

Endless Appeal

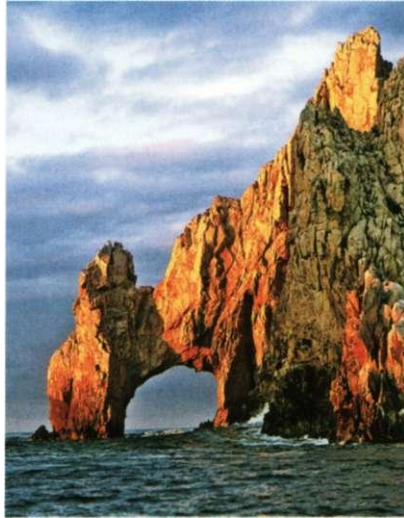
Los Cabos continues to hold Americans' popular imagination **BY SKYE MAYRING**

Mexico's "miraculous" Baja air prompted American author John Steinbeck, during a 1941 expedition through the Sea of Cortes, to pen that "a dream hangs over the whole region." At that time, the peninsula's southernmost tip—where the Pacific Ocean meets the Sea of Cortes—was home to little more than a fish cannery and a few scattered *rancheros*. Known today as Los Cabos (Spanish for "the capes"), the area is a popular resort destination that first became famous for its sportfishing in the 1950s. The early 1990s introduced golf to the region, and in a few short years, this coastal desert will reinvent itself again, with the addition of two new marinas, a dozen master-planned communities, and several more golf courses, spas, restaurants, boutiques, and limited-entry social clubs.

On Los Cabos' eastern cape is San Jose del Cabo, a quiet town with an emerging art community that has retained its Spanish Colonial charm. A 30-minute drive west is the party town of Cabo San Lucas, which contains a bustling marina, a vibrant nightlife, and the oft-photographed rock formation, El Arco (The Arch). Connecting the two towns is a 20-mile stretch of beachfront property, commonly referred to as "the corridor."

"It's the new Riviera," says Discovery Land Company CEO Mike Meldman, who is developing two private golf course communities—the Chileno Bay Club and the El Dorado Golf & Beach Club—along the corridor.

Perched on a bluff overlooking the popular body of water for which it is named, Chileno Bay is a 1,200-acre property located on the site of the historic Hotel Cabo San Lucas, originally built in 1961. In addition to preserving select aspects of the landmark hotel, Discovery Land Company plans to add a private residential community that will be complemented by a newer hotel, a private marina, a yacht club, and two Tom Fazio—designed golf



courses. No homes will be built along the fairways of the property's two courses to ensure that golfers can enjoy ocean views from nearly every hole.

The Discovery Land Company's other project—El Dorado Golf & Beach Club—also caters to golfers. Features on the 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature course include four "comfort stations"

that offer everything from ice cream sundaes to margaritas, as well as a ninth-hole beach *palapa* where golfers can break for massages and lobster tacos.

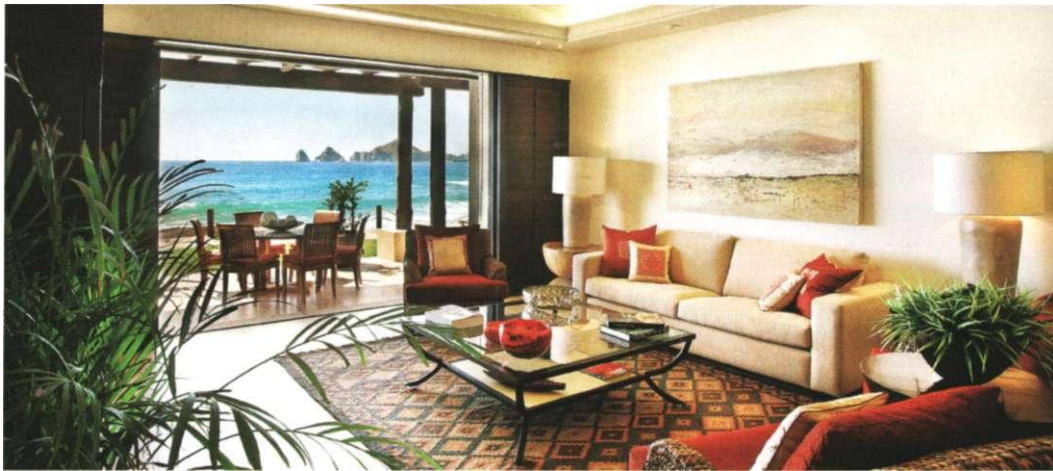
Situated between the two Discovery Land properties is Rosewood's Las Ventanas al Paraiso, which opened in 1997. As the area's first luxury resort, Las Ventanas was one of the pioneers of Los Cabos' initial real estate boom, offering one- to three-bedroom villas that front the sea. "We weren't selling many one-bedrooms, so we replaced them with two-, three-, and four-bedroom penthouses, complete with rooftop terraces and at least one hot tub or infinity plunge pool," says Erika Hernandez of Las Ventanas Real Estate, an exclusive affiliate of Christie's Great Estates. "When you buy in Cabo, you need something larger than a one-bedroom because people almost always want to come with you when they find out that you have a place down here."

