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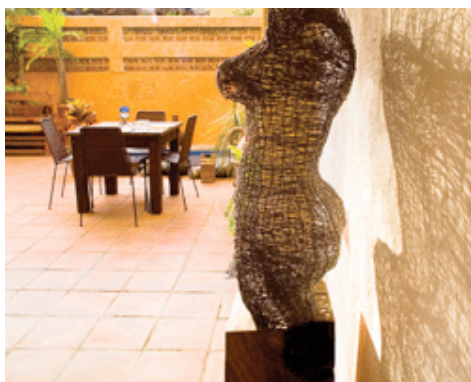
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This stylish hotel features the simple pleasures

by Josef Kandoll W
07/10/2006



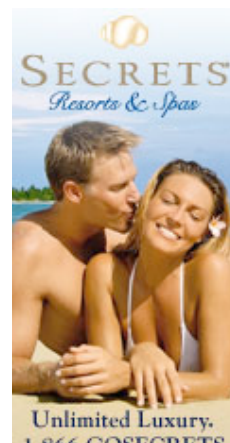
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When synergy of place matches intent and design, the boutique hotel that emerges generates attention. Ultra-chic Hotel Cielo Rojo glows like a ruby in charming San Pancho, located on the Pacific Coast just north of Puerto Vallarta. Officially named San Francisco, this delightful Mexican pueblo continues to grow in population as well as in breadth of cultural experience. Although a long way from the all-night dance clubs of Puerto Vallarta, gourmet restaurants and coffee shops provide the visitor with plenty of ambience. Also, the area is home to the growing polo club La Patrona, with weekly games throughout the season from November through May. Clients can sip tequila or nosh on tacos with the horsey set in the shade of the jacaranda trees during the match.

Yes, donkeys still wander about while traffic tries to hurry on the cobblestone streets. But it only takes moments to reach the end of town in any direction and continue along rutted roads to discover palm groves, mango orchards and even some deluxe developments that offer seaside living at reasonable prices. Fruit markets provide sustenance in between visits to casual eateries that serve quesadillas, Mexican divorced eggs and chilaquiles with chicken and red chile sauce. A beer or margarita washes it all down nicely after a stroll on one of the broadest — and least populated — beaches in the region.

At night, visitors can spend time at Hotel Cielo Rojo, three blocks from the beach, giving this escape some distance from the sun-and-sandals set. The restaurant Azucena caters to adventurous taste buds from anywhere, while chef Mane Rios from Mexico City proves her touch on plates that might combine the tang of tamarind with tender chicken or a twist on whatever she discovers in the market that day. Tell clients to save room for the better-than-homemade desserts.

In the pleasant evenings of San Pancho, as the sun drops below the horizon, the evening light begins to change and the candles are lit.



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The private garden becomes another world and the eclectic music, might include Edith Piaf or big band hits from the Mexican Golden Age of movies. Local musicians may pop in for an impromptu set with hand-carried instruments.

Guests can make a reservation with manager Glades Huizar for a relaxing massage in the spartan but comfortable room. During the day, clients will find easy access to surfing, swimming, horseback riding, fishing, kayaking, yoga, dance classes, hiking and more. Clients should save Wednesday night for on-site, old-time movies that brought Mexico such fame in the 1940s and '50s. Order a margarita on the rocks and slip back in time.

Prices are also like Old Mexico too, doubles begin at about \$65 per night, including taxes, while suites start at \$85. And that includes breakfast.

Since a car isn't really necessary, request arrangements for airport pick-up when making the reservation. Agents should book directly for the standard 10 percent commission.

52-311-258-4155
www.hotelcielorojo.com

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