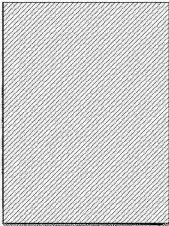


# AT HOME

## MEMPHIS & MIDSOUTH

**TRAVEL**  
Near & Far

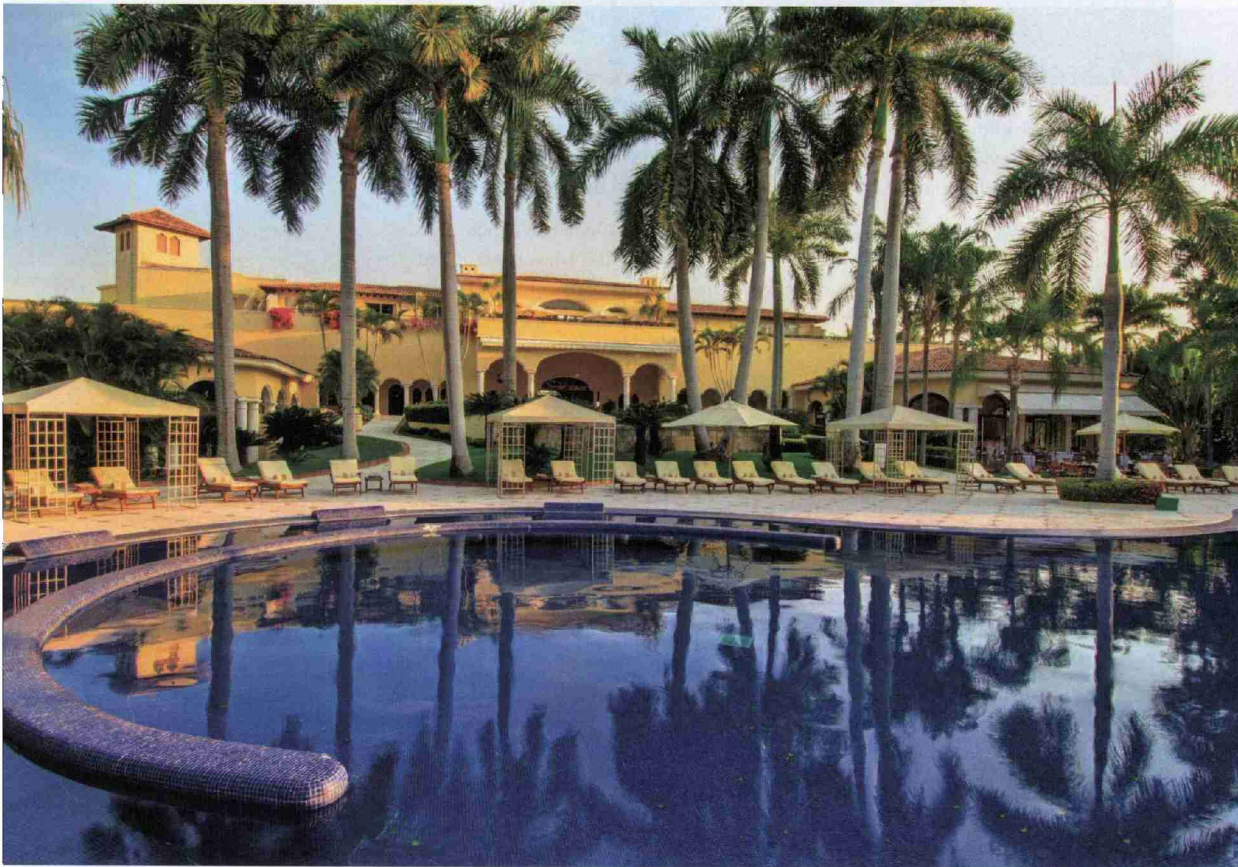
**A Modern Oasis**  
Oxford condo offers the perfect mix of beauty and practicality



travel

# Attention to Detail

No detail is overlooked at Casa Velas luxury resort in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. In fact, the staff at the adults-only, all inclusive, boutique resort seem to have thought of perks guests may not have even considered, but definitely can't do without. A handbag bar that provides guests "loaner" designer purses to use during a stay, nine varieties of iced tea served daily, and weekly "Painting with Wine" workshops led by the resort's resident artist are only a few of the treats that await at the highly awarded property.