Other options include whole- and fractional-ownership programs offered through Olamar, Esperanza, and

Located at the southernmost tip of Mexico's Baja Peninsula, Los Cabos is readying itself for two new marinas, a dozen master-planned communities, and several more golf, spa, and fine-dining projects.

Opposite page and below: Opened in 1997, Rosewood's Las Ventanas was the region's first luxury resort. Inset: Los Cabos' famous landmark, El Arco.





Querencia. The Olamar community, which broke ground last year on five residential buildings that will each be five stories high and contain two units per floor, will offer one-eighth fractional-ownership shares in the mid-\$300,000 range and whole-ownership penthouses for approximately \$5 million. The neighboring Esperanza—a serene adobe-style Auberge resort with views of El Arco—offers 63 two- to four-bedroom residential villas. Opened in 2001, the resort recently underwent a \$10 million revamp and subsequently raised its fractional-ownership prices to \$1.5 million for a waterfront

DEVELOPMENTS/REAL ESTATE

1 Capella Pedregal

Location: A 24-acre estate on the Pacific side of Cabo San Lucas.

Residences: 13 four- to six-bedroom villas, 38 three- and four-bedroom fractional-ownership residences, and a 12,000-square-foot estate home.

Amenities: Access to the 66-room Capella Resort and Spa, four restaurants, a gym, and the Capella Yacht Club.

Timeline: Broke ground in late 2006; build-out is expected in mid-2008. The Capella Resort and Spa is slated to open in late 2008.

Pricing: Villas from \$3 million to \$6.2 million; one-eighth-share fractional residences from \$475,000 to \$540,000; the estate home is about \$9 million.

866.956.7222, +52.624.172.0374,
www.capellacabo.com

2 Chileno Bay Club

Location: Along the corridor on a 1,200-acre bluff overlooking tide pools and 2.5 miles of coastline.

Residences: The first phase includes 61 homes and lots; the next phase of building is in its initial planning stages.

Amenities: Two 18-hole Tom Fazio-designed golf courses,

a private marina with a fleet of cruising and fishing yachts, one of the few swimmable beaches in Los Cabos, biking and golf cart trails, and several beach clubs.

Timeline: Construction began in early 2007; phase one is scheduled for completion in late 2008.

Pricing: From \$2 million to more than \$10 million.

866.937 8756, www.discoverylandco.com,
www.chilenobayclub.com

3 El Dorado Golf & Beach Club

Location: On the corridor, overlooking the Sea of Cortes.

Residences: 66 homesites, 92 two- to six-bedroom bungalow-style oceanfront and ocean-view villas, and 36 ocean-view casitas with shared courtyards and separate entrances.

Amenities: 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature course, spa, beach club, and organized activities, such as marlin fishing trips and desert buggy racing.

Timeline: Ground broke in 2004; golf course reopened in 2006; pool, spa, and restaurant opened in 2007.

Pricing: Homesites from \$4 million to \$13 million; a club membership is \$125,000.

866.937.8756, www.eldorado-golfandbeachclub.com,
www.discoverylandco.com

4 Esperanza

Location: Four miles east of Cabo San Lucas, with views of El Arco.

Residences: 63 two-, three-, and four-bedroom villas, available for whole or fractional ownership.

Amenities: Access to a secluded beach cove, dramatic seaside dining, daily yoga or Pilates classes, a garden spa, a cigar lounge, a tequila bar, and swimming pools.

Timeline: Resort opened in 2002; residences completed in 2006.

