

“DESIGN IS SO SIMPLE.
THAT’S WHY IT’S SO
COMPLICATED.”
— PAUL RAND

*We tapped industry leaders,
from Mexico-based developers to
international designers and architects,
on the process of planning and creating
beautiful escapes in Mexico.*

FUN FACT: TERRAFORMA LED
THE REMODEL OF THE CAPE, A
THOMPSON HOTEL IN CABO
SAN LUCAS.



DESIGNING ICONS



BY SUZANNE KOCH



A LUXURY DEVELOPER ON MEXICO'S REAL ESTATE

Juan Mari Celorio, Director of Operations of Terraforma

TERRAFORMA, a Mexican group comprised of investment funding, asset management, development, construction and commercialization, has established themselves as leaders in developing iconic, high-end projects. With more than 15 years of experience in luxury real estate, the group touts impressive numbers and notable projects. They have successfully developed, built and commercialized more than 5.4 million square feet and are currently under management of more than \$500 million in their portfolio. Currently, the team has 20 projects in development. Here, Juan Mari Celorio, Director of Operations, shares what it takes to be successful in Mexico's luxury real estate market.

What are some challenges faced in the development process?

There are a lot of challenges during the entire development process. The first one appears when looking for the correct plot of land. At Terraforma, we say a project should have three essential characteristics: location, location, location. In Mexico City, the main challenge is to find an appropriate plot of land to develop. Being able to align the architect's project with the finished product can get very complicated.

As a developer, what are some important factors that make a luxury project successful?

As mentioned before, I think location is one of the most important factors for a successful development. Other factors such as construction quality, design and finishing touches also contribute to determining the project's success.

What has been your proudest achievement as Director of Operations?

For the past few years, Terraforma has experienced exponential growth, and for me as COO I think the fundamental accomplishment has been maintaining the company's great name and its status, keeping the firm as a reference in the market. It is normal during growth periods that areas in the developer could suffer some turmoil, but we have managed to keep the same standards that have brought us to where we are now.

Being able to structure the group into the different business branches has also been a great achievement. We went from being a developer with five projects to a group of companies that include the developer, two investment funds, a company which holds investments within hotels and a construction company.

Another successful accomplishment has been the implementation of systems which have helped the company have better control in all areas. Some examples include construction site controls and a CRM.

Any exciting projects that Terraforma is currently working on?

Nowadays, the developer has 15 active projects, each one of them with its own peculiarity, but we are very excited about Reserva Leon Felipe (RLF), which will most definitely be an iconic project in Mexico City. RLF is a project with 32 single-family lots and 81 apartments distributed across four buildings. It is a very unique project located in one of the most exclusive locations in southern Mexico City.

Where do you see Mexico's luxury real estate scene headed in the coming years?

For the past months, there has been a decrease in the sale of homes. This is mainly due to the uncertainty caused by the change in government. We think that this will change during the next year when, we hope, we will start seeing the results of the current administration. We are convinced that high-end housing will have a better upturn than the rest of the housing business, due to the low offering of developments with Terraforma's characteristics and the high demand for these types of projects.

TERRAFORMA.MX

WORLDWIDE ARCHITECTS ON DESIGNING IN MEXICO

Jorey 'Shosh' Friedman, Vice President and Principal of SB Architects

CURRENTLY celebrating their 60th anniversary, SB Architects is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to design solutions. Boasting offices and projects all over the globe, SB Architects has established an international reputation for excellence and leadership in the planning and design of global hotels, resorts and destination communities, as well as large-scale multi-family residential and urban mixed-use projects. You may be familiar with some of their notable projects including Napa Valley's Calistoga Ranch, an Auberge Resort and Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve in Puerto Rico, to name a few. But when it comes to designing and planning projects in Mexico, the firm takes a specific approach.

SB Architects has experience designing projects in Latin America for the past three decades and currently, the team has five luxury hospitality projects underway in Mexico alone, a destination that has been a source of inspiration for the firm. "Mexico's popularity and demand continually inspires us to design innovative and unforgettable experiences that celebrate the place and its heritage," says Jorey 'Shosh' Friedman, Vice President and Principal of SB. "Mexico is a unique destination. Its local identity can be felt through its vibrant culture, history, design and most importantly, its people who have kept the traditions and customs alive for centuries. A spirited mix of past and present, guests are drawn to the distinct, authentic culture." In Mexico, the demand for barefoot luxury destinations is on the rise. "As architects, we are inspired by the endless possibilities that this naturally luxurious style brings to our projects," notes Friedman. She goes on to say that SB's bold simplistic designs are influenced by the site's natural surroundings and in turn provide an enhanced experience for guests.

