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LOS CABOS

by Robert Dagley

Once the tranquil haven of big game fishermen chasing giant blue marlin (they still hunt the behemoth billfish in the Sea of Cortez), quiet Cabo San Lucas on the tip of Mexico's Baja California peninsula is one of the most coveted destinations in the world. Hollywood celebrities, along with other rich and famous folks, "discovered" the charms of Cabo in the 1950s and 1960s. They prized the sun-filled location for its privacy and easy access from southern California. Luxurious resorts and residential communities, along with a thriving nightlife, naturally followed the money, giving Cabo a unique flavor. Against all odds, this sun-filled slice of land has retained its local character, remained far from elitist, and lost none of the stunning natural (and wild) beauty for which the Baja coast is renown.

Sandwiched on an extraordinarily beautiful slice of land between the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortez, Cabo San Lucas today is not only one of Mexico's most popular destinations, but also one of its safest. While celebrities, drawn by the easy access from Hollywood and the privacy offered, still flock here, the area has become as well known for the luxurious quality of its residential communities as for its ritzy nightlife. A wonderful place to vacation, Cabo has also become an attractive place for a second—or even primary—home.

"CABO LOOKS LIKE GOLF'S HEAVEN ADDED TO BLUE OCEAN."

Rita Gonzalez, soon-to-be-homeowner at Copala at Quivira Los Cabos

Fred and Diane Hearn, from Vacaville, CA, about 20 minutes outside Napa Valley, have been vacationing in Cabo for about 20 years, making multiple trips a year. Getting here was easy. Direct flights from San Francisco to Los Cabos International Airport are just under three hours. The drive to town was another 40-45 minutes. Six years ago they decided they wanted to have a second home here and purchased a condo in downtown Cabo. Now they are in the midst of building their own home in the luxury beachfront resort and residential villa community, VieVage Los Cabos.

"With our grandkids coming now, we decided we wanted to be in a more family-friendly environment," says Fred Hearn. "We live in Cabo about four months out of the year now."

A community by Auberge Resorts Collection, VieVage Los Cabos is set to open in October 2016. Located within the 1,200-acre Chileno Bay development, VieVage Los Cabos will feature a 29-room, boutique luxury hotel, and 32 contemporary three- and four-bedroom beach villas. Amenities will include a 138-meter swimming pool, wellness spa, fitness center and movement studio, a variety of dining options, a kid's club, owners lounge, and the h2O Cave, the resort's waterfront sports center.

Golf With a View

For golfers, Cabo San Lucas is a particularly alluring setting. With 11 rain-free months, the Sea of Cortez as a sparkling backdrop, and a star-studded roster of designs by the game's best, this region has become the golf capital of Latin America. "I've played golf all over the world and find the courses here great," says Hearn, who was moti-

vated to buy here as much by the great golf as anything. As a resident at VieVage Los Cabos, Hearn enjoys full access to Chileno Bay's exclusive Tom Fazio-designed course, one of the most incredible in southern Baja. Laid out in the stunning desert terrain, it provides golfers with magnificent views of the Sea of Cortez from every hole.

Concurring with Hearn is Rita Gonzalez of Hudson Valley in New York who says, "Cabo looks like golf's heaven added to blue ocean." An international banker, Gonzalez has traveled extensively around the world and played golf everywhere she could.

Gonzalez plans to someday retire to her new vacation home being built on the 16th hole of the Jack Nicklaus course in Copala at Quivira Los Cabos. She likens the new course that opened in 2014 to Pebble Beach.

Situated on three miles of pristine beaches, Quivira Los Cabos offers single family residences and condominiums in addition to a full resort and spa. It has everything from world-class fishing and spectacular golf to award-winning spas and superb service. Amenities will include a beach clubhouse, over 400 acres of natural conservation areas, more than 20 miles of walking/hiking/biking trails, outstanding botanical gardens, family sport parks, a village center, and more. Copala has a wine club with their own private-label vintages and an organic garden that provides ingredients for farm-fresh meals. You can even reserve a yacht for a day from the Yacht Club.

