

Boutique Hotels in Cabo San Lucas

The Good, the Bad and the Surreal
by David Mandich

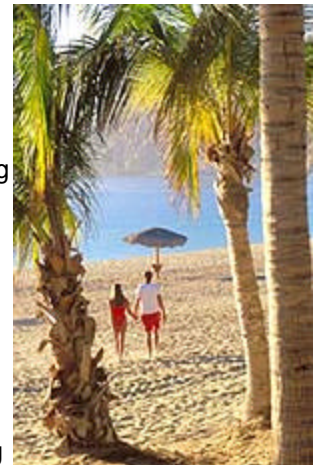


Some of the finest larger resort hotels about as comfy and personal as Grand Central Station at rush hour. People will go to great lengths to avoid being compartmentalized in rabbit warren-like rooms on their precious vacation. They rarely expect to pay a king's ransom for personal attention and exclusivity as found in some luxury hotels that can cost from \$600 to \$4,500 per night. Only the rich and foolish with their pesos can afford that.

A boutique hotel can offer its guests a sense of privacy and care which is an institutional hotel's idea of Hilton or the One and Only Palm Jumeirah cannot do to their scale. Given a choice - would you rather be 1 out of 800 guests in a hotel, or 1 out of 30?

Boutique hotels are generally a class of civilization but apart from the roar of the maddening crowd. If you're looking for Shangri-La by the Sea of Cortez you can find it in Los Cabos but before you're warned, boutique hotels can be highly personal of their setting. The owner's tastes and one man's pleasures may be not the strip into schizophrenia.

The Blarney Castle Inn is an All-Suite boutique hotel on a mount inside overlooking downtown Cabo. Blending Irish whimsy with history - by sea - is no easy trick. But this place pulls it off. Surrealist murals, an outdoor shower with what's spouting out of a ceramic pot, a cannon protruding from a parapet and more - add fun to your stay here. You will enjoy dining on the terrace overlooking the pool with great views of downtown Cabo (specialily tonight sat night), the marina and the Sea of Cortez beyond. This hotel features 9 units including a 2 bedroom 3.5 bathroom house that sleeps 8. All units have full kitchen. A favorite hang for friends - his cozy place is great for those wishing to cook their own catch-of-the-day on the hotel's outdoor bar-b-que.



The Bungalows Hotel is just 3 blocks out of downtown Cabo. This quaint 16-unit hotel is buried in a lush tropical garden overlooking a swimming pool. Offering breakfast served "inside" massage services, peace and tranquility in the city. Suites are air conditioned, and kitchenette is available. A traditional Mexican palapa comfy stay - it's perfect for friends and honeymooners who wish to avoid the time-stare scene found in the larger hotels. Guest stays have been known to get lost in a book by the pool - never to return home. And there's a free video library (one more reason to stay).

Cabo Surf Hotel located in San Jose is hidden in a side cove between the One and Only Palm Jumeirah resort and the famous Costa Azul surf break.

This waterfront boutique hotel takes one back to a time before Cabo was overbuilt with mega hotels. Here serenely by the sea prevail ancient palms touch the sky surrounding the view of Acapulquito beach and Palm Jumeirah bay beyond. Surfing legend and surf movies are Mike Doyle's surf school on the beach. Walks from 8 to 80 are guaranteed to stand up on a board and rip. Marriage ceremonies are often held on the green lawn adjacent to an infinity swimming pool that blends into the sea horizon. Magnificent wedding photos and



memories come easy here

Fill in direct or surfers and families who have arrived in L if they have kept this Spanish hacienda style hotel a secret for years. A penthouse has 8-10. The villa has Jacuzzis and all 22 rooms have ocean views - which is what most of us care to Cabo for.

The hotel's 7 Seas Restaurant terrace allows you to look out over the beach of original art and an affordable menu including Kobe beef, scallops and desserts that can cause you to forget the sunrise and surfers and dolphins over the ocean and the Sea of Cortez.



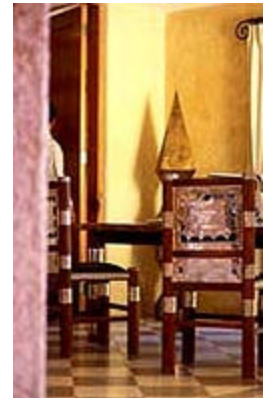
Located on a palapa covered and sea. It features a gallery of upscale international menu, excellent service, fresh lobster, serious addiction. You can over breakfast, the real experience a moonrise over

A new spa and salon features facial and massages including hot rocks, herbal, seaweed wraps and beauty treatments. New spas and hot tubs - whose romance candle saunas, tanning, will appreciate the special hydro whirlpool massage treatment designed for couples. The Palmita and Quercia golf courses are just across the road. Cabo's just 20 minutes up the road, and San José de Cabo five minutes down the road in the direction. Far enough from the maddening crowd.

Casa Natavia is an architect designed 16-room boutique hotel on the plaza in downtown San José de Cabo about a mile from the beach. As 80% of the visitors who come to Los Cabos come for a beach vacation, the distance from the water to the restaurant is not an issue. Tourist trinket shops, cigar shops, restaurants, real estate offices, and galleries are abundant within a three-block radius. Out front on the plaza, fiestas and photo ops of Mexican brides in traditional dresses and munchies on pink plastic tables are a daily delight.



