



# ESCAPE

## THE RESORT:

# Offbeat Boutiques

*The crown jewel of most Mexico resorts is a sparkling pool, over-the-top spa or world-renowned chef. But for these boutique stays, it's their funky, avant-garde features that keep guests coming back.*

By Suzanne Koch





## THE ARTISTIC HIDEAWAY

### Casa Malca | Tulum

If eclectic spaces, colorful designs and tropical surroundings sound like heaven, then Casa Malca is for you. Located on the quiet and enchanting beaches of Tulum, this eco-friendly hideaway serves as a boutique stay as much as it does an art gallery. With rich textures and vibrant décor, Casa Malca puts a spin on the typical Tulum hotel. Originally operating as the personal property of the hotel's founder, Lio Malca, the space has since been transformed into a retreat for guests looking for a unique destination. A dedicated collector of contemporary art, Lio Malca's personal and impressive collection is now on display throughout the hotel, giving it a flashy yet stylish flair.

With a total of 40 guest rooms, the hotel's main house has 10 exclusive suites worthy of an art lover's dream space. Fully renovated, the house features original artworks, sculptures, photographs and new media from artists like Keith Haring, Marco Brambilla, Holton Rower, George Condo, Kenny Scharf, Vik Muniz, Marion Peck, Mark Ryden, Ariel Orozco, Xavier Dehouliers and KAWS among others.

The hotel also has two restaurants worthy of a stare; Ambrosia, which has dizzying Haring décor that dances around the walls, and Philosophy, the hotel's newest addition that's decked out with antiques collected from San Miguel de Allende. The rooftop and Haring bar provide spots for guests to kick back and relax with the rooftop offering 360-degree views of the immaculate scenery below, including the hotel's two swimming pools.

CASAMALCA.COM.

## THE URBAN PARTY

### Thompson Playa Del Carmen | Playa Del Carmen

For a no-sleep, party-until-morning type of getaway, Thompson Hotel's second Mexico property offers the closeness of the beach with the energy of the city. Situated in the heart of trendy downtown Riviera Maya is the hip and vibrant five-story Thompson Playa del Carmen, located on Playa's famous Quinta Avenida at Calle 12. The 5th Avenue building's 30,000-sq.-ft. "rooftop playground" is the central point which houses an infinity-edged pool, breakfast and lunch restaurant Cinco, and the popular New York City culinary concept, CATCH, that turns into a nighttime hotspot come evening. The hip sushi spot features DJ sets, live performances and dancing along with nightly specials to keep the party going. During the day, guests can sip signature cocktails while relaxing in cabanas, in-water loungers or at island perches.

Inside, the hotel rocks a 1950's Mexican oasis vibe with touches of glam throughout. Light-washed concrete and Mexican marble is contrasted with Bohemian accents, geometric patterns and funky décor. With its young attitude and playful atmosphere, this hotel manages to weave the best of Mexico into a vibrant scene.

#### TIP:

**Sounds too loud? Located two blocks from its energetic sister, the hotel recently opened a quieter, more intimate oceanfront Beach House that houses 27 luxury rooms and suites, its own pool, a restaurant and more. Guests also have access to the amenities at the 5th Avenue building so you can have the best of both worlds.**

THOMPSONHOTELS.COM.

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# THE FEEL-GOOD RETREAT

## Sanará | Tulum

With a name meaning “you will heal,” it’s no surprise that this eco-boutique features a world-class wellness center and a beautiful beachfront yoga studio. The wellness center specializes in treatments like Sobada Maya Massage, crystal-healing therapy, Sanará Breathe Massage and Sanará Relieve Massage among others. The wellness center also offers its signature Cleanse & Heal program, a three- to seven-day experience that includes cleansing diets, unique treatments (think detox baths and Magnesium Oil Massages) and yoga and meditation classes.

To complement the healthy lifestyle of the hotel, The Real Coconut Café serves up energy-boosting dishes that incorporate key elements of paleo diets, gluten- and grain-free diets, and vegan practices. Some of the dishes even include original recipes like coconut cheese and coconut tortillas. Headed up by Daniella Hunter, the beachfront eatery is also able to create custom menus, offer juice-fasts and support detox programs with its specially curated menu that features nutrient-dense food to cleanse and re-balance. Food options range from loaded avocado toast and plantain pancakes to plant bowls and coconut tacos, as well as an extensive list of juices and smoothies.