The Many Appeals of Cabo

With so many pleasures and pursuits available along Cabo's celebrated coast, it's tempting to paint a picture of this area as the ultimate idyllic getaway. And you



Jack Nicklaus Signature Course 12th Green at Quivira Los Cabos

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wouldn't be far off the mark. The fishing is legendary and attracts sportfishers from all over the world. The beaches are stunning. None more so than Chileno Bay, one of Cabo's best swimming beaches. Set in a protected cove, it's a perfect spot to snorkel, swim, paddleboard and kayak. You might even be lucky enough, while underwater, to hear one of the area's plentiful humpback whales singing. This is one of the best places in the world to go whale watching, as humpbacks and grays gather in great numbers in the Sea of Cortez during the winter months. If all of this is working up your appetite for a visit to the tip of the Baja California, save room for the delicious fare served up, especially seafood. "Up and down the Corridor—the 20-mile stretch that runs between San Jose and Cabo San Lucas—you won't run out of places to eat," says Hearn. "All types of food: Italian, Mexican, sushi, Argentinian. All of it is very good."

Gonzalez shares what she loves about Cabo, "It's so low-key and relaxed. You can have a party atmosphere or have excellent dining at both very good and affordable prices, as well as upscale experiences rivaling the best in the world. There is no comparison with the service and the food."

A Safe, Welcoming Environment

Understandably, one of the first questions potential buyers have about living in Mexico is safety. Most of the problems the country has experienced are in trouble spots near the border, from which Los Cabos is far removed. The crime rate here is very low and residents and visitors alike are made to feel welcome and secure. "I've been coming here for 20 years and never had an incident," says Hearn. "Our kids could go downtown, even late at night. The officials understand the value of tourism here and stay pretty well on top of things." Many buyers choose to purchase a home in a gated community which provides yet another level of security and ease of mind.

Purchasing a Home in Cabo

Most who visit Cabo San Lucas fall in love with the place—the weather, the people, and the rhythm of life. So how difficult is it to buy your own place here? Not very. While the process is similar to the U.S., it is very difficult to get a conventional mortgage in Mexico. Most purchases are cash and are completed in U.S. dollars. One peculiarity that affects all purchases in Cabo San Lucas is the requirement that homes within 50 kilometers of the coast be bought through a trust at a Mexican bank.

However, Copala offers exclusive direct financing from the Quivira/Pueblo Bonito group. Packages are custom-tailored and offered with 10-year terms and very attractive interest rates.

Gonzalez couldn't have found an easier transition in purchasing her home. After 15 years of partial ownership at a resort in Cabo, she started looking around. "I have traveled the world and I could not think of a better place that I always want to go to. I did a lot of research until I came across Copala at Quivira Los Cabos. At that point, there was just a vision, a plan and a mountain. And with the reputation of the company and with the transformation of Cabo that I have seen over the last 15 years, I didn't blink. I knew this was the place for me. And, I have to say that the process and the experience, the friendliness of the resort and the whole management team could not have made it any easier. The community is just so impressive."

The Hearn family has found the process painless. “This is our second purchase here. Things do take a little bit longer in Mexico, but it’s nice to slow things down sometimes. It’s part of the lifestyle and it’s a nice change,” says Hearn. “We’re familiar with Auberge [Resorts Collection] from their California resorts and they have a tremendous reputation for being first-class. We were excited to buy into an Auberge property. We feel pretty secure.” Fred Hearn is also excited about the quality of the home being built for them. “I’ve been a builder and developer,” says Hearn. “The workmanship and craftsmanship of the homes are unbelievable.”

Medical Care

Expect to find state-of-the-art medical facilities, top doctors, excellent care and affordable rates when you come here. Los Cabos has become popular as a medical tourism destination and has established a thoroughly modern network of hospitals and physicians that can handle your care—often for far less than it would cost in the U.S. As always, establishing (before you travel) health insurance that will cover you while in residence in Mexico is very important.

Getting to Cabo

According to TripAdvisor, 30 airlines currently operate out of Los Cabos International Airport, which offers non-stop flights to 40 cities, with 756 international flights departing weekly. Among the U.S. cities offering direct flights are Chicago, Denver, Atlanta, Dallas/Fort Worth, Phoenix, and Los Angeles. Direct flights from New York City and Washington, D.C. average \$400-\$500 this time of year.

There is no better way to get the feel of living an international destination than by spending quality time there. That is easy to do in Cabo San Lucas with its scores of places to vacation, from small boutique hotels to all-inclusive resorts. The warm hospitality of the locals will make you feel immediately welcome. Perhaps welcome enough to want to call Cabo home.

Gonzalez sums it up, “I am so passionate about it! For an American, it’s like a home away from home. I cannot speak highly enough about the standard of living—it’s above the rest.”

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Copala Casa Muestra at Quivira Los Cabos

