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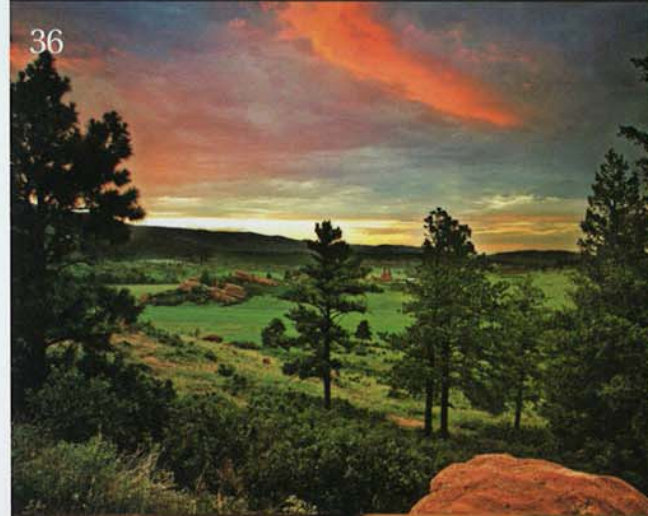
Location: Las Palmas, Punta Mita. To learn more about this Mexican retreat and many others, turn to Page 46.



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PUNTA MITA

With ocean and beach on three sides of this private peninsula, nearly every home and hotel room overlook the warm, turquoise waters that surround Punta Mita. With peace, quiet and privacy among other top amenities, it's no wonder this place is filling up fast.

By Hayley Mitchell



WHERE TO LIVE

To make sense of what Punta Mita really is, one must understand that the majority of this tropical peninsula is a gated master-planned community by developer/owner DINE. Within it lies many unique residential enclaves to suit every need, from condos to custom estates. All residents enjoy use of Punta Mita's numerous Residents' Beach Clubs (amenities include waterfront dining, pools and spa) and each buyer will purchase a refundable Club Punta Mita membership (which allows access to Jack Nicklaus golf and tennis privileges, as well as a future equestrian center). But perhaps most of all, residents come here for room to breathe. "People who come here enjoy tranquility and privacy," says Lynne Bairstow, marketing and operations director for Punta Mita Properties, explaining that at build-out there will be 1,000 residences within the 1,500-acre paradise.

One of the first real estate offerings is Las Palmas, a collection of 28 Mexican Colonial-style three- and four-bedroom villas with outdoor showers and private pools. Some are now offered for resale from \$1.4 to \$2.2 million. The next phase of Las Palmas will comprise 80 condos with floor plans that span at least 3,700 square feet, starting at more than \$1 million. Another early arrival was the 55 glam Four Seasons Private Villas, complete whole-ownership properties. When released in 2005, the villas started at \$1.4 million and the remaining six are now priced from \$3.8 to \$4.2 million; exhibiting the increased value of this peninsular paradise.

Newer to the scene is El Encanto's contemporary villas surrounded by both golf and beach. These three- and four-bedroom homes all boast spacious courtyard entries and an incredible furnishing package that complements the sleek, yet comfortable, look. Depending on the view, these villas range from \$2.5 to \$3.4 million, says Maria Cintron, C.O.O. and vice president of sales and marketing for Casa Mexicana, El Encanto's developer. She says many of her clients come from Texas and California due to the close proximity. "They can leave the United States in the morning and get here for lunch and a round of golf."

WHERE TO STAY

Upon completion, Punta Mita will cap off at five resorts, keeping it as a low-profile, luxury escape for those in the know—no crowded beaches or rowdy nightlife here. For now, two major players in hospitality share the shores: the original resort offering, Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita, built in 1999; and the new St. Regis Punta Mita, which opened its doors in November.



The Four Seasons is encompassed by dense tropical foliage, giving visitors the feeling that they are much farther away than just a few hour's plane ride, and an evening walk along its many forested pathways is a must-do. This natural setting extends to the décor too, as seen in the tranquil palapa-style spa entrance or the natural fabrics and colors used in the 172 guest rooms. On a less earthy note, the Arena Suite is a 13,000-sq.-ft. respite that goes for \$10,000 a night. Even more opulent, the Coral Suite carries a \$15,000 price tag per night, and has its own fitness center, spa area and media room.

The brand new St. Regis brings another 120 luxury rooms to Punta Mita, and is the first of its brand in Latin America. The refined style of this property combines Mexican charm with French Provincial notes, creating a look all its own. Visitors can spy this unique style starting in the lobby overlooking the sea and ending in the spacious guest rooms that boast large bathrooms with outdoor showers. The dining options here are exciting for both visitors and Punta Mita residents, who can choose between three premier restaurants, all modern masterpieces for the eyes and taste buds.

WHERE TO PLAY

Golf is the game on the peninsula, thanks to two gorgeous Jack Nicklaus Signature layouts, both offering numerous holes that overlook the ocean and one that even requires a trip through it. That's right: The tee for the par-3 "Tale of the Whale" hole on the original course is on the mainland, and the green is 199 yards offshore on an island accessed by a special amphibious golf cart. The new Bahia course, which opened in November, boasts more waterfront golf, but this time with noticeably undulating fairways and greens.

- Punta Mita is located in the Riviera Nayarit, on the Pacific Ocean, with Banderas Bay on the south side of the peninsula and Litigu Bay on the north. It is 26 miles north of Puerto Vallarta.

- Frequent direct flights from the United States fly into Puerto Vallarta International Airport.

- **What's next?** "The parcels of land on the hillsides will be in big demand," says Lynne Bairstow, referring to the 14 one-acre, oceanfront and beach-access homesites at Kupuri, a gated community with both a beach club and a yacht club. Prices range from \$2.25 to \$7.2 million.

TO LEARN MORE

EL ENCANTO, 888.647.0979, www.elencanto-puntamita.com. FOUR SEASONS RESORT PUNTA MITA, www.fourseasons.com/puntamita. KUPURI, 888.647.0979, www.kupuripuntamita.com. LAS PALMAS, 888.647.0979, www.laspalmaspuntamita.com. PUNTA MITA, 888.647.0979, www.puntamita.com.mx. ST. REGIS PUNTA MITA, www.stregis.com/puntamita.