Accommodations include 19 suites on both the jungle- and ocean-side of the hotel with beautifully appointed features like freestanding bathtubs, chandeliers, geometric pendant lighting and whimsical dream catchers. A classy color palette of whites and grays mixes with warm woods for chic, yet rustic interiors while outdoors, guests will find private gardens and decks or balconies. Some higher-level villas and suites feature rooftop terraces, waterfalls and pools. The newest addition to the hotel’s accommodations is the Jungle Compound, a collection of rooms and suites tucked away into the thick foliage. The standout here is the Sanara Jungle Villa, two interconnecting two-room apartments each with a king-sized bed, a private bathroom, a living room, a kitchenette, an oversized deck and a rooftop terrace.

### LOOKING GOOD:

Sanara Tulum won the 2015 National Competition for architecture and interiors from the Asociación de Arquitectos e Interioristas, Mexico, along with receiving the gold medal at the Biennial of Architecture of the Mexican Caribbean.

SANARATULUM.COM.



## THE SURF SCHOOL

### Cabo Surf Hotel | San Jose del Cabo

Located on Acapulquito Beach, one of the top surfing beaches in Los Cabos, this cozy hotel is perfect for aspiring surfers and active visitors. Surrounded by lush vegetation and decked out in white stucco walls, arches and red-tile roofs, this boutique stay is reminiscent of a California-style bungalow with carefree West Coast vibes.

Whether you're a veteran rider or have yet to touch a board, the hotel has its own on-site surf school, Mike Doyle Surf School, which offers a variety of classes for both beginners and experienced surfers. Certified by the National Association of Surf Schools and Instructors (NSSIA), the school offers regular one-hour lessons or, for the more dedicated, three-day surf clinics. Lessons include board rental, rash guard and instructions to get you cruising the waves in no time. The school is open daily and accommodates both reservations and walk-ins. There is also a surf shop on site that's loaded with various-sized board rentals ranging from long boards, short boards, soft boards, boogie boards and stand-up paddleboards. The surf shop also has its own surf clothing line.

To wind down, the hotel's Sea Spa Cabo is a cozy and intimate spa that offers a variety of treatments like body wraps, massages, facials, scrubs and more, while the seaside restaurant, 7 Seas Seafood Grille, serves a menu full of fresh catches in a casual environment overlooking the glimmering water.

CABOSURF.COM.



## THE MUSICAL HUB

### Hotel El Ganzo | San Jose del Cabo

Escape the ordinary and head to the base of the Puerto Los Cabos marina where you'll find the edgy and creative, Hotel El Ganzo. The 69-room boutique hotel is loaded with an artistic ambience and out-of-the-box vibe from top to bottom—literally. Located in "The Underground," a state-of-the-art recording studio is found through a trap door in the lobby lounge's floor and is loaded with all the necessary equipment for some serious jam sessions from top brands like Blue Microphones, Fender and Gibson. Spacious enough for an entire band and cozy enough for a solo artist, The Underground is open all day and night and is even available to rent over an extended period of time.

The hotel also offers an artist-in-residence program that invites artists from all over the world to use El Ganzo as their canvas and muse. While the musically inclined head down to The Underground studio, the visually creative can take to the hotel grounds to craft live installations for guests to marvel at. With no restraints and rules, artists are able to construct unique masterpieces, making a vibrant and ever-changing world for visitors.

The hotel's edgy vibe even seeps into its accommodation offerings. With suite categories ranging from deluxe ocean view to very large suites, guests should opt for the large suites category. At four times larger than the deluxe rooms, these suites are individually designed and decorated and will serve as the canvas for El Ganzo's upcoming artists-in-residence.

The hotel also features a beach club, a state-of-the-art fitness center, a spa, access to the signature Puerto Los Cabos golf course, a waterfront lap pool and a rooftop that includes a lounge, a restaurant, an infinity pool, cabanas and a popular glass-enclosed Jacuzzi. A total of four restaurants and two bars are available to hungry patrons with choices ranging from rooftop sushi to casual, beachfront fare.

ELGANZO.COM.

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