Pricing: Whole-ownership villas from \$5.27 million; one-eighth fractional shares from \$370,000 to \$695,000; one-sixth shares from 1.5 million.

866.311.2226,
www.esperanzaresort.com

5 Las Ventanas al Paraiso

Location: In the midpoint of the corridor, approximately 15 minutes from both Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo.

Residences: 34 private residences range from one-bedroom villas to four-bedroom penthouses.

Amenities: Residences come

with fireplaces, infinity plunge pools, hot tubs, and rooftop terraces. Owners have access to the resort's yacht, spa, fitness center, two restaurants, and an 18-hole golf course.

Timeline: Resort opened in 1997; residences completed in 2004.

Pricing: Resales only, from \$2 million to \$7.5 million.

+52.624.144.2848,
www.lasventanas-realestate.com

Olamar

Location: On the beach in Cabo San Lucas, near El Arco.

Residences: 48 units sold as whole and fractional ownership.

Amenities: Clubhouse features a spa, swimming pool, and dining. Members have access to a fleet of yachts and concierge services.

Timeline: Broke ground in 2007, with the first of five buildings slated for completion this summer.

Pricing: Fractional ownership starts around \$350,000; whole ownership starts at \$2 million.

877.757.3875,
www.olamarliving.com

© Puerto Los Cabos

Location: On 2,000 acres near San Jose del Cabo.

Above: A view of El Arco from one of the residences at the Olamar.

Opposite page: The new Puerto Los Cabos development in San Jose del Cabo.

villa. But perhaps most representative of Cabo's real estate growth is the nine-bedroom home offered for \$12.2 million on the mountain side of the corridor in the Querencia development. Indeed, a three-bedroom home that may have sold in this area for \$800,000 six years ago might now sell for as much as \$3.5 million.

"Homes will continue to appreciate," says JJ. Abraham, vice president of Del Mar Development, the company behind three neighborhoods—Villas Del Mar, Oasis Palmilla, and, most recently, Espiritu Del Mar—in the 1,000-acre Palmilla community near San Jose del Cabo.



Residences: A variety of custom homesites and mixed-use residences. Mision La Serena, the first of six residential communities planned within the complex, offers fractionals.

Amenities: Two golf courses (one designed by Greg Norman and the other by Jack Nicklaus), several beach clubs, a natural estuary, a shopping village, six luxury hotels, a 420-slip marina, and access to more than three miles of beach.

Timeline: Broke ground in 2004; the first phase of the marina was completed in late 2007; build-out of the final residential subdivision is estimated at another six to eight years. Broke ground on Mision La Serena in 2006 and is slated for completion in early 2010.

Pricing: From \$650,000 to \$8 million for whole-ownership residences. Mision La Serena's fractional-residence club ranges from \$370,000 to \$435,000, and whole-ownership villas are priced around \$4.5 million.

Puerto Los Cabos, +52.624.146.9656, www.puertoloscabos.com

Mision La Serena, 866.341.1190, www.misionlaserena.com

8 Querencia

Location: Atop the corridor on 1,880 acres of mountain terrain.

Residences: 14 condos, 41 three- and four-bedroom homes, and 200 custom homesites.

Amenities: A Tom Fazio golf course, a driving range, two club houses, tennis courts, a swimming pool, a wine cellar, a gym, a spa, and concierge services.

Timeline: Golf course opened in 2000; phase one completed in 2006; phase two completed in 2007; completion slated for 2010.

Pricing: Condos from \$1.1 million; homes from more than \$2 million; and homesites from \$575,000. Custom homes from \$4.2 million to \$12.2 million. 888.236.2229, www.loscabosquerencia.com

9 Villas Del Mar, Oasis Palmilla, and Espiritu Del Mar

Location: Three gated neighborhoods within the 1,000-acre Palmilla development near San Jose del Cabo.

