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01 Whitewashed handcrafted architecture
02 The ultimate location for relaxation

Paradise found

With a surprise at every turn, Jocelyn Pride discovers anything is possible at this imaginative Mexican escape where exquisite modern style meets ancient grace.

The pretty hand-painted note says, “Just follow the roses...” Tea lights flicker as the trail of rose petals winds through our luxurious suite, past the outdoor private spa and up the stone stairs. Under a perfect Mexican sky, our rooftop terrace has been transformed into a glamorous boudoir. Moonlight dances across the Sea of Cortez and echoing in the distance are the slap of mobula rays and the sounds of breaching whales.

Sleeping under the stars is just one of the surprises that can be organised by the Department of Romance at Las Ventanas al Paraiso. Translated as ‘Windows to Paradise’ it’s a favourite with celebrities, the winner of every conceivable award and, with a guest return rate over 40 per cent, it does more than live up to its name. Hidden from the world where the desert meets the sea on the tip of Baja California Sur, Las Ventanas al Paraiso

(or simply LVP) was handcrafted by local artisans. Architecturally understated, the sweeping lines of the 71 exquisite suites – with floor space ranging from 960 to a massive 3,893 square feet – blend into the natural setting. Bright pink bougainvillea spills into the intricate cactus gardens, and a wide, white sandy beach lines azure water so clear it looks invisible. Unique mother-of-pearl glass windows reflect the year-round sunshine. Although the physical beauty is

sublime, the staff is the heart of any LVP experience. Their attention to detail and perfect timing redefines pampering. Individually sized gowns and slippers are laid out on arrival, a sewing kit is colour matched to personal clothing and even laundry is treated as special. It's returned wrapped as a gift tied with gold Las Ventanas signature ribbons.

With personal butler service appointed to every suite, things seem to happen as if by magic.

Above and beyond

"We are here to make holiday dreams come true," says Mariajose Rodriguez, Romance Director. "Anything is possible." 'Anything' could include flying in a specific bottle of wine, coordinating fireworks on the beach for an 'I do', a caballero galloping along the beach on a white stallion to deliver a bunch of flowers, salsa or cooking lessons or learning the art of drinking tequila.

Another innovation is the beach

cinema. After following a candlelit path to the beach one evening, we are in for a real surprise. A personal welcome sign is sculptured in the sand, a dining table draped in flowers is between two tall candelabras, and a cosy beach bed is set up in front of a large HD screen. We dine on Baja lobster, French bubbles and Mexican crepes before settling in to watch an old favourite – *Holiday*.

Although there are seven pools to choose from (plus some suites have

private pools) most guests relax under umbrellas by the central infinity pool. Smiling butlers bring ice buckets filled with treats – sparkling water, Evian mist sprays, ice-creams and sunscreen.

High on life

For active guests, the tennis courts come with coaches and ball attendants; horse riding is on the beach and four championship golf courses are nearby. Further afield there's whale watching,

snorkelling, diving excursions and private yacht charters in the Sea of Cortez. Porsche Boxsters and Mini Coopers are available for hire and the giant cactus forests can be explored by 4WD.

The award-winning spa in the tranquil, secluded garden setting features holistic indigenous treatments. Based on the four elements invoking earth, air, fire and water, ancient Baja healing techniques engage the senses.

With locally sourced food, each of

the three restaurants also treads lightly. One night we dine in La Cava, the magnificent private dining room in the wine cellar, where chef Fabrice Gusset creates a five-course degustation 'Taste of Mexico' featuring delicacies such as a tamarind mole with escolar fish and foie gras crème brulee matched perfectly with carefully chosen wines. ●

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- 03 A hotel suite with a difference
- 04 A private terrace allows for seclusion
- 05 The hotel's entrance makes an impact
- 06 The postcard-perfect azure ocean
- 07 Landscaped walkways for leisurely strolls
- 08 The private villa pool is heaven sent
- 09 A luxury suite bedroom

