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The Perfect Vacation

A beachside villa makes for a memorable family getaway. | BY ANTHONY DIAS BLUE

For the past several years, I have taken my family to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, in December. Located at the tip of Baja California, this resort area is an easy two-hour flight from Los Angeles. The weather is always great, and the available accommodations range from beach shacks to palatial villas. Nightlife options span raunchy tequila bars to exquisite Jean-Georges Vongerichten haute cuisine. Last year, we opted for the high end of the spectrum; we decided to go for the gold and stay in a villa at the ultra-exclusive Villas Del Mar at Palmilla.

Built on a rocky rise that stretches along two miles of pristine oceanfront property overlooking the Sea of Cortez and adjacent to one of the world's most luxurious resorts, One&Only Palmilla, Villas Del Mar offers the comforts of an über-luxury vacation home along with the services and amenities of a five-star resort. Just outside the heavily guarded gates are 27 holes of Nicklaus championship golf, state-of-the-art tennis facilities at the Palmilla Tennis Club, and an amazing selection of restaurants as well as access to the extraordinary spa at the One&Only Palmilla.

Our villa could comfortably have housed 10 or more among its five roomy bedrooms, large living room that opened onto a pool deck, spacious kitchen and dining room. There was also a lovely outdoor dining area, where we had breakfast and lunch every day, plus another covered seating area, with a fireplace adjacent to the pool. From our terrace we had a sweeping view of the sea and a front-row seat for whale sightings, of which there were many each day. Included in the cost of the rental was three hours of daily maid service, including laundry and bed making; a chef who prepared breakfast and lunch; and a butler who saw to our every need.

We quickly settled into a routine. Breakfast at nine: *huevos rancheros* (fried eggs with spicy tomato sauce, guacamole and tortillas), refried beans, omelets, fresh-cut tropical fruit, fresh-squeezed juices, coffee and *chilaquiles* (tortillas, cheese and avocado with eggs). This was followed by a few hours of reading, sunning and swimming. Then came lunch: *chiles rellenos* (poblano chiles stuffed with cheese), fish tacos made with fresh sable, enchiladas, stuffed lobster tails, wine, beer and colorful, exotic salads. This was followed again by a few hours of reading,



sunning and swimming.

In the afternoon some of us (not me) played golf or tennis and went to the beach. Villas Del Mar has the nicest and most swimmable beach in the area; beaches that face the Pacific Ocean are not recommended for swimming because of the powerful rip tides.

At night we had many options. Nearby San Jose del Cabo is quite charming and authentic. There are a number of good restaurants, including Tequila, Morgan's, El Chilar and, our favorite, Don Emiliano, which serves remarkably skillful and high-end Mexican food prepared by Chef Margarita de Salinas.

Club Ninety Six is the lavish establishment for the exclusive use of Villas Del Mar residents and guests. It includes a large clubhouse; an outdoor bar that offers excellent margaritas plus burgers and other casual food; two handsome, freeform swimming pools; a children's pool; access to the best swimming beach in Cabo; a fitness center with every exercise machine one could want; a temperature-controlled member wine cellar; fine dining, inside or out; and an excellent wine list. There is also a private catamaran for the use of the club.

Most evenings we dined outside at a table near the fire pit that overlooked the beach. Club Ninety Six was easily reachable from our villa via golf cart. The menu of contemporary Mexican and traditional grill items is adeptly prepared and quite delicious. Service is friendly and highly professional.

Was this the ultimate family vacation? I've yet to top it. **AL**

For more information about renting at Villas Del Mar, visit villasdelmar.com or call 1-877-845-5277.



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