

# THE Road TO El Dorado

A few of our favorite things about El Dorado and Los Cabos BY JOSH SENS





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ENTURIES AGO, fleets of starry-eyed explorers combed Central and South American shores in search of El Dorado, the lost city of gold. No one ever discovered the mythic city, but in 2005, Discovery Land Company CEO Mike Meldman observed a spectacular expanse of shoreline in Los Cabos, Mexico, and saw what the explorers had missed. He had found El Dorado.

“El Dorado has many of the fundamentals we seek when identifying a property to develop,” explains Meldman. “It is in a prime location along the ‘golden corridor’ of Los Cabos, and it has a great beachfront. That combined with a great course creates the opportunity for a family-friendly club and community.”

Plans for the 520-acre private community, dubbed El Dorado Golf & Beach Club, evolved around a Jack Nicklaus course—a favorite of visitors to Cabo San Lucas. With Nicklaus’ assistance, Discovery improved upon the layout by reversing the routing of two nines, redoing the greens and adding extensive landscaping to the existing property along the Sea of Cortez. “I believe it was one of Nicklaus’ best courses, and we made it even better,” says Meldman.

Besides the golf course, El Dorado offers homesites and residences all featuring spectacular ocean, golf or desert mountain views, and a beach club set on the sands on one of the most beautiful stretches in all of Mexico. The state-of-the-art fitness center, world-class spa and beautiful oceanfront restaurant and bar

The 9th green offers a stunning panorama of the Sea of Cortez. Above: The welcome gates at El Dorado.





Top: A quiet place to enjoy the captivating views. The Mercado (above) reflects Tuscan-inspired architecture with a Mexican flair; inside (right), the market offers homemade ice cream, cappuccino, food, wine and Mexican specialties, including tequila.

Opposite page, top left: The traditional welcome fire tower serves as a *faro*, or light, for visiting guests. Top right: Overlooking the ocean, the open-air restaurant and bar is a fine place to grab a meal or cocktail. Middle right: Squid Roe, a popular bar in the town of Cabo San Lucas. Bottom: El Dorado's luxurious driving range.



oftentimes present a dilemma about venturing beyond the gates at all. However, based on tips from Discovery partners and members, we offer ample reasons to explore both opportunities.

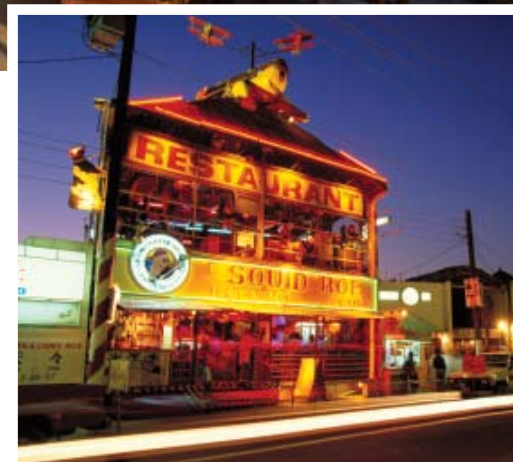
The options within El Dorado are nearly limitless. Meldman points to the property's Beach Club & Bar as a prime spot. "The bar is the hottest spot in all of Los Cabos, and the Jacuzzis and cabanas are the best anywhere," he says. "Viva la Mexico!" Discovery partner Steve Adelson cites another El Dorado hotspot—The Mercado—for its exceptional coffee, ice cream and

architecture as the perfect spot to meet with your fellow members for a morning latte or Mexican coffee.

Discovery partners Joey Arenson and Sky Joyner, meanwhile, make the case for El Dorado's spectacular golf course. Arenson favors the driving range, while Joyner can't get enough of the 16th tee just before sunset. And for a stunning view of El Dorado from above "in all its glory," Discovery partner Ed DiVita recommends following the Al Cielo cross-country trail at sunrise.

