

# WESTIN & SHERATON LOS CABOS

Split meeting/incentive programs  
are a breeze in Baja, Mexico

[ON LOCATION] GIANNA WYATT

Bookending Los Cabos, the twin cities of San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas have their own culture, look and lifestyle. We checked into two **Starwood Hotel** properties and traveled around with **Terramar Destinations DMC** to scope out the scene. The program started with a glass-bottom boat tour to the iconic Arch at Lands End. The distinctive rock formation is only accessible by boat, and during the voyage, we saw sea lions, pelicans and grey whales. The small boats hold 10 people and they're great for adventurous spirits because they ride so close to the water. Terramar can transport groups up to 200 pax to the Arch on large catamarans or a 50-foot yacht, with stops for snorkeling along the way.

"We usually snorkel at Chileno Bay or Santa Maria Bay," says Julia Trejo, director of sales/marketing for Terramar. "Groups can view lots of sea creatures like manta rays, dolphins and over 150 types of fish."

Located where the Sea of Cortez and Pacific Ocean meet, the Arch is called "Lovers Divorce Beach" by the locals.

"On the sea side, the water is calm and beautiful like a couple in love," says Mario, our guide. "When we hit the Pacific side, the divorce happens and the craziness begins. There are a lot more waves on that side."

We also visited **J&J Habanos Cigar Shop**, owned by Juleta and Jose Cantu. Along with the cigars, they have a bar where they sell a bunch of rums and tequilas, including a glass shotgun filled with Blue Agave tequila. Try the Big Papa Mojito, concocted with a choice of 3/5/7-year old Havana rums.

San Jose is a quiet town on the opposite end of the Los Cabos corridor. The quaint colonial city is filled with local shops and restaurants surrounding the Parroquia San Jose church in the main Plaza Mijares.

The historic pastel-hued buildings and beautiful 18th century gazebos are a charming counterpoint after visiting the busy streets of Cabo San Lucas. Wood carvings, pewter objects, handmade clothing and jewelry, pure vanilla and glass art are all on sale from both the street vendors and shops.

"The whole area is really attractive for groups because they have access to two opposite towns," says Trejo. "And the two cities are close so groups can take advantage of both in one day, which a lot of planners really appreciate."

## THE WESTIN RESORT & SPA LOS CABOS

For the first half of the trip, we stayed at **The Westin Resort & Spa Los Cabos**. The destination's most well-known resort architecturally-speaking is built into the side of a mountain. Architect Javier Sordo Madaleno designed the graceful hotel with contemporary scalloped lines and vibrant colors to capture the feel of the landscape and Mexican culture.

Its iconic design and inspiring ambience brings groups into an oasis that nourishes the soul and expands the mind. The 243 guest rooms offer a distinct sense of Mexican luxury and style with three specialty restaurants, several fun bars and three infinity swimming pools.

**Arrecifes** is the signature restaurant chiseled into the mountains at the top of the property. The grand foyer has a

dramatic entrance with romantic lighting, vibrant colors and rock sculptures placed throughout. Groups up to 150 can sip drinks at the bar, enjoy appetizers on the patio or lounge in one of the oversized armchairs facing out over the cliffs.

We sat at a large table that gave us the perfect view of the infinity pools and sandy beaches below. Executive Chef Eduardo Fausto's menu includes locally caught seafood creations served grilled and seasoned with Mediterranean spices. The prix fixe menu starts with a duo of ceviches with citrus and cilantro, paired with a basket of warm bread filled with spicy jalapenos and cream cheese. The main course was a big portion of seasoned sea bass in a tangy mustard sauce with wilted greens, corn on the cob and delish potatoes.

After the meal we relocated to the beach and sat around the firepit to grill s'mores. During our campsite conversations, a Brazilian group of entertainers danced on stilts around our seats. We were all enthralled as they performed a percussion piece while swinging flaming torches around their heads and waists. As our fire burned down, we enjoyed sparkling sangria and sunk our bare toes in the sand.

"Our bread and butter is our outdoor space," says Pablo Gonzalez, the director of sales. "Our location sets us apart from anywhere else in Cabo because we have panoramic views of the ocean and the mountains, it's gorgeous."

The Westin Los Cabos has 12 meeting rooms, the largest seating 280 pax. Outdoor event space is pretty much unlimited, with tent facilities available on the beach and many outdoor dining options inside the hotel.

## SHERATON HACIENDA DEL MAR GOLF & SPA

We also checked out the 270-room **Sheraton Hacienda del Mar Golf & Spa Resort, Los Cabos**. It resembles a stone palace dotted with terracotta tile, bubbling fountains and multiple plazas along emerald water. During our stay, Subaru bought out over 200 of the standard guest rooms.

"We host a lot of buyouts," says Nadezda Dodonova, director of sales. "But you never feel crowded when you are here since we are located on 28 acres."

The resort feels very much like an oasis. Our group stayed in the private villas surrounded by Jack Nicklaus' renowned Ocean Golf Course and a beautiful secluded beach. There are 27 gardens with plants from 24 different countries planted around pools and five oceanview restaurants and five bars. The best part is the Cactus Spa, offering a bunch of unique indigenous treatments like a green coffee wrap that I enjoyed during my stay.

Our group dinner was equally phenomenal at the beachfront **De Cortez Grill & Restaurant**, seating 160 pax. The smell of grilled lamb chops fills the salty air, and the stone walls are decorated with Mayan and Aztec art lit by chandeliers hanging from the vaulted ceilings.

Chef Jose Salvador Campuzano prepares a prix fixe menu

"Our bread and  
butter is our  
outdoor space."

for groups that he can customize for special events with the help of the restaurant's event coordinator. The chef's specialty is mesquite-grilled Mediterranean with a Mexican influence.

"Cooking for me is an art, an art of coordinating the five senses to enjoy the style and personality of each unique dish," says Campuzano. "I aim to honor the established Mediterranean concept of the restaurant while also creating innovative local dishes."

We moved to the semi-private dining room for dinner. The first course was sashimi-style salmon served with a sweet soy glaze. Our main dish was lobster drizzled in a buttery crab sauce with gooey cheese. This is one of those meals where everyone hangs out late talking and laughing in the moonlight and sea breeze.

The Sheraton has the largest meeting facilities in Los Cabos, with 18,000 sf of group space including a 12,000-sf ballroom. Both hotels are less than five miles from the San Jose Del Cabo Airport.

Visit Los Cabos: [visitoscabos.travel](http://visitoscabos.travel)

Terramar Destinations DMC: [terramardestinations.com](http://terramardestinations.com)