SB has plenty of opportunities to flex their design muscle as Mexico continues to forge ahead with the strongest tourism economy in the region. Their current south-of-the-border projects include Conrad Punta de Mita which is scheduled to open this spring, along with Park Hyatt Los Cabos Resort, Sofitel SO Los Cabos, Waldorf Astoria Cancun and Hilton Cancun, all currently under construction with a scheduled completion in 2021. Looking even further ahead, Friedman notes the firm's excitement over the continued growth in Mexico from some of hospitality's biggest names. Hilton Hotels has committed to hit 100 properties in Mexico by 2022 while Marriott International has plans to expand their footprint in the country by more than 50-percent by 2023.

SB-ARCHITECTS.COM





SB ARCHITECTS' RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL HOTEL

Understanding

As architects, we need to understand the brief, location and programmatic needs from the client/brand, while maintaining an original design concept.

Culturally & Contextually Relevant

The architecture needs to tell a story of the local culture, people, history and environment through thoughtful design solutions, creating an authentic sense of place.

Site-Specific

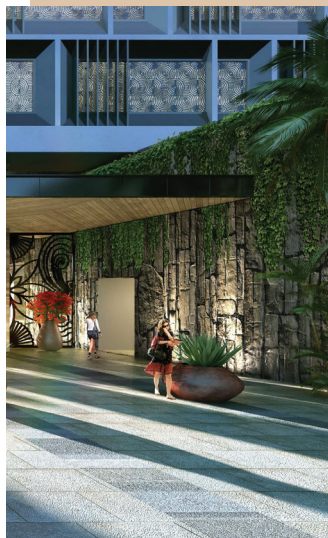
We design in response to the local climate and topographic conditions, resulting in an efficient design that provides optimal comfort and relaxation for guests.

Immersive

We design in a way that allows the guest to get up close and personal with the place, culture and locale respectfully.

Surprise & Delight

We create unexpected places that invite the guest to disconnect from their busy daily lives, inspiring them to reconnect with nature, the people around them and most importantly, their inner sense of self.



RENOWNED DESIGNER ON CREATING A MEXICAN VACATION HOME

Joel Villalon, President and Principal of BraytonHughes Design Studios

President and Principal of award-winning design firm BraytonHughes Design Studios, Joel Villalon took his expertise to the artistic town of Guanajuato to create his perfect summer home. Honoring the romance of the city, Villalon's goal was to fuse Guanajuato's history and art scene with personal materials and items collected from his many worldwide travels throughout his life.

The charming home was purchased by Villalon 10 years ago and keeping its original vibe and colonial exterior intact was an important factor to him. With the help of Francisco Moran, the home's original architect, he was able to design the ideal vacation home. To do this, Villalon drew on BraytonHughes Design Studios' skill of creating projects that have a unique sense of place, along with using his common approach of exacting detail and carefully selected materials.

Villalon was able to renovate and construct new additions to the home, allowing him to add more space for entertaining and displaying his personal trove of art, accessories, tile and textile collections. Light fixtures and furniture were commissioned by regional craftsmen while detailed bovedas, muraled tiled and stone walls were all created by local artisans. Even the majority of wall art is from local artisans. The result is a warm abode that stays true to the historic, artistic city of Guanajuato.

BHDSTUDIOS.COM





JOEL VILLALON'S TIPS FOR DECORATING A MEXICAN SUMMER HOME

Take Advantage of Local Artisans From custom pieces of furniture and accessories to light fixtures and more, affordable and unique hand-crafted items are at your fingertips in Mexico.

Bring the Culture into the Home The number of artists and art itself is abundant in Guanajuato and Mexico. Collect inexpensive and interesting pieces over time.

Display Personal Items Displaying additional personal items from life's journeys add an intimate touch. Tap talented Mexican craftsmen to help create a unique way to showcase the memories.

Make the Most of Summer Weather Create outdoor rooms to take full advantage of the mild weather. Decorate with eclectic pots to house a wide variety of plants, creating a breezy indoor-outdoor atmosphere.