A quick drive away is the historic center of San Jose del Cabo, flanked on one side by the stark beauty of the desert and on the other by the sea's soothing currents. Dominated by the Parroquia San Jose Church, dating from the town's establishment as a mission in 1730, the plaza buzzes with activity. A host of shops and stands sell local crafts like wood carvings, pewter objects, clothing and hand-painted jewelry; sidewalk cafes and bakeries offer coffee and pastries, ice cream and an array of savory snacks. Nearby, a downtown marina capable of harboring more than 500 boats is nearing completion—a reminder that time has not remained completely still in this former colonial outpost.





## Inside the Gates at El Dorado

“There is a magical spot on the 5th tee box where, if you look straight through the V of the mountains, you have a clear shot of the ocean. It is my favorite part of the course—my only regret is that there is no comfort station there, because I can tell you I would spend more time there than anywhere else.” *–Victor Coleman*

“Muscle Beach is the best place at El Dorado because of the fantastic ‘view.’ ” *–Molly Koppes*

“Chef Todd at El Dorado makes some of the most creative dishes you can find anywhere in Mexico. Everything is fresh and tastes incredible.” *–Brian Ezralow*

“One thing that I am sure will occur when I arrive at El Dorado: I am going to have fun. From the warmth of the people to the beautiful scenery—once inside the gates at El Dorado the real world is left behind.” *–Jim Gray*

“As a family we love the fact that we can do many things together right inside the club’s gates—whether its golfing, hanging out on the beach, fishing, working out or just plain reading a book. We love the staff. They are all so nice and welcoming, even when we’ve been gone

for months. Their friendly smiles make El Dorado feel like home!”

*–Mary Hart*

“El Dorado is the only place where time stands still for me.”

*–Regina Manian*

“All the incredible people who work at El Dorado.” *–Geyer Kosinski*

“On my last visit, we were out on the Jet Skis off the shores of El Dorado with the wonderful OP guys, and we came upon a small family of whales. We turned off our motors and they continued swimming and doing their jumps right in front of us. The sight was so beautiful; it almost made me cry. It was breathtaking and such a memorable moment.”

*–Wendy Coleman*



## Outside the Gates at El Dorado

“The most wonderful thing about El Dorado’s location is that, depending on your mood, 15 minutes in one direction and you can be clubbing in downtown Cabo—15 minutes in the other direction and you can be shopping or walking down the streets of a sleepy colonial town.” *–Regina Manian*

“There is a fantastic restaurant in San Jose del Cabo called Tequila. It is a place where we really like to go and enjoy the assorted tequila list as well as the cuisine with an Asian flare.” *–Victor Coleman*

“A walk with family or friends along any one of the magnificent beaches of Los Cabos.” *–Wendy Coleman*

“Hiking on any of the trails in and around El Dorado, but my absolute favorite is the La Buena Vida trail.” *–Molly Koppes*

“When I’m not at El Dorado, all I can think about is their sangria!” *–Fran Vettor-Gray*

“Go to Nick-San for great sushi.” *–Geyer Kosinski*

“Why go outside the gate?” *–Bryan Ezralow*



“From the warmth of the people to the beautiful scenery—once inside the gates at El Dorado the real world is left behind.”

If the opportunity rises to venture out the gates past the imposing stone fire tower situated at the entrance of El Dorado, the partners point to some of the following options.