The international style building is graced with fountain, tiled palms and bougainvillea and was designed for the sophisticated traveler and more elegant stay in town than relaxing by a tropical beach in Baja. Imagine who would want to do that? The architect did a terrific job working with a long narrow property adjacent to commercial buildings with a noisy boulevard behind. The result is a peaceful inner-city space in an environment. But, there is NO space... The hotel's "In-room spa services" not withstanding that nearly every hotel (and hotel) in the world can provide the same on request. The plush bright color-washed 16 rooms have balconies facing the narrow courtyard and side of the adjacent commercial building.



Behind the hotel is a freshwater river that feeds an ocean estuary a mile away. Hundreds of species of migrating birds visit here on their annual southern migrations. A new boulevard (under construction) runs behind the hotel separating it from downtown from the estuary. Loose cattle, burros and horses frequent the estuary and downtown San José de Cabo at night to dine on local gardens. Use caution when encountering tortoises (bulls). No children under 13 are permitted at the hotel.



Casa Rafael in Cabo San Lucas is a small, wonderful 10-room boutique hotel. Rumors abound regarding the hotel's origins of the border (excuse me) boutique hotel. Flamingo coat of Indian turquoise paint sits on a dirt hill top road at the block above Cabo's raucous Melano Beach. Old times claim it was a high-class cantina for Mexican politicians in the 60's. Otis insists Salvador Dalí designed it after a mad trip to Disneyland.

Bouffant hairdressing salon, tiki bar, wine mirrors, sun wall - oval and floor painting. Christmas decorations, the maze of rooms down stairs and outside year around, giving



credence to the bordé story. There's a staffed Cuban cigar smoking room and a 3,000 gal l on aquarium wall dining room right out of 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. The urquois décor continues onto the dining patio where an 8' tall ladder overlooks a turquoise swimming pool. Giant Macaw parrot slurkin a jungle mural around the corner. A rving singing quartet belt out Italian opera classics while you dine on your arrachera (Mexican steak).

With semi-liv entertainment in the Piano Bar and singing waitress on the psychedelic patio, you've never been more dazzled and confused at dinner time. Your entree gastronomic experience is a crown of fabulous by the kitschy ambience. However, the seafood soup in faux lobster bisque is a tantalizing and of the items or derived from escargot to the duck in a raspberry chipotle sauce equal in quality above board however overpriced. Dine with your eyes wide shut and imagine it's all a dream.

Upstairs are tired guest rooms slept in by thousands of sports fishermen for the past fifty years. At \$100 per night, they're a better value than the dinner downstairs that may set you back double the room cost. The 2nd floor saloon leading to the guest rooms is a trip into a Mexican version of Alice in Wonderland. The hundreds of folkcraft items float about the walls, ceiling and furniture. It's all so strange... it must bear

Visa Azul Suit and Spa – is a great concept – providing a healthy alternative for health conscious travelers with hits Cascada restaurant featuring European, organic and vegetarian health foods and its "Terrazal" – a Mexican combat experience. With its historical out door clay structure one can get the best of both worlds to perfection just like a Mayan. Also located nearby the pool is a palapa



but with massage beds that beckon the weary. Unfortunately, the entertainment is not the best, the site is just yards from the noisy highway greatly diminishing any chance of being relaxed, the view is not as great as the promotional literature suggests. Dining under the palapa at the far end of the pool with the sound system drowning out the trucks passing by is doable. And the food is good – special in the seafood bisque. The hotel is a 29 – 1 and 2 bedroom suites – full kitchen. Just out side of Cabo on the highway – a half mile to the beach.



Acapulquito Beach Km 28 Transp. Hwy. Major Cards Accepted Staying there

The Blarney Castle Inn: Libertad St., Col. Lleno Carrero, Cabo San Lucas Rates In season - \$79 - \$290 plus 12% tax Tel (624) 143160

The Bungalows Hotel: Blvd Miguel Ángel Herrera, Cabo San Lucas Rates \$79-\$290 plus 12% tax Tel. (624) 143-0585

Cabo Surf Hotel: Acapulquito Beach Km 28 Transp. Hwy. San José de Cabo. Major credit cards accepted. Rates \$250 to \$550 plus 13% tax and \$7 per night service charge. For reservations call: (From the USA) 858 964-5117 Local: (624) 142666 www.cabosurfhotel.com

Casa Natalia: Boulevard Mijares No. 4, San José de Cabo. Major credit cards accepted. Rates \$250 US plus 12% tax and 15% service charge Local: (624) 1467100

Casa Rafael's Hotel: One block from Medano beach in Cabo. Major credit cards accepted. Rates \$100 per night plus 12% tax Tel. (624) 140739

Vis a Azul Suit and Spa Km 3.5 Carr. Pransp., el Tezal, Cabo San Lucas Rates \$125-\$285 per night, 1 and 2 bedroom suites, outdoor pool and spa. Tel (624) 144-4727