Text by Terri Glazer | Photos courtesy of Casa Velas



travel



Only a five-minute drive from the Puerto Vallarta airport, the 80-suite, all-inclusive Casa Velas has the look and feel of a Spanish hacienda. The property is surrounded by a lush garden, nestled on the greens of Marina Vallarta's 18-hole golf course. In addition to a la carte dining, room service, beverages, and use of a private beach club and spa, guests have unlimited complimentary golf privileges at three courses.

Decorated in traditional Mexican style, every luxurious suite features a private terrace, but the ultimate indulgence is the four-bedroom, 3,000-square-foot Presidential Suite. Up to eight guests can enjoy its oversize plunge pool, huge private terrace, Jacuzzi and dedicated butler and bartender.

For even more pampering, the Abja Spa at Casa Velas welcomes clients with the sound of trickling fountains and alluring aromatherapy fragrances. Friendly staff members provide a full array of services and amenities include separate hydrotherapy areas for men and women, a spa boutique and beauty salon.

A stay at Casa Velas is a golfer's dream. The 18-hole Marina Vallarta, which nestles against the hotel property, offers 6,701 yards and a par-71 layout designed by Joe Finger. Vista Vallarta, a short drive from the hotel, has two courses. The easier Jack Nicklaus 18-hole course is a par 72 with 7,073 yards with grassy hillsides, a dense forest of palm and giant ficus trees and natural creeks. The Tom Weiskopf course, also 18 holes, is a par 72 with 6,976 yards and a more extreme terrain of dense jungle, deep ravines and swift creeks.

Emiliano, the resort's fine-dining restaurant serves gourmet Mexican and international cuisine, including a nightly five-course tasting menu created and overseen by head chefs from its sister resort, the AAA Five Diamond Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit. The fare at the private Ocean Club focuses on Asiatic bistro cuisine for lunch and dinner. There's no truer craft cocktail than at Casa Velas, where the drinks are virtually garden-to-glass. Guests can take fruit and herbs straight from the hotel's botanical garden to the resident mixologist, who uses the ingredients to contact a personalized beverage on the spot.



The resort offers so much, guests may be tempted to spend their entire time on the property, but Casa Velas' staff makes a trip outside the gates a great option. Guests can partake in the weekly art and crafts market in nearby Marina Vallarta. Starting with a welcome cocktail and short introduction outlining the tour, the experience includes a guide to take guests to the market, located a 10-minute walk from the hotel. There, with lengthy yachts and the Sierra Madre mountains in the background, guests will learn about the typical stands found at the market, from local artisans to trendy boutiques.



travel



After an entertaining musical show the tour ends in the food area, where participants learn about traditional Mexican fare. The resort also offers a complimentary art gallery tour of downtown Puerto Vallarta. Showcasing Mexican culture through the art of the ages, the two-hour tour explores a wide range of local art from traditional indigenous displays to eclectic contemporary galleries. The tour concludes with a nightcap at the Café des Artistes, surrounded by the murals by Federico Leon de la Vega, the resort's resident artist. Both tours are part of the resort's rotating schedule of complimentary dining offerings and entertainment activities.

It's no wonder the travel industry has been buzzing about Casa Velas. It's the only boutique hotel on the Mexican Pacific coast to receive four stars from the acclaimed Star list of hotels and restaurants curated by *Forbes* magazine. AAA awarded the resort four diamonds, and Trip Advisor named it to the prestigious Travelers' Choice category.