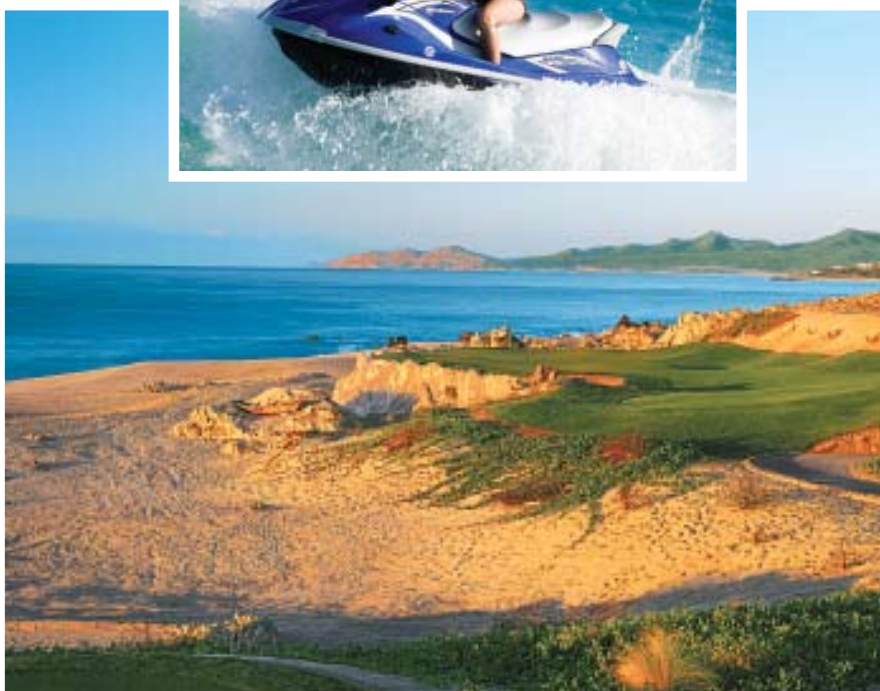
DiVita gives a thumbs-up to “dining *con amigos* at any one of the many great authentic Mexican restaurants in San Jose del Cabo.” Adelson agrees, recommending the patio at Edith’s, a water-side dining establishment. “The cool punched-tin lights give a warm glow to a wonderful Baja dinner,” he says. And for a cold beer, Arenson appreciates the view of the marina from the Nowhere Bar. But it is Meldman who singles out the Jell-o shots at Squid Roe as a “must stop” for anyone visiting downtown Cabo San Lucas.

World-renowned as a paradise for sportfishing enthusiasts, on quieter days Meldman can be found in the waters surrounding El Dorado where he netted his first marlin—a 140-pounder—earlier this year with his friend Jerry Weintraub. Though best known to anglers for an abundance of blue, black and striped marlin, the Sea of Cortez is also home to sailfish, swordfish, wahoo and tuna.

Those who would like to observe—rather than tame—nature, will enjoy a trip to Cabo Pulmo, home of the only living coral reef along North America’s western shores. Located at the convergence of cool Pacific currents and warm Cortez waters, Cabo Pulmo



Clockwise from left: El Dorado's restaurant exudes warmth inside and out; the restaurant's stylish interior; the shores of El Dorado are best seen via Jet Ski; another day in paradise comes to an end on the 15th green.



provides favorable conditions not only for the coral—which fans out in eight long fingers just offshore—but for a panoply of other species. After visiting Cabo Pulmo in 1940, John Steinbeck wrote of the “complexity of life pattern” in a place where “one piece of coral might conceal 30 or 40 species, and the colors of the reef are electric.” Visitors who partake in daily scuba and snorkeling tours, or night dives, will find the reef as vibrant as it was in Steinbeck’s day. Joyner and his children, meanwhile, give the cove at Chileno Bay their unanimous vote as the “best beach in all of Cabo.” The calm waters provide perfect swimming conditions, and the white sands are great for sand castles.

Another favorite pastime enjoyed by members and Discovery partners alike is stand-up paddle boarding through the aptly named Arch, an idyllic rock formation shaped by centuries of waves. Just beyond the Arch lies Lover’s Beach; this sandy crescent of shoreline, ringed by rocks, faces the Sea of Cortez and serves as an ideal setting for swimming, snorkeling or laying in the gently lapping waves. Just around the point, however, conditions change dramatically. The forceful waves and rapid currents of the Pacific Ocean make swimming inadvisable, and locals bluntly call its shore Divorce Beach. There’s no need to tempt fate—so stick to El Dorado and the Sea of Cortez.