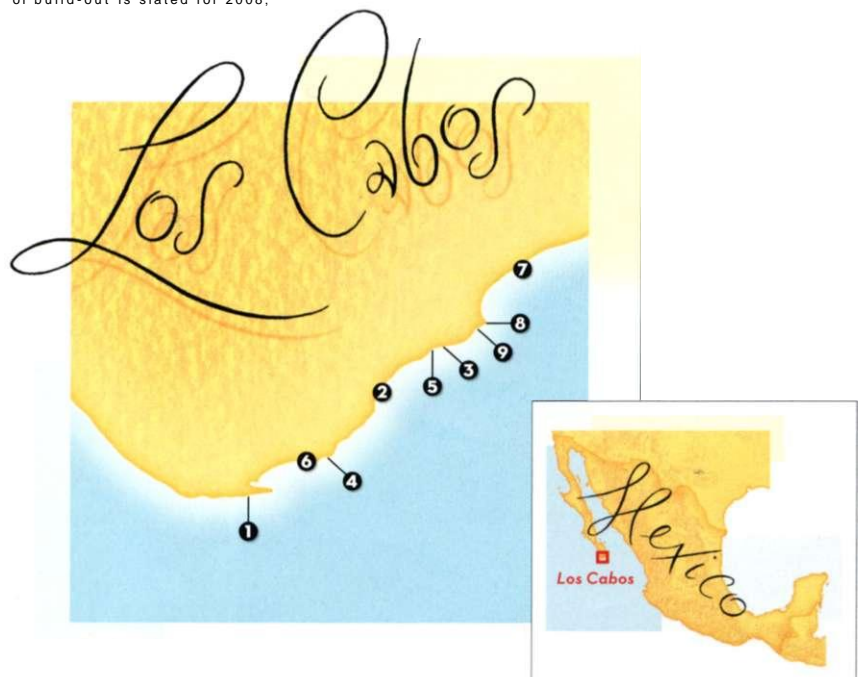
Residences: 172 residences in the Villas Del Mar neighborhood, 40 estate lots in the Oasis Palmilla, and 103 homes in Espiritu Del Mar.

Amenities: All residences have private swimming pools and hot tubs and some contain outdoor kitchens. Resort amenities include access to private jet service, a 27-hole Jack Nicklaus championship golf course, two private clubs, a variety of restaurants and bars, and the One&Only Palmilla resort.

Timeline: Villas Del Mar broke ground in 1995. Completion of build-out is slated for 2008;

Espiritu Del Mar and Oasis Palmilla will roll out in phases over the next few years.

Pricing: From \$1 million to \$7 million for homes; from \$700,000 to \$1.75 million for lots. 877.847.1662, www.villasdelmar.com, www.espiritudelmar.com, www.oasispalmilla.com



Right: A view from a home at Villas Del Mar, one of three neighborhoods within the 1,000-acre Palmilla community. Below: The ninth-hole at the Discovery Land Company's El Dorado Golf & Beach Club overlooks the Sea of Cortes.

Del Mar broke ground on the 75-acre Espiritu Del Mar last year. After an estimated five-year build-out, the development will include botanical gardens, waking trails, and about 100 Mexican Colonial-style homes. As with Villas Del Mar and Oasis Palmilla, the neighborhood will offer residents membership to two private clubs. Homeowners will also enjoy access to a 27-hole Jack Nicklaus Championship golf course, a tennis club, and the One&Only Palmilla.

Another development in San Jose del Cabo is the 2,000-acre Puerto Los Cabos, a \$1 billion master-planned resort community that, when completed in 2010, will have six luxury hotels, three miles of beach, and a 420-slip marina. The development unveiled its first phase three years ago, with a selection of custom homesites and mixed-use residences. Also located within the development is the Mision La Serena residential club, which consists of 75 fractional residences featuring open-air showers, elevated plunge tubs, and rooftop terraces. The club's centerpiece is a multilevel pool where members can order a margarita from the swim-up backgammon bar or submerge their ears to hear lounge music emanat-



ing from the underwater speakers. Future plans for Puerto Los Cabos include an ecological park, a trolley that takes residents around the marina, and two golf courses. The goal, however, is to maintain the area's cultural authenticity. "We want to keep San Jose as it is: a tasty old town," says the resort's CEO Jorge Buch Braniff.

In the same vein, Capella Pedregal has taken stake on the opposite end of the capes, near Cabo San Lucas' marina. The 24-acre resort is separated from the hustle

and bustle of downtown by a private tunnel that passes through a mountain ridge. On the Pacific side exists the resort's Mediterranean-style residential village. Capella Pedregal recently launched a fractional-ownership yacht program that grants members access to a fleet of nine Viking yachts. Each yacht comes staffed with a captain and first mate who will facilitate scuba and snorkeling trips, evening cocktail cruises, and camping excursions to the nearby islands.