXICO

These resorts and villas fill a growing demand

A GOOD SIGN THAT MEXICO is continuing on the comeback trail as far as tourism goes is the growing number of luxury resorts being built or refurbished throughout the country.

Punta Mita (www.puntamita.com), a residential luxury community, recently opened the Punta Mita Bahia, a Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course. This is now the second course Nicklaus has designed for Punta Mita, the first being Punta Mita Pacifico, which opened in 1999 and offers the only natural ocean island par-3 hole in the world. Both courses are part of the private Punta Mita Club de Golf, exclusively for Punta Mita homeowners and guests.

Wimco Villas (www.wimco.com) has added 17 villas in Punta Mita to its international portfolio, which now includes private villas in Hawaii, the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. The new villas in Punta Mita are located in a recently developed gated community, and have three-

to six-bedroom private homes that are serviced by a local team of maids, cooks and staff.

The villas, ensconced in a coastal enclave, share an expansive, private peninsula with the Four Seasons and St. Regis hotels and two Jack Nicklaus designed golf courses. Families can relax on several white sand beaches, taking advantage of an array of water sports. The more intrepid can book whale watching or rainforest canopy tours, jungle ATV or jeep safaris, golf and tennis matches, and excursions to explore the handcrafts of local Hurichol Indian villages.

Guests will also enjoy sport fishing, sea kayaking and surfing. The harbor city of Puerto Vallarta is only 45 minutes east, and there are numerous fishing villages and beaches nearby for those who want to explore the area. Spa services are available through the hotels and guests can also take advantage of Wimco's full concierge program to arrange in-villa spa treatments, private chefs and yoga sessions.

In other luxury news, **Auberge Resorts** (www.aubegeresorts.com), a collection of luxury hotels in Mexico, is eyeing a possible expansion. The company is eyeing Zihuatanejo, Puerto Vallarta and the Riviera Maya as possible areas of expansion. The plans are still in the brainstorming stages, however, so no further details are available as of yet, but we'll keep you posted when we get new information.

One of Auberge's most popular resorts, **Esperanza** resort in Cabo San Lucas, opened eight new villas in October. These luxury three- and four-room villas will include 3,000 to 4,000 square feet of indoor/outdoor living space with pocket doors that open to private terraces, gourmet kitchens and bathrooms built for two. Another 24 villas will be added to the resort sometime next year. The hotel portion of Esperanza is still adults-only, but the villas will cater to families, broadening the resort's market.

Cabo also saw a huge luxury addition this summer,

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when **Capella Pedregal** (www.capellacabo.com) in Cabo San Lucas debuted in July. This 66-room resort is located where the Pacific Ocean meets the Sea of Cortez. The resort is also home to the 12,000-square-foot Auriga spa, a uniquely Bajan vision that represents the first-ever Mexican spa by renowned spa designer Sylvia Sepielli. It features distinctive treatment pods that float on a private pool; two deluxe couples suites with a private tub and direct pool access; ladies' and gentlemen's active and relaxation areas; steam, sauna and ice rooms; a private spa pool; and a private 24-hour fitness facility, complete with personal training consultations. Introductory rates and packages start at \$525 per room, per night and include an array of enticing extras such as daily resort credits, complimentary spa treatments and more.

And let's not forget the Riviera Maya, which always seems to have new luxury products opening up or on the horizon.

Condo Hotels Playa del Carmen (www.condohotelsplayadelcarmen.com) is adding a new property to go along with its four luxury condominiums in Playa del Carmen, the **El Taj Oceanfront**. It is slated for a grand opening during the first week of January.

The property will feature a world-class gym, inspired and built by Vito Errico, the original founder of the famous Equinox sports clubs in the U.S. There are going to be two upscale restaurants, a scuba shop, New York-style gourmet deli and a spa.

The Fiesta Americana Grand Coral Beach Cancun (www.fiestamericana.com) has 602 luxury suites and the largest spa in Latin America. The resort has undergone an extensive renovation and this winter, clients can enjoy its fabulous accommodations and amenities at 35 percent off the usual room rate.

Zoëtry Paraiso de la Bonita (www.zoetryresorts.com), consistently named one of Mexico's most exceptional boutique resorts—with just 90 luxury suites—is set on 14 acres, including a private beach, situated just 20 minutes from Cancun's International Airport.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. (www.starwoodhotels.com) announced the opening of **The St. Regis Mexico City** this summer. It is located on the exclusive Paseo de la Reforma boulevard overlooking the iconic Plaza of Diana. The brand's first downtown hotel in the region, The St. Regis Mexico City features 189 rooms and suites, each with views of the city, a signature Remède Spa, and three signature restaurants.

It is located 30 minutes from Benito Juarez International Airport and is only a short distance from the city's famed Polanco area, the bustling financial district and the landmark Historic Center. Situated at the heart of Paseo de la Reforma, the hotel offers guests easy access to specialty shopping, haute cuisine, cultural centers and museums including the world-famous Anthropology Museum, the Museo Frida Kahlo, the Museum of Modern Art-Mexico City and the Rufino Tamayo Museum. 

